

# Victoria's end of life and palliative care framework

Communique no. 5 – February 2018

This communique is issued by the Implementation Advisory Group (the group) for *Victoria's end of life and palliative care framework* (the Framework) [www2.health.vic.gov.au/palliative-care](http://www2.health.vic.gov.au/palliative-care) released in July 2016. It aims to keep stakeholders and interested groups informed of progress and developments of activities under the framework priorities.

The group has progressively considered each of the framework's priorities at its meetings. This communique follows the group's 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, with a focus on workforce, education and training.

## Funding announcement

On 14 November 2017, the Andrews Labor Government announced more than \$62 million in additional funding over the next five years to increase options for people with a terminal illness to be cared for, and die, in their place of choice. This includes \$19 million to be provided immediately for palliative care services this financial year. This will help provide more options for support and care, particularly for people living in regional Victoria. The funding includes:

- \$19.9 million to support home-based palliative care across regional and rural Victoria to provide care for an additional 1,215 people and their families each year
- \$6.25 million to establish a 24-hour expert advice line to address variability of access to after-hours palliative care advice for clients, carers and generalist health services, and address gaps for people living in rural areas
- \$19.5 million to better respond to demand and patient complexity by providing additional palliative care physician or nurse practitioner positions in Regional Palliative Care Consultancy Services
- \$10 million in one off grants for end of life ancillary support services to assist people, families and carers to manage the day to day activities associated with caring for someone with a terminal illness at home
- \$6.35 million from 2018-19 to support the families of people who access the Voluntary Assisted Dying scheme, passed in parliament on 29 November 2017 and due to come into effect on 19 June 2019.

Read the full media release at [www.premier.vic.gov.au/palliative-care-boost-to-support-terminally-ill-victorians/](http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/palliative-care-boost-to-support-terminally-ill-victorians/)

The group welcomed the increase in regional support and establishment of an advice line. Implications of the funding was discussed including the ability to recruit in regional areas, intersection with aged care services and continued importance of people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

## Funding model review

Included in the Victorian Government's funding announcement on 14 November 2017 was a commitment to undertake an independent review of palliative care funding. The review will address any inequities that exist in the current funding model and consider how to improve sustainability for palliative care services and improve their capacity to deliver flexible patient-centred care.

The review is being led by an expert panel. Panel members are St Vincent's Health Australia Deputy Chair, Patricia Faulkner AO, Goulburn Valley Hospice recently retired Executive Officer, Carmel Smith and Chair of Northern Health, Jennifer Williams AM.

Consultations occur in early March; a final report of the review's findings is due at the end of March 2018.



[Better Health Channel <www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/palliative>](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/palliative)

features pages for consumers on:

'Managing your quality of life',

'Managing your pain and other symptoms' and

'Making plans and decisions'

under the tab '**Living with a life-limiting condition**'

## Education and training

The importance of education has underpinned many of this group's discussions in relation to implementing the Framework's priorities. The Department of Health and Human Services presented an audit of national and Victorian education initiatives that will be made available as a resource on [www2.health.vic.gov.au/palliative-care](http://www2.health.vic.gov.au/palliative-care). The group discussed workforce and education issues at length and determined several priorities. These include:

- Acknowledging the needs of consumers culturally and socially, ensuring relevant workforce skills enable carer and family focussed practice including the intersection with aged care standards and competencies.
- Gaining further evidence on the effectiveness of training courses, uptake of courses, motivating practitioners to utilise training, gaining clarity around skill competencies required and exploring recognition mechanisms in training.
- Determining how best to influence change such as links with the funding review outcomes and linking with key issues such as elder abuse, family violence and dementia.
- Exploring further the skills required for end of life care across wider sectors, educating other sectors and linking to a role categorisation statement of skills.

The group will provide advice to the workforce development advisory group that will be established by the Department of Health and Human Services in 2018.

## Voluntary Assisted Dying implementation

Whilst not included in the groups meeting, this information is provided for the benefit of readers. The new Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Taskforce met on 26 February to start preparing the community and health sector for the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act that comes into effect on 19 June 2019.

Former public advocate Mr Julian Gardner AM chairs the taskforce. Their role includes working with the community to broadly engage stakeholders and groups to ensure they are included throughout implementation.

The taskforce will develop the resources, processes and systems including a training program to ensure safe and compassionate access to voluntary assisted dying. The taskforce will partner with Safer Care Victoria to establish the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board that will oversee the operation of the laws, reporting and maintaining standards of safety.

For a full list of taskforce membership, terms of reference and overview information visit [health.vic](http://health.vic) at: [www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/patient-care/end-of-life-care/voluntary-assisted-dying](http://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/patient-care/end-of-life-care/voluntary-assisted-dying)



## Implementation Advisory Group

The group provides an advisory, advocacy and leadership role to the department and relevant stakeholders on the implementation of activities to meet the framework's aims. The group was established in late 2016.

Membership includes representatives of public, private and regional health services, metropolitan, regional and non-government palliative care services, Council of the Ageing, Leading Age Services Australia, Advanced Care Planning Australia, Victorian Disability Advisory Council, Municipality Association of Victoria, Carers Victoria, Palliative Care Victoria, Ethnic Communities Council Victoria, Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria, Health Issues Centre, consumer representatives and Primary Health Networks representative.

## More information

[www2.health.vic.gov.au/palliative-care](http://www2.health.vic.gov.au/palliative-care) - for health, human service, social and community sectors.

[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/palliative](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/palliative) - for consumers.

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To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 03 9096-0509 using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email [John.Carson@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:John.Carson@dhhs.vic.gov.au). Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne. © State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services February 2018. Where the term 'Aboriginal' is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Indigenous is retained when it is part of the title of a report, program or quotation.