STAND UP SPEAK OUT

27-29 JULY 2026

2026 AUSTRALIAN ELDER ABUSE CONFERENCE

Comparative Police and High Risk Responses

Inspector Bernie Quinlan, QPS

Senior Constable Grace O'Donovan, SAPOL

Chair: Colette Bots, Caxton Community Legal Centre

EAAA Elder Abuse Action Australia

caxton COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE

ADAAustralia Your Aged and Disability Advocates

Case Study 1

- Joan is a 75-year-old widow whose adult son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter moved into her home temporarily and remained there for five years without contributing financially.
- After Joan suffered a fall and required support, their behaviour towards her deteriorated.
- Joan experienced verbal abuse, social isolation, threats that she would lose contact with her granddaughter, and one incident where her son pushed her.
- Joan sought support from a community legal centre but did not want formal police or court involvement.
- Joan fled her home and spent nine months couch surfing while her son and his family remained living in her home.
- Eventually, Joan re-contacted the community legal centre and agreed to a warm referral to the Vulnerable Persons Unit and a joint appointment involving police, a lawyer and a social worker.

Case Study 2

- Police are called to a domestic violence incident involving an older married couple, Bob and Tina.
- Bob is an 82-year-old man with severely impaired decision-making capacity who has become verbally and physically aggressive, causing Tina physical injuries.
- Tina wishes to remain living with Bob despite the ongoing risk of harm.
- Following a referral from QAS, police apply for a Domestic Violence Order due to concerns about ongoing risk and the absence of alternative support pathways.
- During court proceedings, concerns arise that Bob may lack capacity to understand the order or the consequences of breach.
- The matter is repeatedly adjourned while attempts are made to identify appropriate supports and involve the Office of the Public Guardian.

Contact Details

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