

## Free aged care advocacy – we're here if you need us

Dear resident or family member,

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unique risks for older people, particularly those living in residential aged care facilities. It is not surprising if you feel concerned right now. That's why it's especially important that you understand your rights, what support systems are available and how to get help if you need it. An aged care advocate can make it much easier.

### What an aged care advocate does

Aged care advocates walk alongside older people and their families. They provide older people with a voice and work at their direction. Most importantly, they are independent of aged care providers and the government, and the support they offer is free.

An advocate can assist you whether you're an older person or a family member or representative. They can support you one on one, or work with other members of your family and your aged care service provider.

### Who provides the advocacy services

In Victoria, your advocacy provider is Elder Rights Advocacy (ERA). ERA is a member of OPAN, the Older Persons Advocacy Network, which is a national aged care advocacy organisation. Both ERA and OPAN are funded by the Federal Government to provide free, confidential, independent aged care advocacy and information to older people, their families and representatives.

### How you can request support or more information

Freecall **1800 700 600** to be connected to ERA. If you need an interpreter, call **131 450**. For the National Relay Service (NRS), call **133 677**. If you prefer, email **covid@opan.com.au** – put 'ERA' in the subject line and include your call-back number in the text. However you contact us, you can request a call-back after hours.

Please don't hesitate to ask for support. If you need help, we're here for you.

With best wishes,



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