

From: [Christine Mansfield](#)
To: [LA VAD](#)
Subject: Submission to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee on Voluntary Assisted Dying
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Dr Tanzil Rahman MLA

Chair, Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee on Voluntary Assisted Dying
Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

Dear Dr Rahman

Submission to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee on Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD)

As a member of your electorate, I am writing this submission in response to the Committee's call for public input on voluntary assisted dying, ahead of the 15 August 2025 deadline. I welcome the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion and share my perspective as a concerned Northern Territory resident.

1. Position on Legalisation

I strongly support the legalisation of voluntary assisted dying in the Northern Territory. Territorians deserve the same rights as those in other Australian jurisdictions—to make informed, compassionate choices about how they end their lives in the face of unbearable suffering.

2. Eligibility Criteria

I believe eligibility should not be limited solely to individuals with a terminal illness and a life expectancy of six months or less. Those suffering from chronic, progressive, and incurable conditions—such as advanced neurodegenerative diseases—may endure significant suffering over a longer period and should not be excluded from accessing VAD. The framework should be flexible enough to consider individual circumstances, while still upholding strict safeguards.

3. Safeguards

I support the implementation of rigorous and legally sound safeguards to protect all involved—patients, families, and healthcare providers. While I am not an expert in the legal or medical details of these mechanisms, I believe the Northern Territory can draw on best practices from other states and overseas. Safeguards should include:

- Independent medical assessments by at least two qualified practitioners.
- The ability for individuals to declare in advance, through their Advance

Personal Plans, their wish to access VAD.

- Clear and informed consent protocols.
- Mental capacity assessments.
- Mandatory reporting and oversight by an independent body.
- The right for healthcare professionals to conscientiously object.

These measures can provide confidence to the community that the system is both safe and ethical.

4. Personal Perspective and Community Feedback

I participated in a community consultation session during the previous round of engagement. The discussion was balanced and respectful, with diverse perspectives shared—from medical professionals and religious leaders to everyday Territorians. Despite differing views, there was broad recognition of the importance of individual choice.

On a personal note, I have witnessed the slow and undignified decline of both my parents—one from Alzheimer’s and the other from vascular dementia. It was an agonising process that robbed them of autonomy and dignity. I have also seen friends go through similar experiences. I do not wish that on anyone. While I speak only for myself, I know there are many Territorians in similar circumstances who feel strongly that those facing incurable suffering should have the right to choose how they live—and how they die.

5. Call to Action

As elected representatives, I urge you to act without further delay. Territorians have waited long enough. Please bring voluntary assisted dying to the floor of the Legislative Assembly for debate. For those at the end of life, being told their suffering is “not a priority” is deeply hurtful and unacceptable.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Yours sincerely

Christine Mansfield

