

20th July 2012

Response from Professor David Currow to the questions from Senator Moore

Senator MOORE: Can we get on notice the funding and the time frame for that, because it has been going since the late nineties?

Senator MOORE: And funded into the future?

PaCCSC is a collaborative research organisation that consists of:

- A coordinating agency (a 'sponsor' organisation)
- An active governance and committee structure
- A number of partner organisations¹ (referred to as 'sites') who:
 - o are currently based at hospice and palliative care providers across four states (NSW, Vic, SA, QLD);
 - o contribute expert members to the governance and committee structure of PaCCSC; and
 - o maintain teams of local research staff that provide local research training and knowledge and importantly recruit to the PaCCSC clinical studies.
- Supporting members from within and external to the palliative care community including:
 - o biostatisticians
 - o health economists
 - o pharmacists and clinical pharmacologists
 - o expert researchers from industry and academia
 - o consumers
 - o other interested parties.
- Patients and their carers who consent to participate in the clinical trials

The collaborative undertakes Phase III and Phase IV studies.

The first funding agreement for the establishment of the Palliative Care Clinical Studies Collaborative (PaCCSC) to support multi-site clinical drug trials was signed on 1 June 2006 for a one year period. The initial funds were provided to establish the collaborative's governance and infrastructure including the identification of palliative care providers across the country where clinical studies could be conducted.

A second phase agreement to continue the establishment groundwork undertaken in the first year was signed in February 2007 for a period of three years and then extended by variation dated June 2010 to June 2011.

A third and current agreement followed that has an end date of 30 June 2014.

Funds provided under the above agreements are outlined below.

Contract period	Expenditure Area	Expenditure Amount
06.2006 to 01.2007	Total contract	408,855
02.2007 to 06.2011	Total contract	10,818,495
07.2011 to 06.2014	Total contract	7,481,900

In total, eight years of funding has/is been provided (ending 30 June 2014). This equates to an approximate spend of \$2.3m per annum.

PaCCSC has randomised over 900 participants to its studies and along with receipt of Commonwealth funding for the conduct of six Phase III studies has been awarded competitive funding through the National Health and Medical Research Council for a further three studies that are currently underway. The Collaborative is actively pursuing competitive funding sources to grow the number of studies being conducted however it is important that a mix of funded studies are conducted at any one time. Mixed funding provides continuity to enable the maintenance of skilled research staff and infrastructure at both the sponsor office and the sites, and momentum for study recruitment.

PaCCSC can never, by itself, be self-funding as it is studying off-patient medications for symptom control in a relatively small clinical population. No industry funding will ever be available for such studies.

These will remain public interest studies that require ongoing government support in order to improve the quality of care offered to people at the end of life.

¹ Phase 3 recruitment sites: St Vincent's Melbourne; Barwon Health; The Alfred Hospital; The Austin Hospital; Melbourne Health; Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre; Sacred Heart Hospice; Royal Prince Alfred; HammondCare - Braeside; Calvary Health Care, Kogarah; Calvary Mater, Newcastle; Greenwich Hospital; Liverpool Hospital; Camden Hospital; Mater Hospital, Brisbane; The Prince Charles Hospital; St Vincent's Hospital Brisbane; Modbury Hospital; Southern Adelaide Palliative Services; Flinders Medical Centre; Flinders Private Hospital; The Repatriation General Hospital, Adelaide; Blackwood Hospital; Modbury Hospital; Curtin University/Hollywood Hospital; (Note: not all sites remain active). Phase 4 sites names can be provided – these total more than 50 organisations both national and international.