

MEDIA RELEASE



**Palliative
Care
Australia**

Palliative Care Australia

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A vision and a promise

As a society, our aspiration is for every single person in need to have access to the best pain and symptom relief possible at the end of life. The vision is for every person, their families and carers to be supported by best-practice care.

“It is time to recognise that even with the enormous achievements in palliative care, people can still miss out on the right care and thus experience much more physical and emotional pain than is necessary,” said Professor Margaret O’Connor, President of Palliative Care Australia.

During National Palliative Care Week (24-30 May 2009), PCA works on two fronts: to move the policy debate forward on the provision of quality care at the end of life; and to help the community find answers to the questions they have when faced with dying and death.

The National Community Education Initiative is launched each year during National Palliative Care Week. This year, the theme is *If only I knew ... finding answers to questions that help us live and die the best we can.*

The initiative is a platform for everyone in our community to learn about important issues – issues like what is palliative care, where can I go for help, what can I say and do when someone I know is dying, or what does normal grief look like.

“Each year, half a million Australians experience the impact of terminal illness. Building capacity within the community to talk about dying and death, and the knowledge of where to find answers to questions is crucial. We must assist people who are confronting the realities of dying and death themselves, in their family, friendships, work or neighbourhood groups.”

“When people are well informed, they are better able to access the care they need when it is required. Furthermore, when communities start talking about dying, death and grief, they are better able to support themselves and work to prevent adverse impacts of loss and grief.”

Palliative Care Australia is also working on the policy front to ensure there are systems and resources to deliver care for people at the end of life, and for their families, carers and communities.

“Our existing models of care and resources do not always match the needs of many living with a terminal condition, creating unnecessary stress and pain at this crucial time.”

“We need to get it right to ensure people are not suffering from preventable pain, to ensure people receive the care they need when they need it. As responsibility for end-of-life care is increasingly integrated through the whole of health, it must be supported by systems and resources that make the delivery of quality care a reality for all – to deliver upon the promise.”

For more information on National Palliative Care Week, see www.palliativecare.org.au.

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PCA is the peak national organisation representing the interests and aspirations of all who share the ideal of quality care at the end of life

Patron: Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia