

Council on the Ageing Queensland Your Voice



Quarterly Newsletter

September 2025

In this edition:

- › Queensland Seniors Month
- › Livable Housing Design Standards
- › Barcoo Community Discussions
- › Age Well, Stay Connected.

News in Brief

- › The Australian Government has promised to release an extra 20,000 home care packages between now and October
- › We are partnering with the Queensland Mental Health Commission and TAFE Qld to deliver free suicide prevention training for aged care workers.

About us

Advocating for the rights and wellbeing of older Queenslanders and future generations since 1957.



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A Message from our Board Chair - Jean McRuvie

I have been revisiting our history and it dawned on me that we have been supporting Seniors Week (now Seniors Month) for 65 continuous years.

From 1-31 October, we are once again proud to bring people of all ages, cultures and abilities together within their community

Why is Seniors Month important?

Because one in six Queenslanders are currently over the age of 65 and this number is growing as a proportion of population every year.

Older people are an increasingly important and vital contributor to the economy, culture and wellbeing of society. This includes working, running their own businesses, volunteering or caring, fundraising, travelling, protesting, advocating for others and learning new skills

It is a great opportunity to support and focus attention on older people in the community and the contributions they make. This year's theme is 'Connect and Celebrate'.

I am looking forward to the fascinating range of online and face to face events across Queensland including:

- › From Her Lips to Ours – A Legacy of Wisdom Across Generations, hosted by the Capella Tieri Middlemount Community Support Network Inc
- › Elders Gathering – Cultural and Social Connections, hosted by the Elders Gathering in the Torres Strait
- › The Intergenerational Teddy Bears Picnic – hosted by Murroona Gardens Care Community in Bowen.

I sincerely hope you enjoy this year's celebrations. For more, visit www.cotaqlld.org.au/seniors-month



Queensland Seniors Month 1 to 30 October 2025



The Queensland Government and Council on the Ageing Queensland value the contributions older people have made and continue to make in their communities and share a commitment to building an age-friendly Queensland

Council on the Ageing Queensland coordinates Queensland Seniors Month on behalf of the Queensland Government and receives funding to collaboratively plan and subsidise events and activities.

Through these events older Queenslanders are provided opportunities to celebrate and create meaningful connections with each other and the important people in their lives and find out about the supports and services available to them.

Beginning on the UN International Day of Older Persons (1 October), Seniors Month includes celebrating Grandparents Day (26 October 2025).

2025's theme is 'Connect and celebrate'. This recognises strong communities are connected communities.

It embraces older people and recognises the enormous value they contribute to our families, neighbourhoods and wider communities.

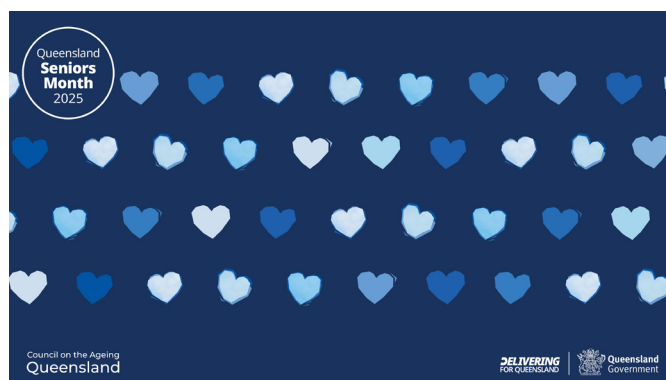
It focuses on the importance of ensuring Queensland Seniors are supported to live active, healthy and productive lives and are connected, cared for and celebrated.

Strong communities are essential to our economic prosperity, wellbeing and future opportunities.

Queensland seniors have helped build and shape our great state and remain an integral part of the fabric of our communities—whether as volunteers or in the workforce, community leaders or carers, grandparents or advocates.

Social connectedness is one of the most important factors in creating strong communities. It allows us to build relationships with people we might not otherwise meet, share common values and experiences, and can help us to become more aware and engaged.

Through Seniors Month we can increase the feeling of social connectedness and support and empower Queensland seniors to connect, participate, contribute and thrive.



While 55 events are funded through Seniors Month grants, there are hundreds of other events listed on this year's program. Check out www.qldseniorsmonth.org.au to find events near you!

Livable Housing Design Standards Keep Building Homes for ALL Qlders

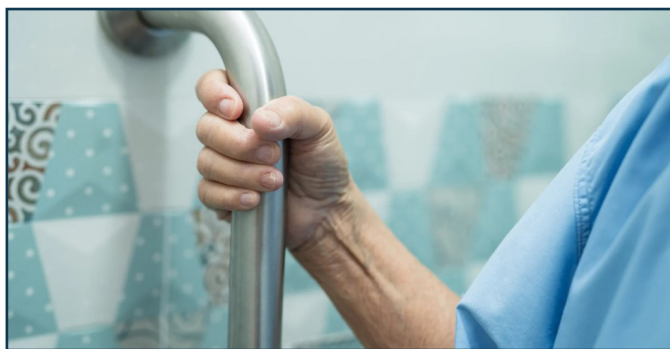
Queenslanders are at risk of losing their right to age well at home.

The Queensland Government is considering whether to step back from the Livable Housing Design Standards (LHDS) — a reform that benefits us all and ensures all new homes are safe, accessible, and future-ready.

Without LHDS, too many Queenslanders will face:

- › Homes that don't meet basic needs as we age
- › Expensive retrofits or premature entry into aged care
- › Lost independence and connection to community.

For less than 1% added to construction costs, LHDS saves tens of thousands of dollars in future health, care and housing expenses.



Keep new homes safe, accessible, future-ready.

Please email or write to your local MP today and tell them you support LHDS.

You are welcome to use our letter template which you can access at www.cotaqld.org.au/category/latest-news

Read our Queensland Productivity Commission submission at www.cotaqld.org.au/seniors-peak

Together we can continue to build an age-friendly Queensland!

Barcoo Community Discussions Windorah, Jundah and Stonehenge

We travelled west to meet with Barcoo's best as part of Western Queensland PHN's Barcoo Community Discussions.

Focused on Aged Care, palliative care and disability support, we learnt about local issues including the challenge of travelling very long distances for medical care, accessing service providers for Aged Care support, cost of living expenses and the limited availability of local activities.

Our Senior Advocacy and Engagement Officer, Dylan Olliver was interviewed by ABC Western Queensland's Heather Hale on her program on 15 August.

WQPHN's Integrated Care and Commissioning Project Manager, Rachel Bock (WQPHN) is working with Central West communities to identify and implement additional supports for aged care, disability, and veterans, using locally-driven solutions. You can contact Rachel directly on 0461 531 234.

Other local supports include ADA Australia's local Care Finder and Aged Care Advocate, Jo Winkleman who can help with accessing Aged Care services and understanding My Aged Care - 1800 818 338 or email info@adalink.com.au. Longreach Home and Community Care and Meals on Wheels can help too.



Dylan(c) with WQPHN, NDIA & Services Australia

Age Well, Stay Connected Townsville event - 3 September

Council on the Ageing Queensland proudly brought together older people, carers and sector professionals for an unforgettable day of connection, conversation and collaboration.

Partnering with ADA Australia, the Queensland Public Advocate and Life Without Barriers the program included:

- **Welcome to Country** by Randal Banbari Ross Juru/Bindal Descendant - respect and inclusion
- **Facilitators** Geoff Rowe (CEO, ADA Australia) and John Chesterman (Queensland Public Advocate)
- **Karen Wilson** (Executive Officer, Seniors Social Isolation Prevention Peak) and **Stacey Eilers** (Life Without Barriers) highlighted the importance of informal social connections and local community strengths and needs
- **Dr Catherine Barrett** (Celebrate Ageing) discussed internalised ageism and her 'Bold is Beautiful' initiative, highlighting that beauty is reflected in how we live, not just in appearance
- **Older Queenslanders** shared their lived experiences of local Men's Shed participation, volunteering, and living with dementia, emphasising dignity, courage, and the value of meaningful connection
- **Community voices** enabled local organisations and local service providers to share key insights
- **Q&A panel** on community-led solutions to reduce social isolation
- **TRCOTA volunteers** delivered a lively SPLaSH (Sing, Play, Laugh and Share Happiness) performance

- **World Café conversations** explored ideas for supporting seniors to stay socially connected, contributing insights on key community priorities.



Our Volunteer Champion Celsie Mead leading a World Café conversation

On behalf of the organising team, a huge thank you to all the contributors who made the day a success!



Council on the Ageing Qld's Karen Wilson(l) & Gillian Myers(r) with Celsie Mead & Stacey Eilers

Age Well, Stay Connected Longreach event - 10 October

Our third and final opportunity for you to join us in 2025 to bring Queensland seniors and communities together is at the Civic and Cultural Centre, Longreach.

We'd love you to join us from 9am to 2.30pm for a free day of connection, conversation and collaboration to share ideas on how to prevent social isolation in regional areas.

Register at:
<https://events.humanitix.com/stayconnectedlrc>

Visit: www.cotaqlld.org.au/social-isolation-prevention-peak

Funded by



Queensland
Government

Energy4Seniors (E4S) - Empowering you to make wise energy choices

Imagine cutting your power bills without sacrificing comfort, health, or wellbeing!

Our free Energy4Seniors (E4S) group sessions can help you learn about:

- Concessions, Rebates and Supports you may be eligible for
- Practical Energy Efficiency Tips
- Smart Meters – What? Why? When?
- Understanding your electricity bill and choosing a better plan.

To book a free group information session, at your community group, library, neighbourhood hub or seniors' centre, email energy4seniors@cotaqlld.org.au or call Kayleen (Tues–Fri) on 0447 202 043.

The golden rule is simple, the cheapest energy is the energy you don't use. Small changes like switching appliances off at the wall, using a power board to manage devices or avoiding running multiple high-power appliances at once can add up to real savings.

Every dollar saved on energy is a dollar that can be spent elsewhere!

With your energy use however, please get the balance right and make sure savings are not at the expense of your health or comfort.

We aim to reach 12,000 households with practical energy advice by December

www.cotaqlld.org.au/energy4seniors

E4S Smart Meters and Electricity Bills Training Day - 16 July



Jodie(ARQRV), Darren(CEO), Lisa(E4S), Kenny (Energy Qld), Judy(ARQRV) & Anne-Marie (EQ)

Supported by Energy Queensland and delivered in partnership with the Association of Residents of Queensland Retirement Villages, our third training day brought together 14 E4S volunteers.

This very successful day covered Smart Meters – What, Why and When? and understanding your electricity bill plus choosing a better plan.





E4S Volunteer Clyde OWN Mt Gravatt 26/8/25 Lisa & Jodie(ARQRV) Charters Towers 3/9/25




Energy & Water Ombudsman Jane Pires with Board Member, Robyn Robinson & Michael Dart



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Queensland Wills Week Matters of Trust - 3 September

We were proud to partner with the Queensland Public Trustee (QPT) during Queensland Wills Week (1-7 September).

Tailored for service providers, front-line professionals, and decision-makers, the forum covered Wills and Enduring Power of Attorney, financial management, deceased estates, guardianship and decision-making, and elder abuse.

The follow-up webinar went live across Queensland on 26 August. Remember, 'Life changes, so should your Will'.



Dylan presenting at the 'Matters of Trust' forum

Outback in the Mind Conference Roma - 21 to 22 August

Our CEO, Darren Young explored 'Are we ready for 100-year lives'? Focussing on the foundations for good mental health and ageing well.

An initiative of Headspace Roma and RHealth, the conference strengthened the knowledge, capability and network of rural mental health providers in this area.



More people reach 100 due to better healthcare

Out and About Connecting with Communities

Men's Shed Big Day Out, Gladstone



Lisa Hodgkinson from Energy4Seniors - 11/9/25

ADA Seniors Expo - Southport 8/9/25



Energy for Seniors Volunteer, Sheree Fleming(I)

Positive Ageing Expo, Cairns 14/8/25



Lisa Hodgkinson, Kate Kleemann & Lisa Crouch

Townsville Seniors Expo - 4/9/25



Department Officers with the Exhibitor team

Licensing for older drivers in Queensland - ABC News story

How old is too old to drive?

In Queensland, drivers aged 75 and over must attend a licence medical check every 12 months and always carry a medical certificate.

Our CEO, Darren Young, was interviewed as part of a five-part ABC News series exploring how regional Queenslanders are ageing well outside the capital city.



Our CEO Darren Young on ABC TV and online news

'It is important to use capability as the barometer, rather than age', he said.

'Losing a licence is a big fear for people across regional Queensland. It can have really drastic effects.'

'Not being able to see friends or relying on neighbours to go to the shops. Some people even stop eating as regularly or they don't get the medication they want.'

With limited transport options in much of regional Queensland, Darren hopes to see a statewide approach to the issue.

'Every community is different and will need a different solution to address their transport needs, so we should start that now and start planning and preparing'.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) Webinar - 9 July



Dylan hosting our statewide WEAAD webinar

We proudly delivered Queensland's first WEAAD webinar to over 50 social isolation prevention workers.

Our sincerest thanks to Caxton Legal Centre, the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit, QPS, ADA Australia and Relationships Australia for your valuable contributions.

Together we covered types of elder abuse, how to start a conversation, law enforcement, support and resources, and mediation services. For more, visit: www.cotaqld.org.au/weaad

Aged Care Act Community Sessions Gold Coast- 14 October

From 1 November 2025, a new Aged Care Act will come into effect.

These important changes to how aged care in Australia is delivered are significant and complex, and may affect you or someone you care for.

To help people understand what's changing, COTA Australia and the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) are hosting an information session on the Gold Coast on 14 October (11am to 1pm) Register via www.cota.org.au

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Profile - voice of an older regional Queenslander with lived experience

Mark Tobin shares his opinion below.

Connection to Community

Moving rural and remote residents from their community disconnects them from their foundations.

With a small population in a large geographical and challenging country, it is very difficult to meet the required resources to care for these people in their home environments. To keep them there, society needs to shift its thinking and actions on how to care for friends and relatives until not possible.

Intergenerational Relationships

The issue ignites when one or both sides ignores the needs and skills of the other and disrespect ensues. It seems this is a societal issue of deep moral and ethical belief of equality across the generations.

Building an ingrained respect and regard for elders where they are expected to be part of decision making and show leadership has to start from birth. The advantages of an all inclusive society needs to be built into every piece of top-down legislation, policy and strategy and every bottom-up decision being made.

Impacts of Ageism

From a more personal and observed perspective and lived experience the forced disconnection, disregard and silent discrimination leaves many older folk losing the skills, confidence and eventually self-regard that should have been used to advantage across personal, family and business life.

About Mark Tobin - father, husband, retired paramedic and farmer



Mark Tobin, retired after a 50 year career from age 15

Mark is a family man, married with two adult children and two grandchildren.

His life of community service includes:

- › Studying at Gatton Agriculture College and working in rural and remote properties across Queensland
- › Completing a Diesel Fitter apprenticeship in Toowoomba while completing senior school studies and working as an Honorary Ambulance Officer
- › 30 years' service in the Queensland Ambulance Service as an Intensive Care Paramedic, Manager and Executive
- › Serving as Manager Clinical Skills at the University of Queensland School of Medicine
- › Owning and running a small beef cattle business until recently, and
- › Working as CEO of Queensland Agriculture Training Colleges.

Thank you for your service and ongoing dedication to older Queenslanders, Mark.



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