

Where to get support for advance care planning

Advance care planning involves shared planning for your future health care needs. It is a voluntary and ongoing process. It enables you to make some decisions now about the health care you would or would not like to receive if you were unable to communicate your preferences or make treatment decisions. It may involve completing documents such as an Advance Care Directive or appointment of a substitute decision-maker.

This fact sheet provides information on where you can find support to help you with advance care planning.



Free information and resources

There is a wide range of resources for individuals and families on the process of advance care planning and the preparation of advance care planning documents available free of charge and readily accessible online.

Advance Care Planning Australia is a free, government-funded service which provides information and resources to help Australians plan for their future health care. If you need free advice about advance care planning, phone the **National Advance Care Planning Advisory Service on 1300 208 582**.

Advance Care Planning Australia has free information and forms for each State and Territory – visit **Create your plan | Advance Care Planning**. The Department of Health in your state or territory also has information about the advance care planning documents that are recognised by legislation.

Professional support

Your GP or other health professional can support you with advance care planning.

Some public hospitals and health services provide specialised advance care planning services. Contact your local service to enquire.

Legal services and solicitors can also assist with the completion of legally binding documents such as Advance Care Directives, or appointment of a substitute decision-maker such as Enduring Power of Attorney, Enduring Guardian.

Storing advance care planning documents

Advance care planning documents are important, and need to be stored carefully so that, if and when they are needed, they can be located easily by your substitute decision-maker and your health care providers.

My Health Record is a national, government-funded, free service you can use to store your advance care planning documents, visit **My Health Record (digitalhealth.gov.au)**.

Some states and territories have registers where you can lodge your advance care planning documents. For more information see your state or territory's page on the **Advance Care Planning Australia's website**.

Private advance care planning service providers

Private advance care planning service providers offer services to assist with the advance care planning process, including completing and storing advance care planning documents, on a fee-for-service basis. Private providers may offer their own advance care planning documents (paper or online), and subscription-based electronic storage services for advance care planning documents.

Further information

For more information about advance care planning, visit: **advancecareplanning.org.au**

Advance Care Planning Australia does not endorse any private providers of advance care planning services or products.

If you are thinking about using the services of a private advance care planning service provider, consider the questions below before you make your decision.

Questions to ask about private advance care planning service providers	Why is this important?
Is the service provider a registered health or legal professional?	Registered professionals must act in line with laws and their professional standards of practice. Using registered professionals is a good way to ensure you are protected.
Does the service provider inform you that advance care planning is voluntary, and the advance care planning process may or may not result in written documents?	Private providers should respect that it's a personal choice to do advance care planning – it's voluntary for everyone, including people who live in aged care homes. It's also voluntary to complete written advance care planning documents.
What are the fees the service provider charges and what do they include? Are there one-off or ongoing charges?	Private providers should give you complete and transparent information about their fees and any ongoing subscription costs, so you don't get any nasty surprises or sign up for ongoing costs without meaning to.
Does the service provider inform you about government-funded, free services for information, resources, and electronic storage?	It's important that you know what is freely available so you can make an informed decision about any additional services you choose to pay for. The information provided in this fact sheet sets out free, government funded services for information, resources, and document storage.
If there is a subscription-based service through the service provider for storage of documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How do I control who can and cannot access my documents? ■ How am I protected against risk of privacy breaches? ■ How easy is it to cancel my subscription? ■ What happens to my documents if I stop paying my subscription? ■ What happens to my documents if the business ceases to operate? 	Having your documents stored online means you need to think about how they are protected from being accessed by people who should not have access but are still available to you and others who may need access to them, such as your substitute decision-maker and health professionals providing your care. Signing up for an ongoing subscription through the private provider also means you need to think about what might happen if things change down the track. Knowing in advance what will happen will help you make an informed choice.
Does the service provider inform you about and use the statutory (legally binding) advance care planning documents in your state or territory?	Your state or territory will have specific forms and documents that are legally recognised, so it's important you are informed about what these are. These forms are available at Create your plan Advance Care Planning
Does the service provider have a business relationship or commercial agreement with other organisations, such as aged care providers?	A relationship with another organisation means there is potential for conflict of interest. If priority is given to a partner organisation's business interests, this may disadvantage you. If you have a government-funded Home Care Package, note that package funds cannot be used for private advance care planning services.
How does the service provider ensure that the advance care planning documents have been completed in a way that meets formal requirements?	If advance care planning documents do not meet formal requirements of the relevant state or territory (for example, they have not been signed or witnessed correctly, or important information is missing), they will not be legally binding. It is important to be confident that the private provider knows how to ensure documents are done right.