

**A Better Access to Palliative Care Initiative**

# Compassionate Communities: A Tasmanian Palliative Care Policy Framework 2017–21

## Final Progress Report 2020–21





A compassionate community that works together to ensure all Tasmanians have access to high quality, coordinated, respectful and responsive palliative care that is person-focussed and supports families and carers.

## Compassionate Communities

Tasmanian Government

Department of Health

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# Background

Compassionate Communities: A Tasmanian Palliative Care Policy Framework 2017–2021 (*Compassionate Communities*) was released in May 2017. It provided a strategic vision and policy framework for palliative care in Tasmania and adopts an inclusive, whole of community approach to palliative care known as ‘compassionate communities.’ A compassionate community is a community that cares for and supports one another. It aims to link both formal and informal supports to provide palliative care to people in the place of their choice and in accordance with their personal needs and wishes. It recognises the important role played by families, carers and the broader community in palliative care. It also aims to strengthen the role of primary health providers and community-based services and to re-orientate specialist palliative care services. It calls for partnerships between the community and service providers.

Compassionate Communities drew on contemporary and innovative approaches to palliative care recognised nationally and internationally.

Compassionate Communities identified six key priorities for action that focus on building community engagement, planning for end-of-life care, leadership and coordination, providing enhanced bereavement support and developing the palliative care workforce.

Implementation of the priorities commenced upon the release of *Compassionate Communities* in 2017. The first Progress Report was delivered to the Minister for Health in 2018 and the second in 2020.

This is the third and final progress report outlining achievements over the course of the implementation of the *Compassionate Communities* policy framework.



# Summary of Our Progress

**Figure 1 – Our Policy Framework Priorities for Action at a Glance**

To improve the delivery of palliative care in Tasmania the Government will focus on the following key priorities over the next four years and implementing the associated actions.

These priorities and actions have been informed by comprehensive research and input from consumers, carers, families, health and community service providers from across the State and the broader Tasmanian community.

While there are a number of immediate actions that we will deliver, work to progress these priorities and embed our reforms will continue throughout the duration of *Compassionate Communities* to help us realise our shared vision for palliative care in Tasmania.



# Priority – Providing Inclusive Community and Person Focused Palliative Care

## Action

- 1 Develop a Tasmanian Palliative Care Community Charter by June 2017.

## Background

The *Tasmanian Palliative Care Community Charter* (the Charter) sets out guiding principles and statements in the community's 'own words' about what is important to Tasmanians for their end-of-life care.

The charter is an agreement between two or more groups or sectors of society. The Charter is intended to communicate what care and support community members want during their palliative care journey, and how the service system may be able to respond to those needs.

The aims of developing the Charter are to:

- give a voice to community members about their palliative care needs
- assist to raise awareness about palliative care and how we can best support people to plan for death and dying
- provide guiding principles to inform and underpin the delivery of palliative care.

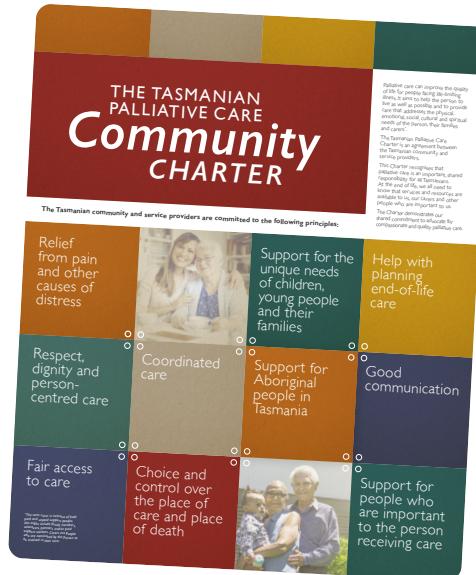
## What we did

The *Tasmanian Palliative Care Community Charter* (the Charter) was finalised and released in July 2017. It was the first of its kind for palliative care in Australia.

PCT was awarded a contract to lead a project to promote and facilitate implementation of the Charter. This project was completed in September 2018.

The Charter is also included in all information packs provided by Specialist Palliative care Service (SPCS) to palliative care clients and their families.

For further information see [\*Tasmanian Palliative Care Community Charter\*](#).



In 2021, the Charter was mapped against national quality standards as a means of promoting and embedding its principles into palliative care service. These standards included National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards 2015; Aged Care standards; The National Consensus Statement – Essential Elements for Safe and High Quality Paediatric End of Life Care, 2016; Palliative Care Service Development Guidelines 2018; National Palliative Care Standards 5th ed 2018 and the National Palliative Care Strategy 2018.

## What we delivered

Since the release of the Charter there has been ongoing work to promote and facilitate the adoption of the Charter across the health care system and in the community.

PCT has incorporated the Charter into its core education events on palliative care. Over the course of the Compassionate Communities Framework there has been 1120 events held with a total of 15 481 participants

7 community organisations have signed on as supporters of the Community Charter over the period 2017–21, with significant room for improvement through ongoing promotion.

# Priority – Strengthening Communities of Care

## Action

- 2** Develop a state and sector wide strategy to build the capacity and capability of all Tasmanians in palliative care 2018–21.

## Background

The intention of the Strategy was to take a new approach beyond traditional workforce development strategies that focus on the paid workforce. It adopts a 'communities of care' approach which acknowledges the role and value of both formal and informal networks of care and the natural supports that exist in our communities.

The Strategy recognises everyone has a role to play in palliative care, dying, death and bereavement. We are all part of the 'palliative care workforce'

## What we did

The Department of Health developed *Strengthening Communities of Care: A strategy to build the capacity and capability of all Tasmanians in palliative care 2018–21*. The Strategy was developed in consultation with members of the Tasmanian community and service providers.

Palliative Care Tasmania was contracted to implement the Strategy on the Departments behalf.

## What we delivered

### The Strategy identified 8 priority areas

1. Build skills in communities of care so they are able to talk about and support people to plan for death, dying and bereavement.
2. Implement strategies that support and sustain our communities of care into the future.
3. Build the capacity and capabilities of carers, volunteers and community support networks.
4. Further develop, connect and promote palliative care skills development opportunities.
5. Develop knowledge and skills to work collaboratively.
6. Develop palliative care leadership capabilities and encourage research, innovation and continuous improvement.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES OF CARE:  
A STRATEGY TO BUILD THE CAPACITY  
AND CAPABILITY OF ALL TASMANIANS  
IN PALLIATIVE CARE 2018–21



Department of Health



7. Develop capacity and capabilities in cultural competency and diversity to meet the needs of specific populations.

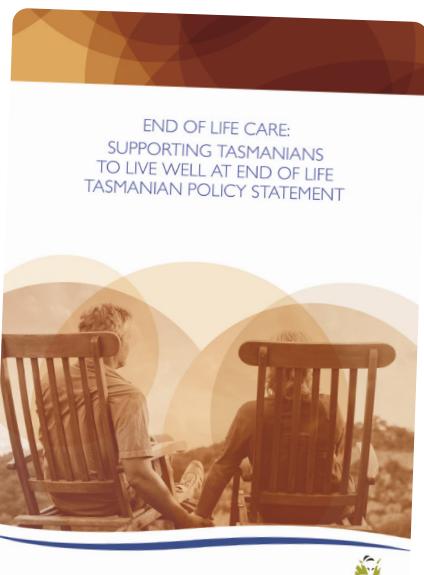
8. Strengthen and connect communities of care in rural and remote areas of Tasmania.

Palliative Care Tasmania, in collaboration with the Department and broader the palliative care sector undertook a needs analysis that informed selection of projects that would meet these priority areas, including:

- A State of Palliative Care Report.
- Development of an information and learning hub for the palliative care sector (Pallihub).
- Convening of regular palliative care sector roundtables with the Minister of Health.
- A palliative care workforce research report commissioned from the University of Tasmania.
- A state of palliative care workforce symposium, 2021.
- Postgraduate scholarships in palliative care in cooperation with Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation.
- Development of a core palliative care core capability framework.

All projects have been fully evaluated. Further information on these initiatives and copies of reports can be found at [pallcaretas.org.au](http://pallcaretas.org.au)

# Priority – Enhancing End of Life Care



## Action

- 3** The Developing *End of life care: Supporting Tasmanians to live well at end of life*, a consistent approach across Tasmania to delivering end of life care by the end of June 2017.

## Background

The End-of-Life Care Policy Statement (the Statement) committed Tasmania to the delivery of end-of-life care in accordance with the National Consensus Statement: Elements for safe and high-quality end of life care. It also promotes advance care planning and the uptake of Advance Care Directives.

It is a whole of community policy statement, outlining principles to support consistent approaches to end-of-life care across all care settings. It provides clear directions about what is required to deliver high quality palliative care and to improve the experience of dying in Tasmania.

## What we did

We consulted extensively with the palliative care sector and community in the development of the Statement and initiated projects to give substance to its intent.

## What we delivered

Tasmania's End of life care: Supporting Tasmanians to live well at end of life (the policy statement) was publicly released in June 2018.

Completed initiatives which contributed to the implementation of the policy statement have included:

- a review and update of Tasmania's Advance Care Directive (ACD). A new ACD was endorsed and implemented across the palliative care sector by the Department of Health in 2020, along with resource material. This form was endorsed by the THS Forms committee in 2020.
- a small grants program to:
  - increase community knowledge and awareness of death and dying through community education initiatives.
  - promote participation in advance care planning.

- build the knowledge and skills of those involved in the delivery of end-of-life care.
- increase community awareness and understanding of bereavement, as well as building the skills of existing services and supports.

### Funded projects were,

A research report into building the knowledge and skills of those involved in the delivery of end of life and bereavement care for populations such as migrants and refugees (University of Tasmania),

A *Do the Four-End of Life Planner* by the Council of the Ageing (Tasmania) including development and promotion of an online and printable resource book that acts as a one stop shop for information development and trial of peer education sessions and printing of postcards for broad distribution that point to the resources.

A project by Primary Health Tasmania (entitled Tapu) to establish a community forum to highlight the great importance of the psychosocial elements of palliative care, and the importance of such in developing community capacity to support end-of-life care within a compassionate community's framework. Its objectives were to foster discussion around death, dying, end-of-life and bereavement care and contribute to de-stigmatizing these topics for community members, thereby improving palliative care outcomes.

An evaluation by the University of Tasmania on the end-of-life Namaste Care program on aged care staff's knowledge, skills and perceived competence in end-of-life dementia care.

# Priority – Enhancing Bereavement Care

## Action

- 4 Implement the recommendations of Bereavement Care in Tasmania: Current Status and Future Directions for Palliative Care over the duration of Compassionate Communities.

## Background

The Centre for Rural Health (UTas CRH) was commissioned to develop the Tasmanian Bereavement Care Network (BCN) (the Network).

The Strategy recognises everyone has a role to play in palliative care, dying, death and bereavement. We are all part of the 'palliative care workforce'

## What we did

Extensive consultation occurred throughout 2017 including workshops involving more than 100 people across the state. The BCN continued to grow in membership and in March 2018, the Network secured funding from the Tasmanian Community Fund (TCF) to support and further develop the Network.

The Network subsequently established an Advisory Group and partnered with Palliative Care Tasmania (PCT).

Together the BCN and PCT continued to work to implement initiatives to progress the recommendations identified in the Future Directions paper:

- adopting a public health approach to bereavement care
- adopting a model of bereavement care based on the public health approach to clarify roles and responsibilities
- potential workforce initiatives to enhance bereavement care knowledge and skills
- increasing consumer and clinician awareness.

## What we delivered

The Network is now a stand-alone group of community-based groups and individuals which continues to enhance bereavement care knowledge



and skills and to increase community awareness of bereavement care services and supports in our community. Through the Network information can be accessed and is made available to better inform and support consumers and clinicians.

The Network:

- facilitates monthly regional networking meetings and statewide management meetings to discuss website update and promotion, membership and networking opportunities, governance and sustainability
- has developed a web-based Bereavement Care Network which is accessible through **Bereavement Care Network Tasmania – Home** ([bcntasmania.org.au](http://bcntasmania.org.au)) and currently has 55 members
- has initiated and continues to maintain a directory of services at a regional and statewide level. This includes up-to-date information such as the service location, contact details, and service parameters including eligibility and costs
- manages an accessible bereavement care network list of members and organisations including a description of the background, credentials, expertise and service/s offered
- provides a list of relevant educational resources accessible to formal and informal bereavement care providers
- distributes relevant information on current news and events; this may include upcoming forums, workshops, conferences, continuing professional development events, grants, tenders and job opportunities.

# Priority – Delivering Contemporary, Accountable and Sustainable Specialist Palliative Care Services by:

## Action

- 5 Commence development of a model of care for specialist palliative care services by June 2017.**  
**Develop a plan by December 2017 to agree and implement an associated reporting and performance framework.**

## Background

As part of the Better Access to Palliative Care project a new statewide Model of Care was proposed.

A Model of Care describes the services to be provided by SPCS, the principles and the approach to the care provided and includes what the community can expect from SPCS.

A Model of Care reflects contemporary best practice in palliative care, recognising good palliative care is provided not only by formal health services but through a network of supports – a community of care.

SPCS recognised the importance of developing and implementing key performance indicators aligning with their Model of Care to ensure the quality of their services and to demonstrate the value of SPCS to the community, government and other funding bodies.

## What we did

The DoH worked with the Tasmanian Health Service and other stakeholders to develop a model of care for specialist palliative care services, including a reporting and performance framework. The model of care was developed in response to feedback received from the Tasmanian community supporting the development of a model of care that clearly articulates the role, scope and approach to delivery of specialist palliative care services.

DoH also worked with SPCS statewide to develop a Reporting and Performance Framework (the Framework) to support the SPCS Model of Care, taking into consideration Compassionate

Communities, the National Palliative Care Standards (5th Edition 2018), the National Palliative Care Performance Indicators Report AIHW and the Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration measures.

The Framework aims to identify how the SPCS meets and measures its Model of Care approach and principles.

The purpose of the Framework is to ensure:

- SPCS is performing effectively to deliver best patient outcomes and is providing value for money for the Tasmanian Government and population
- there is statewide consistency of data collection and clarity regarding the data required to inform future planning, including data to inform service improvements.

## What we delivered

The Department of Health supported the specialist palliative Care (SPCS) teams to implement the statewide model of care in which the role of the SPCS is to:

- provide expertise in the management of complex palliative care related to pain and symptom control, cultural, psychological, social and spiritual needs
  - utilise a collaborative consultancy delivery of care, work in partnership with health and community service providers in delivering palliative care in a diverse range of settings.
  - enhance and build the capacity and capability within Tasmania's communities of care through education and partnership arrangements to enable communities to support and care for people with a life limiting illness in the place of choice.
- SPCS continue to implement and refine a Reporting and Performance Framework.

The Framework will assist SPCS to continually review, monitor benchmark and improve the quality of services being provided.

## **Priority – Providing Leadership, Coordination and Evaluation**

## Action

- 6** Develop processes to support ongoing development, leadership and coordination of Tasmania's palliative care system, in partnership with key sector representatives, with a plan in place by December 2017.

DoH will provide an annual progress report to the Minister for Health.

## Background

Compassionate communities are underpinned by strong partnerships across the palliative care service system and broader community. PIPC is a reference group convened to provide leadership and inform the ongoing and sustainable development of palliative care in Tasmania. Membership is representative of stakeholder organisations from across the Tasmanian health, aged and community service sectors, and other entities with a role in palliative care advocacy and capacity building.



## What we did

In addition to the role played by PIPC, the Tasmanian Government funded PCT as a peak body for palliative care, in Tasmania, in recognition of its leadership and advocacy work.

DoH has provided regular progress reports to the PIPC and Minister on the implementation of Compassionate Communities 2017–21 and worked with the Australian government on the introduction of the Comprehensive Palliative Care in Aged Care project and the National Palliative Care Information priorities paper.

After an internal organisational rearrangement, DoH constituted a team of policy and project staff to form a dedicated palliative care team within the Health Planning business unit.

## What we delivered

PIPC continues to meet quarterly and is providing ongoing advice, guidance and input, and monitors progress towards implementation of the priorities and actions outlined in the Policy Framework.

Key activities undertaken by the PIPC this year included continuing to guide the finalisation of actions identified within the Compassionate Communities Policy Framework, continuing to ensure Tasmania's perspective and input contributes to state and national decisions regarding caring for and supporting our palliative care patients and their families and continuing to support state organisations which provide palliative care.

PCT continues its work as Tasmania's peak body for palliative care and is open, communicative and collaborative in providing input and support in the implementation of Compassionate Communities.

DoH (Palliative and End of Life Care Service Development team) is actively exploring new initiatives with peak pharmacy bodies and Ambulance Tasmania. It continues to fund the Tasmanian Palliative Care After Hours Phone Service and is exploring ways to improve shared care arrangements between that service and primary care providers.

DoH is currently in the process of establishing a clinical network for palliative care in Tasmania. Clinical networks are the means by which the Tasmanian Health Service engages clinicians, service managers and consumers to lead service-level and system-level safety and quality improvement.

Clinical networks are groups of health providers and consumers who work collaboratively to set priorities, develop action plans and quality improvement programs, and provide a mechanism to inform the Department of Health on clinically related issues. Using the insights of those who deliver and receive health services, clinical networks seek opportunities to change how the health care system operates.

# The Future

## A New Statewide Palliative Care Policy Framework for Tasmania, 2022–27

A new statewide palliative care policy framework will be delivered by Government in 2022. This framework will set out priorities for the next five years. DoH will develop an implementation and evaluation plan which will chart progress against priority areas.

## New Investment into palliative care

The new statewide policy framework will be supported by \$10.5 million in new state government investment under the Home and Community Based Palliative Care program and \$6.8 million in Partnerships in Palliative Care program. These funds will provide more specialist staff for palliative care services, fund new after hours services and projects that support a public health approach to palliative care service delivery.

## A new hospice for Northern Tasmania

The Australian Government has committed \$20 million to the establishment of a standalone public hospice for Northern Tasmania. Funding arrangements between the Australian and State Government are expected to commence in the current financial year.

## Continuation of the End-of-Life Care Supplementary Services program

The State Government has committed \$1.5 million to continue this service which was previously funded by the Australian Government under the Mersey National Partnership Agreement. The program provides personal care, in home respite (including overnight sits) and on occasion nursing support for clients (and their families/caregivers) at the end of life and who are unable to access mainstream support services owing to ineligibility or delays.

## Amendments to the Guardianship and Administration Act 1995

DoH is working with the Department of Justice and the palliative care sector on amendments to the Act which will see Tasmania's advance care directives embedded into legislation. This will require further changes to the advance care directive form and supporting material.





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