# Your chance to have your say

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) is inviting anyone over the age of 18 to participate in a community survey to inform its evaluation of the *National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians (Elder Abuse) 2019–2023* (National Plan) and to guide future action to end elder abuse.

The National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians (Elder Abuse) 2019–2023 was established with the backing of the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments recognising we must act now to do more to reduce the growing prevalence of elder abuse. This four-year framework for action included a commitment to undertake research, provide services, and develop policy and law reforms to address this complex problem. The National Prevalence Study undertaken by the Australian Institute of Family Studies as part of the Plan found that one in six older Australians reported experiencing elder abuse. Australia’s ageing population is set to double over the next 25 years adding to the imperative to eliminate elder abuse.

The Federal Attorney-General’s Departments has appointed AIFS to consult extensively, including with every state and territory government and the agencies that work with older people and to consult with the general community through a survey. The survey and consultations will occur until April 7, 2023 and the deadline for the final evaluation report is mid this year.

*“There’ll be* ***targeted engagement*** *through organisations such as Elder Abuse Action Australia, service providers in every state and territory, Older Persons Advocacy Network, Council on the Ageing Australia, Carers Australia, as well as stakeholder groups such as LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, People with Disability Australia, First Nations stakeholder groups, and Federation of Ethnic Community Councils Australia.”*

**Dr Rachel Carson**

Executive Manager, Elder Abuse Research Team Australian Institute of Family Studies

AIFS is looking to recruit participants as widely as possible and from each state and territory   
to participate in the community survey.

It will assess:

* general awareness of elder abuse in the community
* did participants know how to respond to abuse and were they aware of the types of   
  services available
* were participants aware of any communications/awareness campaigns
* how awareness of and responses to elder abuse can be improved

**The evaluation** will explore a number of areas including:

* opportunities for a nationally consistent policy and service responses
* the extent to which the National Plan has been implemented, and any barriers faced in implementing the agreed actions arising from it
* how and to what extent jurisdictions and agencies have shared learnings about the outcomes of their actions
* new evidence to better inform responses to elder abuse, enhance understanding of the abuse of older people and how it manifests

“***Five core policy priority areas*** *have been identified in the National Plan. The Australian Government and state and territory governments want to enhance understanding about elder abuse, improve community awareness and access to information, strengthen service responses and ensure that there's planning for future decision making and then strengthening safeguarding for vulnerable adults*.” explained Dr Carson.

Case studies will be evaluated against each of the five priority areas. More broadly, the evaluation will be informed by a mixed method approach, which has both quantitative and qualitative elements.

The evaluation will also include **online focus groups** with a cross section of representatives from services such as health and aged care services, emergency services, legal and advocacy services, financial services, and other community services that engage with older people. The evaluation team will also conduct up to 20 semi structured interviews with Australian Government and state and territory government officials.

“These are designed to explore the progress and impact of initiatives, programs and activities that have been undertaken under the National Plan.” said Dr Carson.

The National Ageing Research Institute (NARI) is partnering with AIFS in this evaluation and will be compiling a comprehensive list of the programs, activities, initiatives, and evaluations completed under the National Plan. “*This will be presented to a group of experts to generate a consensus through an iterative process of looking at this comprehensive list and identifying those activities that should be prioritised moving forward, and those that should no longer be prioritised*.” Dr Carson told EAAA.

AIFS is calling for at least 300 people to participate in its community survey. The survey is only available [**online**](https://surveys.aifs.gov.au/aifs/index.php/569597?lang=en) and in English, however assistance to cross the digital divide can be provided upon request. Learn more about the [**study**](https://aifs.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-02/Project-Information-Sheet-National-Plan-Elder-Abuse.pdf).

“*If you have problems accessing this survey or need assistance, please email the AIFS Research Team at*[*eanr@aifs.gov.au*](mailto:eanr@aifs.gov.au)*or call 1800 720 142*.” Dr Rachel Carson said.

Start the Survey

**We are seeking your input -   
Recruiting for focus groups is now open**

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) and the National Ageing Research Institute (NARI) are currently evaluating the Commonwealth’s National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians 2019-2023.

As part of the evaluation, **feedback will be sought from** key informants, who are able to provide insight into the progress and impact of initiatives undertaken under the National Plan.

NARI will conduct up to 10 online focus groups between now and the end of March. Each focus group will have 6 to 10 participants and run for 90 minutes. We are seeking input from diverse service sectors from every state and territory, including but not limited to:

* Health and aged care
* Elder abuse and counselling services
* Peak bodies representing the interests of older people
* Legal and advocacy services
* Emergency services
* Financial and banking services
* Community, crisis and housing services

NARI expects the **focus groups** to fill quickly, so if you wish to secure a place please go [**here**](https://www.nari.net.au/national-plan-evaluation) to register.

To find out more about the focus groups you can contact Rachel Muoio at NARI:  [**r.muoio@nari.edu.au**](mailto:r.muoio@nari.edu.au)

Register