

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Older Persons Advocacy Network responds to Royal Commission Preliminary Hearing

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Aged care advocacy network, Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN), will be at the forefront in bringing their expertise to the upcoming Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

OPAN, a leader in providing aged care advocacy support and elder abuse prevention, has welcomed the Royal Commission. It believes that a Royal Commission offers unique opportunities to investigate the quality and safety issues in aged care and contribute to improving the design of the complex, hard to navigate system.

“It is essential that older people are heard during this process, and encouraged to come forward and share their experiences, good and bad,” Craig Gear, OPAN Chief Executive Officer, said. “The rights of older people entitle them to have their voices at the centre of the investigations to ensure that the Commission is effective in addressing the issues in aged care.”

It is crucial that the Royal Commission address the abuse of older people and the reasons for it, says Gear. It should pay particular attention to the barriers to accessing aged care faced by older people who are culturally and linguistically diverse, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTI, and those living in regional, remote and rural locations.

Homeless older people also have particular needs requiring focus from the upcoming Royal Commission. These people have specific challenges in navigating the aged care system and receiving high quality aged care services.

OPAN has emphasised that an effective Commission must not concentrate disproportionately on residential care facilities as most aged care users actually use home care services.

“Aged care issues go beyond those occurring in aged care facilities,” Gear said. “As more older people are choosing to age in place, the Royal Commission must be sure to hear sufficient evidence from those receiving support to live at home.”

**More details** regarding Older Persons Advocacy Network, a network of aged care advocacy organisations, can be found at: <https://opan.com.au/>.

#### For more information and media contact:

Craig Gear, Chief Executive Officer, Older Persons Advocacy Network  
(02) 9281 3600 or 0410 695 659