



people  
pPlaces  
possibilities

13<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL RURAL  
HEALTH CONFERENCE  
24-27 May 2015, Darwin Convention Centre, NT

## Media Release

26 May 2015

### National Palliative Care Week recognised at major biennial rural health Conference

During National Palliative Care Week (24 – 30 May 2015) Australians are being encouraged to break a taboo and sit down and talk about their wishes for end of life care.

The theme for National Palliative Care Week is: “dying to talk; talking about dying won’t kill you”. This theme reminds us that although talking about end of life care is a tough and sad conversation, it is also a necessary one. Palliative Care Australia estimates that although seventy per cent of Australians want to die at home, half of all deaths still occur in hospital. Without knowing what our loved ones want, we cannot advocate for it on their behalf.

End of life care has been an area of discussion this week at the 13<sup>th</sup> National Rural Health Conference in Darwin. Michele Holloway, from the WA Centre for Rural Health, shared with delegates findings from an evaluation of the Program of Experience in the Palliative Approach (PEPA) that has been training Indigenous health care workers in culturally sensitive end of life care since 2007.

The PEPA program came about because there was a gap in appropriate training for health workers on cultural sensitivity to the spiritual issues that Indigenous Australians face at the end of their lives. The evaluation also found that there is a distinct lack of home and community palliative care support for family, friends and carers in rural and remote Indigenous communities.

“There is a real need in rural and remote communities for Aboriginal people to receive end of life care in culturally sensitive ways”, said Ms Holloway. “It is important to equip the Indigenous health workforce with the necessary skills to deal with the cultural and spiritual issues faced by Indigenous Australians”.

“We need to enable Indigenous Australians to face death and dying in familiar surroundings with the necessary support from family and their community” she said.

This National Palliative Care Week make sure you help break the taboo around death and dying, and sit down and talk to your loved ones about their wishes for end of life care. It can help avoid difficult future conversations, and having to making difficult decisions later on.

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For more information about the 13<sup>th</sup> National Rural Health Conference visit [www.ruralhealth.org.au/13nrhc](http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/13nrhc)