

## Welcome to Childers Social Branch First Newsletter!

It was fabulous to see the numbers booked for the NSA forum and Childers social branch launch event on 8<sup>th</sup> October! ..and excited to share our plans for the rest of the year.

The vision for Childers NSA is to collaborate, support and help promote activities held around the region that welcome, support,

respect & encourage participation by all people over 50.

Each month the plan is to have a loose structure to update members with NSA's latest initiatives, welcome a guest speaker from one of the other groups & have some fun!

Come along and help shape the branch future!

## Join the Social Branch Direct Mailing List or Facebook Group!

Join the Childers National Seniors email list and/or Facebook group to be sure you hear about it first! Don't miss out on hearing about what's happening at the Childers Social branch.

Events will be posted on the National Seniors Australia web page too!

## The FIRST Social Gathering

It's appropriate for the very first Childers Social Branch event to be something uniquely Childers and most importantly - affordable.

Merissa has generously offered The Paragon Theatre and Espresso Bar, in the theatre space (at back of The Perfectly Imperfect Collection) at no cost and is also happy for each person to order and pay for their own food and drink.

This way, everyone's budget is catered for! PLUS you get to appreciate the wonderful building and Perfectly Imperfect Collaboration and each other's fine company all at once!

See the following pages for more information about this event.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Thursday 6th November 2025

**Morning Tea - Paragon Theatre & Espresso Bar, 75 Churchill St, Childers - 10am - 11.30am**

*Buy your own food/drink.*

Let's make the very first Childers social event memorable! Free event!

Check out the Perfectly Imperfect Collection too!

### Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2025

**9.30am Good Cause Santa Claus CWA Childers and morning tea!**

*Just \$10 pp includes morning tea.*

End the year with a bang and help others by donating to the CWA DV bags and Childers Neighbourhood Share the Dignity Drive!

### Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026

**Planning for Purpose - Isis Club, 46 Churchill St, Childers: 10am-12pm**

*Buy your own food/drink.*

Do you feel like you are just sitting around waiting to die?

Don't know what to do with yourself to get meaning back? This fun activity will help.



## Childers Social Branch First Event! Paragon Theatre & Espresso Bar

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**10am-11.30am**

**75 Churchill St, Childers. QLD**

**Cost: FREE**

**Buy your own tea/coffee & treats from the  
Espresso Bar!**



### **Introducing Merissa Craft guest speaker and owner of Paragon Theatre & Espresso Bar.**

Leaving Childers at 17, Merissa Ricciardi (now Craft) embarked on an adventurous journey, living in various places across Australia, including Melbourne. Her travels extended beyond the borders, as she lived in London and backpacked overseas in her 20s.

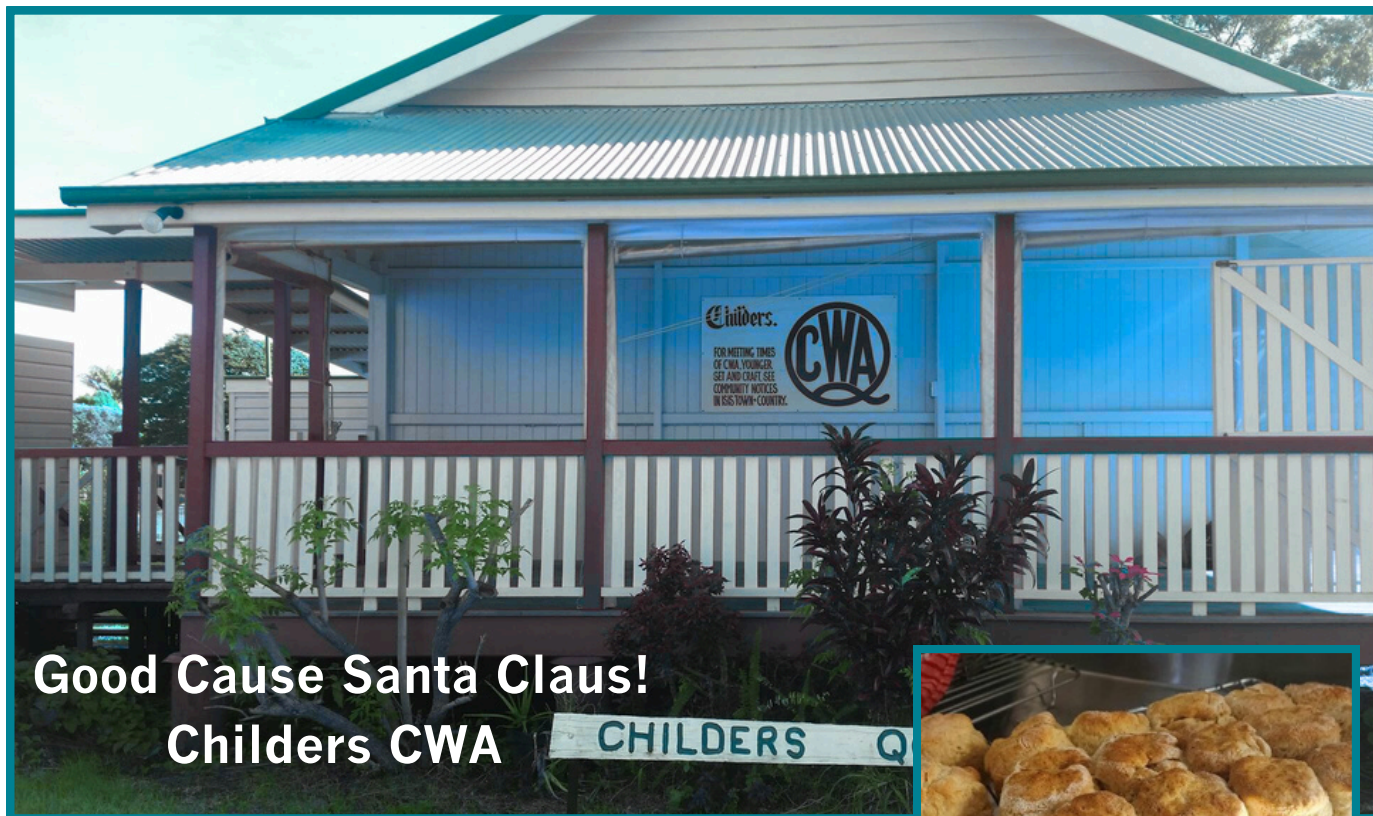
At the age of 23, she purchased The Paragon from her grandparents, Charlie (Carmelo) and Marietta Ricciardi, and began an incredible and challenging journey of restoration. Over the past 18 years, Merissa has meticulously restored the building from front to back, transforming it into a vibrant hub of activity.

Returning to the region in December 2011, she embraced life's ups and downs, getting married, having her beautiful children, and eventually getting divorced. As a dedicated single mum for the last six years, she lives on-site with her three wonderful children: twin girls, Evie and Ava (8 years old), and her son, Eli (11 years old).

In July 2014, she proudly reopened The Paragon as an entertainment venue, breathing new life into the community. Her entrepreneurial spirit didn't stop there; in November 2015, she launched the Espresso Bar, followed by The Perfectly Imperfect Collective in May 2025. Her commitment to preservation and excellence was recognized in 2015 when she and her ex-husband won a National Trust award for their outstanding conservation work.

Through it all, she has remained resilient and passionate, continuously contributing to her community and creating spaces that inspire and connect people.





## Good Cause Santa Claus! Childers CWA



**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

**9.30am-11.30am**

**1 Crescent St, Childers. QLD.**

**RSVP to Carol 0418 757 837**

**Cost: \$10 per person**

**Numbers are limited. Be sure to book.**



## *Good Cause Santa Claus!*

The Childers National Seniors Social Branch is holding a morning tea. Donations to Good Cause Santa Claus will contribute to the Childers CWA annual collection for those in need and will also support Childers Neighbourhood's Share the Dignity annual drive.

### **How you can help?**

Book in to attend the Good Cause Santa Claus event (details above). In addition to the \$10 payment on the day for morning tea, if you are able, please bring along a donation for the cause!

### **Ideas for donations:**

- Toothpaste & toothbrushes
- Small shampoos & conditioners
- Combs and head bands
- Roll on deodorant & hand sanitiser
- Sealed packet of sanitary items
- Washable sanitary items

*Ho ho ho!*



**PLEASE NOTE:** All items must be new and in sealed packaging for health & safety reasons



## Planning for Purpose Isis Club Inc

**Thursday 5th February 2026**

**9.30am-12midday**

**46 Churchill St, Childers. QLD**

**RSVP to Desley 0419 817 973**

**Cost: free**

**Buy your own drinks and eats.**



## Planning for Purpose

**Do you feel like you are just sitting around waiting to die?**

**Don't know what to do with yourself to get meaning back?**

**This fun activity will help.**

*New Year*  
NEW YOU!

**Tailored especially for Seniors over 50!**

*New Year*  
NEW YOU!

Whether you are still in the work force, planning your retirement or already retired, this planning event will be tailored just for you!

Please don't think that, 'at your age', you can't still make a difference and make a meaningful contribution. It simply isn't true!

Discover new ways to refine, rethink or plan your goals for 2026 and, if you'll allow it, branch members will support you along the way where they can!

Be sure to join the branch mailing list, facebook page or check out the National Seniors Australia Childers web page for more details as venue and costs are finalised.

Everyone welcome!



# National advocacy update



## Pension indexation & deeming changes from 20 September

From 20 September 2025, Age Pension payments will rise by up to \$29.70 for singles and \$22.40 each for couples—the largest increase in two years. At the same time, deeming rates will lift by 0.5%, meaning some pensioners may see their increase offset.

The government timed the deeming rate change with indexation to soften the impact, a move NSA strongly advocated for. Our advocacy was recognised when Minister for Social Services, Tanya Plibersek, personally briefed CEO Chris Grice ahead of the announcement. NSA will continue discussions with the Minister ahead of March 2026 indexation. We continue to call for a fairer, more transparent way to set deeming rates and better support for pensioners facing cost-of-living pressures.

### Read the full article:

<https://bit.ly/NSADeemingEstimator>



## Aged care: A step in right direction

The Federal Government will release 20,000 new Home Care Packages before 1 November, with a total of 83,000 to be delivered by mid-2026. This announcement marks progress toward reducing the long wait list that has left tens of thousands of older Australians without support. NSA has strongly advocated for this action, emphasising the human cost of delays on both older people and their families. While challenges remain, this decision is an important step toward ensuring older Australians can age safely at home, as recommended by the Royal Commission.

### Read the full article:

<https://bit.ly/NSADeemingEstimator>

### Join the Aged Care campaign:

<https://bit.ly/NSAPensionABC>

National Seniors Australia is urging retailers who accept cash to proudly display our sticker.

Register for bumper stickers and retailer stickers to distribute in your local area.

Visit our **KEEP CA\$H** campaign page: [bit.ly/3wEOLGu](https://bit.ly/3wEOLGu)



# Would you like to be a guest speaker in 2026?



## Childers Branch Vision for 2026 Regular Gatherings: Collaboration!

As previously mentioned, the vision for Childers NSA is to collaborate, support and help promote activities held around the region that welcome, support, respect & encourage participation by all people over 50.

Each month the plan is to have a loose structure to update members with NSA's latest initiatives, welcome a guest speaker from one of the other groups & have some fun!

Register your interest today to be one of the guest speakers for 2026 and share the story of your not for profit, group, organisation or business.

Contact details below.

*Don't Wait too Long!*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER WITH YOUR LOCAL CHILDERS BRANCH?

No Committee roles, just the fun stuff that you like to do!

- Help set up for an event.
- Organise your own event/activity under the NSA banner
- What would you like to do?

Contact Desley (details below) in the first instance.

The direction of the social branch will be guided by active branch volunteers under the guidance of NSA.

All the hard work has been done.

- ✓ Volunteer handbook
- ✓ Incorporation
- ✓ Branch website
- ✓ Branch manual
- ✓ Stationery templates

*Which means:*

Branch volunteers can focus on what they enjoy doing!



## What is a Social Branch?

The social branch structure is more relaxed, requiring only volunteers to organise activities and maintain contact with members and NSA.

No bank accounts! No committee! No reporting requirements! The model works well for 5 other NSA branches. How good is that?

## Branch Contact Details

Desley Cowley  
Childers Social Branch  
Volunteer  
0419 817 973

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**W:** <https://nationalseniors.com.au/get-involved/branches/childers-social-branch>