

QLD Focus

Elder Abuse Prevention Unit Newsletter

Edition 11
March 2007



Parliament of the
Commonwealth of
Australia

OLDER PEOPLE AND THE LAW

PUBLIC FORUM

The House of Representatives Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee will hold a public hearing in Brisbane on Monday 25 June. The Committee will examine how well the legal system meets the needs of Australians aged 65 years and over. In addition to hearing from invited witnesses, the Committee also invites members of the public to have their say at a public forum from 3:30pm to 4:30pm.

The hearing and public forum will be held at:

UQ Business School Down-
town
Level 19 Central Plaza 1
345 Queens St
Brisbane

The hearing will commence at 9:00am and is open to the public to observe. The Committee is not able to investigate individual cases or provide legal advice.

For more information visit :
www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/laca or phone (02) 6277 2358.

The public forum on 25th June 2007 is held as an information session in response to the Inquiry into Older people and the Law conducted by the House of Representatives. For more information read the media release below.

OLDER PEOPLE AND THE LAW

MEDIA RELEASE (20 SEPTEMBER 2006)

The House of Representatives Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee is to investigate whether current legislative regimes are adequately addressing the legal needs of older Australians.

Committee Chairman, Peter Slipper MP, today announced an inquiry into older people and the law. "The Committee wants to know whether the various statutes are doing enough to deal with some of the legal issues that are important to older Australians".

"The Attorney-General has asked the Committee to look at six spe-

cific areas: fraud, financial abuse, general and enduring power of attorney provisions, family agreements, discrimination, and barriers to older Australians accessing legal services".

"Financial abuse is a particularly serious issue and is complicated by the fact that it can often be perpetrated by family members," Mr Slipper added. "Studies have suggested that older people are less likely to take legal action where abuse has occurred".

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**ELDER ABUSE
HELPLINE**

1300 651 192



From the Editor:

Domnica Alexa (domnica.alex@lccq.org.au)

So much excitement—so little time!! Since the beginning of the year we have a new Minister for Aging (Hon Christopher Pyne), changing legislation, programs like SAILS expanding, and preparation for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. That's just to name a few!

As for the EAPU where do we start? Claudia (our new Senior Project Officer) has hit the ground running and adding an exciting new flavour to the EAPU. Andrea has made a big splash in Rockhampton with the grand success of the Senior's expo this month (read all about it on page 3). Maya has been setting the stage for the Multicultural events for the year. SEL have had a major breakthrough with the Time for Grandparents Program and have received funding for a new venture aimed at providing camps for grandparents caring for grandchild. Congratulations to Julie and the SEL team!!

Domnica Alexa
Project Officer

TIME FOR GRANDPARENTS PROGRAM

Wilma Gehrke



With the approval of on-going funding by the Department of Communities for the next three years, it is anticipated that there will be more Grandparents participating the **Time for Grandparent Program** and additional service providers will register. The aim is to vary the activities and extend availability of the service to the whole of Queensland.

Initially the Police Citizens Youth Clubs (PCYC), Kindilan Outdoor Education and Conference Centre, Guides, Scouts and Sports and Recreation Camps on Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Atherton Tableland, were the main service providers. It is a requirement that all service providers have the Child Protection and Risk Management Policies & Procedures in place as per the Commission for Children, Young People and Child Guardian. Other providers who meet these requirements have been included in the program such as Fitness and Dance, Playground and Recreation Association of Qld, Girls Brigade, School Camps. Grandparents are encouraged to request inclusion of providers if their grandchildren are interested in specific activities. These activities will then be approached to confirm compliance to the required risk management procedures. Some of the services approached to date are Army, Navel and Airforce Cadets, Little Athletics, Edmund Rice Camps, Boys Brigade and Nipper Surf Life Saving and various sporting groups.

It is also anticipated that the popular Grandfamilies Camps will be rolled out across the state as sufficient number of families in a particular location are identified with camp sites near Toowoomba, Hervey Bay, Cairns being investigated. These camps give the grandchildren the opportunity to participate in activities including abseiling, canoeing, craft, nature walks and the grandparents the opportunity to rest, meet other grandparents and attend information sessions.

Even though the Time for Grandparents Program aims to assist Grandparent who are the primary carers of the grandchildren but not receiving fostering allowance or relative or kinship carers, all Grandparents are encouraged to contact Seniors Enquiry Line on 1300 135 500 to make use of their friendly, personal, confidential information and referral service.



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OLDER PEOPLE AND THE LAW

MEDIA RELEASE (cont'd)

Mr Slipper indicated that the Committee will focus on those aged 65 and over in its inquiry. "At present, 12% of the Australian population is aged 65 and over, and by 2030 this is estimated to rise to more than 22%", Mr Slipper said. "There is a real need to ensure that legal concerns of this group are adequately addressed".

The legal framework is complex, with both Commonwealth and State legislation covering issues important to older Australians. Areas dealt with by Commonwealth legislation include social security, aged care, taxation and superannuation,

family law, and anti-discrimination. State and territory legislation covers a range of issues such as wills and estates, health services, accommodation, delegation of authority, and competency. In conducting its inquiry the Committee will also consider the relevant experience of overseas jurisdictions.

Members of the public will be able to make submissions in writing to the Committee until 1 December. Public hearings will be held in early 2007.

Respite a welcome relief for Queensland grandparents

Minister for Communities, Disability Services,
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
The Honourable Warren Pitt

Sunday, April 01, 2007

Queenslanders who are raising their grandchildren will welcome news that they have ongoing access to respite programs to give them a much-needed break.

Seniors Minister Warren Pitt said today Lifeline would get Queensland Government funding of more than \$1.75 million to run the Time for Grandparents program for another three years.

"Time for Grandparents is a statewide program offering fully funded activities for grandparents who are raising their grandchildren outside the statutory child protection system," Mr Pitt said.

"Many grandparents performing this vital role cannot take access diversionary activities due to financial and physical constraints.

"The Time for Grandparents program will ensure grandparents and their grandchildren receive the support and respite they need, so that grandparents can continue their important role and maintain their wellbeing and general health."

Mr Pitt said Lifeline had been trialling the Time for Grandparents program through the Seniors Enquiry Line since December 2005.

For the cost of a local call, the Seniors Enquiry Line can link grandparents with activity providers throughout the state.

Mr Pitt said he was committed to ensuring that grandparents were better supported so they could cope with the often demanding role of helping their families.

He said the program included specialised "Grandfamily" camps, at which grandparents and grandchildren could spend quality time together. "Namballie" camps, focusing on cultural revitalization, were also available for Indigenous grandfamilies.

"The Time for Grandparents program is extremely flexible, allowing families to choose activities that suit their respite needs," he said.

"For instance, some families may wish to spend quality time together away from daily pressures, while other families may need some time apart.

"Some grandparents prefer the children to take part in a program while others welcome the chance to meet other people in similar situations. I hope more people will take advantage of this useful service."

The Seniors Enquiry Line also received \$2500 to buy a laptop computer to support the program.

Media contact: Peter Nibbs 3235 4280 or 0417 789 208



INPEA Announces 2nd World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2007



For Immediate Release

INPEA Announces World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2007

INPEA WEAAD Contact: weaad-info@inpea.net

Mark your calendars! The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA) announces the 2nd Annual **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD)** on **June 15, 2007**.

Communities and municipalities will make proclamations declaring **June 15, 2007** as **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD)** and hold events designed to raise their communities' awareness of elder abuse. The first Awareness Day in 2006 involved several hundred organizations and governmental bodies at international, national, regional, local, community and neighbourhood level, in every continent in the world. The day is in support of the United Nations International Plan of Action which recognizes the significance of elder abuse as a public health and human rights issue. Governments, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, religious groups, professionals in the field of aging, interested individuals as well as older persons themselves will promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by organizing activities around the world to raise awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect.

Throughout the world, abuse and neglect of older persons is largely under-recognized or treated as an unspoken problem. Unfortunately, no community or country in the world is immune from this costly, public health and human rights crisis. Research indicates that public education campaigns like **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD)** are vital for informing people in a growing number of countries about elder abuse and active involvement of the media is central to its success.

All countries, communities, neighborhoods and organizations interested in working to help bring recognition and ultimately an end to elder abuse and neglect are urged to take part in the 2nd Annual **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD)** on **June 15, 2007**. Awareness activities may encompass volunteer or educational programs, cultural and art events, use of information technology, or any activity that aims to create awareness of elder abuse and neglect. Raising awareness of elder abuse and neglect is a challenge and no effort is too small. To learn more, and to download a free copy of the Community Guide World Day Tool Kit, please visit www.inpea.net.

The International Network for the Prevention for Elder Abuse (INPEA) was founded in 1997 and is dedicated to global dissemination of information as part of its commitment to world-wide prevention of elder abuse. Acknowledging the diversity of culture, background, and life style of the world population, the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA) aims to increase society's ability, through international collaboration, to recognize and respond to the mistreatment of older people in whatever setting it occurs, so that the latter years of life will be free from abuse, neglect and exploitation. For more information, please see our website at: www.inpea.net

SAFE AND CONFIDENT LIVING EXPO 2007 ROCKHAMPTON

Approximately 60 Senior's attended the annual Safe & Confident Living Expo 2007 on March 19th in Rockhampton. After consultation with a number of service providers who have attended previous Confident Living EXPO's it was decided that we would wrap the EXPO up around 1:30pm, so we had a lot to fit in, in 4 hours. After listening to a number of speakers, eating morning tea and lunch, the senior members were keen to chat with their friends and even head off home for an afternoon nap. There were no arguments from anyone with the change in time, because I believe we were all ready for a siesta.

23 service providers within the community that had valuable information to share with Senior's, manned displays offering brochures, advice and contacts. There were 13 speakers in all. We started out with the Police speaking on reducing the fear of crime. They spoke about body language and how to present oneself when out in public. They introduced the new VIP service which is the Volunteers in Police. These people go out and speak with members of the community about safety. The Ambulance spoke about their new program called CPR for Life, which takes about an hour and a half of ones time and is free. Basically it is 30 compressions to 2 breaths while waiting for an ambulance. No previous experience required. It gives people the confidence to have a go while waiting for help. The Fire Service did a kitchen fire exhibit, by contriving a saucepan of oil to catch fire and then demonstrated how to put the fire out.

Other government officers spoke from the Office of Fair Trading, Public Trust, and Centrelink. Ozcare Nursing normalised incontinence by encouraging participation in some simple exercises to strengthen the bladder and the bowel. This was extremely informative and raised a few laughs. Capricorn Respite Care Association, Women's Health, Alzheimers Australia and the Seniors Enquiry Line also spoke about their services. Myra Pincott was our guest speaker and she summed up very nicely the wealth of information that had been passed on to everyone during the course of the day.

The wonderful ladies from the Bouldercombe Singers entertained us in the 2 short breaks. The staff and their happy band of volunteers in the kitchen at Schotia Place kept the food and drink up to everyone. The usual multi-draw was held and we received wonderful donations from Rockhampton City Council, Goodman Fielders, Parmalat, Growers Own, Woolworths Allens-town, Aboriginal and Islander Community Resource Agency, Women's Health and Alzheimers Australia.

Our very own Safe & Confident Living Support Group supported the EXPO by making up sample bags and wrapping the baskets for the multi draw. On the day these men and women were busy with evaluation forms and supporting our display. It was a great day supported by many, many people wanting to make our community safer and confident. All in all it was a very successful EXPO and I am looking forward to teasing out the evaluations and making changes where necessary for next years EXPO.

Andrea Dowling
(Project Officer for EAPU & Safe & Confident Living—Rockhampton)



Above: Andrea Dowling (Safe & Confident Living Project Officer) and Julie Argeros (Seniors Enquiry Line Coordinator)

Investigations of allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation by the Office of the Adult Guardian

Carolyn McDiamid
Principal Community Liaison Officer

One of the functions of the Adult Guardian, an independent statutory officer responsible for protecting the rights and interests of vulnerable adults with impaired decision making capacity, is to investigate allegations that an adult with impaired capacity is being or has been neglected, exploited or abused.

Investigations snapshot for 2005-2006:

- 55% of investigations related to financial exploitation of adults.
- 63% of the investigations about financial exploitation involved allegations against an attorney appointed under an Enduring Power of Attorney.
- Dementia was the primary impairment for 63% of investigation clients.
- 67% of investigation clients were aged 65 years and over and 61% were aged 75 years and over.
- Approximately 60% of referrals of matters for investigation come from the family and friends of the adult at risk, 30% come from service providers and 10% come from other sources.

Given the significant proportion of allegations involving the actions of attorneys under Enduring Powers of Attorney, the Office was pleased to accept an invitation from the Queensland Law Society to participate in the Society's Regional Continuing Legal Education series. Through this series Assistant Adult Guardian, Louise Logan has had the opportunity to speak to solicitors in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton and Noosa about the investigative functions of the Office, the need for clients to give careful consideration to choosing an attorney they can trust and one who is best equipped to make good decisions on their behalf.

The investigations team also respond to calls to the Adult Guardian's telephone enquiry service and in 2005-2006 there were 3070 calls to this service. On current trends the figure will again exceed 3000 in this financial year. The overwhelming majority of calls are from family members in relation to Enduring Power of Attorney matters. Other issues raised on the telephone enquiry service are about Advance Health Direc-

tives, Statutory Health Attorneys and guardianship. Families and/or adults with alleged impaired capacity are often in crisis or conflict situations when calls are made. Many of the matters referred to the Office for investigation first come to the attention of the office through the telephone enquiry service. For example, the enquiry service received 511 calls during January and February 2007. Subsequently, referral forms were sent to 41 people during this two month period.

In addition to the telephone enquiry service, the Office also undertakes a community education program as part of its functions to educate and advise about the *Guardianship and Administration Act 2000* and the *Powers of Attorney Act 1998*. Consequently, the Adult Guardian, the Community Liaison team and other officers conducted 32 free community education presentations during January, February and March 2007 to groups, including the Guardianship and Administration Tribunal, service providers, TAFE and university students, community organisations, a Carers' Forum on the Gold Coast, the Kingaroy Free Information Day and a providers' network in Ipswich.

OAG currently produces Fact Sheets on the following matters:

- The role and functions of the Adult Guardian
- The Adult Guardian (as guardian of last resort)
- Enduring Power of Attorney
- Advance Health Directive
- Statutory Health Attorney
- Making health care decisions
- Resolving complaints
- Reasons for decisions and internal review of decisions.

Multiple copies can be mailed out on request to the Office's Community Liaison team. Additionally, they may be accessed via the website: www.justice.qld.gov.au/guardian/

General enquiries or concerns can be directed to 07: 3234 0870 or 1300 653 187 or by email to: adult.guardian@justice.qld.gov.au

Research Roundup

by Domnica Alexa (EAPU - Project Officer)

Older Indigenous Australians: their integral role in culture and community

J Warburton & B, Chambers, (2007). *Australian Journal on Ageing*, pp 3-7.

Jenni Warburton and Brianna Chambers did a review of literature and multimedia sources on "Aboriginal older people". They found that there were very few reviewed journals and books on the topic. The authors ascertained that the majority of literature focused on the negative issues faced by older Indigenous people in Australia. The information focused on three major areas: social conditions, social life and customs and biography. Much of the literature was identified to be either narrative or storytelling in nature. This approach gave the research the ability to: 1. accurately identify issues in the Indigenous community and 2. to keep within an Indigenous culturally appropriate genre, and facilitate further transmission of findings to the community.

This article also looked at kinship and the concept of support within kinship networks. The study confirmed the essential underlying belief in the Indigenous community that human health and country health were interdependent and that wisdom comes from the land and through sharing of this wisdom. They found that older people play an integral role in imparting information about kinship based connections and responsibilities onto the younger generations. The article explained kin relationships in terms of networks across geographic and biological connections and that there was a sense of duty and responsibility in caring for kin within the Indigenous culture. Older Indigenous Australians play an irreplaceable role in passing on information about language, kinship systems, customs, sacred places, objects and stories to the younger generation.

In Indigenous culture generational knowledge is transmitted by word of mouth from one generation to the next along gender lines. Grandparents also play an important role in raising grandchildren especially in regions where there is high levels of dysfunction, violence and substance abuse, or in cases of parental death or the parents are unable to perform their parenting roles.

The Indigenous culture provides a sense of identity and connection to the land they belong to and must care for. Knowledge of culture has also played a protective role for younger generations at risk of falling into the cycle of drinking, violence and substance abuse. The onus is on the Elders and older Indigenous people to teach younger generations the Indigenous culture.

There is an emphasis in Indigenous culture on respect for older generations as is the basis of a strong and fair culture. Older Indigenous people are respected within the community because:

- They have survived many years of discrimination, racism, prejudice and segregation.
- They are responsible for passing on cultural knowledge and traditions to younger generations.

In conclusion older Indigenous people provide younger generations with positive role models and a sense of identity. Their role in passing on culture is also invaluable as this is traditionally done through spoken word.



Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared - Buddha

Media Overview



NT needs more funding for aged care, Senator says http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200612/s1816058.htm	ABC Online	21 Dec. 06
Aging Japan faces huge population drop http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2006/12/20/japan-population.html	CBC News Canada	21 Dec. 06
Sibling Rivalries affect care of Aging Parents http://www.indystar.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070116/LIVING/701160317/-1/ZONES04	Indiana Living	17 Jan. 07
Elder Abuse Legislation http://www.cairnsnewspapers.com.au/localnews/detail.asp?aid=403	Cairns Newspaper	18 Jan. 07
The Rewards and Demands of caring for an Aging Parent http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/21/AR2007012100251.html	Washington Post	21 Jan. 07
SF: District Attorney speaks out on Elder Financial Abuse http://cbs5.com/localwire/localnews/bcn/2007/02/20/n/HeadlineNews/FINANCIAL-ABUSE/resources_bcn.html	Bay City News	20 Feb 07
Law looks out for elderly financial abuse http://www.insidebayarea.com/business/ci_5271891	Inside Bay Area	21 Feb 07
Elderly at risk from financial abuse – by their own children http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/0300business/yourfinance/tm_headline=elderly-at-risk-from-financial-abuse---8211--by-their-own-children&method=full&objectid=18655343&siteid=50082-name_page.html#story_continue	Western Mail	21 Feb 07
Kids rip-off elderly http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,21267023-5007200,00.html	Courier Mail	22 Feb 07
Children Oppose New Spouse for Aging Widows/Widowers http://www.arabnews.com/?page=1&section=0&article=92311&d=18&m=2&y=2007&pix=kingdom.jpg&category=Kingdom	Arab News	28 Feb. 07
National conference on Aging delivers wake up call to boomers http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/nation/16877385.htm?source=rss&channel=inquirer_nation	Philadelphia Inquirer	14 Mar 07
Santoro quitting delays elder abuse law http://www.smh.com.au/news/National/Santoro-quitting-delays-elder-abuse-law/2007/03/20/1174153062902.html	Sydney Morning Herald	20 Mar 07
Aged care residents win more protection http://www.theage.com.au/news/National/Labor-wants-more-protection-for-elderly/2007/03/22/1174153231315.html	The Age	22 Mar 07

Upcoming Events

Breaking the Silence: Responding to Elder Sexual Abuse

14 April 2007
AARP Washington, DC
Email: GKasunic@aarp.org
Website: www.aarp.org/states/dc/dc-lce/

Promoting Well Being Conference for Older People

17 April 2007
New Connaught Rooms, Covent Garden, London
Email: olderpeopleconference@nao.gsi.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.bgop.org.uk/index.aspx?primarycat=3&secondarycat=8&articleid=325>

Canadian Geriatrics Society 2007 Annual Meeting.

April 19-21, 2007. CALL FOR ABSTRACTS
BANFF, Alberta CANADA.
Website: www.canadiangeriatrics.com

3rd Annual Elder Abuse Conference

30 April—1 May 2007
Hilton Oakland Airport Hotel, Oakland, CA, USA
Email: swilliams@lashicap.org
Website: www.lashicap.org/events.htm

California Attorney General's 4th Biennial Training Conference

7-11 May 2007
San Francisco Airport Marriott Hotel, CA, USA
PH: (916) 274-2907
Website: safestate.org/documents/Elder_Abuse_May_2007_confer_regist_A

Breakfast Colloquium

2 May, 11 July, 5 September, 7 November,
UQ Australasian Centre on Aging
Website: www.uq.edu.au/cfha/index.html?page=9185

Building Community Capacity & Social Resilience

11-13 July 2007
University of NSW, Sydney
PH: (02) 9385 7802
Website: www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/ASPC2007/index.htm

2nd National Men's Shed Conference

13-14 Sept 2007
Manly Pacific Hotel, NSW.

AAG Conference 2007

21-23 November 2007
Hilton Adelaide, South Australia
Website: <http://www.aag.asn.au/conferences/conference2007.htm>

DATE CLAIMERS:

01 – 07 April: Arthritis Awareness Week - Nationwide Arthritis Australia,
PH: 1800 011 041,
Email: info@arthritisaustralia.com.au,
Website: www.arthritisaustralia.com.au

07 April: World Health Day,
Worldwide, World Health Organisation,
PH: 02 6273 8200,
Website: www.who.int

26 April: Violet Ribbon Day - WA -
Continence Advisory Service,
PH: 08 9386 9777, Email: info@continencewa.org.au,
Website: www.confound.org.au

06 – 12 May: Pap Smear Awareness Week - Nationwide
SA Cervix Screening Program – Department of Health, PH:
08 8226 8131, Email: anita.gueve@health.sa.gov.au,
Website: www.cervixscreening.sa.gov.au

20 – 26 May: National Palliative Care Week - Nationwide
Palliative Care Australia,
PH: 02 6232 4433, Email: pcainc@pallcare.org.au,
Website: www.pallcare.org.au

Domestic Violence Prevention Month	May
World Elder Abuse Awareness Day	15 June
Senior's Week QLD	18 - 26 Aug

EAPU hopes you have enjoyed the first edition of "Queensland Focus" for 2007. If you wish to become an online recipient please email the EAPU to join the mailing list.

The Elder Abuse Prevention Unit is funded by the Queensland Government Department of Communities and operates under the auspice of Lifeline Brisbane.

Editors Note: Opinions expressed in this edition "Queensland Focus", do not necessarily reflect those of The Elder Abuse Prevention Unit (EAPU). Articles in this newsletter may be used with the permission of the contributing author.



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