

Tuesday, 14 October 2025

COMPASSION AND DIGNITY FOR TERMINALLY ILL VICTORIANS

The Allan Labor Government is updating Victoria's voluntary assisted dying (VAD) laws to make the process clearer and more compassionate for terminally ill Victorians who are living in pain.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today introduced legislation into the Victorian Parliament to amend the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017* – which has allowed 1,683 terminally ill Victorians to make their own decisions about their death since 2019.

The new legislation will remove unnecessary barriers to accessing VAD, improve clarity for practitioners, strengthen safety measures and make the system fairer and more compassionate.

The reforms will maintain the strong safeguards that have been a cornerstone of Victoria's approach, ensuring that decisions are voluntary, the person has decision-making capacity, and they are free from coercion.

There are 13 proposed amendments to the legislation, with proposed key changes to include:

- Removing the 'gag clause' so that registered health practitioners are allowed to raise VAD with their patients during discussion about end of life options
- Requiring registered health practitioners who conscientiously object to provide minimum information
- Extending the prognosis requirement (life expectancy limit for eligibility) from six months to 12 months
- For people with neurodegenerative diseases (like motor neurone disease), they'll no longer need a third prognosis if their expected lifespan is between six and 12 months
- Introducing a new administering practitioner role to expand the workforce able to support VAD.

The proposed amendments follow the release of an independent review into the first five years of VAD in Victoria which found the service is working safely and as intended – however, it also identified challenges in accessing VAD.

Victoria led the nation in 2017 by becoming the first state or territory in Australia to legalise VAD – since then other jurisdictions have followed suit and, in many cases, improved the service.

The proposed amendments would bring Victoria's VAD legislation into line with these other states where they have been operating safely and effectively for several years, and do not go further than those in other jurisdictions.

Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"People who are terminally ill and suffering in pain deserve the choice to live out their last days with dignity."

"Under our Government, Victoria was the first state to introduce voluntary assisted dying – now we're reforming it to make it clearer and more compassionate for patients and their families, while keeping the safeguards secure."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"We know our Australian-first VAD laws work to alleviate suffering and give Victorians a safe choice – but we know we need to bring them into line with other states, so more Victorians can live out their final days on their own terms."

"We've listened to doctors who have told us they want to have open, honest conversations with patients about all their end-of-life options, so they can make safe and informed decisions."