



# What is an Advance Health Directive? – Why Do You Need One?

**Date: Thursday May 25, 2017**

An Advance Health Directive (AHD) is a legal document used in Queensland which allows you to give instructions about your health care if you can't make decisions for yourself.

In this article we are referencing Queensland requirements to complete such a document. There are similar documents in other states and territories of Australia each with different names; in NSW and Tasmania it is called an Advance Care Directive and in the Northern Territory it is called an Advance Personal Plan. If you require estate planning documents in any of those locations, please [contact](#) a suitable Hall Payne office.

## What does an Advance Health Directive (Queensland) provide?

An AHD makes your wishes known about what you want to happen if an incident were to occur, such as incurable disease or a brain injury. It includes information that health professionals should know about you such as your health conditions, allergies, and religious, spiritual or cultural beliefs that could affect your care.

You can also state the quality of life that would be acceptable to you. Such as whether you want to be resuscitated or given assisted ventilation, nutrition and hydration.

It also enables you to appoint an attorney for health and personal matters.

## Who can make an AHD?

Anyone who is over the age of 18 can make an AHD as long as they have the mental capacity to do so.

## When Does an AHD start?

Your directive will apply at any time when you are unable to decide for yourself, or you may want it to apply only if you are terminally ill.

## Does a doctor have to be involved when making an AHD?

To make an AHD you need to take the document to your doctor so that they can advise you about the consequences of the decisions that you have made. It's a requirement that your AHD is signed by your doctor.

## Do I need witnesses when signing my AHD?

There are special procedures that must be followed in having your signature witnessed. Your witness must be over 21 and a qualified witness; for example a Justice of the Peace, Commissioner for Declarations, lawyer or notary public.

It's important to note that your witness can not be:

- your attorney for personal matters
- your relative or a relative of your attorney
- a current health provider
- a current paid carer (which does not include a person on a carer's pension)
- a beneficiary of your will. It's very important to get it right!

## Where should I keep my AHD?

There is no register of Advance Health Directives. The document needs to be kept in a safe place so that it can be used if required.

You should advise your loved ones where your original AHD is stored.

## Can I change my AHD?

You can change the provisions in your Advance Health Directive at any time while you have the capacity.

Don't forget to tell your family that you have an AHD.

## In Summary

- You can make an Advance Health Directive if you are over 18 years of age
- You must have capacity to make an AHD

- Your doctor must sign your AHD
- Your witness must be over 21 and qualified ( Justice of the Peace, Commissioner for Declarations, lawyer or notary public)
- Store your AHD in a safe place and tell your family where it is

Hall Payne Lawyers can help with all your [estate planning](#) needs.

If you require assistance with an Advance Health Directive (or Advance Care Directive or Advance Personal Plan) or any other estate planning needs we can help. Contact Hall Payne Lawyers on 1800 659 114 or [select a suitable office location](#).

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