

10 June 2021



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2019

Implementation Update

Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Leadership Team - Communique June 2021

Message from the Chair, Dr Scott Blackwell

Looking through the timeline reveals that the mountain of work in front of us when we commenced the Implementation Leadership Team journey is now behind us. Each of the eight workstreams is close to completing their contribution to the implementation of Voluntary Assisted Dying in Western Australia. Voluntary assisted dying is ready to start on 1st July 2021.

Pre-registration of practitioners for the WA Voluntary Assisted Dying Approved Training has given us confidence that there will be trained practitioners by the commencement date. I encourage those who have started the eligibility process to continue on to the training and to consider their availability to support those Western Australians who make the choice of voluntary assisted dying. Those who do complete the training will be invited to join a Community of Practice to provide support and to share the experience of voluntary assisted dying.

This communique contains the release of more links to information on the many aspects of voluntary assisted dying. We have endeavoured to cover all aspects for as many people in our community as possible.

In particular I direct all clinicians to the First Request webpage as it will be important for all to know and understand their responsibilities under the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2019. It will be important to know what constitutes a First Request and how it should be responded to. The 1st July 2021 will come very quickly now.

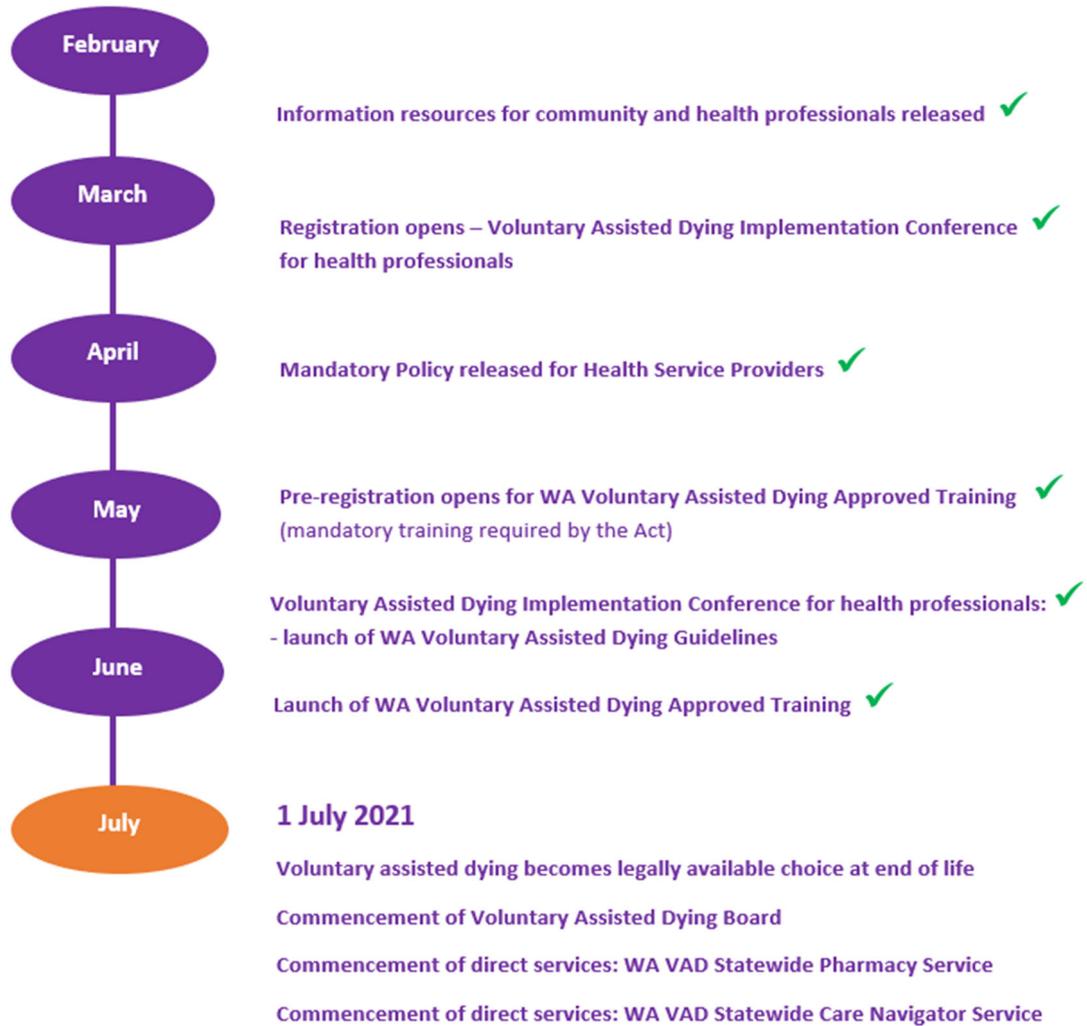
The Community Webinar on June 16th will provide a further opportunity for the community to become informed about voluntary assisted dying.

I invite you to read on, and follow the links to connect with the information you need to know.

Dr Scott Blackwell

Chair, Implementation Leadership Team

2021 Implementation Timeline - key dates



WA Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) Approved Training released

The WA VAD Approved Training is now available for eligible practitioners. The WA VAD Approved Training has been developed by the Queensland University of Technology and includes multiple online modules with interactive learning exercises. More information about the WA VAD Approved Training can be found in the [Western Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Guidelines](#).

Practitioners who wish to complete the WA VAD Approved Training will need to apply to the End of Life Care Program in the Department of Health for access. An information sheet on how to register is available on the Voluntary Assisted Dying website [Access to WA VAD Approved Training](#).

Voluntary Assisted Dying Board membership announced

The five members of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Board have recently been announced by the Minister for Health. The five-member board will have a mostly advisory and monitoring function in relation to voluntary assisted dying; the board will ensure adherence to the legislation and report to the State Government as necessary on quality and safety improvements related to voluntary assisted dying. The Voluntary Assisted Dying Board will commence its functions on 1 July 2021.

The members of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Board are:

- **Dr Scott Blackwell (Chairperson)**

The Board will be chaired by general practitioner and former AMA WA branch president, Dr Scott Blackwell. Dr Blackwell has expertise in palliative and aged care and has chaired the Implementation Leadership Team on voluntary assisted dying.

- **Colin Holt (Deputy chairperson)**

Mr Holt recently retired as Member of the Legislative Council for the South West Region. He was also deputy chairperson of the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices.

- **Dr Robert Edis**

Dr Edis is a consultant neurologist with a particular interest in motor neurone disease and is the vice president of the Motor Neurone Disease Association of WA.

- **Maria Osman**

Ms Osman is a senior consultant and advisor specialising in human rights, diversity and gender matters and is a former executive director

of the WA offices of Multicultural Interests and Women's Policy. She was on the Ministerial Expert Panel on voluntary assisted dying.

- **Linda Savage**

Ms Savage is a former director of the Social Security Appeals Tribunal and a legal member of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. She has also been a Member of the Legislative Council.

Upcoming community webinar on voluntary assisted dying

A webinar on voluntary assisted dying will be held on **Wednesday 16th June 2021**. This will provide an opportunity for anyone in the community to hear about the implementation of voluntary assisted dying in Western Australia, learn more about process and how voluntary assisted dying may be accessed from 1 July 2021. Implementation Leadership Team deputy chairperson Noreen Fynn and member Andrew Miller will present an update for the community and be available to answer questions from participants.

The webinar will be held online via Microsoft Teams. Register to attend the event via the link below (registered attendees will receive a link to access the webinar):

[Eventbrite - Voluntary Assisted Dying Community Webinar](#)

Wrap-up of Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Conference

The Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Conference for WA health professionals was held on **Saturday the 22nd and Sunday the 23rd of May 2021** at Fraser's Kings Park.

The conference provided an opportunity for health professionals to be updated on many aspects of the implementation preparations for the commencement of voluntary assisted dying from 1 July 2021. It provided an opportunity to learn more about how practitioners and organisations may be

involved and also the roles, rights and responsibilities of health practitioners and health care workers. Participants heard from Canadian and Victorian speakers who shared their experiences and perspectives on the implementation of voluntary assisted dying in their jurisdictions.

The conference was well attended, with 117 attending in person and 97 attending online across the two days. It is anticipated that recordings of presentations will be available on the WA Health website soon.

Release of new information

More information resources have been added to the voluntary assisted dying webpage.

Western Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Guidelines (WA VAD Guidelines)

The WA VAD Guidelines have been developed for health professionals who plan to take an active role in the voluntary assisted dying process and any health professional who wishes to know more about the voluntary assisted dying process in WA. The WA VAD Guidelines can be accessed [here](#).

New information sheets

Additional information sheets are now available as part of the suite of information sheets on voluntary assisted dying:

- [*What every medical practitioner needs to know*](#)
- [*What every nurse practitioner needs to know*](#)
- [*What every health practitioner and healthcare worker needs to know*](#)
- [*Information for pharmacists*](#)
- [*Supporting Aboriginal people*](#)

Please share and distribute within your networks as appropriate.

Please note all information sheets will be updated to new versions that reflect Act commencement and will be available on 1 July 2021.

First Request webpage

A specific [First Request](#) webpage is now available that is aimed at supporting and informing medical practitioners who may receive a First Request for voluntary assisted dying. It provides information on what constitutes a First Request for voluntary assisted dying and guidance through the actions that medical practitioners are obliged to undertake.

Western Australian Statewide Care Navigator Service (SWCNS) and Western Australian Statewide Pharmacy Service (SWPS)

Staff at the SWCNS and SWPS continue their preparations for full commencement of services on 1 July 2021. Information sheets on the [SWCNS](#) and [SWPS](#) will be updated on 1 July 2021 to include service contact details.

Subscribe now and further information

Further resources can be accessed on the WA Department of Health website on voluntary assisted dying (link [here](#)).

To continue to be updated on implementation of voluntary assisted dying in WA, please subscribe [here](#).

Support Services

Some people may find issues relating to end-of-life care distressing. If reading the material in this communique or thinking about end-of-life care has raised some issues regarding grief or bereavement or personal crisis, there are helplines and services available to provide support and counselling 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- **Lifeline:** Ring 13 11 14 for telephone support and counselling 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also visit Lifeline's crisis support chat online, 7pm to midnight, 7 days a week

- **Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement:** Ring (03) 9265 2100 or 1800 642 066 (free call, Australia-wide) for information about bereavement services and support
- **Palliative Care WA:** Ring 1800 573 299 (free call, WA) 9am to 5pm, 7 days a week for information and support on advance care planning, palliative care, and grief and loss.



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