



# Hillside at Figtree



Residential Aged Care



Wollongong,  
New South Wales

## Goal

To enhance the palliative care approach through upskilling, developing clear guidelines and providing access to resources and support to enable the provision of quality care.

## Highlights

- Provided access to evidence-based resources to care and clinical staff
- Received positive feedback from families relating to staff attentiveness and support to both the resident and their family.
- Clarified access and connected with the local specialist palliative care team for support both during and after office hours

Hillside at Figtree, located near Wollongong, NSW, is dedicated to providing quality retirement lifestyle housing and aged care services for older Australians. The facility promotes a healthy outlook and lifestyle, encouraging independence and active community involvement among its residents. Hillside at Figtree strives to create a welcoming environment where residents, their families, and visitors can relax and support each other.

By building connections with health professionals and community agencies, the facility works to ensure that the ongoing health, welfare, and personal needs of residents are met while honouring their lifetime experiences with dignity and respect. Through continuous improvement, Hillside at Figtree regularly reviews and implements innovative practices to enhance the quality of life and independence for its consumers.

The 81-bed residential aged care facility is designed to be responsive to the culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds of residents, ensuring that everyone can participate equally.

To improve the quality of care, Hillside at Figtree committed to the ELDAC Linkages program to increase staff confidence, upskill the care team, and provide access to resources to support care delivery. It also set out to develop firmer connections with external service providers for specialist guidance in care delivery.

Through participation in the ELDAC Linkages program, Hillside at Figtree aimed to upskill staff in palliative care approaches. Namely, they sought to integrate palliative care and advance care planning (ACP) into the orientation and induction of all new staff, including registered nurses, enrolled nurses, and personal care assistants.

Improving communication with residents, families, and team members was also a focus to better support the palliative care approach and enhance interactions when developing end of life care plans.

"The outcomes of the ELDAC Linkages program have strengthened the attentiveness to comfort cares ensuring the resident is our priority."

Throughout their participation in the ELDAC Linkages program, Hillside at Figtree has achieved several key outcomes. Families have become more educated about palliative care, and staff members have received training on important aspects such as syringe drivers from the local Specialist Palliative Care Team.

To further educate families, staff, and residents, Hillside at Figtree, with the support of the Specialist Palliative Care Nurse, organised and introduced a trial of 'Death Cafes' for residents and their families, fostering open discussions and sharing knowledge about end of life care. Connections with the Specialist Palliative Care Team have been strengthened, enhancing the overall support available to residents.

The use of the ELDAC Residential Aged Care and Linkages toolkits, access to online training videos, and informative flyers have all contributed to the knowledge base surrounding palliative care. Support from the ELDAC Linkages facilitator has been instrumental in guiding the facility's initiatives. Additionally, the collaboration with the after-hours palliative care service team has provided valuable support to newly registered nurses, helping them understand the care needs of residents receiving palliative care.

As a result of these efforts, feedback from families has been positive, with many expressing appreciation for the support and attentiveness of the staff. The clinical team has established improved systems for updating residents' care plans, ensuring that changes are effectively communicated. They have also become more

skilled at organising palliative care referrals and involving the community palliative care team when residents begin palliative care.

Moreover, the clinical team has learned to engage in case conferences with residents' family members to discuss end of life care in collaboration with the palliative care team. The facility manager participates in after-death audits to ensure that all aspects of care are met during end of life care, which is an important part of their continuous improvement process. As Hillside at Figtree continues on its journey, it is making steady progress toward its goals of providing compassionate and quality care for all residents.

## Key outcomes

- Improved clinical assessments and palliative care plans to deliver personalised care to residents
- Increased confidence in communicating about end of life care to support residents and families
- Accessed a wide range of resources to support care team providing palliative care advance care planning

"By working together with our local community Specialist Palliative Care Service, we were able to arrange a case conference with the family member of a resident who was approaching the end stage of life. With the community Palliative Care Team who we had become more familiar with, we were able to resolve complex care needs of the resident and able to respond to symptoms in a timely manner."

