

What does the VIENNESE WALTZ have to do with Palliative Care?

**The Palliative Care Council South Australia Inc is grateful to the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra for its welcome to this partnership concert.**

It may seem strange that the energy and life of the Viennese waltz could be linked with the situation of those who have advanced and terminal illness.

The waltz is a smooth and progressive dance for a ballroom or folk-gathering; it calls for partnership, expertise and the assistance of music, best offered by a team of instrumentalists, none better that our ASO.

Palliative care also seeks to be smooth and progressive in its offer of care – always available, responsive, and in partnership with the patient and family. It calls for medical and nursing expertise, but just as each waltzing couple has its own individual style, palliative care seeks to be patient-centred, offering the support that the patient and family see as most appropriate for them

Some persons feel they cannot dance; many feel unable to approach the prospect of death and dying.

Just as everyone can learn to waltz, everyone should be prepared to consider the circumstances of major illness and the treat of dying – we never know its timing.

And we should be prepared to start a conversation with those close to us about how we wish a serious illness to be managed. It will serve to dispel anxieties and fears and will facilitate communication in crisis situations. South Australia is preparing Advance Care Directives legislation that will encourage us all to do this, and write it down.

Tonight we affirm both the spirit-lifting rhythm of the waltz, and the heart warming work of palliative care.

Everyone should understand also what palliative care can offer for make the ‘dance with death’ something not to be feared. It is not about helping to die, m ore about ensuring comfort and fostering patience, courage and love; that are the values of life itself. The Palliative Care Council will welcome your queries and assistance.

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