



**Catherine Ashton**

*Founder & CEO, Critical Info | Certified Social Enterprise*

*Leader | Death Literacy Advocate | Podcast Host*

# **SPEAKER KIT**

## **2025 – LIVE & VIRTUAL**



# Catherine Ashton

*Building a better way to die —  
with systems, soul, and social impact.*

Catherine Ashton is the founder of Critical Info, a fully independent, certified social enterprise helping Australians improve death literacy, live with peace of mind, and support better grief outcomes for the bereaved. Catherine created Critical Info following two life-changing events: surviving a serious car accident in 2019 and the sudden death of a close friend in 2023.

Both events revealed a confronting truth - most Australians are unprepared for death, and their families often suffer unnecessary confusion and stress as a result.

**Catherine Ashton | Founder – Critical Info**





Under Catherine's leadership, Critical Info was certified by Social Traders in 2025, and has grown a trusted directory of over 260 organisations in end-of-life planning, deathcare, and bereavement—all without financial incentives or referral fees.

She is a sought-after speaker and educator, having collaborated with Griefline, Price Waterhouse Coopers Eldercare Network, the Sustainable Funerals Group, Melville Cares, Western Suburbs Cares, and numerous local councils to deliver workshops, community events, and workforce training that build empathy and capability.

**Catherine Ashton | Founder – Critical Info**

Catherine responded with bold action, launching Critical Info Platform, a secure, grief-informed, multimedia planning tool that guides users across 15 essential life areas. It empowers people to document their wishes, store important personal details, and communicate legacy messages through text, audio, or video.

Now adopted by aged care providers, the Platform is transforming how individuals, families, and professionals plan for end-of-life. Catherine also developed the national guide *My Loved One Died, What Do I Do Now?*, and hosts the podcast *Don't Be Caught Dead*, which has exceeded 8,000 downloads in its first year and continues to drive courageous conversations across the country.

**Catherine Ashton | Founder – Critical Info**





*Winner* 2025  
Best New Business - Emerging Star  
*Wild Women In Business*



# Awards

Catherine's work has been recognised nationally through multiple awards.



Catherine Ashton | Founder – Critical Info

# In The Media



Catherine Ashton | Founder – Critical Info

# Five End-of-Life Planning Tasks You Can Tick Off Today Without Costing You a Cent

In this fast-paced and practical session, participants will learn five simple yet powerful end-of-life planning tasks they can complete immediately, with no legal fees or paperwork required. Designed to empower everyday Australians, this talk demystifies the essential steps everyone can take to protect their rights, reduce future stress, and ensure their wishes are known and respected.

From updating emergency contacts and nominating a pet care plan, to confirming your organ donation status and having a meaningful conversation with family, this session is packed with free, achievable actions. Ideal for community groups, aged care audiences, and anyone feeling overwhelmed by where to start, this session proves that peace of mind doesn't have to come with a price tag.

## Key Takeaways:

- Learn how to check and update your organ donor registration
- Nominate emergency Key Contacts and tell them what to expect
- Understand the importance of superannuation beneficiary nominations
- Make a plan for your pet's care if you're unable to
- Start 'the conversation' with loved ones about your wishes

Simple. Free. Impactful. A perfect starting point for anyone ready to take control of their end-of-life planning journey.

**Catherine Ashton | Founder – Critical Info**



# Behind the Headlines: Turning Pain into Purpose and Chaos into Clarity

What happens when life doesn't go to plan? When the headlines are about your family, your trauma – your turning point?

In this raw and powerful keynote, Catherine Ashton shares her extraordinary journey from childhood grief and media distortion to a life-changing car accident that forced her to rebuild from the ground up. With warmth, wisdom and a touch of wit, Catherine explores how trauma, reinvention and loss led her to create Critical Info, Australia's first social enterprise focused on end-of-life planning, legacy and compassionate preparation. Blending personal storytelling with professional insights, Catherine invites audiences to reflect on what really matters when everything else falls away. She offers practical takeaways for facing uncertainty, healing intergenerational patterns, and finding clarity amidst chaos – whether in life, loss, or leadership.

## Perfect for audiences seeking:

- Inspiration through lived experience
- Conversations around resilience, legacy, and purpose
- Insights into grief-informed leadership, social entrepreneurship, and life transitions
- Motivation to start over – personally or professionally

Catherine's story is a reminder that it's never too late to begin again – and that from the hardest moments, meaningful impact can grow.

**Catherine Ashton | Founder – Critical Info**



# What Now? A Human Approach to End-of-Life Administration

When someone dies, it's not just grief we face — it's paperwork, decisions, and deadlines. In this compassionate and practical keynote, Catherine Ashton walks audiences through what really happens after a death, and how to navigate the overwhelm with clarity and care.

Drawing from lived experience and the nationally recognised Guide: My Loved one died, what do I do now?, Catherine shares tools, stories, and systems that demystify end-of-life admin. From coronial processes to cancelled passwords, Wills to WiFi, this talk offers a gentle roadmap for those supporting others through loss — and those wanting to prepare ahead.

## Perfect for audiences seeking:

- Confidence in managing real-world tasks after a death
- Guidance on legal, financial and practical obligations
- Empathy-first conversations about grief, legacy, and responsibility
- A framework to support clients, colleagues, or community in times of loss

Leave with peace of mind — and a checklist that could change everything.

**Catherine Ashton | Founder – Critical Info**



## The Invisible Load: Turning Overwhelm into Legacy

Between raising kids and caring for ageing parents, many women in the “Sandwich Generation” are quietly carrying the weight of everyone else’s needs — often at the expense of their own. In this compassionate and empowering keynote, social entrepreneur and trauma survivor Catherine Ashton speaks directly to those women.

Blending personal storytelling with practical tools, Catherine explores how crisis, caregiving, and chronic stress can become a catalyst for clarity. She shares five simple — and free — steps women can take today to reduce future chaos, protect their loved ones, and reclaim peace of mind. With warmth, humour, and hard-won wisdom, this keynote invites women to transform the invisible load into a legacy of love, structure, and strength.

### Perfect for audiences seeking:

- Empowerment through real-life storytelling
- Practical, bite-sized steps to reduce end-of-life stress
- Support for carers, mothers, and multi-taskers
- A relatable roadmap to planning with clarity and compassion

**Catherine Ashton | Founder – Critical Info**



# The Hidden Cost of Chaos: Why Every Small Business Needs a Legacy Plan

What happens to your business if something happens to you?

In this compelling keynote, social entrepreneur and trauma survivor Catherine Ashton brings a rarely discussed — but critically important — conversation to the forefront of small business leadership: continuity planning through the lens of real-life loss, legacy, and lived experience. Drawing on her journey from injury and upheaval to founding Critical Info, Australia's leader in holistic end-of-life planning and management, Catherine shares the practical, emotional, and operational risks of not having a plan in place — and five simple, free steps every business owner can take today to protect what they've built.

Designed for founders, freelancers, sole traders, and entrepreneurs juggling life and leadership, this keynote empowers audiences to take the invisible risk seriously — and transform it into a lasting strength.

## Perfect for audiences seeking:

- Business continuity strategies grounded in lived experience
- Practical tools to reduce risk and disruption
- Inspiration from a founder who turned pain into purpose
- A fresh lens on leadership, systems, and sustainable legacy

**Catherine Ashton | Founder – Critical Info**



# Dead Famous: The Ultimate Pop Culture Pub Quiz on Death, Dying & Beyond

Think end-of-life planning can't be fun? Think again.

In this lively, laugh-out-loud pub quiz, Catherine Ashton flips the script on how we talk about death — blending pop culture, history, and quirky trivia in a fast-paced event that's as entertaining as it is thought-provoking. With four rounds of ten questions, plus interactive games between rounds, this quiz invites audiences to explore the fascinating ways death shows up in movies, music, literature, and even cartoons (yes, Skeletor makes an appearance).

From Shakespeare's graveyard scene in Hamlet to the curious case of celebrity last words, this quiz sparks conversation, connection, and a surprising amount of fun around topics we're usually afraid to discuss. Catherine brings her trademark warmth, wit, and crowd-pleasing energy as MC. All you need to provide is a microphone and a screen — she'll take care of the rest.

## Perfect for:

- Community events, festivals, and libraries
- Corporate team-building with a twist
- Fundraisers and social clubs
- Audiences are ready to laugh, learn, and rethink life's only certainty

Customised versions and abridged formats are available to suit your event and budget.

**Catherine Ashton | Founder – Critical Info**



# Testimonials

Had the pleasure of attending a presentation by Catherine this morning. Really insightful on all aspects of what happens, or should happen, after a loved one dies...and so much more information. Catherine is a terrific presenter, knowledgeable and compassionate. Highly recommend Catherine and her work. **Jeff Rogut, Advisor, Transcend**



Catherine's insights at our inaugural Startup Spotlight panel were truly invaluable. Her willingness to openly share her personal journey and dedication to supporting the startup network exemplify her commitment to nurturing innovation. Catherine's guidance and genuine connection with aspiring entrepreneurs highlight her commitment to fostering a thriving entrepreneurial community.

**Joanne Petrillo, Business and Industry Support Officer, Mornington Peninsula Shire.**



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# Testimonials

As someone who has seen the behind-the-scenes development of "Critical Info," I am genuinely excited about its potential impact. This app isn't just a tool; it's a testament to thoughtful, user centric design and development. I eagerly anticipate its launch and am confident that it will offer a truly enriching user experience.

**Vicky, Dandenong**

If I had had access to something like this in the past, it would have been a really powerful support for me, I think so I'm grateful that you're doing it. **Libby, Thornbury**

The grief period of losing someone, you just got to pick yourself up and move into this other space of preparing for funerals and informing friends and family and then potentially backing up someone's life and managing that element. So, there's so much to it. So, I think it's a fantastic piece of work and, and I really hope it goes well. **James, Somerville**

**Catherine Ashton | Founder – Critical Info**



**Her mission is clear:** to ensure no one is caught off guard when death happens. Catherine believes end-of-life planning should be treated as a core life skill, just like budgeting or first aid and she's actively advocating for its inclusion in Australia's education and health systems.

She brings a powerful combination of lived experience, project management expertise, and strategic vision to her work, helping Australians reclaim agency, dignity, and connection in one of life's most universal yet overlooked moments.

**Catherine Ashton | Founder – Critical Info**





## Contact Catherine

*To schedule a talk or workshop,  
please get in touch with Catherine.*

**Phone: 0419 883 443**

**Email: [catherine.ashton@criticalinfo.com.au](mailto:catherine.ashton@criticalinfo.com.au)**

