

Policy Procedure Name	Voluntary Assisted Dying
Policy No.	
Version No.	V1.0
Date to be reviewed	October 2026
Applies to	All Staff
Major review frequency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annually <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Yearly <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Yearly

Purpose

Marymead CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn (MCCG), is committed to the principles of Catholic social teaching, including the dignity of the human person, sanctity of human life, the common good and participation in society, solidarity and subsidiarity. These principles are expressed through our values of respect, integrity, excellence, care, compassion, and inclusivity.

The Catholic Church teaches and acts within a consistent ethic of life and are committed to human flourishing and living life to the full. For these reasons the Catholic Church opposes any action, process or procedure intended to deliberately end human life. MCCG adopts an approach of fidelity to Church teaching, respect and integrity, while ensuring as necessary, there is compliance with legislation.

Overview

This policy outlines how MCCG 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 all clients are supported with compassion, respect and dignity when seeking information about access to voluntary assisted dying.

Scope

This Policy is applicable to all MCCG staff.

Definitions

The following definitions apply to this policy:

Term	Definition
Catholic Social Teaching	Catholic Social Teaching (CST) offers a way of Thinking, being, and seeing the world. It provides a vision for a just society in which the dignity of all people are recognized, and those who are vulnerable are cared for. It consists of an interrelated body of Catholic social thought and principles which can be used to reflect on and guide how we relate to one another in our local and global communities. Ref: https://cssa.org.au/resources/catholic-social-teaching/
Facility	A facility is any place where a care service (i.e. a health service, aged care service or personal care service) is provided to a resident of that place, other than a person's private residence. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hospitals (public and private) • hospices • hostels • respite facilities • nursing homes • residential aged care facilities • any other place where accommodation, nursing or personal care is given to people because of their infirmity, illness, disease, incapacity or disability.
VAD	Voluntary Assisted Dying
Conscientious Objectors	An individual who refuses to take part in providing voluntary assisted dying services due to their personal beliefs, values, or moral concerns.

<p>Eligibility to Access Voluntary Assisted Dying</p>	<p>To be eligible to access voluntary assisted dying in the ACT, a person must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be 18 or older • have lived in the ACT for the last 12 months • have an advanced and progressive medical condition that will cause their death and is causing them intolerable suffering • have decision making capacity in relation to voluntary assisted dying at all stages through the process • make their decision to access voluntary assisted dying voluntarily and without coercion
<p>Relevant Health Professional</p>	<p>Practitioners registered with AHPRA (Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency) or professionals not regulated by AHPRA but recognised under the Act, including Social Workers, Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists and Counsellors.</p>

Policy Statement

As an Agency of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, MCCG are bound by the Church teachings in this area, therefore MCCG is a conscientious objector and is not a provider of voluntary assisted dying services.

MCCG recognise the legal right of eligible people in the ACT to choose Voluntary Assisted Dying as an end-of-life option in accordance with the Act. MCCG will provide high-quality, compassionate care to all clients, regardless of whether they are considering or accessing Voluntary Assisted Dying.

MCCG treats all clients, families 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. MCCG responds openly, sensitively and respectfully to all clients who express a wish to explore or consider Voluntary Assisted Dying.

The principles underpinning this Policy are as follows:

- A person's decision to seek information or access voluntary assisted dying will not

impact the support they receive through MCCG.

- All staff must be aware of their responsibilities under the Act and must not actively obstruct individuals' access to information and/or advice regarding the voluntary assisted dying process.
- MCCG staff will not participate in any aspect of the process or be present for the administering of the voluntary assisted dying substance.
- MCCG services will not store the voluntary assisted dying substance on the site of residential services.

Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide MCCG personnel with clear, consistent guidance on their roles and responsibilities when supporting an individual who requests information about, or chooses to participate in, voluntary assisted dying.

Procedure

In line with legislated responsibilities and service models, MCCG will:

1. Provision of Voluntary Assisted Dying Services

MCCG does not provide Voluntary Assisted Dying service. MCCG staff will not initiate, prescribe, administer or otherwise participate in any part of the Voluntary Assisted Dying process. MCCG will, however, comply with its obligations under the Act to allow reasonable access for individuals who wish to seek information about or access Voluntary Assisted Dying services. MCCG will not block or impede an individual from accessing Voluntary Assisted Dying.

2. Provide Information

The steps taken if an individual requests information on voluntary assisted dying will depend on the role and profession of the staff member. If the staff member approached is not considered a 'relevant health professional' under the Act, they should:

- Listen and respond respectfully.
- Inform the individual that MCCG does not deliver or participate in the voluntary assisted dying process, but that they will inform their Manager who will provide the relevant information.
- Inform their manager immediately so that the relevant information can be provided.
- Record the interactions on the individual's record.

MCCG Staff who are considered relevant health professionals must in accordance with s 107 of the Act:

- Respond respectfully and appropriately when a person raises voluntary assisted dying.
- Inform the individual that MCCG does not deliver or participate in the voluntary assisted dying process, but that they will provide the relevant information.
- Provide information on the Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service within 2 days of it being requested (details below).
- Record the interaction in the individual's record and inform their Manager that the information has been provided.

3. Provide Access

MCCG will allow reasonable access to Authorised Voluntary Assisted Dying Practitioners and Voluntary Assisted Dying Related Visitors to provide information or access to Voluntary Assisted Dying to an individual who requests it, in accordance with s 104 of the Act.

4. Transfer Obligations

MCCG will take reasonable steps to facilitate transfer to and from another suitable place, when:

- an individual requests voluntary assisted dying and wishes to access services not delivered by MCCG, or
- if the Voluntary Assisted Dying Authorised Practitioner or Related Visitors cannot visit the individual onsite.

The decision to approve or deem a transfer unreasonable will be made by the Voluntary Assisted Dying Deciding Practitioner in consultation with the individual and MCCG management.

All transfer decisions and related correspondence shall be documented.

5. Further Access Where Transfer is Unreasonable

If the Voluntary Assisted Dying Deciding Practitioner determines that a transfer is unreasonable, MCCG will allow Authorised Voluntary Assisted Dying Practitioners and Related Visitors reasonable access to the individual within the residential service, as required by s105 and s106 of the Act.

6. Ensure Continuity of Care

MCCG is committed to ensuring continuity of care and will continue the same level of care (including palliative care) for people accessing, or considering accessing, voluntary assisted dying.

MCCG will not withdraw care or refuse to provide care to individuals based on their seeking information about or making a request for voluntary assisted dying.

7. Conscientious Objection

MCCG acknowledges that individual staff members may conscientiously object to involvement in voluntary assisted dying. A staff member who holds a conscientious objection must:

- (a) Promptly inform their immediate manager; and
- (b) Provide the contact details of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator to the individual requesting information.

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

8. Privacy and confidentiality

MCCG will manage all information relating to Voluntary Assisted Dying in accordance with the Act, the Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997 (ACT), the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), and MCCG's Privacy Policy. Private spaces will be provided, where possible, for discussions concerning individuals seeking Voluntary Assisted Dying.

9. Support and wellbeing

MCCG will make available appropriate support for individuals, families and staff affected by the Voluntary Assisted Dying process, including:

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

10. Training

MCCG 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 MCCG's website (www.mccg.org.au); and
- (b) In printed form 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 Voluntary Assisted Dying enquiries

The Voluntary Assisted Dying CNS is operated by Canberra Health Services. For further information about Voluntary Assisted Dying, 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)

Responsibilities

The following persons have responsibilities with respect to this policy:

Person or Group	Role
Leadership Team	Ensure compliance with legislation Provide training to staff on roles and responsibilities under the Act
All Staff	Understand and act on obligations under the Act Inform in line manager of requests for information related to voluntary assisted dying as soon as requested

References

External References	
Standards and Guidelines and References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCGG Governance Board Charter • MCGG Governance Handbook • Quality Improvement Council (QIC) Health and Community Service Standards • National Disability Insurance Scheme Practice Standards (NDIS) • Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Aged Care Quality Standards • National Standards for Mental Health Services (NSMHS) • National Regulatory System for Community Housing. • National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
Legislation or Other Requirements	<p>Key Legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2024 (ACT) • Voluntary Assisted Dying Regulation 2025 (ACT) • Privacy Act 1988(Cth) • Human Rights Act 2004 (Cth) <p>Other Legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDIS Act • Aged Care Act • Mental Health Act
Internal References	

Related Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights Policy • Dignity of Risk Policy • Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedure • Clients Rights & Responsibilities Policy & Procedure • Use of Interpreters Policy & Procedure • CAC Changing Needs of Individuals Policy & Procedure • CAC Individual Planning Policy & Procedure 			
Forms, Record Keeping or Other Organisational Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Agreements 			
Contractual References				
Contractual Obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 			
Version History				
Ver sion	Approved by	Revision Date	Description of Change	Author
1.0	CEO	29/10/2025	New policy & procedure to meet legislative requirement.	CEO
Authorisation				
<i>CEO</i>				

