

Media Release

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Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to talk about their end-of-life care

New resources launched today by the Hon Ken Wyatt, Minister for Indigenous Health, will help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people discuss their end-of-life care wishes with their families and health care teams.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Dying to Talk resources were developed in partnership by Palliative Care Australia (PCA) and the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM).

CATSINaM CEO Janine Mohamed says these resources will help health care workers open conversations around end-of-life care in a culturally safe way.

“The end of someone’s life is a very special time in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. To ensure people have the care they want, in the place they want, it is important to be able to plan and discuss their wishes,” Mrs Mohamed said.

“For example, returning to country at the end of life and having a traditional burial are often important for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Being able to discuss these wishes with family and their health care team means they are more likely to have the best death possible.”

PCA CEO Liz Callaghan says the resources were developed after consultations with Indigenous health organisations that identified the need for a specific resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

“The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific resources have been developed to support advance care planning and end-of-life discussions,” Ms Callaghan said.

“Focus groups were held with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to understand what barriers they had in discussing their end-of-life care wishes and planning for death. Those focus groups informed the design and content of the Discussion Starter and the Dying to Talk Cards to ensure they were culturally safe and useful.

“I also thank the Australian Indigenous Doctors’ Association and Indigenous Allied Health Australia for their input on this project.”

The resources can be accessed at www.dyingtotalk.org.au and printed resources can be provided by request pcainc@palliativecare.org.au.

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