



ERA News—March 2007

A New Era in Advocacy

Welcome to the first newsletter of the new look advocacy service. We're still the same organisation (RCR) that has been helping older Victorians for the past 16 years, but you'll notice some changes happening in 2007.

Our New Name

For a start, you will see that we have a new name. From February 2007 we'll be operating as *Elder Rights Advocacy* (ERA). We hope this will reassure the recipients of Australian Government funded aged care services in their home, such as CACP's and EACH packages, that we are here to help them as well as people in residential aged care. We encourage anyone receiving a community based aged care service, or their family representatives, to contact us for information or assistance with a problem they are experiencing with their aged care package. Of course, we still want to hear from people in residential care too.

We've Moved

We've recently relocated our organisation to smaller but more modern offices, still within the Melbourne CBD and easily accessible by public transport. You will find all our new contact details at the end of this newsletter.

Education

You will see new developments in our education services program. We will continue to provide free information sessions to residents, community care recipients, and their family carers about their rights to quality care and ERA's role in upholding those rights. This short information session will also be available at no cost to aged care staff. Watch out for new topics being offered in our fee-for-service education sessions for staff — *Elder Abuse Identification and Prevention* is coming soon!

Country Visits

ERA provides advocacy and education services throughout Victoria. In order to best utilise our

resources, we will plan to have an advocate spend a few days at a time in a country area. When we receive a request for education from a country service provider, we will write to other organisations in the district inviting them to book education sessions for their clients and staff whilst the ERA advocate is there. If you receive such a letter, respond promptly so your aged care service can be included in the planning, as we may not be back in your area for a while. If you live and work in country Victoria, and would like ERA to present education sessions at your aged care facility, contact ERA to initiate planning for a visit to your region.

Website

Have you seen our new website? You may have downloaded this newsletter from it and know it's there, but if you received the newsletter by other means, check out the new website at www.era.asn.au. You will find lots of information there about ERA and the services we provide; advocacy and aged care; ERA's publications and how to order them; and links to other useful aged care organisations. There's a new page on the website called *What's New* which we plan to keep updated with information about current 'hot topics'. There's another new page called *FAQ's* where you'll find the answers to the questions callers to our service most frequently ask. You might find the answer to a query you have right there!

Cultural Care Kit

Did you know that our popular *Cultural Care Kit* is available once more? We just couldn't ignore the many requests we were getting from organisations wanting the resource to assist them to provide appropriate and sensitive care to their CALD clients. In 2006 we published a revised edition with the contact details for each community updated to web based links. You will find more information about the kit and an order form on the *Publications* menu on our

Empowering older Victorians

Elder Rights Advocacy is the registered business name of Residential Care Rights Inc. (ABN 63 367 539 827) which is part of the National Aged Care Advocacy Program - an Australian Government Initiative.

Note: The information in this fact sheet is general information about the law in Victoria—it is not legal advice.

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website, together with details of other written resources that we can supply.

QA

We've always aimed to provide a high standard of service to the people we assist through our advocacy and education programs. We will be asking more of them to help us maintain and improve our service by completing a short questionnaire on their experience of ERA. If you are asked to do this, we hope you will assist us by providing honest and constructive comments. You won't have to put your name on the survey, and of course, any information you give us is confidential.

We hope you will find this newsletter and our new website useful and informative. We also hope that the changes to our organisation you see here will enable us to continue to provide a high standard of advocacy to older Victorians in the coming years.

Hot times in Yarrawonga!

A recent country trip to Yarrawonga saw our CEO Mary Lyttle, facing temperatures of 42° as she presented information sessions to residents and staff at Woods Point Aged Care Facility. Fortunately, the home was cool and comfortable, and Mary enjoyed meeting and talking with many of the residents who now call Woods Point their home.

The next two days were spent talking to residents, families and staff at Rangeview Aged Care and St Catherine's in Wangarratta as well as meeting with aged care staff from the Rural City of Wangarratta. It was great to see the range of services provided in this large rural area, and to meet residents. St Catherine's residents were very involved in activities in their home, as well as taking part in a water conservation program (supported by staff) to save the gardens in this period of water restrictions.

New Consumer Protections

Earlier this year, the Australian Government announced a package of new measures (including compulsory reporting of suspected abuse), designed to protect residents in aged care facilities from sexual and physical assault. We were able to comment on some of the measures recently, and speak to the Senate Committee and provide comment from an advocacy perspective. These protections will be implemented in the coming months. Check our website at 'Information' and click on 'What's New' for more detail on this new legislation.

New Aged Care Commissioner

As part of the changes in aged care, a new Aged Care Commissioner will be appointed. They will be able to oversee the handling of complaints, investigate complaints about the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency and its assessors, and undertake their own reviews about the process of complaints handling by the Department of Health and Ageing. The Commissioner will be appointed by the Minister for Ageing, Senator Santoro, for a period of three years. The Commissioner will have broader powers than the existing Commissioner for Complaints, and will be required to make recommendations on matters to improve the complaints system.

Did You Know?

The National Ageing Research Institute (NARI) has produced leaflets about adopting restraint free care. There are two leaflets, one designed for staff, and the other for residents and families.

Contact ERA

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