



Media Release

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Dementia funding catalyst for better care and understanding

A significant investment in dementia research should provide the catalyst for a better understanding of the disease and a focus on quality of life for sufferers, says Palliative Care Australia (PCA) CEO Liz Callaghan.

Health Minister Sussan Ley today announced \$35.6m in research grants and a further \$50m to establish National Health and Medical Research Council's National Institute for Dementia Research, awarded to Alzheimer's Australia.

Ms Callaghan said PCA and Alzheimer's Australia already worked closely because many dementia sufferers need palliative care, though the disease is not widely recognised as terminal.

"Many people are not aware that dementia is a terminal illness even though dementia and Alzheimer's disease is the second leading cause of death in Australia.

"I am particularly pleased that the five national dementia priorities include improving quality of life for people living with dementia. While many people associate palliative care with the very end of life, in fact the care provided by palliative physicians is as much about quality of life as it is about a quality death.

"Many Australians still believe that palliative care is only for people with cancer. That means many Australians, including dementia patients, might be missing out on the support and benefit of palliative care.

"It is important that people with conditions like dementia and chronic illnesses know they can seek palliative care and those close to them can ask for them to receive it.

"PCA congratulates the Minister for making such a significant contribution to this area of health care. As our population continues to age there will be further need for understanding of this damaging condition, how we can prevent it and the best way to care for sufferers when the onset of the illness cannot be stopped.

"Palliative care is an important part of ensuring quality of life for all Australians when they face end of life and PCA looks forward to continuing its work with Alzheimer's Australia," Ms Callaghan said.

Media contact: PCA Frith Rayner 0400 45 99 88

