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## **Palliative care in crisis in Tasmania**

The Federal Budget did not deliver expected funding to continue the successful hospice@HOME program to enable and support people to die with dignity at home, resulting in removal of choice for Tasmanians. “This week is National Palliative Care week and a time to celebrate but we are not celebrating in Tasmania”

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) Tasmanian Branch Secretary, Mrs Neroli Ellis has met with a myriad of stakeholders to ascertain the direction of the \$1m per annum Federal funding post announcement for Tasmanian palliative care. It appears that only \$500,000 per annum will go to the District Nurses and the remainder to the Palliative Care Tasmania (PCT), which is the peak representative body for hospice and palliative care in Tasmania.

“The hospice@HOME program was funded for four years with \$32 million of Federal funding and no new patients have been accepted post 31 March this year. Effectively, the lack of funding will see Tasmanians having their choice removed and being forced to go to hospital without 24 hour support, which is not in line with national palliative care standards.”

“This will leave Tasmanians with no choice as the public sector after hours on- call service

was closed and has been managed as part of hospice@HOME, who have operated a statewide 24 hour service. Now Tasmanians can only call the community nurses after hours until 9pm in the city and 4pm in regional areas. If there are complications and no on-call service, the patient will have to call an ambulance and attend the Emergency Department and may be admitted to a scarce hospital bed.”

“Choice of hospice care is vital and a principle of the Tasmanian Palliative Care Community Charter, yet Tasmanians will be forced to go to acute hospitals without ongoing funding. ANMF is calling on the State Government to redirect vital funds immediately to ensure palliative care can continue safely in people’s homes.”

“End”

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