



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

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Australia leading the way in rural palliative care

As part of National Carers Week (October 15-21) Australia's peak body representing divisions of general practice is officially recognising and thanking carers working as part of a world first palliative care initiative.

The Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP) proudly supports the Rural Palliative Care Program, which is assisting terminally ill Australians in eight rural and remote regions.

ADGP Chair Dr Tony Hobbs said the pilot program, which began three years ago, has enabled patients to die with dignity in their own communities and homes because of a coordinated care approach.

"There is no way this program would have achieved the success it has without the commitment and dedication of carers involved.

"As the program requires a team-based co-operative approach, carers include family, friends, nurses, pastoral carers, GPs and volunteers. All play a very important part in helping the terminally ill," Dr Hobbs said.

Once a patient is diagnosed as having a terminal illness, the GP works with a number of different parties to ensure the patient's wishes and health requirements are considered, essentially forming a working group of carers, or a community of practice.

The 'thinking outside the square' approach allowed for a gentleman in the final stages of his illness, unable to turn in his bed, to be provided with a hospital bed for his home. This assisted nursing staff to care for him at home, instead of hospital. He was able to look outside his bedroom window and receive visits from family and friends. His dog also kept him company, sleeping under the bed in his final days.

Dr Hobbs said ADGP has submitted a proposal to government to have this program extended across all of rural Australia.

"The proposal focuses on the continuation of care in a Community of Practice model and the provision of reliable information management systems.

"This model would ensure all Australians have access to a palliative care system that allows them to die with dignity in familiar and peaceful surrounds.

"We must continue to acknowledge the fine work undertaken by not only palliative care carers but all carers across Australia to ensure those that need help are receiving it," Dr Hobbs said.

The regions involved in the Rural Palliative Care Program are South East New South Wales, Southern Queensland, New South Wales Mid-North Coast, Pilbara, Eastern Goldfields, North- West Tasmania, the Adelaide Hills and Western Victoria.

For more information please call Kate Carnell, ADGP Chief Executive Officer, on 0415 662 266.

WHAT IS ADGP?

- ADGP is the peak body representing 119 Divisions of General Practice and eight State-based organisations (SBOs) around Australia. The Divisions Network supports general practice and their practice teams and drives the implementation of innovative health strategies.
- ADGP, through the Divisions Network, works to integrate general practice with other sectors of the health system, both government and non-government, to deliver high quality care to the Australian community.
- ADGP is committed to promoting the health of all Australians by supporting the role of Divisions in the nation's primary health care system.



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