

## Chat with us

Do you have concerns about your aged care?

Do you need assistance

- ensuring your right to have visitors is upheld
- understanding aged care provider services or fees
- accessing, or getting the most from, your services
- having a say in your care and the things that impact you.

If your answer is yes, or you simply want advice about your aged care services

## Chat with us 1800 700 600

We will talk through the issue with you to get a full understanding of the situation and your wishes.

We are guided by what you want.

Our services are free and confidential.



Free advocacy line  
**1800 700 600**



Find out more visit:  
[open.org.au](http://open.org.au)  
or scan the QR code



# News for You

Aged Care Advocacy Newsletter | August 2023 | Issue 7



Maggie Beer is ready to tackle the challenge of improving food in residential aged care.

## Every mouthful must count

Maggie Beer is a passionate voice for fresh, wholesome food in residential aged care.

'Food is nutrition for the soul as well as the body,' she says.

'And cooks and chefs can do more than anyone else to bring about health and wellbeing for older people.'

To inspire them, the cook, writer and educator has been running two-day masterclasses across the country for the best part of a decade.

A \$5 million injection of federal government funding, announced last October, will enable her to drive further change.

'It's a big job, the biggest job I've ever done,' she says.

The aim is to give aged care kitchens the skills and knowledge they need to

cook food that gives 'pleasure along with the goodness'.

'We want to raise the bar,' Maggie says.

'For older people, the consequences of poor nutrition are significant – and often associated with other health risks.

'With smaller appetites when less physical activity is part of the norm, it is more important than ever that every mouthful counts.'

**If you have issues or concerns around the quality of food being provided in your aged care home, call us on 1800 700 600.**

**To view the [webinar](#), 'Food glorious food: what to do when it's not', scan the QR code.**



## JIM'S STORY

### 'We live here: it's important for us to have our say'

James (Jim) Kildea has noticed a 'big improvement' in the meals being served at his residential aged care home since he joined the food committee.

'Our current chef has done a wonderful job, with great enthusiasm I must say, to make meals interesting,' he says.

'We have regular meetings with him to discuss what the new menu is going to be – our likes and dislikes.

'We are there – not to advise him – but to help him to decide what sort of food we need.'

Having a say in the meals at his aged care community, says Jim, is a 'great privilege, really.

'I enjoy it enormously.

'People come into aged care from having a very independent life and they need to be occupied, they need to be able to think and do and help – all the things they did before.

'I find it very uplifting, actually, to be part of these activities.'

An older person's right to have control over, and make choices about their care is enshrined in the Charter of Aged Care Rights. As is their right to be listened to and understood.



'It's very important for us to have our say. In fact, it's vital,' says Jim.

'We live here. This is supposed to be our home!'

**Contact Seniors Rights Service for free and confidential information and support with your aged care needs.**

**Chat with us by calling 1800 700 600**

# How to protect yourself from harm



There are some simple steps you can take to minimise your risk of abuse:

- know your rights (including your right to make your own decisions)
- keep in touch with family and friends and stay active in your community
- plan ahead, write down what you want to happen (inform as many trusted people as possible of your wishes).

OPAN's Self-advocacy toolkit has more information and resources about abuse and the steps older people can take to protect themselves. Visit [open.org.au/toolkit](https://open.org.au/toolkit) for the online version or call 1800 700 600 to order a free print booklet.

## ANTONELLA'S STORY\*

### You can have a visitor during lockdowns

Mateo's wife, Antonella, lives with dementia in residential aged care. Mateo visits her most days. When it's sunny, they walk to the nearby park or have pizza at the local club. If it's raining, they watch television together in her room. Mateo knows Antonella appreciates his visits because of her open-armed response when he walks into the room.

When the aged care home went into lockdown, following a third COVID outbreak, the manager told Mateo he couldn't visit. Mateo was troubled by the prospect of yet another enforced separation – he knew how detrimental previous lockdowns had been for Antonella. He phoned OPAN and discussed his options with an advocate who told him about the Sector Code for Visiting in Aged Care Homes, which says older people



are entitled to a visitor, even during lockdowns. Mateo emailed a copy of the Code to the manager who agreed that Mateo's visits could recommence. A few days later, a staff member stopped Mateo from entering. Upset, Mateo again called the advocate. The advocate explained his options, including escalating the issue to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission. Mateo decided to first make another call to the manager, who undertook to resolve the situation herself. Mateo's visits resumed.

**For information about concerns with your care call Seniors Rights Service on 1800 700 600**

\*Names have been changed.

## You have a right to an Essential Visitor

Aged care residents are entitled to an Essential Visitor, even during COVID-19 lockdowns.

### Essential Visitors include:

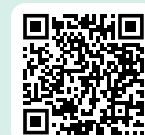
**Partners in Care:** Someone who frequently visits you to provide companionship or regular routine care. This may be a family member, friend or representative.

**Named visitors:** If you do not have a Partner in Care, you may nominate one person to be a named visitor.

Visits to residents at, or approaching, the end of life should be facilitated for anyone at any time. This includes out of hours visiting.

**Please contact OPAN on 1800 700 600 for free and confidential support if you have issues with visitation in your aged care home or scan the QR code or visit:**

**[opan.pub/visitsDL](https://opan.pub/visitsDL)**



**'When something's not right, it's okay to speak up. Most service providers want to know what they can do better.'**

Advocate, Gerard Dunlop

## Free education sessions for residents on:

- your rights
- how advocates can assist you
- abuse of older people.

**Call 1800 700 600 for more information on our free education sessions**



# Keep these numbers handy

**Seniors Rights Service**  
- Free Advocacy & Legal  
1800 700 600

**Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**  
1800 951 822

**My Aged Care**  
1800 200 422

**National Dementia Helpline**  
1800 100 500

**National Seniors Australia**  
1300 765 050

**Lifeline**  
13 11 14

**NSW Health**  
1300 066 055

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.



[seniorsrightsservice.org.au](http://seniorsrightsservice.org.au)

Seniors Rights Service is a proud member of the Older Persons Advocacy Network. Member organisations support you with free and independent aged care advocacy in each state or territory.

## PUZZLE TIME

### WORD FINDER

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**FOOD CHOICE TIMING TEMPERATURE NUTRITION**

**SNACKS CULTURE PREFERENCE RITUAL EATING**

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[open.org.au](http://open.org.au)

**Advocacy line 1800 700 600**  
We welcome your feedback.  
Email: [enquiries@open.org.au](mailto:enquiries@open.org.au)