



# Media Release

Thursday, 8 October 2015

## **Gender and sexuality should not be barriers to quality healthcare**

Sexuality and gender identity should not be barriers to any kind of health care, including palliative care, says Palliative Care Australia (PCA) CEO Liz Callaghan.

PCA today launches its position statement in conjunction with the National LGBTI Health Alliance calling for recognition of sexuality and gender diversity across health care.

Ms Callaghan said World Hospice and Palliative Care Day on Saturday 10 October called for understanding of 'hidden lives, hidden patients' - those patients who are often marginalised or have difficulty accessing palliative care like lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people.

"World Hospice and Palliative Care Day is the perfect opportunity to take a stand and advocate for change so that LGBTI people live and die with equity, respect and dignity, and without fear of prejudice and discrimination. Unfortunately, in the health system many LGBTI people feel compelled to stay hidden," Ms Callaghan said.

"Many LGBTI people have experienced discrimination, stigma, rejection and isolation in the system. As a result, many LGBTI people feel uncertain about accessing health care services, including palliative care."

The position statement includes calls for recognition of partners regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status as the legal next of kin and for palliative care providers to have opportunities for appropriate accreditation and training for whole-of-service approaches to LGBTI people.

"Quality palliative care should be available to all people with life-limiting conditions, and this includes LGBTI people.

"It should be accessible, inclusive and affirm their right to dignity and respect. It should also recognise the diversity amongst LGBTI people, who are not a homogenous group, and ensure that care is tailored to the needs of individuals," Ms Callaghan said.

She said eradicating discrimination was a collective responsibility, which should be encouraged.

Link to the Position Statement:

<http://palliativecare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/LGBTI-Position-Statement.pdf>

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

