

Voluntary Assisted Dying

Position Statement

As a Catholic aged care organisation, Southern Cross Care Queensland believes in the sacredness of human life and it informs all of our responses to those who are sick and vulnerable. We were founded on the central principle of *valuing and respecting human life*, therefore we hold a view that it is against our fundamental values to purposefully end an individual's life through Voluntary Assisted Dying, euthanasia or assisted suicide.

We believe high quality aged care is fundamental to allowing people to live a purposeful life and the provision of palliative care and end-of-life care are the best options to allow freedom of choice, comfort, dignity and respect as a person nears the end of life.

We do not consider that the prescription of a lethal substance to a person to help them end their own life, nor the administration of a lethal substance to a person by a health practitioner to end their life, are part of end-of-life care. It is these acts which are legal under Queensland's Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021.

Our position is consistent with the Australian Medical Association and the World Medical Association.

The law allows aged care providers in Queensland to choose whether or not to participate in the State's Voluntary Assisted Dying system. In line with our ethos and vision, mission and values, we will not provide Voluntary Assisted Dying at any of our homes or services.

We recognise that some people may wish to explore the option of Voluntary Assisted Dying while under our care. We are committed to receiving any enquiries about Voluntary Assisted Dying in a compassionate and respectful manner.

If a person under our care wishes to access Voluntary Assisted Dying from an external provider, we will not impede them. We will also continue to respect the privacy of each person's own home, within our facilities, which includes honouring the privacy of consultations with any external health care practitioners.

We will always maintain our commitment to care for those under our care who are considering or pursuing Voluntary Assisted Dying.

We will abide by all relevant Queensland legislation.