

# QLD Focus

Elder Abuse Prevention Unit Newsletter

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## We Need Your help in Coordinating Queensland's Elder Abuse Response

The **EAPU** in conjunction with the **Seniors Roundtable** are undertaking to collect, collate and share any information about elder abuse initiatives happening around the state **but we need your help**.

**"If only I'd known...."** Various agencies and working groups, large and small, have tackled elder abuse issues with different levels of success. Sometimes promising initiatives just fade away only to be 'reinvented' down the track by some other group. Collaborations, Research, Law Reform, Resource Development.....It's all happening somewhere but who is doing it and what exactly are they doing?

The Seniors Roundtable recognises the benefit of having an accessible pool of information to inform and facilitate coordination among initiatives. It will also greatly assist the Roundtable with the identification of gaps and priority issues for their advisory role to the Government's "Positively Ageless" seniors strategy.

**Please Send Details of any Elder Abuse Related Initiative to**

**[eapu@lccq.org.au](mailto:eapu@lccq.org.au)**

**These details will appear shortly on the eapu website at**

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

### Did you know...

**Research:** Lifeline Community Care Qld is assisting the EAPU to produce two papers; one on Effective Awareness Raising and the other on the Uptake of Domestic Violence Protection Orders by Older People. But what type of elder abuse related research is happening in Queensland's universities?

**Working Groups or Collaborations:** Older People Speak Out (OPSO) have just started developing an Elder Abuse Awareness Campaign. The Department of Communities, Seniors Legal and Support Services and the EAPU are starting to plan the 2011 World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Campaign. The EAPU is aware that many more groups are working on elder abuse issues, but we may not know them all.

**Legal Issues and Law Reform:** The report on the Review of Guardianship legislation is now out. The report on the Review of the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act cannot be too far away. There are moves afoot to initiate reform of Queensland's Civil and Criminal Laws, an important area that needs support. We need more details of these and any other initiatives.

**Resources:** The EAPU is developing or updating a range of resources for staff, older people, and the community and the Public Advocate is also working on a comprehensive resource booklet.

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**ELDER ABUSE  
HELPLINE**

**1300 651 192**

Funded by





# Editorial

*By Domnica Sparkes*

Adversity brings out the best and worst in people, as the recent natural disasters have proven. Our thoughts go out to those who have lost everything and now face the ordeal of rebuilding their homes and lives. Life is full of unpredictable circumstances and challenges that we must face and somehow overcome.

My experience with older people on the Helpline has taught me that elder abuse can be slow and insidious over many years or people can be stuck in awful situations in an instant. Whether they have been able to foresee potential abuse or whether it has taken them by surprise it is no less traumatic and difficult to come to terms with the betrayal and pain that is caused. In these situations not only can the hurt and shock be overwhelming; knowing where to ask for help can also be very confronting.

2011 has a number of new projects that the EAPU is embarking on including hosting a clearinghouse for elder abuse initiatives from across Queensland and launching a research paper on the impact of an awareness campaign on reporting of elder abuse to the EAPU Helpline. Not to forget the ongoing work through the helpline, community education and Peer Support Network teleconferences.

Our trainers have a number of regional trips already planned for the first half of the year so if you would like training while they are in your region now is the time to give Rosey, Maya and Andrea a call to book your session before you miss out. To find out dates check the Calendar of Events on the last page for details.

As part of our continued efforts to raise awareness about elder abuse in the community we will also be publishing a new resource booklet to help with understanding some of the traps that can leave people vulnerable to elder abuse.

That's all from me for now and don't forget to let us know if you're doing something for older people in your region or would be interested in hosting a session to help your community gain a greater understanding of elder abuse and strategies to prevent it. We'd love to promote your event.

## **DATE CLAIMERS: Regional Training for 2011**

- Cairns and Far North Queensland Mon 28<sup>th</sup> Feb—4<sup>th</sup> March
- Mt Isa and surrounding area Mon 28<sup>th</sup> March – 1<sup>st</sup> April
- Townsville and North Queensland Mon 21<sup>st</sup> March—25<sup>th</sup> March
- Mackay and surrounding area Mon 16<sup>th</sup> May— 20<sup>th</sup> May

If you would like to book a training or information session please contact Rose Marwick (for Mt Isa region), Maya Zetlin (for Cairns and Townsville regions) or Andrea de Vries (for Mackay region) on 1300 651 192 or [eapu@lccq.org.au](mailto:eapu@lccq.org.au).

# QPS Flood Alert Information

Stephanie Gilholme  
Queensland Police Service

For up to date information on the flooding in South East Queensland please visit the Neighbourhood Watch Queensland Website [www.NHWQ.com.au](http://www.NHWQ.com.au).

Queensland's big wet continues to drench many parts of the state cutting off new sections of highways and limiting movement. Police remind motorists not to attempt to cross flooded roads or causeways. Do not risk your life, the lives of those in your vehicle and the lives of rescuers. Nothing is so important that you need to enter floodwaters.

With school holidays still underway is a timely reminder for parents to actively supervise their children and ensure they stay well away from swollen creeks and causeways. This also applies to drains and rivers.

Children may think playing in bodies of water is fun but this practice is deadly. This wet season some haven't been so lucky and young lives have been lost. This is a heartbreaking but avoidable circumstance.

## When you hear a flood warning

- Listen to your local radio station for severe storm advice and warnings;
- Plan to move vehicles, outdoor equipment, garbage, chemicals and poisons to higher locations;
- Plan which indoor items you will raise or empty if water threatens your home (e.g. freezers and refrigerators); and
- Check your emergency kit and safeguard your pets.

## What to do if you need to evacuate

- Pack warm clothing, essential medications, valuables, personal papers, mobile phone, photos and mementos in waterproof bags to be taken with your emergency kit;
- Raise furniture, clothing and valuables on to beds, tables and into roof spaces;
- Empty freezers and refrigerators, leaving doors open;
- Turn off power, water and gas;
- Whether you leave or stay, put sandbags in the toilet bowl and over all laundry/bathroom drain holes to prevent sewage back-flow;
- Lock your home and take recommended evacuation routes for your area

## Useful links to assist in obtaining further information about the Queensland Floods

- Bureau of Meteorology website for up to date weather information, including up-coming forecasts [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)
- The Traffic and Travel information line on 13 19 40 or <http://131940.qld.gov.au>
- RACQ road closure site on 1300 130 595 or [http://www.racq.com.au/travel/Maps\\_and\\_Directions/road\\_conditions](http://www.racq.com.au/travel/Maps_and_Directions/road_conditions)
- For more information about flood and cyclone preparation and emergency kits can be found at [www.disaster.qld.gov.au](http://www.disaster.qld.gov.au);
- Monitor local councils and local radio stations for local information and updates.
- People experiencing personal hardship due to the flooding can call 1800 173 349, or visit the Department of Communities web site for updates on the types and availability of support.
- If you would like to donate to the Premier's Flood Relief appeal please call 1800 219 028
- Primary producers are urged to contact the [Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority](http://www.qra.gov.au) for assistance.
- For practical health advice during and after floods visit the [Queensland Health](http://www.health.qld.gov.au) website.
- If you have a question about your insurance policy, or need help identifying your insurer, call the Insurance Council of Australia's 24-hour emergency hotline on 1300 728 228.

# WHAT IS FINANCIAL FIRST AID AND HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

By Vicki Cella  
Financial First Aid

We provide FREE, independent and confidential Financial Counselling services to resource our community about *rights and responsibilities* in relation to credit and debt issues.

If you have money worries; can't pay your bills; being harassed by debt collectors; in arrears with repayments; considering bankruptcy; feeling alone and confused and don't know where to turn, we are here to answer your call. Financial First Aid is your first point of call and can help you address your immediate financial concerns.

Recently Queenslanders were hit by devastating FLOODS which has caused enormous financial stress in our community. If you have been affected by the floods and don't know what to do we are here to HELP.

Our team of Financial Counsellors are committed to each caller to provide essential information to empower you to make the appropriate choice in response to your unique situation.

**PH: 1800 007 007**

## PEER SUPPORT NETWORK TELECONFERENCE STATEWIDE DEMENTIA ADVISORY SERVICE

Date— 16 March 2011 at 1pm

RSVP to Rose Marwick on 3250 1955 or [eapu.psn@lccq.org.au](mailto:eapu.psn@lccq.org.au) by 7 March 2011

### **Presenters:**

Karen Constant – State wide Senior Co-ordinator for the Dementia Advisory and Support Service (DASS)

Karen has extensive aged care experience having work with various service provider in Queensland in both residential and community care settings. Karen has undertaken postgraduate and masters study specialising in person-centred care and dementia and held key roles encompassing training and education, changed behaviours, care planning and the development of dementia champion networks. Karen also holds a voluntary position as Chair of the Board for the Queensland Aged and Disability Advocacy.

Julie Morrow – Dementia Co-ordinator, Brisbane North

Julie has over 20 years community welfare experience in managing community based mental health services and a state wide welfare service for people with Huntington's Disease. In her current role, Julie provides care co-ordination for people with dementia and their carers and dementia training for HACC service providers within the Brisbane North region.

Also keep an eye on the website for more details and an information sheet with from the Teleconferences, <http://www.eapu.com.au/PeerSupportNetwork.aspx>.

# What's the task of a Taskforce?

Maya Zetlin  
Elder Abuse Prevention Unit

Most of what we do in EAPU is our core business, which includes the activities that we have to report to our funding body e.g. our Helpline, education sessions, data collection and peer support network. However, we have realised quite early in our existence that for a small organisation like ours we need to extend our specialised knowledge by belonging to, supporting and coordinating networks of similar interest throughout Queensland.

Two of these locally coordinated networks still exist in Ipswich and the Gold Coast. Both groups were formed by the initiative of local organisations that recognised that the issue of elder abuse impacts on their community and services and needs a coordinated response. Both groups chose to act as a Taskforce, which indicates that they are task-oriented and pro-active in a collaborative manner.

The Ipswich Taskforce has been supported with a venue and admin support by the Ipswich City Council and the Gold Coast has been receiving similar supports from the regional Department of Communities. Both Groups have applied for funding at various times to employ a worker for a specific project. With the coordination of these designated workers the Taskforces have produced wonderful resources, participated in EXPOs and have engaged in education and training sessions.

Both groups are currently operating without a specifically funded worker and exist through the sheer dedication of their members who have to juggle their time with their paid jobs' commitments.

A third Taskforce has previously operated at Hervey Bay, with similar projects, activities and achievements. However, since the establishment of the Senior Legal and Support Service (SLASS) there, the Taskforce as such has ceased to exist as most members now act as their reference group.

EAPU has maintained ongoing participation, support and provision of information to all three groups and benefited, in return, from the knowledge and contributions of the members as well as by forging close working relationships. We believe that the existence of all the Taskforces greatly contributed to the advancement in successful strategies of prevention and intervention in elder abuse.

A slightly different Taskforce is the multicultural group, which EAPU initiated as part of our commitment to address the special needs of older people from Culturally And Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. The PEACC (Prevention of Elder Abuse in CALD Communities) Taskforce has been operating in Brisbane since 2002 and has survived the tyranny of time and of being driven by a designated worker for only a couple of years.

Since its establishment the PEACC Taskforce has been coordinated by EAPU and, for the past few years, meetings have been held at the courtesy of the Greek Community Aged Care at their premises at South Brisbane.

The group meets bi-monthly and alternates between having meetings with agenda items to education seminars, which are open to all interested service providers. Our last session in 2010 attracted huge attendance and interest. "The Long Goodbye- End of Life Care for People Living with Dementia" - explored palliative care approach for CALD older people who are at risk of elder abuse and was very ably presented by Kerri Dooley and Ruth Rowan from Spiritus. Following the success of the session we intend to hold it again in Ipswich, under the banner of the Ipswich Elder Abuse Taskforce.

Standing agenda items in each meeting include round the table information sharing and the exploration of elder abuse cases by drawing on the professional and cultural expertise of the members. And last but not least, PEACC Taskforce and EAPU have been holding very well attended and successful yearly Forums with great speaker and interesting topics.

If any of you are interested to join any of the Taskforces please contact Maya Zetlin at EAPU by phone 3350 1968 or e-mail [maya.zetlin@lccq.org.au](mailto:maya.zetlin@lccq.org.au) and you'll be very warmly welcome.

P.S. and yes, all meetings are very well catered to promote a friendly atmosphere and another good reason to attend.

# QADA LEGAL ADVOCACY

*Annelise van Deth*  
QADA

Hello everyone. I thought I would provide an update of QADA's legal advocacy service. In a nutshell - what we do is promote the rights of an adult who has a Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) matter, or a potential QCAT matter.

Our client is always the adult in the proceedings, that is, they are the one the hearing is about. They will be going through the QCAT process, or potentially going through the process, or they may wish to have their QCAT orders appealed or reviewed.

We work within the Queensland statutory framework. We promote the principles of the legislation. We promote the right of an adult to make decisions as fundamental to their inherent dignity and that an adult has the right to make decisions with which others may disagree. Examples of this can include decisions about palliative care, sexuality or how a person manages their finances.

QADA accepts referrals from a range of sources – self referral, family referral, service provider referral.

For our service, a referral as promptly as possible as the issues arise will ensure we can do the maximum work for the client. Notification of matters the day before a hearing means we cannot provide the comprehensive service we prefer.

All referrals go through our general intake service. Once a matter has been allocated to a legal advocate, they determine the best course of action. The first stage is usually one of gathering information from the adult and the persons in their lives. We will visit the adult at least once, to discuss the application and their hopes, wishes and fears.

Where appropriate, we refer to the Adult Guardian, particularly if there is suspected abuse of an Enduring Power of Attorney or the Adult Guardian's investigative powers are required.

We uphold the client's right to confidentiality. Should we be contacted by family or other interested parties, we will refer them to organisations such as Carer's Qld as we perceive a potential conflict of interest should we start assisting anyone other than the adult.

We promote the general principles of the legislation when we empower the adult to exercise their basic human rights. This includes the right of the adult to participate, to the greatest extent possible, in decisions concerning them.

To achieve maximum participation, we assist the adult in educating them about the QCAT process. The nature of this education will depend upon the adult's individual circumstances

We are a state-wide service, with our advocates travelling to attend hearings. Some hearings we need to do by phone attendance but we have offices in Brisbane, Townsville, Cairns, Rockhampton, Hervey Bay, Gold Coast, Toowoomba and Mackay.

We can arrange an interpreter if appropriate. QADA has developed CALD postcards in 12 languages. They set down a simple four step process to speak to a QADA advocate through an accredited interpreter. These cards can be supplied to your service upon request.

We also have a wide range of educational materials: fact sheets, posters, DL cards and these can be ordered directly from QADA.

For more information call QADA on 1800 818 338.

# FAIR GO FOR PENSIONERS COALITION NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Raymond Ferguson  
APSL

On the 24<sup>th</sup> November together with other representatives from RUPA, Ray Ferguson Policy Coordinator for the Australian Pensioners & Superannuants League attended the second National Conference of the Fair Go for Pensioners Coalition in Canberra. In total there were over twenty delegates from various affiliates of the Coalition throughout all states.

As well as electing a National Chair, Deputy National Chair, along with members of the National Executive, the Conference also gave consideration to the reports concerning the activities of the Coalition over the last twelve months. Overall the reports were positive and confirm that at different levels Coalition affiliates have been active in their respective states and much information was provided concerning the different benefits pensioners/seniors are receiving from their respective State Governments.

As part of the Conference agenda an opportunity was provided to have further discussions with Federal Minister Macklin. In giving a commitment that the Gillard Labour Government would continue to improve the lives of older people she highlighted the governments record on pension increases and changes to pension indexation arrangements, she explained the governments policy was to implement their election commitments as outlined in the delivering for seniors package, part of that package included the following;

1. Improvements to Work Bonus arrangements to allow pensioners to earn \$6,500 per year and this to be taken as an annual rather than fortnightly amount.
2. Improve protection for people taking out Reverse Mortgages.
3. Establishment of an Aged Discrimination Commissioner.
4. New services for Grandparents caring for Grandchildren.

While the above are the Federal Governments commitments it became clear to all that the forthcoming Federal Budget is unlikely to see any further upward adjustment in the Aged Pension. With Minister Macklin making clear that as far as the government is concerned that the adjustment to pensions of 27.7% of the Average Total Male Weekly Earnings (ATMWE) has got it right.

As well as the discussions with Minister Macklin the Conference also had discussions with Peter Tucker Chief of Staff to Andrew Wilkie who is the independent member from Tasmania. Peter Tucker confirmed to the Conference that Andrew Wilkie fully supports the claim of a FGFP and will take all steps to push these matters in Parliament.

As a result of the discussions agreement was reached that the National Executive would arrange a meeting with Andrew Wilkie in the first weeks of the Parliamentary Sitting in 2011 and that the Coalition would draft a letter for Andrew Wilkie to send to the Prime Minister outlining the FGFP claims and asking for discussion of the issues. Furthermore it was agreed the next National Executive would meet in early next year to spend time in Canberra lobbying parliamentarians particularly with the Green Members.

# Respect for Elders is the Key to Eliminating Elder Abuse

## A Review of 'How To Live' by Henry Alford

By Daniel Hann - Elder Abuse Prevention Unit

### ***The Problem: Ageism***

In October 2010 the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) released a report entitled *Age discrimination – exposing the hidden barriers for mature age workers*. While the report focuses primarily on the problem of ageism in the workplace, it is an issue that has a wider import. As the report states: “Age discrimination in our workplace does not occur in isolation from the rest of society. If unlawful age discrimination is occurring in our workplaces it is highly likely that such attitudes exist outside of the workplace” (AHRC, 2010, p.2). It goes on to suggest that “age discrimination in the workplace reflects broader attitudes in our community” (p.2).

It is not hard to draw the conclusion that a poor attitude towards older people is one of the key factors behind the problem of elder abuse. If people view elders as a burden on society and an inconvenience in their busy lives, then they are more likely to mistreat and take advantage of the elderly people in their lives. For this reason, it is important to encourage any initiatives that seek to engender respect and admiration for our elderly citizens. This is what American author Henry Alford sets out to do in his book: *How to Live: A Search for Wisdom from Old People (While They Are Still on this Earth)*.

### ***Henry Alford's Book – In Pursuit of Elderly Wisdom***

Proceeding on the assumption that old people are wise, because they have lived longer and amassed more experiences than the rest of us, Alford set out “to interview and spend time with as many fascinating seniors” as he could (Alford, 2009, p.10). His aim was to gather their wisdom in order to improve his own life. “If people are repositories of knowledge” he writes, “then I want a library card. I want borrowing privileges for the rest of my life” (p.10).

And Alford does indeed come across some fascinating older people who have valuable wisdom to share. Take for example a woman called Granny D: a ninety-seven year-old political activist, walker and author. During their interview she offers up this priceless insight: “If you are afraid of death, you are afraid of life, for living your life leads to death. Until you face death and see its beauty, you will be afraid to really live – you will never properly burn the candle for fear of its end” (p.23). Or seventy-five year-old Althea Washington, who lost her husband and her home during Hurricane Katrina. She has this to say about surviving hard times: “You have to give yourself the strength to just keep on. You may not call it God, but whatever you believe in, don't forsake it...Whatever you call it, find it – that deep, deep strength that lifts you. And let it lift you...” (p.230)





# Media Overview



Government of Canada raises awareness about financial exploitation of Seniors .....	Marketwire.com .....	4 Oct 10
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Probate court abuses found across the U.S. ....	The Arizona Republic .....	28 Oct 10
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# Calendar of Events

## **Legal and Policy Challenges of Financial Elder Abuse**

22 February 2011  
Dublin, Ireland  
Website: <http://www.ncpop.ie/index.php?uniqueID=8>

## **Elder Abuse Training—Cairns Region**

28 February — 4 March 2011  
Cairns and northern region, Queensland  
PH: 1300 651 192 or 07 3250 1836  
Email: [eapu@lccq.org.au](mailto:eapu@lccq.org.au)  
Website: [www.eapu.com.au](http://www.eapu.com.au)

## **Elder Abuse Training—Mount Isa Region**

28 March—1 April 2011  
Mount Isa and region, Queensland  
PH: 1300 651 192 or 07 3250 1836  
Email: [eapu@lccq.org.au](mailto:eapu@lccq.org.au)  
Website: [www.eapu.com.au](http://www.eapu.com.au)

## **Peer Support Network Teleconference—Dementia Advisory Service**

16 March 2011  
PH: 1300 651 192 or 07 3250 1836  
Email: [eapu@lccq.org.au](mailto:eapu@lccq.org.au)  
Website: [www.eapu.com.au](http://www.eapu.com.au)

## **Action on Elder Abuse National Conference 2011**

28—29 March 2011  
Manchester Conference Centre, UK  
Email: [daisygoodstien@elderabuse.org.uk](mailto:daisygoodstien@elderabuse.org.uk)  
Website: <http://www.elderabuse.org.uk/Conferences/National%202011/Nat%20Conf%202011%20flyer%203.pdf>

## **2011 AAG Rural Conference—Across the Divide**

31 March—1 April 2011  
Cessnock, New South Wales  
PH: 02 6650 9800  
Email: [info@eastcoastconferences.com.au](mailto:info@eastcoastconferences.com.au)  
Website: [www.aagruralconference.com](http://www.aagruralconference.com)

## **National Home and Community Care Conference 2011: Innovation and Integration into the Future**

5—7 April 2011  
Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, South Bank  
PH: 08 8207 0245  
Email: [aurelia.strozik@dfc.sa.gov.au](mailto:aurelia.strozik@dfc.sa.gov.au)

## **VII European International Congress of Gerontology & Geriatrics**

14—17 April 2011  
Bologna, Italy  
Email: [iagg@promoleader.com](mailto:iagg@promoleader.com)  
Website: <http://iaggbologna2011.com/>

## **Elder Abuse Training—Mackay Region**

16—20 May 2011  
Mackay and region, Queensland  
PH: 1300 651 192 or 07 3250 1836  
Email: [eapu@lccq.org.au](mailto:eapu@lccq.org.au)  
Website: [www.eapu.com.au](http://www.eapu.com.au)

## **National Indigenous Domestic Violence Conference**

17—19 May 2011  
Gold Coast, Queensland  
Email: [sosmedical@ymail.com](mailto:sosmedical@ymail.com)  
Website: <http://ica-dv.webs.com/indigenoussdvconference.htm>

## **National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys Elder and Special Needs Law Annual National Conference**

19—21 May 2011  
Las Vegas, USA  
Website: [http://www.naela.org/Public/Events/Annual\\_Meeting/Public/Meetings\\_and\\_Events/Annual\\_Meeting.aspx?hkey=fb9b958-8a2c-4a3f-a683-aeb277ec602a](http://www.naela.org/Public/Events/Annual_Meeting/Public/Meetings_and_Events/Annual_Meeting.aspx?hkey=fb9b958-8a2c-4a3f-a683-aeb277ec602a)

## **7th Annual Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum**

30—31 May 2011  
Mackay, Queensland  
Email: [enquiries@noviolence.com.au](mailto:enquiries@noviolence.com.au)  
Website: <http://www.noviolence.com.au/eoi2011/callforexpressions.html>

## **9th Asia/Oceania Regional Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics—Aging Well Together**

23-27 October 2011  
Melbourne, Victoria  
PH: 03 9682 0500  
Email: [info@ageingin2011.com](mailto:info@ageingin2011.com)  
Website: <http://www.ageing2011.com/EOI.htm>

## **Additional Date Claimers 2010—2011:**

May 2011—Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month  
15 June 2011—World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Editor's Note: Opinions expressed in this edition "Queensland Focus", do not necessarily reflect those of The Elder Abuse Prevention Unit (EAPU). Articles in this newsletter may be used with the permission of the contributing author.



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