

AAG SECG NEWSLETTER



AAG
Australian
Association of
Gerontology

SECG
Student and
Early Career
Group



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Welcome to the March/April AAG SECG Newsletter

A big hello to all new and continuing student/early career AAG members! This is the first newsletter brought to you by the new Communications Working Group for 2026. After two years of amazing leadership to bring you the SECG blog, social media and newsletter, Dr Tricia King (USC) is stepping down as Communications Lead. Tricia has been an exceptional asset to SECG. We sincerely thank Tricia for her dedication to all things AAG - she will be missed!

Tricia is handing over to Dr Kristina Chelberg (UTS). Kristina has previously been a member of the AAG Queensland Division SECG and is looking forward to working with the team. You can learn a bit more about Kristina and her research in this issue's Six Questions section.

If all this sounds interesting - you might want to get involved yourself! You will find our EOI call for volunteers also in this issue. Finally, we are really looking forward to supporting our SECG members in the coming year - please reach out with your ideas on how we can support you.

Many thanks
Kate Wang
SECG President

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AAG & SECG UPDATES



CALL FOR NATIONAL & STATE LEVEL SECG VOLUNTEERS!

- **Are you an active AAG SECG member with big ideas?**
- **Are you keen to make new connections with multidisciplinary practitioners and researchers in gerontology?**
- **Are you willing to make a small commitment to be involved in regular meetings and activities?**

If this sounds like you - the AAG is looking for a few extra volunteers to contribute to SECG committees at both state and national levels. Availability exists on the national communications and prizes team, conference planning, as well as state committees. The Queensland SECG committee is particularly looking for new members.

If you're interested - please contact [Michael Tan](#) or [Kristina Chelberg](#).

RM GIBSON PROGRAM GRANT OPEN



Applications are now open for the AAG Research Trust **RM Gibson Program** grant. Targeting the next generation of researchers in ageing, the grants are awarded for work that improves the experience of ageing through innovation in research, policy and/or practice. Open to AAG members who are in the early stages of their careers, the grants are specifically aimed at supporting the next generation of researchers or practitioners across the multidisciplinary field of ageing.

These grants:

- Facilitate early career learning and growth by providing seed funding for a standalone project, or a discrete piece of work within an existing project;
- Help early career researchers build their grant track record.

Find out more [here](#) - closing **5:00pm on Monday, 25 May 2026**.



SIX QUESTIONS

with Dr Kristina Chelberg



1. Tell us about yourself:

Hey! I'm Dr Kristina Chelberg, a [Dementia Australia Research Foundation \(DARF\)](#) Post-Doctoral Research Fellow based at the Faculty of Law, University of Technology Sydney. My background is genuinely interdisciplinary – I hold degrees in biomedical science and law, spent over a decade as a solicitor in insurance and negligence litigation, have a masters in writing and editing, and completed a PhD by publication in socio-legal dementia studies. My research sits at the intersection of law, ageing, and social justice, and is shaped in no small part by my personal experience as the daughter of a parent living with advanced dementia in residential aged care.

2. What inspired you to pursue a career in gerontology?

Watching my parent navigate residential aged care with dementia was a big turning point. My sisters and I could see – directly and painfully – how the aged care system failed residents with dementia. As a lawyer, I was troubled by marginalising practices that permitted residents with dementia to be treated in ways that would not otherwise be tolerated. That combination of personal urgency and professional instinct drew me toward gerontology, and toward asking what it would actually take to 'welcome in' people living with dementia into the systems that shape their lives.

3. What do you find most rewarding about working in the field of ageing?

The people. Meeting and working alongside amazing researchers and colleagues, particularly my research team and the Faculty of Law, UTS. I am fortunate to work with a group of strong, capable women who are determined to draw attention to critical issues in ageing and disability. And my sister, Georgina, who also happens to be a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Canberra. Our goal is to publish under Chelberg and Chelberg one day!

4. Outside of work, what are you passionate about?

I founded the [4 Daughters Walk Club](#) in 2024 – a community walking group for women supporting a parent living with dementia. Based on the southern Gold Coast, it is a small community group with other people who 'get it'. Walking and talking, it turns out, is a pretty effective combination.

5. What is the best piece of advice you have received?

'Move from critique to action.' I heard this during my PhD, when my critical legal lens was revealing how aged care systems marginalise people with dementia – but stopping short of asking what to do differently. It reoriented my approach to understand that critique is essential, but only the beginning. The question that matters is: what comes next, and who gets to shape it?

6. What are you working on currently?

I am 12 months into my three-year DARF Fellowship project titled '*Promoting voice of people living with dementia in aged care improvement and reform: developing innovative approaches through participatory action research.*' The project is partnering with residential aged care facilities to work alongside residents with dementia, care staff, families, and advocates to trial innovative aged care consultation methods – visual tools, arts-based practices, alternative communication approaches – that do not solely rely on standard survey or interview format.

We are commencing activities in aged care sites soon and beginning to map existing consultation practices. The goal is to develop evidence-based, rights-informed resources that can be used to include residents with dementia as active participants in quality improvement and reform. I am extremely grateful to have this opportunity to work on this research to make sure the system 'asks and hears' the voice of all residents, including with dementia.

Insights & Innovations

Co-designing Health Literacy Communication Training

by Lesley O'Brien (Torrens University)



Chronic disease is one of the most significant health challenges facing older Australians, yet the ability to understand and manage health information is not equally distributed. Improving communication in primary care is an important step toward addressing these inequities.

My recent paper in *Health Expectations* reports on the co-design of a **health literacy communication training prototype for primary healthcare providers** working with adults aged 50 years and over.

The research began with a scoping review of existing health literacy communication training programs. This was followed by workshops using *Experience-Based Co-Design*, bringing together healthcare providers and older adult consumers to identify the communication competencies most needed to support chronic disease management and acute care in primary healthcare settings.

Co-designing the training with providers and consumers, several of whom are co-authors on the paper, has been invaluable in ensuring the program reflects real-world care experiences.

I am now commencing Phase 3 of my PhD: a process evaluation and pilot study to develop and test Module 1 of the training with healthcare providers this year.

Read the open access paper here:
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/hex.70590>



Figure: Seven key factors in developing provider training for positive outcomes from ideation to implementation – modelled from our findings



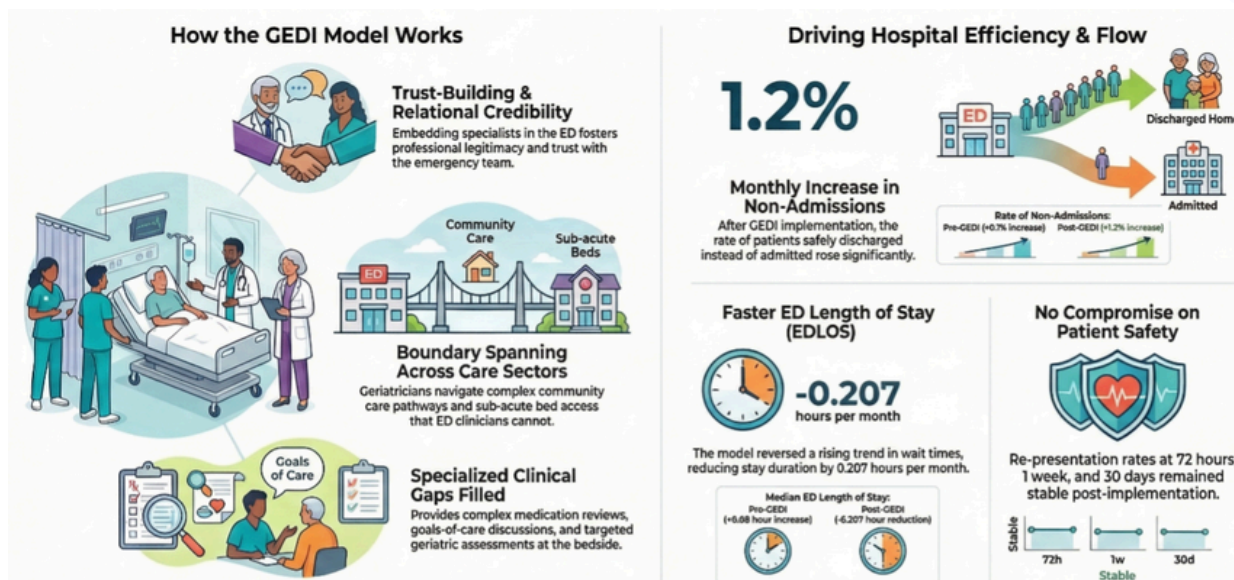
Lesley O'Brien,
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Torrens University

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Evaluating the Geriatric Emergency Department Innovation (GEDI): New Evidence from a Multi-Method Study

Dr Celene Yap (National Ageing Research Institute)



Older adults aged 75 and over represent the fastest-growing demographic presenting to emergency departments (EDs), yet care models tailored to their complex needs remain limited. The Geriatric Emergency Department Innovation (GEDI), implemented at Austin Health in Melbourne, embeds consultant geriatricians directly within the ED to provide targeted assessment and disposition planning for older patients. Three recently published papers report findings from a comprehensive evaluation of this model, each addressing a distinct dimension of its impact and implementation.

Osman et al. (2026) used interrupted time series analysis to demonstrate improved patient flow and reduced ED length of stay without compromising re-presentation rates. Yap et al. (2026a) applied realist evaluation to uncover the mechanisms driving GEDI's effectiveness, including trust-building, boundary spanning, and specialized clinical gap-filling. Yap et al. (2026b) used the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) to identify contextual facilitators and barriers to sustained adoption. Collectively, these papers offer a rich, multi-method account of how and why geriatrician-led ED models can improve care for older adults.

Read the full papers here:

- Osman AD et al. (2026) *Academic Emergency Medicine*, 33: e70218.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/acem.70218>
- Yap CYL et al. (2026) *Age and Ageing*, 55: afag036.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ageing/afag036>
- Yap CYL et al. (2026) *European Geriatric Medicine*, 17: 335–345.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s41999-025-01394-7>



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Project Recruitment



Seeking participants for a study on interprofessional education in tertiary healthcare (click for PDF)

Australian university health educators are invited to participate in an online interview study exploring interprofessional education practices for falls prevention in community-dwelling older adults. Share your experiences of current practices, barriers, enablers and key capabilities to help inform future curriculum development and collaborative care.

Scan the QR code to register your interest



Or email s3190852@student.rmit.edu.au
(Amy Lawton, PhD Candidate)

Seeking participants for a study into falls prevention care for older adults

Registered healthcare professionals from general practice, geriatrics and primary practice nursing are invited to participate in an online interview study exploring allied health and interprofessional collaboration in falls prevention for community-dwelling older adults. Share your perspectives on current roles, barriers, enablers and capabilities to help inform future policy, education and collaborative practice.

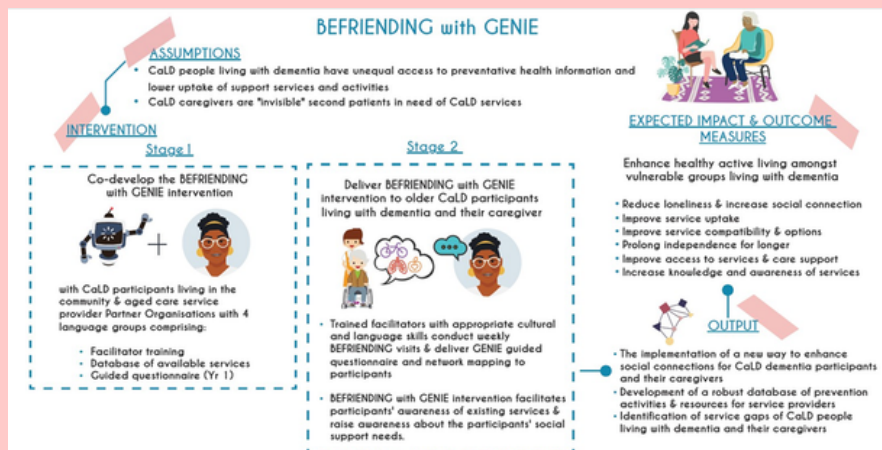
Scan the QR code to register your interest



Or email s3190852@student.rmit.edu.au
(Amy Lawton, PhD Candidate)

Seeking participants for MRFF BEFRIENDING with GENIE Project:

Join our eight-week Befriending with GENIE program which aims to reduce loneliness, and increase social support for people living with dementia, and caregivers from culturally & linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) - Chinese, Italian, South Asian, and Vietnamese.



What is the research study about?

Watch our project video to find out
<https://www.youtube.com/@BwG-Information-Consent>

Interested?

If you are or know any participants living with dementia from Chinese, Italian, South Asian, and Vietnamese backgrounds, please contact our research team by filling the following online EOI:
<https://redcap.link/bwgen-eo>
Or email us at: bwgen@ecu.edu.au





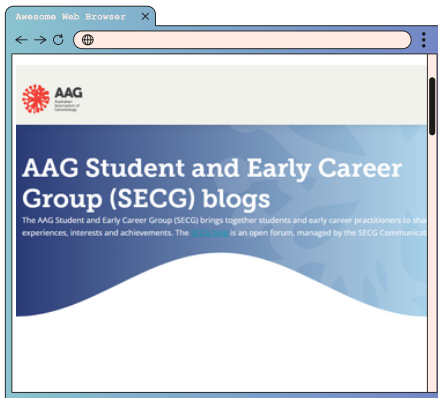
Rethinking Aged Care Design: the *Home Matters* webinar series

The Department of Health and Aged Care is hosting **Home Matters**, an insightful webinar series exploring how we can reimagine the design of aged care to better support independence, dignity, and quality of life.

Each session brings together leading thinkers, designers, practitioners, and people with lived experience to unpack what “home” should truly mean in aged care, and how thoughtful design can transform the way older Australians live and receive support.

Whether you work in aged care, design, policy, or simply care about shaping a more human-centred future, this series offers practical ideas and fresh perspectives.

Explore the full series and register [here](#)



NEW SECG BLOG POST

What Consumers Taught Me That Research Papers Never Could



A reflection on working with older people in consumer consultations, and why their voices matter more than we think

By Dr Celene Yap,
National Ageing Research Institute

Read [HERE](#) now!



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As shown through our fantastic contributions, this newsletter relies on your content to make it great - so let's make it great.

- Just started or concluded a study?
- Just received a grant?
- Need help recruiting?
- Just published some findings?
- Ideas or reflections keeping you awake?
- Want to make friends?

We'd love to hear from you.

Please reach out to kristina.chelberg@uts.edu.au with your idea(s)!