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Although there were small areas of interest in advance care planning (ACP) and the ability to refuse treatment in Australia as early as 1987, the implementation of and research in, ACP began in 2002 with Australian Federal government and Victorian State government funding of the Respecting Patient Choices Program. This program has been established in many hospitals, health services and aged care homes throughout Australia and has been adapted successfully to local conditions and legislation. There is an increasing body of research to support ACP, including a randomised controlled trial published in the BMJ (*BMJ* 2010;340:c1345).

With the growing public and political interest in ACP a number of new initiatives have been undertaken including:

- ▶ new supportive legislation in several states and territories
- ▶ a National government sponsored review of existing legislation with recommendations for achieving national uniformity
- ▶ recommendations in the Australian National Health & Hospitals Reform Commission Report that ACP should be available in all aged care homes.

The holding of the Inaugural International ACP conference in Melbourne in April 2010 galvanised interest and support for ACP in Australia and raised awareness internationally, leading to the establishment of International Society of Advance Care Planning and End of Life Care -ACPEL Society with hundreds of members joining from around the world. The Society will be officially launched at a London conference.

03 **EVOLUTION OF ADVANCE CARE PLANNING IN AUSTRALIA –
LAUNCHING THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ADVANCE CARE
PLANNING AND END OF LIFE CARE SOCIETY**

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