



## Media Release

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### Palliative Care Australia welcomes palliative care focus at Royal Commission hearing

**Palliative Care Australia (PCA) CEO Rohan Greenland says the organisation is pleased the Royal Commission into Aged Care Safety and Quality has identified palliative care as an issue to explore in Perth next month.**

“It’s very pleasing to see the Royal Commission has identified the access and quality of palliative care in aged care as a topic for inquiry during the [person-centred care hearing in Perth](#) at the end of June,” said Mr Greenland.

“As highlighted by the World Health Organisation, palliative care is care that is provided by all health and aged care professionals involved in supporting people living with a life-limiting illness, their families and carers.

“PCA has long been raising issues about how palliative care is supported to be provided in aged care, both in residential and home settings.

“We have been working with our state and territory members, the specialist palliative care and aged care sectors and key stakeholders to prepare a full submission to the Royal Commission. Listening to people with a lived experience across Australia has provided us with examples that show the need to recognise and better support palliative care in aged care settings.

“There are a number of structural and policy-based issues that contribute to the lack of understanding and attention given to palliative care in aged care. These impact on individuals, families, aged care staff and the broader community’s experiences and perceptions of aged care, death and dying, as well as the rates of avoidable or unnecessary hospital admissions, increased costs across systems and sectors, and grief and bereavement support.

“For example, PCA continues to highlight the current narrow view of palliative care being funded only for the last week or days of life under the Aged Care Funding Instrument. This leads to a misunderstanding that associates palliative care with the end of life, reducing the many benefits older people living with a life-limiting illness would gain from earlier identification of palliative care need, and access to specialist palliative care services if required.

“As 60,000 Australians die while accessing aged care services each year, it’s simply inadequate that the Aged Care Quality Standards do not include a standard or any requirements that refer to palliative care.

“Support for the delivery of palliative care within home care services is another priority. Currently access to Commonwealth funded home care supports are hampered due to poor understanding of palliative care, inconsistent assessment for Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and Home Care Packages (HCP), waiting times for HCPs and interface issues with state/territory funded specialist palliative care services.

“The current wait times for HCPs mean that many people requiring additional support to meet their palliative care needs are dying before they are able to get the services they need to stay in their own homes if this is what they choose.

“Improving the quality of life and death for older people with a life-limiting illness is a goal PCA shares with the aged care sector. We look forward to these issues being explored at the Royal Commission hearing,” said Mr Greenland.

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