

Media Release

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DWDV welcomes new minister Kristy McBain's support for Territories rights

Dying With Dignity Victoria (DWDV) is heartened to hear that new minister for the Territories, Kristy McBain, will support a private member's bill to allow citizens in the ACT and the NT to have the same rights as other Australians to decide for themselves whether they want to legalise Voluntary Assisted Dying in their jurisdictions.

DWDV president Hugh Sarjeant said, "We've heard of cases where people in the ACT, diagnosed with a terminal illness, have considered moving to Wodonga to avail themselves of Victoria's Voluntary Assisted Dying laws. We hope this cruel situation will not be necessary in the future if the federal parliament agrees to overturn the infamous 'Andrews' legislation."

In 1997, Kevin Andrews championed the *Euthanasia Laws Act*, which voided the Northern Territory's ground-breaking *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act*, the world's first assisted dying legislation. Since then, citizens of the ACT and the Northern Territory have not had the same rights as other Australians to decide for themselves whether they want assisted dying legislation.

"We understand that Labor will make this a conscience vote, but even so, we're confident a private member's bill on this matter will have the numbers. Assisted dying is now lawful in all Australian states and it's unconscionable that those in the territories are not allowed to vote on this matter for themselves," said Mr Sarjeant.

"VAD has been operating effectively in Victoria for 3 years now. That should help allay any fears MPs may have. All Australians should have the right to decide for themselves on VAD, not have the federal parliament make that decision for them."

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