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Advance care planning essential as dementia cases rise

With Australians living longer than ever before and diseases including dementia on the increase, all Australians should have a plan in place for if they are incapacitated, according to Equity Trustees.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare released its first major report on dementia since 2012* in September, finding more than 400,000 people are currently living with dementia, with that number expected to jump to 850,000 by 2058 as our population ages, unless a major cure is found.

According to Marie Brownell, National Manager Estate Planning, Equity Trustees, Advance Care Directives are an often-overlooked part of the estate planning process.

"Most of us put a great deal of thought into how we would like our assets to be distributed after we are gone but less time and effort goes into planning for end-of-life care," she said.

"Setting out what type of care you would like and sharing these wishes with your loved ones can provide a great degree of comfort should you become incapable of making your own decisions in the future."

Sometimes known as a 'living will', an Advance Care Directive is a legal document that formally records your wishes for future medical and health care.

"They can include a wide variety of information, from your preferred living arrangements, to medical treatment, palliative care, life support and organ donation," Ms Brownell said.

An Advance Care Directive has different names and meanings in each state and territory in Australia. Depending on where you are located, the Advance Care Directive may be set out in a document, included in the Enduring Powers of Attorney (Medical) or appointment of an Enduring Guardian.

"We recommend everyone considers having a living will in place. This should be reviewed regularly, particularly if there is a change in your health, personal or living situation," Ms Brownell concluded.

More information about Equity Trustees' wills and estate planning services is available on our [website](#).

**Dementia in Australia, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, September 2021*

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