



PalliativeCare
AUSTRALIA

Media Release

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Closing the gap on palliative care remains a challenge

Indigenous access to palliative care services remains a concern, with continued gaps in access for rural and remote communities across Australia, according to Palliative Care Australia (PCA).

PCA CEO Liz Callaghan said research showed 73% of city dwellers accessed palliative care before they died compared with only 52% of people from the bush.

“Getting palliative care services out to rural and remote communities is difficult and a key challenge in dealing with the gaps in access to care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

“It is an important role the Royal Australian Flying Doctor Service provides to communities, bringing specialist care out to these areas. With an increasing chronic disease burden more health professionals will need palliative care experience to manage the terminal nature of these conditions over the long term.”

As a Close the Gap steering committee member, PCA wants to raise the profile of palliative care as a necessary service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

“There is a long way to go before we close the gap on health inequality. But we have seen some successes in lowering smoking rates and lower infant mortality. We need to see better palliative care as well.

“We will continue to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups to identify the availability of Indigenous- specific palliative care services and work to identify which models of care are most effective.

“Governments and non-government organisations need to continue to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to develop and implement health policy and programs, particularly around chronic disease management and long-term care of these patients,” Ms Callaghan said.

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