

THE ADVOCATE

Your aged care and disability advocacy news, 21 July 2023

Contact us: 1800 700 600

Message from the CEO

New doors, but same at heart

I am happy to announce that the doors are open for two of our newest services - ADA Link North Queensland care finder service, and outback Seniors Legal & Support Service.

ADA Link has opened its doors in Townsville and Cairns, and we have a team of Community Connectors ready to help older people access the support they need.

ADA Link is a free service that connects vulnerable seniors in the [Northern Queensland Primary Health Network area](#) with essential face-to-face support to navigate the aged care maze. Our team will be supporting people from Clermont out to Richmond and up to Mapoon, and from Townsville up to the Torres Strait.

ADA Link operates on a referral basis, and community organisations, or members of the community, can refer a senior who they believe could benefit from support. ADA Link then works hand in hand with a person to connect them to local services in aged care, health, or community sectors. Our mission is to ensure every older person can access and benefit from the services they are entitled to.

ADA Link doors have already opened in the Toowoomba, Darling Downs and West Moreton region. Thank you to everyone who joined us for our launch events.

We also have our ADA Law team ready and providing legal support to older people in outback Queensland with elder abuse, mistreatment or financial matters, through the Seniors Legal & Support Service (SLASS). This is an outreach service covering areas in northern and western Queensland.

If it looks like ADA Australia has grown a lot, that's because we have. We are now delivering services as part of a number of advocacy and community legal programs across Queensland. But we are the same organisation at heart....at our core, all of our work is about giving older people and people with disability a voice. Our growth has meant we can support more Queenslanders in more ways to be safe, uphold their rights and access the supports and services they are entitled to. We have provided an updated overview of all the services we provide in this edition.

We also talk about the top 5 current issues that older people are contacting our aged care advocates about. We hope this is informative for both older people and the sector about how we are responding to, and supporting people with, current and important issues.

Aged care roadmap and taskforce

The [Aged Care Reform Roadmap](#) has been released by the Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells, putting a delivery framework around a number of key changes recommended by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. This is welcome information - older people need to know what changes are coming, when those changes are coming and how those changes will affect them. The newly established Aged Care Taskforce is charged with delivering a sustainable, long-term funding model for the sector. We hope this work incorporates innovation and alternative models for residential aged care, as we discussed in our [newsletter](#).

It's important to keep reiterating, reforms must be underpinned by human rights, and we welcome Minister Wells' explicit commitment to a new Aged Care Act in mid 2024, that would be underpinned by international human rights conventions and a Statement of Rights.

But an Aged Care Act should not stand alone. We are also strongly supporting calls for a national Human Rights Act, in our [submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework](#). A Human Rights Act would support the protection and upholding of rights as set out in the Aged Care Act.

Age Discrimination Commissioner thank you and farewell

I would like to acknowledge the work of Australia's Age Discrimination Commissioner, Dr Kay Patterson who has retired from the role after 7 years. Dr Patterson's work has helped to shine a bright light on the issue of ageism. She was also a champion for elder abuse awareness and prevention and supporter of work in this area by aged care advocacy organisations such as ours.

I was fortunate to attend the Commissioner's final address to the National Press Club in Canberra and had the opportunity to personally thank her for her contribution and support. We look forward to meeting and working with the new Commissioner who we hope will bring the same commitment to stamping out ageism and to valuing older people.

For our Elders

I would also like to acknowledge NAIDOC Week 2023 just past. This year's theme, For Our Elders, has special significance to us as aged care advocates. We know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders often face barriers to accessing aged care. Whether it's cultural barriers, such as fear of institutions from past experiences, or just a general lack of services available to be able to age well on Country, as advocates it's about finding the right services and solutions that respect culture.

ADA Australia's advocates Barry Fewquandie and Elsja Dewis, part of OPAN's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advocates Network, shared their views on First Nations aged care during NAIDOC Week. Catch up [here](#).



Until next time.

Geoff Rowe

ADA Service Update - how we can help and where



| Service | Service Provided | Where |
|---|---|--|
| Aged Care Advocacy | Aged care information and individual advocacy | Statewide |
| ADA Link Care Finder service | Connecting seniors in need to services & support | Darling Downs, Ipswich & West Moreton, Northern QLD, Western QLD |
| ADA Law | Legal help to adults about decision making Elder abuse advocacy in aged care | South East Queensland |
| ADA Law Seniors Legal & Support Service | Support for seniors with elder abuse, mistreatment or financial matters | Outback Queensland |
| ADA Law Mental Health Legal Support | Legal support for people with mental health conditions to access the justice system | Townsville and surrounds |
| Disability Advocacy | Information and individual advocacy | Gold Coast, Logan, Redlands, Central QLD |
| ATSIDNQ Side by Side First Peoples Disability Advocacy | Information and individual advocacy for First Nations people with disability | Statewide |
| ATSIDNQ - Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Disability Network of QLD | A network of First Nations people with disability, and their families and carers | Statewide |

[Download copy.](#)

Welcome to our Seniors Legal & Support Service team

Welcome Alanna O'Halloran, Solicitor.

Our SLASS team will be covering a huge area of Queensland - from Charleville down and west to the border, and all the way up to Mt Isa. I'm really looking forward to heading out west as I grew up in Charleville (and Gympie), and many years later went back to practice law in Charleville after my admission as a solicitor. During that time I regularly travelled on circuit to Court in Cunnamulla, Quilpie and Tambo - I love a road trip!

I'm really passionate about people having access to services in regional and remote communities, and I'm excited to work support seniors and rural communities in this new role. Our team will be able to provide telelink and videolink appointments, and will be on the road where possible for in person meetings and community education.

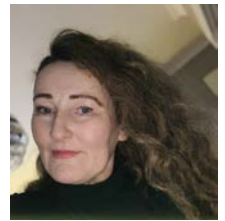


Welcome Deborah Brody, Social Worker.

Australia and Overseas; I feel I have been fortunate to work alongside people that live in remote and rural communities throughout the vastness of Australia. I have witnessed firsthand the tenacity and strength of families and communities to problem solve whilst managing conditions such as floods, droughts, fire, with access to fewer services and supports available as compared to regional and cities.

I have worked supporting older people who have experienced abuse or mistreatment with successful outcomes and know how important it is that vulnerable people have supports and systems which look out for their best interest.

I am looking forward to having conversations and yarns with people that live in rural and remote Queensland and being part of the SLASS team.



What older Queenslanders are telling us - top 5 current issues in aged care

1. Home care services and fees

Older people are contacting ADA Australia with concerns about cuts to their home care services or increased fees, following the wage increase for workers and the wage subsidy. The Department of Health and Aged Care have advised care recipients in a [letter](#) that any resulting price adjustments should be reasonable and justified, and agreed by care recipients. Also there should not be any changes to hours of care. We are referring people to this information, and helping older people to discuss their concerns with their service provider.

2. Navigating care at home

We are finding that many older people need greater support with taking the next steps following approval for aged care services at home, whether that is CHSP or a home care package. They may have a letter with CHSP codes and are not sure what to do, or need help to find a provider, or help to find a provider with availability. Our advocates are providing information and individual support to take these next steps.

3. In person support

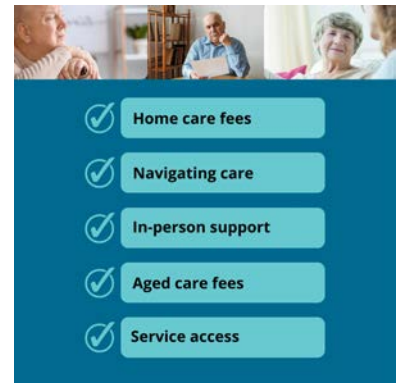
When older people have limited access to a phone, or have hearing difficulties or other issues that make communicating by phone difficult, our advocates will provide in-person support. We know the difference that a face-to-face conversation can make.

4. Aged care fees

Older people are needing assistance to understand the fees and charges in residential aged care, in relation to their particular circumstances - why are they being charged what they are, or impacts of asset changes as some examples. Our financial advocates are on hand to provide individual support.

5. Service access

Older people are continuing to have difficulties getting domestic assistance or lawn mowing services in place, due to unavailability of services. Unfortunately, we can not really assist if there is no availability of service, but we certainly encourage people to get on waiting lists, if available, and to keep checking for availability. Older people can also apply to have some cleaning done through 'assistance with housing and services' or 'minor home maintenance' as a one-off interim solution.



Don't mistake 'power' under Enduring Power of Attorney

This year on **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (June 15)** we released the [Supported Decision-Making Guide](#). A resource developed in partnership with Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion (QAI) to help legal, health and other professionals and attorneys to engage the person they are supporting in making their own decisions.

Sadly, elder abuse is still a major social issue impacting too many older people in our communities.

One of the most common forms of abuse is financial, and in particular we know this often occurs when older people have someone in their lives supporting them with decisions – whether that is informally, or under formal arrangements like an Enduring Power of Attorney.

Too often we are hearing that older peoples' powers of attorney are not respecting the wishes and preferences of older people.

It's important that people don't mistake the word 'power' under power of attorney. We know that this is not always from bad intent, but rather that it can stem from a lack of education about the fundamental principle of being a good attorney.

And that is, it's not what you think is safest or best for a person. The person must be involved in the decision and you should stand in their shoes to make the decisions they would want or would have normally made.

We know this is not always easy especially when you think safety is involved. But here we must remember our fundamental human rights - everyone has the right to make or participate in decisions about the things that affect them, regardless of age or capacity. Also people have the right make decisions that have risks or that you might not agree with.

We hope this Guide will help foster that inclusion in decision making. [Download your copy here.](#)



Talking Disability with our Community

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network of Queensland (ATSIDNQ) has developed a [Talking Disability with our Community toolkit](#). The resource has been designed to help disability advocates across the state to deliver effective and culturally appropriate support to First Nations people with disability.

The launch of this resource was supported by an interactive session held in Brisbane where advocates from all disability advocacy providers got to hear directly from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders about their lived experience, and their advice on delivering effective advocacy support to First Nations people with disability.

Thank you to our panel for sharing their stories and wisdom:

- Cody Skinner, disability advocate, Auslan educator and ATSIDNQ Champion
- Thomas Callaghan, Biripi-Dunghutti man and CEO of Indigenous Conference Services
- Faith Green, proud Wakka Wakka and Kabi Kabi women and CEO of Gunya Meta non-profit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation
- Michelle Tuahine, descendant of the Gangulu People, a veteran of Indigenous media and proud mum.

"It's all about taking the time to build relationships and trust" and "ask don't assume" were key takeaways from the day. [Download the toolkit here.](#)



7 Steps to Culturally Responsive Advocacy



Gold Coast Seniors Lunch

To celebrate Multicultural Queensland Month in August, seniors on the Gold Coast are invited to connect, share and celebrate diversity at our Gold Coast Seniors Lunch.

The event is free and includes lunch and entertainment.

We also invite you to bring along a special photo of you or your family to share that memory or time of your life with other people on your table. A great way to start the conversation.

Date: Friday 4 August 2023

Time: 10.00am to 1.00pm

Venue: Southport Sharks Event Centre, Cnr Musgrave and Olsen Avenues, Southport

RSVP to reserve your place: <https://southportseniorslunch.eventbrite.com.au/>



Out and About

NAIDOC Week



World Elder Abuse Awareness Day - It's all about RESPECT Event, Southbank Brisbane



ADA Link Launch events - Ipswich, Kingaroy and Toowoomba



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