

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 5 September 2025

LANDMARK REPORT FROM INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF AGED CARE SHINES SPOTLIGHT ON SECTOR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) welcomes the *2025 Progress Report: Implementation of the Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety* by Inspector-General of Aged Care Natalie Siegel-Brown.

This landmark report assesses the Australian Government's progress in responding to the Royal Commission's recommendations as at 1 January 2025.

The report provides clear insight into the state of the aged care sector, including challenges, risks and pathways forward.

Key findings include:

- **Embedding human rights in aged care:** The new Act embeds rights but does not provide a robust enforcement mechanism. Elements of the reform agenda are not consistent with a rights-based framework for care. The Inspector-General is concerned there are gaps between intention and implementation.
- **Support at Home:** Wait times lead to reduced quality of life, increase pressure on hospitals. Those most impacted are pensioners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders, and older people with a disability.
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples:** Mainstreaming aged care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples could cause harm, and there is no commitment from government to genuinely co-design a culturally safe end-to-end model of aged care for this cohort.
- **Centring diverse life experience:** Concerns that the reform measures fall short of providing the trauma-informed care envisioned by the Royal Commission. The new Act does not implement the mandatory training model proposed by the Royal Commission. Instead, it is a condition of registration that providers must meet any prescribed qualifications and training requirements. This is insufficient.
- **Co-Payments:** The way in which the government has structured the new co-payments model is inconsistent with the Royal Commission's vision and may undermine existing policy to promote people ageing in place.
- **Complaints:** Complainants continue to share their frustrations with the Inspector-General about their experiences. Communication from ACQSC is patchy and confusing, progress is slow and many cases remain unresolved.
- **Respite care:** Limited respite results in premature entry to residential care. Emergency respite care is very difficult to obtain and those with complex needs aren't being afforded enough access to respite.

- **Support at Home:** Wait times lead to reduced quality of life, increase pressure on hospitals. Those most impacted are pensioners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders, and older people with a disability.
- **People with a disability:** The loss of specialised disability support when transitioning into aged care has serious consequences for older people with disability and runs contrary to the intention of a rights-based, person-centred aged care system. There are calls for equitable care for older people with disability, regardless of whether they are receiving aged care.

OPAN South Australian member, Aged Rights Advisory Service CEO Carolanne Barkla said the report is a powerful reminder of the challenges facing aged care.

“We welcome this report and its crucial insights and findings,” Ms Barkla said.

“The release of it is timely, with the new Aged Care Act commencing on 1 November, which is only weeks away.

“There are several challenges and risks that need to be addressed before we reach this milestone, and this is a useful report card for government and industry stakeholders to measure aged care delivery against.

“Aged care providers support some of the most vulnerable people in the community and it is imperative that care is delivered within the prism of rights, dignity and respect.

“This report sends a clear message – there is a lot more work to be done to better support providers, residents and older people”.

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