

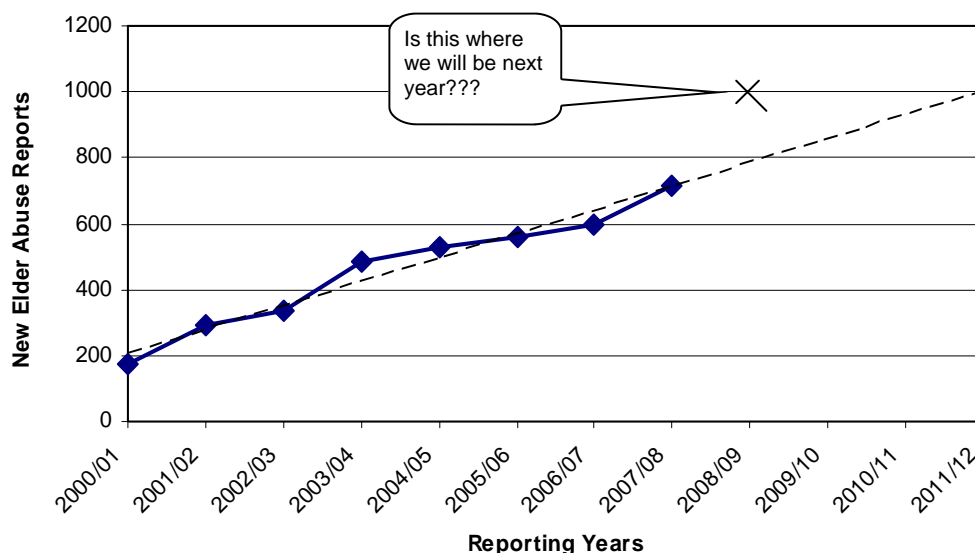
QLD Focus

Elder Abuse Prevention Unit Newsletter

Edition 16
September 2008

Another Record Year!! - Unfortunately

Yes, elder abuse reports coming in through the EAPU Helpline continue to climb each year and unlike the stock market there is no sign that it will slow down anytime soon. In fact if last year's figures are any indication, reports of elder abuse will climb at an even steeper rate. Our current prediction based on soon to be released figures in the EAPU 2007/08 annual report is that the EAPU will be dealing with 1000 new elder abuse reports by 2011/12. But at the time of writing this article we already have 302 new reports for the July-September quarter. My gut instinct tells me that the appalling milestone of 1000 new elder abuse reports could be reached in this reporting year - 3 years earlier than expected.



Does this mean that elder abuse is increasing or that more people are seeking assistance? A reasonable question but one without an answer as there are no academic studies that look at the actual rate of elder abuse in Queensland. Without a reference point from which to start there is no telling how big the problem is or how effective is Queensland's elder abuse response, and the EAPU is just one part of this response.

What we do know is that there is a need out there and it is growing with each passing month. Increasing demands across Queensland for EAPU training sessions, awareness sessions, peer support in remote regions, culturally diverse resources, assistance with protocol development, requests for input into various policies and initiatives across Australia and of course the Helpline are all carried by the small team of Maya, Dom, Andrea (part time), Rose (part time) and myself. It is an understatement to say it is a challenging job given the small resources we have, but the rewards are what keep us going.

Les Jackson - Coordinator

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



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**ELDER ABUSE
HELPLINE**

1300 651 192



From the Editor:

Domnica Sparkes (Project Officer)

Time is a curious matter. The more I need it the faster it seems to pass me by - or at least that how it seems... This quarter we've been very busy doing our Annual report and organising things for our strategic meeting for the Unit. We are also looking at several major projects which will hopefully be commenced either late this year or early 2009. So you'll have to keep in touch to find out what's happening at our end. Seniors Week once again saw our staff stretching them selves to be in multiple places at once from Mackay to Warwick and throughout Brisbane.

The Annual Report is a great resource for the unit to ascertain what forms of abuse and demographics are increasing in terms of older people who are being abused or who are at risk of abuse. It also identifies what risk factors are associated with abuse and enable us to promote and lobby for preventative services and awareness in the community. If you would like a copy don't hesitate to get in contact with us and we'll gladly send one your way. Happy reading...

Peer Support Network Updates

Rose Marwick—EAPU

Firstly I would like to welcome all our new members who have joined the Peer Support Network in the last few months. I hope you enjoy our newsletter and if you have the chance do try and follow up some of the articles in the media overview on page 10. There is a lot of current research on elder abuse coming from all over the world, and we try to keep abreast of it.

We have been making some changes to our Peer Support network database and have decided to each be responsible for maintaining contact with the members in our particular patch of Queensland.

Therefore Maya will take care of Cairns and Far North Queensland, and I am sure that many of you will already have met her when she comes to visit for training and awareness raising sessions. Les will take on Townsville and the surrounding area, I will have the South West, and the wonderful Andrea, who is based in Rockhampton, will look after the rest of Queensland.

Although you hear from us quarterly via the newsletter we like to stay in touch by phone or e-mail from time to time. It is important for us to know what's happening outside Brisbane as we respond to calls from all over Queensland and it's great if we can tap into existing networks to assist our callers.

We also encourage PSN members to call us if there are any issues that you would like to raise or discuss. We always welcome calls.

Our teleconference takes place on November 26th (see the date claimer on page 3) and we are thrilled to have Peter Murray and Petrea Rogers from Centrelink join us to talk about social and financial issues that affect older people. I think it should be a very interesting session and we invite you to send in questions you would like answered. I know I have several questions for them.

We will only have 15 sites available so sign up today so you don't miss out.

Some of you already know that Andrea and I will be in the South West the week beginning 27th October.

It is a lightning visit unfortunately but we are really excited about hitting the open road again:

Our agenda is as follows:

Monday 27th October—Roma

Tuesday 28th October-Charleville.


Wednesday 29th October-Cunnamulla

Thursday 30th October - St George

Friday 31st October—Warwick

If any PSN members would like to join us at any of these venues give me a ring on my mobile-0431 860 086. Space might be an issue but we'll do our best to squeeze you in.

If we have missed you, don't worry, I'm planning another visit early in 2009.



Elder Abuse Prevention Unit's
Peer Support Network for Remote & Isolated Workers Present

A **FREE** training teleconference

“Centrelink Matters: Addressing social and financial issues of older people”

Date: Wednesday 26th November, 2008

Guest Speakers: Peter Murray and Petrea Rogers

FIS Officers can show you how to make informed financial decisions and help you to understand the consequences of those decisions in the short, medium and long term. FIS Officers can talk to you about:

- taking control of your finances so that you can actively plan for your retirement
- how to prepare for the lifestyle choices in retirement, even while you are still in the workforce.

Centrelink Social workers:

- provide counselling and support to Centrelink customers with difficult personal or family issues
- provide information about, or refer customers to, community support services
- help with claims for payments from Centrelink.

Time: 2pm to 3pm

Those wishing to participate should complete the attached form (page 11) and fax or email it back:

RSVP By: Friday 7th November 2008

Fax: (07) 3250 1929

For further information:

Phone: 3250 1836 or 1300 651 192

Email: rose.marwick@lccq.org.au or psn.eapu@lccq.org.au

Note: The number of sites will be limited due to costs. Priority will be given to existing members of the Peer Support Network and remote or isolated workers. To maximise coverage, participants may be asked if they can attend just one site in the locality.

The Office of the Adult Guardian Opens a Townsville Office

Julie Newton
Community Liaison Officer
Office of the Adult Guardian

The role of the Adult Guardian is to protect the rights and interests of adults who are unable to make decisions for themselves. This lack of decision-making ability, known as impaired capacity, may be caused by intellectual or psychiatric disability, acquired brain injury, dementia or temporary illness such as delirium. The Adult Guardian is appointed as guardian for more than 800 clients who live throughout Queensland.

The Office of the Adult Guardian was created in 1998 and based in Brisbane. This required staff to travel long distances to visit with their clients and the relevant support organisations in regional Queensland. This was not the best way to maintain close working relationships with either clients or service providers.

A permanent Townsville office started operation in January this year. Five staff work in the office.

Dianne Pendergast, the Adult Guardian, stated "It is very important for people with incapacity that their decision makers are local and have a good understanding of and relationship with local service providers".

Setting up a satellite office for the Office of the Adult Guardian has been challenging. The staff are enjoying the new experience along with the friendly tropical lifestyle.

To contact the Office of the Adult Guardian Townsville,

Postal address: PO Box 450
Townsville QLD 4810
Phone: 07 4799 7600
Fax: 07 4799 7607

Alternatively if you require information about the role of the Adult Guardian or Guardianship in general, please visit www.justice.qld.gov.au/guardian

The Inquiries Officer Role in the Office of the Adult Guardian

The investigations team of the Office of the Adult Guardian maintain the inquiries officer position within the office. The inquiries officer is available to the public during office hours. The function of this position is to discuss potential referrals to the Adult Guardian, about possible abuse, neglect or exploitation of adults with impaired capacity. At present an average of 377 inquiries calls per month are being received, the majority of which come from health professionals, non-government service providers and legal officers. Should you need to contact the inquiries office please call 3234 0870 (Brisbane) or 1300 653 187.

Article Request

Queensland Focus welcomes articles on elder abuse issues. If you have a service or an upcoming event that you would like to promote please contact the EAPU with details and we will attempt to include it in the following newsletter.

PH: 1300 651 192 (within Queensland) or 07 3250 1836 (interstate)

Email: eapu@lccq.org.au

Website: www.eapu.com.au

New Senior's safety website released

*By Sergeant Rodney Bell
Queensland Police Service*

The Queensland Police Service has recently released a new comprehensive senior's specific website. The website is a one stop shop providing information on a range of safety issues that may affect seniors. The website also provides a range of senior specific resources for download.

The website can be located at www.police.qld.gov.au/seniors.

Nearly \$1 billion dollars lost by Australians to personal fraud

*By Sergeant Rodney Bell
Queensland Police Service*

Figures from an Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey show that some 806,000 people in Australia experienced personal fraud in a recent 12-month period (ABS 2008). The survey, funded by the Australasian Consumer Fraud Taskforce, showed personal financial losses of almost \$977 million, with a median financial loss of \$453 per person.

The victimisation rate was five percent of the population aged 15 years or more: three percent through identity fraud, and two percent through scams. The most common form of personal fraud was credit card fraud (more than 383,000 persons, or a victimisation rate of 2.4%). Prominent scams to which Australians fell prey included lotteries and pyramid schemes. Lottery scams asked the victim for personal financial information and/or bank account details for payment of winnings from a lottery they had not entered. These accounted for 84,100 persons, or a victimisation rate of 0.5 percent.

Pyramid schemes, in which earnings and promotions depend on victims' capacity to recruit others into the scheme, accounted for 70,900 persons, or a victimisation rate of 0.4 percent. Males were more likely than females to fall victim to scams, with victimisation rates of 2.3 and 1.8 percent respectively. The figure below shows that those aged 35 to 44 years appear to be more susceptible than those in any other 10-year age group to scams and that identity fraud is almost equally common amongst age groups spanning 25 to 54 years.

Further information can be obtained from the AIC website at www.aic.gov.au/publications/cfi/cfi180.html.

Presentations for Community Groups on Fraud

The Fraud and Corporate Crime Group, Queensland Police Service delivers presentations to community groups especially seniors on fraud prevention. These presentations focus on Identity Fraud and Scams and are designed to make community members aware of current frauds and how to prevent being a victim. To arrange a presentation for your local group contact:

Fraud Prevention Unit
Fraud and Corporate Crime Group
07 3364 6622
shelton.rodneyN@police.qld.gov.au

Grand-families: Issues faced by grandparents who are primary carers of grandchildren

*Julie Argeros—Coordinator Seniors Enquiry Line
and Grandparents Information*

In conjunction with its state-wide telephone information and referral service to older Queenslanders Seniors Enquiry Line also operates Grandparents Information which aims to support grandparents raising grandchildren by helping them identify their information and referral needs and by providing access to information, and referrals to support services in their local area.

The number of grandfamilies or families where grandparents are the primary carers of their grandchildren is an increasing trend in most Western countries including Australia (Council on the Ageing National Seniors [COTA National Seniors] 2003; Ochiltree 2006). Seniors Enquiry Lines Information/Support Officers who speak with grandparents on a daily basis indicate that the key issues of concern for grandparents mirror those outlined by the COTA National Seniors Report (2003) and these issues are also consistent with the qualitative data gathered from Seniors Enquiry Line's 2006 Queensland-wide consultation process with grandparents who were raising grandchildren.

For many grandparents raising grandchildren, their own and the lives of their families can be characterised by complex and often strained family relationships. Family violence, child custody issues, coping with drug addicted parents or parents with mental illness and supporting grandchildren who may have experienced physical and emotional abuse, neglect or be experiencing grief and loss associated with the death or incarceration of parents, places considerable strain on grandparents. For grandparents this strain can be exacerbated by financial hardship, adjustment to the parenting role, negotiating the education system and complex legal and child safety systems, isolation from their own peer group, concern about what will happen to their grandchildren if they are no longer able to care for them, their own health problems, the provision of personal care for a spouse/partner or older relative and the forgoing of retirement hopes and dreams.

Raising a grandchild can be both rewarding and challenging. The arrival of a grandchild may be sudden and grandparents may be left feeling uncertain about where to go to find reliable information and appropriate support services. Queensland Grandparents can contact Seniors Enquiry Line and Grandparents Information on **1300 135 500** between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, for the cost of a local call. Grandparents can talk with an Information/Support officer who is a trained telephone counsellor with a wide knowledge of the issues that impact on grandfamilies. Brochures about Grandparents Information can also be obtained by contacting 1300 135 500.



Tales from the Travel Bag: Miles from home for Rose

EAPU - Trainers

When I started work at the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit last September the job description suggested that I would be taking Helpline calls and performing light administrative duties, but a year later those light administrative duties have morphed into travelling to attend expos for older people, and meeting with community groups to raise awareness of elder abuse. Even better, I now have my own patch of Queensland (the South West- a huge patch) so look forward to visiting a couple of times a year to offer training to service providers and less formal awareness raising sessions to members of the community. I am half way through my Cert IV course in Training and Assessment and should have it finished by the end of the year.

I made a brief trip in August to Warwick and Miles and attended a wonderful expo at TAFE in Warwick and had the chance to meet and talk to workers from surrounding areas. I wasn't able to stay all day as I had to be at Toowoomba to speak to the Senior Citizens during their afternoon ballroom dance session while the band took a break. They danced beautifully and I made a mental note to take up dancing one of these days, but my husband hasn't bought into the plan, alas!

From Toowoomba I drove to Chinchilla, and I can't tell you how much I love driving out West with all that massive expanse of sky and landscape- It's all so open and vast, and my heart was singing and I could have driven forever. You'll have to forgive me-I'm from London originally! If only I knew all the words of Dorothy Mckellar's marvellous poem...'I love a sunburnt country.' Something else to learn for posterity!

I stayed overnight at Chinchilla and a large thunderstorm moved through that evening and delivered more than 20mm of rain which clattered loudly on the roof of the motel. People were sitting watching the rain with beers and everyone was smiling.

Next morning I was up early to drive to Miles for the National Seniors' Week expo and had a bacon and egg roll to die for at the bakery there-I'll need more than ballroom dancing to compensate for that!

The Expo at Miles was fabulous and I was thrilled to be there; Every-one was so friendly and welcoming and the morning tea was delicious too-all home made and plentiful. It was nice to have the chance to meet people and to talk to the older people who came for the morning. I found it very hard to leave. Even better, quite a few people signed up for peer support network membership and I hope to recruit many more on the next trip which will take place at the end of October.

On the way home I was able to stop in and have a brief visit with the workers at the Neighbourhood Centre in Miles and it was great to put faces to names and have a cuppa and discuss the rain from the evening before.

And that was my trip-short and sweet. Not bad for light administrative duties eh! Fortunately we are mandated to offer training and awareness raising sessions throughout Queensland so there will be more road trips in the future. Don't forget-if you have any concerns about elder abuse, no matter how small, pick up the phone and call us. We are all more than happy to have a yarn.

Research Roundup

by Domnica Sparkes
(EAPU—Project officer)

J. C. Charland; (2006) Blain House Conference on Aging, The University of Maine Center on Aging; Orono, Maine.

This paper provides an analysis of elder abuse in the state of Maine, USA. Once again it reaffirms that there is no consistent definition of elder abuse, in academic literature. Charland identifies that victims are often unwilling to report abuse as it is often a member of the family and thus they would risk a breakdown in that relationship. “Elder abuse is considered to be at the same point where child abuse and domestic violence were 25 years ago”. This paper also found that victims of elder abuse “made twice as many visits to the hospital and doctor’s surgery, were more dependent on federal health care programs, and have higher outpatient expenses than their non-victimized counterparts”.

Charland recommends that the best option for screening for elder abuse, in Maine, is through their primary care physician. Maine, the author identifies, is a rural state and older people are often mostly likely to visit their physician than seek help elsewhere, especially when they are isolated. Following on, screening should be done in at least two stages: the first with the older person alone (without their carer), and then with their carer.

Maine has mandatory reporting legislation – where certain people are mandated to report suspected elder abuse of someone who is “incapacitate or dependent”.

K. R. Plitnick (2008). Elder Abuse. *AORN Journal*. Vol. 87, 422-427.

This article covered the need for “perioperative nurses” to report suspected abuse of older people in the US. It was a very general overview of the definition and signs of abuse of older people. The target audience is nurses working in hospitals who may encounter victims of elder abuse. The language used was easy to understand and concise. The resources were specially targeted for nurses identifying elder abuse and how they should respond to ensure the safety of the older person and that their rights are respected. The recommendation is for hospitals to have elder abuse protocols and train staff to respond appropriately to elder abuse situations.

APEA: WA (2006). Elder Abuse Protocols: Guidelines for Action

The aim of the protocols is to aid government and non-government agencies to develop policies and procedures for staff when encountering elder abuse situations. Intervention can be either informal (providing support where the abuse was caused or resulted due to lack of information or knowledge of services) or formal (such as by funded services to address elder abuse or Police). The guidelines identified in this report are general and can be adapted to suit all services which may encounter situations of elder abuse and provides a loose outline of what policies and procedures may need to be put in place. Page 18 has a flow chart outlining what may need to occur.

Media Overview



Bankers, State Officials Launch Elder Scam Prevention Project	Wicked Local	26 Jun 08
http://www.wickedlocal.com/reading/news/business/x19925277/Bankers-state-officials-launch-elder-scam-prevention-program		
Action on Elder Abuse and Age Concern England Launch Consultation on Survivors Network for victims of abuse	Medical News Today	27 Jun 08
http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/113016.php		
Schwarzenegger signs legislation giving elder abuse victims greater support in court	Imperial Valley News	2 Jul 08
http://www.imperialvalleynews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1927&Itemid=1		
Prosecutors: Elder Abuse cases difficult	KyPost.Com	7 Jul 08
http://www.kypost.com/news/local/story.aspx?content_id=2c37f463-fcd7-4224-b904-3728d2712055		
Bank reporting project helps identify scams	Wickedlocal.com	20 Jul 08
http://www.wickedlocal.com/harvard/news/lifestyle/seniors/x1542095365/Bank-reporting-project-helps-identify-scams		
Big increase in abuse claims	HartlePool Mail	29 Jul 08
http://www.hartlepoolmail.co.uk/news/Big-increase-in-abuse-claims.4334853.jp		
Senior Safeguards in the dock	The Guardian	30 Jul 08
http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/jul/30/longtermcare.law		
Elder abuse is frequent, but not investigated	Jackson Holes Star Tribune	1 Aug 08
http://www.jacksonholestartrib.com/articles/2008/08/01/news/casper/21cabe45641ffe70872574970080fd09.txt		
Few doctors report abuse of elderly patients	Rhode Island News	10 Aug 08
http://www.projo.com/news/content/PHYSICIAN_REPORTING_ELDERLY_08-10-08_S8B4NFJ_v39.3cd00b6.html#		
We must face up to challenges of elder abuse	Scotsman.com	18 Aug 08
http://news.scotsman.com/opinion/We-must-face-up-to.4399801.jp		
More than 10% of older Americans suffer mistreatment, Study finds	Science Daily	20 Aug 08
http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/08/080819160201.htm		
National elderly research centre to be operational in September	Irish Medical Times	27 Aug 08
http://www.imt.ie/news/2008/08/national_elderly_research_cent.html		
Financial abuse of elderly "huge"	BBC News	6 Sep 08
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7601419.stm		
Elderly often victimized by own children	Edmonton Journal	11 Sept 08
http://www.canada.com/edmontonjournal/news/story.html?id=2609c420-30fa-4fc8-a32e-c7c099518746		

Upcoming Events

ACQ Community Care Queensland Conference & Trade Exhibition 2008

6-7 November 2008
Gold Coast,
Ph: 07 3725 5588
Email: events@acqi.org.au

Mandatory Reporting of Elder Abuse in Residential Care

11 November 2008
Alzheimers Association of Queensland
Kallangur, Brisbane
PH: 1800 1800 23
Website: www.alzheimersonline.org

The AWID International Forum on Women's Rights and Development

14-17 November 2008
Cape Town, South Africa
Website: <http://www.awid.org/forum08/index.htm>

AAG 41st National Conference—Aging Landscape

18-21 November 2008
Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle, WA
Website: www.aagconference.com

EAPU Teleconference

26 November 2008
Time: 2-3pm
PH: 07 3250 1836
E: eapu.psn@lccq.org.au

8th Annual National Ageing and Law Conference

3-6 December 2008
DoubleTree Hotel, Crystal City
Arlington, Virginia, USA
E: mgouge@aarp.org
Website:
<http://aarpnltp.grovesite.com/page.asp?o=aarpnltp&s=NLTP&p=257256>

The 4th International Conference on Community Health Nursing Research: Health in Transition: Researching for the Future

16-20 August 2009
Adelaide, South Australia
Website: www.healthintransition2009.org.au
Or www.alloccasionsgroup.com/index.jsp

Additional Date Claimers:

1 Oct	International Day of Older People
2 Oct	International Day of Non-violence
3 Dec	International Day of Persons with a Disability
10 Dec	Human Rights Day

EAPU hopes you have enjoyed the 3rd edition of "Queensland Focus" for 2008. 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.

Editor's 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.



For more information please contact:

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PO Box 108 Fortitude Valley Q 4006
Phone: (07) 3250 1836
HELPLINE: 1300 651 192
Fax: (07) 3250 1929
Email: eapu@lccq.org.au

Membership Application

Multidisciplinary Peer Support Network (Elder Abuse Prevention Unit)

Contact Details:

Name:

.....

Position:

.....

Organisation (name)

.....

Postal Address:

.....

.....

Town / Suburb Post Code

Phone: Fax

Email:

I would like to become a member of the Multidisciplinary Peer Support Network

..... / /08
(Signed)

Return Form to Elder Abuse Prevention Unit,
PO Box 108 Fortitude Valley Qld 4006
Fax: 07 3250 1929 Phone: 07 3250 1955