



South West Sydney Ageing Forum

A Network of Services Working Together to Support Older People and their Carers to remain independent in the community.

<https://supportservices.org.au/sws-ageing-forum/>

Tuesday 2 June 2026

10am to 11.30am

Online

Minutes

Chairperson: Eunice Sansour – Inclusive & Diverse Communities Inc

Minutes: Krystle Sands – Macarthur Disability Services

Attendees: Maryana Nasour (Amana Community Services), Carissa Zielonka (SWCT), Michelle Watson Deloso (Bankstown Sports Club), Kirsty Young (SWSPHN), Semet Sabri (BaptistCare), Danielle Taylor (Fairfield City Council), Catherine Gonzaga (CatholicCare), Jacqueline Andres (Benevolent Society), Jennie Siriphan (Services Australia), Veruska Benedito (Multicultural Care), Shareen Silva (Live Well Home and Community Services), Fina Kimati & Stephen Neville (Department of Health, Disability & Ageing), Paola Jamett-Caru (Liverpool City Council), Simone Lucidi (Leigh Place Aged Care), Lynne McCormack (NSW Ageing & Disability Commission), Anastasia Hadjisavas (GWC Community Services), Kanta Chetty (Services NSW), Sandra Loyola-Sandoval (CB City Council), Sarah Ryan (SWSLHD), Dat Nyguen, Ekaterina Magin, Kimberley Rainer (SWSLHD), Nhu Tran, Mawuli Dokli, Jennifer Kasule, Lannie Luu, Eva Chun, Dee-Dee San Jose, Stephen Villon

10:00am	Acknowledgement of Country, welcome and housekeeping Eunice acknowledgment of Country, Introduction of the forum and executives, mentioned housekeeping, provided update and overview of the support services website.
10:05am	Acceptance of previous minutes: Simone Lucidi
10:10am	Guest speaker Lynne McCormack (she/her) Senior Project Officer - Communications and Engagement NSW Ageing and Disability Commission • Work to protect and promote the rights of older people and adults with a disability to live free from abuse in their family, home and community. • Different from other commissions, whilst they look at complaints and investigate workers who are paid to do a job, the ADC are able to assist people experiencing abuse or

	exploitation from family, friends or community. The ADC is an Independent NSW Government safeguarding agency. Focused on older people and adults with disability who are subject to, or at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation in their family, home and community. ADC role is to promote and uphold rights, fill a gap that wasn't previously established. Big part of Act is the need to get consent to be able to work with people. All about will and preference. • Definition: a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person. • Strategies – prevention and response, will and preference they some investigative powers, protections for reporters and employees, information sharing. • Have a hotline – majority of reports are from workers going into people's home and seeing what is happening with the person and their family. • Information sharing: MoU's with other agencies including NSW Health, Relationships Australia, Seniors Rights, police etc. So work with them rather than in silos. • What is Elder Abuse of older people: The elder Abuse Prevalence Study in 2020 found that 1 in 6 older Australians reported they experienced abuse. Meta-analysis of 52 international studies found a pool prevalence rate for overall abuse was 15.7%. See WHO factsheet Abuse of Older People • Most reports are about psychological, financial abuse & neglect is also very strong. 5 categories, look into all of these. • All reports are on the website including dashboards – Quarterly and other ad hoc reports. 5-year dataset. • Over the last financial year, over 17K calls, almost 6K reports that were investigated. Most calls result in information, advice and referral (90-95%). Taken care of at the helpline level. ○ 80% of reports are about older people ○ 22% about adults with disability ○ Women featured in most reports ○ Adults with disability the main age for most reports that come in are 18-24. ○ Older people age usually 80-84 ○ Main reporters are paid workers, concerns about their relatives and adult children • Top 20 LGA's out of 128 across NSW. Four LGA's in SWS are in the top 20 of reports. Number of calls are not reported on. Also look at health and ABS data to provide an overview of the characteristics of the population. Doesn't include other agencies. Doesn't mean that an area has worse abuse, it's just the number of abuse reports being reported. • Not a mandatory reporting agency, people are not obliged to report. However, might report to other local agencies. • ADC's response to reports ○ Helpline: work with other agencies, make relevant referrals to a range of services and agencies, also work with the adult 'always' to uphold their rights, will and preference. Where the person doesn't want to follow up
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on the report, ADC do still keep in contact with the local agencies.

- Can put extra supports into place, such as talking with the family and getting everyone involved. Advice support and education for the person doing the abuse.
- Investigations with the consent of the adult. Investigative powers and outcomes. Limited excepts where the person is at immediate harm or neglect has gone so far as to require hospitalisation.
- Often people don't realise they are being abusive or neglecting. Neglect is neglect even if a person is aware of it or not. Have resources which have been put together with Carers NSW to support carers. It's about keeping family together.
- Common examples of what they see:
 - Controlling or blocking access to money
 - Preventing the adult from seeing friends and family, accessing the community or appointments
 - Physical violence, threats and intimidation, destroying property or harming pets
 - Misuse of Powers of Attorney etc
 - Taking advantage of the adult for financial benefit
 - Not providing enough care, refusing services
- Risk factors & Barriers to seeking help:
 - Risk factors – social isolation, dependence on alleged abuser, history of DFSV & Coercive control, cognitive impairment, carers stress.
 - Barriers – fear of not being believed, not wanting to get someone in trouble, fear of retaliation or punishment, lack of awareness and information, cultural barriers and systems
- Strategies – ADC strategic plan includes 5 key areas, everything the ADC does aligns to 5 key areas. [Link to strategic plan](#)
- Overview of what the ADC are doing including working around ableism, ageism and perceived value every day.
- Inquiry into supported decision making currently underway.
- Report on neglect – five years of neglect cases – understanding of what been happening and what's been done
- Free training modules available to workers on the website –
- <https://ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au/tools-and-resources/training.html>. The website also has reflective practice resources, guide for assessing and planning safety and factsheets.
- Community resources are also available

Questions

Danielle: Numbers from LGA's 4 in the top 20 – glad the ADC is working on CALD community, good to hear there is a multicultural worker – are they focusing on all CALD communities and languages? Fairfield Council are doing a pop up for Elder Abuse Day. Currently all organisations she is working with, do not seem to have multilingual, bi-lingual workers which is a barrier, resources will be good to get out to the communities.

	Lynne: Multicultural Project Officer who speaks Arabic (her parents language so not sure how fluent they are) – goes to events and gives talks. Some people in the investigation's teams speak different languages and culture. A lot of the time would use official interpreter as government agencies are meant to. Only 5.5% of people report from CALD communities so it's not very high. Have abuse collaboratives. Work with multicultural organisations to help CALD clients make reports etc. Abuse not a word used in these areas, needs more of a soft approach. Really encourage people to report and not be isolated and keep connected. • Eunice mentioned the SWS prevention of Abuse of older people Collaborative – Bi-monthly on Wednesday – 2pm-3pm. • Elder Abuse activities coming up in recognition of world elder abuse day on 15 June 2026. • Lynne: There is an events list on the website as well. • Sandra is also part of the Inner West Elder Abuse Collaborative – 350 seniors registered for the Seniors Wellbeing Safety Day on 15 June.
10:30am	Guest speaker Aziza Rifai, Multicultural Service Officer Community Engagement Portfolio, Southeast Hub (VIC, TAS, ACT, NSW) Aziza was unable to attend, Ruma presented on their behalf Ruma Kathpalia, Aged Care Specialist Officer (ACSO), Services Australia • Cover the ACSO role & Services Australia • Delivering My aged care through various channels • General information & support to older Australians – in person or telephone, how to navigate MAC. Steps involved in accessing aged care, basic fee information and navigating My Aged Care website. Service officers are trained in basics, anything out of scope they can be referred to ACSO. People can go into any service centre or call the telephone line. • Encourage Service Officers to encourage people to use the online channel • ACSO provide specialised support on aged care – available in some services centres (81 across the country), booked service. Do try to reach and expand to other officers. Came out of the royal commission, once completed, government didn't want to expand and only sticking with current ACSO's. They do try to expand out where they can but are very limited. • Ruma looks after Blacktown, Rouse Hill and Hawkesbury (Blacktown LGA & Hills are her main focus). • Services include different services, access to the Dept health, referral for assessments, review circumstances, appoint people, update records, can help connect them to local support services such as care finders, find a provider, using the website and making them understand their financial charges. • In person, video appointments available, video appointments are getting more popular. Carers can attend these sessions to support the older person.

- To book an appointment: Telephone channel or pop into any Centrelink office
- Also go out into community to educate the community about what Services Australia does and how to access. Do this by collaborating with organisations, councils, LHD etc.

Questions

Sandra: receiving calls from seniors to get out of residential facilities, do you provide services and information on this? Answer: Yes, book with ACSO to work with them on this. They will ask what their care needs are when moving back home, what plans they have to put in place etc. Do they have a carer involved. Can help with the steps in moving back home. Don't provide advice but provide as much information to help them make an informed decision. Offer support with reconnecting with MAC and any re-assessments etc.

- Simone: Are you able to support a client obtain POA, trustee of guardianship? Some clients are relying on the facility to apply for the client that may have dementia, so they may not be able to do it themselves, they don't have any family etc. There is a bit of a conflict of interest, and we don't particularly like to do it.
- Ruma: No, recommend the NSW Trustee & Guardian who may be able to support them.
- Sandra mentioned there is a big gap here. Seniors Rights or OPAN also not able to support. People go to NCAT to try complete forms, NCAT don't understand what people might be asking then they are appointed an NSW guardianship they then get a bill for something they are already doing.
- Fina did also mentioned connecting with Seniors Rights & OPAN as the department don't have an avenue however per Sandra's comment they might not be able to assist.
- Eunice mentioned it is tricky and something we can follow up outside the meeting for some information around this to share.
- Ruma mentioned Services Australia do try to educate customers early on whilst people still have capacity to put arrangements in place. Really important to note at community events and ensure the community is educated.

1. Public Trustee & Guardian (Government service)
2. ACAT / Aged Care Assessment Teams (indirect help)
3. Guardianship Tribunal (NCAT in NSW)
4. Aged Care Social Workers (within nursing homes)
5. Community Legal Centres & Seniors Services

Jacqueline: do ACSOs assist to complete the SA456 form? and financial hardship SA462?

Ruma: Services Australia can assist to complete the forms to enable them to find out financial information. Encourage people to do it online as it is easier, only shows questions based on previous questions. If they would like to do the paper form or have a service officer can assist.

Welcome opportunities to come out and do presentations.

	Ruma's contact email: Ruma Kathpalia, Aged Care Specialist Officer (ACSO) Rouse Hill, Blacktown and Hawkesbury Service Centre Face to Face Service Division Ruma.kathpalia@servicesaustralia.gov.au
10:50am	Sector Updates Department of Health Disability & Ageing Stephen Neville & Fina Kimati • Acknowledgement of Country • Stephen & Fina are from local network team supporting SWS • Royal commission requested face to face engagement with organisation and local community across the country. So local networks have been established to hear experiences and feedback to inform policy and programs. • Fina and Stephen are in the Western NSW Region Local Network Team at Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. nswwesternregional@health.gov.au • What's new – Recommend reviewing the Statement of Rights to ensure upholding the rights of older people – Modules on websites that can be shown to clients to help them understand it. eLearning for Aged Care workers and volunteers Training Catalogue: https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/training-and-education-catalogue?language=en • CHSP: continues to be block funded until 30 June 2027, transition no earlier than July 2027. What has changed – part of the budget, SSD has been extended for 12 months which aligns with current CHSP agreements. Grant agreements are to be executed prior to 1 October 2026. Continue to provide updates through the SSD CoP moderator meetings. • Provider resources available on the website which continue to be updated. Encourage people to use latest as these change all the time. • DEX changes also commencing – additional data fields to assist and identify hidden costs to delivery. Guidance material available including the DEX toolkit. • Support at Home still transitioning and settling – key focus is now on how the system is working in practice. ○ Priority and access is still high on the agenda. ○ System changes still to settle ○ 6 months in with some challenges that the department is still working through. • Start with Training, webinars, Support at Home Communities of Practice. Updated regularly. • Overview of what the Support at Home Communities of Practice looks like and is a great tool to connect with ○ Able to search topics which may have already been answered by the department. ○ Latest news and discussion forum ○ Inclusions and exclusions – the manual is quite large ○ Encourage everyone to join to support with your transition

	○ Fina mentioned even the team check the CoP when they receive queries as it may have already been answered • The Department acknowledge issues coming in from providers including access delays, system complexity, workforce pressures, additional admin and difficulty navigating reforms. – continue connecting with regional team and submitting specific examples feedback. Give us as much data as possible. • What providers should do next: ○ Use templates and resources ○ Access the SaH CoP ○ Subscribe to newsletters ○ Continue sharing feedback ○ Ensure your organisation has clear complaint pathways, staff understanding obligations and provide accessible information to clients. • Links included in slides <u>Questions & Comments</u> • Sandra mentioned that SWS is lowest ranked area for digital literacy. https://dashboard.digitalinclusionindex.org.au/National.aspx Think this needs to be taken into consideration. Talk about access and inclusion but still excluding people. A lot of seniors don't have digital literacy not want to use it. Not enough case management to support them. Fina to make mention to the policy makers, have been to a number of forums that it has also been mentioned. Sandra is concerned that older people that lack digital literacy, including those migrating to Australia who maybe haven't had access to computers are being left behind. Krystle noted that whilst SSD has been funded for another 12 months, there will be a delay in contracts which may not be finalised until October 2026. The Department have specified that no activities can be actioned until the SSD organisation has an approved activity work plan. There could be a drop in training however all SSD providers remain contactable.
11:25am	Forum Members Information Share General Business Sandra Loyola-Sandoval Dementia Awareness Expo 25th September 2026. Will be sending an EOI soon. Kirsty young (SWSPHN) Care Finder portfolio has expanded with a First Nations care find. The successful organisation was Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation. They will be covering all SWS and should be operational by July. Eunice Sansour Understanding Diversity and Intersectionality in Aged Care - 17th June – inclusive and accessible care for all diverse communities. Sarah Ryan (SWSLHD)

	SWS Healthy Ageing Expo – Healthy Ageing team is hosting an expo 16th June. If you want to promote please let me know, we have a lot of flyers we can share (physical or electronic) but the link for community can be shared via https://events.humanitix.com/south-western-sydney-healthy-ageing-expo Maryana Nasour (Amana Community Services) Continues to provide high-quality brokerage services to aged care providers requiring reliable and culturally appropriate support. We specialise in connecting providers with experienced Arabic-speaking support workers, ensuring effective communication and culturally sensitive care for clients. We welcome partnerships with organisations in need of flexible and responsive workforce solutions. For inquiries or bookings, please contact us on 0468 945 079. Danielle wondering about follow up regarding pop up assessment places, possibly in Fairfield. Provided venues for the LHD team and wondering if there were any follow ups to these? Connect with Fina. Fina mentioned they are still waiting to see what they can do moving forward. At the moment, focused on engagement, visiting facilities and building strong relationships to support everyone through the reforms.
11:36am	Meeting closed
Next meeting	Tuesday 4 th August 2026, Lurnea Community Hub, hosted by Liverpool City Council

* Please complete the Information Share sheet if you would like your update included in the minutes and return to Danielle Taylor on the day of the meeting to Dtaylor@fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au