



BETTER PALLIATIVE CARE

Support when it matters most

Caring for people in the hardest moments

Conversations about dying can be difficult, but it's something we will all have to face. Good palliative care can ensure we receive the care we want. The Greens will work to improve the palliative care system, so that individuals, carers and their families have the right support.

Conversations about death can be difficult. But if we avoid those conversations, family, friends and carers may not know what sort of care we would prefer.

More than 70 per cent of Australians would prefer to die at home, but less than 20 per cent do.¹ Failing to have these conversations is depriving Australians with life threatening illnesses, their carers and families of better quality of life. The Greens have a plan to improve palliative care, to make it easier to have difficult conversations about life-threatening illness and dying, and to make care arrangements that respect people's wishes.

> BETTER PALLIATIVE CARE

Improving palliative care improves people's quality of life. The Greens will **commit \$76 million over four years to:**

- **Increase funding for palliative care by \$15 million annually.**
- **Develop nationally consistent model legislation for advanced care planning.**
- **Provide \$5m to Palliative Care Australia, to develop a model for a National Cooperative for Palliative and End of Life Care.**
- **Provide \$10m for a national awareness campaign, and**
- **Provide \$1m for research projects to improve our understanding of palliative care challenges.**

> WHAT IS PALLIATIVE CARE?

Palliative care is 'an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problem associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual'.²

Palliative care can be needed by people of any age, from newborns to children and young people, to adults in their 20s through to their 90s. It may be provided in a hospital, an aged care facility, a hospice or a home.

Palliative care involves the patient themselves, carers and family, and a variety of professionals and others who may come from the public health system, private business, or a charity or not-for-profit organisation. Palliative care is not necessarily end of life care. People may move in and out of palliative care as symptoms are treated and managed.

> \$15M ANNUALLY IN EXTRA PALLIATIVE CARE FUNDING

People often think of palliative care in connection with terminal cancer. However, as Australia's population ages and our life expectancy increases, more people are experiencing other life limiting illnesses that require palliative care, for example dementia and cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.

The Greens will **provide additional palliative care funding to states and territories by \$15m a year, for a total of \$60m over four years.**

> BETTER ADVANCE CARE PLANNING

Dying is something that happens to everyone sooner or later. Advance care planning lets people make plans for their future care.

Advance care planning supports people having control over their own life and their wishes respected, removes the stress of decision-making from others, reduces scope for family disagreements about what the patient would want, and provides guidance if patients can no longer make their own decisions and/or have no family to make decisions for them.

Some advance care planning decisions can be formalised legally via an Advance Care Directive. Unfortunately however, there is

¹ Palliative Care Australia, [2014-15 Budget Submission](#).

² [Palliative Care Australia](#).

inconsistency between the laws of the States and Territories so that if a person moves interstate their Advance Care Directive may not be recognised and/or the terminology may have a different meaning.³ The result may be that the person's wishes are not respected.

The Greens will work with states and territories to develop nationally consistent model legislation for advance care planning. This will provide individuals and their families and carers with the certainty they need.

> A NATIONAL COOPERATIVE FOR PALLIATIVE AND END OF LIFE CARE

Palliative Care Australia has proposed the establishment of a National Cooperative for Palliative and End-of-Life Care, so that Commonwealth and state and territory governments can work together to improve palliative care, and provide better services across different levels of government.⁴

The Greens will **provide \$5 million to Palliative Care Australia**, to work with multiple levels of government and prepare a detailed model, including options for improving services, and ways in which palliative care can be better delivered across multiple levels of government.

> BETTER INFORMATION

Palliative care services are often fragmented and hard to navigate. This is a huge stress people do not need when they or someone they love is facing a life-threatening illness.

To help carers and families, the Greens will **provide \$10m over four years** for a national awareness campaign. This will help ensure Australians have the resources and awareness to have the difficult conversations.

> TACKLING THE DIFFICULT ISSUES

The palliative care system deals with a range of complex issues. To help improve our understanding of the complex issues, the Greens **will provide \$1m for projects to improve our understanding of palliative care challenges.** Issues such as palliative care in residential aged care settings, and the challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in accessing palliative care, are complex and need more research. The Greens will provide additional funding to support research on these and other areas.

³ [It's your choice: how to plan for a better death](#), *The Conversation*.

⁴ Palliative Care Australia, [2016-17 Budget submission](#).