Council on the Ageing Queensland | Sector Support & Development

Beyond compliance: What CHSP providers took away from the 2026 National Conference

The future of CHSP, the value of preventative care and the need to keep older people at the centre of service delivery were key themes at the CHSP National Conference 2026.

Hosted by Invox on 24 to 25 August at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and online, the conference brought together aged care providers, sector leaders, government representatives and advocates to discuss reforms, funding, workforce challenges and the future of the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).

Two aged care leaders attended virtually after securing complimentary places through a giveaway promoted in **COTA Queensland's Sector Support and Development (SSD) CHSP Provider Update newsletter**.

Deb Mellor, Activities and Day Centre Manager at The Good Shepherd Home in Townsville, received her complimentary place from COTA Queensland's SSD team. James Ostapenko, General Manager of Allied Services at CPL – Choice, Passion, Life is based on the Gold Coast. He attended with support from Macarthur Disability Services, an SSD provider in New South Wales.

Following the conference, Sherryn Davies from COTA Queensland's SSD team, who attended in person, spoke with James and Deb about their key takeaways and what these mean for CHSP providers.

A more certain future for CHSP

A major topic at the conference was the government's announcement on 20 August that CHSP would be extended to 30 June 2029.

For James and Deb, this was welcome news, offering greater certainty and an opportunity for providers to help shape the program's future.

But beyond the reform announcements, both reflected on the importance of maintaining CHSP's preventative role.

James highlighted the need to look beyond compliance and service delivery numbers to measure what matters – helping older people remain independent, reducing social isolation and improving quality of life.

"It really is that preventative care model that's preventing social isolation," James said.

Keeping independence at the heart of service delivery

For Deb, the conference reinforced the importance of rights-based care, meaningful activities and programs that build independence.

She shared examples of how The Good Shepherd Home combines exercise, social connection and everyday activities to help older people maintain their skills and confidence.

"Our programs are very different and we focus on maintaining those independent skills so people can live in the community for extended periods of time," Deb explained.

She also raised concerns about assessment and referral pathways, particularly the challenges older people and providers face when transitioning between CHSP and Support at Home.

Bringing purpose and relationships back into focus

For Sherryn, one of the strongest messages from the conference was the importance of intentional, relationship-based care.

She reflected on how increasing compliance requirements, administrative processes and constant change can shift attention away from what matters most – the older people receiving care and support.

Presentations from Age Discrimination Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald and Danielle Ballantine, CEO of Your Side, reinforced the need to move beyond transactional service delivery and prioritise meaningful relationships, social connection and individual choice.

"We need to take a moment to stop and look at how we do things with intention," Sherryn said.

Sherryn also highlighted the value of taking time to reflect, learn from peers and consider whether organisational processes are genuinely supporting better outcomes for older people, staff and volunteers.

A chance to shape what comes next

Across both conversations, a clear message emerged: providers need opportunities to share their experiences, strengthen partnerships and influence reform.

Sherryn encourages CHSP providers to participate in consultation processes, connect with their local SSD teams and share practical examples of what's working and what needs to change.

The takeaway for CHSP leaders is clear. While compliance and reform remain important, the focus must stay on older people, the relationships that support them and the difference services make to their lives.

As the sector looks towards 2029, these conversations are a reminder that the people delivering services every day have an important role in shaping CHSP's future.

Watch the full conversations:
Watch Sherryn's conversation with James
Watch Sherryn's conversation with Deb