



July / August 2020



CEO'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the July-August edition of The Advocate.

Our thoughts are with our Victorian colleagues, families and loved ones as they deal with the Coronavirus crisis and work to stem community transmissions. As a member of the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN), ADA Australia advocates have been able to support our Victorian counterparts with extra hands to provide advocacy support and information to older Victorians.

In Queensland we have been reminded that we need to continue to be vigilant to support and protect older people, particularly those living in aged care facilities, to be safe from the virus. New Coronavirus cases have again emerged in the community. Queensland Health have been quick to take precautionary measures with visitor restrictions again placed on aged care homes, and in addition disability accommodation services, across Brisbane and greater Brisbane areas.

Previously we have seen that these restrictions are very short term and lifted as soon as it has been determined that there is no immediate risk of widespread transmission in the community. We hope to see this continue, though at the time of writing understand the restrictions will be in place for a minimum of four weeks.

In other news, I am pleased to announce that ADA Australia's community legal service is now fully operational. ADA Law's primary focus is supporting people whose capacity is questioned as they navigate service systems, including tribunals in Queensland.

In addition, we have also launched MHLaw Queensland, an online directory which provides practical tools and information for legal and mental health professionals, as well as people living with a mental health condition and their supporters.

In this issue we talk in detail about these new services and introduce Karen Williams, Principal Solicitor for ADA Law. I would particularly like to congratulate the ADA team who have worked hard over many months to bring these two major initiatives to fruition in an uncertain and changing environment.

Finally, this year Seniors Week went virtual with a focus on sharing stories and recipes online. To celebrate the team at ADA Australia put together a [collection of their favourite recipes](#) to help keep the inspiration flowing in our kitchens, as we all are perhaps spending more time at home than usual.

Please continue to take care and stay safe.

Geoff Rowe

ADA Australia CEO

INTRODUCING ADA LAW, OUR NEW COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE



ADA Australia's human rights advocacy service will now operate as [ADA Law](#), a registered Community Legal Service. As a Community Legal Service, we can now provide legal advice and representation in addition to advocacy services for guardianship and administration matters.

As ADA Law, ADA Australia can provide a valuable human rights legal and advocacy service to support adults whose capacity is in question or who have a cognitive impairment when they are:

- seeking to review, change, or revoke:
 - decision makers appointed by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT)
 - Enduring Powers of Attorney
 - Advance Health Directives
- needing support to work with their existing decision makers
- appearing at Mental Health Review Tribunal (MHRT) hearings for ECT applications; Forensic Order Reviews; (or Treatment Authorities under 18 years of age); and are referred by Legal Aid Queensland.

ADA Law is also available to support people receiving aged care and experiencing elder abuse, either by a family member, service provider, or attorney.

Call ADA Law on 1800 ADA LAW (1800 232 529), or visit the website at www.adalaw.com.au

Meet Karen Williams, ADA Law's Principal Solicitor, in The Advocate Spotlight.

> www.adalaw.com.au

MHLAW QLD, A NEW MENTAL HEALTH LEGAL DIRECTORY

ADA Australia in partnership with Queensland Advocacy Incorporated (QAI) has launched a new online mental health legal directory MHLaw Qld - www.mhlawqld.com.au.

MHLaw Qld is a one-stop directory where you will find comprehensive information and services that can help you navigate legal and other issues which impact people experiencing mental health issues in Queensland.

Lawyers, mental health professionals as well as people living with a mental health condition and their supporters can now easily:

- find local legal and community support services who can help with common legal issues
- get answers to frequently asked questions
- find information to help navigate issues under the Mental Health Act, including step-by-step flow charts
- access information on mental health recovery and clinical practice guidelines
- access information about understanding capacity and decision-making



COVID-19 UPDATE

The outbreak of COVID-19 in Victoria and new cases in Queensland is a reminder that we need to remain vigilant about keeping safe from the virus, particularly older Queenslanders. Our condolences go out to families who have lost loved ones during this crisis and all Victorians as they work to stop further spread in the community.



Earlier this month there had been a small number of new COVID-19 cases in Queensland. As a precaution, the Queensland Chief Health Officer, placed new restrictions on aged care homes in areas of south east Queensland, which were quickly lifted as soon as it was determined safe to do so.

Unfortunately, we have since seen more cases of COVID-19 emerging in Brisbane. As at 22 August, restrictions have again been placed on facilities, including disability accommodation services, in Brisbane and greater Brisbane local government areas. We can expect to continue to see temporary restrictions placed on facilities when there is a risk of an outbreak of COVID-19 in communities.

Whenever restrictions are in place, it's important that residential aged care facilities work with residents and families to facilitate alternative ways of maintaining social contact and activity – residents have a right to access family and friends. For example, make sure all residents can access an iPad or mobile phone for video calls or arrange for window visits where people can see each other and talk over the phone.

Information about current advice regarding COVID-19 and guidelines for visiting residential aged care homes in Queensland is available on our website at

www.adaaustralia.com.au/covid19.

If you have any issues or concerns, ADA Australia is here to help. We offer free advocacy support. Phone us on 1800 700 600.



ROYAL COMMISSION INTO AGED CARE

General Submissions closed on 31 July 2020, however, submissions on the impact of COVID-19 and in response to the matters to be examined in the hearing on COVID-19 commencing on 10 August 2020 will remain open until **Friday, 4 September 2020**.



Submissions on these matters are to be emailed to covid19submissions@royalcommission.gov.au

DISABILITY ROYAL COMMISSION WE CAN HELP YOU SHARE YOUR STORY

The Disability Royal Commission has scheduled the next round of public hearings in Brisbane.



Week of 12 October: Brisbane – Public hearing into the barriers experienced by students with disability in accessing and obtaining a safe, quality and inclusive school education and consequent life course impacts

Week of 16 November: Brisbane – Public hearing into long term, including indefinite, detention and the experiences of people with disability in the criminal justice system.

Week of 23 November: Brisbane – Public hearing into the experiences of First Nations people with disability and their families in contact with child protection systems.

ADA Australia can help you share your story with the Disability Royal Commission. You can talk to us in confidence and we will:

- listen and link you with any immediate support you need, for example, help to access services, stop discrimination, or make complaints
- talk about how you might share your story, if you decide you want to participate in the Disability Royal Commission

- help you tell your story in your own words and in the way that suits you best – writing it down, making a video or audio recording, making pictures.
- submit your story to the Royal Commission, or help you arrange a private session to talk about your experiences if you would like to do this.
- organise any support you need such as an interpreter or communication support.
- link you with support for ongoing counselling and/or psychological support.

This support is available to people living in the Central Queensland and Gold Coast regions. Visit our website to download the fact sheet for more information or to give to people with disability you support.

www.adaaustralia.com.au/disability-royal-commission

There are also services available to support you through any difficult feelings you might be having because of the Royal Commission. Services are available statewide. Find free [counselling services](#) in your area.

First Nations People

The Disability Royal Commission particularly wants to hear the experiences of First Nations people with disability. Hear [Cody Skinner](#), one of the local champions for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network Queensland (ATSIDNQ) talk about his thoughts on the Royal Commission.

ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT: KAREN WILLIAMS PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR, ADA LAW

Now that ADA Law has been granted the status of a Community Legal Centre (CLC), what are your aspirations for the service?

There is an opportunity now, with the Human Rights Act 2019 operational, and Guardianship and Administration Act 2000 amendments coming into place later in the year, for people considered to have a cognitive impairment (either short or long term) to have a greater say in their own decisions. ADA Law will hopefully play a greater role in ensuring more people are included in decision making about them.



Is there an unmet need that you would love ADA Law to be able to address if further funding were fortuitously to become available?

Yes. It would be good to have mobile or virtual clinics to advise and/or assist people to complete future planning documents. These documents would include Advance Health Directives and Enduring Powers of Attorney, so that if down the track a person requires health decisions to be made (including mental health), or they need a formal decision maker, then the person has nominated someone they trust to make the decisions that they would want to make.

What roles have you performed throughout your legal career that have led you to the current role as Principal Solicitor, ADA Law?

Formerly a Barrister, involved in Guardianship and Mental Health matters, and I co-edited an Elder Law text book for Undergraduate Students.

Describe something you enjoy doing outside of work to achieve a positive work/life balance?

Sea kayaking most weekends (unless a strong westerly is blowing) helps me exercise and enjoy the great Brisbane all year-round weather.

The COVID-19 pandemic has meant major, and in many instances, unwanted changes upon us however has there been a positive in your life that is attributable to this period of recent upheaval?

COVID19 has given me the opportunity to improve my digital skills and focus on working from home without the traffic interruptions. Plus, keeping the local coffee shop well supported!

Where do you dream of taking your next holiday, in a post COVID environment with all restrictions on travel lifted? What do you imagine awaits you at that destination?

I would love to be able to return to Sicily and stay in the baroque area of Syracuse. Being a port city, I can swim in the Mediterranean, and buy beautifully fresh seafood, nuts, fruit and vegetables at the local markets, and generally soak up the beautiful architecture.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- 4 [Virtual Brisbane Disability Expo](#)
- 7 [Women's Health Week](#)
- 11 [Care Expo](#)
- 13 [Disability Action Week](#)
- 21 [International Dementia Conference](#)

SEPTEMBER 2020						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

INDUSTRY NEWS

Aged Care

- [PresCare to exit residential aged care, with six operating facilities now for sale](#)
- [Help for families of a person in care during a pandemic](#)
- [Australia far behind in monitoring and reporting aged care quality](#)
- [Review unpacks 'vicious cycle' of staffing and PPE shortages at Newmarch](#)
- [COVID-19 Accelerates Aged Care Digital Communications Platform](#)
- [Preventing Financial Elder Abuse Webinar](#)

Disability

- [Disability sector left vulnerable by coronavirus response despite early warnings, royal commission hears](#)
[The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability has published responses to its Education and Learning issues paper.](#)
- [A new National Disability Strategy – Stage 2 consultations](#)

NDIS

- [NDIS update for Queensland](#)
- [New Supported Independent Living Participant Information Pack](#)
- [Disability sector calls for greater accountability re NDIA settlement outcomes](#)

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If you would like a printable copy, please click [here](#) or email info@adaaustralia.com.au

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