

**THE SALVATION ARMY AUSTRALIAN TERRITORIES  
POSITIONAL STATEMENT**

**EUTHANASIA**

Modern medicine allows people to survive illnesses and injuries which would previously have proved fatal, though possibly with long-term or permanent disability and impaired quality of life. This could be as a direct result of the initial pathology or as a consequence of side effects of the treatment given.

Since the Bible displays so clearly that every person is important to God, The Salvation Army, like other Christian communities, places great value on the life of all people. For this reason Salvationists oppose actively taking or shortening human life through rational choice, with or without medical assistance.

In non-emergency situations medical workers have a responsibility to ensure that patients clearly understand the likely benefit of any treatment offered and the possible risk or cost to quality of life. This would allow patients, or their legally designated representative, to make informed decisions regarding their management. Refusal to undergo treatment is not the same as deliberately sanctioning death.

Full palliative care should be available to those with terminal illness. Optimal pain control and the overall comfort and dignity of the individual should be the goals, even though this could shorten life. The Salvation Army accepts that where brain death, as defined by the relevant authorities, has already occurred, the next of kin is justified in agreeing with medical advice to terminate life support systems.

For further reading:

Clifton, Shaw: Strong Doctrine, Strong Mercy: The Salvation Army, London, 1985.

**Approved by the General, 30 October 1992.**