

Health Consumers Queensland

Summary of the National Palliative Care Strategy

In November 2010 the Australian Health Ministers Conference endorsed the *National Palliative Care Strategy: Supporting Australians to Live Well at the End of Life* (the National Strategy). The following is a summary by Health Consumers Queensland (HCQ) of the key elements of the National Strategy.

HCQ has endeavoured to summarise the National Strategy while remaining faithful to its overall content and wording. The full Strategy is approximately 20 pages and can be viewed at the Department of Health and Ageing's website:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/palliativecare-strategy.htm>.

Overview of the National Strategy

The National Strategy was informed through a national consultation in March 2010 in order to meet increasing palliative care demand in the future and to provide equitable access to palliative care for all Australians.

The Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments will use the National Strategy to guide palliative care policy development and service delivery across Australia. While most palliative care service provision occurs at the State and Territory level, the strategy aims to enhance and build on that work, to *'ensure Australia continues to be a world leader in the provision of first class palliative care services'*.

The strategy has been endorsed by Palliative Care Australia and Palliative Care Queensland.

National Strategy Goals

The Strategy contains four goals:

1. Awareness and Understanding
2. Appropriateness and Effectiveness
3. Leadership and Governance
4. Capacity and Capability

Each of the goals are underpinned by goal statements, objectives, action and areas and suggested measures of success to indicate improvements in palliative care delivery. These are summarised in the table attached at **Appendix A**.

Queensland Health is in the process of drafting a Queensland Health Palliative Care strategy and will undertake consultation with stakeholders in the near future.

HCQ's perspective

HCQ welcomes the development of the National Strategy and the commitment demonstrated by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to improved palliative care access, quality of services and service delivery for health consumers, their families and carers across Australia.

HCQ particularly welcomes the inclusion in Goal Four of the National Strategy (Leadership and Governance) of action around developing mechanisms for formal communication, engagement and linkages throughout the sector, including consumer engagement, to support the collaborative, proactive, effective governance of national palliative care strategies, resources and approaches.

HCQ considers consumer engagement integral to the provision of consumer-centred, timely, safe, quality and responsive healthcare and treatment and the development and delivery of quality health services. To ensure effective implementation of the National Strategy and the development and delivery of palliative care services throughout Australia HCQ urges the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to continue to actively engage consumers and consider their perspectives around palliative care to achieve better outcomes for consumers, their families and carers at end-of-life.

Health Consumers Queensland

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