

MEDIA RELEASE

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The Gap is closing but continued effort needed

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) has welcomed today's Closing the Gap report, praising the progress that has been made and calls for continued action on this critical health priority.

'It is fantastic to hear about the progress that has been made to date, particularly around reductions in smoking rates and improvements in child and maternal health,' said Dr Yvonne Luxford, Chief Executive Officer of Palliative Care Australia.

'This is proof that Closing the Gap initiatives are working and evidence that generational change is possible.'

Palliative Care Australia is a member of the Close the Gap Steering Committee, which is calling for there to be extra effort to build on the successes of the past for the next 16 years to ensure we meet the 2030 target to end health inequality.

'A key priority is the implementation of the 2013-23 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan,' said Dr Luxford. 'And within this, improving the quality of care at the end of life for Indigenous Australians.'

Evidence shows that Indigenous Australians are underrepresented when it comes to accessing palliative care services.

'We really need to have a palliative care workforce strategy which addresses culturally sensitive palliative care and trains Aboriginal Health workers in this crucial area,' said Dr Luxford.

'We also need a communication strategy which educates Indigenous communities about the benefits of palliative care and encourages them to access services.'

'There has been significant progress on the Closing the Gap targets to date, and with continued effort we will be able to meet the 2030 deadline and end health inequalities for Indigenous Australians.'

Ends

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PCA is the peak national organisation representing the interests and aspirations of all
who share the ideal of quality care at the end of life

Patron: Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia