




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NOOSA

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Voluntary Assisted Dying

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (2.16 pm): Being diagnosed with a terminal condition is incredibly traumatic. It takes your breath away, as well your dreams, aspirations and future in just one sentence. For many of us these last days are fraught with deep sadness; however, thankfully, pain free and dignified due to the excellent palliative care available. But what about those who are not so fortunate? As a parent, as a child, as a partner or as a friend there can be nothing worse than when you cannot alleviate intense prolonged and debilitating agony for your loved one. If you have not been in this position you are indeed fortunate.

During this intensely difficult time it is paramount that your loved one feel they have the ability to make decisions about their end-of-life care to have some last element of control. High-quality, impartial information is needed from their care team in order to make those decisions. It is equally important to have every viable option for individual circumstances made known and available from a credible, trustworthy and compassionate source. For many the illegality of voluntary assisted dying, or VAD, denies access to choice and, for many, peace of mind. Many may never make that choice or even want or need to. From many discussions over many years with so many different people, they tell me choice would give them and their loved ones the ability to get through one more day because they feel empowered and comforted that there is an option available if needed.

To my fellow MPs, I have no doubt we all share a commonality in that either personally or through family or friends we have experienced firsthand or through shared stories what it is like for those forced to endure unbearable pain and suffering even with the support of highly competent palliative care physicians and allied health professionals. Increasingly, Queenslanders are compelled to travel out of state, away from their homes, their loved ones and their security, at great expense and effort, to access this right to choice. VAD raises substantive, ethical and practical issues.

These issues are not new and have been successfully addressed and mitigated in other jurisdictions in highly developed countries overseas and more recently legislation interstate. Insights from these provide assurance and a secure basis on which to bring forward as a matter of priority a review on end-of-life choices and VAD in Queensland. Why as a matter of priority? Because every single day fellow Queenslanders are suffering incredibly and unnecessarily and they deserve our respect, our compassion and our assistance. As the only independent MP in Queensland, I ask this government to please commence this review on behalf of every single Queensland and their loved ones, as well the MPs who represent them, as soon as possible.