



# Office of the Public Advocate

## Strategic Plan 2024-2027



1800 066 969



[www.opa.sa.gov.au](http://www.opa.sa.gov.au)



[opamailbox@sa.gov.au](mailto:opamailbox@sa.gov.au)



## Message from the Public Advocate

I am pleased to share our strategic plan, which outlines our vision, purpose, values and goals for the next three years.

The plan outlines our priority actions to achieve the best outcomes for Office of the Public Advocate clients, staff and the community.

We will continue to be challenged by growing demand for our services. This plan positions us to respond effectively and to continue to build our capability to support and safeguard our clients.

Anne Gale

**Public Advocate**

## Purpose

The Public Advocate promotes quality in decision making and systemic advocacy that enhances and protects the dignity, safety, and rights of all South Australian adults with impaired decision-making ability.

## Our vision

South Australians living with impaired decision-making ability are afforded the right to self-determination and are supported in decision-making to maintain their safety, independence and dignity.

## Values

- **Public Sector Values**

We are committed to the Public Sector Values.

- **Accountable**

We act truthfully and fairly and expect professionalism and excellence of ourselves and those we collaborate with.

- **Connected**

We establish, maintain and value collaborative partnerships with other stakeholders to share responsibility for vulnerable adults with impaired decision-making ability (including people under the guardianship of the Public Advocate)



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# Public Sector Values/ OPA Values

VALUE	PSV STATEMENT	OPA STATEMENT
Professionalism	Strive for excellence	We demonstrate competence, expertise and thoroughness in all that we do.
Service	Proudly serve the community and Government of South Australia	We proudly serve and promote the rights and safety of vulnerable South Australian adults.
Trust	Have confidence in the ability of others	We establish and maintain relationships built on confidence and credibility.
Respect	Value every individual	We acknowledge that every person is unique in their experience, understanding and ability.
Collaboration and engagement	Create solutions together	We value the voice of the individual and relationships with stakeholders to achieve outcomes for vulnerable South Australian adults.
Honesty and integrity	Act truthfully, consistently and fairly	We are accountable for our actions which is underpinned by our Quality Governance Framework.
Courage and tenacity	Never give up	We are brave, persistent and are steadfast for those we make decisions on behalf of and advocate for.
Sustainability	Work to get the best results for current and future generations of South Australians	We work efficiently to provide a high-quality service for South Australians.



# Thematic Strategic Goals 2024-2027

## Focus

The Office of the Public Advocate delivers innovative and quality services that enhance service delivery and respond to new and changing policy, processes, and legislation.

## Actions

- Create strong partnerships in the development and operationalisation of service reforms
- Implement quality assurance processes as part of our service delivery and decision making
- Empower staff to deliver quality services and contribute to the organisational goals
- Ensure services are effective, efficient, and financially viable

## Outcomes

- Leadership in service reform, submissions, and consultation with other agencies on issues that impact Public Advocate clients
- Contribution and participation in research, law reform, best practice decision making and operational processes
- Current policies, procedures and training tools that support staff to deliver quality outcomes, using continuous improvement processes
- A quality, efficient and viable service to the South Australian community
- A service model and quality governance framework that guides and empowers staff to support client decision-making ability and positive outcomes.



# Strategy One

## Engage with and influence wider systems

### ACTIONS

### OUTCOMES

Advocate and provide advice about existing and emerging issues, unmet need and law reform

- Evidence-based and practice informed reporting
- Submissions and systemic advocacy on relevant and critical issues
- Engagement with stakeholders to ensure OPA has up-to-date information about emerging issues that affect its clients
- Two-way engagement with stakeholders to improve OPA's understanding of their roles and services relative to OPA's clients

Educate stakeholders and the community about the role and responsibilities of the Public Advocate

- An Office of the Public Advocate communication strategy for targeted groups
- Improved community and stakeholder understanding of the role, responsibilities and service offering of the Public Advocate

Partner with stakeholders in research, innovation, and best practice in service provision for complex clients and people with impaired decision-making ability

- Active involvement in research and reform initiatives and forums, including the Australian Guardianship and Administration Council
- Partnerships and participation in the research of guardianship, dispute resolution and decision-making to deliver best practice



# Strategy Two

## Provide quality direct services

### ACTIONS

Adopt best practice in guardianship, dispute resolution, customer service and the provision of information and education

Implement quality services supported by a strong governance framework, policies, procedures

Ensure business operations are efficient and sustainable

Promote opportunities for alternatives to guardianship through information, education and training

### OUTCOMES

- Guardianship decisions and dispute resolution outcomes are consistent with legislative requirements, national standards, and organisational policies
- Organisational information is current, relevant, and accessible
- Developments in case law and legislation are clearly documented and implemented within OPA practice

- The Office of the Public Advocate's governance framework is implemented, and policies and procedures comply with public sector governance
- Ongoing review and implementation of the organisation's policies and procedures

- Services are effective and delivered within budget supported with available technology

- Education, information and advice support informal arrangements and supported decision making



# Strategy Three

## Develop a professional, accountable and responsive workforce

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
Promote a culture that values induction, performance and reflective practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff understand how their role contributes to organisational performance</li><li>• Staff receive appropriate support to enable them to undertake their roles</li><li>• Staff are supported to ensure they make decisions in line with best practice and the principles of section 5 of the Act</li></ul>
Enhance systems and procedures to enable best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policies, procedures and guidelines are relevant and applied consistently</li><li>• Staff receive professional development and training that responds to service delivery and system changes</li><li>• Regular reporting systems to support staff</li></ul>
Promote and provide for the safety and wellbeing of all staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff are empowered and foster workplace health and safety</li></ul>



# Strategy Four

## Research and innovate

### ACTIONS

### OUTCOMES

Implement innovation to respond to changes in policy reflective of community needs

- Strong partnerships that support the development and effectiveness of service reforms
- Decision making is consistent and reflects quality assurance requirements
- Explore evolving practices including supported decision-making principles and practices for people with impaired decision-making ability

Enhance the capacity to develop policy and research to inform decision making, practice and advocacy

- Research and systemic analysis that informs law reform and operational processes
- Research is empirical and supports access to resources

Enhance corporate knowledge by analysing organisational and performance data

- Timely access to reliable and relevant data for enhanced organisational reporting
- Streamlined operational processes and improved records management
- Business intelligence developed and utilised to inform service delivery and systemic advocacy

Use technology to optimise business efficiency

- Staff are supported with technology and regular training
- Evidence based and consistent decision making





# Strategy Five Culture and Diversity

## ACTIONS

## OUTCOMES

Recognise cultural authority of Aboriginal people, their family and communities in decision-making

- Explore culturally safe supported decision-making processes for Aboriginal people
- Engage a culturally aware workforce to support OPA in its work with Aboriginal clients
- Respect the authority of Aboriginal people and their unique experiences
- Provide cultural sensitivity and awareness training opportunities for staff
- Respect the importance of culture, community, clan and Country
- Provide information in culturally appropriate formats and enable engagement of interpreting services

Recognise the unique needs and challenges for people from diverse cultures (including LGBTIQ+)

- Understand the diversity of OPA clients
- Provide information in diverse formats and engage interpreting services when required
- Understand and utilise the diversity of the OPA staff to work with clients
- Provide diversity awareness training opportunities for staff.