

Wednesday, 11 May 2022

FAITH-BASED AGED CARE PROVIDERS UNITE AGAINST EUTHANASIA AND ASSISTED DYING IN AGED CARE FACILITIES

As leaders of the major faith-based medical and care providers, we urge NSW MLCs to respect the rights of staff and residents of aged care facilities who do not want to facilitate assisted dying.

The Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 claims to offer choice in end-of-life matters yet it fails to protect the choice of residents in aged care facilities who do not want anything to do with assisted dying.

Faith-based aged care homes offer a clear choice for those who want to be cared for in an environment that will never offer assisted dying.

If voluntary assisted dying is to be voluntary for the public, then any VAD scheme should be voluntary for clinical staff and medical officers and for the organisations that they work for.

This expectation is grounded in the Bills title – voluntary – and the expectation must be honoured. The Bill currently forces faith-based aged care facilities to allow doctors into their premises to prescribe and even administer restricted drugs with the intention of causing death to a resident without even informing the facility.

The Bill has the veneer of protecting aged care staff but in fact does the opposite as it forces them to choose between abandoning residents with whom they have a long-term, caring relationship or violating their conscience by being involved in assisting their death.

We ask MLCs to not create unnecessary division by enabling the assisted death of residents a precondition to providing aged care in this state.

At any time, HammondCare, Anglicare and Catholic Health Australia are providing live-in aged care services for up to 16,500 people in NSW, while also supporting more than 35,000 additional people in their private homes across the state.

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