



Media Release

8 September 2021

For immediate release

INVEST CHALLENGE CHANGE - OCEANIC PALLIATIVE CARE CONFERENCE IMPACTED AND INFORMED BY COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Minister for Health and Aged Care, The Hon Greg Hunt MP has today paid homage to palliative care staff, volunteers, medical professionals, researchers and carers, for their efforts amid the COVID-19 pandemic, praising them for providing care to 'our most vulnerable Australians at their most vulnerable time.'

Minister Hunt officially opened the 2021 Oceanic Palliative Care Conference (21OPCC) this morning.

Held virtually for the first time, 21OPCC, the official conference of Palliative Care Australia, is the pre-eminent event for all those passionate about palliative and end-of-life care in Australia, New Zealand, and throughout the wider Oceanic region.

Shaped by the pandemic, this year's Conference theme, *Invest Challenge Change*, builds on the continuing global push to ensure that we forge more resilient health systems, better equipped to meet critical health care needs in normal circumstances and during times of crisis.

In her opening plenary address to over 1,000 delegates, PCA Chair Professor Meera Agar echoed the sentiments of Minister Hunt, remarking that COVID-19 is a defining moment in our lives, impacting Australia and the world like no other event in the history of this generation.

"I would first like to thank you all for your ongoing contribution, your tireless efforts to serve your patients, their families, your services, organisations and institutions, your colleagues, in the most difficult and at times, unimaginable circumstances," Professor Agar said.

The rich conference program will cover ten conference themes: population groups, ethics and law and its interface with clinical practice, caring for older persons, an interdisciplinary approach to care, grief and bereavement, investing in strong systems and structures in palliative care, clinical care and practice, holistic care, paediatric palliative care and the impact of voluntary assisted dying in palliative care.

The comprehensive program recognises the breadth of palliative care and some of the significant issues being tackled both in Australia and the region, such as the need for greater investment in palliative care, COVID-19's impact on grief and bereavement, and dealing with a rapidly aging population and its impact on palliative care.

21OPCC boasts over 100 live presentations, five international presenters, ten workshops, five industry panels, a virtual conference Choir and the National Palliative Care Awards ceremony held yesterday evening.

PCA Chief Executive Officer Camilla Rowland says the virtual setting has been no barrier to building a rich and exciting program that has been well received by the sector, as shown by the record registration numbers.

Media contact: Jayme Markus – 0401 944 905 – communications@palliativecare.org.au
palliativecare.org.au



"In fact, with the barriers of travel and accommodation removed, this year's conference is more accessible, particularly for those in the Oceanic region and beyond," Ms Rowland said.

The virtual setting has also helped drive the Conference's extensive scholarship program, ensuring the participation of practitioners, carers and volunteers who may not have had the opportunity to attend otherwise.

"I wish to acknowledge and thank the Australian Government's generous support in partnering with Palliative Care Australia to deliver a valuable investment into the palliative care workforce that will see over 100 scholarship recipients attend this year's conference," Ms Rowland said.

Speaking ahead of the 2021 National Palliative Care Awards ceremony, at a pre-conference welcome evening held on Tuesday 7 September, PCA Patrons, His Excellency General, the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Her Excellency Mrs Linda Hurley, also praised the contributions of those working in the palliative care sector.

The Governor General said, "We appreciate that many of you are on the front line of service delivery and under all sorts of pressures,"

"We recognise that others are working hard behind the scenes to help ensure that palliative care needs are met. That is why Linda and I want to thank everyone in the palliative care sector."

PCA's National Palliative Care Awards recognise innovation, teamwork and emerging talent in Australia's palliative care sector, with this year's award line-up featuring four new individual award categories.

The awards acknowledge individuals and teams who provide exceptional care and support for people receiving palliative care through public recognition and further development opportunities. There are nine individual and two organisation/team awards categories.

PCA extends its congratulations to all of the winners of the 2021 National Palliative Care Awards.

- **Innovation in Palliative Care**, Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service (Paediatric Palliative Care Service)
- **Outstanding Teamwork Award**, Dungog Shire Palliative Care Volunteers Inc.
- **Emerging Leader**, Dr Graham Grove, Medical Director, Specialist Palliative Rural Telehealth Service (and Gold Coast Health)
- **Emerging Researcher**, Dr Claudia Viridun, Senior Research Fellow, Cancer and Palliative Care Outcomes Centre, Centre for Healthcare Transformation School of Nursing, Faculty of Health, Queensland University of Technology
- **Excellence in Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Palliative Care**, Cheryl Porter-Pedras, Senior Aboriginal Health Worker Palliative Care, South Western Sydney Local Health District NSW
- **Excellence in Generalist Palliative Care**, Dr Jonathan Ramachenderan, Palliative Care GP, WA Country Health Service, Great Southern region
- **Excellence in Palliative Care – Community Based Care**, Dr Paula Moffat, Medical Director - Palliative Care, Bethesda Health Care
- **Excellence in Palliative Care – Paediatric Palliative Care**, Associate Professor John Collins, Director, Pain Medicine, The Children's Hospital at Westmead
- **Excellence in Palliative Care – Rural and Remote** Robyn Ellis, Regional Palliative Care Clinical Nurse Specialist/Manager, West Australian Country Health Service Midwest

Media contact: Jayme Markus – 0401 944 905 – communications@palliativecare.org.au
palliativecare.org.au



- **Excellence in Palliative Care in an Aged Care Setting**, Yasothiny Yogarajah, Care Team Manager, BaptistCare NSW & ACT
- **Outstanding Achievement by a Volunteer**, Keri Wassenaar, Palliative Care Support and Biography Volunteer, Karuna Hospice Services

END]

Professor Meera Agar, Camilla Rowland and 21OPCC speakers are available for interview upon request.

Conference website: [Oceanic Palliative Care Conference 2021 \(oceanicpallcare.com\)](https://oceanicpallcare.com)

VIDEO - Minister Hunt's Opening Address: [Oceanic Palliative Care Conference - Palliative Care](#)

VIDEO - Professor Agar's Chair Address: [Oceanic Palliative Care Conference - Palliative Care](#)

VIDEO – Governor General's Address: [National Palliative Care Awards 2021 - Palliative Care](#)

Palliative Care Australia extends its thanks and appreciation to:

- The Oceanic Palliative Care Conference Executive & Program Committee
- To our international partner organisations – Hospice NZ, the Asia Pacific Palliative Care Network, the International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care, the Worldwide Hospice Palliative Care Alliance, the European Association for Palliative Care, and Australasian Palliative Link International.
- Our Sponsors
- Our Members
- And to all of our 21OPCC presenters and delegates.

Media contact: Jayme Markus – 0401 944 905 – communications@palliativecare.org.au
palliativecare.org.au

