

GOODBYE WITH LOVE

HOME • TRANSITION • ESTATE • LEGACY

Where do we begin?

A practical guide to preparing a home during a major life transition.

For families navigating aged care, downsizing,
a deceased estate, separation or change.

A gentle starting point

A home can become one more thing to manage at exactly the time life already feels full.

You may be supporting a parent into aged care, preparing to downsize, managing a home after someone has died, or finding a way forward after separation. Perhaps you are trying to help from another town, another state or another country.

Alongside the practical jobs, there may be grief, uncertainty, relief, disagreement or simply exhaustion. Different people can feel very differently about the same home.

Every family situation is different, but the heart of my work is always the same: helping people move forward.

Start with one question

What would make the next week feel a little more manageable? It might be finding an important document, agreeing who will organise access or asking someone to help with a first visit. A useful beginning does not have to be a big one.

Use this guide at your own pace

Read the section that feels most relevant. Make notes, share it with someone helping you, or use the worksheet on page 7. You can return to the rest when you have more information or more room to think.

Keep the person in view

Wherever possible, involve the person whose home it is. Ask what matters to them, what they want to remain part of and what support would help. Moving home does not make someone’s preferences less important.

My approach is calm and grounded. I believe there should be room for emotions as well as a practical plan, and that thoughtful preparation starts with understanding the people involved.

Hayley Fualau

Founder, Goodbye With Love

Understand what needs attention

Before arranging services or setting a timetable, take a little time to understand the situation.

What has changed?

Write down why the home needs attention and what is currently known. Is a move confirmed? Is sale being considered or already agreed? Is there a deadline, or does it only feel as though everything must happen immediately?

Who needs to be involved?

Identify the owner, the person authorised to make relevant decisions and anyone whose input is needed. A family contact can help communication, but being the organiser does not automatically give that person authority to approve work, remove belongings or make decisions about a sale.

Where ownership, an estate, a power of attorney or separation is involved, ask the relevant solicitor to clarify who can authorise what before commitments are made.

What needs attention first?

Distinguish a time-sensitive task from a task that can wait. An urgent safety concern, a confirmed access appointment or a date agreed with an adviser may need attention before cosmetic work or sorting an entire room.

- Who has keys, and who is allowed to enter the home?
- Are there immediate safety, maintenance or security concerns?
- Is anyone still living there, and what do they need day to day?
- Which dates or instructions need to be confirmed with an adviser?

Choose a communication point

Agree who will collect updates and how decisions will be recorded. Keep a short shared list of questions rather than asking everyone to make separate arrangements.

A useful first step: name the next decision and the person who can help you make it.

Before anything leaves the home

A house can be cleared quickly. Identifying what matters deserves a little time first.

Meaningful belongings are not always the most valuable ones. A handwritten recipe, an old work shirt, a family photograph or an ordinary kitchen bowl may hold a connection that nobody else can see.

Make a pause list

Before broad sorting or clearance begins, identify the things that need a closer look. Ask family members about items they hope to find, while being clear that a request is not the same as an agreed allocation.

- Photographs, letters, journals, recipes and family records.
- Wills, titles, financial papers and other important documents.
- Jewellery, medals, heirlooms and items with potential value.
- Devices, storage drives and paperwork containing personal information.
- Objects with a story, even if they have little monetary value.

Create clear sorting groups

Use labels such as “staying in use”, “keep”, “needs a decision”, “donate or sell” and “dispose”. Keep the “needs a decision” group separate. Avoid removing, selling or giving away anything disputed until the appropriate people have agreed.

Record what is being kept

With permission, photograph meaningful items and note who they belong to, where they will go and any story attached to them. Store important documents securely, with access limited to the appropriate people.

Begin small

Choose a drawer, a cupboard or one type of item. Take breaks and leave the room usable. Avoid discarding papers or arranging large collections simply to meet an ambitious clearing date.

Before a collection arrives: check the agreed items, destination and approval one more time.

Make a manageable plan

Once the priorities are clearer, put the work into a sequence that people can realistically manage.

Work backwards from confirmed dates

List any agreed move, collection, photography or sale-preparation dates. Then identify what must happen before each one. Keep uncertain dates marked as provisional so the family is not organising around assumptions.

Put the tasks in a sensible order

A typical sequence might be: confirm authority and access; identify belongings to protect; agree sorting and removals; assess maintenance; arrange approved work; then organise final cleaning and presentation. The right order depends on the home and who is still using it.

Give each task an owner

For each job, record what is required, who will arrange it, who can approve it and when it needs to happen. Check that the person has the time and willingness to take it on. Being nearby should not mean carrying everything.

Agree costs before work starts

Ask for clear written quotes describing the work, exclusions and payment terms. Confirm who is engaging the provider and who will pay. Keep approvals together and agree how any additional work or costs will be handled.

Leave room for real life

Build in time for family decisions, provider availability and unexpected discoveries. If the plan becomes too much, reduce the next stage. It is better to agree a smaller achievable task than to keep extending an overwhelming list.

Keep updates simple

A brief update can cover what is complete, what is booked, what needs a decision and what has changed. Record decisions in one place so relatives and professionals are working from the same information.

You can share responsibility without asking everyone to manage every detail.

What does the home actually need?

Preparing for sale does not automatically mean renovating. Begin with the home, the likely buyer and the circumstances of the family.

Get a clear picture first

Ask the selling agent what preparation they believe would make a useful difference, why they recommend it and which jobs matter most. Where a condition or safety issue needs assessment, involve the appropriate qualified professional.

Consider the simpler work

Cleaning, decluttering, garden tidying and attending to appropriate minor maintenance may be enough to improve presentation. A larger cosmetic project may suit some homes, while selling with limited work may suit others. There is no single answer for every property.

Before approving an improvement

- What problem will this work solve?
- Is it necessary, a presentation improvement or a personal preference?
- What is the full quoted cost, including related work and clean-up?
- How long will it take, and what happens if it is delayed?
- Does the relevant professional expect a worthwhile benefit?
- Would the family still be comfortable if the extra spend was not recovered?

Weigh up more than appearance

Consider the budget, timing, disruption and the family's ability to manage the work. A home does not need to look new to be prepared thoughtfully. Extra spending cannot guarantee a higher sale price.

Keep the right people involved

Your solicitor, selling agent, financial adviser and qualified trades each have different roles. Ask questions within their areas of expertise and confirm the required approvals before work proceeds.

The aim is a considered plan that fits this home and this family.

Your next steps

Use this page to turn the conversation into a short, achievable plan. You can complete it together or bring it to an initial meeting.

What has changed, and what does the home need to be ready for?

Who is authorised to approve decisions, and who is our main contact?

Our three priorities

What needs to happen	Who will arrange it	By when
1		
2		
3		

What must be protected or agreed before anything leaves the home?

What questions do we need to ask a professional?

Our next check-in date and the one thing we will do first

Support for what comes next

You do not have to manage every moving part alone.

Goodbye With Love helps families prepare homes for sale during major life transitions, including moves into aged care, downsizing, deceased estates, separation and situations where relatives are managing from a distance.

I begin by listening to what is happening, understanding the home and helping identify practical priorities. Depending on the agreed scope, support may include belongings and decluttering, arranging cleaning and gardens, approved maintenance and cosmetic improvements, access, scheduling and communication with the selling agent.

The level of support is shaped around the situation. We can begin with practical direction and a plan, or discuss help bringing the wider home-preparation process together.

My role sits alongside your existing professional team. Legal, financial, building and real estate advice remains with the appropriately qualified professionals.

Begin with a conversation

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Serving Frankston, the Mornington Peninsula and surrounding areas.

Useful places to start

My Aged Care | Government aged-care information

Carer Gateway | Information and support for carers

Services Australia | Death of a loved one

Relationships Australia | Relationship and family support

This guide offers general practical information. Your circumstances may require advice from a solicitor or other qualified professional. External organisations provide their own services independently of Goodbye With Love.

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