



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Thursday 2 September 2021

### **HOSPITALS AND AGED CARE HOMES UNITE WITH DOCTORS IN OPPOSITION TO VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING BILL**

Queensland Catholic hospitals and aged care operators have joined forces with senior doctors to press home their case about the impact on their operations if assisted suicide legislation passes later this month.

Catholic Health Australia members Mater Group, St Vincent's Health Australia, Southern Cross Care, Catholic Healthcare, and Mercy Community Services have put their name to an open letter to Queensland MPs.

They are joined by three prominent doctors, the former heads of State and Federal branches of the Australian Medical Association.

Their letter is entitled 'Voluntary should mean voluntary' and centres on what the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill (2021) will mean for hospitals and aged care homes if passed in the Queensland Parliament later this month.

CHA Director of Strategy & Mission Rebecca Burdick Davies said: "Queensland is about to make history for all the wrong reasons. If the Parliament passes this bill, then it will be the only jurisdiction in Australia that actually forces people or their workplaces to participate in something that goes against their will.

"The law will also totally override the good governance that is at the heart of every hospital or aged care home - knowing who is on the premises, what their purpose is and their duty of care.

"This bill, in effect, enables trespass. It authorises someone who doesn't have a relationship with that care provider to come in and administer a lethal dose. The VAD practitioner can do this without informing the hospital or home and then leaving it up to the staff and fellow patients or residents to deal with the trauma of discovery.

"We are grateful that Steve Hambleton, Stephen Parnis and Shaun Rudd - all eminent doctors - have endorsed our view. We all remain staunchly opposed to this bill. But we recognise it is likely to pass and so we are appealing to MPs to see sense and at least change the worst elements of it."