

## Turning their wishes into a plan

After yarning with your loved one, family and health care professionals the next important step is to create a plan that outlines your loved one's wishes.

This is known as **Advance Care Planning**.

It is the process of planning their medical care in advance, regardless of age or health. However, it is particularly important if they have a chronic or life-limiting illness, or are aged over 55 years.

This plan talks about values, beliefs and preferences so that family and health care providers can guide decision-making if your loved ones become unable to make or communicate their decisions in the future.

An **Advance Care Directive** is different from an Advance Care Plan and records preferences for end-of-life care in a legal document. It makes sure your loved one's decisions are informed by their health and that the treating doctor understands their wishes.

**While planning for end-of-life care is something we may not want to think about, writing down our loved one's wishes early will help to provide clarity during a difficult time for them and those they care about.**



For more information  
about end-of-life care for  
your loved ones visit:

[www.health.gov.au/palliativecare](http://www.health.gov.au/palliativecare)



Australian Government  
Department of Health



Caring for  
your mob at the  
end of their life

MY END OF LIFE CARE

Talking about what matters to me

**It can be difficult to talk about how we, or our loved ones, will be cared for as we age or become seriously ill.**

**Traditionally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is based on respect for our elders and for country. But while our aunts and uncles may assume that they will live with their family as they near the end of their life, this may not always be possible. That's why it's important to talk with your loved ones.**

### **Why is it important to plan ahead for end-of-life care?**

Having a plan for how your loved ones will be looked after will:

- Allow their wishes to be respected.
- Give them peace of mind knowing everyone around them understands how they wish to be cared for.



### **What is palliative care?**

**Palliative care is about improving the quality of life when facing a life-limiting illness.**

This type of care focuses on care needs and aims to prevent and relieve suffering. The goal is to improve the quality of life for both patients and their families.

Care and support may include:

- Relief of pain and other symptoms
- Resources such as medical equipment
- Assistance for families to come together to talk about sensitive issues
- Support for people to help meet cultural obligations
- Support for emotional, social and spiritual concerns
- Counselling and grief support.

### **What is end-of-life care?**

End-of-life care is for people of any age.

It is about the palliative care services they and their family receive when they are facing their end of life.

It often involves many health professionals bringing together a range of skills to support the person and their family. Wherever possible, end-of-life care is provided where your loved one feels comfortable. The need to return to country is very important for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the end of their lives. So it is important that end-of-life care takes this and the values of kinship, culture and community into account, no matter whether care is at home, in hospital, a hospice or a residential aged care facility.



### **How can we start yarning about end-of-life care?**

Talking about end-of-life care with our loved ones can be difficult but it is important to begin this yarn so you can plan ahead.

Some things to keep in mind:

- There is no right or wrong way to go about having this yarn—it's very personal to you, your family and friends, and to your cultural and religious beliefs.
- The yarn doesn't have to be rushed—take time to think about what's most important to your loved one and to those around them.
- Yarns like this are likely to happen over time—you don't need to resolve everything or make decisions all at once.
- Resources and support services are available to help you and your loved one when you're ready to begin discussing and planning.