



**April 2, 2026**

**Email to VADSA Supporters**

## **Telehealth ban**

Many of you will be aware of the telehealth challenge with the voluntary assisted dying request and assessment process. In brief, Commonwealth law bans the use of telehealth to promote suicide. State government legal advice and a recent Supreme Court case in Victoria have interpreted the ban to apply to consultations on voluntary assisted dying.

Write to Attorney General Michelle Rowland asking her to amend the Commonwealth Criminal Code to allow telehealth for VAD consultations:

**<https://gogentleaustralia.good.do/regionalaustraliansdeservefairaccesstovad/fairVADaccess/>**

The ban on the use of telehealth in VAD is a particular disadvantage for people in regional areas who already have less access to health services, and when they become ill with a terminal illness, find it almost impossible to travel to medical appointments.

We all know that VAD is not suicide. Suicide can be prevented with appropriate support and care. VAD is not a choice between life and death. VAD is a request for medical assistance from a person who is dying from a terminal illness; a request for medical assistance to die when their suffering is no longer bearable.

Suicide prevention organisations have signed a [joint statement](#) confirming that VAD is not suicide and noting how damaging it is to conflate the two.

The law on suicide and telehealth was made before VAD laws were passed in all six states and the ACT, with the NT set to table a VAD Bill later this year. VAD is the most highly regulated area of medicine. There are multiple safeguards. The vulnerable are protected.

The Commonwealth Attorney General, Hon Michelle Rowland, has the power to table a Bill to amend Section 474.29a and Section 474.29b of the Commonwealth Criminal Code to confirm that VAD is not suicide and allow telehealth (called a carriage service in the legislation) to be used in VAD consultations.

We know that the AMA supports the amendments. The SA VAD Review Board supports the amendments. Our SA Attorney General, Hon Kyam Maher, supports the amendments.

Yet the Commonwealth Attorney General Hon Michelle Rowland refuses to act.

It is a simple fix. She just needs to do it.

Andrew Denton, founder of Go Gentle Australia, has this week urged the federal government to stop blocking fair access to VAD.



Mr Denton has accused the federal government of “turning a blind eye to avoidable suffering” by failing to remove VAD barriers for eligible, terminally ill Australians.

Mr Denton called on the government, particularly Attorney General Michelle Rowland, to “step up, so states can get on with delivering compassionate VAD care. .... Dying Australians continue to suffer needlessly while we wait for the Government to act.”

“Australia is the only country in the world, where VAD is legal, that does not allow telehealth. No cogent reason has ever been given why this problem should not be fixed. Turning a blind eye to avoidable suffering is not good enough.”

Write to Attorney General Michelle Rowland through this link

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Mr Denton made the comments as more than 100 people, including leading health, legal and patient rights organisations, attended the release of the [2026 State of VAD Report](#) at Parliament House in Canberra. The report found that while VAD laws are working as intended, Commonwealth policies have become a major roadblock to fair and timely access.