

## Message from the CEO

### Funding aged care into the future

There has been much discussion about the recommendations from the [final report of the Aged Care Taskforce](#) who were tasked with reviewing the current funding arrangements for aged care and proposing the best way to sustainably fund aged care into the future.



There is universal acceptance that something needs to change if we are going to continue to be able to provide a viable aged care support system. The number of older people is growing fast, while the taxpayer base is shrinking.

However rather than introducing a levy on all taxpayers, as suggested by the Royal Commission into Aged Care, the Taskforce is recommending more of a user-pays model, where those who can afford it would contribute more to some parts of their care.

Understandably, there has been a mixed response from older people. Some would agree that this is a better option and are comfortable contributing more, and others see it as unfair to ask for more given they have worked hard, saved all of their lives and built the society we have today.

As aged care advocates we also have some concerns.

What we don't want to see is a two-tier system of the 'haves' and 'have nots' when it comes to aged care. Any funding model has to include a substantial safety net and a guarantee that older people who can't afford to contribute more to their aged care are still able to access good quality care that respects their human rights.

As advocates we are regularly contacted by people who are having difficulty accessing the services they need because they are unable to pay, and we help them to find solutions. If user pays becomes the focus, then the last thing we need to see is more people joining that queue.

If we are moving towards a user-pays model, I would hope that this is the catalyst for the aged care sector to start seeing and treating older people more as customers not clients, where the 'customer is always right'. Meaning, the customer is valued, their views are respected, and services will put their best foot forward in order to keep them.

How aged care will be funded is a final piece pending for the new Aged Care Act. The Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) has consulted extensively with older people to put forward [feedback on the draft of the new Act](#). There are many elements but the main focus for advocates is ensuring that we have an aged care system that articulates, enables, protects and enforces the human rights of older people.

## Financial issues & advocacy

As the government works on funding and financial models for the future, our financial advocates are increasingly finding that older people are experiencing a range of financial issues, particularly with home care services. We talk more about these issues in this edition and provide links to relevant information. Providers have a duty to ensure their clients' home care packages are well managed to achieve the best outcomes for the person.

## ADA Link is turning one

Our care finder service ADA Link is turning one in May. I am proud of what we have achieved in building this service from the ground up in just one year. We are delivering services across approximately 1.3 million square kilometres, have 27 staff on board, and most importantly have supported over 500 seniors in need, to connect with services they need in their communities. Thank you to all those organisations who have worked with us for your support.

## See you at ACCPA on the Gold Coast

ADA Australia is having a trade stall at the [Aged & Community Care Providers Association \(ACCPA\) Conference](#) on the Gold Coast next week. Drop by and book a free advocacy education session for your residents, community group or staff. I will also be participating in the opening Panel session discussing the new Aged Care Act. We look forward to catching up with those who are attending.

## Lest we forget

Yesterday we joined the nation to remember and honour those past and present that served for our country. We are proud supporters of The Last Post Magazine and veterans, providing priority advocacy support for all veterans who need assistance with aged care or disability matters. Catch up on The Last Post editions and podcasts [here](#).

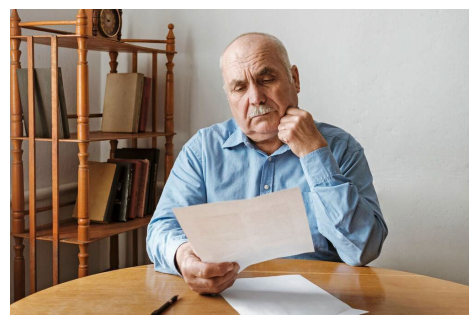
Until next  
time.

Geoff  
Rowe

## Five financial issues in home care

Our financial advocates are here to support older people to be informed about aged care fees and charges and provide information and support to resolve financial issues. Here are five common financial issues that we are seeing in relation to home care packages, which need to be improved.

**1. Income tested fee assessment.** Providers have a responsibility to inform clients at onboarding that there may be an income tested care fee if their income is above a set threshold, and that they will need to complete an income assessment with Services Australia. We are finding that some clients are unaware of an income tested fee, or because they are receiving a full pension, there is an assumption that this fee will not apply. Clients can have a range of income sources, and income needs to be properly assessed. Clients also need follow-up to ensure that they have completed the income assessment and know that they can reach out to a financial advocate



if they need assistance with this process. It's also important that an income assessment is done promptly so clients are not accruing a large debt.

**2. Price increases and impact on service delivery.** We

understand that prices for services can increase, but we see that clients are agreeing to a price increase without understanding any impact it may have on their budget and services. Clients should be informed how price increases will impact their care plan, and if they need to make any adjustments or choices.

**3. Slow transfer of unspent funds.** When clients change providers there is a process the existing provider must follow to finalise outstanding invoices and transfer the remaining package funds to the new provider, within 70 days. We see cases where the transfer process is not completed properly and clients are waiting well outside 70 days for funds to be with their new provider, and they are left waiting for services and equipment. The transfer process is outlined [here](#).

**4. Incorrect charging on temporary leave.** There are [rules](#) around what fees clients can be charged when they are on different types of temporary leave, such as hospital transition care or holiday care. We are finding that people on leave are being charged incorrectly for services, leading to overcharging.

**5. Late, missing or inaccurate statements.** Providers must provide monthly statements that clearly show available funds, how funds are spent and the amount of unspent funds. We are finding cases of very late or missing statements, statements which are inaccurate, or generally lacking explanation, so it is difficult for clients to follow when something has occurred, such as a credit being applied. Providers should work to improve their management and invoicing systems to ensure the information which is provided is clear, timely and accurate.

To get in touch with a financial advocate, call 1800 700 600.

## ADA Link Community Conversations in the north

ADA Link turns one in May, and we will be hosting community conversation events in Cairns and Mossman on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of May.

### Tuesday 21 May 2024

8.30am to 10.30am

Join us for breakfast at the Novotel Cairns Oasis Resort

### Wednesday 22 May 2024

Join us at the Mossman Gorge Cultural Centre at 12.30pm for lunch (or for a Guided Dreamtime Walk first at 10.30am)

RSVP 7 May at [info@adalink.com.au](mailto:info@adalink.com.au)



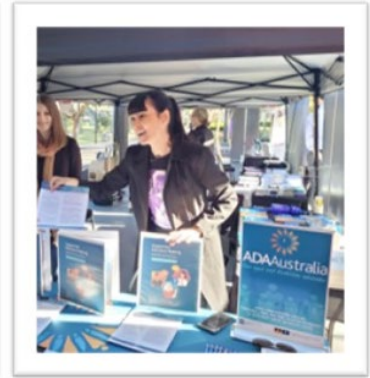
## Meet Nicky Adjei, aged care advocate Team Leader

Nicky is one of ADA Australia's most experienced advocates, who has been with us for over 10 years. Starting out in child protection, and also working as an elder abuse advocate, Nicky has long been a champion for those without a voice.

Having lived and worked in Vietnam and Ghana, Nicky has a world view on ageing and aged care.

“Granted there were limited aged care facilities and resources, but what I saw was that the way people lived meant that there was intergenerational living and older people were valued and integrated into the community and everyday life. This meant that aged care support was not necessarily needed in the same way.

“I'm excited to be working for ADA Australia as the aged care sector goes through a major reform. I hope to see innovation in support models, more intergenerational programs, and a change in perspective from the business of aged care to the people in aged care, so older people here can experience the best of both worlds.”



## Becoming dementia-friendly

"It's not scary. We are not dangerous. We just need some extra help sometimes."



"I wouldn't have to advocate like I do if everywhere was dementia-friendly. Everyone would know what dementia is." Thank you to Eileen and Dubghlas (and Hamish 11) for

helping us to complete the dementia-friendly environmental audit at our head office in Geebung in March. This is part of our process in becoming a dementia-friendly organisation, increasing accessibility for people living with dementia.

## #AgeWithRights Global Rally 2024

The world is still calling for stronger protection and promotion of older people's human rights through a UN convention on the rights of older people.



The #AgeWithRights Global Rally was held on 8-14 April. In support, OPAN hosted a Roundtable where members of the National Older Persons Reference Group shared their views about the role a convention on the rights of older persons would play in their lives.

[www.opan.org.au](http://www.opan.org.au)

[www.adaaustralia.com.au](http://www.adaaustralia.com.au) or email [info@adaaustralia.com.au](mailto:info@adaaustralia.com.au) ADA

Australia

121 Copperfield St, Geebung QLD 4034

Telephone: (07) 3637 6000 or 1800 818 338

Website: <https://adaaustralia.com.au/>