



# Media Release

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## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health plan a good step forward**

The development of actions and deliverables to measure real change in improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health care has been welcomed by Palliative Care Australia (PCA) CEO Liz Callaghan.

The Implementation Plan for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013 - 2023 launched today by Rural Health Minister Fiona Nash aims to close the gaps in the health system Ms Callaghan said.

“This is an important step forward and it was particularly pleasing to see bipartisan support for real change in this area.

“The Implementation plan will build capacity and improve outcomes while also working to improve the quality and efficiency of health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The report calls for culturally appropriate aged care models, including palliative care and end of life decision making for individuals, their families and carers be developed and implemented.

Ms Callaghan said these are vital to the delivery of good quality palliative care.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have specific end-of-life care needs, often including returning to country and the telling their story. Palliative care can’t just be built around a hospital, but should reflect the spiritual and cultural needs of each person, as well as connections to place and community.

“PCA is willing to support the actions on these deliverables in any way we can. This is very important work,” she said.

Ms Callaghan said all Australians deserved to die in the place of their choosing, with their spiritual and cultural needs taken care of.

“Palliative care offers people truly patient-centred care, for all Australians. It is important we all become advocates for palliative care that we talk about what we want at the end of life so our family and friends can make decisions about our care with our guidance.

“Many people have cultural and spiritual preferences which affect how they die and what will happen to them after they die. We need to ensure we talk about our wishes so they can be fulfilled,” said Ms Callaghan.

**Media contact: PCA Frith Rayner 0400 45 99 88**

