

**WELCOME** – It was wonderful to see our members and new guests participating in our “Be Seen in Green” themed meeting on 10 March to celebrate St Patrick’s Day. Congratulations to Marjorie Scott who was selected as our first prize winner by our guest speaker, Emily Gould from Seniors Enquiry Line who gave a very interesting talk on how scams can affect us all. It’s good to hear that our Treasurer Evelyn Jamieson is on the mend after a recent bout of ill health. We look forward to seeing her again soon. Thanks to everyone who contributed items towards supporting the Care Kits For Kids Qld charity in March – these items are greatly appreciated.

## 2022 BRANCH MEETINGS

Our April branch meeting will be held on Thursday 14 April at the Coorparoo RSL Club. Arrival will be at 10:00am for a 10:30am start with guest speaker, updates on branch and national activities, raffles and refreshments. The cost will be \$7.00 per person payable at the door. As Easter Friday is the following day, we encourage members to be creative by wearing or bringing something themed to Easter for a chance to win some great prizes.

Our guest speaker will be Barry Collis an Earth Angel/Driver from Angel Flight Australia. We hope you can join us and perhaps stay for lunch at the club afterwards (at your own cost).

The remaining meeting dates for 2022 will be:

12 May	9 June
14 July	11 August (AGM)
8 September	13 October
10 November	

## MORNING TEA CATCH-UP

Our next morning tea and chat will be on Monday 28 March at Easts Leagues Club, 40 Main Avenue, Coorparoo from 10:00am. As this coincides with our first day bus trip for 2022, some members may not be able to attend, but those who are not able to do the bus trip are still encouraged to get together at Easts.

Our April get-together will be on Tuesday 26 April (due to Anzac Day public holiday on 25 April)

There is ample free parking, or it is a short stroll from the bus stops. The car park opens at 9:50am and the club opens at 10:00am. We hope to see you there.

## APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Best wishes to:

Karin Chambers	Elsie Debney
Sophia Feulbach	Lyn Potter
Bruce Purnell	

who celebrate their birthdays in April. We hope you enjoy your special day with family and friends.

## LIVE SHOWS AT QPAC ...

The new musical GIRL FROM THE NORTH COUNTRY starts a season at QPAC in September and we are currently holding some tickets for the 1:30pm matinee session on Wednesday 14 September at a cost of \$79.90 each.

*Some information about the show: "After sell-out seasons in London and Broadway, GIRL FROM THE NORTH COUNTRY has taken the theatrical world by storm. An uplifting story of American life in 1934 Minnesota, a group of wanderers cross paths at a guesthouse. Featuring the reimagined songs of Bob Dylan, written and directed by Conor McPherson and starring Lisa McCune, Peter Kowitz, Helen Dallimore and Peter Carroll."*

If anyone is interested in attending this matinee session please advise Freya Tienan on 07 3397 3304 or by our 9 June branch meeting so the booking can be finalised.

If anyone is interested in other shows like ballet or concerts please let your committee know so we can investigate them as well.

## CARE KITS FOR KIDS DONATIONS

Some suggestions of items are listed below that can be brought to our monthly meetings and will be delivered to Care Kits For Kids. Most can be purchased at discount shops, and not everything needs to be provided each month. Every donation will help Queensland children in need.

**April** – Face washer, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush

**May** – Long pants, jackets, tops, beanies (sizes 0-16)

**June** – Underwear, socks (all sizes to 16)

**July** – Hairbrush, comb, bands, clips, baseball cap

**August** – roll-on deodorant (no glass or spray), shampoo, conditioner (travel or small size)

**September** – Summer pyjamas, girls crop tops (all sizes to 16)

**October** – Reading book (all genres & ages), small soft toy or doll (no beads or stick-on eyes)

**November** – Backpack, small lunch box

## MEET ONE OF OUR MEMBERS...

To help get to know a little more about our members we would like to profile a member each month, and Barb Marshall has kindly agreed to share some of her story.

*Q: Tell us a little about when you were growing up, your work life and family.*

I grew up in Liverpool, NSW. I met Denis in Perth when I was 18 years old and we were married in 1962. Because Denis was 17 years older than me people told us it wouldn't last, but we were married for 53 plus years. We have two children, Denis Jnr and Sonja.

My husband loved to travel, and for most of our earlier years we lived in a number of countries – Australia, twice in New Zealand, twice in England, twice in America and a year in Saudi Arabia. Denis was a teacher and always had a job to go to. We finally retired in British Columbia, Canada, where my husband was originally from. Although Denis died in 2016 I didn't move from BC to Brisbane where my daughter lives until 2019, a week before my 75<sup>th</sup> birthday.

I spent a lot of my working life in hospital or care homes, and after Denis retired, I took on home care work which I loved. When my children were young I worked for Australia Post, and also did some waitress work on and off when we lived in California which I also loved.

My son lives in NZ with his second wife and he adopted her daughter when they married – I am Oma to her. I live with my daughter in Brisbane and she also has an adopted daughter.

*Q: Do you have someone who you can call a life-time friend?*

I've made some wonderful friends over the years in the different countries where we lived. My best friend lives in England and we still talk once a week. I haven't found a new best friend here yet.

*Q: What are some ways you keep yourself busy nowadays?*

I keep busy taking care of my daughter's home, I volunteer at a hospital one day a week, and I am involved in a lot of my church's activities. I also belong to the Holland Park Lions which leads to other volunteer work.

*Q: What is the secret to a happy and healthy life?*

I don't think that a healthy happy life is a secret. I believe – all things in moderation, go with the flow, and

everyday above ground is a blessing. Keep yourself fit and busy. Give thanks for what you have.

*Q: If you could change one thing in your life, what would it be?*

I don't know that I would change much in my life, but I often wonder what life might have been like if we had more children. We always wanted four, but Denis became very ill with T.B. when Sonja was only six weeks old and Denis Jnr. 13 months. He needed to have a lung removed which meant he was unable to work for almost two years. We were living in the Northern Territory of Canada at the time, and as he needed lots of sunshine, decided to move to California for a while. It was then we decided not to have more children.

*Q: What do you like most about National Seniors Coorparoo?*

I like coming to National Seniors because I'm a people person. I get my energy from the fellowship of others. I love that we support Care Kits for Kids and that we look outside of our needs to support the less fortunate. I also enjoy hearing from the different guest speakers each month.

## QUICK QUIZ...

1. What has a head and a tail but no body?
2. What can't talk but will reply when spoken to?
3. What has many teeth but can't bite?
4. I'm light as a feather yet the strongest person can't hold me for five minutes!
5. What is full of holes but still holds water?

(Answers Page 6)

## TOP 7 TIPS FOR MAKING MEDICAL DECISIONS FOR OTHERS

Making medical treatment decisions for others is hard. It typically involves a sudden medical event with someone you love becoming critically ill and unable to communicate.

While it's something we don't like to dwell on, it's important that we understand our responsibilities and what's expected of us if we're ever called upon to make medical decisions for others. After all, any of us could suddenly experience a car accident, stroke, or serious illness like COVID.

Be prepared. You may find yourself dealing with a sudden medical event if you've been legally appointed as a substitute decision-maker (SDM). Or the responsibility may automatically fall to you through your family relationships. In fact, if you have a husband, wife or parent, chances are you're a substitute decision-maker and don't even know it.

Advance Care Planning Australia has compiled their top 7 tips to help people feel better prepared for the role.

## 1. Start talking

All too frequently, people have expectations that loved ones can make decisions on their behalf without discussion. If someone has appointed you as a substitute decision-maker without the benefit of clarifying their preferences, be sure to raise it with them.

To kick off the conversation you might ask: "I'm worried that if something happened to you, I wouldn't know what you would want. For example, would you accept treatment if it meant you were no longer able to talk or were unable to recognise family members?"

## 2. Ask if you're right for the role

Before accepting the responsibility of being a substitute decision-maker, ask yourself if you're the right person for the role. Few people are aware that it's okay to say no.

If you're not great at making decisions in pressured, emotional situations or feel uneasy about discussing death or dying, be sure to let your loved one know so that they can choose someone else.

## 3. Get their preferences in writing

Just like making a will, an advance care directive (ACD) can help clarify a person's preferences and reduce confusion and family conflict.

Encourage your loved one to write an ACD while they are still fit and healthy. Be aware that ACDs can only be completed by people with decision-making capacity, so if dementia is a factor, early planning is critical.

## 4. Go to medical appointments

It's easier to make medical decisions for others if you understand their current health status and how it impacts their quality of life. If possible, accompany the person to medical appointments. Ask questions about their illness and treatment options, and how their illness is likely to progress in future.

## 5. Learn your CPRs and DNRs

While most of us have watched TV medical dramas and know some of the terminology, few of us have a solid understanding of how medical events play out in real life.

From CPR and dialysis to tube feeding and artificial breathing, these interventions come with significant burdens that are not always compatible with how people want to live. Advance Care Planning Australia offers useful information on life-prolonging treatments and how to weigh the pros and cons.

## 6. Access is everything

Too often, an ACD can't be found quickly in an emergency. Encourage your loved one to upload their ACD to My Health Record, or ask their health professional to do so. This will ensure the document can be accessed when needed most. Ask your loved one for a copy so you can also keep it safe and accessible.

## 7. Ask for help

As a substitute decision-maker, it's natural to have questions - ranging from how to complete forms and understand the legal aspects - to your ethical concerns. For free, personalised advice, call the National Advance Care Planning Support Service on 1300-208-582 from 9am - 5pm (AEST) Monday to Friday.

More information can be obtained from their website [advancecareplanning.org.au](http://advancecareplanning.org.au) (*Source: Advance Care Planning Australia is funded by the Australian Government and administered by Austin Health*)

## FROM THE MOUTHS OF BABES...

Some responses from children when asked "When is it okay to kiss someone?"

-When they're rich. - Pam, age 7

-The law says you have to be eighteen, so I wouldn't want to mess with that. - Curt, age 7

-The rule goes like this: If you kiss someone, then you should marry them and have kids with them. It's the right thing to do. - Howard, age 8

And this gem when asked "Is it better to be single or married?"

- It's better for girls to be single but not for boys. Boys need someone to clean up after them. - Anita, age 9

## PENSION INCREASE

The Age Pension increased on 20 March in line with rising inflation and living costs.

Centrelink adjusts the maximum pension payment twice a year in March and September to ensure your payments keep pace with rising living costs. The latest increase of 2.1% - effective 20 March 2022 - has been adjusted to reflect the higher cost of living from rising inflation. The increase is based on a set formula, which uses the rate of inflation and adjusts for changes in male average earnings.

This indexation is an integral part of our social security safety net and ensures pensioners maintain their purchasing power within the economy.

## Payment rates increase:

- Singles: Increase of \$20.10 a fortnight, totalling \$987.60 a fortnight.
- Couples (combined): Increase of \$30.20 a fortnight for couples, totalling \$1,488.80 a fortnight
- This is equivalent to \$1.43 per day for singles and \$2.15 per day for couples.

## Asset test limits increase:

Centrelink has also adjusted assets test thresholds to ensure they keep pace with the changing value of assets and their capacity to generate retirement income. These changes are:

- Single: \$6,750 to \$599,750 for homeowners and \$816,250 for non-homeowners
- Couple (combined): \$10,000 to \$901,500 for homeowners and \$1,118,000 for non-homeowners

Centrelink also reassesses the value of your assets in March and September along with indexation of the pension and assets test limits. This is to make sure you are not being paid too much or not enough – based on the rules set out under the means test.

While National Seniors welcomes these changes to the pension rate and the asset test limits, they believe that cost-of-living still far outweighs the pension, especially for those with limited other means. This makes it very hard for those reliant on the pension, especially those paying rent, to meet their living costs.

## Broader reform needed:

There is a need to initiate broader reform of the retirement income system to ensure it is fairer and simpler. National Seniors' Federal Budget Submission outlines some of these critical reforms:

- An Independent Pension Tribunal to set the rate of the pension and pensioner supplement so they better reflect need.
- An increase to the Commonwealth Rent Assistance payment to reflect the high costs of rental housing in Australia.
- An exemption to the income test for work income for low-wealth pensioners to help those who need to work, earn and save more.
- An exemption from the assets test to allow those receiving high-level Home Care Packages to downsize into more suitable housing (and stay out of residential aged care) without affecting their pension.

## HOW TO WALK A HUMAN – A Dogs Guide

Humans need exercise. If they don't get it they become "chubby". It's up to you to save them.

1. Allow your human to tether themselves to you. This keeps them from wandering off or running away.
2. Your human probably needs breaks. Be considerate and stop and sniff often.
3. Bark frequently. Humans have a short attention span.
4. When you go to the bathroom, walk away. If you have trained your human correctly, they will pick it up. Good aerobics.
5. Periodically drag your human as fast as you can. This is called interval training.
6. Do not allow your human to shorten the walk. They are being lazy. Sit in protest if you must.
7. Once you are home, allow your human to remove their tether, then lick their face many times. This is positive reinforcement for a job well done.



## NATIONAL SENIORS RESEARCH UNCOVERS SOME 'HOME' TRUTHS

It is twelve months since the 148 recommendations of the Royal Commission into aged care were publicly released and CEO, Professor John McCallum, shares what the research has uncovered in aged care.

"In announcing the work of Commissioners Pagone and Briggs, Prime Minister Scott Morrison acknowledged a seismic shift was needed in the way we approach aged care. "So generational change is needed, ...It will take quite considerable time to achieve the scale of change that we want to and need to," the PM told the media at a news conference at Kirribilli House a year ago.

"So, okay we must accept that this will take time but are things moving?"

"I was called as an expert witness to the Royal Commission on no less than three occasions and had many other background meetings and submissions. At my formal appearance on the very first day, I gave my views on key issues, dominated by home care, which was woefully underfunded and had horrific statistics.

Waiting lists for home care had blown out to more than 120,000 people waiting on average 18 months to receive the level of care that had already been approved. In one year alone, 16,000 of our fellow Australians died on the waiting list while a further 13,000 were shunted into residential aged care against their wishes because the home care they had been approved to receive, simply wasn't available. Under oath in cross examination, I described it as the "running sore" of aged care which received immediate media coverage

So, twelve months on in last year's budget, home care became the centrepiece receiving the bulk of the \$17.7 billion dollars allocated to aged care. According to the government this was to primarily, reduce waiting times, better meet the needs of older Australians, more support for carers themselves and for assistance in helping seniors navigate the system in choosing their care.

Since then, waiting times for the highest level of home care are now estimated to take between six to nine months after the care package has been approved (as of December 31, 2021). And last November, the Department of Health reported that the wait list for those seeking a package at their approved level had fallen to 74,143 while the number of available home care packages had increased to 217,724 by year's end according to the Minister, Greg Hunt.

That's home care, but what about residential aged care where we heard a continuing parade of horror stories at the Royal Commission? That verdict belongs to the people who use home care or will soon be looking to use home care either for themselves or a loved one. Last year our research team at National Seniors embarked on an arduous journey to ask thousands of older Australians what, if anything has changed in their minds when it comes to aged care. This was especially in the wake of the reports of systemic abuse and neglect within the sector.

We conducted a broad social survey in the weeks leading up to the release of the Royal Commission's recommendations and a follow up survey more than six months later. The results are contained in our new report 'As close to home as possible – Older Australians' hopes and fears for aged care.'

The most common response from those who took the time to tell us their thoughts was aged care needed to be more like "home". They told us of a desire for more home style meals, facilities and atmosphere. We were told of a preference for smaller, community minded facilities minimising the sort of abuse and neglect that was exposed in the Royal Commission.

There's a preference for more not-for-profit nursing homes because many of our respondents believe that the profit motive and care are incompatible bed fellows. The survey also revealed sympathy for aged care workers who are underpaid and work in trying conditions. Not surprisingly respondents believe better pay and conditions would lead to better care for aged care residents.

The other sticking point our respondents referred to is the inability to navigate the complex system and find information when choosing an aged care provider. A one-stop-shop for information and advice was consistently raised to overcome this.

In response we at National Seniors came up with 12 ideals on how to make residential aged care more attractive including, lower fees, increased staff, more diverse aged care homes and more accountability. As our report shows and our members tell us, we have the answers on fixing the system, and the Prime Minister is right, it will take time to achieve our goals, but the length of that time and quality of outcomes will also be the judge - The clock is now ticking."

## **MOULD KILLS – CHECK IT OUT AFTER RAIN DOWNPOUR**

Heavy rain and dampness can put your health at risk if not corrected.

Moulds are fungi – microbes like viruses or bacteria. There are some microbes in every building and they're usually harmless. In a damp or water-damaged environment, however, toxic mould species grow and release spores that can cause health problems if inhaled.

Research shows dampness, mould, and related airborne particles are associated with a range of adverse health outcomes, including increased risks of asthma, allergies, and respiratory infections and symptoms.

A parliamentary inquiry into biotoxin-related illnesses in Australia noted the need for further research into mould prevalence, mould measurement, and the potential health effects of exposure to damp and mould.

Some research suggests people exposed to mould in their homes report more severe depression and anxiety symptoms. Of course, this association isn't just about mould, and worsening mental health is likely to do with a range of factors associated with living with damp and mould, including poor housing condition, poverty, and general ill health.

The World Health Organisation advises no level of exposure to mould can be considered safe for health. It says dampness and mould-related problems should be prevented and remediated early to avoid potentially harmful exposure.

A recent analysis by the University of Melbourne shows 27% of renters say their current home has problems with mould and 21% report problems with dampness. Mould is often found in the south-eastern states of Australia due to a combination of lower temperatures and damp weather. It is also a problem in NSW and Queensland, where 39% and 26% of regions respectively have a high prevalence of mould in rental homes. Sydney has more mould than Melbourne.

You're also more likely to find mould in poorly maintained, low-income housing. These poor housing conditions are more common among people who already experience health issues.

Other risk factors for mould included roof and plumbing defects, and the need for urgent repairs.

### **What can you do about mould in your home?**

Prevention is more efficient than removal. The key is keeping the house dry and free of dust. Make sure you:

- Fix leaks, including roofs and walls, as well as plumbed appliances such as dishwashers
- Increase ventilation and air circulation with windows and fans
- Use extractor fans when cooking, bathing or drying laundry
- Use a dehumidifier
- Clean condensation from inner windows.

If mould has already set in, the best option is to remove it physically with a microfibre cloth.

Mould remediation is complex and often best undertaken with professional advice. Australian state and territory governments provide advice on dealing with dampness and mould in the home.

*(Source: The Conversation, written by Professor Rebecca Bentley, Director of the Centre for Research Excellence in Healthy Housing, University of Melbourne)*

## **COVID-19 OLDER PERSONS SUPPORT LINE**

Don't forget, if you need information and/or support as it relates to the current COVID-19 pandemic, there is a National Seniors Australia support team dedicated to members, so please call 1300 877 626 to speak directly to the team about your concerns.

## **QUICK QUIZ ANSWERS**

1. Coin; 2. Echo; 3. Comb; 4. Breath; 5. Sponge

## **BRANCH CONTACT DETAILS**

If you have any queries please contact our Secretary, Graham Tienan, on mobile 0407 736 453 or email [nsacoorparoosec@gmail.com](mailto:nsacoorparoosec@gmail.com).

## **SMILE**

- I have a few jokes about unemployed people, but none of them work.
- How does an attorney sleep? First he lies on one side, then he lies on the other side.
- How do you make holy water? You boil the hell out of it.
- Will glass coffins be a success? Remains to be seen.
- What's the difference between a hippo and a zippo? One is really heavy and the other is a little lighter.
- Two windmills are standing in a wind farm. One asks, "What's your favorite kind of music?" The other says, "I'm a big metal fan."
- Hear about the new restaurant called Karma? There's no menu - you get what you deserve.
- I went to buy some camouflage trousers yesterday; but couldn't find any.
- What do you call a bee that can't make up its mind? A maybe.
- I tried to sue the airline for losing my luggage. I lost my case.
- When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
- A cross-eyed teacher couldn't control his pupils.
- She had a photographic memory; but never developed it.
- Is it ignorance or apathy that's destroying the world today? I don't know and don't really care.

