

# Media Release

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## AMA support for palliative care welcome

**Palliative Care Australia (PCA) CEO Liz Callaghan has welcomed the release of the Australian Medical Association’s position statement on euthanasia and physician assisted suicide.**

Ms Callaghan is very pleased to see the explicit support raised for both palliative care and conversations in the community about dying.

“The AMA is right to note that access to timely, good quality end of life and palliative care can vary throughout Australia, and largely depends on your postcode” said Ms Callaghan.

“People who are missing out include some people living in rural areas and in aged care facilities, it includes some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people from culturally diverse backgrounds, as well as people with dementia and other non-cancer life-limiting conditions,” she said.

Palliative Care Australia also supports AMA’s recommendation to ensure adequate resourcing of palliative care and advance care planning services.

“At the moment there are 191 FTE specialist palliative care physicians and 3,500 palliative care nurses in Australia and significantly less allied health staff. There needs to be a significant increase in the palliative care workforce to care for Australia’s aging population and an upskilling of the existing health workforce in best practice end-of-life and palliative care.

“We know that increased support for general practitioners, the nursing workforce, carers and other specialists is important to improve end-of-life care for Australians,” Ms Callaghan said.

The AMA have also called for investment in a comprehensive education and information campaign to raise community awareness of the medical and nursing care and expertise that is available to assist patients in the final stages of their lives.

“We know that if you talk about your wishes with your family and health care professionals you’re more likely to get the care that you want at the end of your life,” Ms Callaghan said.

Ms Callaghan said PCA had developed a Discussion Starter, which provides a step-by-step guide with activities to help people talk about their end-of-life care wishes.

“The ‘Dying to Talk’ Discussion Starter helps people to start the conversation with their loved ones and health professionals,” Ms Callaghan said.

The Discussion Starter is available from [www.dyingtotalk.org.au](http://www.dyingtotalk.org.au)

Palliative Care Australia’s euthanasia and physician assisted suicide position statement is available [here](#).

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