

ABOUT YOU... EARLY PLANNING

If you have been diagnosed with dementia, this Help Sheet may be useful. It makes suggestions about planning for the future. It also tells you who can assist you to do this.

Planning ahead

It is a good idea in the early stage of your diagnosis to think about planning ahead. You can participate in the planning process which ensures you have some control over future decisions.

Talking with your family about your preferences for the future will assist them to help you in the way you have chosen.

Money matters

Make sure that all your important documents such as insurance policies, mortgage and financial papers are the way you want them to be. Tell someone you trust where they are kept.

In most States and Territories a person can sign a document called an enduring power of attorney. An enduring power of attorney is a legal arrangement that enables a nominated person to look after your financial affairs if you become unable to do so.

More information about planning ahead for money matters can be obtained by contacting the National Dementia Helpline on **1800 100 500**.

Planning ahead ensures you have some control over future decisions

Legal matters

You may need to review your will to make sure that it is up to date and the way you want it to be.

In most States and Territories a person can appoint one or more people they trust to make important personal and lifestyle decisions on their behalf when they need assistance. These decisions may include choice of accommodation, recreational activities and holidays. In some States this includes health and medical decisions.

A number of people and organisations can help explain about money, legal and medical arrangements

Work

If you are still working, consider speaking to your employer about dementia and your symptoms. It may be useful to take someone with you to help you explain. It may be possible to keep working a little longer by cutting down on your hours or your responsibilities. If you eventually have to give up work, find out about your entitlements.

If you are already retired, or have to stop working because of the condition, it is important to keep active. For some people, taking on voluntary work is one way to keep involved while continuing to make a valuable contribution to the community.

Medical care

In some States and Territories it is possible to appoint someone you trust to make medical decisions on your behalf if it becomes necessary. If you have not planned ahead, the law in every State and Territory allows a particular court to appoint someone to make decisions for you. Two types of tools are available to help plan ahead about medical treatment:

1. An enduring power of attorney covering health matters. This allows you to appoint a person to be your substitute decision maker for medical decisions
2. An advance directive is a written document expressing your wishes about medical treatment

Different names may be used in some States and Territories, but the functions of these tools are much the same.

Who can help

A number of people and organisations can help explain these arrangements and how to make them work for you and your family:

- Bank manager
- Accredited financial adviser
- Solicitor
- The Public Advocate, Public Guardian or Public Trustee in your State or Territory

Care arrangements

At some point, you may need extra assistance in your home, or alternative living arrangements. Consider what services are available, and where and with whom you might want to live. Talk about it with your family and friends.

Contact the National Dementia Helpline on **1800 100 500** for information about extra assistance or alternative living arrangements.

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres provide free and confidential information on local carer support, disability and community services. Centres are located throughout Australia and you can contact your nearest Centre by phoning **1800 052 222** (Freecall except from mobile phones).

Information on aged care can be found on the My Aged Care website myagedcare.gov.au

FURTHER INFORMATION

Alzheimer's Australia offers support, information, education and counselling. Contact the National Dementia Helpline on **1800 100 500**, or visit our website at fightdementia.org.au



Interpreter

For language assistance phone the Translating and Interpreting Service on **131 450**