



# OPAN Annual Report 2022–2023

Raising the voices of people accessing aged care

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## Cover image

Gwenda Darling, member of the Aged Care Council of Elders and OPAN's National Older Persons Reference Group. Gwenda was a key contributor to the development of the Self-advocacy toolkit videos.

## Artwork by Dr Mick Adams

This painting represents the old people and ancestors who give wisdom and guidance to our young generation of people.



OPAN acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work and recognise that it always has been and always will be Aboriginal Land. We honour the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and pay our respects to all elders past and present.

## Tribute to Mary Anne Hunt



Former Elder Rights Advocacy President and OPAN Chair Mary Anne Hunt, who died in April, was a passionate advocate for aged care rights and a powerful voice for change.

Mary Anne was involved in OPAN before its incorporation and served as OPAN Chair from 2018–2022. Her belief in the potential of a national advocacy organisation was unwavering. As was her determination to hold government and providers to account.

Having worked as a manager and senior manager in the aged care and disability sectors, Mary Anne was an experienced leader and a generous mentor. Elder Rights Advocacy and OPAN are stronger, richer and more stable for her contribution.

While Mary Anne liked to describe the success of the two organisations as a 'collective effort', her role cannot be underestimated. She was professional, persistent and pragmatic. She had a big heart. And she understood the strength of a team.

A tireless champion for a society in which older people are heard, informed and respected, there is no doubt Mary Anne has left the world a better place.

The network, Elder Rights Advocacy and OPAN deeply loved and respected Mary Anne. Her wisdom, her unselfishness and her gift for pastoral care will be greatly missed – by staff and older people.

In her last post on social media, Mary Anne said:

*'Difficult roads often lead to  
beautiful destinations.  
The best is yet to come.'*

She firmly believed this.  
We do, too.

# Chairperson's report

Ara Cresswell



I have reached the end of my first year as the independent chair of OPAN, a year of enormous growth – and change – for the network. I have watched OPAN and its network members step up to every challenge, ever vigilant about ensuring the rights of older Australians are promoted and upheld, making certain that every request for advocacy is heard and acted upon.

I have witnessed first-hand what can be achieved when members work together as a collective to raise the voices of older people. Each and every one of us can be proud of the network's achievements over the past 12 months. Given the current brisk pace of aged care reform, I believe we are in a position to consolidate those gains going forward.

I, personally, would like to say a heartfelt thank you to OPAN's network members and board directors, who are volunteers, for steering us through the significant challenges that have been presented during our expansion period.

I also want to pay tribute to the late Mary Anne Hunt, a tireless campaigner for aged care reform. The contribution Mary Anne made as Chair of the OPAN Board cannot be

overstated. Mary Anne was a woman of extraordinary intellect and endless energy. We were all deeply saddened by her passing.

On the eve of significant reforms, such as a new Aged Care Act, OPAN's rights-based, older person-led focus is more relevant than ever.

The importance of OPAN's work – and the credibility the organisation has gained through its consistent, long-term commitment to aged care advocacy – is why I signed up for this role.

Over the past 12 months, OPAN CEO Craig Gear's support has been unflinching. His detailed knowledge of the sector and passionate commitment to aged care reform have been an inspiration to me.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of OPAN's talented senior leadership team and an expanded National Secretariat in raising awareness of our advocacy work. The pace keeps quickening, but OPAN manages to rapidly respond to greater and greater demands for expertise and action.

As Chair of the OPAN Board, I have taken on the role of leading the development of OPAN's inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan. In May, we published our [Statement of Intent](#), which set out the vision for the organisation's Reflect RAP. Having made our first small steps on the reconciliation journey, it's important to keep up the momentum. Listening to, and learning from, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is an integral part of that process.

It has been a busy year, but I remain honoured to be Chair of the OPAN Board and look forward to 2023-24 as we progress with long-awaited reforms.

*'OPAN and its network members have stepped up to every challenge.'*

*OPAN Chair, Ara Cresswell*

# CEO report

## Craig Gear OAM



This year, the expansion of our advocate network took flight. We now have 200 plus aged care advocates working for OPAN network members across the country. Between them, they have provided close to 37,000 cases of information and advocacy support to older people receiving aged care. We also embedded our community network development officers and financial advocacy officers into the network and piloted home care check-ins in selected locations to provide greater awareness and more specialised supports to older people and the community.

Our overarching goal is to engage with more older people in 2023–24 through OPAN's Self-advocacy toolkit, our webinars, the national advocacy line and in face-to-face education. By walking alongside an older person, helping them raise their voice, advocates ensure older people's rights are upheld.

Significant changes continue to be implemented following the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

OPAN has been at the table as the reforms have been planned and implemented, bringing the perspective of older people to the discussion. We will continue our systemic advocacy for older people and OPAN network members in the months and years to come.

While OPAN has been heartened by the significant legislative reforms this year, such as 24/7 nursing in residential aged care, older people tell us that they are not yet feeling the changes on the ground. Thanks again to the great work of the members of the OPAN National Older Persons Reference Group who keep us accountable and who continue to champion the change they want to see.

On 1 June, we held Mary Anne Hunt Day in recognition of the wellbeing approach OPAN's former chair was so passionate about and in thanks for her contribution to the network. We remember Mary Anne's great work and continue to be saddened by her passing.

Finally, a heartfelt thankyou to all the advocates who contribute daily to the lives of older people in aged care. It is your tireless commitment that moves us closer to a society where the rights of older people are fully recognised and upheld.

*'By walking alongside an older person, advocates ensure older people's rights are upheld.'*

OPAN CEO, Craig Gear

## Who we are and what we do

Formed in March 2017, the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) is a national network comprised of nine state and territory organisations that have been successfully delivering advocacy, information and education services to older people across Australia for over 30 years.

The network's services are free, independent and confidential.

Older people are at the centre of everything we do. OPAN's goal is to help older people understand and exercise their aged care rights, access aged care services that suit their needs, and find solutions to issues they may be experiencing with their aged care provider.

At a national level, we raise the voices of older people with governments, aged care providers and sector stakeholders to advance aged care reforms.

Through our National Older Persons Reference Group, we aim to ensure older people are actively involved in discussions that affect them, including changes to the aged care system.



### Vision

A society where older people are heard, informed and respected, where they are aware of the role advocates play, and where they enjoy and exercise their rights.

### Purpose

OPAN promotes the rights of older people. Our goal is to support and empower older people to get the best out of their aged care services so they can live well and be respected.

### What guides us

We support older people to understand and exercise their rights under the Charter of Aged Care Rights and Aged Care Quality Standards. We also help their families, friends, carers and aged care providers to recognise, respect and uphold those rights.

# The Older Persons Advocacy Network



## Queensland

Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia provides advocacy support for older people and people with disability.

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## Western Australia

Advocare supports and protects the rights of older people through information, advocacy and education services.

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## Northern Territory Top End

DCLS provides legal services and supports the rights of older people, people living with disability.

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## Australian Capital Territory

ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service supports people with disability, mental ill-health, older persons and their carers.

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## South Australia

Aged Rights Advocacy Service supports older people to uphold their rights, including advocacy for Aboriginal communities.

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## Victoria

Elder Rights Advocacy supports older people, their representatives address issues related to their aged care.

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## Tasmania

Advocacy Tasmania works for older people, people living with disability, mental health and AOD issues.

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## Northern Territory Barkly and Central Australia

Catholic Care provides advocacy services to older people, including programs and supports for Aboriginal communities.

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## New South Wales

Seniors Rights Service provides advocacy and legal advice, supporting the rights of all older people.

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# Strategic Directions

## Our Focus:

Champion older people's human rights, embrace diversity, and prevent abuse

Expand and innovate aged care advocacy

Enhance quality, data, and the voice of older people

Drive operational improvement and impact

## Strategic Directions:

- 1:** Advance the human rights of older people, particularly those seeking and receiving aged care, and the most vulnerable.
- 2:** Improve advocacy and support for older people with diverse needs.
- 3:** Provide information and advocacy support to prevent the abuse of older people, including those receiving aged care.
- 4:** Expand service reach and develop innovative advocacy models grounded in individual needs and human rights.
- 5:** Embed advocacy quality standards and assurance across OPAN systems and services.
- 6:** Enhance information and knowledge management to increase the impact of systemic advocacy.
- 7:** Enhance OPAN's effectiveness as the peak body for older person's individual advocacy.

*'Everyone deserves respect and dignity as they age'*

OPAN CEO, Craig Gear



# Charter of Aged Care Rights



As an older person, I have a right to:

1. safe and high-quality care and services
2. be treated with dignity and respect
3. have my identity, culture and diversity valued and supported
4. live without abuse and neglect
5. be informed about my care and services in a way I understand
6. access all information about myself, including information about my rights, care and services
7. have control over and make choices about my care, and personal and social life, including where choices involve personal risk
8. have control over, and make choices about, my care and personal life, including where choices involve personal risk
9. my independence
10. be listened to and understood
11. have a person of my choice, including an aged care advocate, support me or speak on my behalf
12. complain free from reprisal, and to have my complaints dealt with fairly and promptly
13. personal privacy and to have my personal information protected
14. exercise my rights without it adversely affecting the way I am treated.

# In 2022-2023, OPAN and its network members provided



## Information and individual advocacy

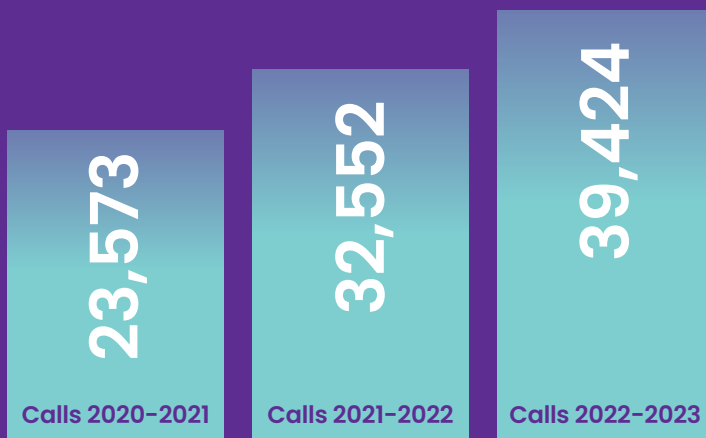
# 36,904

**cases\*** of support to older people, their families and other representatives, including support and information for older people at risk of, or experiencing, abuse. This is an increase of 36% from 2021-2022.

\*NACAP advocacy and NACAP abuse of older persons cases and Information provisions opened during the 2022-2023 financial year.

## Demand for advocacy

**Calls to the 1800 700 600 national advocacy phone line increased by 21% in 2022-2023. These calls represent only a small portion of the total enquiries the network receives. Additional channels include calls to local network member numbers and email and websites forms. Network member organisations continue to report increasing complexity in client needs.**



## Education

OPAN network members delivered

# 4,358

**education sessions\*** to older people, their families and other representatives. This is an 85% increase on the previous year.

\*Community and residential advocacy education sessions and community and residential abuse of older persons education sessions conducted during the 2022-2023 financial year.

## Expansion phase (2021-2023)

Responding to Recommendation 106 of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, the Department of Health and Aged Care funded the expansion of National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP) services to increase advocates' reach, particularly in rural and remote communities. OPAN received additional funding in 2021 for a workforce expansion program that increased points of access and more than doubled the number of advocates.

# OPAN communications and awareness

## Digital



Facebook

**6,634** followers

23% increase from last year.



LinkedIn

**7,037** followers



www.opan.org.au visitors

**199,547**

54% increase from last year.

Website unique page views

**611,979**

80% increase from last year.

## Newsletters



News for You –  
OPAN's print newsletter

**360,000** copies

printed and distributed to residential aged care homes.



The National Advocate –  
OPAN's monthly electronic newsletter

**37,584** subscribers

21% increase from last year.

## Webinars



**45,952**

views of the 11 webinars.

*'Just wanted to thank you for today's webinar. So nice to know that you exist, and that you are there for older Australians. Helping us navigate the aged care system. Knowing their jargon and being able to use it ourselves is essential. Our rights show us the way.'*

- Understanding Home Care Packages

# Older people in Australia today

Life expectancy in Australia is among the highest in the world. Australians are enjoying more years of full health, allowing older people to enjoy better wellbeing and lead fuller lives. However, the number of years Australians live in ill-health has also increased. This has contributed to an increasing demand for aged care services.

 Reference: [Australian Treasury](#)




## Percentage of population aged 65 and over

	Aged 65-84	Aged 85 and over
2000	11.10	1.32
2005	11.45	1.50
2010	11.80	1.75
2015	12.95	1.97
2020	14.24	2.05
2023 (estimated)	14.62	2.05

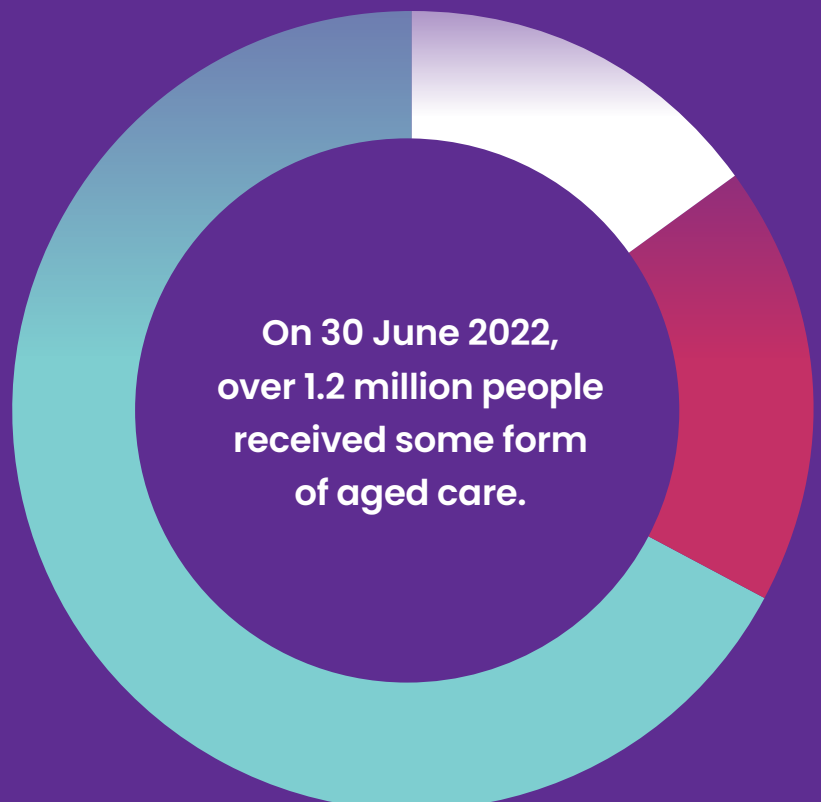
 Source: [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)

 Source: [AIHW Gen Aged Care Data](#)

## Older people in our aged care system

-  188,000 permanent or respite residential aged care
-  216,000 home care under the Home Care Package Program
-  818,000 home support under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (including transition care)

 Source: [AIHW Gen Aged Care Data](#)



# Raising older people's voices

We aim to improve access to aged care advocacy for older people across Australia and to create a society where older people's voices are heard and where they can exercise their rights. We strive to be a dynamic organisation that builds on, and learns from, our collective history to provide the best support to older people we can.

## National Older Persons Reference Group

OPAN established the National Older Persons Reference Group in March 2020 to hear from, and engage with, a diverse range of older people across Australia. We recruited 10 new members during the 2022-2023 financial year, taking the total membership to 35.

Diversity groups represented in the National Older Persons Reference Group include people living with dementia, people living with disability, people living with mental

illness, LGBTQI+ people, people living in rural and remote Australia, people living in residential care, carers, people living with rare and/or chronic disease, Forgotten Australians, Aboriginal people, and people from culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse backgrounds. A Be Connected grant enabled OPAN to lend digital devices to five National Older Persons Reference Group members to enable them to more fully participate in meetings.

To further broaden the input of people from minority, isolated or diverse communities and groups, OPAN this year established a Community Voices Register of people with expertise in specific areas of ageing. We currently have a list of 14 people who can be consulted in detail on issues or projects.



# National Older Persons Reference Group

(continued)

The National Older Persons Reference Group held its first face-to-face meeting in Melbourne in October 2022. Nineteen members took part. A further six members attended remotely.

National Older Persons Reference Group members sat on, or attended, an extensive range of webinars, conferences, research, advisory groups and consultations, including:

- Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) Conference
- Australian Aged Care Providers Association (ACCPA) conferences
- Evaluation of National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP)
- 2nd phase of National Dementia Action Plan on supported decision-making.

OPAN also supported National Older Persons Reference Group member Theresa Flavin to apply for a funding grant through the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older Persons to attend the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (#OEWG13) in New York in April.

 [Watch OPAN webinars HERE](#)



## National Older Persons Reference Group member profiles

### Caroline Carroll

Caroline lives in Victoria. She is a Forgotten Australian, one of approximately 500,000 children who found themselves in institutional or other out-of-home care in the last century.

Caroline advocates for, and educates people in her community (including OPAN and the National Older Persons Reference Group) about, the impact of ageing on Forgotten Australians, for whom the loss of family (including separation from siblings) caused grief, feelings of isolation, guilt, self-blame and confusion about their identity.

Caroline has an interest in human rights and is the Chair of the Alliance for Forgotten Australians. She is also on the Board of Elder Rights Advocacy.



*'You think getting older is not going to happen to you, but it does. The lived experience is what wakes you up to each individual ageing period of your life.'*

### Ted Cole

Ted holds dual Australian and Canadian citizenship. Based in Queensland for the past 23 years, Ted is living with a disability and is in residential aged care. He is heavily involved in individual and systemic advocacy and has been on many boards, management committees, panels, advisory and reference groups.

He is on the Management Committee of Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion (QAI), an independent community advocacy and legal service organisation. QAI's purpose is to uphold fundamental human rights, social justice and inclusion in the community life of people with disability. He is also on Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Consumer and Families Panel.

Ted is committed to contributing to positive change as an outcome of aged care. His overriding passion is to ensure that the voices of people living with disability and older people are heard.



*'I had let older years make my world very small. Thankfully, assisting and advocating for others has made my journey immensely more fulfilling and my world a whole lot bigger.'*



## National Older Persons Reference Group member profiles (continued)

### Gwenda Darling

Gwenda is a proud Palawa Aboriginal woman, mother, grandmother and great grandmother who is living with dementia in rural NSW.

Gwenda is passionate about destigmatising dementia and raising awareness and acceptance in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. She is open about the impact of her own behaviour variant Fronto Temporal Dementia, educating everyone she speaks to – from the vet to the postman.

Gwenda is a member of the Aged Care Council of Elders. She sits on a variety of committees and participates in numerous research opportunities and studies with universities across Australia.



*'It's about maintaining your own power, the power you've had all your life. You've got to create a space for yourself to age well.'*

### Theresa Flavin

Theresa is living with younger onset dementia and is a passionate advocate and activist for the human rights of people living with dementia and their support partners.

Theresa has a particular focus on human rights, supported decision-making and sexual safety in the context of dementia. Theresa's mission is to demolish the barrier of ageism, particularly in the context of the disparity between disability and age care services.

She is the human rights advisor for Dementia Alliance International.



*'It's vitally important we have our say on the future of aged care. It's almost our obligation. All of us will be old at some point – if we are fortunate. We are preparing the road for ourselves and for future generations. We really need to get this right.'*

# Presenting Issues Report

The National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP) Presenting Issues Report 2022-2023 provides valuable insights into the challenges experienced by older people accessing and receiving aged care in the past financial year.

Four key themes emerged in the report, which draws on quantitative and qualitative data from over 36,900 cases of information and advocacy support by OPAN network members.

## Service availability

The supply of aged care services is often not meeting demand. This is most evident in the delivery of the Commonwealth Home Support Programme and in rural and remote areas.

## Communication

Older people's attempts to communicate with their aged care provider are often not responded to, making it difficult to address care concerns. Options for effectively communicating with older people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds are particularly overlooked by aged care providers.

## Choice and decision-making

Supply issues result in many older people feeling they have no choice or control over who delivers their service, when that service is delivered, and what types of goods and services can be delivered.

In the residential aged care setting, providers often make decisions on behalf of an older person or prioritise the decisions of family members or substitute decision-makers over the views and preferences of the older person.

## Fees and charges

Price increases, unclear statements and budgets, fees and charges errors, and accumulated debts have continued to cause stress and confusion for many older people receiving Home Care Packages and living in residential aged care.



Advocate, Hayley Webb


## Presenting Issues Report (continued)

Workforce shortages were identified as an influencing factor for many of the key issues presented in this report. Workforce shortages have been observed across all aged care program types and appear to be most significant in rural and remote communities. Workforce shortages are contributing to issues with service availability, communication and quality of care concerns.

The case examples in this report highlight the importance of the NACAP in identifying and resolving issues with government-funded aged care. Through the NACAP, older people and their chosen representatives can access:

- education about their aged care rights
- independent information to support them to self-advocate
- aged care advocacy when they require support to raise and address their concerns.

Access to aged care advocacy support will remain vital as the aged care system continues its journey of reform.

 [Read the full report on our website: HERE](#)

### CASE EXAMPLE

*An older person requested advocacy support because they were experiencing frequent changes in staff and regular service cancellations and their Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) provider had not provided timely communication about these changes. An advocate supported the older person to raise these issues at a meeting with their provider. The provider acknowledged there had been a decline in the quality of services due to a lack of staffing and provided reassurance that they were putting strategies in place for the onboarding of new staff members. When the advocate followed up with the older person a few weeks later, they reported a marked improvement in communication from the provider.*



# OPAN network member profiles

Profiles of some of our network members and the exceptional work of aged care advocates who support older people to get the aged care services they need and to speak up for their rights.

## Advocacy Tasmania, Tasmanian network member

Advocacy Tasmania has worked for over 30 years to improve human rights for Tasmanians by providing individual advocacy and information to the community as well as pursuing systemic change. Formed as an aged care advocacy organisation in 1990, Advocacy Tasmania has expanded to deliver the National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP), National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP), Tasmanian Disability Advocacy Program (TDAP), National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Appeals Program, Home & Community Care Advocacy, Mental Health

Advocacy, Alcohol & Other Drug Advocacy, and the Tasmanian Elder Abuse Helpline.

In 2022-23, Advocacy Tasmania, provided over 1,200 cases of information and individual advocacy support to older people. More than 13,400 Tasmanians attended almost 1,000 education sessions (more than 400 of these sessions were delivered under NACAP).

At a systemic level, Advocacy Tasmania campaigned tirelessly for change to the Public Trustee and guardianship and administration reform. This work has led to an independent review of the Public Trustee

and new guardianship and administrative legislation which will come into effect in 2024.

Advocacy Tasmania supported and advocated for hundreds of Southern Cross Care residents and families, raising their concerns with the Aged Care Minister, Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner and Independent MP Andrew Wilkie. Advocacy Tasmania's relentless determination has enabled a fresh start for residents and constructive dialogue between Southern Cross Care and Advocacy Tasmania.

### Lisa Woods, Advocacy Tasmania advocate

Working to achieve positive outcomes for clients is what Lisa finds most satisfying about her role as an aged care advocate. Lisa loves being part of a process where clients are empowered to stand up for their rights and to have their rights upheld and understood. Recently, Lisa has worked to address the systemic issues raised by Southern Cross Care residents and families and she has been a key employee in successfully advocating for clients through that process.

*'When you're an advocate and you hear the word no, it's critical to not accept the knockbacks and give up. It's about identifying every option, exploring all possibilities, striving for, and with, your client to change that no into a yes.'*



## ACT Disability and Carer Advocacy Service, Australian Capital Territory network member

ACT Disability and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS) has been promoting and protecting the rights of people with disability, mental ill-health, and older people and their carers for over 30 years.

In 2022-23, ADACAS supported over 1,800 clients across 2,371 issues. There was a marked increase in demand and support for priority cohorts, with a 42% increase in advocacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, an 82% increase in advocacy for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people and a 300% increase in the number of clients who identified as

being part of the LGBTIQA+ community.

The expansion of the organisation's older persons team enabled ADACAS to strengthen engagement and increase the number of education sessions to residential aged care homes and community organisations by 100%. This has improved awareness of ADACAS's advocacy services and the Aged Care Charter of Rights.

The focus of ADACAS's older persons advocacy services has been accessing the Commonwealth Home Support Programme and the service

provision of Home Care Packages through My Aged Care. In the past year, the team supported 521 clients in 658 cases over 2,152 hours.

During the next financial year, ADACAS will continue to explore ways to improve efficiency and service delivery to ensure the organisation can meet the increasing demand for advocacy services. This will include working with key partners, such as OPAN, to develop collaborative, cross-sector strategies to ensure the best outcomes for clients across the regions we support.

### Esi Louis, ADACAS advocate

Esi is passionate about social justice, human rights and the value of older people's wisdom and experience. She joined the ADACAS Older Persons Team as a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) advocate in July 2022. Her work as a CALD advocate extends from the office into her community, ensuring clients have access to appropriate services that meet their needs and improve their wellbeing. Through her work, she has increased and improved ADACAS's relationship with CALD communities in the ACT. This is affirmed by feedback from clients.

*'I strongly believe older people have made massive contributions to our society. When I get compliments on my work from my clients, I go home feeling fulfilled.'*



## CatholicCare NT, Northern Territory network member for Barkly and Central Australia

CatholicCare NT delivers older persons advocacy services throughout the Barkly and Central Australian regions of the Northern Territory. As CatholicCare NT progresses on its older persons advocacy journey, the organisation is tapping into knowledge gained through 30 years of providing social services across the NT.

CatholicCare NT's advocates work from hubs located in larger towns and connect with older people in smaller communities to ensure their rights are protected. One of CatholicCare NT's key advantages is offering place-based service delivery. This means advocates can build on existing relationships with local

Aboriginal councils, other NGOs and residential aged-care facilities.

Over the past year, CatholicCare NT's older persons advocacy team has been working with Darwin Community Legal Service to develop culturally appropriate resources to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Increased investment in advocacy services in Central Australia enabled CatholicCare NT to recruit two permanent advocates to work out of the Tennant Creek office, expanding the organisation's reach in the Barkly region to communities close to the Queensland border.

Due to the remote nature of CatholicCare NT's operations, advocates experience a unique working environment. In remote communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples receive very limited service provision. Navigating the situations that occur often requires a markedly different approach to that employed in other regions.

CatholicCare NT values the knowledge and expertise of OPAN and other network members to support advocates to represent the rights of older people. Those additional resources enable CatholicCare NT to develop and grow on its journey of providing older persons advocacy services.

### Amy Lasslett, CatholicCare NT Advocate

With a background in advocacy, community development and human rights, Amy believes effective changemaking needs to be practical, creative and community led. Working alongside Elders, families, and local service providers, Amy advocates for culturally safe aged care, quality care and for more service providers to meet the needs of the Barkly region in the Northern Territory.

*'Supporting Elders to speak up about matters that are important to them, while striving to get them the best care possible in a remote setting, is hard. But it's a worthy task, as our Elders deserve better.'*



# Improving our data and services

OPAN has continued to improve its data governance and data consistency in the current financial year. The National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP) Minimum Data Set (MDS) was reviewed and updated. Mandatory training was implemented and a Data Governance Steering Committee was established to make recommendations around risk and mitigation strategies.

OPAN continued to support the delivery of nationally consistent NACAP services through a revised Service Delivery Framework and the development of new practice and NACAP Education Guidelines. OPAN also supported the professional development of the advocacy workforce by introducing a new Aged Care Advocate Code of Conduct and a National Advocate Professional Development Strategy.



## Advocacy, Operations and Practice Advisory Group (AOP)

At the heart of our data and service improvement is the Advocacy, Operations and Practice Advisory Group (AOP), which meets monthly. The AOP includes representatives from each of our network members at a manager or operations lead level and supports continuous improvement across the network's operational, practice and project areas.

This year AOP has consulted on many items, including:

- Service Delivery Framework 2023
- National Minimum Data Set V1.4
- Salesforce development projects for data consistency and reporting
- call centre solutions to improve network diversion capability and customer experience
- National Education Guidelines
- advocacy professional development projects, including national orientation
- Advocacy Practice Guidelines
- NACAP expansion projects
- other operational consistency discussions and projects.

Advocate, Ramnik Walia



## Our data journey

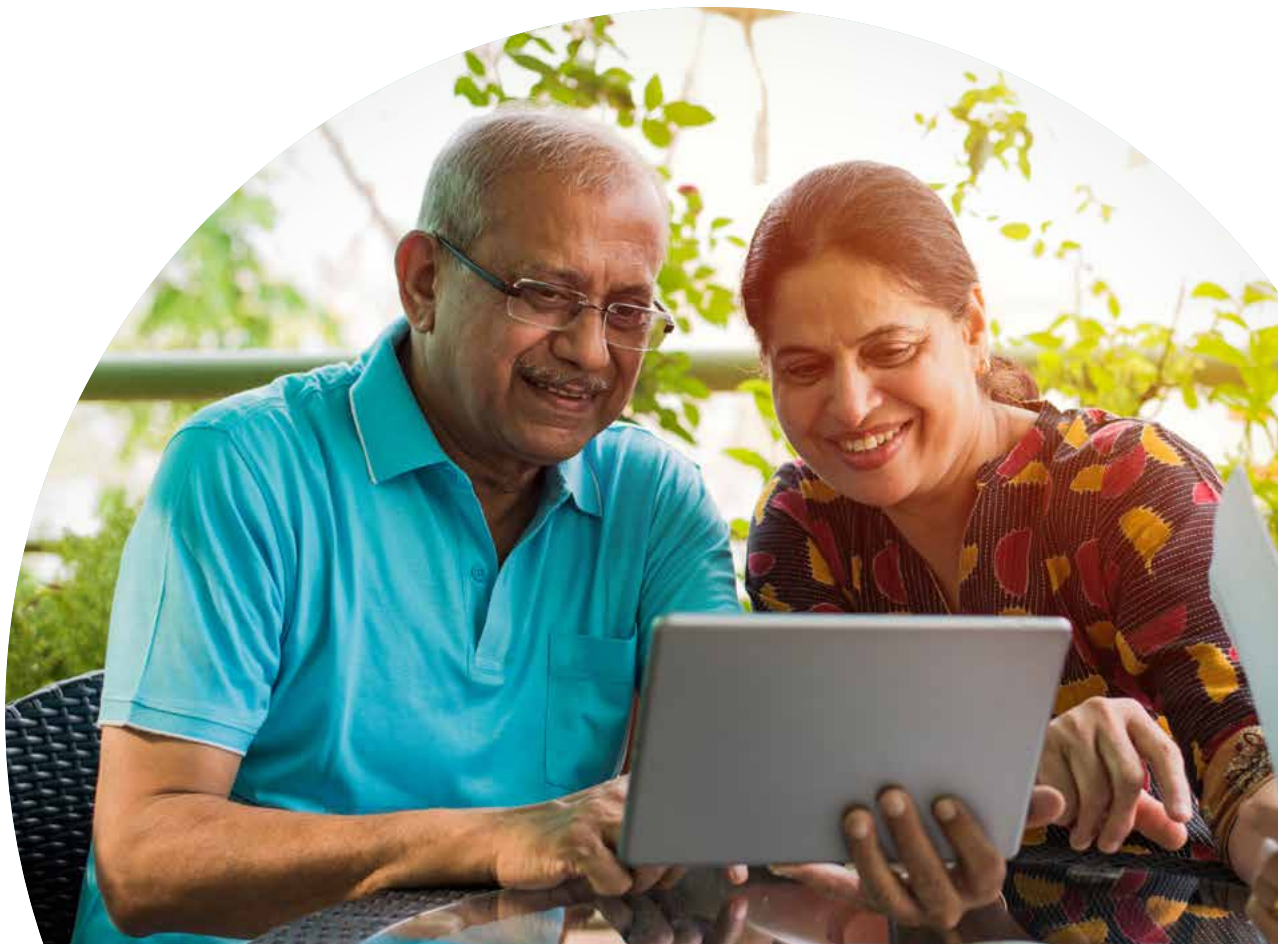
OPAN recognises the value of the information it holds to better understand the impact of our advocacy work. Our focus is a culture of continued improvement in data integrity, security and national consistency. We strive for reliable, trustworthy, accurate data so that we can make informed strategic decisions and contribute to systemic advocacy.

The OPAN Data Governance Framework, developed in May 2022, identified steps to better govern and manage our data as a network.

In the current financial year, OPAN employed that framework to:

- establish a Data Governance Steering Committee, made up of members from across our network
- appoint a Data Custodian
- establish a Salesforce community of practice
- release the Minimum Data Set Learning Module, mandatory training for advocates and OPAN staff, to assist in the collection of consistent data and inform the network on the importance of data governance
- review our Minimum Data Set
- work with network members to implement a small Minimum Data Set update to ensure data is collected reliably.

OPAN also created a cyber security strategy, identifying risks and mitigation strategies, to ensure the organisation's data is safe and secure.




# Nationally consistent advocacy practice and service delivery

The Operations and Advocacy Practice Team delivered a number of activities and resources to support the delivery of high-level, best practice and nationally consistent aged care advocacy in the 2022-2023 financial year. This included a revised Service Delivery Framework, the development of an Aged Care Advocates Code of Conduct, NACAP Education Guidelines, a National Advocate Professional Development Strategy and new and revised practice guidelines and further enhancements to the Advocacy Academy. The team also supported the sharing of knowledge and experiences across the OPAN membership network via national aged care advocate meetings.



## Service Delivery Framework

The revised Service Delivery Framework replaces the 2019 edition of the framework as well as the National Elder Abuse Prevention and Advocacy Framework 2018. The framework is designed to provide a high-level, national reflection of OPAN principles and processes to be customised by network members at the jurisdictional level in response to local needs. It also provides network members with a model for delivering a nationally consistent service which enables the consumer experience to be similar nationwide, whilst still responding to local issues and needs.


 **Read the Service Delivery Framework on our website: [HERE](#)**



## Aged Care Advocates Code of Conduct

Following the introduction of the Code of Conduct for Aged Care in December 2022, OPAN developed an Aged Care Advocates Code of Conduct. The Aged Care Advocates Code of Conduct describes the principles, values and behaviours expected of advocates delivering information and advocacy supports under NACAP.

The code aligns with, and builds on, current expectations around worker conduct in the aged and disability sectors, incorporating key elements from both the Code of Conduct for Aged Care and National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Code of Conduct.

 **Read the Aged Care Advocates Code of Conduct on our website: [HERE](#)**

## Nationally consistent advocacy practice and service delivery (continued)

### NACAP Education Guidelines

This year, OPAN developed NACAP Education Guidelines to encourage national consistency in the:

- booking and delivery of NACAP education
- promotion of NACAP education
- processes for responding to, and escalating concerns about, aged care providers repeatedly declining NACAP education.

OPAN network member organisations are responsible for booking and delivering NACAP education sessions on Advocacy and Aged Care Rights and the Abuse of Older People in their state or territory.

OPAN network members typically contact the aged care providers within their state/territory every 12 months to offer an education session. Many residential care facilities are open to this independent provision of rights-based education, however, in the absence of any legislation requiring aged care providers to accept NACAP education, many residential care facilities decline. These guidelines outline an escalation process for addressing concerns about NACAP education refusal. The escalation process has been developed in consultation with the Department of Health and Aged Care and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.

### National Advocate Professional Development Strategy

An OPAN National Advocate Professional Development Strategy was introduced in April 2023. The strategy has been developed to support the delivery of a high quality and nationally consistent NACAP by a skilled and knowledgeable advocate workforce.

The strategy aims to:

- ensure aged care advocacy clients have access to a consistent and high-quality workforce
- clearly define the shared professional development responsibilities of OPAN network member organisations and the OPAN National Secretariat.
- outline strategies that the OPAN National Secretariat will adopt over the period of the strategy to support the ongoing development of advocate skills and knowledge.



Advocate, Barry Fewquandie

# Nationally consistent advocacy practice and service delivery (continued)

## Advocacy practice guidelines

OPAN develops practice guidelines to further refine national consistency in the delivery of information and advocacy support. This year, we reviewed the existing suite of practice guidelines to ensure currency of content and improve usability. We also released a new practice guideline titled Providing Advocacy Support to People with Diverse Characteristics and Life Experiences and commenced work on a case notes practice guideline.

## Online learning through Advocacy Academy

In November 2021, OPAN established the Advocacy Academy, which provides a range of online learning opportunities for advocates, as part of our learning management system. In the current financial year, the Advocacy Academy has expanded to include the mandatory NACAP Minimum Data Set learning modules as well as access to non-compulsory training on topics such as Responding to, and Preventing, Sexual Assault in Residential Aged Care, Abuse of the Older Person for Aged Care and Health Professionals, Advocacy and the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme and Inclusive Language.

The Advocate Knowledge Hub, an online library of resources that provide aged care advocates with easy-to-access information to support their advocacy casework, is continually updated throughout the year to ensure that advocates have access to the latest information.

As of June 2023, 310 OPAN network member employees have registered for the Advocacy Academy.

## OPAN Advocate Orientation Program

The OPAN Advocate Orientation Program was established in November 2021 to help new advocates develop foundational knowledge about NACAP. These modules were reviewed in November 2022 to ensure the content remained current.

In 2022-2023, it became mandatory for the OPAN Orientation Modules to be completed by all Aged Care advocates joining the network. As of June 2023, 196 network member employees had completed the orientation modules.



## Nationally consistent advocacy practice and service delivery (continued)

### National aged care advocates meetings

OPAN facilitates national aged care advocates meetings on a bimonthly basis with the aim of providing advocates with a forum to connect with their peers in other states and territories, discuss advocacy practice and share knowledge, experiences and resources.

In September 2022, OPAN established a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advocates Network. The network provides an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advocates to share their knowledge and advocacy experiences. The network also aims to raise the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to OPAN and network members and influence positive change in advocacy practice and the aged care service system.

### Advocates as Agents

OPAN worked closely with the Department of Health and Aged Care to support OPAN network members in transitioning the Advocates as Agents pilots across to the My Aged Care (MAC) Service and Support Portal. The department prepared advocates for the transition by delivering training in October 2022 and developing a range of guiding resources which have been made available on the Advocate Knowledge Hub. The transition to a more permanent Advocates as

Agents system on the MAC Service and Support Portal has largely been successful. As agents, advocates can better support older people to engage with My Aged Care, access information about the status of their care and progress their aged care journey. The agent functionality meant that on some occasions, advocates were able to bypass delays with the My Aged Care contact centre and access client information online via the portal.

Kaylene Cahill, ERA (left) and Ulli Kohn, OPAN (right)



# Projects to inform, support and empower older people

OPAN continued to deliver projects to inform, support and empower older people, with an important focus on addressing and preventing elder abuse. These projects are monitored through the OPAN National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP) Workplan.

# Home Care Check-in Project

This pilot project is designed to build a scaffold of supports around older people who are vulnerable and at risk of harm or neglect because they are reliant on one provider or carer. OPAN's specialised community support advocates work with the older person to identify risks and reduce them.

As part of a staged roll-out, OPAN's WA network member, Advocare, commenced service delivery in the first quarter of the 2022-2023 financial year, followed by the South Australian network member, Aged Rights Advocacy Service (ARAS), in the second quarter and the NSW network member, Seniors Rights Service, in the third quarter.

This year, our small pilot team has provided over 1,000 check-in supports to vulnerable Australians who receive aged care services but might not have family or established community networks around them.

## CASE EXAMPLE

*An older person, who was living in a public housing unit, had been waiting more than a year for a ramp to be installed. They were unable to leave their unit without assistance. A local care finder program referred the older person to OPAN's Home Care Check-in Project.*

*With the support of a community support advocate, the older person addressed the issue with the housing authority. An independent occupational therapy assessment was organised and work on the ramp has now begun.*

*The community support advocate also facilitated a complaint to a medical clinic to call out poor treatment and linked the older person to supports for Forgotten Australians and care leavers. An additional outcome of the three-month process was an increase in the older person's self-advocacy skills.*





# Home Care and Aged Care Costs Education Project

The Home Care and Aged Care Costs Education Project aims to improve the knowledge, skills and confidence of older people and their representatives in relation to home care packages and other aged care costs.

Financial advocacy officers directly support older people in financially complex cases. They also provide tailored financial advocacy education and work alongside colleagues to improve their practice around financial advocacy.

Full recruitment was achieved in the 2022-2023 financial year, with at least one financial advocacy officer employed in each state or territory. Financial advocacy officers were involved in 654 advocacy cases (exceeding the target of 132 by 495%). A community of practice met 10 times between August 2022 and June 2023. Financial advocacy officers also participated in OPAN webinars focusing on Home Care Package costs and Aged Care Reform.

Financial Advocacy Officer,  
Heidri Brook

## CASE EXAMPLE

*A carer of an older person receiving a Home Care Package sought support to self-advocate. The carer expressed concern that the package had a debt that was growing each month. They had made numerous, unsuccessful attempts to call the Home Care Package provider to address this. A financial advocacy officer supported the carer in reviewing the older person's Home Care Package budget and statements. The financial advocacy officer also provided information to assist the carer in their conversations with the provider. The carer identified that the older person was eligible for a dementia supplement which had not been captured on the statements for the past four months and questioned the provider about this. The provider advised that an error had occurred and credited the Home Care Package with \$5,500 in the next statement.*



# The Advocacy Community Network Development Project

OPAN's advocacy community network development officers aim to increase awareness of aged-care advocacy services in the community with a focus on self-advocacy among community groups, those supporting older persons, and older people.

The Advocacy Community Network Development Project was fully recruited in 2022-2023, with at least one advocacy community network development officer in each state and territory.

Advocacy community network development officers delivered 1,279 awareness-raising events across Australia in the 2022-2023 financial year.

A community of practice met 11 times between July 2022 and June 2023 to share information, support one another, and identify opportunities for collaboration.

## Self-advocacy toolkit

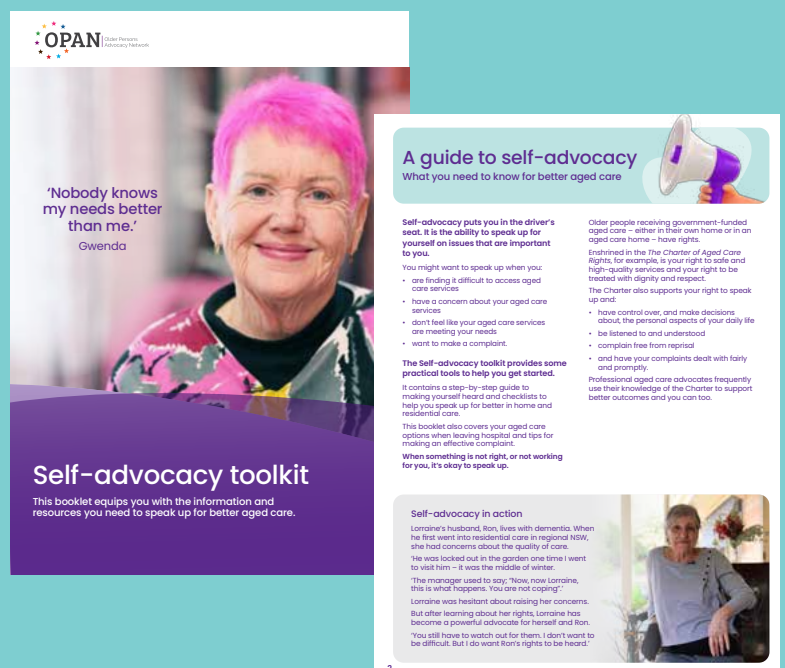
An online Self-advocacy toolkit, developed and launched in November 2022, is a key OPAN resource. The toolkit had a total of 37,611 views across its pages in the 2022-2023 financial year: aged care costs, aged care options and rights in aged care were the most popular topics.

In March 2023, a print booklet version was launched to ensure accessibility in non-digital formats. More than 22,000 copies were distributed.

Advocacy community network development officers promote the Self-advocacy toolkit at community events.



Access the Self-advocacy toolkit on our website: [HERE](#)



# Supporting older people through the COVID-19 pandemic

The OPAN Emergency Response Management Team remained on standby for COVID-19 and other future emergencies in the 2022-2023 financial year.

With outbreaks of COVID-19 still prevalent in the community, OPAN provided older people with regular aged care updates on our designated webpage. An updated Sector Code for Visiting in Aged Care Homes (version 7.2), released on 26 June, promoted a nationally consistent approach.

 [Read more \*\*HERE\*\*](#)

In June 2023, Val Fell OAM, member of OPAN's National Older Persons Reference Group, interviewed Professor Michael Kidd AO, Deputy Chief Medical Officer and Principal Medical Advisor at the Department of Health and Aged Care, around the latest evidence and information on boosters, flu vaccines, isolation rules and rights. The video was part of an integrated digital communications plan to widely distribute the messaging to older people, including social media, advertising and eDMs.

 [Read more \*\*HERE\*\*](#)



# Education and training for the aged care workforce

OPAN delivers education and training to the aged care workforce, including volunteers, through our online learning management system. Our free, self-paced eLearning courses support the aged care workforce in understanding aged care rights, advocacy and how to prevent elder abuse, including sexual assault.

# Education and training for the aged care workforce

**OPAN** Older Persons Advocacy Network

Enrol in the 'Talk to Us First' Aged Care Advocacy online training

Participating in 'Talk to Us First' training will:

- Help aged care staff meet Standard 6 of the Quality Standards
- Increase understanding of how advocates can support older people to raise and rectify their concerns early
- Drive new ways of preventing elder abuse and assist in providing advocacy to older people at risk
- Develop awareness of how to access advocacy services through OPAN

Enrol today. Scan the QR code or visit [opan.org.au/03](http://opan.org.au/03)

1. Watch the video
2. Answer the questions
3. Receive a certificate of completion

OPAN member organisations by state or territory:

ACT: ADONAS Advocacy Network  
VIC: Victorian Elder Rights Service  
QLD: ADONAS Advocacy Network  
NT: Top End  
TAS: ADONAS Advocacy Network  
WA: ADONAS Advocacy Network  
SA: ADONAS Advocacy Network  
NT-Central: ADONAS Advocacy Network

Funded by: Australian Government Department of Health

## Talk to Us First

Our online advocacy education course is designed to support aged care providers and professionals to meet Aged Care Quality Standard 6, ensuring older people feel safe, encouraged, and supported to give feedback or make a complaint. The course was reviewed in 2023 and republished with fresh content.

Over the past financial year, 1,518 people registered for Talk to Us First training.

[Read more HERE](#)

## Abuse of the older person training

OPAN's Abuse of The Older Person: eLearning Program for Health and Aged Care Professionals assists health professionals and aged care workers in identifying and preventing abuse of older people.

This program supports people working in the sector to respond to suspected, witnessed, or disclosed abuse of older people.

Over the past financial year, 2,084 people enrolled in this online training program.

[Read more HERE](#)

**OPAN** Older Persons Advocacy Network | 1800 700 600 | [opan.org.au](http://opan.org.au)

**Abuse of the older person: eLearning Program for Health and Aged Care Professionals**

**Who should complete it?**  
Health, aged care and allied health professionals play an important role in addressing abuse of older people. As trusted professionals, they are well placed to identify signs of abuse of older people through their established professional relationship with patients and therapeutic clinical assessments. In responding to abuse, health and aged care professionals need to be aware of sensitive contextual nature of abuse and the concomitant complex family dynamics, such as dependency on the perpetrator for care, transport, and housing.

**Why?**  
Abuse of older people is a complex issue which is often caused by someone who is trusted by the older person, such as a family member, friend, professional, or paid caregiver. Sometimes, both the victim and perpetrator do not recognise that what is occurring is abuse. Abuse affects both older men and women and can occur in home or in care. Figures estimated as high as 39.2% of older people in residential aged care experience elder abuse in the form of neglect, emotional and/or physical abuse (ACQS, 2020).

**How was it developed and by whom?**  
**Abuse of the older person: eLearning Program for Health and Aged Care Professionals** is an outcome of the Australian Law Reform Commission report recommendations on Elder Abuse (2017). The project involved the formation of a collaborative partnership with the Hon Dr Kay Patterson AO, Age Discrimination Commissioner, and the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN), and a coalition of Subject Matter Experts and health professionals nationally.

**How long will it take to complete?**  
The free course provides the learner with up to date, at point of care, research, expertise, resources, and referral pathways from nationally acclaimed Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) on abuse of older people. Access to the self-paced eLearning program allows for approximately **6+ hours of CPD** by engaging with the three abuse modules.

**Module 1:** Understanding abuse of the older person and their rights  
**Module 2:** Identifying, responding to, and preventing abuse of the older person  
**Module 3:** Rights of older people, Power of Attorney the law and organisational governance

**Learning Objectives**

1. Define the various forms of abuse of older people.
2. Identify signs and risk factors for abuse of the older person, recognising that abuse situations are often complex, deeply personal, and individual.
3. Assess abuse of the older person using different support mechanisms and communication styles.
4. Respond appropriately to signs of abuse.
5. Provide support to older people to mitigate risks associated with abuse and refer them to advocacy networks & other support services, where appropriate.
6. Acknowledge the rights of self-determination of all older people, raise awareness of the harmful effects of ageism and ageist attitudes.
7. Understand the diversity of older Australians and provide culturally aware supports and information.
8. Build organisational governance capacity.

Register your interest now: [education@opan.com.au](mailto:education@opan.com.au)

## Education and training for the aged care workforce (continued)

### Advocate access and abuse prevention training for volunteers

The Community Visitors Scheme (CVS) offers companionship to lonely and isolated older people to improve their quality of life and social connections. OPAN supports the CVS program by providing free online training for CVS volunteers on advocacy, abuse and how to link older people with advocacy services. This financial year, 718 registrations were received with 510 certificates of completion processed. The eLearning program has undergone a comprehensive review in 2023 in conjunction with the Department of Health and Aged Care to reflect the transition from the Community Visitors Scheme (CVS) to the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS) on 1 July 2023.

### Responding to, and preventing, sexual assault in residential aged care

This online facilitator course has been developed as part of the #ReadyToListen project, which aims to build the skills and capacity of residential aged care providers to better respond to – and prevent – sexual abuse. The #ReadyToListen project is led by OPAN in partnership with Celebrate Ageing Ltd and the Older Women's Network, New South Wales. The course, launched on 15 June 2023 to coincide with World Elder Abuse Day, supports educators, clinical governance and quality, risk and compliance managers to conduct training in their workplace.



CVS participant, Patricia and volunteer, Farid

# Supporting diversity and inclusion in aged care

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety said diversity 'should be core business' in aged care. The Charter of Aged Care Rights also requires service providers to actively affirm older people's rich and distinctive life experiences. It calls for a person-centred approach that enables people from diverse backgrounds to thrive in residential aged care and home care settings.

# Planning for Diversity project

OPAN's Who's Missing? Planning for Diversity training was developed as a response to Recommendation 30 of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety: Designing for diversity, difference, complexity and individuality.

Aimed at quality improvement, service planning and compliance officers, it addresses the delivery of safe and inclusive services at an organisational

level. OPAN commenced the rollout of this targeted workshop series in July 2022.

Seventeen workshop series were delivered to 136 participants in Queensland and Tasmania in the 2022-2023 financial year. One hundred per cent of attendees said they felt more competent in planning and implementing diversity and inclusivity safe practices for their organisations after completing the three workshops.

This diversity training will be available to aged care services in NSW, ACT and NT in the 2023-2024 financial year and VIC, WA, and SA in the 2024-2025 financial year.

 [Read more HERE](#)





# Advocacy support to people from diverse and marginalised groups

In 2022-2023, OPAN network members provided 5,907 cases of advocacy support to people from special needs groups.

This includes:

- people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- veterans
- people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless
- care leavers
- parents separated from their children by forced adoption or removal
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex people
- people who live in rural or remote areas
- people who are financially or socially disadvantaged
- people living with dementia
- people living with a mental health condition
- people living with a disability
- people living with cognitive decline.

## CASE EXAMPLE

*Aged care advocacy support was provided to an older person from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background who is living with dementia. As the older persons' dementia progressed, they reverted to their first language. This made it difficult for care staff to communicate with the older person when delivering support. The advocate worked with the aged care provider to explore communication solutions because there were no staff available to communicate in the older person's preferred language. One-word prompt cards were introduced in both languages. This enabled the support workers to engage more effectively with the older person and reduced the frustration experienced by the older person.*

## CASE EXAMPLE

*The partner of an older person living in residential aged care made multiple requests for aged care staff of a specific gender to provide care to the older person. This request was made for religious reasons. Management of the residential aged care home ignored the requests and labelled the partner 'aggressive'. As a result, the partner felt unsafe when visiting the residential aged care home and sought advocacy assistance. A specialist CALD advocate supported the partner at multiple case conferences with the managers of the residential aged care home and eventually their concerns were understood and resolved.*

## Leading diversity awareness and change through systemic advocacy

OPAN continued to advocate for diversity and inclusion in systemic advocacy work in the following ways:

- Chair, Department of Health and Aged Care's Aged Care Diversity Consultative Committee
- Co-chair, National Aged Care Alliance Human Rights Strategic Priority Group
- ensuring diversity representation on National Older Persons Reference Group
- participation at the International Federation on Ageing conference symposium with SAGE USA and others on LGBTIQ+ older women
- developing the OPAN Reconciliation Action Plan
- working closely with diversity peaks and ensuring a diversity lens on submissions and position papers
- raising issues around diverse and marginalised groups in discussions and in meetings.

Advocate, Elsja Dewis



# Raising awareness of aged care rights and our advocacy work

OPAN connects with older people, their families and other representatives across a variety of different platforms, including social media, newsletters and webinars. We raise the voices of older people – and the issues that affect them – in sector and mainstream media. We also promote the services the network offers with exhibition booths at a variety of national conferences. By increasing our reach in all these areas, we raise the profile of our network, our network members and the work we do.

## Marketing, Communications and Education Advisory Group

The Marketing, Communications and Education Advisory Group is made up of representatives from our network organisations, including communications, marketing and education managers/officers, and 2-3 members from the National Older Persons Reference Group. The group works together on joint initiatives, to promote and advertise within states and territories, and as a feedback loop to share information and learnings. Collaboration ensures consistent messaging at a local and national level. In the past financial year, the group met on 7 occasions.

Frank Smith, member of  
Marketing, Communications  
and Education Advisory Group



# OPAN webinars

OPAN's webinars have proven extremely effective in engaging with older people about their aged care rights, addressing aged care issues, and providing practical tips for ageing well and getting the most out of aged care services. They are also a valuable resource for families, carers and representatives. OPAN hosted 11 webinars in 2022-2023 across a wide range of aged care topics, with an annual total of 45,952 views.



## Christmas in July with Kamahl

An estimated 30,000 people watched our live Christmas in July concert, a celebration of ageing featuring the veteran Australian singer. Parties were held in aged care homes across the country.



## What you need to know for better aged care

This webinar, on 29 November 2022, launched OPAN's Self-advocacy toolkit. Viewed by over 1,130 people, it explains the concept of self-advocacy and provides practical tips for older people.



## Food, glorious food: what to do if it's not

This webinar, on 24 May 2023, explored what older people can expect from service providers during mealtimes and how to provide effective feedback. Featuring Maggie Beer, everybody's favourite TV cook, it has been viewed by over 1,230 people.



*'I thought your work in developing the toolkit and today's presentation was brilliant. Well done!'*

*- What you need to know for better aged care webinar attendee*

## OPAN webinars (continued)

### Home care packages series

This popular webinar series addressed many of the top issues raised with our advocates.



### Understanding home care packages

Financial advocacy officers gave an overview of home care packages and the top queries regarding fees and costs in this 9 August 2022 webinar. Over 5,000 people have viewed the webinar and resources.

### Home care packages Q&A

Due to unprecedented demand, this follow-up webinar, on 18 October 2022, saw our financial advocacy officers answer live questions about getting the most out of home care and understanding statements and fees. Almost 1,800 people have viewed this Q&A session.

### Home care packages: what's changed?

This 18 April 2023 webinar, viewed by 3,200 people, helped older people navigate the changes to home care package fees and the updated operational manual around inclusions and exclusions.



# Communicating with older people, families and representatives




## The National Advocate

Our monthly e-newsletter, The National Advocate, highlights OPAN's work as well as providing up-to-date information and resources. Subscriptions increased by 21% from last financial year and the newsletter is now read by over 37,584 people. The National Advocate has a strong focus on current aged care and advocacy issues and where to go for further support.

 [Sign up HERE](#)

## News for You

We understand that not everyone is online. To address this barrier to information for older people living in residential aged care, we publish a print newsletter News For You. OPAN distributed two issues of this newsletter to 2,671 residential aged care homes around Australia (360,000 copies).

 [Previous editions of this newsletter can be downloaded from our website HERE.](#)

**Chat with us**  
 Have you ever been asked a question about your care?  
 ■ **Ensuring your rights**  
 ■ **Understanding aged care provider services or fees**  
 ■ **Accessing, or getting the most from, your services**  
 ■ **Having a say in your care and the things that impact your life**  
 If your answer is yes, or you simply want advice about your aged care services, we are here to help.

**Chat with us 1800 700 600**

**AHWACAS**  
 Free advocacy line 1800 700 600

**OPAN**  
 Older People's Advocacy Network  
 1800 700 600

**News for You**  
 Aged Care Advocacy Newsletter | August 2022 | Issue 7

**Every mouthful must count**

**Chat with us 1800 700 600**

**Advocare**  
 Free advocacy line 1800 700 600

**OPAN**  
 Older People's Advocacy Network  
 1800 700 600

**Chat with us**  
 Are you concerned about being treated appropriately? Do you need assistance with:  
 ■ **Ensuring your right to have visitors**  
 ■ **Understanding aged care provider services or fees**  
 ■ **Accessing, or getting the most from, your services**  
 ■ **Having a say in your care and the things that impact your life**  
 If your answer is yes, or you simply want advice about your aged care services, we are here to help.

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**OPAN**  
 Older People's Advocacy Network  
 1800 700 600

**News for You**  
 Aged Care Advocacy Newsletter | April 2023 | Issue 8

**Best of friends reunited**

**Chat with us 1800 700 600**

**Advocare**  
 Free advocacy line 1800 700 600

**OPAN**  
 Older People's Advocacy Network  
 1800 700 600

**Chat with us**  
 Are you concerned about being treated appropriately? Do you need assistance with:  
 ■ **Ensuring that your right to have visitors is upheld**  
 ■ **Understanding aged care provider services or fees**  
 ■ **Accessing, or getting the most from, your services**  
 ■ **Having a say in your care and the things that impact your life**  
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**Chat with us 1800 700 600**

**OPAN**  
 Older People's Advocacy Network  
 1800 700 600

**News for You**  
 Aged Care Advocacy Newsletter | January 2023 | Issue 5

**Alan finds the key to freedom**

**Chat with us 1800 700 600**

**OPAN**  
 Older People's Advocacy Network  
 1800 700 600

# Communicating with older people, families and representatives (continued)

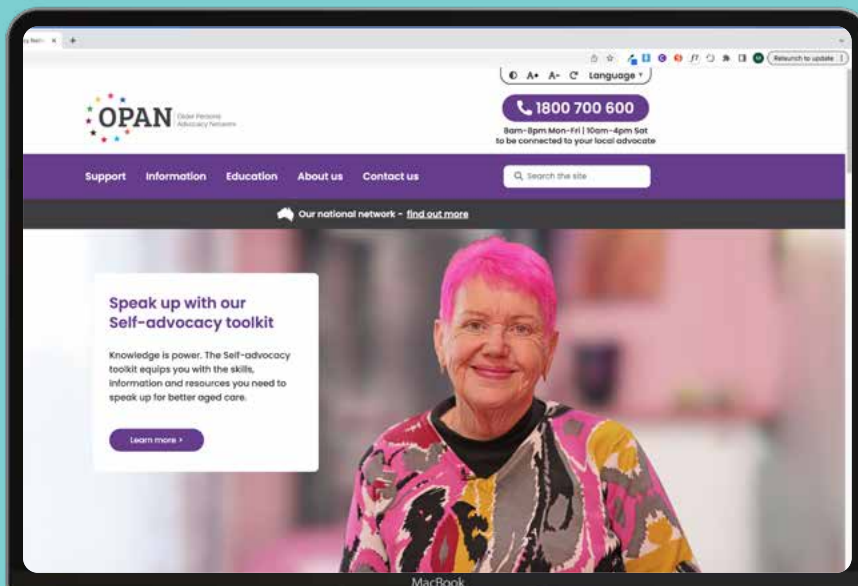
*Our website remains a key tool for raising awareness and providing up-to-date information about aged care rights and services available to support older people.*

## OPAN website

The OPAN website has experienced a 54% growth in the 2022-2023 financial year, with 199,547 visitors. Visitors accessed 611,979 pages across the website during this period, an 80% increase from last financial year. The most viewed pages included the Self-advocacy toolkit, information on eLearning programs, how to vote in elections as an older person, advocacy support and community connection.

## Social media

Across Facebook and LinkedIn, OPAN achieved a combined reach of 1,467,219 due to integrated campaigns and advertising efforts. Facebook followers have increased 23% to 6,634. The largest group of followers continues to be people aged 65+ followed by the 55-64 age group – together they contribute to over half (53%) of OPAN's followers. LinkedIn followers have grown to 7,037. This workforce and sector audience has seen accelerated growth and engagement.





## Advocating in the media

OPAN recognises the importance of sector and mainstream media as a platform for sharing information, engaging with stakeholders, advocating for, and raising the voices of, older people, and driving systemic change. We consolidated upon our already strong media profile as the peak body for individual advocacy support for older people in the 2022–2023 financial year. CEO Craig Gear amplified key messages of equity, choice and control, dignity of risk, and quality, rights-based aged care across print and digital media, radio, and television. The CEOs of our network member organisations supported and amplified that message. Staff members were interviewed on specialist subjects. Members of the National Older Persons Reference Group shared their diverse lived experience of the aged care system and identified some of the unanticipated effects of the recent reforms, addressing ongoing issues such as ageism, discrimination and rights-based care across a range of different platforms and publications.

### Top 10 media appearances



#### Elder abuse and extra measures to ensure the voices of older people are heard

Carolanne Barkla, CEO Aged Rights Advocacy Service, 19 June 2023, ABC Radio Riverland SA.

 [Listen HERE](#)



#### High quality care, adequate staffing levels and closures in residential aged care

Craig Gear, CEO OPAN, 24 May 2023, 2GB.

 [Listen HERE](#)



#### Gaps in dementia training for aged care staff

Craig Gear, CEO OPAN, 22 May 2023, Channel 10.

 [Watch HERE](#)



#### Raising awareness: the Charter of Aged Care Rights

Craig Gear, CEO OPAN, Gwenda Darling, National Older Persons Reference Group, Gerard Dunlop, aged care advocate, Senior Rights Service, 20 April 2023, Australian Ageing Agenda.

 [Read more HERE](#)

# Advocating in the media (continued)



## Deinstitutionalising Aged Care

Geoff Rowe, CEO ADA Australia, Craig Gear, CEO OPAN, 16 April 2023, The Australian.

 [Read more HERE](#)



## Home care packages

Craig Gear, CEO OPAN, Lesley Forster, National Older Persons Reference Group, 23 March 2023, Life Matters, ABC Radio.

 [Listen HERE](#)



## Presenting Issues report reveals abuse, neglect

Craig Gear, OPAN CEO, 13 October 2022, The Guardian.

 [Read more HERE](#)



## Self-managing aged care packages

Lesley Forster, National Older Persons Reference Group, 1 October 2022, The Senior.

 [Read the article on the OPAN website HERE](#)



## Sexual abuse of older people in regional and remote areas

Catherine Barrett, Ready to Listen project coordinator, 22 September 2022, Partyline.

 [Read more HERE](#)



## SCHADS changes impact aged care

Craig Gear, OPAN CEO, 7 August 2022, Sunday Telegraph.

 [Read more HERE](#)

## Conferences

In October 2022, OPAN exhibited at the Aged & Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA) Conference which focused on the future of aged care including developments and reforms for industry professionals. Participation included an exhibition booth and recognition on the website and app. There were around 1700 attendees.

In November 2022, OPAN exhibited at the Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) Conference. The conference brings together key decision makers including researchers, policy experts, and specialists in aged care. Participation included an exhibition booth and recognition on the website, program, e-communications and app. There were around 500 attendees.



# Systemic advocacy

OPAN utilises its role as the peak body for individual aged care advocacy support to inform systemic advocacy and to contribute to the consultation and implementation of the aged care reforms recommended by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety as well as other reform processes. Our systemic advocacy is informed by qualitative and quantitative data received from our network member organisations, engagement with the National Older Persons Reference Group, our various internal advisory groups, and our engagement with other peak and non-government bodies. We participate in many external aged care advisory meetings, forums, and conferences, and contribute to government advisory groups and forums. We also develop position statements and submissions and collaborate with other organisations.

## Policy and Systemic Advocacy Advisory Group

A driving force behind our systemic advocacy is the OPAN Policy and Systemic Advocacy Advisory Group, which consists of OPAN's CEO and policy team, representatives from network member CEOs and policy representatives, and two members of the National Older Persons Reference Group.

Work included:

- providing information and advice on OPAN submissions and position statements
- feedback for consultations such as the Aged Care Quality Standards
- consideration of, and responding to, issues such as restrictive practices, human rights and co-contributions
- advising on issues that intersect at a state and federal level such as adult safeguarding, guardianship and Enduring Power of Attorney.

Theresa Flavin, Policy and Systemic Advocacy Advisory Group member



# Advocating for sexual assault prevention in aged care

#ReadyToListen is a groundbreaking approach to preventing sexual assault in aged care. Led by OPAN in collaboration with Celebrate Ageing Ltd and the Older Women's Network NSW, #ReadyToListen aims to build the skills and capacity of aged care service providers.

Milestones this year include:

- The #ReadyToListen Townhall meeting in Melbourne on 9 December 2022 – a community call to action on preventing sexual assault of older people and people living with dementia.
- Formation of the #ReadyToListen Sexual Assault and Dementia Special Interest Group (SAD-SIG) to draw on the expertise of people living with dementia and their carers to prevent sexual assault. The SAD-SIG advises OPAN on the #ReadyToListen project and is a co-designed process for incorporating the voices and experiences of people living with dementia and their carers.
- The #ReadyToListen In Sickness and Health project on assistance for carers of people living with dementia experiencing unwanted sexual attention.
- Co-designing an In Sickness and Health online seminar with the SAD-SIG.

Further funding will be sought to continue this pioneering work.

 [Read more HERE](#)



# Contributing to aged care reform

The National Older Persons Reference Group met regularly throughout the year and consulted on key reform issues. Membership was expanded to include more people living in residential aged care and people from more regions.

Highlights included:

- delivering a targeted project on human rights for people living with dementia for inclusion in the National Dementia Action Plan
- engaging in international work on the development of a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons
- working on the new Disability and Aged care Advocacy Standard.

## Submissions, Feedback and Consultations

OPAN made submissions, provided feedback, and participated in consultations across 59 areas of reform, including the Aged Care Amendment (Implementing Care Reform) Bill, Aged Care Quality Standards, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) Data Strategy, Disability Royal Commission, Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority (IHACPA) Pricing Framework, Coercive Control, Restrictive Practices, Support at Home, Carer Leave, Inspector General of Aged Care, Human Rights Framework and the Care and Support Economy.



## External policy and systemic advocacy meetings and collaborations

- Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG)
  - Co-convened the Elder Abuse Special Interest Group
  - Convened the LGBTI Special Interest Group
- Aged and Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA) Consumer Advisory Council
- Aged Care Quality and Safety (ACQSC) Consultative Forum
- ACQSC quarterly meetings and regular forums
- ACSQHC Clinical Expert Reference Group
- ACSQHC Partnering with Consumers Advisory Group
- Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) Older People Voting
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) Aged Care Data Advisory Group
- Australian Health Protections Principles Committee Aged Care Advisory Group
- Department of Health and Aged Care Aged Care Diversity Consultative Committee
  - OPAN chaired this committee
- Department of Health and Aged Care Aged Care Quality Consumer Reference Group
- Department of Health and Aged Care Consumer Peaks Forum
- Department of Health and Aged Care Home Care Program Assurance Reference Group
- Department of Health and Aged Care Monthly Care Statements Consumer Focus Group
- Department of Health and Aged Care Home Care Operations Working Group
- Department of Health and Aged Care Residential Aged Care Funding Reform Working Group
- Department of Health and Aged Care Better Access Evaluation Stakeholder Engagement Group
- Department of Social Services (DSS)/Carers Australia Carers Policy Forum
- Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Health Providers Partnership Forum
- Elder Abuse Action Australia (AAA) Advisory Group
- Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority (IHACPA) Aged Care Interim Working Group
- National Aged Care Advisory Council
- National Aged Care Alliance quarterly meetings
- OPAN-Council on the Ageing Aged Care Forum
- Rights of Older Persons Australia (on coordinating committee)
- Standards Australia
  - MB-027 Ageing Societies
  - MB-031 Advocacy Standard.





# External policy and systemic advocacy meetings and collaborations (continued)

## International collaborations

OPAN is a member of the Board of Directors of the International Federation of Ageing where we engage in actions that advance the health, wellbeing and rights of older people. We are also a member of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People National Advocacy Group, which enables broad discussions across the globe about the rights of older people. This year, we participated in the World Health Organization (WHO) Consultation on Maximizing Voice and Meaningful Engagement across the Decade of Healthy Ageing.

## Conference presentations

In 2022-2023, OPAN presented at the following conferences:

- Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) Think Tank on Human Rights – co-facilitated a workshop on co-design with AAG, Collabforge and older people, and facilitated a workshop on elder abuse
- Aged and Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA) – consumer panel session, presentation on OPAN Presenting Issues Report, participation in a ‘fishbowl’ discussion on Support at Home
- Presentation to Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria on OPAN Presenting Issues Report
- ACCPA NSW/ACT – part of a panel session discussing What Does Excellent Care Look Like & What Do We Need to Deliver It?
- International Federation on Ageing 16th Global Conference on Ageing – presentations on OPAN Presenting Issues Report and three different aspects of the Ready to Listen Project, participated in a Symposium on LGBTIQ older women.

## Research

OPAN participated in the following research collaborations:

- No More Shame: Changing health providers’ recognition and response to elder abuse to reduce associated stigma – led by the National Ageing Research Institute
- Unspoken, Unheard, Unmet: Improving Access to Preventative Health Care through Better Conversations about Care – led by the University of Queensland
- Redressing Abuse and Neglect of People Living with Dementia in Residential Aged Care – led by the University of Technology Sydney
- Community partners: intergenerational research project – led by The George Institute for Global Health Australia.



# OPAN Senior Leadership Team

Our Senior Leadership Team steers the work of OPAN and they are committed to creating a positive work culture. Its members take responsibility for delivering the National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP) and other projects.

## OPAN Senior Leadership Team



### Executive and Administration

#### Craig Gear OAM, Chief Executive Officer

Responsible for leadership of the organisation's Senior Leadership Team and supporting the implementation of OPAN Board's strategic directions. Craig works to enable a flourishing and dynamic network with member CEO colleagues. He is also responsible for managing external government and stakeholder relationships.



#### Karen Doyle, Director Operations

Oversees internal operations of OPAN, including marketing, communications, learning and development, business operations, data and NACAP Expansion projects. Coordinates the implementation of the National Aged Care Advocacy Program and OPAN Board work plans and leads contract reporting. Supports the CEO with network management, OPAN Board and governance committee operations.



#### Rona Doherty, Finance Manager

Responsible for maintaining and enhancing financial controls and financial governance processes to ensure compliance with legislative, audit, and government/funder reporting and contract terms and conditions.



### Policy and systemic advocacy

#### Samantha Edmonds, Director Policy and Systemic Advocacy

Ensures the consumer voice and the rights of older people remain at the centre of the work we do. Leads OPAN's Policy and Systemic Advocacy Team. Builds and strengthens relationships with stakeholders. Represents OPAN at key meetings and advisory groups. Develops responses to systemic issues through position papers, submissions and consultations. Leads OPAN's Policy and Systemic Advocacy Advisory Group.

## OPAN Senior Leadership Team (continued)



### National Aged Care Advocacy Program operations Catherine Stade, Manager Advocacy, Operations and Practice

Leads OPAN's Operations and Practice Team who are dedicated to supporting the network in achieving national consistency in advocacy practice and operations. The operations team is responsible for managing OPAN's national advocacy line call centre solutions and other national operational projects. The practice team develops national guidelines and coordinates advocacy support resources. These teams also lead the Advocacy Operations and Practice Advisory Group, which brings together the network members' management leads for continuous improvement in NACAP service delivery.



### Marketing, Communications and Learning & Development

#### Diana Vizard, Strategic Engagement Manager

Leads OPAN's Marketing, Communications and Learning and Development Team. Manages the organisation's relationship with key sector stakeholders and allied peaks. Creates and implements OPAN's Engagement Plan, which aims to increase the profile of the organisation, network members and the work we do. Oversees production on OPAN webinars and other awareness-raising events. Leads the Marketing, Communications, and Education Advisory Group, which works together to ensure consistent messaging and identify initiatives at a national level.



### Data Projects

#### Emily Cornes, Manager Data Projects

Leads the team responsible for improving the quality and consistency of the network's data as well as its data analytics capabilities. Leads the development and implementation of advocacy outcomes and impact measures to demonstrate the value and impact of our advocacy work. Oversees measures to strengthen OPAN's cyber security posture. A key member of the Data Governance Steering Committee, Salesforce Community of Practice and Advocacy, Operations and Practice Group.

# Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd Financial Statements

Year ended 30 June 2023

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# Directors' report

The directors present their report, together with the financial statements of the Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd (OPAN) for the year ended 30 June 2023.

## Directors

The following persons were directors of OPAN during the whole of the financial year and up to the date of this report, unless otherwise stated:

**Mary (Ara) Cresswell (Chairperson)**

**Mary Anne Hunt  
(ceased as a director on 11 April 2023)**

**Anne Burgess**

**Judy Davis**

**Leanne Groombridge  
(resigned at the 8 February 2023 meeting)**

**Brian O'Keefe**

**Margaret Duckett  
(resigned at the 26 October 2022 meeting)**

**Helen McDevitt**

**Leanne (Liz) Kearins**

**Kimmy Jongue  
(resigned on 13 June 2023)**

**Andrew Byrnes  
(joined on 7 December 2022)**

**Janice (Jan) Porter  
(joined on 17 May 2023)**

Directors have been in office since the start of the financial year to the date of this report unless otherwise stated.

## Objectives

OPAN was established to facilitate the provision of relief and services to the needs of older people who are vulnerable, socially or economically disadvantaged, exploited or abused.

OPAN's vision is for 'a society where older people are heard, informed and respected and where they enjoy and exercise their human rights.'

The purpose of OPAN is to facilitate an environment that promotes the rights of older people. We do this through:

- systemic advocacy as the peak body for individual aged care advocacy in Australia
- facilitation of the delivery of services by the OPAN network members
- collection and communication of the voice of older people through the OPAN network
- national projects which enhance the rights of older people.

The activities of the company must be conducted in the furtherance of its Charitable Purpose and may include:

- a. acting as the peak body for individual and systemic advocacy support for the rights of older people, their families and representatives;
- b. contracting on behalf of members to deliver programs to older people, their families and representatives;
- c. facilitating the provision of advice, assistance, referral and education to older people who are vulnerable, socially or economically disadvantaged, exploited or abused;
- d. facilitating the provision of confidential support and education to older people who are recipients of care and to promote the rights of older people to aged care service providers;

# Directors' report

## (continued)

- e. promoting, advocating for and defending the rights of older people in general and promoting, fostering and pursuing a community where older people are treated with dignity and respect and do not experience discrimination; and
- f. undertaking any other activities in furtherance of the above.

OPAN will also do such things as may be incidental or convenient to furthering the objects set and activities set out above including:

- (a) negotiating, contracting and complying with government agencies, or other bodies, to procure funding and then contracting members to deliver services meeting the objectives;
- (b) fostering greater coordination, relationship building, and sharing of organisational knowledge and expertise between the different members with respect to high quality independent individual and self-advocacy, resources and educational services;
- (c) developing a national voice for aged care advocacy and enabling coordinated feedback to government around issues and trends in relation to both independent individual and self-advocacy and aged care service delivery;
- (d) strengthening relationships and networks with other stakeholders;
- (e) providing a forum for members to share information, resources, practices and learnings; and
- (f) creating opportunities for professional development and training.

## Strategy for achieving the objectives

The company would like to thank the Australian Department of Health and Aged Care as the prime funder of OPAN through its aged care community grants.

OPAN's vision and strategic directions were developed and endorsed by Members, service delivery organisation CEOs and OPAN Board Directors at its November 2017 and updated at its November 2018 combined meeting. A revised constitution was accepted by OPAN members on 2 March 2022 which contains the principles under which OPAN will operate, and notes the cessation of the Memorandum of Understanding and Members Agreement.

OPAN Values include:

- respect
- integrity
- justice and equity
- accountability and transparency
- working and learning together.

Key strategic directions and key outcomes include:

1. Advance the human rights of older people, particularly those seeking and receiving aged care, and the most vulnerable.
2. Improve advocacy and support for older people with diverse needs.
3. Provide information and advocacy support to prevent the abuse of older people, including those receiving aged care.
4. Expand service reach and develop innovative advocacy models grounded in individual needs and human rights.
5. Embed advocacy quality standards and assurance across OPAN systems and services.
6. Enhance information and knowledge management to increase the impact of systemic advocacy.
7. Enhance OPAN's effectiveness as the peak body for older person's individual advocacy.

*Continued next page*



# Directors' report

## (continued)

### Principal activities

In the 2022-23 financial year, the principal continuing activities of the company were delivering, through members, the Australian Department of Health National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP).

OPAN also progressed the implementation of the expanded NACAP Workplan, undertook commissioned projects with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, contributed to the aged care reform program implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission in Aged Care Quality and Safety and the program of work surrounding the Elder Abuse prevention and advocacy program.

### Performance measures

OPAN measures its performance in both the amount of services provided to older people through information and individual advocacy and education sessions delivered.



*Continued next page*

# Directors' report

## (continued)

### Information on directors

Mary (Ara) Cresswell

**Non-Executive Director (Chairperson)**

**Diploma of Nursing, Western Australian Government Nursing Service; Diploma Social Training, Western Australian Institute of Technology; Graduate Australian Institute of Company Directors**

Ara Cresswell is an experienced board director, executive manager and policy adviser in the not-for-profit sector. Senior management roles include CEO Carers Australia, for over 8 years, Acting CEO and Director of Policy and Public Affairs at Reconciliation Australia, CEO of Homelessness Australia and CEO of the ACT Council of Social Service. Previous board roles include Vice Chair International Alliance of Carer Organisations, two terms as a Commissioner of ACT Legal Aid Commission, elected Board member Australian Council of Social Service, ACT nominee to National Women's Emergency Services Board. National Advisory positions include membership of the Ministerial Aged Care Advisory Committee, member of the NDIS CEOs Advisory Committee, member Ministerial Advisory committee on Dementia, Member Disability and Carers Alliance.

**Special responsibilities:**

**Chairperson (from 1st July 2022).**

**Member Finance, Audit & Risk (FAR) Committee,**

**Member Governance and Performance Committee (GaP).**

Mary Anne Hunt

**Non-Executive Director**

**Ass Dip Social Science & Comm Welfare; GAICD**

Mary Anne Hunt was a Director for OPAN and also Elder Rights Advocacy (ERA) in Victoria. She had over twenty years experience in senior leadership roles across a range of diverse communities and businesses including wellness, health, children/family, disability, community and aged services, and vocational educational services. She was an accomplished mentor, coach and facilitator. Her diverse experience allowed her to bring forward the right mix of compassion and business acumen to the individuals or organisations she supported.

Anne Burgess

**Non-Executive Director**

**AUA (Dip Soc Stud), BSW**

Anne Burgess has invaluable and extensive experience at an executive level in government with previous roles as Director of Mental Health, Director of the Office for Women and Acting Commissioner for Equal Opportunity. She is Chair of South's Australia's Aged Rights Advocacy Service, Deputy-President of COTA SA and Chair of its Policy Council, Board member of the Northern Adelaide Local Health Network and Chair of the Community Visitor Scheme's Advisory Committee.

# Directors' report

## (continued)

**Judy Davis**

**Non-Executive Director**

**BSc (PubHlth), Grad Dip International Pub Hlth, GAICD**

Judy Davis is the General Manager of Programs at Catholic Care Northern Territory (NT) and is responsible for the strategic leadership and operational performance of the organisation, managing a large portfolio of social services programs across 17 sites. She is a highly experienced manager with more than 20 years' experience in public health and community services, working in government, not-for-profit and community sectors. This position proceeds many senior positions spanning both public and community sectors including Australian Health Ministers Advisory Committee (AHMAC) Principal Coordinator for NT Top End Health Services, Deputy CEO of Northern Territory Medicare Local/ Primary Health Network and Director of Health Promotion for Queensland Health. Judy is also the Deputy Chair of the Northern Territory Mental Health Coalition, a professional member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Northern Territory Council of Social Services.

**Leanne Groombridge**

**Non-Executive Director**

**Bachelor of Arts, Graduate Certificate in Counselling and Certificate in Governance for Not-for-Profits**

Leanne Groombridge is the Chief Executive Officer of Advocacy Tasmania Inc. Leanne has over 30 years of experience in senior management, executive and human resource positions across the not-for-profit, corporate and tertiary education sectors. She brings with her a wealth of experience in strategic planning, employee relations and change management.

**Brian O'Keefe**

**Non-Executive Director**

**Bachelor of Business- Major in Finance, Graduate Diploma in Applied Finance & Investment, Diploma of Finance & Mortgage Broking Management, Graduate AICD Director Course**

Brian O'Keefe is currently a Director of Advocare Incorporated in Western Australia. He is an experienced senior executive who has worked in different business environments across a number of financial services organisations, building and managing successful teams to achieve desired outcomes.

He has experience in business development (sales), client relationship and change management, strategy development and implementation, and risk management. Brian has qualifications in commerce, finance, investment and mortgage broking management and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD).

Brian is currently working as a finance broker with a large, diversified broking firm, with a team of specialised brokers in Western Australia.

Brian is also a Director of ConnectGroups Support Groups Association WA Inc.

**Margaret Duckett**

**Non-Executive Director**

**Australian Institute of Company Directors' diploma program, Bachelor of Science, Master of Science in Medicine, Master of Science and Society. Graduate of AICD Director Course, named as Fellow in 2002**

Margaret Duckett has held various senior roles including as Director of the NSW Office of Ageing. Her career has been primarily in the health and social sectors, building on her science background in terms of health promotion, advocacy and policy development. Margaret has extensive experience in government and political processes, and strategic policy development and implementation. She can point to a number of instances where her advocacy changed policy. Margaret is the Chair of Seniors Rights Service in NSW.

*Continued next page*

# Directors' report

## (continued)

Helen McDevitt

**Non-Executive Director**

**Bachelor of Arts English/History Majors, Graduate Diploma of Education English/History Majors, Company Directors Course Award, Executive Leadership Program, Towards Strategic Leadership, SES Orientation; Appearing Before Senate Committees, Leadership and Management; Corporate Governance and Law, Certificate IV in Business Facilitation, Graduate Diploma in Management, Positive Psychology**

Helen McDevitt was appointed as Chair of the ADACAS Board in December 2019 after retiring from a career as a senior Australian public servant, and before that, in the community sector working in regional development, education and youth services. She has a particular passion for supporting and improving the lives of people with disability and young people through promoting their social inclusion, education and workforce participation. Throughout her career Helen contributed to national reforms in the health, education and social services sectors. She played a key role in the transition to the NDIS, led the social policy work in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and supported the government's social inclusion not-for-profit sector agendas. Helen brings leadership, management and negotiation skills, and extensive experience in policy reform and delivery.

Leanne (Liz) Kearins

**Non-Executive Director**

**Diploma Business Studies – Massey University and Certificate in Journalism – Auckland University of Technology, Certificate in Strategic Human Resource Leadership – e-Cornell**

Liz Kearins is an experienced senior executive, board director and consultant, with expertise in strategy, culture change, engagement, and communication. Her diverse background spans the management consultancy, utilities, healthcare, local government, environment, tourism, and media sectors. Liz is the Chief Operating Officer at Actrua, where she leads project strategy, design and delivery to help organisations and leaders engage, inspire and empower people to be their best. She also chairs the board of Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia. Liz is a Fellow of the Institute of Managers and Leaders, a certified Change Management Practitioner, and a member of the Australian HR Institute, the Public Relations Institute of Australia, the Institute of Company Directors and the Institute of Executive Coaching and Member Governance, Accountability and Performance Leadership Committee.

**Special responsibilities: Chairperson – Finance, Audit & Risk (FAR) Committee.**

# Directors' report

## (continued)

Kimmy Jongue

**Non-Executive Director**

**Bachelor's Degree, Information Technology and Business, Chartered Accountant, Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia and New Zealand, Registered Company Auditor**

Kimmy Jongue has over 15 years' experience in the provision of audit and assurance services for large and small, private, public and not-for-profit organisations. Her experience extends across a wide range of industries which include indigenous services, government, utilities, infrastructure, health, not-for-profits and technology. Kimmy has particular interest in working with senior management, directors, boards and advisory boards, providing experience-based commercial advice on how they can achieve their strategic objectives, with a focus on sound decision-making. Kimmy is a member of the Board of Darwin Community Legal Service.

Andrew Byrnes

**Non-Executive Director**

**Bachelor of Arts (Hons); Bachelor of Laws (Hons), Master of Laws**

Andrew Byrnes is Emeritus Professor of International Law and Human Rights, Faculty of Law & Justice, University of New South Wales. His areas of research, publication and teaching have for many years been in the field of international law and human rights, human rights in domestic law, ageing and human rights, the rights of persons with disabilities, and gender and human rights. He serves on the Board of Seniors Rights Service (NSW) and on the National Human Rights Committee of the Law Council of Australia and is one of the co-organisers of the Rights of Older Persons Australia (ROPA) network. He previously served on the Board of the Diplomacy Training Program and on the advisory boards of many human rights organisations, as as the President of the Australian and New Zealand Society of International Law and has acted a consultant to various international bodies on human rights issues, including the human rights of older persons. He is a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and the Australian Academy of Law.

**Special responsibilities: Member – Governance, Accountability and Performance Committee.**

# Directors' report

## (continued)

**Janice (Jan) Porter**  
**Non-Executive Director**  
**B.A. (Hons); A.L.A.A; Dip. Gov**

Jan Porter has had a wide ranging executive and business background, with particular expertise in analysing and solving complex problems, developing and leading strategic change, with proven negotiation and communication skills, and is a competent and experienced media performer. Jan has a background in information and records management systems, particularly in the mining industry and merchant banking. She established and ran a consultancy business specialising in information and change management. She has held executive positions the federal and Northern Territory public service, including in equal opportunity and management training. She was a political advisor in the Office of the Leader of the Opposition in the Northern Territory, engaged in policy development, strategic planning, campaigning and public relations. Most recently Jan has been an advocate for refugees and a consumer representative on the steering committee of a major project for Breast Screen Victoria. Jan is a strong believer in human rights and equity, particularly for those whose voice is not always heard. Jan is currently the President of Elder Rights Advocacy.

**Company secretary**  
**Craig Gear was appointed CEO and Company Secretary on 13 Nov 2018**

# Directors' report

## (continued)

### Meetings of members

The number of meetings of OPAN's members and the dates of each meeting held during the year ended 30 June 2023 were:

Date	Details
6 July 2022	Ordinary meeting
30 November 2022	Annual general meeting

### Meetings of Directors

The number of meetings of the company's Board of Directors (Board) and of each Board committee held during the year ended 30 June 2023, and the number of meetings attended by each director were:

Date	Details
03 August 2022	Ordinary meeting
26 October 2022	Ordinary meeting
30 November 2022	Annual general meeting
7 December 2022	Ordinary meeting
08 February 2023	Ordinary meeting
17 May 2023	Ordinary meeting

	Full Board Attended	Held*
Mary (Ara) Cresswell	5	5
Mary Anne Hunt	4	4
Anne Burgess	5	5
Judy Davis	5	5
Leanne Groombridge	1	3
Brian O'Keefe	5	5
Margaret Duckett	2	2
Helen McDevitt	4	5
Leanne (Liz) Kearins	4	5
Kimmy Jonge	2	4
Andrew Byrnes	3	3

\*Held: represents the number of meetings held during the time the director held office or was a member of the relevant committee.

### Meetings of Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

The Finance, Audit & Risk Committee was formed as a Committee of the Board at the direction of the Board at its meeting on 27 March 2019. The number of meetings of the company's Finance, Audit & Risk Committee and the dates of each meeting held during the year ended 30 June 2023 were:

Date	Details
20 July 2022	Ordinary meeting
12 October 2022	Ordinary meeting
31 January 2023	Ordinary meeting
19 April 2023	Ordinary meeting

### Meeting of the Governance and Performance Committee (formerly Nominations and Remuneration Committee)

The Nominations & Remuneration Committee was formed as a Committee of the Board at the direction of the Board at its meeting on 29th May 2019. At a meeting of the Board in February 2022, the Terms of Reference and role of the sub-committee were revised and the sub-committee was reconstituted as the Governance and Performance (GaP) Committee. The number of meetings of the company's Governance and Performance Committee and the dates of each meeting held during the year ended 30 June 2023 were:

Date	Details
15 July 2022	Ordinary meeting
17 October 2022	Ordinary meeting
11 January 2023	Ordinary meeting
12 April 2023	Ordinary meeting

### Matters subsequent to the end of the Financial Year

Matters subsequent to the end of the financial year are disclosed in note 7.5.

*Continued next page*

# Directors' report

(continued)

## Contributions on winding up

In the event of the company being wound up, ordinary members are required to contribute a maximum of \$100 each. The total amount that members of the company are liable to contribute if the company is wound up is \$900 based on 9 current ordinary members.

## Auditor's independence declaration

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration as required under section 307C of the *Corporations Act 2001* is set out immediately after this directors' report.

This report is made in accordance with a resolution of directors, pursuant to section 298(2)(a) of the ACNC Act.

On behalf of the directors



**Ara Cresswell**  
Director/Chairperson



**Liz Kearins**  
Director/FAR Committee Chair

Dated this 8th day of November 2023



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## AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION

### RSM Australia Partners

12 Anderson Street West, Ballarat VIC 3350  
PO Box 685 Ballarat VIC 3353

T +61 (0) 3 5330 5800  
F +61 (0) 3 5330 5890

[www.rsm.com.au](http://www.rsm.com.au)

As lead auditor for the audit of the financial report of Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd for the period ended 30 June 2023, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of:

- (i) the auditor independence requirements as set out in the *Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- (ii) any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

*RSM*

### RSM AUSTRALIA PARTNERS

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John Finday'.

**JOHN FINDAY**  
Partner

Ballarat, Victoria  
Dated this 21<sup>st</sup> day of November 2023

### THE POWER OF BEING UNDERSTOOD AUDIT | TAX | CONSULTING

RSM Australia Partners is a member of the RSM network and trades as RSM. RSM is the trading name used by the members of the RSM network. Each member of the RSM network is an independent accounting and consulting firm which practices in its own right. The RSM network is not itself a separate legal entity in any jurisdiction.

RSM Australia Partners ABN 36 965 185 036

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation

# Financial statements

## STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	NOTE	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>Revenue</b>			
Government grants	2.1	37,979,082	27,780,944
Commissioned projects	2.1	13,565	106,180
Interest income		166,034	10
<b>Total revenue</b>		<b>38,158,681</b>	<b>27,887,134</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Advocacy service delivery	3.1	33,338,523	25,092,434
OPAN staff costs	3.2	2,815,139	1,859,584
OPAN operating expenditure		1,498,515	646,895
OPAN governance expenses		99,072	43,346
Other project costs		13,565	135,388
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>37,764,814</b>	<b>27,777,647</b>
<b>Surplus before income tax</b>		<b>393,867</b>	<b>109,487</b>
Income tax expense		-	-
<b>Surplus after income tax</b>		<b>393,867</b>	<b>109,487</b>
Other comprehensive income, net of income tax		-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>393,867</b>	<b>109,487</b>

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

	NOTE	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	5.1	2,947,787	3,912,920
Trade and other receivables	4.1	87,751	135,188
Other financial assets	4.2	4,040,061	20,000
Other assets	4.3	43,089	4,994
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>7,118,688</b>	<b>4,073,102</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	4.4	1,000	1,000
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>7,119,688</b>	<b>4,074,102</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	4.5	439,667	302,490
Employee benefits liabilities	3.3	169,514	130,346
Contract liabilities	4.6	5,440,808	2,972,582
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>6,049,989</b>	<b>3,405,418</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>			
Employee benefits liabilities	3.3	12,139	4,991
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>		<b>12,139</b>	<b>4,991</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>6,062,128</b>	<b>3,410,409</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>1,057,560</b>	<b>663,693</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Retained surplus		1,057,560	663,693
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>1,057,560</b>	<b>663,693</b>

## STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	RETAINED SURPLUS \$	TOTAL EQUITY \$
<b>2023</b>		
<b>Balance at 1 July 2022</b>	663,693	663,693
Surplus for the year	393,867	393,867
<b>Balance at 30 June 2023</b>	<b>1,057,560</b>	<b>1,057,560</b>
<b>2022</b>		
<b>Balance at 1 July 2021</b>	554,206	554,206
Surplus for the year	109,487	109,487
<b>Balance at 30 June 2022</b>	<b>663,693</b>	<b>663,693</b>

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	NOTE	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Receipts from grants and customers (including GST)		44,594,167	32,215,972
Payments to clients, suppliers and employees (including GST)		(41,705,273)	(29,240,110)
Interest received		166,034	10
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>		<b>3,054,928</b>	<b>2,975,872</b>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Purchase of term deposits		(4,020,061)	-
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		-	(1,000)
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		<b>(4,020,061)</b>	<b>(1,000)</b>
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents held		(965,133)	2,974,872
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		3,912,920	938,048
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year</b>	5.1	<b>2,947,787</b>	<b>3,912,920</b>

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

### Note 1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

The financial statements cover Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd ("OPAN") as an individual entity, incorporated and domiciled in Australia. OPAN is a not-for-profit public company limited by guarantee.

The principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

#### New or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations adopted

OPAN has adopted all of the new or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB') that are mandatory for the current reporting period.

Any new or amended Accounting Standards or Interpretations that are not yet mandatory have not been early adopted.

#### Basis of preparation

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – *Simplified Disclosures* and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB'), the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and associated regulations, as appropriate for not-for-profit oriented entities.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis.

#### Historical cost convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

#### Critical accounting estimates

The preparation of the financial statements requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the company's accounting policies. The areas involving a higher degree of judgement or complexity, or areas where assumptions and estimates are significant to the financial statements, are disclosed in the relevant notes.

#### a) Company details

The registered office and principal place of business is:

L6, 241 Commonwealth Street  
Surry Hills NSW 2010

#### b) Income tax

As OPAN is a charitable institution in terms of subsection 50-5 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*, as amended, it is exempt from paying income tax. OPAN also holds deductible gift recipient status.

#### c) Goods and services tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of associated GST, unless the GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the statement of financial position.

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities, which are recoverable from or payable to the ATO, are presented as operating cash flows included in receipts from customers or payments to suppliers.

Commitments and contingencies are disclosed net of the amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023****Note 1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (cont.)****d) Current and non-current classification**

Assets and liabilities are presented in the statement of financial position based on current and non-current classification.

An asset is classified as current when: it is either expected to be realised or intended to be sold or consumed in the company's normal operating cycle; it is held primarily for the purpose of trading; it is expected to be realised within 12 months after the reporting period; or the asset is cash or cash equivalent unless restricted from being exchanged or used to settle a liability for at least 12 months after the reporting period. All other assets are classified as non-current.

A liability is classified as current when: it is either expected to be settled in the company's normal operating cycle; it is held primarily for the purpose of trading; it is due to be settled within 12 months after the reporting period; or there is no unconditional right to defer the settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the reporting period. All other liabilities are classified as non-current.

**e) Impairment of non-financial assets**

Non-financial assets are reviewed for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised for the amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount.

Recoverable amount is the higher of an asset's fair value less costs of disposal and value-in-use. The value-in-use is the present value of the estimated future cash flows relating to the asset using a pre-tax discount rate specific to the asset or cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs. Assets that do not have independent cash flows are grouped together to form a cash-generating unit.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	2023 \$	2022 \$
--	------------	------------

**Note 2 Funding Delivery of Our Services**

OPAN's overall objective is to facilitate the provision of relief and services to the needs of older people who are vulnerable, socially or economically disadvantaged, exploited or abused. To enable OPAN to fulfil its objective it receives revenue mainly based on government funding.

## 2.1: Revenue

**Note 2.1: Revenue**

National Aged Care Advocacy program	37,979,082	27,640,944
Dementia and Aged Care services	-	140,000
<b>Total government grants</b>	<b>37,979,082</b>	<b>27,780,944</b>
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission	13,565	106,180
<b>Total commission projects</b>	<b>13,565</b>	<b>106,180</b>
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>37,992,647</b>	<b>27,887,124</b>

*Disaggregation of revenue*

The disaggregation of revenue from contracts with customers is as follows:

*Timing of revenue recognition*

Recognised over time	37,992,647	27,887,124
----------------------	------------	------------

*Geographical regions*

Australia	37,992,647	27,887,124
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Dementia and Aged Care Services funded a 2-year project on Elder Abuse and Staying Connected.

**Revenue recognition**

OPAN recognises revenue as follows:

*Revenue from contracts with customers*

Revenue is recognised at an amount that reflects the consideration to which OPAN is expected to be entitled in exchange for transferring goods or services to a customer. For each contract with a customer, OPAN: identifies the contract with a customer; identifies the performance obligations in the contract; determines the transaction price which takes into account estimates of variable consideration and the time value of money; allocates the transaction price to the separate performance obligations on the basis of the relative stand-alone selling price of each distinct good or service to be delivered; and recognises revenue when or as each performance obligation is satisfied in a manner that depicts the transfer to the customer of the goods or services promised.

*Grants*

Grant revenue is recognised in profit or loss when OPAN satisfies the performance obligations stated within the funding agreements.

If conditions are attached to the grant which must be satisfied before OPAN is eligible to retain the contribution, the grant will be recognised in the statement of financial position as a contract liability until those conditions are satisfied.

*Interest*

Interest revenue is recognised as interest accrues using the effective interest method.

*Other revenue*

Other revenue is recognised when it is received or when the right to receive payment is established.



NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

**Note 2 Funding Delivery of Our Services (cont.)**

*Volunteer services*

OPAN has elected not to recognise volunteer services as either revenue or other form of contribution received. As such, any related consumption or capitalisation of such resources received is also not recognised.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	2023 \$	2022 \$
--	------------	------------

**Note 3 The Cost of Delivering Services**

This section provides an account of the expenses incurred by OPAN in delivering its services. In Note 2, the funds that enable the provision of services were disclosed and in this note the cost associated with provision of services are recorded.

- 3.1: Breakdown of operating expenses
- 3.2: OPAN staff costs
- 3.3: Employee benefits in the statement of financial position

**Note 3.1: Breakdown of operating expenses**

NACAP contract service delivery organisations	31,750,630	23,211,086
NACAP contract other service delivery costs	1,587,893	1,881,348
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b><u>33,338,523</u></b>	<b><u>25,092,434</u></b>

Other operating expenses generally represent the day-to-day running costs incurred in normal operations.

**Note 3.2: OPAN staff costs**

Salaries and wages	2,487,158	1,594,149
Other payroll costs	76,665	107,504
Superannuation	251,316	157,931
<b>Total OPAN staff costs</b>	<b><u>2,815,139</u></b>	<b><u>1,859,584</u></b>

*Superannuation recognition*

Contributions are made by the entity to an employee superannuation fund and are charged as expenses when incurred.

**Note 3.3: Employee benefits in the statement of financial position***Current*

Annual leave	137,596	107,975
Special leave	19,434	22,371
Time in lieu	5,712	-
Additional leave buy-out	6,772	-
<b>Total current employee benefits</b>	<b><u>169,514</u></b>	<b><u>130,346</u></b>

*Non-current*

Long service leave	12,139	4,991
<b>Total non-current employee benefits</b>	<b><u>12,139</u></b>	<b><u>4,991</u></b>
<b>Total employee benefits</b>	<b><u>181,653</u></b>	<b><u>135,337</u></b>

**Employee benefits recognition**

Provision is made for the company's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to reporting date.

*Short-term employee benefits*

Liabilities for wages and salaries, including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and long service leave expected to be settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in current liabilities in respect of employees' services up to the reporting date and are measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

**Note 3 The Cost of Delivering Services (cont.)****Note 3.3: Employee benefits in the statement of financial position (cont.)***Other long-term employee benefits*

The liability for annual leave and long service leave not expected to be settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in non-current liabilities, provided there is an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability. The liability is measured as the present value of expected future payments to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date using the projected unit credit method. Consideration is given to expected future wage and salary levels, experience of employee departures and periods of service. Expected future payments are discounted using market yields at the reporting date on corporate bonds with terms to maturity and currency that match, as closely as possible, the estimated future cash outflows.

**Critical accounting estimates and judgments: Employee benefits**

As discussed above, the liability for employee benefits expected to be settled more than 12 months from the reporting date are recognised and measured at the present value of the estimated future cash flows to be made in respect of all employees at the reporting date. In determining the present value of the liability, estimates of attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation have been taken into account.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$

**Note 4 Other Assets and Liabilities**

This section sets out those assets and liabilities that arose from OPAN's operations.

- 4.1: Trade and other receivables
- 4.2: Other financial assets
- 4.3: Other assets
- 4.4: Property, plant and equipment
- 4.5: Trade and other payables
- 4.6: Contract liabilities

**Note 4.1: Trade and other receivables**

Trade receivables	615	38,830
Other receivables	1,992	-
GST receivable	66,391	79,353
Rental bonds	18,753	17,005
<b>Total trade and other receivables</b>	<b>87,751</b>	<b>135,188</b>

**Receivables recognition**

Receivables are classified as financial instruments and categorised as 'financial assets at amortised cost'. They are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. OPAN holds the receivables with the objective to collect the contractual cash flows and therefore subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment.

Other receivables are recognised at amortised cost, less any provision for impairment.

**Note 4.2: Other financial assets***Current*

Term deposits	4,040,061	20,000
<b>Total other financial assets</b>	<b>4,040,061</b>	<b>20,000</b>

**Financial assets recognition**

Refer note 6.1 for further information on accounting policies in relation to financial assets.

**Note 4.3: Other assets***Current*

Prepayments	43,089	4,994
<b>Total other assets</b>	<b>43,089</b>	<b>4,994</b>

Prepayments represent expenses paid in relation to services to be performed in the future.

**Note 4.4: Property, plant and equipment***Non-Current*

Property, plant and equipment	1,000	1,000
<b>Total property, plant and equipment</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	2023 \$	2022 \$
--	------------	------------

**Note 4 Other Assets and Liabilities (cont.)****Note 4.5: Trade and other payables**

PAYG liability	35,096	97,786
Trade creditors	289,862	93,471
Accrued expenses	84,888	95,046
Credit card payable	12,028	12,637
Superannuation payable	17,793	3,550
<b>Total trade and other payables</b>	<b>439,667</b>	<b>302,490</b>

**Payables recognition**

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to OPAN prior to the end of the financial year and which are unpaid. Due to their short-term nature, they are measured at amortised cost and are not discounted. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

**Note 4.6: Contract liabilities***Contract liabilities arising on grant funding*

NACAP advocacy program	1,616,808	422,360
NACAP expansion projects	3,819,000	2,550,222
Other Grants	5,000	-
<b>Total contract liabilities</b>	<b>5,440,808</b>	<b>2,972,582</b>

**Contract liability recognition**

Contract liabilities represent the OPAN's obligation to transfer services to a client that are recognised when a client or related funder pays consideration, or when OPAN recognises a receivable to reflect the unconditional right to consideration (whichever is earlier), before OPAN has transferred the services to the client.

Grant related contract liabilities represent funding received in advance of delivery of the NACAP which may be recalled by the Commonwealth at their discretion or used to satisfy future performance obligations under the terms of the grant agreement.

Under AASB 15, grant revenue is recognised as the performance obligations in the related grant agreements are satisfied, generally over time. The consideration received in advance of providing these services is recognised as a contract liability. NACAP Supplementation funding of \$1,192,308 was received on 29 June 2023 and has been approved by the Department for carry forward into 2024.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

2023  
\$2022  
\$**Note 5 How We Finance Our Operations**

This section provides information on the sources of finance utilised by OPAN during its operations, along with other information related to financing activities of OPAN.

This section includes disclosures of balances that are financial instruments.

- 5.1: Cash and cash equivalents
- 5.2: Commitments for expenditure

**Note 5.1: Cash and cash equivalents***Current*

Cash at bank

2,947,787

3,912,920

**Total cash and cash equivalents****2,947,787****3,912,920****Cash and cash equivalents recognition**

Cash and cash equivalents includes deposits with financial institutions..

**Note 5.2: Commitments for expenditure**

OPAN had no commitments for expenditure as at 30 June 2023 and 30 June 2022.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

### Note 6 Risks, Contingencies and Valuation Uncertainties

OPAN is exposed to risk from its activities and outside factors. In addition, it is often necessary to make judgements and estimates associated with recognition and measurement of items in the financial statements. This section sets out financial instrument specific information, as well as those items that are contingent in nature or require a higher level of judgement to be applied, which for OPAN is related mainly to fair value determination.

- 6.1: Financial instruments
- 6.2: Contingent assets and contingent liabilities

#### Note 6.1: Financial instruments

Financial instruments arise out of agreements that give rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. OPAN classifies all of its financial assets based on the business model for managing the assets and the asset's contractual terms.

##### *Financial assets at amortised cost*

Financial assets are measured at amortised costs if both of the following criteria are met and the assets are not designated as fair value through net result:

- the assets are held by the group to collect the contractual cash flows; and
- the assets' contractual terms give rise to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interests.

These assets are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less any impairment.

OPAN recognises the following assets in this category:

- cash and cash equivalents;
- receivables; and
- term deposits.

##### *Financial liabilities at amortised cost*

Financial liabilities at amortised cost are initially recognised on the date they are originated. They are initially measured at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial recognition, these financial instruments are measured at amortised cost with any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value being recognised in profit and loss over the period of the interest-bearing liability, using the effective interest rate method.

OPAN recognises the following liabilities in this category:

- payables; and
- contract liabilities.

#### Derecognition of financial assets and financial liabilities

##### *Financial assets*

A financial asset (or, where applicable, a part of a financial asset or part of a group of similar financial assets) is derecognised when:

- the rights to receive cash flows from the asset have expired; or
- The company retains the right to receive cash flows from the asset, but has assumed an obligation to pay them in full without material delay to a third party under a 'pass through' arrangement; or
- The company has transferred its rights to receive cash flows from the asset and either:
  - has transferred substantially all the risks and rewards of the asset; or
  - has neither transferred nor retained substantially all the risks and rewards of the asset but has transferred control of the asset.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

**Note 6 Risks, Contingencies and Valuation Uncertainties (cont.)****Note 6.1: Financial instruments (cont.)**

Where OPAN has neither transferred nor retained substantially all the risks and rewards or transferred control, the asset is recognised to the extent of OPAN's continuing involvement in the asset.

*Financial liabilities*

A financial liability is derecognised when the obligation under the liability is discharged, cancelled or expires.

**Financial risk management objectives and policies**

OPAN's activities do expose itself to some financial risks which need to be actively managed. The main risks the company are exposed to through its financial instruments is credit risk, liquidity risk and market risk consisting of interest rate risk. The main purpose in holding financial instruments is to prudentially manage OPAN's financial risks within the parameters set by the Board of Directors.

*Credit risk*

Credit risk refers to the possibility that a borrower will default on its financial obligations as and when they fall due. The company is not exposed to any significant credit risk.

*Liquidity risk*

Vigilant liquidity risk management requires the company to maintain sufficient liquid assets (mainly cash and cash equivalents) to be able to pay debts as and when they become due and payable. OPAN manages liquidity risk by maintaining adequate cash reserves by continuously monitoring actual and forecast cash flows and matching the maturity profiles of financial assets and liabilities.

*Market risk*

The company's exposure to market risk is primarily through interest rate risk.

Fair value interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. Cash flow interest rate risk is the risk that the future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. OPAN has some exposure to cash flow interest rate risks through cash and deposits that are at floating rates. The company manages this risk by mainly undertaking fixed rate or non-interest-bearing financial instruments. Management has concluded for cash at bank, as financial assets that can be left at floating rate without necessarily exposing the company to significant bad risk, management monitors movement in interest rates on a timely basis.

**Note 6.2: Contingent assets and contingent liabilities**

There are no other known contingent assets or contingent liabilities for OPAN as at 30 June 2023 (2022: NIL).



## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$

**Note 7 Other Disclosures**

This section includes additional material disclosures required by accounting standards or otherwise, for the understanding of this financial report.

- 7.1: Related parties
- 7.2: Key management personnel compensation
- 7.3: Remuneration of auditors
- 7.4: Events after the reporting period
- 7.5: Member's guarantee

**Note 7.1: Related parties**

Unless otherwise stated, none of the transactions incorporate special terms and conditions and no guarantees were given or received.

Foundational Members of OPAN are funded to deliver the National Aged Care Advocacy program in their jurisdiction under a contract with the Older Persons Advocacy Network.

*Key management personnel*

Disclosures relating to key management personnel are set out in note 7.2.

*Transactions with related parties*

The directors and their related entities transact with the company from time to time on normal contractual terms and conditions. The types of transactions involved include those that are provided by the company as part of its normal operations. Directors of the OPAN Board are not paid for their role as Director, apart from the Independent Chairperson.

*Receivable from and payable to related parties*

There were no trade receivables from or trade payables to related parties at the current and previous reporting date.

*Loans to/from related parties*

There were no loans to or from related parties at the current and previous reporting date.

**Note 7.2: Key management personnel compensation**

The aggregate compensation made to the Independent Chairperson and other members of key management personnel of the company is set out below:

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Aggregate compensation	<b>400,071</b>	<b>282,569</b>

**Note 7.3: Remuneration of auditors**

During the financial year the following fees were paid or payable for services provided by RSM Australia, the auditor of the company:

Audit of the financial statements	31,980	29,000
Other non-assurance services	2,210	2,000
<b>Total remuneration of auditors</b>	<b>34,190</b>	<b>31,000</b>

**Note 7.4: Events after the reporting period**

No matters or circumstances have arisen since 30 June 2023 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect the entity's operations, the results of those operations, or the entity's state of affairs in future financial years.

**Note 7.5: Member's guarantee**

OPAN is incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* and is a company limited by guarantee. If the company is wound up, the constitution states that each member is not required to contribute a maximum of \$100 towards meeting any outstanding and obligations of the company. At 30 June 2023, the number of members was 9 (2022: 9).

DIRECTORS' DECLARATION FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

In the directors' opinion:

- the attached financial statements and notes comply with Australian Accounting Standards – *Simplified Disclosures*, the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and other mandatory professional reporting requirements;
- the attached financial statements and notes give a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its performance for the financial period ended on that date; and
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

On behalf of the directors



.....  
Ara Cresswell  
Director/Chairperson



.....  
Liz Kearins  
Director/FAR Committee Chair

Dated this 8<sup>th</sup> day of November 2023



**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT**  
**To the Members of Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd**

**RSM Australia Partners**

12 Anderson Street West, Ballarat VIC 3350  
PO Box 685 Ballarat VIC 3353

T +61(0) 3 5330 5800  
F +61(0) 3 5330 5890

[www.rsm.com.au](http://www.rsm.com.au)

**Opinion**

We have audited the financial report of Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2023, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion, the financial report of Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (ACNC Act), including:

- (a) giving a true and fair view of the registered entity's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year ended on that date; and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards – *Simplified Disclosures* and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2022*.

**Basis for Opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

**Other Information**

Those charged with governance are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2023, but does not include the financial report and the auditor's report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

**THE POWER OF BEING UNDERSTOOD**  
**AUDIT | TAX | CONSULTING**

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### **Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report**

The management and directors of the registered entity are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – *Simplified Disclosures* and the ACNC Act, and for such internal control as the management and directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the management and directors are responsible for assessing Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The management and directors are responsible for overseeing the registered entity's financial reporting process.

### **Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: <http://www.auasb.gov.au/Home.aspx>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

### **Independence**

We confirm that the independence declaration required by the ACNC Act, which has been given to the responsible entities of Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd, would be in the same terms if given to the responsible entities as at the time of this auditor's report.

*RSM*

**RSM AUSTRALIA PARTNERS**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John Finday'.

**JOHN FINDAY**

Partner

Ballarat, Victoria

Dated this 21<sup>st</sup> day of November 2023

OPAN member organisations by state or territory:

