



## Media Release

24 May 2021



### NEW CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES TO CHALLENGE PERCEPTIONS ABOUT PALLIATIVE CARE

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New survey data released today during National Palliative Care Week (NPCW) has highlighted limited community understanding around the broader meaning of palliative care and a general reluctance to engage in conversations on death and dying.

In direct response, and also launching today; an innovative national education campaign – **Palliative Care *It's more than you think.*** – has been created to engage the community in a conversation about the benefits of palliative care.

The multimedia campaign developed by Palliative Care Australia (PCA), with the support of the Australian Government, seeks to challenge perceptions that palliative care is a 'last resort' and empower individuals to engage with their health care professionals early in their diagnosis in the hope to live as well as possible for as long as possible.

It is conservatively estimated that in addition to the 40,000 Australians receiving palliative care, there are at least a further 40,000 Australians who would also benefit from palliative care treatment. Three quarters of Australians (76 per cent) say they would ask for palliative care for themselves or a family member when first diagnosed with a terminal illness. However, there is strong evidence that Australians do not fully understand the full breadth of palliative care and its benefits, which then presents as a barrier to accessing timely care.

Fewer than four out of ten Australians (39 per cent) correctly understand that palliative care can be requested when a person is first diagnosed with a terminal, chronic or degenerative illness.

And only three out of ten Australians surveyed correctly understand that General Practitioners (GPs) are among those who can provide palliative care.

Almost 90 per cent of Australians surveyed last month agree that people should plan for end-of-life and think it is important to start thinking and talking about their wishes and preferences for care if they were to become seriously or terminally ill.

However, far fewer Australians; in fact, half of all respondents have done nothing regarding their end-of-life wishes, finding the subject of death and planning for the end of life too difficult to talk about and think talking about their preference for end-of-life with their family will upset them.

PCA Chair Professor Meera Agar, says the campaign will help Australians better understand that palliative care helps people living with a life-limiting illness to live as well as they can by managing pain and symptoms to ensure their quality of life is maintained.

[palliativecare.org.au](http://palliativecare.org.au)



“At its heart, it is a clear and simple message; the campaign is aimed at informing, empowering and encouraging Australians living with a life-limiting illness to engage with their health care professionals early in their diagnosis, so as to live as well as possible for as long as possible,” Professor Meera Agar said.

Adopting a light-hearted, ‘vintage’ style of animation, the **Palliative Care It’s more than you think.** campaign seeks to challenge perceptions and start conversations about end-of-life care.

Stage one of the campaign will see it roll out nationally on television, in print and online over the months of May, June and July.

The series of original animated vignettes were designed in response to the initial question, *What is palliative care?*, with different scenarios created to respond with answers and activities not usually associated with palliative care, such as golfing, fishing, gardening, travelling and even ticking off one’s bucket list by parachuting.

The new campaign website, <https://morethanyouthink.org.au/> explains clearly and simply what palliative care is, who it is for, who can provide it, and where palliative care can be provided, together with answers to frequently asked questions.

“Palliative care really is more than you think. It’s for anyone of any age – from babies to older adults – who have been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness, and it can be provided alongside curative treatments, or when those treatments have ended,” Professor Agar said.

And while the true definition of palliative care is much broader than the care provided at the end-of-life, as many Australians incorrectly believe, Professor Agar says all palliative care shares one key characteristic in common.

“All palliative care is about quality of life and helping people with a life-limiting illness live their lives as well as possible for as long as possible,” Professor Agar said.

### National Palliative Care Community Survey – Key Findings

- 76% of respondents are likely to ask for palliative care for themselves or someone close to them if they had a serious, prolonged or terminal illness
- Only 39% of respondents think a person can first ask for palliative care when they are first diagnosed with a terminal, chronic, or degenerative illness
- Only 31% of respondents think that GPs can provide palliative care
- 78% of respondents agree that people should plan for the end of their life and 88% of respondents think it is important to start thinking and talking about their wishes and preferences for care if you were to become seriously or terminally ill
- 50% of respondents have done nothing regarding their end-of-life-wishes
- Respondents believe that talking about their preferences for the end of their life with their family will upset them (54%) and find the subject of death and planning for the end of their life too difficult to talk about (48%).

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- Broadcast-ready campaign creative (TVC's, digital artwork) available upon request
- Professor Meera Agar is available for interview.
- Campaign website: <https://morethanyouthink.org.au/>
- National Palliative Care: [Community Survey Snapshot](#)
- Social Media hashtags #morethanyouthink #NPCW2021

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[National Palliative Care Week 2021](#) will be held from Sunday 23 May – Saturday 29 May, with the theme “Palliative Care It’s more than you think.”, which seeks to raise awareness about the many benefits of quality palliative care. One of the great myths about palliative care is that it is only a synonym for end-of-life care. It is so much more than that.

National Palliative Care Week (NPCW) provides an opportunity to discuss the benefits of palliative care and celebrate the amazing dedication of all those working and volunteering in palliative care across Australia.

[palliativecare.org.au](http://palliativecare.org.au)

