



Media Release

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Palliative care must be a priority for the next Australian Government

Palliative care will need to be a priority for the next Australian Government, regardless of who forms it, with the demand for services set to soar as the population ages, grows and chronic disease becomes more prevalent, Palliative Care Australia (PCA) CEO Rohan Greenland warned today.

PCA has released its [2019 Federal Election Statement](#), calling for a range of measures to help address current gaps and meet future demand.

“Most importantly, we seek a commitment to fund and support the full implementation of the [National Palliative Care Strategy](#), as endorsed by all Australian health ministers and released in February this year,” Mr Greenland said.

“There can be few health issues as important as ensuring people with life-limiting conditions have access to high-quality palliative care services when and where they need them.

“The Productivity Commission has estimated that around 80,000 Australians would benefit from palliative care each year, and that this number will escalate over the next 30 years as our population ages.

“We know that there is currently inequitable access to palliative care in Australia, and unless there is significant change in the way it is funded and delivered, these inequities will continue to grow. Access must be available to anyone with a life-limiting illness, regardless of their postcode, diagnosis, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status or place of care, to enable them to live as well as possible for as long as possible.

The National Palliative Care Strategy states that *‘investment at national, state, and territory levels will be required to ensure that the systems and people are available to provide quality palliative care when and where it is needed’*. Mr Greenland said by endorsing the Strategy, health ministers made a firm commitment to ensure quality palliative care is available to all who need it.

“But without investment in a strong implementation plan for this Strategy, and recognition that palliative care is not just for the end of a person’s life, more Australians will continue to miss out rather than benefit from this person and family-centred care, where the primary goal is to optimise the quality of life.”

The goals of the Strategy include:

- People affected by life-limiting illnesses receive care that matches their needs and preferences
- A skilled workforce and systems are in place to deliver palliative care in any setting
- People to understand the benefits of palliative care, know where and how to access services, and are involved in decisions about their own care
- Knowledge and practice of palliative care is embedded in all care settings
- Everyone works together to create a consistent experience of palliative care across care settings
- Robust national data and a strong research agenda strengthen and improve palliative care
- National governance of the Strategy drives action.

“PCA looks forward to working closely with whoever forms government after May 18 to drive significant change in palliative care funding and delivery and achieve our [Palliative Care 2030](#) vision of equal access to palliative care for all Australians when and where they need it,” Mr Greenland said. [ENDS]

Media contact: Natalie Peck

palliativecare.org.au

