

Voluntary Assisted Dying – Position Statement

Catholic Healthcare's Mission is to **“promote dignity, life, and spirituality of older people through connected and inclusive communities.”** As a living expression of the healing ministry of Jesus, we are called to respond with compassion for all, particularly those in palliation and at the end of life.

As a ministry of the Church, Catholic Healthcare is called to live according to the ethical tradition of the Catholic Church, which **upholds the dignity of the human person and the sanctity of life**, lived through the values of courage, compassion, and integrity. The core underlying principles are outlined in the “Code of Ethical Standards for Catholic Health and Aged Care Services in Australia.”

Catholic Healthcare ensures that all people who receive any of our care and services receive quality palliative care so that they can die with comfort and dignity. We also provide direct support to their families and significant others.

We respect every individual choice and preference, acknowledging a capable adult’s right to choose their clinical care, including the right to cease or withdraw from medical treatment at any time. We do not and will not seek to prolong life. This includes the right to refuse or discontinue treatment that is burdensome and will not improve the prognosis of illness or quality of life. We encourage and support the use of Advanced Care Planning and Directives as the choices made by a person for their death.

Catholic Healthcare does not support, facilitate, or participate in voluntary assisted dying (VAD).

All people who receive any of our care and services and their families are advised of our conscientious objection to VAD as part of onboarding to Catholic Healthcare, is publicly available on our website and we will always take the time to answer any questions whenever an individual seeks information in accordance with our VAD policy and procedure documents.

Catholic Healthcare adopts a right-based approach to care and is **respectful of the personal choice of each person. We will never abandon an older person pursuing a VAD pathway, will never treat them any less favourably**, and will always demonstrate a compassionate approach to all people in our care.

Catholic Healthcare will not change or alter the provision of safe, high-quality care and services provided by the workforce, including contractors and volunteers, when a person chooses to access VAD.

Catholic Healthcare has a governance structure including policies, procedures, and training for all workforce members, including volunteers and contractors. Catholic Healthcare **will not impede a person from pursuing VAD or hinder access to information about VAD.**