



MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 10 February 2026

ALBANESE GOVERNMENT MUST TAKE URGENT ACTION TO ADDRESS SUPPORT AT HOME CHALLENGES FACING OLDER PEOPLE

Despite the much-anticipated new Aged Care Act being in effect for more than 100 days, significant challenges persist for older people on the Support at Home program, as evidenced by the nearly 18,000 cases supported by OPAN's network members in the last quarter. A wide range of issues remain unsolved and urgent action is required if Support at Home is to realise its fundamental intent: enabling older people to remain living safely and independently in their homes and communities.

Addressing long wait times; unaffordable prices for essential services; and a lack of cottage respite, are among the main implementation issues that require urgent action from the Albanese Government.

Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) CEO Craig Gear said the longer these issues remain unresolved, the harder and more difficult life becomes for older people.

“Greater funding is needed to alleviate the assessment and reassessment wait times, which show no sign of abating.

“We also call on the government to provide assessors with the ability to override the algorithmic decision based on clinical judgement where it is clear the algorithm has underassessed their care needs. The uncertainty and confusion being experienced by older people is unfair and detrimental to their wellbeing.

“Our network member advocates have told us that older people are reducing their services due to the price increases. Nobody should need to jeopardise the care they need, which is why better transparency around prices is required. This includes access to transport, especially in rural areas. We are pleased the department and Commission are taking regulatory action where providers have not fully displayed their prices.

“There are also many older people receiving invoices months later, affecting their ability to properly manage their budget and service options. Providers need to ensure they meet the 30-day timeframe for monthly statements.

“Older people have repeatedly shared that the financial hardship application process remains overly complex and daunting. We are looking to work with government to further simplify this process.”

Mr Gear said cottage respite, which was previously available under the old Act, must be immediately reincluded to Support at Home.



“The unavailability of cottage respite under Support at Home could lead to unnecessary hospitalisations and premature entry to residential care.

“Older people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Although Support at Home enshrines these principles through the Statement of Rights, it is abundantly clear that the program is failing to meet community expectations.

“This is consistent with the feedback received from older people and OPAN's advocates, who have seen a significant rise in enquiries and increased demand for support since the changes took effect. It is also consistent with evidence heard at the CHSP Senate Inquiry.

“OPAN is here to help older people understand their rights and navigate the system. Those who require support, please call the Aged Care Advocacy Line on 1800 700 600 for advice and assistance,” Mr Gear said.

MEDIA CONTACT

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When reporting about older people please refer to the [media reporting guidelines](#) and for more information or media enquiries visit our [Media Centre](#).

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