

**From:** [ALC](#)  
**To:** [LAVAD](#)  
**Subject:** Submission.  
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This submission comes from:

Alan Corbett



Dear Chair,

In 2017 my wife took her life. VAD was not an option in Qld at that time. She suffered and in the end could not contemplate a future without suffering. She was bedridden, without medical assistance as traveling was intolerable and no specialist would come to visit her at home. There was no hope in her life.

I believe every Australian has a right to receive compassionate, high quality and accessible palliative care at their end of life. Northern Territory citizens are Australian citizens as well, therefore, our Northern Territory neighbours and friends deserve the compassionate, high quality and accessible palliative care at their end of lives as well. This includes VAD as the rest of the country has. No debate there.

Community members are entitled to make decisions around managing their end-of-life care, like other Australians. A person must meet the eligibility criteria and follow all the legal steps for voluntary assisted dying to happen. This will allow them to take or be given a medication to bring about their death at a time that they choose.

## 1. Do you support making VAD legal in the NT?

Yes. Voluntary Assisted Dying has been used throughout the rest of the country with care and concern for the patient. VAD has given so many a soft, easy death that my wife was denied.

Compare that with the painful, tormenting, seemingly unrelenting death that is experienced when VAD is not used. Voluntary assisted dying means an eligible person can ask for medical help to end their life. The person must have an advanced and progressive disease, illness, or medical condition that is expected to cause their death within six months (or 12 months for neurodegenerative diseases like motor neurone disease). They must also be experiencing suffering that can't be relieved in a way that is acceptable to them.

Voluntary assisted dying and suicide are different. Asking for medical help to die is **not** suicide under the law.

**2. What eligibility criteria should a person need to meet before they can access VAD?** A person must meet the eligibility criteria and follow all the legal steps for voluntary assisted dying to happen. This will allow them to take or be given a medication to bring about their death at a time that they choose.

Voluntary assisted dying and suicide are different. Asking for medical help to die is **not** suicide under the law. There is strict criteria for who is able to access Voluntary Assisted Dying. In Queensland,

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
- They must request VAD two times to two independent medical practitioners and again directly prior to the administration of the VAD substance
- The person has decision-making capacity in relation to VAD
- The person is acting voluntarily and without coercion

### **3. How could the NT make sure that an eligible person can access VAD in a safe and effective way, including people living in remote areas and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?**

Strict eligibility requirements. A tightly prescribed request and assessment process. Mandatory VAD training. Oversight by a specifically constituted review board. These are recommended by the well-known and respected advocates Ben White and Liddy Wilmott

### **4. How could the NT monitor the process to ensure VAD is delivered safely and effectively?**

VAD must be voluntary and initiated by the person themselves. It will usually be self-administered. Only those who are already dying from **an incurable, advanced and progressive disease, illness or medical condition** will be able to access voluntary assisted dying.

According to the 2024 Expert Panel a

recommendation was made that an independent statutory body (Review Board) should be established to monitor compliance in every case and to review the operation of the Act. The functions, membership and responsibilities of the Review Board should be as outlined in Chapter 6 of the 2024 Expert Panel Report.”

I trust this submission will be of assistance. In her final note to me, my wife asked that I do all I can to reduce the suffering of others.

Yours Sincerely,  
Alan