

## Roberto Celada



Dr Roberto Celada has been providing palliative care to the West Gippsland area for over 20 years, after he watched his own father pass away in pain and without the support of end of life care.

Originally from Mexico, Roberto arrived into Australia in 1986. He moved to Drouin, a rural township in the West Gippsland region in 1990 where he started a GP clinic.

“In 1991, I had to go back to Mexico to see my father who was dying from pancreatic cancer. There was no palliative care in Mexico, so my father died in a lot of pain. When I returned back to Australia, I decided I wouldn’t want any of my patients to die the way my father had died.”

Upon his return to Australia, Roberto undertook a Post Graduate Diploma of Palliative Care via the University of Melbourne before commencing a position in aged care where he further realised the lack of adequate palliative care services in the region.

“In the early 1990’s there were no people specialising in palliative care in Drouin, particularly in the aged care facilities. There were also no nurses, so when someone got sick they were transferred to hospital to die.”

“So, along with a group of district nurses, I decided to commence a palliative care system in the area. We started working with aged care facilities and educating the staff on how to care for a dying resident.”

“It evolved from there, and we now have four aged care facilities in the area that we provide end of life care too. While I am semi-retired and only look after two facilities, the palliative care group in Warragul continues to work with people in aged care homes and those in the hospital.”

***“I want to ensure my patients are comfortable in their final moments and that I can manage their symptoms. I do not want their families to see them in pain.”***

Having watched a loved one die in pain, Roberto is incredibly passionate about giving everyone the chance to access good palliative care services, and acknowledges that there is more work to be done – particularly in regional areas.

“Palliative care is so important for everyone. We’re all going to die, so we should be assured that our journey in end of life will be comfortable and without distress.”

“Our society is getting older and we are living longer, which means palliative care will need to be accessed by more and more people.”

“While palliative care has certainly evolved since I started working in the industry, we need to keep improving. We need to continue offering 24-hour care in the community, we need to continue educating our medical practitioners, and we need to continue providing access to good end of life care.”

“I want to see equal access for palliative care right across Australia. For example, it doesn’t matter if we have excellent palliative care services in Melbourne if there is nothing in regional country towns.”

“Good palliative care needs to be available to everyone, no matter where they live.”