

RE: PALLIATIVE CARE NURSES AUSTRALIA 2021-22 PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

Palliative Care Nurses Australia (PCNA) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission for the 2021-22 Federal Budget.

Background

PCNA is a member organisation established in 2005 for Australian nurses who are passionate about excellence in palliative care. We provide a unified voice for nurses who deliver, or have an enduring interest in, palliative care policy, clinical practice, research and education. In addition, we aim to foster the sustainability and growth of palliative care nursing. PCNA is also an affiliate organisation of Palliative Care Australia (PCA).

Nurses deliver palliative care in a wide range of settings, in the community, hospitals, residential aged care facilities, and specialist palliative care units/wards. Nurses are a key member of interdisciplinary teams and work alongside a range of health professionals, including medical specialists, General Practitioners, social workers, interpreters, counsellors, physiotherapists, pastoral or spiritual caregivers etc.

As well as supporting patients, nurses engaged in providing palliative care also work closely with patient's family members. This work can include helping families to take on a caring role, helping them make decisions with, or on behalf of the patient; and providing care and comfort in the lead up to and after, the patient's death. Supporting families can make a lasting difference to their memories and subsequent own physical wellbeing and mental health, of the End-of-Life experience.

Key Initiatives Regarding Palliative Care Nursing

This submission asks the Australian Government to support funding measures and initiatives that will:

1) Sustain and grow the palliative care nursing workforce including recommendations to:

- Specialist positions (including Nurse Practitioners, Clinical Nurse Consultants and Specialists/Educators) through a dedicated strategic nursing workforce plan.
- Delivering on the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety recommendations to ensure improved access and standards of care are upheld in aged care through nursing staff mix including registered nurses (RN) on all shifts, access to Specialist palliative care services, core standards of palliative care nursing education/training and reform that includes licensing of care workers/care service employees/personal carers (however named) to uphold standards of care and safety.
- Building the nursing capacity in the Primary and Community workforce to ensure future palliative care demands can be met and that core standards of service delivery and education/training are embedded (including private/contracted nursing services).

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2) Invest in palliative care nursing education and training programs through recommendations:

- Including undergraduate, post graduate courses through to higher academic awards) with opportunities for funded nursing scholarships to ensure the next generation of palliative care nursing expertise.
- In addition, programs for on-the-job training and experience will ensure all nurses have opportunities to develop their palliative care/end of life skills to assist them in their usual area of practice ie: renal nursing, critical care, surgical nursing etc.

3) Building palliative care nursing academic/research capacity through recommendations:

- To enhance academic appointments and nursing research funds to ensure palliative care nursing is at the forefront of research both Nationally and Internationally, leading evidenced base practice and policy change.

4) In addition, PCNA strongly supports:

- The report by Palliative Care Australia who commissioned KPMG (with the support of the Snow Foundation) to undertake an economic study into the value of palliative care "*The Economics of Increased Investment in Palliative Care in Australia*".
- The National Palliative Care Strategy 2018, Australian Government **and recommends:** that funding measures support the implementation of the National Strategy and the recommendations in the KPMG report.

Palliative Care Nurses Australia

29 January 2021