



Illawarra Diggers Aged and Community Care



Residential Aged Care



Wollongong,
New South Wales

Goal

To enhance the palliative care experience through holistic and culturally sensitive practices, supporting both residents and staff in delivering compassionate, informed end of life care.

Highlights

- Developed tools and guidelines, such as the end of life checklist for recognising and responding to deterioration
- Enhanced team training, including syringe driver education and after-death audits for quality improvement
- Established Death Café discussion groups for open conversation about end of life care with residents and families

Illawarra Diggers Aged and Community Care, in Wollongong's northern suburbs, provides quality care and accommodation for the local aged community, in particular veterans and war widows.

Illawarra Diggers participated in the ELDAC Linkages program to improve its approach to palliative care, aiming to introduce clinical tools, establish end of life pathways, enhance staff education, and address the unique multicultural needs of its residents and workforce.

With a team representing diverse cultural backgrounds, Illawarra Diggers focused on developing a more holistic and culturally sensitive approach to end of life care that recognised both the cultural nuances of its residents and the perspectives of its care team.

With guidance from ELDAC Linkages facilitator, the team implemented crucial resources and practices, such as an end of life checklist, which assisted Registered Nurses (RNs) in identifying deterioration signs and standardised their approach to end of life care. This checklist became an invaluable tool in fostering confidence and consistency among the staff, ensuring timely and compassionate support for residents.

One of the most significant cultural shifts was introducing Death Café discussion groups. With support from the Specialist Palliative Care Team, these sessions demystified death and encouraged open dialogue around dying. Residents and family members of all cultural backgrounds could discuss their experiences, easing anxieties and fostering a sense of community and understanding. For the staff, many of whom came from Nepal, the Death Cafés also helped bridge cultural gaps and build awareness around the customs and beliefs of the residents they cared for, enhancing the quality of care provided.

Illawarra Diggers has established a strong foundation of palliative care tools, documentation, and continuous improvement processes, which has reshaped its end of life care approach.

With ELDAC's resources, Illawarra Diggers created lasting connections with the specialist palliative care team, whose ongoing support and training have been invaluable in driving these improvements

Key outcomes

- Improved collaboration and planning with the specialist palliative care team
- Upskilled Registered Nurses to identify palliative needs and engage sensitively with residents and families
- Implemented continuous improvement processes and updated documentation to support palliative care delivery
- Developed a stronger coordinated approach to the palliative journey for residents

"We truly wished as an RACF to improve our approach to the support of residents on their personal palliative pathway. ELDAC Linkages program was the way to go to help us achieve this!"

Anthony Pritchard, Care Director

Working with local services

Through the support of the ELDAC Linkages program, we have developed a stronger, coordinated approach to our residents' palliative journey.

Our Care staff, RN's and lifestyle staff, as well as management have embraced partnerships and linkage, we have grown with the local Specialist Palliative Care Team.

With the support of the local Specialist Palliative Care Team we were able to run our first Death Café supporting our residents to talk freely about their wishes and choices. Staff learnt a lot about how to have discussions with residents and families about their wishes and to talk freely about their concerns and worries when facing the end of their life.

This was a direct result of the process with ELDAC Linkages program and the strong support, assistance, and upskilling we were able to achieve from the local Specialist Palliative Care Team.

Our deepest thanks goes to the support we received from our local Specialist Palliative Care Team and ELDAC Linkages program.

Anthony Pritchard, Care Director, Illawarra Diggers Aged and Community Care

