



PalliativeCare
AUSTRALIA

*His Excellency General the
Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK
MC (Retd), Governor-General of
the Commonwealth of Australia,
Patron*

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Australian Government

Australian Research Council

Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification Review

[Online submission]

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Need for Palliative Care Code within the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification

I am writing in response to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC) Review (the Review) to highlight the need for a Field of Research or sub-category (group or field) for research related to palliative care.

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) is the national peak body for palliative care in Australia, providing leadership on palliative care policy and community engagement. Working closely with consumers, its Member Organisations and the palliative care and broader health workforce, PCA aims to improve the quality of life and death for people with a life-limiting illness, their families and carers.

PCA affirms that palliative care is person and family-centred care provided for a person with an active, progressive, advanced disease, who has little or no prospect of cure and who is expected to die, and for whom the primary goal is to optimise the quality of life. The importance of continued investment in research is essential to plan and prepare for the future where Australians will live longer, demand an improved quality of life, and access to high quality palliative care when living with a life-limiting illness.

Research, data and advances in technology is a key element within PCA's [Palliative Care 2030 – working towards the future of quality palliative care for all](#), which calls for significant investment into palliative care focused research, including the benefits of early referral to specialist palliative care for non-malignant life-limiting illnesses, the off-label use of medicines, systems to monitor and record improvements or changes in quality of life, avoidance of clinically non-beneficial treatments and ICU presentations, and life expectancy and experiences of the person and their carers working within different models of care and at different points in the illness trajectory.

I highlight to you the [National Palliative Care Strategy](#), endorsed by all Australian health ministers and released in February this year, states that *'maintaining a strong national commitment to research and evidence will benefit Australia as well as help to improve services internationally by increasing the global knowledge base.'* The Strategy acknowledges that Australia has benefited for many years from a focussed national research agenda, which has created a large network of clinicians, academics, researchers and policy makers, where the outcomes of this research have contributed significantly to the quality of palliative care provided in Australia.

Despite this, the significance of the research is not currently acknowledged as a stand-alone field for the review of applications for National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) or Medical Research

Futures Fund (MRFF) grants. As the aims of the Review state, ANZSRC is to ensure it reflects current practice and is sufficiently robust to allow for long-term data analysis. PCA therefore request a Palliative Care Field of Research as one of the outcomes of this Review.

Not only would this acknowledge the contribution palliative care focused researchers have made to the overall standard of research in Australia and internationally, it would assist in reaching the following goals of the government(s) National Palliative Care Strategy:

- Goal 3 (Access and Choice) People affected by life-limiting illnesses receive care that matches their needs and preferences.
 - Outcome 3i - Governments support ongoing research to identify and address barriers to access and choice

- Goal 5 (Investment) A skilled workforce and systems are in place to deliver palliative care in any setting.
 - Outcome 5j – Governments continue to support research to identify gaps in service provision and implement responses to address those gaps

- Goal 6 (Data and Evidence) Robust national data and a strong research agenda strengthen and improve palliative care.
 - Priority 6.4 - A robust national research agenda informs sector development and improvement.
 - Priority 6.5 - Research includes the experience of individuals affected by a life-limiting illness and these experiences inform the continuous improvement of palliative care
 - Outcome 6j - Governments continue to support research to maintain a strong evidence-base for palliative care
 - Outcome 6k – Governments support the translation of research into practice

There can be few health issues as important as ensuring people with life-limiting illnesses have access to high-quality palliative care services when and where they need them. Given that around 80,000 Australians would benefit from palliative care each year, and that this number will escalate over the next 30 years as our population ages, I hope that the Review consider this request favourably to assist in ensuring a research base to support Australians benefit from this person and family-centred care, where the primary goal to optimise the quality of life.

Please do not hesitate in contacting Kelly Gourlay, National Policy Advisor, if you wish to arrange to discuss these matters further at kelly@palliativecare.org.au or 02 6232 0700.

Yours sincerely



Rohan Greenland
Chief Executive Officer
Palliative Care Australia