

# CommonAge Annual Newsletter, January 2026

## Prioritising Wellness for Success



Welcome to Our Annual Newsletter!

### **2025 was a dynamic and milestone year for CommonAge.**

From launching a new website to spark digital engagement, to forging powerful partnerships with HelpAge International and India's Home Management & Care Givers Sector Skill Council, our work gained fresh momentum across continents.

We brought bold ideas together at the *Living Well – Ageing Well* Innovation Roundtable in London, supported global knowledge exchange at the IFA Global Conference, and expanded our footprint with new chapters in Zambia, Mozambique, and Namibia.

With the launch of *Commonwealth Ageing with Creativity & Technology (CW ACT)* and a strong presence at the Ageing Australia National Conference 2025, CommonAge continued to connect people, ideas, and innovation for ageing well worldwide.



As 2026 gets underway may I wish all supporters of CommonAge a very happy and successful 2026.

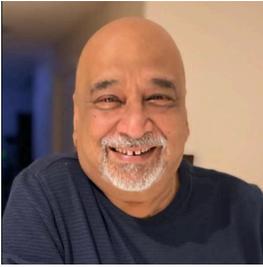
As we begin the new year, and the next stage of our development, under new leadership, I would like to offer my sincere thanks and appreciation to my good friend Mansur Dalal for his outstanding stewardship of our organisation during his term as Chair of the Board. We have seen great progress under his leadership and our organisation is in good health.

Congratulations to Femada Shamam on her accession to the Chair. We wish her all possible success. I know she will be well supported by her fellow board members, and by our dedicated support team. 2026 will be an important year for the Commonwealth as it continues, at a time of tension and division in many parts of the world, to support and uphold the core values on which it has been built over the past 76 years. Our work for an all-age friendly Commonwealth that respects and upholds the rights, dignity and quality of life of people of all ages, and the ideals of mutual support between generations, has never been more important. We look forward to continuing our journey and to continued growth of our CommonAge family through the challenging year ahead and beyond. Thank you for accompanying us and helping us on the journey.

With all best wishes.

**Andrew Larpent, Chair Emeritus CommonAge**

# A Message from the Immediate Past Chairman



Greetings on the New Year, friends.

Please join me in warmly applauding **Femada Shamam** and in committing to our continued and unstinting support as she takes charge as the new Chair of CommonAge. I extend my heartfelt thanks to each of you for your trust, encouragement, and unwavering support throughout my journey with CommonAge since 2015 and more so from 2022 till 2025 as Vice- Chair and Chair.

It is through our joint efforts that we have a Legacy of Growth, Innovation, and Global Impact :

## **Global Advocacy & Policy Influence**

Our organisation established a strong international presence through active participation in major global forums including CHOGM 2022 and 2024, ensuring older persons' voices were consistently represented in policy discussions. We contributed significantly to global policy development through submissions to World Health Organisation (WHO) frameworks and active participation in the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing, while contributing to the World Health Organisation-aligned Roadmap for Healthy Ageing, with releasing a road map for healthy ageing at CHOGM Samoa

## **Organisational Expansion & Growth**

CommonAge experienced unprecedented growth, expanding from a regional network to a truly global organisation. We established new country chapters across three continents: India, South Africa, Botswana, Kenya, Zambia, Mozambique, and Namibia. This expansion was complemented by the successful celebration of our 10th anniversary at the Global Ageing Conference in Glasgow (2023).

## **Strategic Partnerships & Collaboration**

We forged transformative partnerships with leading international organisations including HelpAge International, UKRI - (UK Research & Innovation) , UK and Australian ageing bodies, DIA ( Dementia India Alliance) and the Home Management & Care Givers Sector Skill Council (India). These collaborations strengthened our global reach and enhanced knowledge exchange across the Commonwealth.

## **Innovation & Knowledge Leadership**

Our commitment to research and innovation resulted in the publication of the landmark "Dementia in the Commonwealth" report, Convened the Living Well – Ageing Well Innovation Roundtable in London., which resulted in the launch of Commonwealth Ageing with Creativity & Technology (CW ACT) and going forward establishing CHAIF (Commonwealth Healthy Ageing Investment Fund) and CHAGP (Common Wealth Healthy Ageing Grant Programme). We also enhanced our digital presence through the launch of a new CommonAge website, expanding our reach and engagement capabilities.

## **Capacity Building & Recognition**

We implemented comprehensive capacity-building initiatives including the Train-the-Trainer Programme across Africa, supported a total of 19+ international bursary recipients, and established the C.A.R.E. Awards to recognize excellence in ageing services. Additionally, we supported critical initiatives such as South Africa's National Elder Abuse Helpline and Mauritius's Healthy Ageing Task Force.

## **Operational Excellence**

To ensure sustainable growth, we streamlined organisational processes by implementing comprehensive documentation systems, data storage solutions, and creating Standard Operating Procedures for Awards, Bursaries, and Director Travel.

Onwards with Femada at the helm for unparalleled growth, continued excellence, and a globally recognised voice in healthy ageing, promoting dignity, and well-being for older persons across multiple continents while maintaining strong policy influence and fostering innovation.

**Kind Regards,**

**Mansur Dalal - Immediate Past Chairperson, CommonAge**

# A Message from our new Chair - Femada Shamam



*"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."* –African Proverb

I'm thrilled to step into the role of Chair of CommonAge at such a pivotal moment in our journey. Before looking ahead, I want to acknowledge those who have brought us to this point.

To Mansur, our outgoing Chair: your drive, dedication, and unwavering commitment have shaped CommonAge into the dynamic organisation it is today. Your leadership during a time of significant evolution has left an indelible mark, and we are profoundly grateful. To Andrew, whose vision continues to illuminate our path: thank you for remaining as an ambassador for our organisation. Your ongoing guidance and advocacy ensure that the foundation we've built remains strong and purposeful.

This is an extraordinarily exciting time to be working in this space. The world is shifting, and we find ourselves at a unique intersection; responding to the immediate needs of older persons today while simultaneously setting wheels in motion for tomorrow. We are committed to being age-ready now, while steadfastly pursuing our vision of an all-age-friendly Commonwealth.

What can we look forward to? Creating meaningful spaces where we think, learn, and grow together. Our diversity is not merely a characteristic; it is our greatest gift, bringing together perspectives, experiences, and wisdom from across the Commonwealth. Together, we will capitalize on this richness to drive innovation, foster understanding, and build connections that transcend borders and generations.

I'm energized by this opportunity and excited about the possibilities ahead. With your continued engagement and support, CommonAge will continue to be a catalyst for positive change across our communities.

With gratitude and anticipation,

**Femada Shamam - Chair, CommonAge**

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## Marlborough House Meet

Andrew Larpent, Founder of CommonAge had the opportunity to connect with David Stevens of StandardsWise International and Dame Carol Black from the Centre for Transformation in Health and Social Care (CTIS) at Marlborough House, UK.

The focus was on fostering meaningful networking and encouraging investment into Ageing Well initiatives across the Commonwealth, with a shared commitment to advancing innovation, collaboration, and sustainable approaches to support healthy and dignified ageing for all.



## Commonwealth Day



10 March, millions of people across the Commonwealth celebrated CommonwealthDay with festivals, fairs and faith-based services. The day brought together 2.7 billion Commonwealth citizens across the 56 member countries in celebration of their shared values and in pursuit of a common future. The 2025 theme is 'Together We Thrive'.

[Read More](#)

# Accelerating Impact: Strengthening Positive Health Outcomes Across the Commonwealth

(The Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Health (CACH) Meeting )



Health (CACH) convened to discuss the key meeting health outcomes for the upcoming Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting in May 2025. Chaired by the Government of Kiribati, the CACH meeting included Jacqueline WM Wong, Vice Chair, CommonAge and representatives from member countries, regional bodies including ECSA-HC and CARICOM, and accredited organisations, including the Commonwealth Health Professions Alliance and CommonAge.

[Read More](#)

## Leadership, Innovation & Global Action for Ageing Equality

This second quarter saw powerful momentum across the Commonwealth, from innovation roundtables in London to grassroots action in Nairobi—proving that ageing is not just a global issue, but a shared opportunity.

A key highlight was the **Living Well – Ageing Well Innovation Challenge Roundtable** at Marlborough House, where we proposed a bold **£50 million fund** to support scalable healthy ageing solutions across the Commonwealth, especially in low- and middle-income countries and Small Island Developing States.

## CommonAge Living Well-Ageing Well Round Table 13 June 2025



On 13 June 2025, experts convened at Marlborough House, London, for the inaugural **Living Well –Ageing Well Innovation Challenge Expert Roundtable**, organised by CommonAge with Commonwealth partners. The roundtable brought together policymakers, investors, and thought leaders to explore innovative responses to ageing populations, particularly in low- and middle-income countries and Small Island Developing States.

A key outcome was CommonAge’s proposal for a **£50 million innovation fund** to support scalable solutions in health, housing, technology, and social care. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to building inclusive, age-friendly societies across the Commonwealth.

[Secretary General's Video Message](#)

# Jacqueline Wong , CommonAge Director Appointed Civil Society Advisory Governor for Asia (2025-2027)

Jacqueline Wong, the then Vice Chair; is a public health and social equity advocate, representing Asia as the Civil Society Advisory Governor. She has led regional initiatives addressing non-communicable diseases and the health needs of ageing populations across Asia.

She played a key role in organising South-East Asia and Western Pacific dialogues on NCDs, promoting people-centred healthcare and the meaningful engagement of those living with NCDs. Jacqueline also actively advocates for healthy ageing, including life-course immunisation and age-friendly communities.



Jacqueline represents civil society on global platforms such as the United Nations and the G20, contributing to international discussions on social justice, sustainable development, and equitable healthcare. Through her work, she bridges regional priorities with global health policy.

## International Federation on Ageing (IFA) Conference 9th September - 12th September 2025

September 2025, CommonAge, in partnership with the International Federation on Ageing (IFA), proudly supported the participation of 10 outstanding bursary recipients from across Africa and Asia at the 16th Global Conference on Ageing in Cape Town, South Africa. These emerging leaders in ageing, health, and social development brought fresh perspectives, lived experiences, and innovative ideas to the global stage, contributing to the conference theme, “**YEBO/YES! Action on Ageing: Evidence | Policy | Practice**”.



[Read the Report Here](#)

## New Leadership at CommonAge South Africa Chapter



We are delighted to welcome Carmel Murugen as the new Chair of the CommonAge South Africa Chapter — a bold and passionate leader committed to driving meaningful change for older people across the region.

With an impressive track record as Divisional Manager at Tafta, Carmel brings deep experience in ageing services and advocacy. She recently represented Africa at CHOGM 2024 in Samoa as part of the CommonAge delegation, where she contributed to a high-level panel led by CommonAge Director, Linda Justin. This session resulted in a ground-breaking dementia report presented to global leaders and policymakers.

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## CommonAge Chapter Launch



**Zambia**  
Anderson Simfukwe



**Namibia**  
Prof. Janet (Janetta) Ananias



**Mozambique**  
Prof. Miguel Marrengula

CommonAge launched three new Chapters in **Zambia, Mozambique, and Namibia**, expanding its presence across the Commonwealth and strengthening its mission to amplify the voices of older people globally. Each Chapter brought together changemakers passionate about ageing and intergenerational collaboration, advocated for the rights and inclusion of older people in their communities, and fostered cross-country partnerships that drove meaningful change.

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## Memorandum Of Understanding CommonAge & HelpAge International



HelpAge International and the Commonwealth Association for the Ageing (CommonAge), were pleased to announce a formal strategic partnership, this Sept at Cape Town, by signing an MOU which will enable the two organisations to integrate their work for older people across the Commonwealth.

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## Commonwealth Secretariat - AO Reporting 2024-2025

[Read the Annual Activity Report here](#)

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# Launch of the CW ACT - Commonwealth Ageing with Creativity and Technology



Commonwealth Ageing with Creativity and Technology (CW ACT) is an independent Company Limited by Guarantee, registered in the UK, that has been created, with support, by CommonAge and was launched on 1st October 2025 in Australia.

It operates as a commercial company designed to create and support investment and growth opportunities for businesses and social enterprises across the Commonwealth.

Working on commercial solutions that will improve the quality of life for citizens of all ages across the life course and especially those facing the challenges of age-related infirmity. A significant percentage of any profit generated by CW ACT will be donated to CommonAge to sustain the day-to-day operations of the charity.

[Read the Report here](#)

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## Ageing Australia National Conference 30th September - 2nd October 2025

Ageing Australia welcomed 2,342 attendees to the National Conference 2025.

Chair **Mick Reid AM** opened the event following a welcome to Country by the Tribal Custodians. He highlighted the Board's role in representing Australia's diverse aged care providers and stressed the need for dignity, respect, and collaboration across government, providers, and communities to drive meaningful reform.

The conference featured Minister for Aged Care and Seniors **Sam Rae** and Shadow Minister for Health and Aged Care **Anne Ruston**, along with insights from demographer **Mark McCrindle**. Journalist and MC **Virginia Trioli** led a dynamic discussion with sector leaders, setting an energetic and inspiring tone for Australia's premier aged care event.



[Read the Report here](#)

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## CommonAge Chair Emeritus Mission to Rwanda (23–26 Nov 2025)



[Know more about the Visit](#)

The visit provided an opportunity to explore ways to advance a healthy ageing agenda in Rwanda. NSINDAGIZA was identified as the only significant organisation working on age-friendly initiatives in the country. Despite minimal resources, it coordinated around 200 Older Persons Associations and played a key role in developing Rwanda's National Policy for Older Persons (2021). However, the organisation faced a precarious situation due to stricter NGO compliance requirements and limited funding, with an estimated annual operating need of USD 30,000.

# CommonAge Annual General Meeting 8th September 2025

The CommonAge Annual General Meeting was held on 8 September 2025 in Cape Town. Members from across the Commonwealth came together to reflect on the year's milestones, review key achievements, and reinforce a shared vision for ageing. The meeting also provided an opportunity to exchange experiences, reaffirm CommonAge's commitment to amplifying the voices of older people, and set strategic priorities for the year ahead.

Key resolutions were approved, and members were updated on recent Board developments. The Board formally acknowledged the outstanding contributions of Jacqueline Wong, who will voluntarily step down at the end of 2025, and Mr. John Collyns, who concludes his term as Director from January 2023 to December 2025.



## Meet our incredible bursary recipients

Miguel Marrengula – Mozambique

Anderson Simfukwe – Zambia

Richard Waindi – Kenya

Carmel Murugen – South Africa

Lizette Kuhn – South Africa

Dr Sriromi Maduwage – Sri Lanka Margaret Njagi – Kenya

Diana Etuhole Iyambo – Namibia

Kandina Mukapuli – Namibia

[Read about our Recipients Here](#)

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## Charting New Horizons with New Leadership



**Ann Keeling**

Chair – Age International |  
Retired Global Health  
& Gender Equality Leader



**Anthony Kupferschmidt, MA**

Gerontologist, Strategic Lead,  
Aging and Older Persons, City of  
Vancouver (Canada)



**Darren Birbeck**

Chief Executive Officer –  
Resthaven Incorporated  
(Australia)

## Bidding Farewell



**Jacqueline Wong**



**John Collyns**

# Lets Hear it from the Board



## The Global Ageing Network

**Roundtable 2:** Joseph Musgrave, (CEO of Home & Community Care Ireland) moderated a thought-provoking discussion with panellists Mansur Dalal (Chair, CommonAge) and Dr Robyn Stone (Senior Vice President of Research at LeadingAge and Co-Director of the LeadingAge LTSS Center at UMass Boston).

[Tune In Here](#)

## CommonAge Membership Badge

We have developed this exclusive badge for members to support their credibility and commitment on working towards an all age-inclusive Commonwealth, as well as being part of a Commonwealth affiliated organisation that is committed to ensuring older people are fully recognised in society, and are supported and enabled to live well.



## Accreditation



The Commonwealth

## Core Patrons



**STANDARDS WISE INTERNATIONAL**  
Supporting Excellence in Senior Living and Human Services



Delivered by  
Innovate UK and ESRC

## Our Patrons



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## Our Partners



## Our Brand Graphics consultant (pro bono)



### Join us!

We are a charity and our voluntary Board of Directors is committed to making changes to older people's lives across the Commonwealth.

Help us deliver the ideal of an "All Age Friendly" Commonwealth that values the dignity of older people, respects their wisdom and experience, and that leaves no one behind in the journey towards a sustainable, peaceful future.

[Donate, partner, become a member!](#)

You can donate to us via

Credit card: Visa, Mastercard and American Express Apple Pay

Google Pay

PayPal

Get in Touch! We'd love to share your stories and help us to grow the conversations about our mission and vision, and to celebrate the great achievements of organisations and older people themselves.

Visit our website [www.commonage.net](http://www.commonage.net) for more information about our work and for regular updates.



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