



MEDIA RELEASE

12 September 2024

PEAK AGED CARE ADVOCACY BODY WELCOMES THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW AGED CARE ACT

The Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) today welcomed the announcement of the agreement to introduce the Bill for the new Aged Care Act to parliament.

“I congratulate the Albanese Government and the Opposition for their efforts in reaching a hard fought-for agreement on the funding principles of this crucial piece of legislation,” OPAN CEO Craig Gear OAM said.

“The new Aged Care Act has the potential to enhance quality standards, increase protections for older people, and create a financially sustainable aged care system for future generations.

“What we have here are the building blocks for a safe, high-quality, financially viable aged care system for generations to come.

“Older people look forward to having their rights enshrined in legislation.”

Mr Gear said OPAN would take time to work through the detail of the new legislation and to assess the fairness and equity of the proposed co-contribution model.

“We understand the government will continue to be the prime funder of aged care and clinical care. While some people may be contributing to their aged care via a sliding scale, we are keen to understand the efficacy of the safety nets and other financial protections for older people.

“OPAN will collaborate with older people and the organisations that support them to provide feedback to ensure the best aged care outcomes for older people.

“We look forward to working with the parliament and other sector stakeholders to implement sensible changes that ensure the rights of older people are upheld in the rule of law.”

Mr Gear said he was disappointed by the omission from the final legislation of criminal penalties in particular for serious harm and neglect.

“However, there may be alternative legislative avenues for older people to pursue, such as Work Health and Safety and Corporations Law,” Mr Gear said.

“OPAN, in collaboration with other peak bodies for older people and those who support them, will explore the detail of the new legislation to ensure there are appropriate financial penalties for providers who do the wrong thing, redress and/or compensation for older people, and measures to ensure restorative justice for older people and their families.”

Mr Gear urged politicians to adopt a multi-partisan approach to the commencement of the new Aged Care Act, a key recommendation of the Aged Care Royal Commission.



“Older people have waited far too long for their rights to be upheld and for this life-changing piece of legislation. Its passage must now be facilitated without further delay.”

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IMPORTANT NOTICE TO MEDIA FOR STORIES RELATING TO OLDER PEOPLE

It is critical to provide older people with an avenue to get support when covering stories about aged care. We strongly encourage you to include the following message in your story to enable older people to seek support:

For information or support regarding aged care, please call the Aged Care Advocacy Line on 1800 700 600 or visit opan.org.au