



STROKE RECOVERY
ASSOCIATION NSW

CLUB NEWS

Summer 2026

FROM MICHELLE'S DESK

Welcome to the first Edition of Club News for 2026, I hope you all had a great break and are coping with the very hot, humid weather we have been experiencing.

It was so lovely looking at the photos of all the Christmas parties. One thing that can be said for all our Club/Groups and Choirs is that you all know how to have a good time. Christmas is a perfect excuse to get together and celebrate all you have achieved over the past twelve months. Well done.

I would like to welcome the new members of staff to the association, Stephanie and Georgie. They will both be a great asset to the team over the coming period. Please make them welcome.

While I do not have photos to share congratulations must go to former staff Rachel and Alex on the birth of two beautiful boys since the last newsletter. Our tally now stands at Boys - 3, Girls - 0.

Well after 28 years and 6 months this will be my last message to you in Club News. My exciting news is that we are now going through the final stages of appointing a new Chief Executive Officer. Unfortunately, until all the formal processes are completed, I can not elaborate on any of the details, suffice to say I leave you and the association in excellent capable hands.

I have enjoyed every minute of working with and for each of you over the past 3 decades. It is extremely difficult to say farewell. However, it is time, for the Association to forge ahead with new ideas and energy. You certainly will not be disappointed with the Boards appointment. They come with excellent achievements in their previous jobs.

I will be around for a couple more months to introduce them to as many of you as possible. It will also give me a chance to say goodbye and thank you for all your support and hard work for the Association over my time here. We would not have achieved all we have achieved without each of you being behind the development and changes that have occurred. It has been a privilege to get to know each and every one of you. Thank you.

*Kind regards
Michelle*



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MONEY AND CENTRELINK

Someone owes me money

There are different situations where someone might owe you money. This could be because you loaned money to a friend or family member or sold goods and haven't been paid. A private loan can be more flexible than borrowing money from a bank, but sometimes disputes can happen. This might be about whether the money was meant to be a gift or a loan. It's a good idea to try mediation or write a 'letter of demand' to the other person before going to court to recover money. You have six years to start a court case to recover a debt. For more information including a sample letter of demand, visit legalaid.nsw.gov.au and search 'my money'.

I owe money

Sometimes you might owe money. For example, you borrowed money from a bank and have not repaid the loan in time, or you have not paid your phone, water or electricity bill. If you have questions about a utilities bill or are struggling to pay your bill, the first step is to contact the provider. You may be able to negotiate a payment plan or get other help. You can call an Ombudsman service if your provider can't help. See the section on 'My rights as a consumer' in this diary for more information. Work and retirement Many older people continue to work. Age discrimination in the workplace is against the law. To find out more about your legal rights as a worker, visit [humanrights.gov.au/older workers](http://humanrights.gov.au/older-workers), call 1300 369 711, visit antidiscrimination.nsw.gov.au or call 1800 670 812. If you work, your employer must pay super for you no matter how much you earn. To check if you've been paid super visit ato.gov.au or call 13 28 65. If you retire, your employer should pay you money they owe you for wages, bonuses, commissions, unused annual leave and long service leave but they don't have to pay you for unused sick leave. For more information visit fairwork.gov.au or call 13 13 94.

My pension

Your pension may be affected if there is a change in the way you own property or a change in your living arrangements. Centrelink doesn't count your home as an asset when it calculates your pension if it's your primary place of residence. After you get the pension, you need to tell Centrelink about any changes to your assets, income and circumstances within 14 days. For example, tell Centrelink if you stop or start living with a partner, or if your partner dies. Changes may mean your pension is reassessed. If you gift someone money, this can also affect your pension. If you disagree with a Centrelink decision, you can call or write to Centrelink and ask to have it reviewed by an Authorised Review Officer (ARO). If Centrelink have refused, stopped or reduced your payment, you should do this within 13 weeks from when Centrelink tell you their decision. You can also appeal a decision of an ARO but you should get legal advice before you do this.

More information

Legal Aid NSW has information about dealing with debts, money disputes, Centrelink and about your rights at work. Visit legalaid.nsw.gov.au and search for 'my money' or call 1300 888 529.

MoneySmart has information about investments, superannuation and more. Visit moneysmart.gov.au or call 1300 300 630.

Centrelink older Australians line can help explain your pension entitlements. Visit servicesaustralia.gov.au or call 132 300

ELDER ABUSE

Everyone deserves respect

Abuse of older people usually involves harm caused by someone they know and trust.

Psychological abuse includes stopping someone from making their own choices. It can look like stopping someone from seeing their family, belittling or patronising someone, or preventing someone from attending appointments alone. It can also include spiritual abuse where someone is manipulated, controlled, or harmed through religious or spiritual means. This can involve forcing religious practices or restricting someone's ability to practice their faith.

Financial abuse includes limiting someone's access to their own money. It can look like unexpected charges on an account, a stack of unpaid bills, minimal food in the fridge or having no money for everyday things. It can also be the person appointed as the power of attorney making decisions to benefit themselves, not the older person.

Neglect includes not providing basic everyday needs. It can look like not providing food, clean clothes or a safe place to live, or preventing someone from receiving the medical or social support they need. It can look like poor personal hygiene, unkempt appearance, the person complaining they're too hot or cold or a lack of medical care.

Abuse at home

Intergenerational living can be financially necessary and can also provide support and care but sadly family members, and especially adult children, are the most common perpetrators of elder abuse. Sometimes, an older person may want an adult child out of their home, but they're not sure how to make this happen. Legal support and other services are available to help you with this change. Another common situation where abuse can occur is a "granny flat" arrangement where an older person has given a significant sum of money to a child in return for the promise of care.

How can the law help?

In some situations, the law can protect you from abuse and help you after the abuse has happened. Some types of behaviours are crimes, for example, assault, theft or fraud. These should be reported to the police. Call 000 in an emergency or call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000. An Apprehended Violence Order (AVO) can protect you from the person who makes you fear for your safety and can include conditions that say they can't contact you, live with you or come into your home. In cases of financial abuse, you may be able to take legal action against the person who took your money or property to get it back. Abuse in aged care Your human rights matter. In aged care you have the right to be treated with respect and dignity and to exercise choice and make your own decisions about how services are delivered. If you have any concerns about abuse in aged care, you can contact the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission. Visit agedcarequality.gov.au or call 1800 951 822.

More information

NSW Ageing and Disability Commission promotes the rights of older people and adults with disability to live free from abuse and neglect in their family, home and community. Visit ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au or call 1800 628 221 (Mon - Fri, 9am - 4pm)

Australian Financial Complaints Authority (AFCA) can help with complaints about loans, guarantees and potential misuse of powers of attorney. Visit afca.org.au or call 1800 931 678.

STAFFING UPDATES

WELCOME STEPHANIE

The Stroke Recovery Association is delighted to welcome Stephanie Ho as the new Community Engagement Director, bringing over 15 years of campaign management, community development, Stroke advocacy and public awareness.

After having a haemorrhagic Stroke at the age of 22, Stephanie has transformed her lived experience into powerful advocacy since 2010. She has delivered keynote speeches at the Stroke Society of Australasia and Smart Stroke Conference, and shared her story on multiple media channels, helping to raise awareness and reduce the stigma of disabilities that are often invisible for Stroke survivors.



Stephanie served on the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation's Rehabilitation Network Executive Board for a decade as a Consumer Representative, co-designing rehabilitation toolkits and shaping models of care for NSW. She has also represented consumer perspectives for Australian Aphasia Association and SESLHD Stroke Group Committee, and in 2019, received the Stroke Foundation Award for Improving Life After Stroke.

As Corporate Social Responsibility Manager at Deloitte Australia, Stephanie led initiatives for over 10,000 employees and built partnerships with +300 charities over 12 years. In her new role, Stephanie will lead the Stroke Recovery Association's events and communications with the aim to further the Association's impact and broaden our reach to Stroke survivors, carers and healthcare professionals across NSW.

WELCOME GEORGIE



The Stroke Recovery Association is also welcoming Georgie Paspalas as the new Information & Communications Officer to our ever-growing team with enthusiasm, creativity and a fresh perspective. Georgie is currently studying for a Diploma in Marketing and Communications at Torrens University Australia, where she is developing strong foundations in digital media, brand awareness and event administration.

Georgie has a passionate interest in community-focused initiatives and not-for-profit organisations, such as our own. She thrives in creating engaging and accessible content that drives connection between people, services and resources. Thus, ensuring that Stroke survivors, carers, and healthcare professionals feel informed and supported.

In her previous roles as a marketing assistant for various small businesses, Georgie has supported the development for newsletters, digital communications, events and community incentives. At Stroke Recovery Association, we aim to strengthen our voice across NSW with her skillset. She is excited to contribute to raising awareness, sharing powerful stories and supporting the Stroke community with enthusiasm and compassionate communication.

Around the Clubs - Christmas

FAIRFIELD



GLAMS

TAMWORTH



BELMONT



SYDNEY INNER WEST

TWEED

ULLADULLA



Around the Clubs - Christmas

WYSS



WAGGA WAGGA



BEGA



KEYSTROKES



HORNSBY



BRAINWAVES



Around the Clubs - Christmas

LOWER NORTH SHORE



ORANGE



HUNTER STROKE OLYMPICS THANKS MICHELLE

At the Hunter Stroke Olympics in October 2025 the Stroke Olympics Committee honoured Michelle Sharkey with a lifetime achievement award and thank you for her amazing work over the past 25 years. She was presented with her very own medal and trophy for her years of service and as a thank you for what is likely her last ever Hunter Stroke Olympics.

Ross Park on behalf of the committee along with John Garbutt presented the award to Michelle on behalf of the Hunter Stroke Olympics committee. The entire committee extends their thanks and praise for Michelle's long and tireless involvement.

The Hunter Stroke Olympics is a long tradition that predates the involvement of the Stroke Recovery Association and is held each year in the Hunter. We get great participation from many of our Clubs and it is one of the best days of the year. Last year and for many years we have been grateful for the hospitality of Raymond Terrace Bowling Club. Due to renovations we will be visiting a new venue in 2026, which will be decided in March. The Association will be in touch with Clubs about details at a later date and we encourage members to stay alert for information regarding attendance this year.



Upcoming Events



2026 EVENTS

18 JUNE THURSDAY	SYDNEY STROKE OLYMPICS Club Burwood RSL	
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8 AUGUST SATURDAY	COMBINED CLUBS MORNING TEA Diggers The Entrance	
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STROKE AWARENESS WEEK NSW SUN 6 - SAT 12 SEPTEMBER		
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11 SEPTEMBER FRIDAY	CREATING CONNECTIONS STROKE CONFERENCE Club Burwood RSL	
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13 OCTOBER TUESDAY	HUNTER STROKE OLYMPICS Venue TBD	
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6 NOVEMBER FRIDAY	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Venue TBD, Tamworth	
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13 NOVEMBER FRIDAY	COMBINED CLUBS PICNIC Wentworth Commons, Homebush	
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1300 650 594



PO Box 3401
Putney NSW 2112



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Complaints Process

The Stroke Recovery Association is an open and inclusive organisation and the board welcomes your feedback and reviews on the Associations services.

If you have any issues or complaints regarding the treatment you receive through the associations staff or programs please contact the CEO Michelle Sharkey on 1300 650 594.

All complaints received and issues raised are monitored and discussed by the board monthly.

Contributions

We welcome contributions to Club News, especially in our "Around the Clubs" section of the newsletter.

Submissions should be sent to admin@strokensw.org.au.

Contributions may be edited, either to reduce size, to assist with readability, or for legal/liability reasons. To include something in our next Club News, please send it into our office before 1 February 2026

Memorial gifts & bequests

A bequest is a gift in your will. If you would like to consider how you can include the Stroke Recovery Association NSW as a beneficiary in your will, please contact the office at admin@strokensw.org.au or on 1300 65 594.

We can also supply 'In Memoriam' donation brochures with pre-paid addressed envelopes for use at memorial services.

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