



DYING To Know Day

August 8

“
**Let's embrace our precious life now.
Let's live intentionally.**
”

Now in its 14th year, Dying to Know Day on August 8 is part of Australia's national campaign of action to inspire people to prepare for the inevitable — not with fear, but with purpose, love, and a sense of legacy.

Although death is something every one of us will experience, only 53 percent of Australians say they feel comfortable talking with a family member about their end-of-life wishes*. Yet every year, more than 185,000 Australians die, leaving over 1.6 million people grieving — and often without clear guidance about their loved one's wishes or practical instructions for what to do next.

Dying to Know Day 2026 encourages us to break the silence, have these important conversations early, and give our families the confidence of knowing what matters most to us. This year's theme, "Nobody Knows — The Secret I'm Glad I Shared", continues to encourage Australians to share the conversations and decisions that matter most before they're needed.

Being death-ready is about more than having a will — it's about making things as straightforward as possible for the people you leave behind. Keep important documents, such as your will, advance care directive, and power of attorney together in a secure place, and let your executor or a trusted loved one know where to find them. Sharing your wishes and keeping key information up to date can reduce stress, avoid confusion, and help ensure your decisions are carried out as intended.

If you are interested in accessing resources to help you commence your end-of-life planning journey visit: www.proveda.com.au/community-programs/dying-to-know/.

**YouGov online 2022 survey.*



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Cemetery trusts in the Central Goldfields Shire

In the Central Goldfields Shire, there are nine cemetery trusts responsible for the care of the historic cemeteries located in the region.

As independent entities, these trusts make decisions in relation to the provision of their services (including burials and ash placements), employment of staff (if applicable), and expenditure of funds.

Below is a list of current contact details for the trusts operating in our shire.

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Contact: Alan Knight | P: 0448 442 707 | E: agknight608@gmail.com

BEALIBA CEMETERY TRUST

Contact: Kate McClelland | P: 0408 324 089 | E: hornehill@gmail.com

BUNG BONG/WAREEK CEMETERY TRUST

Contact: Alan Steed | P: 0418 510 026 | E: rachellesteed@hotmail.com

CARISBROOK CEMETERY TRUST

Contact: Sonia Wright | P: 0419 892 257 | E: secretary-at-CCT@outlook.com

DUNOLLY CEMETERY TRUST

Contact: Barry Taylor | P: 0409 148 305 | E: btaylor63@bigpond.com

MAJORCA CEMETERY TRUST

Contact: Patricia Rainbow | E: majorcacemeterytrust@gmail.com

MARYBOROUGH CEMETERY TRUST

Contact: Debra Russell | P: 0457 906 375 | E: maryboroughcemetery@ gmail.com

MOLIAGUL CEMETERY TRUST

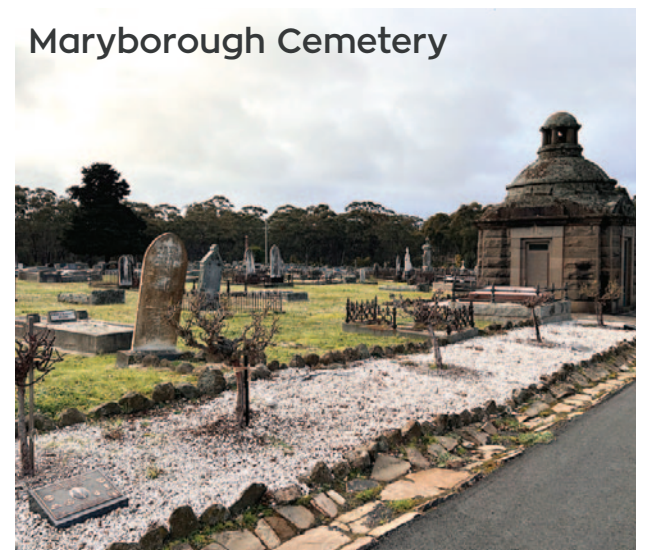
Contact: Shayne Carless | P: 0438 697 231 | E: carless_farm@hotmail.com

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Managing the practical steps after a loss

After the loss of a loved one, managing practical and administrative tasks can feel overwhelming.

While a number of organisations and businesses need to be notified, you do not have to do everything at once. This guide is designed to help you understand the steps that may be involved and provide an overview of the organisations you may need to contact.

As you work through these tasks, you may be asked to provide documents such as a copy of the death certificate, the will, or other supporting information. Keeping these documents accessible can make the process a little easier.



- Solicitor and/or Public Trustee
- Australian Tax Office
- Financial institutions and loan companies
- Superannuation company
- Insurance companies
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Electoral office
- Doctor, specialist or hospital
- Local government for rates and car registration.
- Employer/former employer
- Professional associations
- Chemist, dentist, and other therapists
- Utilities companies
- Medicare

- Health benefits fund
- Ambulance service
- Clubs, organisations, associations and volunteer groups
- Church or religious organisations

- Home help and associated services such as cleaner and gardeners
- Home delivery services - e.g. groceries, bottle gas
- Post office for mail delivery



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Share what matters for your future care

Conversations about future health choices, whether you're sharing your own wishes or supporting someone else to share theirs, can be some of the most significant you'll ever have.

It might not be easy, but talking about what matters can be both reassuring and empowering, for you and your loved ones.

Lisa Evans is a clinical nurse consultant, palliative care at Maryborough District Health Service (MDHS).

"Planning ahead isn't about giving up hope," Lisa said.

"It's about making sure the people who care for you understand what is most important to you.

"Having these conversations can bring comfort, reduce uncertainty, and give your loved ones confidence that they are honouring your wishes."

They are also an important way to guide your healthcare team around the care choices that reflect your values and preferences.

Something to think about

MDHS Palliative Care/ District Nursing team supports people living with serious illness in our community, not just in their final days, but often months or even years beforehand.

This Dying to Know Day, people living with a serious illness are encouraged to consider

what matters to them and share this with family, friends or a carer.

A good place to start:

- What does living well mean to you?
- What brings you comfort and joy?
- Who would you trust to make decisions if you couldn't?
- Where would you prefer to receive your care?
- What treatments would you want and which would you prefer not to have?

Record your wishes

One way to formalise your preferences is through an Advance Care Directive.

An Advance Care Directive records your wishes about your future healthcare. It is a legal document that outlines your values and treatment preferences and appoints a substitute decision-maker, should you be unable to make or communicate decisions.

It provides a clear path, based on your choices, and reassures your support people and your healthcare team that they are following your wishes every step of the way.

An Advance Care Directive can be completed with your GP or healthcare team.

To learn more, visit advancecareplanning.org.au or call the free National Advance Care Planning Advisory Line on 1300 208 582.

Understanding Voluntary Assisted Dying

In Victoria, voluntary assisted dying is one of several end-of-life care options available to people who meet the conditions, in the late stages of advanced disease. It provides a legal and carefully regulated way to end life at a time chosen by the individual.

Who can access this option?

The formal process is thorough and respectful, requiring three separate requests and assessments by trained medical professionals.

To access voluntary assisted dying a person must have an advanced disease that will cause their death and that is:

- Likely to cause death within six months (or within 12 months for neurodegenerative conditions such as motor neurone disease)
- Causing the person suffering that is unacceptable to them.

In addition, an individual must:

- Have the ability to make and communicate a decision about voluntary assisted dying throughout the formal request process.
- Be 18 years or older, be an Australian citizen or resident and have lived in Victoria for at least 12 months.

Choosing voluntary assisted dying is a deeply personal decision, and support is available regardless of the choices someone makes. Your GP or Palliative Care team will be able to provide more information.

Palliative Care at Maryborough District Health Service

Palliative care is specialised healthcare and support for people living with a life-limiting illness and their families.

It is person-centred, respectful and deeply compassionate care, designed to help people live as comfortably and meaningfully as possible.

Our purpose-built palliative care suite at Maryborough Hospital provides a quiet, private space for families and carers to stay close to their loved one.

Connect with the Palliative Care team on 03 5461 0390 or through your GP.

This may include:

- relieving pain and managing symptoms
- supporting emotional, spiritual and cultural needs
- guiding decisions and Advance Care Planning
- providing ongoing support to families and carers.



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Maryborough District Health Service

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Dunolly
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mdhs.vic.gov.au

Gentle end-of-life conversation starters

You've finally made time to sit down with your spouse, an elderly parent, or a close friend to have a friendly chat about end-of-life wishes.

However, as soon as your loved one hears the word "death", they blithely change the subject, nervously scuttle off, or simply refuse to engage in the conversation at all. Sadly, it's a common scenario across Australia, and it can leave families unprepared for some of the most important decisions they may ever need to make.

Most of us know it's important to think about the future, but talking about end-of-life wishes with the people we love can feel uncomfortable. We often put it off, waiting for the "right time".

The truth is, the best time is when everyone is healthy and still able to make decisions without pressure.

Planning ahead isn't about expecting the worst. It's about making sure the people who care about you understand what matters most to you — and giving them the confidence to honour your wishes when they need to.

Many people worry that discussing advance care plans, wills or funeral preferences is morbid or upsetting. In reality, these conversations are about living with confidence, knowing that your loved-one's values and wishes will be respected if they can no longer speak for themselves.

The Dying to Know campaign encourages families to approach end-of-life planning as an ongoing conversation rather than a single event. It reminds us that keeping our wishes secret can leave families guessing during already emotional times, potentially leading to confusion or conflict.

No one knows what the future holds. By talking openly today, you can replace uncertainty with clarity, reduce stress for your loved ones, and create a lasting legacy of care, respect and understanding. After all, the hardest conversations are often the most important ones to have.

Here's six gentle ways to start conversations with loved ones about what matters most before it's too late.

1. Start small

You don't have to cover everything in one conversation. A simple question like, "Have you ever thought about what kind of care you'd want if you became seriously unwell?" can be enough to begin. Small conversations often lead to bigger ones over time.

2. Share your own thoughts

Talking about your own wishes can make it easier for others to open up. You might mention that you've been thinking about putting your plans in place because you want to make things easier for your family one day.

3. Use cards and games as ice-breakers

Resources such as The Death Deck and The Bottom Drawer Book can make conversations about death and end-of-life wishes feel less confronting. With simple prompts and practical guidance, they help families start honest conversations, share what matters, and plan with confidence.

4. Listen with an open heart

Everyone has different values, beliefs and priorities. Give your loved-one the space to share what's important to them, even if their choices are different from your own. These conversations are about understanding, not convincing.

5. Make a plan together

Once you've started talking, make sure you write down important decisions. Completing an Advance Care Plan, updating your will, appointing someone you trust to make decisions if needed, and recording your personal wishes are practical ways to make sure your voice is heard.

6. Don't wait

Life can change unexpectedly. Having these conversations and making your own plans while you're well gives everyone more choices, less stress and greater peace of mind. It's one of the kindest things you can do for yourself and the people you love.

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A place for reflection: a festival that celebrates life

Rising from the landscape just outside Bendigo, the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion is far more than an impressive architectural landmark.

It is a place dedicated to peace, compassion and understanding, where people of all backgrounds are invited to reflect, learn and connect.

The vision to build the Great Stupa in Australia came from Lama Thubten Yeshe, while Lama Zopa Rinpoche envisioned creating it to the same design as the Great Stupa (Kumbum) of Gyantse in Tibet. Together they founded the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), and their shared aspiration continues to inspire one of Australia's most significant Buddhist projects.

At almost 50 metres high with a 50-metre-square base, the Great Stupa is the largest stupa in the Western world. It faithfully follows the design and dimensions of the 15th-century Gyantse Stupa, one of Tibetan Buddhism's greatest treasures.

Inside, visitors discover a traditional Tibetan gumpa (temple), home to magnificent statues of Buddhas and sacred figures. Designed for meditation, Buddhist teachings and ceremonial practice, the gumpa also welcomes visitors wishing to gain a deeper understanding of Buddhist philosophy and culture.

The experience extends beyond the Stupa itself. The surrounding Peace Park gardens provide tranquil spaces for contemplation



while celebrating values shared across many faiths. Symbols representing Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Catholicism stand together as a reminder that compassion, kindness and respect transcend religious boundaries.

It is within this unique setting that the Great Stupa Death Festival has found its home.

Rather than focusing solely on grief and

loss, the festival invites people to explore one of life's most universal experiences with openness, curiosity and compassion. Understanding our mortality can help us appreciate life more deeply, strengthen our relationships and encourage meaningful conversations with those we love.

The festival brings together people from diverse backgrounds to hear inspiring speakers, learn from different cultural and spiritual perspectives, and share thoughtful conversations. It is a day of reflection that also celebrates the richness of life and the importance of community.

Families are warmly welcomed, with the Kids Dharma Club, free face painting, great coffee, delicious donuts and a variety of food options creating a relaxed, inclusive atmosphere.

Whether you come seeking spiritual insight, practical conversations about end-of-life planning, an appreciation of different cultural traditions, or simply a peaceful day surrounded by beautiful gardens, the Great Stupa Death Festival offers a rare opportunity to celebrate life by embracing one of its most profound truths.

In a world where conversations about death are often avoided, the Great Stupa offers a different perspective. It is a place where ancient wisdom meets contemporary community, reminding us that by acknowledging the impermanence of life, we can learn to live more fully, love more deeply and connect more meaningfully with one another.



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Five important things to consider when making a will

Making a will is one of the most important steps you can take to protect the people and things that matter most.

A valid will gives you a say in how your assets are distributed, who will manage your estate, and who will care for any children or dependants. It's often your last message to your loved ones, but it also serves important legal purposes.

Without a will, your estate is distributed according to Victorian law, which may not reflect your wishes and can make an already difficult time more stressful for your loved ones.

When making a will, it's worth thinking about these five key things.

Decide who will inherit your assets

This could include your home, farm, livestock, machinery, vehicles, savings, or treasured personal items. Be clear about who should receive what.

Choose an executor you trust

Your executor is responsible for carrying out the instructions in your will, paying any debts, and managing your estate. Choose someone who is organised and willing to take on the role.



Plan for children or dependants

If you have children under 18 or someone who depends on your care, nominate a guardian and consider how they'll be financially supported.

Think about your family circumstances

If you own a family farm or business, consider how it will be passed on. Having clear arrangements can help reduce uncertainty and minimise the risk of family disputes.

Review your will regularly

Update your will after major life events such as marriage, separation, the birth of children or grandchildren, buying or selling property, or significant changes to your financial situation. Make sure your executor knows where your original will is stored.

Sarah Byrne from Byrne Law will be presenting a talk on 'How to make a Will and appoint a Power of Attorney' at The Good Grief Lounge in Castlemaine on Saturday 8th August - see ad on page 6 for booking details.



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Listening, Remembering, Honouring

Saying the final goodbye to a loved one can be one of the most emotionally challenging times in a family's life. That's where the services of a trusted funeral celebrant come in.

Since becoming a celebrant late last year, Liesbeth Long has brought her passion and commitment for telling people's stories to ensure that the final farewell is a meaningful celebration of the person's life and reflects the impact of the loss to those who loved and knew them.

“I understand that it can feel like their world is turned upside down and inside out, it's my role to support and help them navigate the difficult days following as they plan the funeral,” Liesbeth said.

“I'm not a counsellor but I think basic human empathy helps you understand what people are going through.”

The first thing Liesbeth does is to sit with the family and chat about their loved one. This is an unhurried process, where people can share happy, funny, sad and poignant memories. Liesbeth said her role is to listen and occasionally prompt memories and reflections.

“I always ask ‘tell me about your loved one’,” Liesbeth said.

“I want to write that love story from scratch and our conversation gives me a feeling of what the person was like.

“No two people are the same – it is important that each funeral is a unique reflection of that person and the life they lived.”

“Perhaps the most significant thing I can do in the first meeting is listen. I then go away and write a service incorporating the memories of the loved ones. I always say to the family, this is your ceremony, whatever you want in there is 100 percent okay with me. I won't be offended if you want something changed, because it's not about me, it is about you and honouring your loved one.

“It's great when I receive positive feedback from the family when I send them the draft saying: ‘Wow, you really listened, you got my mum or dad down to a tee!’”

The role of the celebrant

Before the Funeral

- Family consultation: Meet with loved ones to listen to memories, learn personal history, and understand cultural or spiritual wishes.
- Script writing: Compose a unique, custom ceremony, including a fitting welcome, reflections, and closing words.
- Eulogy support: Write the full tribute, help family members structure their own words, or edit speeches written by friends.
- Coordination: Recommend music, poems, or readings, and talk with the funeral director to align on logistics.

On the Day of the Service

- Leading the ceremony: Officiate the service with a calm, warm, and steady presence.
- Public speaking: Guide guests through the order of service and deliver the eulogy or read tributes on behalf of apprehensive family members.
- Managing flow: Keep the timing on track and support anyone else who steps up to speak

After the Funeral

- Check in with the family a few weeks later to see how they're going.
- Offer allied health support services, if grief becomes too overwhelming.



Liesbeth explained that crafting a service is very much a collaborative effort with the family. After sending the first draft to them, they may remember things they want to add or tweak things a little; this can happen several times before the final script is agreed on.

While that process is happening, Liesbeth also helps to organise the practical aspects of the service in collaboration with the funeral director, such as how many pall-bearers, the music to be played, people who will speak and so on.

“Often one of the hardest things people will do is read a eulogy at a person's funeral for someone they love. To assist with this, I have curated a list of poetry and also have a few websites I can send to people because again, they are thrown in the deep end and often don't know where to start.”

Speaking with Liesbeth it is clear she is passionate about helping people through one of the most difficult times of their life.

“Preparing a funeral is the last job that someone does for a loved one when they're on this earth. Sometimes the families don't know whether they are coming or going, so to be able to hold space for them and help them through that time is something that gives me great fulfillment and a real sense of purpose.

“It's an incredible honour to be entrusted to ensure the service is meaningful and memorable for those left behind.”



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Three death-related podcasts

Talking about death isn't always easy, but it can be one of the most valuable conversations we have.

Whether you're planning ahead, supporting someone through grief, or simply curious about how others are changing the way we think about life's final chapter, these Australian podcasts offer thoughtful, practical and often uplifting perspectives. Take a listen — you may come away feeling more informed, prepared and comfortable discussing a topic that touches us all.

Don't be Caught Dead

One initiative helping Australians start important conversations is the *Don't Be Caught Dead* podcast, hosted by award-winning speaker and Critical Info founder Catherine Ashton.

The podcast explores the topics many people avoid discussing until a crisis forces the issue. Through candid conversations with experts in end-of-life planning, healthcare, law, finance and aged care, alongside people sharing their lived experiences, it offers practical guidance on preparing for illness, incapacity and death.

Drawing on Catherine Ashton's own family's experience, the series aims to help others navigate difficult decisions with greater confidence and clarity. Episodes cover everything from wills, enduring powers of attorney, funerals and estate administration to caregiving, grief, sudden illness and the realities of managing life's unexpected challenges.

Available on Apple Podcasts and Spotify.



Passing Thoughts

Passing Thoughts is an Australian podcast exploring death, dying, grief and the many issues surrounding life's final chapter.

Hosted by seasoned podcast and radio producer Rob Kaldor, the series tackles topics Australians are increasingly seeking information about, including palliative care, voluntary assisted dying, aged care, wills, near-death experiences and the experience of grief. Through thoughtful conversations with experts, advocates and people with lived experience, the podcast approaches these subjects with warmth, honesty and, at times, unexpected humour.

Produced with the support of Radio 2RPH and funded by the Wicking Trust, *Passing Thoughts* aims to improve death literacy by making conversations about dying more accessible and less daunting. Regular contributors Barbara Sullivan, Jane Mundy and Connie Mason bring additional perspectives and lived experience, helping to encourage greater understanding, compassion and confidence around one of life's few certainties.

Available on Apple Podcasts and Spotify.



Carked it! A game about life, death and beyond

Carked It! is a funny, Australian-made, card game that turns the one thing we all eventually face into something to laugh and talk about with friends.

Created as a project by The Ageing Revolution — an organisation that began as a force to address ageism — the game was co-designed and partially funded by the Good Death Impact Network.

Designed to encourage and stimulate better conversations around dying and death, humour is used to break down barriers, ease discomfort, and create a more open and approachable space for discussing difficult topics.

Suitable for groups of three to six players, *Carked It!* is built around three simple stages of life: Live, Die and Bye. Live cards explore the experiences, choices, and adventures that shape a person's life; Die cards determine the often humorous or unexpected way their story ends; and Bye cards focus on their legacy, funeral, or how they are remembered.

Together, the three sections create a playful narrative that uses humour to encourage conversations about life, death, and what comes after.

The creators of the game recommend bringing it out at family get-togethers where great conversations are just as important as the laughs.

To buy a copy of the cards, visit the official website: www.carkedit.com



GIVEAWAY

We have a copy of *Carked It!* to give away to a lucky reader. To win this prize, fill in the details below, and drop your entry in the box at The Maryborough Advertiser, mail it to us at 94 Napier Street, Maryborough, or photograph/scan and email it to advertising@maryaddy.com.au. The winner will be drawn on Friday, August 14 and will be announced on our Social Scene page.

Full Name

Phone number. Home town

What would you like to see discussed in this feature in 2027?

- and a radio show

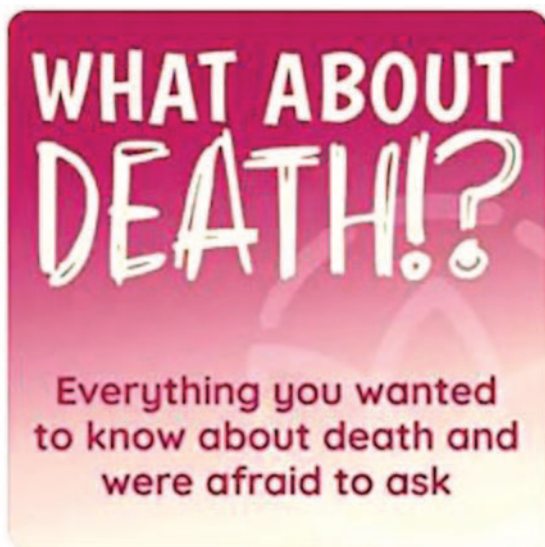
What About Death!?

What About Death!? offers another perspective on conversations about mortality, with Australian Buddhist nun Venerable Tsultrim exploring death, dying, grief and loss through the lens of compassion, reflection and everyday living.

Drawing on Buddhist philosophy alongside a range of guest perspectives, the podcast encourages listeners to consider how acknowledging mortality can help shape a more intentional and meaningful life. Episodes explore personal stories, practical insights and diverse viewpoints, inviting thoughtful discussion about life's most universal experiences.

By bringing conversations about death into the open with curiosity and compassion, *What About Death!?* supports the broader goal of improving death literacy and helping people feel more informed and comfortable discussing life's final chapter.

Available on Apple Podcasts and Spotify.



Dead Air

While not a podcast, *Dead Air* is a long-running community radio program that brings conversations about death into the public sphere through a distinctive blend of art, culture and practical information.

Hosted by artist and death literacy advocate Hayley West on Castlemaine's MAINfm, the program is described as "a socially engaged artwork for the airwaves".

Episodes explore a wide range of end-of-life topics, from green burials, advance care planning and community death care to grief, funerals, memorial practices and creative responses to mortality.

Alongside interviews, music and cultural commentary, the program regularly highlights events, books, exhibitions and local initiatives that encourage Australians to engage more openly with death and dying.

At its heart, *Dead Air* shares a simple message: talking about death isn't something to fear. By making these conversations accessible, thoughtful and engaging, the program empowers listeners with practical knowledge while helping to build confidence, curiosity and greater death literacy within the community.

Listen to this show on 94.9 Main FM Mondays from 10 am - 11 am. You can also catch previous episodes on Hayley's website www.hayleywest.com.au/radio



LISTENER NOTE

If listening to any of these productions raises any concerns or issues for you, please contact **Lifeline on 13 11 14** or **Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636**.



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