



PalliativeCare
AUSTRALIA

Media Release

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Recognising the patients who miss out on palliative care

World Hospice and Palliative Care Day tomorrow (10 October 2015) celebrates all the hidden patients and hidden lives who struggle to access palliative care – children, homeless people and marginalised communities, says Palliative Care Australia (PCA) CEO Liz Callaghan.

“It was a great credit to our palliative care services that this week The Economist’s Quality of Death Index showed Australia was the second best place in the world to die, but there is still work to do.

“The rating was largely based on investment in health care and services and Australia was let down against ‘best’ placed United Kingdom in terms of community understanding and awareness of palliative care, including amongst diverse population groups.

Ms Callaghan said there were a number of groups who did not easily access care, and appropriateness of care was also an issue – particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

“For Aboriginal people dying ‘on country’ can be very important, the telling of stories is valued. It’s important that across the board palliative care meets an individual’s needs.

“Australian children can access some great palliative care services, but this is mostly offered in the cities. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people often avoid health care for fear of discrimination. Homeless people are not always identified as needing palliative care. Yet all of these Australians have the right to die well, all Australians do.”

PCA launched a Position Statement with the National LGBTI Alliance that calls for understanding of difference in health care settings, including palliative care.

As part of World Hospice and Palliative Care Day, PCA also sponsored Joseph’s Story, a Little Stars film about a young boy with early onset infantile epileptic encephalopathy, a life threatening condition. The film will be released tomorrow.

“Joseph’s story is also an important one for palliative care. Many Australians think palliative care is just for the final stages of life, when in fact care can be provided from diagnosis and for children often follows them for many years.

“In fact palliative care have offered services to the whole family and also an opportunity for them to meet others in a similar situation. It’s an holistic model of care that is very supportive and works closely with patients and families,”

Ms Callaghan said days like today provide an opportunity to remind Australians to ‘have the talk’ about their end of life wishes, so if the worst happens, their families know what they want,” she said.

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To find people working in palliative care in your area: <http://palliativecare.org.au/palliative-care-people/>

