Welcome to PalCare Voice with a special focus on National Volunteers Week and leading into National Palliative Care Week. This is a very busy time with organizations running many activities in recognition of these important events...Thank you in advance for your participation and for your assistance in recognizing important people and for making the events a success.

Following is an update from workers in the After Hours Project and the Spirituality/Pastoral Care Program in Palliative Care. Keep a watch for the other consortium projects in progress including:
- Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner
- Palliative Care Link Nurses
- Health Promoting Palliative Care
- Palliative Care Aboriginal Project
- End of Life Care Pathway
- Timely access to Specialist Palliative Care Service Assessment & Support

Please consider your organization for inclusion in any project and do not hesitate to contact the project workers for further information. We look forward to keeping you up to date with Consortium happenings.

**WHO DO YOU CALL??**

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(please note: days indicated are usual days worked, they may vary)
National Volunteers Week
9th—15th May

**National Volunteer week (NVW)** is the largest celebration of volunteers and volunteerism in Australia, and provides an opportunity to highlight the role of volunteers in our communities and to say thank you to the more than 5 million Australians who volunteer.

Australian volunteers are essential to society, and many charities would struggle to survive without the support of their volunteers. Australian volunteers contribute to more than 700 million hours of community service to so many areas of society, including Palliative Care. NVW provides a platform to pay tribute to these volunteers who donate their time and energy to help others.

The NVW website will provide you with all the information you need to celebrate NVW and ways to help and recognize and thank the unsung heroes in your organization.

Site links include:
- Fast facts about NVW
- Latest news from NVW
- Radio advert for download
- Posters and certificates

The theme for NVW, ‘Inspiring the Volunteer in You’ is the same theme used by the United Nations International Year of the Volunteer plus 10 (IYV+10). It brings volunteering to the forefront and provides a focused agenda for the volunteer sector. The theme is inspirational and aims to encourage more people to become volunteers.

Volunteers in palliative care are an important and valued part of the entire team. They offer friendship and practical help which enables adults and children living with a terminal illness to remain independent for longer than otherwise possible.

**2010 Survey of Palliative Care Volunteers (PCV) in Victoria**

In November 2010, at PCV’s request, a small working group from the Victorian Managers of Volunteers Network undertook a snapshot telephone survey of all Victorian Managers/Coordinators of Volunteers to determine the number of palliative care volunteers in Victoria.

Thanks to this work PCV now has an up to date listing of all palliative care volunteer services in Victoria and some guiding statistics to support future monitoring of service growth.

This snapshot demonstrated that Victoria has 54 services with 1730 registered palliative care volunteers. 1329 of this number were directly supporting clients.

PCV has extensive information relating to state and national Volunteer Standards and many resources related to training.

**So go ahead...** make 2011 a memorable tribute for your volunteers and celebrate in style with these wonderful people who donate their time and energy to help others.
Your information kit will contain:
• 3 x National Palliative Care Week posters
• 7 x information brochures (including 2 new resources: *The process of dying* and *Pain and pain management*)
• Balloons and promotional items

To assist you with your planned activities for the week, PCA have also put together a draft media release and some tips about engaging with the media, as well as an event planning tip sheet, which will also be in your kit.

**Thank you** in advance for your participation in National Palliative Care Week and for your assistance in making it a success.

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The theme: Let's have a chat about dying

Our first reactions to this statement may be ‘why’, or an outright ‘no’. The truth is that for most Australians, talking about dying and the end of life is confronting, difficult and not something that we want to do. But although something is difficult, can we afford to ignore it?

We are well aware that people don’t like to talk about the end stage of their lives and unless they have had some direct experience with palliative care, they tend not to know what support is available. This lack of understanding often extends to family or loved ones, who can be integral in decision making when the time comes.

We need your assistance in helping people to have these conversations. Death is an experience we will all go through, and it is important that we have thought about the end stage of our lives, talked about it with our loved ones, and planned for it.

We want to encourage people to think about where they would like to be when they die, who they want to be present, and importantly communicating this to family and loved ones.

Palliative Care Australia has produced a number of resources for National Palliative Care Week and an information kit containing copies of these will be sent to services in the first week of May.

You will be able to request further copies of the resources using the order form that will be supplied, and the PCA website [www.palliativecare.org.au](http://www.palliativecare.org.au) will have the resources available for download.
Supporting Australians to Live Well at the End of Life

National Palliative Care Strategy 2010

The Strategy
The development of the National Palliative Care Strategy (NPCS) commenced in 1998 and was endorsed in October 2000 by Australian Health Ministers’ Advisory Council. The NPCS represents the combined commitments of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, palliative care service providers and community-based organisations to the development and implementation of palliative care policies, strategies and services that are consistent across Australia, in building common and agreed goals.

The National Palliative Care Strategy Activity Implementation Report (2005), subsequent literature scan and stakeholder consultation undertaken as part of the development of this updated National Palliative Care Strategy, clearly demonstrates there has been a wealth of important activity which has occurred at all levels around the development of palliative care services.

The NPCS 2000 has been key in advancing the sector’s capacity through:
- increased understanding of palliative care in the health sector
- providing a focal point for State and Territory activities
- providing the overall direction for the National Palliative Care Program.

Eleven years on, whilst much has happened and there are demonstrable achievements, gaps and deficiencies still remain in the provision of high quality palliative care service provision. In order to meet future demand and provide equitable access to all Australians, when and where they need it, further work is required.

Supporting Australians to Live Well at the End of Life (the National Palliative Care Strategy 2010) — has been developed following extensive consultation and research. Eight workshops were held across Australia in March 2010 and an extensive online survey was undertaken by 320 people. This provided a significant amount of data on the views of stakeholders on the directions, priorities and potential strategies for inclusion in this update. The draft updated Strategy was then provided for further consultation with 127 stakeholders providing feedback to inform this final document.

The scope of the updated National Palliative Care Strategy 2010 is broad, addressing both palliative care provided in all specialist and general settings as well as end of life issues.

This update occurred at a time of major health care reform in Australia. Whilst these reforms continue to be developed to address the needs of a changing and ageing population, it is clear that the demand for high quality palliative care across Australia will inevitably increase. To meet this demand all parts of the health and human services sector will need to focus on the following four goal areas:
- Awareness and Understanding
- Appropriateness and Effectiveness
- Leadership and Governance
- Capacity and Capability.

Each of these goal areas are further defined in the Strategy with goal statements, objectives and action areas. Some suggested measures of success are listed for each goal area. These measures will require refinement and translation into measurable performance indicators as part of the development of implementation and work plans.

The clear message of demand emerging from the stakeholder consultation process in the development of this Strategy is that Australians want a system that supports Australians to live well at the end of life. Implementation of this Strategy will ensure Australia continues to be a world leader in the provision of first class palliative care services.

Community Palliative Care After Hours Project

From Jane Auchettl

Many thanks to all services for their support of the project over the past eighteen months. For many services this has meant spending significant time in implementing the Guidelines and actively involved in promoting change. Hopefully the benefits outweigh the challenges that this has presented.

The most significant outcome is that all services are now using the Guidelines and are formally linked to an after hours telephone triage support service. For one service, this is still internal, but this process has been enhanced and time has been spent on making significant progress in other areas.

A quick snapshot of project outcomes so far, is provided in the following comments from some of the services:

Hasn’t this been a great project!
Newest Guideline form much easier to use/looks simpler for clients
“Slow” month for symptom control - so limited need to fill in guidelines
Still not standard practice to fill them in for everyone
We are now adding them to every admission pack and client history to encourage use
Increased communication between AH managers and PC team
Carers feeling more empowered

Reminder: FINAL telephone triage training day for nurses at Bendigo PRN Training on Tuesday 17th May 2011. Please register NOW – to jane.ahproject@gmail.com

For further information about any aspect of the project please ring Jane on 0422 574 393

Working with Spiritual/Pastoral Care in Palliative Care - David Jenkins

Loddon Mallee Regional Palliative Care Consortium (LMRCC) and Loddon Mallee Integrated Cancer Services (LMICS) have joined together to offer the first in what is proposed to be a series of Spiritual Education programs for healthcare workers and volunteers across the Region. The program will be provided at four centres in the Region, and is of three days duration.

Day 1: Exploring Spirituality in Pastoral Care in Palliative Care
Day 2: Listening Deeply in Spiritual/Pastoral Care in Palliative Care
Day 3: Working as a Team and Caring for Self in Spiritual/Pastoral Care in Palliative Care

The program aims to lead participants to understand the importance of self-knowledge and how "who we are" impacts on our ability to be available to others, how our ability to listen deeply comes from our own inner stillness and awareness, listening from the heart, enabling exploration not necessarily decision making. Participants will also explore the similarities and differences between spirituality and religion and how western societies’ changing attitudes to death and dying has brought about an increased acceptance of the importance for caregivers in palliative care to be aware of the spiritual needs of both themselves and their clients. The group will also look at possible ways of assisting a client to explore what is important to them at this stage of their life. There will also be times when what the client requires is beyond what the spiritual caregiver is able to provide; learning to recognise when to refer on to someone with greater knowledge and expertise is an essential skill in this work.

Program presenters: Fiona Gardner is a senior lecturer and acting Director of the Centre for Professional Development at La Trobe University, Bendigo. Irene Nolan is a consultant who worked with Bendigo Health for several years as a social worker and later established the Bendigo Centre for Loss and Grief. Jill Hanlon is a social worker and gestalt therapist with over 30 years work experience. Her final year placement was in the Melbourne City Mission as a hospice worker in palliative care.

For further information about the Spirituality/Pastoral Care program please ring David on 54704206
From the Editors Desk . . .

Since Merrill has changed roles I have moved to the editors desk and I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to Merrill for her guidance and support whilst I stepped into the CNC role. Initially the role was for 3 months and now 7 months into the job it has been a pleasure working more closely with the consortium team under the guidance of our manager Trish. Many projects are on the go and in particular I’ve been delighted working with the fantastic staff at Swan Hill District Health with the implementation of the End of Life Care Pathway. The teams commitment is a credit to Swan Hill organization and the same goes for the trail blazers at Maryborough District Health and St John Of God in Bendigo. Good luck to any other organizations undertaking the implementation in the coming months.

Wishing Merrill success in her new project with expanding the nurse practitioner role in the southern part of Loddon Mallee. We know Merrill’s dedication, attention to detail, and her passion to support people across the region in palliative care is a winning combination.

Many thanks also to the management and staff at Sunrayisa Community Health Services for supporting my secondment to the consortium CNC role.

Cheers
Bertilla Campbell

VPCSS – Victorian palliative Care Satisfaction Survey 2011

Urgent notice
VPCSS questionnaires final return date – Friday 13th May 2011
An urgent reminder that the cut off date for the return of all questionnaires completed by patients and carers in the community and in inpatient care is Friday 13th May 2011.

Return rates are currently running:
Inpatient palliative care services 30%
Community palliative care services 24%
Bereaved carers 28%

Please encourage patients and carers who are able to complete the surveys and ensure returned as quickly as possible. Inpatient units should forward any completed questionnaires immediately ...

Newsletter Items
Calling for newsletter items ideas or suggestions...next edition June
Email Bertilla bcampbell@schs.com.au or Anne lmppcc@castlemainehealth.org.au

LMRPCC WEBSITE
The Website is now active and can be seen at: http://www.lmrpcc.org.au/
We are planning to add further material to the website over the coming weeks so that it will become a comprehensive resource for the Region (and beyond), but if you have any comments or suggestions relating to the website at this stage of its development, please use the “contact us” email page on the website, and we will respond accordingly.