



# Queensland Focus

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## New Domestic and Family Violence Video Resources through Queensland Courts

In September, Attorney General and Minister for Justice Yvette D’Ath and Dame Quentin Bryce launched a series of videos, which explain, in plain English, the court process for making domestic violence orders.

The videos, produced by Queensland Courts, explain the court process for all participants as well as provide a valuable resource to front line services who support victims and provide information and advice to perpetrators.

These videos will help people seeking protection, as well as respondents to applications, become aware of what to expect when they attend court. This information will help ease any feelings of fear, uncertainty or anxiety about the court process itself. Chair of the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence, Dame Quentin Bryce said the videos were “entirely consistent with the spirit of the (Bryce) report.”

“My mission when I chaired the Special Taskforce was to ensure that the voice of the people who shared their stories with us were heard,” Ms Bryce said.

“Today’s launch shows that these voices have been both heard and understood by the Queensland legal community and that we are changing our justice system to better accommodate the needs that they expressed.”

The six short educational videos outline how to apply for a domestic violence order, how the court hears applications, the conditions that can be made as part of an order and what happens if an order is breached.

Importantly, the videos show people the inside of a courtroom, the court process itself and the other participants who will be in court. This knowledge can greatly help to alleviate the unknowns and make the court experience less daunting.

To reach culturally and linguistically diverse communities the videos will be published by November this year in Auslan as well as six languages other than English including – Mandarin, Spanish, Arabic, Persian, Thai and Vietnamese.

<http://www.courts.qld.gov.au/courts/magistrates-court/domestic-and-family-violence/domestic-violence-videos> or [www.eapu.com.au](http://www.eapu.com.au)

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### FINANCIAL ABUSE EXAMPLE:

Wendy (80yrs old) has capacity to make her own decisions but recently, her son Robert took her bank card away and doesn’t really allow her to make her own decisions about what to do with her money any more. Robert says he is having “money troubles” and has shouted at Wendy many times.

Robert has threatened to stop bringing the grandchildren to visit if Wendy doesn’t stop talking about it. Wendy feels sad and not in control of her life.

*Call EAPU for options and information.*

Service funded by:



## Editorial

Huge thank you to everyone who has participated in our webinars, they were a huge success yet again. We are now hosting professional development webinars every two months for anyone interested. We are also making our webinar facilities available for Rural and Remote organisations for training and community education.

As some may be aware, there has been quite a lot of movement at a national level on developing a national approach to elder abuse prevention, intervention and research. The Federal Attorney-General Sen. George Brandis has commissioned a prevalence study and a national elder abuse awareness campaign. This is a much anticipated result after many years of work and petitioning by state-based elder abuse agencies.

Our Cultural Diversity Project is moving on and Peter has been making good progress consulting with communities to develop resources and tools that are useful and will have an impact at the grassroots level. If you would like more information or to make a comment email us at [eapu@uccommunity.org.au](mailto:eapu@uccommunity.org.au).

We appreciate all the support and feedback we can get as we are keen to ensure that the service we provide is meeting the needs of older people at risk of elder abuse. We would like to extend a happy holiday and Christmas season from our team to all our readers and everyone who supported us throughout the year. May all your wishes come true and the spirit of the season bring you joy and peace.

*Domnica Sparkes*

## Elder Abuse in the Media

*(Please click on title to open up the article in your internet browser)*

- [Elder abuse in South Australia 'widespread', state sets up new parliamentary committee](#) (South Australia)
- [Elder abuse inquiry: Man dies in hospital after Gold Coast nursing home staff fail to properly treat wounds](#)
- [Banks called on to play greater role in prevention of elder abuse](#)
- [Three dead in suspected murder-suicide on Queensland's Fraser Coast](#)
- [Researchers working on new framework to tackle elder abuse](#) (Victoria)
- [Disturbing lack of evidence on elder abuse strategies laid bare](#)
- [Qld Government launches elder abuse campaign](#)
- [Public Trustee probes swindles of elderly](#) (Western Australia)
- [Study flags financial exploitation of elderly](#) (Singapore)
- [Perpetrators of adult abuse 'getting derisory sentences' - UK](#)
- [Recent theft and elder abuse cases cause renewed interest in "Gran Cams"](#)
- [Equipping organisations to identify elder abuse](#) (NSW)
- [Elder abuse inquiry flagged for South Australia after hidden camera footage shows assault](#) (South Australia)
- [Burt MP may support use of CCTV in aged care homes but warns it could cause problems](#)

## Time for Grandparents Program

The Time for Grandparents program was created 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**.

**Senior Safety from the Queensland Police Service Domestic,  
Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Unit**  
*Acting Senior Sergeant Kerry McKay, Queensland Police Service*

Many people have a fear of crime that is disproportionate to the actual safety risks they face. This can result in unnecessary limitations being placed on their lifestyle and a diminished quality of life. Your own sense of safety and comfort should be your guideline.

### **Safety at home**

One of your best security measures are your neighbours. If you are comfortable, identify the neighbours you can trust or feel comfortable with in case of an emergency. Exchange phone numbers and let them know when you are going away etc.

Look at making your home less vulnerable to thieves by putting in place effective home security strategies. Know which doors and windows you can use for an emergency. You may also consider contacting your local Queensland Police Crime Prevention Office via Policelink (131 444) who offer free security assessments of your residence.



Whilst at home, only open the door to people you know and trust. Use a peephole or a window to see who is outside. Check the identification of unknown visitors, including service repair people, sales people and charity workers. Do not give out any personal information to strangers by phone or personally.

If you are home alone and feel concerned when someone is at the door, pretend there is someone else in the house (e.g. yell out, "John, there is someone at the door!"). Trust your instincts. If you feel unsure do not allow someone entry to your home. If you feel unsafe, call the police.

### **Safety out and about**

Always be aware of your surroundings and walk in areas that are populated and are well lit at night. Consider carrying a mobile phone.

With money and valuables, always try to carry a minimum amount. When carrying a handbag or wallet keep it close to you. Avoid leaving your bag in a shopping trolley or the back of a chair.

When catching public transport, plan your trip to avoid unnecessary waiting around. Sit where you feel most comfortable and if someone sits beside you and you are not feeling comfortable, then if possible change seats. If you feel your safety is being threatened by a fellow passenger, then respond in an assertive voice "Leave me alone, or I will report you" and consider moving.

### **Financial Crime - Protecting your identity**

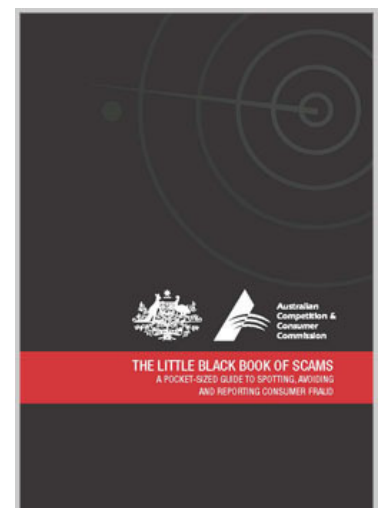
Identify theft is one of the scariest issues facing Australians today. Identity theft occurs when you leave personal information unguarded and someone takes your identity in order to make money, commit crime or do the wrong thing.

#### **5 Tips to protect your identity**

1. Limit the amount of personal information you post online.
2. Make sure you update your anti-virus software.
3. Never give out personal details to anyone who calls you on the phone or sends you an email or text message.
4. Change your passwords regularly and never use your date of birth or anything too obvious.
5. Shred documents containing your personal information. Never just put them in the bin.

Refer to 'The little black book of scams' for further information  
[https://www.accc.gov.au/system/files/Little Black Book of Scams](https://www.accc.gov.au/system/files/Little%20Black%20Book%20of%20Scams).  
Report to '[Scamwatch QLD](#)' via internet or alt. 1300 795 995.

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### **Elder Abuse**

We all have dignity and the right to respect as we get older. Elder abuse is any act within a relationship of trust, which results in harm to an older person. Elder abuse is domestic violence when it involves family or spousal or informal care relationships.

**Economic / Financial abuse** - the illegal or improper use of a person's money or property

**Psychological / Emotional Abuse** - behaviour by a person towards an older person that torments, intimidates, harasses or is offensive to the older person.

**Threatening / coercive behaviour** - threaten, compel or force an older person to do, or refrain from doing, something.

**Sexual abuse** - sexual assault, rape or any activity that makes an older person uncomfortable about their body or gender

Some examples of elder abuse:

- Coercing a person to relinquish control over assets and income, or forcing older person to change their will.
- Removing or keeping a person's property without the person's consent, or threatening to do so.
- Preventing a person from making or keeping connections with the person's family, friends or culture.
- Repeated derogatory taunts.
- Threatening to withhold a person's medication.

### **Referral pathways**

If you are not feeling safe in your home consider calling your local police station or Policelink on 131 444 (who can also put you in touch with your police station).

For further information about Elder Abuse, call Acting Senior Sergeant Kerry McKay from the Queensland Police Service Domestic, Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Unit on PH 3144 5347.

Other contacts are Elder Abuse Prevention Unit on 1300 651 192 or the Seniors Enquiry Line 1300 135 500.

### **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.seniorenquiryline.com.au](http://www.seniorenquiryline.com.au).

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

## The cost of living and age pensioner households - issue 4

Queensland Council of Social Services

Queensland couples who rely on the age pension and rent in the private market are at the greatest risk of living in poverty compared to other seniors, according to the Queensland Council of Social Service's (QCOSS) latest *Cost of Living Report*.

The fourth edition of QCOSS' [\*Cost of Living Report – Special Edition: The cost of living and age pensioner households\*](#) was released as part of the Queensland Government's Seniors Week, and draws attention to one of the biggest issues facing aging Queenslanders today.



State and federal governments assist age pensioners by providing base pensions and allowances, and through delivering a range of targeted rebates, concessions and subsidies. While there is no doubt that these initiatives have a positive impact on age pensioners, as demonstrated in the previous figures, QCOSS concerns that the allowances, rebates, concessions and subsidies provided to age pensioners are not sufficient to keep pace with increases in the cost of living, and especially the cost of essentials.

Evidently, those at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum are battling to meet a basic standard of living, especially those who are renting in the private market. With almost half of our renter households' budgets taken up with rental costs and the average price of rent increasing by \$10 per week for our single renter, it is clear that action is needed to assist age pensioners who are unable to afford appropriate housing in the private rental market.

Based on the analysis in this report, QCOSS has a number of recommendations to improve access to affordable and appropriate housing and utilities for people relying on the age pension.

[Read the full report here in PDF format](#)  
[Read the full report here in Word format](#)

With permission: <https://www.qcoss.org.au/cost-living-and-age-pensioner-households-issue-4>

### EAPU Diversely Ageing Project Update

*Peter Dorsett*

During the first period of this project, the EAPU has been forming partnerships, testing key messages from the stakeholder group, scoping key messages present within CALD communities and engaging with groups around story ideas.

Meeting with community leaders and groups has inevitably provided many opportunities for community education throughout our more informal and invaluable group discussions.



#### Key Points:

- Engagement with Italian community underway.
- Key contacts: CO.AS.IT and its social groups run for Italian members.
- Engagement with Mandarin speaking communities underway. Key contacts: 4 aged care providers for Chinese community, another Chinese community organisation and their attached community groups.
- The EAPU has also engaged with the Moorooka south community HUB. This has helped test key messages with far less developed community groups. This has been important to make the videos relatable to a broader audience in subsequent translations/ interpretations. There is a possibility that the EAPU may be able to stretch its funding to work over- and-above the 2 funded language groups.



## What's in a name?

By Holly Terrace, Office of the Public Guardian

With the word “public” at the beginning of the name of three of the independent agencies, involved Queensland's guardianship and administration system, it can sometimes be difficult to know what the difference is, and what each agency does. The Office of the Public Guardian, the Public Trustee and the Office of the Public Advocate are all independent statutory agencies who work together to protect and promote the rights of adults with impaired decision making capacity.

The Public Guardian acts as substitute decision maker of last resort for adults with impaired decision-making capacity in relation to **accommodation, health care, legal (not related to finance or property) and other personal matters**.

**The Public Guardian** is appointed by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) as a guardian. The Public Guardian can also be appointed as attorney to make the above decisions through an enduring power of attorney document (EPA). We also investigate allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with impaired capacity.



Find out more about us at [www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au](http://www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au) or phone 1300 653 187.

The Public Trustee acts as substitute decision maker for adults with impaired decision making capacity for their **financial matters**. The Public Trustee is appointed by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) as an administrator.

**The Public Trustee** can also be appointed as attorney for financial decisions through an enduring power of attorney. The Public Trustee is self-funding and has been serving Queensland for 100 years. The Public Trustee delivers a range of services to Queenslanders including: free Will making, enduring powers of attorney, deceased estate administration, and other financial management services.



Find out more about us at [www.pt.qld.gov.au](http://www.pt.qld.gov.au) or phone 1300 360 044.

## Office of the Public Advocate

**The Public Advocate** protects and promotes the rights, autonomy and participation of Queenslanders with impaired decision-making capacity through **systemic advocacy**. We focus on influencing and changing the systems that impact on people with impaired capacity, including the legislative, policy and service aspects of those systems.

Unlike the Public Guardian or the Public Trustee, we do not investigate individual complaints or allegations. We are, however, interested in the experiences of people with impaired capacity to inform our systemic advocacy for legislative, policy or service change.

The work of the Office of the Public Advocate is not limited to people who are subject to guardianship or financial administration. Rather, we advocate for the inclusion of all people with impaired decision-making capacity in all aspects of community life.

Find out more about us at [www.justice.qld.gov.au/public-advocate](http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/public-advocate) or phone 07 3224 7424.

## Desperate need for elder abuse prevention research: new report

By Phil Baker, QUT

“Focussed, well-funded research on elder abuse prevention is urgently needed given the lack of high-quality research in this area and the ageing of the population”, said QUT Professor of Public Health Philip Baker who conducted a [Cochrane Review](#), of studies from around the world.



**Queensland  
University  
of Technology**

Professor Baker, from QUT’s Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation, reviewed seven studies on the effects of different interventions designed to stop elder abuse, which involved 1924 elderly participants and 740 carers and health workers.

“It has been estimated that 5 per cent of elderly Australians experience abuse, however these estimates are probably low as significant problems in the quantification and reporting of elder abuse exist,” Professor Baker said.

“In Australia, nine advocacy and elder abuse agencies operating telephone helplines reported assisting 6784 clients in 2015 alone, similar to figures in other countries.

“In 63 per cent of cases the perpetrators were the children of the older person and 39 per cent of cases were psychological abuse, 37 per cent of cases were financial and 9 per cent for physical abuse and neglect.

“We did find, however, that teaching coping strategies to family carers of elderly with dementia probably reduces anxiety and depression of carers, which possibly could lead to better outcomes for the elderly.

“We found no conclusive evidence that caregiver training focussed on improved knowledge is successful in reducing abuse.

“The programs which aimed to detect abuse may have led to improved identification of abused elderly and their abusers, but it is uncertain whether they led to less abuse.”

Professor Baker said the two studies concerned with providing abuse victims with social support and education had yielded disappointing results.

“One study of 403 residents found those who participated in the intervention had a much higher rate of abuse, in other words, the opposite of the hoped effect,” he said.

“The other one was conducted on only 16 subjects and was thus too small to detect a difference.

“In all, we noticed a distinct absence of research that evaluated the effects of elder abuse prevention programs, apart from the slight evidence that teaching coping skills to carers of people with dementia reduced their depression and anxiety.

“Disappointingly, there is considerable uncertainty in the limited research and little to guide the development of a best practice model of care and prevention.

“We have an ageing population and we can expect elder abuse to increase unless we put funds and effort into high-quality research to find solutions to prevent this abuse of vulnerable members of our community.”

(Reproduced with permission from [QUT media](#).)

### 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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