

Let's talk about dying, death and loss

2 August 2018

Communities in the Great Southern are being encouraged to talk about dying, death and loss as part of a project focused on shifting community culture and improving end of life care and support.

Compassionate Communities is a whole of community approach to increasing awareness of end of life, and empowering people to live and die well, at home where possible.

The project is being delivered in partnership by WA Primary Health Alliance and the City of Albany.

Federal member for O'Connor Rick Wilson said the pilot project was one of 11 being delivered nationally through funding from the Australian Government through the Primary Health Network program.

"This initiative addresses a clearly identified need for people requiring palliative care, their families and carers. It will give more people greater choice in how and where they access end of life care, and help us to address this important topic as a community," Mr Wilson said.

WA Primary Health Alliance regional manager, Lesley Pearson said provided symptoms can be adequately controlled, the majority of people nearing the end of their lives prefer to be cared for in the comfort of their homes.

"Having sufficient, high quality end of life care services is vital, but it's just as important for people to have the opportunity and confidence to talk openly about dying, death and loss during life. This is where the City of Albany's collaboration on this project will be key," Ms Pearson said.

Mayor Dennis Wellington said the City was committed to creating an environment that will help change community attitudes towards the end of life.

"We are developing a Compassionate City Charter to expand our support for dying, death and loss. This will involve capacity building within the community to expand the support to improve the coordination of palliative care across all sectors," Mayor Wellington said.

To mark Dying to Know Day on Wednesday 8 August, Great Southern residents are asked to share their knowledge and understanding of end of life care by completing a short survey to help inform future community awareness activities of the project.

To complete the survey, visit <https://phexchange.wapha.org.au/great-southern-compassionate-communities>

In addition, a number of activities are taking place in Albany from 8 to 11 August, including information sessions on Advance Health Directives and My Health Record, a topical film screening,

guest speakers and a primary school art competition. To find out more, visit www.wapha.org.au/great-southern-compassionate-communities

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About WA Primary Health Alliance: WAPHA oversees the strategic commissioning functions of the Perth North, Perth South and Country WA Primary Health Networks (PHNs). The WA PHNs are three of 31 PHNs established by the Australian Government nationally to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for the community. We work across the WA healthcare system with doctors, allied health professionals, Area Health Services and service providers to improve the coordination of care for people who are at risk of poor health outcomes. For more information, visit www.wapha.org.au