



Media Release

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For immediate release

ROYAL COMMISSION: PALLIATIVE CARE IS CORE BUSINESS FOR AGED CARE

The recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (The Commission) are aligned with, and a very strong endorsement of recommendations long held and advocated by the nation's peak palliative care organisation, Palliative Care Australia (PCA).

That endorsement has been highlighted in [a new report, *Palliative care is core business for aged care, released today*](#) which summarises the Royal Commission's recommendations against *Palli-8*, PCA's eight-point plan for palliative care.

PCA welcomes the report's recommendations. The Royal Commission's call for greater investment in palliative care is a significant step toward better outcomes for all Australians.

PCA, together with the sector more broadly, has advocated strongly for many years that palliative care must be considered core business in aged care. As Australia's population ages and the number of people using aged care services increases, the demand for palliative care in aged care is also increasing.

PCA appeared before the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (the Royal Commission) in June 2019, highlighting the urgent need for palliative care to be considered as 'core business' in aged care.

Over the last three years and across a total of eight submissions to the Royal Commission, PCA has continued to build the case. *Palli-8*, launched in September 2020, proposed eight key recommendations to improve palliative care in aged care.

PCA Chair Professor Meera Agar says the new PCA report clearly highlights the alignment between PCA's own eight key recommendations and the recommendations contained in the Royal Commission's Final Report.

"It is very clear that our calls for palliative care to be considered core business in aged care have not just been heard, not just understood but in fact fully embraced.

The Royal Commission's call for greater investment in palliative care is a significant first step toward better outcomes for all Australians and it is PCA's hope that the Government will now act swiftly and comprehensively to enact them," Professor Agar said.

The Royal Commission's Final Report singled out four concerns for immediate attention - food and nutrition, dementia care, the use of restrictive practices, and palliative care, with the Commission noting:

High quality palliative care is essential to ensuring that an older person can live their life as fully and as comfortably as possible as they approach death. Compassionate, respectful and individualised support for older people approaching the end of their lives is a necessary component of aged care services.'

Media contact: Jeremy Henderson – 0425 559 710 – jeremy.henderson@palliativecare.org.au
palliativecare.org.au



The Final report also acknowledges that evidence heard during the life of the Royal Commission shows that too few people receive evidence-based end-of-life and palliative care, and instead experience unnecessary pain or indignity in their final days, weeks and months.

*Palliative and end-of-life care, like dementia care, should be considered core business for aged care providers. People at the end of their lives should be treated with care and respect. Their pain must be minimised, their dignity maintained, and their wishes respected. Their families should be supported and informed.*ⁱⁱ

[ENDS]

Download PCA's report, [Palliative care is core business for aged care](#) (PDF)

ⁱ Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (2021), *Final Report: Care, Dignity and Respect, Volume 1 Summary and Recommendations*, pg. 94

ⁱⁱ Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (2021), *Final Report: Care, Dignity and Respect, Volume 1 Summary and Recommendations*, pg. 67

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