



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee

Associated Minutes of Proceedings

Voluntary Assisted Dying in the Northern Territory – First Interim Report

July 2025





LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
15th Assembly

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Meeting No. 5

10.00 am, Monday 19 May 2025
Litchfield Room

Present: Dr Tanzil Rahman MLA, Chair, Member for Fong Lim
Mr Matthew Kerle MLA, Deputy Chair, Member for Blain
Mrs Oly Carlson MLA, Member for Wanguri
Mx Kat McNamara MLA, Member for Nightcliff
Mr Dheran Young MLA, Member for Daly

Secretariat: Dr Caroline Williams, Executive Director
Ms Julia Knight, Committee Secretary
Ms Katie Helme, Committee Secretary
Mr Caelan Ikin, Administration/Research Officer

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Mr Kerle moved and Mrs Carlson seconded that:
The Minutes of Meeting No. 4 of 24 March 2025 be confirmed.

Question put and passed.

2. CORRESPONDENCE

Noted.

3. REVIEW OF HISTORICAL REGULATIONS

Mrs Carlson moved and Mr Young seconded that:

The Chair write to the Attorney-General requesting that the inquiry into the review of historical regulations be suspended until the conclusion of the inquiry into voluntary assisted dying.

Question put and passed.

4. SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

Mr Young moved and Mx McNamara seconded that:

The Committee forward the legal advice regarding the West Arnhem Regional Council (Jabiru Town) By-Laws 2024 (No. 28 of 2024) to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Community Development for consideration and comment by 27 June 2025.

Question put and passed.

5. VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING

Mx McNamara expressed deep concerns regarding the process and timeframe for the inquiry, particularly in relation to the ability of the Committee to ethically and respectfully engage with remote communities.

Dr Rahman noted the concerns of Mx McNamara, and communicated that as Chair, he was committed to conducting the enquiry ethically and respectfully, within the terms of reference. He further expressed his hope that all Members would work cooperatively and constructively together, to agree on suitable scope and process for the inquiry, with a view to progressing VAD.

He asked that Members fully avail themselves for the duration of inquiry hearings, be mindful to declare conflicts of interests if relevant, and consider substitution of committee membership if necessary before the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee discussed the conduct of the inquiry, including potential hearing locations to be discussed further at its next meeting.

Mrs Carlson moved and Mr Kerle seconded that:

The Chair write to the Co-Chairs of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Independent Expert Advisory Panel, Hon Vicki O'Halloran AO CVO and Mr Duncan McConnel SC, to invite them to privately brief the Committee at its next meeting.

Question put and passed.

Mx McNamara moved and Mr Young seconded that:

The Chair write to the four Aboriginal Land Councils and the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory to advise them of the inquiry referral and tentative parameters, before the next Committee meeting.

Question put and passed.

6. NEXT MEETING

Dr Rahman proposed the next meeting be held at 10.00 am, Monday 2 June 2025, ahead of the currently next scheduled meeting of 10.00 am, Monday 28 July 2025, to exclusively discuss the VAD inquiry. The Committee was not unanimously available at that time. The Committee instead unanimously agreed to meet on 10.00 am, Monday 7 July 2025.

Meeting closed at 12.10 pm.



Dr Tanzil Rahman MLA
Chair



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

15th Assembly

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Meeting No. 6

10.00 am Wednesday 28 May 2025
Litchfield Room and via Microsoft Teams

Present:	Dr Tanzil Rahman MLA, Chair, Member for Fong Lim Mr Matthew Kerle MLA, Deputy Chair, Member for Blain Mrs Oly Carlson MLA, Member for Wanguri Mx Kat McNamara MLA, Member for Nightcliff
Apologies	Mr Dheran Young MLA, Member for Daly
Secretariat:	Dr Caroline Williams, Executive Director Ms Katie Helme, Committee Secretary Mr Caelan Ikin, Administration/Research Officer

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Mrs Carlson moved and Mr Kerle seconded that:
The Minutes of Meeting No. 5 of 19 May 2025 be confirmed.

Question put and passed.

2. CORRESPONDENCE

Noted.

Mx McNamara moved and Mr Kerle seconded that:

The Chair write to the four Aboriginal Land Councils and the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory as per the draft correspondence to invite them to privately brief the Committee at its next meeting.

Question put and passed.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

The Committee discussed options to regarding the planning and logistics of its Inquiry into Voluntary Assisted Dying.

Mrs Carlson moved and Mx McNamara seconded that:

The Chair write to the agency facilitating BushTel to request a private briefing to inform the Committee on undertaking remote consultation.

Question put and passed.

Mx McNamara moved and Mr Kerle seconded that:

The Chair, on the Secretariat's advice, select subject matter experts on voluntary assisted dying to provide the Committee with a private briefing at its next meeting.

Question put and passed.

Mx McNamara moved and Mrs Carlson seconded that:

The Secretariat prepare a proposal for the Committee to address training needs, including options and providers, for Members to undertake training subject to their individual availability prior the Committee's next meeting.

Question put and passed.

4. NEXT MEETING

10 am on Monday, 7 July 2025.

Meeting closed at 10.29 am.



Dr Tanzil Rahman MLA
Chair



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
15th Assembly

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Meeting No. 7

10.00 am Monday 7 July 2025
Litchfield Room and via Microsoft Teams

Present: Dr Tanzil Rahman MLA, Chair, Member for Fong Lim
Mr Matthew Kerle MLA, Deputy Chair, Member for Blain
Mrs Oly Carlson MLA, Member for Wanguri
Mx Kat McNamara MLA, Member for Nightcliff
Mr Dheran Young MLA, Member for Daly (via Microsoft Teams)

Secretariat: Dr Caroline Williams, Executive Director
Ms Katie Helme, Committee Secretary
Ms Georgia Eagleton, Senior Research Officer
Mr Caelan Ikin, Administration/Research Officer

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Mr Kerle moved and Mx McNamara seconded that:
The Minutes of Meeting No. 6 of 28 May 2025 be confirmed.

Question put and passed.

2. CORRESPONDENCE

Noted.

3. PRIVATE BRIEFINGS – VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING INQUIRY

Voluntary Assisted Dying Expert

The Committee heard from Dr Geetanjali Lamba (via Microsoft Teams).

The witness withdrew.

Former Co-Chairs of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Independent Expert Panel

The Committee heard from the former Co-Chairs of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Independent Expert Panel, Hon Vicki O'Halloran AO CVO and Mr Duncan McConnel SC.

The witnesses withdrew.

Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development

The Committee heard from Mr Leslie Manda – Executive Director, Local Government and Community Development, and Mr Brett Beaton – Director Remote Information and Coordination.

The witnesses withdrew.

4. INQUIRY PLAN – VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING INQUIRY

Short Consultation Guide

Mrs Carlson moved and Mr Kerle seconded that:
The Committee approve the Short Consultation Guide.

Question put and passed.

Mx McNamara moved and Mr Kerle seconded that:

The Committee direct the Secretariat to work with the Aboriginal Interpreter Service to develop the Short Consultation Guide for use and distribution in remote Aboriginal communities with the Chair's oversight for public release.

Question put and passed.

Mrs Carlson moved and Mx McNamara seconded that:

The Committee direct the Secretariat to work with translation services to develop the Short Consultation Guide for culturally and linguistically diverse communities with the Chair's oversight for public release.

Question put and passed.

Promoting the Inquiry

Mr Kerle moved and Mx McNamara seconded that:

The Committee write to all stakeholders in the key stakeholder list (along with any other stakeholders proposed by the Committee at its next meeting) to invite them to make a submission to the Inquiry, and to invite other interested stakeholders to contribute.

Question put and passed.

Mr Young moved and Mrs Carlson seconded that:

The Committee promote the Inquiry via the proposed methods of distribution, including the Committee website, social media, radio, and regional networks.

Question put and passed.

Risks and mitigation strategies

The Committee discussed the potential risks and mitigation strategies it could use in relation to remote consultation.

Mr Young moved and Mx McNamara seconded that:

Given the information the Committee has received on remote consultation and the constraints and risks associated with it, the Committee write to the Attorney-General to ask for an extension of time to deliver its Inquiry report to adequately undertake consultation with remote and regional communities.

The Committee divided.

For	Against
Mr Young	Dr Rahman
Mx McNamara	Mr Kerle
	Mrs Carlson

Question negatived.

Mr Kerle moved and Mx McNamara seconded that:

The Committee note the possible constraints and mitigation strategies for consulting with remote communities.

Question put and passed.

Consultation Paper

Mrs Carlson moved and Mr Kerle seconded that:

The Committee approve in principle the draft Consultation Paper, noting it will not be publicly distributed until it has been discussed and subject to final review at the Committee's next meeting.

Question put and passed.

Inquiry Plan

The Committee discussed the proposed Inquiry Plan, including the proposed timeline, modes for evidence gathering, and methods of distribution. The Secretariat informed the Committee that, with the Chair's approval, Dr Geetanjali Lamba has been appointed as a specialist advisor to assist the Committee with its Inquiry.

Mrs Carlson moved and Mr Young seconded that:

The Committee endorse the proposed Inquiry Plan as discussed by the Committee.

Question put and passed.

Remote Hearings

Mr Young moved and Mr Kerle seconded that:

The Committee approve the proposed remote hearing locations and dates on the condition that this may be subject to changes based on community willingness, availability, interest and resources.

Question put and passed.

The Committee discussed the option of using 'substitute' Members and establishing a subcommittee to enhance the prospect of the Committee having a quorum at all remote hearings.

Mx McNamara moved and Mr Young seconded that:

The Committee agree to all Inquiry hearings and consultation meetings to be recorded, where agreed to by the witness, as evidence formally gathered for the purpose of the preparation of a Hansard transcript and published, with exceptions decided by the Committee on a case-by-case basis.

Question put and passed.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair informed the Committee that Dr Linda Swan, CEO of Go Gentle Australia, had offered to meet with the Committee to provide information about the experience of Voluntary Assisted Dying in other jurisdictions.

Mx McNamara moved and Mr Kerle seconded that:

The Committee write to the CEO of Go Gentle Australia, Dr Linda Swan, to invite her to privately brief the Committee on 28 July 2025.

Question put and passed.

6. NEXT MEETING

12.30 pm, Wednesday 9 July 2025.

Meeting closed at 5.15 pm.



Dr Tanzil Rahman MLA
Chair



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
15th Assembly

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Meeting No. 8

12.30 pm Wednesday 9 July 2025
Microsoft Teams

Present: Dr Tanzil Rahman MLA, Chair, Member for Fong Lim
Mr Matthew Kerle MLA, Deputy Chair, Member for Blain
Mrs Oly Carlson MLA, Member for Wanguri
Mx Kat McNamara MLA, Member for Nightcliff
Mr Dheran Young MLA, Member for Daly

Secretariat: Dr Caroline Williams, Executive Director
Ms Katie Helme, Committee Secretary
Ms Georgia Eagleton, Senior Research Officer
Mr Caelan Ikin, Administration/Research Officer

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Mr Kerle moved and Mrs Carlson seconded that:

The Minutes of Meeting No. 7 of 7 July 2025 be confirmed.

Question put and passed.

2. DRAFT CORRESPONDENCE

Mx McNamara moved and Mr Young seconded that:

The draft correspondence be forwarded to Dr Linda Swan, CEO of Go Gentle Australia.

Question put and passed.

Mrs Carlson moved and Mr Young seconded that:

The draft correspondence be sent to stakeholders to invite them to make a submission and invite other interested stakeholders to contribute

Question put and passed.

3. INQUIRY INTO VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING

Mr Young moved and Mr Kerle seconded that:

The Committee write to additional stakeholders in the key stakeholder list to invite them to make a submission to the Inquiry, and to invite other interested stakeholders to contribute, those stakeholders including:

- Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation NT
- Buddhist Society NT
- C3 Church Darwin
- Darwin Baptist Church.
- Glory City Church Darwin
- Greek Orthodox Church
- Gumatj Corporation
- Hillsong Church Darwin
- Holy Spirit Catholic Church

- Islamic Society Palmerston
- NT Ambulance and Paramedics Union
- NT Jewish Community Association (NTJCA)
- Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church Palmerston
- Pharmacy Guild of Australia NT Branch
- Potters House Christian Church
- Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation
- Sikh Association Northern Territory
- St John Ambulance NT
- St. Alphonsa Syro-Malabar Parish
- United Muslims of the NT (UMNT).

Question put and passed.

Mrs Carlson moved and Mx McNamara seconded that:

That the Committee approve the draft Consultation Paper for public release on 14 July 2025.

Question put and passed.

The Chair noted that the Secretariat may make minor changes to the document to correct any typographical and grammatical errors prior to public release.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

The Secretariat informed the Committee that an Employee Assistance Program service will be available to Members and staff to safeguard against vicarious trauma.

The Chair asked the Secretariat to investigate legal advisors who could, if the Committee recommends adoption, provide drafting instructions for model legislation to give effect to VAD in the NT as per the final Term of Reference.

5. NEXT MEETING

10.00 am Wednesday 23 July 2025.

Meeting closed at 1.05 pm.



Dr Tanzil Rahman MLA
Chair



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
15th Assembly

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Meeting No. 9

Wednesday 23 July 2025
Microsoft Teams

- Present:** Dr Tanzil Rahman MLA, Chair, Member for Fong Lim
Mr Matthew Kerle MLA, Deputy Chair, Member for Blain
Mrs Oly Carlson MLA, Member for Wanguri
Mx Kat McNamara MLA, Member for Nightcliff
Mr Dheran Young MLA, Member for Daly
- Secretariat:** Dr Caroline Williams, Executive Director
Ms Katie Helme, Committee Secretary
Ms Georgia Eagleton, Senior Research Officer
Mr Caelan Ikin, Administration/Research Officer

The Meeting commenced at 10.04 am.

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Mr Young moved and Mx McNamara seconded that:

The Minutes of Meeting No. 8 of 9 July 2025 be confirmed.

Question put and passed.

2. CORRESPONDENCE

Mx McNamara moved, and Mr Kerle seconded that the Committee note the correspondence.

Question put and passed.

3. PRIVATE BRIEFING – VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING INQUIRY

The Chair informed the Committee that Professor the Hon Jill Hennessy GAICD was unavailable to brief the Committee at the meeting and the Committee noted her apologies.

4. APPOINTMENT OF LEGAL ADVISOR – CONSIDERATION

The Committee discussed the option of appointing Professor Ben White as Legal Advisor.

Mr Young moved, and Mr Kerle seconded that:

The Committee approve the appointment of Professor Ben White as Legal Advisor for its Inquiry into Voluntary Assisted Dying, subject to the following terms:

- The primary scope of the work will be to develop drafting instructions for model legislation to give effect to VAD in the NT.
- The complete scope of the work to be undertaken will be as per the proposal dated 18 July 2025.
- The proposed timeline for the scope of the work will be as per the proposal dated 18 July 2025.
- The project team will be as per the proposal dated 18 July 2025.
- The work will be subject to the price of delivery as per the proposal dated 18 July 2025.

- The work will be subject to the Committee's direction and ongoing engagement with the project team.

Question put and passed.

Mrs Carlson moved and Mx McNamara seconded that:

Professor White and the QUT Team commence work based on the Committee's 2025 Consultation Paper, the 2024 Expert Panel Report, and the former *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act 1995* (NT) as the basis to build and complete drafting instructions for model legislation to give effect to VAD in the NT.

Question put and passed.

5. DISCUSSION OF PUBLIC HEARING IN DARWIN – VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING INQUIRY

The Committee discussed potential witnesses for its public hearing scheduled on 5 August 2025.

Mr Young moved and Mx McNamara seconded that:

The Committee invite the following organisations to attend a public hearing in Darwin on 5 August 2025:

- NT Health
- Palliative Care NT
- Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT)
- Pharmacy Guild of Australia
- Australian Medical Association NT.

Question put and passed.

The Committee noted that additional witnesses for the hearing will be considered by the Committee at its next meeting on 28 July 2025.

6. SUBMISSIONS UPDATE – VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING INQUIRY

Mr Young moved, and Mr Kerle seconded that the Committee:

- Publish all submissions received prior to 23 July 2025 (with personal information redacted) on its website.
- Direct the Secretariat to publish all future submissions on the Committee's website (with personal information redacted) when they are received, unless the submission has been received as confidential and/or contains adverse comments. In this instance, the submissions will be added to the agenda for the next Committee meeting for the Members' consideration.

Question put and passed.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

The Committee requested the Secretariat provide an update on the progress of producing translated materials for its Inquiry into Voluntary Assisted Dying at its next meeting on 28 July 2025, including:

- work with the Aboriginal Interpreter Service in developing translated materials; and
- the feasibility of translating the Consultation Paper into foreign languages.

The Committee directed the Secretariat to invite its specialist advisors, Dr Lamba and Professor White (and his Queensland University of Technology team) to attend its next meeting on 28 July 2025.

The Chair informed the Committee of his intention to consider a draft Interim Report for its Inquiry into Voluntary Assisted Dying at its next meeting on 28 July 2025.

8. NEXT MEETING

10 am on Monday 28 July 2025.

Meeting closed at 11.14 am.



**Dr Tanzil Rahman MLA
Chair**



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

15th Assembly

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee

DRAFT MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Meeting No. 10

10.00 am Monday 28 July 2025

Litchfield Room

Present: Dr Tanzil Rahman MLA, Chair, Member for Fong Lim
Mr Matthew Kerle MLA, Deputy Chair, Member for Blain
Mrs Oly Carlson MLA, Member for Wanguri
Mx Kat McNamara MLA, Member for Nightcliff
Mr Dheran Young MLA, Member for Daly

Secretariat: Dr Caroline Williams, Executive Director
Ms Katie Helme, Committee Secretary
Ms Georgia Eagleton, Senior Research Officer
Mr Caelan Ikin, Administration/Research Officer

The meeting commenced at 10.05 am.

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Mrs Carlson moved and Mx McNamara seconded that:

The Minutes of Meeting No. 10 of Wednesday 23 July 2025 be confirmed.

Question put and passed.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

3. CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence noted.

Mr Kerle moved and Mx McNamara seconded that:

The Committee write to the Tiwi Islands Regional Council, the East Arnhem Regional Council, and Atyenhenge Atherre Aboriginal Corporation to thank them for their correspondence.

Question put and passed.

Mr Kerle moved and Mx McNamara seconded that:

The Committee write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Community Development to thank him for his correspondence and to note that no further action is required.

Question put and passed.

4. SPECIALIST ADVISOR – DR GEETANJALI LAMBA

The Committee was briefed by Dr Geetanjali Lamba and provided responses to question on notice by Members.

5. SPECIALIST ADVISOR – QUT TEAM

The Committee was briefed by Professor Ben White, Dr Madeleine Archer, Dr Katrine Del Villar, and Katherine Waller.

6. PRIVATE BRIEFING – VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING INQUIRY

The Committee heard from Dr Linda Swan, CEO of Go Gentle Australia.

The witness withdrew.

Mr Young left the meeting at approximately 10.55 am.

7. TRANSLATED MATERIALS – VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING INQUIRY

Mx McNamara moved and Mr Kerle seconded that:

The Committee note the progress of producing translated materials for its inquiry into Voluntary Assisted Dying.

Question put and passed.

8. CONSULTATION PAPER UPDATE – VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING INQUIRY

Mx McNamara moved and Mr Kerle seconded that:

The Committee publish the information contained in Briefing Note 10a on the Committee website as a corrigendum to the Consultation Paper.

Question put and passed.

9. INTERIM REPORT – VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING INQUIRY

Mr Young returned to the meeting at 11.32 am.

Mrs Carlson moved and Mr Kerle seconded that:

The Committee adopt the Chair's draft report, *Voluntary Assisted Dying in the Northern Territory – First Interim Report*, for tabling in the Legislative Assembly during the July 2025 sitting week, with an amendment to remove Santa Teresa as a potential hearing location.

Question put and passed.

10. PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULE – VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING INQUIRY

The Committee discussed the proposed remote hearing schedule and noted that it may undertake additional consultation in the Roper Gulf region, as per correspondence received from Roper Gulf Council dated 25 July 2025, circulated at the meeting. The Committee also discussed an opportunity to consult in Gunbalanya on 18 or 19 August 2025.

Mr Kerle moved and Mrs Carlson seconded that:

The Committee approve the proposed remote hearing schedule, noting that it may be subject to further changes based on community willingness and revised availability.

Question put and passed.

Mr Young and Mx McNamara noted their concerns regarding the timeframe for the Inquiry and the ability of remote communities to fully engage with the process.

Mr Young moved and Mrs Carlson seconded that:

The Committee publish hearing locations on its website.

Question put and passed.

Mx McNamara moved and Mrs Carlson seconded that:

The Committee Members confirm their individual availability and attendance for remote hearings with the Secretariat to establish quorum and enable the booking of transport, catering and accommodation.

Question put and passed.

Mx McNamara moved and Mr Kerle seconded that:

The Committee invite the Coroner's Court to a public hearing in Darwin on 5 August 2025.

Question put and passed.

Mr Young moved and Mrs Carlson seconded that:

The Committee invite Professor the Hon Jill Hennessy GAICD to a public hearing in Darwin on 5 August 2025.

Question put and passed.

Mx McNamara moved and Mr Kerle seconded that:

The Committee liaise with the Secretariat to provide potential additional witnesses with lived VAD experience to speak to the Committee.

Question put and passed.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

12. NEXT MEETING

9.00 am, Tuesday 5 August 2025.

Meeting closed at 12.05 pm.

Dr Tanzil Rahman MLA
Chair