

Dignified and Respectful Decisions

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Palliative Care
Victoria

**& DIGNIFIED
RESPECTFUL
DECISIONS**



Acknowledgement of Country

Palliative Care Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we meet today, the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains.

We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and future.
Further, PCV acknowledges Traditional Custodians of Country where palliative care services are delivered throughout Australia, and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and Communities.



Project brief:

“To partner with health care providers to test, refine and implement resources to **support families of residents without decision-making capacity** to identify and record **goals of care**. Well-crafted goals of care can inform maintenance and end of life plans for residents thereby preventing unnecessary transfers to emergency departments for care not aligned to the resident’s goals of care.

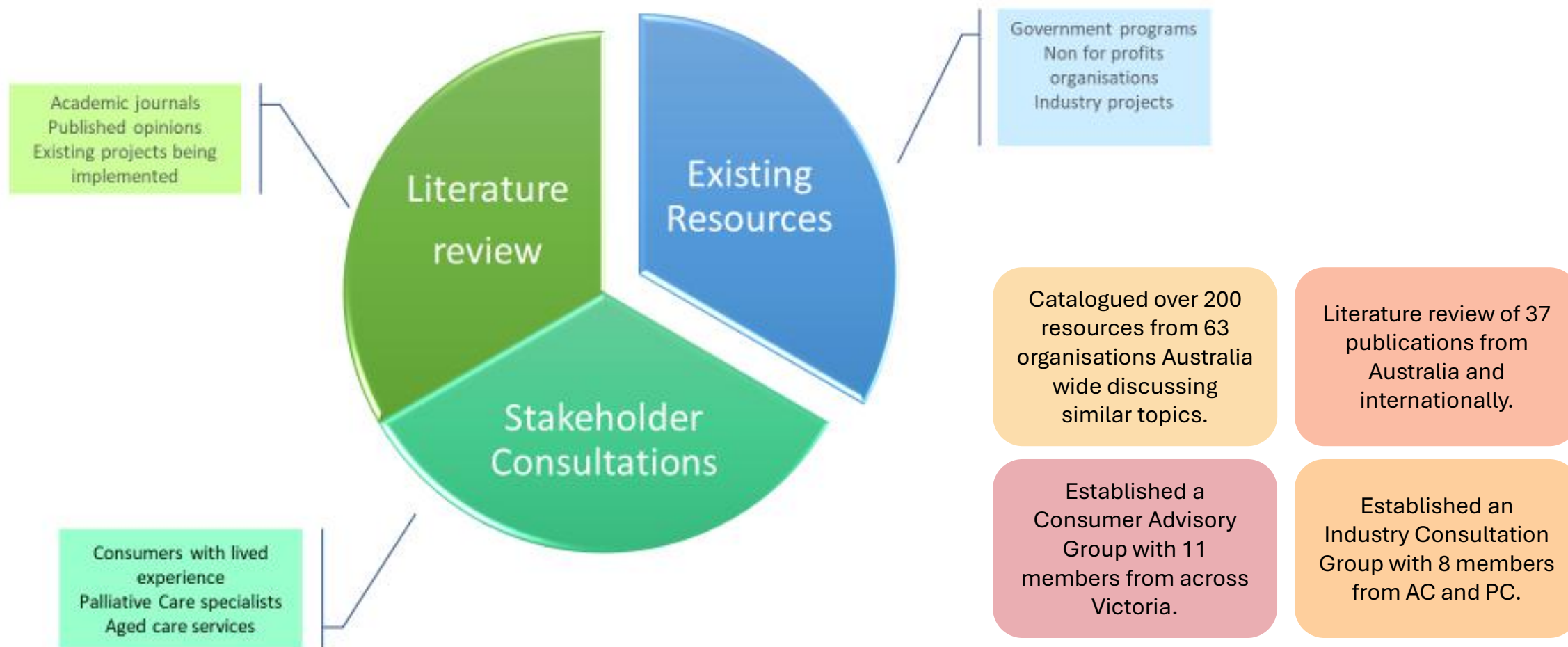
Where possible test goals of care approach with **CALD** residents and **culturally centric** RACF’s”

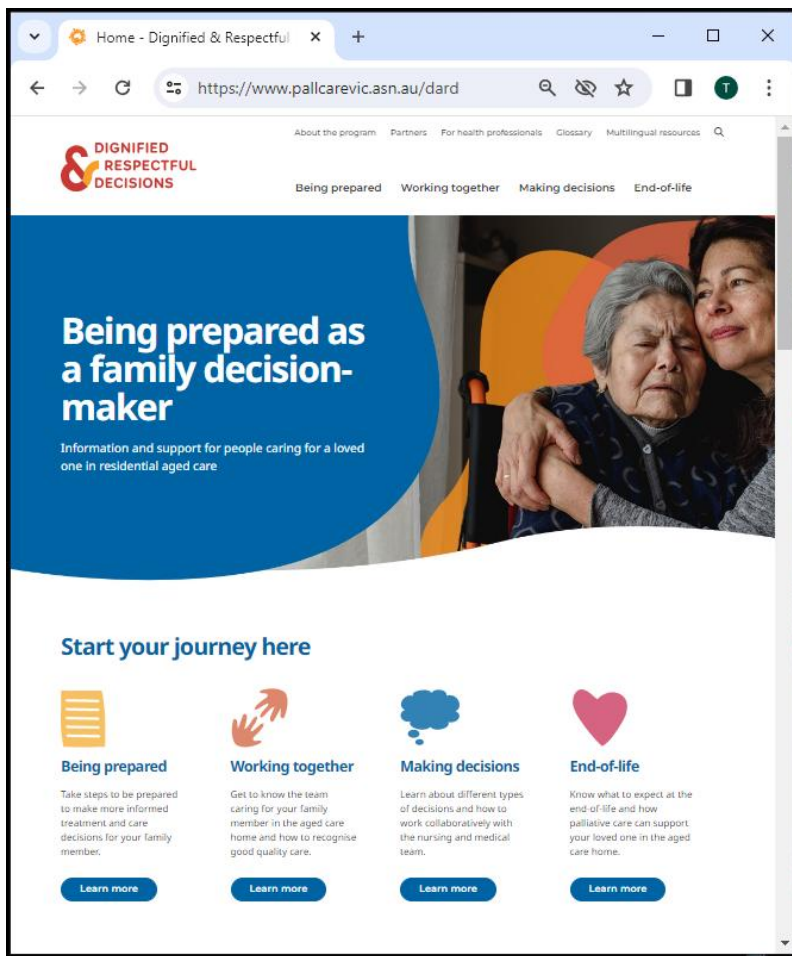
Funding by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments as part of the Comprehensive Palliative Care in Aged Care Measure (2018-2024).





Foundation work





www.dard.org.au

Website resources

- ❖ **Being Prepared**
Information to practically and emotionally support decision makers
- ❖ **Working Together**
Understanding roles of staff in the aged care home and how to assess good quality care.
- ❖ **Making Decisions**
Recognising the different types of decisions about care to be made and who can support you.
- ❖ **End-of-life Care**
Illustrates the benefit of palliative care in an aged care home and what to expect as a family member.

DIGNIFIED RESPECTFUL DECISIONS



Being prepared as a family decision-maker

Information and support for people caring for a loved one in residential aged care

Start your journey here



Being Prepared:
Be ready and equipped to make more informed treatment and care decisions for your family member.



Working Together:
Get to know the aged care team and how to recognise good quality care.



Making Decisions:
Learn about the different treatment and care decisions you may need to make on behalf of your family member.



End-of-Life:
Know what to expect at the end-of-life and how palliative care can support your loved one in the aged care home.



www.pallcarevic.asn.au/dard




Remaining strong

Being treated to make treatment and care decisions for another person can be difficult at times. Being treated to make treatment and care decisions for another person can be difficult at times. Being treated to make treatment and care decisions for another person can be difficult at times.

Healthy habits

- Get well: Being treated to make treatment and care decisions for another person can be difficult at times. Being treated to make treatment and care decisions for another person can be difficult at times. Being treated to make treatment and care decisions for another person can be difficult at times.
- More sleep: Making time for physical activity will benefit your physical health and reduce stress. Even just 15 minutes a day can help.
- Sleep right: What adults require 7-9 hours of sleep a night. A good night's sleep has been shown to have a number of health benefits.
- Be active: Practising some relaxation or mindfulness techniques, keeping a diary or talking with a close friend can help reduce stress and anxiety.
- Seek professional support if needed: Getting professional support from your GP or a psychologist can help you work through challenging situations.

Working together

When your family member moves into an aged care home, important new relationships are set in motion. Getting to know how the aged care home operates, building relationships with staff and understanding how the home provides good quality care will support you in your role as decision-maker.

Key staff and clinical care support

The manager and the team in charge of clinical care are key people to the aged care home when it comes to care decisions. It is a good idea to keep track of their names and contact details should you need to be in touch.

Getting to know other staff and building relationships with them can provide about clinical care. The clinical care information in the booklet will help you know who to talk to about the different needs of your family member.

It is also important to know your family member's GP. The GP is responsible for monitoring and directing medical care, providing medication and coordinating referrals to specialist services (such as home care, or home treatment services).

Aged health services are helped to quality care and your family member is likely to use one or more of these services, sometimes on a regular basis. These services span a range of services, from medical, psychological, psychiatric, general pathology (which includes treatment for infectious) and dental services.

Many aged care homes have access to specialist palliative care services. These services provide care to patients with complex palliative care needs or challenging medical symptoms related to the living condition. Some homes have access to specialist palliative care services which offer people a range of support and care in the aged care home. You can ask the aged care home about what services they have access to.

Guiding checklist

Being prepared

- Build a good understanding of your family member's wishes and preferences for care.
- Check if your family member has previously documented their preferences in an Advance care plan or an Advance care directive, and that the aged care home has this document on file.
- Learn about any health conditions your family member has. This can include how they may progress, the effect it may have on their ability, and any specific symptoms that need to be managed.
- Recognise that you may encounter challenges that can be both practically and emotionally difficult. Prepare by becoming familiar with the types of decisions you may need to make. Consider when to reach out for support and how to take care of yourself.

Working together

- Get to know the staff in the aged care home and find out to whom you should talk to about the care your family member is receiving.
- Confirm that your contact details with the aged care home and that you for someone you have delegated to can be contacted in the event of a sudden change in your family member.
- Learn about the nursing team's assessment and Care Plan review processes with your family member and how you as decision-maker can be involved.
- If you would prefer support when talking with the staff of the aged care home, reach out to all another family member or close friend to join you, or contact a support person.

Wellbeing support

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Healthy habits

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- More sleep: Making time for physical activity will benefit your physical health and reduce stress. Even just 15 minutes a day can help.
- Sleep right: What adults require 7-9 hours of sleep a night. A good night's sleep has been shown to have a number of health benefits.
- Be active: Practising some relaxation or mindfulness techniques, keeping a diary or talking with a close friend can help reduce stress and anxiety. Prepare a diary for some people.
- Seek professional support if needed: Getting professional support from your GP or a psychologist can help you work through challenging situations.

Coping with change

When your family member moves into an aged care home, the changes to your day-to-day life may cause disruption to your personal daily routine or activities. When the moves, it can be helpful to acknowledge these changes and know that you are likely to adjust your own time.

It can also be helpful to build in some positive activities such as walking time to go to the cinema or meet up with a friend or coffee. If you are going to manage, you might like something close to home such as spending time in the garden or watching a TV show you enjoy.

If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed or struggling to manage, consider asking for support from someone who you trust or someone you can talk to. If you would like to learn more about community activities available, you can reach out to the following organisations:

Blue Rights helpline
1800 755 466
www.comcarevic.org.au

Carers VIC
1800 234 845
www.carersvic.org.au

Printed resources available on request: dard@pallcarevic.asn.au

Additional resources

- Glossary of terms
- Video and animations based on real situations
- Guiding checklist for families starting the journey
- Wellbeing support for family members
- Information about common medical treatments (CPR, interventions for eating/drinking, antibiotics)
- Additional resources on specific topics (i.e. ACP, Dementia)

Understanding key terms

Being prepared involves several key terms which some of you will be familiar with while others may not. It can be useful to refer to the definitions of these terms as you peruse the information in the sections on *Being prepared*.

Advance Care Plan This is a document that provides information about a person's values and preferences for health care treatment should they become seriously unwell or be unable to make their own decisions. An Advance Care Plan is a guiding document for the medical and nursing team to understand what is important to someone. An aged care home will commonly ask a resident or their substitute decision-maker for a copy of this document or to provide them with one to complete on behalf of their family member	Advance Care Directive An Advance Care Directive is a legally binding document a person can complete with their doctor that details what medical treatment they want to receive or would refuse should they lose the capacity to decide later in life. This document also shares the person's values and provides brief information about why they have made these choices to guide health care decisions. It cannot be completed by a substitute decision-maker.	Life-limiting condition Life-limiting condition refers to a large number of progressive illnesses that lead to physical decline in health and shortens a person's life expectancy. When a person is diagnosed with a life-limiting condition, it is expected they will die as a direct result of their illness and not of natural causes. Many individuals living in aged care homes have a life-limiting condition such as dementia, heart or lung disease or a neurological disorder.
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Multilingual Booklets



- Initially translated into 10 languages from English with a further 7 available from July 2026.
- Imagery unique for each edition and developed in partnership with 15 culturally specific community groups. Each participated in a one-day photo shoot.
- Languages determined based off local and demographic data and figures from the 2021 national census
- Education also provided to staff working in multicultural specific RACS





Auslan Videos

Being Prepared

Auslan Video

Take steps to be prepared to make more informed treatment and care decisions for your family member.

[View more videos](#)



End-of-life Care

Auslan Video

Know what to expect at the end-of-life and how palliative care can support your loved one in the aged care home.

[View more videos](#)



- Each section of the Dignified and Respectful Decisions booklet has been recorded into Auslan.
- Developed in collaboration with Expressions Australia who work to empower people who are Deaf and hard of hearing to overcome barriers in their life and choose how they want to live.
- Embedded in each section of the site as well as a stand alone page.
- Promoted at Deaf community events and prompted further conversations (i.e. ACP sessions)





LGBTI+ DARD Supplement

- Building on PCV's work following Rainbow Tick Accreditation and the release of the Victorian Rainbow Toolkit
- Will include a booklet accompaniment as well as online information.
- Follows same sections with specific information for substitute decision makers advocating for a person from the LGTBI community.
- Developed through an iterative approach in collaboration with individuals and organisations within the rainbow community (i.e. Val's, TGV, Lifeview).
- Still in consultation stage. Due for launch in January 2027.



Read Now

* We have intentionally used LGBTI+ for two reasons: some older community members, including many Rainbow Elders, feel uncomfortable with the term "queer" because of the historical stigma associated with its use; and LGBTI+ remains widely used in ageing, health and palliative care research relevant to this work.



Support for aged care teams

Admission



Care plan review



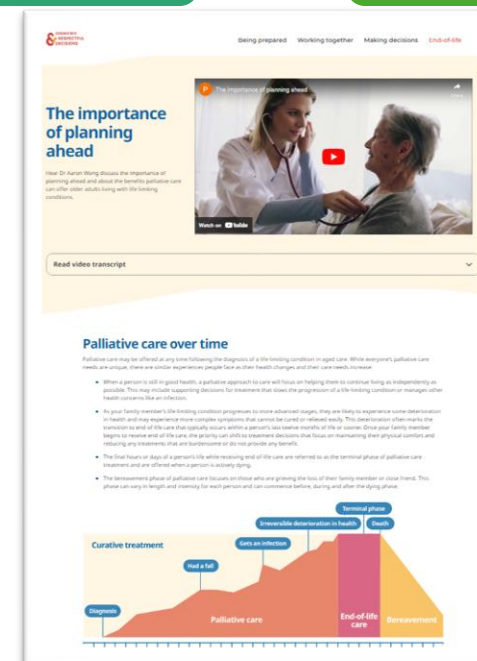
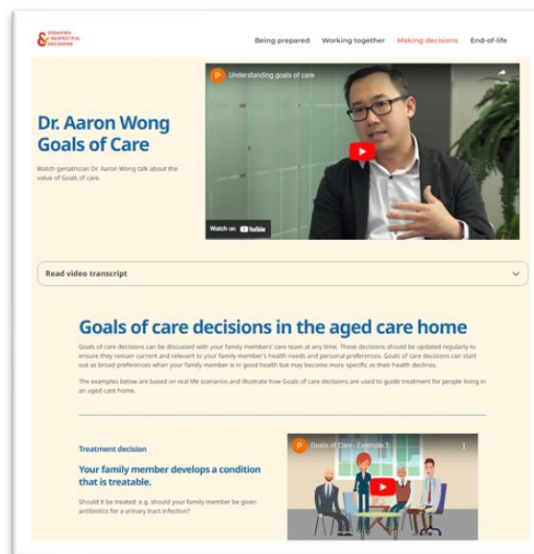
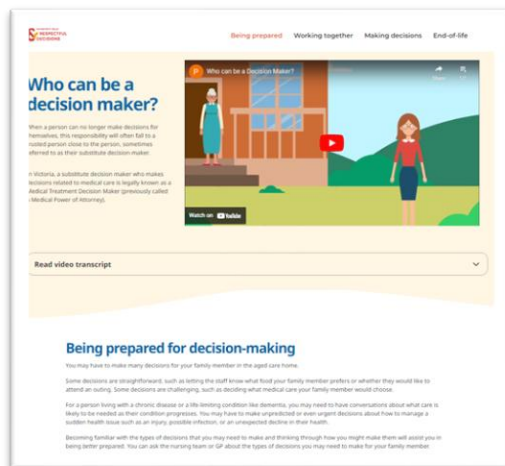
Critical Event or incident



Deterioration Identified



Palliative Care Pathway commenced



www.pallcarevic.asn.au/dard



Key messages shared by families

- Supporting someone in RAC can be overwhelming, stressful and involve making unexpected (and sometimes difficult) decisions about medical care.
- Combining your knowledge of the person with the medical knowledge of the staff can make decision making easier in many situations.
- Resources need to help families discuss active care as well as prepare for future treatment and end of life care.
- There is no right or wrong answer as long as the decisions made reflects what the person would want - given their **current health and values**.



Thankyou.

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