

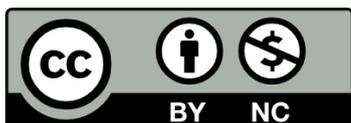
When someone dies

A practical guide for the family and
friends of a person who has chosen
voluntary assisted dying



Disclaimer The information within *When someone dies – A practical guide for the family and friends of a person who has chosen voluntary assisted dying* is intended as a guide for the family, carers and friends of a person who has died following access to voluntary assisted dying. The law and service delivery environment is constantly evolving, so while every attempt has been made to ensure the content is accurate, it cannot be guaranteed. The information within this document should not be relied upon as a substitute for other professional or legal advice.

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Acknowledgment of Country

Queensland Health acknowledges the Traditional and Cultural custodians of the lands, waters, and seas across Queensland, pays our respects to Elders past and present, and recognises the role of current and emerging leaders in shaping a better health system. We recognise the First Nations peoples in Queensland are both Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and support the cultural knowledge, determination, and commitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in caring for the health and wellbeing of our peoples for millennia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be advised that this document refers to material of a sensitive nature.

Acknowledgement of co-design

This guide is based on *When someone dies: A practical guide for family and friends*, which was researched and developed by Queensland Health's Care at the End of Life Project team in consultation with: an extensive group of clinicians, consumers and content experts from across Queensland; the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Team and their statewide network; and Health Consumers Queensland. The authors extend their sincere thanks to the Care at the End of Life Project team and their collaborators for permission to adapt their resource in the development of this guide.



*“Death is not the opposite
of life, but a part of it.”*

- Haruki Murakami, Japanese novelist

Voluntary assisted dying is one of several choices that a person may have at the end of their life.

Voluntary assisted dying gives people who are suffering and dying, and who meet eligibility criteria, the option to ask for medical help to end their life.

More information about voluntary assisted dying is available on the [Queensland Health website \(www.health.qld.gov.au/vad\)](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/vad).

Purpose of this guide

When someone is dying or has died, it can be a very difficult and stressful time. This guide is meant to help. We hope it will give you support and direction during this time. It has information and practical ideas about things to do before and after a family member or friend dies after accessing voluntary assisted dying in Queensland.

You might not be able to do this on your own. Asking for help is okay. You could contact QVAD-Support (QVADSupport@health.qld.gov.au or 1800 431 371 – 8.30am-4pm, Monday-Friday), your spiritual carer, cultural leader, social worker, family or friends.

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Grief is a normal and natural response when we experience loss.

Grief can affect our lives in a number of ways, but it also allows us to slowly adjust to our loss and continue to go about our lives.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve (see [Caring for yourself and others](#), page 17).

Section 1

Preparing for the end of life

We can all plan, discuss and prepare for the end of life at any time. When a person accesses voluntary assisted dying, they and their family, carers and friends may have been involved in many discussions with healthcare workers about planning for their death.

This may help make the experience more comfortable and provide a greater sense of control when death happens. You might find comfort knowing the person has a choice regarding the time, place and who they would like to surround themselves with when they die. Voluntary assisted dying can allow more time for you to prepare for and accept the person's death than you would otherwise. Knowing you will have the opportunity to say goodbye may help you through your grieving process. Knowing these things may help you understand their decision.

Supporting the person with the voluntary assisted dying process

If someone close to you is accessing voluntary assisted dying and nearing the end of their life, you can help them:

- by supporting their decision:
 - helping them understand and consider their end-of-life options
 - being part of their conversations about voluntary assisted dying
 - asking for more information about voluntary assisted dying
- by being involved in the process, if you are eligible, by taking on the role of:
 - a witness to the second request
 - the contact person
 - the witness to practitioner administration
- to make plans for the administration of the voluntary assisted dying substance, including:
 - who they would like to be present when the substance is administered
 - where they would like administration to take place, such as at home, in another home environment, on country, in hospital, a palliative care unit hospice, or a residential aged care facility
 - any religious, spiritual or cultural considerations they want incorporated

- whether there's an outfit they would like to wear
- if there are any smells or sounds they would like incorporated, for example, a particular perfume or song
- preparing for what happens immediately after the person dies.

Preparing for death

Someone who is accessing voluntary assisted dying will need to make a number of important decisions during the voluntary assisted dying process, including wider considerations about preparing for death. When the time comes to plan for the person's death, you can support them to:

- carry out advance care planning with health professionals, family, carers and friends to discuss their wishes, values, beliefs and preferences for future medical treatment. Voluntary assisted dying cannot be requested via advance care planning documents or by a substitute decision-maker, but advance care planning can still help the person express their preferences for care and support as they approach the end of their life (see [Support services](#), page 19)
- appoint an attorney for personal, health and/or financial matters using an enduring power of attorney form (see [Definitions](#), page 21), but remember that someone who holds an enduring power of attorney cannot make decisions about voluntary assisted dying on the person's behalf
- let healthcare workers know if emotional and/or spiritual support is needed, and to talk about any important cultural practices
- organise to see a spiritual carer in the time leading up to the death, including after hours
- decide where they would like to be cared for as they approach the end of their life, if possible. This may include:
 - in their own home
 - on country
 - in hospital
 - in a palliative care unit or hospice
 - in a residential aged care facility
- discuss and decide which doctor will issue the cause of death certificate when the time comes. This may be the person's coordinating doctor, administering doctor, GP or other treating specialist (such as a palliative care doctor or oncologist)
- write a will and ensure it is up-to-date and easy to find
- talk about palliative care services and support (if needed) with a doctor or healthcare worker
- visit facilities where they may receive care and support. Some private facilities do not provide voluntary assisted dying services. These facilities cannot hinder (delay or stop) access to voluntary assisted dying and must advise on their website if they do not provide voluntary assisted dying services. It can be helpful to visit and ask questions about accessing voluntary assisted dying at the facility
- start funeral planning if possible, and talk about who will be the point of contact for organising the funeral

- think about how to pay for the funeral (see [Arranging a funeral or memorial service](#), page 14). This may include:
 - setting up a funeral savings account
 - life insurance or superannuation
 - buying a funeral benefit product, such as a prepaid funeral, funeral bonds or funeral insurance. You can find out more information about paying for funerals at [The Australian Securities and Investment Commission website](#) (www.asic.gov.au)
- make a list of their personal details and passwords and store them in a safe place. You may choose to use the [Tasks and contact list](#) (page 23) to help you decide what information you might need
- add a 'legacy contact' to Facebook and other social media accounts to allow someone they trust to manage their account after they die
- write letters, record videos, create photo albums or put together keepsakes for loved ones. Some people may wish to write cards or arrange gifts for future birthdays or significant life events
- consider who will care for children, other dependents and pets
- say goodbye to those they love and care about.

More information about supporting a person who is accessing voluntary assisted dying is available on [the Queensland Health website](#) – www.health.qld.gov.au/vad.

*Supporting someone who is dying can be stressful.
For suggestions on how you can look after yourself during this time, see [Caring for yourself and others](#), page 17).*

Section 2

First steps

This section has information about things that happen soon after a person dies. Not all will be related to your situation.

Appointing a funeral director

Most people in Queensland use a funeral director to help organise a funeral or memorial service. Funeral directors are not compulsory, but they may make things easier. You can choose a funeral director by searching online, talking with family and friends or using the [Australian Funeral Directors Association](http://afda.org.au) website (afda.org.au). Typically, people choose local funeral directors as they may need to visit a few times.

Always check what the quote includes and doesn't include. Many funeral directors can take calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

For more information, see [Arranging a funeral or memorial service](#) on page 14.

Dying at home or in the community

A voluntary assisted death at home is not an emergency situation. This will be a planned death following either self-administration or practitioner administration of the voluntary assisted dying substance (see [Definitions](#), page 21). The person may die of their underlying disease or condition before administration of the voluntary assisted dying substance, but this is also likely to be an expected death.

There is usually no need to rush. You can have time with the person who has died before anything needs to be done. If this happens during the night, you can wait until the morning to carry out next steps, if you are comfortable with this. When you are ready, notify your doctor, palliative care service, or funeral director.

Cause of death certificate

It is important to have spoken with the person's coordinating doctor, administering doctor or other doctor, such as their GP or other treating specialist about who to contact to issue the cause of death certificate (see [Definitions](#), page 21) when the time comes. The certificate needs to be completed within 48 hours of the person's death. Any doctor who knows the person's medical history and can certify the cause and manner of death is able to complete the cause of death certificate. In Queensland, the cause of death certificate must not mention voluntary assisted dying as the cause of death. It will say that the cause of death was the person's underlying disease, illness or medical condition.

Self-administration

If the person dies at home after self-administering the voluntary assisted dying substance or dies from another cause, you can contact the relevant doctor to request that they complete the cause of death certificate.

Practitioner administration

The person may die at home after a doctor or nurse administers the voluntary assisted dying substance ('practitioner administration'). If the administering practitioner is a doctor, they can complete the cause of death certificate. If the administering practitioner is a nurse, they will not be able to complete the cause of death certificate, as only a doctor can do this. In this case, planning for the person's death should include consideration of which doctor will be contacted to complete the cause of death certificate.

Life extinct form

If there is likely to be a delay in completing the cause of death certificate, a nurse, paramedic or doctor can complete a life extinct form (see [Definitions](#), page 22). A life extinct form allows the person to be taken into the care of your chosen funeral director.

Dying in a hospital, palliative care unit, hospice or residential aged care facility

If the person dies in a hospital or other facility, the staff will help you to understand the process and what you need to do. There's usually no need to rush. You can have time with the person who has died before anything needs to be done. You may want to wait until other family, carers and friends have a chance to say goodbye.

Ask questions. If you need more information or support, or do not agree with something, please ask. The healthcare team are there to support you. Make sure staff are aware of any end-of-life rituals, such as what needs to happen to the body in preparation for burial or cremation, so that arrangements can be made before the person is transferred.

Usually, the following things will happen shortly after death:

- healthcare workers will complete documentation
- a doctor will complete the cause of death certificate
- after discussions with you, the person may be transferred to the mortuary or another suitable room
- any belongings the person had with them at the facility will be given to a representative of the family by nursing staff
- the person may remain at the facility until the funeral director is chosen and plans are made to move them to the funeral home
- if family, carers or friends are coming to say goodbye, talk to the staff about how long the person who has died can stay at the facility. Different places have different processes.

Reportable deaths

Some deaths need to be reported to the coroner, for example, where the cause of death cannot immediately be determined or if someone dies in care or custody. **If someone dies after accessing voluntary assisted dying, their death does not need to be reported to the coroner because they accessed voluntary assisted dying.** This is the case regardless of where the person has died and whether they died from administration of the voluntary assisted dying substance or their underlying disease or condition.

There may be rare cases where situations arise that mean the death of someone who has accessed voluntary assisted dying will need to be reported to the coroner. If this occurs, a paramedic, police officer or doctor will provide advice.

Visiting a person who has died

Some people find it helpful to see the person after they've died. This is called a viewing. Deciding whether to visit a person after they've died is a personal choice. You can talk about this with a healthcare worker.

It is important to note that not all facilities have a mortuary for viewings but may make a room available for you. Viewings may also be arranged at the funeral home.

Before appointing a funeral director, check whether the funeral home allows viewing as part of their service. There may be an associated cost.

Organ and tissue donation

A very small number of people would be eligible for both voluntary assisted dying and organ and/or tissue donation. Organ and/or tissue donation has strict eligibility criteria. Some medical conditions, including neurodegenerative diseases, blood cancers and melanoma will prevent people donating organs or tissue. However, there are some cancers which may not be a barrier to eye tissue donation. People should talk to their doctor to see if they are eligible to donate.

Body bequests

The person may have prearranged donation of their body to a university. The university will need to be notified of the death in order to assess suitability and arrange transportation as soon as possible. Transportation is typically managed by the university's contracted funeral director.

Where to get help

Not all situations are straightforward, and some people may need extra support to work through complicated matters. Find a list of services that can help with grief, financial, legal, advocacy and other issues in [Support services](#), page 19.

It can be difficult to talk about death and dying. Everyone responds in their own way. Dying should be discussed with honesty, sensitivity and respect.

Section 3

What you can do next

Gather key information

There can be a lot of things to do after someone dies.

The [Tasks and contact list](#) (page 23) may help you keep track of who to contact. Getting important information and paperwork together can help make these tasks easier.

Information could include:

- the person's full legal name (birth name or legal name at the time of death; avoid using nicknames)
- last residential address
- the original or certified copies of their driver's licence and passport
- any names previously used, including maiden surname
- their Medicare number, Tax File Number and Centrelink Customer Reference Number (if relevant)
- the person's date and place of birth (town and state if born in Australia and country if born overseas)
- marriage, civil partnership and/or divorce certificates, or date of marriage/civil partnership if certificate not available
- name, occupation and birth date of the surviving spouse
- the contact details of the person's coordinating doctor
- the contact details of the person's administering doctor or nurse (if they have one)
- the details of the person's appointed contact person
- the details of the person's witness to practitioner administration (if they need one)
- the contact details for QVAD-Support
- financial information, including loan details, house title/lease documents, superannuation and insurance
- any pre-planned funeral paperwork.

Role of the contact person

The contact person may be present when the person dies, but they do not have to be. If the contact person is not present, it is important to tell them that the person has died.

Self-administration

For a self-administration decision, the contact person must:

- tell the coordinating doctor when the person has died
- if there is any unused or remaining substance, give it to an authorised disposer (pharmacist)
- if asked, provide information to the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board (the Review Board).

Practitioner administration

For a practitioner administration decision, the contact person must:

- tell the person's coordinating doctor if the person dies from a cause other than administering the substance
- if asked, provide information to the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board (the Review Board).

Funerals and wills can be the source of conflict in families and support networks due to differences in opinions and beliefs, and complex relationships. Keep communication open and get help if required.

* See [Definitions](#), page 21, if you need more information about terms marked with *.

Wills and estates

Some people have a will* and others die without one. A will needs to be written before a person's death.

If the person who died has a will, the executor* of their estate* needs to be informed. If there is uncertainty about the will's validity, or other support is required, you may choose to seek:

- independent legal advice
- advice from the [Public Trustee of Queensland](http://www.pt.qld.gov.au) (www.pt.qld.gov.au)
- probate* from the Supreme Court of Queensland.

If a will is unavailable, letters of administration* will be required to manage the estate.

Arranging a funeral or memorial service

The way we acknowledge the death of a person can look different between cultures and families.

A funeral is usually held at a funeral home, cemetery, crematorium, church or place of worship. Funerals involve the burial or cremation of the body of the person who has died.

A memorial service can be held anywhere (often in someone's home). Memorial services do not involve burial or cremation. They are usually organised by a relative, carer or friend.

Some people choose not to hold a funeral or memorial service and will acknowledge the person's death in their own way.

If you have chosen to appoint a funeral director, they will usually organise:

- transport, care and viewing of the deceased person
- the service, including the cremation or burial, in consultation with faith group leaders, where appropriate
- returning the deceased's remains to the relevant place (this may be home, interstate or overseas)
- registration of the death with the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
- certified copies of the death certificate to be posted to the relevant person (this may be a family member, carer, friend or solicitor). It may take up to 4-6 weeks to receive the official copy.

The funeral director **may ask you about:**

- date, time and venue of the service and the place of burial or what to do with the ashes
- music, decorations, flowers or symbols of the person's life
- cultural or religious customs and practices
- the eulogy (see [Definitions](#), page 22)
- if you would like a member of the clergy to give a graveside service (fee may be payable).

You can get more information about arranging a funeral from your local council.

Paying for a funeral

Funerals in Queensland can vary significantly in cost. The price you pay depends on the cost of the funeral director and the type of service. If you have any concerns about cost, ask your funeral director for a quote that breaks down each item cost.

The cheapest option is a cremation without an official service. This is sometimes called *direct or unattended cremation*. *Unattended burials* may also be available.

Funeral costs may be covered by:

- pre-paid funeral plan/bonds taken out by the person who has died
- funeral insurance or a savings account for their funeral
- family and friends
- the person's estate—the bank may pay a funeral account, if there are available funds in the person's bank account
- the person's superannuation fund—this can take some time and will be executed through their will
- Department of Veteran's Affairs, or the person's trade union
- [funeral assistance](#) (see below).

Funeral assistance

The Queensland Government may organise a simple burial or cremation of a person whose assets cannot cover the cost of their funeral, and whose family, carers or friends cannot pay for their funeral. Applications can be made at your local Magistrates Court (eligibility criteria apply) (see [Support Services](#), page 19).

If you need other financial assistance, contact [Services Australia](#) (www.servicesaustralia.gov.au) (eligibility criteria apply).

Notify agencies and cancel or transfer services

Once you have the death certificate you can start notifying agencies and organisations. The processing time for the death certificate varies and this may take several weeks. When you contact agencies and organisations, you may need to give information about the person such as:

- personal details
- proof of your identity and relationship to the person
- certified copy of the death certificate (see [Definitions](#), page 21). It's a good idea to get several copies certified at the same time.

This guide contains a checklist of tasks to carry out and people/organisations to contact (see [Tasks and contact list](#), page 23). Some things will not be relevant to you or the person's circumstances. Check each section to see if it contains information you want or need.

Notifying Centrelink

If the person who died was receiving a payment from Centrelink, it is important to notify Centrelink as soon as possible so the estate is not overpaid, requiring a repayment. For partners, a bereavement allowance may be available.

Notifying the bank

Financial institutions have different processes for managing a deceased estate.

- **Sole account**—After you call, the bank will freeze the person's bank accounts. Banks will generally pay funeral expenses from the person's account when given an original tax invoice from a funeral director. You will need to ensure all direct debits have been stopped to avoid dishonour fees.
- **Joint account**—Transactions from joint accounts should continue as normal. Joint bank accounts may be transferred into the name of the remaining joint account holder/s.

Section 4

Caring for yourself and others

Understanding grief

Grief affects our thoughts and feelings, how we do things and our relationships with others. It can also have a physical impact. It's important to know that grief is normal, and it affects people in different ways including:

- crying and sadness (or a reluctance to cry)
- anger and irritability
- regret
- feeling numb
- difficulty sleeping and having nightmares
- changes to appetite
- difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- feeling tense, sick and difficulty breathing
- losing interest in family, friends, and hobbies
- disorientation and confusion
- nausea and headaches.

There may be other reactions to grief, especially when someone's family member or friend has accessed voluntary assisted dying, including:

- accepting another person's choice to access voluntary assisted dying will be easy for some people and difficult for others. Even those who are supportive will face the loss of someone and the grief that follows
- grief can begin before someone dies. When someone is accessing voluntary assisted dying, their death will be planned and expected and it is natural to feel sad, distressed and anxious in the time leading up to the person's death
- if the person has been in extreme suffering, it is common and natural to feel a sense of relief that their pain has ended.

You might not experience all of these thoughts and feelings, but if you do, they will not necessarily come in any particular order.

Your grief is like your fingerprint. It is unique and personal to you.

The amount of time spent grieving is different for everyone, and that's okay.

Grief has no timeline

The amount of time spent grieving is different for everyone and that's okay. Grief may be felt over a long period of time, even for many years. At first, people often feel grief more strongly. As time passes, we learn to include grief into our lives. Sometimes, after a period of feeling good, we find ourselves feeling sadness, despair, or anger. This is a natural response of grief, and it may happen repeatedly.

Taking care

It's important to remember that everyone grieves in their own way and may go about caring for themselves in different ways as well.

There are many ways to care for yourself and others while you grieve:

- get enough sleep—people often have trouble sleeping during times of grief. If you find it hard to sleep on a regular basis, speak to your doctor
- eat a healthy diet and do exercise
- talk to your employer about what support might be available, such as compassionate leave and flexibility to return to work when you are ready
- delay making big decisions
- create a memorial or do something to honour the person who has died

Your grief is like your fingerprint. It is unique and personal to you.

- do something for yourself every day, and do your usual activities as much as you can
- keep in contact with friends
- practice your own spirituality, culture or religion—this might be meditation, yoga, prayer or talking with your spiritual carer.

You may be able to talk about your emotions and find comfort with the help of family and friends, or you may need some extra help. There are many organisations that can help you. A list of [support services](#) is provided on page 19 of this guide. Don't be afraid to reach out.

Feelings of grief may be overwhelming over a long period of time and impact on things you need, want and enjoy. If this happens to you and these feelings continue, you may want to talk to your GP (see [Support services](#), page 20).

Talking to children about death and dying

Children will feel, understand and talk about grief and loss in different ways. This is because of their age, personality, family culture, understanding of death and past experience of loss. Take the time to talk and listen to children before and after someone has died. Answer their questions about death in an honest and consistent way. For more information, visit the [Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement](#) (www.grief.org.au).

Section 5

Support services contact list



If you need an interpreter, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50 or visit www.tisnational.gov.au

Voluntary assisted dying

Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Support Service

www.health.qld.gov.au/vad | QVADSupport@health.qld.gov.au | 1800 431 371

Advice and support for all Queenslanders about voluntary assisted dying (available Monday-Friday, 8.30am-4pm).

Care at the end of life

Care at the End of Life

qld.gov.au/careatendoflife

Queensland Health information about care at the end of life.

Caresearch

caresearch.com.au | 08 7221 8233

Information and resources about living with or caring for someone with a serious illness, preparing for the end of life, and how to manage bereavement, grief and loss.

Managing affairs after a death

manage-affairs-after-death.services.qld.gov.au | 13 74 68

Queensland Government service to create a customised checklist and find information about tasks to complete after a death.

My Care, My Choices

mycaremychoices.com.au | 1300 007 227

Queensland Health advance care planning.

Palliative Care Australia

palliativecare.org.au | 02 6232 0700

Palliative care resources for people living with a terminal condition and their carers, family, and community.

13 HEALTH

13 43 25 84 | 24-hour phone service providing health advice.

Counselling and grief support

Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement

grief.org.au | 1800 642 066

Information for adults and children experiencing grief, including MyGrief app.

Beyond Blue

beyondblue.org.au | 1300 224 363

24-hour telephone counselling service. Online and email counselling.

13YARN

13yarn.org.au | 13 92 76

24-hour, 7 day a week crisis support provided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crisis supporters.

Grief Line

griefline.org.au | 1300 845 745

7-day telephone counselling service for people experiencing grief.

Lifeline

lifeline.org.au | 13 11 14

24-hour phone and online counselling.

1300 MH CALL

www.qld.gov.au/health/mental-health/help-lines/1300-mh-call | 1300 642 255

Confidential mental health telephone triage service that links callers to their nearest Queensland Public Mental Health Service. Available 24-hours, 7 days a week.

Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre

metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au/qtmhc | 07 3317 1234 or 1800 188 189 (outside Brisbane)

Specialist statewide service that works to ensure people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds receive culturally responsive mental health care and support.

Word Wellness Group

worldwellnessgroup.org.au | 1300 079 020

Support and information to find aid, assistance and mental health services in your language.

Your GP

To find a GP in Queensland go to qld.gov.au/health/contacts/service-finder

Financial assistance

Centrelink

servicesaustralia.gov.au | 13 27 17

Information on eligibility and how to apply for Australian Government support.

Financial Counselling Australia

financialcounsellingaustralia.org.au | 1800 007 007

Information about financial counselling and help to find a qualified counsellor.

The Public Trustee Queensland

pt.qld.gov.au | 1300 360 044

Statutory authority that provides support including will-making, enduring powers of attorney, and managing deceased estates.

Funerals

Australian Funeral Directors Association

afda.org.au | 03 9859 9966

Funeral planning information and a directory to find a funeral director.

Australian Securities and Investment Commission

moneysmart.gov.au/living-in-retirement/paying-for-your-funeral

Information about paying for a funeral.

Funeral assistance

courts.qld.gov.au/courts/coroners-court/funeral-assistance

Information on eligibility and how to apply for funeral assistance.

Legal and advocacy matters

Community Legal Centres Queensland

communitylegalqld.org.au | 07 3392 0092

Legal centres providing free information, legal assistance, education and advocacy for vulnerable clients and communities facing legal problems.

Legal Aid Queensland

legalaid.qld.gov.au | 1300 65 11 88

Legal help for financially disadvantaged people.

Multicultural Australia

multiculturalaustralia.org.au | 07 3337 5400

Support for new Queenslanders including refugees, migrants, international students and people seeking asylum.

Queensland Law Society

qls.com.au | 1300 367 757

Legal resources and a directory to find a solicitor.

Section 6

Definitions

Administration decision – the decision a person makes with their coordinating doctor to either self-administer the voluntary assisted dying substance or have it administered by an authorised voluntary assisted dying doctor or nurse.

Administering practitioner/Administering doctor or nurse – the doctor or nurse who is authorised to administer the voluntary assisted dying substance to the person, if the person has made a practitioner administration decision.

Advance care planning - involves thinking and making choices now to guide future health care. It is also a process of communicating someone's wishes. This can be done by having conversations with family, carers and friends and writing down preferences (see [Support services](#), page 19). Advance care planning documents cannot be used to request voluntary assisted dying or to continue the voluntary assisted dying process if the person loses decision-making capacity in relation to voluntary assisted dying at any point in the process.

Authorised disposer – a pharmacist who is authorised to dispose of the voluntary assisted dying substance. This may be a pharmacist employed by QVAD-Pharmacy, a public or private hospital or a community pharmacy.

Authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioner – a doctor or nurse who is authorised to participate in the voluntary assisted dying process and has been verified as eligible to participate by Queensland Health and has completed mandatory training.

Cause of death certificate - a legal document completed by a doctor that certifies the manner and cause of death. This is different to the death certificate.

Certified copy – a copy of an original document that has been verified as a true copy by an authorised person, for example, a Justice of the Peace or a Commissioner of Declarations.

Coordinating practitioner – the doctor who supports the person through the voluntary assisted dying process.

Contact person – someone who is appointed by the person accessing voluntary assisted dying to carry out certain activities that are required by law.

Death certificate – the official registration of the death. The funeral director will usually assist with this, or you can contact the Queensland Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (www.qld.gov.au/law/births-deaths-marriages-and-divorces).

Enduring Power of Attorney – a legal document that gives another person/people the authority to make personal and/or financial decisions on someone's behalf. For personal and health matters, the attorney's power begins only if and when the person loses capacity to make those decisions. For financial matters, the attorney's power begins whenever the person wants it to, and they can nominate the start date. The person can continue to make any of their own decisions while they are capable of doing so. A person who holds an enduring power of attorney cannot make decisions about voluntary assisted dying on someone else's behalf.

Estate – the property and assets (such as vehicles, investments and bank accounts) owned by a person at the time of death.

Eulogy – a speech or piece of writing given at a funeral to remember the life of the person who died.

Executor – if you are named as executor in someone's will, you are responsible for carrying out the terms of the will when they die.

Funeral director – arranges for care of the person who has died, offers guidance and support to family, carers and friends, makes arrangements for the funeral service and provides professional advice.

Intestate – if a person dies without a valid will, there is no executor and therefore they have died intestate (see [Public Trustee Queensland](http://www.pt.qld.gov.au) (www.pt.qld.gov.au) and [Queensland Courts](http://www.courts.qld.gov.au) (www.courts.qld.gov.au) for further information)).

Letters of administration – if someone dies intestate, the next of kin, such as a spouse, takes on the role of administering the person's estate. Letters of administration show that the court has examined the relevant documents and is satisfied that the person named in the grant is authorised to administer the estate. Contact [Queensland Courts](http://www.courts.qld.gov.au) for further information.

Life extinct form – a form that is completed by a nurse, paramedic or doctor to confirm that a person has died. This is different to a cause of death certificate. Completing a life extinct form allows the person who has died to be removed and transported.

Mortuary – a room or health facility used for storage of a person who has died prior to burial or cremation. Some but not all mortuaries will include a viewing area.

Palliative care – healthcare that focuses on improving quality of life for people of any age living with a life-limiting illness. It includes responding to physical, psychological, emotional, social, cultural and

spiritual needs. It does not aim to slow down or speed up the dying process.

Probate – the Supreme Court of Queensland's official recognition of a will as legally valid. Probate is often needed before the executor of a deceased estate can take control of the estate's assets (administer the estate).

Public Trustee of Queensland – offers a free will-making service and can give general information on wills and estates, and the administration of deceased estates.

Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Support and Pharmacy Service (QVAD-Support and QVAD-Pharmacy) – QVAD-Support is staffed by care coordinators and provides advice and support to Queenslanders about voluntary assisted dying. The service provides support to anyone involved in voluntary assisted dying in Queensland, including people who want to access voluntary assisted dying, family, carers, friends, and healthcare workers. QVAD-Pharmacy is responsible for managing the supply of the voluntary assisted dying substance.

Will – a legal document that states what a person would like to happen with their money, belongings and other assets when they die; names who they want to give their estate to (beneficiaries); and who they would like to administer their estate when they die (executor).

Section 7

Tasks and contact list

	Person/organisation to be contacted	Tasks (if relevant)	Contact details
First steps	Doctor to complete the cause of death certificate (e.g. coordinating doctor, GP, treating specialist)	<input type="checkbox"/> Contact	
	Contact person	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify	
	Coordinating doctor	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify	
	Family and friends	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify	
	Funeral director	<input type="checkbox"/> Contact	
	Executor of will	<input type="checkbox"/> Enact as documented	
	Support services (e.g. cultural, religious, spiritual, counselling service)	<input type="checkbox"/> Contact if required	
Voluntary Assisted Dying	QVAD Support and Pharmacy Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Advice about next steps following a voluntary assisted death	1800 431 371 QVADSupport@health.qld.gov.au
	Authorised disposer	<input type="checkbox"/> If the person made a self-administration decision, the contact person must give any unused or remaining voluntary assisted dying substance to an authorised disposer within 14 days of the person's death	1800 431 371 QVADSupport@health.qld.gov.au
	Coordinating doctor	<input type="checkbox"/> The contact person must inform the coordinating doctor of the person's death	
	Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board	<input type="checkbox"/> The contact person may be asked to provide information to the Review Board after the person has died	

	Person/organisation to be contacted	Tasks (if relevant)	Contact details
Bereaved support	Your employer / education provider	<input type="checkbox"/> Seek compassionate leave	
	Centrelink	<input type="checkbox"/> Apply for bereavement allowance / payment (eligibility criteria apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Seek exemption from mutual obligations / activity test requirements	
	Department of Veterans' Affairs	<input type="checkbox"/> Apply for bereavement allowance / payment (eligibility criteria apply)	
	Queensland Government mortgage relief loan	<input type="checkbox"/> Apply for a mortgage relief loan / bond loan / rental grant (eligibility criteria apply)	
Employment and education	Australian Business Registration (ABN)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cancel	139 226 abr.gov.au
	Education providers (e.g. child care, school, TAFE, university)	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify <input type="checkbox"/> Inform child/children may be absent	
	Employer/s	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify	
	Professional affiliations (e.g. associations, union)	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify	
Utilities and mail	Australian Bereavement Register	<input type="checkbox"/> Stop unwanted direct mail	1300 887 914 tabr.com.au/register
	Australia Post	<input type="checkbox"/> Re-direct mail / cancel PO Box	13 76 78 auspost.com.au
	Telecommunications and network providers (e.g. mobile, landline, internet)	<input type="checkbox"/> Close / transfer accounts	
	Utilities providers (e.g. electricity, gas)	<input type="checkbox"/> Close / transfer accounts	
Transport	Department of Transport and Main Roads	<input type="checkbox"/> Cancel / transfer vehicle registrations <input type="checkbox"/> Cancel driver's licence <input type="checkbox"/> Cancel disability parking permit	13 23 80 www.tmr.qld.gov.au
Health services	GP and hospital	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify / cancel appointments	
	Health services (e.g. dentist, optometrist, psychologist)	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify / cancel appointments	
	My Aged Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify	1800 200 422 myagedcare.gov.au

	Person/organisation to be contacted	Tasks (if relevant)	Contact details
Financial, social and welfare	Australian Electoral Commission	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify	132 626 aec.gov.au
	Australian Taxation Office	<input type="checkbox"/> Finalise income tax returns	132 861 ato.gov.au
	Banks, credit unions and credit card providers	<input type="checkbox"/> Close/transfer accounts <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss loan repayment options	
	Centrelink	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify (will be shared with Medicare and Child Support) <input type="checkbox"/> Cancel payments	132 300 servicesaustralia.gov.au
	Certified copies of death certificates (e.g. with a JP or solicitor)	<input type="checkbox"/> Arrange	
	Child Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify (will be shared with Centrelink and Medicare)	131 272 servicesaustralia.gov.au
	Death registration within 14 days (a funeral director will usually do this)	<input type="checkbox"/> Register the death with the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages	13 74 68 www.qld.gov.au
	Department of Veterans' Affairs	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify	1800 838 372 dva.gov.au
	Foreign pension authority and/or embassy/consulate	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify	
	Insurance providers (e.g. health, property, car, life, funeral, boat)	<input type="checkbox"/> Claim as documented in the will or cancel as required	
	Medicare	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify (will be shared with Centrelink and Child Support)	132 011 servicesaustralia.gov.au
	Professional services (e.g. solicitor, accountant, financial advisor)	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify	
	Queensland Carer Business Discount Card	<input type="checkbox"/> Cancel	13 74 68 www.qld.gov.au
	Queensland Health Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme (for return transport if a person has died in a hospital away from their home)	<input type="checkbox"/> Apply (eligibility criteria apply)	13 43 25 84 www.qld.gov.au
	Queensland Seniors Card	<input type="checkbox"/> Cancel	13 74 68 www.qld.gov.au
	Superannuation Fund	<input type="checkbox"/> Claim as documented in the will / close	
	The Public Trustee of Queensland	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify	1300 360 044 pt.qld.gov.au

	Person/organisation to be contacted	Tasks (if relevant)	Contact details
Lifestyle and personal	Community groups / clubs/ membership / (e.g. library, RSL, sports club, gambling)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cancel	07 3497 3479 www.titlesqld.com.au
	Livestock brands or earmarks	<input type="checkbox"/> Cancel	
	Pet care	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify vet / animal kennel <input type="checkbox"/> Cancel / transfer pet registration (local council)	
	Social media accounts (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)	<input type="checkbox"/> Memorialise / close	
	Subscriptions to ongoing payments (e.g. Netflix, gym, loyalty programs)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cancel / transfer	
	Weapons licence	<input type="checkbox"/> Update / surrender	
Housing and property	Landlord / real estate agent / tenants	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify / end lease	
	Local council	<input type="checkbox"/> Update for rates notices	
	Queensland Revenue Office	<input type="checkbox"/> Claim land tax exemption	
	Public housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Apply for a change of tenancy	
	Queensland Titles Registry	<input type="checkbox"/> Update land title <input type="checkbox"/> Update water allocation ownership	