



# **NEWS RELEASE**

**Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.**

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## **Rural Divisions put the spotlight on palliative care**

The Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP) and several rural Divisions will this week join with other health-care organisations in raising awareness about palliative care for National Palliative Care Week 2005 (May 22-28).

National Palliative Care Week is held each year to raise awareness around Australia about the importance of palliative care. This year's theme, *Partners in Caring*, highlights the major role played by family, friends, health professionals and volunteers in the care of people with terminal illnesses.

Palliative care is about caring for people with a terminal illness for whom the primary treatment goal is quality of life. Importantly, palliative care also provides much needed support for the families and carers of dying patients.

Eight Divisions of General Practice – from diverse locations including the Western Australian goldfields to North West Tasmania – are involved in a program to enhance rural palliative care services and to improve access to quality palliative care for country people.

“The aim of the Rural Palliative Care program is to significantly improve access to quality, coordinated palliative care for people living in rural and remote communities,” ADGP Chair Dr Rob Walters said.

Under this program, the Australian Government has provided funding of up to \$5 million over a three-year period to several rural Divisions to support the development and implementation of collaborative models to improve access to, and delivery of, multidisciplinary palliative care for rural communities.

Divisions network activities during National Palliative Care Week include:

- A “Carer’s Day Out” and palliative care information sessions throughout the week for the general public, volunteers, GPs and aboriginal health workers (South East NSW Division of General Practice);
- Distribution of palliative care posters for all local general practices and hospitals and a palliative care display at the local shopping mall (Southern Rural Queensland Division of General Practice); and
- A morning tea at a local (Ararat) palliative care service with tours of a newly opened palliative care room at the local hospital (the West Victorian Division of General Practice).

The RPC Program is a cornerstone in the Australian Government's National Palliative Care Program, which seeks to improve the quality of palliative care offered in the Australian community.

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