

Wednesday 20 March 2019

Dementia peak body welcomes Government plan to address elder abuse

Dementia Australia has welcomed the Federal Government's plan to support older Australians who are victims of abuse. The plan includes a national free call number.

Dementia Australia CEO Maree McCabe said that elder abuse in Australia is a serious issue that directly impacts the wellbeing of older Australians, especially those who are living with dementia.

"People living with dementia and other forms of cognitive impairment have a heightened risk of abuse as they may find it difficult to comprehend, recall or report their abuse," Ms McCabe said.

"With the prevalence of dementia projected to increase to almost 1.1 million by 2058, an increasing number of Australians will be susceptible to financial, physical, sexual or psychological abuse."

The National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of older Australians provides a framework for coordinated action across federal, state and territory governments over the next four years, with \$18 million assigned for national trials of frontline services designed to support older people who are victims of abuse.

There is no detailed research in Australia to determine the extent of elder abuse in Australia, but based on overseas studies the Government estimates that as many as 185,000 older people experience some form of abuse or neglect nationally each year.

"We need national safeguards in place that protect the most vulnerable members of our community, and ensure the rights of people living with dementia and older Australians are protected," Ms McCabe said.

"Dementia Australia welcomes the framework and its commitment to promote the safety, dignity, equality, health and independence of older Australians through coordinated action.

"Improved levels of training, education and support for people working with or caring for someone living with dementia must be a focus to minimise the risk of abuse."

Dementia Australia provides a range of education and services to support people working with or caring for people living with dementia, to enhance the quality of life of the person living with dementia and reduce the potential for abuse. For more information please contact the National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500.

The National Plan, and further information on elder abuse initiatives is available at www.aq.gov.au/ElderAbuse.

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Dementia Australia is the national peak body and charity for people, of all ages, living with all forms of dementia, their families and carers. It provides advocacy, support services, education and information. An estimated 436,000 people have dementia in Australia. This number is projected to reach almost 1.1 million by 2058. Dementia Australia is the new voice of Alzheimer's Australia. Dementia Australia's services are supported by the Australian Government.

National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500

Interpreter service available

(The National Dementia Helpline is an Australian Government Initiative)

Dementia is a National Health Priority Area

www.dementia.org.au

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When talking or writing about dementia please refer to [Dementia Language Guidelines](#).