# Invitation\* to attend

## 'Voluntary Assisted Dying and the realities of end-of-life in Canberra'

**A Forum sponsored by Dying with Dignity ACT**

Date: 15 April 2025 - 10.30 to 12.30

At the Legislative Assembly Reception Room, Legislative Assembly Building, Civic.

**Chairperson:** Nicole Lawder. Former Liberal MLA.

Ms Lawder, whose mother lived with advanced dementia, is familiar with VAD legislation in the ACT. Ms Lawder voted for the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill and the Paterson Motion to extend eligibility for VAD.

To highlight some of the realities of end-of-life in Canberra, our speakers will discuss:

* the trauma caused by late-stage Dementia to the sufferer and their family;
* the stress of having to consider travelling to Switzerland because of the limited eligibility criteria for VAD in Canberra;
* the impact on the well-being of first responders attending suicides. Many suicides leave notes about health-related suffering;
* the sadness of persons who have made their own arrangements to have some control over their end-of-life, but who have to die alone because of fear their loved ones could be prosecuted for assisting a suicide.

A VAD Coordinator from Queensland will speak of her experience both as a Palliative Care Nurse and VAD Coordinator. How in each role she has seen the peace that each approach can give to people and their families, but also the trauma caused when things go wrong. Some of this trauma is a result of the restrictive eligibility criteria for VAD in both Queensland and the ACT.

Dying with Dignity ACT will outline its campaign to get the ACT Legislative Assembly to amend the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act so that persons with long term degenerative conditions who have intolerable suffering[[1]](#footnote-1) can access VAD when they consider life is no longer endurable. 81% of Canberra voters support this.

We are also campaigning for persons be allowed to include their wishes about voluntary assisted dying in some form of Advance Care Plan, in case they lose decision-making capacity. 77% of voters support this.

**\* PLEASE email an RSVP to** **rsvp@dwdact.org.au** by 11th April to assist us with seating arrangements. For further information ring Roy Harvey, Project Coordinator DwD ACT 0439 538 668

1. Conditions such as Motor Neurone Disease Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), Huntington's Disease, Dementia, and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)