

# CHOICE, ACCESSIBILITY AND DIGNITY

## AUTONOMY AND CHOICE IN END OF LIFE CARE

Death is a natural part of life. Everyone should have equitable access, agency and choice over their care so they can enjoy what's left of their life as much as possible.

There is no one size fits all approach to end of life healthcare and each person has different needs and experiences which impact their decision-making.

With a growing and ageing population, we must scale up our whole health system to ensure people have options that are accessible, tailored to their needs and best supports them to have dignity in the last stages of their life.

Some people receive palliative care for years prior to death which is why Canberra must be a place where everyone has a higher quality of life, for as long as they can.

The ACT Greens will go further and faster to expand end of life care choices that are more equitable, fair and accessible to give people the most fulsome quality of life possible.

### THE ACT GREENS WILL:

- ▲ Create a palliative model of care that is nation-leading and embedded across the hospital
- ▲ Establish a paediatric palliative care service
- ▲ Develop a palliative care workforce plan
- ▲ Deliver community education resources and activities to destigmatise palliative care
- ▲ Establish a clinical research team to ensure Canberra's palliative care response best supports the community now and well into the future

# MORE DIGNIFIED END OF LIFE CARE

## CARE ACROSS THE WHOLE SYSTEM

The ACT Greens will design a nation-leading model of care for the 12-bed palliative care ward at the Canberra Hospital. While work is already underway for this, we will go further to provide fairer and more options for Canberrans. As part of this we will ensure more clinical and allied health resourcing to support the entire hospital embed palliative care as part of its mainstream clinical service delivery.

## PAEDIATRIC CARE

Illness does not discriminate and some children and young people are diagnosed with life limiting illnesses. That's why we will create a specialist paediatric palliative care service and establish a community support service for carers, parents and families.

## GROWING OUR WORKFORCE

Within the first year of Government, we will commission an evidence-based review to attract healthcare workers into the ACT's palliative care network, retain existing staff and further build clinical and professional capacity. This will support workforce resources for The Canberra Hospital and the ACT's hospice service, Clare Holland House.

## A MORE INFORMED COMMUNITY

We will immediately establish a range of public education activities to destigmatise end of life care. We will increase community understanding of palliative care and increase death literacy

across the Canberra community so people can make informed decisions on the options available. This will focus on both raising awareness and making access to palliative care more equitable.

## A DEDICATED RESEARCH UNIT

We will fund a clinical research team within ACT Health focused on making end of life healthcare nation-leading as the most accessible, responsive, reliable and evidence informed. This will commence after the nation-leading model of care has been developed.

## VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING

The legislation in its current form means that VAD will not be available for Canberrans who have lost decision making capacity.

The ACT Greens remain committed to respect people's autonomy and choice when it comes to decisions about their end-of-life healthcare. This is why we will continue to advocate for a legislative mechanism that allows people diagnosed with life limiting illnesses likely to result in a loss of their decision-making capacity to make decisions about their end of life healthcare in advance.

Around the world, other jurisdictions have successfully used Advanced Health Care Directives for the purposes of VAD, respecting the patient's wishes as to how they should die. We will also consider other approaches that enable people to access VAD after they have lost capacity.

## INVESTMENT: \$3.2M OVER FOUR YEARS

- \$1.4m to develop and implement an end of life care communication

### SUPPORTING OUR CARERS | P2

Authorised by Pat Dollard for the ACT Greens

- and community education package
- \$400,000 for a nation-leading palliative model of care
  - \$400,000 to design a paediatric palliative care service
  - \$200,000 for a workforce plan
  - \$800,000 for the research unit