

## Health Minister launches NPCW

The Minister for Health, the Hon Nicola Roxon MP, officially launched National Palliative Care Week 2010 at the PCA Breakfast at Parliament House. An excerpt from her speech is reproduced below.

This is the 13<sup>th</sup> Palliative Care Week. This year's theme is *If only I knew...how to talk about dying*.

This is an important theme to consider. It is a question every single person in this room will have to ask themselves at some point in their lives. It is not an easy question to ponder over your cornflakes this morning – it is difficult to talk about the prospect of dying or starting to plan for death. It is even more difficult when you think about planning for the needs of a loved one who requires palliative care. It is a difficult and emotional time for everyone involved.

But the message from National Palliative Care Week is that it doesn't have to be a scary or unpleasant topic to talk about. We all have different views on what decisions we would like to be made if we were lying unconscious in an intensive care ward, or require care if suffering from a terminal illness. These are very personal decisions, but it is very important that we talk to our loved ones about what our wishes are – because none of us are mind readers – and we all want to follow the wishes of our loved ones.

The government recognises the importance of palliative care, and the important role and dedication of health professionals and volunteers who work in this field. Through the National Palliative Care Program, the government provides national leadership and works collaboratively with the state and territory governments, key stakeholders such as Palliative Care Australia, palliative care service providers, and community based organisations to provide quality services that best meet the needs of patients, their families, and carers.

This morning Minister Elliot and I are pleased to mark National Palliative Care Week by announcing \$14.3 million to fund nine projects for

(continued p.2)

## From the president

The message from National Palliative Care Week 2010, *If only I knew*, contained a personal challenge that continues beyond the celebrations of the week. The challenge starts with me, and my response to the issue.

In our community we balance mixed messages about death. On the one hand, we have a ghoulish interest in the deaths of the famous and the infamous, in deaths in car accidents or in war. On the other hand, personal conversations remain difficult.

I have never been in a social situation where the conversation turned naturally to death, but like many professional carers I have had the conversation-stopping experience with an individual where they have asked what I do!

So, there is a continuing challenge, to keep talking and to encourage those I



talk to, to talk to others. The postcards we produced for NPCW are to be used as a prompt for these conversations today, tomorrow and in to the future.

On behalf of Palliative Care Australia, I would like to thank everyone who was involved in National Palliative Care Week 2010 – there were myriad activities during the week including morning teas, shopping centre displays, public lectures, open days, and barbecues. It is wonderful to see such enthusiasm from everyone in the sector.

**Professor Margaret O'Connor AM**  
President



National Palliative Care  
Service Directory



PCA Connect



Palliative  
Care  
Australia

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improved palliative care services, research, training and information.

Today's funding includes:

- \$2.2 million to the Queensland University of Technology for continued education and training for the palliative care workforce
- \$1.3 million for Flinders University to continue the rollout of 'CareSearch' – a website that provides information to consumers and clinicians
- \$6.6 million to the Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration (PCOC) for the ongoing rollout of a quality improvement program
- \$866,000 to Palliative Care Australia for the National Standards Assessment Program.

We have provided more than \$55 million to the National Palliative Care Program since being elected in 2007. The national program funds projects to promote the use of national quality standards, and support palliative care patients, their families and the workforce.

But our support goes a lot further than this specific strategy. As part of the \$64 billion National Healthcare Agreement with the states and territories that the Rudd government negotiated in December 2008, we committed \$500 million to boost sub-acute services by 20 percent over four years. These increased services are already rolling out. We know that it is better for patients, their carers, and the health system for people to receive care out of hospital. Good for patients, good for hospitals – it is win-win.

The centrepiece of our response to boost palliative care is our \$1.6 billion investment in 1,316 new sub-acute beds. These beds can take the form of rehabilitation, palliative care, mental health and geriatric services, in both hospitals and the community. We know each year up to 340,000 older Australians being treated in public hospitals could have been more appropriately cared for elsewhere.

This substantial investment, coupled with our \$122 million commitment for 286 new sub-acute beds in multi-purpose services in rural and remote communities, will help deliver patient care in the most appropriate setting and improve health outcomes and quality of life for many vulnerable patients. We will also establish Medicare Local whose job will be to improve co-ordination and integration between primary health care and other local health services.

Our reforms cannot work without the help of people like you who make vitally important contributions to people's lives every day. If it wasn't for you, there would be little support available for patients and carers and help for their families to cope during the person's illness and in their own bereavement.

On behalf of the Rudd government I thank you for the remarkable and compassionate support you provide to our community.

Read the joint media release from the Minister for Health and the Minister for Ageing at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au). Listen to the Minister's presentation at [www.palliativecare.org.au](http://www.palliativecare.org.au).



#### PCA Breakfast at Parliament House

From top: Dr Yvonne Luxford, CEO Palliative Care Australia, and The Hon. Nicola Roxon MP, Minister for Health and Ageing; Dr Yvonne Luxford, The Hon. Justine Elliot MP, Minister for Ageing, Mr Bruce Shaw, PCA National Policy Director; Senator Claire Moore and Senator Judith Adams, Co-convenors of the Parliamentary Friends of End-of-Life Care group; Professor Ken Hillman, Intensive Care Specialist Liverpool Hospital and Professor Margaret O'Connor, President, Palliative Care Australia.

# Palliative Care Australia - update

## Policy report

### Health reform

Both the Federal Budget and the Federal Government's blueprint for their health reform agenda *A national health and hospitals network for Australia's future: Delivering better health and better hospitals* outline significant wins for palliative care. However, these will require much work from you, our constituency, over the coming months and years to turn these wins into reality.

The government's blueprint document is available at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au). At pages 76-77 of this report, the government notes it has already made a substantial investment in providing additional transition care places and sub-acute bed capacity. It stresses, as did the Federal Minister for Health and Ageing at our Parliamentary Breakfast to mark National Palliative Care Week, that 'sub-acute beds' can mean community or other non-hospital-based service options.

The government will provide \$1.6 billion to deliver 1,316 new sub-acute care beds nationally by 2013-14. This will improve patients' health and quality of life, while also reducing the pressure on public hospitals. The government stresses that sub-acute care (including palliative care, in both hospitals and the community) can significantly improve health outcomes.

It can help restore patients' functional independence, often supporting them to return to live in the community. Additional sub-acute care beds will help prevent unnecessary admissions and readmissions to hospitals, freeing up beds for patients who require acute care.

Funding will flow from 1 July 2010 to ensure that immediate capacity is delivered into the health and hospital system. The Commonwealth will contribute the full capital and recurrent funding, and the states and territories will commit to the number of beds to be delivered over each of the next four years.

Annual payments will be subject to agreed implementation plans including performance requirements. These new beds could be provided in public hospitals, private hospitals or community settings.

The challenge for PCA state and territory-based member organisations is to engage with state and territory governments and health and treasury departments to ensure palliative care needs are included in their negotiating bids to the Commonwealth to divide this money.

Palliative Care Australia will be working to this end and encourages sector participation through its member organisations.

Bruce Shaw  
National Policy Director

## Standards—NSAP

### Changes to the NSAP Team

#### *New NSAP Manager*

It is with pleasure that PCA and the NSAP team welcome Claudia Giugni as the new National Standards Assessment Program Manager. Claudia comes with a strong history in the palliative care sector and most recently in program management and project work with the General Practice Division Network.

The role of NSAP Manager will involve providing support to participating services both whilst they complete their self-assessments and as they are progressing their identified action plans. Her role will also include developing further resources for services as NSAP reaches the end of its first funding cycle. In addition to this, Claudia will be working with the Director, Sue Hanson, to identify opportunities for growth and rollout of NSAP to non-specialist palliative care services.

Claudia will be contacting many services over the upcoming weeks and looks forward to speaking with many of you soon. If you would like to contact Claudia she can be reached via the NSAP direct line on 02 6163 8419, via her mobile on 0410 437 473 or at [claudia@palliativecare.org.au](mailto:claudia@palliativecare.org.au).

#### *Farewell to Belinda Fenner*

The NSAP team is very sad to announce that Belinda will be leaving PCA and the NSAP team at the end of June. Belinda has been with PCA for two years and has provided immeasurable support to both the NSAP program itself as well as to the many services participating in NSAP.

Belinda is leaving to volunteer as an English teacher in the Marshall Islands for a year. This is a fantastic opportunity for her and although we are sad to see her leave NSAP and PCA, we are sure she will have an incredible year ahead. The NSAP team and PCA wishes Belinda all the best in her future endeavours and would like to thank Belinda for her incredibly hard work. Her energy and enthusiasm for NSAP is contagious and has been hugely appreciated.

## Recruitment update

### *Western Australia*

Services in Western Australia are preparing for and commencing self-assessment. Should you still need to sign up for NSAP in Western Australia or register for the NSAP workshop – please contact the NSAP team ASAP on 02 6163 8419 to ensure your spot at the workshop.

### *South Australia*

Services from South Australia are scheduled to receive the NSAP start-up pack soon –future e-bulletins will contain further information.

### *Have you been unable to commence NSAP?*

If specialist palliative care services in your state have already begun NSAP but your service has



not, you are still able to sign up to undertake the NSAP self-assessment. Services in Western Australia, New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory can sign up now and register to commence NSAP at any time.

If you have not yet signed up, contact the NSAP team to discuss options for beginning NSAP at a time that suits your service. To access the NSAP website, please visit [www.palliativecare.org.au](http://www.palliativecare.org.au) and select the NSAP logo.

## SDRP round 2

Applications for round 2 of the Syringe Driver Replacement Program are now open for eligible services who did not apply the first round in 2009. Community-based palliative care services providing palliative care in rural, regional or remote areas are eligible to apply. Program guidelines and the application form can be found at [www.palliativecare.org.au](http://www.palliativecare.org.au).

## National Palliative Care Week

### If only I knew ... how to talk about dying

A conversation about death is not something you normally hear around the dinner table, but Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon. Nicola Roxon MP, would like us to give it a go. Minister Roxon challenged the guests at the launch of National Palliative Care Week to spend some time thinking and even talking about the end of life.

Guests also heard about palliative care from a different perspective as Professor Ken Hillman, an intensive care specialist, spoke about the need for medical specialists to get better at talking about dying. Professor Hillman's presentation can be found at [www.palliativecare.org.au](http://www.palliativecare.org.au).

A panel discussion was chaired by Senator Claire Moore with Dr Yvonne Luxford, Professor Margaret O'Connor, Professor Ken Hillman, and Senator Judith Adams. The event concluded with a round table discussion for health sector stakeholders.

One day earlier at Admiralty House, the Governor-General, Patron of Palliative Care Australia, reflected on the history of palliative care and the tremendous job done by those caring for people with a terminal condition. Sixty people, including volunteers and palliative care service providers attended the reception to mark National Palliative Care Week.

Across Australia, palliative care services, hospitals, libraries, pharmacies and general practices marked National Palliative Care Week with seminars, displays and open days, all of which encouraged Australians to think about... how to talk about dying.

This year the Close the Gap campaign for Indigenous Health Equality demonstrated its support by drawing attention to the need for Indigenous health providers and families to also enter into conversations about dying and death.

For copies of the resources produced for National Palliative Care Week, visit the PCA website [www.palliativecare.org.au](http://www.palliativecare.org.au).

## EoL – Winter 2010

The Winter 2010 edition of *EoL – Towards quality care at the end of life* is now available. This edition focuses on health reform, asking the question: What is required to deliver a health system that is patient focused, driven by information and organised for safety and quality?

Contributors include Colleen Cartwright, Afaf Girgis, Carol Bennett, Jennifer Tieman, Patricia Davidson, Jane Phillips, Mark Cormack, and Philip Davies. Download *EoL* at [www.palliativecare.org.au](http://www.palliativecare.org.au).



## Resources in 21 languages

Palliative Care Australia has translated three of its most popular resources into 21 languages: *What is palliative care?*, *Asking questions can help: An aid for people seeing the palliative care team*; *Facts about morphine and other opioids in palliative care*. These resources can be downloaded from [www.palliativecare.org.au](http://www.palliativecare.org.au) or ordered using the [order form](#).



### National Palliative Care Week Reception at Admiralty House

From top: The Governor-General, Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC; Dr Louise Welch, Mr John-Paul Kristensen, Ms Sue Hanson, Dr John Rosenberg; Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC, Ms Lesley Brydon; Senator Judith Adams, Mr Tom Brennan, Professor Peter Ravenscroft.

## News brief

### GP shortage in aged care

A recent study by Catholic Health Australia, *Survey of access to general practice services in residential aged care*, has found 57 percent of aged care home respondents had on occasion transferred residents to emergency departments because of a doctor shortage.

Martin Laverty, CEO of Catholic Health Australia says there are not enough doctors to meet the needs of older Australians who live in residential aged care and many of the doctors who do work in aged care are themselves approaching retirement. The full survey is available at [www.cha.org.au](http://www.cha.org.au).

### Grants to increase dementia support

The Federal Government has provided \$3.5 million in grants under round 3 of the Community Grants to Increase Dementia Support program. Round 3 has funded 82 community projects to provide support and raise awareness for people with dementia and their families. Further information on grant recipients is available at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au).

### Productivity Commission inquiry

The Productivity Commission has released an issues paper for its public inquiry into the future of Australia's aged care system.

The inquiry, *Caring for older Australians*, will examine the social, clinical and institutional aspects of aged care in Australia; address the interests of special needs groups; develop regulatory and funding options for residential and community aged care; examine the future workforce requirements of the aged care sector; recommend a path for transitioning from the current regulatory arrangements to a new system that ensures continuity of care; examine whether the regulation of retirement specific living options should be aligned more closely with the rest of the aged care sector; and assess the fiscal implications of any change in aged care roles and responsibilities.

Further information, including the issues paper, can be found at [www.pc.gov.au](http://www.pc.gov.au).

### Awards for palliative care volunteers

The Victorian 2010 Minister for Health Volunteer Awards has recognised the work of palliative care volunteers Norma Bett and Roberta Hay. Norma Bett, who volunteers with Southern Health, has volunteered for 23 years. She has volunteered in palliative care since 1996. Roberta Hay, from Colac Area Health, was the instigator and founder of the palliative care volunteer team in 1991 and coordinated and trained the volunteer team until 1996.

Palliative Care Australia joins with the sector in congratulating Norma and Roberta and all the volunteers who work in palliative care.

For more information, see [www.premier.vic.gov.au](http://www.premier.vic.gov.au).

## Sector news

### PCOC

The Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration (PCOC) has begun the formal process of designing Version 3 of its dataset. A working group convened for the first time in May to consider, amongst many issues, how to accommodate and differentiate the different settings of care within which palliative care is delivered. The working group includes both palliative care providers and data experts. Consultation with participating services will be an integral part of the development process.

The group will be chaired by Rob Gordon from July 2010 and members are: Kathy Eagar, Richard Chye, David Currow, Joanne Lister, Anne Oakley, Karen Puvogel, Lachlan Shield, Donna Truran, Rohan Vora, Helen Walker, Maree Banfield, Janette Green, Susan Mylne, and Ruth Cornish.

More information on PCOC is available at <http://chsd.uow.edu.au/pcoc/>.



### CareSearch

*Patient carer resources*

Last year, seven brochures covering a number of important topics for patients, carers, families and friends were produced. We have designed and printed a [specific envelope packet](#) that can be used to hold all seven brochures as an easy kit. Services and organisations can now order the brochures in the kit as well as ordering individual brochures.

We have also produced an A3-size [poster](#) reminding us that dying and death will affect us all. Services and organisations can easily print it locally for any events or promotions. If needed, you can email us at [CareSearch@flinders.edu.au](mailto:CareSearch@flinders.edu.au) and we will send copies.

CareSearch is available at [www.caresearch.com.au](http://www.caresearch.com.au).



### PEPA

The Program of Experience in the Palliative Approach provides an opportunity for primary health care practitioners from all disciplines to develop skills in the palliative approach by undertaking a workforce placement of 2-5 days within a multidisciplinary palliative care team.

*Testimonials*

One of the most useful things is actually coming to meet the individuals who are consultants, the registrar, the nurses and the outreach people, that I've got a very clear relationship and pathway for me to actually make contact with these people to get advice or to facilitate their early involvement – general practitioner.

I gained a lot of knowledge and skills in dealing with the more difficult areas of physio, things like lymphoedema, oedema management, using different sorts of garments, mobility assessments and that sort of thing – physiotherapist.

# PCA member organisation updates

*Palliative Care Australia's membership comprises the eight state and territory palliative care organisations and the Australian and New Zealand Society of Palliative Medicine. These organisations created and share the vision, mission and aims of Palliative Care Australia and operate through a federated governance structure.*

*Together, the Palliative Care Australia members network to foster, influence and promote local and national endeavours to realise the vision of quality care at the end of life for all.*

## Palliative Care Council of South Australia



The council's volunteer conference *Searching for Balance 2010* was a resounding success with 250 delegates from across South Australia, Victoria, and Queensland.

Content was designed to be part of the volunteer's professional development and also provide an opportunity for volunteers to connect with others and share their experiences, promoting discussion on the wider issues of palliative care.

Speakers involved in culturally appropriate service delivery, palliative care medicine, nursing, complementary therapy and a panel discussion delivered up-to-date information and also provided an opportunity to exchange ideas on experience, trends, and best practice.

The two day conference commenced with a number of interactive experiential learning workshops including creative writing; music therapy; cooking 'Good Food for Fading Appetites'; and complementary therapies using massage and the energy within, the scented touch, and emotional freedom techniques.

The conference included a bus tour of four patient and family accommodation venues in metropolitan Adelaide and an entire day of informative plenary speakers, breakout workshops, and many opportunities to network and share the views of others, and build relationships.

Formal feedback and evaluation supports volunteer development opportunities such as this.

*Searching for Balance 2010* provided a great platform from which to communicate our messages of care and support for people facing death and bereavement. It is good to know that together we can continue to make a difference to the health and wellbeing of our communities.

See [www.pallcare.asn.au](http://www.pallcare.asn.au) for more information.



Chefs Saskia Beer and Vivki Rezonja give a cooking workshop during *Searching for Balance 2010*.

I am more confident in dealing with end stage life, explaining end stage life, explaining to someone who is refusing renal dialysis, what's going to happen – registered nurse.

To apply for a PEPA supervised clinical placement or to find out more about experiential workshops and ongoing post placement support please visit [www.pepaeducation.com](http://www.pepaeducation.com). Applicants from various disciplines and regional, remote and metropolitan areas in all states and territories are encouraged to apply.



## International Palliative Care Family Carer Research Collaboration

The latest edition of the IPCFRC newsletter is available. Read about the inaugural meeting of the IPCFRC, membership and IPCFRC projects and initiatives. The newsletter is available at [www.ipcfrc.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.ipcfrc.unimelb.edu.au).

## Palliative care and dementia

A project funded by the Department of Health and Ageing will address a palliative approach for people with dementia at the end of life. These people may receive services in the community, in hospital, or in residential care. It is therefore important to address best practice across all these sectors and in inter-sector transitions. A local community of practice (COP) is proposed as a strategy to achieve this.

Two COPs will each comprise staff from local acute, community, and residential providers plus representation from respite providers and general practice. One COP will be in Perth, Western Australia, the other in Launceston, Tasmania.

The COPs will be supported to identify practice areas that need to be addressed and champion best practice. Evaluations will address practice change; outcomes for people with dementia, their families, and staff/professionals; plus variations in approaches/outcomes between the two geographical areas. Learn more at [www.caresearch.com.au](http://www.caresearch.com.au).

## Conferences

### AGPN eHealth Conference

*Connecting the healthcare sector*

16-17 June 2010

The Sebel Albert Park, Melbourne

w: [www.agpn.com.au](http://www.agpn.com.au)

### Australia's Health 2010 Conference

22-23 June 2010

National Convention Centre, Canberra

w: [www.aihw.gov.au](http://www.aihw.gov.au)

### Palliative Care Victoria 7<sup>th</sup> Biennial State Conference

*Palliative Care—Extending the Reach*

22-23 July 2010

Jaspers Hotel, Melbourne

w: [www.pallcarevic.asn.au](http://www.pallcarevic.asn.au)

### ACSA Twenty10

Explore the possibilities

19-22 September 2010

Grand Chancellor Hotel, Hobart

Features: Ideas Market Place

w: [www.cdesign.com.au/acsa2010/](http://www.cdesign.com.au/acsa2010/)

### 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Oncology Social Work Australia Conference

12-13 November 2010

Melbourne

w: [www.oswa.net.au](http://www.oswa.net.au)

### World Health Care Networks Conference

22 – 24 July 2010

Auckland Convention Centre, New Zealand

w: [www.whcnetworks.com](http://www.whcnetworks.com)

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| <b>WA</b>     | Palliative Care WA<br>15 Bedbrook Place<br>Shenton Park WA 6008                               | t: +61 8 9382 9367 / 1300 551 704<br>f: 1300 551 704<br>w: <a href="http://www.palliativecarewa.asn.au">www.palliativecarewa.asn.au</a><br>e: <a href="mailto:pcwainc@palliativecareswa.asn.au">pcwainc@palliativecareswa.asn.au</a> |
| <b>SA</b>     | Palliative Care Council of South Australia<br>202 Greenhill Road<br>Eastwood SA 5063          | t: +61 8 8291 4137<br>f: +61 8 8291 4122<br>w: <a href="http://www.pallcare.asn.au">www.pallcare.asn.au</a><br>e: <a href="mailto:pallcare@pallcare.asn.au">pallcare@pallcare.asn.au</a>   |
| <b>TAS</b>    | Tasmanian Association for Hospice and Palliative Care<br>PO Box 834<br>Kingston TAS 7050      | t: +61 3 6285 2514<br>f: +61 3 6239 6030<br>w: <a href="http://www.tas.palliativecare.org.au">www.tas.palliativecare.org.au</a><br>e: <a href="mailto:tahpc@intrepidonline.com.au">tahpc@intrepidonline.com.au</a>                   |
| <b>ACT</b>    | ACT Palliative Care Society<br>PO Box 88<br>Civic Square ACT 2608                             | t: +61 2 6273 9606<br>f: +61 2 6273 9590<br>w: <a href="http://www.pallcareact.org.au">www.pallcareact.org.au</a><br>e: <a href="mailto:office@pallcareact.org.au">office@pallcareact.org.au</a>                                     |
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| <b>ANZSPM</b> | Australian and New Zealand Society of Palliative Medicine<br>PO Box 238<br>Braidwood NSW 2622 | t: 0458 203 229<br>f: +61 3 8677 7619<br>w: <a href="http://www.anzspm.org.au">www.anzspm.org.au</a><br>e: <a href="mailto:karen@anzspm.org.au">karen@anzspm.org.au</a>  |

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