




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 24 February 2021

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Journalists, Shield Laws; Voluntary Assisted Dying

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.00 am): There has been a lot of media attention this week about shield laws, as there should be, because these are the laws that allow journalists to claim legal privilege to protect confidential sources. We made a commitment to consult on these complex laws and it is crucial we get this right. Shield laws are important to the media but they are also incredibly important to the Queensland public. They are critical in protecting Queenslanders. We know journalists should not be going to jail for doing their job, and Queenslanders need to be protected if they come forward with important information.

We have started consulting with the media, legal experts and key stakeholders, including the Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance, who I will be meeting with later today. My department will review Queensland case law and how relevant protections operate in other Australian jurisdictions to create the best possible legal framework for Queensland.

Today I have another fantastic update for Queenslanders. I would like to table the Queensland Law Reform Commission's *A legal framework for voluntary assisted dying: review update*.

Tabled paper: Queensland Law Reform Commission: A legal framework for voluntary assisted dying—Review update, February 2021 [178](#).

In doing so, I thank Justice Applegarth and the Queensland Law Reform Commission for their diligent work to date. The Palaszczuk government made a commitment to Queenslanders that we will legislate this extremely complex and deeply personal issue, and we are getting on with the job. This review update is the first step in delivering this important reform for Queensland and in ensuring our community has a choice on voluntary assisted dying and end-of-life decisions. The QLRC's review update has included the close examination of the 124 submissions received from a wide variety of stakeholders, including Queenslanders who are experiencing suffering close to their end of life or who have experienced witnessing it in their family members.

The QLRC's task is not to consider whether Queensland should have voluntary assisted dying legislation but to recommend 'the best legal framework' here in Queensland. To this end, the review update describes how the QLRC has been focused on a model for voluntary assisted dying that would be suited to Queensland's unique conditions, including its geography, population diversity, access to health practitioners and public and private hospital systems, as well as the fact that many Queenslanders live in remote parts of our great state. The review update identifies the principles that will underpin the recommended legislation but notes that work is ongoing to develop a comprehensive legislative framework.

I understand that this is a deeply personal issue for so many Queenslanders and it is something I am determined to see happen. I believe everyone should have choices about how they end their life and have dignity in death. While the inquiry time was extended, there will be a shorter implementation period of 15 months to ensure there is no delay in Queenslanders being able to have a choice on voluntary assisted dying and end-of-life decisions.