

VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING AND THE EMERGING SOCIAL WORK ROLE

WEDNESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2021

An on-line conference

This conference is relevant for all Social Workers working with people who have a life-limiting illness or disability



Organizers



OSWANZ
ONCOLOGY SOCIAL WORK
AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND
EXCELLENCE IN PSYCHOSOCIAL ONCOLOGY



Palliative Care Social Work
Australia

VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING (VAD) AND THE EMERGING SOCIAL WORK ROLE

Wednesday 20 October

Quick FAQs

Why should I attend this conference?

Australian States and New Zealand have now either implemented voluntary assisted dying laws or are about to do so. This conference is about proactively preparing for how we work in this area of practice. It is not just specialist palliative care Social Workers who will be asked about assisted dying. Social Workers in all areas of practice need to understand the key aspects of VAD and how to communicate ethically and compassionately with people who are seeking it.

This conference brings together international and national social work research, facts, experiences and perspectives around VAD and its key concepts. It will allow conference registrants across Australia and New Zealand to discuss and reflect upon how it may affect their practice and role. The conference is meant to be the start of learning about VAD.

How do I register?

You register for the conference [here](#). Once registered, you will receive the links to each session closer to the conference day.

What will it cost?

The cost is \$25 for PCSWA and OSWANZ members and social work students. Non-member cost is \$50.

How will the program timing work across Australia and internationally?

The program commences at 8:30 (QLD time) and 9:30am (NSW, Victoria etc. time) and finishes before 3:30 (QLD time) and 4:30pm (NSW, Victoria etc.) time to allow as many places as possible to watch live. If you are unsure when the sessions on the program below will start, use a freely available time zone/difference calculator on the web. We hope to record sessions for OSWANZ/PCSWA members who miss a session. With consent of the speakers, recordings will be made available to view later on the OSWANZ and PCSWA websites.

The program timetable is detailed below (may be subject to change if speakers are added). Get to know each of the confirmed speakers by their bios below too!

Conference Program Timetable

Time	Sessions	Presenters
8:30 – 8:50 (Brisbane time) <i>Adjust this to your own State.</i>	<i>Acknowledgement of country</i> <i>Introduction</i>	Dr Pippa Blackburn and Nick Hobbs
8:55 -10:15  <i>Acquiring knowledge</i>	Session 1: Plenary session <i>Voluntary Assisted Dying, facts, evidence, and the international experience</i>	Dr Sheri Mila Gerson
10:15-10:45 10:45 --12:45pm  <i>Acquiring skills</i>	Morning tea Session 2: Facilitated panel and audience discussion in breakout rooms <i>The Experiences thus far: A trans-Tasman dialogue</i>	Savannah Rowland Bronwyn Wilson Melanie Van Diemen
12:45- 1:30 1:30 – 3:15  <i>Reflecting on heart</i>	Lunch Session 3: presentations and facilitated presenter discussion <i>Raising and reflecting: Cautionary tales and key concepts in VAD and implications for practice</i>	<i>Ethical considerations -</i> Professor Donna McAuliffe <i>Human rights considerations –</i> Scott McDougall <i>Grief and loss considerations –</i> Dr Lise Johns & Emily Plunkett
3:15 – 3:30	Summary comments and conclusion of conference	

The Plenary Speaker



Dr Sheri Mila Gerson has over 30 years of experience working as a clinical social worker in the United States primarily focused on end-of-life care.

She holds a Master's degree in social work from the University of Chicago (1987) and in 2018 was awarded a PhD in Palliative Care from Lancaster University, United Kingdom, with a thesis focused on professionals' experiences with patients who died of suicide or hastened death in Washington State.

She has been a research associate/affiliate with the University of Glasgow End of Life Studies Research Group working on studies about global issues in end of life including the relationship of palliative care with assisted dying, and the death café movement.

She has been a community educator and facilitator of advance care planning, community conversations on death and dying, cultural traditions and customs after death, and issues related to medical assistance in dying.

Her current research interests include assisted dying, social work practices serving patients and families about end-of-life issues, and the intersection of healthcare, technology, and social justice.

Presenters and panel discussants



Professor Donna McAuliffe is Professor of Social Work in the School of Health Sciences and Social Work, Griffith University.

As a qualified social worker, Donna has practice experience in the fields of mental health, community development, legal social work, and social policy. She completed her PhD in 2000 on ethical dilemmas in social work practice, and has developed her expertise in professional ethics through teaching and research, leading and consulting on reviews of codes of ethics (AASW), and constructing models of ethical decision making. Donna is sole author of *Interprofessional Ethics: Collaboration in the Social, Health and Human Services* (moving into 2nd edition); and co-author of *The Road to Social Work and Human Service Practice* (7th edition). She is the ethics lead for Palliative Care Social Work Australia (PCSWA).



Scott McDougall commenced as Queensland Human Rights Commissioner on 8 October 2018. Prior to his appointment he was the Director and Principal Solicitor at Caxton Legal Centre Inc. in Brisbane. Since admission to legal practice in 1993 he has advocated on behalf of communities and conducted litigation particularly in the areas of discrimination, native title, criminal law, guardianship and coronial inquiries.

Mr McDougall has overseen the design and implementation of numerous legal and social work service programs and was the President of the Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services from 2009 to 2013. He has undertaken several projects facilitating engagement between governments and communities including working with the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council to prepare the Palm Island Future Direction Report (2006) and overseeing the G20 Independent Legal Observers Project (2014).

He holds a Bachelor of Laws from the Queensland University of Technology.



Dr Lise Johns has practiced as a hospital social worker. Whilst working as a generalist medical social worker in a rural hospital, she became increasingly involved with palliative care patients and families. Addressing psychosocial needs of this patient group (and families) ultimately became her main work. From 2010-2014 (whilst working full-time in this role), she undertook a PhD on a palliative care related topic. Since graduating with a PhD in 2014, Lise has worked as a lecturer/researcher at Griffith University. She now teaches a health course with a palliative care component, whilst continuing to research and publish on this topic. She actively supports palliative care practitioners who are seeking to participate in research or evaluations.



Savannah Rowland graduated from Monash University, Australia in 1997 with a Bachelor of Social Work. She completed her Master of Advanced Social Work, Melbourne University in 2021. Savannah started her career working in aged care (Jewish Care) but soon found her niche working in palliative care, where she worked for 13 years in a range of clinical settings including inpatient, community palliative care and an oncology day unit. Savannah commenced working at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in 2019. Her role at present is working within the lower GI team and as the Education Portfolio lead.



Bronwyn Wilson works at Melbourne City Mission Palliative Care – a community palliative care service providing in-home holistic palliative care support. Within their team, she works in a smaller team that specifically focuses on the provision of specialist palliative care support for clients who live in Residential Aged Care. Her role includes support for residents, family and education/support for staff. Bronwyn provides insight from her experience as a Palliative Care Social Worker working in Victoria where VAD is now legislated.



Melanie Van Diemen completed her undergraduate degree in health science and social work at Monash University and completed a Master's in Public Health and Health Management at UNSW in 2020. She has worked primarily in the health sector. Her clinical experience is in palliative care and ICU at Eastern Health and the Royal Melbourne Hospital. She has also worked as a team leader and clinical education co-ordinator at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. Mel has been in the role of State Wide Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator since April, 2019.



Emily Plunkett is a Senior Social Worker who has specialised in the areas of Cancer Services and Palliative Care over the past 10years. Emily is a novice researcher who has published on a variety of topics including bereavement risk assessment in the palliative care context.