



HON MARK DREYFUS KC MP

**ATTORNEY-GENERAL
CABINET SECRETARY
MEMBER FOR ISAACS**

Statement – World Elder Abuse Awareness Day - 15 June 2023

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is a timely reminder of an issue that impacts too many Australians.

The abuse of older people is a serious and growing issue in our community. In 2021, Australia's first National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study found that approximately one in six older Australians living in the community experienced elder abuse in the preceding 12 months.

Despite this, it continues to remain largely hidden, with most people (approximately six in 10) who experience elder abuse not seeking help or advice from a third party.

All older Australians should be free from the harms of elder abuse and neglect – whether intentional or unintentional. The Australian Government is committed to combatting the physical, psychological, emotional, sexual and financial abuse of older Australians.

With the population of older people in Australia expected to double to around 9 million over the next 25 years, we are committed to acting now to bring about lasting social change.

The *National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of older Australians (2019-23)* (National Plan) is Australia's key framework for building understanding and awareness of elder abuse, and continuing to strengthen service responses and safeguards for vulnerable older people.

In April 2023, the Standing Council of Attorneys-General agreed to develop a successor National Plan to ensure that we continue to build on the important work progressed to date.

Findings from the Australian Institute of Family Studies' (AIFS) evaluation of the current National Plan will also future action to protect the rights of older Australians and inform the development of the second National Plan. This evaluation is currently underway and due to report to Government by 30 June 2023.

We look forward to working with Elder Abuse Action Australia, and other organisations and individuals that support and advocate for older Australians, to develop and implement the second National Plan.

The Australian Government is also developing a new \$4 million campaign to educate the community on how to recognise abuse of older people and where to go for information and support, such as the national free-call phone line, 1800ELDERHelp (1800 353 374), and the Compass website (www.compass.info). This national campaign will support priority two of the National Plan by improving community awareness of the abuse of older Australians, and access to information and support.

Together we can achieve a society where older people are safe, cared for, respected and empowered.

If you experience, witness or suspect elder abuse, you can call the National Elder Abuse phone line 1800ELDERHelp (1800 353 374) for free and confidential information, support and referrals. You can also visit Compass.info for further information and resources.