



North West Rural Palliative Care Project.

Communications Strategy.

8th of April 2004.



About this document:

This document was developed as a strategy to outline a communication process for the North West Rural Palliative Care Project (NWRPCP). This document is only intended as a guide. The key partners in the NWRPCP recognise that as time progresses and the project evolves the outcomes and responsibilities of key stakeholders may vary from those outlined in the initial stages of planning. Due to this communication processes too are newly evolving.

This strategy is an underlying foundation for communication processes between those parties, both internal and external involved in the facilitation of the NWRPCP.

Background Information:

The North West Rural Palliative Care Project (NWRPCP) is one of eight national federally funded projects being coordinated by the Australian Divisions of General Practice. The NWRPCP is being coordinated through a newly evolving partnership between the North West Tasmania Division of General Practice, University of Tasmania Rural Clinical School and North West Palliative Care Service.

Over the next three years the NWRPCP will be developed in consultation with other service providers and members of the community who are sensitive to the needs of people living in our community with a life threatening illness. The primary aim of the NWRPCP is to improve access to quality coordinated palliative care services for people in the North West Region of Tasmania.

The North West region of Tasmania is home to a population of 107 910 (ABS 2001) and is officially classified as a rural and remote region. The widely dispersed population is spread over an area of 22 202 square kilometers and includes the West Coast and King Island with consequent problems for service delivery, and access to services. Ninety-eight GPs service the region (full and part time). There are a high proportion of elderly people in comparison to other areas of Australia.

GPs have provided palliative care to the best of their abilities and the services/resources available supported by the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services' Palliative Care Service. There is a need to develop primary health palliative care services supported by a GP workforce with sound palliative care knowledge and skills. Levels of specialized knowledge of palliative care differ widely between GPs and there is a need to offer opportunities to build on existing skills. GPs need sustainable and supportive systems to facilitate working collaboratively with the patient and the multidisciplinary teams.

Goals of ongoing communications.

The overall objectives of the ongoing communications and the marketing activities of the NWRPCP are to:

- Stimulate interest in and engage participation in the NWRPCP.
- Create awareness and an understanding of the vision of the NWRPCP.
- Provide regular updates to the public, key stakeholders and consumers regarding ongoing activities and the status of the project.
- Provide clearly outlined updates and reports on project progression and the benefits derived from the NWRPCP.

- To coordinate effective communication between members of the Executive Committee, Advisory Committee and all key stakeholders.

COMMUNICATION TARGET GROUPS.

Stakeholders of the NWRPCP may include but are not limited to the following:

The NWRPCP Executive and Advisory Committees. The North West Palliative Care Service. Community Health Services. Community Nursing Services. North West Hospice Association North West Regional Hospital Rural Hospitals North West Private Hospital Community Pharmacists NW Aboriginal Health Services Tasmanian Ambulance Service Cancer Council Medical Oncology Radiation/Oncology Justice Tasmania The North West Renal Unit. North West Nursing Homes. GPs Carer Respite/ Family based care DVA nursing and Allied Health. Justice Tasmania Tasmanian Ambulance Division Telehealth.

COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS.

1. General Communications.

- Physical Point of Contact for Communication.

The primary role of the program officer is to provide organisation and coordination at all levels. This process should facilitate effective communication between all areas of governance and all key stakeholders.

The program officer is responsible for interaction with consumers, all committees of governance, key stakeholders and the media.

The program officer is responsible for the provision of monthly reports outlining project progression and budget. The provision of this report will be made to members of the Executive Committee to the project.

The program officer will facilitate a process for communication to other national rural palliative care project, program officers. This may be on a one to one basis via phone contact or electronic means. Alternatively communication may be in the form of a presentation or report at a national level at National Workshop.

The program officer will coordinate ongoing liaison with the ADGP RPCP coordinator and the University of Wollongong Evaluation coordinator.

The program officer will be responsible for reporting to the Steering Committee of the Caring Communities project. This project is being implemented statewide in Tasmania in concurrence with the NWRPCP

1. *Virtual Communications.*

- The development of a link between the Australian Division of General Practice website and the North West Tasmania Division of General Practice website would be useful in the promotion of the NWRPCP and its unique sensitivity to the needs of the North West Region. This may occur as the project progresses.
- The Australian Division of General Practice (ADGP) website currently outlines each individual rural palliative care project nationwide. This site will be continually updated as the project progresses.
- The creation of an electronic and paper-based newsletter, which is, distributed quarterly to all members of the Governance Committees and Key Stakeholders. This newsletter will be made available to consumers through the North West Tasmania Division of General Practice. This will facilitate a process for information exchange pertaining to the status and progression of the project to all key parties.
- The North West Tasmania Division of General Practice website home page will have a detailed link to the NWRPCP.
- The University of Tasmania's Rural Clinical School website will have a detailed link to the NWRPCP.

2. *Marketing Communication Tools.*

- The development of two specific information brochures. The first being generic which simply outlines details of the NWRPCP for consumers and key stakeholders. The second being tailored specifically to GPs to stimulate their interest in being involved in NWRPCP and wanting to know more about palliative care.
- The development of an information booklet available at most places of consumer contact i.e. Doctor's surgeries, pharmacies, community health centres and hospitals. To initiate consumer interest and increase awareness of all areas of ongoing support available to consumers.
- Coordination of media coverage at the launch of the NWRPCP in National Palliative Care Week May 2004. Facilitation of further media coverage at planned timely intervals, which demonstrate a continued commitment to ongoing advances and real outcomes through the

implementation of the project. This ongoing exposure will ensure continued interest in the project amongst community members and key stakeholders.

- The provision of Rural Palliative Care Program promotional materials to all GPs and health care providers on the North West Coast. These materials include National Palliative Care Strategy information and details of other federally funded palliative care programs. This is to enhance key stake holder's knowledge of the ongoing provision of funding in palliative care in Australia.
- Ongoing reference to the North West Rural Palliative Care Project in the North West Tasmania Division of General Practice bi-monthly newsletter to continually remind people of the project and it's importance to the region.