Council on the Ageing Queensland Your Voice

Quarterly Newsletter **July 2025**

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News in Brief

- July Aged care reforms delayed by four months
- Our survey on e-mobility & safety to support our Parliamentary Inquiry submission received 166 valuable responses
- 2025 Queensland Seniors Month Grant applications in final review

Sue (l) 20 years' volunteering with us

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

We need your expertise!!

While retirement is something most of us face, there is no doubt that we lose years of experience and skills when people retire.

With one in six Queenslanders over the age of 65, we cannot afford to ignore the critical roles older people have played and continue to play across all areas.

Being retired does not mean you stop contributing and thousands of older people are still volunteering, working, caring, teaching and keeping community organisations thriving.

Council on the Ageing Queensland is very keen to make sure that this experience is not lost. We have convened an 'advocacy network' to capture this knowledge.

This group of people will ensure our work reflects real life and provides the voice of experience to our advocacy and service role including raising awareness and exploring solutions for issues such as – ageism, housing, transport, health, social isolation and elder abuse.

We are particularly interested in hearing from people who live outside the South East corner of the State as rural and regional issues are very different from those faced by people living in or near big cities.

Your commitment will be as much or as little as you have time to give. If you would like to be considered for this network please contact Dylan at info@cotaqld.org.au.

It would be wonderful to tap into your life exeperience. There is still so much to do. Please join me.

Focus on Elder Abuse Inquiry and Events

We are deeply committed to preventing elder abuse in Queensland. To act on this, we contributed our insights to the state Inquiry in April and recommended:

1. **Create a Queensland-wide strategy** to prevent elder abuse, led by the state government and informed by older people's real-life experiences - includes clear steps to raise awareness, improve services and prevent harm and consider different backgrounds and experiences.
2. **Fix key gaps that make it hard for people to get help** - more support earlier, better services in rural and remote areas, better training for banks, police, aged care workers and health staff to spot elder abuse signs, and stronger Power of Attorney protections.

More at https://cotaqld.org.au/seniors-peak/.

Delivering more than 130 quotes from older people, our CEO, Darren Young presented to the Queensland Education, Arts and Communities Committee at their Public Hearing into Elder Abuse in Queensland on 16 June.

Darren emphasised that Queensland urgently needs a coordinated State Plan that must be strategically led and supported by state and regional implementation. It will also need robust governance to deliver long-term, systemic change.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD)

We joined our WEAAD Queensland Working Group partners on 13 June for a forum focusing on community sector responses to elder abuse.

Keynote speaker, Caxton Community Legal Service CEO, Cybele Koening acknowledged progress made, called for more resources and urged everyone to work together to coordinate efforts.

WEAAD Forum Q&A panel

This was followed by an engaging panel discussion which provided insights from the complexity of the types of elder abuse including ageism, coercive control, the impacts of declining health and fraud to the need to tailor responses to local needs with collaboration across the sector. There was a joint call for more resourcing.

Thank you to inspiring speakers Karen Williams (Principal Solicitor, ADA Law), Rita Prasad Ildes (Director, World Wellness Group), Betty Taylor AM, Deidre Lawrence (EAPU) and Deidre Venz (Queensland Health) for sharing your knowledge and for your hard work to combat elder abuse.

For elder abuse resources (including 2025 toolkit) and support services visit https://cotaqld.org.au/weaad/.
Further information at Elder Abuse Prevention Unit at https://eapu.com.au/.

Aged Care Navigation (Care Finders) Team welcomes two new Members

Council on the Ageing Queensland is proud to grow our long-term capacity to support vulnerable older people with a disability or from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds.

Marlene Levasseur and Lisa Crouch recently joined our Cairns team to help double our efforts to ensure these Queenslanders can access the aged care services they so desperately need.

Marlene Levasseur (l) and Lisa Crouch (r)

Having worked as a disability advocate within a human rights framework, Marlene strongly believes in social justice. She is driven to support, self-empower and assist the most vulnerable people in our community to achieve outcomes that enhance their lives.

Lisa is excited and energised about the opportunity to tackle ageism and empowering older people to live their best lives. She brings over 25 years' experience working in the health sector advocating for vulnerable populations.

Thanks to funding from the Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN), our Navigator program has been extended until June 2029.

Our Navigators can help with registering with My Aged Care, accessing services, completing forms and language support. Find out more at www.cotaqld.org.au.

Aged Care Reforms Delayed CHSP Team Aged Care Ready

The Australian Government has postponed the start of new Aged Care reforms by four months to November.

COTA Australia and the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) welcomed this news saying it was '*necessary to avoid confusion and make sure older people and their families are informed about how the new system will work*'.

Our Sector Support team have been hosting a series of webinars to support Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) providers prepare for the reforms and the new Act.

The team have also been meeting with their state and national colleagues to identify shared activity for the next 12 months.

These collaborations increase access to information, resources, training and support for CHSP providers across the country.

The CHSP Sector Support and Development Program is funded by the Australian Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

Queensland Government Gladstone Seniors Expo - 28 May

Jodie (ARQRV) and Lisa (Council on the Ageing)

Quality responses inform E-mobility and Safety Inquiry submission

Council on the Ageing Queensland received 166 survey responses from older people amplifying the insights we provided in our state Inquiry submission.

Personal Mobility Devices (PMDS) include e-skateboards, e-scooters and e-bikes – that are electric and usually used for personal transportation and recreation.

Top 3 concerns to be addressed include:

- Safety risks in shared environments
- Older adults and users of mobility aids disproportionately impacted by unsafe PMD practices
- Gaps in regulation and enforcement.

More at https://cotaqld.org.au/seniors-peak/.

Key recommendations include:

1. **Regulatory reform and legal integration** - develop statewide standard for PMD operation, and introduce mandatory licensing of higher speed PMDs.
2. **Infrastructure and spatial planning** - fund upgrades to create physically separated lanes, restrict PMD access in dense or vulnerable areas unless clear signage and safety measures.
3. **Education, training and public awareness** - mandatory training programs covering road rules.

Toowoomba Multicultural Aged Care Expo - 8 May

We partnered with Ethnic Communities Council Queensland (ECCQ) to support a commitment to aged care services that respect every culture, language and life story, and create workplaces in care where all older Australians feel understood, safe, and supported.

ECCQ brought together community organisations (including three of our team), aged care providers, government agencies and multicultural communities from across the Darling Downs.

Gillian, Bronwyn and Dylan (orange lanyards)

ECCQ Peak Body General Manager, Dr. John Bosco Ngendakurio and Diversicare General Manager, Grant Clonan gave thought-provoking overviews of the challenge of discrimination, issues with low self-esteem and migration trauma.

This was followed by an engaging panel discussion 'Building Inclusive Aged Care Together' including our very own Manager, Aged and Community Care, Bronwyn Bidstrup.

Bronwyn was joined by Grant and John, David Taylor (Aurora Training Institute), Rosa Ines Rother (Community Leader) and Chelsea Apps (Employment Success Program - 2M Language Services).

The food, dance, exhibitors and vibrant community crowd made a special day of connection, culture and community.

Our CEO joins Navigating Aged Care Changes Forum Panel - 4 June

Hosted on the Sunshine Coast by Healthy Ageing Partnerships and Country to Coast PHN, this consumer-driven forum attracted over 150 people.

The audience learnt more about:

- Upcoming changes to the Aged Care Act and Quality Standards
- How to be an active partner in your care
- Making informed decisions about your care journey.

Our CEO Darren Young with Marg Adams

Part of the panel, our CEO, Darren Young heard some people felt let down by the current system, particularly when waiting too long to get the support they needed.

He also observed sometimes it was the more everyday issues that hurt - like the unavailability of a toilet when visiting a Services Australia site - that causes distress and older people feeling they are simply overlooked.

Darren learnt those already getting services and first time system navigators were both treading cautiously forward to better understand the changes.

Energy4Seniors reaches record program engagement targets

Energy4Seniors aims to help 12,000 older Queenslanders save on electricity bills by:

- Raising awareness of concessions, rebates and support services like the Energy and Water Ombudsman
- Improving understanding of energy bills and usage, smart meters, and energy plans
- Building confidence in managing energy use efficiently.

Energy4Seniors

So far, we've reached 7,925 people and need your help to reach our goal by joining a webinar, attending a local session, or hosting a group session.

To learn more or to book a session visit cotaqld.org.au/energy4seniors or phone Kayleen Johnston on 0447 202 043 Tuesday – Friday.

Council on the Ageing Response to Queensland Sport Strategy 2025

Equitable access to sport for older Queenslanders is essential.

We called for a Sport Strategy.with ongoing funding for community activities and increased promotion of existing successful, long-term and grassroots programs and initiatives.

They would need to maximise outcomes that deliver physical and mental health benefits to participants.

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