COORPAROO BRANCH NEWSLETTER

National Seniors AUSTRALIA

AUGUST 2026

WELCOME – Our guest speakers at the July meeting, Susie Dash and Amanda Morgan from Task Tamers, provided some very helpful insights and options into de-cluttering or downsizing (which is a great fear for many of us) by breaking the task down into small sections to not be overwhelming. Thanks also to Karen Furnivall from NSA head office for her discussion on current advocacy projects on behalf of all seniors, and her explanation of the options available as a branch should we not be able to form an executive committee at the AGM in August. More details are explained below. Our thanks as always to everyone for those generous donations to Care Kits For Kids and the community pantry which are greatly received.

BRANCH MEETINGS

Our next meeting will be on **Thursday 13 August at the Parkside Community & Services Club**. Arrival will be at 9:30am for a 9:45am start with guest speakers, updates on branch and national activities, raffles and refreshments. The cost will be $10.00 per person payable in cash at the door.

Our guest speaker is Trevor Hamley, an Australian Glaciologist who will recount his extraordinary adventure in Antarctica with eight Soviet expeditioners in 1983 in his memoir "Vodka in a Vegemite Jar: an Australian on a Soviet Antarctic Expedition".

Remaining meeting dates for 2026 are: 10 September; 8 October; 12 November

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will follow the branch meeting on Thursday 13 August, commencing at approximately 11:00am at which all members and guests are welcome, however only current financial members are eligible to vote.

All Executive positions on the committee will become available, ie President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, although the Vice-President and Treasurer have both offered to continue in their roles while the others will assist the committee as required. If any financial member would like to nominate for any position on the committee, forms are available from the Secretary, Graham Tienan, 0407 736 453 or nsacoorparoosec@gmail.com.

The role of the President is to supervise and control all the business of the branch and see that all orders and resolutions of the Management Committee and members are carried into effect whilst also being a member of all committees of the branch.

The Secretary must keep accurate records of all the proceedings of all meetings/attendance book; report the minutes to members; report end of financial year results to the Office of Fair Trading; be head office liaison contact, and notify any change in officers of branch executive positions; and perform other duties as prescribed by the Management Committee or President.

As explained by Karen Furnivall from NSA head office at the July meeting, if we are unable to form an executive committee of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer at the annual general meeting, we can close the branch or we do have an option to become a Social Club branch under NSA. This would mean that the incorporated branch would be closed and advised to the Office of Fair Trading. Any remaining funds will be distributed in accordance of members' wishes such as charitable donations, host a function for members, or return funds to NSA head office etc. The branch will not hold any funds, and bank accounts will be closed.

As a Social branch under the NSA banner, we will retain a branch page on the NSA website and financial members will still be covered by NSA insurance if participating in branch activities. There is no committee to run the branch, only a group of willing volunteers. Activities that we currently hold such as monthly meetings, guest speakers, morning teas, public transport outings or bus trips can continue on a cost-per-use basis. Our current charitable donations of goods to Care Kits For Kids, the food pantry, and Mission to Seafarers will continue, but should we wish to raise cash funds for a particular charity this will be as a donation box type collection.

If you need any further clarification please contact either President, Freya, on 0409 397 330, or Secretary, Graham on 0407 736 453.

MORNING TEA CATCH-UP

Our next morning tea catch ups will be on **Monday 20 July and Monday 17 August from 10am at Easts Leagues Club**. This is always a great informal way to get to know fellow members outside the confines of a branch meeting.

The remaining dates for 2026 are: 21 September; 19 October; 16 November

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Best wishes to *Bob Deathridge; Alex Garlin; Marion Hawthorne; Irene Prendergast and Joan Stenner* who celebrate birthdays in August. We hope you enjoy your special day with family and friends.

EXPLORE BRISBANE BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ENJOY A "CHRISTMAS IN JULY" LUNCH

On **Thursday 30 July** we will visit **The Crown Hotel, 446 Lutwyche Road, Lutwyche** to enjoy a two-course "Christmas In July" lunch from 12:00pm. Cost of lunch is $35 per person consisting of mixed Ham and Turkey roast served with baked seasonal vegetables, followed by traditional Christmas Pudding with brandy custard. To add to the celebration, members are encouraged to bring a small gift wrapped in Christmas paper that we will put in a "lucky dip" for everyone to draw from.

As bookings are essential, please advise Freya Tienan on 0409 397 330 by 17 July if you wish to attend and whether you have any dietary requirements.

There are a couple of options available for public transport, however if you would like to attend and can't use either public transport or drive yourself, we can try to make arrangements to drive you.

- Route 333 – departs Woolloongabba station at 11:20am; Mater Hill station 11:22am; South Bank busway station 11:24am or Cultural Centre station 11:26am and arrives at the Truro Street station at 11:41am. It's a 330m walk outbound to the Hotel along Lutwyche Road
- Alternate Route 334 – departs Stop 58 Queen Street outside Post Office Square and opposite the GPO at 11:40am, arrives at Stop 19 East Street on Lutwyche Road at 11:57am. You then walk back towards the city to the hotel approx. 138m. This bus runs hourly so don't miss it!
- If you prefer to drive yourself, there is parking at the rear of the hotel with entry on the left off Lutwyche Road at The Good Guys driveway.

CARE KITS FOR KIDS

Coorparoo Branch continues our relationship with this not-for-profit organisation in 2026 with some suggestions of items 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.

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

COMMUNITY PANTRY DRIVE

If you would like to provide good quality non-perishable food items that can be passed on to a local community organisation to assist those in need in our area, please bring them along to each meeting where we will collect and distribute them. Please ensure that all items are well within use by date.

NAME BADGES

Please remember to wear your name badge to each meeting to assist new members. If you don't have a name badge and would like to obtain one, please advise our secretary Graham Tienan on 0407 736 453 or nsacoorparoosec@gmail.com so we can organise for them to be made before the next meeting. Cost will be $12.00 for either a pin-on type or magnet type. (Please note that magnet type is not suitable if you have a pacemaker.)

WELLBEING OFFICER

If you are, or know of any member who is ill, injured, or in need of help please notify Jan Jackson on 0411 987 174 so that we can give our support where needed.

MISSION TO SEAFARERS

In the past, our members have been kindly knitting beanies and scarves which are donated to the Mission to Seafarers. These items are available to any crew members visiting Brisbane who may need warm clothing when their ships are heading to colder climates. If anyone is interested in continuing this activity during the winter months, we will collect items for donation to the Mission in November.

BRANCH RECYCLING ITEMS

If you are interested in recycling any of the following items, please bring them along to any of our branch meetings where we will arrange recycling:

- Plastic bottle tops
- Pens, highlighters, white outs
- Batteries
- Blister tablet packs
- PLASTIC bread tags (not cardboard tags)
- Corks
- Soaps
- Stamps

2026 EVERALD COMPTON COMMUNITY CHAMPION MEDAL AWARDED

Congratulations to Kilkivan-based Rosie Fitzgerald who was announced as the recipient of the 2026 award for her tireless and selfless work to improve the experience of ageing for residents in her community of Kilkivan – a rural region around 50kms northwest of Gympie, helping residents to stay connected and to age in place rather than relocate to larger centres, away from family and friends.

In 2020, Rosie founded the Kilkivan District Community Care Association Incorporated (KDCCAI) which included the establishment of Seniors Social Hubs to strengthen social connections. KDCCAI purchased a community minivan, driven by volunteers, to provide transport to medical appointments and social activities. KDCCAI also continues to advocate for improved access to Home Care Packages.

Under Rosie's leadership, KDCCAI purchased a former church with plans to develop supported accommodation to enable older residents to remain local rather than relocate to residential aged care elsewhere. KDCCAI has also partnered with University of the Sunshine Coast researchers to co-design and pilot a dementia caregiver support program as well as other initiatives.

"The 2026 Everald Compton Community Champion Medal has shown how many older people are making differences in the communities. While nominations were strong, it was Rosie who stood out for her work to improve the wellbeing of older residents, including those living with dementia, in her community of Kilkivan," NSA CEO Chris Grice said. "Rosie has contributed countless volunteer hours, working hands-on while raising much-needed funds and advocating for older community members. She is described as determined, deeply committed, and a true champion for her community."

NSA's Founder and medal inspiration, Everald Compton AO said, "Too often, older Australians get cast aside. But they're an asset and shouldn't be ignored. Rosie, and all nominees, are shining examples of the difference older Australians make to their communities through humble, selfless and inspirational work. Rosie embodies everything the medal represents including impact on the community, inclusivity and accessibility, leadership and inspiration, and dementia care and support."

In presenting the Everald Compton Community Champion Medal to Rosie, Everald said, "We can all vow to collectively help change negative attitudes about older Australians by acknowledging them as community builders who have the wisdom and ability to turn 'grey into gold' throughout Australia in the manner so ably demonstrated by Rosie."

Finalists for the 2026 medal included:

- Respected Elder Thomas Slockee – nominated for bringing about secure and affordable housing for Indigenous people;
- Jane McMillan OAM – nominated for helping to establish the Caboolture Branch (now known as Leukaemia Support Qld) and raising funds to support patients living with Leukaemia and their families;
- Sandra Slatter – nominated for her dedication to crisis recovery following major events such as the Marysville Black Saturday bushfires and providing support and connection for people living with dementia and their carers; and
- Robert (Bob) Shewring OAM – nominated for his dedication to several community organisations and his efforts to repatriate the bodies of the last remaining Australian soldiers killed during the Vietnam War buried overseas.

All finalists attended a ceremony and dinner at Brisbane's Convention and Exhibition Centre also attended by Federal Minister for Health and Ageing; Minister for Disability and the NDIS the Hon. Mark Butler MP (who delivered the keynote address) and Federal Member for Blair, Shayne Newmann (who delivered the closing remarks). Federal Member for Mayo Rebekha Sharkie MP and Hon Paul de Jersey AC CVO KC presided as judges at the event proudly sponsored by Nucleus Network, RMBL, Watch Smoke Alarms and the Good Guys Commercial.

GOOD NEWS IN PENSION CHANGES

From 1 July 2026, the Federal Government has increased a range of Age Pension means-testing thresholds, allowing some retirees to earn more income, hold more assets, or have more financial investments before their pension entitlement is reduced. These changes form part of the regular July indexation process. While the Age Pension payment rate itself is not increasing, the updated thresholds may result in higher pension entitlements for some existing part-pensioners and may allow others who were previously ineligible to qualify for a pension.

The biggest pension changes typically occur in March and September, when pension payments rates and deeming rates are reviewed. However, the July indexation adjustments remain important because they affect the tests used to determine Age Pension eligibility.

Higher income thresholds – Under the income test, single pensioners can now earn up to $226 per fortnight before their pension begins to reduce, up from $218. For couples, the combined income-free area has increased from $380 to $396 per fortnight.

While the increases may appear modest, they effectively allow pensioners to retain more income before their pension is affected. This is particularly relevant for retirees undertaking part-time work alongside initiatives such as the Government's Work Bonus arrangements designed to encourage older Australians to remain in the workforce. The fortnightly Work Bonus amount remains at $300. The upper income-test limits have also increased. A single pensioner may still qualify for a pension with assessable income of up to $2,628 per fortnight, while couples may remain eligible with combined income of up to $4,017 per fortnight.

Assets test limits increase – The asset-test thresholds have also increased. Single homeowners can now hold up to $333,000 in assessable assets and retain eligibility for the Age Pension, while homeowner couples can hold up to $499,000. For non-homeowners, the equivalent thresholds have increased to $600,000 for singles and $766,000 for couples. The family home remains exempt from the assets test.

Importantly, higher asset limits do not automatically determine pension eligibility. Centrelink applies both the income test and the assets test, with the test producing the lower pension entitlement determining the final payment rate. The cut-off asset limits for pension eligibility have also increased. For example, a single homeowner may now remain eligible for a part Age Pension with assets up to $733,500, while homeowner couples may qualify with assets up to $1,102,500. These changes may particularly benefit retirees whose assets sit just above previous thresholds. In some cases, retaining even a small part-pension entitlement can unlock access to valuable concessions and planning opportunities.

Deeming thresholds rise – The Government has also increased deeming thresholds, which are used by Centrelink to estimate income from financial assets such as bank accounts, term deposits, and managed investments. From 1 July, the lower deeming threshold rises from $64,200 to $66,800 for singles and from $106,200 to $110,600 for couples.

Assets below these thresholds are deemed to earn 1.25%, with balances above the thresholds deemed to earn 3.25%. Though these rates may change in September, with the Government set to announce the new rates by 20 August. The increase is particularly relevant in a higher interest-rate environment and may provide some relief for retirees whose financial assets are assessed under the deeming rules. Further changes to deeming arrangements may occur in future indexation rounds.

Retirement villages and granny flats - The additional allowable asset amount for retirement village and granny flat residents has increased from $258,000 to $267,000, helping ensure these arrangements continue to be assessed fairly under the pension assets test.

Aged care changes – Several aged care thresholds have also increased. The Refundable Accommodation Deposit (RAD) threshold above which aged care providers must obtain approval to charge a higher accommodation deposit has increased from $758,627 to $789,686. In addition, the Maximum Permissible Interest Rate (MPIR) used to calculate Daily Accommodation Payments (DAPs) has increased from 7.96% to 8.43%.

For new residents paying accommodation costs through a DAP rather than a lump-sum RAD, the increase in the MPIR means a higher DAP for the same room price. For example, a room with a $760,000 RAD paid via a DAP under the old MPIR would be $165.74 a day, but with the new rate of 8.43% that rises to $175.52. New aged care residents would also likely have the new twice-yearly indexation apply to their DAP.

Looking ahead - While the July changes primarily affect eligibility thresholds rather than pension payment rates, they may improve outcomes for retirees receiving a part pension, approaching Age Pension age, or those who narrowly missed out on eligibility in the past.

The next major areas to watch are the September indexation adjustments, including the annual update to the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card income limits and any future changes to deeming arrangements. Early indications are that the next pension indexation is likely to be the lowest since March 2025. The indexation of the Age Pension on 20 September is based on inflation for the six months from January to June 2026. The ABS will be releasing these figures in late July and early August. But so far inflation has been heading down (prices are still going up, but not as fast), meaning a lower increase in maximum pension rates. Based on the data available, the next indexation could be less than $20 a fortnight for a couple.

For retirees sitting close to the current income or asset thresholds, a review of their position could be worthwhile, particularly where even a small Age Pension entitlement may provide access to valuable concessions and benefits. *(Source: NSA, Services Australia)*

SENIORS HIT HARD BY BACK PAIN

New survey data shows seniors experience the highest rates of chronic back pain and suffer its most severe impacts. The 2026 Australian Spinal Health Survey of 1,040 adults found that 87.3% of Australians aged 61 and over have experienced back pain in their lifetime, and 83.3% reported pain in the past year.

Nearly half (48.3%) of older sufferers report chronic pain lasting more than three months, which is the highest rate of any age group. Among those aged 81 and over, chronic pain rises to 56.8%. Australian Chiropractors Association (ACA) President, Dr Billy Chow, said the findings confirm that back pain in later life is rarely temporary. Only 16.5% of seniors with low back pain said their condition had fully resolved. Instead, many live with persistent pain that affects mobility, sleep, and independence.

Reduced mobility is a defining issue. More than two in five seniors report being less mobile due to back pain, compared with 25% across all sufferers. Sleep disruption is also more common, affecting 29.5% of older respondents. According to Dr Chow, these factors combine to accelerate functional decline, increase isolation, and limit social participation for seniors.

Mental health impacts are closely linked. While overall rates of anxiety and depression are lower than in younger groups, 30.3% of seniors report a moderate-to-extreme mental health impact from back pain. Among those aged 61-70, 17.3% report depression or anxiety as a direct result. This rises to 18.6% among women. The survey also points to heavy reliance on medication, with seniors reporting the highest daily use of both over-the-counter and prescription pain relief.

At the same time, older Australians are the most frequent users of chiropractic care, with nearly 50% having consulted a chiropractor. Of those, 77.3% reported improvement. Fear of movement is another major barrier. More than half of ACA chiropractors report that most of their older patients restrict activity due to fear of pain or injury. This “fear avoidance” can worsen deconditioning and reinforce pain cycles.

Research supports the need for integrated care. Studies by CQUniversity and Macquarie University’s MindSpot program show that combining physical treatment with psychological support can improve both physical and mental outcomes.

Further research led by Assoc Prof Katie de Luca found chronic low back pain in older adults is linked to frailty, falls, poor sleep, reduced quality of life, and declines in cognitive function. Encouragingly, her study found that tailored exercise programs can improve strength, reduce frailty, and decrease depression and anxiety in older adults with back pain. Dr Chow said these findings reinforce that back pain should not be accepted as a normal part of ageing. Maintaining movement, addressing fear avoidance, and accessing evidence-based care can improve function, independence, and overall wellbeing *(Source: ACA)*

HOW TO STAY SAFE AND WARM

As colder weather sets in, we all need to take extra care to stay warm, healthy, and safe. Ageing bodies can have a harder time regulating temperature, making older people more vulnerable to cold-related illnesses such as hypothermia, respiratory infections and worsening of chronic conditions. A few simple steps can make a big difference.

Keep warm at home – maintaining a comfortably warm indoor environment is essential. Aim for a living area temperature of around 18-21C. Use heaters safely and ensure rooms are well ventilated to prevent carbon monoxide build-up. Draught-proof doors and windows, and close curtains at dusk to retain heat. Wearing layers – including thermal underwear, socks, and a well-fitting jumper – helps trap body heat effectively.

Look after your health – Winter is the peak season for colds, flu, and other respiratory illnesses. Seniors should stay up to date with vaccinations, including the annual flu shot and COVID-19 boosters if recommended by your GP. Regular handwashing, avoiding close contact with unwell people, and staying home when sick all help reduce the risk of infection. Chronic conditions such as arthritis, asthma, and heart disease can worsen in cold weather. Keep medications organised and attend regular medical appointments. If you notice changes in symptoms, such as shortness of breath or increased joint pain, seek medical advice promptly.

Eat and drink well – Good nutrition supports immunity and energy levels. Enjoy warm, nourishing meals such as soups, stews, and cooked vegetables. Don’t forget to drink enough fluids. People often feel less thirsty in cold weather, but dehydration can still occur.

Stay active and connected – It’s easy to become less active during winter, but staying physically active helps maintain strength, balance, and mental wellbeing. Gentle indoor exercises, stretching, or short walks during the warmest part of the day can help. Equally important is social connection. Regular phone calls or visits with family and friends can prevent isolation and support emotional health.

Be mindful of safety risks – Winter can increase hazards in the home. Wet surfaces and poor lighting raise the risk of slips and falls. Ensure walkways are clear, use non-slip mats, and keep frequently used items within easy reach. If you are using electric blankets or heaters, check that they are in good working condition.

Check on others – Finally, look out for neighbours, friends, or family members who may be vulnerable. A simple check-in can make a big difference. By taking a proactive approach, we can all enjoy a warm, safe, and healthy winter season. *(Source: Better Health, Healthy WA, Department of Health, NSA)*

WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR NEWS?

A study reveals differences between seniors and younger adults when it comes to staying informed. Older Australians remain among the most loyal consumers of traditional news, even as digital platforms continue to grow.

The 2026 global *Digital News Report* and related Australian research highlight a clear generational divide. While younger audiences are embracing social media and online influencers, older people continue to rely heavily on television, radio, and newspapers. The results were based on a survey conducted by YouGov using an online questionnaire between 9 January and 6 February this year.

Television remains the cornerstone of news for older Australians. Across the population, TV is still the single most widely used news source, reaching a majority of adults, and it retains particular strength among older age groups. Among Australians aged 75 and over, free-to-air television is significantly more likely to be a main source of news than social media or online platforms. This reflects long-established viewing habits and the perceived reliability of scheduled news bulletins produced by trusted broadcasters.

Print newspapers also continue to play a role for older audiences, despite a broader decline in readership. More than half of Australians aged 75 and over reported reading a print newspaper in a given week – a figure dramatically higher than among younger people. This ensuing connection to print underscores both habit and trust, as newspapers are often seen as more authoritative than digital alternatives.

Radio remains another important traditional platform, particularly for older Australians who value its accessibility and companionship. While younger people increasingly bypass radio altogether, it still forms part of a daily news routine for many older listeners, often complementing television and print rather than replacing them.

However, older Australians are not completely insulated from digital change. Increasing numbers are accessing news online, and many are active on social media – particularly Facebook, which has become the dominant platform for news across age groups. More than 70% of Australians over 65 use social media to some extent, often to stay connected with family and community, and this usage can include encountering news content. Still, their engagement with social media tends to be more selective and less news-focused than that of younger users. The broader shift described in the 2026 Digital News Report – towards "platformisation", where social media and video networks rival or surpass traditional outlets – has not yet fully reshaped older Australians' habits. *(Source: The Guardian, ACMA, Reuters Institute, University of Canberra)*

BRANCH CONTACT DETAILS

If you have any queries please contact our Secretary, Graham Tienan, on mobile 0407 736 453 or email nsacoorparoosec@gmail.com. Do remember to update any changes to your details. Emergency contacts need to be current.

SMILE

A hundred years ago everyone owned a horse and only the rich had cars. Today, everyone has a car and only the rich have horses. Oh, how the stables have turned!

* * * * *

Hospital regulations require a wheelchair for patients being discharged. However, a student nurse found one elderly gentleman already dressed and sitting on the bed with a suitcase at his feet, who insisted he didn't need her help to leave the hospital.
After a chat about rules being rules, he reluctantly let her wheel him to the elevator. On the way down she asked him if his wife was meeting him. "I don't know," he said. "She's still upstairs in the bathroom changing out of her hospital gown."

* * * * *

Two older gentlemen, Fred and Sam, went to see a movie. Merely minutes into the movie, Sam heard Fred rustling around. It appeared that he was reaching under all the seats. "What on earth are you doing, Fred?" asked Sam. Fred indignantly responded, "I had a caramel in my mouth and it dropped out. I'm trying to find it!" Annoyed, Sam told him not to worry about it – they could get him another caramel later since that one was ruined by now. "But I've got to," said Fred, exasperated. "My teeth are in it!"