

Voluntary assisted dying in Queensland 2024–2025

A guide to the Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board Annual Report 2024–2025

What is voluntary assisted dying?

Voluntary assisted dying gives people who meet eligibility criteria and who are suffering and dying the option to ask for medical help to end their life. It became available in Queensland on 1 January 2023, and has been accessed by people across Queensland, including people in regional, rural and remote areas.

Voluntary assisted dying is one of several choices a person may make towards the end of their life. Compassionate end-of-life care includes support and treatment that is respectful of a person's physical, psychological, emotional, social, cultural and spiritual needs and preferences. This care is provided by a range of healthcare workers and includes support for families and carers.

You can visit the Queensland Health voluntary assisted dying website for more information about voluntary assisted dying in Queensland: www.health.qld.gov.au/vad

How does a person access voluntary assisted dying?

A person may raise voluntary assisted dying with their doctor or other healthcare worker. A doctor or nurse practitioner may also start a conversation about voluntary assisted dying as a part of end-of-life discussions. At the same time, they will also let the person know about other treatment and support available to them, such as palliative care. Early conversations about voluntary assisted dying allow time for careful consideration by the person about what is right for them.

The law respects the rights of healthcare workers to not provide voluntary assisted dying, while making sure eligible people wanting to access it can do so. If a registered health practitioner is not comfortable discussing voluntary assisted dying, they have a legal obligation to advise where a person can get more information and support.

Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Support Service (QVAD Support)

QVAD Support is a statewide service that provides advice and support to Queenslanders about voluntary assisted dying and can help link a person with a voluntary assisted dying doctor. These doctors are 'authorised practitioners' and are located across Queensland.

QVAD Support contact information can be found at the end of this document.



The Review Board

The Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board (Review Board) was established to ensure the safety and wellbeing of people who access voluntary assisted dying, and the doctors and nurses who provide these services. Completed requests for voluntary assisted dying are reviewed to ensure the process complied with the strict laws that are in place in Queensland. The Review Board is required to provide an annual report to the Minister for Health on the operation of voluntary assisted dying in Queensland.

Annual Report 2024–2025

This document is a guide to the Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board Annual Report 2024–2025. This document details information about activity from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 in Queensland. For more detailed information please see the full annual report which is available on the Review Board publications webpage: www.health.qld.gov.au/vadreviewboard

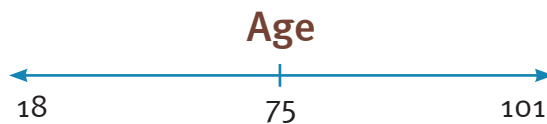
From 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, 2039 people started the voluntary assisted dying process.



■ 55% of these people were male.

■ 45% of these people were female.

No people identified as X or non-binary.



75 was the median age, the youngest person was 18 and the oldest person was 101.

3 in 4 people

were accessing palliative care.

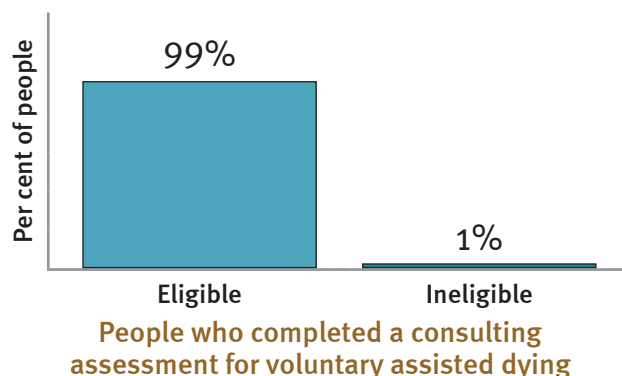
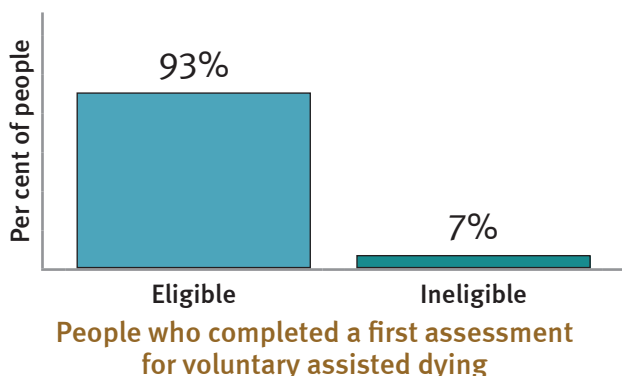
Eligibility

There are strict eligibility criteria to access voluntary assisted dying in Queensland. A person must meet **all** eligibility criteria to access voluntary assisted dying:

1. Have an eligible condition that is:
 - advanced, progressive, and will cause death
 - expected to cause death within 12 months
 - causing suffering that the person considers to be intolerable.
2. Have decision-making capacity.
3. Be acting voluntarily and without coercion.
4. Be at least 18 years of age.
5. Fulfil Australian and Queensland residency requirements.

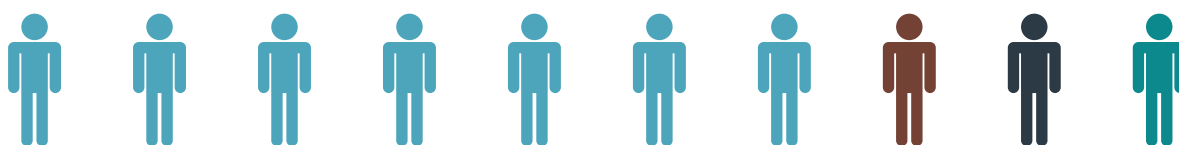
The person must be independently assessed for eligibility against these criteria by two doctors. These assessments are called a **first assessment** and a **consulting assessment**.

From 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, most people who completed these assessments were eligible for voluntary assisted dying.



Diagnosis

There is a range of eligible diagnoses for voluntary assisted dying. From 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025:

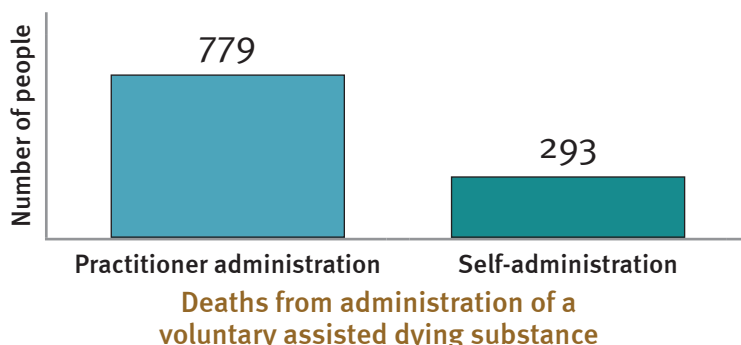


- Most people (76%) accessing voluntary assisted dying had cancer.
- Approximately one in 10 people (9%) had a respiratory disease.
- Approximately one in 20 people (6%) had a neurological disorder.
- Other people (8%) had diagnoses such as kidney and liver disease.

Voluntary assisted dying deaths

An eligible person will talk with their coordinating doctor and decide how the substance will be administered. There are two methods: self-administration, where the person administers the substance themselves, and practitioner administration, where a doctor or nurse administers the substance.

From 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, 1072 people died from administration of a voluntary assisted dying substance.



Other deaths

Not all people who are assessed as eligible will choose to administer the voluntary assisted dying substance and are content to know the option is available if they need it. Some people become rapidly unwell and die before the process can be completed. People may also lose decision-making capacity, which means they become ineligible to continue the voluntary assisted dying process.

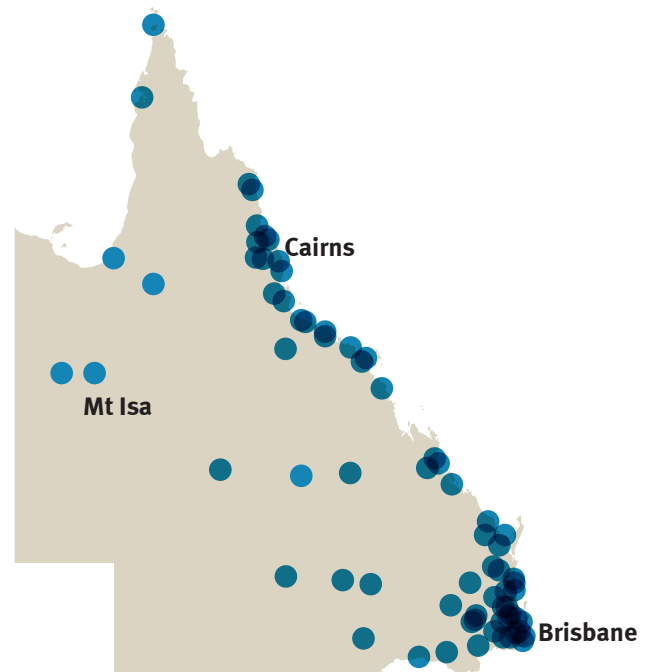
From 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, 612 people who were undertaking the voluntary assisted dying process died without administering the substance.

Authorised Practitioners

Only doctors and nurses who have completed mandatory training and been approved by Queensland Health can participate in the voluntary assisted dying process. These healthcare workers are called “authorised practitioners”.

Between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025, there were 470 authorised doctors and nurses in the voluntary assisted dying workforce in Queensland.

This map shows where these practitioners are located. Each circle represents one or more practitioners and locations are approximate.



Note: Each circle represents one or more practitioners, locations are approximate.

Recommendations

The Review Board has made four recommendations in this annual report. These recommendations will support the continuous improvement and sustainability of voluntary assisted dying in Queensland. They include promoting education and guidance materials that support healthcare workers to manage conversations about voluntary assisted dying; reviewing voluntary assisted dying models of care across Queensland; consulting broadly during the review of the effectiveness of the voluntary assisted dying legislation; and engaging with authorised doctors and nurses to understand how to support their involvement in voluntary assisted dying.

More information about voluntary assisted dying

More information about the voluntary assisted dying process is available on the Queensland Health website: www.health.qld.gov.au/vad. QVAD Support can also provide advice and support.

Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Support Service (QVAD Support)



Phone: 1800 431 371 | Email: QVADSupport@health.qld.gov.au

Hours of operation: 8.30am to 4pm, Mon to Fri (excluding public holidays)

Visit the Review Board webpage for more information about the Review Board and to read the quarterly reports: www.health.qld.gov.au/vadreviewboard

Help in your language

For help reading this information call:



- Multicultural Connect Line free hotline number: 1300 079 020
- Interpreter Service (Help with English): 13 QGOV (13 74 68) and ask for an interpreter
- Translating and Interpreting Service: 13 14 50