

## **New funding will help meet record WA demand for support for people in aged care and at risk of abuse**

WA's Advocare has welcomed the increased \$94 million additional investment in aged care advocacy announced in the Federal Budget and the organisation will use its share to increase advocacy support to meet record demand from older West Australians and their families.

Advocare is the leading agency providing advocacy services for older West Australians in residential aged care or receiving home care and the new financial support coincides with a spike in demand for its services.

Chief Executive Etta Palumbo said Advocare would benefit from the additional funding which would be used to boost the organisation's advocacy staff.

"We are experiencing an unprecedented number of requests for help, advice and support from older people receiving aged care and their families," Ms Palumbo said.

"During March, we received a record number of calls to both our Elder Abuse Helpline and to our main telephone line.

"This new funding will help keep older West Australians living in their homes for longer and will also prevent elder abuse."

Ms Palumbo said the Office of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety estimated that 40% of people living in Australian residential aged care facilities experienced elder abuse in the form of neglect or physical abuse. Many older West Australians found it difficult to get help with aged care issues for a variety of reasons including not knowing they could access free, independent advice from Advocare.

She said Advocare would recruit additional advocates which will make it easier for older people to access aged care services and support when they need it, particularly in rural and regional areas of the State.

"As the WA member organisation of the national Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN), we fully support the Federal Government's significant investment in aged care and their commitment to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission," she said.

"The aged care sector is struggling and it needs funding and encouragement to recruit, train and retain qualified staff."

Ms Palumbo said Advocare would continue to develop its advocacy support services for older West Australians while also working to create greater public knowledge of the rights of older people in the community.

"Recently, Advocare has taken steps to strengthen our advocacy services to ensure we are giving the best possible support to those older people who need us by upskilling resources and adding aged care navigation expertise," she said. "This new funding is most welcome and it will enable us to take the next step toward meeting a growing need.



“Advocacy will continue to play an increasingly important role in our society – seldom do people deliberately set out to cause harm or distress to others, particularly older people. Issues often stem from misinformation, misunderstanding, a clash of interests or lack of time or resources, amongst other things.

“Advocare will continue to deliver advocacy services that are relevant, sustainable and of the highest standards and to use research and public awareness to make a lasting difference in empowering older West Australians.”

### **About Advocare**

Advocare provides in person and telephone advocacy services (Telephone: 1800 655 566) including the Elder Abuse Help Line (Telephone: 1300 724 679), Aged Care Navigation for eligible Western Australians that help older people register for My Aged Care, access aged care packages and home care services, transition between services or select and secure residential aged care place and the Community Volunteers Scheme which connects one-to-one volunteers with older people who are lonely or socially isolated and whose quality of life would be improved by positive engagement and companionship. Advocare is also the WA member of the national Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN), which aims to achieve national access and consistency in advocacy services and a collective voice for systemic change in Commonwealth funded aged care services.

**Media contacts: Gina Cumberland, telephone 0413 122 260 or Joanne Fowler, telephone 0408 878 817**

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