

MEDIA RELEASE

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Advocates implore Territory Government to act on voluntary assisted dying legislation

The Northern Territory is the only jurisdiction in Australia yet to have legislation for voluntary assisted dying (VAD). Over the last five years, laws have been passed in every other state and the ACT. Leading advocates are now imploring the Northern Territory Government to prioritise the enactment of VAD legislation without any more procrastination. They are also urging Members of the NT Legislative Assembly to act in accordance with the wishes of more than 75% of the Territorians who took part in VAD community consultations.

Supported by Go Gentle Australia, Northern Territory Voluntary Euthanasia Society (NTVES), Association of Independent Retirees (Northern Territory) and Marshall Perron, former Chief Minister of the NT Government, COTA NT has published a special edition of its *Seniors Voice* publication. It includes an overview of how VAD is already working across Australia and calls on the public to act if VAD is important to them. It also includes the suggestion from Perron of how the NT Government can advance without delay and without cumbersome bureaucracy by proceeding with a revised *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act* (1995). When this Act was originally passed by the NT Legislative Assembly it was the first piece of legislation in the world to give dying adults the option of medical assistance to die at a time they choose.

“It is time. The Northern Territory has waited long enough. It is time to restore the Rights of the Terminally Ill,” said Sue Shearer, Chief Executive of COTA NT. “If you are diagnosed with a terminal illness in another state, you have the right to choose, with dignity, the time and place that you will say goodbye surrounded by family. How is it right that Territorians cannot do the same?”

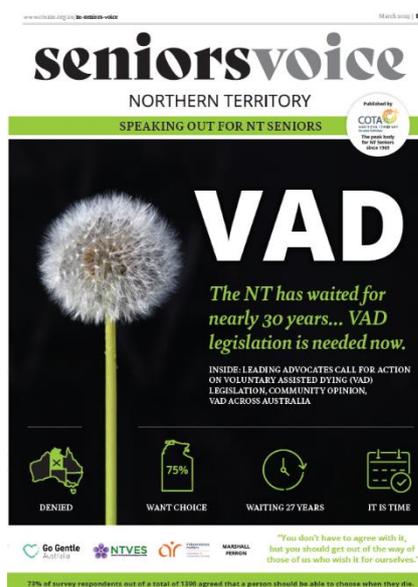
“At present in the Territory, if you have a terminal illness, palliative care is a choice. This care is delivered with compassion and dignity. However, if any Territorian would choose to use voluntary assisted dying, they would have to go interstate, possibly away from their family and friends in the final moments of their life.

“I have written to each of our elected Members asking them to act on the wishes of Territorians and bring us up to speed with the rest of Australia. We do not deserve to be treated as second class citizens and if we proceed with a revised *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act*, the Territory could also have its legislation around voluntary assisted dying – sooner rather than later.”

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Media Contact: Sue Shearer, CEO of COTA NT Email: ceo@cotant.org.au Phone: 08 8941 1004

VAD Special Edition www.cotant.org.au/nt-seniors-voice



COTA Northern Territory is the peak advocacy and representation organisation for senior Territorians advocating for and working towards an age-friendly, just, inclusive and equitable society since 1969

COTA NT Inc 65 Smith Street P: (08) 8941 1004
GPO Box 852 Darwin NT 0800 E: ceo@cotant.org.au
Darwin NT 0801 ABN 86 316 991 800 www.cotant.org.au

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