



More local support for euthanasia Bill

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MORE Riverlanders will speak up about their support of voluntary euthanasia following an information session in Berri on Saturday, event organisers claim.

Questions about safeguards and palliative care were covered at the session, along with some myth-busting, ahead of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill hitting State Parliament – as soon as next month.

Approximately 50 people attended the session and a petition – also circulated in Waikerie last week – was available for attendees to sign, targeting Member for Chaffey, Tim Whetstone, who made headlines in 2016 over his decision to vote against a voluntary euthanasia Bill that was defeated 24-23.

Organiser Angie Miller, who met with Mr Whetstone this week, said she expected more locals to be vocal in their backing of the controversial and emotive Bill.

“I felt encouraged that many who attended are willing to take their support further in whatever capacity that are able to do so, whether that is contacting Tim Whetstone or talking with their

friends and family,” she said.

“This meeting is a clear indication that the momentum in the Chaffey electorate is certainly building.

“I could feel a real desire in people, not just wanting to show their support towards the issue but also wanting to make a very informed view that they could then share with others.”

The session featured several guest speakers, including a cancer sufferer and a spokesperson from Voluntary Assisted Dying SA. Aldgate-based Ms Miller said “many questions” were answered and fears allayed.

“Of particular interest is the fact that this Bill mirrors the Victorian legislation and has 68 safeguards,” she said.

“This includes the need for two VAD (voluntary assisted dying) trained doctors to assess that you have a terminal illness. Doctors and medical staff are not allowed to raise the issue with you. The request has to come from the person.

“Many myths were discussed. Among them, the notion of killing someone.

“Under this legislation not one



Some of the attendees at last Saturday's pro-VAD (voluntary assisted dying) session at the Berri Hotel. Organisers say approximately 50 people attended the session. PHOTO: supplied

more person is going to die. This is about the choice not to suffer.

“We also discussed the myth that this issue is for elderly people when in fact it is for people over the age of 18 with a terminal illness.”

Debate around palliative care also featured at the session.

“With many attendees having had first-hand experience in this area, the need for access to quality palliative care was well under-

stood,” Ms Miller said.

“We were also able to inform people that in jurisdictions where VAD legislation was introduced, palliative care funding was actually increased.”

Despite the meeting being pro-VAD, Ms Miller said the importance of respecting all views on the topic was stressed.

“Something that really stood out at the meeting was the issue of choice,” she said.

“There seemed to be a real general consensus that it's okay not to support VAD.

“However, there is no need to get in the way of those that do want to access it.”

Ms Miller said in addition to the implementation of voluntary assisted dying legislation, the VAD campaign aimed to promote increased funding for palliative care and advanced care directives.