



MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSTRALIA'S CATHOLIC HEALTH PROVIDERS WELCOME KEY REPORT INTO PALLIATIVE CARE

Australia's largest grouping of not-for-profit health providers, Catholic Health Australia, today welcomed the release of a key report calling for an overhaul of palliative care services in Australia.

Palliative Care Australia's Investing to Save – [The economics of increased investment in palliative care in Australia](#) - raises important issues around palliative care and calls on government to take a more co-ordinated approach to the sector.

A national strategy, greater funding and more palliative care services delivered at home could save the health system up to \$464 million, PCA's report found.

CHA members provide 13 per cent of all PC-related hospitalisations in Australia. In the private sector, CHA members make up the majority of PC inpatient provision and have more than 52 per cent of private inpatient beds.

Last year CHA released a [landmark report](#) - *Palliative Care in the Catholic Sector* - that detailed the vast array of services offered by Catholic health care providers but also identified the policy gaps that need to be plugged if we are to deal with an ageing population. CHA's report identified data collection and use, better funding and greater education and awareness of palliative care as key factors.

CHA Chief Executive Pat Garcia said: "Palliative care in Australia is ranked second in the world, with only the UK outperforming Australia, yet just half of the people who would benefit from palliative care actually access it. Referrals to palliative care are absent or late, and only 14 per cent of people die at home, even though studies suggest between 50-70 per cent want to.

"There are many opportunities, often missed, to improve access and quality of palliative care in Australia. Funding and resources were identified by our members as the largest barrier to achieving access to quality palliative care. Fragmentation of service, workforce shortages and palliative care awareness both within the health care workforce and in the public arena are also barriers to achieving improvements."

Mr Garcia said the PCA report raises awareness of the many benefits to palliative care. "Our members will welcome this report. Many aspects of palliative care service provision are funded at a cost to the organisation or by donations. With appropriate funding and resourcing and by sharing learnings within the Catholic sector and the wider health system we have the potential to achieve more."

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