



MEDIA RELEASE

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CATHOLIC HOSPITALS AND HOMES WELCOME PANEL'S RECOGNITION THAT INSTITUTIONS SHOULD NOT BE FORCED INTO AN ASSISTED SUICIDE REGIME

Catholic Health Australia has welcomed an independent panel's findings that hospitals or aged care facilities should not be forced into participating in an assisted suicide regime should it become law in Tasmania.

A University of Tasmania panel charged by the Tasmanian Government to objectively examine the End of Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Bill 2020 concluded that "no organisation or entity should be compelled to participate in or provide VAD".

Hospitals, aged care facilities, palliative care services and home care services provided by Catholic institutions are asking the Tasmanian Parliament to allow the law to exempt them from offering or participating in assisted suicide. In Tasmania our members include Calvary Health Care and Southern Cross Catholic Homes.

CHA has requested a meeting with Premier Peter Gutwein to discuss possible amendments, among them greater protections for the vulnerable, the widening of exemptions beyond doctors to include nurses and other staff, and an increased role and participation of the patient's GP in any assisted suicide application.

CHA members will not participate in assisted suicide because it contravenes the ethic of care that reflects the tradition of medical care endorsed by the Australian Medical Association and World Medical Association - that is we will not intentionally inflict harm on or kill patients or assist them to kill themselves.

Furthermore, on a practical level, allowing some staff to practice VAD while others object risks undermining the community of practice – the bedrock principle upon which a hospital or aged care facility is founded.

CHA CEO Pat Garcia said the panel's report should now prompt Tasmanian Parliamentarians to rethink the End of Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Bill 2020.

"An independent panel has concluded that no organisation or entity should be compelled to participate in an assisted suicide regime. It is the right thing to do by doctors, nurses and other



MEDIA RELEASE

staff and it is the right thing to do by a community that wants clear choice between those facilities that offer assisted suicide and those that never will.”

“If the Tasmanian Parliament is determined to implement an assisted suicide scheme then we urge them to consider enshrining organisational non-participation in the act – to give confidence in the law to everyone involved.”

“Our members will continue our ethic of compassionate care as we have done for decades.”