

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Tuesday, 18 August 2026

### **ABC FOUR CORNERS HIGHLIGHTS SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS WITH SUPPORT AT HOME AGED CARE PROGRAM**

Older people across Australia continue to experience delays and unacceptable challenges with the Support at Home program, with ABC Four Corners bringing national attention to critical issues that need urgent reform.

Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) has consistently raised these issues with the government since the commencement of the Act. OPAN CEO Craig Gear said the recent media coverage is a powerful reminder of the need for urgent changes to be made.

Issues included concerns about the prioritisation system and the use of a controversial algorithm within the Integrated Assessment Tool (IAT), which is used to determine an older person's priority status and funding allocation. Additional concerns include unacceptably long wait times for assessments and reassessments, access to the full level of funding approved, and timely access to assistive technology and home modifications.

"We continue to hear directly from older people about issues in aged care, which will continue to worsen unless changes are made," Mr Gear said.

"The problems highlighted last night are the same ones that our advocates have been hearing since day one.

"Support at Home is well intentioned but it is abundantly clear that the program is not reaching its intent for too many older people.

"While OPAN supports a consistent and rigorous approach to the assessment process, the IAT algorithm has been an ongoing challenge and concern for older people. Especially since it determines a person's level of aged care funding and priority, which can impact their wellbeing and autonomy.

"The algorithm may work for some to receive the right levels of support, but we continue to hear from frontline aged care advocates about instances where the outcome does not logically match an older person's identified care needs.

"These assessments go to the core of an older person's dignity and independence, so it is crucial that a human element remains when it comes to decision-making.

"We look forward to seeing the findings from the government's review and working together to find a better way forward to escalate exceptional cases, including times when an older person's needs or priority level have changed. This must occur with appropriate clinical and human oversight."

Mr Gear said the government's latest Aged Care Wait Times report shows some improvement, but it still takes on average 7-10 months for standard priority to get Support at Home and 5 months for a spot in an aged care home.

"More than 250,000 older people are currently on the wait list for aged care, either for an assessment, allocation of funding or a package at their approved level," Mr Gear said.

"These are not numbers, they are human beings, who deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. While there have been some gains in allocating more packages there are still a large number of older people who are not getting the support they need or have been assessed for.

"Older people have a right to access a safe, quality aged care system that genuinely realises their rights in practice, not just in legislation."

### **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](http://opan.org.au)*