

ALARM AGM: 1 DECEMBER 2021

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

1 Introduction: This is the first President's Report of ALARM. I begin by thanking sincerely all those who have contributed over the past year to the many and varied activities ALARM has pursued, in particular, the Law Student Volunteers from Monash, Melbourne and South Australia University Law Schools. Without their commendable efforts, ALARM would have achieved little. In fact, we have made significant progress in many spheres, and are now well placed to pursue our objectives in 2022.

2 ALARM Established: Following the work of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, especially the release of the *Interim Report: Neglect* (31/10/2019), a group of activists – medical, legal and digital – met in September – October 2020 to discuss reform action. Thereafter, ALARM was incorporated as a not-for-profit community group on 31 October 2020 pursuant to the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (Vic). Thereafter, following numerous changes at the Board level, the current Board was established early in 2021. Such personnel movements at various levels of the organisation continue. However, a stable and productive core leadership team has been established, and basic structures and documentation established, eg, Policies, insurance cover, financial reporting, etc.

3 Purposes: ALARM's purposes are set out in Cl 3 of its Model Rules: **See Appendix 1.** These may be reduced to three priorities: assisting aged-care residents, and their families, to understand and exercise their legal rights and, if appropriate, pursue redress through legal action; law reform in the aged care sector, guided by the Royal Commission's recommendations; and legal education to both the profession and the community. ALARM, very deliberately, does not provide legal advice or representation.

4 Organisation & Management: ALARM's structures and modus operandi at this early stage, while governed by the applicable regulations and our Model Rules, are nevertheless, very much a work in progress at many levels. This evolution continues, guided by many factors but essentially: our purposes, the realities of voluntary professional and student workers; the complexities of the aged care sector in Australia; and minimal financial support while seeking funding through achieving Charitable Status (see below). This involved amending our Purposes twice, by special resolutions and Board meetings, to comply with official requirements. Through 2021 ALARM's structure operated, basically, at three levels: the Board and Consultants; our volunteer Projects Manager, Anna Wills often working on specific tasks with students; and eight Working Groups headed by a shifting cast of Board Members or Consultants, and volunteer law students.

Patron, Board & Consultants: In October, 2021, the Hon Tony Pagone, QC was appointed Patron, significantly increasing ALARM's standing in the aged-care sector throughout Australia and, hopefully, the impact of our activities, especially in law reform. I thank him for his support.

The Board, as at November 2021, comprises eight members, embracing legal, financial, digital, aged-care employment, health and law-student backgrounds. Their particulars, plus those of ALARM's Consultants, are set out at **Appendix 2**. The Board continues to seek recruits, especially with social-media experience and skills. ALARM's Board Members and Consultants have held monthly meetings throughout 2021; engaged in management and policy development, and Chaired the several Working Groups. This work, all voluntary, continues. I thank each Member and Consultant for their many contributions.

Projects Manager: In June 2021, Anna Willis, solicitor, Sydney, volunteered to work as ALARM's Project Manager. She has devoted many hours each week to this task, and pursued many administrative, co-ordination, and development activities, especially as Chair of Working Group 5(a) and more recently, 5(b). I offer sincere gratitude for her work which has been crucial to ALARM's progress, keeping many sometimes multi-faceted, inter-connected ALARM projects on track and moving forward in a co-ordinated, efficient manner.

Student Volunteers: Central to ALARM's operations from the start has been the contributions of around twenty volunteer law students, mainly from Monash University, plus one from Melbourne and three from the University of South Australia. They have pursued designated tasks under the direction and guidance of their various working groups chairpersons. These many tasks have been performed to a high standard, and the results are evident. These include researching and writing articles on various aged-care legal issues to be posted on ALARM's website and distributed to allied organisations; social media posts and advertising; researching the Australian philanthropic sector and applying for funding; researching the Royal Commission's Reports and additional materials; attending to ALARM's phone and email services on a weekly, now monthly roster; and more. I thank all volunteer students sincerely for their invaluable efforts and hope that the experience has proven both satisfying in and of itself, and of value to them in their professional development.

ALARM Secretaries: This essential role, involving many hours, mostly unseen, has been pursued by Joint Secretaries, Dimitri Osianlis and Yasmin Chalabi, both Monash Law student volunteers. They have pursued many essential secretarial tasks diligently and in good humour, especially notifying members of meetings, recording minutes, pursuing follow-up work, and engaging with other student volunteers. Dimitri Osianlis continues in this role into 2022, while Yasmin will focus on her Working Group activities. I sincerely thank both for their many contributions.

6 Finances: The Treasurer, Henry Wallachowski, of Marin Accountants, has provided his Report to the AGM. Henry has provided critical, and very professional, reporting and advice regarding a range of financial matters, throughout the year. Amongst many contributions, this includes establishment of our bank account; dealing with financial requirements under the governing regulations; and dealing with authorities in relation to our successful application for Charitable Status and becoming a Deductible Gift Recipient – an essential step in our search for funds. I commend the Treasurer's Report to the AGM and thank Henry for his leadership and exemplary financial management.

Funding: Early in 2021, then Board Members loaned up to \$1,000 each to provide basic funding for ALARM's activities, especially website costs. See for details, the Treasurer's Report. In November, ALARM's application to a philanthropic company succeeded, leading to a donation of \$135,000, ie, \$35,000 pa. for three years to employ a part-time legal education and law reform project manager, plus a one-off sum of \$30,000 for start-up expenses. The appointment and management of this employee will be a major focus early in 2022. I express ALARM's sincere appreciation for this support.

Charitable Status: Following a long process guided by our Treasurer, ALARM achieved Charitable Status and was accepted by the ATO as a Deductible Gift Recipient, operational from 28 July 2021: see further below.

7 Insurance: In April 2021, following Vice-President Sue Williamson's review of our options, a policy was taken out with Aon Risk Services Australia Ltd. and Insurance Australia Ltd. This embraces liability that may be incurred by ALARM personnel when pursuing ALARM activities, eg assisting complainants by phone or email and includes professional, management and association liability. This policy will need to be updated when ALARM takes-on employees.

8 Policies: Under Sue Williamson's guidance, ALARM has, to date, developed and adopted, policies concerning Conflict of Interest; Privacy; Discrimination in Employment; and Referrals to Legal Firms. Further policy development – eg Workplace Bullying and Confidentiality, are being developed.

9 Activities 2021: Working Groups: A list of ALARM Working Groups, and their members, as at November 2021 (details have changed over the year and continue to do so) is attached at **Appendix 3**.

Grp 1: Board: See above. In addition, two Strategy Meetings have occurred, under Sue Williamson's guidance, with a third planned for December 2021, to focus on ALARM's future development. The release of a Strategy Plan 2022 is planned for early 2022: see further below.

Grp 2: Fund Raising: This group has met regularly throughout the year. It has focused on identifying, and reviewing, around 250 philanthropic organisations in order to isolate those interested in supporting community groups in the aged-care sector. Standard-form applications have been developed, and one submitted successfully: see above.

Grp 3: Law reform: This group has met regularly each month and concentrated on researching the Royal Commission's Reports and Materials; reviewing legislation (Reform Bill No1 and No 2) introduced into the Federal Parliament to amend the *Aged Care Act 1997* (Cth); and writing articles on various priority aged-care reform topics, especially topics responding to the Royal Commission's recommendations in its *Final Report* (Feb 2021). Several articles have been completed and posted on ALARM's website, distributed to allied organisations and, by way of legal education and law reform agitation, to ALARM's panel of law firms (see below). In addition, case-studies, and associated materials are now posted, and may be viewed, on the website. In November, one of ALARM's consultants, Rodney Lewis (solicitor, NSW) presented a substantial private submission to the currently running Senate Community Affairs Committee's inquiry into the *Aged Care Reform Bill (No 2)*, focusing on Schedule 9 of that Bill. This seeks to provide civil and criminal immunity to aged care providers who impose restraint which might otherwise violate the rights of consumers.

ALARM supported Rodney Lewis' submission with a short letter: see **Appendix 4**. At time of writing, the Committee's recommendations are awaited, and the Bill remains subject to final debate in the Senate.

Grp. 4 (a): Allied Law Firms: ALARM does not provide legal advice or representation: one of its primary "purposes" (see **Appendix 1**) is to provide referrals. Throughout the year, Group 4, led by Deputy President Sue Williamson of Holding Redlich, Solicitors, has reached out to, and engaged with, as at November 2021, twenty-one law firms around Australia willing to accept referrals of aggrieved aged care residents seeking legal advice and assistance. Residents complaining of abuse and/or illegal conduct by their providers are, pursuant to policies drafted by Sue and adopted by ALARM, referred for initial pro-bono advice; thereafter, the parties proceed pursuant to their own arrangements, if any, that may be entered into. The Panel Firms include two national firms. All States and Territories are represented on the Panel, except Tasmania. Grp 4 volunteers continue to work to identify suitably qualified lawyers in that jurisdiction.

Grp 4 (b): Complainants Register: ALARM maintains a data-base of complaints received, referrals to our Law Firms Panel, and any resulting action, all kept under strict confidentiality protocols and with complainants knowledge and permission. To date, fourteen aged-care residents have utilised ALARM's services – ie, the GetHelp form on our website, filled-out with the assistance, if required, of our rostered student phone and email volunteers – and been referred to law firms for this initial pro-bono interview. No legal action has, so far, been pursued, with the firms' various clients considering their options. However, a matter in Victoria is likely to lead to court proceedings being filed on behalf of an ALARM complainant shortly.

Grp 5 (a): Social Media, Advertising, Networking: The Social Media Working Group has created Facebook posts twice per week, on a range of topics including topics related to articles written by ALARM volunteers and posted on our website, (eg, by Grp 3 Law Reform and Grp 8, Legal Education.) These posts have increased followers to ALARM's website and Facebook membership. Further, Grp 5(a) has increased posts on LinkedIn, raising ALARM's profile in the business community. ALARM posts were also placed with other Aged Care community groups, such as Aged Care Reform Now Carers Circle.

Grp 5 (b): Allied Organisations: To date, a list of 94 community-based, professional, educational, and government-funded groups all active in the aged-care sector, have been isolated, and a selected "law-reform-related" list compiled. ALARM continues to reach out to and enter into collaborative projects with various groups. For example, ALARM has established a relationship with the Victorian Law Foundation, which will promote ALARM's services to its community legal organisations via social media and its newsletter. Also, Celebrating Ageing would welcome ALARM preparing a legal fact sheet on sexual assaults in aged care for distribution to its members.

Grp 6: Volunteers Phone & Email Roster: During the first several months of 2021, Secretary Dimitri Osianlis rostered volunteers, on a weekly basis, to attend to ALARM's phone and email services, and answer any calls or emails concerning, eg, aged-care residents seeking assistance generally, or to complete ALARM's GetHelp form on our website. Many volunteers, including students fluent in a second (or third) non-English language, performed this task. However, very few phone calls or emails were received, and this arrangement

changed to one volunteer per month. This continues. The volume of phone calls and emails received by ALARM continues to be small.

At the commencement of this program, Guy Donovan, solicitor with Holding Redlich, and ALARM consultant, conducted two on-line instruction sessions for ALARM phone/email roster volunteers. These sessions provided practical advice on eg., handling distressed callers; summarizing relevant aspects of personal histories, especially complaints concerning abuse in residential aged care facilities; avoiding offering “legal advice”; assisting a complainant to fill-out ALARM’s GetHelp form on the website; and more. These sessions were greatly appreciated and proved invaluable to student volunteers. I thank Guy for his time and efforts.

Grp 7: Digital Services Website development:

(a) **Phone & email systems** Board Member Patrick O’Doherty and his business Yarra Web, have throughout the year, provided essential, and invaluable, assistance through creating and developing ALARM’s website and associated services; see WWW.ALARM.org.au. I record a special thankyou to Patrick, and his staff, especially Milos Petrovic, for their continued support. This work continues with refinements, additional pages and sections, and constant updating and posting of ALARM material.

(b) **Information & Google Docs management:** ALARM has established a centralized, and secure, document management system, stored in its Google Drive.

Grp 8 Legal Education During 2021, this group has been chaired by Professor Eileen Webb, from South Australia University, Adelaide.

(a) **Professional:** Through 2021 this group has pursued the researching and drafting of educational material. The results are posted on our website. Further work is underway.

(b) **Community & Complainants:** A particular focus has been on producing educational material on legal issues appropriate for non-lawyers, especially those resident in aged-care, or families of such residents.

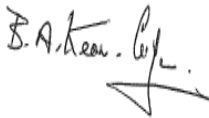
Grp. 9 ALARM Publications: This group, chaired by myself, seeks to isolate and list out for attention, with the advice of our expert senior practitioners and educators, (especially Rodney Lewis, Catherine Henry, and Eileen Webb), priority law-reform topics (currently numbering 40+); co-ordinate the various writing projects underway across ALARM’s (very productive) authors from various Working Groups; finally approve the content; and organise their forwarding, through our projects manager, Anna Willis, for posting and recording in ALARM’s Google-docs system. This work continues, and is heavily reliant upon the research and skills of our student volunteers. I thank all authors for their very important work.

10 Further Initiatives Further activity has included the following. ALARM published an article, announcing its arrival to the profession, in the *Victorian Law Institute Journal*, (Nov 2021) “Advocacy Group Raises Alarm”: see **Appendix 5**. Collaboration with the community group Justice Connect and solicitors Holding Redlich has been pursued to provide ALARM legal fact sheets related to contractual rights in aged care facilities. Case studies provided by Catherine Henry Lawyers (Sydney) are a welcome addition to ALARM’s website, informing aged care residents of their legal rights.

11 Future Plans 2022 ALARM is convening a third Strategy Meeting in December 2021 to discuss (and hopefully agree) ALARM’s forward strategy for 2022 and beyond. Agenda items for discussion include a review of our purposes; extending ALARM’s services to those receiving Commonwealth-funded home-care packages; reviewing how we seek to provide access to justice to those suffering abuse in aged-care facilities; building relationships with like-minded aged-care service advocates to ensure those receiving aged care services know both their legal rights and that ALARM is able to provide support; joining (or forming) a coalition of like-minded independent groups seeking to reform and improve aged-care services and hold abusive providers to account; establishing ALARM membership arrangements; and conducting a formal “Launch and Fund-raising Event.”

Appendices

- 1 Model Rules: CI 3: Purposes**
- 2 Board Members, Consultants and Student Volunteers, 2021**
- 3 ALARM Working Groups**
- 4 Submission to Senate Committee on Community Affairs: 9/11/21**
- 5 “Advocacy Group Raises Alarm”, *Victorian Law Institute Journal* (Nov 2021)**



Dr Bryan Keon-Cohen AM QC

Chairman

1 December 2021

APPENDIX 1: ALARM Model Rules: Purposes
Aged-care Legal Advocacy & Reform Matter Inc.
Incorporated pursuant to the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic)

Cl 3: The purposes of the association are—

- 1.** advocate for and assert the rights of residents of aged care facilities, public and private, and their families, within Australia, to ensure that residents receive proper care and support, in accordance with state and federal law, including legislation, contract and common law;
- 2.** ensure that all aged-care providers, governments, and responsible agencies within Australia are held to account for breaches of civil and/or criminal law in their administration of residential aged care facilities and the care of residents;
- 3.** improve access to justice for residents of aged care facilities and their supporters and families by:
 - (a)** facilitating and supporting legal action in all appropriate forms and jurisdictions to achieve redress according to law; to protect the health and safety of aged care residents; and to promote systemic law reform throughout Australia;
 - (b)** referring abused residents and/or their families to supportive legal services or law firms to pursue prospects of civil and/or criminal proceedings in appropriate courts, preferably on a pro-bono basis;
 - (c)** supporting individual residents and/or their families who have suffered loss or damage due to unlawful actions by residential aged care facilities and/or governments and/or relevant agencies; and
 - (d)** challenging harmful, abusive or discriminatory conduct, and/or involving human rights breaches, including conduct engaged in by governments or public agencies at federal, state, territory or local levels, by facilitating “test cases” to provide both redress to individuals and to establish legal precedents to force agencies to improve services and comply with all applicable legal obligations.
- 4.**
 - (a)** facilitate and/or research and promote academic and public discussion to raise awareness of the legal rights of, and provide support to residents of aged care facilities in Australia.
 - (b)** publish or provide access to legal resources and research materials to assist legal practitioners acting for aged care residents in Australia.
- 5.** make submissions in relation to relevant proposed laws, and government policy, to support the rights and interests of residents in aged care facilities in Australia.
- 6.** seek out other like-minded community groups and organisations and co-ordinate activities with them to assist ALARM to achieve its objectives;
- 7.** urge relevant Australian governments and agencies to establish mandatory requirements that ensure:
 - (a)** that data concerning the financial performance, quality of care and quality of life in the aged care sector in Australia is publicly available; and
 - (b)** the transparency of all operations in the aged care sector, especially but not limited to, aged care facilities in receipt of public funding;
- 8.** pursue fund-raising and other resources, retain and/or employ persons, and establish administrative facilities and services, as deemed necessary from time to time, to support the association and its above purposes; and
- 9.** pursue activities incidental to, relevant to, or supportive of, the above purposes.

Dated: 28 July 2021

By Order of the Board.

**APPENDIX 2:
BOARD MEMBERS, CONSULTANTS AND STUDENT VOLUNTEERS:
(November 2021)**

Patron

Hon Tony Pagone, QC, Vic Bar.

Board Members

President: Dr Bryan Keon-Cohen AM, QC, (Vic Bar, retired)

Vice-President: Sue Williamson, (Partner, Holding Redlich, Solicitors)

Secretary: Dimitri, Osianlis, (law student, Monash University)

Treasurer: Henry Walachowski, (Partner, Marin Accountants)

Projects Manager: Anna Willis, (solicitor)

Members: Catherine Henry (solicitor), Patrick O’Doherty (Yarra Web Pty Ltd), Elizabeth Barton (registered nurse, aged care advocate)

Consultants

Rodney Lewis (solicitor), Melanie Scott (registered nurse, aged care advocate) Guy Donovan (solicitor), Eileen Webb (professor, law school, Sth Australia University).

Observer:

Paul Dougas, company director.

Law Student Volunteers

Andrew Browell, Thu (Anna) Huynh, Aristeia Nikolakakis, Daniel Peet, Edward Carlisle, Elizabeth Rudelic, Ella Hockley, Emma Greenwood, Emily Lai, Evangeline Yong, Fereshtoh Homayoun, Jessica Ziada, Jerry Wang, Jack Watson, Jennifer Murray, Joshua Cordina, Joshua Devonshire, Lani Nguyen, Liz Papapetrou, Natalie Barbazza, Olivia Mollia, Ruchika Bilagi Sandesh, Yasmin Chalabi, Zara Bendit-Rosser.

APPENDIX 3:

ALARM WORKING GROUPS: NOVEMBER 2021

	Working Group	People	Activities
1 (A)	Project Manager Anna Willis	Members Joshua Devonshire Olivia Mollia	*Co-ordinate and supervise working rps 2 – 9; * Further specific tasks as required by Board etc.
2	Fundraising Chair BKC Secretary Liz Papapetrou	Members Lani Nguyen Jerry Wang Liz Rudelic Andrew Browell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philanthropic orgns: identify & applications • Social media & networking • Charitable status
3	Law Reform Chair: BK-C (temporary) Secretary: Daniel Peet	Members Lani Nguyen Thu (Anna) Huynh Fershteh Homayoun Aristea Nikolakakis Emma Greenwood Emily Lai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review RC Recommendations • Review AACC report & advocacy publications • Media advocacy strategy • Subs to Fed govt re RC Recs
4	(a) Allied Firms Panel (b) Complainants Register & Info (c) Google Docs management Chair Sue Williamson Secretary: Yasmin Chalabi	Members Eliz Rudelic Josh Devonshire Jerry Wang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) Research, appoint, liaise with “pro-bono” firms • (b) Dimitri: Maintain complainants register. • (c) File phone/email contact reports in google docs
5 (A)	Social Media, Advertising, networking Chair Sue Williamson Secretary Yasmin Chalabi	Members Natalie Barbazza Ruchika Bilagi Singh Ella Hockley Liz Papapetrou	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise, partner & pursue media projects • articles & copywriting • Facebook posts • LinkedIn posts • Press articles • Blog (ALARM’s own) posts
5(B)	Allied Organisations Chair Anna Willis Secretary Joshua Cordina	Members: Olivia Mallia Jennifer Murray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationships with organisations to spread the message about ALARM and legal rights. • Disseminate ALARMs legal education.

6	Volunteers: Ph & email rosters Chair: (vacant) Secretary Dimitri Osianlis	Jerry Wang Ruchika Bilagi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile, manage, update, assist volunteer tasks • Manage weekly ph/email roster • Confirm vols & Distribute weekly roster spreadsheet • instruct re ph. Email, google doc, Gethelp systems
7	Digital (a) Website; posts; technical (b) Ph & email systems (c) Info/Google Docs Chair Patrick O’Doherty Sec D Osianlis	Nil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain phone & email • Website development • GetHelp Form • Maintain Google docs • Post on website
8	Legal Education: (a) Professional (b) Community & Complainants Chair Eileen Webb Secretary: Ed Carlisle	Jennifer Murray Daniel Peet	(a) Professional Share /post on website/via media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • academic articles • Court judgements • Class action info <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R Comm extracts eg, re abuse (b) Community & Complainants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop educative material (egs of abuse from RC evidence) • post on website, social media, press, etc • Writing articles Assist complainants & families with legal info
9	ALARM Publications Chair: BK-C Sec: Ruchika Bilagi	Nil	* articles writing, editing & co-ordination * case studies, fact sheets; * podcasts; *media posts etc

APPENDIX 4
ALARM SUBMISSION TO
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

9 November 2021

The Senior Clerk,
Senate Committee on Community Affairs,
Parliament House, Canberra, ACT
By email: seniorclerk.committees.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir,

**Re: Aged Care and other Legislation Amendment (Royal
Commission Response No 2) Bill 2021: 9th Schedule.**

**Re: Submission by Mr Rodney Lewis, Senior Solicitor, Elder Law
Legal Services, Sydney, dated 8/11/2021**

I refer to the inquiry currently being pursued by your Committee, and Mr Lewis' above submission.

ALARM supports Mr. Lewis' submission in relation to his analysis of the 9th Schedule, and its proposal to grant immunity from civil and criminal claims and charges under certain circumstances.

These aspects of the Bill are contrary to the rule of law, deny Australian citizens their rights, may do great harm to vulnerable residents in aged care facilities, and must be rejected by the Parliament, for the reasons provided by Mr. Lewis.

Yours Faithfully,



Dr. Bryan Keon-Cohen, AM. QC,
President.

APPENDIX 5

“ADVOCACY GROUP RAISES ALARM” (Vic Law Institute Journal, Nov 2021)

“Aged-care Legal Advocacy and Reform Matter (ALARM) is a not-for-profit organisation established in October 2020 to promote the welfare of aged care residents in Australia.

ALARM has three key objectives:

- to ensure residents of aged care facilities and their families and friends have access to legal support and services
- to ensure law reform occurs in the aged care sector and
- provide legal education to the aged care community and legal practitioners.

ALARM chair Dr Bryan Keon-Cohen QC (Victorian Bar, retired), says: “Aged care residents, their families and loved ones, need to be informed that residents have a voice, have legal rights. ALARM is here to do that.”

Dr Keon-Cohen is no stranger to advocating for the legal rights of community groups in Australia, including seeking law reform through test cases in the High Court. He appeared in, among others, the Dams Case, representing the Tasmanian Wilderness Society (1983) and Mabo (1992) and Wik (1996) representing the Indigenous plaintiffs.

ALARM aims to work with legal, community and government agencies.

Residents of aged care facilities often feel vulnerable and need support to determine their legal rights. Many residents are unlikely or unable to complain about abusive practices due to a range of factors, including fear of retribution from their provider and diminished capacity.

ALARM provides a website (<https://www.alarm.org.au/>) and telephone referral services to residents and families who seek legal redress due to financial, emotional or physical damage suffered in an aged care facility. Complainants are supported by ALARM’s allied law firms that specialise in aged care matters.

Residents in aged care facilities in Australia need clarification of their rights. ALARM is developing a series of plain-English, focused educational materials on a range of topics (for example, what constitutes restraint, medical negligence, breach of contract, assaults and others) plus more technical material to ensure practitioners have the expertise to deal with and understand the issues relevant to aged cared residents.

Reform of the *Aged Care Act 1997* (Cth), consistent with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety is essential to enable the delivery of comprehensive, sustainable, and measurable services to older Australians. ALARM has the depth of experience and expertise to actively participate in drafting necessary reforms and is seeking representation in government law reform processes now underway.

ALARM is seeking to drive the legal community, governments, the aged care sector and concerned community groups to work together to eliminate the unacceptable levels of neglect, and improve accountability and governance in aged care. An immediate concern is to ensure commonsense reforms related to unacceptable staff training and remuneration and residents’ nutrition are implemented urgently.

ALARM is supported by volunteers, including legal practitioners and academics experienced in aged-care administration and elder law, and allied community organisations around Australia. ALARM’s services are much needed, given that the recent Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety found that many facilities have, over many years, repeatedly failed to deliver acceptable standards of care.

The legal community has an important role to play in enforcing the legal rights of residents in aged care in Australia.

ALARM would welcome the active involvement of volunteer practitioners and academics with experience in the aged care sector to provide input, especially in relation to ALARM’s law reform and legal education activities. Contact Dr Bryan Keon-Cohen, by email bkeoncohen@gmail.com. We also welcome law firms interested in providing legal services support as an allied law firm to contact ALARM.”