



Media Release

20 October 2017

Every Australian must have access to palliative care

Palliative Care Australia CEO Liz Callaghan is calling for increased funding for palliative care services to ensure all Australians can access support at the end of life, regardless of the legality of voluntary assisted dying.

“The debate in the Victorian Parliament this week has highlighted the emotional and difficult times that people have experienced caring for loved ones at the end of life.

“We know that palliative care services make a real difference to the vast majority of patients’ quality of life and provide support to their families after their death.”

“It is vital that governments across Australia ensure that their palliative care services can support all of those who require assistance, and this is even more important in light of proposed law reform in Victoria and New South Wales.

“It is true that Australia has one of the best palliative care systems in the world. However there are still many people who miss out because of their location, diagnosis, ethnicity or socio-economic status. More needs to be done to address the gap in services, particularly in rural and regional areas.

“We need increased funding to educate the community about palliative care and engage them to plan for their future care. We know that people who plan ahead for their desired care and share those wishes with their family and health team, are more likely to receive it.

“More also needs to be done to upskill health professionals outside of the palliative care sector, such as GP’s, nurses, aged care staff, allied health and other health professionals to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to best support people with a life-limiting illness and their carers.

“Currently, medical and nursing students do not receive adequate training about end-of-life issues and communication skills, and this should be a priority for all universities to integrate into their curriculums.

“No matter the outcome of the proposed legislation, palliative care and aged care will continue to care for the vast majority of Australians at the end of life. This needs to be resourced accordingly.

ENDS

Media contact: Grace Keyworth – 0422 040 576

palliativecare.org.au

