GOODBYE WITH LOVE

HOME • TRANSITION • ESTATE • LEGACY

When Mum or Dad moves into aged care

A practical guide to supporting the move and managing the home left behind.

For adult children, relatives and the people helping a loved one through change.

Two transitions at the same time

There is the move into care. Then there is everything that still needs attention at home.

Your focus may understandably be on helping Mum or Dad settle, getting to know staff and making sure they have what they need. Meanwhile, there may be a house full of belongings, a garden to maintain, bills arriving and questions about what happens next.

Often one adult child or relative becomes the organiser while also working, raising a family or living some distance away. The practical responsibility can feel much bigger than anyone expected.

Begin with what is confirmed

Clarify whether the stay is temporary, respite or a planned permanent move. Ask the care team what is known about timing and what remains uncertain. Avoid treating a short stay as a decision to clear or sell the home.

Keep Mum or Dad involved

Ask what matters to them, how they would like to be part of decisions and who they want helping. A move into care does not automatically transfer responsibility for their home or belongings to someone else. Seek appropriate advice where authority or decision-making support needs clarification.

There may still be someone at home

A spouse, partner, relative or tenant may remain. Their needs, privacy and rights need to be considered before access, sorting or changes are arranged. Do not assume the home is vacant or available for clearance.

Take one practical step

This guide helps you separate settling-in tasks from work at the former home. Use the worksheet on page 7 to agree priorities, responsibilities and questions. You do not have to make every longer-term decision in the first week.

Hayley Fualau

Founder, Goodbye With Love

Help the new room feel familiar

The first priority is the person making the move, not how quickly the former home can be emptied.

Ask before packing

Check with the aged care home about available space, furniture, electrical items, labelling, laundry and any safety requirements. My Aged Care explains that essential furniture is provided and that personal items can be discussed with the home. Each home's arrangements need to be confirmed directly.

Choose familiar things together

Ask which belongings would make the room feel more personal. A few well-chosen items may be easier to settle around than many boxes arriving at once. Keep a record of anything valuable and discuss secure storage with the home.

- Photographs of important people, places or pets.
- A favourite bed covering, where suitable and permitted.
- Books, music or an activity they enjoy.
- Comfortable clothing and the everyday items they prefer.
- Glasses, hearing aids and other essentials identified with the care team.

Share the small things that matter

With their agreement, tell staff about preferred routines, language, cultural or spiritual practices, interests and how they like to be addressed. Ask whom to contact about settling-in questions and practical concerns.

Arrange a clear handover

Coordinate medication and clinical information with the care team rather than packing them among general belongings. Confirm what is needed on arrival, who will bring it and how any missing items will be followed up.

Leave room to adjust

Check what is working after the move. Some items may be wanted later; others may turn out to be unnecessary. Where practical, keep a small, clearly labelled group at home for follow-up rather than making every belongings decision before arrival.

A useful question: what would help this room feel more like theirs?

Look after the home left behind

A short holding plan can protect the home while the family gets clearer about longer-term decisions.

Agree access and responsibility

Confirm who may enter, who holds keys and who will be the main contact. Record any instructions from the owner or authorised decision-maker. If someone is still living in the home, agree access with them and consider their needs before changing anything.

Check immediate practical needs

Arrange a suitable person to identify urgent maintenance or safety concerns. Keep entrances and pathways accessible. Ask qualified trades to assess anything that needs specialist attention rather than attempting unfamiliar repairs.

If the home will be unoccupied

Contact the insurer to explain the circumstances and ask about cover, inspections and any requirements. Arrange agreed checks of the home and garden, and decide who will respond if a problem is found. Keep the owner’s privacy in mind when sharing keys or access information.

Review services before cancelling

List utilities, security, internet, garden care and other ongoing arrangements. Check what must continue for anyone living there, property checks or planned work. Ask the appropriate account holder or representative to manage changes and arrange mail collection or redirection where needed.

Keep a simple record

Use one list for visits, maintenance issues, invoices and approvals. Share updates with the relevant people, with permission. This makes it easier to see what has happened and prevents several relatives booking the same job.

Confirm the next review date

A holding plan is a way to manage the immediate practical work. Set a time to review it once care arrangements, authority and professional advice are clearer.

The first goal can be a secure, maintained home while decisions are being worked through.

Decide the next step for the home

Moving into aged care does not, by itself, settle the question of what should happen to the family home.

Get advice before committing

Selling, retaining or renting a home can raise different legal, financial and practical questions. Ask a qualified financial adviser with aged-care expertise and the relevant solicitor about your circumstances. Use current information from My Aged Care and Services Australia where appropriate.

My Aged Care recommends understanding aged-care costs before choosing a home and identifies independent financial advice as a helpful early step. This guide does not calculate fees or tell you which property decision to make.

Prepare questions for the right people

Take a short list to the relevant advisers, along with the information they request. Ask who needs to approve decisions and which steps should wait until advice has been obtained.

- What options should be considered before deciding about the home?
- How might each option affect care funding, income or other obligations?
- Does anyone else's occupation or interest in the home need to be addressed?
- What legal authority and documents are needed for the proposed action?
- Which dates, costs and practical requirements need to be planned for?

Separate advice from practical preparation

You may be able to organise agreed maintenance, protect important papers or make a belongings list while larger decisions are pending. Confirm the scope with the appropriate person; do not assume that preparing a plan means approval to clear, renovate or sell.

If sale is agreed

Work with the selling agent and professional team on priorities, timing and sensible preparation. Ask what is worth doing before spending money. Consider the family's budget, the home's condition and how much work can realistically be managed.

Get clarity first, then build the practical plan around the agreed direction.

Share the work around the family

One person may be the main contact without having to carry every job.

Make responsibilities visible

List the tasks around the move and the former home separately. Include appointments, follow-up belongings, property visits, paperwork, quotes and communication. Ask who can realistically do what, rather than assuming the nearest relative will manage everything.

Protect belongings before sorting

Ask Mum or Dad and the relevant family members what must be kept aside. Separate important papers, photographs, sentimental items and things still needed. Leave uncertain or disputed belongings in an “Awaiting decision” group until the appropriate people have agreed.

Help relatives contribute from a distance

An agreed shared list, brief update or video call can help people take useful tasks. Someone living interstate may be able to obtain quotes or keep records, while a local person handles access. Share personal information only with the appropriate people.

Agree spending and service bookings

Confirm who is engaging each provider, who can approve the work and who will pay. Keep quotes and approvals together. Tell providers what must stay and who to contact if they find important documents or unexpected belongings.

Make room for different responses

One relative may want to act quickly while another needs time to absorb the change. Where deadlines allow, explain the reason for each next step and identify decisions that can wait. Seek appropriate support if disagreements prevent progress.

Notice your own limits

Visits, work and family responsibilities still need space. Ask for practical help with a specific task rather than waiting until you can no longer manage. Carer Gateway offers information and support for carers; you can ask about help suited to your situation.

A useful update: what is done, what is next and which decision needs attention?

Our move and home plan

Use this page to agree the next few steps. Keep detailed care information and personal documents securely elsewhere.

What matters most to Mum or Dad, and how do they want to be involved?

What is confirmed about the stay, and what remains uncertain?

Who can authorise home-related decisions, and who is the family contact?

Our immediate priorities

Task or question	Who will follow up	By when
Settling into care		
Looking after the home		
Advice or decision needed		

What must stay in place or be protected at the former home?

Our next family check-in date

Support around the family and home

You can focus on your loved one while asking for help with the practical work around the home.

Goodbye With Love helps families prepare homes for sale during major life transitions. When a move into aged care leads to a planned sale, I can help identify priorities and bring the agreed home-preparation work together.

Depending on the agreed scope, that may include belongings and decluttering, cleaning, gardens, approved maintenance and cosmetic improvements, access, scheduling and communication with the selling agent. I work alongside your family and existing professional team.

Care assessment, placement, clinical care and legal or financial advice remain with the appropriate services and professionals.

Begin with a conversation

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Serving Frankston, the Mornington Peninsula and surrounding areas.

Helpful information and connections

My Aged Care | Residential aged care information

My Aged Care | Current costs and fees

Carer Gateway | Information and support for carers

CareAbout | Help exploring aged-care providers

CareAbout matches families with providers from its panel. Its service is free for families and is funded by successful referral fees. It is a separate organisation, not a substitute for independent financial or legal advice.

This guide offers general practical information. Confirm care arrangements with the provider and seek legal and financial advice suited to your circumstances. External services are independent of Goodbye With Love.

Information checked October 2026. Visit the linked websites for updates.