

# THE ADVOCATE

Your aged care and disability advocacy news, 18 August 2021

Contact us: 1800 700 600

## Message from the CEO

Welcome to the July-August edition of The Advocate.

### Stay connected

Our thoughts are with those people and families dealing with COVID-19 outbreaks and who are still in lock downs. We see that restrictions may need to be put in place anywhere at any time, and we know the distress that visitor restrictions and separation from loved ones can cause.

Older people and people with disability are more vulnerable to the impact of COVID-19 so we need precautions to prevent the virus from getting into aged care facilities and group homes. However, it's incredibly important that there is a balance between keeping people safe and keeping people well. Residents need to have contact with their friends and family members, during times of restrictions, however they can.

This is one of the reasons the aged care sector worked together to develop the [Aged Care Visitor Access Code](#). Providers have a responsibility to ensure that residents can still have contact with their friends and family members whether it's by a video call or even window visits. It's incredibly important that older people continue to have visual contact with their family for their mental health and physical health. The Visitor Code has just been updated and is calling for State and Territory Health Directives to list 'Partners in Care', who are people who go in every day to support their loved one, as 'essential care visitors.' This would mean they are always permitted to visit and provide care at residential facilities during community outbreaks.

Advocates are available to work with families and providers to develop solutions for families to keep in touch with residents. Call 1800 700 600.

There are many questions to be answered about the future of visitor restrictions and the rights of older people in aged care as more of the population is vaccinated. Is it reasonable to continue to impose the current level of restrictions for residents and families who have been vaccinated? And how do we safeguard those who have not been vaccinated, regardless of whether it's by choice or circumstance? We will bring you more on this discussion as it develops.

Sadly, one in eight people over 65 living in Australia experience feelings of loneliness and one in twelve experience social isolation. Feeling lonely and being isolated should not be a normal part of ageing. Connection to other people, from across the generations, provides security, support, happiness and a sense of purpose.

In this edition we will look at the Staying Connected initiative through the Older Person's Advocacy Network (OPAN) including options for making social connections.

### Welcome to new Board members and farewell to outgoing member

I am pleased to announce two new members have joined the ADA Australia Board of Directors. Natalie Siegel-Brown and Lucille Chalmers bring a wealth of experience in advocating for the rights of people experiencing vulnerability. Natalie was the former Queensland Public Guardian and is the current Managing Director of Child Wise, and Lucille has a long history as a senior health and human services executive and is currently Deputy CEO at Brisbane South Primary Health Network. I would like to extend a warm welcome to both and look forward to working together.

We also say farewell to Board Director Stephanie Gallagher. Stephanie has been a member of the ADA Board since 2017 and I would like to thank her for the contribution she has made to the organisation and our work supporting vulnerable Queenslanders. Stephanie has been appointed to the Brisbane Magistrates Court and will also undertake the role of Brisbane Coroner at the Coroners Court of Queensland. We wish Stephanie all the best.



### Increased advocacy services

Work has commenced on increasing aged care advocacy services following the additional investment announced in the recent Federal Budget. Details of positions for ADA Australia and other advocacy organisations across the country are available on the OPAN website <https://opan.org.au/advocatejobs/>.

I am also pleased to announce that the [Aged Care Navigator program](#) will continue for 2021-22. Our Navigators will be available to help older people and families in Wide Bay and South Brisbane areas access the aged care services they need. I also encourage any providers in these areas to refer potential clients they connect with who might be at the start of their journey and need assistance with the My Aged Care process.

### Steering systemic change

There are significant reforms and policy reviews underway across many areas of social and community services and health. Some of which, include domestic violence and women's safety, voluntary assisted dying, the NDIS, the treatment of people with disability through the Disability Royal Commission, isolation and loneliness in Queensland, rental reform and fees charged by the Public Trustee. These are really important issues with significant impacts, and ADA Australia is contributing to these discussions to make sure the interests and human rights of the people we support are represented. A summary of some of our submissions is included below.

In good news for people with disability. The collective call to the Australian Government to 'Pause, Reset and Co-design' on the issue of independent NDIS assessments has been heard, with Minister Reynolds announcing that independent assessments would not proceed.

### Responding to the Abuse of Older Queenslanders

We are continuing our campaign to take action against abuse of older people. In collaboration with the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit and the Office of the Public Guardian we are working to strengthen service responses to, and safeguards for, elder abuse. This will culminate in a Continuing Legal Education Master package for legal, health and community sector professionals being developed over the next two years.

We also continue our look into Enduring Power of Attorney, with the final instalment of our three-part case study. Spoiler alert - it is the outcome of autonomy and choice we all would hope for. Unfortunately, without support and education the rights of a person with impaired capacity to make or participate in decisions is often overlooked.

### Multicultural Month

This month we are celebrating Queensland's Multicultural Month. In this edition we introduce Carolyn Sjaarda Richards, ADA Australia's dedicated Multicultural advocate who specialises in working with and supporting clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Go well. Until next time.

Geoff Rowe

## Meet the newest members of our Board

### Natalie Siegel-Brown

Natalie is currently the Managing Director of Child Wise, a leading global NGO that provides safeguarding services and education in Australia, New Zealand, Asia, the Pacific and the US. Most recently Natalie was the Queensland Public Guardian. In her time as Public Guardian, Natalie passionately advocated for the rights of people in aged care, particularly with respect to restrictive practices; and actively advocated and intervened in cases of elder abuse. Natalie frequently jointly advocated with ADA Australia on these issues, to strengthen calls for change through a united voice. Similarly, Natalie was an active advocate for people with disability and strongly moved for changes in the use of restrictive practices and the critical role of advocacy agencies like ADA in the NDIS-participant funding process. Through this, Natalie became what she calls "ADA's Number 1 fan".



Natalie has unique experience leading organisations in all three sectors: government, NGO and private. Although she is now in a child-focused role, her passion for advocating for people with disability and older people is a flame that still burns bright - so the ADA Board was a natural attraction.

Natalie's diverse background has been singularly driven by a passion to make the world a better place.

### Lucille Chalmers

Lucille is a senior health and human services executive with a proven track record in change management, service re-design and increasing revenue to achieve strategic vision in the delivery of high quality and sustainable health services. She has held senior roles with large not for profit and government agencies and has significant experience in leading major change initiatives and designing new service delivery and capability building programs. Lucille has a particular passion for community driven co-design to address health inequities and improve health outcomes.

Her current role is the Deputy CEO at Brisbane South Primary Health Network, a role that includes strategic and operational oversight of all commissioned activity across Child, Youth & Family, Aged Care, Mental Health, Alcohol and other Drugs, First Nations and Multicultural Health.



## Stay connected

Contact the OPAN **Stay Connected and Supported Line** for assistance to connect in your community.

Phone 1800 001 321  
(8am - 8pm Monday to Friday)



The **Older Persons COVID-19 Support Line** is there for older people, their friends, family or carers if they would like to talk to someone about COVID-19 - concerns, restrictions and ask questions.

Phone 1800 171 866 (6am - 10pm 7 days a week)

Request a **Community Visitor** with shared interests for a regular chat, visit or outing.

Phone 07 3379 7200

The **FriendLine** is available for anyone who needs to connect or have a chat over a cuppa. Volunteers are ready for a yarn and to share a story or two.

Phone 1800 424 287 (10am - 8pm, 7 days a week)

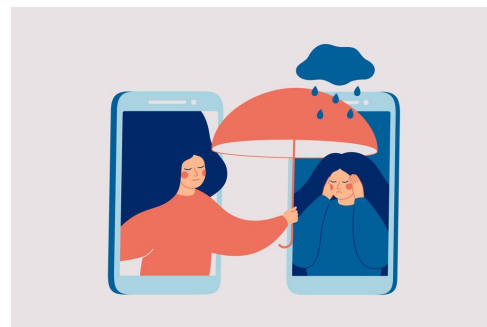
**Be Connected** - learn online skills. Knowing how to get online, use a smartphone, or make video calls can help older people stay more connected with family and friends. Be Connected provides step-by-step help to get older people started with technology or to feel more confident using it.

Phone 1300 795 897 (9am - 5pm Monday to Friday).

## Grief and Bereavement and Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Specialist grief and counselling, information and support to older people experiencing grief and loss, sadness, numbness or anxiety.

Phone 1800 222 200



## Patricia and Farid's story

Staying connected at home



## Survey - Financial Elder Abuse

Griffith University has partnered with ADA Australia to conduct research on the prevalence and cost of financial elder abuse in our communities.

☒ We ask you to complete a short survey which includes questions on your observations of elder financial abuse issues and provides opportunity for you to provide feedback.

Complete the survey here - <https://prodsurvey.rcs.griffith.edu.au/prodls200/index.php/822825?lang=en>

## Aged Care Navigator



### Help with accessing aged care

ADA Australia is your  
Aged Care System Navigator



Contact 1800 700 600 for free support

- ✓ Continuing in 2021-2022
- ✓ Available across Wide Bay-Burnett including Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Maryborough, North Burnett, South Burnett and Cherbourg and Brisbane south
- ✓ Practical support to help older people make their way through the aged care system and get access to services
- ✓ Referrals from service providers are welcome

ADA Australia will continue to be available throughout 2021-2022 in the Wide Bay Burnett and Fraser Coast regions, and across Brisbane south to provide practical support to older people to help them make their way through the aged care system and get access to services.

Our support is available to older people and their families and supporters and includes help to:

- understand how the aged care system works and the types of support available
- contact My Aged Care
- apply and get an assessment, including help with filling in forms
- find organisations who can deliver services in the area.

The service is free and independent, and is particularly helpful for those who have limited access to the internet, live in rural or remote areas, or are unlikely to seek aged care support without assistance from others.

Contact your Aged Care Navigator on 1800 700 600.

## Systemic change

### Submissions & Contributions

**To:** *Queensland Parliamentary Health & Environment Committee*

**Issue:** - response to the draft Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021

**Views:** - we want to ensure any legislation is underpinned by human rights such as individual choice  
 - that appropriate safeguards are included  
 - should include advocacy support to help people navigate and exercise their choices.



**To:** *Australian Attorney-General's Department*

**Issue:** - introduction of a National Register of Enduring Powers of Attorney (EPOA)

**Views:** - consider who has the authority to lodge an EPOA on the register, and flexibility in how it is lodged with post, online and in-person options  
 - needs documents to verify the validity of an EPOA  
 - that the system be complemented with a program of community education about the role of an EPOA.

**To:** *Disability Royal Commission*

**Issue:** - the experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability

**Views:** - people with disability from different cultural backgrounds are not a homogenous group  
 - disability is understood differently by different cultural communities  
 - examples provided of discrimination and additional challenges experienced by people with disability from different cultural backgrounds that ADA Australia have supported.

**To:** *Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce*

**Issue:** - options for legislating against coercive control and the creation of a stand alone domestic violence offence

**Views:** - older women and women with disability who experience coercive control by a person who they are dependent on for care are at a heightened risk  
 - the current domestic and family violence service systems response is insufficient to deal with coercive control



- ADA Australia supports the introduction of legislative reform, including criminal offences, to deal with these issues
- there is also a need for greater support programs and housing services, tailored to meet the needs of women with disability and older women, to help victims escape abuse.

## NAIDOC Week 2021 Heal Country

Our advocates enjoyed many fantastic celebrations during NAIDOC Week.

(Left to right)

Ben & Jo at Rockhampton

James & Aunty Ruth ATSIDNQ Champion at Cairns NAIDOC Friday in the Park

Christine at Townsville NAIDOC Deadly Day Out

Barry & Seriako Stephen at Cairns NAIDOC Friday in the Park



## From the ADA Law Desk

### Enduring Power of Attorney: a case study FINAL

#### The Situation

ADA Law has been in contact with Randolph who was placed in an aged care facility following his recent admission to hospital. Randolph's EPOA was enacted during his hospital admission. Randolph explained that he was not happy with his current living arrangement at the aged care facility and that he was concerned about his finances and had not received any statements from his bank. Randolph's capacity was impaired in hospital but since then he has made significant improvements. Randolph's capacity needs to be reassessed to determine if he can make his own accommodation and financial decisions. Catch up on [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).

#### What's the issue?

Randolph was referred by his general practitioner to a specialist geriatrician for a capacity assessment. The assessment confirmed that Randolph has the ability to make his own accommodation and financial decisions. However, Randolph now needs to have his capacity declared for these decisions.

#### How can ADA Law help?

ADA Law supported Randolph to apply to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) for a declaration of capacity. With the evidence from the geriatrician, QCAT were able to make a declaration of capacity for Randolph.

ADA Law also helped Randolph to amend his Enduring Power of Attorney to include a clause that his attorneys would send him a copy of his financial statement every quarter.

#### The outcome

Randolph was able to make his own choice about where he lives. He decided that he wanted to return home. Randolph was assessed and deemed eligible for a home care package which meant that he could receive support to live independently at home.

#### Key terms

*Capacity:* means the person is capable of:



- understanding the nature and effect of the decision
- freely and voluntarily making the decision
- communicating the decision in some way.

**Capacity Assessment:** is an assessment undertaken, at the time a decision is required, to determine whether the person has sufficient capacity to make the decision.

**QCAT:** Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal is the independent tribunal that can make a declaration about an adult's decision-making capacity for some or all matters; and can appoint guardians or administrators to make some or all personal or financial decisions.

[Contact ADA Law](#)



## Multicultural Queensland Month

**Meet ADA Australia's Multicultural Advocate, Carolyn Sjaarda Richards**

**As a multicultural advocate, what is your main role?**

My role is the same as all other ADA advocates, that is, to provide information and support to help people raise and resolve any issues they are having with their aged care services.

However, working with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds means that this may need to be provided in other languages - everyone has the right to information that is delivered in a way that they can understand. There are many resources available to assist with this.

**How long have you been an advocate and what is the most rewarding part of your role?**

I have worked for ADA Australia for ten years. I think the most rewarding aspect of advocacy is the ability to empower older people. This enables them to improve the quality of their care or get the things they need for better quality of life.

**Why is aged care that considers a person's culture important?**

Every individual and family is different regardless of where you were born or what your first language is. To have support that is flexible and understands your cultural needs without having to explain why you need it this way reduces stress and anxiety. We know it can be frightening to not have anything or anyone around you that looks or sounds similar to you and as we age, I believe most of us need this familiarity more. However, culture is so much more than language. Each client should be seen as an individual and asked - what do you need? and how can we help?

If you have the opportunity, I encourage everyone to join in a local multicultural community [event](#) near you this August. Happy Multicultural Queensland Month everyone!



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