

MEDIA RELEASE



**Palliative
Care
Australia**

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Budget 2008 – True health reform still to come

Palliative Care Australia has welcomed announcements on increased health funding by the Commonwealth Government announced in the Budget, such as the promise to expand the scope of the next Australian Health Care Agreements to include primary care.

We are encouraged by the Rudd Government's commitment to ensure older Australians get the quality care – and choice of care – they want and need, and by the promised investment in health workforce, and the strengthening of equity for rural Australians.

Yet still we await true reform.

“Tough questions about how Australia will deliver upon the needs for the increasing proportion of the population living with chronic illness, ageing and terminal illness must be answered,” said Professor Margaret O'Connor, President of Palliative Care Australia.

“The ‘big picture’ of health reform must await the renegotiation of the Australian Health Care Agreements between the Commonwealth and all States and Territories” said Professor O'Connor. “Hopefully we can look forward to next year's Budget for real reforms.”

The first report of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission (NHHRC), released on 8 May, identifies twelve “challenges” that must be addressed if the next Health Care Agreements are to make the health system work better for the people who need it and use it.

“Palliative Care Australia welcomes the Reform Commission report's identification of ‘Caring for and respecting the needs of people at the end of life’ as one of these key priority challenges for health sector reform” said Professor O'Connor.

Professor O'Connor said that “Now is the time for us as a society to rethink the paradigm of health and care options for people with complex, chronic, and terminal conditions by providing for genuine care options in addition to hospital for these people.”

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Palliative Care Australia (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 for all.

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