



Australian groups mobilise ahead of global day of action on elder abuse

By Darragh O’Keeffe on June 5, 2015 in Industry



From left: Paul Ostrowski and Sam Hardikar

Aged care providers and seniors rights groups are preparing to launch public awareness campaigns and events in the lead-up to World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on 15 June

The campaigns get underway as latest figures show that financial and physiological abuse are the most common forms of elder abuse, that women are most likely to be victims, and abuse is most commonly perpetrated by family members.

Major home care provider Care Connect Group said it was getting behind World Elder Abuse Awareness Day by launching an awareness raising campaign it would deliver through the support of its service providers, with the aim of reducing the risk of elder abuse.

CEO Paul Ostrowski said that if older people were better educated on the issue they would be more likely to seek support.

“As an organisation that supports people to live independently at home and in the community, we need to do all we can to support them to feel safe and secure,” he said.

The provider's campaign gets underway next week and runs for two weeks.

"We are working in close partnership with our service providers to reach as many of our older clients as possible over the two week period. Our service providers are wearing Care Connect-designed World Elder Abuse Awareness Day badges designed to prompt a conversation. They have also been briefed on elder abuse so they can answer any questions clients may have," said Mr Ostrowski.

Sam Hardikar, director of Home Instead Senior Care Inner East said: "We are fully behind this important campaign and applaud Care Connect for raising awareness amongst the elderly regarding this important and often silent issue."

Mediation program to resolve conflict

Victorian aged care provider Benetas is also marking World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, with the launch of a trial of a unique mediation program for seniors and their families.

Benetas partnered with FMC Mediation and Counselling Victoria on the program, which puts the older person at the centre of discussions about their care and helps families to resolve conflict, make important decisions, set goals and plan for the future through a non-adversarial approach.

Benetas clients and their families have been participating in a trial of the program over the last six months and the provider reported that significant outcomes had already been achieved.

The program trial will be launched next Tuesday, 9 June, at Melbourne Town Hall.



Seniors Rights Victoria's elder abuse awareness website

Website launched to raise awareness

Elsewhere, a seniors rights group is holding a special event to mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on 15 June at Melbourne Town Hall, which will be launched by Martin Foley, Victorian Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing.

The group has also produced a dedicated website to coincide with the global day of action, which provides seniors with information and equips service providers with an 'elder abuse response kit'.

Seniors Rights Victoria manager Jenny Blakey said that elder abuse was a "critical but under-recognised family violence issue" and it was important to shine light on the problem.

The group said the latest analysis of Seniors Rights Victoria data, compiled by the National Ageing Research Institute, showed that financial abuse and psychological abuse were the most common forms of abuse reported by older Victorians (81.8 per cent).

The data also showed that some 72 per cent of victims were female, while 60 per cent of perpetrators were male. Just over 92 per cent of abuse was perpetrated by persons related to the older person or in a de facto relationship, while 66.8 per cent was perpetrated by a child of the older person.

[Visit Seniors Rights Victoria's elder abuse awareness website](#)

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