

A Plea for Compassion: Why the Northern Territory Needs Voluntary Assisted Dying

By Beverley Whitby

I have recently seen, with my own eyes, what life can look like in the final stages for many elderly Territorians. In aged care homes across our region, I have met people living with unrelenting pain, trapped in bodies that no longer work, their dignity slowly stripped away.

The staff do their very best. Families sit by helplessly. Palliative care can help, but it cannot always take away the pain—or the longing to be at peace.

In other parts of Australia, people in this situation can choose Voluntary Assisted Dying. They can say their goodbyes on their own terms, with dignity, surrounded by those they love. Here in the Northern Territory, that choice is denied.

It is heartbreaking to see someone you care about begging for an end that never comes. We would not let an animal suffer the way we make our elderly suffer. Why do we deny the same mercy to humans?

It's time for the Northern Territory to bring back Voluntary Assisted Dying, with the same strict safeguards that work in other states. This is not about giving up on life—it is about ending suffering when life has nothing left but pain.

I call on our leaders to have the courage to give Territorians the right to choose a peaceful end.



Beverley Whitby