

MEDIA RELEASE



**Palliative
Care
Australia**

Palliative Care Australia

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11th May 2011

Federal Budget – opportunities for palliative care

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) welcomes the government's commitment to addressing palliative care and end of life issues in this budget cycle.

'The implementation of the updated National Palliative Care Strategy and other palliative care projects will help us to build palliative care capacity,' said PCA President, Dr Scott Blackwell. 'We are pleased that the government has agreed to work with PCA in delivery of these important projects and we look forward to ensuring that high quality care at the end of life is available to all Australians.'

PCA also commends the government for delivering on key election promises in mental health and regional and rural health, and sees opportunities for the improvement of palliative care within these announcements.

'The mental health reform package is most welcome,' said Dr Blackwell. 'We know that early identification of psychosocial issues positively impacts on the quality of life for patients, their families and the people who care for them. It is in the nature of palliative care to address these matters. We hope the mental health package will extend to this and provide appropriate bereavement support for families and loved ones.'

The provision of quality care at the end of life for all Australians, regardless of location, is a key goal for PCA.

'We are always conscious of the lack of access to palliative care in regional and rural areas. We hope that the \$1.8bn investment in health infrastructure for regional and rural Australia will go some way in ensuring that those with a terminal illness have access to palliative care services they need, and receive the best end of life care possible.' Dr Blackwell said.

The real opportunities for palliative care will come with the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into *Caring for Older Australians*, to be released in June.

'It has been acknowledged by the Productivity Commission that 'palliative and end of life care needs of older Australians are not being adequately met under the current arrangements.' We eagerly await the Commission's final report and look forward to the real commitment of assisting older Australians to 'die well', said Dr Blackwell.

'We urge the government to continue with its health reform agenda and deliver a comprehensive aged care reform package next year.'

'We look forward to the 2012 budget being the budget for Aged Care and providing comfort to older Australians, and their loved ones, that they will be able to die to with their preventable pain well managed, with the people they wish to be present and in the place of their choice.'

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PCA is the peak national organisation representing the interests and aspirations of all who share the ideal of quality care at the end of life

Patron: Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia