

MEDIA RELEASE



**Palliative
Care
Australia**

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8th August 2011

Palliative care should be the core business of aged care

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) is delighted that the Productivity Commission has recognised the importance of palliative care as a fundamental part of the aged care system and has adopted many of PCA's recommendations in its final report, *Caring for Older Australians*.

'The Report argues strongly that palliative and end of life care should be core business for aged care services', said Dr Yvonne Luxford, PCA Chief Executive Officer. 'With 50,000 Australians dying each year in residential aged care facilities alone, there is no denying that we need to embed palliative care throughout the aged care system and ensure that all older Australians have access to the highest quality palliative and end of life care possible.'

The Report calls on the government to ensure that residential and community care providers receive appropriate payments for palliative care. 'We know that people would prefer to die at home, or at least have choice in where they spend their final days', said Dr Luxford. 'The recommendations propose a flexible funding model which supports individual choice and will help us ensure that people are assisted to die in the place of their choice, with the people they wish to be present.'

The Commission has also identified the need to fund education for aged care staff and carers to increase knowledge, awareness and understanding of a palliative approach to care of the elderly. 'The report acknowledges the skills mix needed in aged care and it is fantastic to see the Commission recommend that end of life care should be a basic competency for aged care workers – this will go a long way to improving the quality of end of life care delivered to older Australians,' said Dr Luxford.

The report highlights the importance of Advance Care Planning in ensuring people have greater choice and control over their end of life care options.

'Educating the community and health professionals, and encouraging the development of advance care plans will go some way to ensuring that people receive the care they want, in the place of their choice, tailored to their individual needs,' said Dr Luxford.

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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

'We commend the Productivity Commission for delivering this excellent report. The challenge will be to now transform these recommendations into reality. We are encouraged by the government's commitment to reform and Palliative Care Australia looks forward to working with the government and the aged care sector to implement these recommendations for palliative care.'