

I care about my neighbours in the Northern Territory. I do not wish them to be the only ones, by area, to be kept from having a calm, easy passing. They should not be denied that. Please reinstate VAD here!

1. *What is Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD)* - Explains what VAD is.

2. *The number of people accessing VAD is increasing* – Demonstrates accepting use of VAD

3. *Telehealth should be permitted for VAD purposes provided at least one assessment is conducted in person.* – One very strong rationale for safety. Some areas in the Northern Territory are a far distance from medical clinics.

1. Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) is the use of a prescribed substance to cause the death of a person who is terminally ill at their request. It is a process that gives an eligible person the choice to ask for medical help to end their life in a manner and time of their choosing. VAD is not a way for a person who is not terminally ill to end their life. ‘Voluntary’ means the process can be freely chosen by a person competent to make decisions about VAD. VAD is one of many end-of-life choices. Others may include continuing treatment for an illness or palliative care.

Example: Queensland-There is strict criteria for who is able to access Voluntary Assisted Dying. These include:

- The person requesting VAD must have a terminal illness that will cause them to die within 12 months
- They must be suffering intolerably
- They must be a Queensland resident and be able to prove that they have lived in Queensland for the previous twelve months

2. In the Consultation Paper, VAD in the Northern Territory July 2025 page 12, the number of people accessing VAD is increasing in other Australian jurisdictions. The table below outlines the number of people accessing VAD over the last three years.

Number of people accessing VAD in Australian jurisdictions 2021- 2024

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
VIC	407	443	554
WA	191	255	292
TAS	N/A	25	60
NSW	N/A	N/A	160
SA	N/A	39	156
QLD	N/A	245	793
ACT	N/A	N/A	N/A

3. ACCORDING TO THE CONSULTATION PAPERS, page 12:

2024 Expert Panel Recommendation - Subject to amendment of Commonwealth legislation, telehealth should be permitted for VAD purposes provided at least one assessment is conducted in person.

There are a number of challenges associated with delivering services such as VAD in rural and remote communities. Residents in regional and remote areas may face additional barriers to accessing VAD in comparison to residents of metropolitan areas. These barriers may include:

- finding eligible medical practitioners in remote areas;**
- restrictions on the ability to communicate via telehealth; and**
- disproportionate effect of conscientious objectors in remote areas. In the NT, more than 45 per cent of the population live in rural and remote areas. This is significantly more than the national average of 28 per cent. As noted in earlier in this Consultation Paper, the burden of disease is higher in rural and remote areas of the NT. Whilst NT Health service locations are spread broadly across the NT, geographic challenges remain.**