

Future proofing palliative care in SA

Date: 8th May 2025

Palliative Care South Australia (PCSA) welcomes the release of the *Palliative Care Services Inquiry Report* (the Report) by the Health Performance Council today. We particularly value the opportunity it provides to spark important discussions about palliative care in the lead-up to National Palliative Care Week, which carries the theme 'What's your plan?'.

PCSA CEO, Adjunct Associate Professor Shyla Mills, said:

"Unfortunately, the Report focuses solely on quantitative data, which we know has significant limitations and does not capture the full scope of palliative care activity across South Australia. However, this approach has usefully highlighted the considerable gaps in data and reporting—an issue we are aware of and are keen to see addressed."

A key finding of the Report is the lack of quality data and comprehensive reporting on palliative care service activity across the state.

"We know that data and reporting are persistent challenges in palliative care," Associate Professor Mills continued. "We highlighted this issue in our *2024–2026 Priorities for Palliative Care in SA* publication. We look forward to working with the SA Government to find solutions—we need to understand both current usage and future need in order to meaningfully address service gaps."

The Report also stresses the need to future-proof the palliative care system in South Australia.

"This is not unique to our state—it's a global need. However, it can no longer be ignored. South Australia must not delay. PCSA calls for a clear, state-specific plan that includes implementation guidelines, timelines, and defined responsibilities. This plan must address workforce growth, service delivery, and community capacity building—and it must come with long-term, sustainable funding."

"South Australia is already trialling innovative models of palliative care—including the statewide navigation project *Palliative Care Connect*, the Link Nurse Program, Palliative Care Needs Rounds in aged care, *Palliative Care Volunteering SA*, and *Ambulance Wish SA*—but all of these initiatives are currently supported by short-term funding. Ongoing funding is essential to ensure sustainability and consumer confidence," said Associate Professor Mills.

Next week marks National Palliative Care Week, with the theme 'What's your plan?'. PCSA and the broader palliative care sector have a series of events and awareness-raising activities planned across the state. The main event is a community breakfast on Wednesday, 14 May.

"The timing of this Report's release is significant, aligning with National Palliative Care Week, which calls for future-focused planning. PCSA is pleased that the Hon. Chris Picton, Minister for Health and Wellbeing, has accepted the Report's recommendations and recognises the importance of quality palliative care for South Australians. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the SA Government to respond to these challenges and co-develop a clear and timely plan for the state."

For interview requests, please contact: media@palliativecaresa.org.au 0424 324 376

References:

- PCSA 2024-2026 Priorities for Palliative Care report: https://palliativecaresa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Priorities-for-Palliative-Care-in-South-Australia-2024-26_web-1.pdf
- The Health Performance Council report: <https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/about+us/about+sa+health/reporting+and+advisory+group/s/health+performance+council/inquiry+into+palliative+care+services>
- National Palliative Care Week: palliativecaresa.org.au/national-palliative-care-week
- National Palliative Care Week SA Breakfast: <https://events.humanitix.com/npcw-2025-breakfast>

Living, dying & grieving well

hello@palliativecaresa.org.au

palliativecaresa.org.au

