

7 May 2021



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

Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2019

Implementation Update

Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Leadership Team - Communique May 2021

Message from the Chair, Dr Scott Blackwell

Most of the preparation around the many facets of voluntary assisted dying is nearing completion within the 8 workstream structure of the Implementation Leadership Team (ILT). We have ensured relevant focus has been on the preparedness of the health industry and in particular the clinicians who will be affected by or involved in voluntary assisted dying. Making sure that the public also has access to a wide range of information has also continued as a major priority.

It is time for all professionals within the health industry and related care sectors to consider what their response will be should the question of voluntary assisted dying arise in their workplace. Equally it is important that we all understand our obligations and responsibilities under the Act once it is proclaimed on 1st July 2021.

Soon to be released is the most comprehensive of our documents, the 'Western Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Guidelines'. The guidelines are an important milestone in the progress towards implementation of voluntary assisted dying in Western

Australia (WA). The CEO and the Department have taken note of much feedback in its development and it will soon be approved. These are guidelines that will be reviewed regularly as WA learns from the experience of voluntary assisted dying after implementation to maintain the highest standard of practice in voluntary assisted dying for those Western Australians who make it their choice.

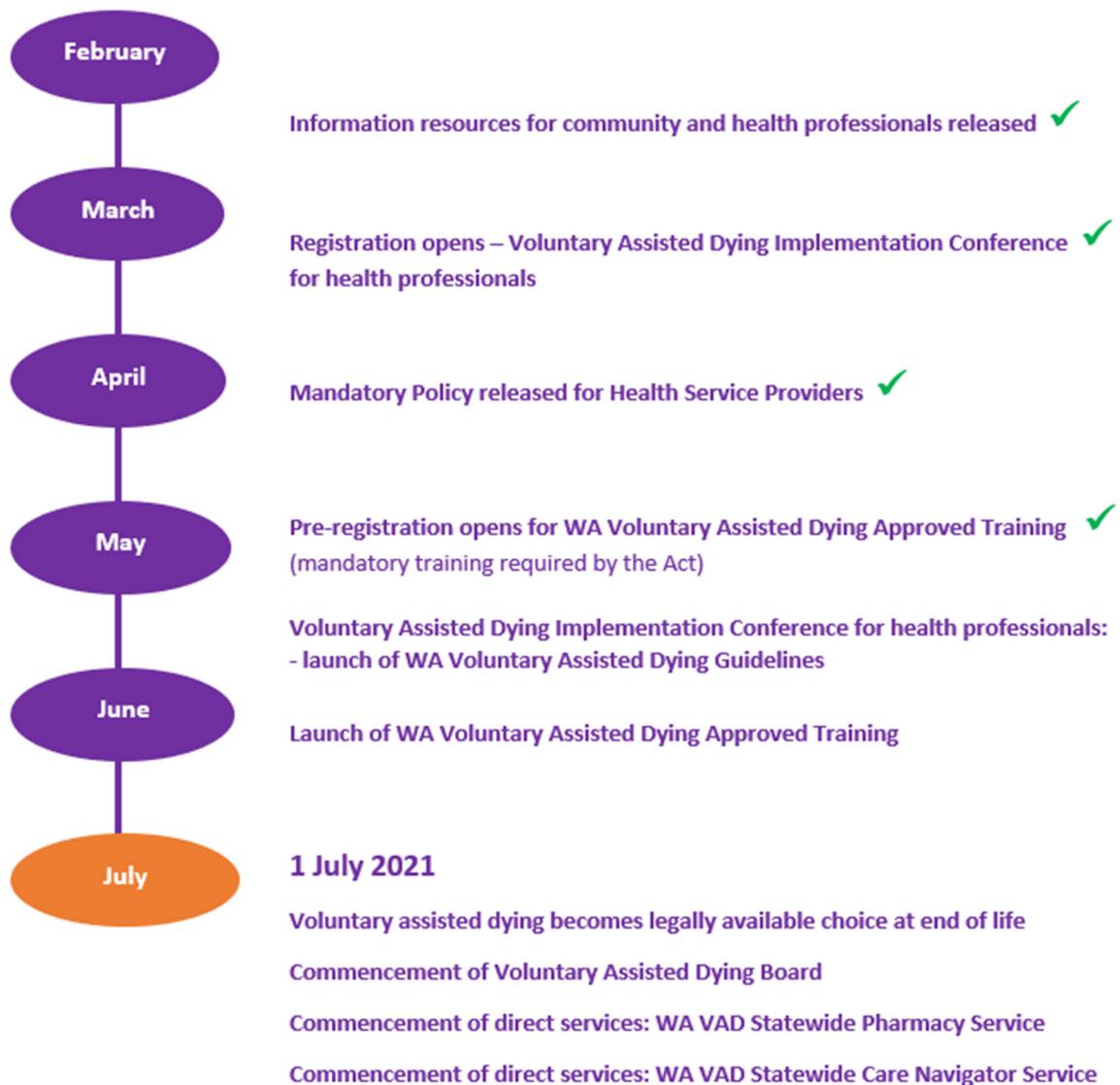
Once again you will be able to connect with increasing amounts of information about voluntary assisted dying in WA from the links in this communique as well as from the WA Department of Health website.

A final word of encouragement for health professionals to register for the WA Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Conference to be held on May 22-23. More information is contained in this communique. I look forward to seeing you there.

Dr Scott Blackwell

Chair, Implementation Leadership Team

2021 Implementation Timeline - key dates



Pre-registration for WA Voluntary Assisted Dying Approved Training

Pre-registration now open

Practitioners who wish to participate in voluntary assisted dying will need to apply to the End of Life Care Program team in the Department of Health for access to the WA VAD Approved Training. The WA VAD Approved Training will be available in early June.

Practitioners can pre-register now to commence the validation process required for access. An information sheet on how to pre-register is available on the voluntary assisted dying website [Access to WA VAD Approved Training](#).

Publication of documents

The following requirements of the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2019* (the Act) are now published on the Department's website:

- **Access Standard** – As required by Part 10 of the Act, the Access Standard describes how the State will facilitate Western Australians having access to voluntary assisted dying, with a specific focus on facilitating access to voluntary assisted dying for regional residents. The Access Standard is published [here](#).
- **Approved information for a person making a First Request for voluntary assisted dying** – As per section 20 of the Act, a medical practitioner is required to give approved information to any person who makes a First Request for access to voluntary assisted dying. This information must be given regardless of whether the First Request is accepted or not. The approved information is published as a printable booklet [here](#).
- **Practitioner eligibility: requirements approved by the CEO** – To perform a role under the Act, practitioners must meet the eligibility requirements outlined in sections 17 and/or 54 of the Act, including requirements approved by the CEO (the Director General of Health). A summary of these eligibility requirements is published [here](#).

Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Conference 22-23 May 2021

Registration closes 5pm Tuesday 11th May

Last chance to register for the Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Conference!

The Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Conference for Western Australian health professionals will be held on **Saturday the 22nd and Sunday the 23rd of May 2021** at Fraser's Kings Park (60 Fraser Avenue, Kings Park West Perth).

The conference will provide health professionals with information about roles, rights and responsibilities as part of the commencement of voluntary assisted dying from 1 July 2021. In addition to local speakers, international and Victorian speakers will provide their perspectives on the implementation of voluntary assisted dying. Featured speakers include:

- Dr James Downar - Critical Care and Palliative Care physician, Ontario, Canada
- Tanya Burr - Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner, Ontario, Canada
- Dr Greg Mewett - Palliative Care Physician, Grampians Regional Palliative Care Team, Victoria
- Eliza Armstrong - Nurse Coordinator, Groupwide VAD Coordinator, Epworth HealthCare, Victoria
- Dr Peter Lange - Geriatrician, Victoria
- Staff from the Western Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Statewide Care Navigator Service
- Staff from the Western Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Statewide Pharmacy Service

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:

- **Aged & Community Services Australia (ACSA)**
Title: WA Member Breakfast – Voluntary Assisted Dying update
Date: Tuesday 1st June 2021
Time: 7.30am – 9.30am (AWST)
Venue: Pagoda Resort & Spa – 112 Melville Parade Como
Speakers: Dr Scott Blackwell
Registration link: <https://events.acsa.asn.au/event/wa-member-breakfast-voluntary-assisted-dying-update/> (members only)
- **Australian Medical Association (AMA) WA**
Title: MEDCON21
Includes: Session titled “What every medical practitioner needs to know about Voluntary Assisted Dying” and a booth hosted by staff from the Western Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service
Date: Friday 18th June – Sunday 20th June 2021
Venue: Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre
Registration link: <https://medcon.edu.au>

Information resources

Information on voluntary assisted dying can be accessed through resources available on the [WA Health voluntary assisted dying website](#). Resources include information sheets for community, carers and health professionals.

Publication of Mandatory Policy for Health Service Providers

The Managing Voluntary Assisted Dying Policy has recently been published by the Department of Health WA. The Mandatory Policy outlines requirements for WA health system entities to appropriately, safely and effectively manage and

respond to requests for voluntary assisted dying. Health Service Providers (HSPs) can access the policy [here](#).

HSPs continue to prepare for the implementation of voluntary assisted dying at their service. Staff can visit their HSP's intranet page for more information about voluntary assisted dying at their service.

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
 - **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>

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