

# THE ADVOCATE

Your aged care and disability advocacy news, 12 October 2023

Contact us: 1800 700 600

## Message from the CEO

Happily, seniors are centre stage. Not only is it Queensland Seniors Month, a month-long celebration and recognition of what seniors bring to our communities, but there is also significant progress on developing a new Aged Care Act, one which will finally put older people at the centre of aged care. OPAN and COTA Australia have been travelling around the country consulting on a new rights-based Aged Care Act and funding principles for a sustainable aged care system.

I know that drafting legislation can seem far removed from the day-to-day reality across aged care, but this really is an opportunity for us to change the foundations of the aged care system in Australia. We don't rewrite this legislation very often (current Aged Care Act was passed in 1997), and it's important we make sure that older people are at the front of the conversation.

Almost 4,000 seniors signed up for consultation events across Australia and the feedback has informed our submissions to the government on a new Aged Care Act. One of the messages that came through clearly and consistently was the need for monitoring and enforcement mechanisms for the new Act. There will be more opportunities to have your say on these important reforms, when the Exposure Draft of the Act is released in December. Register your interest for future consultations [here](#).

We also head to the polls this weekend to vote on the Voice to Parliament Referendum. This week I have hosted discussions about the Referendum with the purpose of providing independent information and facilitating informed discussion for all ADA Australia staff.



I would encourage all eligible Australians to take the opportunity to make an informed vote at this weekend's Voice to Parliament Referendum.

### **Queensland Seniors Calendar**

I am pleased to announce that the Queensland Seniors Calendar 2024 is here! We look forward each year to providing this handy reference guide to supports and services available to Queensland seniors. This year the Calendar celebrates the remarkable ingenuity and resilience of seniors who helped build the society we enjoy today, with a fun look back and then and now. Details on how to get your copies in this edition.

### **North Queensland care finder doors open**

ADA Link care finder service doors are officially open across North Queensland with the team hosting Community Conversation events in Townsville, Ayr, Innisfail, Ingham and Charters Towers. Local community organisations came together to hear about the care finder program but also discuss the best referral pathways and the barriers to accessing services in their communities.

### **Disability Royal Commission**

The final report from the Disability Royal Commission is out. With 12 volumes, 5,000 pages and 222 recommendations, we are sifting through the information and welcome the government's initial step to set up a taskforce to coordinate its response. The recommendations call for sweeping changes across all areas of society, and it's important the government takes this opportunity to respond comprehensively and meaningfully. We are expecting a report on progress early next year. It's an exciting time for the disability community, and the report has been received positively. In this edition I have outlined our key takeaways from the report so far.

### **Welcome and farewell to ADA Board members**

I would like to take this opportunity to farewell and thank two of ADA Australia's long-serving Board Directors, Paul Johnson and Jennifer Pouver. Paul joined our Board in 2014 and brought a wealth of experience in the aged care sector, and also served as Deputy Chair. Jennifer joined us in 2017 and brought a wealth of experience in government social services and not-for-profit organisations. She also served as Treasurer for two years. Thank you both. It's been a pleasure working with you over these many years.

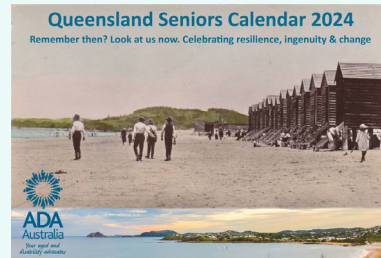
I am also pleased to announce two new members have joined our Board of Directors. A warm welcome to Preya Pillay and Steve Cunningham. We have included some information about Preya's and Steve's backgrounds and what they bring to ADA Australia. We are also looking for a First Nations Director to join our Board so please contact us if you, or someone you know, could be interested.

Until next time.

Geoff Rowe

## Queensland Seniors Calendar 2024

We were pleased to have Craig Crawford MP, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services launch our 2024 Queensland Seniors Calendar at the South East Queensland Seniors Forum on the 5th of October.



To get your copy or copies for your clients email [info@adaaustralia.com.au](mailto:info@adaaustralia.com.au)

## Care finder doors open in North QLD

Part of the government's national care finder scheme, this free new service connects vulnerable seniors in the Northern Queensland Primary Health Network region with essential face-to-face support to navigate the aged care and community services maze.



Thank you to everyone who joined us for our [launch events](#).

## Meet our Longreach care finder

Meet Jo Winkleman, our new ADA Link care finder and aged care advocate based in the Longreach area. Jo is an Ilfracombe local and has lived and raised her family and worked in Western Queensland for over 20 years. She has a passion for regional communities and the people that live there.

"I am passionate about helping people and strive to see our most vulnerable community members receive the same access to aged care services and opportunities."

In her spare time you'll find Jo keeping busy by spending time in the garden, running and hiking, as well as volunteering for multiple community organisations and events across the region.



## Meet the newest members of our Board

### **Preya Pillay**

Preya is a Chartered Accountant, who brings more than 25 years' experience in finance, treasury, investments, strategic procurement and property, having worked with major listed companies, the public sector and more recently the not-for-profit/for-purpose sector in health and care settings. She has held senior finance roles in Anglicare Southern Queensland and Southern Cross Care Qld within the Aged and Disability sectors. Preya holds extensive experience in business turnaround and growing financial sustainability with a focus on financial stewardship and insight driven decision making. She has implemented significant change initiatives in implementing large scale enterprise resource planning systems, business process improvements and increasing value in Strategic Procurement and infrastructure projects



She is a passionate advocate for social justice and is driven to improve outcomes for marginalised, disadvantaged and isolated individuals and communities, irrespective of their background, race or gender.

### **Steve Cunningham**

With over 20 years' experience across numerous industries including Defence, Financial Services, Health Care and Community Services, Steve is a recognised digital transformation, cybersecurity and risk management thought leader known for enabling the requisite strategic vision and key relationships across many boundaries to guide innovative and sound business direction at the forefront of the Executive agenda within a range of private, public and Not for Profit organisations.



For the past 15 years Steve has been involved at all levels of senior management building knowledge and capabilities particularly in the community services and NFP sector within such organisations as Royal Flying Doctors, Richmond Fellowship Queensland and most recently Mercy Community Services. As a long-term member of Australian Institute of Company Directors, and with lived experience across mental health, disability and aged care practicalities, Steve has constantly shared his dedication and experiences that have focused him on assisting our community in numerous engagements and volunteer undertakings.

# Disability Royal Commission

The major message from the [Disability Royal Commission final report](#) is a call for an end to segregated systems, particularly it recommended:

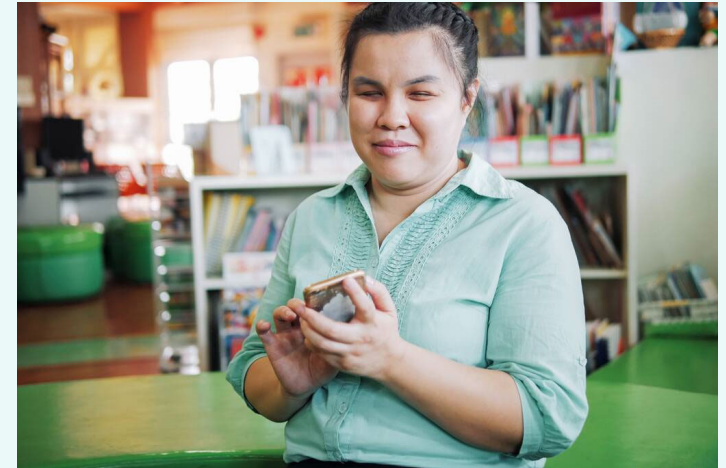
- special schools should be phased out over 28 years and all students, regardless of support needs, should be educated together in mainstream schools.
- enterprises that employ only people with disability, usually at less than minimum wages, should also be phased out over 10 years.
- group homes and similar forms of accommodation constitute segregated accommodation and should be phased out over 15 years.

We know that these particular recommendations may be concerning for some people, and we will need to see what steps the government proposes. We understand the differing views on having choice within these systems, but also know that mainstream systems need to make more efforts to become fully inclusive.

As disability advocates, we particularly welcome the acknowledgement and recommendations that disability advocacy must be better funded to meet demand. We also welcome recommendations related to embedding supported decision making practices. We have long worked to promote the rights of all people, including those living with cognitive impairment, to have a say in the decisions that impact their lives, and a more comprehensive approach to educating professionals, organisations and representatives is needed. However, we would want to ensure that this work was assigned to an appropriately independent entity.

Other key takeaways include:

- Recommendation to remove default gag laws for those in the guardianship and administration system, to provide greater transparency, along with measures to better include people with disability in tribunal hearings



- A disability rights act to enshrine international human rights law into Australian law
- A new complaints mechanism
- A federal government portfolio for disability with a dedicated minister.

## What Queenslanders with disability are telling us

Although there is excitement in the disability community about changes that will result from the Disability Royal Commission outcomes, there is more work to be done improving the NDIS. These are some of the key issues our disability advocates are currently assisting with.

**1. NDIS access continues to be an area where people with disability need support.** Carers, families and people with disability find it difficult to navigate the access process, generally in terms of gathering the evidence needed to define what is reasonable and necessary for them. Our disability advocates can help people with the access process, providing guidance and assistance with obtaining evidence, and liaison with the NDIA , and Local Area Coordinators.

**2. NDIS Plan Reviews.** Where plan funding is not meeting a person's support needs, our disability advocacy can help NDIS participants through the Plan Review process, to meet evidence and timeline requirements.

**3. Service issues.** Where your services are not meeting your expectations or wishes, our advocates can help people with disability to talk to their service providers to identify and resolve issues.



NDIS Access



NDIS Plan Reviews



Service issues



Decision making

**4. Decision making.** Disability advocates can help people with disability negotiate with their formal or informal supporters and decision makers to resolve conflict, and our community legal service, ADA Law, is here to assist when representation is needed for formal guardianship and administration matters.

## Join us for the Elder Abuse Forum



Be part of the conversation and contribute to much needed reforms to combat elder abuse.

The Public Advocate in collaboration with ADA Australia, Caxton Legal Centre and the Department of Child Safety, Seniors, and Disability Services (DCSSDS), is hosting the Elder Abuse Forum on **Thursday 9th November 2023** at Parliament House.

## Reclaiming the word old



ADA Australia was proud to be a sponsor of the [Embolder2023 National Symposium](#). The Embolder Symposium is a national event combatting ageism and building respect for older people. Hosted by [Celebrate Ageing](#), the theme for Embolder2023 was **Words make Worlds**.



The forum will focus on the key themes of data, practice, reform, and strengthening ongoing connections. Attendance will be beneficial to those working in the aged care sector, as well as government bodies, the legal sector, community service organisations and advocacy groups.

Speakers include:

- Scott McDougall – Queensland Human Rights Commissioner
- Geoff Rowe – ADA Australia
- Cybele Koning – Caxton Legal Centre
- Rae Kaspiw – Australian Institute of Family Studies
- Debbie Phillips – Queensland Police Service

Registrations close **Wednesday 25 October 2023**. Register [here](#).

Language mirrors our culture - and can be used to drive culture change, so how do we change the narrative and reclaim the word 'old' to reflect the power of wisdom, experience and the gift that is ageing?

It was also the platform to launch **#OldisBeautiful**. The [campaign](#) that challenges the ageist view that beauty is limited to youth, and how this view disrespects and socially isolates older people and erodes self esteem, health and wellbeing. And that beautiful is more than a physical form - it includes attitude, character, spirit and encompasses all human shapes, sizes, skin colours, genders, sexualities and abilities. We look forward to an opportunity to host an Embolden symposium in Queensland in the future.

## Talking aged care in the Downs

As aged care advocates for all areas of Queensland, we love a road trip here at ADA Australia. We enjoy the chance to meet with and hear about what is impacting older people in our rural and regional areas.

In August we joined forces with Dementia Australia, Wellways and Services Australia to host aged care conversation events in Toowoomba, Dalby and Warwick. The events provided a chance for seniors, carers, families and service providers to come together to talk all things aged care in their community, ask the experts, and to share knowledge, resources and support.

Around 130 people attended across the three events, and the conversations covered key topics such as:

- Debunking confusion about My Aged Care
- Waiting times to access assessments
- Limited capacity among service providers to provide some aged care services
- Getting help in situations of elder abuse
- Support available to carers.

Thank you to everyone who came along, asked questions and shared their experiences.

Aged care community conversation events will be held in Rockhampton, Mackay and Townsville in November. [Contact us](#) if you would like to attend.



## Research Project - making decisions about aged care in hospital

Karen Williams, our Principal Solicitor with ADA Law, is conducting a [research project into the experiences of people over 75 accessing aged care from hospital](#), whether that's care at home or in a residential care facility. Part of Karen's PhD(I) at the University of New England, School of Law, the research aims to understand supported decision-making approaches in healthcare and identify tools and information older people would find useful when choosing aged care arrangements.

This work will add to resources we have already developed to support decision making such as the [Supported Decision-Making Guide](#).

A 40-minute interview would be conducted by phone or online, and of course would be confidential. If you, or someone you know or care for, are interested in receiving more information about participating, contact [kwill207@myune.edu.au](mailto:kwill207@myune.edu.au).

In hospital - Making decisions about aged care?

**Would you be interested in participating in my research project about aged-care decision making?**

If you are 75 years or over, I would like to hear your views on the pathway from home to hospital to aged care.

My Name is Karen Williams and I am a researcher doing my PhD (Innovation) at the University of New England, in the School of Law.

I am trying to improve the support for people 75 years and over as they experience decision making about aged care in hospital.

# Out and About for Seniors Month

## South East Queensland Seniors Forum and Calendar launch



Scott & Matilda Community Development Officers



Minister Craig Crawford & Geoff Rowe



Rhonda (President U3A Network QLD) & David Weston

Seniors Expos - Longman Bribie Island, Redbank Palms Village, Forde Expo



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