



**THE HON MARK BUTLER MP**  
**Minister for Mental Health and Ageing**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**10 February 2011**

**NATIONAL PALLIATIVE CARE STRATEGY RELEASED**

The release of the updated National Palliative Care Strategy will help ensure a nationally consistent and coordinated approach to the delivery of palliative care services across Australia.

The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing Mark Butler said the strategy - *Supporting Australians to Live Well at the End of Life* - provides the key framework for delivering palliative care services in Australia.

“The updated strategy sends a clear message that the Gillard Government and the state and territory governments will continue to implement palliative care policies, strategies and services consistently across the nation.

“The final report of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission recommended that access to specialist palliative care services be strengthened. It also suggested we build the capacity and competence of primary health care services to provide generalist palliative care support for their dying patients.

“The updated strategy, endorsed by all Australian health ministers, meshes well with our emerging health reform policies and will help us to meet the challenges of integrating palliative and end-of-life care across the health system,” he said.

The National Palliative Care Strategy, originally developed and endorsed by the Australian Health Ministers’ Advisory Council in 2000, has guided service planning and policy development in palliative care over the past decade. It has been updated in partnership with state and territory governments and key stakeholders to ensure it accurately reflects current policies and practices.

The strategy assists coordination between the Australian Government’s National Palliative Care Program (NPCP) and the states and territories, which provide most palliative care services in the community.

The NPCP funds national initiatives that support patients, families and carers; improve access to palliative care medicines; provide education, training and assist workforce development; and promote research and quality improvements in palliative care services. In 2010-11, funding for the program will total more than \$23 million.

Mr Butler said the Government was committed to increasing access to, and the quality of, palliative care.

“This is something that affects large numbers of Australians – each year, more than 20,000 people receive specialist palliative care and more than 500,000 patients, carers, family members or friends are affected,” he said.

“It is important people receive the best palliative care available, wherever they live and whatever their circumstances.”

The updated National Palliative Care Strategy is available for downloading at [www.health.gov.au/palliativecare](http://www.health.gov.au/palliativecare) or by contacting [palliativecare@health.gov.au](mailto:palliativecare@health.gov.au)

**For all media inquiries please contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7220**