

THE ADVOCATE

Your aged care and disability advocacy news, 25 February 2026

Contact us 1800 700 600

Message from the CEO

Urgent action is needed to fix Support at Home issues

Significant challenges are persisting for older people and providers with the new Support at Home program. While the introduction of any new system can expect teething problems, it's become clear that there are a number of compounding issues that are having serious impacts on older people receiving, or trying to receive, support to stay in their homes.



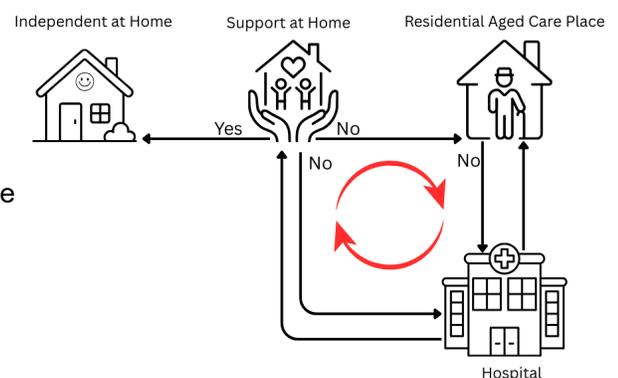
We are calling on government to take urgent action if Support at Home is to realise its fundamental intent: enabling older people to remain living safely and independently in their homes and communities.

Evidenced by nearly 18,000 cases across the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN), these are the key implementation issues that require urgent action:

- excessive wait times for assessment and reassessment
- inability for assessors to override algorithmic decision based on clinical judgement
- older people reducing care they need due to increased prices
- financial hardship application process remaining overly complex with long wait times
- older people receiving invoices months later (affecting their ability to manage budget and services)
- cottage respite no longer covered by Support at Home.

A functional and accessible support at home system is critical to breaking the hospital-residential aged care cycle - where older people can't return home without support, or find an aged care place so remain in hospital.

Read [OPAN's full media release](#).



We have to look for new solutions

I wonder if we are in danger of what Einstein defined as insanity - "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results"?

There is unlikely to ever be enough government funding that will solve the current aged care problems in the market-driven aged care system that we have. Building enough aged care homes is not the solution. We have to think differently.

Older people want to stay in their homes and communities for as long as possible. It is the most cost-effective and desired option for ageing well and yet is where the current blockages are. A waitlist for support at home packages over 100,000 people and up to a 12 month wait; average wait times from approval to receipt of package up to 10 months; long queues for assessments in some areas; and a lack of service availability for many people through the entry CHSP program, which has become a stop-gap for many.

In April 2023 ADA Australia called for the government to allocate 10% of its aged care reform spending to explore ways to deinstitutionalise aged care and look at alternative models of care.

This is now more important than ever. In the coming months ADA Australia will be collaborating with the sector to develop a blueprint for achievable innovations in aged care including:

- Targeted preventative and restorative health programs for older people
- Technology integrated care
- Small scale group living and shared care arrangements.

More to come on this soon.

CHSP transition Inquiry

We also recently put forward our submission on the future of the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), which has been the subject of a [Senate Committee Inquiry](#). We raised several key issues to be addressed for a successful CHSP transition into the Support at Home program, and recommended that the government delay transition. As with many others, our concerns are around supporting long-trusted local organisations to remain delivering services, and a plan for supporting service delivery in regional, rural and remote areas. We don't want to see any older person lose access to essential supports.

I think there is general consensus that the CHSP transition timeframe needs to be extended.

Aged Care Quality and Safety Advisory Council

Congratulations to [Liz Kearins](#), Chair of the ADA Australia Board, and now also Chair of the [Aged Care Quality and Safety Advisory Council](#). The Council provides advice to the regulators of aged care – the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner and the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner. It also provides advice to the Minister for Aged Care and Seniors on matters arising in relation to the performance of the Commission's functions.



We could not recommend a better person for the job. Liz has the depth of experience in the aged care sector but also a passion and commitment to upholding the rights and amplifying the voices of older people.



Finally, wishing everyone a Happy Lunar New Year, and hope those who celebrated enjoyed the festivities with family and friends. And Happy International Women's Day which is coming up on the 8th of March. It's a day where we at ADA Australia celebrate the contributions, strength and resilience of women, but especially older women and women with disability who should not be forgotten on this day.

Keep well. Geoff Rowe, CEO

Stand Up Speak Out: *Because silence is never the solution.*

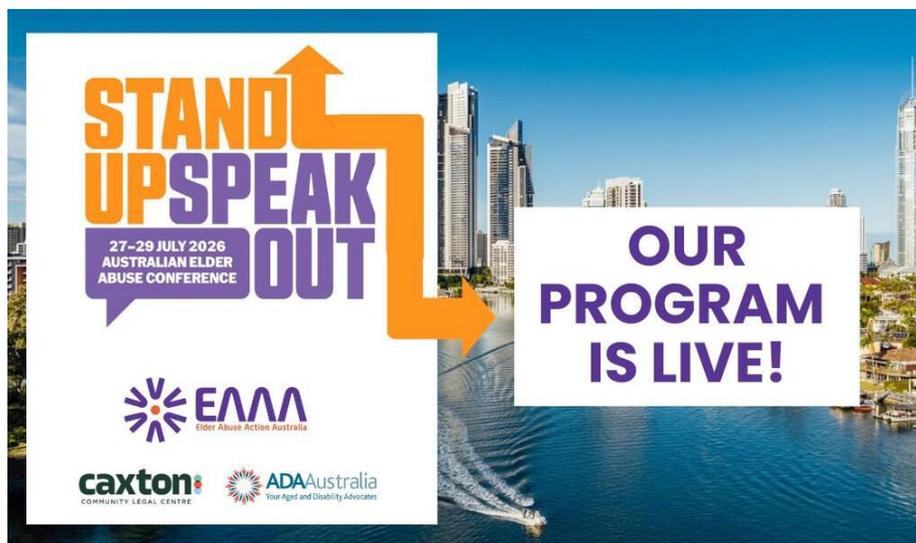
Australian Elder Abuse Conference, 27-29 July 2026

The Conference program is out now and we might be biased but think it is shaping up to be one of the best!

Keynote speakers include:

- Natalie Seigel-Brown - Inspector-General of Aged Care
- Jean Kittson AM - Writer, author and comedian
- Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald AM - Aged Discrimination Commissioner and Conference Ambassador
- The Hon Dr Kay Patterson AO - Patron of Elder Abuse Action Australia
- Phillipa McDonald - Award-winning journalist and reporter, Conference MC
- Dr Catherine Barrett - Founder and CEO Celebrate Ageing Ltd.

Early bird registration closes on **Friday 27 February**, so register now and join us. There's a lot to talk about! <https://conference.eaaa.org.au/>



Aged Care and Financial Hardship

We know many older people are concerned about the cost of care following the introduction of the new Aged Care Act.

ADA Australia Financial Advocates, Maha and Heidri, shared information about the government's financial hardship and assistance program and application process - what you need to know to have your fees waived or reduced.



[Maha - What happens if you are approved for financial hardship?](#)

[Heidri - What evidence to you need to include in your financial hardship application](#)

To speak with a Financial Advocate, call the Aged Care Advocacy Line on **1800 700 600**.

Let's talk Supported Decision Making

2 webinars for carers and supporters not to miss

Moving aside from issues with implementation of the Support at Home program, the Aged Care Act is clear - it starts from a presumption of capacity: that every older person has the ability to make decisions about their life, care and services.

In addition, people with cognitive impairment also have the right to participate in decisions about their life.

This is where supported decision making comes into play for family, carers and supporters. It's about not making decisions for the people you care for and loved ones, it's about enabling them to make choices about their own life.



Catch up on **OPAN's Supported decision-making Q&A**.

<https://opan.org.au/video/supported-decision-making-2026/>



Join the **Office of the Public Guardian (OPG)** Queensland and our **ADA Law** team for a free webinar to learn how you can empower the person you care for to make their own decisions. Gain an understanding of how to practically apply the principles of supported decision-making to become more effective in your role as a supporter.

 **Date:** Thursday 12 March 2026

 **Time:** 12:00—12:45pm (AEST)

 [Register to secure your spot](#)

Age-Friendly Seniors Month grants are now open

The Age-Friendly Seniors Month Grant program can support local council, community or not-for-profit organisations to create meaningful projects that foster connection, inclusion, and participation for seniors in your community.

Eligible organisations can apply for grants of between \$5,000 and \$15,000 to deliver innovative projects that help build an age-friendly Queensland. Projects must respond to a local need, benefit older people, and deliver part of the initiative during Queensland Seniors Month (1–31 October).

Applications close at **5pm on Friday 27 March 2026**.

Find out more and apply at <https://qldseniorsmonth.smartygrants.com.au>



#Age with Rights Global Rally

The UN are drafting a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons! It is the result of many years of collective advocacy from across the world. What do you think are the important universal rights older people should have? We'd love to hear what you think.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kfsj-NEHbXA>



Supported Employment Advocacy




Supported Employment Advocacy
Speak up to feel safe and supported at work

- Do you feel safe and included at your job?
- Is your workplace fair, respectful and supportive?

If your work does not feel this way, we can help.

Chat with us **1800 818 338**



If you work in Supported Employment, our advocates can help you with:

- Speaking up
- Being treated fairly
- Asking for changes
- Feeling safe and included
- Understanding your work choices

Our services are free, confidential, independent and directed by you.

www.adaaustralia.com.au

1800 818 338



Interpreter Ph: 131 450



ADA Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land and pays respect to Elders, past and present.



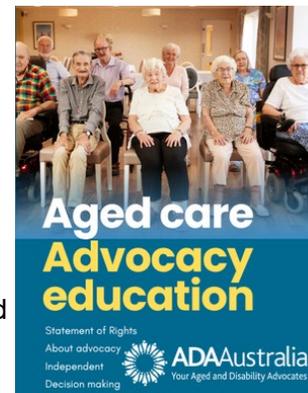
New year, new educations

When did your aged care home last have an advocacy education session?
Are your residents familiar with the new Statement of Rights and Supporter role?
Book your free Aged Care Advocacy Education session for 2026.

Advocacy education is a condition of registration under Section 156(2) of the Aged Care Act, and under Section 156-10 of the Aged Care Rules, every provider is required to allow and facilitate access to independent aged care advocacy.

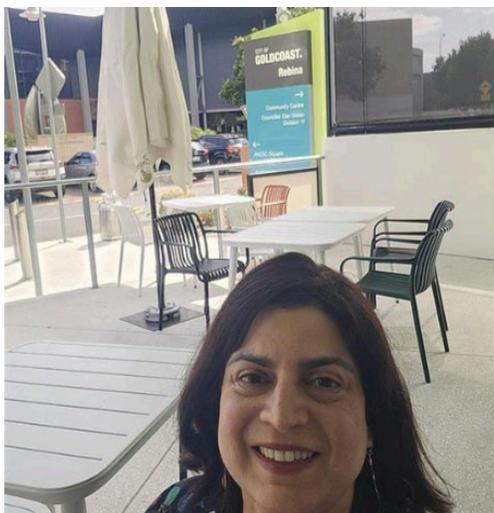
These sessions can be tailored to suit your residents, and can help to resolve your client's concerns constructively.

Book your session for 2026 at education@adaaustralia.com.au



Out and About

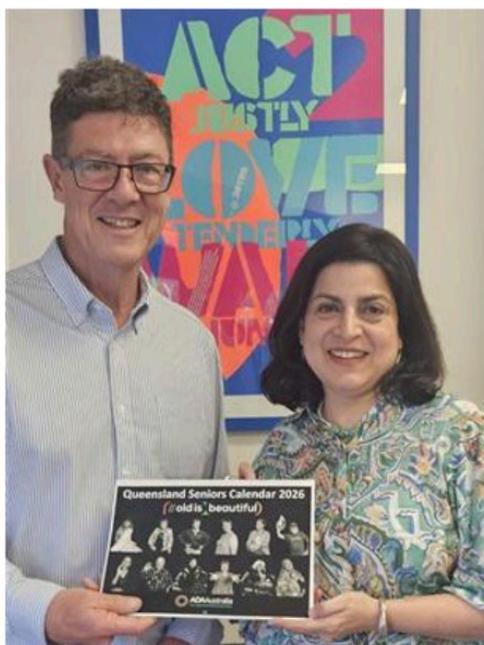
Our Community Development Officer Ree Ali dropping off the last of our 2026 Seniors Calendars on the Gold Coast. There are still a few copies left if your organisation would like some - admin@adaaustralia.com.au



Bottom Left: Birch Foundation

Left: Gold Coast City Council

Below: MP Rob Molhoek Member for Southport



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

ADA Australia

121 Copperfield St, Geebung QLD 4034

Aged Care Advocacy Line: 1800 700 600

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