ARCHBISHOP PHILIP FREIER

THOUGHTS AND OPINION

[](https://www.melbournearchbishop.org.au/2019/06/18/a-pastoral-note-on-assisted-dying/)

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In November 2017 the Victorian Parliament passed the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017. The passage of this bill made Victoria the first state in Australia to legalise voluntary assisted dying. From tomorrow – June 19, 2019 – Victorians who meet the strict eligibility criteria set out in the Act will be able to request access to voluntary assisted dying, if suffering from a terminal illness and approaching the end of their life.

Consequently, Anglican ministers in Victoria may receive a request for ministry with a dying person who will end their life under the provisions of the state’s assisted dying legislation. Those called upon to provide ministry in this situation may well share the ethical and theological concerns about the legislation that continue to be expressed by people of faith. Notwithstanding the gravity and importance of such concerns, the pastoral imperative will be to commend the dying person to God.

Anglican ministers should respond to a request for ministry in these circumstances in the same way as they would for any dying person, including funeral ministry. (Adapted from *A Pastoral Handbook for Anglicans*, page 257.)

I gave my personal view when the legislation was passed in November 2017. My statement from that time may be read [here](https://www.melbournearchbishop.org.au/press/assisted-dying-law-cause-for-lament/).