



# OPAN Annual Report 2024–2025

We provide free, independent and confidential support to older people seeking or receiving government-funded aged care.

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OPAN acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are the traditional custodians of the lands and waterways on which we work. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We acknowledge that sovereignty has never been ceded, that it was and always will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.

## Who we are and what we do

Formed in March 2017, the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) consists of the national peak body for individual aged care advocacy support and the network of 9 state and territory organisations that have been successfully delivering advocacy, information and education services to older people, their families and other representatives for more than 35 years.

OPAN supports older people to understand and exercise their aged care rights, access government-funded aged care services that suit their needs and find solutions to issues they may be experiencing with their aged care provider. This occurs through the frontline of our network members along with the national education, training and promotion of rights of older people occurring through the OPAN peak body.

We also raise the voices of older people, their families and other supporters with government, aged care providers and sector stakeholders to advance aged care reform at a national level. 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.





# Chairperson's report

Ara Cresswell



Words matter. But to truly transform the way aged care is delivered in this country, those words must now be backed up by meaningful action.

While OPAN welcomes the introduction of the new rights-based Aged Care Act on 1 November 2025, Inspector-General of Aged Care Natalie Seigel-Brown's [inaugural report](#) on the government's implementation of the Aged Care Royal Commission's recommendations reveals the extent of the challenge that still lies ahead of us.

OPAN is committed to using the mechanisms contained within the new legislation, including the Statement of Rights and supported decision-making, to realise the common goal of putting older people at the centre of their aged care.

Cultural change does not happen just because the Governor-General has given the Aged Care Bill her Royal Assent. It happens when dedicated front-line aged care staff, supported by independent aged care advocates, succeed in bringing human rights into everyday practice for every older person.

How do we know change of that magnitude is even possible? Because pioneering providers are already demonstrating what putting the new Statement of Rights into everyday practice actually looks like. By including a positive duty, or legal obligation, for providers to deliver services in line with the

Statement of Rights, the new Act gives a clear direction to other providers that they must follow suit. OPAN collaborated with a group of other community and grassroots organisations to ensure positive duty was included in the Act and we are very proud of that contribution.

The new Act also explicitly acknowledges the older people's right to be supported by one of the more than 200 independent aged care advocates and specialist financial advocacy officers employed across our national 9-member network.

As you will see in the data snapshot that follows, the more than 52,000 cases of information and advocacy support network members delivered to older people in the 2024-25 financial year equates to a potential reach of 4% of people receiving aged care services. We note that this is lower than the 5% target set by the Aged Care Royal Commission in its final list of recommendations.

The quality of that support was verified in an [independent evaluation](#) of the National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP), which OPAN is funded to deliver – around 90% of those surveyed were satisfied with the support they received. That finding is affirmed by OPAN's own data. Since the network started measuring NACAP participants' satisfaction with our services in April 2024, the average score has been 4.7 out of 5.

Advocates will play a crucial role in informing older people about the changes under the new rights-based Act and raising their issues with service providers and government representatives.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing for funding OPAN to deliver the NACAP for another 4 years. OPAN's core vision is that of a society where older people are heard, informed and respected and where they enjoy and exercise their human rights. This funding security will help us to deliver on that promise.

*'Words matter. But to truly transform the way aged care is delivered in this country, those words must now be backed up by meaningful action'*

– Ara Cresswell



# Chief Executive Officer's report

Craig Gear OAM



The new rights-based Aged Care Act, passed with bipartisan support in the 2024-25 financial year, has the capacity to transform the way aged care is delivered in this country.

But the spike in calls to our national contact centre in the last financial quarter, many of them from older people who were afraid they would not be able to afford the appropriate level of in-home support, is an indicator of just how much work the sector needs to do to deliver on that promise.

As the national peak body for individual aged care advocacy, OPAN expects demand for our services to significantly increase in the lead-up to and immediately after the implementation of the Act, on 1 November 2025. Over the past 12 months, we have laid the groundwork by putting in place the systems and strategies needed to meet this demand.

As OPAN's Independent Chair Ara Cresswell noted, last year's independent evaluation of the National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP) confirmed the value of our work and gave us important insights into where we could improve.

OPAN has made significant progress on addressing the evaluator's recommendations in 2024-25. NACAP quality officers were employed by each of the 9 network members to support frontline advocates to deliver NACAP requirements, the Advocacy Community Network Development Project was incorporated into OPAN's core business to further increase the network's reach, and the Rural and Remote Pilot was trialled in the Northern Territory and Western Australia to better understand how to strengthen relationships in isolated communities.

One of our key roles, as a peak body, is to support consistency in advocacy practice, data collection and marketing of NACAP services across the country. An organisational realignment at peak body level has enabled us to support network members and older people more effectively. In 2024-25, the data and operations teams were integrated to ensure efficiency of operations and data collection and the practice team expanded to reflect its integral role in preparing advocates for the implementation of the new Act.

By including older people's right to advocacy in the primary legislation, the Act gives us additional strength to support older people at an individual and a systemic level. Our more clearly defined role will also enable us to better support providers in upholding older people's rights, including the right to make their own decisions.

OPAN has launched and will continue to produce a suite of resources, including a supported decision-making toolkit, which will be crucial in driving the cultural shift we need in this country to deliver safe, high quality, rights-based aged care.

Poor communication, and lack of choice and control were amongst the top issues raised by older people across the more than 52,000 cases of information and advocacy support provided by advocates in 2024-25.

The inability to access aged care services was another common presenting issue, often with disturbing consequences. While it's our job to support older people to access the care they are entitled to, we can only do so within the limits of the system. We welcomed the government's fast-tracking of 20,000 home care packages ahead of the Act's rollout, but significantly more resources will be required to address the current wait list of almost 230,000 that was the case in late August this year, and likely to only grow without ongoing investment and government action.

The role of this network's members' independent aged care advocates in communicating information to – and from – older people will play a vital role in the successful introduction of the new Act. OPAN is well prepared

for this challenge. We will continue to raise issues and unintended consequences with government and other sector stakeholders as they arise. OPAN is committed to finding long-term solutions to short-term compromises, such as further streamlining the waiver of fees and contributions for the most financially vulnerable (termed by government as the hardship process) ahead of the legislated 3-year review. In Australia, surely we can do better to have a more fair and equitable system?

Looking back over the past year, one of our most important lessons has been that reform cannot succeed without the voices of older people being heard, respected and acted upon. We can use this once-in-a-generation legislative reform to pursue the network's overarching goal of an aged care system in which **all** older people get the care and support they need.

*'Reform cannot succeed without the voices of older people being heard, respected and acted upon.'*

– Craig Gear OAM





## Our network

More than 200 advocates and specialist financial advocacy officers were employed across OPAN's 9-member network in the 2024-25 financial year to support older people to get the best out of their aged care services. Advocates' comprehensive knowledge of the issues and barriers older people face, supported by the detailed qualitative and quantitative data they collect, also enables OPAN to address aged care issues at a systemic level and to target specific areas of need.

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing funds network members through OPAN to deliver the National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP).





# The Older Persons Advocacy Network



## Queensland

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



## Western Australia

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



## Northern Territory Top End

Darwin Community Legal Service provides advocacy and legal advice, supporting the rights of older people and people living with disability.



## Australian Capital Territory

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



## South Australia

Aged Rights Advocacy Service offers advocacy, information, and education to older people on aged care and abuse prevention.



## Victoria

Elder Rights Australia promotes and supports the human rights of all older people to be socially connected and to receive safe, quality aged care.



## Tasmania

Advocacy Tasmania works for older people, people with disability or a mental health condition, and people using alcohol and drugs.



## Northern Territory Barkly and Central Australia

CatholicCare NT provides advocacy support to older people, including those who live in Aboriginal communities.



## New South Wales

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

# Strategic directions

## Our focus

## Strategic directions

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

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.

Expand and innovate aged care advocacy

4. Expand service reach and develop innovative advocacy models grounded in individual needs and human rights.

Enhance quality, data, and the voice of older people

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.

Drive operational improvement and impact

7. Enhance OPAN's effectiveness as the peak body for older person's individual advocacy.



# The Statement of Rights



## As an older person, I have a right to:

- make my own choices – about my care, relationships, lifestyle and taking risks – with support if I want it.
- 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.
- be treated with dignity and respect by experienced aged care workers who value my identity, culture, spirituality and diversity.
- have my privacy respected and my personal information kept confidential, and be in control of who this information is shared with.
- be informed in a way I understand and to raise concerns without fear of reprisal. My feedback must be dealt with fairly and promptly.
- 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.



# Data snapshot 2024–25



## Individual advocacy and information

OPAN network members provided

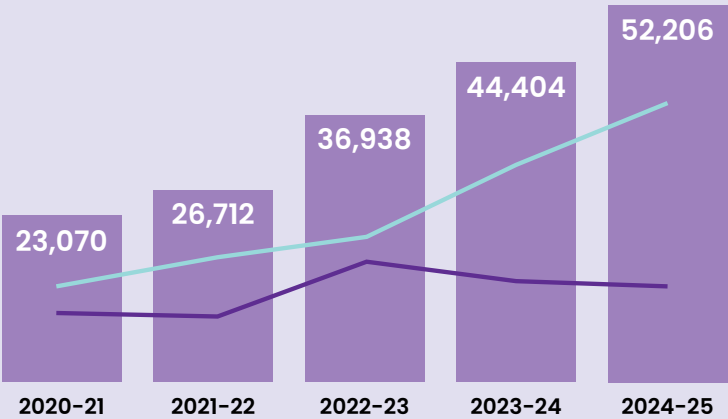
52,206

instances of support to older people, their families and other supporters, including support and information for older people at risk of, or experiencing, abuse. This is an increase of 18% from 2023–2024.

## Advocacy and information

Reporting period: 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2025

● Total services ● Information provisions ● Advocacy cases



Fiscal Year	Total information provisions	Total advocacy cases	Total services
2020-21	13,349	9,721	23,070
2021-22	17,295	9,417	26,712
2022-23	20,071	16,867	36,938
2023-24	30,185	14,219	44,404
2024-25	38,720	13,486	52,206



## Education

OPAN network members delivered

5,971

education sessions\* to older people, their families and other supporters. This is a 5.5% increase on the previous year.

*\*Education sessions about rights and abuse of older persons delivered in residential aged care homes and in community settings.*



## Aged Care Advocacy Line

OPAN received

45,816

calls\* to the 1800 700 600 Aged Care Advocacy Line in the 2024–25 financial year, a 14% increase on the previous year.

*\* Excludes calls to local network member numbers, emails and website forms.*

For information on the scope and methods used for the presentation of data in this report and for an explanation for the slight variation in some of the figures from previous years, please see page 64.

## Digital



Facebook

**8,426** followers

16.8% increase from last year



LinkedIn

**11,332** followers

26.1% increase from last year



opan.org.au

**602,663**

website sessions

144.3% increase from last year

**74.09%**

website engagement rate

## Newsletters



News for You –  
OPAN's print newsletter

**415,052** copies

printed and distributed to residential  
aged care homes Australia wide.



The National Advocate –  
OPAN's monthly eNewsletter

**44,614** subscribers

11.1% increase from last year.

## Webinars



**24,349** views

9 webinars

*'I really appreciated the webinar. I felt the participants  
knew their topic and were enthusiastic about giving out  
relevant information.'*

– Webinar participant

## Traditional media



More than 530 appearances in sector  
and mainstream media, across print,  
radio and television, with a potential  
audience reach of

**13.2** million.

## Older people in Australia today

- There were an estimated 4,909,946 people aged 65 and over in Australia in 2025.
- That number is projected to almost double over the next 40 years.
- By 2065, it is anticipated that older people will account for 24.5% of the population.

Percentage of population aged 65 and over		
Year	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%
2025	15.71%	2.22%



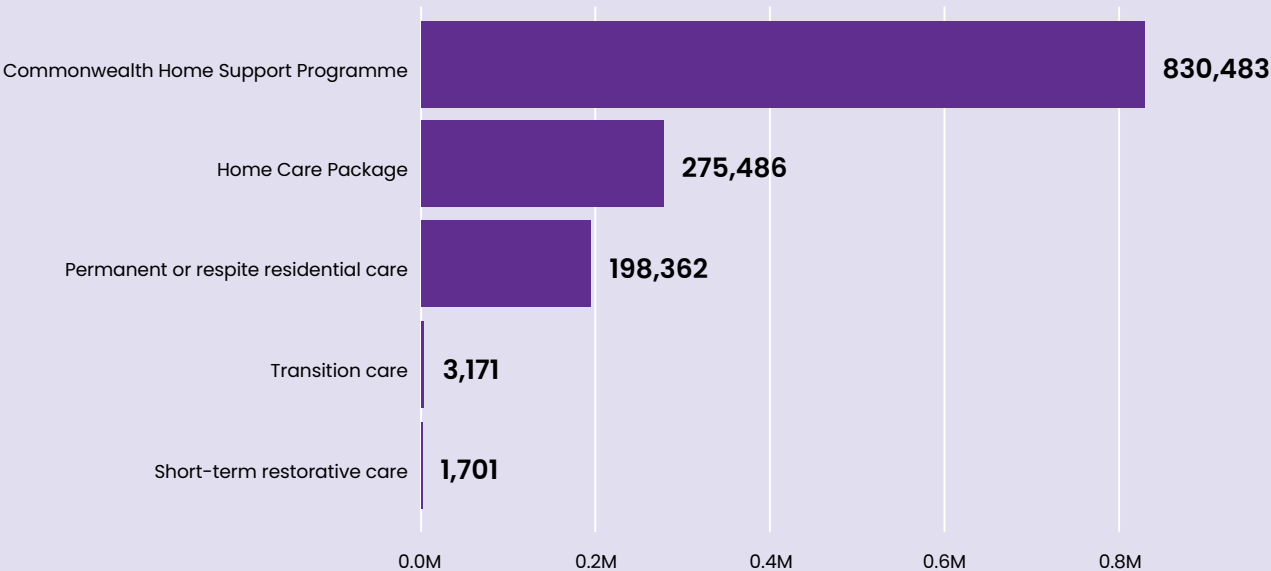
Source: 2000 to 2020: Australian Bureau of Statistics



Source: 2022 to 2065: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Population Projections, Australia, 2022-2071, accessed September 2025

## Older people accessing aged care

On 30 June 2024, almost 1.31 million older people received some form of aged care.



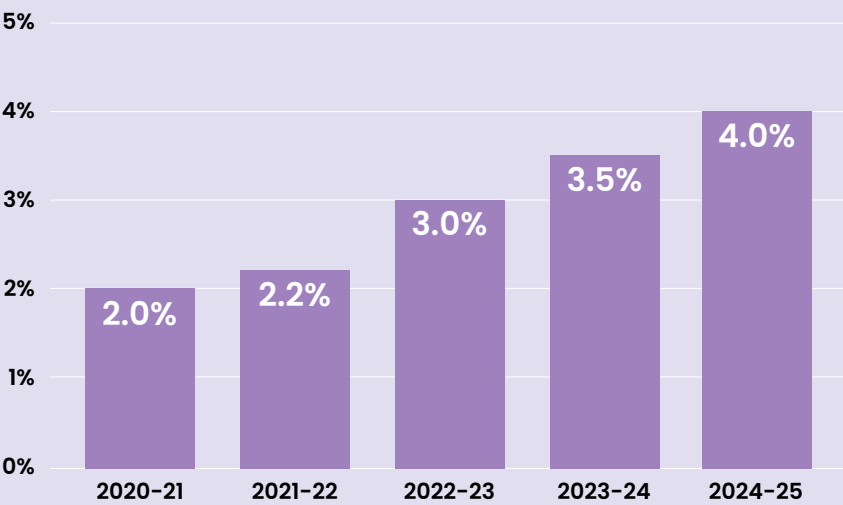
Source: AIHW Aged care data snapshot – third release, October 2024



### Advocacy and information provisions reach

The 52,206 cases of advocacy and information support provided by OPAN network members in 2024-25 equates to a potential reach of 4% of people receiving aged care services during the same period.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety identified a target of 5% of older people receiving aged care services in its final list of recommendations.



# Raising older people's voices

OPAN's core vision is that we have, in Australia, a society in which older people are heard, informed and respected, and where they enjoy and exercise their human rights.

Our annual *NACAP Presenting Issues Report* analyses what older people and advocates have told us, highlights common aged care problems and suggests practical solutions.

Through our National Older Persons Reference Group, we support older people to be actively involved in discussions that affect them, including aged care reform.

# Presenting Issues Report

The *National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP) Presenting Issues Report* reviews the 52,206 cases of information and advocacy support delivered by our network members in 2024-25 to identify persistent systemic issues and recommend solutions. Through a detailed analysis of the 13,486 cases of individual advocacy support, 413 advocacy case studies and feedback from network members, the report also highlights the importance of the NACAP in identifying breaches of older people's human rights and resolving issues with their aged care.

## Stubbornly recurring issues across all programs included:

### Poor communication, as well as a lack of information and support to make decisions about aged care

In some cases, aged care providers enabled or even participated in the abuse of older people by excluding them from information and decisions about their aged care, or by following the directions of people other than the older person receiving the care.

### Difficulties finding and engaging service providers

Service shortages resulted in some older people going without services because they were unable to find a provider, as well as unnecessarily entering residential aged care or staying in hospital. People who are experiencing delayed discharge from hospital without acute care needs also resulted from older people being unable to secure a residential care place.

### Barriers to accessing necessary assistive technology

Older people reported experiencing lengthy delays, a lack of communication, and contradictory advice from service providers regarding the provision of assistive technology. This meant many older people went without assistive technologies that were essential for their function and independence.

## Two emerging issues presented in the second half of the year:

### Misinformation and concerns about the upcoming Support at Home program

There was a significant increase in information provisions in the last quarter of 2024-25. An analysis of the case studies and reflections provided by OPAN network members showed that many of these contacts resulted from provider actions in anticipation of the upcoming Support at Home program. This included misinformation from Home Care Package (HCP) providers about the transfer of unspent funds, financial co-contribution requirements and included and excluded items.

### Issues with Single Assessment System services

The qualitative data from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4 suggested emerging issues with the new Single Assessment System, which was implemented in November 2024. Advocates had first-hand experience of the new Single Assessment System service staff being unfamiliar with the aged care system and providing incorrect information to older people regarding service options that may meet their needs.

Systemic barriers combined with a lack of knowledge, prejudices, and poor communication skills of aged care assessors, providers, and other services meant the issues described throughout this report were often experienced to a greater extent by people in diverse and marginalised groups.



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





CASE EXAMPLE

*An older person contacted an OPAN network member because they were frustrated that their Home Care Package (HCP) provider was communicating with their adult child about their care needs without consent. There were no concerns about the older person’s ability to make decisions and the adult child was not an appointed substitute decision-maker.*

*The older person explained that when they received nursing support from their HCP provider, the nurse told them they had been speaking with the older person’s adult child about their care needs. In one case, the nurse told the older person they needed to visit their GP and get some tests done, and the older person then found an appointment had already been scheduled with their GP without their knowledge or consent.*

*The advocate supported the older person to raise their concerns with the HCP provider, drawing attention to their rights under the Charter of Aged Care Rights, and requesting that communication with the adult child cease immediately. The HCP provider confirmed the communication with the older person’s adult child would cease immediately and only occur in the future with their consent.*

CASE EXAMPLE

*An older person had applied for an HCP through My Aged Care and was told they would be assessed. The older person then did not have any further contact from My Aged Care or the Single Assessment System service for 6 months. During this time, the older person’s mobility worsened, and they became more dependent on family members for personal care and domestic assistance. This led to a deterioration in the client’s physical and mental health.*

*After the advocate was engaged, they sought to expedite the assessment process by contacting My Aged Care directly and raising the urgency of the case. After repeated follow-up calls to My Aged Care by the advocate, the assessment was prioritised, and the client was placed on the waitlist for an HCP.*

CASE EXAMPLE

*An older person has spent most of the last 12 months in hospital with only 15 days in total at home. They live with long term mental health issues, incontinence, and poor mobility. The older person had agreed to discharge to residential care and contacted an advocate with the support of the hospital social worker. They agreed to advocacy to support them with decision-making and choice regarding a residential care provider.*

*A team of hospital social workers contacted a total of 21 residential care providers in the region and all 21 had declined the older person’s application or enquiry. The reason given was no current vacancy and it was implied that the older person’s past suicidal ideation and complex care needs were deciding factors.*

## National Older Persons Reference Group

OPAN formed the National Older Persons Reference Group more than 5 years ago to hear directly from older people about the issues that affect them and to facilitate their active participation in aged care reform.

An independent evaluation by MSC Consultants Pty Ltd in 2024 found the reference group to be 'an exemplary role model for other organisations wishing to embed lived experience in systemic advocacy'.

*'There have been tangible influences on government aged care reforms flowing from OPAN's advocacy informed by the voices of National Older Persons Reference Group members,' the evaluators said.*

External agencies and researchers were also increasingly seeking input from reference group members on issues and policies that impacted older people.

In 2024-25, the National Older Persons Reference Group consisted of 34 members, aged between 50 and 96, with a broad range of professional and personal lived experience related to aged care services. There was at least one representative from every state and territory. Diversity groups represented included:

- people living with dementia
- people living with disability
- people living with mental illness
- people at risk of homelessness

- people from LGBTI communities
- Forgotten Australians
- people living in rural, regional and remote areas
- Aboriginal people
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The reference group, which meets online every 2 months, also included people on the National Disability Insurance Scheme, people accessing Home Care Packages and the Commonwealth Home Support Programme, people living in residential aged care, and current and former carers.

Twenty-two reference group members attended the third face-to-face National Older



Persons Reference Group meeting in Melbourne from 7 to 9 August 2024. Another 7 attended online. Guest speakers included Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner Andrea Kelly, Age Discrimination Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald, AM and former Aged Care Complaints Commissioner Louise Macleod. Housing for the Aged Action Group delivered a sobering presentation on homelessness and ageing and there were broad-ranging discussions based around older people's lived experience of aged care.

The new Aged Care Act remained a key focus for reference group members in 2024-25. Ten reference group members gave evidence at Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee Hearings across Australia on a range of issues, such as [discriminatory transport costs](#) for older people living in rural and remote areas, [the importance of supported decision-making](#) in upholding the rights of older people and the limitations of everyday living supports.

Reference group members participated in external advisory groups, such as the:

- Advocacy in Ageing and Disability Standard (AS5391) Technical Committee
- Ageing Australia Consumer Advisory Group (no longer active)
- My Aged Care implementation advisory group
- Support at Home advisory group
- Single Assessment Program advisory group
- Council of Elders
- Quality Use of Medicines Alliance.

Reference group members were also consulted on the:

- Inspector-General of Aged Care's 2025 Progress Report on the Royal Commission Recommendations
- Star Ratings evaluation
- Star Ratings refresh
- National Carers Strategy
- Pricing Framework for Support at Home for the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority (IHACPA).

Traditional media is an important platform for raising awareness of the issues that affect older people. In 2024-25, reference group members shared their views on subjects such as unacceptable wait times for home and residential aged care and navigating the aged care system in mainstream outlets such as *The Daily Telegraph*, *Herald Sun*, *Courier Mail*, *Adelaide Advertiser* and *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Reference group members also participated in OPAN webinars, a virtual round table on the draft National Plan to End the Abuse and Mistreatment of Older People and the National Aged Care Research Institute summit. They shared their lived experience at a range of national conferences on subjects such as supported decision-making and building trust and confidence in aged care (for more information, see the conference presentation section on page ).

*'An exemplary role model for other organisations wishing to embed lived experience in systemic advocacy.'*

– Independent evaluator

## State-by-state: 4 reference group member profiles



**Heather Scott**  
New South Wales

Heather lives in a small town in the Queanbeyan-Palerang region. She has a background as a secretary and a business owner. At 84, she has amassed one of the best beanie collections in the country.

Heather was the primary carer for her mother, who lived with Alzheimer's disease, for 10 years. She also cared for her husband, who lived with frontotemporal dementia, until his death 7 years ago at the age of 76.

Heather joined OPAN and Dementia Australia to advocate for older people's rights after witnessing abuse at the aged care homes her mother and husband moved to when they could no longer remain at home. She intends to speak up for as long as she has a voice to do so.



**Kathy Mansfield**  
Victoria

Kathy, a trans woman, is the primary carer for her wife of over 53 years, Lynette. They live in the Gippsland region of Victoria.

Kathy is outgoing co-chair of the National Older Persons Reference Group and an active member of other advocacy groups, including Alice's Garage, Celebrate Ageing, Elder Abuse Action Australia's Seniors' Panel for Advocacy Rights and Knowledge, and LGBTIQ+ Health Australia's Living Experience Advocacy Panel.

Prior to retirement, Kathy was a business manager at the RAAF. She is a former chair of the Wellington Shire Chamber of Commerce and a passionate advocate for rural communities, the environment and older people seeking a 'fair go' in their final decades.



**Frank Smith**  
Western Australia

Frank was born in the UK where he studied agricultural science. After migrating to Australia, he worked in biosecurity publications and media relations and ran a tourist publication with his wife Mary-Helen.

Frank lost mobility after suffering a stenosis but still managed to travel extensively. He now works as a freelance writer, editor and book indexer. Frank became interested in aged care issues when he started writing for *Have a Go News*, Perth's lifestyle paper for seniors.

Highlights of Frank's life include joining Mensa, being a Mastermind contestant, failing to get elected to the UK parliament, spending a year as visiting professor at the University of Missouri-Columbia, and becoming active in the National Older Persons Reference Group.



**Robert Tan**

Robert was born in Myanmar. He migrated to Sydney in 1980 via the US and the Philippines, where he gained a master's degree in Agricultural Engineering.

Robert first became aware of the issues facing older people when joined the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme through ACON. 'A country like Myanmar has no age care homes except for older persons who have no families,' he says. 'The majority of middle or low-income families care for older people at home.'

Robert is actively involved in the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation, Positive Life and ACON. He also works with ethnic groups who are not aware of the aged care services available to them.

# Improving the advocacy experience for older people

OPAN's practice team supports advocates across our 9-member network to deliver high quality aged care advocacy services. Our overarching goal is to provide a consistent advocacy experience for older people nationwide.

We do this through 2 pathways:

- professional development opportunities
- service delivery/advocacy practice guidelines.

This year, advocates were kept up to date on the rapidly changing reforms through the delivery of information and training, the development of new resources, and an audit and update of existing materials.

The team also provided a variety of opportunities for advocates to share knowledge, insights and experiences. Feedback from advocate forums and communities of practice enabled OPAN to address issues and unintended consequences at both an individual and systemic advocacy level.



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

The Advocacy, Operations and Practice (AOP) Advisory Group meets online monthly to support continuous improvement across the network's operational, practice and project areas. The AOP consisted of representatives from each of our network members at a manager or operations lead level. This year, the group has incorporated the network's new NACAP quality officers (more information in the data section below).

**In 2024-25, the AOP guided the development of:**

- new practice guidelines
- national Minimum Data Set improvements
- OPAN's National Contact Centre process improvement projects
- advocate professional development initiatives.

AOP face-to-face meetings in Melbourne in October 2024 and in Sydney in May 2025 brought advocacy and operations managers and NACAP quality officers from across the network together to share learnings and engage in robust discussion about cross-jurisdictional NACAP issues such as preparations for the new Aged Care Act, change management, psychosocial safety and advocate capabilities.



## Advocacy Academy

The Advocacy Academy provides a range of online learning opportunities. As of 30 June 2025, 398 network employees were registered in the Academy. In 2024–25, the practice team:

- embedded Department of Health, Disability and Ageing Support at Home learning modules and Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission modules on the new Act into the Advocacy Academy
- expanded the Advocate Knowledge Hub to include information on aged care reforms including the new Support at Home program.

## National advocate meetings

National aged care advocate meetings are held online every 2 months to provide advocates with a forum to connect with their peers in other states and territories, discuss advocacy practice and share knowledge, experiences and resources.

OPAN regularly invites guest speakers to present on topics of national interest. Over the last year, national meetings have focused on preparing advocates for the new Act. Topics explored included:

- the new Statement of Rights
- Support at Home
- supported decision-making and the role of supporters.

At the meetings, the practice team also showcases new resources to support advocates to prepare for the Act and hears from advocates on the issues that older people are raising about the Act.



## National issues-based forums

OPAN facilitates a number of communities of practice (CoP) to support knowledge sharing, peer support and problem solving across specialist interest areas.

The independent 2024 [National Aged Care Advocacy Program \(NACAP\) Evaluation](#) report highlighted:

- CoPs create meaningful program benefits such as improved knowledge sharing, collaborative troubleshooting and service consistency across regions. In addition, they were seen to be helpful in identifying whether common presenting issues were specific to a particular jurisdiction or were occurring more broadly and warranted escalation to OPAN for a systemic response.
- Currently, there are no formal CoPs for general advocates, who expressed a desire for more opportunities to connect with peers in other network members. Several interview participants highlighted the value of CoPs in supporting and reducing isolation for advocates working in niche areas, suggesting that future CoPs could be structured around NACAP target groups (for example, culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTI or rural populations).

The NACAP evaluators recommended the creation of additional CoPs 'to provide general advocates across the consortium with meaningful opportunities to connect with each other'.

The practice team trialled this approach in May 2025 with a forum that focused on the aged care and disability interface. The forum included information on the Disability Support for Older Australians Program and NDIS and a case study from a guest speaker. These forums will become a quarterly event in 2025-26, with each forum focusing on a different diversity group.

## Practice guidelines

In 2024-25, the practice team developed a new *Navigating Complex Advocacy Interactions Practice Guideline* in consultation with the AOP. This guideline provides advocates with guidance and practical tips on a range of topics, including:

- managing expectations
- professional boundaries
- effective communication
- de-escalating heightened situations
- responding to discriminatory remarks
- advocate safety and self-care.

The practice team also commenced work on updating existing practice guidelines to reflect changes in the new Act. This work has included reviewing the *Demand Management Practice Guideline* to ensure the network is prepared for an increase in demand in the lead up to and post the implementation of the Act.





## Specialised financial advocacy

Financial advocacy officers (FAOs) directly supported older people in 1,082 financially complex cases in 2024-25.

The FAO CoP meets monthly to share practice, seek individual case feedback (de-identified) and problem-solve common challenges, including issues relating to the transfer of unspent funds, additional service fees, invoicing errors and issues with Services Australia.

Members of the CoP regularly share their aged care financial expertise to inform OPAN submissions on the Act and Rules, or subordinate legislation.

**Stuart Barber is part of a small financial advocacy team at Seniors Rights Service that has managed to get almost \$2.3 million worth of fees refunded, waived or reassessed in their client's favour over the past 2-and-a-half years.**

*'Money isn't everything and it doesn't always show the full extent of the work involved, but this tally is a nice reminder of the tangible good we do for older people,' he says. 'The only downside is that not enough people know we exist and reach out to us.'*

Stuart is one of 19 financial advocacy officers employed across OPAN's national 9-member network. These specialist advocates 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.



### CASE EXAMPLE

*An older person whose only income was the age pension decided to move permanently into residential care. Their total aged care fees were assessed at almost \$3,000 per fortnight. They had a small amount of savings, which were used up by the end of the first 3 months. Their savings account then went into overdraw, causing considerable stress to the older person.*

*When the advocate met the older person for the first time, they were going back to the home where they had lived alone for 35 years almost every day to pack up their home before selling it to cover their aged care expenses. Some maintenance jobs needed to be done prior to the sale, but the older person could not afford to pay these bills.*

*The advocate assisted the older person to apply for financial hardship. As a result, the older person's aged care fees dropped to \$350 per fortnight, backdated to the date of entry into residential care. Their \$17,000 debt with the provider was cleared and the older person was able to use their age pension to pay all their outstanding bills. The older person felt they now had time to pack up and sell their home without the added stress of accumulating debt.*

## National advocacy standard project

In 2023-24, OPAN and the Disability Advocacy Network of Australia (DANA) developed a new Australian standard specific to aged care and disability advocacy – AS 5391 – *Advocacy in Aged Care and Disability Standard*. In 2024-25, OPAN and DANA worked with the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ) to design a certification scheme that enables advocacy services to be assessed against the standard.

A technical committee was established to inform the drafting of the scheme. The committee included representatives from advocacy service providers, individuals who use advocacy services, government department officials, and representatives of certification bodies that conduct audits to certify advocacy services against established standards.

In November 2024, OPAN and DANA sought feedback on the initial scheme draft in consultation sessions with advocacy service providers and people with lived experience as advocacy service users. Feedback from the consultations was considered by the technical committee. This scheme was endorsed by the technical committee in September 2025.

## National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advocates Network

OPAN provides secretariat support to this networking group which brings together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advocates from across the OPAN network, including those working for OPAN member organisations in programs other than aged care (such as disability and mental health). The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advocates Network (NATSIAN) provides an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advocates to connect and share their knowledge, advocacy experiences and to support each other. Five online meetings were held in 2024-25.

Thirteen advocates and care finders attended NATSIAN's second face-to-face meeting in Sydney in November 2024, which incorporated a cultural supervision session delivered by Yamurrah, a collective of First Nations professionals who specialise in trauma-informed healing and recovery, guest presentations and a mini workshop exploring ways to increase the capacity of general advocates to provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Follow-up online cultural supervision sessions were held in February and June.

*'The presentations are good, but the bonding is the best part. Feels like a big family – sharing our stories, supporting each other, finding ways we can best support our Elders.'*

– NATSIAN member





# Capturing older people's experience through data

In 2024-25, the data and reporting team, along with the operations team, transitioned into the data and technology team as part of a wider organisational realignment. The change reflects technology's growing role in the network's ability to share information and deliver advocacy across Australia.

The data and technology team's overarching goal is to ensure our systems, information and technology work seamlessly together, so OPAN staff and network members have the tools they need to make informed decisions and support older people effectively.

Ten national quality officers were appointed in late 2024-25 to support this goal. The role was created in response to the independent 2024 **NACAP Evaluation** recommendations and feedback from member organisations. Quality officers support network members to apply a nationally consistent approach to individual advocacy practice and data collection. They also ensure data is recorded and interpreted correctly.

## Data and technology

In 2024-25, the data and technology team took responsibility, not only for data and reporting, but also for managing OPAN's key platforms, including Salesforce, Genesys, LivePro and Microsoft 365.

### Highlights from the year include:

- designing an improved Minimum Data Set (MDS version 2.0) and Salesforce, making it easier to capture accurate information and measure impact
- supporting the transition to a new managed service provider, creating stronger foundations for cybersecurity and IT support
- undertaking a technology review to inform operational efficiencies
- providing essential support to the OPAN Contact Centre, ensuring systems run smoothly and reporting reflects the needs of older people
- exploring the potential of artificial intelligence (AI), approaching it with curiosity, while also taking a cautious and responsible stance to ensure any use protects privacy, maintains data security, and aligns with OPAN's values
- working closely with network NACAP quality officers to ensure data is collected consistently across the network.

In the coming financial year, the team will focus on building the latest version of the MDS into network member systems, delivering the changes required under the new Aged Care Act, and providing training and system updates to support these reforms.



# Projects to inform, support and empower older people who are hard to reach

Older people who are socially, physically or geographically isolated are often at increased risk of harm or neglect. OPAN develops and delivers targeted advocacy and information projects to support and empower this cohort, many of whom are unaware of the services available to them.

The successful 3-year Home Care Check-in Pilot wrapped up in 2024-25, despite a recommendation by the 2024 **NACAP Evaluation** that it be rolled out more broadly. OPAN is committed to working with care partner organisations, care finders and the government to make sure the lessons learnt during this 3-year pilot program aren't lost.

OPAN's Rural and Remote Service Delivery Project, which is currently being delivered by by Darwin Community Legal Service (Northern Territory) and Advocare (Western Australia), has been extended for another 12 months.

## Home Care Check-in Project

OPAN's pioneering Home Care Check-In Project was piloted by 3 network members – Advocare (Western Australia), Aged Rights Advocacy Service (South Australia) and Senior Rights Service (NSW) – between July 2022 and June 2025.

The project specifically targeted people who lived alone and were socially isolated, reliant on a single carer or service provider, or otherwise at risk of harm. The goal was to reduce risk and isolation by providing regular check-ins, developing a trusted relationship over time, and building a scaffold of supports by helping older people to connect with other services in the community.

A newly-established workforce of 8 community support advocates – primarily health care professionals, such as nurses and social workers – provided non-clinical, trauma-informed support to 353 people through 6,181 check-ins and more than 6,000 connections and referrals.

More than 85% of those supported during the 3-year pilot extended advocacy project identified as a member of at least one of the 12 diversity groups outlined in the Aged Care Diversity Framework. Many had experienced abuse, domestic and family violence and intergenerational trauma. Their trust in the system had been deeply eroded.

*'The biggest surprise for me was the amount of trauma this older cohort had experienced,'* said senior Advocare project officer Hazel McKenna. *'There was so much more complexity than we initially imagined.'*

The additional 2-hours of support per month (on average) provided by community support advocates delivered tangible results in terms of the reduction of clients' assessed risk and vulnerability, according to the client risk assessment tool developed for the project.

The majority of Home Care Check-in recipients also reported increased confidence and independence, increased social connections and increased linkages with essential health and support services.

*'Sometimes, you didn't do anything, but the outcome was still a happier, connected person. Or there was an increase in self-care, just because someone was checking in.'*

– Community support advocate

*'You saved my life. I'm here because of what you have done for me'*

– Home Care Check-in recipient





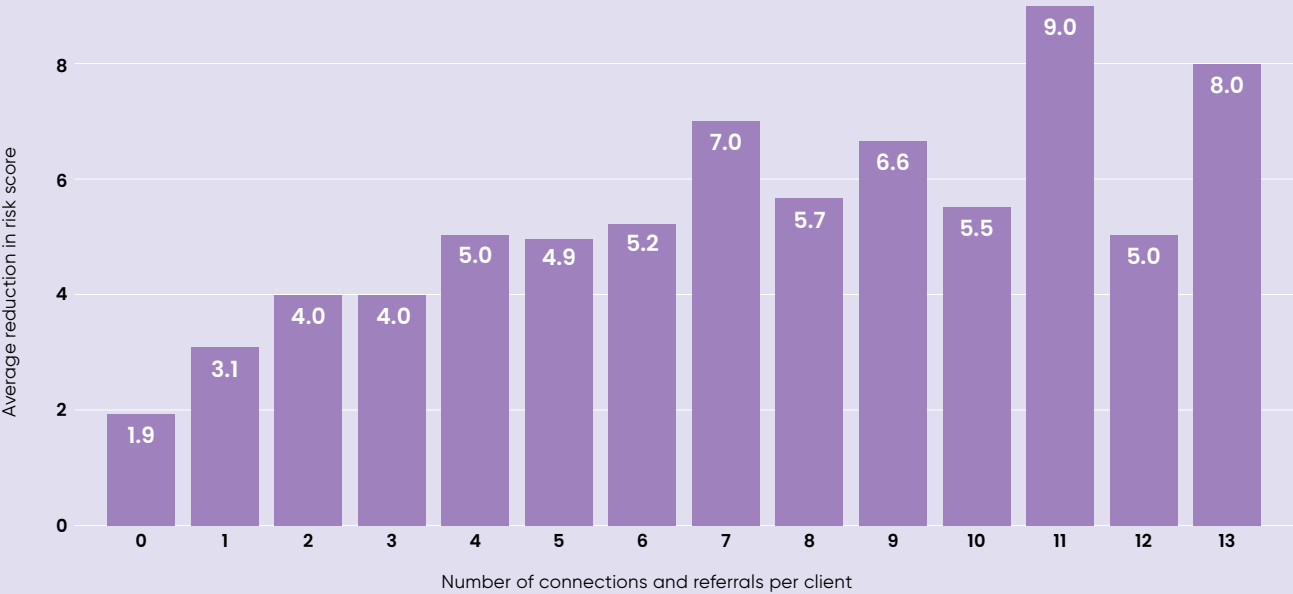
## Client outcomes per diversity characteristic\*

\*Diversity characteristics are not exclusive. One client may identify with multiple diversity characteristics. Data shown only for closed cases where data is available for both initial and final risk assessments.

Diversity characteristic	Average reduction in risk score	% of closed cases	Number of issues resolved	Number of referrals	Number of connections
People living with cognitive decline	5.41	23.0%	2,771	1,281	699
Care-leavers	5.38	4.2%	2,133	568	328
People who are financially or socially disadvantaged	4.73	72.8%	8,749	3,442	2,161
People living with a mental health condition	4.63	48.7%	5,860	2,595	1,375
People who live in rural or remote areas	4.63	17.3%	639	264	204
People living with a disability	4.62	56.0%	6,240	2,370	1,551
Parents separated from their children by forced adoption or removal	4.59	5.2%	1,378	318	208
People living with dementia	4.42	6.3%	681	327	190
People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	4.30	17.3%	1,741	898	522
People who are homeless or at risk of being homeless	4.14	7.3%	1,944	859	396
People from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	3.73	7.9%	1,173	578	304
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex people	3.00	1.1%	35	42	21
Veterans	2.86	3.7%	23	18	5
<b>At least one diversity characteristic identified</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>94.24%</b>	<b>9,122</b>	<b>3,731</b>	<b>2,307</b>

Average reduction in risk score by total number of connections and referrals per client\*

*\*Data shown only for closed cases where data for both initial and final risk assessments are available.*



### CASE EXAMPLE

*A veteran with PTSD, cognitive impairment and a history of substance use problems was referred to a community support advocate after he was refused services by several aged care providers due to his behaviour towards staff. He was at risk of homelessness because the manager of his retirement village had asked him to move out. He had no social or family connections. An ACAT assessment had been arranged but was cancelled when the older person's My Aged Care representative – his retirement village manager – did not answer or return calls.*

*The community support advocate conducted a total of 14 home care check-ins with the older person. Through these visits the advocate saw that he was malnourished and was having increasing difficulty with his mobility and vision. The advocate also noticed that his cognition was deteriorating from one visit to the next.*

*The older person reported that he had not seen his GP or any other health professional for almost 10 years. With the older person's consent, the advocate:*

- made an appointment for him to see his GP, accompanied him to the appointment, and subsequently followed up on the GP's referrals to a geriatrician, social worker, and podiatrist*
- contacted the Department of Veterans' Affairs community nursing and transport programs, requesting a review of his eligibility for assistance and providing supporting evidence from the GP regarding his deteriorating condition*
- explained the Charter of Aged Care Rights and conflict of interest in relation to his current My Aged Care representative*
- arranged an ACAT assessment and supported him during the assessment, and continued to advocate when his representative did not appropriately assist him to take up his approved package.*

*The older person ultimately received a formal diagnosis of dementia. He was later admitted to hospital, where the social worker lodged a guardianship application and listed the community support advocate as a person of importance. The community support advocate continues to visit him in hospital while he waits for a place in a residential aged care home. The older person is now well-fed, clothed, and supported.*

## Rural and Remote Service Delivery Pilot



One in 3 older people [live in rural and remote areas of Australia](#). They face significant challenges and barriers to accessing aged care. Many are not receiving the care they need, increasing the risk of poorer quality of life and premature entry into residential care.

OPAN's Rural and Remote Service Delivery Pilot aims to improve outcomes for this cohort by partnering with trusted local organisations to extend our geographical reach and inform these communities of the supports that are available to them.

The pilot is currently being trialled in East Arnhem, in the Northern Territory, and the Wheat Belt, in Western Australia.

Darwin Community Legal Service (DCLS) has received 29 separate referrals and self-referrals since partnering with the Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation (ALPA) in June 2024.

OPAN CEO Craig Gear, Director, Operations Karen Doyle and Manager, Communications and Engagement Diana Vizard visited Darwin and Ramingining in May 2025 to gain a deeper understanding of the program.

Supported by quarterly face-to-face training sessions and monthly phone check-ins, aged care champions Hope Meatuai, Jacob Balbunhamirri and Gertie Nawia connect with older people in the remote communities of Millingimbi and Ramingining, share information, and identify pathways for additional support.

A second pilot is now underway in the Wheatbelt towns of Wagin and Narrogin in Western Australia. Initial training has been provided to the community partner, WA Country Health Service.

The Rural and Remote Service Delivery Pilot has been extended for another 12 months due to the positive initial results.



*'By partnering with people who have the necessary skills, connections, knowledge and authority, we can increase knowledge of the services available. And by coming back, again and again, we can develop a culturally appropriate and culturally safe service delivery model for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders.'*

– OPAN CEO Craig



# Informing older people and service providers about advocacy and aged care rights

OPAN network members deliver thousands of information and education sessions in community and residential aged care settings each year to ensure older people understand their rights and the services that are available to them.

OPAN also promotes better aged care by delivering education and training to the aged care workforce. Through our eLearning programs, we support aged care staff and volunteers to understand older people's rights, the role of advocacy, and how to prevent elder abuse, including sexual assault.

## National education sessions

OPAN's network members delivered 5,971 education sessions to older people, their families and other supporters in 2024-25. This is a 5.5% increase on the previous year.

These free face-to-face sessions, which are held in both community and residential aged care settings, are tailored to the audience's specific needs. Topics covered include:

- rights of older people and provider responsibilities
- advocacy and self-advocacy
- complaints and the Serious Incidents Response Scheme (SIRS)
- identifying and responding to abuse.

Many older people seek advocacy support after learning about their aged care rights at an information or education session.

### CASE EXAMPLE

*After an education session by an OPAN network member at a regional residential facility, an older person started talking to an advocate. The older person said they were an Aboriginal person and wanted to remain on Country, but that their aged care provider wasn't listening to their request.*

*Further discussion revealed that the older person was in the current home on a respite stay. The provider had said that they could not offer them a residential care room at this home, but that they could offer them one 45 minutes away in the same area.*

*The older person stated that they had tried to explain that it might be the same 'white man area' but to them, the new place was on a different Country. They went on to say that they had lived on Country their whole life and it was not only culturally important to them but also of spiritual importance.*

*At the older person's request, the advocate spoke with the care manager. The advocate was able to outline the older person's cultural and spiritual connection to Country and the importance of this for their emotional and spiritual wellbeing and health. The care manager said they would need to discuss it with the team.*

*When the advocate followed up with the older person, they said the residential care home had offered them a room, and they were very grateful that they could remain living on Country.*



# The Advocacy Community Network Development Project



In 2024-25, the Advocacy Community Network Development Project raised awareness of aged care rights, aged care advocacy and aged care services in 1,354 community-based activities and events attended by 51,222 people.

Highlights included:

- ADA Australia's 'sold-out' series of Q&A sessions across Far North Queensland
- Advocare's First Responders Forum for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, attended by a wide range of frontline personnel
- a series of presentations that successfully targeted Certificate 3 and 4 TAFE students in WA
- Aged Rights Advocacy Service's active engagement with key local stakeholders (councils, elected representatives, peak not-for-profits and health networks) in regional areas
- a yarning circle with the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory and many other organisations
- ADACAS holding monthly public stalls at each of Canberra's 3 major hospitals and 4 ACT libraries, and presentations to numerous local church and community groups
- Seniors Rights Service connecting with older First Nations people at 22 NAIDOC events across NSW to raise awareness of aged care advocacy.

A bimonthly community of practice enabled community development officers to share ideas, knowledge and practice.

## Self-advocacy toolkit

OPAN's *Self-advocacy toolkit* continues to play an integral role in the community network development project's success. The online toolkit, which was launched in late 2022, provides older people with the tools and resources they need to speak up for themselves. Demand for the print version, which was relaunched in 2024, has been significantly higher than expected.

The online *Self-advocacy toolkit* had a total of 129,332 views across its pages in 2024-25.

The most popular topics were:

- your aged care rights
- aged care costs
- your aged care options.

More than 51,031 copies of the print booklet, which has been translated into Plain English and 7 other languages, were distributed in 2024-25.

 **Access the *Self-advocacy toolkit* or order a print booklet on our [website](#)**



# Education and training for the aged care workforce

OPAN's learning management system offers free, self-paced eLearning programs to support the aged care workforce, including volunteers and health professionals, in understanding aged care advocacy and rights, as well as identifying and preventing elder abuse.

## Talk to Us First

Our online aged care advocacy and rights education is designed to support aged care providers in meeting Aged Care Quality Standard 6, ensuring older people feel safe, encouraged and supported to provide feedback or make a complaint. Over the past financial year, 1,358 aged care workers and volunteers registered for *Talk to Us First* training.

## 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, responding to and preventing the abuse of older people. The online training program underwent an extensive review in 2024 to ensure its currency and alignment with best practices.

Over the past financial year, 1,742 aged care workers and volunteers registered for this online training program.

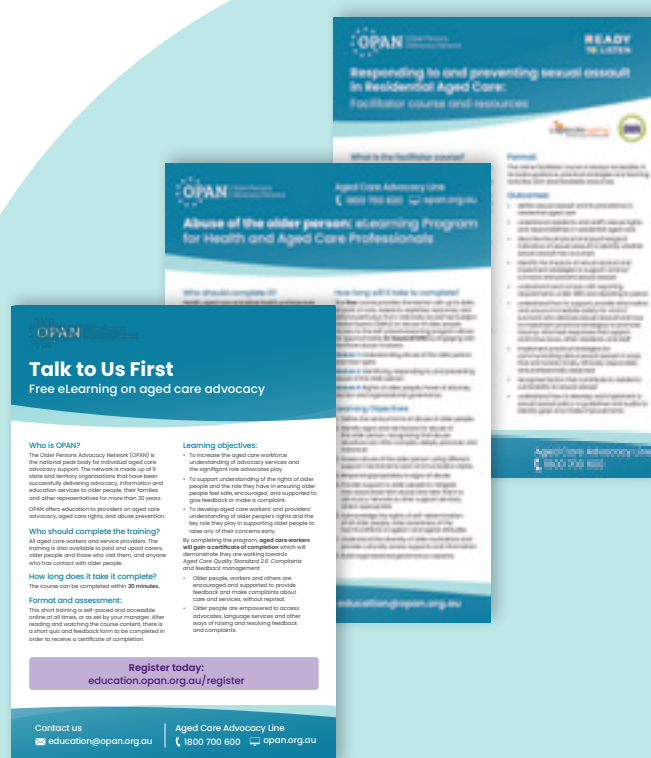
## Responding to, and preventing, sexual assault in residential aged care

This online facilitator course was developed as part of the #ReadyToListen\* project, which builds the skills and capacity of service providers to better respond to – and prevent – sexual assault in residential aged care. In the 2024-2025 financial year, 411 members of the aged care workforce registered for the eLearning course.

\* The #ReadyToListen project is led by OPAN in partnership with Celebrate Ageing Ltd and the Older Women's Network, New South Wales.

## Advocate access and abuse prevention training for volunteers

The Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS) offers companionship to lonely and isolated older people to improve their quality of life and social connections. OPAN supports the ACVVS program by providing free online training for ACVVS volunteers on advocacy, abuse and how to link older people with advocacy services. This financial year, 592 people registered for the eLearning program.





# Championing diversity and inclusion in aged care

In line with the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, OPAN believes diversity should be 'core business' in aged care.

Network members frequently receive calls from, or about, older people whose rich and distinctive life experiences are not being respected. Older people in the LGBTI community, for example, who have been forced back into the closet. And older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who have experienced isolation and even trauma because they are unable to communicate with staff.

OPAN's *Who's Missing? Planning for Diversity* workshop series helps service providers identify barriers for older people in their community who are seeking or receiving government-funded aged care.

# Advocacy support to people from diverse and marginalised groups



Almost 70% of the advocacy cases (9,358) delivered by network members in 2024–25 involved a client who identified as having one of the 12 diversity characteristics in the Aged Care Diversity Framework.

## Advocacy cases per diversity characteristic\*

\*Diversity characteristics are not exclusive. One client may identify with multiple diversity characteristics.

Diversity characteristic	Total cases	% of all cases
People who live in rural or remote areas	3,199	23.7%
People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	2,240	16.6%
People living with a disability	1,993	14.8%
People living with dementia	1,302	9.7%
People who are financially or socially disadvantaged	1,244	9.2%
People living with cognitive decline	1,152	8.5%
People living with a mental health condition	714	5.3%
People from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	678	5.0%
Veterans	160	1.2%
People who are homeless or at risk of being homeless	141	1.0%
Care-leavers	43	0.3%
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex people	32	0.2%
Parents separated from their children by forced adoption or removal	11	0.1%
<b>At least one diversity characteristic identified</b>	<b>9,353</b>	<b>69.4%</b>

## CASE EXAMPLE

*An older person from a culturally and linguistically diverse background had been living in residential care for 18 months. They contacted an OPAN network member for advocacy support because their residential care provider was not meeting their religious and cultural dietary needs.*

*The older person said that they could not eat meat as part of their religious and cultural practice. However, the 'vegetable soups' the aged care provider gave them as the only vegetarian meal option were often meat-based. The only other vegetarian option provided by the aged care provider most evenings was coleslaw or other low-nutrition options.*

*At the older person's request, the advocate spoke to the residential care home's manager. The manager apologised and said they would ask the chef to meet with the older person to discuss meal preferences.*

*When the advocate followed up with the older person, they said the menu had greatly improved and there was now a range of nutritious vegetarian options available.*

## CASE EXAMPLE

*An adult child with active substitute decision-making authority for their parent contacted an OPAN network member with concerns about an assessment conducted by an allied health care worker linked to their parent's aged care provider. The adult child felt that the assessment did not reflect their parent's current level of independence and the fact that they had been able to independently or with limited support complete most daily activities despite a disability experienced for over 15 years.*

*The advocate asked if their parent was able to communicate directly with the advocacy service and to express their thoughts and feelings about the assessment. The adult child said that in all their years supporting their parent with disability services in Australia, no one had ever asked this. They said that while their parent could not speak English, they were in no way limited in their ability to make decisions and could communicate in their language.*

*An interpreter service was organised, and the older person was able to communicate their concerns about the assessment and make decisions about what they wanted the next steps to be in addressing these.*

# Planning for Diversity Project

OPAN's *Who's Missing? Planning for Diversity* project 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.

Specialist diversity trainers focus on:

- addressing gaps in provider knowledge of local data and barriers that prevent access
- increasing awareness of available planning and delivery resources.

The initial, 3-year iteration of this project was completed in June 2024. By then, diversity trainers had delivered 228 learning series workshops to aged care providers, including those in regional, rural and remote areas. Up to 60 providers had attended each of the 8 community of practice meetings. And more than 640 providers had registered for the eLearning modules – an abridged version of the workshop series (with a 70% completion rate).

An independent evaluation of the Planning for Diversity project conducted by Allen + Clarke in 2024-25 concluded:

- the learning series was targeted at the right people
- there were strong levels of engagement across all modes of learning delivery
- there is evidence that the learning series influenced participants' behaviour and practice in a variety of ways.

The project has been extended for another 4 years. Under the new Aged Care Act, providers must report on initiatives they have implemented to support a diverse and inclusive environment for older people and aged care workers. OPAN believes this requirement will encourage more providers to enrol for our diversity training and lead to better outcomes for more older people.



[Read more](#)





# Raising awareness of aged care advocacy and older people's rights

OPAN and our network members connect with older people, their families and other supporters through social media, traditional media, newsletters and webinars. We recognise the importance of each of these platforms in raising awareness, sharing information about advocacy and older people's aged care rights, and driving systemic change.

The introduction of the new Aged Care Act – and its impact on older people – was a key focus for the OPAN Peak Body marketing and communications team in 2024-25. We kept older people up to date with the proposed changes in a series of multi-channel campaigns. We also raised awareness of the implications of delays to the implementation of the Act through our newsletters and media releases.

To increase uptake of our network members' advocacy and information services, we developed an advocacy basics campaign aimed at older people who were unaware of the services provided by the NACAP.

## Marketing, Communications and Education Advisory Group

OPAN's Marketing, Communications and Education Advisory Group consists of representatives from OPAN's network members.

The group's primary focus is on knowledge sharing, collaboration, and fostering a consistent, national approach to communications and education. Members exchange insights on effective strategies, sharing successful outcomes across different audience groups, regions and platforms.

**The group convened 8 times in 2024–25 to:**

- share content and campaigns
- consult on webinar topics
- discuss social media approaches
- provide updates on network activities
- explore innovative ways to engage with older people.

The advisory group is supported by a working group of National Older Persons Reference Group members with lived experience of the aged care sector. This group meets on an ad hoc basis.



# Campaigns and key messages

## New Aged Care Act

The introduction of the new Aged Care Act was a key focus for the OPAN Peak Body marketing, communications and strategic engagement team in 2024-25. We informed older people about the proposed changes – and OPAN’s work in raising their concerns with government – through multiple channels.

Our *What the new Act Means for You* webinar series, cross-promoted through social media, our newsletters and online interviews with subject matter experts, focused on the key changes for older people, including the Statement of Rights, supported decision-making and costs and fees.

An August 14 event in Parliament House, co-hosted by COTA Australia and the Maggie Beer Foundation, highlighted the importance of this once-in-a-generation legislative reform. Convened through the Parliamentary Friends of Aged Care, co-chaired by Dr Mike Freelander MP and Rebekha Sharkie MP, the event was attended by more than 100 politicians, sector stakeholders and older people and their families.

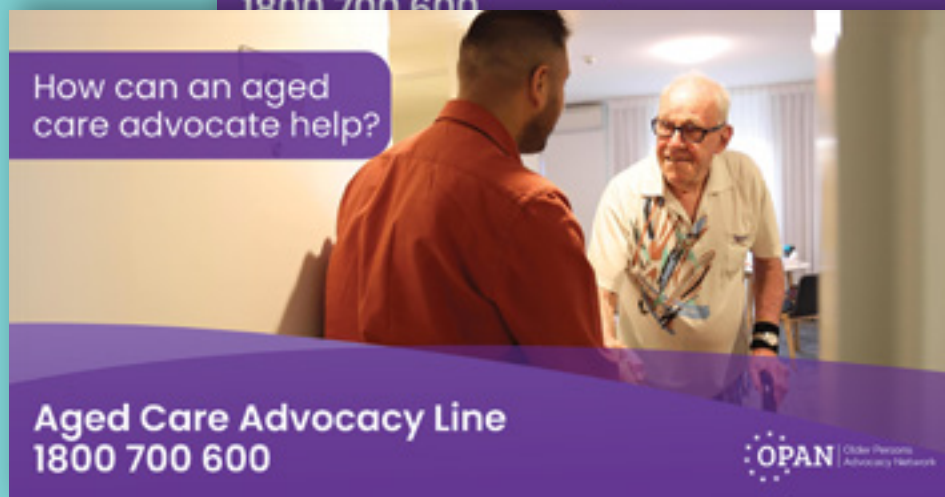
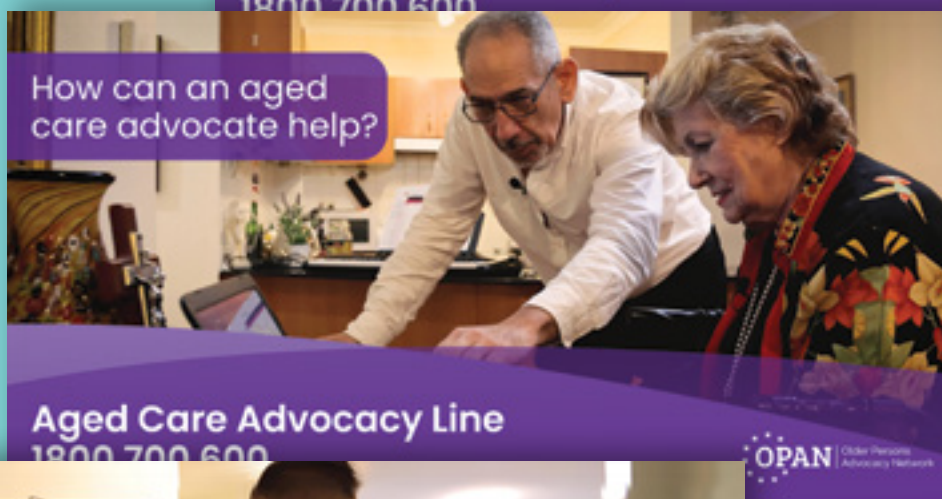
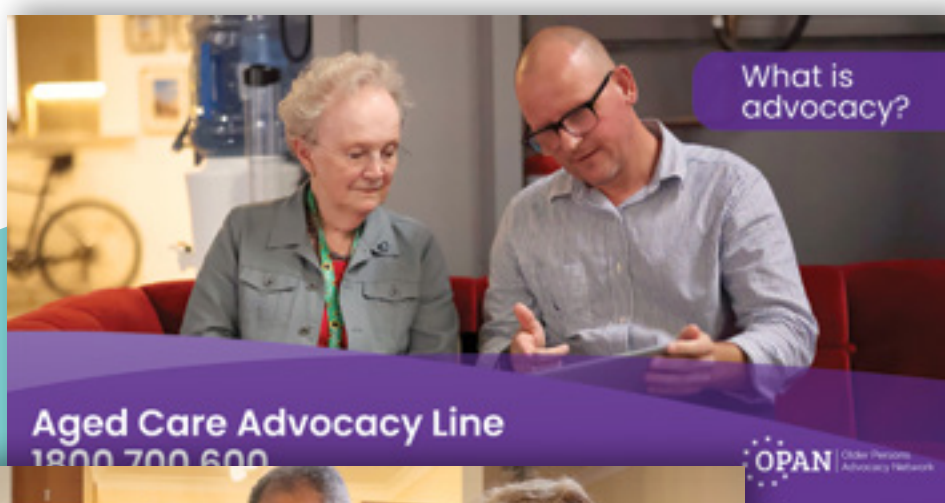
We raised awareness of the implications of delays to the implementation of the Act and the issues and unintended consequences older people with lived experience had identified with the proposed legislation through our newsletters and in media releases and interviews with key sector and mainstream journalists.





## Advocacy basics

In 2024-25, OPAN developed an advocacy basics campaign to expand our reach. The campaign focused on older people's rights and the ways in which aged care advocates could support them. This awareness-raising campaign was targeted at older people who were unaware of, or had yet to access, NACAP services, as well as their family members and other supporters.





## Engaging with older people, their families, other representatives and sector stakeholders

OPAN's electronic and print newsletters have a combined reach of more than 250,000 people. They provide a direct connection to older people, their families, other supporters and sector stakeholders on aged care issues – and what OPAN is doing to address them.

Constant analysis of data metrics for OPAN's website and social media platforms has enabled us to assess the impact and efficacy of our awareness-raising campaigns and to adjust the messaging to reach a broader audience.



## The National Advocate

OPAN's popular monthly eNewsletter keeps older people, their families, other supporters and sector stakeholders up to date on aged care issues and reforms. It also features stories about advocacy in action and older people's experiences of the aged care sector. More than 44,614 people were subscribed to *The National Advocate* in 2024-25, an 11.7% increase on the previous year.



To sign up, visit our [website](#).

## News for You

Not everyone is online. To address this barrier to accessing information for older people living in residential aged care, OPAN publishes the print newsletter *News for You*, which is co-branded with our network members in each state and territory. Two issues were distributed to 2,780 residential aged care homes around Australia (415,052 copies) in 2024-25. .

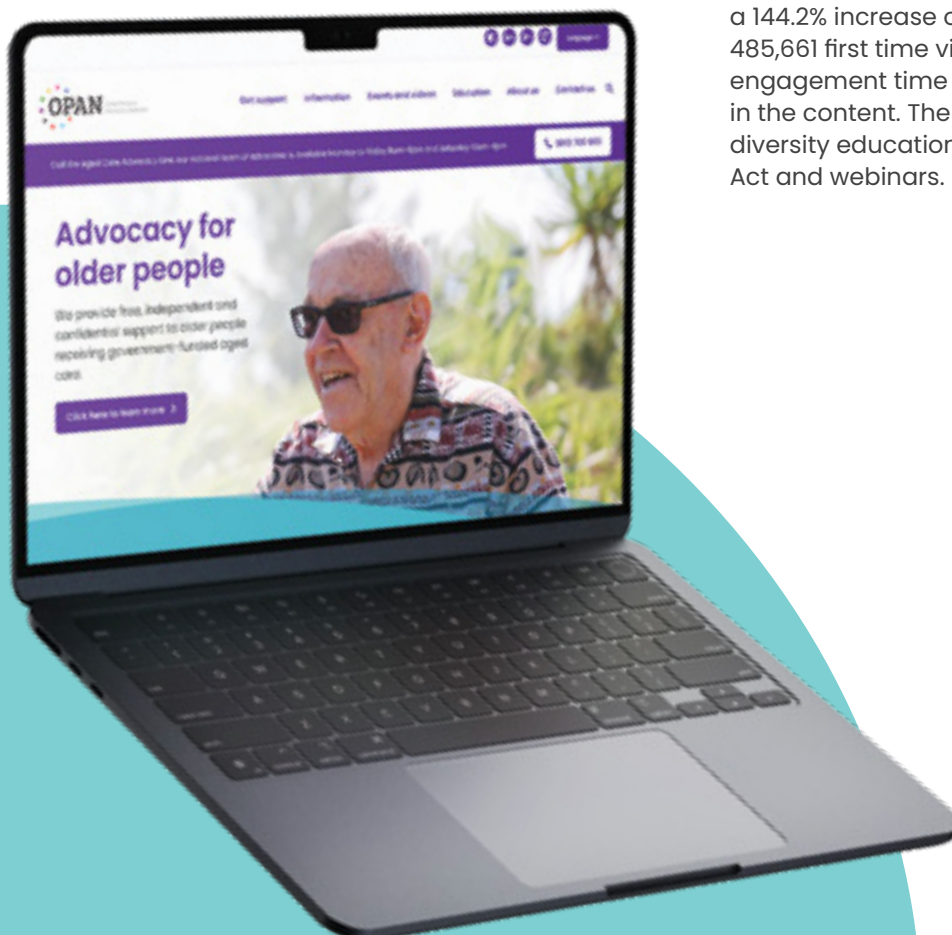


Previous editions can be downloaded from our [website](#).



## OPAN website

OPAN's website had 602,663 sessions in 2024-25, a 144.2% increase on the previous year. There were 485,661 first time visitors. The 2.08 minute average engagement time indicated a high level of interest in the content. The most viewed pages included diversity education, education and training, the new Act and webinars.



## Social media

Integrated marketing campaigns saw OPAN achieve a combined reach of 1,321,578 across Facebook and LinkedIn in 2024-25.

Facebook followers increased by 16.8% to 8,426. People aged 65 and over continued to be our core demographic, followed by people aged 55-64. Together, these 2 groups account for half of OPAN's Facebook followers.

LinkedIn followers have grown to 11,332 in 2024-25, an increase of 26.1% on the previous year. This workforce and aged care sector audience (31% of our LinkedIn followers work in the healthcare, aged and disability services industry) continues to see accelerated growth and engagement.

## Conferences

National conferences proved to be an effective method for raising awareness of our advocacy and education services in 2024-25. OPAN staffed exhibition booths at 3 key sector events with a combined face-to-face reach of more than 3,100 people:

- Elder Abuse Awareness Australia (EAAA) National Elder Abuse Conference
- the Aged and Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA) National Conference
- Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS) conference





## OPAN webinars

OPAN hosted 9 webinars in 2024–25 with an annual total of 24,349 views, including 13,645 live viewers.

Across the year, 53% of those registered to attend webinars tuned in live to the event, with many more viewing replays via the OPAN website.



[View webinars](#)

## OPAN's top-performing webinars in 2024–25

### 2024



#### Food for thought: Your choice, your rights

Food consistently ranks in the top 5 presenting issues in residential aged care, according to our quarterly analyses of advocacy and information support. Maggie Beer, chef, restaurateur and passionate advocate for better food for older people, was a guest panellist.



#### New Aged Care Act: an update

In this OPAN webinar, our panel of experts unpacked the detail of this historic piece of legislation, which has the potential to enhance quality standards, increase protections for older people, and create a financially sustainable aged care system for future generations.



#### Understanding complaints, open disclosure and more

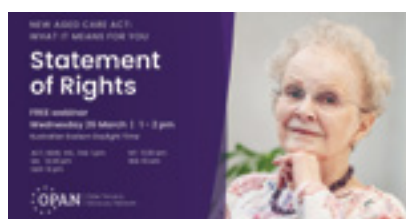
Former Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Complaints Commissioner Louise Macleod was a guest panellist for this webinar, which explored what happens when things go wrong with your aged care service and effective complaints handling.

### 2025



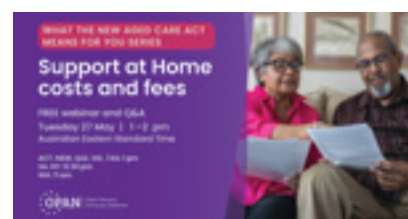
#### What the new Aged Care Act will mean for you

The first in a series of webinars providing information about the new Aged Care Act and its impact on older people. OPAN Director, Policy, Education and Systemic Advocacy Samantha Edmonds provided an overview of the legislation.



#### Statement of 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. This webinar explored the implications for older people.



#### Support at Home costs and fees

The new Support at Home program has replaced the Home Care Packages (HCP) program and Short-Term Restorative Care (STRC) programme since 1 November 2025. In this webinar, our panel of experts explored how these changes will affect what older people pay for in-home support.



## Traditional media

OPAN maintained a strong media profile in 2024–25 with 17 media releases and more than 530 mentions appearances in radio, television, print and online publications with a potential reach of 13.2 million.

OPAN CEO Craig Gear addressed a wide range of aged care issues in key sector and mainstream media outlets, including ABC TV and radio, *The Guardian*, *The Australian*, News Corps' National News Network, *HelloCare* and *The Senior*.

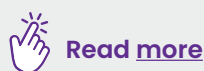
The new Act remained a key media focus for OPAN in 2024-25. OPAN 'reluctantly' supported the 4-month delay to its implementation to ensure older people had the information they needed to make informed decisions but simultaneously called for the release of a minimum 20,000 home care packages to ensure waiting lists did not blow out any further. We also raised older people's concerns around co-contribution payments for personal care and gaps and unintended consequences in the new Act.



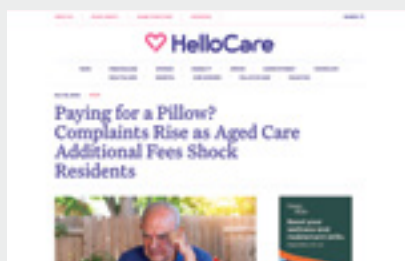
### Care minutes 'bare minimum' *The Guardian*

17 July 2024

Craig Gear, OPAN CEO



[Read more](#)



### Hidden fees *HelloCare*

6 November 2024

Craig Gear, OPAN CEO



[Read more](#)



### Co-payments for in-home care *ABC TV, radio and online*

12 April 2025

Craig Gear, OPAN CEO



[Read more](#)



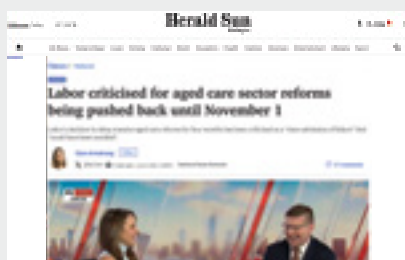
### How to raise a complaint *The Senior*

24 April 2025

Director Policy, Education  
and Systemic Advocacy  
Samantha Edmonds



[Read more](#)



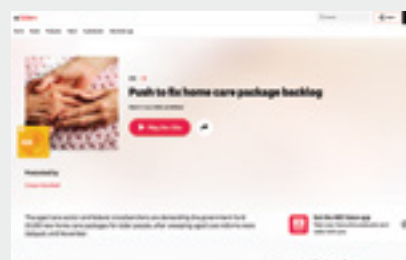
### OPAN 'reluctantly' supports delay *News Corp National News Network*

4 June 2025

Craig Gear, OPAN CEO



[Read more](#)



### Waitlists for in-home care *ABC radio and online*

11 June 2025

Craig Gear, OPAN CEO



[Hear more](#)

# Improving aged care through systemic advocacy

OPAN's systemic advocacy goal is to uphold the rights of older people seeking and accessing aged care. We do this through policy position papers, submissions, discussion papers, reports, providing feedback and consultations. By making sure legislation, policies and practices support the rights and interests of older people, we effect long-term systemic change.

OPAN's systemic advocacy work is informed by the qualitative and quantitative data collected by our network members as well as direct feedback from older people, members of our advisory groups, and other sector stakeholders. We frequently collaborate with other non-government organisations to further amplify the voices of older people.

The introduction of the new rights-based Aged Care Act, a key recommendation of the Aged Care Royal Commission, was the policy and systemic advocacy team's primary focus in 2024-2025.

## Policy and Systemic Advocacy Advisory Group

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

The group is co-chaired by a member of the National Older Persons Reference Group and a network member CEO.

### **In 2024–25, the group:**

- contributed to and reviewed OPAN's submissions and position statements with a particular focus on the new Aged Care Act 2024 and Rules
- advised on issues such as locked dementia units, registered supporters and supported decision-making, hardship measures, restorative pathways for complaints and service agreements
- raised emerging issues including the increased use of Deeds of Guarantee
- provided advice on policy recommendations for OPAN's *NACAP Presenting Issues Report 2024–25*.



## Human Rights Advisory Group

The Human Rights Advisory Group was established in 2024 as an internal advisory body and brings a human rights perspective to OPAN's work, with a focus on policy position development. The group has played a crucial role in providing guidance and advice on supported decision-making and other aspects relevant to safeguarding the human rights of older people receiving aged care.

The group has focused on OPAN submissions and working documents that are guiding our transition to the new Aged Care Act, leading discussions on a Human Rights Act and a submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights with carer and consumer peaks on concerns around aspects of the new Act, including restrictive practices, missing rights and lack of enforcement of rights.



## Rights in Aged Care Practice Working Group

The Rights in Aged Care Practice Working Group was a time-limited group established in 2024 and concluded in 2025. The group assisted with guidance documentation on the development and content of OPAN's human rights education for older people and carers, advocates and providers, as well as facilitating a workshop on embedding human rights in aged care.

## Supported Decision-Making Working Group

OPAN's Supported Decision-Making Working Group was established in 2024 to assist with developing guidelines and educational materials on supported decision-making and providing expert input into government and other bodies' work in relation to supported decision-making. The department has actively engaged with the group, including 2 workshops to discuss supported decision-making in the new Act.



## Advancing aged care reform

The new rights-based Aged Care Act was the policy and systemic advocacy team's primary focus in 2024-25. We advocated for its swift passage through Parliament in consultations with government representatives, peak bodies for older people and their carers and other key sector stakeholders. We also drew attention to issues that needed to be addressed prior to its implementation in submissions, advisory meetings, groups and forums.

On August 15, OPAN CEO Craig Gear, Aged Rights Advocacy Service CEO Carolanne Barkla and National Older Persons Reference Group member Rosemary Seam joined representatives from a number of other organisations representing older people and their carers at a [press conference](#) in the Senate courtyard of Parliament House calling to the Act to be tabled in the Australian Parliament as a matter of urgency.

The *Aged Care Bill 2024* was introduced to Parliament on 12 September 2024. Informed by older people with diverse lived experiences, OPAN made a comprehensive submission on the Bill and appeared at the Senate Community Affairs Legislation

Committee hearing in Melbourne in October 2024. We were pleased that several amendments were subsequently made to the Bill including:

- the removal of aged care decision-making supporters
- the requirement for aged care needs assessors to involve the individual's carer, family member, advocate or other person if that is the individual's will and preference
- a 'sunset' clause to end the current consent arrangements and immunity from civil or criminal liability for use of restrictive practices by 1 December 2026.

A significant area of focus for the policy and systemic advocacy team between October and May was the progressive release for consultation of parts of the Rules, or subordinate legislation, for the new Act. Based on what older people told us, we provided feedback on funding arrangements and service lists for Support at Home and residential aged care, obligations of providers, complaints handling and access by advocates.



An important outcome is improved recognition in the Bill of the role of independent aged care advocates. From 1 November 2025, registered providers must allow and facilitate access by independent advocates:

- within the aged care setting
- to records and information held about an older person
- for the purpose of providing information and education to older people.

Under the Rules, providers must also:

- offer access to independent advocacy to older people affected by an incident
- acknowledge independent advocacy in complaints and feedback management systems and support older people to access independent advocacy when making a complaint or providing feedback
- provide staff training on the roles and functions of independent advocates
- ensure older people receive accessible information about how to contact an independent advocate
- provide information about the availability of independent aged care advocates to assist with making a complaint to the Complaints Commissioner.

Prior to the government's announcement of a 4-month delay to the implementation of the new Act, OPAN and COTA Australia wrote jointly to the government to outline the risks for older people who lacked the information they needed to make informed choices about their aged care.

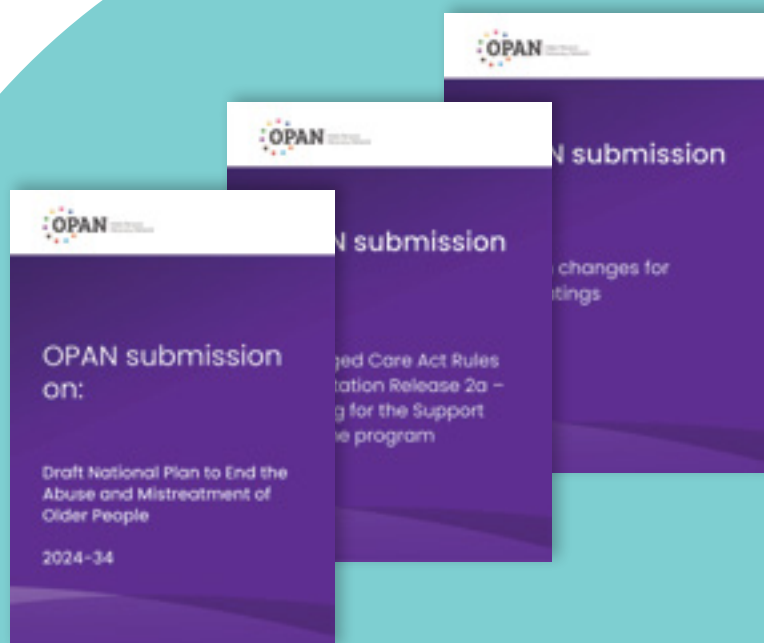
OPAN also continued to advocate on related matters such as:

- improving Star Ratings
- more accessible information about psychotropic medication for older people
- improved aged care financial hardship application processes
- the Draft National Carer Strategy
- the Draft National Plan to End the Abuse and Mistreatment of Older People
- the formation of the Australian Human Rights Commission Rights as We Age Network.

We also made a submission to the Inspector-General of Aged Care's annual work plan and provided feedback on the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's draft Sexual Safety Framework.

Other key pieces of work in 2024-25 included:

- A discussion Paper on [Human Rights and Supported Decision-Making for People Living with Dementia](#), funded by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, in response to our feedback on the lack of human rights focus in the draft National Dementia Action Plan
- a joint OPAN-ACCPA good practice guideline for closure of residential aged care facilities.





## Collaborative systemic advocacy

OPAN frequently collaborates with other organisations to support the rights and interests of older people. In 2024-25, we participated in:

- a joint workshop with COTA and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Complaints Team to discuss and review rights-based complaints
- a roundtable with the Commonwealth Ombudsman in relation to his role as the National Preventative Mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, particularly in relation to aged care and locked dementia units
- a roundtable with the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Age Discrimination Commissioner on a Human Rights Act for Australia and the inclusion of the rights of older people.



# External policy and systemic advocacy meetings and collaboration

## Government

- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Aged Care Data Advisory Group
- Australian Health Protection Committee's Aged Care Advisory Group
- Australian Human Rights Commission – Civil Society Advocacy Group for a National Human Rights Act
- Australian Human Rights Commission – Rights as We Age Network
- Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Consultative Forum
- Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission quarterly meetings and regular forums
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care Aged Care Advisory Group
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care Partnering with Consumers Advisory group
- Department of Health, Disability and Ageing Diversity Consultative Committee (chair)
- Department of Health, Disability and Ageing Aged Care Sector Transition Working Group
- Department of Health, Disability and Ageing Aged Care Transition Taskforce
- Department of Health, Disability and Ageing Aged Care Workforce Committee
- Department of Health, Disability and Ageing Aged Care Workforce Working Group
- Department of Health, Disability and Ageing Consumer Reference Group – Quality
- Department of Health, Disability and Ageing Home Care Program Assurance Reference Group
- Department of Health, Disability and Ageing Residential Aged Care Reform Funding Working Group
- Department of Health, Disability and Ageing Star Ratings Expert Reference Group
- Department of Health, Disability and Ageing Support at Home Implementation Group (ceased Dec 24)
- Department of Health, Disability and Ageing and Services Australia Aged Care Access Consultation Forum
- Department of Veteran Affairs Aged & Community Care Taskforce, Core Advisory Group (CAG)
- Department of Veteran Affairs Health Provider Partnership Forum
- Office of the Inspector General Aged Care Consultative Committee





## Peak bodies

- Ageing Australia Consumer Advisory Committee (ceased 2025)
- Australian Association of Gerontology Convenor of AAG LGBTI Special Interest Group
- Australian Association of Gerontology, Co-convenor of Elder Abuse Special Interest Group
- CHSP Alliance
- COTA – ongoing collaborations and meetings on key aged care reform issues
- Elder Abuse Action Australia Advisory Group
- National Aged Care Alliance (co-chair of steering committee)
- LGBTIQ+ Health Alliance National Silver Rainbow Advisory Committee
- Rights of Older Persons Australia
- Standards Australia – Committee MB-027 – Ageing Societies
- Technical Committee for Advocacy in Aged Care and Disability Scheme Development (JAZANZ)



## International collaboration

Samantha Edmonds, OPAN Director, Policy, Education and Systemic Advocacy, is a director of the International Federation of Ageing (IFA), which works towards advancing the health, wellbeing and rights of older people. Samantha also chairs the IFA Nominating Committee. Ahead of the IFA 17th Global Conference on Ageing in South Africa in September 2025, Ms Edmonds joined the Conference Working Group on Healthy Ageing/Long Term Care, Improving Function/Family Intergenerational and the Conference Working Group on Human Rights.

OPAN was a part of the Universal Periodic (UPR) Review NGO Coalition. The UPR is a mechanism of the UN Human Rights Council which reviews the human rights records of all 193 nations that are members of the United Nations (UN). The UPR will examine

the extent to which Australia is complying with its international human rights obligations under the UN Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international treaties and other commitments. The review is based on information provided by the Australian Government; information from independent UN human rights experts and other UN entities; as well as information from the Australian Human Rights Commission and NGOs. OPAN assisted in drafting the brief section on older people within the final NGO Coalition Report.

OPAN is also a member of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP) National Advocacy Group, which enables broad discussions across the globe about the rights of older people.





## Conference presentations

OPAN facilitated 2 panels at the Australian Elder Abuse Conference in Adelaide in July 2024. The conference theme of *Turn up the Volume!* focused on the need for us all to take a stand against the abuse of older people. The OPAN 'Hear us Roar' panel discussed the lived experiences of older women of sexual abuse, while the 'With a Louder Voice' panel discussed the role of supported decision-making in preventing abuse of older people with cognitive impairment.

National Older Persons Reference Group members Katie Alexander, Judith Covell, Gwenda Darling and Michelle Treasure shared their lived experience and ideas for protecting and promoting the rights of all older people to live their lives free of abuse and neglect. Karen Williams from ADA Law in Queensland shared practical resources to improve the practice of supported decision-making.

OPAN also made a presentation at the Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) conference in Hobart in November 2024 entitled 'Deep Breaths - Reflecting on Advocacy in Aged Care'. We provided an overview of the development of systemic advocacy recommendations made in the 2023-24 OPAN Presenting Issues Report.

In addition, OPAN participated in the following conferences, summits or forums:

- ARIIA Conference
- Carer Participation in Health Forum
- Australian Community Transport Association Conference
- Department of Health, Disability and Ageing webinar on monthly care statements
- Aged Care Quality, Safety and Risk Forum
- National Ageing Research Institute annual summit
- ACCPA National Conference
- Aged Care Volunteer Visitor Scheme Conference
- A New Era in Ageing for Forgotten Australians/Care Leavers Forum
- Aged Care Reform Forum
- 6th Annual Aged Care Week
- LGBTIQ+ Health Australia webinar: The New Aged Care Landscape



# 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)
- Member of the investigator team for the building of capacity for supported decision-making for people living with dementia and acquired disability (BUDDY) (led by University of NSW)
- Care Economy Collaborative Research Collective Consumer Advisory Committee Care Economy. CRC currently has 60 industry, government, and research partners. OPAN is a partner providing consumer voice representation and input in the CRC development.
- Health Consult Diversity Research Study – Diversity Panel: Investigating how to improve the representative sampling of older people from less represented diversity groups (e.g., LGBTI, homeless, care leavers, forced adoption) in Residential Experience Surveys.
- Monash University – Elder Abuse in Regional, Rural and Remote Areas
- The Ageing in Prison Longitudinal Study (A-PLUS): health and frailty trajectories of older people in prison (led by the University of NSW)
- MyMedicare for older adults living in residential aged care homes: Determine the uptake and the factors associated with differential uptake of MyMedicare registration in older adults living in residential aged care (led by University of NSW)
- Rainbow Ageing: A collaborative research piece looking at improved quality of residential aged care provided to gender and sexually diverse people and increasing safety for all people from gender and sexually diverse communities in visiting, living or working in residential aged care. (Led by Southern Cross University).
- Collaborative development and delivery of free, high-quality, evidence-based health professional education and consumer health literacy resources and activities (led by Quality Use of Medicines (QUM) Alliance and Health Care Consumers' Association Inc.).
- Sexual Violence against Older Women (led by University of Melbourne)
- Evaluation of the impact of the Medicare and GP incentive program, increased GP access in residential care (led by University of NSW).





# Appendix

# Data scope and presentation

The scope and methods used for the presentation of data in this report are described below.

## Reporting period

Unless otherwise stated, service (advocacy and information) or outreach (education and event) data presented in this report relates to services and outreach activities that began in the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, noting that some services, particularly advocacy cases, can continue over several weeks.

## Geographic coverage

Descriptions and statistics in this report cover all network operations across Australia.

## Data sources

The information relating to services and outreach activities presented in this report is principally based on data submitted to OPAN from network members.

Aged care client data is based on the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's Aged Care Data Snapshot (release 3), which was current on 30 June 2024, and has been applied for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 to enable comparisons of service type and aged care population.

## Definitions

Statistics are predominantly based on the service and outreach definitions in the OPAN NACAP National Minimum Dataset Data Dictionary and Guidelines, Version 1.5.1, September 2024. Data is captured by network members based on the definitions in the version current at the time of their reporting to OPAN.

## Disclaimer

The statistics in this report may differ to other sources that utilise the same data and coding specifications. This will be due in part to the data collection and preparation methods used to generate the tables and charts in this report which included identification and correction of errors in historical data. As some services are still open or ongoing at the time of reporting, data is subject to review and amendment as more information becomes available, and as OPAN refines its systems for data capture, validation and reporting. This may result in variation between historical and future reports.

## OPAN Senior Leadership Team

Our Senior Leadership Team steers the organisation. Its members take responsibility for delivering NACAP and other projects. They are committed to creating a positive work culture.

The Senior Leadership Team underwent some changes in the latter part of 2024–25 as part of a wider organisational realignment. Anita Martin joined the team in the newly created role of Manager, Education. Anna Harrington was promoted to Manager, Advocacy Practice following the departure of Catherine Stade in April. Catherine Drinkwater replaced Rona Doherty in the role of Finance Manager in May.

### 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 NACAP and Board activity work plans and leads contract reporting. Supports the CEO with network management, Board and governance committee operations.



#### Rona Doherty, Manager, Finance

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, Education and Systemic Advocacy



Samantha Edmonds, Director Policy, Education 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 work. 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.

## National Aged Care Advocacy Program operations



Catherine Stade, Manager Operations and Advocacy 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 Aged Care Advocacy Line call centre solutions and other national operational projects. The practice team develops national guidelines and coordinates advocacy support resources. Leads OPAN's Advocacy Operations and Practice Advisory Group.

## Marketing, Communications and Engagement



Diana Vizard, Manager, Communications and Engagement

Leads OPAN's Marketing, Communications and Learning and Development Team. Manages the organisation's relationship with key sector stakeholders and allied peaks. Drives the creation and execution of OPAN's Engagement Plan, designed to increase the profile of the organisation, network members and the work we do. Oversees production on OPAN's high-impact webinars and awareness campaigns. Leads OPAN's Marketing, Communications, and Education Advisory Group.

## Data and Technology



Emily Cornes, Manager Data and Technology

Leads the team responsible for providing key data insights that inform OPAN's strategic decisions and advocacy efforts. Oversees initiatives to enhance data quality, consistency and analytics capabilities, while optimising data capture processes. As OPAN's Data Custodian, is responsible for the development and implementation of OPAN's data strategy to support the continuous advancement of OPAN's data maturity as well as establishment of data standards across the Network. A key member of the Data Governance Steering Committee and the Advocacy, Operations and Practice Advisory Group, also leads the Salesforce Community of Practice. Oversees the improvement of OPAN's IT environment to strengthen its cyber security posture.



# Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd

## Financial Statements

Year ended 30 June 2025

Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd  
Financial Statements – 30 June 2025

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**Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd**  
**Directors' Report**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2025**

The directors present their report, together with the financial statements of OLDER PERSONS ADVOCACY NETWORK LTD ("OPAN") for the year ended 30 June 2025.

### **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:

Maryrose (Ara) Cresswell (Chairperson)  
 Anne Burgess  
 Judy Davis  
 Helen McDevitt  
 Leanne (Liz) Kearins  
 Andrew Byrnes  
 Janis (Jan) Porter  
 Paul Bull  
 Susan Barrera

### **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;
- 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.

**Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd**  
**Directors' Report**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2025**

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;
- (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, Disability and Ageing 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.



**Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd**  
**Directors' Report**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2025**

### Principal activities

During the financial year the principal continuing activities of the company were delivering, through members, the Australian Department of Health, Disability and Ageing National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP). Members delivered independent information, education and individual advocacy support to older Australians across the country.

### 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.

### Information on Directors

<b>Mary (Ara) Cresswell</b>	
Title	Non-Executive Director (Chairperson)
Qualifications	Graduate Australian Institute of Company Directors, Diploma Social Training, Western Australian Institute of Technology;
Experience and expertise	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 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2022) Member Finance, Audit & Risk (FAR) Committee, Member Governance and Performance Committee (GaP)

<b>Anne Burgess</b>	
Title	Non-Executive Director
Qualifications	AUA (Dip Soc Stud), BSW
Experience and expertise	Anne 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, Chair of Aged Care Council of Elders and Chair of the Community Visitor Scheme's Advisory Committee.
Special responsibilities	Chairperson – Governance and Performance Committee (GaP) Member – Finance, Audit & Risk (FAR) Committee

**Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd**  
**Directors' Report**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2025**

<b>Judy Davis</b>	
Title	Non-Executive Director
Qualifications	BSc (PubHlth); Grad Dip International Pub Hlth; GAICD
Experience and expertise	Judy Davis is the General Manager Corporate Services at Catholic Care Northern Territory (NT) and is responsible for strategic leadership and operational performance of the organisation which delivers 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 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 Public Health - Health Promotion for Queensland Health. Judy is also the Deputy Chair of the Northern Territory Mental Health Coalition and a professional member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.
Special responsibilities	Member – Finance, Audit & Risk (FAR) Committee
<b>Helen McDevitt</b>	
Title	Non-Executive Director
Qualifications	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
Experience and expertise	Helen 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.
Special responsibilities	Member – Governance & Performance Committee (GaP)

**Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd**  
**Directors' Report**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2025**

<b>Leanne (Liz) Kearins</b>	
Title	Non-Executive Director
Qualifications	Diploma in Business Studies, Certificate in Journalism, Certificate in Strategic Human Resources Leadership, Chartered Manager, Certified Organisation Coach (Level 1), Certified Change Management Practitioner.
Experience and expertise	Liz Kearins is an experienced senior executive, board director and consultant, with expertise in strategy, culture change, engagement, and communication. Her background spans the consultancy, utilities, healthcare, local government, environment, tourism, and media sectors. Liz is a director of consulting firm, Engagiosity. She also chairs the board of Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia. Liz is a Fellow of the Institute of Managers and Leaders and a member of the Australian HR Institute, Communication and Public Relations Australia and the Institute of Company Directors.
Special responsibilities	Chairperson – Finance, Audit & Risk (FAR) Committee Member – Governance & Performance Committee (GaP)
<b>Andrew Byrnes</b>	
Title	Non-Executive Director
Qualifications	Bachelor of Arts (Hons); Bachelor of Laws (Hons), Master of Laws
Experience and expertise	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 Trading Program and on the advisory boards of many human rights organisations, 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 & Performance Committee (GaP)
<b>Janis (Jan) Porter</b>	
Title	Non-Executive Director
Qualifications	B.A. (Hons); A.L.A.A; Dip. Gov.
Experience and expertise	Jan 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 in 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 Porter is currently the President of Elder Rights Advocacy.
Special responsibilities	Member of Finance Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee

**Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd**  
**Directors' Report**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2025**

<b>Susan Barrera</b>	
Title	Non-Executive Director
Qualifications	Bachelor of Science (Hons), Bachelor of Education, Master of Business Administration
Experience and expertise	Susan is the chair of Advocare WA. Susan has worked for over 30 years in a number of senior management and policy positions in the Western Australian public sector. Her last position was Director General, Department for Communities. Prior to that she was Executive Director, Labour Relations. She also held senior policy and management positions in the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Corrective Services. She currently works as a consultant specialising in training, human resource, organisational development and evaluation.
<b>Paul Bull</b>	
Title	Independent Director
Qualifications	Bachelor of Economics - The University of Sydney (B Ec), Fellow of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (FCA), Graduate Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD)
Experience and expertise	Paul is a Non-Executive Director with deep finance, audit, risk and governance experience. He was a partner of BDO Chartered Accountants and its antecedent firms for over 30 years. Over his professional career Paul was involved in the audit of many not-for-profit entities in the health, aged care and social services sector. He is also a Non - Executive Director of Plumbers Supplies Cooperative Limited (PSC) and Chair of the PSC Audit and Risk Committee.
Special responsibilities	Member of Finance Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee

#### Company secretary

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

#### Meetings of members

The number of meetings of OPAN's members and the dates of each meeting held during the year ended 30 June 2025 were:

Date	Details
5 December 2024	Annual general meeting

#### Meetings of directors

The number of meetings of the company's Board of Directors ('the Board') and of each Board committee held during the year ended 30 June 2025, and the number of meetings attended by each director were:

Date	Details
21 August 2024	Ordinary meeting
07 November 2024	Ordinary meeting
5 December 2024	Annual general meeting
26 February 2025	Ordinary meeting
14 May 2025	Ordinary meeting



**Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd**  
**Directors' Report**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2025**

	Full Board	
	Attended	Held
Mary (Ara) Cresswell	5	5
Anne Burgess	5	5
Judy Davis	5	5
Helen McDevitt	5	5
Leanne (Liz) Kearins	5	5
Janis (Jan) Porter	4	5
Andrew Byrnes	4	5
Paul Bull	4	5
Susan Barrera	5	5

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 2025 were:

Date	Details
24 July 2024	Ordinary meeting
23 October 2024	Ordinary meeting
31 January 2025	Ordinary meeting
30 April 2025	Ordinary meeting

#### **Meetings of Finance, Audit & Risk Committee**

Matters subsequent to the end of the financial year are disclosed in note 7.4

#### **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.

Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd  
Directors' Report  
For the year ended 30 June 2025

**Auditor's Independence declaration**

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration as required under section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act) is set out immediately after this directors' report.  
This report is made in accordance with a resolution of directors

On behalf of the directors



\_\_\_\_\_  
Anne Burgess  
Director/Acting Chairperson



\_\_\_\_\_  
Liz Kearins  
Director/FAR Committee Chair

Dated this 6th day of November 2025



Tel: +61 2 9251 4100  
Fax: +61 2 9240 9821  
[www.bdo.com.au](http://www.bdo.com.au)

Parkline Place  
Level 25, 252 Pitt Street  
Sydney NSW 2000  
Australia

6 November 2025

**DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE BY LEAH RUSSELL TO THE DIRECTORS OF OLDER PERSONS  
ADVOCACY NETWORK LTD**

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit of Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd for the year ended 30 June 2025.

**Leah Russell**  
**Director**

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads 'Leah Russell'.

**BDO Audit Pty Ltd**

Sydney

6 November 2026

BDO Audit Pty Ltd ABN 33 134 022 870 is a member of a national association of independent entities which are all members of A.C.N. 050 110 275 Ltd ABN 77 050 110 275, an Australian company limited by guarantee. BDO Audit Pty Ltd and A.C.N. 050 110 275 Ltd are members of BDO International Ltd, a UK company limited by guarantee, and form part of the international BDO network of independent member firms. Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.

**Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd**  
**Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income**  
**For the Year ended 30 June 2025**

		2025	2024
	Note	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>			
Government grants	2.1	47,547,994	42,243,437
Commissioned projects	2.1	-	187,195
Interest Income		447,779	442,159
Other Income		-	5,782
<b>Total revenue</b>		<b>47,995,773</b>	<b>42,878,573</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Advocacy service delivery	3.1	40,873,897	37,044,973
OPAN staff costs	3.2	4,023,595	3,439,350
OPAN operating expenditure		2,431,132	1,916,961
OPAN governance expenses		147,121	124,393
OPAN other project costs		-	97,620
OPAN depreciation		144,847	-
OPAN interest – Right of Use Asset		8,477	-
OPAN tax – FBT		1,675	-
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>47,630,744</b>	<b>42,623,297</b>
<b>Surplus before income tax expense</b>		<b>365,029</b>	<b>255,276</b>
Income tax expense		-	-
<b>Surplus after income tax</b>		<b>365,029</b>	<b>255,276</b>
Other comprehensive income, net of income tax		-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>365,029</b>	<b>255,276</b>

*The statement of comprehensive income should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.*



**Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
**As at 30 June 2025**

		2025	2024
	Note	\$	\$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalent	5.1	6,598,544	2,050,710
Trade and other receivables	4.1	88,603	150,221
Other financial assets	4.2	-	4,156,012
Other assets	4.3	179,625	100,167
Contract receivables	4.4	675,011	-
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>7,541,783</b>	<b>6,457,110</b>
<b>Non-Current assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	4.5	45,873	1,000
Right-of-use assets	4.6	166,383	-
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>212,256</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>7,754,039</b>	<b>6,458,110</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	4.7	730,686	361,949
Lease liability	4.6	167,595	-
Employee benefits liabilities	3.3	233,494	200,230
Contract liabilities	4.8	4,870,012	4,567,261
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>6,001,787</b>	<b>5,129,440</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>			
Lease liability	4.6	14,300	-
Provision for make good	4.6	10,000	-
Employee benefits liabilities	3.3	50,087	15,834
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>		<b>74,387</b>	<b>15,834</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>6,076,174</b>	<b>5,145,274</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>1,677,865</b>	<b>1,312,836</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Retained surplus		1,677,865	1,312,836
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>1,677,865</b>	<b>1,312,836</b>

*The above statement of financial position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.*

**Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd**  
**Statement of Changes in Equity**  
**For the Year ended 30 June 2025**

	Retained surplus \$	Total equity \$
<b>2024</b>		
<b>Balance as at 1 July 2023</b>	1,057,560	1,057,560
Surplus for the year	255,276	255,276
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2024</b>	<b>1,312,836</b>	<b>1,312,836</b>
<b>Balance as at 1 July 2024</b>	1,312,836	1,312,836
Surplus for the year	365,029	365,029
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2025</b>	<b>1,677,865</b>	<b>1,677,865</b>

*The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.*

**Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd**  
**Statement of Cash Flows**  
**For the Year ended 30 June 2025**

		2025	2024
	Note	\$	\$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Receipts from grants and customers (inc. GST)		52,697,436	45,834,334
Payments to clients, suppliers and employees (inc. GST)		(52,577,509)	(47,057,619)
Interest received		447,779	385,381
Fringe benefit tax paid		(1,676)	-
<b>Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities</b>		<u>566,030</u>	<u>(837,904)</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Purchase of other assets		-	(59,173)
Purchase of PPE		(48,935)	-
Proceeds from business investment accounts		4,156,012	-
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		<u>4,107,077</u>	<u>(59,173)</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Repayment of lease liability		(125,273)	-
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>		<u>(125,273)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents held		4,547,834	(897,077)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		2,050,710	2,947,787
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year</b>	5.1	<u><u>6,598,544</u></u>	<u><u>2,050,710</u></u>

*The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.*

**Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**For the Year ended 30 June 2025**

**Note 1      Summary of Material 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.

*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.

*Restatement of comparatives*

There can be a restatement of comparatives through either a correction of error, a change in accounting policy or a reclassification.

**a) Company details**

The registered office and principal place of business is:

Suite 207, 46 Kippax 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.



**Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**For the Year ended 30 June 2025**

**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.

**Note 2.1: Revenue**

National Aged Care Advocacy program

**Total government grants**

Public Consultations on Aged Care Reform

**Total commission projects**

**Total revenue**

2025	2024
\$	\$
47,547,994	42,243,437
<b>47,547,994</b>	<b>42,243,437</b>
-	187,195
-	187,195
<b>47,547,994</b>	<b>42,430,632</b>

*Disaggregation of revenue*

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

*Timing of revenue recognition*

Recognised over time

<b>47,547,994</b>	<b>42,430,632</b>
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*Geographical regions*

Australia

<b>47,547,994</b>	<b>42,430,632</b>
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*Accounting policy for revenue and other income recognition*

OPAN when assessing revenue and other income applies AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities. AASB 1058 requires OPAN to assess which standard is to apply. The main standards being; AASB 9 Financial Instruments, AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers or AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities.

AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities is recognised on receipt. This is generally applicable for fundraising income.

*Revenue from contracts*

*a) Contracts that contain clauses that meet the definition of AASB 9 Financial Instruments*

Contracts that meet the definition of Financial Instruments such as where they contain termination for convenience clauses is recognised as OPAN spends, or has provided the services depending on the terms on the contract.

Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd  
Notes to the financial statements  
For the Year ended 30 June 2025

**Note 2      Funding Delivery of Our Services (continued)**

**Note 2.1:   Revenue (continued)**

*b) Revenue from contracts with customers – AASB 15*

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.

Revenue from contracts with customers recognition is detailed below:

**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.

**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.

**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**

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
NACAP contract service delivery organisations	39,425,249	35,804,336
NACAP contract other service delivery costs	1,448,648	1,240,637
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b>40,873,897</b>	<b>37,044,973</b>

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

Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd  
Notes to the financial statements  
For the Year ended 30 June 2025

**Note 3 The Cost of Delivering Services (continued)**

<b>Note 3.2: OPAN staff costs</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Salaries and wages	3,457,318	3,045,370
Other payroll costs	170,731	64,750
Superannuation	395,546	329,230
<b>Total OPAN staff costs</b>	<b>4,023,595</b>	<b>3,439,350</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	203,917	162,129
Long service leave	25,955	13,528
Special leave	-	21,263
Time in lieu	3,622	3,310
<b>Total current employee benefits</b>	<b>233,494</b>	<b>200,230</b>

*Non-current*

Long service leave	50,087	15,834
<b>Total non-current employee benefits</b>	<b>50,087</b>	<b>15,834</b>
<b>Total employee benefits</b>	<b>283,581</b>	<b>216,064</b>

*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.

Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd  
Notes to the financial statements  
For the Year ended 30 June 2025

**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 : Contract receivables

4.5: Property, plant and equipment

4.6: Right-of-use Assets and Lease Liability

4.7: Trade and other payables

4.8: Contract liabilities

**Note 4.1: Trade and other receivables**

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Trade receivables	28,054	54,697
Other receivables	5,502	-
GST receivable	51,583	92,192
Rental bonds	3,464	3,332
<b>Total trade and other receivables</b>	<b>88,603</b>	<b>150,221</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	-	4,156,012
<b>Total other financial assets</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,156,012</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	179,625	100,167
<b>Total other assets</b>	<b>179,625</b>	<b>100,167</b>

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

**Note 4.4: Contract receivables**

NACAP sub-contract receivables

	675,011	-
<b>Total Contract receivables</b>	<b>675,011</b>	<b>-</b>



Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd  
Notes to the financial statements  
For the Year ended 30 June 2025

Note 4.5: Property, plant and equipment	2025 \$	2024 \$
<i>Non-Current</i>		
Opening	1,000	-
Additions	48,935	1,000
Depreciation	(4,062)	-
<b>Total property, plant and equipment</b>	<b>45,873</b>	<b>1,000</b>

The assets are recognised at cost, and have an average useful life of 5 years.

<b>Note 4.6: Right-of-use Assets and Lease liability</b>		
<i>Lease asset – office premises</i>		
Carrying amount at the beginning of the year	-	-
Additions	307,168	-
Depreciation Expense	(140,785)	-
<b>Total Right-of-use Assets</b>	<b>166,383</b>	<b>-</b>

**Amount recognised in profit or loss**

Depreciation charge of right-of-use assets	140,785	-
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**Right-of-use Assets and Lease liability (continued)**

**Lease liability**

*Lease liability – office premises*

Current lease liability	167,595	-
Non-current lease liability	14,300	-
<b>Total lease liabilities</b>	<b>181,895</b>	<b>-</b>

Opening lease	-	-
Additions	297,168	-
Repayments	(123,750)	-
Interest	8,477	-
Closing	181,895	-
Provision – lease make good	10,000	-

<b>Note 4.7: Trade and other payables</b>		
PAYG liability	67,510	46,764
Trade creditors	401,281	158,592
Accrued expenses	185,950	108,240
Credit card payable	7,972	13,130
Superannuation payable	49,492	35,223
Long service leave levies payable	18,481	-
<b>Total trade and other payables</b>	<b>730,686</b>	<b>361,949</b>

The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

**Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**For the Year ended 30 June 2025**

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
<b>Note 4.8: Contract liabilities</b>		
<i>Contract liabilities arising on grant funding</i>		
NACAP advocacy program	4,870,012	605,000
NACAP expansion projects	-	3,962,261
<b>Total contract liabilities</b>	<b>4,870,012</b>	<b>4,567,261</b>

**Contract liability recognition**

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. The accounting policy is in line with Note 2 - *Accounting policy for revenue and other income recognition.*

**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

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
<b>Note 5.1: Cash and cash equivalents</b>		
<i>Current</i>		
Cash and cash equivalents	6,598,544	2,050,710
<b>Total Cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>6,598,544</b>	<b>2,050,710</b>

**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 2025 and 30 June 2024.

**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.

Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd  
Notes to the financial statements  
For the Year ended 30 June 2025

**Note 6 Risks, Contingencies and Valuation Uncertainties (continued)**

**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.

**Note 6.1: Financial instruments**

***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:
  - o has transferred substantially all the risks and rewards of the asset; or
  - o has neither transferred nor retained substantially all the risks and rewards of the asset but has transferred control of the asset.

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.

**Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**For the Year ended 30 June 2025**

**Note 6 Risks, Contingencies and Valuation Uncertainties (continued)***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.

***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.

**Note 6.1: Financial instruments*****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 2025 (2024: nil).

**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

**Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**For the Year ended 30 June 2025**

**Note 7 Other Disclosures (continued)****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.

*Service Delivery Organisations*

Service Delivery Organisations are considered related parties on the basis that OPAN's Board of Directors comprises one representative from each network member organisation.

Payments made during the period to the Service Delivery Organisations for the delivery of the NACAP program are disclosed in note 3.1.

*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.

**Note 7.1: Related parties***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:

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Aggregate compensation	<u>657,535</u>	<u>601,328</u>

**Note 7.3: Remuneration of auditors**

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

Audit of the financial statements	44,000	38,000
Other non-assurance services	5,000	4,500
<b>Total remuneration of auditors</b>	<u><b>49,000</b></u>	<u><b>42,500</b></u>



Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd  
Notes to the financial statements  
For the Year ended 30 June 2025

**Note 7      Other Disclosures (continued)**

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

On 23 June 2025, the entity executed a new National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP) grant agreement with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, securing funding of \$189.6 million for the period FY2026 to FY2029.

Following this, on 30 July 2025, the grant agreement was amended via a deed of variation, resulting in an additional funding allocation of \$1.4 million.

No other matters or circumstances have arisen since 30 June 2025 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 required to contribute a maximum of \$100 towards meeting any outstanding and obligations of the company. At 30 June 2025, the number of members was 9 (2024: 9).

Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd  
Directors' Declaration  
For the Year ended 30 June 2025

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 2025 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



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Anne Burgess  
Director/Acting Chairperson



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Liz Kearins  
Director/FAR Committee Chair

Dated this 6th day of November 2025



Tel: +61 2 9251 4100  
 Fax: +61 2 9240 9821  
[www.bdo.com.au](http://www.bdo.com.au)

Parkline Place  
 Level 25, 252 Pitt Street  
 Sydney NSW 2000  
 Australia

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the members of Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd

### Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

#### Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2025, 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 report, including material accounting policy information, and the responsible entities' declaration.

In our opinion the accompanying financial report of Older Persons Advocacy Network Ltd, is in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- (i) Giving a true and fair view of the registered entity's financial position as at 30 June 2025 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- (ii) Complying with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 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 the registered entity in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (ACNC Act) and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's *APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other

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

#### Other information

The responsible entities of the registered entity are responsible for the other information. The other information obtained at the date of this auditor's report is information included in the registered entity's annual report, but does not include the financial report and our 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 on the other information obtained prior to the date of this auditor's report, 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.

#### **Responsibilities of responsible entities for the Financial Report**

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

In preparing the financial report, responsible entities are responsible for assessing the registered entity'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 the responsible entities either intends to liquidate the registered entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The responsible entities of the registered entity 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 (<http://www.auasb.gov.au/Home.aspx>) at:

[http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors\\_responsibilities/ar4.pdf](http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf)

This description forms part of our auditor's report.

#### **BDO Audit Pty Ltd**

Leah Russell  
Director

Sydney, 7 November 2025

## OPAN member organisations by state or territory

