



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing MEDIA RELEASE

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\$6.5M PALLIATIVE CARE BOOST FOR RURAL AREAS

The Australian Government has today announced funding of more than \$6.5 million – in the field of palliative care -- to provide more coordinated care for rural Australians with a life-limiting illness.

Palliative care involves end of life care for people with terminal illnesses including pain management and support for their families.

Patients and families in rural and regional areas should have access to support services such as palliative care that people in urban areas get.

Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot made the official announcement at Tweed Head Hospital.

At least 22,000 Australians a year at some point requiring specialist palliative care and support.

Funding would be shared among 36 Divisions of General Practice in all states and territories to support their efforts to develop a coordinated approach to caring for rural people at the end of their lives.

“As our nation ages so will the number of people needing palliative care. This is about delivering the most efficient way to provide care and quality of life for all Australians,” Mrs Elliot said today.

“To successfully achieve this, end-of-life services individually provided by doctors, nurses, hospitals, local government and within the community need to be coordinated and linked to ensure the very best outcomes for dying people and their families.

“This is about dying with dignity and in comfort.

“This new funding acknowledges the pivotal role that GPs, among others, play in the delivery of palliative care in rural and regional areas. Rural GPs along with families are the closest to those needing palliative care.

“Participating divisions will be expected to forge strong relationships with local communities, stakeholders and other programs to improve palliative care service delivery in their area.

Fifteen divisions from four states – New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia – have been selected for the first intake of the project.

Each will submit a work plan to the project manager, the Australian General Practice Network, for approval before introducing the model to its region.

“These work plans will enhance the capability of palliative care services in a given area, building on the provision of direct care to patients and working to integrate palliative care into the broader spectrum of rural health care,” Mrs Elliot said.

The following Divisions have been selected for the first intake period following a call for applications and subsequent assessment by the Australian General Practice Network:

- Bendigo and District Division of General Practice (Vic);
- Central Highlands General Practice Network (Vic);
- Eastern Ranges General Practice Association (Vic);
- General Practice Alliance - South Gippsland (Vic);
- General Practice Association of Geelong (Vic);
- Central Queensland Rural Division of General Practice (Qld);
- Sunshine Coast Division of General Practice (Qld);
- Capricornia Division of General Practice (Qld);
- Mackay Division of General Practice (Qld);
- Southern Division of General Practice (SA);
- Eyre Peninsula Division of General Practice (SA);
- Limestone Coast Division of General Practice (SA);
- Riverina Division of General Practice (NSW);
- Barwon Division of General Practice (NSW); and
- Tweed Valley Division of General Practice (NSW)

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