



2025 Progress Report

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

Palliative care

The Royal Commissioners said that 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 and end-of-life 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 services 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.
- There is no automatic extension of End-of-Life Pathway funding for people who outlive the 16-week maximum under the Support at Home program. This may result in the loss of additional specialist services. The Inspector-General is concerned this puts extra pressure on loved ones at an already difficult time, leaving only a short window to complete paperwork to secure financial help and maintain essential services.
- The current prognosis-based access criteria for accessing funding under the End-of-Life Pathway 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 and end-of-life care for people who wish to die at home remains limited.

Dying well is a human right.

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