



Voluntary Assisted Dying

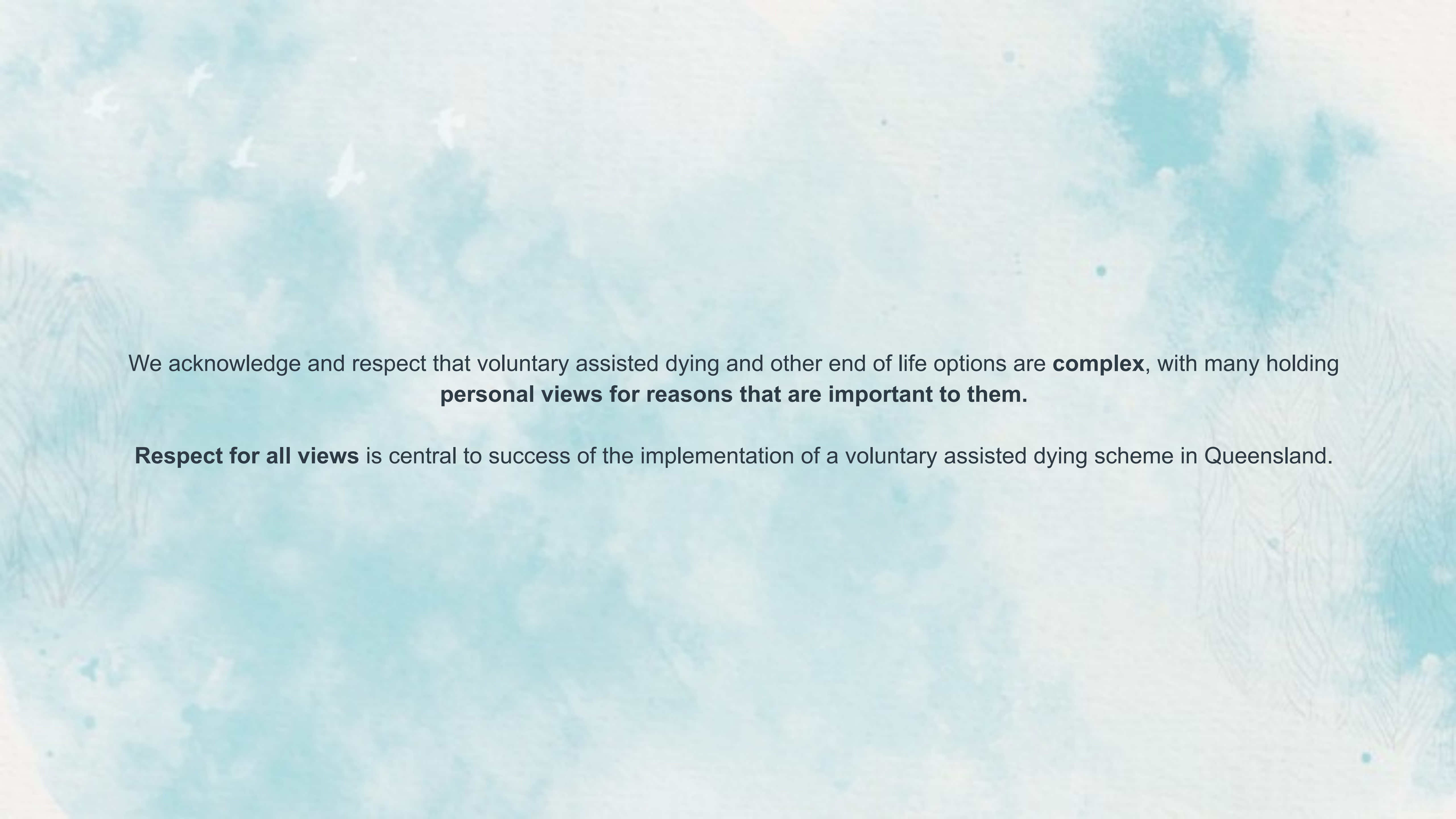
Clinical Update – July 2023

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VAD Clinical Coordinator - Mackay Hospital & Health Service
Proserpine Hospital – Rural Obstetrician

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VAD Clinical Coordinator - Mackay Hospital & Health Service
CNC

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and respect the traditional lands of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and respect all Elders past, present and future. We ask all people that walk, work and live on traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands, to be respectful of culture and traditions and work together as one to better health care for all.

The background features a soft, watercolor-style illustration of a sky with several white birds in flight. On the left and right sides, there are faint, stylized palm trees. The overall color palette is light blue and white.

We acknowledge and respect that voluntary assisted dying and other end of life options are **complex**, with many holding **personal views for reasons that are important to them.**

Respect for all views is central to success of the implementation of a voluntary assisted dying scheme in Queensland.

What is voluntary assisted dying?

- Voluntary assisted dying gives people who are suffering and dying, and who meet eligibility criteria, the option of requesting medical assistance to end their lives.
- **Medical practitioners** who meet the eligibility criteria and undertake approved training will be able to assist a person with the voluntary assisted dying process as coordinating / consulting / administering practitioners.
- **Nurse practitioners** and **registered nurses** who meet the eligibility criteria and undertake approved training will be able to be administering practitioners.

Conscientious Objection



A registered health practitioner:

Has a right to refuse to participate in any stage of the voluntary assisted dying process

Who refuses to participate because of a conscientious objection must:

- Immediately inform the person of their refusal to participate and the reason for their refusal
- Inform the person that other health practitioners, health service providers, services or the **Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Support Service** who can assist them



A speech pathologist:

Has a right to refuse to participate in any stage of the voluntary assisted dying process

Who refuses to participate because of a conscientious objection must:

- Inform their employer or person seeking requesting their services of their conscientious objection
- Advise of another speech pathologist or speech pathology service who they believe is likely to be able to assist
- Not intentionally prevent someone's access to speech pathology services

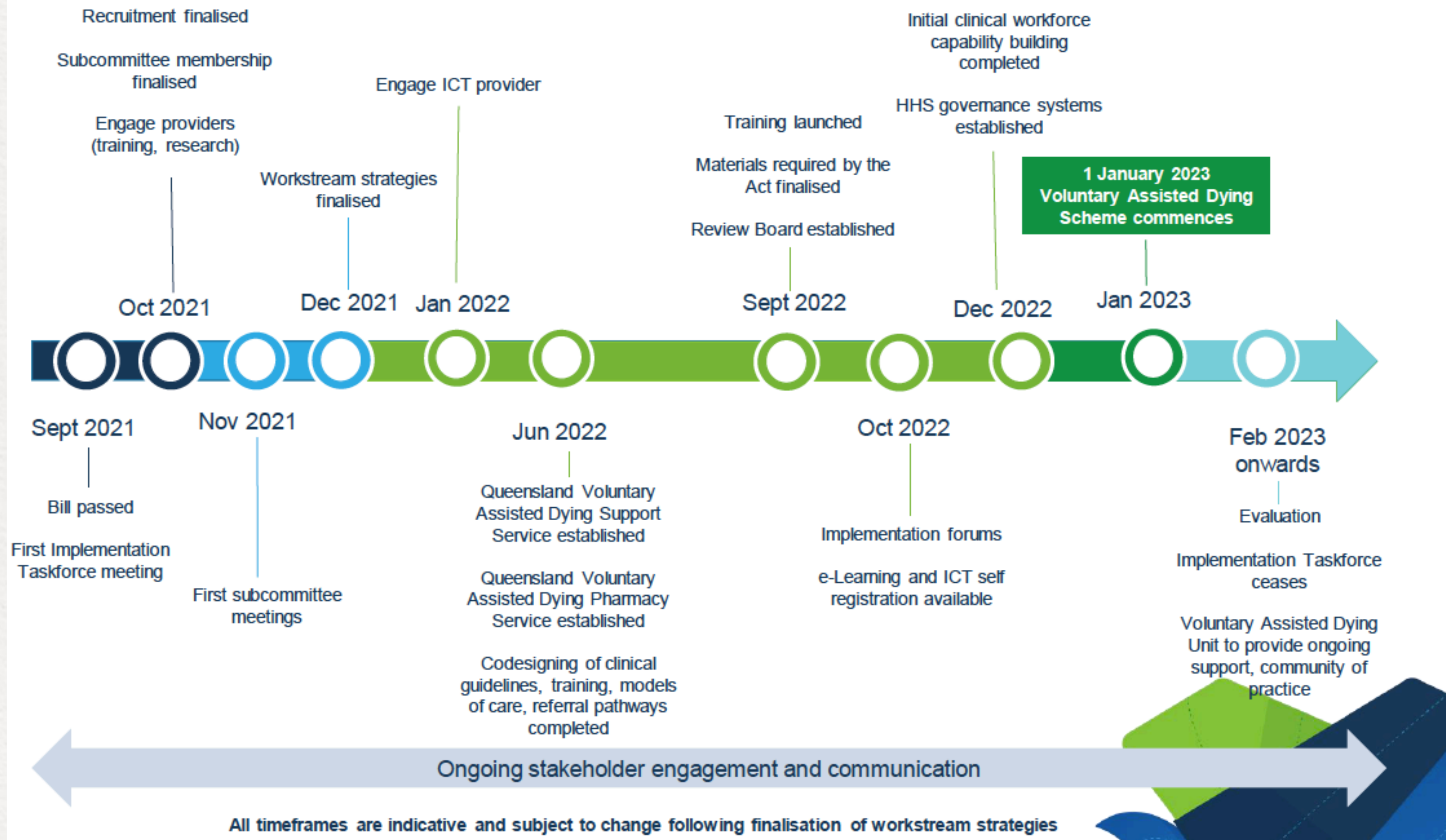


Entities:

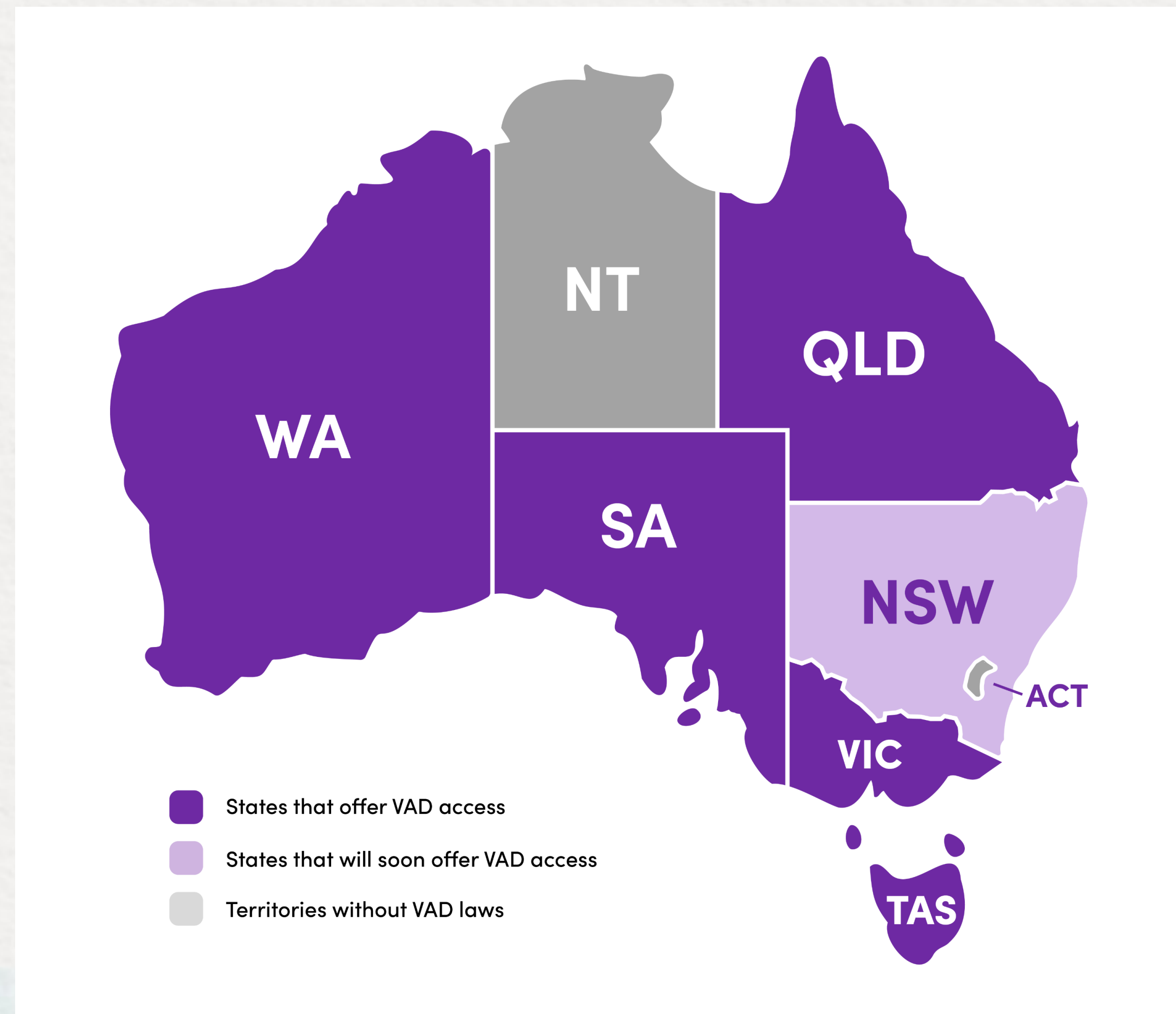
Do not have to provide or participate in voluntary assisted dying

Must not hinder a person's access to voluntary assisted dying – the Act sets out requirements for each stage of the process

May be required to allow reasonable access to the facility by practitioners who are willing to participate, or facilitate a transfer to another facility



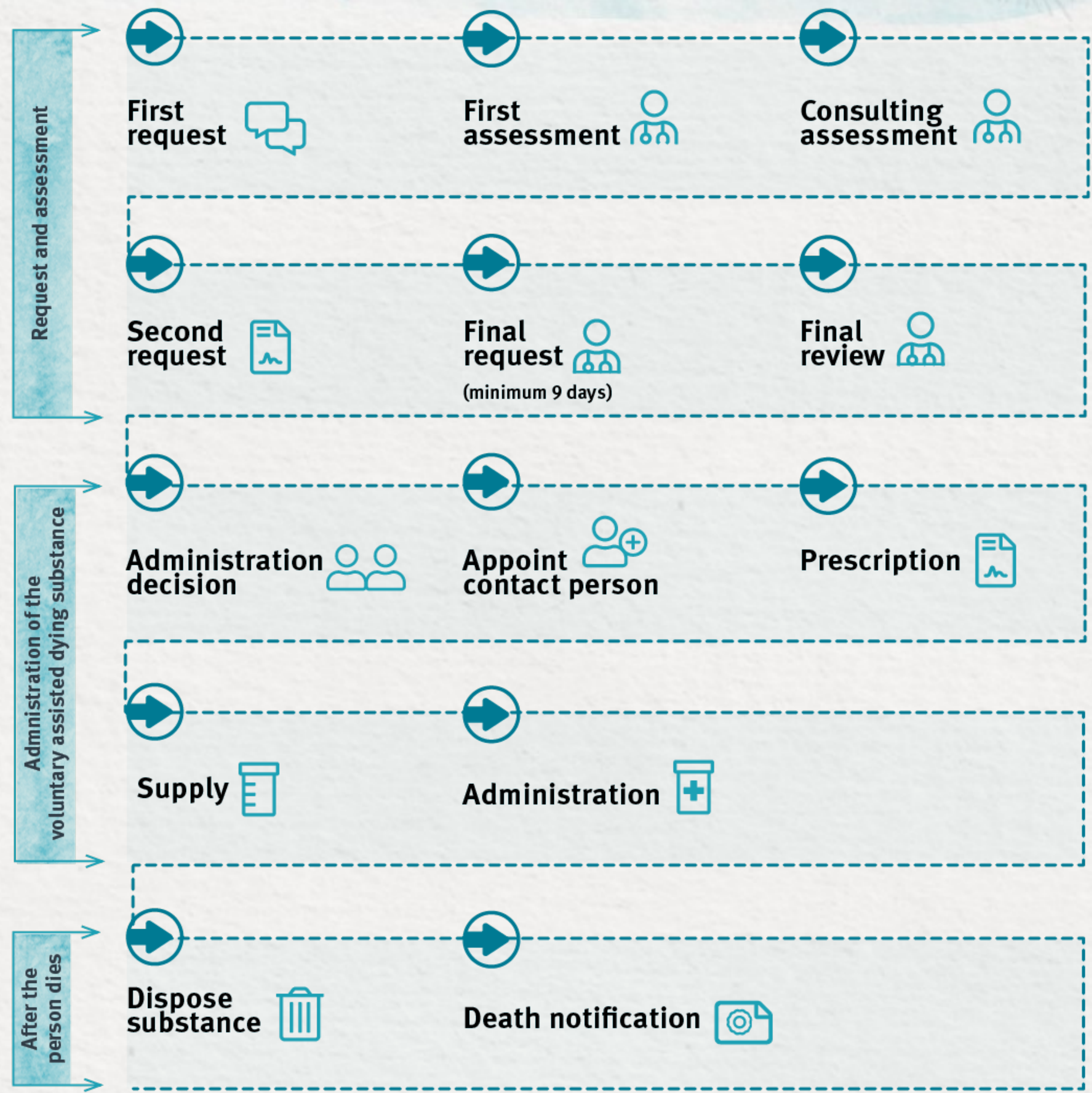
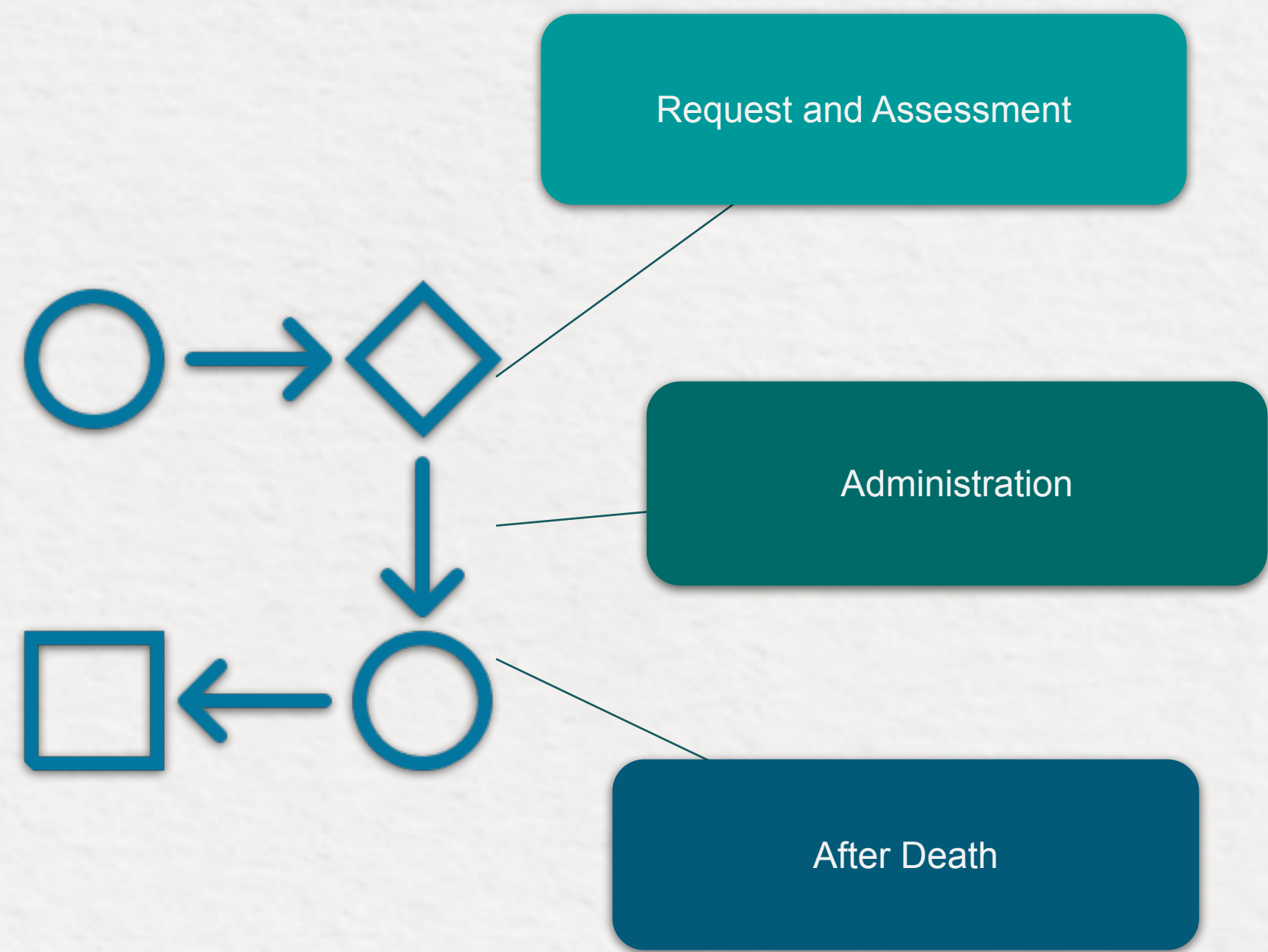
Voluntary Assisted Dying Australian Snapshot



Eligibility Criteria

1. Have an **eligible condition**:
 - is advanced, progressive and will cause death, and
 - is expected to cause death within 12 months, and
 - is causing suffering that the person considers to be intolerable
 - **This is subjective and individual to the person**
2. Have **decision-making capacity**
3. Be **acting voluntarily and without coercion**
4. Be at least **18 years** of age
5. Fulfil **residency and citizenship requirements**
 - Have been ordinarily an Australian citizen for 3 years
 - Have been ordinarily living in QLD for 12 months

Overview of the Process

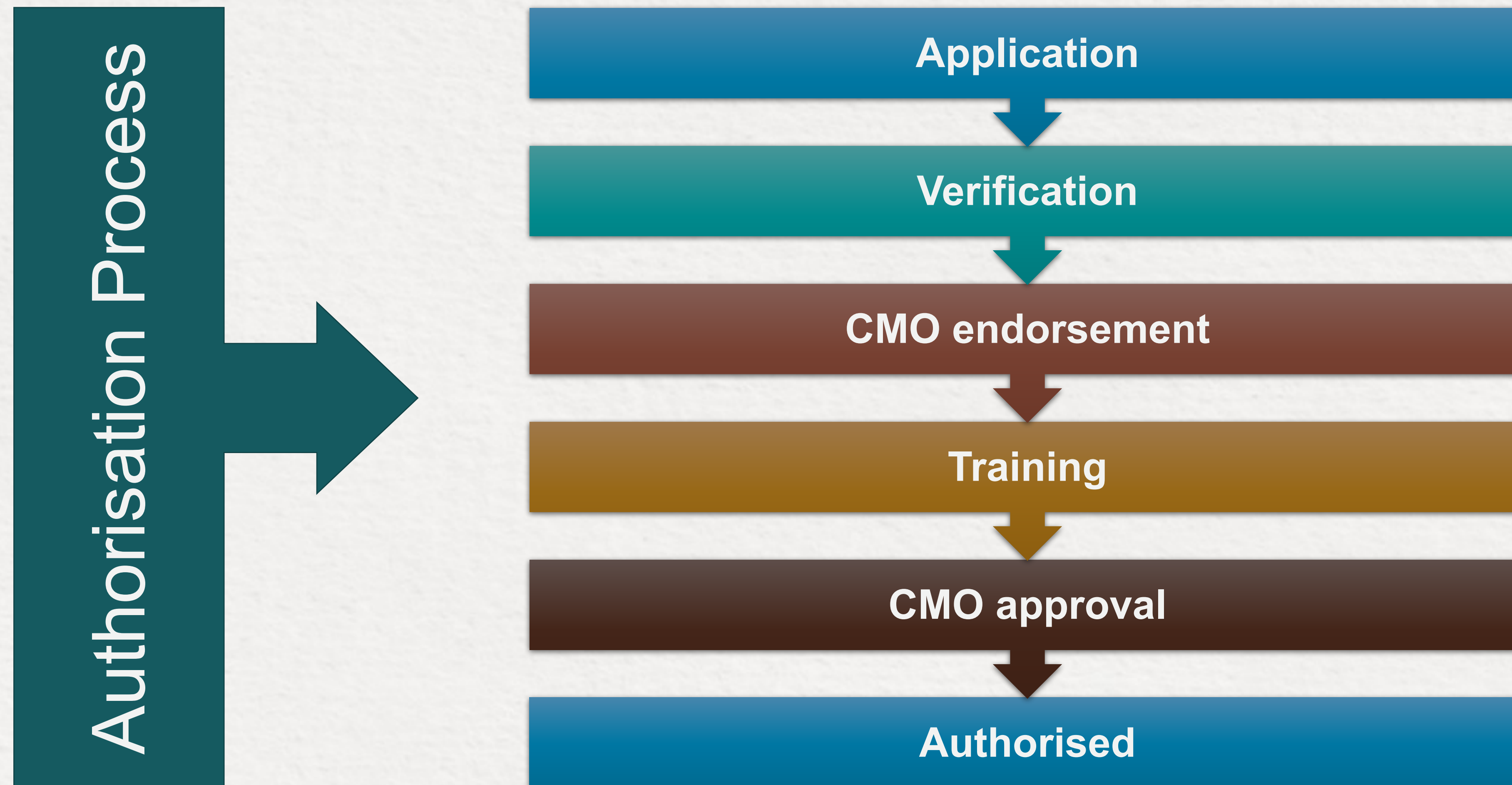


Mandatory report to the Review Board
at all steps by the relevant practitioner

Authorised VAD Practitioners

Role	Functions	Who can act in this role
Coordinating practitioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordinates the voluntary assisted dying process• Primary voluntary assisted dying contact for the person• Conducts eligibility assessment• Prescribes the voluntary assisted dying substance• As a default, acts as administering practitioner (if practitioner administration)	Eligible medical practitioner who has completed mandatory training and been endorsed as an authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioner
Consulting practitioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducts eligibility assessment	Eligible medical practitioner who has completed mandatory training and been endorsed as an authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioner
Administering practitioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only involved in practitioner administration (not self-administration)• Administers the voluntary assisted dying substance• Disposes of any unused or remaining voluntary assisted dying substance	By default, this will be the coordinating practitioner , but the role can be transferred to another eligible medical practitioner, nurse practitioner, or registered nurse who has been endorsed as an authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioner

Practitioner Participation in Voluntary Assisted Dying



Role of Medical Practitioners

A medical practitioner can:

- Act as the coordinating practitioner
- Act as the consulting practitioner
- Act as the administering practitioner

IF

The medical practitioner:

- Holds a **specialist registration** and has practised for at least 1 year as the holder of that registration; or
- Holds a **general registration** and has practised for at least 5 years as the holder of that registration; or
- Holds a **specialist registration** and has practised for at least 5 years as the holder of general registration; or
- Is an overseas-trained specialist who holds **limited registration or provisional registration**.

AND they meet approved voluntary assisted dying medical practitioner requirements

Role of Nurses

Nurse practitioner

Can

- Initiate a conversation about voluntary assisted dying in the course of talking about all end-of-life options
- Act as the administering practitioner if the coordinating practitioner transfers this role to them
- AND they meet the approved voluntary assisted dying nurse practitioner requirements

Cannot

- Act as a coordinating or consulting practitioner

Registered Nurse

Can

- Act as the administering practitioner if the coordinating practitioner transfers this role to them and they:
 - have five years experience as a registered nurse
 - AND they meet approved voluntary assisted dying practitioner required nurse

Cannot

- Act as a ordinating or consulting practitioner
- Initiate a conversation about voluntary assisted dying in the course of talking about all end of life options

Education Program

Mandatory training for **eligible** and **verified** medical practitioner, nurse practitioners and registered nurses delivered via **iLearn**

- 1 Overview of the voluntary assisted dying process and legislation
- 2 Self-care and support networks
- 3 Voluntary assisted dying in the context of end-of-life care
- 4 Participating in the Voluntary assisted dying process
- 5 Eligibility and assessment
- 6 The eligibility assessment process
- 7 Participation by entities (*new Queensland module*)
- 8 Administration of the Voluntary assisted dying substance and steps after death
- 9 Offences, legal protections and review mechanisms
- 10 Assessment
- 11 Completion of Voluntary assisted dying training

Optional **online education** for all healthcare workers delivered via **iLearn**

High level – information relevant for all healthcare workers **including those who conscientiously object** to participation

Broad understanding of the voluntary assisted dying scheme

Individual rights, responsibilities, scope of practice

**Important
for all staff!**

Projected Demand - Queensland

Projected demand in the first 12 months of voluntary assisted dying in Queensland:

800-1100 first assessments

380-430 deaths

These are projections only, actual numbers may differ.

Projected demand by HHS

2023 estimates

HHS of residence	First assessments	Deaths from admin. of VAD substance
Cairns and Hinterland	56	23
Central Queensland	42	17
Central West	2	1
Children's Health Queensland	0	0
Darling Downs	71	29
Gold Coast	143	57
Mackay	31	12
Metro North	201	80
Metro South	222	89
North West	4	2
South West	5	2
Sunshine Coast	115	46
Torres and Cape	3	1
Townsville	50	20
West Moreton	61	24
Wide Bay	72	29
Queensland	1,078	432

MHHS VAD Care Coordination Team

- Information, education, and support
- Coordination of requests
- Assistance with providing VAD services
- Provide counselling resources
- Operational management
- Data collection and reporting

MHHS VAD Care Coordination Team

Staffing

CNC – 0.5 FTE

SMO – 0.2 FTE

AO7 (Project Officer) – 0.5 FTE

Hours of operation

Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays)

0730 – 1600hrs

Contact

MHHS_VAD@health.qld.gov.au

Phone: 4885 5392

Referral Pathways

Internal Referrals	External Referrals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eBlue Slip – required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart Referrals – preferred
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact MHHS VAD Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faxed referral form
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be referred by all clinical staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact MHHS VAD Team
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See HealthPathways for more information

Select Facility & Referral

Facility:

Mackay Hospital

Referral Forms:

Audiology Test Request

Cardiac Catheterisation Laboratory Request

Cardiac Nursing Referral Form

Child Development Service (CDS) Referral

Child Youth and Family Health Unit Referral

Clinical Measurements Cardiac Test Request

Exercise Stress Test Request

Kidney Support Care program (KSCp)

MHHS Indigenous Health Worker Services

Neurophysiology Test Request

Respiratory Test Request

Stroke Discharge Clinic

Voluntary Assisted Dying Referral

MBH Allied Health Outpatient Referral Forms:

Allied Health Rapid Response

Mackay

HEALTHPATHWAYS

Health Alert

A case of typhoid confirmed in Mackay. [Mackay Public Health Unit](#) is tracing close contacts. The risk to the general community is low.

Pathway Updates

Updated – 4 July
[Vaginal Pessaries](#)

SMART REFERRALS SUPPORT

HEALTH PROVIDER PORTAL (VI

Voluntary Assisted Dying and Advance Care Planning

The Rules

A person **cannot request** VAD in an **ACP document**
eg. Advance Health Directive

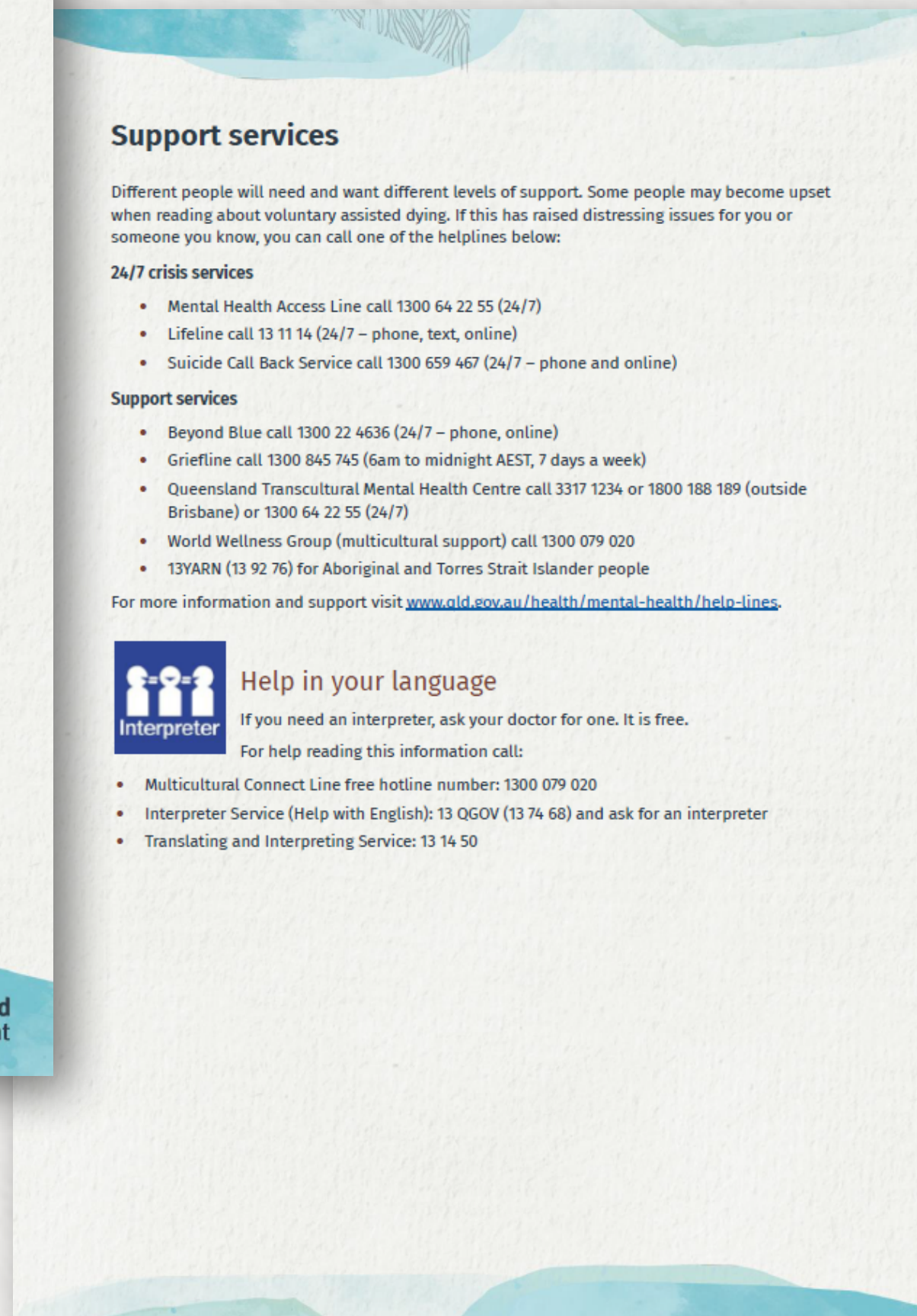
A **substitute decision-maker cannot request** VAD on behalf of another person

The Reasons

To access VAD a person **must have decision-making capacity**
ACP documents = loss of capacity

All requests for VAD **must be made by the person** accessing it

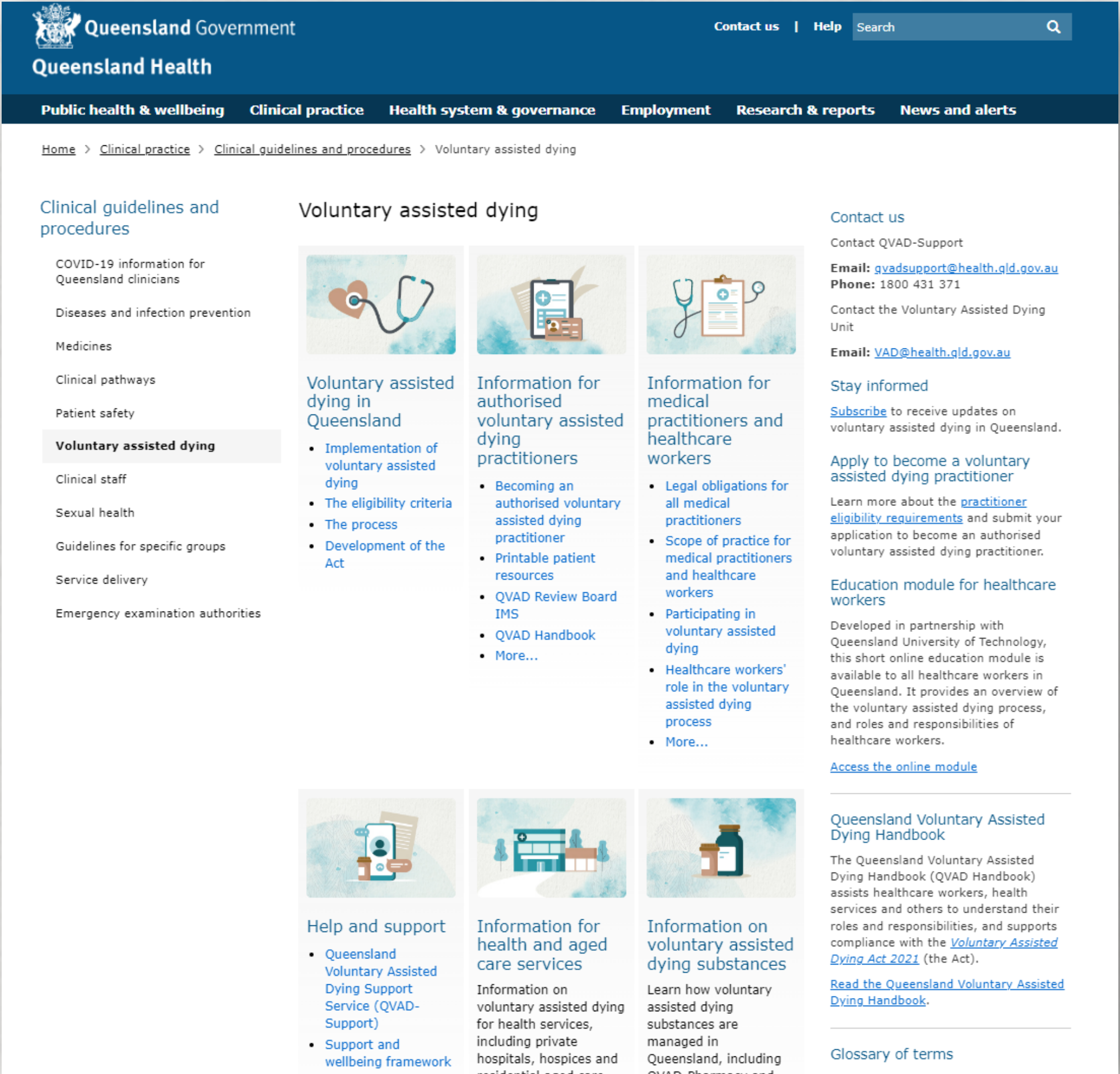
Information Available for Consumers



MHHS VAD Localised Fact Sheet

Available to all staff on QHEPS

Information Available: Consumers + Health Professionals



Queensland Health Public-facing Website

QVAD Support

- **Care coordinators:** medical, nursing, and allied health professionals.
- **Connect individuals** with practitioners, services and referral pathways.

Contact details

8:30am - 4pm | Monday to Friday

Phone: **1800 431 371**

Email: qvadsupport@health.qld.gov.au

Your Role From Here...

- Consider your position on VAD
- Have knowledge of **referral options**
- Continue current cares – no matter your role!
- Unless decided by the patient, treatment is **unchanged**
- Encourage review of **ARP** status
- Bed allocation – **business as usual**
- Strict **confidentiality** – our curtains aren't soundproof!





For more information:

Google: “QLD VAD” or,

Contact MHHS VAD Team → MHHS_VAD@health.qld.gov.au

Phone: 4885 **5392**

**Submit an
application to
become an
authorised voluntary
assisted dying
practitioner**

health.qld.gov.au/vad

