

## LIVING WILLS – WHAT ARE THEY? DO I NEED ONE?

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Now that the State Election is largely behind us, we can expect some new laws to be proclaimed by Parliament in the near future. One of these new laws is the *Acts Amendment (Consent to Medical Treatment) Bill 2006*.

This new law will (among other things) provide legal force to Advanced Health Directives (or Living Wills).

Living Wills provide directions regarding what a person wants done to them in relation to medical treatment – particularly in situations where they are no longer able to provide those directions personally (through mental incapacity, for example).

Until the new law is proclaimed Living Wills act as a guide only. They do not carry any requirement for a treating physician to follow the wishes they contain.

Under the new law, a treating physician is bound to follow the directions of a Living Will if he knows it exists.

Living Wills are important documents and are likely to greatly assist your loved ones in the difficult situation where they are called upon to make medical decisions on your behalf when you are no longer able to yourself.

By providing your directions in a Living Will when the law is proclaimed, you can ensure that your wishes will be followed.

Hudson Henning and Goodman will be providing information sheets on their website [www.hhg.com.au](http://www.hhg.com.au) in the near future for those looking to have a Living Will prepared.

This is general information only, and does not constitute specific legal advice. If you would like further information in relation to this matter or other legal matters please contact our office at [reception@hhg.com.au](mailto:reception@hhg.com.au).

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