



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 10 September 2021

CATHOLIC HEALTH AUSTRALIA CAMPAIGN AIMS TO CHANGE QUEENSLAND'S COURSE ON VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING WITH AD THAT ASKS - WHAT CHOICE IS THAT?

The peak body for Queensland's not-for-profit private hospitals and aged care homes today launches a powerful [video campaign](#) under the banner *What Choice Is That* to highlight the dangers inherent in Queensland's voluntary assisted dying legislation.

Catholic Health Australia has launched the video to appeal to Queenslanders ahead of the debate for VAD bill in the Parliament next week.

The video features testimony from prominent Queensland health and aged care professionals including Mater CEO Peter Steer, Psychiatrist Dr Eileen Burkett, Southern Cross Care Queensland chairman Francis Price, Thoracic Physician Luke Garske, GP Zelle Hodge, St Vincent's Care Services CEO Lincoln Hopper, and GP Steve Hambleton.

Under the narrative "here's the facts", they tell us the draft law to allow VAD will not provide Queensland patients with more choice.

"In fact, it will take away your most basic right to care, dignity and respect," Dr Burkett says.

Key messages include:

- Patients will be encouraged to consider VAD simply because Queensland doesn't have enough palliative care services;
- That Queensland's hospitals and aged care homes will not be able to opt out of VAD;
- Where it is legal overseas, about 30 per cent of patients facing the end of life say they would choose VAD simply because they're lonely and don't want to be a burden;
- Far from promoting the dignity of human life, the proposed laws undermine the very mission of medicine – the health and wellbeing of patients;
- Those doctors who participate in VAD won't have to be experts in the patient's terminal illness, just willing to end a life.

Peter Steer says CHA member hospitals and aged care services are founded on the tradition of care, compassion and integrity.

And Francis Price says the new laws will ride roughshod over that, "allowing outside health practitioners to come into our centres to administer a lethal dose".



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The video concludes with the message that South Australia gave its hospitals the right to provide care according to their ethos and that Queenslanders deserve the same choice.

The video goes to air today and can be seen [here](#).

Notes to editors: Our members in Queensland include Centacare Brisbane, Mater Misericordiae Ltd, St Vincent's Health Australia, Francis of Assisi Home, Catholic Healthcare (including Villa Maria Ipswich and Fortitude Valley), Mercy Community Services, St Vincent's Community Services, Southern Cross Care, Ozcare, Holy Spirit Care Services, Mercy Community Services, St Vincent's Care Services, Canossa Services, St Paul de Chartres Residential Aged Care, St Vincent de Paul Queensland, Villa McAuley Retirement Village. Between them they provide about one in five hospital and aged care beds in Queensland, including:

- 5,700 residential aged care beds
- 2,000 hospital beds
- 8,200 home care consumers.

To interview CHA's Rebecca Burdick Davies please call Julian Lee on 0422 343 086