

Australians as a population are getting older. Our medical system is increasingly prolonging life, even when it may not be able to preserve any quality of life. People may suffer serious injury or illness and lose their ability to understand and make decisions about their medical management. Their families, friends and doctors then have to discuss and decide on issues of their health care on their behalf...unless, as suggested below, this has already been done.

This information sheet has been designed by Dr. Holliday to outline how you can make sure that your health and medical care, even lifestyle care, would go as you wish if you were ever in such an unfortunate position.

You may like to discuss with your family or carer in what way you would like such decisions to be made, or you may like to specify certain approaches for specific problems

These discussions in themselves are most important. They may then be documented and witnessed. The resulting document is called an **“Advance Care Directive”** or a **“Living Will”**. Copies should be given to your family, carer and doctor because this would guide the decision-making processes if ever you were unable to make your own decisions. However, at present, this is “strongly persuasive” of your care preferences but not legally binding.

ENDURING GUARDIANSHIP

A legally binding way of ensuring that your point of view is represented can be made by appointing an **“Enduring Guardian”**. This person can be made responsible to make decisions, if you could not, about what medical, dental or personal services you would receive. Your Enduring Guardian can be made responsible to decide as much or as little as you choose. This could include where you will live, temporarily or permanently (a nursing home, for instance). Before appointing an Enduring Guardian, you must ask the chosen person for their consent. Then discuss with them how you would like them to make any decisions on your behalf. Complete the “Appointment of Enduring Guardian” form available from the Guardianship Tribunal or Office of the Public Guardian. A lawyer or a Registrar of the Local

Court must then witness both your signatures. The Guardianship is only legal in New South Wales and you can revoke or change it at any time.

An Enduring Guardian cannot vote for you, make or alter a will for you, and they cannot make financial and real estate decisions for you.

POWER OF ATTORNEY

A **Power of Attorney** appoints an adult to act on your behalf concerning property and financial management, such as buying or selling real estate or shares or signing your cheques. This may be for a limited time such as while you are in hospital or overseas, or until you are mentally incapacitated or die. Lifestyle decisions cannot be made. You can revoke or change your Power of Attorney at any time.

It is wise to make a Will and also to appoint an Enduring Guardian and a Power of Attorney.

For further information visit <https://touchstonelifecare.com/> or Advance care planning Australia <https://www.advancecareplanning.org.au/>