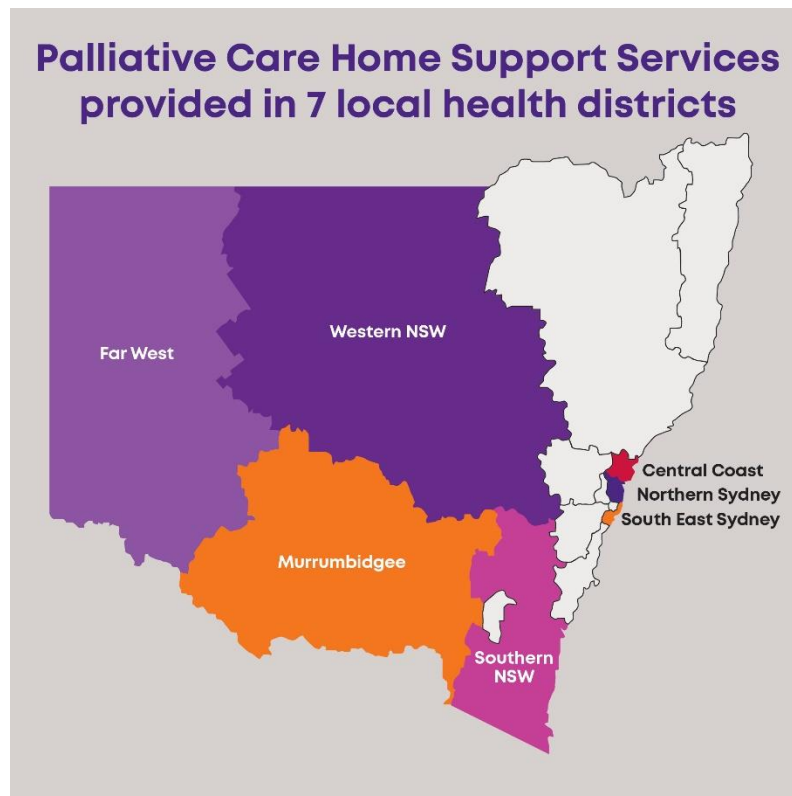


Palliative Care Home Support Program Overview

Geographic reach of service

This service supplements existing Community Palliative Care, building on capacity in consultation with Community Palliative Care services, local GPs and Community Nurses. Services are available in a **partnership model** in the following Metropolitan, Rural and Remote LHDs.



Need for the services and education

Surveys consistently show that up to three-quarters of Australians would prefer to die at home. The local reality is very different – only 16% of people living in Australia and suffering from a terminal illness die at home.

Program Summary

The HammondCare Consortium, comprising HammondCare, Sacred Heart Health Service, and Calvary Health Care Sydney Ltd, in collaboration with participating LHDs and community palliative care services aims to address this end of life care gap.

The provision of end of life packages for up to 48 hours of specialised supportive palliative home-based care, day or night, provided by community workers specifically trained for the



task, and working as part of existing community palliative care multidisciplinary teams. **The 48 hours may be used consecutively or spread over several days or weeks.**

Packages are available to support Community Palliative Care services in participating LHDs at the point of greatest need. It is important that the distribution of packages occurs in response to demand and according to the agreed eligibility criteria, as follows.

Access to Palliative Care Home Support Packages by patients who have expressed a wish to die at home or to remain at home for as long as possible will be arranged through either the local LHD Community Palliative Care service or Community Nursing services and subject to the following criteria:

The patient has expressed a wish to die at home* or to remain at home for as long as possible AND the palliative care phase is either deteriorating or terminal; **AND one of more of the following is present:**

- Family carer is physically/emotionally unable to continue caring at home without support
- There is limited family support
- There are specific cultural/spiritual issues necessitating extra support
- Carer stress is high

*home is place of residence or residential aged care facility

How the Palliative Care Home Support Packages work

Packages are available in all participating LHDs.

- HammondCare works with the local Community Palliative Care teams and their preferred local careworker provider(s) to **recruit and train care workers**, facilitating up-skilling – either HammondCare care workers or, in areas where HammondCare does not have an existing workforce, care workers employed by a recommended provider/agency.
- HammondCare pays care workers based on hours worked and penalties incurred, either directly if they are HammondCare employees or indirectly if they work for another organisation.
- HammondCare holds and administers the packages centrally.
- Requests for packages are required to come from an **approved referrer** of a Community Palliative Care team/ Community Nursing team who will lodge the referral form by email to or by fax and a Patient Information Briefing Note is provided to the care worker
- Care provided under the Palliative Care Home Support Program is determined by the patient and their family in consultation with the palliative care clinician/community nurse. Care may include assistance with personal hygiene, carer respite and some domestic assistance - providing carers with vital support during the end of life stage.



- In consultation with the Specialist Palliative Care Community team it may also include basic nursing care. Observation of changing symptoms in palliative patients and escalation of this information to the Community Palliative Care team is key to the patient being able to remain at home.
- A second package for patients needing more than 48 hours but unable to afford additional support may be requested at the discretion of the Community Palliative Care team leader.
- The service complements and links with existing Community Palliative Care services and aims to reduce inappropriate use of acute hospital bed capacity and community nursing resources, as people are supported to die at home. The Consortium believes that this initiative will be a key hospital avoidance measure as well as giving patients increased opportunity to die at home if that is their wish.
- The delivery of the 48 hours of end of life care may be consecutive hours or may be spread over several weeks and may result in decisions not to admit patients to acute hospitals, hence avoiding costly and potentially distressing admissions.
- The Program is patient and carer focused. Where there is no-one providing care at home, it fills that gap; where carers are stressed or fatigued, it provides extra support to enable them to continue in their caring role.
- The services are delivered in accordance with the National Standards for provision of palliative and supportive care to ensure end of life home care needs of individuals and families are met, including those of CALD and indigenous backgrounds.
- Remote locations – Provision has been made to cover the cost of travel incurred by care workers in reaching patients in remote locations, so that rural and remote patients receive equal access to care hours and are not discriminated against by the tyranny of distance.

Referrals

Referrals to the program are received by approved health professional (Community Palliative care services or Community Nursing) via completion of a Palliative Care Home Support Package Referral Form and faxed to: 1300 882 807 or emailed to: **pchsp@hammond.com.au** (see attached).

Eligibility

The patient has expressed a wish to die at home or to remain at home for as long as possible AND the palliative care phase is either deteriorating or terminal; AND one of more of the following is present:

- Family carer is physically/emotionally unable to continue caring at home without support
- There is limited family support
- There are specific cultural/spiritual issues necessitating extra support
- Carer stress is high

*Home can be either the patient home or residential aged care facility (RACF) they are currently residing in.

For more information regarding Palliative Home Care Support in your region, please call ph: 1300 884 304. or **Palliative Care Home Support website**
<https://www.hammond.com.au/locations/in-home/palliative-care-at-home-program>