

Matters of  life and death



Supporter
toolkit

Introduction



About Palliative Care Australia

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) is the national peak body for palliative care. We represent all those who work towards providing high-quality palliative care for Australians.

We raise awareness about palliative care, improve access to palliative care services for people of all ages with life-limiting illness and support the workforce who play a critical role in providing quality care.

We encourage the Australian community to talk about and engage with conversations and planning surrounding death and dying.

About palliative care

Palliative care is high quality health care and support for people living with a life-limiting illness and their families. Palliative care helps people to live as well as they can by managing pain and symptoms to ensure their quality of life is maintained as the illness progresses.

Palliative care identifies and treats symptoms and issues associated with life-limiting illness which may be physical, emotional, spiritual or social. Palliative care is a family-centred model of care, meaning that family, loved ones and carers can also receive practical and emotional support.

Palliative care is about maintaining quality of life. The aim of palliative care is neither to hasten nor postpone death. Rather, the focus is on living as well as possible, for as long as possible.

Palliative care may include:

- Relief of pain and other symptoms
- Medication management
- Food and nutrition advice and support
- Care and education to support better mobility and sleeping
- Planning for future medical treatment decisions and goals of care
- Resources such as equipment needed to aid care at home
- Assistance for families to come together to talk about sensitive issues
- Links to other services such as home help and financial support
- Support for people to meet cultural obligations
- Support for emotional, social and spiritual concerns
- Counselling and grief support for the person with the illness and their family and carers
- Referrals to respite care services
- Bereavement care to the family and carers once the person has died.

Engage on social media

- Please follow Palliative Care Australia on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to join the conversation.
- Tag our social media channels while sharing your content.
- Use our campaign hashtag #MattersOfLifeAndDeath on your posts so we can re-share your messages.
- While posting your content, we encourage you to prompt your users to visit palliativecare.org.au.

We have provided some sample social media posts to help you communicate with your audiences and support PCA to raise awareness about palliative care:

- Palliative care provides person and family-centred care to people of all ages with life-limiting illness to help them live as well as possible, for as long as possible. #MattersOfLifeAndDeath
- Palliative care can be accessed from diagnosis of a life-limiting illness so you can receive the holistic end-of-life care that you deserve. #MattersOfLifeAndDeath
- Palliative Care Australia and its members around the country have developed a road map of actions to increase access to palliative care for all Australians. Show your support by sharing it with your network – [Palliative Care Australia Roadmap 2022-2027](#)
- General Practitioners, Registered Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, Allied Health Professionals, volunteers and carers, as well as specialist palliative care services play a critical role in delivering quality care to people of all ages living with life-limiting illness. We appreciate them for the work they do. #MattersOfLifeAndDeath
- Palliative care helps people manage their symptoms, ensuring quality of life is maintained as illness progresses. Care is person centred and covers the physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs of the patient and their loved ones. #MattersOfLifeAndDeath
- Do you work in health or care services and want to increase your skills and understand of palliative care? Explore the range of education resources available – palliativecare.org.au #MattersOfLifeAndDeath
- Palliative care workers and volunteers support quality of life. They deliver exceptional care, and we are grateful for their dedication, skill, and passion. #MattersOfLifeAndDeath
- Open conversations about death and dying can encourage people to access Palliative care and reduce the taboo associated with it. Share your story with us using the hashtag #MattersOfLifeAndDeath
- What does quality of life at the end-of-life look like to you? Visit palliativecare.org.au for tools to help your thinking and planning and help make it happen #MattersOfLifeAndDeath
- Caring for someone in the last chapter of life can be an emotional and challenging experience. Please care for yourself so that you can care for others. Visit palliativecare.org.au for ideas and support. #MattersOfLifeAndDeath
- Palliative care delivers quality of life and supports loved ones with their grief and bereavement. Visit palliativecare.org.au to find out more. #MattersOfLifeAndDeath
- You can access palliative care at home, in hospital, in a hospice or in a residential aged care facility, so you can live the life you choose comfortably for as long as possible. #MattersOfLifeAndDeath

Key statistics



Refer to key industry statistics below:

- The [National Palliative Care Community Survey](#) conducted by PCA in 2022 suggests that although 90% of Australians believe that it is important to think about and plan for their care if they were to become seriously or terminally ill, only 4 in 10 Australians have done anything about it.
- The [KPMG Palliative Care Economic Report](#), 2020 reveals that the demand for palliative care will increase by 50% between now and 2035, and double by 2050 as Australia's population ages and the level of chronic disease in our community grows.
- According to PCA Survey of Sector, 2022, it is conservatively estimated that demand for palliative care services has risen by 30% as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, due to delayed diagnoses on the back of lockdowns and community anxiety.
- The [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(AIHW\)](#) reveals that dementia has overtaken coronary heart disease as the leading cause of disease burden among older Australians – 400,000 Australians are currently living with dementia. Other diseases among the 5 leading causes of deaths for males and females are – cerebrovascular disease (which includes stroke), lung cancer, breast cancer (for females) and prostate cancer (for males). Palliative care has a significant role to play in delivering quality of life for people living with all these illnesses.
- The [Palliative Care Services in Australia Report](#) by AIHW suggests that in 2020, there were 300 palliative medicine physicians and 3,800 palliative care nurses employed in Australia. The Palliative Care Service Development Guidelines set a benchmark of 2.0 full-time equivalent Specialist Palliative Medicine Physicians per 100,000 population. This means that by 2030, with an expected population of 30 million, Australia should be aiming for 600 Specialist Palliative Medicine Physicians. This is more than double the current number.
- The above report also reveals that in the five years to 2020, palliative care-related hospitalisations increased by 18%, a steeper rate than that for hospitalisations for all reasons (6%) over the same period. Additionally, the average length of stay for palliative care-related admissions was almost twice as long compared with all other hospitalisations.
- The weight of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety continues to highlight the positive impact palliative care can have. Commissioners made 12 recommendations pointing to the need for palliative care to be embedded within aged care. Staff training opportunities are critical in delivering on this.
- The [Strengthening Medicare Taskforce Report 2022](#) provided a number of recommendations to improve Medicare. Palliative Care Australia believes these recommendations would greatly improve the provision of palliative care by primary care professionals – particularly in regional and rural communities.
- The [KPMG Palliative Care Economic Report](#), 2020 suggests that investing in high quality palliative care delivers a very high return on investment. It does this because people who receive care from palliative care health professionals have their pain and symptoms managed. This means less visits to Emergency Departments, reduced Intensive Care Unit admissions and usage, less emergency calls to ambulances and less days spent in hospital.



**Thank you for helping Palliative Care Australia
raise awareness, and spark conversations.**

We also appreciate your support in recognising
and celebrating the
**'people at the heart of quality
palliative care'** across Australia.