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VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING MODEL ESTABLISHED AHEAD OF VOTE IN PARLIAMENT

The Andrews Labor Government will incorporate all 66 recommendations from the Ministerial Advisory Panel’s final report on Voluntary Assisted Dying into a Bill to be introduced into the Parliament in coming months.

The Panel, chaired by neurosurgeon and former AMA President Dr Brian Owler, was established by the Labor Government to assist drafting a safe and compassionate legislative framework for assisted dying in Victoria.

Over the past six months, the Panel – which consists of the best clinical, legal, consumer, palliative care and health experts – has undertaken extensive consultation, engaging with more than 300 stakeholders.

The Panel’s final report includes 66 recommendations to Government covering eligibility for the scheme, how requests to access voluntary assisted dying are made and assessed, oversight, and the protections in place.

It contains 68 safeguards to protect vulnerable Victorians from exploitation and coercion, making it the safest, and most conservative model in the world.

The Panel recommends a predominately self-administered scheme, that limits access to Victorian adults with decision making capacity with a terminal illness, who are suffering and only have 12 months or less to live.

Under the proposed model, a Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board will be established to review every case of assisted dying, as well as a series of new criminal offences for anyone – including health practitioners – who attempt to act outside the scope of the scheme and coerce or induce a person to access it.

The Panel’s rigorous process means Victorians can have confidence the most stringent protections and safeguards are in place, and will give all Members of Parliament the information and assurances they need to make an informed decision about this important issue.

The legislation to be introduced into Parliament will include the recommendations and safeguards proposed by the Panel. All Labor Members of Parliament will be granted a conscience vote on the legislation, with the Parliament expected to vote on the issue before the end of the year.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

“This will be the safest scheme in the world, with the most rigorous checks and balances. It means we can have a respectful debate on the principles – instead of the technicalities.”

“This is about compassion and choice, and giving Victorians the support and care they deserve in their final moments.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Jill Hennessy

“We know we need to do better and give those Victorians at the end of their life a choice – and that’s exactly what this safe, compassionate and considered framework will do.”

Quote attributable to Attorney-General Martin Pakula

“This scheme has been developed by leading legal, medical and palliative care experts and includes significant safeguards and protections.”

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