



Queensland Focus

Edition 30—January 2013

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QUICK TIPS:

- Always get financial and asset related arrangements or agreements with friends or family in writing. Independent financial or legal advice is always advisable.
- All adults are presumed to have decision making capacity, unless assessed to the contrary by a medical practitioner.

Hellos and Goodbyes

All those who read this newsletter would be familiar with our editor Domnica Sparkes who has been with EAPU for many years now. Alongside her normal duties Domnica had several achievements in 2012. Of particular note was the project management of the very successful National Elder Abuse Conference in June, as well as getting a handle on the new and complex Helpline database outputs. However, by far her greatest achievement in 2012, was the production (in partnership with her husband) of a beautiful baby boy. As a result Domnica will be otherwise occupied until sometime in the latter half of 2013 when she is likely to resume work with the EAPU.

Domnica's position is being temporarily filled by myself, Ceallaigh Spike. Whilst not previously of the EAPU team, I have been part of the Uniting Care Communities Older Persons' programs for a number of years working for the Seniors Enquiry Line service and the Time for Grandparents Program. Having completed my Psychology Undergraduate degree in 2011, I'm enjoying (and somewhat surprised to discover it) the opportunity to dust off my statistics skills, as well as the opportunity to work with people – in the industry and on the Helpline – who care about the rights, dignity and quality of life of older Australians. I will endeavor to keep Domnica's seat warm with as little disruption to you all as possible!

So while we all had plenty of time to get familiar with the idea of Domnica going, the loss of Rosey Marwick to the allure of a trendy Hobart lifestyle in December was both unexpected and swift. Rosey had been with the EAPU since 2008 and began in an administrative role. Utilising her telephone counselling skills she has manned the Helpline with sensitivity and compassion from day one, and quickly expanded her role to training and presenting information sessions. As a trainer Rosey drew upon her nursing experience, easily connecting with attendees and ensuring that training was accessible and relevant. Rosey travelled throughout the south-west of the state, fostering connections with communities and services in the region. She will be missed well beyond the confines of our Chermside office.

The majority of this newsletter has been given over to a snapshot of the data collected by the EAPU Helpline for the 2011-2012 financial year, but also featuring is a review of our most recent and very successful reference group meeting, and an overview of the year ahead for the Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research. The events page should not be missed, as it contains a preliminary notice for the 2nd National World Elder Abuse Day Conference hosted by ARAS in Adelaide.

Ceallaigh Spike

Service funded by:



2011 - 2012 Financial Year Elder Abuse Helpline Data Snapshot

(by Ceallaigh Spike, Project Officer - Research EAPU)

While the annual report for the 2011-2012 financial year is still in progress, the following statistics are a snapshot of the data we collected.

Helpline Usage

During the 2011-2012 financial year the EAPU received **1001 notifications** - calls and emails regarding abuse situations - about **1061 alleged victims** and **1084 alleged abusers** involved in **1,137 abuse cases**. To clarify, in our data an abuse case exists for each relationship involving abuse, for example where one person is abusing a couple, there will be two abuse cases, one for each victim. There was a 10.49% increase in *notifications* compared to the 2010- 2011 financial year.

Age

The number of alleged victims peaked at the 80-84years age bracket, however it should be noted that a substantial number of alleged victims ages were unknown (15.74%).

Amongst alleged abusers, almost half (48.25%) had an un-reported age. Of those that did have a reported age, the most common age was 50 -54 years, this was especially strong for males (see Figure 1).

Gender

The majority of alleged victims were female; in 0.19% of victims gender was not known. Alleged abusers were slightly more likely to be male than female and gender was not known for 5.26% (see figure 2). There was little difference in prevalence of various abuse types by gender for either alleged victims or alleged abusers.

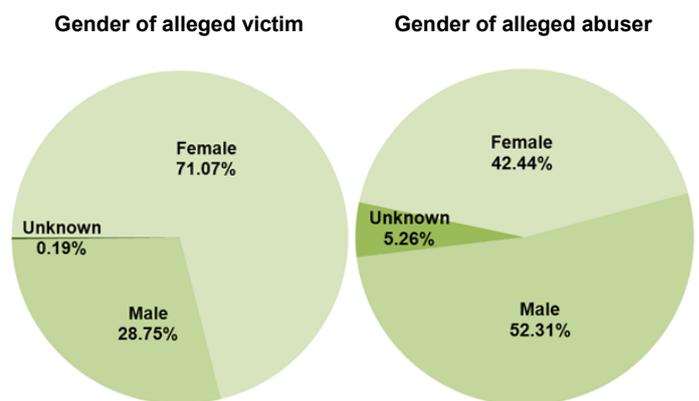


Figure 2. Proportion of alleged victims who are male, female or unknown (left) and proportion of alleged abusers who were male, female, or unknown (right).

Age and gender of alleged victims and alleged abusers

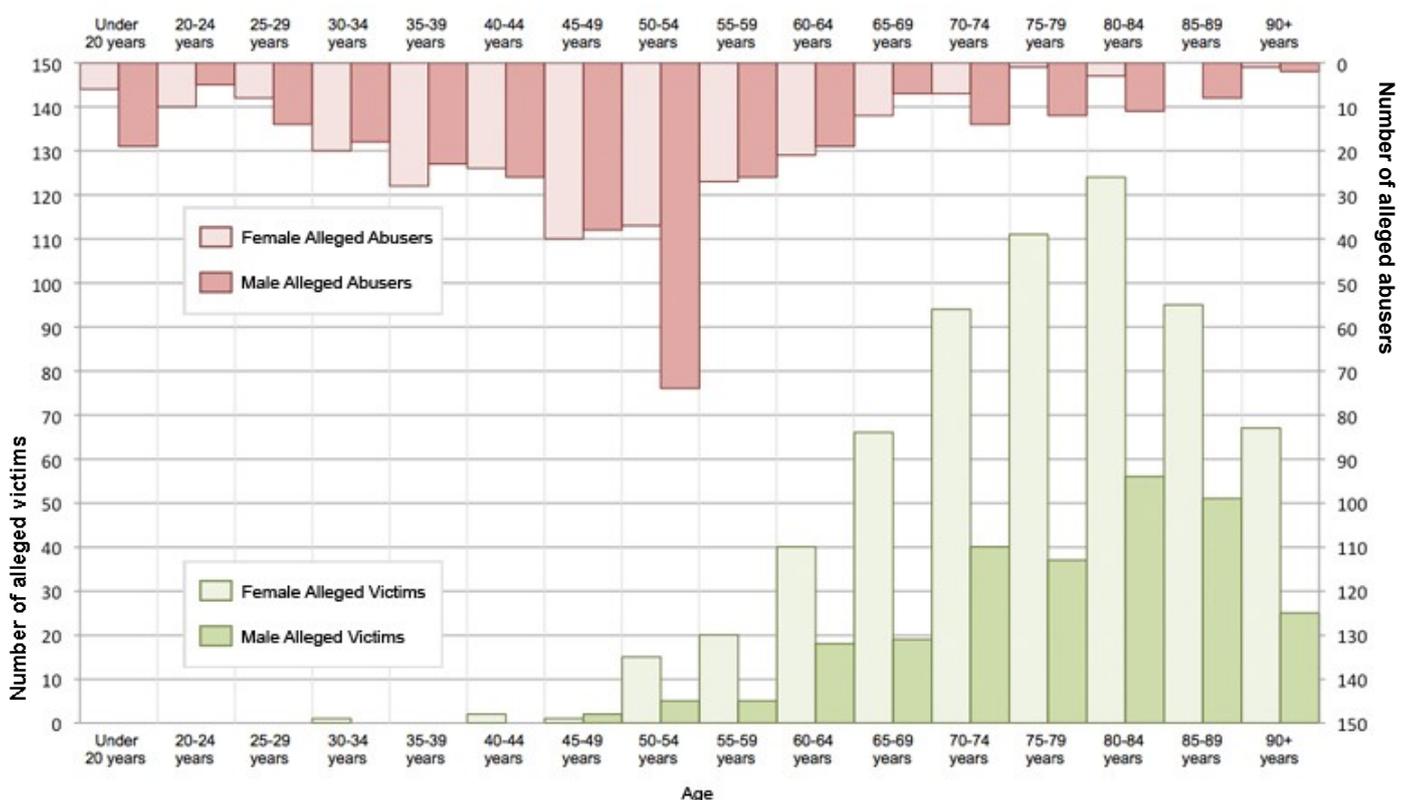


Figure 1. Number of alleged victims and alleged abusers in each age bracket broken down by gender. Note, those of unknown age and/or gender have been excluded from this graph.

2011 - 2012 Financial Year Elder Abuse Helpline Data Snapshot (cont'd)

Relationship Type

Alleged abusers were most likely to be sons or daughters accounting for over half of alleged abuser-abused relationships (58.66%), followed by those in no relationship of trust, partners/spouses, grandchildren, friends, other relatives, neighbours, informal carers, workers, and siblings. Of alleged abusers from the victim's family, 7.83% were non-biological, for example step children, in-laws, and adopted relative, the category does not include spouse-partners. (see figure 3).

Relationship of alleged abusers to alleged victim

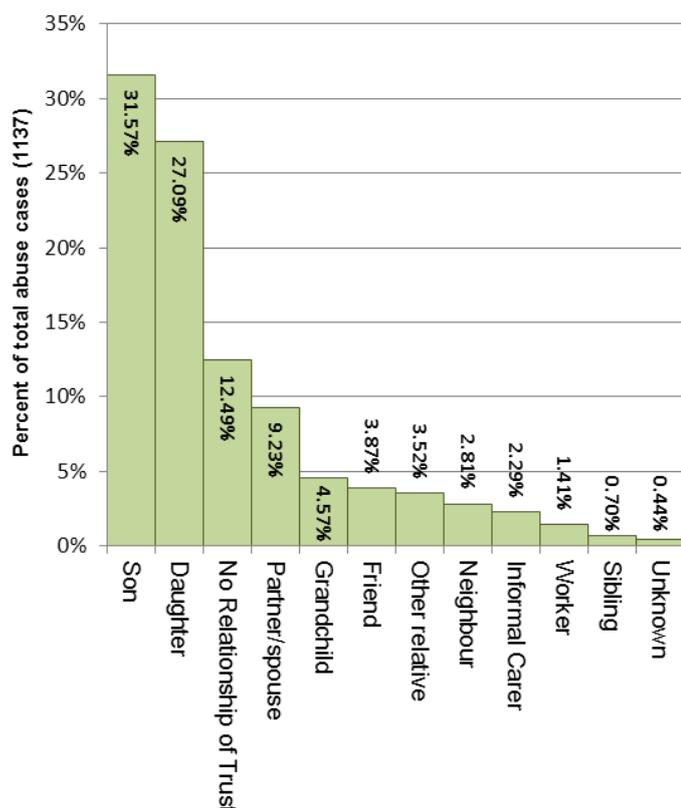


Figure 3. Proportion of abuse cases perpetrated by alleged abuser, by different relationship type to the alleged victim.

Abuse Type

The EAPU records primary abuse types as well as multiple secondary abuse types. The most common primary abuse type was Psychological Abuse (44%), followed by Financial Abuse (29%), Neglect (12%), Physical Abuse (9%), Social Abuse (5%), and Sexual abuse (>1%). The same pattern was seen when primary and secondary abuse types were combined (see Figure 4).

Portion of abuse cases where abuse is present as either primary or secondary type

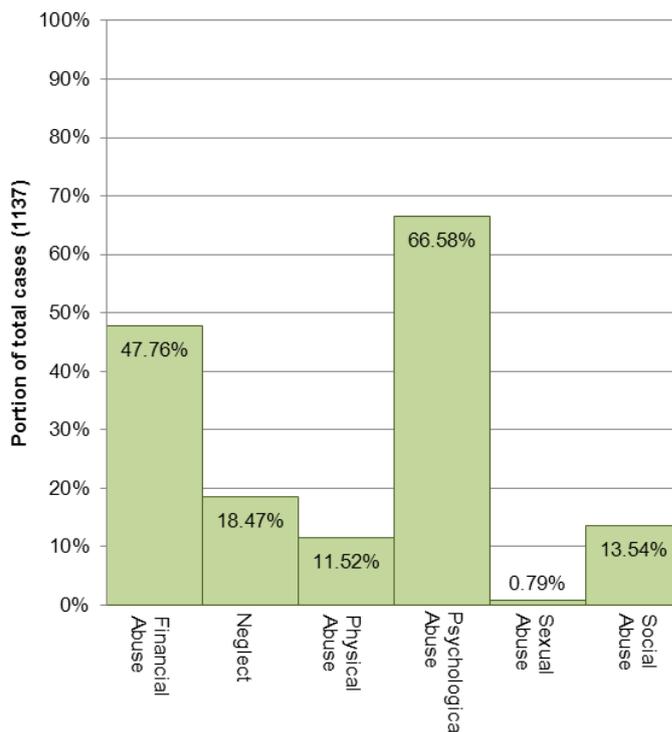


Figure 4. Portion of cases where abuse type recorded. Derived from combined primary and secondary abuse types by number of abuse cases.

Carers Status and Carer Stress

While carer stress is a commonly cited theoretical explanation for elder abuse, of alleged abusers, only 19.10% were reported to be carers. Of these 73.43% reported experiencing carer stress. Further, while carers are more likely to be female, EAPU found no gender difference in either carer status or the experience of carer stress.

Figure 3. Proportion of alleged abusers who are either non-carers, carers, or carers experiencing carer stress

Carer status of alleged abusers and experience of carer stress.



2011 - 2012 Financial Year Elder Abuse Helpline Data Snapshot (cont'd)

Living Arrangements

Of the 49% of alleged victims for whom living arrangements were disclosed, 67.94% of males and females combined lived with family, 21.76% lived alone, and 6.87% lived with others such as friends, carers, and boarders. Gender differences were found. Males were more likely to be living with

a partner/spouse, probably reflecting longevity differences between males and females. Males were also more likely to be living with 'others' (see Figure 6). Of alleged abusers, 44.83% were reported as living with alleged victims.

Proportion of alleged victims living arrangements by gender

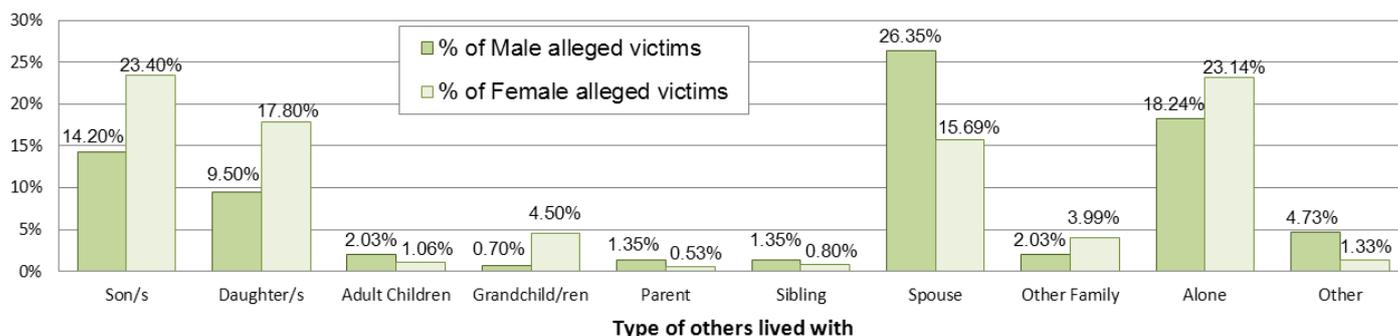


Figure 6. Proportion of alleged victims living with different types of family, or in other types of living arrangements.

What's new at the Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

(By Annie Webster, Education Officer CDFVR)

CDFVR's current funding agreement with the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services expires on April 30, 2013 and, at the time of writing, we are in discussion about future funding, so our current plans for this year only extend to the end of April (with the exception of the annual Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum in May).

Our first public event - a research seminar titled *Typologies of intimate partner violence: Theory and practice* - will be held at the State Library of Queensland on February 21. International speakers - Emeritus Professor Michael Johnson and Dr. Shamita Das Dasgupta and two Australian speakers - Dr. Jane Wangmann and Dr. Rae Kaspiew will explore the theory and practice of typologies of intimate partner violence, including a critique and reflections on practice in the Australian context. Registration is available at www.noviolence.com.au

Our second large event in the first half of 2013 is the annual Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum to be held on May 8 & 9 at the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre. The keynote speaker for this year is Emeritus Professor and Healing Foundation board member, Judy Atkinson. The program will include 'hard yarning' about alcohol management plans on day one and culture and healing panels which focus on children and young

people; women; and men on day two. There will be 110 places available, 80% of which will be taken up by Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Registrations open in mid-February.

Another project that CDFVR is planning to have completed by April is the contextualising of accredited Course in Responding to Domestic and Family Violence (30949QLD). The course is currently designed for service providers who work with women experiencing domestic and family violence. The new learner and trainer guide will provide information for service providers who work with men who use violence. The inclusion of the new units of competence will enhance the current course by providing a greater breadth of knowledge and a more holistic training opportunity to people who work in the field of domestic and family violence.

Research to be completed in 2013 includes a comparative analysis of the application of civil domestic violence legislation in cases involving Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and men; and an exploration of the impacts of elder abuse and barriers to help seeking in Queensland, which is being conducted by a research higher degree (Masters) student Comfort Egwurube.

For further information on any of the projects mentioned above please contact Annie Webster on 07 49407838 or a.webster@cqu.edu.au

Queensland set to lead Australia in Guardianship areas

(By Les Jackson, Coordinator EAPU)

A new Public advocate, a new Adult Guardian, a review of QCAT and the continuing roll out of a more responsive and efficient service delivery system by the Public Trustee will no doubt establish Queensland as the leader in guardianship services and reforms.

The EAPU were privileged to meet Ms Jodie Cook, Queensland's new Public Advocate as well as the new Adult Guardian Mr Kevin Martin at the EAPU reference group in November. These appointees are definitely not seat warmers; they have a clear agenda for improving the rights and interests of adults with impaired capacity and impressed everyone at the meeting with the knowledge, experience and the passion they will bring to the tasks that lay ahead.

Ms Cook spoke about the high priority that elder abuse will have for Office of Public Advocate (OPA) particularly with research designed to inform a coordinated approach to service systems and government policy responses. The OPA deals with improving systems rather than individual cases; however Ms Cook encouraged those at the meeting to direct client feedback about individual matters affecting people with impaired capacity to the OPA to help inform her staff about the issues.

On the other hand the Office of the Adult Guardian (OAG) headed up by Mr Martin has responsibility for investigating individual cases of elder abuse involving people with impaired capacity as well as providing decision making services for this client group as required. Mr Martin certainly impressed as someone with a passion for human rights and someone who would be applying this perspective to OAG activities.

Another important mechanism is the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) which can decide on many matters involving a person with impaired capacity. On the 19th December 2012 the Honourable Jarrod Bleijie, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice announced a public consultation on QCAT operations in which the Minister encouraged people to raise any issues of concern even if they are outside the consultation paper. The EAPU would also like to encourage people to contribute to this consultation as the QCAT has a major role in elder abuse situations involving impaired capacity.

The Public Trustee of Queensland (PTQ) support the EAPU reference group and have regular attendance. They not only provide updates on the enhanced service delivery systems being put in place for their growing number of clients but also provide updates on their response to the rise in financial elder abuse. Each year PTQ solicitors attempt to recover many millions of dollars exploited from impaired seniors.

Although these guardianship areas each provide an important response to elder abuse situations, there are two important things to keep in mind; firstly a very large amount of elder abuse happens to older people who have capacity and are therefore outside these guardianship areas. Secondly, any elder abuse response will involve the participation of everyone; including guardianship areas, other government and non-government agencies. Banks have a role to play as well as the older person's family, their friends and of course the older person themselves – particularly in planning for their financial and personal security.

Queensland Guardianship Agencies

Office of the Public Advocate

07 3224 7424

www.publicadvocate.qld.gov.au

Office of the Adult Guardian

1300 653 187

www.justice.qld.gov.au

QCAT

(Note: consultation expires on 22/02/13)

1300 753 228

www.justice.qld.gov.au

Public Trustee of Queensland

07 3213 9288

www.pt.qld.gov.au

Elder abuse in the media



Industry Reports, Research and News

Latest Research Identifies Elder Abuse is Under Reported, Advocare WA 12 Dec 12
<http://www.advocare.org.au/sysnews/27>

Seniors Rights Victoria Annual Report 2011-12 Dec 2012
<http://www.seniorsrights.org.au/images/Documents/Annual%20Report%202011-12%20Seniors%20Rights%20Vic.pdf>

ARAS Annual Report 2011-12..... Dec 2012
http://www.sa.agedrights.asn.au/files/138_marilyns_annual_report_2011-2012.pdf

ANPEA Newsletter December 2012..... Dec 2012
<http://www.anpea.com.au/Portals/0/ANPEA%20Files/Newsletters/ANPEA%20Newsletter%20December%202012.pdf>

Australian Media

Ruthless kids bleed parents of millions, Courier Mail 29 Dec 12
<http://www.couriermail.com.au/ipad/bank-staff-to-be-trained-as-elderly-parents-fleeced-of-millions-by-children/story-fn6ck45n-1226544839880>

End elderly stereotypes: UK archbishop, Courier Mail 15 Dec 12
<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/breaking-news/end-elderly-stereotypes-uk-archbishop/story-e6freoo6-1226537550581>

New campaign to tackle elder abuse, abc.net.au 21 Sept 12
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-09-21/elder-strategy/4273964>

Our most appalling crime, The Mercury..... 16 Sept 12
http://www.themercury.com.au/article/2012/09/16/361831_todays-news.html

International Media

Dr. Phil 8 January Episode: Elder Abuse, Peteski Productions 8 Jan 2013
<http://www.drphil.com/shows/show/1949>

Experts unsure about law that orders mainlanders to visit elderly parents, South China Morning Post 2 Jan 13
<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1117827/experts-unsure-about-law-orders-mainlanders-visit-elderly-parents>

Report: 59% cases of elder abuse carried out by sons, husbands, The Asahi Shimbun..... 24 Dec 12
http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/social_affairs/AJ201212240100

New El Dorado Sheriff Investigator Position to Focus on Elder Abuse, southtaoenow.com..... 17 Dec 12
<http://southtaoenow.com/story/12/17/2012/new-investigator-position-focus-elder-abuse>

Bad Company: The final days of Baron Dorcy, Maui Millionaire, Honolulu Magazine Dec 2012
<http://www.honolulumagazine.com/Honolulu-Magazine/December-2012/The-bizarre-final-days-of-Baron-Dorcy-Maui-Millionaire/>

Legislation to Better Protect Canada's Seniors Passes in the House of Commons, Northumberland View 7 Nov 12
<http://www.northumberlandview.ca/index.php?module=news&type=user&func=display&sid=18416>

Unreported elder abuse rife among Latino seniors, study finds, LA Times 19 Jul 2012
<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/lanow/2012/07/elder-abuse-latino-seniors-study.html>

Upcoming Events

National World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Conference

'Building a National Approach to Prevent Abuse of Older Australians'

Adelaide Convention Centre, Monday 17th & Tuesday 18th June 2013
Program and registration available in February.

The Aged Rights Advocacy Service (ARAS) is proud to host the second national conference to observe World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) in 2013. The conference theme explores how we take up the challenge of creating a coordinated national approach in Australia for preventing and responding to elder abuse. At a national level there is need for a meaningful shared vision so that the various states and territory initiatives can be shared and progressed.

Master of Ceremonies is Dr Sally Cockburn, (aka Dr Feelgood), high profile media presenter ranked in the top 10 speakers in Australia, who champions those who feel disempowered.

The conference brings together a range of experts from across the disciplines, including a return visit from Paul Greenwood, Deputy District Attorney, Head of Elder Abuse Prosecution Unit, San Diego DA's Office, to inspire us with his prosecutorial panache.

Mark Crofton, the Official Solicitor, Qld Public Trustee; Simon Biggs, Professor of Gerontology and Social Policy, Uni. Of Melbourne; Susan Emerson, Director, Care Environments and Service Strategy, Helping Hand Aged Care, and Dr John Brayley, Public Advocate SA, are among the speakers who will impress with their work to prevent and address elder abuse.

There will be opportunities to explore the key themes in elder abuse in the concurrent sessions, with case reflections. Response agencies across Australia will showcase their research, innovations and programs that assist older people to prevent abuse.

The program will interest the community and residential aged care sector; legal workers, medical and hospital staff, academia and the financial industry – in fact everyone who has an interest in raising the profile and furthering their knowledge in this challenging field.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to hear about the national picture and how we can determine a direction for the future.

You are invited to email your expressions of interest to attend to: aras@agedrights.asn.au

Disclaimer:

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. This publication is a guide only and should not substitute independent legal advice.

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