



Message from the CEO

Season's Greetings

At the end of the year I like to reflect, with a bird's eye view, on what's happened at large for the people that we represent and support - older people, and people with disability.

Have we made any progress on making our aged care system one where older people have choice and dignity in ageing? Are we becoming more aware of entrenched ageism and changing how we see older people? Have we made any progress on creating greater inclusion and opportunity for people with disability?

Happily, the answer to the questions of progress is a resounding yes. But are we anywhere near where we need to be? Not yet.

A new era for aged care

In 2023 many important reforms were introduced to improve the quality of aged care: star ratings, mandatory nursing and care minutes, serious incident reporting changes, wage increase for care staff, to name some. Granted, these have not been without their difficulties to implement, however, will all contribute to bettering the quality of care in the long run.

However, [OPAN's latest presenting issues report](#) identified that it is poor communication and lack of choice and control that are the top presenting issues facing older people in aged care settings. Older people do not feel heard by their providers and that their care concerns are often dismissed or ignored, and they feel like they do not get a say in the things that impact their lives.

To change this, a new approach is needed. A new rights-based Aged Care Act, one that puts the older person at the centre of the aged care system, and one that is backed by the legislative and regulatory powers that are necessary to enforce it.

It's simply flipping the perspective from the business of aged care to the people in aged care. It will enable older people to maintain the same rights as they had before going into aged care. Those fundamental elements of an ordinary life – being listened to and making choices - what to eat, when to shower, what to do, where to go or who visits.

OPAN and its members have already taken part in the first consultation for development of a new Act, and we are eagerly awaiting the release of the Exposure Draft Bill which is expected any day now before the end of December 2023. I encourage those receiving aged care or looking at aged care options to [read more about the Act or participate round of consultations](#). It will have a real impact on the future of aged care in Australia.

Old is Good

It's also been pleasing to see the conversation about ageing and ageism taking place more in the mainstream, especially for women. With pioneers like [Ashton Applewhite](#), [Celebrate Ageing](#) and social media such as [@ageismisneverinstyle](#) all calling out ageism, I think we are slowly reshaping how we see older people and reclaiming the word 'old' as something good.

Positive road ahead for people with disability

For people with disability, 2023 has been a year of real hope and positivity for change. I spoke of key recommendations from the Disability Royal Commission in our last edition and last week the [NDIS Review Final Report](#) was released.

This is another landmark report with 26 recommendations to be implemented over the next five years. I would like to thank all of our clients and their families and networks who participated in the review process.

Some of the biggest takeaways from the report for me....

New foundational supports. An important acknowledgement that supports for people with disability outside of the NDIS are severely lacking, and we are pleased that [State Governments are on board with the establishment of these supports](#).

There are also a number of things that have been described as 'humanizing' the scheme. Such as access to the scheme based on support needs, not a diagnosis (we know obtaining medical reports is expensive and often a barrier), help to find your way around the system with the introduction of navigators, and a more personalised approach to planning



The recommendation that all providers will need to be registered will bring mixed views about this measure as a way to improve quality and safeguarding, over the benefits of choice and control, and the potential of services withdrawing.

The government will respond to the report next year and we hope will remain committed to working with the disability community to implement changes.

Delivering more services to more Queenslanders

For ADA Australia, it was another exciting year of growth, with the addition of three new services to our support portfolio. We are now delivering care finder services in Brisbane, Darling Downs and West Moreton, Northern Queensland and Western Queensland regions, helping seniors in need accessing aged care and other services in their communities. In addition, our community legal service, ADA Law successfully launched two new services: Seniors Legal & Support Service (SLASS) outreach service for people living in outback Queensland, and a legal support service for people with mental health conditions in the Townsville region.

I have included other highlights from our Annual Report 2022-2023 in this edition.

Stay safe and Merry Christmas

As the festive season approaches, COVID-19 cases are on the rise, and we encourage older people and people more at risk of serious illness to make sure your vaccinations are up to date. [OPAN](#) recommends three simple steps to protect yourself against the impacts of COVID-19:

1. Get your booster shot
2. Talk to your doctor about antiviral treatments, which reduce the risk of complications for people over 70
3. If you live in residential aged care, remember you are entitled to an [Essential Visitor](#), even during lockdowns.

I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and hope you get to enjoy some time with family, friends and loved ones over the festive season.

Keep well. Catch up with you in 2024.

ATSIDNQ to become an independent organisation

We are excited to announce that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network of Queensland (ATSIDNQ) has now entered phase 1 of becoming an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled and operated organisation! Since the organisation transitioned in 2105 under the auspices of ADA Australia, it was always the intention to have it become a stand-alone organisation.

The Network has grown to around 1200 members, and now operates the Side by Side First Peoples advocacy service, providing information, referrals and individual advocacy support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability across Queensland. It has taken some time to get to this stage, but we are thrilled that the time has now come.



ATSIDNQ will become a stand-alone legally registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation, governed by a majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability. Through this transition we hope that this will allow a continuation of funding for the Side by Side First Peoples advocacy service and will put the organisation in a position to secure other funding to continue to engage with and grow the Network. ADA Australia will continue to provide support to ATSIDNQ through this development process.

ATSIDNQ Community Gatherings

It's early days in the planning and we are talking to ATSIDNQ members and community to get their thoughts on transition. We will be visiting a number of communities in March, April and May next year to talk further about the future of the organisation. If you would like to have an active role in the planning stage or are interested in more information about the gatherings please contact info@atsidnq.com.au.

What do you think about advocacy services?

ADA Australia is an advocacy service, funded under the National Aged Care Advocacy Program, to provide support to older people receiving aged care. The Department of Health and Aged Care is currently evaluating the program and want to hear from people who work in residential and home care.

They want to know:

- your awareness of advocacy and NACAP
- your experience of advocacy
- how information and education about advocacy could be improved.

[Take the survey now](#) - it should take about 15 minutes to complete.



Annual Report

ADA Australia's 2022-23 Annual Report is out now.

- 10,981 advocacy cases and information and referrals
- Aged care advocacy cases more than doubled to 2,794
- 371 elder abuse advocacy cases and information and referrals
- Delivered education session to 8,543 aged care consumers

Town Hall briefing NDIS Review

Early next year there will be an opportunity in Brisbane to hear directly from [Review panel members](#) on the blueprint to build a better disability support system. The date is still TBA, but keep up to date on the [DANA website](#) or [page](#).

- 696 disability advocacy cases, with 67% relating to the NDIS
- Attended 324 community events and presentations
- 700 legal and advocacy cases and information and referral for ADA Law

View the full report [here](#).



Town Hall briefing on the NDIS Review

Hear directly from NDIS Review panel members on the blueprint to build a better disability support system and ask your questions of the panel.

There will be Auslan interpreters and closed captioning.



NDIS Review
Working together to advance the NDIS

Melbourne
14th December
10am – 11:30am AEST

Sydney
18th December
12pm – 1:30pm AEST

Brisbane
Coming soon in 2023

In person or online

If you would like a printable copy, please visit www.adaaustralia.com.au or email info@adaaustralia.com.au

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