



VADANZ

Voluntary Assisted Dying Australia and New Zealand

Dear <<First Name>>

We know from the statistics gathered by the Review Boards that one in three people approved for VAD don't end up going through the process, for various reasons.

In some cases, this is due to the person losing capacity after receiving final approval. Perhaps some of you have experience of that deeply challenging situation, which may leave families feeling distressed as they struggle to honour their loved one's wishes.

The ACT Government has carefully examined this issue and [released a report earlier this month](#).

Unsurprisingly, the report's findings confirm the ethical and legal complexities involved. As this discussion continues, we are keen to hear your thoughts on loss of capacity after final approval. Later this year, we will be conducting a member survey to gather your perspectives.

Thank you for sending in your expressions of interest for the Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC), and for completing our remuneration survey. We are grateful to have such engaged members. We will be analysing the full results of the survey and using it to inform our policy work on remuneration.

Now the Federal Election is over, we will be renewing our efforts to achieve reform of the Cth Criminal Code clause that prevents telehealth in VAD. We are optimistic there is momentum for this sensible and much-needed change with the re-elected Albanese government and its new front bench.

VADANZ is also engaged with the Victorian Department of Health and Health Minister as they formulate their possible updates to the existing VAD Act. Hopefully this will trigger updates in other jurisdictions.

As always, we appreciate your ongoing commitment to improving end-of-life care.



Dr Sally Cockburn | VADANZ President

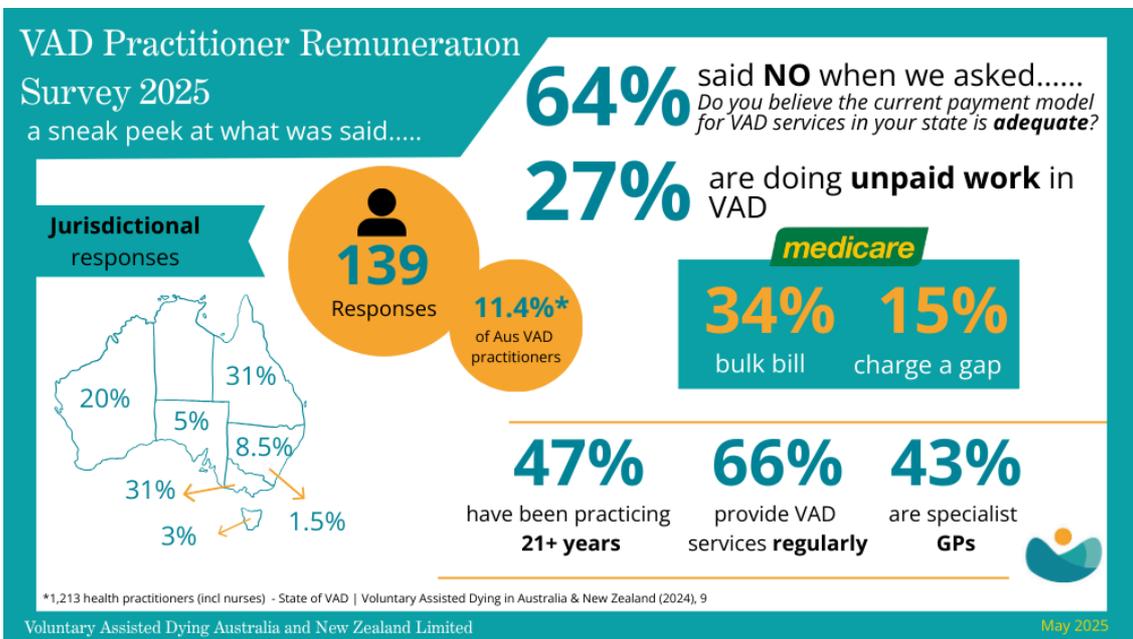


Strategic Advisory Committee

Do you have a head for strategy?

We are looking for expressions of interest for our new **Strategic Advisory Committee**. We are particularly interested in members from **New Zealand and Tasmania** so we have even representation. You would need to be well connected within your peer group and be able to disseminate information and ask for feedback on behalf of VADANZ. The council will meet every two months (on the last Tuesday) to discuss priority topics and give feedback and insights on your jurisdiction. Thank you for those who have already responded to the callout.

We ask that you [complete the EOI](#) if you are interested. Any questions about the SAC, please feel free to [email us](#).



Remuneration survey update

Thank you to those who completed and shared our **Practitioner Remuneration Survey** which will help form the basis of our recommendations to the various jurisdictions. We are working on collating all of the results but we wanted to give our members a snapshot (see graphic above).

We were pleased to receive 139 responses, and we note with concern that almost a third of you are doing unpaid work in VAD. We will have more to share in this newsletter in the coming months.



Loss of capacity

The ACT Government has released the findings of a consultation into what happens when a person **approved for VAD loses decision-making capacity**, making them ineligible.

The Government heard stories of people who feared losing the ability to make a final decision, as well as the emotional burden carried by families who felt unable to honour the wishes of loved ones.

However, the consultation also highlighted serious concerns from health professionals, legal experts and ethicists around removing the requirement for capacity at the point of administration.

“While there is broad community support for exploring this issue, the consultation confirmed that it is ethically and legally complex,” ACT Health Minister Rachel Stephen-Smith said.

“We must balance a person’s right to choose with the need to ensure their consent remains clear, voluntary, and informed, especially in such a sensitive process.”

ACT Health Directorate engaged with more than 100 stakeholders in the consultation, conducted in response to a [Legislative Assembly resolution from June 2024](#).

The issue will be looked at more closely 12 months after the ACT law’s implementation as part of ‘co-design’ process involving clinicians, community advocates, legal experts and ACT residents.

The ACT’s VAD Act comes into effect on 3 November 2025.



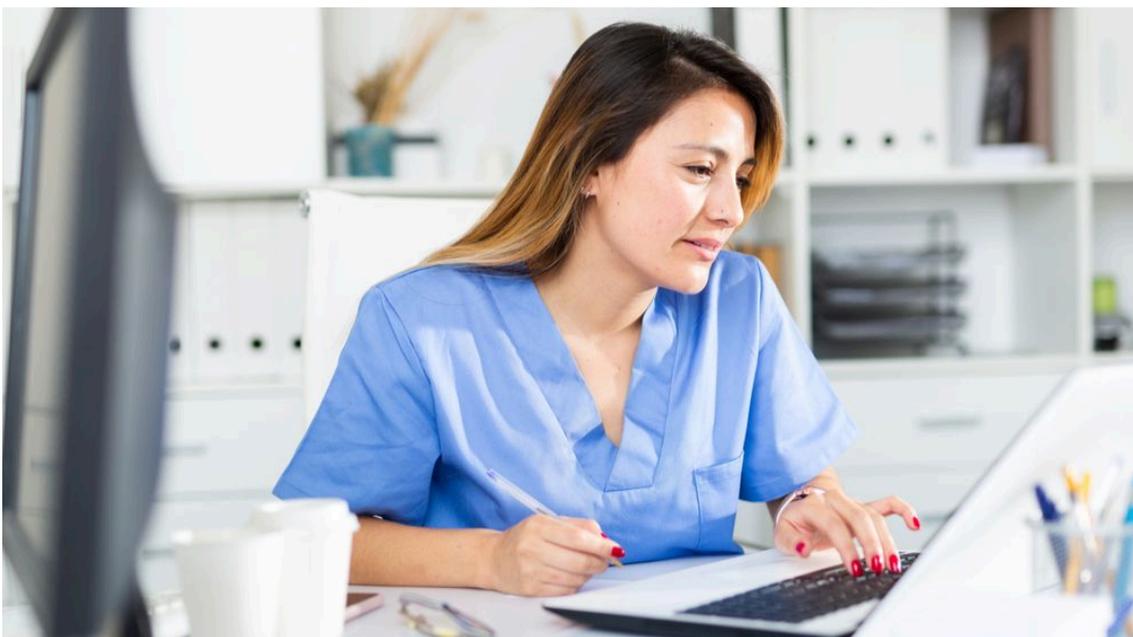
Northern Territory update

The NT government has promised a new inquiry into VAD, due at the end of September 2025, while the Opposition has also promised a VAD private members bill, both promising signs of progress in the Top End.

The NT remains the only jurisdiction in Australia without VAD laws.

VAD has had a [turbulent history in the NT](#). In 1995, the Rights of the Terminally Ill Act made the NT the first jurisdiction in the world to legalise euthanasia.

However, this was short-lived—Commonwealth legislation led by Howard government backbencher Kevin Andrews overturned the Act, stripping the NT of its ability to legislate on euthanasia. It wasn't until 2022 that this right was restored. The government undertook extensive community consultation, culminating in a 2024 expert report recommending the drafting of VAD legislation. However there were fears momentum had stalled under the new CLP government. The new inquiry includes instructions to prepare guidelines for creating VAD laws if the committee recommends it. Watch this space for updates.



NEW VADANZ education resources

Check out our new [Education Resource page](#) on our website. Here you will find a curated collection of tools, resources, articles and fact sheets for health professionals as well as the public. You can find the resources [here](#).



Pharmacy VAD resource

[Advanced Pharmacy Australia \(AdPha\)](#) has released a resource kit for pharmacists to help with conversations around VAD. The [Voluntary Assisted Dying Pharmacy Practice Update](#) includes referral pathways, relevant legislation and self-care.

AdPha President Tom Simpson says the evolving legal landscape and emotional weight of VAD should make it a key focus for the profession.

"As Voluntary Assisted Dying is now legal in most parts of Australia, we have a responsibility to ensure pharmacists are adequately equipped to support patients with compassion and competence."

The AdPha VAD Pharmacy Practice Update is available [here](#) as well as the [VADANZ website](#).



Assisted dying in Aotearoa conference

Save the date - the Inaugural Conference on Imagining the Ideal Assisted Dying Service in Aotearoa: Access, Safety, & Equity will be held on 12-13 February 2026 at Victoria University of Wellington. There will be thought-provoking presentations and discussions about the current system and how to shape the future of assisted dying research and practice in Aotearoa New Zealand to deliver a culturally attuned, safe, accessible, and equitable service.

The two-day conference is the culmination of '[Exploring the early experiences of the AD service in Aotearoa](#)', funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand.

The call for abstracts is now open until 3 August. For more information on abstracts submission, speakers and ticket prices see the [Assisted Dying Research](#)



The Power of Choice exhibition

The [Power of Choice photographic exhibition](#) by Julian Kingma is on now at Sol Gallery in Fitzroy, Melbourne until 1 June. The exhibition and accompanying [book](#) capture the real-life faces of VAD in Australia, through a series of intimate portraits of patients and health professionals. Buy a book for yourself, and also a colleague or family member that would like to know more about VAD, and why you are involved in this important work.



World Watch

UK | The [Terminally Ill Adults \(End of Life\) Bill](#) will have its third reading on 13 June when MPs will vote on amendments. The most significant change is the scrapping of the requirement that a High Court judge must approve all applications, in favour of an expert panel.

US | The New York State Assembly has passed the Medical Aid in Dying Act, clearing the first hurdle after a decade of attempts to introduce an assisted dying law. The bill now has to be passed by the state Senate and signed off by the Governor. [Read more](#). Delaware also become the 12th jurisdiction to legalise assisted dying. [Read](#)

Scotland The Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill has passed the first stage, 70 votes to 56, and will now go forward to parliamentary committee. The free vote followed months of pre-legislative scrutiny by a cross-party committee. You can read the bill [here](#).

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