

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Friday, January 30, 2026

### **OPAN WELCOMES A NEW REFERENCE GROUP TO INFORM SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY**

Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) warmly welcomes a reconstituted National Older Persons Reference Group (NOPRG), making it the most diverse group to date.

The reference group was formed more than five years ago and meets every two months to ensure OPAN's aged care advocacy is directly informed by older people's perspective on the issues that affect them.

The new group, including 22 new and 14 returning members, was selected from more than 150 applications following a robust selection process.

OPAN CEO Craig Gear said the level of interest in the group reflected the commitment of older people across Australia to shaping the aged care system.

"We were encouraged by the quality and diversity of applications and the resulting group reflects both continuity and renewal.

"Following a rigorous application process aligned with OPAN's core values, we have a group that is more diverse and intersectional than ever before with increased representation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, CALD communities and LGBTI peoples. We also welcome increased representation of veterans and forgotten Australians.

"The members bring living and lived experience perspectives on systemic issues in aged care, providing invaluable insight that informs OPAN's reform efforts.

"With members from across Australia, including from metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas, we're able to ensure a wide range of perspectives are represented," he said.

Mr Gear also acknowledged the significant contribution of previous NOPRG members who have helped shape OPAN's advocacy, policy submissions and engagement with the government.

"I want to extend my gratitude to former members who dedicated many hours of their valuable time to share perspectives that have had, and will continue to have, a lasting impact on our work," Mr Gear said.

"As we continue to navigate changes under the new Aged Care Act and work to embed the rights-based framework in the system, it's vital that we continue to raise older people's voices to ensure the sector gets it right.

"We need to create an aged care system that doesn't leave anyone behind therefore the system must be informed by older people themselves."

## **MEDIA CONTACT**

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## **IMPORTANT NOTICE TO MEDIA FOR STORIES RELATING TO OLDER PEOPLE**

It is critical to provide older people with an avenue to get support when covering stories about aged care. We strongly encourage you to include the following message in your story to enable older people to seek support:

*For information or support regarding aged care, please call the Aged Care Advocacy Line on 1800 700 600 or visit [opan.org.au](http://opan.org.au)*