

# Planning ahead for positive ageing



Most aged care plans are made in a hospital car park – why planning ahead paves the way for positive ageing. Q&A with Dani McKenna RN, BDM at St Louis Aged Care.

In this Q&A, we ask Dani McKenna about the importance of planning ahead for positive ageing, and why so often, people wait for a crisis to happen and put themselves in a position where they limit their choices for the right care.

## Can you share an example of what happens when people leave their healthcare plans till the last minute?

“People lose their choices, or they narrow to almost nil. This is a reality and we can’t navigate around the system to avoid this because there are aged care processes we have to adhere to.

If you are admitted to hospital but need post-hospital care, and you don’t have family around you to support you, you will end up in a nursing home. This may not be forever, but you could have gone home with home care support if you had planned in advance. People prefer to be in the comfort of their own home and recuperate faster this way.

For example, one of our clients told us her story of how she learned this the hard way. She would walk past our offices daily and always tell herself that she must pop in and start enquiring about home care plans. However, time got away and she didn’t get around to it. She became very sick and after some time in hospital, she went home but struggled to care for herself, causing more problems and taking many months to recover. I could imagine how difficult this time must have been for her on her own. And it didn’t have to be this way.

Once recovered, she attended one of our information sessions and is now registered with St Louis and has her home care plan working for her and supporting her at home. She feels more confident that help is there should anything happen again.

It is wise as well as prudent to recognise that you can become vulnerable as you get older, and that something like this could happen to you. Positive ageing means proactively planning for your future, and asking yourself these questions:



- What would I do if I was left alone to care for myself and could not cope?
- What plans can I put into place to make life easier for myself, my family and my friends in the future?

These are the conversations you need to start having with yourself and to seek out people and organisations that can be there for you.”

## Why do people not plan ahead for their aged care - how easy/difficult is the process?

“We are so busy doing what we need to do today that we do not think about tomorrow enough. As Ita Buttrose puts it, an iconic Australian who is a role model for positive ageing, “Planning is the key to growing older successfully.”

## Have a good serious look at your whole life and have a plan B.

People fear that if they think that the worse is going to happen then it will, but experience has shown us that planning ahead and having a Plan B for your healthcare as you get older is smart.

Confidence and peace of mind goes a long-long way, it will ease the anxiety of getting older and enable you to live peacefully, staying at home longer knowing that help is only a phone call away.



Advanced care directives operate in the same way, so do wills. We prepare these to minimise unnecessary stress and anxiety when it could be avoided.

*Being pro-active means you take more responsibility and maintain your independence, it makes you feel empowered and happier that you have **guaranteed your independence** because you have a plan in place."*

### What can you recommend people do to begin planning ahead for their aged care?

- Starting having the conversation with yourself first
- Start investigating how you will be able to afford care as you get older
- Find out what support is available from the government to help you
- Call an aged care provider like St Louis where you can have some of the confusing aged care concepts explained in simple language
- Inform yourself as much as possible, information is power and power gives you choice and as a result maintains your independence
- Register with My Aged Care and a provider of your choice to get yourself into the queue as home care packages can take up to 12 months to access.

### What is the most important tip that you want to share with people in planning ahead for positive ageing?

*"The best advice I give to people is to **take the anxiety out of getting older** by being pro-active, and relax into your golden years and enjoy them!"*

Anxiety steps in when people do not plan ahead and have an understanding of what the aged care system can do for them here in Australia. The moment they become informed, their anxiety and worry go away.

Also, decisions take longer when you get older because times have changed and you may have lost a bit of confidence. Hence it is another good reason to be proactive about your healthcare planning. You need to look after yourself and keep yourself physically, mentally and spiritually fit and seek out the life you want to live as you get older. And we are here to help you."

### Call St Louis Aged Care today for a chat about positive ageing with a home care plan.

Call us today on (08) 8332 0950 for a confidential chat with our care team. Start your journey of discovering the positive ageing options available to you, it is never too early to start planning for your care in the future.

For more information visit our website [www.stlouisagedcare.com.au](http://www.stlouisagedcare.com.au)

Call St Louis Home Care to discuss any of your home care needs.

**Adelaide Metro & Hills 8332 0950**  
**Victor Harbor & Fleurieu 8552 1481**

