

THE ADVOCATE

Your aged care and disability advocacy news, 27 February 2024

Contact us: 1800 700 600

Message from the CEO

Critical juncture for aged care

Since my last update, the [Exposure Draft of the new Aged Care Act](#) is out for consultation, and we are pleased to see the high level of engagement from older people, the sector and media. This is a rare opportunity to change how we deliver aged care in Australia for the better.

The exposure draft of the new Aged Care Act shows good intent, and a good start to creating a human rights-based approach to aged care, as recommended by the Royal Commission.

However, we are concerned that the draft doesn't provide enough balance between human rights and safety, and that this could have unintended consequences.

While the draft Act has stronger regulatory powers to address wrongdoing and negligence, issues around choice and control, an effective complaints process and enforceability of the new Statement of Rights have yet to be resolved.

Without any measures to make sure the Statement of Rights are upheld, they simply become good intentions. I understand that there is a need to balance safety and rights in service delivery, but how can a balance be achieved if there is no weight on the Rights side of the scales?

My concern is that this imbalance could naturally compel service providers to place a greater priority on blanket safety measures over the rights of older people to pursue their quality of life and have agency over their lives.

We are calling for service providers to have a positive duty to uphold the Statement of Rights in the Act, that they are directly enforceable and that there are appropriate remedies for breaches.

It's important to note here that this is not about creating a legal minefield in aged care. It's about giving human rights equal consideration, not just in principle but in practice.

You can read the summary of the key issues advocates are raising in response to the draft Act [here](#).

We also recognise that service providers will need time to transition to changes that the new Aged Care Act will bring and would expect to see a staged implementation process when the Act commences.

The Department of Health and Aged Care have extended the [consultation until 8 March 2024](#).

More support for disability advocacy

In good news, we welcomed a \$1.6 million funding boost, from the Queensland Government, for organisations delivering the Queensland Disability Advocacy Program (QDAP). As the QDAP provider, delivering disability advocacy services in Redlands, Logan, the Gold Coast and to First Nations people, we know that the demand for advocacy support is at an all-time high.

This additional support will help organisations support more people in need and reduce wait times.

On a national level, the Disability Advocacy Network of Australia (DANA) has been running a campaign to call on the Australian Government to significantly increase funding for independent disability advocacy to 2025.

The two major recent reforms, the Disability Royal Commission and the NDIS Review, both recognised the very significant role disability advocates and organisations play in supporting people with disability to access services, stay safe and informed about their rights.

Read more about the [Speak Up! for independent advocacy campaign](#)

Tell us what you think about advocacy

Have you, someone you care for, or your clients recently received support from us? ADA Australia is funded under the National Aged Care Advocacy Program and the Department of Health and Aged Care is currently evaluating the program to check that advocacy services are meeting the needs of older Australians. They are asking older people to complete a short survey either:

- [Online](#);
- Over the phone on 03 8632 9503; or
- On paper – call the number above or email nacap@ahaconsulting.com.au

Until next time.

Geoff Rowe

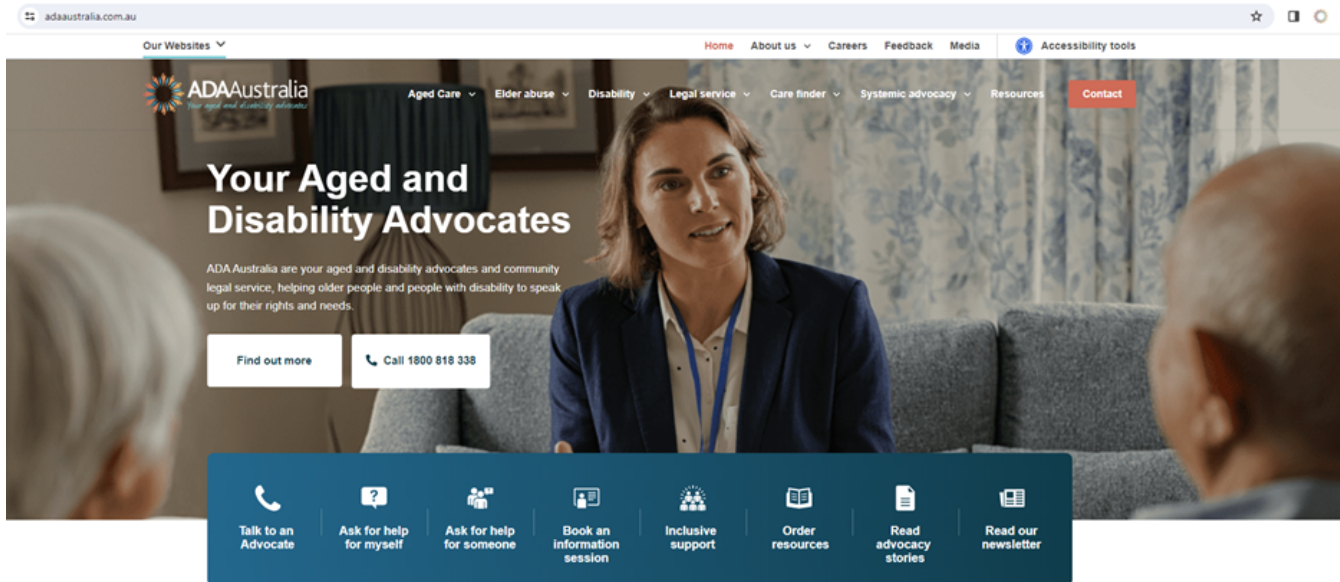


New-look ADA website!

We are pleased to announce that we have launched our new ADA Australia website - www.adaaustralia.com.au.

Based on feedback, this new-look website aims to make it easier for people who visit the site to quickly access the things they most want to do, like talk to an advocate, make a referral for support, or order resources.

We now also provide a wide range of support services, which are clearly listed at the top of the home page so you can easily find out more information such as how we can help, where we work, who is eligible, how we work and frequently asked questions.



2024 Voice of Queenslanders with Disability Survey now open

Queenslanders with disability, their families and carers, and organisations, are invited to have their say on their experiences, successes and challenges as part of a Voice of Queenslanders with Disability survey.

Now in its second year, the survey aims to help government, business and service providers to understand what is working in different areas – such as employment, getting support, and health and wellbeing – and enhance services and programs.

The survey closes **11 March 2024**.

More information is available at [Voice of Queenslanders with Disability Survey](#).



New future for ATSIDNQ

It's an exciting new phase for ATSIDNQ as the Network becomes a community-controlled organisation. The process for getting the Network established as an independent entity is well underway and we are hosting a series of Community Gatherings around the state. RSVP or save the date for your area.

Townsville Community Gathering

Thursday 7 March 2024

9.30am to 11:30am (Morning Tea)

Townsville Community Information Centre

Northtown, 280 Flinders Street

RSVP Friday 1 March on 1800 718 969 or email info@atsidnq.com.au

Cairns Community Gatherings

Friday 8 March 2024

9.30am to 11:30am (Morning tea)

or

Save the Date!

12 March – Logan, Brisbane

New future for ATSIDNQ
Strength in unity, power in community

It's an exciting new phase for ATSIDNQ as we become a community controlled organisation. That means we will be delivering support for our mob, by our mob. Join us on the journey and tell us what you want from the Network into the future. It's your ATSIDNQ.....

Tell us how can we best support our mob with disability?

1:30 to 4:30pm (Afternoon Tea)
Bolands Offices and Conference Centre Cairns
14 Spence Street

13 March – Zillmere, Brisbane

26 March – Southport, Gold Coast

RSVP Friday 1 March on 1800 718 969 or email info@atsidnq.com.au

16 May – Toowoomba

If you can't make one of these events, we would still like to hear your thoughts on what you want from the Network into the future.

Please complete this short survey.

SURVEY

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VMSSFBV>

Supporting Outback Queensland

We know life in the outback can have its challenges, especially as you get older and need more support to maintain your independence.

ADA is supporting older people in bush communities through our Seniors Legal and Support Service (SLASS) and care finder service ADA Link.

SLASS provides free legal and social work support to older people across outback Queensland who are experiencing elder abuse, mistreatment, financial exploitation, or who need help with supported decision making or representation at the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

SLASS were recently able to help an older person living with dementia, and their family, navigate the health system and make their own choices about ongoing care.

ADA Link is your care finder service across outback Queensland – a specialist support service dedicated to helping older Queenslanders access aged care and other services they might need in their communities.

In remote areas, ADA Link's Community Connectors have been re-establishing lost connections for their clients. Providing assistance to older people to allow them to continue to live in their own home as long as possible is the best way.

Of course, we face the same challenge of limited availability of services in rural and remote areas, but the team uses their knowledge of local communities, and the health and aged care systems to problem solve and piece together creative solutions.

Outback Outreach Meet & Greet

Service providers and community organisations are invited to join the SLASS and ADA Link teams at the Mt Isa Neighbourhood Centre on:

19 March 2024, at 10.00am for a Morning Tea. RSVP to slass@adalaw.com.au

Our western Queensland Community Connector, **Jo Winkelman**, will be visiting local libraries in communities during March and May 2024, and available to talk to older people who need more information or help around aged care services. Feel free to drop in, or call Jo to make an appointment on 1800 818 338.

Ilfracombe - 4th March, 9.30am - 12.00pm (at Ilfracombe Council Chambers)

Barcaldine - 11th March, 9.30am - 12.30pm

Longreach - 25th March, 9.30am - 12.00pm

Isisford - 2nd April, 9.30am - 12.30pm

Winton - 8th April, 10.30am - 1.30pm

Longreach - 29th April, 9.30am - 12.00pm



Meet Venessa Piron, your Bundaberg Advocate

Venessa is your local ADA Australia aged care advocate in Bundaberg, helping older people with all things aged care.

Venessa has enjoyed living in the Bundaberg region for several years and has a strong background working in the local community, ensuring people have access to the full range of government and community services available.

"I know the aged care system can be complex and I am here to not only help people get started on their aged care journey but also to help at any time along the way - whether circumstances have changed, and additional support is needed, or there are issues with services."

She is passionate about helping older people access the aged care support they need and are entitled to so they can maintain their quality of life.

In her spare time, you'll find Venessa walking her dog Gus, painting, cooking, singing karaoke and catching up with friends and family.

Venessa is also available to talk to community groups and residential aged care homes about how advocacy can assist. Get in contact on 1800 700 600.



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

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