

Media Release

14 March 2023

Planning for a ‘good death’

Did you know that more than one in two Australians will be unable to make their own medical decisions at the end of their lives, but only 15% have an Advance Care Directive?

March 20-26 is [National Advance Care Planning Week](#), encouraging Australians, regardless of their age or health status, to make their future health care preferences known.

An Advance Care Directive (ACD) is an instruction that a person makes about their future medical treatment or health care in the event they lose capacity to make decisions.

Close to 30% of Australians die in residential aged care. Naomi Lewis is Clinical Manager of Residential Services at Catholic for-purpose organisation VMCH, and is responsible for improving service provision across the organisation’s 14 residential aged care homes, including palliative and end of life care.

Naomi says all residents are strongly encouraged to complete an ACD on admission to any VMCH home.

“If they need help, residents and families can always engage with our staff around these conversations. Having an ACD in place allows us to record their wishes, in the event that their health deteriorates.

“Our staff can then ensure that their preferences are respected and we have a clear understanding about the delivery of their care when there is a change in their condition.

“Having the conversation is so important, because everyone has the right to be involved in decisions around their own end of life care, whatever that may look like. We need to create an environment where residents and families feel comfortable to have those difficult conversations. That is why we are also investing in education and training opportunities for our staff to help facilitate those conversations.”

Charan Sandhu, Residential Service Manager at VMCH’s St Bernadette’s Aged Care, says while completing an ACD can be overwhelming for residents and families, it’s important to see it through.

“Having a plan in place benefits everyone; residents receive the care they want and families have less anxiety and stress. It also helps reduce unnecessary transfers to acute care and unwanted medical treatment. Ultimately, it gives everyone peace of mind.”

If you would like to learn more about advance care planning, visit:

<https://www.advancecareplanning.org.au/understand-advance-care-planning/starting-the-conversation>

Media enquiries

Cassie Zlonzak

Communications Manager

M: 0402 422 852

E: cassie.zlonzak@vmch.com.au

About VMCH

Here at VMCH, our services are as diverse as the people we support.

Our values underpin the work we do. As a Catholic, for-purpose organisation, compassion, respect and inclusion aren’t just words to us, they guide us in everything we do.

While we've been around for over a century, we're always moving forward. Always staying true to who we are by supporting people and families to live their best lives; providing a place to call home and spaces to learn and grow.

Our professional and compassionate teams are with you on your life journey; helping you with a wide range of support from early learning and therapy, specialist education, disability services, affordable homes, residential aged care, retirement living and at-home aged care.

