



ADA Australia

Your aged and disability advocates



January / February 2019



CEO'S MESSAGE

Welcome to a new year edition of *The Advocate*. We are already well into 2019 and the year is shaping up to be a significant milestone for the aged care and disability sectors. We have some important events on our calendar, notably the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, and the 2019 National Elder Abuse Conference, in July. This year, I am hoping we can make great strides in our quest for positive change across Australia.

The Royal Commission has been a key focus in recent months. We've been attentively monitoring the hearings to see what themes unfold as a result of the

evidence given. So far, hearings have revealed stories of neglect, abuse and under-resourcing being experienced within the Australian aged care system.

ADA Australia will be preparing submissions targeting the central issues raised by consumers in our advocacy case work. If you have relevant information you'd like to pass on, please email info@adaaustralia.com.au. An update on the proceedings of the Royal Commission can be found on page 4.

In other news, we're pleased to announce that registrations are open for the [2019 National Elder Abuse Conference](#). The program, including our first three speakers, has also been revealed. It is an impressive line-up that includes our MC, ABC News breakfast presenter Virginia Trioli, former US elder abuse prosecutor Paul Greenwood and widely published author and speaker Kate Swaffer. In bringing together an incredible contingent of industry experts, we hope to cast a strong spotlight and facilitate effective collaboration on solutions to address the issue of elder abuse. More speakers will be revealed in the lead up to the event at neac2019.com.au.

We have also welcomed Minister Ken Wyatt's [recent announcement](#) of the Aged Care System Navigator initiative. ADA Australia is pleased to play an active role in this trial project. We will help to deliver an information hub in the Bundaberg region and work closely with the Brisbane South PHN to deliver specialist one-on-one support to vulnerable people seeking to access the aged care system.

Finally, we're delighted to welcome two new employees to the ADA Australia team. Nicola Wallis has come on board as a Disability Advocate with our Gold Coast office and Bruce Simpson as the ATSIDNQ Project Officer. They bring more valuable knowledge and experience to ADA's ranks.

Best wishes for a positive and successful 2019. We look forward to working with you all.

Geoff Rowe,
CEO

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR THE NATIONAL ELDER ABUSE CONFERENCE

Don't miss this key national conference which promises to help shine new light on the issues of elder abuse. Join industry leaders at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, from 22-23 July 2019, as together we explore strategies to protect older Australians and their right to a life free from violence, exploitation and neglect.

**ROCK
THE BOAT**

2019 National Elder Abuse Conference

ADA Australia and Caxton Legal Centre have announced the first three speakers in what is set to be an impressive line-up. The conference will be hosted by ABC News breakfast presenter Virginia Trioli and will feature international keynote speaker former US elder abuse prosecutor Paul Greenwood and widely published author and speaker Kate Swaffer, who brings her personal perspective on the challenges associated with a dementia diagnosis.

ADA Australia CEO Geoff Rowe said that NEAC 2019 would not be a 'talkfest' but would instead have a clear focus on issues that need challenging to produce much needed change.

"The theme of the 2019 conference, 'Rock the Boat', is indicative of our aim to challenge the status quo and eliminate elder abuse with insight, creativity and passion," he said.

"We expect our program of international, national and local experts to attract more than 500 delegates from across Australia."

Caxton Legal Centre Director of Family, Domestic Violence and Elder Law, Cybele Koning said while the Royal Commission was shedding important light on elder abuse, most Australians didn't realise how widespread the problem was and the many different ways in which abuse could occur.

"Elder abuse has an enormous impact on our society. We are determined to progress the discussion around responses for older Australians who are experiencing abuse in a range of situations."

"To eradicate elder abuse, we need to ask some important questions as a community.

"What are the rights of older Australians? What rights do we want to safeguard? Do we respect that older Australians choose to take some risks? What really works to prevent elder abuse? NEAC 2019 will provide the perfect platform to answer these questions."

To register and see the latest speakers, check out the developing program on the [NEAC 2019](#) website or follow the [NEAC 2019 event page on Facebook](#).

ROYAL COMMISSION UPDATE

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety held preliminary hearings in Adelaide in January 2019. Commissioner Briggs announced that the Commission had commenced its investigation collecting and analysing information and meeting with key government departments, consumer groups and other agencies.



Commissioner Briggs said the major themes to be addressed were likely to include quality and safety, access and inclusion, young people with disability, interfaces and transitions with other service systems, future challenges and opportunities, and how to deliver quality in a sustainable way.

“We will look at the expectations of Australians for quality and safe care, how and where it should be provided and the workforce implications, amongst other things,” he said.

“We will also look to the future, canvassing demographic pressures, community expectations, technology, risks and opportunities. We will consider aged people’s position in society, what they want and how they are perceived. We will give voice to them.”

Part of the Commission’s review will include site visits and engaging with the community to understand how aged care system currently works.

This Royal Commission is the first of its kind with authority to issue notices requiring a person to give information or provide a statement in writing.

The Adelaide hearings heard about staff shortages, under resourcing, money saving practices and sub-par training for staff. Two additional courtrooms were allocated to accommodate the number of people who attended allowing them to watch the proceedings live on screen.

Health professionals gave evidence of overuse of anti-psychotic medication as a major issue in Australian residential care facilities. Where it should be a treatment of ‘last resort’, it’s alleged anti-psychotic medication is frequently used to address behavioural issues, increasing the number of patient strokes, injuries and deaths.

A survey of nurses conducted by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) exposed serious cases of neglect in aged care facilities.

The hearings also revealed there were over 3,700 reported assaults in Australian nursing homes in the 2017-18 financial year, not including incidents between residents.

Aged and Community Services Australia Chief Executive Patricia Sparrow said the number of Australians working in aged care would need to triple by 2050 to keep up with rising dementia rates.

Following the first round of hearings, the Royal Commission released its first background paper on Australia's current aged care system. Background Paper 1 is called [Navigating the maze: an overview of Australia's current aged care system](#). It outlines different aspects of the aged care system, the services currently being delivered in Australia and the areas in need of substantial reform.

The Royal Commission will be accepting submissions until mid 2019 from members of the public interested in providing evidence. Submissions can be lodged online, via mail or telephone.

- [Online submission](#)
- Mail to: Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, GPO Box 1151, Adelaide SA 5001
- Information helpline: 1800 960 711

SENIORS GUIDE TO QLD HELP APP

ADA Australia has launched an innovative new information guide to support services for seniors. The app, Seniors Guide to Qld Help, is designed specifically for older Queenslanders and those who support them.

The free resource provides information about a broad range of topics, including aged care, transport, housing and neighbour disputes, family and finances, elder abuse, consumer issues, community access, future planning and decision-making.

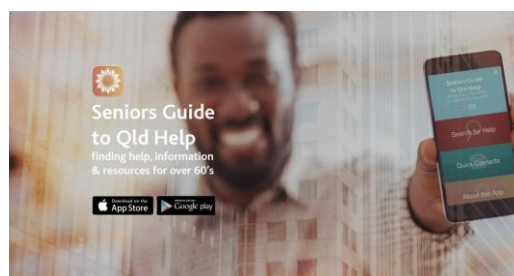
ADA Australia's CEO Geoff Rowe said the app was developed in response to the ongoing frustrations many older Queenslanders experienced when trying to access appropriate information and support.

"It is not uncommon for people to have to call three or four different organisations before they find the right service to help them," Mr Rowe said.

"Sometimes, the whole process can be too overwhelming, and people simply give up on looking for the help they need."

ADA Australia's Manager of Advocacy Services, Rebecca Kok said the app was a valuable tool for support workers and health professionals working with older people.

"We know that support workers providing care in the home often get asked about help for things outside of their usual scope of work. Many of these workers are now equipped with smart phones and can easily access the app for information and referrals to help their clients," she said.



The [Seniors Guide to Qld Help](#) can be downloaded for free on the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#). To find out more, visit the [resources page on our website](#).

RESEARCH FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

New York based Human Rights Watch (HRW) has contacted ADA Australia regarding our interest in an Australian study on the use of anti-psychotic medication in residential aged care.

HRW wants ADA Australia's support to connect with older individuals who can share their direct experiences with chemical restraints in aged care.



HRW wants ADA Australia's support to connect with older individuals who can share their direct experiences with chemical restraints in aged care. This includes family members or chosen caregivers as well. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

Once HRW has gathered client and family experiences it will talk with service providers and government agency officials in order to prepare a report. The aim of the project is to improve "rights-respecting" environments and to improve dignity and well-being of residents.

Older people's experiences of human rights violations are at the core of what HRW does. The organisation confidentially interviews older people about their experiences, analyses what they and their care givers tell them through a human rights legal analysis, and interviews experts and government officials to make recommendations for rights-respecting change. Older people's experiences lead HRW's work. HRW works to gather enough stories so it can identify patterns of violation, that can guide its recommendations

This research builds on HRW's previous work: [They Want Docile: How Nursing Homes in the United States Overmedicate People with Dementia](#).

If you would like to participate in this research, please contact ADA Australia on 1800 700 600 by Friday 8 March.

NEW COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCHEME

The Queensland Community Care (QCC) Program is transitioning to a new Queensland Community Support Scheme from 1 July 2019.

The timing of the transition aligns with the Queensland roll out of the NDIS which is scheduled to be fully implemented by 1 July 2019. The Queensland Government has introduced the new Scheme in response to data indicating that many people currently receiving QCC services may be eligible for supports under the NDIS.



The new Scheme is markedly different from the current QCC program which provides ongoing support (usually one to five hours per week) for people with a severe or profound disability, or a condition which restricts their ability to carry out activities of daily living.

The new Scheme will target people with low level disability, chronic health or mental health needs and will generally feature short term support to improve their independence and wellbeing. People eligible for the NDIS will not be able to receive assistance under this new Scheme.

In preparation for the change, the Queensland Government has called for all people currently receiving services under the Queensland Community Care program to check their eligibility for the NDIS by the 30 March 2019. QCC recipients who are NDIS eligible will be required to transition to the NDIS as soon as possible. Those who are not NDIS eligible will be assisted onto the new Queensland Community Support Scheme.

Current QCCS recipients can check their NDIS eligibility by completing a checklist on the [Am I eligible page](#) of the NDIS website or by calling the NDIS on 1800 800 110. Assistance to determine a client's NDIA eligibility and help to complete the necessary NDIS Access Request is available through Local Area Coordinators, Early Childhood Early Intervention partners or local NDIS offices. Visit the NDIS [Contact us](#) page to find an office near you.

CAMPAIGN TO END AGEISM AND DISCRIMINATION

More than 20 high-profile organisations and individuals have formed a powerful coalition to help fight ageism and age discrimination in Australia, called the *EveryAGE Counts Campaign*.



Ageism against older people is stereotyping, discrimination and mistreatment based solely upon age. It comes from negative attitudes and beliefs about what it means to be older and impacts on older people's confidence, quality of life, job prospects, health and control over life decisions.

EveryAGE Counts is an advocacy campaign that aims to shift negative social norms on ageing and towards older people; raise awareness of ageism; campaign against the structural barriers caused by ageism; and research the attitudes and beliefs that prevent older people from participating equally in social, civic and economic life.

Robert Tickner, who was instrumental in launching everyAGE Counts, said the campaign has an action-oriented agenda.

"We would like to see governments at all levels help drive a public conversation about ageing and ageism including support for a broad, sustained public awareness and education campaign," Mr Tickner said.

EveryAGE Counts is calling on members of the public to join the campaign by signing its pledge to end ageism and discrimination at www.everyagecounts.org.au.

UPCOMING EVENTS

ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT: FIONA MACKIE

The Advocate caught up with ADA Australia advocate, Fiona Mackie and found out a little about her life and career to date.

What inspired you to become an advocate?

My youngest was born with cystic fibrosis and autism, so I had to learn to advocate for him. I spent 11 years as his full-time carer and, in that time, discovered how difficult it is for



parents and family members to advocate on behalf of a loved one. Helping to give others a voice is what inspired me to join the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP).

Tell us a little about your career and life to date

I used to work as an environmental health officer, mainly dealing with food safety in businesses. My duties also included addressing public health complaints, which is where I first learned how disability can impact people's lives. I encountered many cases of hoarding, from storing old household items to keeping a staggering number of pets in one home. You learn to empathise and appreciate how someone's personal situation can affect their everyday actions.

While raising my children, I completed a Graduate Diploma in Education and did my Masters in Inclusive Education. After teaching casually for a few years, I moved on to work in driver testing at the Department of Roads and Maritime. Now, I'm working at ADA Australia as a NDAP advocate on the Gold Coast.

What is the most rewarding part of your role?

Seeing people just like me take back their power is extremely satisfying. As a mother, I had to find my own voice when I felt powerless. Now I'm in a position to help others, I feel like my work has value.

Is there a standout moment you've had in the role?

Any time I can empower someone to speak up is a standout moment. People are amazed when others listen and want to work with them. It comes down to thoroughly understanding someone and helping them to achieve their goals.

Tell us something about yourself that may surprise your colleagues

I love learning new things and challenging myself, so at the end of university I joined the Melbourne Army Reserve as an engineer. Infantry training was part of what I had to do – I'm not sure how many people can say they've thrown a hand grenade or fired a mortar! I've also bomb searched the MCG and David Jones, built bridges and cleared land mines. One night, we were in sleeping bags in a paddock and were pleasantly woken up by a group of kangaroos charging over the top of us. My time in the Army Reserve was definitely demanding but well worth it.

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MARCH

4-5 [NDS Victorian Conference 2019](#)

5-6 [COTA + ACSA Quality in Aged Care Conference](#)

11-17 [Brain Awareness Week](#)

26 [Purple Day for Epilepsy](#)

APRIL

1 [Parkinson's Awareness Month](#)

13-14 [Accessible Outdoor Camping](#)

INDUSTRY NEWS

Aged Care

- [Aged care navigator trial begins](#)
- [The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety explained](#)
- [Aged care inquiry told up to 80% of dementia patients prescribed psychotropic drugs](#)
- [Aged care homes regularly ration continence pads, royal commission hears](#)

Disability

- [Parliament backs disability abuse inquiry](#)
- [Royal commission calls grow as disability campaigners tell stories of abuse and trauma](#)
- [Public schools lack resources to meet needs of 'invisible' students with disabilities](#)
- [Inclusive emoji update sees better representation of disability](#)

NDIS

- [Calls for wider screening of disability workers](#)
- [National database to ensure safe and quality workers for NDIS participants](#)
- [Federal Government under pressure to repay state taxpayers for NDIS delays](#)
- [Meet the NDIS career changers closing the support worker gap](#)

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