



VADANZ

Voluntary Assisted Dying Australia and New Zealand

Dear <<First Name>>

As I approach the end of my tenure, this will be my final newsletter as President of VADANZ. The past 12 months have flown by, and it's been an honour to serve in this role.

Working alongside my dedicated board colleagues, we've made meaningful strides in strengthening VADANZ as the peak body for VAD professionals. Over the past year, we've launched a comprehensive remuneration survey (with more results to come), established a student membership program, delivered a successful webinar series, contributed to key [submissions](#), represented VADANZ at multiple industry conferences and events, and commenced work on clinical guidelines—among other achievements.

I'm incredibly proud of what we've accomplished together and excited to see the organisation continue to thrive under the leadership of President-Elect Dr Andrea Bendrups, who will officially step into the role at our AGM on 30 October.

Dr Bendrups is one of Victoria's earliest and most experienced VAD doctors, bringing a wealth of expertise to the role. As a rheumatologist and general physician at Royal Melbourne Hospital, she is exceptionally well-placed to lead VADANZ into its next chapter. I have every confidence she will take the organisation to new heights.

Speaking of the AGM—have you thought about nominating for the next President-Elect and board director? Nominations close on 16 October and it only takes a moment. You can nominate yourself or someone else. [Nominate here](#).

And hope to see as many of you at the AGM as possible. The AGM meeting will be held on Zoom, 30 October at 6pm AEDT, 8pm NZDT. Register [here](#).



Dr Sally Cockburn | VADANZ President

[Register for the VADANZ AGM 30 October](#)

2025 VADANZ Webinar series

Ethical challenges & VAD

Time: 6pm AEDT, 8pm NZST
Date: Thursday 20 November, 2025

You are invited to the final of our 2025 webinar series.

VAD presents its fair share of ethical challenges.

In this FREE 1.5 hour webinar, ethicist Emma Tumilty will introduce us to some ethical frameworks then use these to unpack three scenarios involving different ethical challenges.

Our Panelists are:

- **Dr Emma Tumilty**, Deakin University and Melbourne Health ethicist, Victoria
- **Adam Rutyna**, Loddon Mallee Regional VAD Navigator and clinical nurse consultant, Victoria
- **Dr Katie Ben**, anaesthetist, pilot & VAD clinician, NZ
- **Dr Max Ryder**, VAD clinician & Rural Generalist SMO - Mackay Hospital & Health Service, Queensland



Register for the Ethics webinar 20 Nov



VAD in the news

Tasmania | Tasmanian MLC Michael Gaffney has been successful in advocating for a VAD portal in the state with Tasmania's Health Minister Bridget Archer promising to implement one as soon as practicable.

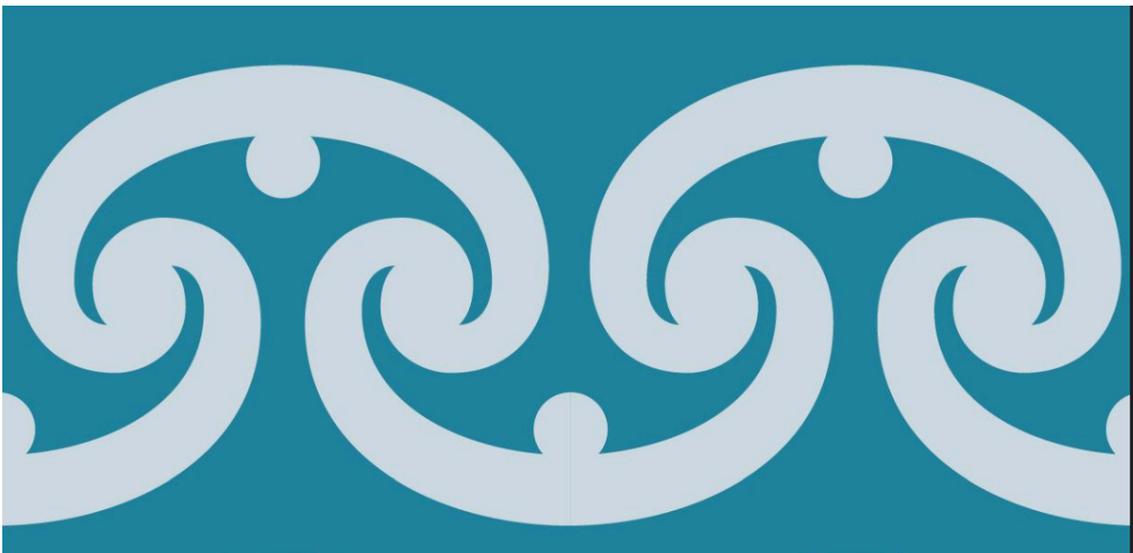
Mr Gaffney had introduced a notice of motion in parliament last month, warning VAD doctors were struggling with cumbersome and time-consuming administration without having an online portal. All other states have an online VAD portal.

[The Mercury reported](#) some Tasmanian VAD doctors were refusing to work under the system.

NT | The NT's Attorney-General has confirmed that MPs will have a conscience vote on a VAD bill which they plan to introduce to Parliament early next year. This follows the release of the the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee's report recommending the adopting of VAD. It also recommends removing timeframes, similar to the ACT.

[Read the NT LCAC committee report here.](#)

[Read the VADANZ submission to the committee here.](#)



Aotearoa New Zealand members - make your views heard

Last year, Manatū Hauora Ministry of Health completed its first [review of the End of Life Choice Act 2019](#), recommending 25 changes including the removal of the 'gag clause' and the requirement for patients to set a date before compliance. These updates are significant for our members in Aotearoa, yet no steps have been taken to implement them.

To fast-track the bill, it needs support from non-Ministerial MPs. VADANZ plans to write to all MPs to advocate for these changes, and we're seeking your input to ensure we reflect our members' views accurately. If you have thoughts on any of the Review's recommendations—especially the six-month eligibility rule, please email us at admin@vadanz.org.au. Your voice is vital in shaping this next step.



VADANZ members share expertise in the UK

VAD practitioners and VADANZ members Wade Stedman and Bhawani O'Brien travelled to London last month to speak to the RCGP, House of Lords and Health Dept about Australia's VAD model.

The UK assisted dying bill is in the final stages, and is currently undergoing further scrutiny by a House of Lords committee.

UK publication *Healthcare Today* published an interview with Dr O'Brien. [Read more.](#)



ACT implementation - momentum builds

The long-awaited ACT implementation is now weeks away, on 3 November.

The **Voluntary Assisted Dying Oversight Board** and its membership has been appointed. The group consists of senior clinicians, legal professionals, ethical and governance experts and people with a lived experience of supporting others at the

Health Care Consumers Association since 2006. [Read more.](#)

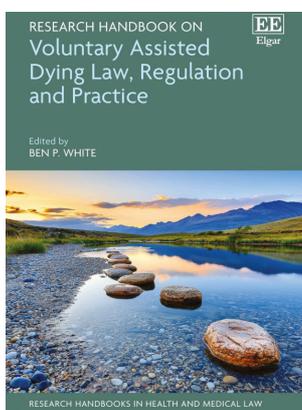
The **ACT VAD clinical guidelines** are now available on the [ACT Government website](#). The guidelines describe the voluntary assisted dying process in the ACT and supports health professionals to adhere to the law.



VAD and dementia research

Calling all medical practitioners! The Australian Centre for Health Law Research at QUT is carrying out a research study that explores VAD and dementia. As part of this study, medical practitioners are invited to participate in a one-time interview via Zoom or phone, 45-60 minutes in length. Interviews will be recorded and aim to gain participants' insights into whether people living with dementia should be able to access VAD, and a possible framework that would allow this to occur safely. More details [here](#). If you are interested in participating, [email Associate Researcher Casey Haining](mailto:casey.haining@qut.edu.au) casey.haining@qut.edu.au.

One for the Christmas stocking - the *Research Handbook on Voluntary Assisted Dying Law, Regulation and Practice* has been published, and will be an invaluable resource for anyone in the field.



The book comprehensively examines the field of VAD law and regulation, analyses the key debates, and maps these laws and their practice internationally in all 17 countries where it is currently lawful. The book explores contested questions about eligibility, including access for minors, those with mental disorders and those who express feeling 'tired of life', as well as examining how best to regulate this practice. The *Research Handbook* also considers different perspectives on VAD, such as choice and autonomy, conscience, palliative care, disability rights, feminism and First Nations' experiences.

The book is edited by Professor Ben White, with 58 authors contributing chapters. There are two chapters which are freely available under open access

- [An introduction to voluntary assisted dying law, regulation and practice](#)
- [Holistic approaches to regulation of voluntary assisted dying](#)



Keep up to date with the latest studies

[‘It should be my choice’: voluntary assisted dying needs and preferences of Australians living with dementia. Ageing & Society.](#)

An Australian study interviewed people living with early stage dementia and asked them about VAD. Of the 36 people interviewed, 34 of them said they wanted VAD for themselves, and also the option of VAD with an Advanced Care Directive. This is the first known Australian study to explore VAD from the perspective of people living with dementia. The study was carried out by Social Work researchers at Charles Sturt University.

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