

# MEDIA RELEASE



**Palliative  
Care  
Australia**

## Palliative Care Australia

Suite 4, 37 Geils Court, Deakin ACT 2600 | PO Box 24, Deakin West, ACT 2600  
t: 02 6232 4433 | f: 02 6232 4434 | w: [www.palliativecare.org.au](http://www.palliativecare.org.au) | e: [pcainc@palliativecare.org.au](mailto:pcainc@palliativecare.org.au)

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## Improvement of palliative care skills across health workforce key to new Strategy

Palliative Care Australia has welcomed the Government's ongoing commitment to improving both access to, and the quality of, palliative care across the country with the release of the National Palliative Care Strategy 2010, *Supporting Australians to Live Well at the End of Life*.

"PCA believes that all Australians should be able to expect to die with their preventable pain and other symptoms well managed, with the people they wish to be present and, whenever possible, in the place of their choice. We are very pleased to see this sentiment reflected in the revised Strategy, said Dr Scott Blackwell, President of Palliative Care Australia.

"We certainly agree that discussions around death and dying need to be more commonplace and frequent in the community. As Australians become more comfortable in talking about dying, it is likely that they will also develop advance care plans and talk to their health professionals about end of life care.

"The recognition of the need for improvement of skills in palliative care across the generalist health workforce is a key issue in the Strategy, argued Dr Blackwell. We definitely still require more specialist palliative care professionals, but the needs of Australians will not be met until knowledge and skills in end of life care are common across health care providers.

"Enhanced and ongoing education opportunities are obviously important to support these goals.

"Overall, we are very pleased with the general direction of the Strategy. However, it is currently lacking timeframes. We need it to tell us when actions will be delivered, not just what.

Palliative Care Australia looks forward to working closely with the Australian Government in achieving the goals in the new Strategy, and to exploring the linkages between the Strategy and both the Productivity Commission's draft report on Caring for Older Australians and the current health reform agenda.

Contact: Dr Yvonne Luxford – PCA CEO – 02 6232 4433 / 0420 537 211

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