



## Report from National Policy Advisory Committee Meeting: 17 November 2017

*The National Policy Advisory Committee (NPAC) provides high level advice to the Palliative Care Australia (PCA) Board on palliative care issues, policy and accompanying advocacy. NPAC consists of representatives from each Member Organisation and Affiliate Member.*

This is the third NPAC meeting communique for 2017, which is prepared for members to share within their networks after each meeting. On Friday, 17 November NPAC convened for a face-to-face meeting in Melbourne, which was chaired by Dr Jane Fischer, President of PCA.

The following is a summary of the main agenda items. In addition, NPAC reviewed and approved an updated Terms of Reference and agreed on a schedule of meetings for 2018, including a face-to-face meeting in November.

### Reconciliation Action Plan

PCA is aiming to launch the organisation's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) on Close the Gap Day in March 2018 after a positive meeting with Reconciliation Australia to discuss the draft document.

### National Palliative Care Strategy

Progress continues on the Commonwealth's draft National Palliative Care Strategy, being prepared by Urbis. NPAC were provided with an opportunity to discuss the most recent draft with Urbis directly at this meeting, as part of the final round of targeted consultation following the open consultation round held previously. PCA understand the Strategy will be provided to the Department of Health by the end of 2018.

The strategy is a great opportunity to effect significant changes within the palliative care sector and PCA has provided and facilitated input through various consultations to ensure that it is as comprehensive as possible and meets the needs of the sector. This follows on from Urbis attending and gathering feedback from delegates at our recent Australian Palliative Care Conference in September, to engage the health care sector more broadly, including residential care, community-based care and primary health care.

### Voluntary Assisted Dying Bills

The Voluntary Assisted Dying Bills recently tabled in NSW and Victoria were noted and the Committee discussed the current activities of the Member Organisations and the approach going forward in each respective jurisdiction. The Committee affirmed that euthanasia and physician assisted suicide are not part of palliative care

practice, however it is ultimately up to services and health professionals to decide to what extent they will be involved in a request from a person in their care if it becomes available. PCA will be consulting with Members over the coming months to review its position on this issue and how to best support palliative care services, with the priority to ensure that all people who are cared for by a palliative care service continue to have holistic person-centered care.

### Current Issues in Aged Care

NPAC members discussed issues of concern in relation to the aged care sector, which is now a standing item on the NPAC agenda. A number of these concerns will be raised at the November meeting of the National Aged Care Alliance meeting, of which PCA is a member.

PCA are involved in the End of Life Directions for Aged Care (ELDAC) project announced by Minister for Health Greg Hunt on 17 October. The ELDAC consortium includes Queensland University of Technology, Flinders University and University of Technology Sydney, along with partners PCA, Aged & Community Services Australia, Leading Age Services Australia, Australian Health Care and Hospitals Association and Catholic Health Australia. PCA are leading the work on policy as a partner in this project.

### National Palliative Care Standards Review

The draft Standards were released for public consultation for a one month period over August and September 2017. It is anticipated the revised Standards will be available in early 2018.

### Service Delivery Review

The review and update of the reference documents *A Guide to Palliative Care Service Development: A population based approach* and *Palliative Care Service Provision in Australia: A planning guide* continues to progress, and the Steering Committee will meet again before the end of 2017 to discuss the revised documents.

The revised service development and planning guidelines will be made available through the release of different resources in early 2018.

#### Next NPAC meetings:

- 27 March 2018 - Teleconference
- 13 June 2018 - Teleconference