

Voluntary Assisted Dying

Chair's update

October sees the appointment of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board representing a significant milestone as we head towards the commencement of voluntary assisted dying in South Australia.



Dr Chris Moy

I stand with the Minister for Health and Wellbeing in celebrating the announcement of the Review Board, who will play the key safeguarding role in overseeing and reviewing activities undertaken in accordance with the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021*.

I encourage you to check out the “Spotlight on...” section of this communique to hear from Dr Melanie Turner, who has been appointed as Presiding Member of the Review Board, about the role this group will undertake to ensure safe and compassionate access to voluntary assisted dying.

I am also pleased to share that SA Health will be hosting an implementation conference on **Wednesday 16 November 2022** for clinicians, service providers and community members interested in learning more about how voluntary assisted dying will work in South Australia.

The conference will feature speakers on the range of support services available to clinicians and the community that will enable access to voluntary assisted dying.

I encourage you to [register to attend](#) now!

Additionally, recruitment to Pharmacy, Care Navigator, Operations Team, and Review Board Secretariat positions continue in full swing. I look forward to letting you know when these positions come online.

The Implementation Team are also busy with clinical portal user acceptance testing, and filming for the mandatory training package – more about those big ticket items in the next edition of this communique.

A reminder to stay tuned to www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/vad for more announcements as the time for voluntary assisted dying implementation in SA approaches.

Dr Chris Moy
Chair, Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Taskforce

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Spotlight on... the SA Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board

The inaugural [South Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board](#) has been appointed, marking a historic milestone in the introduction of safe and compassionate access to voluntary assisted dying for eligible South Australians. The experienced eight-member Review Board, led by Dr Melanie Turner as Presiding Member, come from a broad range of professions, and represent expertise in health and medical care, legal, ethical and governance fields, as well as rich lived experience supporting people at the end of life.

The Review Board will play a varied and important role in the voluntary assisted dying process. They will monitor voluntary assisted dying assessments and forms to ensure the functions and powers of all people involved comply with the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021* (the Act) and promote continuous improvement in the quality and safety of support services for voluntary assisted dying in South Australia.

The South Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board consists of:

Dr Melanie Turner (Presiding Member)
Ms Helen Walker (Deputy Presiding Member)
The Hon John Dawkins
Dr Roger Hunt
Mr Rainer Jozeps
Mr Greg May
Ms Michele Smith
Ms Helen Stone

Dr Turner has shared some of her thoughts about the roles and responsibilities of the Review Board:

“Our responsibilities to the patients, family and clinicians involved in voluntary assisted dying are paramount. We exist to review the processes that have taken a long time to refine and come into legislation and the public are relying on this process to be clear, accessible, navigable, and compassionate”.

“Our role in ensuring that all information for practitioners is suitable and accessible and that all steps in the process are respectful and followed well for each participant is our highest responsibility. Part of this will also be to provide feedback and data so

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that the community and the Minister (for Health and Wellbeing) are able to see how voluntary assisted dying is working in South Australia and well as ongoing refinement of practitioner training and support”.

“We are aware that as the first Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board that the SA public are placing a lot of trust in us, and we will work hard to meet their expectations”.

The next few months will feature the development of board practices, governance procedures and strategy documents, before the full powers and functions of the Board come into operation with the commencement of the Act.

For more information about Review Board members, go to www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/vad

Implementation conference – register now!

In just less than 100 days, voluntary assisted dying will be available to members of the South Australian community.

SA Health is facilitating the SA Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Conference to be held virtually on **Wednesday 16 November 2022**.

The purpose of the conference is to provide details to the health services community on how voluntary assisted dying will be implemented in South Australia including an overview of the process and support services.

The target audience will be medical professionals, government health sector employees, interested community organisations, non-government organisations, not-for-profit organisations and general practice managers.

The conference will be virtual to enable the maximum number of participants to attend and will be recorded to allow those that cannot attend on the day access to the content.

[Register here to attend](#)

If you would like to get in contact with us, you can email us at Health.VoluntaryAssistedDying@sa.gov.au

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Did you know?

Under the [Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021](#) (the Act), a relevant service provider has the right to refuse to authorise or permit the carrying out, at a health service establishment operated by that provider, of any part of the voluntary assisted dying process in relation to any patient at the establishment (including any request or assessment process).

A relevant service provider may include in the terms and conditions of acceptance of any patient into the health service establishment an acknowledgment by the patient that the patient:

- a. understands and accepts that the relevant service provider will not permit the establishment to be used for the purposes of, or incidental to, voluntary assisted dying; and
- b. agrees, as a condition of entry, that they will not seek or demand access to voluntary assisted dying at the establishment.

In relation to a patient at a health service establishment, if the patient advises a person employed or engaged by the relevant service provider at that health service establishment that they wish to access voluntary assisted dying, the relevant service provider who operates the establishment must ensure that:

- a. the patient is advised of the relevant service provider's refusal to authorise or permit the carrying out at the health service establishment of any part of the voluntary assisted dying process; and
- b. arrangements are in place whereby the patient may be transferred to another health service establishment or prescribed health facility at which, in the opinion of the relevant service provider, a registered health practitioner who does not have a conscientious objection to voluntary assisted dying is likely to be able to participate in a voluntary assisted dying process in relation to the patient; and
- c. reasonable steps are taken to facilitate the transfer if requested by the patient.

Individual service providers will need to consider policies and procedures that meet the requirements set out in the Act.

If you want more information about you can support your organisation to do this, check out www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/vad or contact the Implementation Team at Health.VoluntaryAssistedDying@sa.gov.au.

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Workshops, events and presentations

Upcoming events

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| SA Voluntary Assisted Dying Virtual Conference | 16 November |
| ARAS Aged Care Advocates Briefing | |
| Yorke & Northern LHN Strategic Medical Advisory Committee | 24 November |

October presentations

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| University of Adelaide Sixth Year Medical Students | 6 October |
| Modbury Hospital Grand Rounds | 18 October |

Get involved

A reminder that medical practitioners can [register their interest now](#) to access the voluntary assisted dying medical practitioner training when it is launched later in 2022.

Health practitioner survey

The Implementation Team would appreciate your help completing a [survey](#) to the understand capacity and willingness of South Australian health and medical practitioners to participate in voluntary assisted dying (you can choose to remain anonymous).

If you have already participated in the survey, we thank you for your feedback, and you do not need to complete it again.

Connect with us

Stay up to date with the latest news regarding voluntary assisted dying in South Australia by visiting www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/vad or join the mailing list by emailing us at Health.VoluntaryAssistedDying@sa.gov.au.

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About the Implementation Team

This month, we are pleased to feature a little information about Genelle and Jess from the team working behind the scenes on voluntary assisted dying in SA.

Genelle (she/her) is a Senior Project Officer in the Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Team and holds a Bachelor of Social Sciences with Honours in Anthropology. She has been planning for the establishment of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board, including developing documentation and processes to support them to meet their responsibilities under the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021*. Genelle provides support to family with chronic disease and disability and has worked in government for over 20 years undertaking a variety of policy, project and executive support roles. She is passionate about having this end of life choice safely available to South Australians.

Jessica (she/her) is our End of Life Care Trainee who is supporting the Implementation Team with a range of administration, HR, IT and finance tasks. Prior to working with the Department for Health and Wellbeing, she undertook administration and management support roles, including as a personal assistant and working within an RTO. Jessica's goal is to complete her traineeship to the best of her ability and says she particularly enjoys the learning and development opportunities that come with working on voluntary assisted dying implementation.

If you wish to connect with the team, contact Health.VoluntaryAssistedDying@sa.gov.au

Support services

Some people may find issues relating to voluntary assisted dying concerning or distressing. If reading the material in this communique or thinking about voluntary assisted dying has raised some issues regarding grief and bereavement or personal crisis, the helplines and websites below provide support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- > Visit the [Lifeline website](#) or call 13 11 14
- > Visit our [Bereavement Portal](#)
- > Visit the [SA Health mental health services webpage](#) for a range of services
- > Call the Mental Health Triage Service on [13 14 65](#)
- > Call Kids Helpline on [1800 551 800](#)