

MEDIA RELEASE

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Elder abuse to be tackled at major national conference

5th National Elder Abuse Conference, February 19 and 20, 2018
Sofitel Hotel Wentworth, Sydney Australia

More than 500 delegates will come together on February 19 and 20 in Sydney to tackle the issue of elder abuse in Australian society.

- At least 5% of older people across Australia experience elder abuse. That's more than 182,000 people.
- Women are more likely to be victims of abuse by a staggering 250%. (NARI, 2017)
- Two-thirds of elder abuse in Australia is perpetrated by the adult children of the older person. (NARI, 2017)
- By the year 2056 older people will make up about 22% of the Australian population. (ABS, 2016)

Keynote addresses will be given by:

- Australia's new Commonwealth Attorney-General Hon Christian Porter MP
- Hon Ken Wyatt MP, Commonwealth Minister for Aged Care
- Hon Tanya Davies MP, NSW Minister for Ageing
- Hon Mark Dreyfus QC MP, Commonwealth Shadow Attorney-General

International speakers include:

- Susan B. Somers, International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse
- Prof Rebecca Morgan, Chair in Elder Law, Stetson University Florida
- Dr Jane Barratt, Secretary General, International Federation on Ageing

Sue Pieters-Hawke is the Conference Ambassador. Through her lived experience caring for her mother Hazel Hawke, Sue became an "accidental advocate". Dementia is known as an increased risk factor for experiencing elder abuse. "This conference brings much needed attention to the overlooked issue of elder abuse. Australia needs to take urgent action on this issue," said Pieters-Hawke.

A key theme to be addressed at the event is financial abuse – the most common form of elder abuse reported. Hon Anna Bligh, CEO of the Australian Banking Association will deliver a keynote address. The ABA is hosting a collaborative sector-wide discussion focused on financial abuse of older people and what reforms are required in the industry to prevent this type of abuse of older Australians.

The conference is titled *Together Making Change*. Delegates from multi-disciplinary backgrounds from across Australia will participate in an interactive conference that will develop a final conference communiqué. "We want to ensure that recent public inquiries over the past 18 months such as the Australian Law Reform Commission Inquiry into Elder Abuse and the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Elder Abuse as well as other recent aged-care inquiries are actioned. We want delegates to come together and advocate for change," said Russell Westacott, CEO of Seniors Rights Service the organisation hosting the event.

- More details of the conference and the most recent draft program can be found at the conference website: togethertakingchange.org.au
- More details regarding Seniors Rights Service a leading community legal centre and an aged-care advocacy organisation can be found at: seniorsrightsservice.org.au

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