



Australian Government

Department of Health

Secretary

Ms A. Sanderson, MLA
Chair
Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Response to questions in relation to public hearing

Dear Ms Sanderson

Thank you for your letter of 12 March 2018 seeking the Australian Government Department of Health's response to questions arising from public consultations held by the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices. Responses to the Committee's questions are provided below.

1. Does the Department have data on access to palliative care by residents in residential aged care facilities?

There were about 238,475 permanent residential aged care residents in Australia in 2016–17 with completed Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI) appraisals, and about 1 in 53 of these residents (4,499; 1.9%) had an ACFI appraisal indicating the need for palliative care.

Funding for palliative care involving 'end of life care' is provided to residential aged care providers through the ACFI for care recipients identified as needing palliative care which involves intensive clinical nursing and/ or complex pain management. As the ACFI determines an overall funding amount for each resident based on their particular combination of care needs, there is no fixed funding amount attached specifically to palliative care within the ACFI. The maximum daily care subsidy payable for a resident in an aged care facility is \$214.06.

For the purpose of making a claim for ACFI 12.14 for provision of palliative care services 'end of life care' is defined as care provided in the last week or days of life. It is important to note the 'end of life care' definition applied under ACFI is used for funding purposes only. It does not provide an accurate picture of the volume and scope of palliative care services being provided in residential aged care.

2. Do you think that their access to palliative care is sub-optimal?

Palliative care provided in a residential aged care service is regulated under the *Aged Care Act 1997*, within the *Quality of Care Principles*. Currently, however, a person residing in a residential aged care facility who is nearing the end of their life may need to leave their aged care home if the service cannot provide the care and support needed in the last stages of life. The Resident Agreement should outline if the home can provide this care. For these residents end of life care may be administered in a hospice, in a hospital, or at home by their families.

The Commonwealth has a quality framework in place to promote high quality aged care and includes comprehensive quality standards. In the 2015-16 Budget, the Australian Government announced its intention to work with the Aged Care sector to develop a Single Quality Framework across aged care. A key deliverable of the Single Quality Framework is a set of quality standards that will apply to all aged care services.

The Department has undertaken consultation on a single set of Aged Care Quality Standards (the Standards). The Standards will focus on the consumer experience to support a consumer-centred, market-based aged care system that will encourage delivery of high quality aged care. The draft Standards contain a requirement for assessment and planning of a consumer's care and service needs, goals and preferences including advanced care and end of life planning, if the consumer wishes. Pending legislative processes, the Standards are expected to be implemented from 1 July 2018. A 12-month transition period will apply and providers will be assessed against the new Standards from 1 July 2019.

Yours sincerely

Glenys Beauchamp

5 April 2018