



VADANZ

Voluntary Assisted Dying Australia and New Zealand

Dear <<First Name>>

September is shaping up to be a busy month. VADANZ President Elect Dr Andrea Bendrups and myself have been getting out and about, attending several educational doctor group events, speaking about VAD practice and dispelling myths.

VADANZ has made submissions to the much-needed Victorian VAD law amendments, as well as the NT consultation which we hope will result in legislation finally being drafted.

And this month's Oceanic Palliative Care Conference (OPCC) in Brisbane, for the first time, is featuring a dedicated VAD stream with some of our VADANZ members presenting. This shows how integrated VAD and palliative care have become in end-of-life care.

VAD and palliative care co-exist very well. While not all palliative care patients will seek VAD, around 80 per cent of people who choose VAD also access palliative care, highlighting the complementary nature of these services. VADANZ hopes this relationship continues to grow.

One of our directors, Dr Chloe Furst, exemplifies this dual commitment to both sectors, as the SA VAD clinical advisor and a physician trained in both geriatrics and palliative care. Her leadership reflects the thoughtful, collaborative future we envision.

🇺🇸 And speaking of leadership, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to VADANZ member and QVAD Director Liz Reymond for being named a finalist in the Lifetime Achievement category of the 2025 National Palliative Care Australia Awards. This recognition celebrates decades of dedication to improving end-of-life care.

Together, we're continuing to build bridges between VAD and palliative care. The future is compassionate, collaborative, and patient-centred.



Dr Sally Cockburn | VADANZ President



VAD Research news

QUT's Australian Centre for Health Law Research is offering two PhD scholarships as part of an Australian Research Council Linkage Project. The project will undertake the first comprehensive national analysis of how Australian VAD systems are being implemented and are operating in practice. [More information here.](#)

SA Health is seeking proposals for research into assisted dying in South Australia. For more information, see the [South Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Research Framework - Research Project Proposal](#)



Upcoming Events

QUT's Australian Centre for Health Law Research is holding a **FREE** public lecture at **5pm Monday, 8 September** where a panel of international experts will compare insights on assisted dying. Learn how different jurisdictions approach access, safeguards, clinical practice, and oversight. On the panel are Professor Ben White (Australia), Emeritus Professor Luc Deliens (Belgium), Professor Agnes Van der Heide (The Netherlands) and Professor James Downar (Canada). **Attendance is at QUT or online via Zoom.** RSVP by Wednesday 3 September via [Humanitix](#).

In WA, Premier Roger Cook will launch Attorney General Dr Tony Buti's new book *A Considered Act: How Voluntary Assisted Dying Became Legal in Western Australia*. *A Considered Act* provides an analysis of the political and legislative passage, ethical and moral arguments, and personal stories of individuals and families behind the passage of VAD legislation in Western Australia in 2019.

There will be a VAD stream at the **2025 Oceanic Palliative Care Conference (25OPCC)** in Brisbane, September 10-11, 2025. VAD sessions include Telehealth use in VAD; responding to VAD in faith-based palliative care, and the ACT's VAD implementation.

[Register here](#)



NZ's End of Life Choice Act

Dr Aida Dehkhoda from The University of Auckland - Waipapa Taumata Rau studied the impact of the first 12 months working with the End of Life Choice Act 2019 on assisted dying practitioners. Some insights:

- Most assisted dying practitioners were doing this work on top of their regular duties.
- Accurate prognosis was sometimes difficult because of the unpredictable nature of many medical conditions.
- The 'gag clause', ie. the regulatory prohibition on raising the topic of assisted dying with patients, was a challenge.
- Assessing suffering was another complex area with no standard guideline or measurement tool.
- For many assisted dying practitioners, the last words they hear from their patients are 'Thank you'. [Read more.](#)



Keep up to date with the latest studies

[Voluntary assisted dying: challenges in Northern Territory remote Aboriginal communities.](#) *MJA*.

An article about the challenges of bringing VAD to Aboriginal communities in the NT. The authors conclude that implementing the law will require outreach and mobile services; and that telehealth could supplement face-to-face consultations. Cultural safety is crucial and will require a collaborative approach with communities.

[Institutional Responses to Voluntary Assisted Dying: An Empirical Study in Victoria and Western Australia.](#) *J Bioeth Inq*.

A new study by the End-of-Life Law team at QUT looks at institutional responses to VAD in Vic and WA. The findings revealed significant diversity in how institutions approached various VAD activities and that an institution's position on VAD (whether it supports it or not) does not necessarily indicate the extent to which it will facilitate access to VAD.

[Acceptability of euthanasia for people with dementia: perspectives of clinicians from six countries.](#) *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*

The study canvassed doctors' perspectives on assisted dying for dementia in six countries. It found 44% percent considered it acceptable, ranging from 23% in Switzerland to 66% in the Netherlands. 38% expressed willingness to perform assisted dying upon request of a person with dementia.



New Zealand MP Todd Stephenson has rebranded and relodged his Private Members Bill to include the recommendations from the Ministry of Health's three-year review of the End of Life Choice Act. The original bill lodged in September '24 was to extend eligibility for assisted dying from 6 to 12 months. Stephenson is now looking for cross-party support for the bill. Read more: [ACT MP seeks support for bill changing End of Life Choice Act](#)

Royal Australian College of Physicians have published a video discussion *Voluntary Assisted Dying—what have we learned?* recorded at the RACP Congress in May. The panel includes Palliative care physicians Danielle Ko and Greg Mewett, Professor Paul Komesaroff and Professor James Howe. [Watch the discussion here.](#)



World Watch

Uruguay | Uruguay's lower house approved a Dignified Death Law by 64 votes to 29 last month. The bill now moves to the Senate for consideration. A recent survey found 62% of Uruguayans support the bill. If it passes into law, Uruguay would become the first South American country to legislate VAD and only the second after Colombia to decriminalise it.

US | Georgia's House Public and Community Health Committee is holding an inquiry into assisted dying. Advocates hope this will pave the way for future legislation. Read [more](#).

Canada | The Canadian region of Lanaudière has opened a new palliative care facility which has a dedicated area for MAiD. The space can fit up to 20 people, has armchairs, a fridge and music speakers. The region has a very high rate of MAiD (12% of all deaths) and an ageing population. [Read more](#).

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