

MEDIA RELEASE

FRIDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2021

COTA NT launch Petition to allow the NT to enact laws dealing with voluntary assisted dying

The Northern Territory became the first jurisdiction in the world to introduce an assisted dying framework passing laws allowing a doctor to end the life of a terminally ill patient at the patient's request in the *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act 1995*. The legislation was overruled by a federal Private Members Bill entitled *Euthanasia Laws Act 1997* which inserted a clause in the ACT and NT's *Self Government Acts* which states that these two jurisdictions have no power to make laws with respect to assisted dying.

"This was, and still is, unfair and unreasonable," says COTA NT CEO Sue Shearer. "It is increasingly untenable as states around the country are passing legislation in this area. Territory citizens are being denied their democratic rights and the choice for end of life decisions solely based on where they live. This situation should not be allowed to persist."

"This petition is about enabling Territorians to have dignity and choice in how their life ends."

"Assisted dying is not a comfortable subject for a lot of people, and can become very emotive," continues Ms Shearer. "But reluctance to talk about death and dying can prevent future planning of care and medical intervention, and a terminally-ill person from expressing their final wishes. We need those conversations. This petition is about enabling Territorians to have dignity and choice in how their life ends."

COTA NT has launched a petition calling on Federal Government to *repeal Section 50A of the Northern Territory (Self Government) Act 1978 so as to allow the NT Legislature to enact laws dealing with voluntary assisted dying.*

To support the petition, visit www.cotant.org.au/petition.

####

Media Contact

Sue Shearer, CEO, COTA NT
08 8941 1004

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
GPO Box 852
Darwin NT 0801

65 Smith Street
Darwin NT 0800
ABN 86 316 991 800

P: (08) 8941 1004
E: admin@cotant.org.au
www.cotant.org.au