



www.opan.com.au

Older Persons Advocacy Network

Annual Report | 2019 - 2020



Welcome to our 2019–2020 Annual Report.

OPAN strives to be a dynamic organisation that builds upon and learns from its collective history to best support older people. OPAN aims to improve access to aged care advocacy for older people across Australia and create a society where older people are heard, informed and respected and where they enjoy and exercise their rights.

OPAN service delivery organisation by state or territory:

ACT



TAS



VIC



NSW



NT - Top End



QLD



SA



WA



NT - Central



Funded by:



Australian Government

Department of Health

Contents

What we do and who we are	4	ADA Australia – Queensland Member	34
Who we are	4	OPAN’s Projects	35
Our network	4	Delivering against the NACAP framework	36
What we do	5	Key outcomes to be delivered - OPAN NACAP extension	38
What inspires and guides us	5	The National Older Persons Reference Group	39
Val Fell – Member of the National Older Persons Reference Group	6	Launch of the Elder Help App and Noticed Something video	40
OPAN’s Vision	7	Elder Abuse training development for Health Professionals	41
OPAN’s Values	7	Systemic Advocacy	42
Advocare – Western Australia Member	8	Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety	43
Charter of Aged Care Rights	9	Chemical Restraint	44
In 2019 – 2020, OPAN provided...	10	Navigating the Aged Care system	45
Aged care advocacy	12	Partnering with the Department of Veterans’ Affairs	46
Chairperson’s Report	15	My Aged Care Advocates as Agents Pilot	47
CEO’s Report	17	Supporting diversity – supporting Forgotten Australians	48
Australians over 65 in Australia today	19	Charter of Aged Care Rights Phase 2	49
OPAN NACAP Workplan high-level achievements: 2017 - 2020	20	Linking our network together	50
OPAN in the media	21	Mrs Davis Advocacy Case Study	51
COVID-19 Projects	24	Interview with Advocate: Belinda Staniforth	
Supporting older people through the COVID-19 pandemic	25	Catholic Care NT	52
OPAN’s response to COVID-19	26	The OPAN team	54
COVID-19 webinar series	28	OPAN’s Directors	57
The Older Persons COVID-19 Support Line	29		
Norman Swan videos	30		
Victorian outbreak	31		
Newmarch House – Case Study	32		
Visitation Industry Code	33		

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work and recognise that it always has been, and always will be, Aboriginal land. We honour the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and pay our respects to all Elders past, present and emerging.

Diversity

Consistent with the vision of the aged care sector’s Aged Care Diversity Framework, our work aims for all older people to experience a high quality aged care system that ensures equitable access and outcomes and embraces their diverse characteristics and life experiences.

What we do and who we are

Who we are

Although the OPAN alliance was only recently formed, our passion runs deep and our expertise have been developed over decades.

Since 1987, the Commonwealth Department of Health's National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP) has supported nine independent, not-for-profit organisations based in the states and territories to link older people with aged care advocates. OPAN was formed in 2017 by these organisations, who became foundational OPAN members to deliver the first national NACAP contract. OPAN has quickly become recognised as the national peak of aged care advocacy in Australia and together we are a united team working towards a shared goal to deliver advocacy to older Australians.

OPAN acts as a voice for older people either within or considering entering Australia's aged care system and who are seeking or receiving independent advocacy. Our member organisations deliver critical aged care advocacy services in their state or territory, while OPAN engages with the government, carries out systemic aged care advocacy and delivers services through a suite of national projects. Collectively, we are dedicated to giving older people, their families and representatives across Australia a voice and giving them free, confidential, independent advocacy, information and education.

ACT

ACT Disability Aged and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS)

New South Wales

Seniors Rights Service (SRS)

Queensland

Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia (ADA Australia)

Northern Territory (Central Australia)

CatholicCare NT

Northern Territory (Top End)

Darwin Community Legal Service (DCLS)

South Australia

Aged Rights Advocacy Service (ARAS)

Tasmania

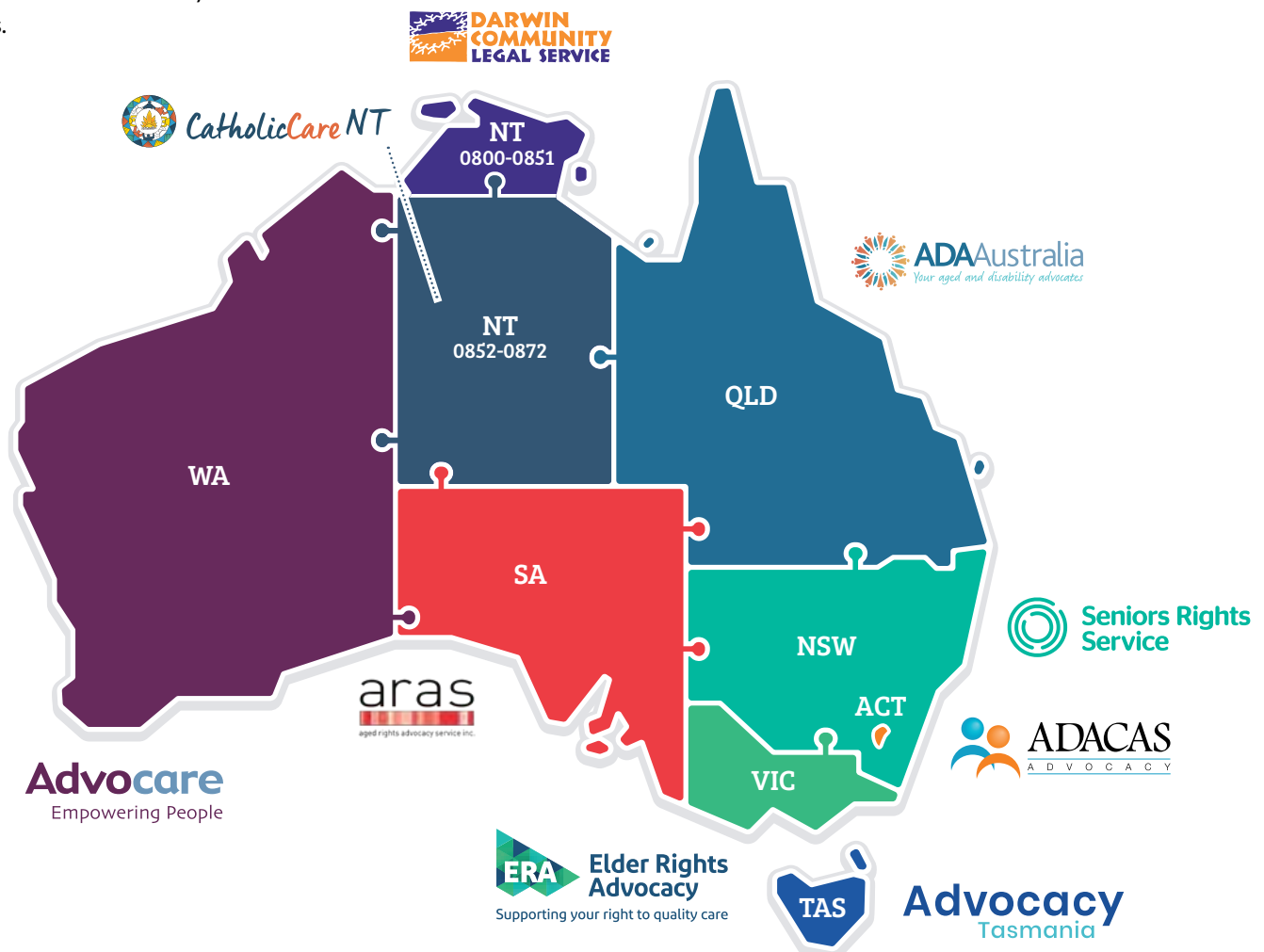
Advocacy Tasmania

Victoria

Elder Rights Advocacy (ERA)

Western Australia

Advocare



What we do

The Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) believes that every older person across Australia – along with their family and representatives – should have a voice. It's a responsibility and privilege that we cannot take seriously enough as we seek to get to more older people. Our independence is a key strength as our advocates work to uphold the rights of older people and find ways to make the aged care system work better for them.

What inspires and guides us

OPAN and its members are vital in promoting every older Australian's ability to exercise their aged care rights under the charter.

Every older person in the community has rights. At the heart of everything we do is the *Charter of Aged Care Rights*.



Val Fell – Member of the National Older Persons Reference Group

Val Fell is part of OPAN's National Older Persons Reference Group. At 91, she is studying a bachelor of dementia care at the University of Tasmania after recently completing both "Understanding the Brain" and "Preventing Dementia" Massive Open Online Courses through the Wicking Centre at UTAS. Previously, while caring for her husband, she attended short education sessions with Alzheimer's NSW.

Since her husband's death in 2013, she has been running a dementia carers support group in Corrimal (Wollongong NSW). Val joined Alzheimer's NSW in 2007 as a volunteer advocate and became a peer educator with COTA in 2010 and is still involved with both organisations.

Val obtained her Leaving Certificate in 1945, studied mathematics and statistics at Sydney University, and taught at SCEGGS Moss Vale for 3 years. She became an Associate Member of the Association of Incorporated Statisticians (London) (1954), while working with the Economic Survey of the Cocoa Producing Areas of Nigeria initially, then with J.B.Lyons as a market research statistician.

After returning to Australia, she worked with Beacon Research (a part of Unilever) until her husband, a Fairfax journalist, was transferred to Newcastle (1962) and subsequently to Wollongong in 1968. Until the late 1980's she continued to do research in education, media, socio-economic areas and product research for many organisations. Val then became involved with the City of Wollongong Eisteddfod as public relations officer then convenor until 1995.

Since moving to Wollongong, Val has been involved in community activities and was awarded the Senior Citizen's Award for 2020 by the City of Wollongong for her continuous work as a volunteer.



Here are some quotes from Val's interview with Craig Gear during her video for International Day of Older Persons:

Her advice to young people:

"Think about the future and remember one day you will be in the same position that older people are in now. Try to respect them but also try to understand them more (the life of older people) and develop some empathy. The person still has an identity, even if they are ill, they are still there and they need to be respected."

"Just because you're old doesn't mean you have nothing to offer."

"We need empathy between all age groups."

"We need more intergenerational activities."

Watch the video here:

vimeo.com/463015698/e244552151

OPAN's Vision

A society where older people are heard, informed and respected and where they are aware of advocacy and enjoy and exercise their rights.

Purpose:

The purpose of OPAN is to facilitate an environment that promotes the rights of older people and the ability for all older Australians to live well and be respected.

Strategic Goals:

1. Delivery of OPAN work plan within quality framework
2. Demonstrated influence and outcomes from systemic advocacy strategies
3. Recognition of OPAN as a key national body for older persons advocacy
4. Strong, collaborative effective organisation with a flourishing network
5. Increase OPAN reach and empower more older people to exercise their rights

OPAN's Values

- ★ Respect
- ★ Integrity
- ★ Justice & equity
- ★ Accountability & transparency
- ★ Working & learning together



Advocare – Western Australia Member

This year, Advocare has delivered the National Aged Care Advocacy Program in Western Australia, providing advocacy and information to over 2,800 callers and delivering high quality education sessions to community organisations and residential aged care facilities. Providing older community members with access to accurate information about their rights, and help to pursue these rights if required.

Advocare has experienced growth in demand in other service areas: receiving the highest ever number of calls to the WA Elder Abuse Helpline and expanding the successful delivery of the National Aged Care Navigation Trial in the Perth metropolitan area to include the Pilbara, Kimberley, and

Mid-West regions of Western Australia. Advocare has been warmly welcomed in these regions by local community and health services. Our regular visits have helped build trust-based relationships with agencies and corporations supporting the local Aboriginal communities.

Advocare also successfully achieved Quality Accreditation against the QIC Community Services Standards, including recognition of our human rights based approach to advocacy.

Whilst the ongoing experience of COVID-19 was by no means a highlight, we were able to transition from office-based to home working service delivery without service interruption.

More recently, Advocare supported our OPAN partner organisation in Victoria by providing advocacy and information to 150 Victorians during a period of high demand.

This year has certainly been one of challenge and change. We would like to recognise the significant contribution made to OPAN by our former CEO Diedre Timms, and to acknowledge her outstanding leadership of Advocare during the past year.

Advocare
Empowering People





Charter of Aged Care Rights

As an older person, I have a right to ...

1. Safe and high-quality care and services
2. Be treated with dignity and respect
3. Have my identity, culture and diversity valued and supported
4. Live without abuse and neglect
5. Be informed about my care and services in a way I understand
6. Access all information about myself, including information about their rights, care and services
7. Have control over and make choices about my care, and personal and social life, including where choices involve personal risk
8. Have control over, and make decisions about, the personal aspects of my daily life, financial affairs and possessions
9. My independence
10. Be listened to and understood
11. Have a person of my choice, including an aged care advocate, support me or speak on my behalf
12. Complain free from reprisal, and to have my complaints dealt with fairly and promptly;
13. Personal privacy and to have my personal information protected;
14. Exercise my rights without it adversely affecting the way I am treated.



In 2019 – 2020, OPAN and its members provided...



Individual Advocacy

20,819

occasions of information or advocacy support to older people

29%

increase from 2018 – 2019



Elder abuse support

3,268

occasions of support to older people at risk of or experiencing elder abuse

38%

increase from 2018 – 2019



Education sessions

2,198

education sessions across both residential aged care facilities and home care recipients.

640

sessions on preventing the abuse of older people



Webinars

35,619

views of the 46 webinars produced

550%

increase from 2018 – 2019



Aged care advocacy

Older people still face barriers in expressing what they want and need when it comes to determining their own future and the quality of their care, and as the number of older people grows, the number of people experiencing issues with aged care will grow too. With the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic blindsiding the community and putting the wellbeing of people in aged care homes in even greater jeopardy, the need for advocacy has never been greater.

Older people still face barriers in expressing what they want and need when it comes to determining their own future and the quality of their care. As the number of older people grows, the number of people experiencing issues with aged care will grow too. With the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic blindsiding the community and putting the wellbeing of people in aged care homes in even greater jeopardy, the need for advocacy has never been greater.

Older people have the right to a say in decisions about the services they receive and to have their views heard. If they find it difficult to speak for themselves, OPAN and their local aged care advocacy provider can support them or speak on their behalf.

Through OPAN, aged care advocates are available for older people, their families and representatives to discuss issues relating to care and find out what they want, and need, to happen. They walk alongside them. They provide them with a voice and work at their direction. Most importantly, aged care advocates are independent of aged care providers and the government, and the support they offer is free.

An advocate is someone who ...

- ★ Helps people express what they need to, and have a say
- ★ Takes the time to listen and understand an individual's views and wishes
- ★ Informs people of their rights and responsibilities
- ★ Assists in exploring options and making informed decisions
- ★ Supports people to raise their concerns and work towards resolution
- ★ Provides practical assistance, like helping to write a letter or raise concerns at a meeting
- ★ Empowers people to speak for themselves in situations where they find it difficult to do so
- ★ Increases an individual's capacity to make their voice heard

Someone might need an aged care advocate when ...

- ★ They want to know their rights and how to exercise them
- ★ They haven't been consulted about decisions that affect their care
- ★ They're not happy with the type of care they're receiving
- ★ They want to find out how to access or change aged care services, whether they're at home or in an aged care home
- ★ They're unclear about the fees they're being charged for their aged care services
- ★ They feel pressured by family members or other people in a position of trust to make a decision they're not comfortable with

These are just a few examples.

In 2020, the rise of COVID-19 has disproportionately affected people in aged care homes and created additional, unforeseen challenges. OPAN's members across Australia are ready to help.

“Elder Rights has provided us with a great service and more importantly the residents have had the opportunity, and freedom, to talk with someone outside the organisation. It’s a scary time for residents, even though they are often our greatest supporters, and I appreciate that you made them a priority when I’m sure you have a lot on your plate too. I know the residents also really appreciated Kaylene’s easy and approachable manner.

Thanks again.”

Vanda Iaconese | Chief Executive Officer
Doutta Galla Aged Services

OPAN can help older people and their representatives to ...

- ★ Engage with the aged care system including My Aged Care and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC)
- ★ Transition between aged care services
- ★ Make informed decisions about the care they receive
- ★ Exercise their right to choose when accessing and receiving aged care services
- ★ Better understand, recognise and uphold their aged care rights
- ★ Resolve problems or complaints with aged care providers about the aged care services they receive
- ★ Address issues that impact their ability to live in their own homes – aiming to prevent premature admission to aged care facilities by focusing on wellness and reablement.

OPAN’s aged care advocacy in a nutshell

We offer free aged care advocacy that is independent and confidential. It focuses on supporting older people, their families and representatives to raise and address issues around accessing and interacting with Commonwealth-funded aged care services.

Our member organisations offer rights-based advocacy. They seek to ensure that people eligible for aged care services understand and exercise their rights and participate, to the maximum degree possible, in the decisions affecting their care.

Our advocates always place the older person, their family or representative at the centre of the process and act at their direction. They’re skilled, experienced professionals with extensive aged care knowledge.

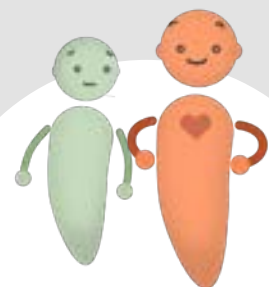
Aged care advocates are there for older people – they always ...



Stand behind:
to provide support –
empowering someone
to self-advocate



Stand beside:
to provide assistance –
helping someone to raise
issues with others



Stand before:
to provide representation –
acting or speaking on
someone’s behalf, at their
direction



Chairperson's Report



Mary Anne Hunt

I have a simple message for this year – it's time to make “transformative change” to the aged and community care system, and now!

In the words of *Dr Martin Luther King Jr* “***A right delayed is a right denied.***”

For far too long in Australia, older people have been denied their human rights and have been seen as “less than” and not respected. Their human rights have not been upheld, and society has continued its ageist attitudes which results in unacceptable levels of elder abuse, neglect and poor care. Access to aged care is inadequate for most older people; however, for those who are vulnerable and live in rural and remote regions of Australia, it is often inaccessible or unavailable.

Whilst the pandemic has impacted everyone, older Australians have suffered the most, especially those in residential aged care facilities and those living alone. The impact of COVID-19 on residential care has been devastating, resulting in neglect, abuse and the loss of 678 lives. While difficult for anyone to fully prevent transmission, the lack of preparedness in aged care for the pandemic, as well the level of restrictions and the denial of human rights for older people in aged care throughout COVID-19 further attest to the underlying and pernicious nature of ageism in the Australian society.

For over 30 years, the aged care system has suppressed the voice of older people, and we have continued to institutionalise our elders while deinstitutionalising services to other groups in society. In fact, since 1997, the institutionalisation of older Australians has increased: we currently lead the world in the proportion of older people in residential care. We know that the Australian government and the broader community can no longer ignore the views of older Australians on how they wish to be supported as they age.

Why has this been allowed to happen? Because we do not value older people, because of ageism. Injustices towards older Australian's permeate every part of our society and appears to thrive in the aged care system, which is widely recognised as broken. So, it's not enough to reform the system. We must demand “transformative change” of our social services in aged and community care. They must be based on enshrining the human rights of older people.

OPAN and its nine-member organisations have worked very hard to bring the voice of the older person to the Royal Commission and their needs to government during COVID-19. I'm extremely proud of the national network of aged care advocates, our Members and our national secretariat. Throughout this year, they have assisted many older people's voices to be heard and their issues regarding the lack of communication and support during the pandemic to be improved, and yes, there is still much work still to be done. OPAN has been a strong voice to government and community throughout COVID-19. It will continue to raise the systemic issues and call for greater advocacy supports for older people throughout the coming year.

Currently, only approximately 1.5% of older Australians are able to access advocacy services. Whilst, it is heartening to hear advocacy being recognised as a vital support service by the Royal Commission and government, we know we need greater funding for advocacy services to increase our reach. We also need to internally adapt the way we deliver our individual support, information and education services. Only by innovation and adaptability will we reach all older Australians, to achieve an Australia where older people are empowered to understand, demand and exercise their human rights.

Finally, I would like to thank all our members' advocates, senior managers, CEOs and my OPAN board colleagues for your commitment, professionalism and dedication in supporting older Australians to have their human rights upheld and their voice heard during these very difficult and challenging times.

In the words of *Albert Einstein*: ***"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them"***.

I call on our OPAN family to commit to challenging our old ways of thinking and create an environment of respect, kindness and compassion which enables the voices of older Australians to be heard, embraced and acted upon.

Thank you

Mary Anne Hunt

Chairperson

CEO's Report



Craig Gear OAM

The older person is at the heart of everything that OPAN does. It is their voice of the issues to which we listen, and their issues for which we work with aged care providers to resolve.

This year we enhanced the voice of the older person through the OPAN National Older Persons Reference Group. The voices of this 36-community member group have real-life experience of the aged care system. They have influenced how OPAN has worked this year and the issues we have been able to take to government on their behalf. It has been an honour and a pleasure to be a participant in their discussions and for OPAN to go into bat on their behalf, and on behalf of their families. In this report you will meet one of these members – Val Fell.

Across this financial year, the nine members of the Older Persons Advocacy Network provided 20,819 cases of information and advocacy support through our highly valued and expert intake offices and advocates. Significantly, this is a 29% increase since OPAN commenced delivery the NACAP from mid-2017.

I would like to thank each and every one of our aged care advocates, as well as, the other support staff in the service delivery organisations and in the national secretariat. Everything they do, they do in support of older people to raise their voice and exercise their rights. Each year we will profile two of our member organisations. In this issue we focus on Advocare WA and ADA Australia (Queensland). I'm also proud to have worked with Belinda Sanisforth, an advocate from our service delivery organisation, CatholicCare NT. Her 'dog with a bone' efforts to support one of her clients and her family in Alice Springs is heart-warming. It is also featured in this report.

This year has seen OPAN extend its work communicating with people and their families on key issues such as aged care navigation, aged care rights, and reducing chemical restraint. We also worked with the Department of Veterans Affairs to inform older veterans and their families of the services available to this important cohort of our Australian population. Further, we worked with the Alliance for Forgotten Australians to begin a partnership that will hopefully span many years. We aim to bring Forgotten Australians' need for tailored and supported pathways to aged care to the consciousness of all Australians and the government.

OPAN and our member organisations continue to provide the voice of the older person to the Royal Commission and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission. The knowledge and experience of our clients and our advocates contributed to the nine submissions we have now made to the Royal Commission. OPAN contributed to the Royal commission's final report indictments enacting its recommendations for a viable, well staffed and sustainable aged care system which focuses on the human rights and dignity of people as they age.

Finally, this year's huge impact of COVID-19 on older people, needs to be noted. The restrictions and confusion of the pandemic has affected older people more than any other cohort. OPAN, with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health, identified the need for older people, their families and their representatives

“The COVID-19 situation continues to develop, and I am so thankful for the OPAN team for how they have pulled together and produced amazing outcomes for older people during this time. They have truly flourished in the face of a global pandemic and I am so proud,”

Craig Gear, OPAN CEO.

to receive tailored information in relation to COVID-19 and how they should be protecting themselves. At the same time, OPAN saw there was a need to champion the rights of older people as well as balance these rights with the protections that were being put in place during COVID-19. OPAN, through its nine members and the dedicated work of the national secretariat, worked to ensure the continuity of the NACAP throughout 2020 whilst preparing for and responding to the COVID-19 outbreak. This meant significant work by our whole network to prepare for new ways of delivering information and advocacy support. OPAN delivered 49 webinars across this 2019/2020 financial year. These webinars were key to simplifying, amplifying, and clarifying the government messaging in relation to COVID-19. OPAN members and advocates dealt with significant increases in calls from the public in relation to aged care and changes in service provision.

OPAN worked with government and peak bodies in the aged care sector to develop the **Industry Code for Visiting Aged Care Homes during COVID-19**. The Code assisted aged care advocates, older people and their families to work with aged care providers to enable safe visitation, protection of aged care rights, balanced with the need to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

For all the challenges of COVID-19, the collaborative work across the aged care peak organisations has been a privilege to be part of, and shows what the sector can deliver when it works together.

I am immensely proud of the work of the whole OPAN network in supporting older people, their families and their representatives during the COVID-19 outbreaks. The national network really came into its own and shows how the advocacy network is stronger together. A special thanks to each of OPAN Member’s CEO and every member in supporting OPAN’s response to the pandemic, but especially to Russell Westacott (Seniors Rights Service, NSW), Philippa Campbell (Elder Rights Advocacy, Victoria), Geoff Rowe (ADA Australia) and Carolanne Barkla (ARAS, South Australia) leading particular aspects of their own, as well as OPAN’s national response.

This report comes at a time where the second wave of COVID-19 in Melbourne appears to be abating. COVID-19 has seen over 680 older people lose their lives in Melbourne. Another 29 people died during the outbreak at Newmarch House and another six at Dorothy Henderson Lodge in Sydney. As Australia moves into the recovery phase and ‘COVID Normal’ we must remember and celebrate the lives of those who were lost, the grief and trauma their families must be still feeling, and the need for support services for older Australians to come out COVID-19 safely.

Craig Gear OAM

Australians over 65 in Australia today

In 2019

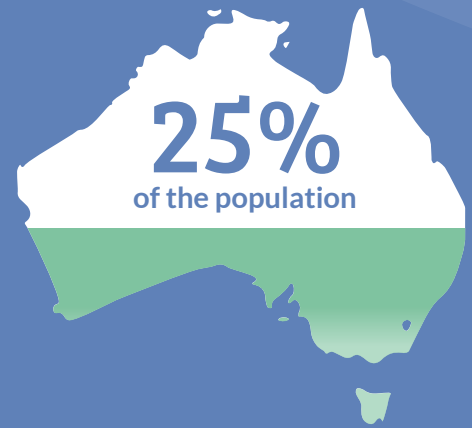
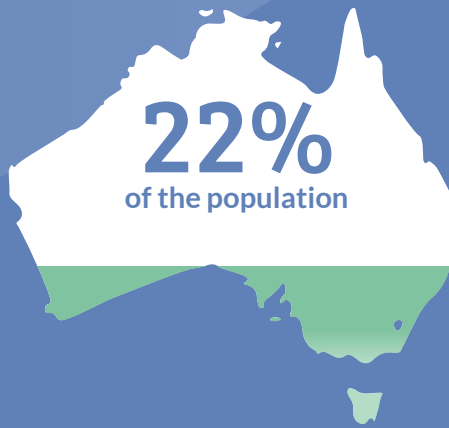
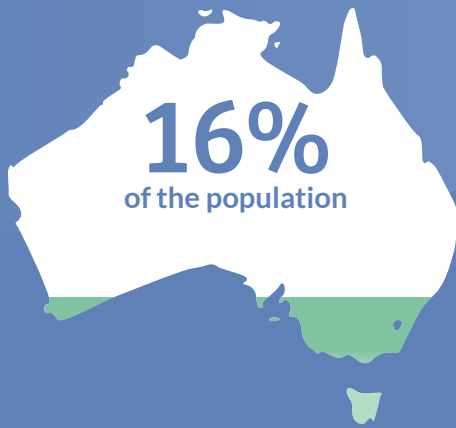
4,145,274

By 2056

8,700,000

By 2096

12,800,000



Australians over 65 receiving aged care services

In 2019

1,200,000

7%

accessed residential aged care

22%

accessed some form of support or care at home

71%

lived at home without accessing government-subsidised aged care services

OPAN NACAP Workplan high-level achievements: 2017 - 2020

Achievements Year 1 (2017/18) to Year 3 (2019/20):

- ★ Increased access/reach to older people via more regional offices, the 1800 national phone line extension of hours, an app, improved website, and marketing (including social media)
- ★ Increased awareness of aged care rights through our community education activities, including Charter of Rights forums and webinars
- ★ Achieved over 5,000 completions of *Talk to Us First* online provider training
- ★ Implemented activities to assist in the prevention of, and response to, abuse of older people
- ★ Developed capacity to advise on practice complexities via practice guidelines
- ★ Maintained our independence and capacity to inform government and other stakeholders where our individual advocacy work has identified systemic issues
- ★ Established a strong governance structure to enable efficient and effective delivery of NACAP activities – providing consistency of practice while allowing flexible delivery to respond to local and cultural needs.

We have also established the foundation for:

- ★ Assurance of quality service delivery through contemporary NACAP standards, a national Service Delivery Framework and extensive professional development research
- ★ Increased participation by older people and their families in reviews and consultations
- ★ Enhanced data collection, data integrity and reporting of trends
- ★ Preparatory work for an evaluation of OPAN's outcomes.



OPAN in the media

It's been a big year for OPAN in the media - here are just some of the highlights

ABC News

My parents are in aged care, what should I do to keep them safe during the coronavirus pandemic? - CEO quoted about the logistics of taking people out of aged care during COVID-19

www.abc.net.au/news/2020-07-30/what-to-do-parents-in-aged-care-coronavirus-victoria/12502168

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

4,000,000+ monthly readers

The Guardian

Newmarch House: NSW blasted for not acting sooner on Sydney's coronavirus-stricken aged care home - OPAN worked with Seniors Rights Service (our NSW member) on the Newmarch House outbreak. We were mentioned after the Prime Minister discussed OPAN and SRS

www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/apr/29/newmarch-house-nsw-blasted-for-not-acting-sooner-on-sydneys-coronavirus-stricken-aged-care-home

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

24,900,000+ monthly readers (worldwide)

The Australian

Coronavirus: Aged care homes standing firm on visitation despite PM call - CEO quoted

www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/coronavirus-aged-care-homes-standing-firm-on-visitation-despite-pm-call/news-story/7bd2721e294420016064d96020ed4055

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

4,400,000+ monthly readers

Sydney Morning Herald

Senior Australians to receive welfare checks amid social isolation - CEO quoted about activities undertaken during COVID-19 to prevent loneliness

www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/senior-australians-to-receive-welfare-checks-amid-social-isolation-20200408-p54ico.html

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

7,600,000+ monthly readers

7 News (Sunrise)

Coronavirus: Govt announces over the phone welfare checks for self-isolating seniors - article about the callback service for COVID-19, OPAN mentioned

www.7news.com.au/sunrise/on-the-show/coronavirus-govt-announces-over-the-phone-welfare-checks-for-self-isolating-seniors-c-965586

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

250,000+ daily viewers

SBS News

Confusion and concern surrounding ban on nursing home visitors - CEO interviewed about visitation restrictions

www.sbs.com.au/news/confusion-and-concern-surrounding-ban-on-nursing-home-visitors

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

7,000,000+ monthly readers

ABC Radio

Loneliness: the unintended consequence of social distancing – CEO interviewed about COVID-19 and social distancing

www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/am/loneliness:-the-unintended-consequence-of-social-distancing/12058398

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

750,000+ weekly listeners

ABC News

Australians strip supermarket shelves – CEO interviewed about coronavirus shopping

www.abc.net.au/radio/sydney/programs/pm/australians-strip-supermarket-shelves/12040088

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

4,000,000+ monthly readers

Australian Ageing Agenda

OPAN chief among those honoured for contributions to aged care - article about OPAN CEO receiving an OAM

www.australianageingagenda.com.au/2020/01/26/opan-chief-among-those-honoured-for-contributions-to-aged-care

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

77,000+ readers

The Senior

Mobile app and video reveal elder abuse signs and what you can do to access help – The Senior write up about OPAN resources and launch, CEO quoted

www.thesenior.com.au/story/6541518/tech-tools-to-fight-abuse

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

560,000+ readers (Australia-wide)

Australian Ageing Agenda

New resources help identify elder abuse – AAA write up about OPAN resources/launch

www.australianageingagenda.com.au/2019/12/18/new-resources-help-identify-elder-abuse/

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

77,000+ readers

Talking Aged Care

OPAN launch multiple elder abuse prevention resources – article about the launch of the new OPAN resources

www.agedcareguide.com.au/talking-aged-care/opan-launch-multiple-elder-abuse-prevention-resources

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

1,600,000+ yearly visitors

Sydney Morning Herald

‘People are dying’: In-home aged care fix tipped to cost at least \$2b extra a year – CEO quoted about reform needed in aged care sector

www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/people-are-dying-in-home-aged-care-fix-tipped-to-cost-at-least-2b-extra-a-year-20191101-p536ka.html

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

7,600,000+ monthly readers

ABC News

“Urgent, big money” needed to help fix aged care system: Craig Gear - radio interview with CEO about aged care reform

www.abc.net.au/radio/sydney/programs/pm/craig-gear/11665142

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

4,000,000+ monthly readers

Sydney Morning Herald

Sedatives ‘clearly justified’ in only 10% of aged care cases – CEO quoted about chemical restraint in aged care

www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/sedating-medication-clearly-justified-in-only-10-percent-of-aged-care-cases-20191101-p536k8.html

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

7,600,000+ monthly readers

The Canberra Times

Elderly regularly over-sedated, royal commission finds - CEO quoted about Aged Care Royal Commission findings and chemical restraint

www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6470927/elderly-regularly-over-sedated-royal-commission-finds/?cs=14225

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

1,150,000+ monthly readers

Sydney Morning Herald

'Need to be transparent': Call for online reviews of aged care providers – CEO quoted

www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/need-to-be-transparent-call-for-online-reviews-of-aged-care-providers-20191030-p535mq.html

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

7,600,000+ monthly readers

Now To Love (Women's Weekly)

Our fight to protect elderly Australians from financial abuse continues at Parliament House - CEO quoted

www.nowtolove.com.au/news/local-news/elderly-financial-abuse-laws-59834

Potential Reach of Media Outlet:

1,600,000+ monthly readers

ABC Darwin Radio

Interview with CEO about Darwin Charter of Aged Care Rights event, Aged Care System Navigator webinar and the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety

Potential Reach of Media Outlet : 50,000+ daily listeners

Ageing Agenda

New resources help identify elder abuse

Sedatives 'clearly justified' in only 10% of aged care cases

By Judith Ireland
November 2, 2019 – 12:22pm

Doctors, pharmacists and seniors advocates say urgent change is needed to the way medications are given to people in aged care homes, with a federal government advisory panel finding psychotropic medication is 'clearly justified' in only about 10 per cent of cases.

The royal commission into aged care [issued stark warnings about the misuse of medication in nursing homes in its first report](#), singling out chemical restraints as an area for immediate action.

ABC **Australians strip supermarket shelves**

By Eleanor Whitehead on 1/11

The Senior

Mobile app and video reveal elder abuse signs and what you can do to access help

By Liz Ashford
10/11/2019, 8:45am

OPAN launch multiple elder abuse prevention resources

National advocacy organisation, Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN), launched new elder abuse prevention resources alongside Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians Richard Colbeck in Melbourne on Thursday.

Posted 10 months ago by Liz Ashford

CULTURE WARRENES **ELDER ABUSE** **GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP** **SAFETY & SECURITY**

The prevention resources, a mobile application, OPAN Elder HELP, and an informational video, *Noticed Something?*, will be new avenues for people experiencing abuse to get more information, or to teach aged care staff and the wider community signs of elder abuse.

OPAN wants the app and video to help

COVID-19 Projects





Supporting older people through the COVID-19 pandemic

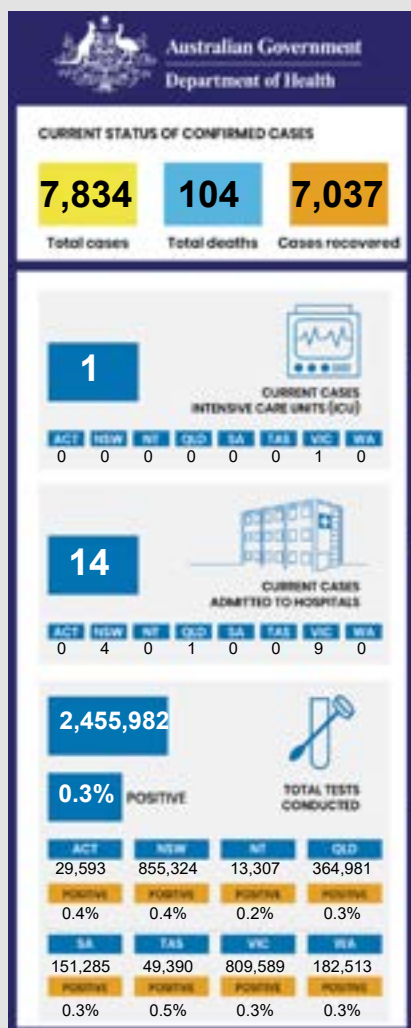
OPAN worked tirelessly during the COVID-19 pandemic. OPAN's aim was to ensure older people, their families and their representatives had information regarding COVID-19. OPAN sought to amplify, clarify and simplify messages from government and health agencies so they could remain safe whilst still maintaining their rights.

OPAN worked to support its members in preparing for COVID-19 and for readiness in service continuity. However, it was our members that continued to deliver front line individual support for older people throughout the tough times of lockdowns and outbreaks.

Australia went through two waves, the first commencing in March and the second in June, which primarily took place in Victoria. Due to the timing of this report (July 1st, 2019 to June 30th, 2020) the information in this section focuses on the first wave.

However, due to the significance of the support provided to older Victorians throughout the second wave, we've included a special section on this entitled the Victorian Outbreak which you can find on page 31.

COVID-19 Projects



As of 30 June 2020

Image source: <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/06/coronavirus-COVID-19-at-a-glance-30-june-2020.pdf>

OPAN's response to COVID-19 prior to 30 June 2020

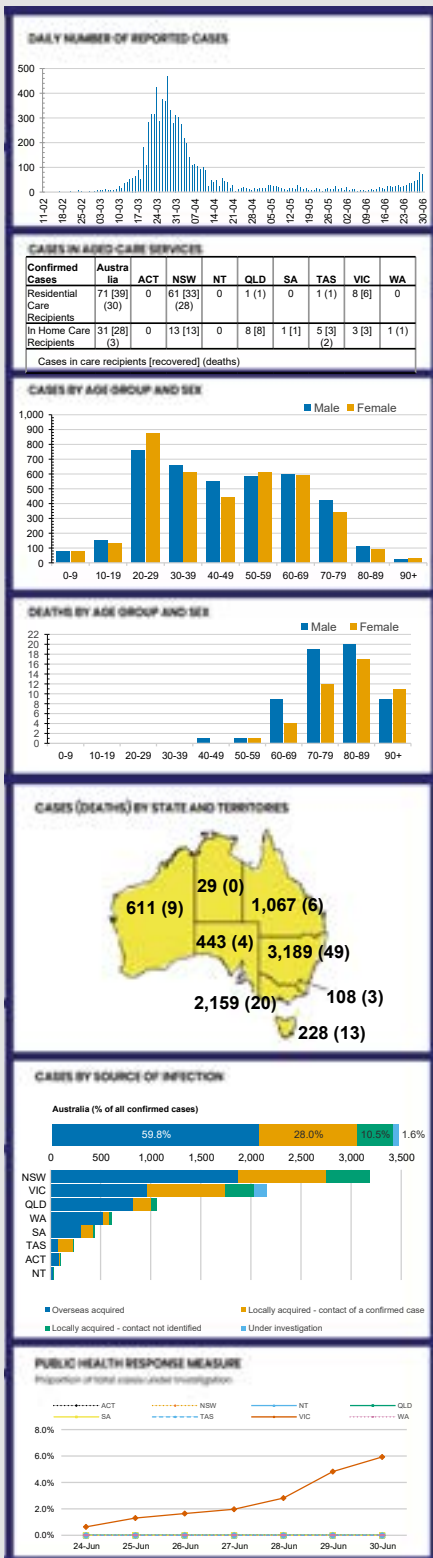
As at 30 June 2020, outbreaks had struck three aged care homes in suburbs of Sydney, NSW:

- ★ Dorothy Henderson Lodge (a home run by BaptistCare NSW & ACT (BaptistCare) in Macquarie Park)
- ★ Opal Bankstown
- ★ Newmarch House (a home run by Anglican Community Services (Anglicare Sydney) in Kingswood).²

As of 30 June 2020, there had been 102 cases in aged care services, with 33 deaths and 67 recovered²

- ★ The nimble and effective formation of the COVID-19 Crisis (COVID-19) Response Management Team (CRMT) demonstrated OPAN's ability to act decisively and quickly to meet the needs of our members and the community. This team provided strong governance to enable swift response to COVID-19 outbreaks in aged care.
- ★ A business continuity program was created. This resource not only applies to COVID-19 but also other crises situations. It is available for OPAN members.
- ★ A "Super Six" national advocacy team was formed and mobilised to assist with specific facilities experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks, and which consequently experienced challenges maintaining communication with residents and families, including Newmarch House.
- ★ OPAN provided guidance and support in formulating the new Industry Code for Visiting Residential Aged Care Homes During COVID-19.

² Source: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/COVID-19-cases-in-aged-care-services-residential-care>



As of 30 June 2020

Image source: <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/06/coronavirus-COVID-19-at-a-glance-30-june-2020.pdf>

- ★ Four teams were brought together at national secretariat level to respond to the significant coordination, business continuity, communications and policy response activity resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ★ OPAN produced 10 COVID-specific webinars prior to June 30, 2020 and many more after this time.
- ★ Seniors Rights Service (OPAN NSW member) and OPAN mobilised an urgent response to residents and families at Newmarch House, which included:
 - Critical advocacy support, facilitation and recommendations
 - On-the-ground attendance on-site
 - Weekly Zoom meetings with the families of residents of Newmarch House residents (including invited guests from the Department, AACQSC and Anglicare);
 - A dedicated cross-state advocacy team to support residents and their representatives of Newmarch House;
 - Escalated and resolved residents' and families' issues with Anglicare;
 - Identified systemic issues with Anglicare for continuous improvement
- ★ Advice, guidance and input into the Industry Code for Visiting Residential Aged Care Homes During COVID-19.
- ★ Assisted in drafting and establishing a communication protocol for outbreaks between The Commonwealth Department of Health (DoH), OPAN and its state and territory-based members.
- ★ A Toolkit with information and recommendations to assist residential aged care facilities to communicate with residents, their families and their representatives during a COVID-19 outbreak was created. This toolkit comprised of phone and email scripts, communication checklists, sample letters, brochures and posters as well as educational videos hosted by physician and journalist Dr Norman Swan.
- ★ Supported and provided follow up to home care recipients and providers through the Home Care Call Back Service - OPAN members checked in on older people receiving care at home who were referred by their aged care provider.
- ★ Responded to the increase in phone, email, social media and web-based enquiries related to COVID-19 issues (including weekends, after hours and on public holidays) and provided additional advocacy support to members to ensure responsiveness.
- ★ Provided advice, recommendations and feedback on COVID-19 advocacy issues and response to the (DoH), ACQSC and Providers.
- ★ Migrated OPAN documents and email from an unstable, unreliable server to secure online platforms which can be accessed remotely by all OPAN staff during the pandemic.
- ★ Assisted ADA Australia (OPAN's Queensland member) to support residents and families at the North Rockhampton Nursing Centre - including additional provider-specific collateral explaining the lockdown to residents/representatives.

² Source: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/COVID-19-cases-in-aged-care-services-residential-care>

COVID-19 webinar series

The weekly webinars covered a range of topics, including:

- ★ COVID-19 and what it means for people in aged care
- ★ Safely receiving aged care services at home during COVID-19
- ★ Living with dementia during COVID-19 and how we can all help
- ★ Family, carers, visitation and wellbeing during COVID-19
- ★ Consulting on the draft of the Aged Care Access Code
- ★ Reducing the risk of abuse for older people during COVID-19
- ★ Navigating aged care services during COVID-19
- ★ Update: Industry Code for Visiting Residential Aged Care Homes
- ★ Community Visitors Scheme & social connection during COVID-19
- ★ Culturally safe & informed aged care support during COVID-19

The global COVID-19 pandemic created confusion and uncertainty for older Australians and their families.

To help keep older Australians, their families, and those in the aged care sector informed, OPAN launched a COVID-19 webinar series in March. These webinars provided up-to-date information in a way that was accessible and comprehensive for a range of audiences.

OPAN hosted new panellists each week, drawing on a depth of knowledge and range of expertise to ensure older people tuning in received well rounded insight and advice. The webinars took a friendly, relaxed tone, allowing for interesting discussion between panellists and the host Kyle Olsen, while remaining informative and engaging.

Viewers were able to participate in a 'Live Chat' throughout the webinar, and could ask questions that were answered by panellists. The chat also enabled viewers to engage in discussions with one another, which created a great sense of community and connection – during a time when COVID-19 restrictions had otherwise limited people's lives.

This project has enabled older people, their families and staff in the aged care sector to stay up to date with important information regarding their aged care services, care and wellbeing – and the feedback from viewers has been overwhelmingly positive. It's also strengthened relationships with other organisations, and encouraged discussion and connection within the community of viewers.

"The two webinars on COVID I have seen have been terrific. The one on Dementia was very well organised and presented, they all are really. I'm very thankful we have such terrific resources in this country and this is such a difficult area for so many people. Keep up the great work. It's so helpful just to know others are going through the same experiences.

Thanks so much!"

Anonymous



FREE SPECIAL EDITION WEBINAR

Community Visitors Scheme & social connection during COVID-19

Wednesday 10 June, 3.00pm - 4.00pm Australian Eastern Standard Time

The Older Persons COVID-19 Support Line

The Older Persons COVID-19 Support Line (OPCSL) was launched in April 2020 by Senator and Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, Richard Colbeck, to provide older people with a way to easily access information and support during the pandemic. The project is a joint initiative between OPAN and consortium partners Council of The Ageing Australia, National Seniors Australia and Dementia Australia, funded by the Australian Government Department of Health (DoH).

Callers are able to dial 1800 171 866 to gain information and support for a range of issues during the COVID pandemic. Enquiries may be related to general COVID 19 questions on restrictions, seeking connection due to social isolation and loneliness, or aged care related concerns. Depending on their concern, callers are directed to one of the partner organisations involved.

Through the support line, our Service Delivery Organisations (SDOs) were able to assist many older Australians and their families with important aged care issues, such as adjusting or reinstating their aged care services due to COVID concerns, visiting family or friends in residential aged care homes that may have had new limitations or overly harsh restrictions, gaining access to meals and emergency groceries, and providing a listening ear.

Even Jimmy Barnes and his wife Jane Barnes got on board to support OPCSL recording a special message and song to encourage people to check in on older friends and family. You can see Jimmy and Jane's contribution here: www.facebook.com/jimmybarnesofficial/videos/325961485104063

To promote the support line, OPAN launched a social media campaign, which included a series of sharegraphics and a video featuring Norman Swan. OPAN also ran Facebook advertising using these materials, targeting older Australians and their families and carers nationally. In addition, OPAN undertook a targeted advertising campaign in Victoria, with a particular focus on the COVID-19 hot spots to reach those most in need of support.

The promotion of this line enabled many isolated, culturally and linguistically diverse and vulnerable people to become aware of many types of assistance available to them, linking them in with advocacy that they may not previously have been aware of. The support line will continue to run until June 2021.



Not sure what to do about your aged care services during COVID-19?

Chat to us on the Older Person's COVID-19 Support Line: 1800 171 866

COTA For older Australians

dementia australia

National Seniors AUSTRALIA

OPAN Older Persons Advocacy Network

Norman Swan videos



OPAN teamed up with Dr Norman Swan to develop a series of videos during the COVID-19 outbreak. Together, we created the following videos:

Dr Norman Swan talks about the Older Persons COVID-19 Support Line

Dr Norman Swan explained how the Older Persons COVID-19 Support Line could help older Australians and their families and encouraged them to call. This video was used across social media and as part of advertising campaigns.

Dr Norman explains the Industry Code for Visiting Residential Aged Care Facilities during COVID-19

This video was developed to explain the Industry Code for Visiting Residential Aged Care Facilities during COVID-19, and how OPAN Advocates could support older Australians and their families with any issues they might have been experiencing with visitation.

Dr Norman Swan explains the changes that may be taking place in your residential aged care facility

This video was developed for use by Residential Aged Care Facilities, to help explain the changes that may be taking place in the facility due to a COVID-19 outbreak, so that they felt reassured and supported.

Promotion of these videos on social media began in June, and by the end of the month they had been seen by over 433,000 people just on Facebook.

These videos were a fantastic way to promote advocacy, and to reassure older Australians and their family during a turbulent time.

View the videos here: www.opan.com.au/videos

Victorian outbreak



Current status at the time of writing this report

At the time of writing this report, more than 900 people have died in Australia as a result of COVID-19¹. Of these, more than 680 people (650 in Victoria) were living in aged care homes at the time of their deaths, however, many died in hospital.

Daily infection rates in Victoria increased from 20 cases on 16 June 2020 to 76 cases on 30 June 2020². There were no active cases of the disease within Victorian residential aged care facilities prior to June 30, and the first recorded death was on 7 July 2020²

At the time of writing this report, there have been over 660 deaths in Victorian aged care services.

OPAN worked with our Victorian member organisation, Elder Rights Advocacy (ERA) to provide advocacy services and assist with the influx of enquiries. OPAN mobilised an SDO (Service Delivery Organisation) support team with advocates from members around the country to assist Victoria with advocacy calls and case management. Members nominated advocates to participate.

The OPAN SDO support team responded to 2100 calls and managed 1100 cases between July and September.

OPAN and ERA worked with Gerard Mansour – Commissioner for Senior Victorians to conduct three groups of family Zoom meetings with the families of the following facilities:

1. St Basil's
2. Kalyna, Glenlyn & Florence Aged Care
3. Cumberland Manor, Grace of Mary & Twin Parks

The objective was to ensure families and residents had their voices heard and issues resolved, as well as providing the Commonwealth Department of Health (DoH) awareness of systemic issues

Seven Zoom meetings were conducted in total. Two each for groups 1 and 3 and three meetings for group 2. The aim of the first meeting was to create an environment of trust where participants could have a voice and air their grievances. The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC) was invited to the second meeting to address and answer the issues raised. In addition, nurse advisors from surge workforces were invited to both meetings to provide families with a current status.

A password protected webpage for each group was created which contained the questions and corresponding answers along with other relevant information.

OPAN formed a Home Transfers team to handle enquiries arising from the DoH initiative to fund residents from aged care facilities to return home if they wished to do so. OPAN handled 174 home transfer cases between August 1st and September 30th, 2020.

¹Source: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/covid-19-cases-in-aged-care-services-residential-care>

²<https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-10/aged-care-and-COVID-19-a-special-report.pdf>

Newmarch House – Case Study

A 95-year-old aged care resident who had received a negative result for five coronavirus tests received a positive test in the sixth instance. The resident and their family were devastated by the results but remained hopeful of the resident's health because they were asymptomatic.

However, the morning after receiving the positive test result, the resident spoke to their family FaceTime from their bed. They were shaken and became visibly upset, telling their loved ones they hadn't been assisted to have a shower and that their breakfast that day was "terrible" and delivered late. Their call bell hadn't been answered throughout the morning, their calls for assistance were ignored and their continence aid had become full and uncomfortable.

The resident told their family they felt abandoned and forgotten, and was fearful they would not get the support they needed after testing positive.

A member of the resident's family contacted their advocate requesting immediate assistance. The advocate contacted the service provider and grew frustrated when their access to staff was blocked by the provider's call centre, but insisted a staff member on site return their urgent call.

A call back was received within two hours, and the resident got the attention from staff and support they needed. Their family reported their loved one in aged care was looking and feeling better. The resident did not fall ill and once the crisis had settled, the aged care facility began fumigating the resident's room.

Their family contacted the advocate again, saying the resident's belongings had been piled into the middle of their room, the window stripped of its curtains and causing the resident distress.

For two days, the resident's room was left in disarray with the promise it would be resolved, but no one came to help. Again, the advocate was forced to contact the service provider and attempt to speak to a staff member on site.

Within hours of this call, the resident's room was returned to its usual state and they felt able to relax after a traumatic experience.

**Advocate – Deborah Nicoll
Elders Rights Advocacy,
Super Six Team Member**



Visitation Industry Code



When Australians began to fall ill with COVID-19, aged care providers put in place tight infection prevention and control measures based on the Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA) national guidelines. The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) supported tighter rules on visits to people in aged care and screening measures to protect residents from disease transmission after witnessing the horrific impact of the disease on older people across Europe and the United States.

Aged care providers surveyed residents and found they were comfortable with the increased protections on a temporary basis. However, visitation restrictions over many months have had a significant impact on the physical and mental well-being of people in aged care. OPAN received over 750 calls regarding the different approaches and overly cautious restrictions being applied by aged care providers. It seemed that the inconsistency in the lack of clear guidelines for safe visitation and proportionate infection control was impacting on the rights of older people. In particular, their right to make decisions about their own lives, to take risks, and choose who and how people can visit them.

A coalition of aged care organisations came together to develop the ***Industry Code for Visiting Aged Care Homes during COVID-19*** (the Industry Code). OPAN is a member of the group that drafted the industry guidelines in April 2020. The code was built on advice from the AHPPC and was endorsed by thirteen aged care peak bodies.

At the time of writing this report, there have been three reviews of the Industry Code. The latest version will be released in November 2020. It is expected that safe and proportionate prevention measures will continue to occur during the period known as 'COVID-19 normal'. However, older people and their families will have more free and open visiting, in line with their wishes and preferences as we move towards Christmas 2020. The latest version of the Industry Code can be accessed **here: www.opan.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/INDUSTRY-CODE-FOR-VISITING-RESIDENTIAL-AGED-CARE-HOMES-DURING-COVID-v2-updated-3-July-2020-1.pdf**

ADA Australia – Queensland Member

Aged and Disability Advocacy (ADA) Australia is a not-for-profit, independent, community-based advocacy and education service with nearing 30 years' experience in supporting and improving the wellbeing of older people and people with disability in Queensland.

With headquarters in Brisbane and advocates in Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba and the Gold Coast, ADA Australia is a state-wide service providing advocacy services to older people and people with disability in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote Queensland.

Our mission 'to enable people to be heard, informed, and exercise their rights' is achieved through provision of accurate information, education and valuable individual advocacy support across a range of programs that have a consumer directed focus, including:

- ★ Aged care advocacy and Aged Care Navigator
- ★ Disability advocacy including support for people with disability to participate in the Disability Royal Commission
- ★ ADA Law, a specialist Community Legal Service supporting people with guardianship and administration matters.

ADA Australia is also the proud host of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network of Queensland (ATSIDNQ), helping First Nations people with disability, and their families and carers, to connect, share and speak up about issues that matter most to them. Membership is free and is supported by a Network team of ADA advocates.



OPAN's Projects



OPAN's Projects

Delivering against the NACAP framework

The objectives of the NACAP will be met through the delivery of the following program activities:

- ★ Independent and individually focused advocacy support delivered to older people (including their families or representatives)
- ★ The provision of independent information to support older people (including their families or representatives)
- ★ The delivery of education sessions promoting aged care consumer rights to older people (including their families or representatives)
- ★ The delivery of education sessions to aged care providers and staff promoting consumer rights and aged care provider responsibilities, including through online/digital systems.

This work is predominantly undertaken by OPAN's nine members at the state and territory level. The significant achievement and hard work of aged care advocates has been demonstrated in the numbers of older people supported and education sessions provided which were highlighted in the introduction to this report.

OPAN's members have also, along with the hard work of the small team within the OPAN national Secretariat, been actively contributing to NACAP objectives, both in terms of direct services and also in terms of the development and implementation of the NACAP work plan initiatives. Below is the status of the projects as of June 30, 2020 against the approved NACAP work plan initiatives.

In the 2019/20 financial year OPAN achieved the following on the NACAP workplan implementation:

- ★ **Engagement and reporting stemming advocacy project** – continued our quarterly reporting of the presenting issues of older people coming to aged care advocates biannual reporting to the Department of Health. Significant contribution to the Royal commission and governmental future system design and reform
- ★ **National extended hours free-call advocacy line** - extend the hours of operations for the national number from 6 AM to 10 PM daily, with escalation processes for high risk and priority calls
- ★ **On-line and digital presence** – implemented chat bot function, OPAN Facebook group, digital online information and webinar provision, and online frequently asked questions functions
- ★ **National consistency in service delivery project** - completed and endorsed the OPAN NACAP service delivery framework with endorsement by OPAN board and members. Practitioners guideline groups established and have advised on the development of five practice guidelines.
- ★ **Digital aged care workforce training on aged care advocacy** - over 5000 aged care workers have now completed the **Talk to Us First** online training course

- ★ **Nationally consistent data governance and information management** - OPAN NACAP and elder abuse datasets developed and endorsed by OPAN board and service delivery organisations. Data implementation gap analysis prepared the level of each service delivery organisation/OPAN member. Implementation planning commenced. Data governance review conducted.
- ★ **Elder abuse prevention and support** - funding provided to each OPAN member to deliver elder abuse prevention education and to support those at risk of or experiencing elder abuse. ElderHELP mobile phone application developed and 'Noticed Something?' explainer video produced with ministerial launch occurring December 2019
- ★ **OPAN national consumer participation project** - the OPAN consumer participation work was developed. OPAN has established the national older persons reference group with 40 older people connected to aged care, with lived experiences of dementia, or from diversity groups have been selected from the community to provide vital advice to all of OPAN's activities.
- ★ **OPAN NACAP unmet demand modelling project** - OPAN utilised external actuarial and data evaluation experts to develop a service projection model and to map against occasions that had delivered advocacy by postcode. This will help inform each planning for growth funding, service expansion and business cases to government power to meet unmet demand of aged care advocacy.

- ★ **OPAN enhanced NACAP quality assurance project** - the revised preliminary draft of the NACAP standards has been developed in consultation with selected knowledge experts from OPAN membership. Revised NACAP standards will be endorsed by OPAN's members and board prior to submission to the Australian Government Department of Health. OPAN has utilised small additional funding grant from the Australian government to assist three OPAN members to prepare for external accreditation against industry standards. By December 2020 all OPAN members will be externally accredited. A staged implementation of the revised NACAP standards will occur throughout 2021 and 2022.



OPAN's record of delivery against the NACAP workplan was a key focus of the government's consideration to extend OPAN's current funding agreement. Meanwhile, other projects will continue to be fully implemented into 2021 and 2022 as OPAN moves from a period of establishment to a consolidation phase. During the two-year NACAP grant extension the OPAN NACAP workplan will focus on the following six areas:

Key outcomes to be delivered - OPAN NACAP extension

Outcomes of proposed extension for 2020-2022.

1. Continued awareness

By July 2022, there will be greater awareness of aged care rights and the capacity for advocacy to provide support.

2. Responding to diversity

There will be increased awareness and responsiveness internally to diversity.

- ★ More Older people from diversity groups will be aware of the availability of advocacy.

3. Preparing to increase reach

Over the next 2 years we will build on these foundations by extending into more locations and a broader range of cohorts.

- ★ Awareness of aged care advocacy will be maintained or increased.
- ★ OPAN will contribute to and be ready to respond to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and its recommendations.

4. Support the response to abuse

We will assist in responding to the abuse of older people.

- ★ We will increase the capacity and capability of our staff to respond consistently to issue of abuse.

5. Quality enhancement of NACAP

There will be continuing professional development so that the quality of our practice remains high.

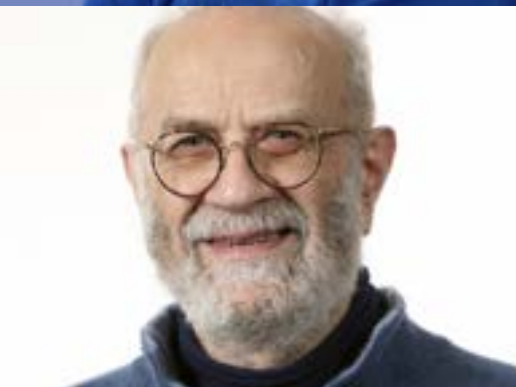
- ★ All SDOs will have external quality assurance.
- ★ The specific requirements of NACAP will be measured and assured against the NACAP Standards.

6. Data and knowledge

We will know more about the needs of older people, how their aged care rights are impacted and the key issues they face within aged care via sophisticated data collection, analysis.

- ★ Data will be accurate and fit-for-purpose.
- ★ Older people, their families and representatives will form a central part of the way we collect and analyse data.
- ★ Our systemic advocacy will contribute to actions arising from the findings of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

The National Older Persons Reference Group



The focus of OPAN's work are older people accessing, or attempting to access, the aged care system. It's essential that their needs, voices and perspectives shape OPAN's work, decisions and discussions on aged care. To this end OPAN established the National Older Persons Reference Group (NOPRG)

Members include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex or people living with dementia. Some members are also carers. They are based all across Australia. All members are paid a sitting fee in recognition of their contributions.

The NOPRG provide their experiences, knowledge and expertise to:

- ★ Influence Commonwealth Government and other consultations.
- ★ Influence OPAN projects, policies and processes.

The NOPRG is co-chaired by the OPAN CEO and a member who was elected by the NOPRG. Meetings are held via Zoom and all members were supported in learning how to use this platform. Breakout rooms where discussions on issues are held are facilitated by representatives from OPAN, Dementia Australia and the Australian Association of Gerontology.

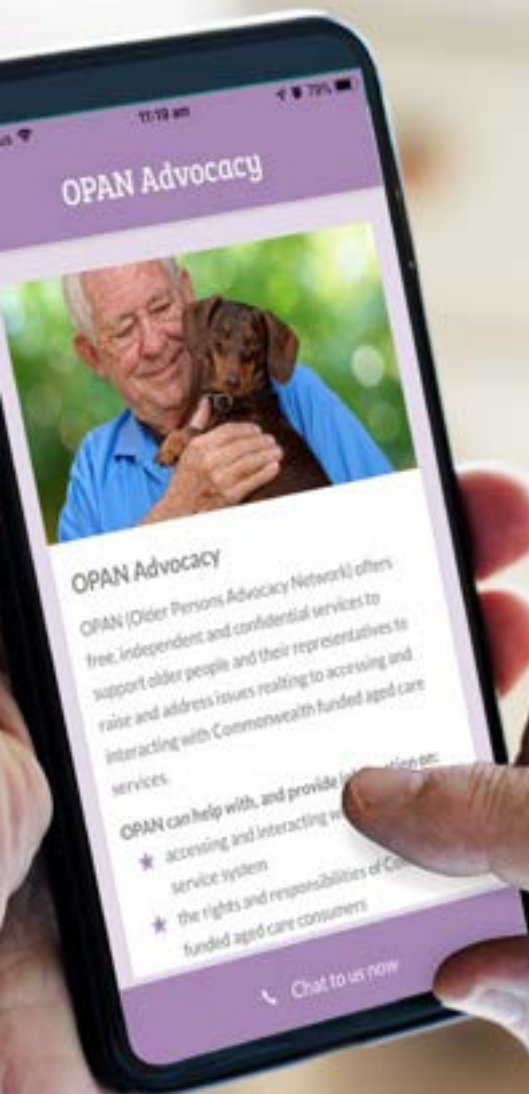
In the FY2019-2020, three meetings were held (March, May and June 2020). The first two meetings focused on members getting to know each other, nominations and election of the Co-Chair, Terms of Reference and structure of the NOPRG and discussions on priorities for the NOPRG.

In May, discussions also focused on the impact of COVID-19.

The June meeting focused on identifying the work OPAN could do on the priority areas previously identified.

The NOPRG members are a passionate group of people and OPAN looks forward to working with and for them over the coming year, to ensure the voices of older people drive the work that we do.

Launch of the Elder Help App and Noticed Something video



The abuse of older people remains a pertinent issue in Australia, which has been highlighted by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and the COVID-19 pandemic.

In late 2019, OPAN developed a mobile application, 'Elder Help', and an explainer video, 'Noticed Something?' which aims to provide information to volunteers, family, friends, carers or anyone in contact with older people, to recognise the possible signs of abuse. These resources also educate the wider community on the rights of older people receiving aged care, and how to access aged care advocacy services. The mobile app also enables the user to contact OPAN and the Elder Abuse Helpline directly to ensure assistance is easily accessible should they suspect abuse is occurring.

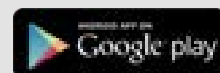
In December 2019, together with Senator and Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, Richard Colbeck, Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, we officially launched these resources at a free event in Melbourne.

The mobile app and video were presented, and the audience were able to ask questions about how the resources can be used. Both resources were extremely well received, with the Minister offering much praise for their support in combatting the abuse of older people.

This event also saw OPAN Consumer Representative Maria Berry emphasise the importance of such resources, especially in rural communities where older people may experience greater isolation. Community Visitors Scheme Coordinator Megan Collison spoke about why volunteers are essential in combatting loneliness for older people and how these resources will aid in reducing elder abuse.

For more information about these resources and to watch the Ministerial Launch here:
www.opan.com.au/elder-abuse

Download the Elder Help app:



Elder Abuse training development for Health Professionals



The abuse of older people is often committed by someone who is close to the older person, such as a family member, friends or paid care-giver. Sometimes, both the victim and perpetrator don't recognise that what is occurring is abuse.

Health and allied health professionals play an important role in addressing elder abuse. As trusted professionals, they are well placed to identify signs of elder abuse through their established professional relationship with patients and/or clinical assessment.

That's why OPAN partnered with the Hon Dr Kay Patterson AO, Age Discrimination Commissioner on a project to develop an online training package for health professionals, to provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to help them identify and deal with elder abuse.

OPAN joined several health care organisations in a working party to develop an outline of the curriculum that could be included as part of the training.

This online training package is now in phase two, with three modules in development, in collaboration with Maree Brown Speech Pathology Australia.

Module 1: Understanding Elder Abuse and Elder Rights

Module 2: Preventing, Identifying and Responding to Elder Abuse

Module 3: Rights, Power of Attorney and Law, Organisational Capacity Building.

This is a collaborative project, with buy-in from allied and health professionals including Speech Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Audiology, RACGP, Pharmacy and Nursing. There has also been input from experts in the area of banking, law enforcement and protective services, academics, lawyers, EAAA and Advocacy agencies across the network.

Keep an eye out for the completed online training package, which is due to be completed early in 2021.

Systemic Advocacy



The advocacy work that the OPAN and its member organisations have accomplished has not gone unnoticed. OPAN has been invited to take a seat at the table of many advisory groups as well as taken many ministerial meetings to effect aged care change and reform. Below are some of the meetings and committees where the voice of the older person has been heard and change has been affected.

The OPAN CEO represented OPAN at the **Inquiry into the Quality of Care Amendment (Minimising the Use of Restraints) Principles 2019** held by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights. In addition, meetings were held with several parliamentary members and OPAN member representatives to discuss the needs of older people, their rights and the role of aged care advocacy.

These have included:

- ★ Senator and Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, Richard Colbeck
- ★ Senator Rachel Siewert
- ★ Hon Julie Collins MP

Aged Care Advisory Groups and Committees include:

- ★ Aged Care Navigator Steering Committee
- ★ Aged Care Restraint Advisory Group
- ★ Aged Care Sector Committee
- ★ Dementia, Ageing, Aged Care Mission
- ★ Chief Executive Group – Aged Care Reform and Compliance Division
- ★ Elder Abuse Action Australia Advisory Group
- ★ Victorian Aged Care Response Centre (VACRC) Stakeholder Working Group
- ★ National Aged Care Alliance (NACA) and its various Working Groups



Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety

OPAN and our members have been active participants in responding to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. In partnership with our members, OPAN has made the following submissions:

- ★ Advocacy and Rights
- ★ Capacity, Guardianship and Supported Decision Making (developed by ADACAS)
- ★ Abuse of Older People in Aged Care (developed by SRS)
- ★ COVID-19 (two submissions)
- ★ Aged Care Program Re-Design
- ★ Aged Care System Governance
- ★ Aged Care in Rural and Remote Areas (developed by ADAA)
- ★ Impact of Sanctions on Older People (& Representatives) and not having their Voices Heard (developed by ARAS)
- ★ Special Needs in Aged care and Advocacy (developed by ERA)

Chemical Restraint



A chemical restraint is a form of medical restraint in which a drug is used to restrict the freedom or movement of a patient or in some cases to sedate the patient.

Unfortunately, chemical restraint is used too frequently in Australian aged care, particularly on people living with dementia or a cognitive impairment. Chemical restraint is a breach on the human rights of an older person an issue in desperate need of attention and reform.

That's why OPAN launched 'Medication; it's your choice', a project funded by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission. The aim was to increase understanding around the rights of older people to choose whether they take medication, what they take, or if they would like to try alternative treatments.

OPAN worked with an Advisory Group, which consisted of health professionals, advocates from OPAN members, and older people, to develop a brochure, booklet and explainer video. These resources provide older people, family, friends, carers and those working in the aged care sector, with information that is accessible and engaging.

OPAN also developed a series of six webinars, each exploring a different area of the issue of chemical restraint. The panellists on each webinar were fantastic, offering expert advice and information on an issue that is not well-known. However, the stars of the webinars were without a doubt Theresa Flavin and Bobby Redman. They shared incredible insights with viewers into their personal, lived experience.

These webinars were viewed a total of 10,759 times to date, and the response to the webinars was overwhelmingly positive, with 96.8% of those who completed the survey saying that they would recommend the webinars to someone they know.

As a result of this project, the OPAN CEO was asked to take part in story on the RN Law Report about COVID-19, elder abuse and chemical restraint.

You can listen to the RN Law Report here: www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/lawreport/elder-abuse-and-covid19/12709240

Download the brochures here: www.opan.com.au/yourchoice

View the webinars here: www.vimeo.com/448753542



Navigating the Aged Care system

Navigating the aged care system can be really overwhelming for older people, their families and their friends. It involves new terminology, contracts, new processes – sometimes it may even mean a new home.

To help alleviate some of the stress involved, OPAN launched a series of 26 webinars called, 'Navigating the Aged Care System'. The aim of these webinars was to break the process of engaging with the aged care system down into steps, and to talk older people, their families, friends and carers through each step. The project is part of the Aged Care Systems Navigator trial.

We began with the basic information older people need before engaging with the system, and working up to more in-depth information that older people may need to know when they're further along their aged care journey. We were joined on each webinar by experts from the specific field we were discussing.

The topics covered in this series of webinars were:

- ★ Planning your aged care journey
- ★ An introduction to 'My Aged Care'
- ★ Getting your needs assessed for aged care services
- ★ Aged care support and service options
- ★ Begin your aged care services
- ★ Reassessing your service and support requirements and accessing advocacy

The series of webinars are available here: www.opan.com.au/videos/#navigate



Partnering with the Department of Veterans' Affairs

The Department of Veterans' Affairs delivers a range of programs and services to support DVA clients. There are no age restrictions to these services. However, as a person ages their needs may increase.

OPAN and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) teamed up to develop a series of webinars and resources to increase awareness of the variety of support and services available to veterans and their families.

The nine webinars covered the topics:

- ★ Introduction to DVA & Veterans Home Care
- ★ Rehabilitation Appliance Program (RAP)
- ★ Respite & Convalescent Care
- ★ Community Nursing Program
- ★ Coordinated Veterans' Program
- ★ Moving into an Aged Care Home & Accessing Aged Care services
- ★ Hearing services

Viewers were able to submit questions via the Live Chat function, which were then put to the panel of experts to answer.

The explainer videos covered:

- ★ An overview of services available to veterans
- ★ Veterans guide to better hearing

This project provided veterans with an easy, engaging way to find out more about the broad range of support and services available to empower them to continue to live independent, happy lives.

You can watch the webinars in this series here: open.com.au/videos/#dva





My Aged Care Advocates as Agents Pilot

The ability of advocates to support older people through accessing My Aged Care services is at times limited, as advocates are unable to access information in the My Aged Care database system.

OPAN conveyed these challenges to the Department of Health and received funding to launch a My Aged Care Advocates as Agents pilot. The aim of this pilot was to provide advocates with the ability to act as a conduit between the older person and My Aged Care, making it easier for older people to receive the support they need.

72 advocates, specialist support workers and Aged Care Navigators registered as 'Agents'. After registering, these Agents were able to:

- ★ View and update client information through the My Aged Care client portal on the older person's behalf
- ★ Speak with, and provide information to, My Aged Care, assessors and service providers on behalf of the older person
- ★ Receive information about the older person's progress in the My Aged Care system, for example in an application process
- ★ Facilitate and enact decisions made by the older person about their aged care assessment and referrals for services
- ★ Be a point of contact for information on assessment and services
- ★ Receive letters for older people receiving or applying for home care
- ★ Receive phone calls on behalf of the older person from My Aged Care or providers

Feedback from advocates and Aged Care System Navigators who have registered as Agents has been overwhelmingly positive. Agents have been able to play a greater role in supporting older people to access the services they need through My Aged Care.

One Agent said,

"Just (want) to let you know how grateful I am for the development of the Advocates as Agents pilot. I've been using the system for a while now, and have had a big day today adding myself as a representative for a number of clients (and) it all runs so smoothly and just gives me a sense of achievement that I'm readily able to support clients, at least in some way, through the My Aged Care journey."

The pilot remains underway but once complete the information will be used to inform future system improvements to enable advocates and Aged Care System Navigators to better support older people.

Supporting diversity – supporting Forgotten Australians

The diverse backgrounds and experiences of older Australians need to be recognised, respected and celebrated. OPAN seeks to celebrate diversity in all its forms and recognises that a one size fits all approach to aged care and aged care advocacy will not work. Services need to be tailored, culturally appropriate and trauma informed in order to best meet the needs of the older people we are here to serve.

The need to understand somebody's background and lived experience is no more important than people who identify or have experienced being a Forgotten Australian. There are approximately 500,000 people who, as Forgotten Australians or Care Leavers, were separated from their family and raised in out-of-home or institutional care arrangements. They have been through an often traumatising experience and have a unique set of needs which can affect the way they engage with institutions, systems and government. Recognising their needs, building trust, understanding and respecting their experience is vital to ensure they receive adequate support when navigating the aged care system and receiving aged care advocacy.

OPAN is working over the next two years to design and implement an adversity policy that is inclusive, culturally appropriate, and brings cultural awareness to the way we deliver aged care advocacy. OPAN members have been delivering tailored solutions for diverse populations for many decades and OPAN's adversity strategy will bring these learnings and experiences together.

Forgotten Australians are one of a number of groups under the special needs definition within the Aged Care Act 1997. In October 2019, the OPAN CEO and OPAN senior policy officer Jennie Burrows met with the board and some members of the Alliance of Forgotten Australians (AFA) to seek to understand how OPAN would support building partnership with Forgotten Australians which would inform projects and activities that would better meet their needs.

OPAN has commenced the work of collaboration with AFA and our first activity was an interview with Pamela Vernon for International Day of the Older Person.

You can watch the interview here:
www.vimeo.com/463275501/bc1a4528d2





Charter of Aged Care Rights Phase 2

Prior to the introduction of a new Charter of Aged Care Rights in July 2019, OPAN was engaged by the Commonwealth Government Department of Health to deliver national education and awareness-raising activities about the Charter. The success and popularity of this initial round of initiatives led to a second phase which had more of a focus on educating providers and consumers in regional areas, and information specific to the Charter's implementation in-home care settings.

Events were held in:

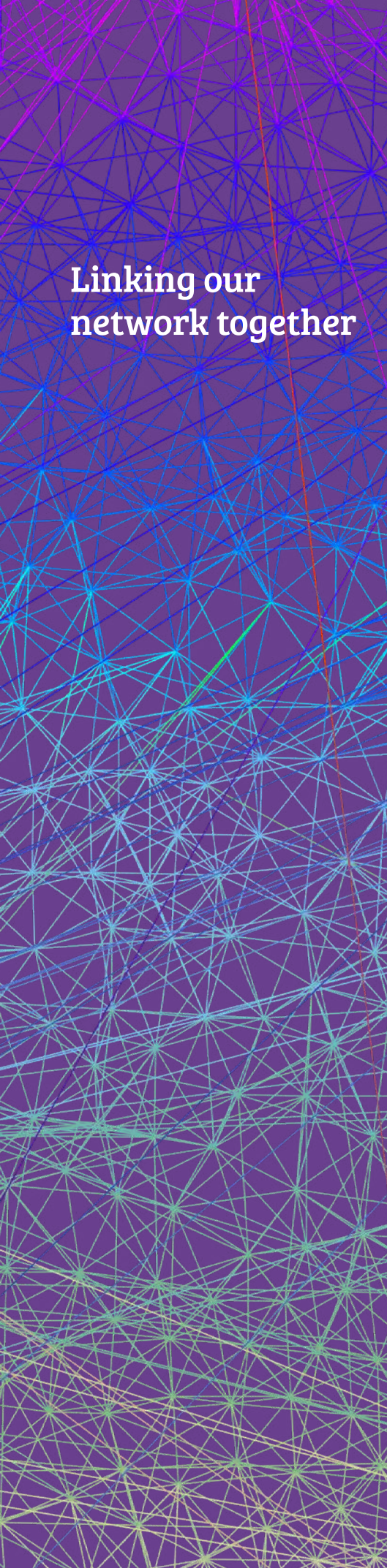
- ★ Newcastle, NSW
- ★ Port Macquarie, NSW
- ★ Bunbury, WA
- ★ Mandurah, WA
- ★ Alice Springs, NT
- ★ Bendigo, VIC
- ★ Geelong, VIC
- ★ Port Pirie, SA
- ★ Victor Harbor, SA
- ★ Toowoomba, QLD
- ★ Devonport, TAS
- ★ Launceston, TAS

The webinars, which mostly focused on briefing aged care providers, were exceptionally well attended and allowed providers to ask pertinent questions which had arisen during the initial months of the Charter's implementation. Consumer-focused webinars were also hosted live from the Newcastle and Alice Springs events.

Key statistics from Charter 2 Project:

- ★ Four **interactive webinars** and twelve **community events** across regional Australia
- ★ **Community events**
540 total registrations
- ★ **Interactive webinars**
454 total registrations
- ★ **Interactive webinars**
1,242 total views to date

From October – December 2019, twelve live events and four webinars were delivered to facilitate meaningful conversations around the Charter which ensured more provider engagement with their consumers. The feedback from the events was very positive. Most of the attendees had little knowledge of their rights under the Charter prior to hearing OPAN's information. The emphasis of phase 2 was educating regional areas.



Linking our network together

In conjunction with the communications strategies OPAN employed to inform the network's member organisations' staff, OPAN also made initial steps towards engaging the broader advocate network through three advocate update meetings offered in April and May this year.

These update meetings were an opportunity for advocates in the network to meet with others and receive information direct from OPAN on changes occurring in the sector, as well as hear about the new COVID-19 related information and activities.

The opportunity to hear verbal information rather than written updates and the ability to put faces to names and ask direct questions

were a new endeavour for OPAN. These meetings were well received by attendees and have laid the foundation for more future community engagement amongst our network in the coming financial year.

An information resource to support advocates to provide front line information on COVID-19 was also developed. This was in the form of an online living document where advocates could reference at any time the latest restrictions, guidelines or information on the quickly evolving COVID-19 situation to provide information to members of the community or those in aged care in their engagements.

Mrs Davis Advocacy Case Study



Belinda Staniforth from Catholic Care NT is a woman with tenacity, endurance and commitment to older people.

Mrs Davis* had been waiting to be discharged from a Northern Territory hospital for almost 100 days but had nowhere else to go. Her family were distraught, but with health issues of their own, were unable to provide her with the support she needed.

As a woman visiting Australia from an island in the Pacific, Mrs Davis's family were worried she would be deported and asked what options were available for their frail loved one.

Her family were struggling to make ends meet and Mrs Davis was not entitled to Medicare to cover the costs of her healthcare.

Her family were told she was not eligible to go into aged care but Belinda Staniforth, who works with the Northern Territory's only aged care provider, Catholic Care, worked with OPAN behind the scenes to secure a safe and comfortable place for Mrs Davis in residential care.

It was no small task, and relationships with government stakeholders were leaned on to work through options despite a lack of aged care beds, no Medicare access or general practitioner.

The supplied photograph has been shared with permission and shows Mrs Davis and Belinda together, happy after being able to get Mrs Davis in care and keep her close to her family in Australia.

Note: *Name and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals

Interview with Advocate: Belinda Staniforth Catholic Care NT



When Craig asked Belinda the following questions, here are her answers:

Why did you go above and beyond the line of duty?

"I received a referral through the hospital and thought there has to be a way to help this family, this lady has no option to return to Tonga where she has no family support. After meeting Mrs Davis and her family for the first time (the family is adorable) I was even more determined to assist and find a way to keep her in Australia being cared for and close to her family. I told the family at the end of the first meeting that 'I have no idea how I am going to do this, it's probably going to take a while but I will do all that I can'. It was a challenge that I was ready to try and solve, I had to take it on."

What did you find frustrating?

"Service providers involved in her care being so negative about what we were trying to do, this put a halt to the appropriate paperwork being completed and submitted by them. The waiting and wondering, running through scenarios early on in the case, not having a clue as to how I was going to assist this family knowing that I had to do something."

Why did you keep going even in the face of adversity?

"I couldn't give up on this family and tell them it was too hard, maybe impossible."

With the huge assistance and support from Craig Gear, I knew we were going to get a positive outcome."

What was the impact?

"The family no longer hold on to the guilt of having to 'dump' their mother in a hospital as they did not have the capacity to care for her at home. The whole family are repairing their relationship with each other as the whole situation has put great strain on the family unit as a hole. As an Advocate I now know it's possible if I am going to receive a similar referral. I learnt so much throughout this process, thanks Craig I honestly could not have achieved the outcome 'we' achieved without all your hard work, support and advice."

For me as a lone advocate, there has been many times where I've doubted the work I've done or wondered if I'm doing a good enough job. But after the Mrs Davis Case and the recognition I received, I know I'm doing a good job and it's given me so much more confidence."

What was your proudest moment?

"Receiving the phone call from Craig that Mrs Davis' hardship application had been approved. The taxi ride out to the facility with Mrs Davis and Elsie on 'move in' day. Being told by the family that they would be forever grateful for the support they received and that I was now classed as their extended family. I class this case as my biggest achievement, I feel so blessed and proud to have been part of such an amazing case with a perfect outcome, this is a story I will be telling my grandchildren!"

**Advocate – Belinda Staniforth -
Catholic Care NT**



The OPAN team

This financial year has seen the OPAN team work tirelessly to advocate for the rights of older people. Despite this year's unique challenges, OPAN's staff have continued to ensure the success of the organisation in delivering aged care advocacy at a time when it is needed most.

Craig Gear OAM – CEO

Craig Gear is a determined and devoted chief executive who has worked hard to extend OPAN's reach and activities. He is constantly championing advocacy and improving the aged care system for older people. His influence has demonstrated the need for advocacy in the aged care sector and he is part of several working groups, providing a platform for the voices of older people to be heard at a systemic level.

COVID-19 Response Team

The rapid development of the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating effects on aged care required a response to be quickly developed and implemented. As a result of additional funding, staff were recruited to assist with this to ensure OPAN could properly respond to the spread of COVID-19 and how this particularly impacted the aged care sector.

Lisa Martin spearheaded the COVID-19 Response Management Team, and under Lisa's leadership OPAN was able to effectively respond to a number of COVID-19 outbreaks at Newmarch House and North Rockhampton. Lisa also liaised with member organisations to ensure they felt supported and able to respond to any issues that arose in their respective State/Territory.

Geoff Rowe and **Catherine Aitken** from Queensland SDO ADA Australia both offered their invaluable expertise during this time, providing input into systemic advocacy issues and operations respectively. These contributions allowed OPAN to develop and hone their processes to ensure we could maximise the assistance provided to older people during this time. **Tania Staggers-Clarke** also joined Catherine on the operations front, and was able to assist in reforming a number of procedures and introducing systems that produced better outcomes for older people.

Cass Looever and **Kayla Foster** both joined the Communications and Education Team, each providing essential support to ensure OPAN could effectively inform older people of their rights during this time. This included (but was not limited to) planning and executing the COVID-19 webinar series, which conveyed information about COVID-19 in aged care in easy-to-understand ways. **Kyle Olsen**, **Maree Montgomery**, and **Tom Linnane** also greatly assisted in this process, with Kyle becoming the 'face' of OPAN and a comforting voice to many.

External support was also provided by **Peter Stahl** from Essential Media across a range of communications activities during this time, and **Dr Devon Indig** was able to use her data analyst skillset to examine and report on trends in the data we received during this period.

The start of the financial year saw Senior Project Manager **Jennie Burrows** continue to deliver on the National Aged Care Advocacy Program. Other significant national projects, such as the Aged Care System Navigator Trial and Charter of Aged Care Rights rollout, also progressed, with Project Manager and Educator **Maree Montgomery** spearheading these initiatives, with frequent collaboration from Consumer Representative **Maria Berry**. It is through these projects that they have increased the awareness and education of older people about their rights.

Claire Levisohn and **Amanda Beezley** have continued to provide invaluable support to the OPAN CEO, Board, and the rest of the team through administrative leadership and project management. **Stella She-Whichelo** has also continued in her role as Financial Controller, providing essential financial management services to the organisation.

Tom Linnane and **Rachael Morcombe** have provided invaluable marketing and communications support to a range of national OPAN projects, working closely with the rest of the team to ensure events and activities are adequately promoted. They have also worked to increase public, consumer and provider awareness of aged care rights and advocacy through measures to expand the OPAN brand awareness.

Sam Edmonds joined the OPAN team this financial year, and has taken the lead on the recently-established National Older Persons Reference Group which provides essential input about a range of issues from older people. Sam has also utilised her unique expertise to make a number of submissions to the Royal Commission on OPAN's behalf.

Talented partners **Travis Conneeley** (create.love) and **Melinda Cole** (M Creative Services) have continued their support of OPAN this year through the delivery of high-caliber videos and graphic design. Professional marketing collateral has ensured OPAN maintains its reputation for delivering high-quality content.



OPAN's Directors

The OPAN Board of directors is comprised of dedicated and experienced volunteers who represent each of the members of the OPAN network. The directors are committed to overseeing the delivery of the National Aged Care Advocacy Program, and ensuring it adequately meets the needs of aged care recipients.

Mary Anne Hunt

Non-Executive Director

Ass Dip Social Science & Comm Welfare

(ERA) in Victoria. She has over twenty years experience in senior leadership roles across a range of diverse communities and businesses including wellness, health, children/family, disability, community and aged services, and vocational educational services. She is also an accomplished mentor, coach and facilitator. Her diverse experience allows her to bring forward the right mix of compassion and business acumen to the individuals or organizations she supports.

Special responsibilities: Chairperson (from 21st August 2018)

Leanne (Liz) Kearins

Non-Executive Director

Cert Journalism, DipBusStud, FAIM, MAHRI, MPRIA

Liz Kearins is an experienced senior executive, board director and consultant, with expertise in culture change, strategy, engagement, and communication. Her diverse background spans the management consultancy, utilities, healthcare, local government, environment, tourism, and media sectors. Liz has a strong track record in leading organisation-wide strategy, engagement and culture change to achieve superior performance. She is also known for her work in stakeholder and community engagement; in particular her passion for involving communities in decisions about the issues that matter to them. As director of her own business, Engagiosity, Liz holds associate roles as a Senior Consultant with Actrua Performance Cultures, and Program Director – Change, Communication & Culture with LeadershipHQ and McDonald Inc. She also serves as Chair of Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia. Liz is a Fellow of the Institute of Managers and Leaders, a certified Change Management Practitioner, and a member of the Australian HR Institute, the Public Relations Institute of Australia and the International Association of Public Participation.

Judy Davis

Non-Executive Director

BSc (PubHlth), GDipIPH, and GAICD

Experience and expertise Judy Davis is the General Manager of Programs at Catholic Care Northern Territory (NT) and is responsible for the strategic leadership and operational performance of the organisation, managing a large portfolio of social services programs. She is a highly experienced manager with more than 20 years' experience in public health and community services. This position proceeds many senior positions spanning both public and community sectors including Australian Health Ministers Advisory Committee (AHMAC) Principal Coordinator for NT Top End Health Services, Deputy CEO of Northern Territory Medicare Local/Primary Health Network and Director of Health Promotion for Queensland Health. Judy is also the Chair of the Northern Territory Mental Health Coalition, a professional member of the Public Health Association of Australia and the Northern Territory Council of Social Services.

Leanne Groombridge

Non-Executive Director

Bachelor of Arts, Graduate Certificate in Counselling and Certificate in Governance for Not-for-Profits

Leanne is the Chief Executive Officer of Advocacy Tasmania Inc. Leanne has over thirty years of experience in senior management, executive and human resource positions across the not for profit, corporate and tertiary education sectors. She brings with her a wealth of experience in strategic planning, employee relations and change management.

Margaret Duckett

Non-Executive Director

B.Sc, M. Sc (Med), M.Sc.Soc, GAICD, Australian Institute of Company Directors' diploma

Margaret is the current President of Seniors Rights Service (NSW) and has held various senior roles including as Director of the NSW Office of Ageing. Her career has been primarily in the health and social sectors, building on her science background in terms of health promotion, advocacy and policy development. Margaret has extensive experience in government and political processes, and strategic policy development and implementation. She can point to a number of instances where her advocacy changed policy.

Anne Burgess

Chairperson (from 21st August 2018)

Non-Executive Director

AUA (Dip Soc Stud), BSW

Anne brings to the Board extensive experience from her career as a senior public sector bureaucrat in SA which culminated in her two year term as Acting Commissioner for Equal Opportunity from June 2010 to July 2012. She has a strong background in equal opportunity, planning, strategy and problem solving from her years at senior levels within the areas of health, mental health and the equal opportunity. Anne also has experience in the not for profit sector, including her current positions as Deputy President of COTA SA and Chair of their Policy Council and a member of the National Aged Care Alliance. Anne holds a number of other positions including member of the Chiropractic Board of Australia and Member Legal Practitioners Conduct Tribunal.

Michael Bleasdale

Non-Executive Director

Master of Letters, Sociology – University of New England and BA (HONS (Greek) – University of Birmingham

CEO – ACT Disability, Aged Care Advocacy Services (ADACAS), CEO – Home Modifications Australia and Treasurer – ACOSS.

Special responsibilities: Chairperson – Finance, Audit & Risk (FAR) Committee

Diedre Timms

Non-Executive Director

BEd, GAICD

Diedre is the CEO of Advocare Inc in Western Australia. Diedre has significant executive and board level experience in community care and not for profit organisations in both rural and metropolitan environments. She has managed programs and organisations in the areas of disability, women's health, aboriginal health, aged care, international emergency response and community care. Diedre is a passionate advocate for social justice.



1800 700 600 | www.opan.com.au