

Question on Notice

No. 382

Asked on 16 April 2024

MR B MICKELBERG ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to the Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board reporting of median time from first to final assisted dying request—

Will the Minister advise (reported separately by Hospital and Health Service) the median time from first to final request from (a) 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2023 and (b) 1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024?

ANSWER

I am advised the median time between first and final requests for access to voluntary assisted dying in Queensland was 13 days from 1 July to 31 December 2023 and 14 days from 1 January to 31 March 2024.

This timeframe refers to the request and assessment phase of the voluntary assisted dying process. A person must make three separate requests. The *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021* requires a 9-day minimum timeframe between the first and final request.

The 9-day period can be shortened if both the coordinating and consulting doctors believe the person is likely to die or lose decision-making capacity during that time.

After the final request, further steps are required before the person can administer the voluntary assisted dying substance. The coordinating practitioner undertakes a final review. If eligible, the person then makes an administration decision, the substance is prescribed, and arrangements are made for the substance to be supplied and administered at the time of the person's choosing, which can be weeks to months later, in accordance with their wishes.

An overview of the voluntary assisted dying process is available on page 12 of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board Annual Report 2022-2023.

This data demonstrates that important safeguards of the Act are in place while eligible Queenslanders can access voluntary assisted dying within a time appropriate to their needs.

Table 1: Median days between first and final request by HHS

Hospital & Health Service	Median days between first and final request Jul-Dec 2023	Median days between first and final request Jan-Mar 2024
Cairns and Hinterland	9.0	11.0
Central Queensland	10.0	12.5
Darling Downs	18.0	9.5
Gold Coast	14.5	14.0
Mackay	7.0	8.5
Metro North	15.5	12.5
Metro South	14.0	16.0
Sunshine Coast	9.0	15.0
Townsville	11.5	15.0
West Moreton	10.5	12.0
Wide Bay	14.0	14.0
Remote HHSs*	13.0	18.5
Queensland	13.0	14.0

* Note: Central West, North West, South West and Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) have been categorised as 'Remote HHSs' due to a sample size of fewer than ten cases in each HHS in the reporting periods.