



Elder
Abuse
Prevention
Unit

www.eapu.com.au

Queensland Focus

Edition 42—February 2016

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Neglect of Older People and Queensland Laws

Les Jackson, Elder Abuse Prevention Unit

The 2013 Queensland Coroner's report on the death of Cynthia Thoresen is a tough read and was probably the first official document I saw which identified the link between neglect and financial elder abuse. It also raised the issue of the lack of laws around death by neglect in Queensland (enforceable laws anyway). The report is easy to find, just Google the name and the "Coronial Findings – Cynthia Thoresen" PDF link should be the top entry, while underneath are the old news stories, some carried by international outlets.

The Coroner noted that the care arrangement was likely financially motivated, and that after the daughter qualified for a Commonwealth Carer's payment in 2001 there were no further eligibility requirements or monitoring – basically a "set and forget" payment. Medicare records revealed that Cynthia hadn't been to a doctor in five years, so she fell under the radar. It may seem reasonable that the daughter should pay back the carer's payment given that her mother died of severe neglect, but as far as I'm aware, the repercussions for not providing care is that the carer's payment will stop if someone reports it to the department. It would seem a no-brainer that a computer cross-check of care recipients with Medicare records would flush out some of this hidden neglect.

Calls to the EAPU Helpline and feedback from workers at our training sessions show a growing trend: an adult child moves in with an ageing parent who was sometimes getting along quite well without them, then the son/daughter provides no care but collects a carers payment, gets free board and lodging and basically keeps the older person out of the "user pays" aged care system and themselves out of the Newstart system. This means the abuser has more money to spend, keeps a free roof over their head and they don't have to look for work. They gain control and fly their parent under the radar for financial gain with neglect as the result, sometimes severe neglect, sometimes death by neglect.

Continues on page 2.

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 **UnitingCare** Community

UnitingCare Community Values | Compassion | Respect | Justice | Working Together | Leading through Learning

UnitingCare Community Services | Lifeline | Child and Family Care | Counselling | Crisis Support | Disability Support | Social Inclusion

Age-friendly Queensland Survey

Elder Abuse Prevention Unit

Minister Coralee O'Rourke has launched an online survey, which is open to all members of the community, seeking their views on how Queensland can be an age-friendly community. The survey includes 3 questions and takes about 10 minutes to complete.

Minister O'Rourke also highlighted the funding designated for addressing safety and social inclusion of older Queenslanders as a key issue and priority.

In a media release Minister O'Rourke outlined the government's commitment to older people and an age-friendly community. The release is available at <http://statements.qld.gov.au/Statement/2016/1/15/more-than-18-million-to-help-queensland-seniors-stay-active-and-safe>

For more information about the initiative visit the Queensland government website at www.qld.gov.au/agefriendlycommunity

To participate in the survey, visit the link below: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XKSX8LC>.

Neglect of Older People and Queensland Laws

From page 1.

So what happened with the Coroner's recommendation, back in 2013, of reviewing Queensland's neglect laws? I can't see that anything has actually progressed. The old law (s285 of the Qld Criminal Code - Failure to provide necessities) looks the same, I haven't been able to find out if it is being reviewed but I suspect not. I suspect, like Cynthia, it dropped off the radar.

Editorial

Domnica Sparkes

Happy New Year and welcome back to another adventure. This year is shaping up to be quite exciting and extremely busy. We welcome Natasha back from maternity leave and Peter has joined the team again following graduating from his Bachelor of Social Work.

We are already starting to plan for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15. Each year has exceeded our expectations and the number of calls has also increased. If you would like to participate and host an event or morning tea for the public, don't forget that we'd love to hear about it and promote it for you.

We are attending and presenting at the 4th National Elder Abuse Conference in Melbourne on 23-25 February and collaborating with our interstate counterparts to work towards a national agenda and strategy.

Our Rural and Remote Peer Support Network teleconferences have been replaced with webinars, so watch this space for dates, speakers and topics. If you have any suggestions, please let us know, as we aim to provide information that is relevant and helpful to your work. We are now able to accommodate requests for training and community education from rural and remote agencies via our webinar facilities. If you are interested, please contact us by emailing eapu@uccommunity.org.au.

'Til next time,
Domnica Sparkes

Time for Grandparents Program

The Time for Grandparents program was set up by the Department of Communities to provide help to eligible grandparents who are the primary carers of their grandchildren by offering fun and interesting activities for grandchildren and giving grandparents the opportunity for well earned time-out.

The program can fund the following options in many areas: school camps, scripture union camps, PCYC, Scouts, Guides, Girls and Boys Brigade, fitness and dance, sport and recreation, little athletics, gymnastics, swimming, softball, netball, rowing, cricket, touch football, soccer, rugby league and more.

To check eligibility and for information please phone **Seniors Enquiry Line on 1300 135 500.**



Elder abuse in the media



Hobart financial planner Kenneth Drake admits stealing \$925k from 94yo client http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-12/financial-planner-admits-stealing-925k-from-94-year-old/7164154	ABC News	12 Feb 16
Family violence against parents, grandparents growing problem in Casey: Police http://www.heraldsun.com.au/leader/south-east/family-violence-against-parents-grandparents-growing-problem-in-casey-police/news-story/a678087db21073101d4c46840c1d9044	Herald Sun	11 Feb 16
Regular supervision may have helped social worker protect man from financial abuse http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2016/02/11/regular-supervision-may-helped-social-worker-protect-man-financial-abuse/	CommunityCare.co.uk	11 Feb 16
Elder abuse victims protected under Domestic Violence Law http://blog.nj.com/njv_donald_scarinci/2016/02/elder_abuse_victims_protected.html	NJ.com	9 Feb 16
Talks to help elderly abuse victims http://mpnews.com.au/2016/02/08/talks-to-help-elderly-abuse-victims/	MP News	8 Feb 16
Breaking the silence on financial abuse of elders http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2016/02/07/breaking-the-silence-on-financial-abuse-of-elders/	The Star Online	7 Feb 16
Neglected elderly rights clash with growing aged care industry http://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/columnists/angela-shanahan/neglected-elderly-rights-clash-with-growing-aged-care-industry/news-story/68101967b9383d7c1995cd1c20f3ecb3	The Australian	6 Feb 16
Support for older people and families to resolve conflict http://www.australianageingagenda.com.au/2016/02/04/37856/	Community Care Review	4 Feb 16
Combatting elder abuse http://www.abc.net.au/local/audio/2016/02/03/4399803.htm	ABC Melbourne	3 Feb 16
Tackling elder abuse in residential care requires systemic culture change http://www.australianageingagenda.com.au/2016/02/03/tackling-elder-abuse-in-residential-care-requires-systemic-culture-change/	Australian Ageing Agenda	3 Feb 16
Spotlight swings on elder abuse as inquiry and Royal Commission examine issue http://www.batemansbaypost.com.au/story/3696108/spotlight-swings-on-elder-abuse-as-inquiry-and-royal-commission-examine-issue/?cs=7	Bay Post Moruya	1 Feb 16
Spotlight swings on elder abuse as inquiry and Royal Commission examine issue http://www.smh.com.au/national/spotlight-swings-on-elder-abuse-as-inquiry-and-royal-commission-examine-issue-20160106-gm0hbo.html	Sydney Morning Herald	29 Jan 16
More work to do on LGBTI training, as project nears end of funding http://www.australianageingagenda.com.au/2016/01/29/37752/	Australian Ageing Agenda	29 Jan 16
Families 'use contactless cards to steal from the elderly' http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3411362/Families-use-contactless-cards-steal-elderly.html	Daily Mail	23 Jan 16

LINKING SENIORS AND THEIR FAMILIES TO INFORMATION



Seniors Enquiry Line is a Queensland-wide telephone information and referral service which links seniors, their families, friends and carers with information on a wide variety of services throughout Queensland.

The services covered include those relating to retirement, concessions, leisure, accommodation, health, finance, the law, computers, home help, transport and many other areas relevant to Queensland seniors.

Call Seniors Enquiry Line on **1300 135 500** for the cost of a local call, weekdays from 9.00am to 5.00pm or you can visit the website www.seniorsenquiryline.com.au.

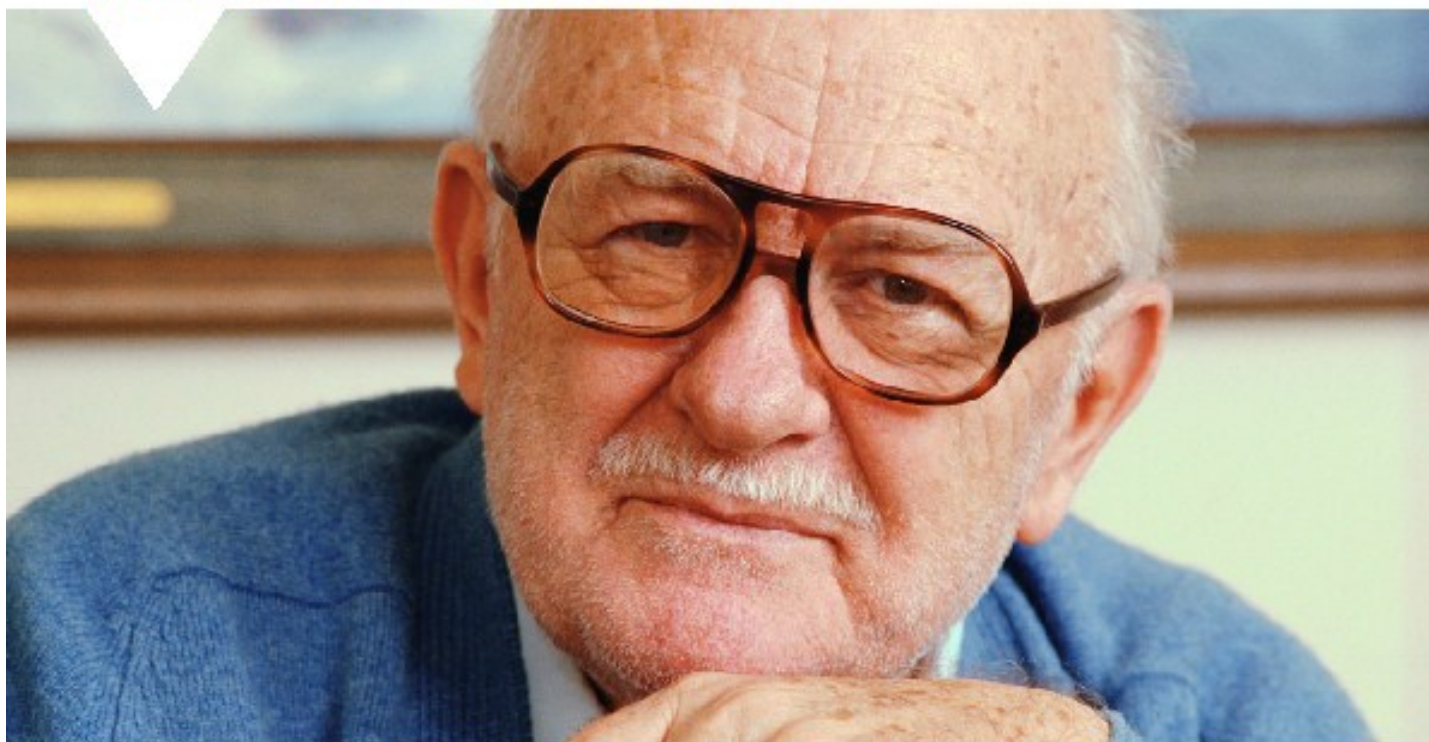
The service is operated by UnitingCare Community and funded by the Queensland Government's Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

Elder abuse in the media



Financial abuse a growing trend for elderly victims http://www.stuff.co.nz/taranaki-daily-news/76244503/financial-abuse-a-growing-trend-for-elderly-victims	Stuff.co.nz	22 Jan 16
Indigenous women more likely to suffer family violence http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/indigenous-women-more-likely-to-suffer-family-violence-20160120-gma7f6.html	The Age	21 Jan 16
Coast groups get funding to help seniors http://www.frasercoastchronicle.com.au/news/seniors-get-funding-boost/2901307/	Fraser Coast Chronicle	18 Jan 16
Preventing isolation and elder abuse http://www.news-mail.com.au/news/bundy-shares-in-seniors-funds/2901604/	Bundaberg News Mail	18 Jan 16
Hotline reveals elder abuse https://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/wa/a/30585434/hotline-reveals-elder-abuse/	The West Australian	16 Jan 16
More than \$18million to help Queensland seniors stay active and safe http://www.sunshinecoastdaily.com.au/news/more-18-million-help-queensland-seniors-stay-active/2900159/	Sunshine Coast Daily	15 Jan 16
Seniors get vital funding to prevent elder abuse http://www.thechronicle.com.au/news/seniors-get-vital-funding-prevent-elder-abuse/2900045/	The Chronicle	15 Jan 16
Women get back costs of violence http://www.sunraysiadaily.com.au/story/3664584/women-get-back-costs-of-violence/?cs=1511	Sunraysia Daily	15 Jan 16
Advocate calls out impact of ageism in response to elder abuse http://www.australianageingagenda.com.au/2016/01/15/37465/	Australian Ageing Agenda	15 Jan 16
Addressing elder abuse with a common approach https://news.agedcareguide.com.au/2015/12/23/addressing-elder-abuse-with-a-common-approach/	DPS News	23 Dec 15
Mental health and elder abuse http://www.abc.net.au/local/audio/2015/11/27/4361513.htm	ABC Melbourne	27 Nov 15
Agencies raise concerns over response to worsening elder abuse http://www.australianageingagenda.com.au/2015/11/25/agencies-raise-concerns-over-response-to-worsening-elder-abuse/	Australian Ageing Agenda	25 Nov 15
Let's talk: Are you being robbed by your own family? http://startsatsixty.com.au/the-big-question/lets-talk-are-you-being-robbed-by-your-own-family	Starts at Sixty	24 Nov 15
DV victim shares story of a lifetime of abuse to help others http://www.themorningbulletin.com.au/news/emerging-from-tunnel-of-terror/2850665/	The Morning Bulletin	24 Nov 15
Elder abuse: Isolation opens way for abuse of older Australians, NSW inquiry to hear http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-11-20/nsw-inquiry-to-hear-of-widespread-elder-abuse/6956532	ABC News	20 Nov 15
Infantilising older women to disguise financial abuse http://womensagenda.com.au/talking-about/top-stories/item/6532-infantilising-older-women-to-disguise-financial-abuse	Women's Agenda	20 Nov 15
Elder abuse going unreported: Council on the Ageing http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2015/s4355275.htm	ABC: The World Today	19 Nov 15
SA government launches 'stop elder abuse' campaign http://www.australianageingagenda.com.au/2015/11/05/sa-government-launches-stop-elder-abuse-campaign/	Community Care Review	5 Nov 15

ELDER ABUSE & CREATING A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITY



VOLUNTEER MANAGERS ONLY

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

- Better understand dementia
- Identify a customer who may have dementia
- Communicate with someone with dementia
- Support customers in their service experience
- Improve customer service and customer experience
- Maintain a dementia friendly environment
- Promote the rights of older people to live free from abuse
- To provide information about support to service providers who have concerns of abuse of their clients.

Join the fight against dementia and become Dementia Friendly today!

WORKSHOP PRESENTER

Deanne Lawrie is a Project Officer – Training and Education & Helpline, she has been involved with the Older Persons Programs with UnitingCare Community for the past 6 years. Deanne previously worked as a Promotion Officer for Seniors Enquiry Line and Time for Grandparents Programs that operate under the Older Persons Programs.

Erica Morgante works in Client Services for Home Instead Senior Care, Gold Coast. Her role incorporates improving coordination and integration of health care in the community, identifying community care needs and assisting ageing adults and their families to access personalised, consumer directed care.

She's passionate with advocating for our vulnerable ageing population and excited to draw on her personal, family experience of Alzheimer's disease in rolling out Home Instead's new 'Creating Dementia Friendly Communities' program.

Supporting volunteer management, referrals education & training, recruitment events & transport services.



WHERE

VOLUNTEERING GOLD COAST

2074 Gold Coast Hwy,
Miami 4220



WHEN

THU APRIL 28th
9:30am – 12:30pm



RSVP

07 5526 0688

commedteam@volunteeringgc.org.au

Limited numbers so enrol early

Please note: Depending on your level of membership a \$25 attendance fee may be applicable.

For more information contact Volunteering Gold Coast on 5526 0688.



07 5526 0688
VolunteeringGC.org.au



Free Education to Service Providers

Wednesday 16th March 9:00am-3:00pm
(Registration from 8:30am)

Kedron Wavell Services Club
21 Kittyhawk Drive, Chermside

Morning tea and Lunch included

TOPICS TO INCLUDE:

- Diagnosis and Symptoms
- Depression and Dementia
- Grief and Loss
- A Carers Perspective
- LGBT Improving practice
- Windsor Aged Care Service Senior Choir

Please advise of any special dietary requirements when registering.
To register or gain further information please phone:

Charlotte Donovan on 3857 2191
Bookings Essential

**RSVP ESSENTIAL BY
MONDAY 29TH February 2016.**

Events

- **4th Elder Abuse National Conference**
23-25 February 2016
Melbourne, VIC
E: info@seniorsrights.org.au
- **AAG Regional Conference 2016—Embracing the Future**
7-8 April 2016
Dubbo, NSW
<https://www.aag.asn.au/events/event/aag-acr-regional-conference-2016-embracing-the-future>
- **International Federation on Ageing Copenhagen Summit**
17-19 April 2016
<http://www.ifa-copenhagen-summit.com/about-the-copenhagen-summit/>
- **Elder Abuse and Creating a Dementia-friendly Community**
Volunteering Gold Coast, QLD
28 April 2016
P: 5526 0688
E: commteam@volunteeringgc.org.au
<http://www.volunteeringgc.org.au/event/event/detail/event/49319>
- **2016 SAGE Conference**
6 May 2016
Ripley Centre, Adelaide Showgrounds, SA
<http://www.aag.asn.au/events/event/2016-sage-conference>
- **2016 International Dementia Conference**
16-17 June 2016
Hilton Sydney, NSW
<http://www.dementiaconference.com/>
- **International Federation on Ageing—13th Global Conference**
21-23 June 2016
Brisbane Convention Centre, QLD
<http://ifa2016.org.au/>
- **Central Queensland Community Education**
Rockhampton and Central Queensland region
15-18 August 2016
P: 1300 651 192
E: eapu@uccommunity.org.au
- **Dickson Seniors Expo**
5-6 September 2016
Strathpine, QLD
- **4th World Congress on Adult Guardianship**
14-17 September 2016
Berlin, Germany
- **AGAC National Conference 2016**
17-19 October 2016
Menzies Hotel, Sydney, NSW
<http://www.agac.org.au/announcements>

EAPU World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Webinar Series 2016

Queensland Age and Disability Advocate service - 7 June

Benevolent Society – Supporting older people from CALD backgrounds — 14 June

Benevolent Society – Supporting older people from Indigenous backgrounds — 15 June

Queensland Aids Council – LGBTI Elders — 21 June

Lifeline – Suicide and older people — 28 June

Disclaimer:

Editor's note: opinions expressed in this edition of "Queensland Focus" do not necessarily reflect those of the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit (EAPU) or UnitingCare Community. 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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The Program

The program for the **4th National Elder Abuse Conference** is now available! Click [here](#) to view session details and presentation topics.

The conference will be taking place from **23-25 February 2016** in **Pullman Melbourne on the Park, Victoria**.

Elder abuse is defined as any act which causes harm to an older person and is carried out by someone they know and trust, such as a family member or friend. The abuse may be physical, social, financial, psychological or sexual and can include mistreatment and neglect. While it is vastly under-reported, it is estimated that up to 10 per cent of older people worldwide suffer from elder abuse.

Join the conference and be part of the discussions relating to prevention, collaborative and innovative responses, as well as decision making for, by and with the older person.

Don't forget to register!

Registration is open for the 4th National Elder Abuse Conference. The early bird deadline is fast approaching, so take advantage of the reduced prices and register now!

For more information, please [click here](#).



Keynote speakers

A number of impressive national and international speakers have confirmed their attendance for the **4th National Elder Abuse Conference 2016**. Please click on the profiles below or visit our [website](#).



Prof Marie Beaulieu



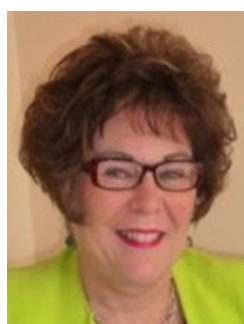
Dr Jacquelin Berman



Libbi Gorr



Senator The Honourable
George Brandis QC



Robyn Scott



Dr Faizal Ibrahim



Prof Mick Dodson AM