



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 28 May 2014

NSW GOVERNMENT GIVES \$1 MILLION BOOST TO PALLIATIVE CARE VOLUNTEERS

Health Minister Jillian Skinner today announced Palliative Care NSW will receive \$1 million to recruit and support palliative care volunteers across NSW.

Launching Palliative Care Week at NSW Parliament House, Mrs Skinner praised the support volunteers give to terminally-ill people and their loved ones.

“The NSW Government recognises the vital role of volunteers in providing palliative care services to patients who are dying, their families and carers,” Mrs Skinner said.

“This personal care could include practical assistance, respite for carers or companionship - making it more likely a person will die at home if that is their wish.”

In September, Mrs Skinner announced the roll-out of \$35 million in community-based palliative care services across NSW - a cornerstone of the *NSW Government Plan to Increase Access to Palliative Care 2012-2016*.

The \$35 million suite of community-based palliative care initiatives includes:

- **Support packages for people dying at home**

Funding has been provided for up to 1545 packages of home support in 2013/14, building to 2863 packages in 2015/16. Rapid access to home support services is designed to ensure safe and comfortable end of life care at home. These services include personal care, domestic assistance and service co-ordination, giving carers the confidence and time to support loved ones, while also reducing the likelihood of hospitalisation.

Leading palliative care organisations, including HammondCare and Silver Chain, successfully tendered to work with Local Health Districts to provide these community-based packages, which will be able to be mobilised quickly and offered on a tailored basis.

- **Support services for dying children and their families**

A “pop up” model of care will mobilise clinical expertise and support around a dying child as close to home as possible. This approach provides support to clinicians caring for children at home, including GPs, nurses and care workers; targeted training to support professionals; and ongoing access to paediatric palliative care expertise for families and clinicians by telephone, e-health or other communication strategies.

- **After-hours telephone support service**

This service will complement existing specialist palliative care services provided during the day to ensure after-hours access to support and assistance, which is vital to being able to stay at home as end of life approaches. The service will be staffed by specialist palliative care nurses, with access to a doctor as required.

“While 70 per cent of Australians say they want to die at home, only 16 per cent do. Over half die in hospitals,” Mrs Skinner said.

“The NSW Government is determined to provide real choice for palliative care patients, allowing them to be supported to die at home if that is their wish.”

To view the *NSW Government Plan To Increase Access To Palliative Care 2012-2016*, go to www.health.nsw.gov.au/palliativecare