



For the Rights of Older People Celebrating 25 Years 1990-2015

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For the Rights of Older People Celebrating 25 Years 1990-2015



A little over 25 years ago we looked forward to the creation of the Aged Rights Advocacy Service (ARAS) with much hope and enthusiasm. This would be the first time there had been an organisation dedicated to advancing and protecting the rights of aged care residents.

ARAS was to be jointly auspiced by COTA SA and its consumer organisations partner the Council of Pensioner and Retired Persons Organisations (COPARP). Getting ARAS going was one of my key tasks in my first year as CE of COTA SA.

ARAS was a new experience for aged care providers, which some, even in 'progressive' SA, found threatening. In the early days I fielded a number of calls from provider CEOs asking me to "call off" ARAS staff.

That changed as ARAS grew and developed, giving high priority to education and awareness raising which aimed to inculcate a culture of respect for resident rights. The provider sector grew to appreciate that ARAS helped lift its standards.

Over the years ARAS has grown into new areas of work - HACC, elder abuse and Aboriginal programs, and now retirement villages - and has enhanced and developed its knowledge, skills and expertise to an unparalleled level.

Today ARAS is a leader in the aged care and elder abuse advocacy sector and makes a significant national contribution as well as to SA. The COTA /ARAS relationship points the way forward for the new national aged care advocacy program we hope will develop from the current reforms.

Special thanks and appreciation must go to ARAS' CEO Marilyn Crabtree, who like me spans the whole 25 years, and whose vision, principles and commitment have been crucial to ARAS' success; and also to its two chairs over that period, the late Mary Miller, and Joan Stone, who have been stalwarts and champions for elder rights.

As we move forward to a new era in aged care with greater consumer choice and control, the role played by ARAS will be all the more vital. COTA looks forward to being a continuing partner over the next 25 years.

Ian Yates AM
Chief Executive
COTA Australia



It has been such an interesting journey to look back over the 25 years since the Aged Rights Advocacy Service began on March 19th 1990. When we started to think of all the things we have done and looked at the photos across those years, it is a surprise that the time has passed so quickly.

I remember the day that the advocacy service started. We did not have a name and there was a great deal of discussion about what that name should be. When we finally came up with the Aged Rights Advocacy Service and an acronym of ARAS, Mary Miller AM, our very first Chairperson asked if we could find a name that would give us the acronym HARASS instead!

We have been most fortunate with our Chairpersons. Our second Joan Stone has been with us since July 98, and Chairperson since February 2001, and her commitment to ARAS has been outstanding.

The contribution of both Mary Miller and Joan Stone is in itself something to celebrate and we are most thankful for their dedication to ARAS and what we stand for.

In fact all of our Board members have been exemplary in their commitment to ARAS and to the rights of older people. I must make a special mention of Ian Yates AM, who has been a most valued member of the Board from prior to the commencement of ARAS right through to today. I thank all of our Board members, past and present, for their support and assistance to making ARAS what it is today.

I have appreciated the opportunities ARAS has given to me. I have always felt it's a privilege to meet so many people who have shared their stories and their concerns with ARAS. To be allowed to offer assistance to speak up about concerns relating to their quality of life or quality of care is very special and not to be taken for granted.

Over the years ARAS has also formed appropriate relationships with the many service providers across South Australia, too numerous to single out, and I thank them for their support and willingness to improve the system to ensure the rights and entitlements of older people are upheld.

ARAS receives funding from the Australian Government under the Commonwealth HACC Program and the Department of Social Services, and Office for the Ageing, SA Health. We have always been well supported by the various department officers both locally and in Canberra.

I must also pay credit to the ARAS staff who have contributed to the strong profile of ARAS, built over 25 years. It is the staff who are the face of ARAS out in the community, and providing advocacy support requires a certain resilience to be able to be involved in the more critical times of people's lives.

Many of our staff stay with ARAS for a number of years and I warn them to watch out or it will be their 25th anniversary too!

Marilyn Crabtree
CEO ARAS



Joan Stone
Chairperson ARAS

Advocacy can play a significant role in enabling older people to have control over their own lives and circumstances. It can give them the confidence to stand up for themselves and make their views heard, as well as ensuring that older people are able to access the information they need to make informed decisions.

The Aged Rights Advocacy Service Incorporated (ARAS) aims to assist older people to exercise their rights and uses an advocacy mechanism to do so.

We work across the full aged care spectrum from Home and Community Care, to Home Care Packages, and Residential Care. We also have an Aboriginal Advocacy Program to encourage access to ARAS by older Aboriginal people. Our Abuse Prevention Program works with older people whose situation has made them vulnerable to abuse by someone they should be able to trust. Most recently we have begun working with residents of Retirement Villages.

This wide coverage is welcomed by older people who may require assistance to have their voices heard, and it means that South Australia already has in place a well-recognised and most reputable 'end-to-end' advocacy service.

The proportion of the population aged 65+ is projected to double over the next fifty years and the proportion aged 80+ is expected to increase three fold, with more than 50% having some level of disability.

The overall demand for health and aged care services is therefore projected to increase and the need for aged care advocacy can also be expected to rise. ARAS has a strong foundation and will be well positioned to meet that need with appropriate resourcing.



WEAAD Reception at
Government House,
Joan Stone,
Hon. Zoe Bettison
Minister for Ageing,
His Excellency Rear
Admiral the Honourable
Kevin Scarce
AC CSC RANR,
Marilyn Crabtree
CEO ARAS.

Residential Care Advocacy 1990

Advocacy services for residents of residential aged care facilities were funded by the Australian Government in every State and Territory in Australia through the Residential Aged Care Advocacy Services (RACASP) Program since the introduction of the Consumer Rights initiatives in 1989. ARAS is the SA component of this network.

The funding of the RACASP in 1989 formed part of the fifth stage of the Commonwealth Government's eight stage aged care reform strategy. The fifth stage for reform was first introduced in 1986 and concluded in 1996.

The strategy for reform was prompted by a number of Parliamentary reports and other reviews of residential care services. Overall, the reform strategy was directed to better outcomes for consumers and gave considerable attention to standards of care and the protection of user rights.

In order to provide a sound basis for this stage of the aged care reform the Government commissioned a consultant, Ms Chris Ronalds, to consult with residents and other interested groups to identify major issues affecting residents. Flowing from Ms Ronalds' recommendations in her report, Resident Rights in Nursing Homes and Hostels, were five key components forming a user rights strategy, one of which was the formation of an advocacy program in each State and Territory through the Residential Aged Care Advocacy Program (RACASP).

Specifically the report noted that: **'Difficulty in personally exercising rights should not mean that those rights no longer apply. Rather it means that some effective method of assisting the person to exercise their rights must be found. In practical terms the notion of an advocate or advocacy services is seen as one mechanism to meet their needs'**.

ARAS began in March 1990 as part of the Residential Aged Care Advocacy Program and this became the National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP) in 2002 to reflect the fact that all recipients of aged care services, both residential and in the community, are eligible to receive advocacy services.

The aim of NACAP is 'To contribute to improving the quality of life of people receiving aged care services and to the protection of their rights through:

- encouraging understanding of, and knowledge about, the rights of older people, to older people, their representatives, service providers and the general community
- enabling older people to exercise those rights
- provide free, independent and confidential advocacy services in relation to those rights'

[see Advocacy Grant Purposes - Aged Care Act 1997].

Home and Community Care (HACC) Advocacy 1991

The working group of the First Triennial Review of the HACC Program recommended that: *Ministers agree that a comprehensive 'user rights strategy' for the HACC Program be developed by 1990.* The working group identified a number of measures that could be part of a HACC User Rights Strategy, including Advocacy services.

The working group recognised that because of the vulnerability or physical frailty of a significant number of service users, it would be necessary in certain circumstances for some users to have access to advocacy services

In March 1989, HACC Ministers agreed that a consumer rights strategy should be developed for the HACC program. The first element of the strategy, the Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, was introduced in September 1990.

ARAS received funding in July 1991 through the HACC Program to include advocacy support for Consumer Rights for the frail aged living in the community and their carers, who receive, or are eligible for, HACC funded services. The initial funding, for one advocacy worker, focused on raising awareness of Consumer Rights and the implications of these rights for agencies. ARAS received additional funding in July 1995 to employ another advocacy worker and was then able to offer advocacy to individual consumers.

Abuse Prevention Program Advocacy 1997

The abuse of older people - what is known as elder abuse - by those with whom they have significant relationships has become a matter of concern in Australia and overseas in recent years. Significant reports produced in the 1990's acknowledged the existence of this particular form of abuse in Australia and raised issues regarding policy and the development of programs for older Australians.

In 1997 the Aged Rights Advocacy Service received government funding, from Home and Community Care Services and Office for the Ageing, to provide advocacy assistance to older people at risk of, or experiencing, abuse. Our staff offer individualised advocacy assistance to older people to understand and exercise their rights to regain control of their lives.

Aboriginal Advocacy Program 2003

ARAS recognised that it needed to be proactive about providing individualised advocacy assistance to older Aboriginal people, and could only be effective if we had a relationship with Aboriginal communities.

From 2000 to 2003, we actively sought to build a relationship with the communities across South Australia, with the assistance of the **Council of Aboriginal Elders of SA (CAESA)** who introduced ARAS to its members in CAESA's fifteen forums. A strong collaboration followed between ARAS and CAESA, submitting a funding application in 2002 to employ an Aboriginal advocate and pilot an Aboriginal Advocacy Project to provide advocacy support to older Aboriginal people.

In 2003, ARAS was successful in securing funding for the Aboriginal Advocacy Project and employed distinguished Elder Brian Butler as ARAS' first Aboriginal advocate. The pilot project was highly successful with hundreds of older Aboriginal people accessing ARAS' services for the first time in its history.

Recurrent funding followed in 2005, thereby establishing the **Aboriginal Advocacy Program**, and this formed the fourth program at ARAS. During the next eight years, ARAS and CAESA worked together to produce culturally-sensitive and appropriate brochures, posters, fridge magnets and media promotional material which further advanced ARAS' reputation in the field of Aboriginal advocacy, including in elder abuse prevention.

Today, ARAS has earned the reputation of being a trusted, reliable and effective response to Aboriginal elders' aged care issues and elder abuse issues, as well as being a key organisation that links elders to service provision and a provider of education and training about the rights of older people to staff of Aboriginal-specific aged care organisations.



Launch of Retirement Villages: Better Practice Guidelines; Sinead O'Brien OFTA, Jeanette Walters OFTA, Hon. Zoe Bettison Minister for Ageing, Jenny Adams ARAS, Marilyn Crabtree ARAS.

Advocacy for Residents of Retirement Villages

A retirement village residents' advocacy service was finally launched in late 2014, following many years of lobbying by the South Australian Retirement Village Residents Association. The advocate provides support to residents with regard to issues which relate to their residency in the Retirement Village.

The advocate aims to:

- 1) Provide information about rights and entitlements relating to residency of Retirement Villages.
- 2) Provide advocacy support, assistance or representation when individual resident and/or groups of residents need to:
 - Contact an administering authority
 - Contact the Office for the Ageing (OFTA)
 - Attend Residential Tenancy Tribunal or South Australian Civil and Administering Tribunal.

As well as supporting individuals to be involved in decision-making and to exercise their rights, we also provide education and community awareness sessions, and have input into policy that impacts on our client group.

ARAS activities focus on the following aims:

■ **Individual Advocacy**

Assist clients to exercise their rights and responsibilities through a free, equitable and confidential advocacy process, including support and representation for individuals and groups.

■ **Information**

Provide accurate and timely information to clients, enabling informed choice and decision-making and self-advocacy.

■ **Promotion**

Raise awareness of the rights of consumers to the aged care industry, government and the broader community.

■ **Education and Community Development**

Protect and enhance the rights and interests of our client group through the use of education and community development.

■ **Access and Equity**

Provide an equitable, high quality service to all people who use the service across the state.

ARAS funding is provided by the Australian Government under the Commonwealth Home & Community Care Program, and the Department of Social Services and Office for the Ageing SA Health.

ARAS is an incorporated association with a Board of Management and one member, that member being the Council on the Ageing (South Australia).

ARAS supports older people or their representatives who are:

- receiving community based aged care services
- living in an aged care residential facility or retirement village
- at risk of, or are being abused by someone they should be able to trust.

■ **ARAS Programs as at March 2015**

Residential Care (1990)

HACC (1991)

Abuse Prevention (1997)

Aboriginal Advocacy (2003) - a collaboration with the Council of Aboriginal Elders of SA.

Retirement Villages (2014) - we are currently building the profile of this program and already have a substantial number of clients seeking assistance.

Our statistics for 2013-2014 show:

- Provided advocacy support to 1,505 individuals
- Information to 1,040 individuals
- Education 352 sessions with 8,900 participants
- Networked with almost 3,000 participants.

Overall ARAS assisted and informed over 13,800 people in 2013-2014

Our core work of assisting people to participate in decisions affecting their lives, provides us with the expertise and depth of understanding of the issues that we use in other areas of our work, for example in education.



'Looking After Our Elders' by Heather Kamarra Shearer

The painting 'Looking After Our Elders' by Heather Kamarra Shearer, was created especially for the Aboriginal Advocacy Program in 2008 (above).

All the programs' material featured the painting reproduced and the description below tells the story of the original painting.

The painting's story:

The central image shows elders sitting around a campfire at the core of the Aboriginal community. Each elder is linked to an ARAS staff member who (1) provides support to them and advocates on their behalf to other people/agencies and etc., to (2) protect them and ensure they live safely, (3) ensure their rights and (4) provide information. Each of these four major roles have been interpreted into the surrounding four images from top left, top right, bottom left and bottom right.

Each image has a series of lines at each end which at the one end represents the colours of the earth, vegetation and water (whether it be sea or freshwater), and at the other end - a single line of pink/apricot to represent where the Advocates represent the elders in the bigger world, in their business.

Placed members of the Aboriginal community sit around the painting, with the hand prints representing the respect that should be afforded to all Elders in our community.

ARAS has undertaken many projects over the years. Here is a sample of some of those that had a broader impact:

ACAT Project

In 1993/1994 the Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health provided funds to ARAS to identify and develop opportunities for consumers to exercise their rights at any stage of aged care assessment and for the Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACATs) to ensure consumer rights throughout their work practices. The primary activities of the project directed attention to consumer rights through an educative approach across the ACAT system. The project officer was also available to assist older people and their representatives with concerns they may have experienced when involved in an aged care assessment.

Access and Equity Project

This project was funded through Aged Care program Support Grants in 1994/95. The project was undertaken part-time with the project officer identifying appropriate strategies to be applied to the operation of ARAS, by which people of non-English speaking backgrounds can be supported to exercise their rights. An additional outcome of this project was that ARAS gained recognition within the multicultural sector as a mainstream organisation employing access and equity strategies. The consumer rights of non-English speaking residents were upheld internally within ARAS and residential care facilities became aware that ARAS was accessible to all consumers regardless of cultural or language backgrounds.

Pathways to Accessing Aged Care Service Project

The Pathways Report was a 2-year research project funded by the Office for the Ageing. The project aimed to identify how older people are assisted to access home-based services directly following, or having applied for, an assessment by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT). The project focused on older people who chose to remain in their own home. Views of consumers were sought on:

- Who assists consumers to access services
- Consumer satisfaction with the processes and outcomes
- Means to enhance consumers' choice and control
- Accessibility to advocates
- Services which consumers identify they require and are able to access
- Promoting and sharing best practice.

Consultation with Residents in Regional Areas Project 1995 - to ensure ARAS was reaching its consumers in the different regions of SA.

Research paper re ARAS abuse data - first 100 clients. This paper was published and continues to be referenced due to the limited availability of elder abuse research

ARAS was awarded a Certificate of Merit and \$5,000 in the Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards in recognition of the important work and participation in *Our Actions* to prevent abuse of older South Australians 2007.

The DH&AC (now DSS) funded ARAS in 2000 to develop a website for the National Advocacy Network and an ARAS website. The NAN website provides information about the advocacy program and the services provided by the national advocacy network and links to their own websites.

Further to these websites ARAS also developed an abuse website that aims to assist staff of aged care facilities to address issues of abuse by family and friends.

ARAS currently registers over 1,000 hits per week indicating the usefulness of this source of information.



Aboriginal Elders in the 'Preventing Abuse of Aboriginal Elders' Project 2012

Abuse Prevention Program website 'Elder Abuse in the Community' has recently been updated with funding from the Community Business Bureau.

Quality Quiz 2002 - this Kit was developed to improve consultation with residents of aged care facilities and launched by former Minister for Ageing Bronwyn Bishop in 2002. The Department of (at the time) Health and Ageing funded enough kits for 50% of the aged care facilities. The information in the kit is still relevant today.

Proceeds of Crime Act - 2010 - 2012 funding received for a community development model project with Aboriginal communities to explore prevention of abuse of the elders. This work was continued through ARAS Abuse Prevention Program as older Aboriginal people who heard about the POCA project, requested that this work be duplicated in their communities.

CALD Research - In 2014 research into prevention of abuse in CALD communities and improving access to ARAS by CALD communities.



Quality Quiz Kit, 2002

Manual of Standards for Advocacy

Agencies 1999 - the DH&AC funded ARAS to develop standards as a guide to assist advocacy agencies in the development of good practice in services for their consumers. The standards are non-prescriptive and provide a foundation and framework for advocacy agencies to develop and provide services in a manner appropriate to their work place. This was developed from work that ARAS was undertaking in house and adopted nationally for the NACAP as part of the funding agreement.

Awarded a Certificate of Merit and \$1,000 in the Australian Violence Prevention Awards 2001 in recognition of the work the Abuse Prevention Program was doing.

A Question of Quality - an information product for consumers with links to the Rights Connection which was aimed at service providers. Two state governments have used it as the basis for their HACC consumer info kit.

Rights Connection Information sheets for HACC agencies re developing rights compliant policies particularly promoting complaints policies.

Abuse Information Sheets - targeting older people but informative for service providers too.

Your Care Plan in Residential Care

ARAS is inclusive of special needs groups with a CD developed including all of ARAS' publications recorded for those who are print and vision impaired.

Regaining Your Control booklets - this award winning booklet is the result of a collaborative venture between Aged Rights Advocacy Service, Helping Hand Aged Care and Department of Veteran Affairs along with a reference group of older people from metropolitan Adelaide in 1999. It includes information about the types and signs of abuse, some myths and facts, barriers to getting help and what can be done to prevent abuse and remain in control. It continues to be well regarded.

Guidelines for Effective Resident Groups

Kit - a collaboration with the University of Adelaide. Residential Aged Care facilities know that an effective resident group is a valuable tool in the QA process of a facility but it can be difficult to evaluate how well a resident group is operating. Developed in 2009 collaboratively by ARAS and the University of Adelaide to promote effective resident groups, the Guidelines for Resident Groups provides a series of simple assessments tools to assist facilities to review the functions of their resident group. This work has great potential to improve opportunities for residents to be involved in decision making.

APEA 5 Brochure Kit - this is to be revised due to changes in legislation.

Your Life Your Care Your Rights booklet is a practical Guide to rights and responsibilities for users of community aged care services.

- Contains examples of questions a consumer can ask to ensure that they are involved in the decisions that are made about their care.
- Provides information about how an advocate can support the consumer to uphold their rights.

An earlier version of this product has been adopted by some State Governments.

CD - All of ARAS' publications are recorded on CD for consumers who are print and vision impaired. The CD is distributed at information sessions to HACC consumers and sent to HACC service providers upon request for their consumers. This product has been very useful for those who are living in regional and remote areas with limited access to information.



'Train The Trainer'
August 2012

ARAS has a number of well-respected education sessions including:

Taking Action to Prevent Abuse - an education session for staff of aged care facilities which continues to be in strong demand. It explores what abuse could look like from a resident perspective.

Advocacy In Action seminars - a workshop for Community Care staff to examine the role of advocacy in supporting consumers

Training sessions using a kit with a 'Train the Trainer' approach. Initially ARAS was funded by 'Improving with Age - Our Ageing Plan for South Australia' in 2009 to provide education and training to HACC funded services.

This training has been broadened to include professionals and other stakeholders working with older people and their families to recognise the risks and the signs of abuse and know how to respond appropriately.

The training kit contains all materials necessary for the designated staff trainer to provide one or more sessions to their front line staff and volunteers about the prevention of abuse of older people.

The purpose of the training kit is to provide agencies with knowledge and resources that will enable front line staff to recognise abuse of older people and act appropriately when abuse is identified.

Very positive feedback has been received from service providers from participants who are successfully using the kit to train their in-house staff and volunteers not only about abuse of older people in the community but also about the role of ARAS and how they can turn to ARAS for support and advocate on behalf of their consumers.

In complementing the Train the Trainer on identifying abuse, the APP has also developed a Workshop Responder Session for service providers who would be responsible for addressing issues regarding abuse of older people.

The Workshop Responder Session covers what to consider and how to respond when faced with an older person who is being abused in a community setting. The service provider is guided through the training with information about, for example:

- Role of ARAS and advocacy
- Reinforcing zero tolerance of abuse
- Working collaboratively
- Assessing risk level
- Options for responding
- Intervention Principles and
- Privacy and Confidentiality in practice.

Abuse Prevention Responder Education Sessions run 6 monthly.



Hon. Jennifer Rankine MP, then Minister for Ageing with members of the Jack Young Centre

Our Actions Abuse Project

- Funded by State Government and worked with Office for the Ageing (OFTA) to implement the State Government Plan 'Our Actions to prevent the abuse of older South Australians 2007' (and ongoing). Highlights of this were:

- Regional collaboration across SA
- Community newspaper advertising
- Radio announcements for community radio
- Promotional material for Aboriginal people
- **Older People Have Rights - Pocket Guide**
The pocket guide is printed in English, Greek and Italian. This pocket guide is in demand by consumers. Agencies also request large numbers of the pocket guide to be inserted in their information packs that are given to their clients. The pocket guide is particularly useful when the older person is living with the alleged abuser and can discreetly be placed in the older person's purse or wallet. Information includes the rights of older people, what constitutes abuse, who is at risk, how your aged care service provider can assist and what ARAS can provide.

The Protocol for Responding To Abuse Of Older People Living At Home In The Community

- a resource for community aged care service providers. It provides a guide for service providers to enable them to provide an effective, consistent, timely response to prevent abuse of older people living in the community. The booklet, focuses on responding to abuse of older people by family, friends or by someone they should be able to trust. The Protocol includes definitions and signs of the different forms of abuse, risk factors and principles of intervention when working with older people. This also covers duty of care and provides guidelines on privacy and confidentiality. 2,500 booklets had been distributed to HACC agencies and is also given to participants and used as part of our Train the Trainer kit and the Responder Workshop Sessions.

Production of a video featuring vignettes of different forms of abuse for use in the community.



ARAS Community Consultation Panels

The ARAS Abuse Prevention Program has continued to progress with:

- Abuse Prevention Community Development with Aboriginal Elders. This was in collaboration with Council of Aboriginal Elders SA for community capacity building to prevent abuse. Lead to Mentoring Camps - 2 held plus DVD which is highly regarded in the Aboriginal community.
- 2 DVDs (2015) to promote activities that minimise risk of abuse - one with the Aboriginal community.

Retirement Villages focus - Better Practice Guidelines for Retirement Villages includes 3 papers developed by ARAS to promote consultation, committees and communication.

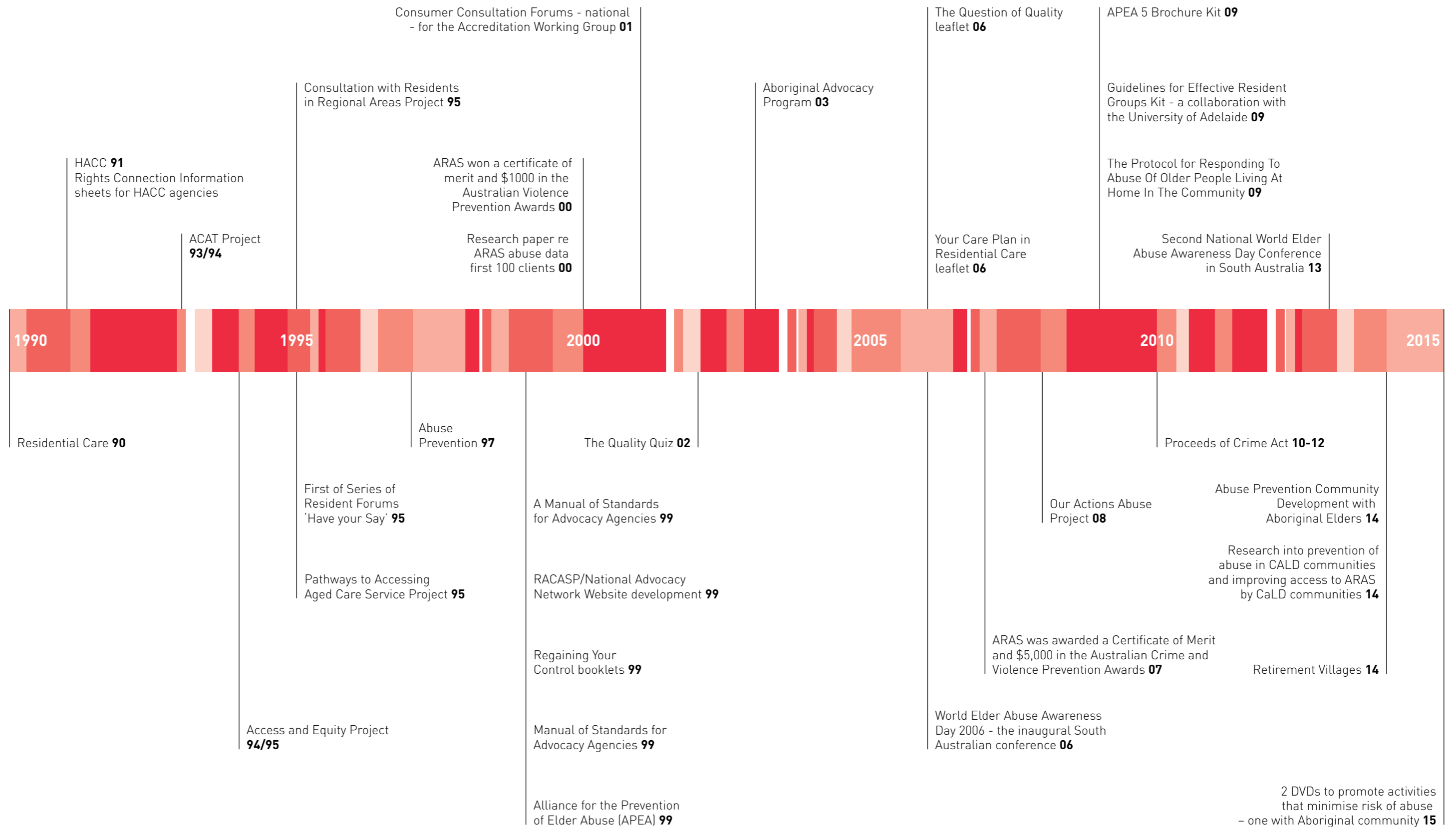
We advocate that consultation is of primary importance when working with older people. In order to strengthen the consumer voice we organised opportunities for consumers or their representatives to come together to discuss relevant issues and seek their views. The majority of the consultations below involved residents of aged care facilities.

Consulting with Your Consumers Seminar 93 (HACC).

Lessons learned from the first round of accreditation 2001 - Five consumer consultations around Australia with a report to the Minister for Ageing's Accreditation Working group.

Resident Forums exploring how to improve the voice of residents and their representatives:

- 'Have your Say' 1995
- Grand Day Out 1995,
- Resident Forum II 1996,
- A Forum for Residents 1996
- Aged Care - The Way Forward 1997
- Aged Care - Time For Review Forum 1998
- 'Let's Talk' Resident Forum 2003
- Forum 98 - residents formed working party and met with the 2 year aged care review team
- Communication Matters
- Communication Matters II 2003
- Effective Residents' Committees - Resident Forum 2008.





It is in our hands...
and it starts right here.

15 | JUNE | 2015

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Wear something purple on the day to show
your support, **'There's No Excuse For Abuse'**

aras



aged rights advocacy service inc.

For further information or to receive our
WEAAD Community Activity Starter Kit,
contact us on (08) 8232 5377.

www.sa.agedrights.asn.au

25 Years of ARAS

Collaboration Highlights



The Alliance for
the Prevention of
Elder Abuse

We have frequently partnered with other organisations in order to achieve a positive outcome across our client group. The list below show the diverse industry partners and topics that have been involved.

Council of Aboriginal Elders of SA - Aboriginal Advocacy Program since 2003.

Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (APEA) 99 - created many brochures including Witnessing Documents.

Australian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (ANPEA) - member of ANPEA. Have encouraged other abuse agencies to promote membership.

North East Division of GPs 99 funded a conference with a panel of APEA members.

Office for the Status of Women - Abuse team involved in Domestic Violence research, 1999/2000.

Part of rapid response team with Riverside to assist interstate advocacy services, 1999.

TAFE - involved in developing the TAFE Advocacy Training Program.

Helping Hand Aged Care, Department of Veterans Affairs and ARAS producing the Regaining Control booklet and a video for country areas.

SPICE Consultancy re Resident Satisfaction. 2003 Resident Focus industry working group re minimising risk of fear of retribution.

University of Adelaide Guidelines for Effective Resident Groups research funded by DH&A, support from Helping Hand - work to continue.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day events and activities in the community are encouraged through promotion of the WEAAD Community Activity Starter Kit. This has been developed for service providers to raise awareness of the abuse of older people in the community, coinciding with World Elder Abuse Aware Day, June 15th.

The World Elder Abuse Awareness Day national conference is held, on a rotation basis, with each state taking a turn. It was held by ARAS in 2013.

The World Elder Abuse Awareness Day annual conference is held in June each year - this year will be our tenth event. All of the events have been well supported in South Australia with approximately 250+ attendees each year and have been most successful in raising awareness of elder abuse.

Other

National Elder Abuse Prevention Hub - NEAPHUB - sponsorship is being sought from the various elder abuse service responders around Australia.

We are promoting that a Centre of Excellence be developed in SA.

ARAS is also promoting that elder abuse data be collected in a nationally agreed format. ARAS supported a student to develop a draft minimum data set.

ARAS is well-respected by South Australian aged care service providers and is seen as the premier rights-focused, independent advocacy service in the state. ARAS specialises in the provision of advocacy support to individuals - this is our core function. ARAS is not a complaints service: advocates cannot resolve complaints by themselves. Advocates assist the consumer to have a stronger voice, or after consultation with the older person, present the complaint to the service provider in a way that facilitates its resolution, and ensures their rights and interests are protected. The aim is for the process to empower the consumer; to strengthen their voice and support independence and self-determination. This function of advocacy, or partisan representation, clearly differentiates the work of ARAS from the style of advocacy undertaken by service providers, usually labelled 'incidental'. Many older people tell us that they are reluctant to make formal complaints due to fear of retribution, fear of embarrassment or because they are daunted by the complaints process. Having the support of an independent local advocate to speak up about an issue can alleviate some of the qualms that some older people have about raising concerns directly with the service provider, or to the Aged Care Complaints Scheme.

We are contacted by service providers for policy advice, and for opinions about rights-based issues. We are also included in a number of aged care sector networks, and have worked in partnership with several organisations to deliver education sessions to staff of aged care services.

The sessions emphasize the importance of the rights of older people, and that operational arrangements within the service should always take rights into consideration. Many older people speak to advocates directly following an information session, or call later to discuss issues that they have previously not disclosed. It is important from a social justice perspective to ensure that older people continue to have the option of an independent advocacy service.

ARAS Residential Aged Care Advocacy Program

This program is funded by the Commonwealth Government Department of Social Services under the National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP). It was established in order to provide advocacy assistance, information and support to both consumers of Residential Aged Care and Home Care Packages and/or their nominated representatives (eg legal guardians).

The primary role is to advocate on behalf of consumers in relation to any issues or concerns that they may raise regarding their care and services that they receive. Under the Aged Care Act residents living in Commonwealth subsidised aged care facilities and those receiving Home Care Packages are provided with a number of legislative protections including Charters, Standards and Quality of Care Principles. Advocates assist consumers to ensure that their rights and entitlements are upheld in line with the above legislative requirements.

In working with the consumer, advocates will firstly assist with clarifying the issue or concern before then determining the most appropriate avenue to address the issue. This may involve initially providing information for the consumer in order for them to have further discussions with management of the aged care organisation, or it may involve the advocate speaking directly with management on behalf of the consumer in order to determine how the matter can be most appropriately addressed. At all times throughout this process the advocate will uphold the rights of the consumer of service and will not proceed without the express consent and permission of that consumer or their nominated representative.

In 2013-2014 the advocates provided direct advocacy assistance to 601 consumers and their representatives in relation to a wide variety of issues that included:

- Continence management
- Call bell response times
- Care Planning
- Dementia Behaviour management
- Medication
- Choice and Decision making
- Hydration and Nutrition
- Fees and charges

Along with advocacy assistance, the advocates also provided information on rights and entitlements to 241 consumers, family members and staff. While the focus is on directly assisting consumers, almost 40% of our information calls came from staff at aged care facilities and community care agencies in relation to how they can more effectively uphold the rights of consumers.

Education

Education has always been a primary tool for empowering consumers of residential and community care services and continues to play a pivotal role in the ongoing campaign against elder abuse.

A number of education sessions are provided to both consumers and care staff on the topics of consumer rights and elder abuse prevention, and many of these sessions are conducted on site at aged care facilities throughout metropolitan Adelaide and regional South Australia every year.

The aim of sessions is to not only ensure that both consumers and staff are provided with information on consumer rights and entitlements but are also fully aware of the services offered by ARAS. Advocates are often specifically invited to speak at regular resident group meetings and all residents are provided with the opportunity to speak privately with an advocate following the meeting or at an agreed time in the future.

As part of these education sessions the advocate will speak directly to consumers and family members about what they should expect regarding standards of care that they receive, and also explain how any issues or concerns can be effectively raised and addressed.

In conjunction with all education sessions, attendees are provided with an information pack that contains a copy of the relevant Charter, along with, for example, other additional fact sheets on How to advocate for yourself and others, Your care plan in residential care, How ARAS advocates for older people and Your Life, Your Care Your Rights booklet.

In situations where there may be a large number of consumers from CALD backgrounds, advocates will also use interpreters to assist in delivering the education session and other written material is made available in a wide variety of other languages. For any residents that may be blind or vision impaired, information about ARAS services and resident rights is also made available in 'talking book' format on audio CD.

Along with consumers, a significant amount of time is devoted to a specific education session for residential care staff in the area of resident rights and the prevention of elder abuse. These sessions have been so successful the many organisations now book in advance as part of the annual training and personal development requirements.

In relation to the prevention of elder abuse, residential care staff are made aware of compulsory reporting obligations and are provided with significant insight into some of the key indicators of elder abuse along with strategies to address these concerns. Feedback obtained by staff indicates that these sessions have been extremely beneficial in raising awareness and also increasing the confidence of staff to take action to prevent the abuse of older people in their care.

In 2013-14 the advocates delivered 83 education sessions to residents and representatives, along with 51 education sessions to residential care staff. There were 20 education sessions to Home Care consumers and staff.

The advocates continue to explore and investigate other alternative avenues to engage with consumers, including the use of video conferencing and webinars to allow greater access for people throughout regional South Australia.

ARAS HACC Consumers Advocacy Program

ARAS works for the rights of older people and provides a free, state-wide, confidential advocacy service to older people and/or their carers in relation to their use of HACC funded services. ARAS is independent of the HACC service system which enables the advocacy support to be partisan and without conflict of interest.

ARAS aims to promote and protect the rights of consumers and potential consumers, including carers of older consumers of HACC services. ARAS uses an advocacy mechanism to ensure rights and it is our role to connect the consumer to their legislated rights, including their right to access independent advocacy as a HACC consumer, through Charters and the Home Care Standards and support them to exercise those rights.

ARAS advocates support the older person or their carer to speak up about issues or concerns relating to the provision of the HACC funded service which are the responsibility of the HACC service provider.

The older person, or their carer, contacts ARAS by phone, in writing or in person. An advocate supports the consumer to identify their rights and entitlements as a HACC consumer and relates that to the issue or concern/complaint. ARAS advocates then offer support to the consumer to speak for themselves or to represent them to the HACC service provider. The advocate works at the direction of the consumer to help them resolve contentious issues or concerns in relation to services. In the guidelines for this questionnaire.

In 2013-2014 **300** individuals were informed about their rights and protections and/or supported to voice their complaints and concerns. Of these there were **148** individual consumers requesting advocacy assistance from ARAS to resolve a concern/complaint. Most individuals have more than one concern/complaint.

Types of issues raised relate to services provided and include:

- Assessment
- HACC Fees
- Service hours
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Lack of consultation
- Access to services
- Complaints handling procedure.

HACC consumers or their carers also contact ARAS for information about their rights and to clarify the responsibilities of service providers or what they can expect from an advocacy service. These are designated as 'Information Calls' of which there were **150+** in 2013-2014 and are separate from the advocacy support contacts.



The Team at ARAS

ARAS strives to be accessible to all special needs groups.

Information and Education Sessions to groups

In order to encourage understanding of, and knowledge about, the legislated rights of older people, ARAS provides information sessions to groups of HACC clients, their representatives, and older people in the general community, including Senior Citizens Clubs. The aim is to promote and protect the rights of people receiving HACC funded aged care services. Information is also provided to raise awareness of the role of advocacy and the ARAS advocacy service.

The provision of information and education sessions is directly related to our advocacy and primary purpose of promoting and protecting the rights of HACC consumers and potential consumers and their carers.

ARAS provided information sessions to **2,800** consumers and potential consumers in 2013-14.

Advocates who present the information sessions draw on their individual case experiences to illustrate how the advocacy process can assist in upholding rights, without escalating an issue to the level of a complaint.

ARAS has developed a staff education session that focusses specifically on the service provider's obligations under Standard 3 of the Home Care Common Standards. Advocates are able to use real-life examples to demonstrate the efficacy of the advocacy process.

ARAS conducted **35** education sessions to **725** HACC staff in 2013-14.

ARAS seeks opportunities and accepts invitations from service providers, community groups, local government and members of parliament to promote the rights of HACC consumers - 11 such events were attended in 2013-14. Special and identified needs groups are well addressed with, for example, regular visits to regional areas, and contact with CALD groups.

Community Radio interviews are conducted periodically with the aim of reaching people who are not able to attend other sessions and events.

Abuse Prevention Program

The Aged Rights Advocacy Service (ARAS) Abuse Prevention Program (APP) assists older people living in the community who are 65 years and over and 50 years and over for Aboriginal consumers, experiencing abuse, or who are at risk of abuse from family, friends or by someone they should be able to trust.

The Australian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, 1999 defines elder abuse as: **'Elder abuse is any act occurring within a relationship where there is an implication of trust, which results in harm to an older person. Abuse can be physical, sexual, psychological, financial, social and/or neglect'.**

The ARAS Abuse Prevention Program commencing in 1997, draws on 18 years of experience, to date, providing the most effective response possible to thousands of consumers, state wide.

ARAS offers individualised advocacy assistance to older people, their representatives or potential consumers to understand and exercise their rights and be involved in decision-making processes affecting their well-being. This is our core business and this specialised service is offered confidentially, equitably and free with professional interpreters provided to consumers from CaLD backgrounds, upon request and at no cost to the consumer. ARAS is inclusive of all consumers who may have special needs.

Older people are able to speak to ARAS by contacting us by phone; in writing; email; they can come into our office and speak to an advocate or the advocate may visit them at home. In the APP, if the alleged abuser lives with the consumer, we would suggest to meet elsewhere for the safety of the consumer as well as the advocate.

The advocacy process in the APP involves discussing the situation in depth suggesting ways to safeguard the older person's future to maintain control and improve their quality of life. This would include the investigation of various options bearing in mind any possible consequences that would be undertaken and presented to the consumer.

The consumer always determines the course of action giving them a voice to speak up and a sense of empowerment. Advocates then support consumers, as needed, to implement the desired plan of action.

ARAS also works with the representative of the older person due to mental incapacity or those who may have concerns for the older person who may not be able to speak up for themselves. In these situations, ARAS works very closely with Office of the Public Advocate who provides assistance to ensure that the rights of older people are protected. Often the best outcome is when ARAS and other services work collaboratively bringing together entities with resources and skills to form a co-ordinated and multi-disciplinary response. ARAS works with many agencies for example, HACC service providers and Domiciliary Care to provide the consumer comprehensive, accurate information about options and strategies to assist in a course of action to ensure the best possible outcome for the older person. Consumer and service provider feedback proves that the advocacy model does work.

Our consumers are offered three levels of prevention strategies, that is:

Informal

- Give information on rights and options available.
- Person may be confident to self-advocate with information given.
- Ensure the older person has support networks, such as family and friends. Usually the older person may want to continue relations with the son or daughter who may be the alleged abuser - the older person just wants the abuse to stop.

Formal

- Support the person to continue living at home independently by referring to community services for assistance.
- Advocate within formal networks to ensure that the person is safe and that the situation can be monitored with the person's consent and hopefully stop or reduce the abuse in the home.
- If there is family conflict, can refer family to mediation.

Protective

- If the person is at risk living at home, may refer to an aged care facility or independent accommodation.
- Can assist with referring to Legal Services or the Police and support the older person by attending appointments.

In 2013 to 2014 the APP supported 643 consumers to implement strategies to reduce and/or stop the abuse. As a result of the consumer speaking to an advocate from the APP, a telephone survey response indicated that 89% of consumers stated that they were very grateful and/or appreciative of ARAS assistance with nearly 40% stating that they now have options to consider which they didn't have before calling ARAS. This clearly indicates that the role of our advocacy work, in helping people work through their options to assist them in decisions affecting their lives, makes us unique in our community. This is very different from providing a referral service where there is no support and no representation on behalf of the consumer to ensure that their best interests are taken into consideration and uphold their rights through advocacy.

ARAS is also contacted by consumers for information about their rights and preventative strategies such as, safeguards and are referred to more appropriate services with their enquiry, such as, SAPOL or Legal Services Commission. These calls requiring only information and not advocacy consisted of 254 consumers.

Information and Education

ARAS APP provides interactive information and education sessions for HACC consumers, community groups, service providers, health professionals and students. All sessions promote our core business, that is, the role of ARAS; advocacy; how ARAS would advocate on behalf of a consumer through case scenarios; consumer rights as well as raising the awareness of abuse of older people in the community. Sessions are presented in creative formats for HACC consumers, potential consumers and representatives when promoting our core business. Often, HACC Consumers and potential consumers attending these sessions state that they are very pleased to know of an organisation such as ARAS who will speak up on their behalf and represent their best interests. Pamphlets at sessions are provided in CALD languages and information on CDs for print and visually print impaired consumers. In 2013-2014, ARAS APP provided 82 information and education sessions to nearly 2,400 participants.

The importance of raising awareness in the community on elder abuse through information, education and training for those service providers who are working in the HACC and non HACC aged sector is highlighted in those sessions. Elder abuse can be very complex, with many barriers to the older person being able to speak up. For example, many older people fear not being believed or that families need to resolve matters internally and not involve 'outsiders'. It takes great courage for the older person to act and end the abuse and is therefore relieved to be able to turn to an organisation such as ARAS for support and assistance through individual advocacy.

The Train the Trainer' and the 'Responder' Workshops are offered to service providers, upon request, twice a year in-house as well as in regional and rural areas.

Abuse Prevention Program - working with the Aboriginal Elders 2014

ARAS recognised that providing individualised advocacy assistance to older Aboriginal people, who were experiencing elder abuse, could only be effective if ARAS had a relationship with Aboriginal communities. From 2000 to 2003, ARAS actively sought to build a relationship with the communities across South Australia, with the assistance of the **Council of Aboriginal Elders of SA (CAESA)** who introduced ARAS to its members in CAESA's fifteen forums.

In 2010, ARAS was funded by the Attorney-General's Department through the **Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) 2002** for an eighteen-month community-development project **'Preventing Abuse of Aboriginal Elders'**. The purpose of this project, which involved three communities - metropolitan (western Adelaide), rural (Port Augusta) and remote (Coober Pedy) - was to increase awareness of the rights of Aboriginal Elders to be safe in their homes and communities, to identify ways in which older Aboriginal people can prevent, minimise and stop elder abuse, to help Aboriginal Elders to access culturally-appropriate support services and information about safeguarding their rights, and to identify and link elders to their local networks of key people and service providers in their communities.

In 2014, ARAS used the POCA Project as a model to extend the work in abuse prevention to three more Aboriginal communities - in Port Pirie, Ceduna and the Riverland. The Elders called this project **'Elder Abuse - What can we do about it?'** This project involved 12 meetings with 166 Elders, community members and aged care service providers of those communities.

It brought to the table representatives from Centrelink, Housing SA, Families SA, Community Legal Services, Aboriginal Family Support Services, TAFE, Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Services, Carers SA, CentrePay, Ceduna Koonibba Health Service, and topics such as access to Seniors Card, how to make a Will and Advance Care Directives.

The project was very well received with participants saying that they were more informed and aware of abuse prevention strategies and the importance of keeping connected to their communities and to community services. They acknowledged that ARAS played an important role in providing ongoing education in their communities and with service providers. They also emphasised the importance of ARAS' long history with their communities and the relationship of trust that had been established.

The success and reputation of this latest project may be measured by the requests from other Aboriginal communities to extend the project in their regions and it is hoped that funding to do this will enable ARAS to meet these requests.



WEAAD 2014,
The Silver Beat
Rock Choir

ARAS World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) Conference

This event incorporates highly regarded speakers both international and national, exploring current and potential roles for organisations and individuals to address abuse of older people in our community.

On June 17th and 18th, 2013, ARAS was proud to host the second National Conference to observe World Elder Abuse Awareness Day showcasing the latest developments in elder abuse Australia wide.

In 2015, ARAS will present its 10th WEAAD Conference focusing on abuse prevention: 'Back to the Future' - looking at how elder abuse prevention has progressed in the 10 years of WEAAD.

The WEAAD Conference targets HACC aged care service providers and other relevant stakeholders.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Community Activity Starter Kit

The 15th June is the annual day to raise awareness of elder abuse throughout the world. It is a day to promote 'There's no excuse for abuse' and to let older people in our communities know they have a right to be safe, including a right to be treated with dignity and respect. A public awareness campaign is a fundamental prevention strategy that can change attitudes and behaviour. Older people and organisations that support them can play an important role by observing the week around the 15th June.

ARAS has developed a WEAAD pack of activities and promotional ideas and encourages aged care providers to garner interest in their communities to promote the day using the WEAAD pack of activities. Through activities people will be better informed about their rights and protections and able to take action to safeguard their safety health and well-being.

15|JUNE|2015

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Aboriginal Advocacy Program

The Aboriginal HACC Consumers Advocacy is funded to provide advocacy support to older Aboriginal people (aged 50+) by:

- 1) providing information about consumer rights and entitlements relating to the provision of aged care services and accessing mainstream services.
- 2) providing advocacy assistance to access aged care services
- 3) providing consumer rights based information and education sessions.

ARAS provides a free, state-wide, confidential advocacy service to older Aboriginal people or their carers in relation to their use of aged care services.

ARAS is independent of the aged care service system which enables the advocacy support to be partisan and without conflict of interest, which is regarded as very important by the Aboriginal community.

ARAS has two Aboriginal advocate positions and this project is in collaboration with the Council of Aboriginal Elders SA (CAESA) since 2003. Over the years ARAS has developed strong relationships with CAESA, Aboriginal communities and networks. ARAS is now seen as integral to the Aboriginal service system and the people to contact because of the skills and knowledge of the advocates and the connection to community. It is imperative that the advocates are Aboriginal people with the connections to community and extended networks that brings. The older Aboriginal people who are our consumers appreciate the ability to speak to an advocate from their own culture.

ARAS promotes and protects the rights of consumers and potential consumers, including carers of older Aboriginal people as consumers of aged care services. It is our role to connect the consumer to their legislated rights, including their right to access independent advocacy as an aged care consumer, through Charters and Standards and support them to exercise those rights. It can be very difficult for older Aboriginal people to speak for themselves, often coming from a background of entrenched disadvantage but this makes advocacy support all the more important as a mechanism that promotes empowerment.

ARAS specialises in the provision of advocacy support to individuals - this is our core function. ARAS advocates support the older Aboriginal person or their carer to speak up about issues or concerns relating to the provision of the aged care service which are the responsibility of the aged care service provider. More often the advocates represent the older Aboriginal person as they are mostly reluctant to speak for themselves.

The older Aboriginal person, or their carer, contacts ARAS by phone, in writing or in person. An advocate supports the consumer to identify their rights and entitlements as a consumer of aged care services and relates that to the issue or concern/complaint. ARAS advocates then offer support to the consumer to speak for themselves or to represent them to the service provider. The advocate works at the direction of the consumer to help them resolve issues or concerns in relation to services.

The complex nature of some case issues call for the Aboriginal advocates to work across the full aged care spectrum as well as liaising with external agencies in order to obtain successful resolutions. It is vital that this flexibility in responding to various issues occurs otherwise the older Aboriginal person would state ARAS could not help (as they do not differentiate issues according to aged care siloes) and therefore will not approach ARAS again and this would go through the Nunga grapevine. ARAS is seen as the place for older Aboriginal people to call when they need help to speak up and it is very rare that only one issue is raised with the advocates.



Aboriginal Advocate
Brian Butler at Tjilpi
Pampa, APY Lands

In 2013-2014 **493+** older Aboriginal people were informed about their rights and protections and/or assisted to voice their complaints and concerns in order to ensure their entry to or continued use of aged care services.

Of these there were **113** older Aboriginal consumers requesting advocacy assistance from ARAS to resolve a concern/complaint. Most individuals have more than one concern/complaint.

Types of issues raised relate to service provided and include:

- Assessment
- HACC Fees
- Service hours
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Lack of consultation
- Access to services
- Access to advocate
- Complaints handling procedure

Being state-wide means a lot of travel for the Aboriginal advocates visiting regional and remote areas as well as servicing the metropolitan area. They receive many invitations and recently visited the Leigh Creek region, working with aged care providers to promote consumer rights. The Aboriginal advocates also get involved in the ARAS Mentoring Camps that promote respect for the elders and the rights of older Aboriginal people to live safely.

They are asked for information and assistance about abuse of the elders and are able to use the other ARAS programs for support. This close connection with ARAS resources adds a great deal of value to the Aboriginal advocacy program, and results in unique 'end-to-end' advocacy support for older Aboriginal people, usually with continued involvement of the Aboriginal advocates.

The strong connections with community result in many contacts from rural regional and remote areas. Preliminary planning is underway for advocates to spend some time in Yalata in 2014-2015, having been invited by the community for an extended visit in order to develop meaningful relationships with elders.

Older Aboriginal consumers also contact ARAS for information about their rights and to clarify the responsibilities of service providers or what they can expect from an advocacy service. These are designated as 'Information Calls' of which there were **300+** in 2013-2014 and are separate from the advocacy support contacts.

Information and Education Sessions to Groups

The Activity Aim of the contract states 'Service Interventions - To develop service delivery models that incorporate best practice and innovation'.

In practice this would incorporate education sessions with HACC service providers. ARAS provides information sessions to groups of older people, their representatives, and the general community in keeping with the aim of protecting the rights of people receiving aged care services.

The Aboriginal Advocacy Program provided group information sessions to **1000+** consumers and potential consumers in 2013-2014.

Information is also always provided to raise awareness of ARAS advocacy service and the role of an independent advocate in assisting consumers to have their voice heard.

Elder abuse has emerged as an issue in the public conscience of Australia over the last 10-15 years. However, little research has occurred into abuse of older Aboriginal people. In initial work undertaken by ARAS, between 2003 and 2009, in Aboriginal communities across South Australia, it was identified as a major and highly sensitive issue due to cultural mores.

From 2010 to 2012, ARAS undertook a project '**Preventing Abuse of Aboriginal Elders' that was funded through Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA)**. This project successfully increased the capacity of Aboriginal communities to implement preventative and responsive strategies to abuse of elders in three Aboriginal communities - metropolitan (western Adelaide), rural (Port Augusta) and remote (Coober Pedy).

During ARAS' consultations with elders in these three communities to discuss prevention of abuse, the Coober Pedy Elders identified the **Mentoring Camp** as a culturally-appropriate way of raising awareness, with young Aboriginal people, about elder abuse and the rights of elders to be safe from harm in their homes and communities. Elders pointed out that the loss of respect for elders in their communities was one of the reasons for the occurrence of elder abuse.

In 2012, ARAS collaborated with other agencies to pilot a Mentoring Camp for Aboriginal elders and disengaged Aboriginal youth in a traditional Aboriginal campsite in the desert around Coober Pedy.

The format of this camp, involving 20 Aboriginal elders and youths from across South Australia and twice as many from the Coober Pedy region, proved so successful for both elders and youth, that the participating elders and community members called upon ARAS to hold other camps in the same region with increased participation from local youth.

Mentoring Camps

Elders reported that the camp had enabled them to fulfil their cultural obligations of passing on their traditional knowledge to the young people. They said that this had created a genuine link to community for these disadvantaged and disengaged youth. The young people reported that they had gained respect for the elders and that they wanted to engage in more activities in their communities. Some youths were motivated to take up leadership courses and to consider work experience in Aboriginal aged care facilities. Others have indicated that they would like to be Ambassadors or Role Models for the rights of older Aboriginal people.

This current HACC funded contract enables ARAS to continue to organise an Aboriginal Elders Mentoring Camp in each year of funding (2013-2014 and 2014-2015). The 2013-2014 Camp has already taken place in the Coober Pedy region, with each Camp following a similar format.



Council of Aboriginal Elders and service providers at its regional forum

The **2014-2015 Camp** will bring together Aboriginal elders with young Aboriginal people to teach and learn the importance of Aboriginal culture, tradition and respect for the Elders who are the Keepers of the Culture. It will be held over a week in May, on SA's West Coast, including travel to and from the camp, and will involve 50 elders, youths and staff from the participating agencies and the local region.

The 2014-2015 camp will be hosted by the **Ceduna Aboriginal Corporation** on SA's West Coast, again with a focus on disengaged Aboriginal youth being mentored by the region's Aboriginal Elders. The camp is being organised by ARAS and the **collaborating agencies the Council of Aboriginal Elders of SA, ACH Group's Aboriginal Wyatt Holidays and Whitelion**. It will be facilitated by the Elders from the region. Preliminary work with the youth from the organisation Whitelion will involve informing them about the work ARAS has undertaken to raise awareness of elder abuse prevention strategies in the Aboriginal communities across the state.

ARAS has 15 years of experience of working with Aboriginal elders and their communities and has gained the trust and respect of elders across the state.

This long-standing relationship to community is vital to the sensitive work that ARAS undertakes in the area of elder abuse. ARAS is therefore in the unique position of being invited by the elders to undertake projects such as the Mentoring Camps. Since the **POCA Project of 2010-2012** and the success of the two previous Mentoring Camps, ARAS has supported and advocated for up to 20 Aboriginal elders, each year, who were experiencing abuse by people in a relationship of trust. It has taken many years for older Aboriginal people to raise issues of abuse of the elders and request assistance to resolve it.

As a key practitioner in the field of elder abuse prevention, ARAS has made a significant contribution to providing opportunities and overcoming disadvantage for this vulnerable target group.

ARAS Retirement Village Advocacy 2014

The advocacy support for residents of Retirement Villages is our most recent program and from the initial interest it would appear that it will be a relevant addition.

The ARAS advocate is able to:

- provide information about rights and entitlements while living in a retirement village, or
- support the resident to speak up about disputes or concerns relating to their residency, around the requirements of the legislation, regulation or individual contract.

This may involve working with the retirement village operator or administering authority, Office for the Ageing or the Residential Tenancy Tribunal or SA Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Addressing issues with advocacy support often leads to a speedy resolution which must be mindful to maintain relationships between all parties. In fact relationships can improve through the process.

The Future of the National Aged Care Advocacy Program

A new era of aged care advocacy in Australia is about to happen. The importance of having a National Aged Care Advocacy Program#2016 providing end to end advocacy across the aged care system has increased in recent times due to the vast changes to the aged care system.

The current National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP) consists of 9 services operating in every state and territory in Australia and is to be reviewed in early 2015. Some of these services are also funded in the Commonwealth Home and Community Care Program and will be included in this review as there is an intention to transfer these services to the NACAP#2016.

The outcomes of the review will inform the design of a future advocacy program accessible to residential, home care and Commonwealth Home Support clients.

The current National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP) services are well positioned to participate in the design of NACAP#2016 and can contribute their 25 years of experience and expertise to visioning a world class program of advocacy support across the aged care system, end to end.

ARAS is ready to play its part in this exciting development and contribute its wealth of experience to the new world of aged care advocacy!



For the Rights of Older People Celebrating 25 Years 1990-2015