



Media Release

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For immediate release

Response to RC recommendations welcomed, but more funding needed for Australia's rapidly aging population

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) has today welcomed the Government's full response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (the Commission), but says greater investment is urgently required if we are to meet the escalating needs of Australia's rapidly aging population.

This year's Budget included an additional \$17.7 billion in funding over five years to be delivered to the aged care sector, but that figure falls well short of the Commission's own calculations, which had identified almost \$50 billion in funding shortfall in aged care over the next five years.

PCA in particular is pleased to see the Government agree to the Commission's recommendations relating to the development of a new Aged Care Act, a review of the Quality Standards and palliative care training for aged care staff.

PCA Chair, Professor Meera Agar looks forward to good end-of-life and palliative care in aged care being a core pillar of ongoing improvement for aged care and says the quality and content of compulsory workforce training in palliative care will also be critical

"The Government's response to the Royal Commission's recommendations is an important next step in efforts to rebuild and reshape this country's aged care sector so that we ensure Australians get the aged care that they need, and that they deserve, and that we also meet the increasing demand for palliative care in aged care," Professor Agar said.

Professor Agar says the Government must, however, continue to engage with stakeholders.

"It is vital we have a new Aged-Care Act. That will be our roadmap to successfully rebuild the aged care sector; but it is also essential that we get it right; that we ensure the right to good palliative and end-of-life care, and that the Government successfully engages and partners with the sector, in the development of the Act," Professor Agar said.

PCA notes the implementation of the Australian National Aged Care Classification (AN-ACC) to address the current shortfalls of the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI), and notes attention will be required to ensure meeting palliative care needs are addressed within the funding formula.

PCA also welcomes the additional \$37.3 million over four years to expand the Greater Choice for At Home Palliative Care measure.

"PCA looks forward to working with the Primary Health Networks as they roll out the Greater Choice for At Home Palliative Care measure – a program that aims to support more Australians to receive high-quality palliative care in their homes," Professor Agar said.

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Following the Government's response to the Commission, PCA has called on all state and territory governments to support the Federal Government in these recommendations, especially those that support older Australians to access specialist and other health practitioners.

Professor Agar says while there is much to celebrate in the Budget announcements, and within the Government's response to the Commission's recommendations, more investment is still urgently needed for an aged care system already struggling to meet rising demand.

"The additional funding announced will help relieve some of the pressure for the aged care sector struggling to meet the demand for their services.

"However, with more Australians living longer and their needs for aged care increasing, the Government must invest further if the aged care sector is to receive the funding it deserves and urgently requires," Professor Agar said.

This year's Budget included funding of \$58.73 million (over four years from 2021-22) to support palliative care in aged care:

- \$37.3 million (over 4 years from 2021-22) to expand the Greater Choice for At Home Palliative Care program to all 31 Primary Health Networks;
- \$10.07 million (over 3 years from 2021-22) to boost training of the aged care and primary care workforce through the End of Life Directions for Aged Care (ELDAC) program and the Program of Experience in the Palliative Approach (PEPA), delivered through the Palliative Care Education and Training Collaborative.
- \$8.91 million (over 3 years from 2021-22) to expand and embed the internationally recognised Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration (PCOC) into residential aged care settings and improve the provision of quality palliative care; and
- \$2.45 million (over 3 years from 2021-22) to educate health and aged care professionals on providing quality palliative care, raise awareness of available tools and generate informed conversations between senior Australians, their families, and health and aged care professionals.

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