



Hello and thank-you for writing to the Voluntary Euthanasia Party (VEP) about your issue/s for the upcoming 2018 Victorian election. The VEP is a small party, run entirely by volunteers. The VEP aims to improve all aspects of end-of-life care and ensure dignity in the final years of life.

Our advocacy, political lobbying and work over many years helped to ensure that there was a Victorian Parliamentary enquiry into end of life choices in the last term of parliament. This enquiry resulted in new laws being introduced on Voluntary Assisted Dying in Victoria. We understand the importance of raising your issues with our candidates, because that's how we helped change the laws in Victoria.

Unfortunately, the hard fought Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) Laws are now at risk of being overturned by some political parties, who want to deny people the right to choose what is best for them at the end of their life, regardless of their beliefs, faith and cultural background. To protect these laws, we are running candidates in all 8 upper house regions and we are negotiating with other candidates to support us in our work.

In November 2017, the Victorian Parliament passed the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017. These laws will come into effect from June 2019. People will be able to request access to a physician-assisted death if they meet certain criteria.

Eligible patients must be Victorian residents over the age of 18, of decision making capacity, who have six months to live and are in intolerable suffering. In the case of neurodegenerative conditions, such as motor neurone disease (MND) and multiple sclerosis (MS) it is 12 months to live.

85% of Australians support Voluntary Assisted Dying and Victoria is the only State in Australia to have these laws. We need all Victorians to strongly signal their ongoing support for voluntary assisted dying now.

At the VEP we believe no-one should be forced to endure pointless suffering at the end of their life. As a small but very focused party we have a limited number of policy areas including:

- Ensuring access to Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD)
- Improving palliative care
- Expanding the access to medicinal cannabis
- Informing the community about Advance Care Directives (ACDs)

As a small party with very limited resources we are not in a position to fully research and respond appropriately to the large volume of requests which include your specific and important issue/s.

The Voluntary Euthanasia Party (VEP) is a moderate, evidence-based, progressive party. Our policies reflect this. If elected, we will consider each and every piece of legislation on its merits.

We further commit to meeting with any individuals and groups who wish to discuss their issues with us. We know how important it is to listen to people on the ground so we are better able to understand topics beyond our current purview. We want to be able to address people's concerns and will do so with compassion and with an evidence base. This includes the issues that you have raised in your letter to us.

I hope this response allows you to be better informed about how we will work with you post the 2018 election.

Warm Regards

Dermot Ryan

Secretary Voluntary Euthanasia Party Victoria.