
Palliative care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Summary

- There are culturally sensitive palliative care services that will help you and your family.
 - Resources are available to help you understand more about services available to you.
 - The Victorian Aboriginal palliative care program provides more information and resources.
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End of life and palliative care is for someone who is really sick, not going to get better and who will enter 'the dreaming'. End of life and palliative care helps with social, emotional, cultural and spiritual concerns as well as physical problems. Palliative care services can support you to stay in community or return to country. They can also help family members, carers and other mob to learn how to support you.

End of life and palliative care services can support you with sorry business or grieving. Most hospitals or health services in Victoria also have an Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer that can give you information or support to make things easier.

End of life and palliative care supports you to live with the best possible quality of life, until you enter 'the dreaming'.

Supporting our journey



The artwork titled Supporting our journey "symbolises the strong support given by family and community, helping us through our journey that we are travelling. The lines symbolise our path as well as the journey of others. The dots represent the many people who help us or who are on the same path." - Kahli Luttrell, *Yorta Yorta descendent and artist*.

Culturally sensitive services

You may want to return home, be on country with family and have access to culturally sensitive services and activities in your area, for end of life or palliative care.

You may want to find out about healthcare workers with knowledge of Aboriginal culture, kinship and men's and women's issues.

Cultural sensitivity can mean many things, such as understanding the needs of your family group and your community or mob's beliefs and practises around dying or entering 'the dreaming.' There are services available that aim to provide end of life care that is culturally and spiritually sensitive.

This can also mean helping to find affordable accommodation for family members who need to travel to visit the dying person or helping with cultural practices after death and funeral arrangements.

There is more information about palliative care and family and community journeys for Aboriginal people on [**Caresearch**](#).

The Victorian Aboriginal palliative care program

The Victorian Aboriginal Palliative Care Program aims to create a sustainable and culturally safe palliative care service system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It assists Aboriginal people across Victoria to access palliative care services in the setting of their choice. The Victorian Aboriginal Palliative Care Program is managed by the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) in partnership with Palliative Care Victoria.

Contact [**VACCHO for more information**](#) Tel: (03) 9411 9411

This [**leaflet**](#) (pdf) provides information on Victoria's [**end of life and palliative care framework**](#) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria.

You can get a referral for palliative care at home from anyone who is caring for you – including health professionals, your family and friends – or you can refer yourself.

Further information is available from [**Palliative Care Victoria**](#) Tel: (03) 9662 9644.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander discussion starter

If you became so sick that you couldn't talk, your family, trusted friend or health worker may need to make decisions for you. Talking about what you want in advance, and your feelings about this, will make their decisions easier and less stressful. It is never too early to plan ahead.

There are resources to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people discuss their end-of-life care wishes with their families and health care teams. They are available from the [**Dying to talk website**](#).

This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by:

Palliative Care, Health Service Policy and Commissioning, Department of Health & Human Services

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