

## Special Conference Edition

*Welcome to the third issue of the ANPEA newsletter. The good news is that our membership has continued to grow across the last quarter. In this issue we are pleased to provide an overview of the Second National Elder Abuse Conference held at the Convention Centre, Adelaide on 17/18 June 2013. It was wonderful that so many organisations were able to come together to gather ideas about raising the profile of elder abuse in Australia.*

### **2<sup>nd</sup> National Elder Abuse Conference Highlights**

The second National Elder Abuse conference, organised by Aged Rights Advocacy Service (ARAS) was held at the Adelaide Convention Centre on 17 & 18 June 2013. The conference was a credit to Marilyn Crabtree and her talented and experienced team at ARAS. They secured an enlightening keynote speaker, coped professionally with unexpected changes to the program, expanded our knowledge of the elder abuse situation in Australia and gave us direction for the future.

ARAS has conducted an annual state Elder Abuse conference for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day since 2006. The conference provided an excellent opportunity to renew and build on contacts made in Brisbane in 2012 and also to broaden Western Australia's (WA) contact base for the

### ***3<sup>rd</sup> National Elder Abuse Conference to be held in Perth, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014.***

The Adelaide conference brought together people interested in replacing the current fragmented approach to elder abuse issues with a unified national approach. This conference built on the enthusiasm generated at the first National Abuse conference in Brisbane last year. The two day program, featuring well credentialed Australian speakers, was embellished by the international guest and keynote speaker, Paul Greenwood.

The conference concluded with a panel of state government representatives reporting on activities in their home states.

### ***International Key Note Speaker Paul Greenwood at the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Elder Abuse Conference***

The keynote speaker was Paul Greenwood, Deputy Prosecutor, San Diego County, USA who gave a spirited, entertaining and well informed address on each of the two days. To clarify the situation, it should be noted that the American definition of elder abuse is broader than the definition used in Australia e.g. trusted others includes those who hold a position of trust because of the profession they practice e.g. lawyers and doctors (California has "Elder Law," which is any crime perpetrated on someone over 65 years of age).

Deputy Prosecutor Greenwood proposed the following ideas to initiate a national approach to the prevention of elder abuse:

- He encouraged Australians to close the existing gaps in the protection of elder abuse victims and proposed some ways to achieve this ideal;
- Establishing a monitoring system where there is a decision not to act;
- Extending partnerships between agencies;

- Establishing an authorised central body responsible for all aspects of elder abuse;
- Paul advised that a national approach should focus on vulnerable and at risk adults and actively screen data and outcomes. The message to government should be consistent.

Paul also said that the Australian challenge is the current incapacity within the criminal justice system. The response to this situation should be willpower and focus. It is time to propose legislation which specifically addresses elder abuse. Paul then went on to dispel some of the myths which may be raised to "justify" inaction e.g. "nothing can be done"; "elderly people make terrible witnesses."

On the second day, Paul highlighted the need for a multi-disciplinary approach as a means to heighten the response and increase the investigations into elder abuse - networking being the key to best practice. He also made the following recommendations:

- The need for Police to establish a dedicated unit to investigate elder abuse;
- That the lack of laws in Australia should not be an excuse for inaction;
- That we should also recognise the potential of taped recordings held by emergency telephone operators, ambulance and paramedics in providing evidence to assist convictions;
- Clergy are often unaware of the elder abuse problem but may be privy to potentially useful information;

- Public Health also has a role to play. Widespread training should be developed for all health professionals;
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- Banks can also make a difference between losing or preserving an individual's life savings;

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Left to right: Gabrielle Canny, Marilyn Crabtree, Dr Sally Cockburn, Paul Greenwood and Tara Simpson at the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Elder Abuse Conference, June 2013

Greenwood then proposed the establishment of an elder death review team. The rule of this meeting should be that no minutes are taken. This team should include the Coroner to investigate suspicious deaths. Paul cited the following cases which went unchecked for a protracted time:

- Dr Harold Shipman in the UK (over 300 cases of morphine overdose, will forging and codicils);
- Charles Cullen (29 murders in Philadelphia and New Jersey);

The keynote speaker then encouraged the audience to get a platform in the community and suggested that Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions clubs provided an ideal opportunity. He urged us to adopt a tougher approach to enforcing the present laws in Australia (and suggested that a national elder abuse contact/distribution list be set up, possibly financed by the Law Council of Australia).

#### **Comments on the National Elder Abuse Conference 2013**

The conference provided networking opportunities during the breaks as well as at the end of the first day's program and at the conference dinner later that evening where attendees mingled enthusiastically.

Personally, I was looking out for both positive and negative events or situations which either enhanced or detracted from the conference experience. In collaborative style, Aged Rights Advocacy Service has offered to share their conference planning milestones and experience with WA.



### **2014 National Elder Abuse Conference 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014, Perth**

Save the date for this not to be missed event.

To register your interest or for more details contact:

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#### ***Other guest speakers at the conference:***

The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Elder Abuse Conference attracted a diverse range of speakers who gave information on topics ranging from the "Draft South Australian Safeguarding Older Adults Strategy" to the "National Development in Guardianship & Administration Relevant to Protecting and Responding to Elder Abuse."

Simon Biggs (University of Melbourne) gave the audience a broader perspective on elder abuse in his presentation - "Elder Abuse in an International Context".

"Comparative Frameworks - Preventing and Prosecuting Elder Abuse – the US, UK, Canada and Australia" was the topic broached by Mark Crofton Deputy Public Trustee & Official Solicitor, Public Trustee Office Qld.

**“Practical Ideas for Building Elder Abuse Prevention and Response Capacity”** were shared by Kaz McKay and Jeanine Jones from the Eastern Community Legal Centre in Victoria, who told about their experiences with web-based conferencing.

Les Jackson from the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit in Queensland drew attention to the dollar value of financial abuse in Queensland. Jackson raised several issues for attention:

- Law reforms.
- National harmonisation of Enduring Powers of Attorneys;
- State jurisdictions and National bodies;
- Poor planning for old age;
- The number of people affected;
- The methods used by perpetrators;

***Panel Discussion:***

*A panel discussion concluded the conference. Representatives from each of the states and territories shared information about elder abuse issues in their home states.*

**Australian Capital Territory - Anna John, Acting Manager, Office for Ageing, Policy and Organisational Services, Community Services Directorate**

The ACT government has funded an Elder Abuse Prevention Program since 2003. A review was conducted in 2008. The Program has focussed on developing an ACT Elder Abuse Prevention Program Policy; increasing community awareness; developing information and referral systems, including establishing a confidential phone line; and preparing information sheets. Attention has also been paid to referral pathways; staff and community training. There is political will to continue this work.

**Western Australia - David Wray, Assistant Director, Seniors and Volunteers, Department for Communities**

WA is well advanced in responses to elder abuse and there is strong inter-agency cooperation through the Alliance for Prevention of Elder Abuse, which has been operating since 2005. The group is currently revamping the second iteration of the state’s 5-year strategic plan and revising the elder abuse protocols, and is also developing a community awareness strategy.

**Victoria - Barbara Mountjouris, Seniors Programs and Participation, Ageing and Aged Care Branch, Department of Health**

An elder abuse advisory group was established in 2006. Barney Cooney (former Labor senator) made 11 recommendations which were accepted by government. In 2008 new family violence legislation recognised elder abuse. In 2009, an interagency initiative developed resources. SRV (Seniors Rights Victoria) is central to the elder abuse response. In 2001, FECCA, The Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils’ of Australia was funded to raise awareness of elder abuse in ethnic communities as well as awareness through government. A coordinated multi agency response was sought, online training was developed and 7000 workers were trained.

**Tasmania - Margaret Kelly, Principal Liaison Officer, Older Persons Community Development Division, Department of Premier and Cabinet**

Tasmania has developed a whole-of-government response to elder abuse: *Protecting Older Tasmanians from Abuse*. This three-year strategy includes a community awareness campaign with television, print and

online advertising, all carrying the message ***Elder Abuse is Not Okay***. Posters, bookmarks, wallet cards and magnets carry the same message and also include the Helpline number. The Tasmanian Elder Abuse Helpline commenced operations in August 2012 and is operated by Advocacy Tasmania. An education and training program has been conducted state-wide, supported by practice guidelines: ***Responding to elder abuse: Tasmanian Government practice guidelines for government and non-government employees***.

COTA have developed a peer education project, ***You're Worth It: preventing financial abuse of older Tasmanians***, which complements the work of the strategy in empowering older Tasmanians with information and advice on protecting themselves from elder financial abuse.

**South Australia - Barb Renton, Director, Intergovernmental Relations and Ageing, Policy and Commissioning, SA Health**

Safety, security and protection of older people have been key priorities under South Australia's existing "Improving with Age – Our Ageing Plan" released in 2006. This plan funded several kick-start initiatives to address abuse of older people including the development of an abuse prevention and response framework called "Our actions to prevent the Abuse of Older People 2007."

This framework committed \$3.5 million towards abuse prevention activities in areas such as safety and security, raising awareness, research and innovation. South Australia is now working on the Draft Strategy for Safeguarding Older People in consultation with key service providers and other State government agencies.

**Northern Territory - Gill Brearley, Social Worker, Psycho-geriatric Service, Department of Health**

Health professionals in the Northern Territory have attended 2 conferences at Alice Springs and Darwin and elder abuse has been on the agenda although there has been little political interest as yet. The conferences have been successful at gathering together people with energy. The NT is considering the introduction of a Helpline and requires the data to be comparable with the rest of Australia. This year, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) displays were held in Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine.

**New South Wales NSW: Michele Whitbourne, Senior Policy Officer, Department of Family and Community Services, Office for Ageing**

The Ageing Strategy highlights a 3-fold approach to tackling abuse: a specialist helpline, a review of NSW protocols and to establishing a NSW Steering Committee. The NSW Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit commenced service in February 2013 operating an 1800 state-wide service. Stage 2 of the development of the helpline will involve an expanded service model, community education, service provider training and the collection of quality data for reporting purposes. A Steering Committee has been established with key agencies, consumer representative and expert advisors. The NSW Interagency Protocols document is being refreshed as a policy document with procedural templates for use by service providers.

### Message from the INPEA President

I am delighted to report that over 80 people from 17 countries attended the 8th INPEA World Conference on Elder Abuse/World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) Commemoration held in Seoul, Korea on June 23, 2013. I would like to thank The Korean Elder Protection Agency for partnering with INPEA in hosting what by all accounts was a very successful event, Professors Cha and Choi and the IAGG 20th World Congress Organizing Committee for providing the meeting room, simultaneous translation and box lunches, the INPEA National Representatives and members of Korean IAGG member organizations who served as chairs, and especially the excellent speakers who shared their knowledge and experience.

INPEA is pleased to announce that power points from the conference have been posted on the Secretariat's website. To access these and the speakers' biographies visit [www.sfu.ca/grc/inpea](http://www.sfu.ca/grc/inpea).

For information about resources that can be helpful in planning next year's local, regional and national WEAAD events, upcoming international elder abuse events, concerning INPEA's UN and other activities, and for membership materials visit [www.inpea.net](http://www.inpea.net) or contact the Secretariat. If you are not yet a member consider joining INPEA today.

*Gloria M. Gutman,  
PhD, FCAHS, OBC, LLD (Hon.) President,  
International Network for the Prevention of  
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### Contacts

Below are some useful contacts on the topic of elder abuse in Australia.

- Older People's Rights Service (OPRS) (WA) Phone 08 9440 1663; Website <http://www.nsclegal.org.au>
- International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA) Representative, Greg Mahney Phone 08 9479 7566;
- email [gregm@advocare.org.au](mailto:gregm@advocare.org.au);
- website [www.advocare.org.au](http://www.advocare.org.au)
- or [www.inpea.net](http://www.inpea.net)
- Advocacy Tasmania Phone 03 6224 2240; [www.advocacytasmania.com.au](http://www.advocacytasmania.com.au)
- Aged Rights Advocacy Service (SA) Phone 08 8232 5377;
- Website [www.sa.agedrights.asn.au](http://www.sa.agedrights.asn.au)
- Elder Abuse Prevention Unit (Queensland) Phone 07 3867 2525; Website [www.eapu.com.au](http://www.eapu.com.au)
- Seniors Rights Victoria Phone 1300 368 821;
- Website [www.seniorsrights.org.au](http://www.seniorsrights.org.au)
- Aged Rights Advocacy Service (ARAS), Adelaide Phone 08 8232 5377; website [www.sa.agedrights.asn.au](http://www.sa.agedrights.asn.au)

- ACT Office for Ageing:  
[http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/wac/aging/elderabuse\\_prevention\\_and\\_assistance](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/wac/aging/elderabuse_prevention_and_assistance).
- ACT Older Persons Abuse Prevention Referral and Information Line (APRIL). This is a confidential telephone service for callers who want to discuss elder abuse issues and seek advice and referral on options. The service operates during business hours. The APRIL number is 02 6205 3535.

***Interesting Articles & Upcoming Conferences:***

**Financial Abuse Protection** 14 June 2013

<http://www.bankers.asn.au/Media/Media-Releases/Media-Release-2013/Financial-abuse-prevention>

**Increased Rates of Hospitalization Linked to Elder Abuse**

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/04/130408172019.htm>

**Call to entrench Human Rights in Aged Care**

<http://www.australianageingagenda.com.au/2013/06/14/article/Call-to-entrench-human-rights-in-aged-care/APIAVMJXVT>

**National Abuse line on Agenda**

**“The Senior” newspaper August 2013 page 3**

<http://www.thesenior.com.au/News/Digital-Paper/Western-Australia>

**46<sup>th</sup> Australian Association of Gerontology National Conference**

<http://www.aag.asn.au/national-conference/2013-conference>

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To opt out of the newsletter mailing list, please email Mary.

***Share the news***

We invite suggestions and contributions to this newsletter in regard to format, frequency and content to guide our new venture. Please join in with the spirit and send your information to me at:

[mkepert@advocare.org.au](mailto:mkepert@advocare.org.au) for inclusion in our next newsletter in December 2013.

**For further information about presentations at the Adelaide conference, please visit:**

[http://www.sa.agedrights.asn.au/page/view\\_by\\_id/39](http://www.sa.agedrights.asn.au/page/view_by_id/39)