



Aged Rights Advocacy Services (SA) Inc. welcomes the invitation by the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs to comment on the proposed Aged Care Legislation Amendment (Financial Transparency) Bill 2020 (Bill).

About Aged Rights Advocacy Service (SA) Inc.

The Aged Right Advocacy Service (SA) Inc.¹ (ARAS) is a state-wide, not-for-profit, independent, community-based organisation that provides information, education and advocacy support for older people across South Australia since 1990.² Older people who use community or residential aged care services, people who live in retirement villages, and older people who are experiencing, or who are at risk of abuse from family or friends, can use an ARAS advocate, at no cost, to assist them to address their concerns. ARAS also has a specialist Aboriginal Advocate to provide culturally appropriate support and hosts an annual intergenerational mentoring camp in regional South Australia. Additionally, ARAS is participating in the Aged Care Navigators trial in North West country regions of South Australia. The Aged Care Navigators support older people to navigate the aged care system and access services.

An experienced volunteer Board of non-executive Directors and a small committed staff of 16.6FTE support ARAS. In addition to supporting older people with individual advocacy support ARAS also provides information and education sessions about aged care rights, retirement village rights and broader human rights, contributing to community understanding and empowerment ensuring the voice of older people is heard on issues that matter to them.

ARAS is also one of the five founding members of Elder Abuse Action Australia (EAAA)³ funded by the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department, volunteering it's expertise and knowledge to support the development of EAAA as an organisation and the development of the national knowledge hub 'Compass'.⁴ Additionally, ARAS at a state level is a founding member of the Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse.⁵

ARAS is the South Australian member of Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN).⁶

ARAS is funded by OPAN, the Australian Government, SA Health, Office for Ageing Well and COTA.⁷

Service Delivery 2018/19 – Who we supported

Some Fast facts from 2018/19 about ARAS service delivery:

- 1743 Individual Advocacy Cases
- 1048 Individual Information inquiries
- 425 Education sessions to
- 10,685 participants
- 53,003 website page views

¹ Aged Rights Advocacy Service (SA) Inc.: <http://www.sa.agedrights.asn.au/>

² Aged Rights Advocacy Service, History: http://www.sa.agedrights.asn.au/about_us/history

³ Elder Abuse Action Australia (EAAA): <https://eaaa.org.au/welcome-to-elder-abuse-action-australia/>

⁴ Compass, Guiding Action on Elder Abuse: <https://compass.info/>

⁵ Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse: <https://www.apea.org.au/>

⁶ Older Persons Advocacy Network: <https://opan.com.au/>

⁷ Aged Rights Advocacy Service: Annual Report: Aged Rights Advocacy (SA) Inc. See Annual Report 2018/19: <https://www.sa.agedrights.asn.au/resources/publications>

- 7028 Contacts from the public
- 1572 Subscribers to our news

Additionally, during 2018/19 ARAS partnered with Ceduna Koonibba Aboriginal Health Service and Ceduna Youth Hub Ceduna Aboriginal Corporation hosting the Aboriginal Elders and Youth Mentoring Camp at Scotdesco Cultural Centre in the far west coast of South Australia, near Ceduna. ⁸

During 2018/19 ARAS also hosted an inaugural Stolen Generations Summit inviting Elders of the Stolen Generations to come together and share their stories. Two Aboriginal Elders consented to sharing their stories providing a resource that can assist aged care and community care to understand and be better informed. ⁹

Additionally, ARAS hosted the annual South Australian World Elder Abuse Awareness Conference on 17 June 2019 with the purpose of supporting the international people's movement speaking up about abuse of older people, supported by the United Nations and the World Health Organisation. The purpose of the annual conference is bringing together policy makers, frontline workers covering the latest research and reviewing the progress that is occurring but ensuring that the message that abuse of any older person is unacceptable. ¹⁰

Submissions

In recent years, ARAS has made submissions to the Australian Law Reform Commission Inquiry into Elder Abuse ¹¹ (ALRC) as well as the South Australian Parliamentary Joint Committee on Matters Relating to Elder Abuse in regards to the financial abuse of older people.

ARAS has also supported older people to make submissions to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety as well as made submissions on behalf of ARAS. ¹² ARAS is also supportive of submissions made by EAAA and OPAN.

Transparency and Accountability

ARAS acknowledges the concern about administrative burden however, ARAS believes this information would or should be able to be collected relatively easily by aged care providers as part of their operations and governance arrangements. This information, including but not limited to about the financial spending on staffing, food, staff training and education, provides valuable information that should also be available to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, as the regulator. By publishing, the information as proposed by the Bill it provides transparency and public accountability for government expenditure and residents own contributions to their aged care. This would be in the public interest.

Contact for more information about this submission:

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⁸ Aged Rights Advocacy (SA) Inc. See Annual Report 2018/19: <https://www.sa.agedrights.asn.au/resources/publications>

⁹ Aged Rights Advocacy Service (SA) Inc. See Understanding the Stolen Generations Through Stories: <https://www.sa.agedrights.asn.au/resources/publications>

¹⁰ Aged Rights Advocacy (SA) Inc. See Annual Report 2018/19: <https://www.sa.agedrights.asn.au/resources/publications>

¹¹ Australian Law Reform Commission: <https://www.alrc.gov.au/inquiry/elder-abuse-2/elder-abuse-submissions/>

¹² Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality & Safety: Interim Report: <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/interim-report>