



Media Release

14 May 2019

It's time to talk about 'What matters most?'

During [National Palliative Care Week](#) (19-25 May 2019) all Australians are being asked to consider "What matters most?" and reflect on what would be most important to them if they became seriously unwell.

Organised by Palliative Care Australia (PCA), this important annual awareness campaign highlights how palliative care can help people with a life-limiting illness to have a high quality of life, to the end of life.

Around 160,000 Australians die each year. But this number will double by 2040. It is estimated that between 50% and 90% of Australians would benefit from palliative care once diagnosed with a life-limiting illness, yet only 40,000 are currently able to access specialist palliative care each year.

In its recent vision statement, [Palliative Care 2030: Working Towards the Future of Quality Palliative Care for All](#), PCA estimates that by 2066 about 25 per cent of the population will be over the age of 65.

"As around 80 per cent of Australians who die in any given year are over 65, the number of people dying each year will increase consistently," the statement says.

PCA Board Chair Dr Jane Fischer says that dying is a normal part of life so it is important for everyone to have discussions about the type of care they would want to receive if they could no longer speak for themselves.

"We know that demand for palliative care is increasing. By having the conversation with their loved ones and health professionals as early as possible, people can ensure their treatment and care best aligns with their values and preferences regarding both the type and place of care and place of death."

"During National Palliative Care Week we encourage everyone to discuss what matters most to them with their loved ones and health care team. Knowing what is important to you will reduce their burden at a difficult time and ensure you get the care you desire."

A wide range of community events will be held nationally as part of National Palliative Care Week to celebrate, acknowledge and thank everyone involved in palliative care for making such a difference in people's lives.

To find out what's happening in your local area visit palliativecare.org.au/events or contact the Palliative Care [Member Organisation](#) in your State or Territory.

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Interviews and high res images are available on request

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