

## Message from the CEO

No one expects 'zero to hero' with aged care but we are expecting a start. As the dust settles from the re-election of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and the Labour government, which brings continuity on aged care reform, the talk has quickly returned to concerns from the aged care sector about their readiness and calls for possible delay of the new Aged Care Act.



We understand that there are many aspects to implementation of the new Act that the sector has to prepare for, however, as aged care advocates we are concerned about the expectation that everything should be perfect and in place before we start to make changes which will see the rights of older people be the focus of our aged care system.

If we wait for everything to be perfect, we'll never start. No one is expecting 'zero to hero'. But what we are expecting is to start.

From a human rights perspective, this is not new. Recommendations from the Aged Care Royal Commission calling for a greater focus on the rights of people in aged care, versus the business of aged care, were released over 4 years ago now.

The Statement of Rights in the new Act includes rights like independence and autonomy, respect for privacy, safe and quality care, and the right to raise issues without fear of reprisal. These are also not new, but rather now are compulsory and set in legislative stone.

What it really means is that self-determination and choices of older people should guide their aged care. It is a change in the current ways of thinking and working. No more doing what 'is best' for the older person, overzealous safety measures or prioritising operational convenience.

Providers can start with practices which embrace those fundamental rights that all of us hold. The 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.

Of the approximate 40,000 calls for help with aged care issues we receive across the Older Person's Advocacy Network a year, poor communication, and a lack of choice and control continue to be the key challenges.

A lot of older people tell us they feel like they have little say or control over what happens in their care and their daily lives.

It's a perfect place to start.

## **Board news**

I would like to pass on my appreciation to Board Director Lucille Chalmers who recently resigned from the ADA Australia Board after 4 years of service. As the Chief Executive Officer for the Darling Downs and West Moreton Primary Health Network, Lucille brought a wealth of experience and knowledge about the intersection of health programs and advocacy to our organisation. Thank you Lucille for your contributions to improving the lives of older people and people with disability, and we wish you all the best.

## **Old is Beautiful**

ADA Australia is proud to bring Old is Beautiful to Queensland. 'Old is Beautiful' takes a new approach to combatting ageism by changing how we perceive 'old'.

Working with Dr Catherine Barrett, from [Celebrate Ageing](#), it is one of a suite of clever and creative strategies to bring about a cultural shift on this issue. As we know ageism is deeply embedded, frequently unseen and underestimated in terms of harm for older people, particularly women – the fashion and beauty industries are notoriously ageist. Combatting ageism is slow work, but through this type of systemic advocacy work ADA Australia hopes to create more self-awareness and change attitudes.

The project includes a 2-hour workshop and a professional portrait photo shoot, the first of which was held at the Brisbane Powerhouse in March. We are organising more Old is Beautiful workshops around the state, culminating in a portrait exhibition during Queensland Seniors Month in October.

In this edition you will meet Brisbane participants Suzon and Tony, and their thoughts about what makes them beautiful, as was featured in [The Senior Newspaper](#).

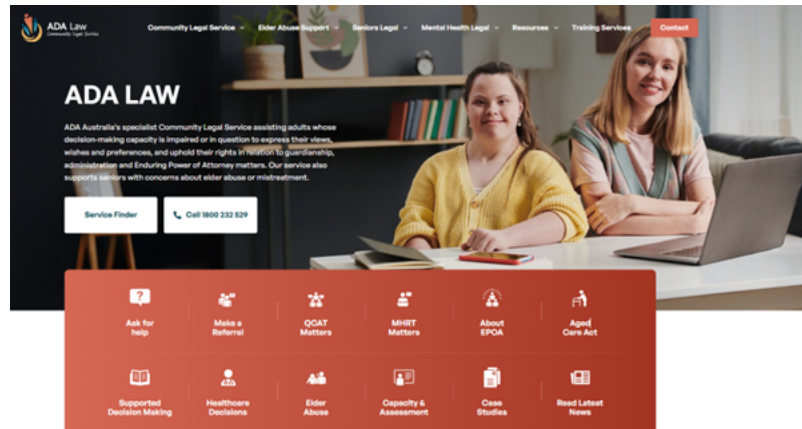
Until next time.

Geoff Rowe

## New ADA Law website

ADA Australia's specialist Community Legal Service, ADA Law has a new website. The website has information for people and professionals who are navigating their way through guardianship and administration matters including, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT), the Mental Health Review Tribunal (MHRT), Enduring Power of Attorney, capacity and assessment, healthcare decisions and supported decision making. We have also published a number of resources to assist responses to elder abuse.

[www.adalaw.com.au](http://www.adalaw.com.au)



## Watch now...Statement of Rights Webinar

Catch up on the Statement of Rights webinar - part of an ongoing series of webinars to help you understand the changes under the new Aged Care Act. Our Advocacy Manager, Rebecca Kok joined the conversation to talk about how the new Statement of Rights will bring a lot more control to older people over the services they receive, how they are delivered and making choices about their lives. Watch now - <https://opan.org.au/video/statement-of-rights/>

NEW AGED CARE ACT: WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

# Statement of Rights

Webinar – 26 March 2025

Join us in conversation with:

**Anne Burgess**, Chair, Council of Elders

**Daniella Greenwood**, Consultant – Aged Care

**Rebecca Kok**, Manager, Aged Care Advocacy, ADA Australia



Daniella Greenwood



Anne Burgess



Rebecca Kok



OPAN | Older Persons Advocacy Network

## News for You

### News for You

Aged care advocacy newsletter | June 2025 | Issue 12



#### Important life lessons: our Elders are our teachers

ADA Australia's Elsja Dewis is one of more than 200 advocates employed across OPAN's national network. Here, she shares some of her own story and how that informs her work.

**Tell us a little about your background**

On my mother's side, I am from Wuthathi country, up near Cape York, in far North Queensland. On my father's side, I am Torres Strait Islander (Thursday Island). I grew up caring for my grandmother, so it's not a new thing for me to speak up for our Elders. I'm still learning, though.

**What do you like most about your job/the work?**

Being with our Elders, our teachers. My nephew taught me such a beautiful lesson. He asked his uncle one day: 'How do you care for the stories of our Elders?' His uncle said: 'I don't let their words hit the ground.' As an advocate, I don't let the words of our Elders hit

the ground. If I let them hit the ground, they turn to dust and become nothing.

**What has being an advocate taught you?**

**Patience.** What's the most surprising thing that's happened to you on the job?

When I was doing an education session in Cairns I bumped into my old music teacher. I may not have been a good student, but I had the privilege of thanking him for adding to my learnings.

**What would be your 'perfect' day?**

A perfect day for me is working with an Elder, achieving their outcome then coming home and getting cuddles from my 3-month-old and 3-year-old grandsons.

The next edition of our aged care advocacy newsletter, News for You, will be delivered, for residents, to all Residential Aged Care Homes in Queensland in June.

In this edition we are proud to boast that the front cover features our very own advocate, Elsja Dewis. Always a great colleague and experienced advocate, Elsja shares some of her story and her 'perfect day'.

## Old is Beautiful



*Suzon Fuks*

"there are layers where you can see beauty as something that has matured, that has a life"

Photos by Jade Ellis

*Tony Robertson*

"beauty is something that embraces your whole lifestyle"



## Putting Words 2 Action

Information sessions for people with disability to learn more about self-advocacy and individual advocacy coaching are available now.

Check

[www.words2action.com.au](http://www.words2action.com.au) for details or email

[words2action@adaaustralia.com.au](mailto:words2action@adaaustralia.com.au).

**WORDS 2 ACTION**  
Let's plan to be heard  
A self-advocacy learning program for people with disability.

Do you have a say about important things in your life?  
Do people listen to what you want?

**What's on offer?**

- Learn about your rights and how to ask for what you want
- Information sessions and 1:1 coaching from friendly advocates (in-person and online)
- Practical planner and helpful resources

## Aged Care Conversations in Roma, Charleville and Goondiwindi



Thank you to everyone in Rocky, Yeppoon and Gladstone who came to join us for the Aged Care Community Conversations in April. As advocates it's important that we have the opportunity to hear your concerns directly, so we know where there needs to be more information, or calls for change.

We care continuing our Community Conversations visiting south west Queensland locations in May.

Roma, 20 May @10am - White Bull Tavern Function Room

Charleville, 21 May @9am - Cosmos Centre Charleville Function Room

Goondiwindi, 22 May @10am - Gateway to Training

We hope you can join us. Let us know if you would like to receive an invitation - [info@adaaustralia.com.au](mailto:info@adaaustralia.com.au).

If you would like a printable copy, please visit [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/>