# Newsletter August 2025

Welcome to the first edition of the Office of the Senior Practitioner Newsletter. This is the first newsletter since Marita O’Connell’s appointment and the commencement of the [*Disability Rights, Inclusion and Safeguarding Act 2024*](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftas.us8.list-manage.com%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3D2d4c10e925b896c2ba34a6dad%26id%3D925f1407a7%26e%3Dce13c8b5cb&data=05%7C02%7CDavid.Badcock%40dpac.tas.gov.au%7C2f54a8817cd5433b92cb08ddd47db2eb%7Cea732b1f3d1a4be9b48b6cee25b8a074%7C0%7C0%7C638900358538982725%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Ijoy4Q4lK1p0nKT212YjOaU2gk1IMKtWKDYkHfzWKrA%3D&reserved=0) (the Act). Today is the one-month anniversary of the commencement and it’s pretty safe to say that it has been a BUSY month.

This newsletter will be quarterly and it’s our way of keeping you all updated on the activities of the office. We hope you’ll enjoy the content and please let us know if you’d like us to cover specific topics in upcoming issues.

## Meet the Senior Practitioner

The Senior Practitioner will be hosting events across the state to provide an opportunity to meet with Marita in person. There will be a brief presentation on the role of the Office of the Senior Practitioner and an opportunity for Questions and Answers. A light lunch will be provided - you will need to register your interest so we can plan accordingly.

**Tuesday 19 August 12-1:30pm Ulverstone Surf Club**

[www.eventbrite.com.au/e/meet-the-senior-practitioner-ulverstone-tickets-1539155157509?aff=oddtdtcreator](http://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/meet-the-senior-practitioner-ulverstone-tickets-1539155157509?aff=oddtdtcreator)

**Wednesday 20 August 2025 12-1:30pm Tailrace Centre**

[www.eventbrite.com.au/e/meet-the-senior-practitioner-launceston-tickets-1539145047269?aff=oddtdtcreator](http://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/meet-the-senior-practitioner-launceston-tickets-1539145047269?aff=oddtdtcreator)

If you have any requests for accommodations or support to ensure you are able to attend, please reach out and let us know.

## Recruitment

The Office of the Senior Practitioner has undergone a major change – w; have gone from an advisory office to that of a regulator. We have a few recruitment activities happening to support the changing role including a Deputy Senior Practitioner and a Legal and Policy officer. We’ll keep you updated on when appointments are made.

## Appointed Program Officers (APO)

We now have more than 50 approved APO’s from different disability services providers.

We’re really excited about the role the APO has in ensuring the human rights of people with disability are protected. This new role adds an additional level of oversight and safeguarding I the use of restrictive practices. It has the potential to really reduce and eliminate the use of restrictive practices when it is safe to do so and that will be a great outcome for Tasmania.

We’ve been working closely with the National Disability Services (NDS) to set up a training fund for Tasmanian based APO’s. There will be courses on offer to support APO’s training in the area of positive behaviour support and the APO role. We’re currently in discussions with some prestigious education providers and we’re looking forward to applications opening soon.

In addition to the training fund, we’ll also be setting up a Community of Practice to support the important work that APO’s do, so watch this space!

## Independent Persons

The other new role the Act has introduced is that of the Independent Person. The Independent Person is someone known to the person with disability, like a family member or friend and they explain the use of the restrictive practice as well as their rights.  An employee of a disability services provider or the behaviour support practitioner for the person cannot fulfil the role of the Independent Person.

The Act is all about improving people’s human rights and the role of the Independent Person is to ensure that the will and preference of the person is heard. It’s all about making sure they are included and they know their rights, including the right to have any decision reviewed.

We’ll be developing a short explainer video that we hope will explain the role to people in an easy to access format.

## Chemical Restraint

The introduction of chemical restraint as a restrictive practice in Tasmania is a major change for all of us. Providers should already be identifying which of the people they support that may be subject to chemical restraint.

Identifying who may be subject to a chemical restraint is a collaborative approach between the person with disability, the provider, the behaviour support practitioner and the person’s prescribing medical practitioner.

The Senior Practitioner will be looking for evidence to answer the following questions:

* is the medication prescribed for the primary purpose of influencing the person’s behaviour?
* is the medication prescribed for the treatment of, or to enable treatment of, a diagnosed mental disorder, a physical illness or a physical condition?
* is there written evidence of the diagnosis of amental disorder, a physical illness or a physical condition?
* is the medication prescribed an accepted treatment for the diagnosed mental disorder, physical illness or physical condition?
* have the appropriate authorisation and consent requirements of the treatment been obtained and documented?

We have a fact sheet on the way about chemical restraint. In the meantime, the NDIS Commission resources are highly relevant and we’d encourage you to check them out.

## Resources

We have been busy producing fact sheets on a range of topics as well as other resources which are now on the [website](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftas.us8.list-manage.com%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3D2d4c10e925b896c2ba34a6dad%26id%3Db694dd18af%26e%3Dce13c8b5cb&data=05%7C02%7CDavid.Badcock%40dpac.tas.gov.au%7C2f54a8817cd5433b92cb08ddd47db2eb%7Cea732b1f3d1a4be9b48b6cee25b8a074%7C0%7C0%7C638900358539054083%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=KHbUsAxqdRI8iG8JBJf3J7Rill8IuFrTfbinGsF3CzE%3D&reserved=0). There are easy-read versions of these on the way – a big thanks to Speak Out for their great work in this area.

We have more resources on the way, some of which will be published as booklets and be available on the website. We’re also in the process of creating some short explainer videos.

We know our website needs a refresh and we have a new-look website on the way - keep your eye out for upcoming changes.

We are also busy working on Guidelines for the following topics: Restrictive Practices: A Guideline for providers, APO’s and Independent Persons. We hope to have these available in the next month or so.

## A note to providers

The new Act has created a lot of changes for all of us. Below is a brief checklist of things we’d like to bring your attention to:

Check out our factsheets on the website for information

* Our online application for the use of restrictive practices is now live. Every application MUST be supported by a positive behaviour support plan
* If you don’t already have an approved APO, and you are using restrictive practices or think you may need to, please head to the website and make an application
* Identifying which of the people you support maybe subject to chemical restraint.

Thanks for reading and we hope to see you at our upcoming events. A Hobart date will be announced soon!

## Contact

For more information on the use of restrictive practices of the Office of the Senior Practitioner, please contact us buy:

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