

MEDIA RELEASE

15 October 2026

OPAN WELCOMES AGED CARE ASSESSMENT REFORMS AND INDEPENDENT REVIEW

The Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) has welcomed the passing of the Aged Care Legislation Amendment (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Commissioner and Other Measures) Bill 2026 by the Australian Senate and the government's announcement of an independent review of the Integrated Assessment Tool (IAT).

OPAN CEO Craig Gear said this is an important response to ongoing concerns about the IAT, which uses a computer algorithm to determine care prioritisation and funding for older people under the Support at Home program.

"It is clear, from all perspectives, that there is strong support to get services right for older people," Mr Gear said.

"OPAN has continued to hear from older people, families and advocates about instances where older people's care needs were not being accurately reflected through the tool, resulting in delays accessing the right care and lengthy reassessment processes."

"We're pleased that the Government and Coalition have come together to deliver these important changes for older people."

Mr Gear said the new escalation pathway is an important step, but the IAT review would be significant for long-term improvement of the system.

"It was important that action was taken this year to create an escalation pathway for older people facing exceptional circumstances, ensuring there is a mechanism to review decisions when an assessment doesn't accurately reflect an older person's care needs."

"While the escalation pathway will help address individual cases, the independent review provides the opportunity for a long-term solution."

"OPAN has consistently advocated for improvements to the assessment system and continues to call for human oversight. Older people deserve confidence that they can access the right level of care they need, when they need it."

"This was a collective effort by a number of peak bodies, with a variety of options discussed with all sides of government, and in the end the Parliament came together to get an important step forward for older people in the community."

Mr Gear said OPAN was also pleased that the legislation secures the establishment of a permanent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Commissioner.

"This is critical reform that will help strengthen equitable aged care access and services."

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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