



Media Release

Issued: 14 February 2019

Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee

Chair: Aaron Harper MP
Parliament House Brisbane

Queenslanders encouraged to have their say on aged care, palliative care and voluntary assisted dying

A landmark parliamentary inquiry is considering whether Queenslanders should be allowed the right to die at a time of their choosing, as well as the future of aged care and how the terminally ill and their loved ones are supported.

Chair of the Health Committee and Member for Thuringowa, Aaron Harper MP is calling on all Queenslanders to get involved in this inquiry and have their say on these significant issues.

“Put simply we are looking at three of the biggest issues that will affect the lives of all Queenslanders – care when we age, care if we become terminally ill, and having a choice in how and when we die. These are not the usual kitchen table conversation topics, but it is probably time they were.”

“Most older Queenslanders will need and receive some form of government aged care assistance during their lives. More and more people now live into their 80s, 90s and even past 100. We want to hear from everyone who has concerns about the adequacy and dignity of aged care provided now to our most vulnerable older citizens.”

“We want to hear from people receiving care as well as their loved ones and friends, their doctors and nurses and carers, and the age care providers they work for. Our older people who need care are often highly vulnerable people who cannot advocate well for themselves. This makes our work that much more important.”

“There are huge pressures on those working in aged care at the moment, and we will make recommendations for how these pressures can be alleviated to build a better, stronger aged care sector for the future.”

“Nobody should think aged care is just a federal government issue. Aged care affects the whole health system, and has huge implications for state and territory governments. There are people waiting in

Queensland hospital beds now who can't get a place in an aged care home or can't get the home care package they need to live in their own homes."

"Our inquiry is also looking at the care available to people dying prematurely from cancer and other terminal illnesses. Palliative care is about helping these people live as well as they can under the circumstances, and providing support for their carers and others around them. We are also considering the intensive end-of-life care these people receive during the final stages of their lives."

"We have also been asked by the Queensland Parliament to gauge public opinion on whether voluntary assisted dying should be allowed in Queensland. We are seeking the views of all Queenslanders on whether our state should follow Victoria and implement a system of voluntary assisted dying," Mr Harper said.

The committee has published an issues paper to explain what the committee is looking at and how to get involved in this inquiry. The paper is available from the committee's webpage www.parliament.qld.gov.au/health and from the secretariat at Parliament House – phone (07) 35536626 or 1800 504 022 if you would like a copy sent to you.

The committee is taking written submissions until 15 April 2019, and oral submissions at public hearings which will commence in late March. The committee must report its findings to the Queensland Parliament by 30 November 2019.

(Inquiry terms of reference attached)

For media comment: please contact the Committee Chair, Aaron Harper MP on (07) 4766 3100

For further information: please phone the Committee secretariat on (07) 3553 6626

Email: health@parliament.qld.gov.au or visit the [committee's website](#)

Committee Members

Aaron Harper MP, Member for Thuringowa (Chair)

Mark McArdle MP, Member for Caloundra (Deputy)

Michael Berkman MP, Member for Maiwar

Martin Hunt MP, Member for Nicklin

Barry O'Rourke MP, Member for Rockhampton

Joan Pease MP, Member for Lytton

Inquiry terms of reference (agreed by the Legislative Assembly 14 November 2018)

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade), by leave, without notice: moved—

1. That the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee inquire into aged care, end-of-life and palliative care and report to the Legislative Assembly on:
 - (a) the delivery of aged care, end-of-life and palliative care in Queensland across the health and ageing service systems; and
 - (b) Queensland community and relevant health practitioners views on the desirability of supporting voluntary assisted dying, including provisions for it being legislated in Queensland and any necessary safeguards to protect vulnerable persons.
2. That in undertaking the inquiry, the committee should consider:
 - (a) in relation to aged care, the terms of reference and submissions made to the Australian Government's Royal Commission into the Quality and Safety of Aged Care and, in recognising the commission will occur in parallel, how to proactively work with the commission to ensure an appropriate exchange of information to inform the conduct of the inquiry;
 - (b) outcomes of recent reviews and work including Queensland Health's Palliative Care Services Review; and
 - (c) the current legal framework, relevant reports and materials in other Australian states and territories and overseas jurisdictions, including the Victorian government's Inquiry into end-of-life choices, *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017* (Vic) and implementation of the associated reforms.
3. That the committee report to the Legislative Assembly by 30 November 2019.