

Voluntary Assisted Dying Policy for Calvary Facilities in the Australian Capital Territory

This policy outlines how Calvary will comply with the requirements of the [Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2024 \(ACT\)](#) (the **Act**) and the [Voluntary Assisted Dying Regulation 2025 \(ACT\)](#) (the **Regulation**), and ensure that residents and patients are supported with compassion, respect and dignity when seeking information about access to voluntary assisted dying (**VAD**). This Policy applies to all Calvary operated hospitals and residential aged care services in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) (**Calvary Facilities**) and to all staff, accredited health practitioners, contractors, students and volunteers working within those facilities.

Policy

Calvary recognises the legal right of eligible people in the ACT to choose VAD as an end-of-life option in accordance with the Act.

Calvary will provide high-quality, compassionate care to all residents and patients, regardless of whether they are considering or accessing VAD.

Calvary treats all patients, residents, carers and staff with dignity and respect, in accordance with the [Human Rights Act 2004 \(ACT\)](#), recognising the diversity of values, beliefs and cultural perspectives within the community.

Calvary responds openly, sensitively and respectfully to all patients and residents who express a wish to explore or consider VAD.

(1) Provision of VAD services

Calvary does not provide VAD services within its facilities. Calvary staff will not initiate, prescribe, administer or otherwise participate in any part of the VAD process.

Calvary will, however, comply with its obligations under the Act to allow reasonable access for residents and patients who wish to seek information about or access VAD services. Calvary will not block or impede a patient or resident from accessing VAD.

(2) Providing information about VAD

When a patient or a resident requests information about VAD, Calvary will:

- (a) Provide, as soon as practicable and within two (2) business days, the written contact details of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service (**VAD CNS**), in accordance with s 107 of the Act;
- (b) Record the request in accordance with Calvary policies and procedures, but, in particular, in accordance with Calvary's [Privacy Policy](#); and
- (c) Offer the individual privacy and treat the individual with respect and compassion when making or discussing their request;

(3) Access for Authorised VAD Practitioners and VAD-Related Visitors

Calvary will allow reasonable access to Authorised VAD Practitioners and VAD-Related Visitors to provide information or access to VAD to a patient or resident who requests it, in accordance with s 104 of the Act.

(4) Obligation to consider and facilitate transfer of individual who wants access to VAD

If the Authorised VAD Practitioner or VAD-Related Visitors cannot visit the patient or resident on site, Calvary will facilitate a transfer to and from another suitable place where VAD steps can occur, consistent with s 105 of the Act.

When considering whether a transfer is reasonable, Calvary will consider:

- (a) The risk of the person losing decision-making capacity during the transfer;
- (b) Any risk of undue delay or prolongation of suffering;
- (c) The availability of an appropriate receiving facility; and
- (d) Potential cost or logistical implications for the individual or their carers.

The decision to approve or deem a transfer unreasonable will be made by the Deciding Practitioner in consultation with the individual and Calvary's facility management.

All transfer decisions and related correspondence shall be documented.

(5) Further access where transfer is unreasonable

If the Deciding Practitioner determines that a transfer is unreasonable, Calvary will allow Authorised VAD Practitioners and VAD-Related Visitors reasonable access to the patient or resident within the facility, as required by s 105 and s 106 of the Act.

(6) Continued care

Calvary will not withdraw, reduce or refuse to provide care to any patient or resident who is considering or accessing VAD. Calvary will continue to provide the same level of care to patients and residents, including clinical, palliative and pastoral care, consistent with the individual's needs and in alignment with Calvary's mission and values.

(7) Conscientious objection

Calvary acknowledges that individual staff members may conscientiously object to involvement in VAD.

A staff member who holds a conscientious objection must:

- (a) Promptly inform their immediate manager; and
- (b) Provide the contact details of the VAD CN to the patient or resident requesting information.

Calvary will ensure that the staff member's objection is respected while ensuring continuity of care and compliance with statutory obligations.

(8) Privacy and confidentiality

Calvary will manage all information relating to VAD in accordance with the Act, the [Health Records \(Privacy and Access\) Act 1997 \(ACT\)](#), the [Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#), and Calvary's [Privacy Policy](#).

Private spaces will be provided, where possible, for discussions concerning a patient or resident seeking VAD.

(9) Support and wellbeing

Calvary will make available appropriate support for patients, residents, families and staff affected by the VAD process, including:

- Pastoral and spiritual care;
- Counselling and Employee Assistance Programs (**EAP**); and
- Bereavement support where available.

(10) Training

Calvary will ensure all staff receive appropriate training on:

- The requirements of this Policy, the Act and the Regulation;
- Procedures for responding to requests for information or access; and
- Privacy and Confidentiality obligations.

(11) Accessibility of this policy

This Policy is available:

- (a) On Calvary's website (www.calvarycare.org.au); and
- (b) In printed form at the reception and admission areas on request.

The policy will be provided to any person upon request within two (2) business days, in accordance with s 108 of the Act.

(12) Contact information for VAD enquiries

The VAD CNS is operated by Canberra Health Services. For further information about VAD, individuals can contact:

ACT Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service

Email: VAD.carenavigators@act.gov.au

Phone: 5124 1888

This service is available Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5.00pm (excluding public holidays).

Schedule – Calvary Facilities in the Australian Capital Territory

Facility Name	Calvary Entity	Category
Calvary Bruce Private Hospital	Calvary Bruce Private Hospital Limited (ABN 67 129 801 378)	Private Hospital
Calvary John James Hospital	Calvary Private Health Care Canberra Limited (ABN 83 121 852 088)	Private Hospital
Calvary Haydon Residential Aged Care	Calvary Retirement Communities Limited (ABN 34 102 625 212)	Residential Aged Care Facility

Definitions

Unless otherwise defined in this Policy, terms used have the same meaning as in the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2024* (ACT).

Accreditation means:

- The authorisation in writing by the General Manager for a Practitioner to provide Health Services at the Calvary Hospital in accordance with an approved Scope of Clinical Practice and in accordance with any conditions attaching to that authorisation; and
- The process of leading to the above authorisation as set out in Calvary Bylaws.

Accredited Health Practitioner means Accredited Allied Health Practitioner, Accredited Medical Practitioner, Accredited Dental Practitioner, Accredited Nurse Practitioner, Accredited Nurse Surgical Assistant.

Authorised VAD Practitioner means the health practitioner who has met the eligibility requirements and successfully completed the mandatory training to provide VAD services in the ACT as:

- An authorised coordinating practitioner;
- An authorised consulting practitioner; and/or
- An authorised administering practitioner.

Calvary means the Little Company of Mary Health Care Limited (ABN 11 079 815 697) and each of its Related Bodies Corporate (as defined in the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth)).

Calvary Bylaws means the rules, regulations, and procedures that govern the management, operation, and conduct of Calvary's Facilities, including clinical practice, patient care, and staff obligations.

Calvary Facility means a health facility in which business is conducted by the Calvary entities set out in Schedule – Calvary Facilities in the Australian Capital Territory.

Calvary Facility Management means the General Manager of a Calvary Facility.

Calvary Hospital means a Hospital owned or operated by Little Company of Mary Health Care Limited and includes the Hospitals listed in the Schedule 'Calvary Facilities in the Australian Capital Territory'.

Carer has the meaning given section 6 of the *Carers Recognition Act 2021* (ACT).

Conscientious Objection in relation to voluntary assisted dying, means a religious or other conscientious objection to voluntary assisted dying.

Contractor means person(s) (sole trader or body corporate) who/that is formally engaged by Calvary to provide skills or services for a set period.

Deciding Practitioner has the meaning given in Part 7 of the Act and means the health practitioner responsible for deciding whether it is reasonable for a resident or patient to be transferred to another place for the purpose of accessing VAD. The Deciding Practitioner is:

- (a) If the individual has a coordinating practitioner – the coordinating practitioner; or
- (b) If the individual does not have a coordinating practitioner – a treating doctor of the individual.

Health Facility has the meaning given in section 6 of the Health Act 1993 (ACT).

Health Services for the purpose of this Policy has the meaning given in section 5 of the *Health Act 1993* (ACT).

Health Service Provider has the meaning given in section 7 of the *Health Act 1993* (ACT).

National Law means the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as it applies in each state and Territory.

Patient means an individual who receives Health Services at a Calvary Hospital.

Resident means an individual who is staying in a residential aged care facility on a temporary or permanent basis for the purpose of to receiving accommodation, nursing, or personal care.

Staff means medical, allied health, nursing, midwifery, personal care, support, or other health service and corporate staff who are employed by Calvary and who are responsible for the provision of (or support the provision of) patient or resident care.

Student means an individual who is formally engaged in learning and currently enrolled in a course of study.

Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) means the legal process that allows an individual who is dying and suffering to request assistance to end their life via the administration of a substance which directly and intentionally causes the person's death. VAD includes all steps in the request and assessment process and all steps for accessing VAD and death, as per Parts 3 and 4 of the Act.

VAD Care Navigator Service (VAD CNS) means the service operated by Canberra Health Services, which provides information about VAD in the ACT and assists individuals to locate Authorised VAD Practitioners.

VAD Pharmacy Service (VAD PS) means the service operated by Canberra Health Services which dispenses the VAD substance, provides education on the safe storage and administration of the VAD substance and disposes of any unused or remaining VAD substance after a person has died. The VAD PS is the only pharmacy in the ACT which can supply and dispose of the VAD substance.

VAD-Related Visitor means –

- (a) For information about VAD – any person who can provide the information, including an employee of the VAD CNS or Authorised VAD Practitioner.
- (b) For access to VAD – a person who is necessary for the completion of the VAD process, including an Authorised VAD Practitioner, an employee of the VAD CNS or VAD PS, a person acting as a witness, agent or contact person for the patient or resident, and a person providing interpreting and/or translating services for the patient or resident.

VAD Substance means the approved Schedule 8 substance dispensed by the VAD PS for the purpose of directly and intentionally causing the death of the eligible individual under the Act. The VAD substance must be secured in the possession of the individual, their Authorised Contact Person or the Administering Practitioner at all times.

Volunteer means individuals who provide their time, skills, or services without remuneration to support the operations or activities of Calvary.

7 Related Calvary documents

- [Position Statement on Voluntary Assisted Dying](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)

8 References

- [Carers Recognition Act 2021 \(ACT\)](#)
- [Health Act 1993 \(ACT\)](#)
- [Health Records \(Privacy and Access\) Act 1997 \(ACT\)](#)
- [Human Rights Act 2004 \(ACT\)](#)
- [Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2024 \(ACT\)](#)
- [Voluntary Assisted Dying Regulation 2025 \(ACT\)](#)