

MEDIA RELEASE

1 November 2019

OPAN responds to release of Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Interim Report

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Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) has welcomed the release of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Interim Report, tabled in parliament yesterday.

The report, aptly titled 'Aged Care in Australia: A Shocking Tale of Neglect', has outlined the failures of the Australian aged care system, and more importantly, the ways in which it can improve. Government needs to immediately act on issues of funding for home care and addressing the overuse of chemical restraint.

"OPAN is pleased to see that issues such as abuse and neglect are finally being brought to the forefront," Craig Gear, OPAN Chief Executive Officer, said.

"The report has exposed the pertinent issues within aged care, that leads to action which results in the fundamental reform that the system needs. We are disappointed that a greater emphasis on individual advocacy support to assist people dealing with issues in the aged care system is not more prominent in the interim report."

Select findings of the interim report include the difficulty people have in understanding and navigating the aged care system, and the lack of transparency about the quality of aged care services. The report also highlighted the dire need for more flexible and targeted services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and those living in regional, remote and rural areas.

As the national network comprised of nine state and territory organisations that have been successfully delivering aged care advocacy, information and education services to older people in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote Australia for over 25 years, OPAN is perfectly positioned to assist in these regards. OPAN members have been raising concerns about these issues for almost three decades.

"Evidence has shown that issues in aged care, such as chemical restraint, are not going to be eliminated or even minimised without further reform and action. But these claims are nothing new – OPAN members have been lobbying for reform for many years," Mr Gear said.

"We are supportive of direction on restraint, and welcome action on that as well as on the other issues of abuse occurring within home care. There must be more transparency about what is occurring within aged care, especially in residential aged care facilities."

"Older people cannot wait for another 12 months – we must respond now."

The assistance of an OPAN aged care advocate can be requested by phoning the extended hours phone line at **1800 700 600**, which operates from 8am-8pm (AEDT) Monday to Friday.

1800 700 600 www.opan.com.au

OPAN service delivery organisation in your state or territory:

ACT TAS VIC NSW NT – Top End



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More details regarding Older Persons Advocacy Network, a leader in providing aged care advocacy support and elder abuse prevention, can be found at <https://opan.com.au>.

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For immediate release