

# Have you thought about later life?



Australian  
Human Rights  
Commission

## Conversation Guide

### Introduction

Talking about later life is different for everyone. Some may find it difficult or uncomfortable. Others may be unsure about how to start the conversation or bring up the topic. These conversations take time but can make a big difference in helping the people around you understand and respect your rights and wishes as you get older.

Here are some simple tips to get you started.

1

#### Think about what matters to you

- Take some time to gather your thoughts. Think about what you want life to be like and what care and support you may need as you get older.
- Think about who you would like to be involved in the conversation. This could be anyone you trust such as a family member, friend, carer or community member.

#### A few questions to get you thinking:

“ Where and how do you want to live as you get older? ”

“ What supports or other assistance may you need to live the way you want, continue your hobbies and stay in touch with family and friends? ”

“ Who do you trust to make decisions about your finances, healthcare and lifestyle if you get sick or can no longer make those decisions yourself? ”



## 2

### Talk to someone you trust

- Find a place you feel comfortable speaking openly.
- Only discuss what you feel comfortable discussing.
- Have these conversations early. Getting organised when you are well and able to make decisions can give peace of mind and help prevent family stress or conflict in the future.

#### Conversation starters:

- “ This is difficult to talk about but I trust you to help me. ”
- “ Now that I am getting older, I want to talk to you about my choices for my medical and health care. ”
- “ I’ve been reading about options for planning ahead. That’s got me thinking about getting my Will and other documents sorted. Can we talk about this? ”

#### Expressing your wishes:

- “ If I am no longer able to manage my legal and financial matters, I would like [this person] to make these decisions on my behalf. ”
- “ I would like to live [here] for as long as I can and receive [this type of care and support]. ”

#### Encouraging others to plan ahead:

- “ My doctor said it’s important to plan for future health and care needs when you are well. Sounds like something we should start looking into. ”
- “ I know you don’t like talking about getting older, but it would give me peace of mind to know your wishes in advance and how I can best support you. ”



3

### Next steps

- Write down or keep a record of your decisions.
- Consider formalising your decisions in legally binding documents.
- Keep the conversation going. It's okay to not have all the answers and it's okay to change your mind at any point.

### Did you know?

In Australia, you can formalise your decisions about later life in documents such as a Will, Enduring Power of Attorney and Advance Care Directive. There can be different names and rules for these documents depending on the state or territory where you live. It is vital that these documents reflect your wishes and not those of the people around you. It is also important that you understand your rights and any decision-makers appointed under these documents understand their responsibilities. You can update, change or cancel these documents while you still have the ability to make these decisions.

**For more information, visit [humanrights.gov.au/planningahead](https://humanrights.gov.au/planningahead)**