

# Palliative Care Aged Care Policy in Australia

What do researchers need to know to influence change?

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*Palliative Care Australia*

# Core Business in Aged Care

- Palliative care must be core business in aged care
- Australian population ageing and more people using aged care service
- Demand for palliative care in aged care increasing
- Not supported by the regulatory framework, funding models or raining and support systems



# Palliative Care in Aged Care in Australia

- Australian government subsidised aged care services:
  - Home care
  - Residential aged care
  - Transition care
- 36% of all deaths are in residential aged care
- 3 x increase in home care services in the last 10 years
- Older cohort - 59% aged over 85 years
- Over 54% high complex health care needs
- 2020-21 – 4,500 needing palliative care (1.9% of all residents)
- No data in home and transition care

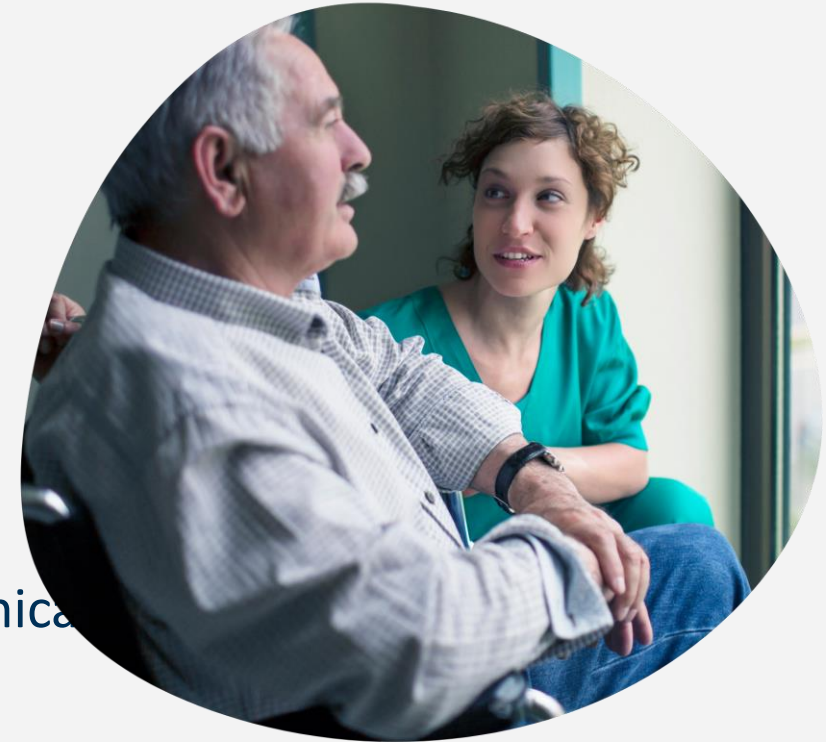


# Palliative Care Aged Care Funding

- Not supported by policy, legislation, standards and funding models
- Only provided in last days or hours of life
- Residential aged care providers can claim funds for a:  
***Palliative care program involving end-of-life care where ongoing care will involve very intensive clinical nursing and/ or complex pain management in the residential care setting***
- End-of-life definition: **‘last week or days of life’**
- No funding in home care and transition care
- Limited access to specialist palliative care in the health care system

# Aged Care Workforce

- No compulsory palliative care training or requirements for palliative care trained staff
- No requirements for:
  - Minimum staffing qualification
  - Number of care hours and/or staff to resident ratios
  - Minimum nursing hours/number of nurses of duty
- Personal care workers – majority of workforce
- High rates of part-time and casual work
- Limited training, English language skills, supervision and clinical support
- Limited knowledge - palliative care, death & dying, grief & bereavement



# Quality Standards and Legislation

- Aged Care Quality Standards: no reference to palliative care and only two references to 'end-of-life'
- **Standard 2:** Aged care and end-of-life planning
- **Standard 3:** Meeting the needs, goals and preference of consumers nearing end-of-life
- *Aged Care Act 1997* – no reference to palliative care



# Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality & Safety

- Final report released 1 March 2021
- Too few people receive evidence-based end-of-life and palliative care
- Palliative care should be core business in aged care:

*Residential aged care is often a person's final place of residence before they die. Palliative and end-of-life care, like dementia care, should be considered core business for aged care providers. People at the end of their lives should be treated with care and respect. Their pain must be minimised, their dignity maintained, and their wishes respected. Their families should be supported and informed.*

Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report, pg. 69



# Royal Commission Recommendations

- **Aged Care Act** – rights based & right to receive palliative care
- **Aged Care Quality Standards** – review and inclusion of palliative care
- **Aged Care Program** – supports for palliative and end-of-life care in both home and residential care
- **Training** – staff to receive regular palliative care training
- **Accreditation** - home care service providing palliative care accredited





# Specialist Palliative Care Services

- Fragmentation of aged care and health systems
- No consistent access to health care including specialist palliative care services
- Local Hospital Network-led multi-disciplinary outreach services
- Amending the National Health Reform Agreement



# Further policy changes

- Aged Care Minimum Dataset must include palliative care
- Improved assessment pathways for people with time-limiting illness
- Professionalisation of the aged care workforce:
  - Mandatory minimum qualifications
  - Ongoing training requirements including clinical supervision
  - Minimum levels of English language proficiency
  - Registering body
- Subsidised training, scholarships, aged care pathways and funding for backfilling
- Support for remote providers

# What's next?

- Ongoing engagement in aged care reform
- 24/7 registered nurse in each facility
- New AN-ACC funding model – **1 October 2022**
- **PCA Roadmap 2022-2027**

The image shows the cover of the 'Palliative Care Australia Roadmap 2022-2027' report. At the top right is the Palliative Care Australia logo, which consists of a red circular icon with a white map of Australia inside, and the text 'PalliativeCare AUSTRALIA' below it. The title 'Palliative Care Australia Roadmap 2022-2027' is written in red and black text on a white rounded rectangular background. Below the title, the subtitle 'Investing to secure high-quality palliative care for all Australians who need it' is written in a smaller black font. The main visual is a photograph of an elderly man with grey hair and a beard, wearing a white sweater and a dark vest, sitting on the ground and looking down at a small bouquet of white flowers held by a woman with dark hair, wearing a grey cardigan. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with trees and fallen leaves. At the bottom right of the image, there is a red banner with the text 'Palliative Care: it's everyone's right!' in white.

**Palliative Care Australia Roadmap 2022-2027**

Investing to secure high-quality palliative care for all Australians who need it

**Palliative Care: it's everyone's right!**