



# St Joseph's Nursing Home



Residential Aged Care



Lismore  
New South Wales

## Goal

To conduct a thorough review of the current model of care delivery to enhance the quality of palliative care provided to residents.

## Highlights

- Registered nurses are now confident in recognising and managing deterioration in residents.
- Leisure and lifestyle team are now confident in having the 'Dying to Talk' conversations with our residents.

St Joseph's Nursing Home is a 130-bed residential facility in the Northern Rivers, New South Wales. The majority of residents require either high clinical care, or an environment that is specifically tailored to older people living with dementia.

St Joseph's have 106 dedicated staff and who encapsulate the values of compassion, respect and teamwork.

St Joseph's decided to participate in the ELDAC Linkages program following an internal end of life audit which highlighted that their cohort of newly graduated registered nurses were struggling to recognise and respond to deterioration, manage palliative medication, and manage the bereavement process.

Prior to commencing the ELDAC Linkages program, St Joseph's established that their challenges were three-fold.

Firstly, there were no robust connections with local palliative care services; indeed, rather a significant amount of misunderstanding and miscommunication.

Secondly, the younger clinical staff lacked the skills and knowledge to confidently manage palliative and end of life services.

Finally, many staff and residents' families had some level of confusion and lack of understanding around the differences between palliative care versus end of life care.

The ELDAC Linkages program provided the perfect mix of training, support and resources to give the staff the help they needed to be the best they

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could be. As such, St Joseph's was concerned that they were missing the only opportunity they have to facilitate a calm, dignified, painless and stress-free passing for the resident and their loved ones.

The benefits of being involved in the ELDAC Linkages program (including the onsite intensive palliative care workshop) were many, and St Joseph's believes the positive impact will be experienced by staff, residents, and their families for many years to come.

Thanks to the ELDAC Linkages program, the registered nurses and clinical staff have gained confidence in identifying and managing residents'

deteriorating conditions. The integration of the SPICT (Supportive and Palliative Care Indicators Tool) has become embedded in practice.

Moreover, staff members now exhibit increased assurance and competence in offering tailored support to residents' families and loved ones, including knowing when and how to initiate crucial conversations.

Through the ELDAC Linkages program, St Joseph's has now established valuable connections with the local community palliative care service, clarifying roles and responsibilities and fostering a collaborative approach to palliative care in Lismore.

Efforts are underway to ensure that all residents have individualised advance care directives or advance care plans, replacing the generic 'resus' form. With the appointment of an advance care planning trainer on staff, the continuity of palliative care training is assured for both new and existing personnel.

Supported by participation in the ELDAC Linkages program, the Leisure and Lifestyle Team has now embrace conversations such as 'Dying To Talk' and 'What Matters Most,' instilling confidence in addressing sensitive topics with residents.

St Joseph's staff members are grateful for the opportunities provided through the ELDAC Linkages program and the support of the facilitator guiding the team through for the 'Self-Care' education, which has heightened their awareness of its importance and equipped them with the necessary knowledge to recognise their own needs.

## Key outcomes

- Increased competence in offering tailored support to residents' families and loved ones
- Integrated the Supportive and Palliative Care Indicators Tool(SPICT) into their practices
- Established valuable connections with the local community palliative care service

### A story of staff growth

One of our wonderful new RNs, let's call her Ava\*, was looking after her first palliative resident, Emily\*, who was beginning to show physical signs of deterioration and approaching the need for end of life pathway.

Ava had been one of the young RNs who had previously been very reticent about working on a 'high care' wing due to feeling that she did not have enough experience or skill to recognise when a resident was significantly declining.

Ava was a (very) active participant in the ELDAC Linkages Program, she read every word in the ELDAC Residential Aged Care Toolkit, in the education workshop Training Manual, about advanced care planning, and completed every recommended online learning module before anyone else. Ava was motivated to be the best, not just for herself, but to be a competent leader for her team and a confident and skilled nurse for her residents.

A few weeks ago Ava had her opportunity to put all her learning into practice. Ava recognised Emily's clinical deterioration and consulted all the information that, due to our participation in the ELDAC Linkages program, had been gathered about what was important to Emily at this time in her life. Information from her ACP, her 'Dying to Talk' and 'What Matters Most' conversations guided Ava to offer Emily the passing that she had wished for.

Emily's passing was calm, dignified and pain-free. Emily's room was filled with her favourite lavender perfume in the diffuser, Neil Diamond was playing softly, a cherished picture of her twin sister was next to her, and she was surrounded by love, lots of love.

That is the real power of the ELDAC Linkages Program in action. A young RN who has grasped this opportunity will take this new found knowledge and experience with her, and will build on it throughout her career. And, even more importantly, Ava facilitated Emily's gentle, peaceful passing.

"The learnings for our staff and the benefits for both staff and residents have far surpassed our expectations." Manager – Aged Care (St Joseph's Nursing Home, Lismore)

*\*names changed to preserve confidentiality*