

Media Release

The Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Wednesday, 19 June 2019

A GENUINE, COMPASSIONATE CHOICE FOR VICTORIANS

From today, Victorians with a terminal illness will be able to make an initial request to access voluntary assisted dying, giving them the genuine and compassionate choice over the manner of their death that they deserve.

Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos today joined chair of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board, former Supreme Court Judge Betty King QC.

The Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board will review each and every case of voluntary assisted dying, ensuring the high safety standards were met. It will receive reports from health practitioners, monitor the dispensing of medications, report to the Parliament and refer any potential issues to relevant authorities.

The historic legislation was passed by the Victorian Parliament in 2017.

The voluntary assisted dying model is the most conservative in the world. The safeguards include:

- Only adults with decision-making capacity, who are suffering and have an incurable, advanced and progressive disease, illness or medical condition that is likely to cause death within six months (or 12 months for people with neurodegenerative conditions) can access the scheme
- A person may only access voluntary assisted dying if they meet all of the strict eligibility criteria, make three clear requests and have two independent medical assessments that determine they are eligible
- The request must always be initiated by the person themselves, with health practitioners who are treating the person and raise the issue subject to unprofessional conduct investigations.

More than 120 doctors including GPs, cancer specialists and palliative care clinicians from right around the state are already undertaking mandatory, specialist training to ensure they're equipped to assess a patient's eligibility to access voluntary assisted dying. About a third of all participating doctors practise in regional Victoria.

A Melbourne-based pharmacy service will become the sole service for dispensing voluntary assisted dying medications across Victoria, ensuring patients are provided clear information regarding administration, and that unused medications are returned and destroyed.

For people too sick to travel, the pharmacy service will deliver them their medication and provide information on administration – and then collect any unused medication.

While we implement Voluntary Assisted Dying, we are also boosting palliative care, with this year's Budget providing \$72 million to improve end of life choices, including support for home-based palliative care in rural and regional Victoria.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos

"Today, Victoria becomes the first state to legalise voluntary assisted dying. This is about giving people who are suffering intolerably from an incurable disease a voluntary, compassionate choice over the manner of their death."

"This is the most conservative model of its kind in the world, with 68 individual safeguards in place."

"My thoughts today are with those who have campaigned for this for many years. Your bravery will change lives."

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