



Hon Yvette D'Ath MP  
Minister for Health and Ambulance Services  
Leader of the House

10 JUN 2021

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Mr Neil Laurie  
Clerk of the Parliament  
Queensland Parliament  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to your letter regarding petitions 3449-20 and 3538-21, tabled in Parliament on 11 May 2021 and 12 May 2021 respectively, in relation to palliative care funding and the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021. As these petitions are similar in nature, I have taken the liberty of responding to both petitions in this letter. I therefore ask that this response be noted against each petition.

The Palaszczuk Government acknowledges that the provision of compassionate, high-quality and accessible palliative care for persons at their end of life is a fundamental right for the Queensland community.

The Government's investment of an additional \$171 million, over 2021-22 to 2025-26, in palliative care will complement and build on its ongoing existing investments in the Queensland palliative care system.

The full \$171 million will be implemented through a package of work that includes the following suite of initiatives to ensure better and more equitable access to high-quality palliative care:

- Development of a new Palliative and End-of-Life Care Strategy (Strategy)
- Development of a workforce plan
- Investment in community-based palliative care service provision by non-government organisations
- Digital/telehealth solutions for consumers
- 24/7 secondary consultation for practitioners
- Education and advocacy activities about death, dying and advance care planning.

The additional investment will be directed to key areas under the new Strategy, which will have a key focus on expanding services in regional, rural and remote areas outside of South-East Queensland, and delivering on the Government's commitment towards increasing the volume and quality of frontline services, including more frontline specialist palliative care workers and increased capability of the broader workforce.

The commitment to a new Strategy and palliative care reform builds on ongoing investment in the Queensland palliative care system. Palliative care services are delivered in a range of settings including public and private hospitals, hospices, residential aged care facilities and private residences (home-based care). Queensland Health also provides funding to non-government organisations to deliver hospice services and community-based palliative care services in individuals' homes.

The *Constitution of Queensland 2000* (section 26B) and SO 136 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly provide that a Bill must be referred to a Parliamentary Committee for a minimum of six weeks. The Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly (SO 136) and the Queensland Parliamentary Procedures Handbook also provides that a Parliamentary Committee must report back to the Legislative Assembly on a Bill within six calendar months of the referral.

The Palaszczuk Government recognises voluntary assisted dying is a deeply personal matter and is committed to considering the views of the community and health care professionals on this issue. The Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 has been referred to the Health and Environment Committee. The Committee will examine the Bill and consult key stakeholders.

The Parliamentary Committee process will follow the extensive stakeholder consultation undertaken by the former Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee and the Queensland Law Reform Commission during their respective inquiries into voluntary assisted dying.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Yvette D'ATH'.

**YVETTE D'ATH MP**  
**Minister for Health and Ambulance Services**  
**Leader of the House**