

Elder abuse: our nation's shame

Shining a spotlight on our nation's shame

The uncomfortable truth about elder abuse and neglect

Elder abuse is a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person¹.



One-in-six older Australians report being abused in the past 12 months



Perpetrators are often family members, mostly adult children, but can also be friends, neighbours and acquaintances



61% of older people don't seek help when they are abused



Over the next 25 years, our number of older people will **double to around 9 million**

Elder abuse is a shameful reflection on our nation and will get worse unless urgent action is taken

Creating a safer Australia for older people

A recently convened sector-wide summit identified the actions required to make meaningful progress. These are substantial and systemic matters that demand a deep level of commitment to address. **There is no time to waste.**



ACTION 1: Strengthen frontline services

Create equitable access to services so that all older people can obtain support across prevention, early intervention, response and recovery



ACTION 2: Invest in research

Determine the economic impact of elder abuse and neglect so we understand its true cost, and address the gaps in the elder abuse prevalence study



ACTION 3: Improve education and focus on prevention

Invest in primary prevention and awareness campaigns that address ageism, empower older people and promote respect across the generations



ACTION 4: Harmonise laws and procedures

Fix the raft of inconsistency across state borders and government departments that generates confusion, discrimination and unfairness for older people



ACTION 5: Give older people a voice

Prioritise the stories and experiences of seniors through every step of the process towards an abuse-free Australia

These actions are underpinned by three fundamental principles:

- 1** Elder abuse is a human rights issue and laws, policies and frameworks must reflect this
- 2** Inclusivity and equity are essential to combat elder abuse
- 3** Only a whole-of-government response, with named central agencies accountable for implementation, is appropriate for this important public and social health problem

For too long, mistreatment of older Australians has been allowed to worsen without substantive and co-operative efforts to generate change.

Therefore, our sector demands a **10-year national strategy** that delivers an Australia free from elder abuse and includes annual reports to Parliament demonstrating progress through measurable and meaningful outcomes and comprises specific lines of accountability.

If we don't act now, we are complicit in this deepening tragedy.

This sector-wide call is supported by:



Elder Abuse Action Australia is a specialist organisation acting to eliminate elder abuse. Our work positively impacts the lives of older Australians, their families, communities and broader society.

For more information, visit eaaa.org.au