

End of Life Choice



Palliative Care funding increases in Victoria

Palliative care funding *increased* in Victoria following VAD legislation: A response to misinformed claims by Hon Dennis Hood MLC

During his Second Reading Speech in the Legislative Council on 31st March 2021, the Hon Dennis Hood MLC said in both his Second Reading speech, and in a series of questions tabled at the commencement of the Committee Stage of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill debate, that palliative care funding had decreased in Victoria as a result of their Voluntary Assisted Dying Act (2017).

- The Hon Mr Hood quoted Palliative Care Victoria (PCV) as the source for this statement.
- In further correspondence with VADSA President Frances Coombe, the Hon Mr Hood referred to a PCV publication as the source, *Palliative Care Victoria - Victorian Government Funding of Palliative Care Services, Changes between 2014-15 to 2016-17*. **This document was published on October 5, 2017 – nearly two months before the Victorian VAD Act was passed, on November 29, 2017, and 18 months before the VAD Act came into operation in June 2019.**
- In July 2019, Palliative Care Victoria published a comparison of the change in funding of palliative care by the Victorian Government over the five year period 2014-15 to 2019-20.
- The publication shows a 2.61% real increase in funding of palliative care in Victoria by the Victorian Government over the five years 2014-15 to 2019-20.
- The 2014-15 to 2019-20 comparison had a series of errors in the calculation which understate the additional funding provided by the Victorian Government; despite this understatement, the calculation still shows a real increase in funding of palliative care.
- In discussion between VADSA and PCV, PCV has acknowledged the calculation error and removed the document from their website.
- A recalculation of the change in funding over the five years, using the publicly available information from PCV, shows a 4% real increase in funding.
- In the same document, PCV state that the Victorian Government estimates an average 4% annual increase in the need for palliative care.

The Victorian Government, as quoted by PCV and confirmed in documents from the Victorian Government, has provided additional funding for palliative care since the passage of the VAD Act (2017):

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| * 2017: additional \$62m | * 2018: additional \$17m |
| * 2018-19: additional \$3m | * 2019: additional \$23m |
| * 2020-21: additional \$75m in recurrent funding over four years | |

Palliative Care Australia commissioned research into the impact of voluntary assisted dying legislation on palliative care funding around the world. Their 2018 report states

An assessment of the palliative care sectors following the introduction of assisted dying for each of the in-scope jurisdictions provided no evidence to suggest that the palliative care sectors were adversely impacted by the introduction of the legislation. If anything, in jurisdictions where assisted dying is available, the palliative care sector has further advanced.

The Hon Mr Hood is incorrect in stating that palliative care funding has decreased in Victoria following the passage of the VAD Act (2017).



VADSA was established in 1983 to campaign for legal voluntary assisted dying. The aim is to provide people who are suffering at the end of their life with the choice of a medically assisted death. VADSA works in the community and with Members of Parliament to achieve law reform.

South Australian Nurses Supporting Choices in Dying

[facebook: SA Nurses Supporting Choices in Dying](#)

We are a group of passionate nurses who believe in our patient's right to choice in their end of life care treatment. The group provides a forum for the nursing voice and perspective on legalising voluntary assisted dying and other patient choices in end of life care.

Voluntary Assisted Dying Youth Advocates

vadsa.org.au/about/VADpartners

A national youth lobby group which aims to provide a youth voice in support of legalising voluntary assisted dying in all States and Territories. Members between ages 18 and 35 are encouraged to join, make contact with their local MP and inform them of their support for legal voluntary assisted dying.

Christians Supporting Choice For Voluntary Assisted Dying

christiansforvad.org.au

We are Christians who believe that, as a demonstration of love and compassion, those with a terminal or hopeless illness should have the option of a pain-free, peaceful and dignified death with legal voluntary assisted dying. This is strongly supported by the majority of Australian Christians.

Accessible Voluntary Assisted Dying (AVAD)

[facebook: Accessible Voluntary Assisted Dying](#)

Accessible Voluntary Assisted Dying is a community of people supporting more equitable access to palliative care services and the choice of a medically assisted death when palliative care cannot relieve suffering at the end of life. Through our facebook page, AVAD encourages people isolated by a disability, or social and physical isolation, to exchange views and lobby for equitable access to legal Voluntary Assisted Dying.

Doctors for Assisted Dying Choice

drs4assisteddyingchoice.org

We are a national organisation of Australian medical practitioners, both current and retired, who are committed to having a legal choice of providing information and assistance to rational adults, who, for reasons of no realistic chance of cure or relief from intolerable symptoms, would like to gently end their lives. Assistance may be by doctor provision of medication for the patient to consume, or by doctor-administration.

[Respecting rational patient end-of-life choices](#)

Lawyers for Voluntary Assisted Dying

vadsa.org.au/about/VADpartners

Lawyers for Voluntary Assisted Dying acknowledge the need for people with profound suffering at the end of life to have the legal choice of a medically assisted death. People diagnosed with a terminal illness may have profound and unbearable suffering which is unable to be relieved by even the best of palliative care. We support the provision of a legal choice for people with profound suffering to seek medical assistance to end that suffering.

Paramedics Supporting Choices in Dying

[facebook: Paramedics Supporting Choices in Dying](#)

Paramedics Supporting Choices in Dying is an advocacy group promoting the rights of people to make decisions regarding their end of life wishes.

To go without pain, without trauma, without breaking the law, without endangering others and without suffering. To go gently, peacefully and with dignity.

We support good palliative care, encourage the use of Advance Care Directives and advocate for law reform to legalise the choice for voluntary assisted dying.