

MEDIA RELEASE

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Queensland Budget should invest in dignity for the dying

AMA Queensland Budget Submission 2025-26

AMA Queensland has called on the government to detail its plan for palliative care in the upcoming state budget.

President Dr Nick Yim said \$171 million in funding to take care of Queenslanders at the end of their lives was announced in the 2022-2023 budget.

"The government should outline which programs have been supported and how much funding is yet to be allocated," he said.

"All unallocated funds must be reinvested by the government in end-of-life care as a priority, with a focus on expanding service provision in First Nations communities.

"Funding for end-of-life care has historically been inadequate from both levels of government, and this cannot continue if we want to achieve equitable healthcare for all."

As part of its *Budget Submission 2025-26*, AMA Queensland has called for further reforms, including:

- an independent review of rural and remote community-based palliative care services,
- expansion of the Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme to the last 12 months of life (instead of six months) and improved access, and
- more support and investment in our community-based workforce to reduce demand on overburdened public hospital specialist palliative care services.

Dr Yim said Queensland's incredible palliative care doctors and nurses deserved more support.

"Just this week Dr Carol Douglas from the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital was honoured with a Public Service Medal in the King's Birthday Honours List," he said.

"We want to see clinicians like Dr Douglas best equipped to help Queenslanders navigate their final years with dignity and care."

AMA Queensland has also recommended a \$2 million annual investment to support patients with voluntary assisted dying (VAD) services in Queensland.

Public and private services are reporting a significant shortfall in the supply of VAD assistance, particularly those wanting to access care via their regular and trusted GP.

"All people deserve the dignity and comfort of high-quality health services as they age and reach the end of their lives," Dr Yim said.

"Culturally appropriate services must also be provided to First Nations Queenslanders as a priority given their historical inequitable access relative to non-Indigenous Queenslanders."

Background

- VAD was legalised in Queensland on 1 January 2023.
- Patients wishing to access these services must meet strict eligibility requirements, including having decision-making capacity, acting without coercion and having an eligible disease, illness or medical condition.