

How to manage a loved one's finances after they pass away

There is nothing harder than losing a family member. The period of grieving can be complicated by the financial steps that often need to be taken if you're the person your loved one trusted to manage their estate. Here is a quick guide.

Losing a loved one is one of the hardest things we ever have to go through. As well as letting family members know and preparing to say goodbye with a funeral, there are financial matters that often need to be resolved on behalf of your loved one.

Here are seven steps that you may need to take to ensure your family member's affairs are taken care of. You can also make a claim, if you are the person they intend to leave their money and things to.

If you need help paying for a funeral, go to [Moneysmart](#) for a list of organisations to contact.

1. FIND OUT IF SOMEONE WAS MANAGING THEIR WILL AND FINAL WISHES



Your loved one may have had a Will prepared, which lays out who they wanted their money and assets to go to. Sometimes, this is managed by a lawyer or a tax agent, such as an accountant.

This paperwork may have been kept in a safe place in their home. If you find it, you can call the legal or tax representative listed on the paperwork.

If they don't have this information available or don't have a Will, the state often decides how money and assets are distributed. Usually, after any costs are paid, any remaining money is paid to the spouse, children or grandchildren, parents or siblings. However, this process can take some time.

2. GET A DEATH CERTIFICATE



When your loved one dies, you, the funeral director or your legal representative may request a death certificate. This is an official document that says someone has passed away. It is often used for legal purposes, such as when someone makes a claim on the estate. You may also need a death certificate to cancel things such as bank accounts, utilities and phone or internet contracts.

To access a death certificate, you can apply on the relevant pages below:

[New South Wales](#)

[Victoria](#)

[South Australia](#)

[Northern Territory](#)

[Queensland](#)

[Western Australia](#)

[Tasmania](#)

[ACT](#)

3. CHECK FOR SUPER

People who are authorised to do so can check to see if your loved one had any super that they had not used before their death. Unused super – including insurance benefits – is often paid to a nominated person or people after someone dies. Sometimes something called a 'binding death nomination' will be in place to tell the super fund who your loved one intended their remaining super to go to.

If your loved one has not authorised someone to check their accounts, this information can only be provided to a legal representative or tax agent who is managing the estate.

4. CHECK FOR INSURANCE

If there is an appointed legal representative or executor, they will often look and see if there is any insurance payments to be paid to family members. This sometimes includes life insurance.

5. NOTIFY THEIR BANK AND SERVICES

Your loved one's bank will have to be told after they have died, so that changes can be made to what is taken out of the account, such as regular payments. A number of people can do this, including the executor, legal representative or the next of kin. Often, a death certificate will have to be provided (see step 2).

A legal representative can also arrange for money to be paid out of accounts to the beneficiaries, which are the people who your loved one intended to have their money paid to.

6. MAKING A CLAIM FOR A LOVED ONE'S SUPER

If you wish to make a claim for a loved one's super after they die, often these steps need to be followed:

1. Write to the super fund with the details of your loved one's account and your intention to claim, along with a certified copy of the Death Certificate.
2. Provide details of their nominated beneficiaries, fund balances and any other amounts that are owing.
3. Fill out the super fund's forms to apply for a Death Benefit payment.
4. The super fund will review the application.
5. The fund will write to you to tell you the outcome of their assessment and to whom the superannuation Death Benefit will be paid.
6. A request can be made to appeal the decision via the Superannuation Complaints Tribunal (SCT) within 28 days.

7. GETTING HELP

There are many services that can help you during this difficult time.

For crisis support:

Lifeline: 13 11 14

For help with your grief:

[Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement](#)

For government payments after someone close has died:

[Services Australia](#)

For financial information about losing a partner:

[MoneySmart](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

You can tell multiple services at once about a loved one's death via the **[Australian Death Notification website](#)**.

