

2024 Federal Budget

Practical proposals to provide greater palliative care options to more people



When asked, most Australians say "I would prefer to spend my final months and weeks at home."

That is currently out of reach for most. PCA's Federal Budget proposals would make palliative care at home possible for many more Australians.



Home and community-based palliative care for individuals with life-limiting illnesses reduces hospital admissions, shortens stays, decreases emergency and intensive care pressures, which means people need ambulances less often, resulting in substantial cost savings for the health system.



Every dollar invested in home and community palliative care delivers a 100% return on investment not to forget increased quality of life for people with life-limiting illnesses, their loved ones, and carers.

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) has identified three urgent priorities for investment in the 2024-25 Federal Budget:



Palliative care at home for people under 65 who have functional support needs

Recommendation

Establish an interim program of non-clinical care and support for people under 65 living with a life-limiting illness, including those with a disability, who need support with the activities of daily living to remain at home and out of hospital.

Vulnerable Australians in their last phase of their life need urgent assistance with daily living so they can remain at home and out of hospital while receiving palliative care.

The proposed program would complement existing clinical care but would address gaps in functional support that have been identified and are causing distress in the community. Children and young people will need specific supports.

A grant for this program would support approximately 3000 people. PCA stands ready to assist with delivering the program by working with our national network and the wider palliative care sector to commission services from accredited providers.

This is designed as an interim solution, to allow time for a longer-term cross jurisdictional approach to be developed. PCA's 2024 - 25 Federal Budget Submission provides recommendations for immediate, interim and long-term supports.

\$77.6m over three financial years to support 3,000 people

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Comprehensive Palliative Care in Aged Care Measure

Recommendation

Maintain funding for the Comprehensive Palliative Care in Aged Care measure beyond June 2024, cost shared with states and territories, to consolidate pathways to specialist palliative care services for people in residential aged care.

This program currently delivers positive outcomes in linking specialist palliative care services with people in residential aged care. It helps avoid unnecessary emergency and hospital admissions and delivers savings and efficiencies for hospital systems.

Continued funding of the program beyond the middle of this year is critical to delivering and improving palliative care to Australia's aging population.

\$33m matched by states and territories over three financial years.

"I want to be in my own place, to be with my own family, but I need help to be there."

Aboriginal mum, early 40s, in hospital separated from family.

"People are really spending the ends of their lives ... fighting systems and trying to get support. We really need to fill this gap."

Palliative care professional



After-hours access to palliative care

Recommendation

Improve access to after-hours palliative care services by analysing gaps in service provision, while working with states and territories and primary care providers to design referral and care pathways that increase access to after-hours palliative care.

Access to after-hours palliative care is an issue for people of all ages. A gap analysis would identify variabilities in service access and enable states and territories, specialist palliative care health professionals and primary care providers to work together to address this need.

This work could be delivered under a refreshed National Palliative Care Implementation Plan and would include nationally agreed benchmarks on access to after-hours specialist palliative care with the opportunity to extend innovative service models.

Primary care can play a greater role in after-hours palliative care. Better co-operation between specialist palliative care and primary care systems will deliver better outcomes for patients, their loved ones, and carers, and produces savings to health systems.

\$300,000 for the gap analysis.

PCA's 2024-25 Federal Budget Submission provides more information about the three priority investments identified here as well as measures that deepen the current reforms in aged care, primary care, disability services, and cancer care. You can explore the full submission at palliativecare.org.au or request further information via pca@palliativecare.org.au