



PalliativeCare
AUSTRALIA

Media Release

Tuesday, 26 May 2015

Guide to your social media afterlife launched

Despite thinking those with a terminal illness should protect and preserve their social media pages for a future without their management, more than 80% of Australians have not taken these precautions themselves, new data shows.

Assistant Minister for Health, Senator Fiona Nash today launched Palliative Care Australia's (PCA) Guide to a Social Media Afterlife, a new document to explain how to manage online and social accounts so your data is preserved, memorialised or deactivated.

PCA CEO Liz Callaghan said managing social media accounts when dying or after death by family members a new and developing area, but the guide encourages all Australians to consider the future of their social media accounts and put measures in place to ensure their online self is protected or memorialised.

"There are stories of people's pages having their personal data stolen after they have passed away or people breaking into accounts. This is not just an issue for those facing the end of their lives, everyone needs to consider what might happen to their accounts if they are suddenly no longer here," she said.

PCA asked more than 1000 Australians about their views on social media protection. Over half (55%) believed a terminally ill person should put account protection in place, even though only 12% of those asked had done so.

"Australians avoid death – they don't like to talk about it, they don't like to think about it – but death is a normal part of life and with the benefit of technology like social media you can communicate with friends and family from great distances, and you or your family can even plan to manage or close accounts at the time of your choosing.

"Some websites will send mail to friends and family after you have died, others will continue to post to your Facebook accounts. There are a range of weird and wonderful elements you can bring to a social media account. But making sure you are protected is the most important.

"In National Palliative Care Week we are encouraging all Australians to celebrate life and talk about death, including what happens to your social accounts."

Deputy Public Trustee Doug Gillespie said the growth and diversity of social media accounts was a new area for executors which called for the setting of procedures and clarification of legal aspects.

Ms Callaghan said the guide would be regularly updated as social media continues to evolve.

"This is a new frontier for Australia and fast moving. However, we hope the PCA guide is a good starting point for people thinking about how to protect, or preserve, their accounts," she said.

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National Palliative Care Week: Sunday 24 May – Saturday 30 May
Palliativecare.org.au



Have you planned what will happen to your social media accounts should you die unexpectedly?	OVERALL	Male	Female	18-24 years old	25-34 years old	35-44years old	45-54 years old	55-64 years old	65-74 years old	75-84 years old	85+ years old
Yes	12.2%	12.5%	12.0%	7.4%	11.6%	6.9%	6.6%	14.8%	22.4%	34.5%	33.3%
No	81.2%	80.5%	81.9%	85.2%	79.4%	84.0%	86.8%	82.6%	73.9%	58.6%	33.3%
Not Sure	6.6%	7.0%	6.1%	7.4%	9.0%	9.0%	6.6%	2.7%	3.6%	6.9%	33.3%

Should a person suffering a serious, prolonged or terminal illness have a plan in place for management of their social media accounts after they die?	OVERALL	Male	Female	18-24 years old	25-34 years old	35-44years old	45-54 years old	55-64 years old	65-74 years old	75-84 years old	85+ years old
Yes	54.5%	55.0%	54.0%	45.2%	45.8%	59.6%	55.5%	55.0%	60.0%	72.4%	33.3%
No	16.0%	16.6%	15.4%	20.7%	21.9%	11.7%	11.5%	22.8%	12.1%	6.9%	0.0%
Not Sure	29.5%	28.5%	30.6%	34.1%	32.3%	28.7%	33.0%	22.1%	27.9%	20.7%	66.7%