

THE ADVOCATE

Your aged care and disability advocacy news, 30 June 2026

Contact us: 1800 700 600

Message from the CEO

Less talk and more action needed on elder abuse

On June 15th, we marked another World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, and we are fast approaching the [Australian Elder Abuse Conference](#) on the Gold Coast 27-29 July, 2026.



But I am concerned that these events make us feel like we are taking action, when in fact it is more talking. In reality there is a lack of progress and investment in more services to create real change to the prevalence of elder abuse in our communities.

We have a new [National Plan to End Abuse and Mistreatment of Older People 2024-2034](#), and the [Final Report from the Inquiry into Elder Abuse in Queensland](#). These seem to me to have great intentions but very little meat on the bone.

But it will actually cost governments more to do nothing. We know that failure to protect older people from abuse means they end up in other systems. It might mean frequent trips to hospital emergency departments for 'falls' and other mishaps, or the money, that had been saved to pay for care in later years, has gone so now a fully government funded aged care place is needed, or older people find themselves without anywhere safe to live and end up on the door of homeless and community services.

What we need is more investment in frontline services, taking the lead on national cooperation, and a prevention campaign.

Elder abuse is complex. The majority of perpetrators are immediate family or close to the older person, and many are living with them, so it can require a range of services to get to a good outcome for the older person. It's rarely about calling the Police, unless of course there is immediate danger. It can involve mediation, counselling, guardian and administration issues appearing before QCAT and other community services, and the current capacity of support services is very limited.

Another plan that has been idling for some time is the harmonisation of Power of Attorney laws across all states and territories. Currently differences in these laws across borders is leaving gaps where older people can find themselves caught.

This work needs a state to take leadership and start a coalition of the willing and I think this is something the Queensland Attorney-General could lead the charge on.

We are also calling for governments to address the root cause of elder abuse – **ageism**.

64% of older Australians say they have been affected by ageism in the last 5 years, and the World Health Organisation notes ageism as a significant risk factor for elder abuse.

Addressing ageism and fostering a cultural shift towards greater respect for older people is Recommendation 7 from the Queensland Inquiry, and the first agenda on the National Plan.

But there is no talk of specific investment in this. How society thinks and feels about ageing is still not equated with being something of value, something good, but we could change this.

It's been done before. Think of the reduction in smoking and skin cancer through concerted campaigns. Why can't we do the same for ageism?

We will be talking about this and more at the upcoming [Australian Elder Abuse Conference on the Gold Coast, 27 to 29 July 2026](#). Of course, we must keep talking about elder abuse, but we must match this with real action.

ADA Australia is cohosting the conference with Elder Abuse Action Australia (EAAA) along with along with Caxton Legal Centre. I hope you or some of your team members will be able to attend the conference. It's not too late to register - <https://conference.eaaa.org.au/>

Until next time.

Geoff Rowe



Aged care is sinking - it's time to stop playing with the band and build the lifeboats

We have started the national conversation about support for alternative and innovative thinking when it comes to aged care, with recent articles published in [The Australian](#) and [Ageing Agenda](#).

The problems in aged care are deeply frustrating. We weren't short on warnings about the iceberg – we're short

on lifeboats.

It is clear that demand for aged-care services is outstripping supply and will continue to do so, and additional funding is not going to fall easily from the sky.

We need to pursue viable alternatives now that could support older people to age at home and relieve pressure on the system.

Here are some solutions we think we could be actively working on.



1. Make home care more nimble

The federal budget included \$1.7bn in funding to incentivise the construction of up to 5000 aged-care beds a year. We need closer to 10,000. There is funding for 83,000 Support at Home packages, and another 32,000 promised – but about 100,000 people are already waiting for their approved level of care, and more waiting for assessment.

Instead of investing in building 5000 more aged-care beds, redirect funding to make the Support at Home system more responsive – quicker assessments, more packages. The most ideal in a less-than-ideal scenario. Waiting no more than 30 days for care would be a reasonable benchmark to aim for.

2. Scale what already works

Each state and territory already has restorative, preventative and acute-care health programs that keep people out of hospital – home-based emergency care, nurse navigators, care co-ordination teams, hospital-home transition care. These programs are resourced but fragmented.

Let's look at how these community-based programs and their funding can be turned into more cohesive models of localised and mobile care services.

3. Shared care in Support at Home

Retirement village residents pooling funds to provide village-wide care services was pitched by the Retirement Living Council in 2023. This is now open to 10 providers for trial with a three-year time frame. This is too long and we need to think more broadly.

The concept of the seniors' commune has become a popular and viable option for groups of older friends to live together and age together. Yet, in this scenario, each person would have to apply for a Support at Home package. Applications for shared care could be a feasible add-on now to the Support at Home model, and mean fewer packages required.

4. Home-share intergenerational living arrangements

This is an arrangement where older people who need a little help to live independently at home are matched with a home companion who can provide support in return for low-cost accommodation. This model has been running in some European countries for some time. The gap here is not funding but regulation, payment design and safeguarding frameworks. We should review existing social and community supports in the aged care, health and community services areas to see where this model could be embedded.

We don't profess to have all the answers, but the aged-care sector, the government, advocates and older Australians urgently need to start collaborating on a blueprint for achievable solutions to problems with aged care.

Aged Care Conversations - Maleny, Kingaroy, Gympie

This year's Aged Care Conversation events kicked off in Maleny, Gympie and Kingaroy at the end of May. The local events have become a popular information morning where seniors and families can ask the experts the questions they want to know about aged care. Around 165 people attended the events in total which was a great turnout for these smaller communities.

Hosted by ADA Australia, we were also joined by other organisations that are an integral part of the aged care system and local community support in those areas - Wellways/Carer Gateway, Services Australia, Dementia Australia, LiveUp and Speak Up Now - Domestic Violence Prevention, COTA Queensland and Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety (Seniors and Carers).

Key themes and concerns raised were:

- Confusion about My Aged Care and changes to aged care system and a need for help to navigate the system
- Long waiting times for assessments, especially reassessments due to increased care needs
- Limited capacity among service providers to deliver certain services, particularly domestic assistance through the Commonwealth Home Support Program
- Support available for carer and difficulty accessing respite care
- Difficulty accessing allied health supports through aged care.

Unfortunately, these are not new issues, and we continue working at a systemic level to make policy change. It can be a slow process, but collectively we can make an impact. For example, the reclassification of personal care to clinical care under the Support at Home program from 1 October, so cost will not be a barrier for people accessing these essential services.

The next round of Aged Care Conversations will be held in Gatton (30 June), Boonah (2 July), and Beaudesert (17 July). If you are interested in attending any of these events or would like to know when we might be hosting one in your area, please contact us on events@adaaustralia.com.au.

Thanks to the Gympie Times

NEWS GympieToday.com.au



Aged Care Conversations.



Scott Green from ADA. (Supplied: Diana Chadwick)

Important conversations

By Gabriel Laidler Burns

It pays to be well informed, and that's why locals joined in at the Pavilion to hear from local providers, organisations and businesses when it comes to Aged Care at the Aged Care Conversations Seminar on Wednesday 27 May.

This seminar include tables of information available to guests and shared advice from attendees and speakers.

The first speaker, Scott Green from Aged and Disability Advocacy shared what his organisation does within the Gympie region.

He explained to guests that ADA is a community based advocacy service with over 30 years experience in assisting Queenslanders to access and navigate aged care services.

Further, guests heard from him what is available through ADA, the challenges older people

face locally and what they can do to help.

This included advocating on the behalf of older locals, communicating with MyAgedCare, help express views and help them speak up for themselves.

Kara Crompton from Dementia Australia then spoke to guests.

She explained how Dementia Australia is a trusted source of information, education, and support services, advocating for positive change for people living with dementia, their families, and carers.

Dementia Australia is the national body supporting people living with dementia, their families and carers and according to Dementia Australia, an estimated 446,500 Australians live with dementia, and 1.7 million people are involved in their care.

She also shared Dementia Australia's Brain-Track App, a free app that helps you monitor and understand changes in cognition over time, which you can use to start a conversation with your GP.

Then guests heard about Wellways Carer Gateways, a national support service that provides free support for carers through out a network of regional care gateway service providers.

They provide support for anyone caring for a family member or friend who has a disability, mental health condition, chronic health condition, terminal illness, or is frail aged.

Wellways Carer Gateway supports carers with their own wellbeing to ensure they are in the best place to care for and support their loved one.

Jade Lutter from the department of Seniors and Carers then spoke to attendees, talking about seniors cards, rebates, concessions and cost of

living support that is available to locals, depending on their situation.

The last speakers were Karen Wilson from the Council on the Ageing (COA) Qld and Catherine Carter, Seniors Social Connection Program from Relationships Australia.

Karen who provided information about COA Queensland and the Seniors Social Isolation Peak Services Program.

An important topic they covered with guests was why staying socially connected matters as we age and the Locals services and support that help older people stay socially connected.

Unfortunately unable to attend was Jenny Hazelwood Live Up, who works within Community Engagement for the Live Up initiative, a digital website of healthy ageing information to help people stay strong, connected and to remain living independently in their own home.

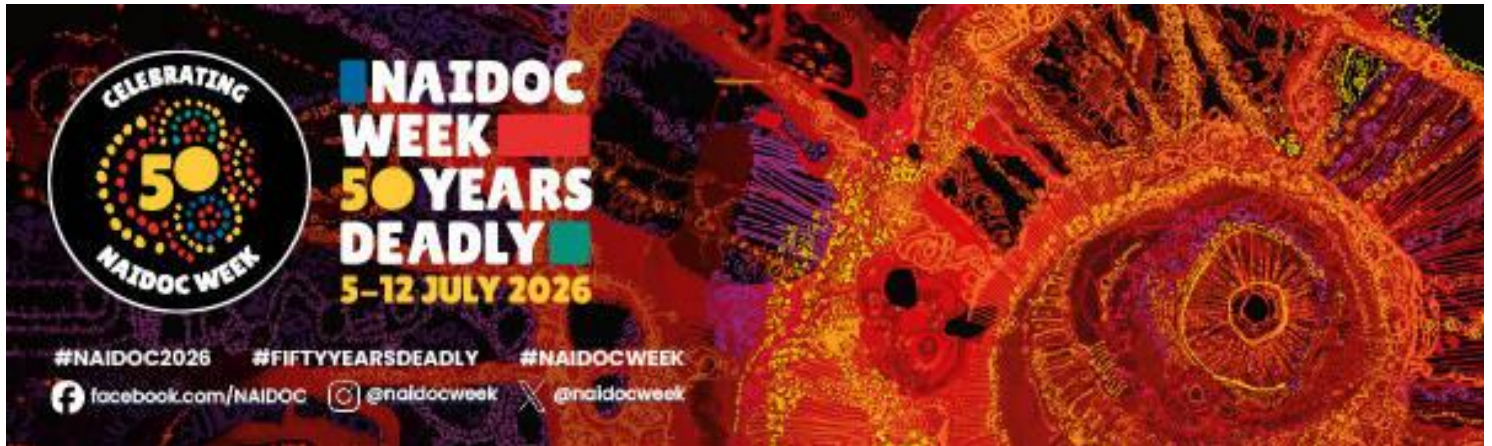


Join us during NAIDOC - "50 Years of Deadly"

Happy NAIDOC Week! This year's milestone for NAIDOC recognises the strength, resilience and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and honours the generations of Elders, leaders and communities who have shaped the NAIDOC movement over the past 50 years.

From **5-12 July** we will be celebrating at NAIDOC events across the state. Please come and join us, drop by and say hello.

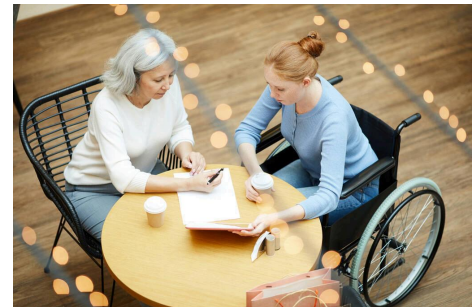
- Monday 6 July - Toowoomba NAIDOC Community Day, The Goods Shed
- Tuesday 7 July - Ipswich NAIDOC Family and Cultural Celebration, Nicholas Street Precinct
- Tuesday 7 July - Logan NAIDOC Family Fun Day, Kingston Butter Factory Cultural Precinct
- Wednesday 8 July - Inala Family Fun Day, CJ Greenfield Complex
- Thursday 9 July - Gold Coast NAIDOC Community Day, Gold Coast Sports Precinct Carpark, Carrara
- Friday 10 July - Townsville Deadly Day Out, Riverway Parklands
- Friday 10 July - Musgrave Park Family Fun Day, Musgrave Park West End



Census support for people who need extra support and people with disability

Tuesday 11 August 2026 is Census night, and help is available for those who need it to complete your form including accessible format information guides, but most importantly, in-person help at many locations across Australia where you can:

- get help to complete your form
- ask any questions you have about the Census.



Visit <https://info.census.abs.gov.au/help> to find out more about the support available.

Out and About

Our Yarn'n Strong Partners came together at the State Library of Queensland, kuril dhagan | Yuggera & Turrbal Country, for the first group gathering, to talk about advocacy, rights and empowering mob.



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

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