



19 March 2026

## CEO Roundtable for Palliative Care – Meeting held on 5 March 2026

### Communique 14

At our 5 March 2026 CEO Roundtable for Palliative Care meeting, 22 representatives from organisations with an interest in palliative care met to discuss the latest developments in palliative care in Western Australia.

The meeting included an introduction to PCWA's new Board President, Liz Behjat, and newly appointed CEO, Mark Kinsela, and acknowledged the upcoming retirement of CEO Lenka Psar. McCabe, items discussed included:

#### Palliative Care Australia – Budget Submission

Palliative Care Australia's 2026 Federal Budget Submission proposals aim to relieve 'bed block' or delayed discharge in hospitals around Australia, by shifting care to the community where people want to be.

PCA's proposals are designed to keep people well-supported at home or in aged care, instead of in a hospital bed that should be available for emergency or acute care. PCA is calling on the Federal Government to:

- Redesign the health system of tomorrow so roles and responsibilities for palliative care are clear across hospitals, general practice and aged care
- Fund GPs appropriately to make home visits and to do vital palliative care work that Medicare doesn't currently recognise
- Base aged care funding on palliative care need, not on trying to predict life expectancy, which is very difficult even for experienced doctors
- Provide Foundational Supports at home for people under 65 with a terminal illness, so they can stay safely at home instead of remaining in hospital because there is no help available.

#### Palliative Care Australia's 2026 Federal Budget proposals will all make a contribution to relieving **"bed block"** in our public hospitals.



**PRIORITY 1**

**Maximise access to palliative care in the coming decades**

- **\$2.61 million over 2 years** to review and update the *National Palliative Care Service Development Guidelines*, which are fundamental to service planning and funding decisions.
- Last updated in 2018, the new *Guidelines* will reflect significant changes in population demographics, workforce capacity, models of care, and policy.
- Updated *Guidelines* will set out a clear role for primary care services, aged care services and state/territory-run services. This will be critical to meeting the growing demand for palliative care in the coming decade.



**PRIORITY 2**

**Strengthen palliative care in aged care**

- Remove the 16-week time limit on participation in the End-of-Life Pathway.
- Base access to the End-of-Life Pathway on need, not life expectancy.
- Commission an independent evaluation of the impact of prognosis-based eligibility on access to aged care, as recommended by the Inspector-General of Aged Care.
- Commission an independent, two-yearly public report to assess whether access to palliative care and provider palliative care capability is improving.
- **\$12.45 million per year** plus CPI as an ongoing Commonwealth contribution to permanently embed the Comprehensive Palliative Care in Aged Care (CPCAC) measure, matched by states and territories and due to expire in June 2026.
- **\$63.4 million per year** to better recognise palliative care delivered through primary care via a new practice payment to cover palliative care activities not covered by Medicare.



**PRIORITY 3**

**Support at home for people under 65 with a terminal illness**

- **\$16.2 million over 2 years** for a pilot program of non-clinical care for 1,000 people over 2 years. Pilot will include those under 65 with a terminal illness who need support with the activities of daily living to remain at home and out of hospital - and who cannot get this support from the NDIS.
- Pilot should include children and adolescents.
- Outcomes of the pilot will inform future Foundational Support arrangements for this cohort. PCA calls on all governments to clarify their long-term plan to fill this service gap.

See [full version here](#) and two-page [summary version here](#).

The CEO Roundtable attendees had robust discussions regarding PCA's proposals and access to palliative care generally.

There was strong agreement that the National Palliative Care Service Development Guidelines (published in 2018) require urgent review to reflect current evidence, workforce models and expanded scopes of practice, including nurse practitioners and pharmacists.

Many thought transitions in care were where issues tended to arise. They also outlined that early access to palliative care should be more than 90 days and that access should commence from diagnosis. Twelve months from death has the biggest impact on quality of life.

It was thought that the 12-week time limit on participation in the end-of-life pathway was not practical to implement and support should be provided based on need not a fixed timeline. -

It was noted that in Western Australia approximately 60% of people die in hospital and that was unsustainable for hospitals and staff, and that more emphasis should be placed on community involvement. Future models of care need to integrate high-quality clinical services with coordinated community and informal supports. Strengthening non-specialist palliative care, alongside better connection of carers and community networks into formal systems, will be critical.

Finally, the gap in care support for people under 65 years old is prominent in diseases that are not serviced by the NDIS. MNDWA reports that there has been significant improvement for priority access under the NDIS for people under 65 years old diagnosed with MND. This is a positive outcome for MND patients but there is a significant gap that needs closing for people diagnosed with other life-limiting condition who need care support. Examples include spinal injury and brain tumour patients whose needs are complex and there are no formally funded support programs available. 'Bed block' was seen as a harsh term, these people do end up in hospital but there are no robust systems in place to support them well in the community.

The group was asked to reflect on issues raised at an extensive sector engagement for the October 2023 CEO Roundtable meeting and if those issues had changed over the past two and half years. The group discussed and identified that key themes are still relevant and PCWA will use that information to further explore avenues for how we can work together across the sector to improve access and support for all. The themes are:

- Funding clarity for service providers
- Engagement and support of the carers on the nature of the illness and what it will take to support their loved one
- Education on palliative care's role in supporting disease and aged care groups, partnering with them early so that they can implement palliative care principles in their care delivery. Often palliative care referrals come too late.
- Improving the understanding of what roles that operate in the sector. Building deeper connections and understanding between services and community.
- Continuing to work on Advance Care Planning, improving death literacy and Goals of Care. Encouraging to have early discussions, especially with patients with cognitive impairment diagnosis.
- Respite of carers and clarity with discharge from hospital support
- Under 65 years support pathways, as discussed above
- Raising profile and understanding of palliative care, specialist and non-specialist services

Finally, Lenka Psar-McCabe thanked the sector for their support and willingness to share resources and ideas. She said it had been a pleasure representing palliative care in Western Australia since being appointed in May 2023.

The CEO Roundtable meets three times each calendar year. The next meeting will be held at a date to be confirmed.



*Meeting attendees from left: Dr Alison Parr, Libby Simpson, Maria Davison, Marnie Chellew-Hawley, Susie Wilson, Liz Behjat, Gary Wilson, Professor Samar Aoun, Jackie Boyce, Jessica Audino, Fiona Simpson, Lenka Psar-McCabe, Mark Kinsela, Anna Kirk, Tim Ryan, Yasmin Naglazas, Andrew Allsop, and Shelly Skinner. Attendees not in the photograph were Donelle Rivett, Jo Micallef and Liz Rehfeldt.*

## Meeting attendees

- Liz Behjat, President, Palliative Care WA and WA-NT State Manager, Ageing Australia – meeting facilitator
- Lenka Psar-McCabe, outgoing CEO, Palliative Care WA
- Mark Kinsela, CEO, Palliative Care WA
- Dr Alison Parr, Clinical Lead Palliative Care, WA Department of Health
- Marnie Chellew-Hawley, Principal Policy Officer (Palliative Care), Health Networks, Department of Health
- Andrew Allsop, Director Clinical Operations, Silverchain Group
- Donelle Rivett, Executive Manager Corporate Support and Projects, Director of Nursing, Bethesda Health Care
- Professor Samar Aoun AM, Perron Institute Research Chair in Palliative Care UWA, Chair of Compassionate Communities Australia
- Tim Ryan, Manager PaSCE, Cancer Council WA
- Anna Kirk, Manager Complex Care, St John WA
- Shelly Skinner, CEO, Lionheart Camp for Kids
- Jackie Boyce, CEO, Albany Hospice
- Yasmin Nglasis, CEO, Parkinson's WA
- Libby Simpson, Executive Director Care Services, Hall & Prior,
- Maria Davison, CEO Melville Cares and Western Suburbs Care
- Jessica Audino, Manager Support Services, Motor Neurone Disease Association of WA

- Fiona Simpson, State Manager, Dementia Australia
- Jacki Boyce, CEO, Albany Community Hospice
- Susie Wilson, Chair, Ambulance Wish
- Gary Wilson, Co-founder, Ambulance Wish
- Jo Micallef, Partnerships, Events and Administration, Palliative Care WA
- Liz Rehfeldt, Marketing and Communications, Palliative Care WA

## Apologies

- Maeve Egan, CEO, MNDAWA
- Professor Davina Porock, Innovation and Care Advisor, Melville Cares and Western Suburbs Cares
- Margherita Nicoletti, Clinical Lead End of Life Care, WA Department of Health End of Life Care Program
- Clare Mullen, Executive Director, Health Consumers' Council
- Catherine Stoddart, CEO, Brightwater Care Group
- James Jarvis, CEO, Busselton Hospice Care
- Amanda Silla, Program Manager, WA Department of Health End of Life Care Program
- Melanie Marsh, Supportive Care Director, Cancer Council WA
- Renae Lavell, Executive Director, Silverchain Group
- Janelle McFarlane, Director Health Services, Silverchain
- Darren Munday, CEO, Consumers of Mental Health WA
- Richard Newman, CEO, Carers WA
- Yvonne Timson, CEO, Community Vision
- Ben Irish, CEO, St John of God Murdoch Hospital
- Peter Mott, WA Government Relations Manager, Ramsay Health Care
- Barbara Voight, WA Department of Health End of Life Care Program
- Erin Timu, CEO, Advocare
- Janet Wagland, General Manager Community, Brightwater Care Group.