

## Chat with us

Our aged care advocates can provide information and support on a range of different issues, including:

- rights in aged care
- raising concerns or complaints
- fees and charges
- financial hardship applications
- moving into residential care
- transitioning between classifications or services.

To find out more

**Call the Aged Care  
Advocacy Line on  
1800 700 600**

Our services are free,  
independent and  
confidential



**ADACAS**  
Advocacy

ACT Disability Aged and Carer  
Advocacy Service is the  
Australian Capital Territory  
member of OPAN

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**OPAN** | Older Persons  
Advocacy Network

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or scan the QR code



# News for You

**Aged care advocacy newsletter | December 2025 | Issue 13**



## A girl's best friend

When Alana moved into residential care more than 20 years ago, she was forced to give up her pet poodle.

'She went to a good home, but I was heartbroken,' she recalls.

Alana has been pleased to see a shift in aged care culture in the intervening years, culminating in the inclusion of older people's right to stay connected to their pets in the new Aged Care Act, which came into effect on 1 November.

'If you are capable of looking after your pet, you should be able to have one,' Alana says.

Encouraged by aged care staff, Alana found her 3-year-old Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Ruby online. The pair has been inseparable ever since.

'I'd be so lonely and lost without her. She gives me a purpose. I have to get up and do things for her.'

Ruby has made friends with staff and other residents, too.

'She makes a lot of people's days', Alana says.

Karen moved into the same aged care home just over a year ago. Pip, her 8-year-old fox terrier, accompanied her to the initial interview.

'I have a feeling one of my daughters would have taken her, if it had come to that, but it didn't, so that's good,' Karen says. 'I would have been pretty upset.'

Alana, Ruby, Karen and Pip regularly join a group of fellow animal lovers, including the aged care home's manager, for a walk in a nearby park.

For Alana, the benefits are obvious. Pip is slightly more ambivalent.

'She's terrible. As we walk along, whenever she sees somebody, she throws herself on the ground for a tummy tickle,' Karen says.

# NEW AGED CARE ACT

## Standing up for your rights

The Aged Care Royal Commission demonstrated the many ways in which people's basic human rights are eroded with age.

A Statement of Rights has been embedded into the new Aged Care Act to address this.

The Statement of Rights:

- presumes an older person is able to make their own decisions
- affirms an older person's right to be supported (if necessary) to make those decisions

- respects an older person's right to take personal risks
- recognises the role of supporters (for example, friends, family members, carers or other members of the community) and advocates.

Under the new Act, which came into effect on 1 November 2025, providers are legally obliged to deliver services to older people in line with the Statement of Rights.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission will have additional powers to address breaches of those rights, and older people will be able to

make a direct complaint to a new independent complaints commissioner about a provider acting in a way that is incompatible with their rights.

Rights will be actively reinforced through the strengthened Quality Standards, which come into effect at the same time, and the Aged Care Code of Conduct.



## Under the Statement of Rights, an older person's rights are grouped into 6 key areas:



Find out more about your aged care rights



### Autonomy and freedom of choice

I have the right to make my own choices – about my care, relationships, lifestyle and taking risks – with support if I want it.



### Safe, quality care

I have the right to be treated with dignity and respect by experienced aged care workers who value my identity, culture, spirituality and diversity.



### Equitable access

I have the right to have my needs assessed in a way that works for me, including having my cultural background, past trauma or cognitive conditions, such as dementia, respected.



### Privacy and confidentiality

I must have my privacy respected and my personal information kept confidential, and be in control of who this information is shared with.



### Communication and complaints

I have the right to be informed in a way I understand and to raise concerns without fear of reprisal. My feedback must be dealt with fairly and promptly.



### Support and social connections

I can stay connected to important people, pets and culture including independent advocates. As an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, I can stay connected to Country and Island Home.

## CASE STUDY

### Kevin's\* story

Kevin, a 70-year-old+ Culturally and Linguistically Diverse male, was recently diagnosed with multiple chronic illnesses and was likely to enter palliative care.

Kevin's partner had been receiving services under the Commonwealth Support at Home Programme, but Kevin himself had not and has only recently registered with My Aged Care. After being assessed for aged care Kevin was assigned a high priority home care package level 4 and a permanent residential aged care referral.

Kevin wanted the support of an advocate to help him navigate home care package providers and the agreement. Kevin also wanted help finding permanent placement in a residential aged care facility.

Leading from Kevin's wishes, the advocate supported him with research and arranging a home visit with his chosen provider. During the meeting



the advocate ask the HCP coordinator questions on Kevin's behalf and helped him to understand some of the terms and conditions of the agreement. Kevin exercised his right to carefully look over information after the home visit, and when ready took steps to sign the agreement.

Kevin feels supported by the HCP services and has asked the advocate to also assist with completing residential aged care home applications and waitlists. Kevin feels that accessing a residential aged care application will support him to manage his health and independence as his illness progresses. Support is ongoing pending availability of a suitable residential home of the client's choosing.

\*Names have been changed for privacy reasons.

## On your side

More than 200 advocates are employed across our national 9-member network to ensure older people have access to the safe, high quality aged care they are entitled to.

The right to be supported by one of these advocates has been enshrined in the new Aged Care Act, which actively reinforces the network's core vision that advocates work 'at the direction of the individual, reflecting the individual's expressed wishes, will, preferences, interests and rights'.

**Call the Aged Care Advocacy Line on 1800 700 600**

Our services are free, independent and confidential

### Free information sessions for residents on:

- your rights
- how advocates can assist you
- abuse of older people.

**To book call the Aged Care Advocacy Line on 1800 700 600**

**'Quality aged care values older people's needs, wants and goals.'**

– Lesley Forster, National Older Persons Reference Group member





## Keep these numbers handy

### ADACAS

1800 700 600  
(Free call)

### Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

1800 951 822

### My Aged Care

1800 200 422

### National Dementia Helpline

1800 100 500

### National Seniors Australia

1300 765 050

### Lifeline

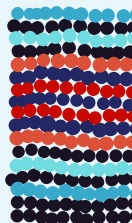
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### Older Persons Legal Service ACT

6243 3436

### ACT Department of Health

02 5124 4444



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands and waterways on which we live and work throughout Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We acknowledge these lands have never been ceded.

## PUZZLE TIME

### WORD FINDER

A	U	T	O	N	O	M	Y
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C	P	U	P	Q	J	N	E
A	M	Q	S	Q	M	N	D
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I	C	Q	R	B	T	N	Z
O	M	K	F	Y	T	D	X
N	U	X	Q	J	I	Q	Y

AUTONOMY

COMMUNICATION

DECISIONS

RESPECT

QUALITY

SAFE

COMPLAINTS

RIGHTS

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Fill the grid with the numbers 1 to 4 so each number is only used once in each row and column.

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**ADACAS**  
Advocacy

Australian Capital Territory member of the Older Persons Advocacy Network

Member organisations support you with free and independent aged care advocacy in each state or territory

[adacas.org.au](http://adacas.org.au)



Older Persons  
Advocacy Network

OPAN is the national peak body for aged care advocacy, with 9 member organisations delivering impactful advocacy, information, and education to older people.

You can email us on [enquiries@opan.org.au](mailto:enquiries@opan.org.au)

[opan.org.au](http://opan.org.au)

**Aged Care Advocacy Line**

**1 800 700 600**