STAND UP SPEAK OUT
AUSTRALIAN ELDER ABUSE CONFERENCE

Conference Communiqué

Elder Abuse Action Australia

"If Not Now, When?" Sector Discussion on Ending Elder Abuse

Stand Up, Speak Out 2026 | Gold Coast | July 2026 | Issued by Elder Abuse Action Australia

When will governments take action against the abuse of older Australians?

Hundreds of delegates from across Australia's elder abuse sector call on the Commonwealth, states and territories to urgently release the first Action Plan for the second *National Plan to End the Abuse and Mistreatment of Older People*, backed by full funding, sustained investment and genuine national leadership.

Meeting at the ***Stand Up, Speak Out 2026 conference,*** the sector was united and unequivocal: without action **at least** one in six, or more than 600,000 older Australians who experience abuse **every year** will continue to be failed by systemic inattention.

What the Sector is calling for

1. **The release of a fully funded Action Plan** for the *National Plan to End the Abuse and Mistreatment of Older People (2026-2036)*, matched to the known prevalence of abuse, with clear national leadership and cross-portfolio coordination.
2. **Sustained national public awareness campaigns** that challenge ageism directly, with simple, long-running, evidence-informed messaging.
3. **Long-term, indexed funding** for prevention, specialist services for all communities and the national peak body ending the cycle of year-to-year funding uncertainty.
4. **Stronger national data and economic modelling** of the true cost of elder abuse, to drive policy and investment decisions.
5. **Recognition of older people, and older women specifically,** within related national strategies, including the *National Strategy to End Violence Against Women and Children*.
6. **Effective services** to intervene with those causing harm to address the causes of the problem.
7. **Prevention embedded across the life course,** from respectful relationships education in schools through to carer and family support before crisis point.
8. **Lived experience at the centre of reform,** in advocacy, policy design, service design and public communication.
9. **Sustained and appropriate operational funding** for EAAA as the sector's voice to government.

EAAA
Elder Abuse Action Australia

What we heard from the Sector

1. Ageism is the fundamental driver of elder abuse remaining invisible and under-prioritised.
2. Abuse remains largely hidden occurring within families, and compounded by shame, dependence and under-reporting.
3. The public narrative is weak: media coverage is limited and past awareness campaigns have lacked a clear, sustained message.
4. Political leadership is fragmented across portfolios and jurisdictions, with no single point of national accountability.
5. The evidence base needs strengthening including national data collection, prevalence research, and robust economic modelling of the cost of inaction.
6. Short-term, fragmented funding undermines the sector's ability to plan, retain skilled practitioners, and reach communities equitably.
7. Elder Abuse is not just a social justice issue; it is an economic issue for all Australians. When an older person is no longer able to meet the cost of their health, housing and aged care it falls on the public purse to meet this cost. We all pay for inaction.

The Sector is concerned that a lack of government prioritisation of the abuse of Older Australians has meant

1. The second *National Plan to End the Abuse and Mistreatment of Older people (2026-2036)* was delivered two years after the expiration of the first national plan. Two years too late!
2. Six months after the release of the National Plan, there is still no funded Action Plan, no confirmed state and territory commitments, no structure guiding implementation, and no certainty for the organisations delivering this work.
3. Governments continue to pass the buck between different departments. Where is the leadership or determination within any level of government to act on this problem?
4. Government has not prioritised the national voice to end the abuse of Older Australians. Almost a decade since Elder Abuse Action Australia was established with government support as the national peak body, its Commonwealth operational funding has never been indexed or increased.

This communiqué reflects the collective voice of the Australian elder abuse sector. Developed through discussion and deliberation involving hundreds of delegates from across the nation, it represents a rare and powerful consensus among those with working daily on the identification, prevention, and response to the abuse and mistreatment of older people. The priorities and recommendations set out in this document should be regarded by elected leaders in all governments, senior bureaucrats and decision-makers as a clear statement of the reforms, investment and national leadership the sector believes are urgently required.

Elder Abuse Action Australia will carry this collective voice forward through its ongoing advocacy and engagement with the Attorney-General's Department and state and territory governments. The sector has spoken. Now it is time for governments to listen and act.

Media enquiries
media@eaaa.org.au
1800 960 026

EAAA
Elder Abuse Action Australia