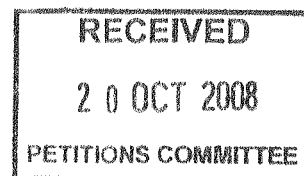




THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP
MINISTER FOR AGEING



Mrs Julia Irwin MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mrs *Julia* Irwin

Thank you for your letter of 4 September 2008 to the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Nicola Roxon MP, regarding a petition recently submitted for the Standing Committee's consideration regarding palliative care and hospice accommodation. As Minister with executive responsibility for palliative care, I am responding on behalf of the Australian Government.

In recognition of the needs of terminally ill patients, the National Palliative Care Strategy is continuing to improve the quality, range and coverage of palliative care services for all Australians. The Australian Government funds a range of projects nationally to support improved palliative care. However, it has no funding to support the ongoing operations of local palliative care services.

The States and Territories are generally very active in palliative care and provide a range of integrated services through acute care settings and community health. Primary care, especially general practitioners, also makes a significant contribution to palliative care. The Australian Government mainly funds primary care through the Medicare Benefits Schedule and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

While the Australian Government and the States and Territories are committed to working together to improve palliative care services, specific palliative care services are provided by the States and Territories as part of their hospital and community health service provision.

I appreciate you writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

JUSTINE ELLIOT

02/10/2008