

## WA: Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill (2019)

The Western Australia Parliament became the second Australian State to legalise Voluntary Assisted Dying and allow people to end their suffering at the end of their life.

The **Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill (2019)** passed through the House of Assembly on December 10, 2019.

Details of the legislation and implementation processes are available on the **WA Department of Health** website (<https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/voluntaryassisteddying>)

The Bill originally passed the House of Assembly on September 25, with a vote of 45 to 11, and then passed the Legislative Council on December 6, 2019 with a vote of 24 to 11. The Bill was then returned to the House of Assembly to consider the 55 amendments made in the Legislative Council. These amendments were all approved in a special sitting on December 10 after the Premier, Mark McGowan, recalled Parliament to ensure consideration before Christmas.

There is an 18 month implementation phase before Voluntary Assisted Dying becomes a legal option in WA, with an anticipated start date of June 2021.

The WA Bill is similar to the Victorian VAD Act (2017) with three significant differences:

- two doctors must independently verify the eligibility of the person, but there is no requirement for one doctor to be a specialist in the person's disease or illness (a requirement in the Victorian VAD Act);
- the person can choose practitioner administration or self administration, and the 'practitioner' can be a doctor or nurse practitioner (in Victoria doctor administration is only allowed if the person cannot self administer);
- doctors and nurse practitioners are permitted to include discussion of voluntary assisted dying in an end of life discussion, ie, initiate discussion about VAD as a legal end of life care choice.

Similar to the process in Victoria, the process used in WA included:

1. Parliamentary Inquiry (My Life My Choice, Report of the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices, August 2018)
2. Ministerial appointed Expert Advisory Panel (Ministerial Expert Panel on Voluntary Assisted Dying, June 2019)
3. Government responsibility for passage of the legislation.

The provisions and safeguards in the WA VAD Bill (2019) can be read on the Government website ([https://988c9073-ec7c-40b2-8b6c-41fea61805a8.filesusr.com/ugd/1062e1\\_77e4fba9ae8c45c5863de00068812c96.pdf](https://988c9073-ec7c-40b2-8b6c-41fea61805a8.filesusr.com/ugd/1062e1_77e4fba9ae8c45c5863de00068812c96.pdf))

Further information is available on the **Dying With Dignity WA** website ([https://www.dwdwa.org.au/the\\_legislation](https://www.dwdwa.org.au/the_legislation)).