



Hon Yvette D'Ath MP
Minister for Health and Ambulance Services
Leader of the House

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Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliament
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

1 OCT 2021

Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to your letter regarding petitions 3562-21 and 3564-21, tabled in Parliament on 1 September 2021, in relation to the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021. As these petitions are similar in nature, I have taken the liberty of responding to both petitions in this letter. I request that this response be noted against each petition.

The Palaszczuk Government went to the 2020 election with a commitment to introduce voluntary assisted dying laws in this term of government.

The Queensland Government referred the preparation of a legislative scheme for voluntary assisted dying to the Queensland Law Reform Commission. On 10 May 2021, the Queensland Law Reform Commission submitted its final report, *Report No. 79: A legal framework for voluntary assisted dying*, including draft legislation.

The Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 introduced by the Palaszczuk Government is based on the Queensland Law Reform Commission's draft Bill. The Queensland Law Reform Commission undertook extensive research and consultation on voluntary assisted dying and carefully considered the laws in other Australian jurisdictions to develop the best model for Queensland.

The Palaszczuk Government acknowledges that voluntary assisted dying and end-of-life care are sensitive issues and committed to considering the views of the community, peak organisations and health care professionals by providing for an extended 12-week Parliamentary Committee process.

The Health and Environment Committee examined the Bill and consulted key stakeholders. The Parliamentary Committee's inquiry included public hearings in Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane in July 2021. The Parliamentary Committee received over 6,000 written submissions from peak bodies, organisations and members of the public. On 20 August 2021, the Parliamentary Committee tabled its final report on the Bill and made three recommendations, including that the Bill be passed with no amendments.

The Parliamentary Committee process was in addition to the extensive stakeholder and community consultation undertaken by the former Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee and the Queensland Law Reform Commission during their respective inquiries into voluntary assisted dying.

The Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 contains appropriate safeguards to protect vulnerable people from coercion, abuse and exploitation. This includes strict eligibility criteria to ensure only eligible people access the voluntary assisted dying scheme.

The Queensland Parliament debated and passed the Bill in the 14 to 16 September 2021 parliamentary sitting period through a conscience vote by Members of Parliament. Queensland's voluntary assisted dying laws will commence on 1 January 2023.

Queensland Health will manage implementation of the voluntary assisted dying scheme. Information about the voluntary assisted dying laws are available on the Queensland Health website and updates about implementation will also be made available at <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/voluntary-assisted-dying-bill>.

The Palaszczuk Government acknowledges that voluntary assisted dying is a deeply personal issue with diverse views in the community. Once implemented, the voluntary assisted dying laws will give individuals who are suffering intolerably and dying an additional end-of-life choice and enable eligible people to choose the timing and circumstances of their death.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely



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