



PalliativeCare
AUSTRALIA

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Survey shows Australians not planning for one of life's certainties

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) deputy-chair Judy Hollingworth says the results of a national online survey shows most Australians know they should plan for the end of their lives, but are putting it off.

“The survey of 1000 Australian adults commissioned for National Palliative Care Week (May 19-26) found that 79 per cent think it is important to think and talk about their preferences for care at the end of life, but only 25 per cent had talked to their family, and only 6 per cent had talked to a doctor,” said Ms Hollingworth.

“We asked those people why, and the most common response was that they weren't sick (40%), they were too young (30%), the subject made them uncomfortable (24.5%), or they didn't want to upset their loved ones (21.2%).

“During National Palliative Care Week we're challenging Australians to put those fears to the side, reflect on what matters most to them, and start a conversation with their loved ones.

“These results show a large disconnect between what people think is important, and their actions. Palliative Care Australia's Dying to Talk initiative aims to reduce that disconnect. People can use the discussion starter and card game resources at www.dyingtotalk.org.au to help them work out what matters most to them.

“For some people, it might be really important that they have the chance to tick off final things on their bucket-list, while others will want to spend quality time with their families, rather than have further medical interventions that would impact on that quality time.

“The survey found that the four most important things to Australians at the end of life are being free from pain, being the place they choose, being able to enjoy their last days and having support from people close to them.

“One in four respondents had a family member or someone close to them die in the last 12 months. So, despite it being something that closely affects a quarter of our population every year, it's still something that we struggle to talk about.

“Take the time this National Palliative Care Week to prioritise yourself, think about what matters most to you, and start the conversation. I strongly encourage you to visit the Dying to Talk website to support you through the process,” said Ms Hollingworth.

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