



Australian Regional and Remote Community Services (ARRCS)



Residential Aged care



Northern Territory

Juninga Centre, Darwin

Terrace Gardens Aged Care,
Palmerston

Rocky Ridge Nursing Home,
Katherine

Goal

To build staff capacity and improve linkages to provide culturally sensitive end of life care

Highlights

- Participation in education and training opportunities for staff to improve knowledge and confidence in end of life care provision
- Establishment of the ARRCS Top End partnership advisory group

Australian Regional and Remote Community Services (ARRCS) is the largest provider of aged care services across the Northern Territory with seven residential aged care facilities in the Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine and Alice Springs regions and four national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care (NATSIFAC) facilities located in some of the most remote and beautiful places in the Northern Territory. Nhulunbuy in the Top End delivers services to the Saltwater People right down to Tennant Creek in the middle of the Territory, and across to the central red desert country and the people of Mutitjulu at the base of Uluru and out to Docker River near the Western Australia / Northern Territory border. ARRCS also provides community services such as home care and day programs in these regions.

Three residential services participated in the ELDAC Linkages program: Juninga Centre in Darwin, Terrace Gardens Aged Care in Palmerston and Rocky Ridge Nursing Home in Katherine.

Audits completed at the start of the program helped identify areas that would benefit from an improvement focus. The audits highlighted that staff would benefit from more education and support about end of life care provision and advance care planning. The three services also wanted to improve linkages and working processes with specialist palliative care and other external care providers.

Challenges that add to the complexity of advance care planning and developing care provision goals were identified across the services and include:

- a large number of residents under guardianship
- cultural sensitivities and considerations about discussing death and dying
- the remote location and vastness of the Territory and communication limitations
- impact of transient workforce on continuity of care and maintaining connections

ARRCS's achievements through the ELDAC Linkages program can be summarised in four words - education, connections, partnerships and commitment.

With the assistance of the ELDAC Linkages facilitator, ARCCS identified a number of different education and training opportunities. Staff undertook a variety of palliative care and advance care planning training and education across the three participating services, including short informal toolbox sessions, online modules, face to face workshops and placement opportunities.

The ELDAC After Death Audit was embedded into routine practice for all deaths. Additionally, policies and procedures relevant to end of life care and advance care planning were reviewed and updated.

The establishment of the ARCCS Partners Advisory Group in the Top End was another exciting achievement that has seen buy in from the local hospitals, ambulance services, palliative care specialist teams, senior advisory services and indigenous and non-indigenous medical groups. Regular meetings continue and improvement goals include to enhance communications, standardise processes and collaboration to improve advance care planning and the life journey and experiences for ARCCS consumers and their families.

Key outcomes

- Improved linkages and working processes with specialist palliative care and other providers
- Built staff capacity to provide palliative, end of life care and advance care planning through upskilling and shared learning
- Reviewed and improve palliative care delivery procedures and processes

