



VADANZ

Voluntary Assisted Dying Australia and New Zealand

Introducing new VADANZ chair Dr Sally Cockburn

Dear <<First Name>>



On behalf of VADANZ, I am delighted to welcome Dr Sally Cockburn as our new Board Chair of VADANZ. Dr Cockburn has a distinguished medical career as a GP and health educator and recently completed a six-year term on Victoria's inaugural Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board. She is passionate about practitioner, patient and community issues and is active in health policy and education at many levels. She has also been high profile in TV, radio and print for more than 30 years.

In 2010 she was inducted into the Victorian Women's honour roll for harnessing the media to improve health communications. That same year she was also awarded the Monash University Distinguished Alumni service award. She is experienced in governance having served as Chair of Family Planning Victoria, on the boards of Metropolitan Ambulance Service and Vic Health and also the Victorian Government's Mental Health Reform Council and Sexual Health Task Force. I'm confident Dr Cockburn will provide strong leadership as we continue to work to improve access to quality VAD care in Australia.

Dr Cam McLaren

VADANZ President

Read the Q&A with Dr Sally Cockburn



Last chance for VADCON24 Earlybird

Early bird sales for the [2024 Trans-Tasman Voluntary Assisted Dying Conference](#) finish on **Sunday July 14** so act fast! After July 14 you can still access your VADANZ member discount.

- Click on the [registration link](#).
- Use access code: **EARLYBIRD** for 10% discount
- Enter discount code **VAD24ANZ** in the box on the top left hand corner and click 'apply' for your additional member 10% discount.

Conference details

Where: Queensland University of Technology - QUT Gardens Point, Brisbane

When: Monday 28 & Tuesday 29 October 2024. **Please note the VADANZ Annual General Meeting will be held in Brisbane on the afternoon of Sunday 27 October, so factor this into your travel plans if you are planning to attend.**

Program: [Click here to view the draft program.](#)



Keynote speaker announcement

We are delighted to announce **Dr Rob Grenfell**, Director of Health and Biosecurity at CSIRO, as the keynote speaker for the [2024 Trans-Tasman Voluntary Assisted Dying](#)

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Dr Grenfell trained as a rural GP, and was previously the National Medical Director of Bupa Australia and NZ. He has also held roles as the National Director of Cardiovascular Health at the Heart Foundation, the Strategic Health Advisor to Parks Victoria and Senior Medical Advisor at the Department of Health Victoria. His keynote will be: *Reimagining the way we die*.

[Register for VADCON24](#)



VADANZ Webinar series

Join us for a one-hour webinar on 17 July to explore **VAD pharmacology and physiology**. On the panel will be:

Dr Gavin Pattullo, Specialist Anaesthetist and Pain Medicine Physician, and authorised NSW VAD practitioner

Professor Michael Dooley, Director of the Victorian VAD Pharmacy Service

The webinar will be hosted by **Dr Vanessa Andean**, (pictured) anaesthetist and VAD practitioner.

VADANZ members can watch the recording of last month's webinar '**Non-malignant prognostication for VAD**' by logging into the VADANZ website [here](#).

[Register for the webinar](#)

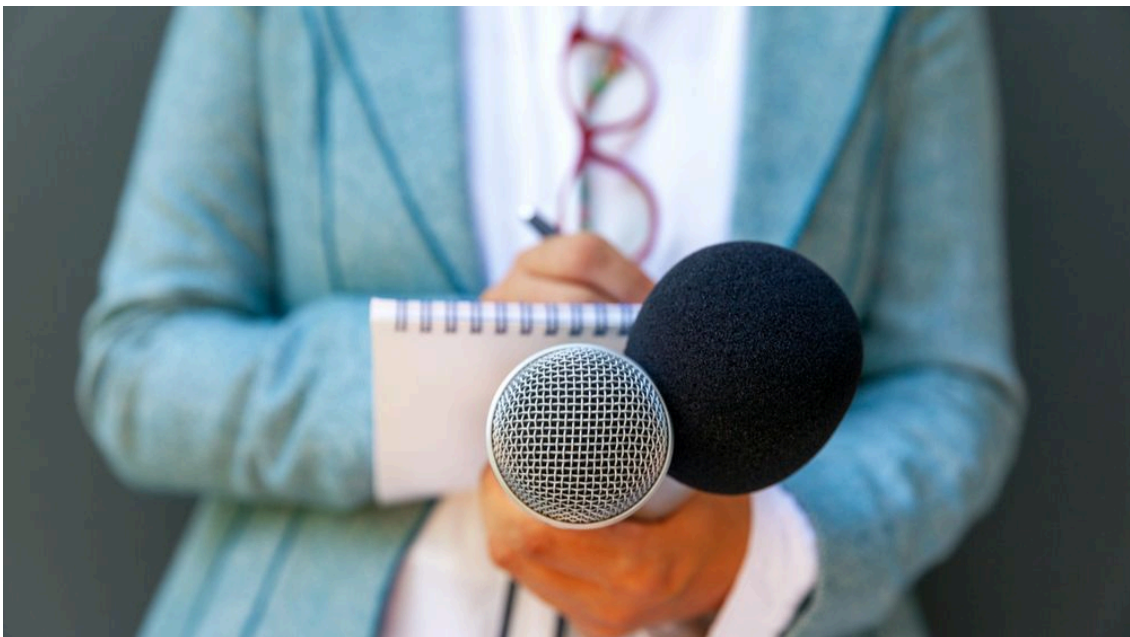


Trans-Tasman 'snapshot' of the State of VAD

With VAD now available in all Australian states and New Zealand, a new report from *Go Gentle Australia* collates data from each jurisdiction's oversight body to present an evidence-based 'snapshot' of how laws are working across the trans-Tasman.

The Minister for Health and Aged Care, Hon Mark Butler MP, will join Andrew Denton and Dr Gordon Reid MP in Australian Parliament House to launch the **State of VAD** on 12 August. If you'd like to attend click below to register. We will send you a copy of the report.

Register for the State of VAD report launch



VAD in the news

NSW: An interim report from the NSW Voluntary Assisted Dying Board showed that in the three-month reporting period, from November 2023 to February 2024, 517 patients made

QLD: Queensland's VAD Review Board has released data from the first year of 2023, showing 1323 people had a first assessment to assess their eligibility to access VAD and 598 people completed the process. There were 361 authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioners across Queensland as at 31 December 2023. [Read the report here](#). There is also data on the first quarter of 2024 - [read here](#).

NT: An [expert advisory panel appointed by the NT Government](#) is currently considering the introduction of laws in the NT, and is due to report in July. VADANZ President **Dr Cam McLaren** was interviewed on [ABC Radio Darwin](#) about the fact the NT is the only jurisdiction in Australia that has not introduced VAD.

During the interview, Dr McLaren raised the Telehealth ban in VAD as a significant issue, calling for urgent reform of the Commonwealth Criminal Code.

"If we transmit any information or have a conversation or assess a patient over video, the same as we do in any other area of medicine, we actually can be found to be in breach of the Criminal Code," he said.

"VADANZ has a very strong position that the suitability of an in-person or Telehealth assessment should be left to the doctor and their patient."

[Listen to the interview here](#), and [read VADANZ's position statement on Telehealth in VAD here](#).



The VAD workforce in NZ

What determines the willingness of a health professional to be involved in VAD?

Secondary analysis of two New Zealand Manatū Hauora – Ministry of Health workforce surveys conducted in February and July 2021 showed older health professionals had a better overall understanding of the End of Life Choice Act than their young colleagues. Female health professionals were less likely to support and be willing to provide assisted dying. Asian

compared to medical practitioners. The analysis shows how several socio-demographic factors, including age, gender, ethnicity, and professional background, impact the VAD workforce. The survey was part of the two-year assisted dying project (2022-2024) funded by the Auckland Medical Research Foundation and conducted by the research team at the University of Auckland. [Read the paper here.](#)



What's different about the ACT VAD law?

Professors Ben White and Lindy Willmott from the Australian Centre for Health Law Research have explained how the [ACT's VAD Bill, which passed on 5 June, compares to VAD laws in the Australian States](#). Significant differences include:

- There is no specific time frame in which patients are expected to die. This is different from the States' laws, where a person must be expected to die within 6-12 months (depending on the State and the person's terminal illness or condition) to access VAD. In the ACT, the person must still have an advanced, progressive illness or condition expected to cause death. The 'advanced' requirement includes the patient is 'approaching the end of their life'.
- A nurse practitioner can be one of the two health practitioners who assess someone's eligibility to access VAD. In the Australian States, both assessing practitioners must be doctors.
- Patients who receive treatment in institutions (such as hospitals) that object to VAD will have a greater access to VAD compared to the states, particularly those who are in institutions temporarily.

VAD will be available in the ACT from 3 November 2025.

See also this [handy comparison table of VAD laws](#) in Australia & NZ.



National VAD survey Australia

In the second half of 2023, Go Gentle Australia, in partnership with VADANZ and consultancy Nous Group conducted the [National Voluntary Assisted Dying Survey](#). Some 209 responses were received from health practitioners involved in VAD services.

Key insights were:

- Australian practitioners involved in VAD delivery were passionate about facilitating high-quality care and a dignified death for their terminally ill patients.
- They reported feeling adequately protected by their state's legislative settings.
- They said availability of state-wide VAD support services and the timely delivery of VAD substances were strengths of the system.
- Practitioners called for more support, particularly for newly qualified practitioners.
- Heavy workloads, inadequate remuneration and burnout were identified as genuine concerns.
- A significant number (1/3) questioned whether their workplace had the capability and capacity mix needed to provide high-quality VAD care.
- In Tasmania, there were calls for the VAD process to be simplified, especially the complex paperwork required.

[Read the full survey here.](#)



Seeking NZ research participants

The [Assisted Dying Research Network](#) would like to hear from NZ assisted dying providers and would appreciate referrals for patients who:

- formally applied with the Ministry of Health who were assessed as eligible, ineligible or changed their mind, or
- asked for assisted dying from a health professional but were told that they couldn't or shouldn't apply for some reason.

Interviews over Teams or phone. All information is confidential. This research aims to produce an evidence-based submission to the upcoming Act review and create resources that will support people using or providing the service.

Email assisteddyingresearch@vuw.ac.nz, phone 04 887 3140, or find more information on our [website](#). Alternatively, complete this [short survey](#).



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The Australian Government **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission** has provided a new fact sheet on **residential aged care provider responsibilities** when a person in their care wants to access VAD. While laws in each state are different, a provider needs to respect an older person's choice to access VAD services.

[Read the fact sheet here.](#)

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