Royal Freemasons' Benevolent Institution

RFBI's Voluntary Assisted Dying Position Statement

The purpose of this position statement is to outline RFBI's stance on the recently introduced *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2024* (ACT) (VAD Act). The Act was passed on 5th June 2024 and will commence operation in Australian Capital Territory (ACT) from 3 November 2025.

Under the VAD Act, aged care providers can choose whether or not to participate in the ACT voluntary assisted dying system. RFBI supports the right of a resident to make an informed end-of-life decision when they have capacity to do so and provided the decision is in line with the VAD Act. While RFBI does not provide VAD services, RFBI will support any resident who wishes to explore or consider voluntary assisted dying.

Consistent with RFBI's decision to not offer VAD services, RFBI will not:

(a) hinder a resident's right to access information or their right to make a request about voluntary assisted dying; and

(b) hinder a resident's family member from accessing information about voluntary assisted dying; and

(c) hinder access by an authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioner or Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service (VAD CNS) to a RFBI service to provide information or advice to a resident, where the access is requested by a resident or otherwise required under the relevant legislation;

(d) initiate a conversation with a resident about voluntary assisted dying or suggest voluntary assisted dying to a resident; and

(e) induce a resident to make a request for access to VAD, to access VAD, or to self-administer a VAD substance.

In relation to VAD services, RFBI employees will not:

(f) actively participate in the request and assessment process,

(g) participate in an administration decision,

(h) prescribe, supply or administer a voluntary assisted dying substance,

(i) initiate discussions about VAD with residents,

(j) take custody of, store or accept responsibility for the storage or management of a voluntary assisted dying substance. Where a resident chooses to keep a voluntary assisted dying substance at the service, responsibility for the substance remains with the resident.

(k) participate in the administration of a voluntary assisted dying substance. Employees may be present at the time of administration if specifically requested by the resident and the employee freely agrees to be present.

RFBI will respect the privacy of residents throughout the voluntary assisted dying process and will continue to support residents, including the continuation of medical treatment and care, access to their medical practitioner and providing psychological and spiritual support at RFBI village's.

While RFBI does not provide VAD Services, RFBI will otherwise comply with the requirements of the VAD Act.

If you would like to discuss this position further, please contact our Chief of Operations Residential Care, Sanjila Verma on 02 8031 3200 or email enquiries@rfbi.com.au.

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