

VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2021–22

Statement by Minister for Health

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [12.15 pm]: I rise to table the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Board annual report 2021–22*. I am pleased to present this inaugural annual report, which fulfils the requirements of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2019 by reporting on the operations of the act for the 12 months to 30 June 2022. The report marks the first year of voluntary assisted dying as an end-of-life choice for terminally ill people across WA. I extend my condolences to the family and friends of those who have made the choice of voluntary assisted dying since the act commenced.

The contributions of community advocates, the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices, the Ministerial Expert Panel on Voluntary Assisted Dying and the voluntary assisted dying implementation leadership team established the safe and compassionate foundation for voluntary assisted dying as an end-of-life choice for our community. The key data presented by the VAD board in the annual report provides that from 1 July 2021 to 13 June 2022, 553 people made a first request for voluntary assisted dying, 375 patients completed a first assessment and 353 patients were found eligible; 284 patients completed the request and assessment process; 190 deaths were recorded following administration of a voluntary assisted dying substance; the median age of patients when they died was 74 years; 73 per cent of people who died were based in the Perth metropolitan region and 27 per cent were based in regional WA; and voluntary assisted dying deaths represented 1.1 per cent of the total deaths in Western Australia in the reporting period.

Support for people to access voluntary assisted dying was provided by 50 medical practitioners as coordinating, consulting or administering practitioners. A total of 70 medical practitioners were trained, with practitioners coming from a range of medical specialities from across the state. I am pleased to advise that, following this annual reporting period closing, two nurse practitioners have completed the voluntary assisted dying training process. The statewide Care Navigator Service has been pivotal in providing information, advice, coordination and support for patients throughout the voluntary assisted dying process, including facilitating access for 50 patients through the regional access support scheme. The Statewide Pharmacy Service has ensured that voluntary assisted dying substances have been provided in a manner that is safe, equitable and patient-centred, including pharmacists travelling to every region to supply the VAD substance.

The care, respect and collaboration displayed by these healthcare professionals is evident, through the personal reflections shared with the board by patients and family members, as represented in the annual report. The board has made six recommendations for the improvement of voluntary assisted dying, which will be considered by the Department of Health. It has, and continues to be, a privilege to be the Minister for Health in the McGowan government, ensuring that VAD in WA is an accessible, safe and compassionate end-of-life choice for Western Australians. I thank the VAD board for its work supporting the operation of voluntary assisted dying in WA and I table the report.

[See paper [1708](#).]