

MEDIA RELEASE

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TOWNSVILLE'S MOST VULNERABLE GET A VOICE WITH FUNDING BOOST

A peak advocacy body that helps Queensland's most vulnerable will launch a new support service for Townsville residents, appointing a dedicated advocate to not only help locals get the support they need, but also the support they want.

Queensland Aged and Disability Advocacy (QADA) expects the Townsville-based advocate will help older people and people with a disability make choices for themselves, wherever possible.

QADA CEO Geoff Rowe said the free service was aimed at those considered by law not to have the capacity to make decisions that affect their lives, and would provide an independent voice for those needing help.

"Our local advocate, a qualified lawyer, will help many vulnerable local residents have their say when it comes to choosing the support services they receive, and which organisation or person provides that support, and who supports them with financial decision making" Mr Rowe said.

"It's difficult enough for people without a disability to navigate through the available care and support options. For a person unable to express their wishes, the process is even harder.

"Unfortunately, we have seen many instances where the expressed wishes of an aged person, or a person with a disability are ignored by their guardian".

"Having a trained lawyer, whose role is to advocate and negotiate on behalf of their client, can help balance the scales in this complex process, and provide a better outcome for the person receiving care."

Mr Rowe said the service would be particularly important with the commencement of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

"This is about ensuring those with a decision making disability have their wishes heard, and understood.

"This way they receive the services they want, the care arrangements they want, and the organisations they want to provide that care."

Under the 18 month project, funded by the Queensland Government, QADA will provide free legal advice and advocacy support to north Queensland residents who have a legal guardian or administrator (substitute decision maker) appointed.

QADA expects residents from Townsville and the surrounding region to benefit from the support, which is expected to help up to 100 people.

For support, contact QADA on 1800 818 338.

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