

How national approaches to palliative care can benefit rural communities

Yvonne Luxford¹

¹Palliative Care Australia

As CEO of Palliative Care Australia, Yvonne Luxford interacts and collaborates with all levels of government, health professionals, service providers and advocacy bodies in an effort to achieve high-quality health care that is accessible and culturally appropriate. Her previous roles include managing the policy, advocacy, media and communication strategies of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, SEO of the Australasian Faculty of Public Health Medicine, and several years as a university lecturer in various health related subjects.

Yvonne has qualifications in philosophy, higher education and her doctoral thesis explored a mixture of policy and medical issues with a focus on child oral health. Yvonne has held positions on various boards and senior committees across sectors, including health, higher education, housing and childcare. Yvonne has particular interests in Indigenous health, chronic disease prevention and equity of access to health care.

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) is the peak national organisation representing the interests and aspirations of all who share the ideal of quality care at the end of life. PCA believes that all Australians should be able to expect to die with their preventable pain and other symptoms well managed, with the people they wish to be present and, whenever possible, in the place of their choice.

Supporting the needs of people living with terminal illness, and their carers and families, requires a well-resourced and well-integrated service delivery model that supports specialist palliative care services, and enhances in-home support through better integration of community care with specialist palliative care services.

Access to optimal palliative care and end-of-life care is the responsibility of the entire health, aged care and disability services system.

The national health reforms must improve service system capacity and coordination so that optimal palliative care and end-of-life care can be provided, when and where it is needed, including in rural and remote communities.