



MEDIA RELEASE

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BUDGET – PALLIATIVE CARE LEFT WANTING

Australia's not-for-profit Catholic hospitals and aged care providers are disappointed by the failure in tonight's Budget to fund the growing need for palliative care services across the nation.

While the Budget delivered some money over the next few years to trial improved coordination of palliative care, it failed to deliver additional funding for actual service provision, for the development of a national workforce plan to identify the gaps in services, nor more money to fund a trial of palliative care nurses in residential aged care homes.

With an ageing population the need to improve the end-of-life care for hundreds of thousands of Australians is greater than ever, says peak advisory body Catholic Health Australia.

Catholic Health Australia's Health Policy Director Caitlin O'Dea says palliative care should be available to everyone who needs it.

"Palliative care should be a universal right to anyone who is suffering towards the end of their life. Our ageing population is set to double, demand for palliative care is expected to increase by 50% between now and 2035 and double by 2050 and yet the number of palliative care specialists and nurses is on the decline.

"We need to know how many people are receiving palliative care today so that we can plan for the future. When it comes to palliative care data there is a black hole."

"It is disappointing that as more states introduce voluntary assisted dying laws, people are not given a real choice between ending their life prematurely and receiving proper palliative care that would relieve suffering for them and their families and allow them to live well until their death."

Notes to editors: Catholic Health Australia (CHA) is Australia's largest non-government grouping of health and aged care services accounting for approximately 10 percent of hospital-based healthcare in Australia. Our members also provide around 25 percent of private hospital care, 5 percent of public hospital care, 12 percent of aged care facilities, and 20 percent of home care and support for the elderly.