



Media Release

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Budget 2019 - more work to be done to improve palliative care access in Australia

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) CEO Rohan Greenland says the time is rapidly approaching when all governments will need to substantially invest in palliative care as Australia's ageing population increases and people continue to live longer with multiple chronic conditions.

"With the release of the updated [National Palliative Care Strategy](#) in February this year, all Australian governments made a commitment to ensure that evidence-based, quality palliative care is available to everyone who requires it.

"While the Budget delivered last night falls short on new funding for palliative care, PCA looks forward to working with whoever forms the next government to make sure there is funding to improve access to palliative care.

"Without a significant investment of funding and new models of care, under-served populations such as rural and remote Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, culturally and linguistically diverse groups and people living with dementia or a disability will continue to miss out on the benefits of palliative care.

"[PCA's vision](#) to enable access to quality palliative care for all Australians who require it by 2030, is a good foundation for systematic, workforce and funding reforms and we encourage those involved in implementing a number of the Budget measures to consider how they could help us achieve this vision.

"PCA is pleased to see a number of the Budget announcements that will improve quality of life and treatment options for people living with a life-limiting illness.

"This Budget also provides for a range of programs funded in the aged care sector that should include mechanisms to increase the provision of quality palliative care to the 60,000 Australians who die in aged care services each year.

"Particularly important is the aged care workforce strategy to ensure that aged care services have the right skill mix to be able to meet the palliative care needs of consumers, to reduce unnecessary transfers to hospital, and support staff to provide care to individuals and their families at the end of their lives.

"We also look forward to seeing the results of the funded trial to embed a pharmacist in residential aged care facilities. This is an important opportunity to consider the quality use of, and access to medicines required for adequate pain and symptom management if and when required at the end of life, which is an ongoing concern for PCA.

"The investment in medical research into ageing and unmet needs is also welcome. This should include a focus on palliative care research, which is needed now to prepare for our ageing population and to ensure that we are providing the best possible care to all people living with a life limiting condition.

"The clear focus in this Budget on investing in processes that support quality and safety for those accessing aged care services is important, however palliative care remains absent from the new Aged Care Quality Standards which we'd like to see included," said Mr Greenland.

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