

31 March 2021



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

Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2019

Implementation Update

Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Leadership Team - Communique March 2021

Message from the Chair, Dr Scott Blackwell

The work of each ILT workstream is now well advanced; the many aspects of voluntary assisted dying required for implementation are nearing completion and our work is on track to meet the planned 1st July start.

We have remained person centred throughout the implementation process; always focusing on the Western Australian person who will be eligible and who will access voluntary assisted dying. To establish an accessible and safe program for that person has required us to seek a wider focus to include all who will be involved in, or affected by, voluntary assisted dying.

Families and friends will need information, support and referral for quality grief counselling where required.

The clinicians, Care Navigators, pharmacists and others who will play a key role in voluntary assisted dying will have high quality education and training as well as opportunities for good support.

The Board (supported by its Secretariat) is being formed to oversee voluntary assisted dying and to maintain compliance, safety and access to this end-of-life choice.

The broader community of clinicians and health workers across the state are being encouraged, through information and education opportunities, to understand what voluntary assisted dying may mean in their practice and be prepared for the possibility that a patient may one day raise the question of voluntary assisted dying with them.

We have also been reaching out to the broader health community, both private and public, with the aim of supporting them to be prepared.

Within this communique is something for all of these people. More can be found on the WA Health Department website.

Dr Scott Blackwell

Chair, Implementation Leadership Team

2021 Implementation Timeline - key dates



Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Conference 22-23 May 2021

Registration now open

An implementation conference for Western Australian health professionals will be held on **Saturday the 22nd and Sunday the 23rd of May 2021**. The conference will be held at Fraser's Kings Park, 60 Fraser Avenue, Kings Park West Perth, Western Australia.

To register your attendance for the conference, please click the link below:

[Eventbrite – Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Conference 2021](#)

Attendance may either be in person or online. You can choose to register for one day of the conference or attend both days.

Voluntary assisted dying information sessions

There are a number of upcoming information sessions on voluntary assisted dying being held by Western Australian organisations. Information sessions are being held by:

- **Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) WA**
Title: Voluntary Assisted Dying
Date: Tuesday 13 April 2021
Time: 7.00pm – 8.15pm (AWST)
Venue: Webinar (online)
Speakers: Dr Scott Blackwell, Dr Peter Wallace and Amanda Bolleter
Registration
link: https://www1.racgp.org.au/events/booking/registration?eventid=WA2021_65 (for members only)
 - **Palliative Care WA (PCWA)**
Title: Palliative Care and VAD co-existing in WA
Date: Thursday 29 April 2021
Time: 4.00pm – 6.00pm (AWST)
Venue: Mt Lawley Golf Club
Details: Presenters from Canada, Victoria and WA
Registration link: <https://pcwaforum-palliativecare-and-vad-coexistinginwa.eventbrite.com.au>
 - **Cancer Council WA GP Cancer Education**
Title: With the end in mind: Palliative care and voluntary assisted dying
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Date: Wednesday, 28 April 2021

Time: 7.00pm – 8.30pm (AWST)

Venue: Webinar (online)

Speakers: Dr Derek Eng and Dr Scott Blackwell

Registration link: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/with-the-end-in-mind-palliative-care-and-voluntary-assisted-dying-7875-tickets-145396652301>

- **Australian Medical Association (AMA) WA**

Title: MEDCON21 (includes a session on voluntary assisted dying')

Date: Friday 18th June – Sunday 20th June 2021

Venue: Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre

Registration link: <https://medcon.edu.au/>

Information resources now available

In February several resources were released and can be accessed on the [WA Health voluntary assisted dying website](#). Links to information resources are below:

- [Who is eligible](#)
 - [Overview of the process](#)
 - [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
 - [Glossary of terms](#)
 - [Statewide Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service](#)
 - [WA Statewide Voluntary Assisted Dying Pharmacy Service](#)
 - [Making the First Request](#)
 - [Assistance with communication](#)
 - [Review of certain decisions](#)
 - [Completing the Written Declaration](#)
 - [Choosing the Contact Person](#)
 - [Considerations at end-of-life](#)
 - [Being the Contact Person](#)
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- [Supporting someone through the process](#)
- [Considerations for an assisted death](#)

- [Health professional participation](#)
- [FAQs for health professionals](#)

- [Information for interpreters](#)
- [Information for first responders](#)

Information for Health Service Providers

The Department of Health has been meeting regularly with private and public health service providers to support their preparation for the introduction of voluntary assisted dying. These services have been provided with information and guidance to support the development of policies and procedures for voluntary assisted dying prior to 1 July 2021.

Update on statewide services

From 1 July 2021, Western Australians will have access to the Western Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Statewide Pharmacy Service and the Western Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Statewide Care Navigator Service.

Western Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Statewide Pharmacy Service

The Western Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Statewide Pharmacy Service (SWPS) has been established to ensure the voluntary assisted dying substance is provided in a safe, equitable, and patient-centred manner. The SWPS continue preparations for operationalisation of this service for 1 July 2021. An information sheet on the SWPS is available [here](#) and more information will be made available prior to 1 July 2021.

Western Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Statewide Care Navigator Service

The Western Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Statewide Care Navigator Service (SWCNS) has been established to support anyone involved with voluntary assisted dying in WA. Preparations continue in the lead up to 1 July 2021 including the recent appointment of the SWCNS Clinical Nurse Consultant. Recruitment of the Care Navigators is also nearing completion. An information sheet on the SWCNS is available [here](#) and more information will be made available prior to 1 July 2021.

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 communicate 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
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- **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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<https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/voluntaryassisteddying>

VADimplementation@health.wa.gov.au

PO Box 8172

Perth Business Centre

Perth WA 6849

Australia

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