



2025 Progress Report

Implementation of the Recommendations of the
Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety

Palliative care

The Royal Commissioners said compassionate, respectful and individualised support for older people approaching the end of their life is a necessary component of aged care services.

Current reforms are positive and help create an environment that better enables and supports palliative care. However, they have not delivered the level of change recommended by the Royal Commission.

What has happened since the Royal Commission?

The new *Aged Care Act 2024* (new Act) recognises the importance of palliative care in several ways:

- A right to equitable access to palliative care and end-of-life care is included in the Statement of Rights.
- A specific standard, 5.7 Palliative Care and End of Life Care, which will apply to all aged care service that offer nursing or transition care.
- An expectation that all aged care services will undertake Advance Care Planning is included in Standard 3.

What is missing from the change recommended?

The Inspector-General is concerned that:

- not enough progress has been made to improve the integration of health, hospital and aged care services, including the state and territory-funded specialist palliative care outreach services.
- people who, against expectations, outlive the 16-week maximum for receiving palliative care pathway support under Support at Home could still have their access to specialist palliative care services withdrawn. There is no automatic extension of support for those who outlive the 16-week maximum, and the Inspector-General is concerned this is a traumatic and narrow time-window for loved ones to be completing paperwork seeking financial relief for the extension.
- the current prognosis-based access criteria for specialist palliative care may be unnecessarily restricting access to support.

More investment in training the aged care workforce to deliver high quality palliative care is needed. While improvements in access to palliative care in residential facilities have been made, access to quality palliative care for people who wish to die at home remains limited.

Dying well is a human right.

**Palliative care should be delivered with the same consistency,
quality and compassion regardless of where a person lives.**