

Communiqué on the review of *The Standards for Providing Quality Palliative Care for all Australians*

The Standards for Providing Quality Palliative Care for all Australians (The Standards) 2014 consultation paper was released in August 2014 with the due date for submissions a month later. The consultation paper was distributed widely across a range of mediums including the palliative care, aged care and health sectors, and through palliative care networks, a variety of health networks, federal government state and territory contacts, and specialised health media and journals. A total of 119 submissions were received. Approximately four times as many services responded to the consultation than did those categorised as academic/research or organisations.

The consultation paper posed questions under each of the proposed six Standards which people were invited to answer. In relation to each standard it was asked whether:

- the intended purpose and scope was clear
- if the criteria were relevant
- if there was anything vital that had not been included
- overall if they supported the revised Standard

Additional questions were asked regarding the format of the Standards. Additional comment was also invited, and people were able to make submissions as individuals, or on behalf of an organisation.

The overall feedback on the revised Standards indicated that respondents were in favour of a reduction in the number of Standards and that this would increase their usability. This view however was strongest for services. Issues raised included the following:

- Ensuring the Standards could be incorporated into other accreditation and evaluation programs.
- That the Standards align with other standards in the health and aged care sectors.
- That a new edition of the Standards reflects current and projected trends for the palliative care sector, including acute, primary care, aged care and community sectors.
- Ensuring the Standards are relevant to diverse groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) communities, and people with a disability.
- Ensuring that 'terminal care' and 'self-care' are properly represented.
- The application of the Standards to paediatric palliative care.
- The need for more emphasis on involving the person in their care and care decisions.
- The use of a strong evidence base to inform the Standards.

The next stage of the review will involve further consultation with stakeholders and will include the collation and analysis of the overall feedback and issues raised, to be considered by the Standards Review Project Board and the PCA Board, and consultation with experts on various aspects of the proposed Standards. There will then be further targeted consultations with relevant groups in the sector, particularly the PCA member organisations.

The Project Board and PCA acknowledge the importance of the Standards to the sector and that further work is required. Therefore, the process of review will continue until the necessary work has been done to have a new edition of the Standards that reflects trends for the sector, and addresses the issues raised through the consultation. This work will determine the timeline for the completion of the standards review and the implementation of the new standards. When the revised version of the Standards is due to be implemented, it will be extensively communicated and discussed in consultation with the sector. Meanwhile the existing Standards remain valid.