



**JUNE 15**  
**WORLD ELDER ABUSE**  
**AWARENESS DAY**

**Together we can stop elder abuse**  
**Let's start a conversation**



Queensland  
WEAAD Activity & Marketing Toolkit

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# Contributors and supporters

This toolkit was developed in partnership.

Click on the contributor and supporter logos below to be redirected to their website.



# JUNE 15 WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

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**Let's start a conversation**



## What is elder abuse?

The increasingly older age profile of the Australian population makes it particularly important to address elder abuse effectively. The 65 and over age group is expected to more than double from 3.8 million to 8.8 million in the next 25 years.

Elder abuse is a single or repeated act—or lack of appropriate action—occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person.

The five abuse subtypes are commonly recognised as financial abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse (otherwise known as emotional abuse), and neglect.

### Signs of elder abuse

If you suspect an older person is being subjected to elder abuse, pay close attention and see if you can identify any of the signs or behaviour changes.

If you suspect elder abuse is happening, don't wait for proof. Call the **Elder Abuse Helpline** on **1300 651 192** for free, confidential advice and referral.

### Changes in general behaviour

- Fear of one or many persons
- Irritability or being easily upset
- Worry or anxiety for no obvious reason
- Depression, anxiety or withdrawal
- Changes in sleep patterns or eating habits
- Rigid posture and avoidance of contact
- Avoidance of eye contact or continuous darting of eyes
- Contradictory statements unrelated to mental confusion
- Reluctance to talk openly

**Ageism** is one of the enabling factors of elder abuse. The recent Elder Abuse Prevalence Study (2021) empirically confirmed that the more ageist we are the more likely we condone elder abuse, and, the more ageist we are the less likely we are to recognise elders abuse.





# JUNE 15 WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

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## World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD), a day to voice  
opposition to the abuse of older people.

Individuals and communities throughout Queensland will come together and show their support by hosting and attending a wide range of activities where people will have the opportunity to learn about Elder Abuse, its impacts and older people's human rights.

The **official colour of WEAAD is purple** which represents wisdom, dignity, independence and creativity.

Over the next three years we are calling on communities to:

2022: Create **Awareness**

2023: Call for **Action**

2024: Empower **Advocacy**

This toolkit contains some event and activity ideas, WEAAD marketing and elder abuse resources.

For more information about WEAAD and to let people know about your events and activities visit [www.cotaqld.org.au/weaad](http://www.cotaqld.org.au/weaad).

### Elder Abuse Helpline

The elder abuse helpline is funded by the Queensland Government and operated by UnitingCare Community. For free, anonymous and confidential assistance 9am–5pm, Monday to Friday call:

- **1300 651 192 (Queensland only)**
- **(07) 3867 2525 (interstate)**

An operator can talk to you about your concerns and discuss support and referral options.

**In an emergency, call triple zero (000).**

To find support and services visit [www.qld.gov.au/stopelderabuse](http://www.qld.gov.au/stopelderabuse).

**Together we can stop elder abuse.**

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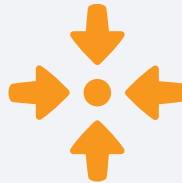
## Key Facts

These have been taken from the Australian Institute of Family Studies National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study: Final Report, published December 2021.

### 1 in 6



older Australians (15%) reported experiencing abuse in the 12 months prior to being surveyed between February and May 2020.



### Comes in many forms

Elder Abuse can take the form of psychological abuse (12%), neglect (3%), financial abuse (2%), physical abuse (2%) and sexual abuse (1%).



### Who is more at risk

People with poor physical or psychological health and higher levels of social isolation are more likely to experience elder abuse.



### Often family

Perpetrators of elder abuse are often family members, mostly adult children, but they can also be friends, neighbours and acquaintances.



### Alarming under reporting

Two thirds of older people don't seek help when they are abused (61%).



### Often hidden

Elder abuse often remains hidden, with the most frequent action taken to stop the abuse involving the victim speaking directly to the perpetrator.



### Family & friends

Family and friends are the most common source of support for older people who experience abuse. Find support services and resources on pages 17-19.

[Click here to download  
this poster and more](#)

# Abuse hurts at any age.

Elder abuse can be  
**emotional, financial,  
physical or sexual.**  
It can also result  
from **neglect.**

**Together we can stop elder abuse.**

Visit [www.qld.gov.au/stopelderabuse](http://www.qld.gov.au/stopelderabuse)  
Call the Elder Abuse Helpline **1300 651 192**

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# Elder abuse awareness

## How you can get involved

During the week of 15 June, individuals and communities throughout Queensland will come together and show their support by hosting and attending a wide range of activities where people will have the opportunity to learn about Elder Abuse, its impacts and older people's human rights.

The week leading up to 15 June we encourage you to raise awareness of elder abuse and human rights by sharing the WEAAD campaign materials.

Below are some event and activity ideas you can use to get involved, raise awareness about elder abuse, and resources to find supports and services. The easiest way to show your support is to post the campaign shareables to your social media accounts using the hashtag #WEAAD #WEAADqld #WEAAD2022 and use the campaign email signature on page 9.

- Host a morning tea connecting people of all ages, cultures and abilities.
- Invite a **guest speaker** to discuss the issue of elder abuse.
- **Let's talk** - host a facilitated chat using our conversation starters in this document - pages 11-13.
- Organise a **flash mob**.
- **Wear purple** to work during the week leading up to and including the 15th of June.
- **Help turn Queensland purple** to highlight the issue of elder abuse. See our list of bridges, buildings and landmarks that will be lit purple on page 10.
- Organise a purple themed awareness walk, picnic or sausage sizzle in your local park.
- **Create an awareness display** in your workplace, school, council, library or shopping centre. Find a listing of useful resources on pages 17-18.
- Take the **EveryAGE Counts** online pledge to stand against ageism at [www.everyagecounts.org.au](http://www.everyagecounts.org.au)

Let people in your community know about your event by registering it into the online event calendar at [www.cotaqld.org.au/weaad](http://www.cotaqld.org.au/weaad)





# WEAAD campaign downloadable resources

## Click on the images to access and save

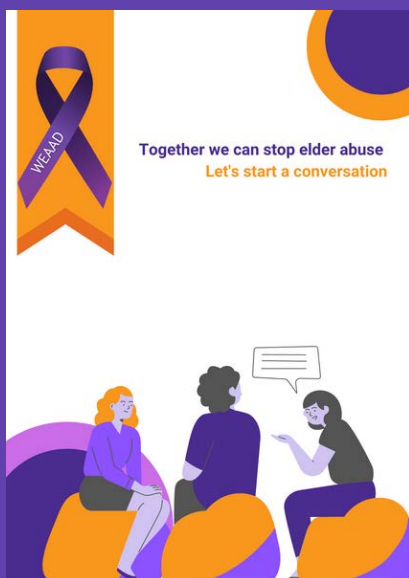
### WEAAD social media tile



### WEAAD email signature



### WEAAD editable event flyer



### WEAAD hashtags



WEAAD  
WEAADqld  
WEAAD2022

# Shining a light on elder abuse

## Join us in turning Queensland purple

We encourage you and your community to show your support and help raise awareness for elder abuse by turning Queensland purple during the week of and including the 15th of June.

A number of local councils are showing their support by lighting a number of buildings, bridges and landmarks purple.

Do you have a business, shopfront, or space you'd like to turn purple? Let us know by getting in touch with the team at [eapu@ucommunity.org.au](mailto:eapu@ucommunity.org.au)

### BRISBANE

- Parliament House
- Story Bridge
- Victoria Bridge
- ReddACLiff Place "Steam" Sculptures
- Brisbane Town Hall
- King George Square
- Mt Coot-tha Botanical Gardens Tropical Dome
- Wickham Terrace Carpark Architectural Wall
- Kurilpa Bridge
- Breakfast Creek Bridge
- Sandgate Town Hall

### CAIRNS

- Cairns Reef Casino

### TOWNSVILLE

- Qld Country Bank Stadium
- Townsville sign
- Victoria Bridge
- Wharton Reef Lighthouse
- George Roberts Bridge
- Old Magistrates Court House
- Central Park Boardwalk
- Little Fletcher Bridge





# Together we can stop elder abuse

## Host a facilitated conversation

We encourage you to connect and host a facilitated conversation about Elder Abuse. Below are some conversation starters to get you going.

### Let's talk about Elder Abuse

1. What do you think of when someone says elder abuse?
2. Who can be affected by elder abuse?
3. Do you know the types of Elder Abuse?

Answers for Facilitator (and further links)

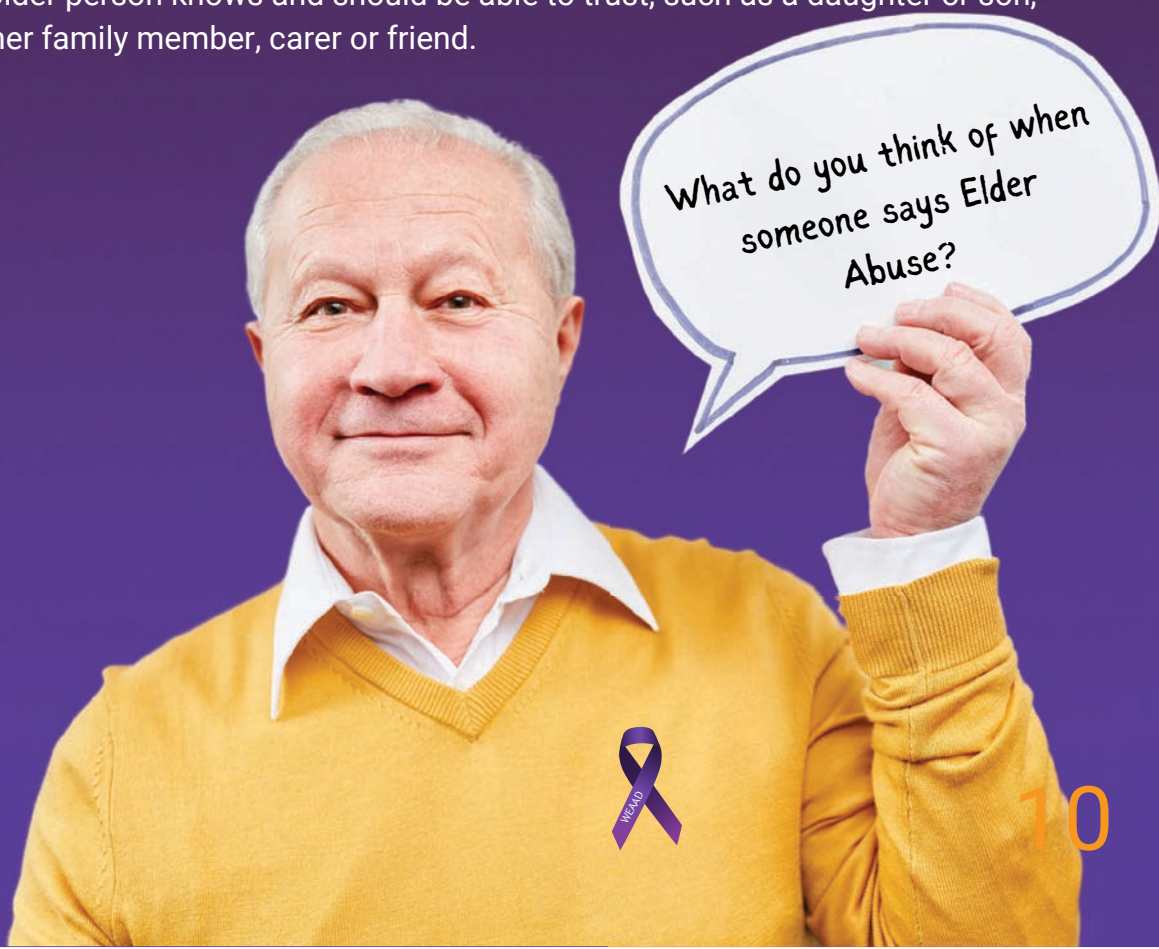
### What is Elder Abuse?

Elder Abuse is a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person"

(World Health Organisation 2002)

### Who can be affected?

Abuse can be experienced by men and women from all cultures and races and by both rich and poor. An abused older person may live on their own or in a household. They could be taking care of themselves, caring for someone or being cared for by someone. The person doing the abusing is often someone the older person knows and should be able to trust; such as a daughter or son, grandchild, spouse, other family member, carer or friend.



## Types of abuse

**Financial abuse** - the illegal or improper use of an older person's money or property, including the misuse of an Enduring Power of Attorney document.

**Psychological abuse** - causing mental anguish, fear of violence, feelings of shame, humiliation and powerlessness.

**Physical abuse** - inflicting pain or injury. It includes hitting, slapping, restraining or over/under medicating.

**Social abuse** - preventing a person from having social contact with family and friends or accessing social activities. Eg. Removing someone's phone, not allowing family and friends to visit.

**Neglect** - in intentional or unintentional failure by a carer to provide necessities of life to a person who depends on them.

**Sexual abuse** - sexual assault, rape or any activity that makes an older person uncomfortable about their body or gender, for example unwanted text messages.

For more information visit:


[www.eapu.com.au](http://www.eapu.com.au)

[www.qld.gov.au/stopelderabuse](http://www.qld.gov.au/stopelderabuse)

[www.pt.qld.gov.au/other-services/elder-abuse-awareness](http://www.pt.qld.gov.au/other-services/elder-abuse-awareness)

[www.compass.info](http://www.compass.info)

[www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/elder-abuse](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/elder-abuse)



Who can  
be affected  
by elder  
abuse?



Do you know the types of  
elder abuse?



## Let's talk about Respect

1.What happens when you feel disrespected?

2.What is Ageism

3.How can we prevent elder abuse and encourage more respectful relationships involving older people?

Whether we are nine or 90, we all deserve to be safe, equal and respected. To prevent elder abuse from happening, we must understand how it works, and the underlying attitudes, structures and beliefs that drive it.

Elder abuse is hard to picture, but it happens every day. What starts out small doesn't always stay that way for long. It's important that we call it out!

- Caring for an elderly family member does not entitle you to take their money. There is no grey area, it's elder abuse and it's wrong.
- They're retired. They own their home. They've got plenty of super. No amount of self-justification makes elder abuse ok.
- Ageing does nothing to diminish your rights. Elder abuse is everybody's business.
- Family aren't entitled to a free pass for poor behaviour. Have the challenging conversation.

"The thing that has amazed me about getting older is the lack of understanding that we do have ideas, can contribute, are interested in what's happening in our world. You're not asked to give an opinion when you would love to." – Helen, Respect Older People: 'Call It Out' campaign.

For more information visit:

[www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/campaigns/respect-older-people-call-it-out](http://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/campaigns/respect-older-people-call-it-out)

[www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/campaigns/respect-each-other-connection-keeps-us-strong#connection](http://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/campaigns/respect-each-other-connection-keeps-us-strong#connection)



## What is Ageism?

Ageism is discrimination, stereotyping or prejudice against a person or a group of people based on age. For older people, this form of discrimination can lead to isolation, shame, and abuse.

It is pervasive but often hidden.

It can distort our attitudes to older people and ageing and have profound negative impacts on our personal experience of growing older.

Ageism is not benign or harmless. It is a big problem because it impacts on our confidence, quality of life, job prospects, health, and control over life decisions.

Changing the social norms that underpin negative attitudes and behaviours towards ageing and older people is critical to reducing elder abuse.

We need to acknowledge our own inclinations to infantilise and disempower older people. Ageism can enable us as individuals to trivialise or minimise a story of abuse from an older person and dismiss complaints.

Many of us have internalised ageism. This can make us believe that if bad things happen to us, they are an inevitable part of ageing. This can be a risk factor for elder abuse.

**How can we prevent elder abuse and encourage more respectful relationships involving older people?**



## Leading with connection and respect

One of the simplest ways to prevent elder abuse, is to lead with respect and foster positive attitudes towards ageing in your community, family, and workplace.

This can look like:

- Supporting young people to have mutually respectful, caring relationships with older relatives or neighbours
- Promoting or celebrating the voices and contributions of older people in your workplace or community
- Seeking the opinions and expertise of older people wherever appropriate, and ensuring their agency is upheld.

### We can all call out ageism.

This can look like:

- Not laughing at or actively calling out jokes or comments that discriminate against older people based on age.
- Thinking about the unconscious biases you may hold, and doing the work to understand how ageism can affect the older people in your life or how you speak to or about them
- Advocating for policies in your workplace, local sports club or community group that support and are inclusive of older people, particularly older women.

WEAAD is the opportunity to work with others in your community to create a society where every person is valued, connected and respected, regardless of age and health. One action you can take today is to take the EveryAGE Counts pledge, taking a stand against ageism.

## Wrap up questions

1. **Has your view of what elder abuse is changed through our discussion?**
2. **Do you think you are being treated respectfully by family and friends?**

If a participant is requiring assistance they can phone the elder abuse helpline on 1300 651 192 (Queensland) or 07 3867 2525 (interstate) for free, anonymous and confidential assistance, 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday. An operator will talk to them about their concerns and discuss support and referral options.





# Take a stand against ageism and take the EveryAGE Counts pledge today!

**EveryAGE Counts** is an advocacy campaign aimed at tackling ageism. It's an ambitious campaign spearheading a social movement with a challenging goal: to shift social norms (those unwritten rules of common thinking and behaviour) and positively influence the way Australia thinks about ageing and older people.

It is pervasive but often hidden. It can distort our attitudes to older people and ageing and have profound negative impacts on our personal experience of growing older. The impacts of ageism can prevent or limit us from contributing and participating in our communities – socially, economically and as full citizens – and even impact our physical health and longevity.

As well as its individual impacts, ageism can also deny society the enormous range of benefits that can flow, economically and socially, from the full participation of older people.

EveryAGE Counts is an advocacy campaign aimed at tackling ageism against older Australians.

Be a legend and take the EveryAGE Counts pledge today and take a stand against ageism. [www.everyagecounts.org.au](http://www.everyagecounts.org.au)





# Emergency & support services

If an older person is in clear and present danger of harm, call triple zero (000).

## Elder Abuse Prevention Unit 1300 651 192

### Legal and social support services

Services are available across Queensland to provide social support and legal advice to people who have experienced elder abuse.

Brisbane: (07) 3214 6333

Cairns: 1800 062 608 or (07) 4031 7688

Hervey Bay: (07) 4124 6863

Toowoomba: (07) 4616 9700

Townsville: (07) 4721 5511

Call 1300 063 232 to access services at these locations:

- Bundaberg
- Gladstone
- Gold Coast
- Mackay
- Rockhampton
- Sunshine Coast.

### Office of the Public Guardian

1300 653 187 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, local call cost)

The Office of the Public Guardian is able to investigate allegations of abuse, exploitation and neglect of older people with impaired decision-making capacity to determine if their decision-making arrangements are adequate and appropriate, or whether a decision-maker needs to be appointed or replaced.

### Public Trustee

The Public Trustee provides a range of services to Queenslanders including will making, enduring powers of attorney, executor and financial administration services at 15 offices across the state. To make an appointment, visit the Public Trustee website or call 1300 360 044.

Other confidential advice and support services

- Lifeline: 13 11 14 (24-hour crisis support line)
- Legal Aid Queensland: 1300 651 188 (8.30am to 4.30pm)
- DVConnect Womensline: 1800 811 811 (24 hours, 7 days a week)
- DVConnect Mensline: 1800 600 636 (9am to midnight, 7 days a week)

# eDownloadable resources

*To access and download the resources click on the resource link under the name of the organisation.*

## Elder Abuse Prevention Unit

- [Elder Abuse, Mistreatment & Exploitation - multilingual and English](#)
- [Mistreatment of Older People - multilingual and English](#)

## Queensland Government

- [Together we can stop elder abuse campaign materials - including posters, shareables, DL brochures and help cards](#)

## Caxton Legal Centre

- Staying safe at home - [multilingual](#) and [English](#) fact sheets
- Telling someone - [multilingual](#) and [English](#) fact sheets
- Keeping money and assets safe - [multilingual](#) and [English](#) fact sheets
- Making your own decisions - [multilingual](#) and [English](#) fact sheets
- Caxton Legal Centre Brochure - [multilingual](#)
- 10 Tips for Protecting Yourself from Elder Abuse - [English fact sheet](#)
- New Guardianship Laws - [English fact sheet](#)

## Compass

- [Compass is the national website about elder abuse in Australia](#). It raises awareness and makes it easier for people to connect with services and information tackling elder abuse. Compass also hosts useful webinars and discussions.

## Queensland Police Services

- [QPS Elder abuse brochure](#)
- [Senior Safety information sheet](#)
- [Older Wiser Safer Living in Queensland - a handbook on safety for seniors](#)



# eDownloadable resources

## Office of the Public Guardian

- OPG has released an information pack dedicated to planning ahead, which includes a [booklet about the importance of planning ahead](#) and factsheets on [Enduring Powers of Attorneys](#) (EPOA), decisions about future health care and [responsibilities of an attorney under an EPOA](#).
- [EPOA and Advanced Health Directive forms](#)
- Watch the "What are the chances" video which aims to motivate and explain the value of personally planning ahead [HERE](#).

## The Public Trustee

Financial elder abuse is the most common form of abuse experienced by older Australians:

- [Help is Available fact sheet](#)
- [Preventing Financial Abuse](#)

## Sunshine Coast Legal Service

- [Piano Forte - A community Legal Education Resource](#)

Do you have feedback to share?

The intention for the future of this toolkit is to build upon the foundational work started in 2022. In order for us to make improvements we need to hear from you. Please email all feedback to [eapu@uccommunity.org.au](mailto:eapu@uccommunity.org.au)

