

10 May 2021



RE: Calvary Health Care's concerns regarding the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2020*

I write to advise of Calvary's opposition to the adoption of the Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) Bill currently before the Parliament. I am grateful for the opportunity to set our reasoning below and in the attached paper.

Calvary is a significant provider of health care and community care services and has served the South Australian community for more than 120 years. Calvary's mission calls us to accompany people and relieve suffering and never to harm nor intentionally bring about the death of a person who is not dying.

The need to protect the vulnerable

First and foremost, Calvary remains concerned that the Bill does not provide sufficient protection for the vulnerable who we believe may be led into a VAD death not by a genuine exercise of personal autonomy, but rather because they feel pressured to agree. These are patients or residents living with a terminal illness who feel a burden to their families, who are lonely or who suffer from other existential concerns. These are also those who may not have capacity to make such an importance decision. Two recent Royal Commissions suggest that legislated safeguards designed to protect vulnerable people from abuse and neglect have been simply ignored.

The need to provide for conscientious objection

If the Bill is passed, Calvary cannot participate in Voluntary Assisted Dying and will conscientiously object to the scheme.

Our hospitals are communities of practice drawing together doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and administrators by common purpose and values – a purpose that ultimately generates a distinct singular institutional identity, character, culture and purpose.

For the sake of clarity, certainty and business continuity, if the South Australian Parliament is determined to proceed with a VAD scheme, a right to organisational non-participation needs to be legislated.

The need for consultation

Calvary invests significantly to provide health and aged care services in South Australia but has not been consulted on the proposed Bill or how it is to operate.

Calvary wishes to continue to contribute to the long term comprehensive, quality and timely health care of South Australians by investing in present services and future developments. However, **Calvary needs certainty that our services will not be forced by legislation to permit actions that are inconsistent with our fundamental ethic of care.**

A fuller explanation of these matters is set out in the accompanying submission.

Please direct any questions you may have to Calvary's National Director of Mission, Mark Green:

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Yours faithfully,



Jim Birch, AM

Chair

Little Company of Mary Health Care Ltd.

(Calvary Health Care)