



# Media Release

03-February 2021

## Government urged to increase investment in palliative care

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) has called on the Commonwealth Government to invest a further \$365 million to meet the growing palliative care needs of people in the community, hospitals and residential aged care.

The three key funding initiatives are contained in [PCA's Pre-Budget Submission](#) and form a comprehensive suite of funding measures designed to address a system that is failing to meet the demand for palliative care in Australia.

PCA Chair, Professor Meera Agar, says the evidence is clear that investing in palliative care delivers not just better health outcomes, but significant economic value as well.

"All Australians have a human right to quality palliative care – when and where they need it, and on that alone, the argument for prioritising this funding is a powerful one. But we also know that investment in palliative care makes sound economic sense and delivers strong returns on investment," Professor Agar said.

The three key initiatives would see an increase in funding of \$240 million per year in integrated home and community-based palliative care services, an additional \$50 million in hospitals and \$75 million in residential aged care.

The recommendations are informed by a KPMG report [Investing to Save: The Economics of Increased Investment in Palliative Care in Australia](#), commissioned by PCA in 2020, which found that increased funding in community-based settings, hospitals and residential aged-care would deliver a strong return on investment and provide governments with significant cost savings.

Professor Agar says governments cannot afford to ignore Australia's changing demographics that will see the population reach 30 million within 10 years.

"Australians are living longer, many with multiple chronic conditions. Australia is not meeting the demand for palliative care so we absolutely need governments to invest now if we are to meet that emerging need," Professor Agar said.

PCA's comprehensive budget submission contains a raft of measures designed to address the current funding gap.

Together with the three key initiatives, PCA has also put forward six supporting initiatives that would provide further investment and strengthen structural and policy settings, including the appointment of a Palliative Care Commissioner to coordinate and champion palliative care nationally for all older Australians, as well as \$20 million over three years for the establishment of a National Disaster Grief, Bereavement and Mental Health Framework.

Professor Agar said the need for a Framework emerged from two PCA-led strategic forums in 2020 held to identify emerging issues, available resources, and gaps in current service provision.

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“It’s estimated that 44,000 Australians will be diagnosed with prolonged grief disorder each year. A National Framework for Disaster, Grief, Bereavement and Mental Health would bring together currently siloed services and deliver better outcomes for Australians in need,” Professor Agar said.

[PCA’s Pre-Budget Submission](#) also includes support for two broader health and Aged Care system initiatives.

Fully funding the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety would significantly improve access to palliative care in aged care settings.

Fully funding the recommendations of the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Review Taskforce would support more equitable access to palliative care in all care settings.

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