

VAD MEDIA WATCH November 2 – 8

A big week in Australia with the ACT's Act coming into force, the Carter bill in NSW and the release of Tasmania's latest VAD report.

In Canada the critiques of MAiD for disabled people who lack social support continue relentlessly. And now there is a new discussion about the undesirability of advance requests for MAiD; I have included a couple of examples. In the UK there is a steady stream of articles bemoaning the possible passing of the TIA bill, almost all of it from faith-based sources. Nothing new. Look for the excellent article by Ann David on what is happening legislatively in New Zealand and there is news from Italy, Spain and Luxembourg.

This week's edition compiled by Liz Jacka. Thanks to World Federation of Right to Die Societies (WFRtDS), Go Gentle Australia, Dying With Dignity Canada, Penny Hackett, Mike Gaffney, Death With Dignity, Stephanie Short, Dignitas, Suzanne James and Ben White.

AUSTRALIA

The November issue of the *Australian Journal of General Practice* has a guest article on VAD in Australia, urging GPs to get themselves up to speed. It is written by two doctors who are part of VAD support services in their respective hospitals. The journal will run a series of articles on VAD in coming issues. [Guest Editorial: Voluntary assisted dying](#)

And the team at *QUT*, led by Professor Ben White, has written a guide for GPs which clarifies the law for them. It's useful for everybody because it gives a state-by-state breakdown of the requirements for accessing VAD. [First conversations about voluntary assisted dying in general practice](#)

Australian Capital Territory

November 3

ABC News. An excellent article about the details of the ACT's VAD scheme which features a story about Gail Ford who has lived with Parkinson's for 20 years but whose life has now become so diminished that she is considering applying for an assisted death. The lack of a time till death in the legislation is clearly very merciful. [ACT voluntary assisted dying scheme begins, allowing Canberrans to 'die with dignity'](#)

November 3

The Canberra Times. Report focused on VAD in aged care, highlighting GGA's Aged Care Report and comment by Frankie Bennett from GGA as well as Uniting Aged Care. ['New era for the ACT': Canberra's aged care homes prepared for voluntary assisted dying](#) (Behind a paywall – see Attachment 2.)

November 3

The Guardian. Anne Davies describes the machinations of the politics in the NSW parliament and says that the Butler bill might get caught up in the horse-trading (pardon the pun). [Strap in for a feral lead-up into Christmas in the NSW parliament](#)

November 3

Canberra Daily. Reports on the start of the ACT's VAD scheme. Includes comments from readers, some welcoming it and some expressing concern that it might develop into the terrible situation in Canada (reflecting the misinformation we have covered many times). [Voluntary assisted dying begins in ACT](#)

November 3

Catholic Voice. Describes an opposition rally outside Parliament House on Monday to oppose the ACT VAD law coming into effect, but it does not mention how sparsely attended it was. [ACT Right to Life holds Rally on first day of controversial Euthanasia Law](#)

November 3

Region. This will get the opponents going. ACT Health Minister, Rachel Stephen-Smith, says they are considering the possibility of advance requests for VAD in cases where capacity might be lost. [Voluntary assisted dying is here but loss of capacity is the next big issue](#)

New South Wales

November 3

ABC Sydney Radio Mornings. Hamish McDonald interviews the loved ones of Hilary Webster who had an assisted death. He plays an extract of an interview with Hilary herself last September just after she had been diagnosed with incurable brain cancer. Her niece and former partner talk about her death and the celebration of her life. [What's it like when a family member chooses Voluntary Assisted Dying?](#)

November 3

Sydney Morning Herald. Geriatrician, Dr John Ward, say that he finds Susan Carter's bill to force dying people out of residential aged care if they want to access VAD "cruel beyond belief", and there is legal advice which finds that the bill is inconsistent with the new Aged Care Act. (Behind a paywall – see Attachment 1). This story has also appeared in *The Newcastle Herald* and *The Age*.

November 4

Sydney Morning Herald. Jill Nash, 86-year-old campaigner for the rights of the aged, writes a robust opinion piece which sets out how unjust the Carter amendment is. It will trample on the rights of people in their place of residence to have the kind of death they want, including an assisted death. She points out that it is inequitable because people in regional NSW have

very little choice about which aged care facility to enter. [I'm 86 – this bill to restrict voluntary assisted dying is cruel and callous](#) (Behind a paywall – see Attachment 3.)

November 6

ABC Central Coast Breakfast. An interview with DWD board member, Dr Stephanie Short, in which she cogently explains why the Carter amendment is flawed. Then Susan Carter appears and her main argument for the amendment is that other residents of the aged care home would “be confronted” by one of their residents having an assisted death, a pretty weak basis for the need for this change. [Breakfast](#) The interview begins at the 1 hour 20-minute mark.

Co-editor of VAD MW, Jane Morris, reminded me that the statement on VAD from the Aged Care and Assessment Commission seems to flatly contradict the terms of the Carter bill. Worth reading again. Here is the [link](#).

November 6

Nightshift. Suzanne James interviews NSW Greens spokesman on Health, Dr Amanda Cohen, about the Carter bill. Cohen describes it as cruel and unconstitutional. [Nightshift November 5](#)

November 6

The Northern Rivers Times. References Dr Amanda Cohen and lays out the implications of the Carter bill for people in NSW regional towns who have very limited choice of aged care facilities and in many cases only to faith-based institutions. [Residents in Small NSW Towns Could Be Forced to Leave to Access Voluntary Assisted Dying](#)

Throughout the week there have been many letters published in *The SMH*, pertaining to the Carter bill. They have all condemned it as cruel.

November 7

ABC TV News NSW. An interview with leader of the NSW opposition, Mark Speakman, in which he declares he will be voting for the Carter amendment. He gives the same feeble reason as Carter in an earlier item, namely, that the other residents will be distressed. Honestly! Is that the best they can do? [Mark Speakman](#) This exchange takes place towards the end of the 8-minute clip.

Tasmania

November 6

The *Voluntary Assisted Dying Commission* has released its third annual report which cover the 2024-5 period. It reports as follows:

Demand for access to voluntary assisted dying in Tasmania, when contrasted to the 2023-24 Financial Year, increased significantly in the reporting period. In the 2024-25 Financial Year:

- The number of First Requests notified to the Commission increased by 71 per cent.

- The number of voluntary assisted dying deaths reported to the Commission was 73 per cent higher than in 2023-24.
- Voluntary assisted dying deaths as a proportion of all deaths in Tasmania increased from 1.2 deaths per 100 deaths to 2.1 deaths per 100 deaths.

It seems that the statutory three-year review of the Tasmanian VAD scheme will commence soon, with the selection process for the review board members having commenced.

A message from *Mike Gaffney Upper House MP* in Tasmania about his intention to table the recent GGA report on VAD in aged care:

“I (Mr Gaffney) give Notice that tomorrow I shall move that the "Go Gentle Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying in Residential Aged Care Homes - A National Report Card," be considered and noted. On the 9th of December I will be speaking to the report in the Chamber, and I am comfortable receiving comments from individuals and organisations to consider including in my speech. Speaking on that day will also allow me an opportunity to focus on the 3-yr review of the Tasmanian VAD ACT and encourage many to forward submissions. Please feel free to disseminate this information to others.”

INTERNATIONAL

United States of America

Yahoo News. A rare item from North Carolina which reveals that there are efforts there to get an assisted dying bill up and running. [In NC, the fatally ill see new support for the choice of medically assisted death](#)

News from *Death in Dignity*: “Last month in Massachusetts, the End-of-Life Options Act (S1486) advanced out of the Joint Committee on Public Health and is now before the Joint Committee on Healthcare Financing—bringing Massachusetts one step closer to passing Death with Dignity”.

Canada

November 2

Canadian Affairs. The debate about the vexed issue of advance request for MAiD continues. This article contains results of various polls on the matter. [Doctors divided as Canada weighs advance MAiD requests](#)

November 3

MLI. Dr Ramona Coelho continues her campaign against the expansion of MAiD. Here she accuses Health Canada of misleading people during the recent consultation about the use of advance request in cases of dementia. [Canada’s MAiD consultation misleads the public in its framing: Ramona Coelho in National Newswatch](#)

November 5

Calgary Herald. A suggestion that the more conservative Alberta should go it alone on MAiD and develop a scheme that is less liberal than the Canadian scheme. [Alberta can be a leader in MAiD safeguards](#)

Luxembourg

November 4

RTL. A useful article about VAD in Luxembourg which reveals that the option is not well understood by the population, and – something I didn't know - you can request an assisted death via an advance request called the "Disposition de fin de vie". [Euthanasia association calls for more awareness and wider rights in Luxembourg](#)

Italy

SpiritFM. Opponents of VAD stage a dramatic demonstration in the Piazza de Popolo in Rome. The Italian Senate is presently considering a bill to decriminalise assisted dying. This article contains some detail about where that's up to. ['Don't kill me': Empty wheelchairs dramatize campaign against assisted suicide in Italy](#)

New Zealand

November 5

Dignitas Newsletter. Past president of the End-of-Life Choice Society in New Zealand, Ann David, writes an excellent article updating us on the status of the private member's bill to abolish the time till death provision in the NZ Act and to replace it with something like the ACT wording. She describes what is required to get a private member's bill debated and how the Society is going about campaigning for it. I can't find anything about the stance on VAD of the current Prime Minister, Christopher Luxon. I don't believe he was in parliament at the time the original bill was passed. [NEW ZEALAND – More people may have access to assisted dying soon](#)

United Kingdom

November 5

Perspective. The British Chief Medical Officer repeats his view that VAD ought to be equitable and simple to access, without unnecessary bureaucracy. [Assisted dying should be option for people from 'all walks of life', says Whitty](#)

Scotland

November 4

Holyrood.com. Sigh. 287 amendments have been proposed to Liam McArthur's assisted dying bill. The health committee will now begin to consider them. [Nearly 300 amendments submitted to assisted dying bill](#)

November 5

The Telegraph (a consistent opponent) reports that the Health Committee has thrown out an amendment which would have assisted dying available only to those with six months to live. [Scots 'with years to live' could be eligible for assisted dying](#) (Behind a paywall, but you can get the drift.)

Spain

Ara (Barcelona). This could be significant. The Supreme Court of Spain is considering whether a parent has the right to block an approved assisted death of their adult child. The Catalan court had previously allowed a father to step in to stop his son, who was approved for VAD in 2024, accessing the assisted death he wants. [The Supreme Court will decide whether a parent can stop their child's euthanasia](#)

ALSO OF INTEREST

Go Gentle Australia and VADANZ have announced that their next conference will be held in Melbourne on 19th - 20th October 2026. These conferences are unmissable, and you will be able to attend in person or virtually. You can keep up to date via the Go Gentle Australia website.

Dr Thaddeus Pope is calling for submissions for an issue of the journal, *Bioethics*, which will look at the question: under what circumstances should voluntary assisted dying be permitted. You can respond [here](#).

November 3

Via *Exit International* an article from *Der Spiegel* giving more detail about the case of Dr Florian Willett, who was pursued by the Swiss authorities over the first Sarco death to occur in Switzerland. Dr Willett had a psychotic breakdown because of his detention and subsequently had an assisted death. [Euthanasia in Germany: A suicide that could shake up politics](#)

World Federation of Right to Die Societies (WFRtDS) president, Peter Warren, gives an interview on Spanish radio (in English) about the work of his organisation and the status of VAD around the world. It goes for 54 minutes. [Peter Warren](#)

WFRtDS gives bi-annual awards for people who have provided outstanding service to the dying with dignity movement around the world. Our own Shayne Higson won in 2022. You can find details of the awards and the criteria [here](#).

An earlier article we missed is one by former Federal Greens leader, Bob Brown in *The Saturday Paper* of October 4. He talks about his brush with death when he developed a pulmonary embolism and how it made him realise that he is very glad the option of VAD is available to him. It's behind a paywall and unfortunately, I don't have a copy suitable to attach, but it's worth chasing up. You will be able to access a free version if you give them your Email address. [Bob Brown reflects on mortality](#)

November 4

The wonderful *MAiD in Canada* republishes an article from last year which debunks opponent's claims that dying by taking Nembutal is painful and excruciating. They are doing this because the same claims have been made again in a press conference at Canada's parliament, and they are often recycled by opponents in other jurisdictions. [Misinformation Goes to Parliament...again](#)

This one is for the really keen. *Spice* (a blogging site) publishes a detailed comparison of the UK and Scottish VAD bills. [An update on how the Scottish and UK assisted dying bills compare](#)

An American documentary, *Life After*, is making a few waves. Made by a disabled man, it seems to take the position that disabled people should fear MAiD because it is a "cheaper form of healthcare". Will undoubtedly be picked up by the opponents. It also revisits the case of Elizabeth Bouvia, a disabled woman who in 1983 petitioned the courts for the right to die. She was, of course, turned down. This link takes you to a trailer. [Life After](#)

Caresearch, the Australian palliative care knowledge network has good information on its website about VAD and how to access it, state by state. [VAD](#)

Society for the Protection of Unborn Children reports that the man who failed in his attempt to assassinate Donald Trump on the golf-course has asked to be incarcerated in a state which permits assisted dying. I'm treating this story with a grain of salt. [Would-be Trump assassin asks to be imprisoned in a state with assisted suicide](#)

The lawyers might be interested in this one. An expert on capacity from *Kings College London*, seems to be arguing that the definition of capacity in the TIA bill is inadequate. It is based on an already existing law about capacity, but the fact that the decision involved in VAD is a decision to end one's life, this expert says that the capacity part of the TIA bill needs strengthening. [Terminally Ill Adults \(End of Life\) Bill – capacity: CLADD briefing](#)

November 8

The Conversation. More on the debate about execution using nitrogen. Philip Nitschke says it's peaceful; these writers say it's not. [Silent but not serene: what science says about nitrogen death](#)