NORTHERN SYNOD
UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA
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MODERATOR

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To members of the Northern Synod.

CC. Rev Bruce Moore (Moderator),
Wendy Hubbard (CEO ARRCS),
Peter Armstrong (Director of Mission, Uniting Care Qld),
John Ruhle (Assistant Director of Mission, Uniting Care Qld),
Jeff Howard (Chaplaincy Services Coordinator)

2nd September 2026

Voluntary Assisted Dying

Greetings in the name of Christ.

Late in August 2026, following a short period of debate, the Northern Territory Parliament passed legislation to support Voluntary Assisted Dying. It was reported that the Northern Territory was the last jurisdiction in Australia to do so.

I know and understand that this is a very difficult conversation for many people. Within our Church there is significant diversity of understanding and opinion. People have deeply held views based on theology, personal experience, cultural and linguistic background.

As Agencies, Congregations and Faith Communities in the Northern Synod come to understand the decisions of the government, I ask you to take care of each other, understand the diversity of opinion and respond with prayerful respect and care.

The Northern Synod has discussed Voluntary Assisted Dying on several occasions over the years. As a Synod we were opposed to the introduction of Voluntary Assisted Dying legislation in 1996. At that time, we publicly stated our opposition to the proposed Rights of the Terminally III Act.

In March 2024 the then Moderator, Rev Tony Goodluck provided the following resources to the church;

More information about the NT Government process including details of public meetings can be found online, at Voluntary assisted dying | Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet.

Some helpful reading is available:

- Paper: *Information Papers on Yolŋu Culture, Papers 1 to 8* © ARDS INC 1993 rev. 2002
- Book: '*Remaining in **lament** and **hope***' (A pastoral response for a Voluntary Assisted Dying pathway) available from UCA Queensland Synod and Uniting Care (ucaqld.com.au)

Subsequent resolutions of the Northern Synod in 2022 and 2024, form the Northern Synod's current position on Voluntary Assisted Dying:

1. The Northern Synod has not changed its opposition to the Rights of the Terminally Ill Act and is opposed to the introduction of Voluntary Assisted Dying legislation into the Northern Territory.
2. The Northern Synod will not provide voluntary assisted dying as a service.
3. The Northern Synod will continue to provide high quality care to anyone in Uniting Church facilities and will continue to offer compassionate support to people, and their families, regardless of their choices in 'end of life' circumstances.

As the resolutions indicate, the Synod is committed to providing high-quality care to anyone and everyone in Uniting Church facilities. However, we will not provide voluntary assisted dying as a service. Our facilities will offer compassionate support to people, and their families, if they choose to use Voluntary Assisted Dying as a pathway for care.

If you wish to discuss the Synods position, please contact me. Synod and Presbytery Resource staff will also be happy to meet with you.

Grace and peace to you all as you continue to seek God's vision, wisdom and direction. Be gentle with each other as you move forward in God's grace.

Rev Felicity Amery
Moderator