

An environmental scan summary:

Palliative Care and End of Life resources for the aged care workforce

MAY 2024

This report describes the methods and findings of the original environmental scan conducted in September 2022. The scan was re-run in May 2024 and resulted in additional informative articles about palliative care and end-of-life among older people being added to the Resource Collection. We will continue to repeat the scan process at scheduled intervals to ensure content currency.

Key Points

- An interactive desktop environmental scan was undertaken to identify Australian palliative care resources of potential use to the aged care sector.
- The scan used two search approaches. The first was an open web search and the second was a review of selected websites to identify potentially relevant items.
- Websites were identified in the web search or nominated by the Evidence Advisory Group. Websites of associated peak bodies or projects funded by the National Palliative Care Program were also checked.
- The Google search identified over 150 items with 55 being included as palliative care and end-of-life resources in the Knowledge and Implementation Hub. A further 13 items were identified through the search of 16 selected websites.

Background

The aim of this environmental scan was to undertake a limited desktop review to identify existing palliative care and end-of-life resources available within Australia for use by the aged care sector. These might include educational, informational or support tools. This report presents the methods and findings of the scan completed by the Knowledge and Implementation Hub team.

Methods

The environmental scan followed a structured method for resource identification. This included a replicable search strategy, eligibility checking against inclusion criteria, and data extraction of key items. These processes are explained in further detail below.

Search strategy

Two search approaches were undertaken to identify potentially relevant items: an open Google search and a search of specified websites.

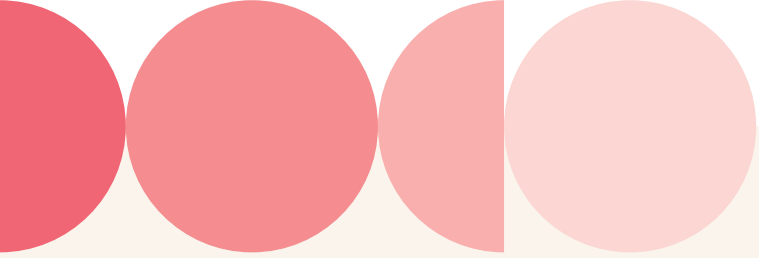
Google Advanced searches

Structured searches for Australian palliative care and end-of-life resources were conducted between 16 September 2022 and 22 September 2022 using the Advanced Search version of Google (Chrome browser in incognito mode to avoid previous search history impacting results). Searches for both 'palliative care' and 'end of life' were run to identify webpages, websites, and PDF resources originating from Australia, including each of its states and territories.

The search was structured as follows:

- The search terms 'palliative care' and 'end of life' were individually entered in the 'all these terms' box in Google Advanced Search.
- Australia was selected from the Region drop-down menu.
- The search was run with and without the PDF file type limit.

For each search term variant run in Google Advanced, we aimed to retrieve relevant resources from up to 10 pages of search results (10 results per page, i.e., up to a total of 100 webpages would be assessed).



Scanning palliative care and end-of-life organisation websites

A list of key palliative care and aged care organisations was compiled for more targeted website searching. Organisations were identified during the scan process, were already known to the researcher group, or were nominated by the Evidence Advisory Group. In addition, project websites funded under the National Palliative Care Program with an aged care focus were also searched. The website search list is as follows:

- ACCPA
- Advance Care Planning Australia
- Advance Project
- Aged Care Safety and Quality Commission
- Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement
- CarerHelp
- CareSearch
- Dementia Australia
- Department of Health and Aged Care
- End of Life Directions for Aged Care (ELDAC)
- Health direct
- National Ageing Research Institute (NARI)
- Palliative Aged Care Outcomes Program (PACOP)
- Palliative Care Education and Training Collaborative
- palliAGED
- Palliative Care Australia

Evidence Advisory Group

An Evidence Advisory Group was established to inform the direction, approach, and scope of the overall project. This comprised people researching and working in palliative care and aged care. The group was presented with preliminary results from the environmental scan and given the opportunity to provide feedback and advice on additional resources and current research initiatives to be followed up.

The details for all resources identified as potentially relevant at this point (including URL) were entered into an Excel spreadsheet. Each resource was then checked against the environmental scan's eligibility criteria.

Eligibility criteria

Resources were considered for inclusion if they were:

- Product, resource, tool dealing with palliative care or end of life in an aged care context
- Accessible online
- Free to use
- Created since 2010
- Able to be used in Australia
- Based on evidence
- Of an informative, educational, or practical nature
- From a reputable/authoritative source

Data extraction

The following data fields were captured for included resources:

- Resource name
- URL
- Audience
- Resource type
- Provider of care/service/support
- Description of resource(s)



Results

The 'palliative care' and 'end of life' searches produced 99 and 49 items respectively. Items from the 'end of life' search that had been previously retrieved in the 'palliative care' search were removed. Promoted items in both searches were not included. Of these items, 17 met the criteria and were included for data extraction. Many of the excluded items from the Google searches were statements from aged care services indicating that they provided palliative care but with little detail on the activities and no descriptions of products or resources that could be assessed.

Searches of the website identified a further 43 items that met the inclusion criteria and were consequently included in the resources summary. The majority of these were found on websites associated with projects funded through the National Palliative Care Program.

Target Audience

The resources which have been included were designed for a wide variety of audiences including aged care workers, older people and their families, nurses, GPs and managers and service providers.

Types of resources found

There were a variety of resources retrieved including learning modules, toolkits, guidance documents, reports, and information sheets. Many covered a range of different palliative care considerations while some were quite specific in nature dealing with a single topic such as advance care planning or bereavement.

Specific projects such as ELDAC and palliAGED provide focused and extensive resources for the aged care sector around palliative care. There was also a variety of educational and learning resources for different workforce groups.

Conclusion

This summary report describes the initial process used to identify palliative care resources capable of informing, training, educating, or generally supporting the aged care sector in its work. This is the first part of an ongoing process to build the resources of the Knowledge and Implementation Hub. We will repeat the scan process on a scheduled basis to ensure new resources are identified and included so that Hub content remains relevant to the sector's needs.

Report authored by Professor Jennifer Tieman, Dr Nurul Adnan and Dr Raechel Damarell, Knowledge and Implementation Hub, Aged Care Research and Industry Innovation Australia, Flinders University.

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For more information email ariia@ariia.org.au or call 08 7421 9134

ARIIA - Level 2, Tonsley Hub, South Rd, Tonsley SA 5042

ARIIA was established as an independent, not-for-profit organisation, set up to lead the advancement of the aged care workforce capability by promoting and facilitating innovation and research to improve the quality of aged care for all Australians.

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