

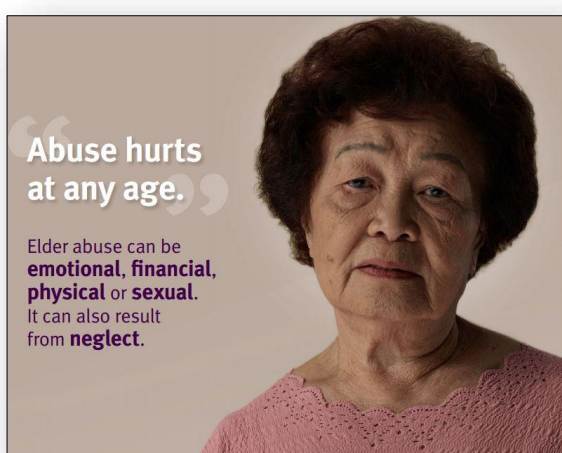
The EA Brief

elder abuse in focus

QLD Gov. 2021 Elder Abuse Campaign!

Campaign materials available

Check out the campaign page [here](#) for social media kits, information and printable resources.



Elder Abuse Knowledge Hub www.compass.info

Had a look yet?

Take a look at the end result of a huge effort to establish a *knowledge hub* for information about elder abuse. [Click here.](#)

Health Justice Partnerships!

What are they? ...read more on p. 5

Have you heard of OPAL's new Health Justice Partnerships operating in some of Brisbane's Hospitals and Health Services?

The SIRS scheme has arrived!

Apr 1, Serious Incident Response Scheme

The Serious Incident Response Scheme is the next evolution of mandatory reporting within residential aged care. Check out what's new – p. 3.

What's in this edition?

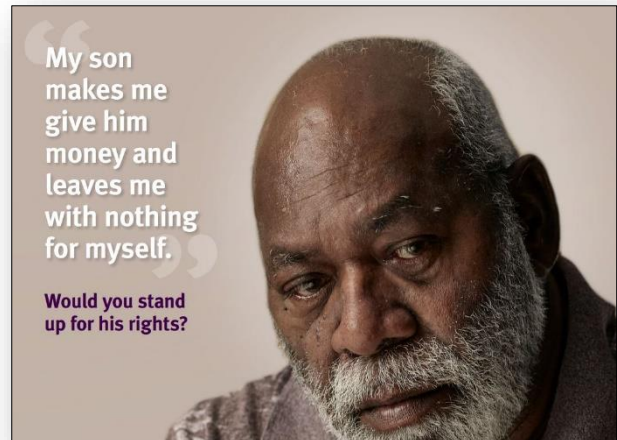
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QLD Government 2021 Elder Abuse Campaign

Together we can stop elder abuse

Each year the QLD Government oversees a state wide elder abuse awareness and prevention campaign. It usually launches in June to coincide with World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

The [campaign page](#) has information about how to 'start a conversation about elder abuse', which may be a helpful tool for supporting people you know or work with.



The webpage also contains loads of downloadable/ printable resources. This includes:

- Videos
- Posters
- Social media kits
- Email signature blocks
- ...and more

Of course, there has been distribution of campaign brochures and posters into the community as well. The EAPU also has a limited supply of posters and brochures for people outside metro areas.

The campaign features direct quotes from older people and a call to action; *together we can stop elder abuse.*

Visit: [Together we can stop elder abuse - Queensland Government](#)
(dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au)

The SIRS is here

The Serious Incident Response Scheme, April 1st 2021

The introduction of SIRS – the Serious Incident Response Scheme – was the federal Government’s big announcement from 2020’s World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. You can still see last year’s media release [here](#). As of April 1st, 2021 the SIRS is already in effect. Here are some quick details.

Broadening the scope of reportable incidents:

The Aged Care Royal Commission Final Report found that the ‘*existing compulsory reporting scheme in aged care [was] unsatisfactory*’ (summary report p. 140). The SIRS is essentially the next evolution of reporting requirements for abuse incidents that occur within residential aged care settings. One of the main differences from before is that the SIRS vastly broadens what is considered a *reportable incident*. Where previously an incident was either *unreasonable use of force* or *unlawful sexual contact*, it now is ALSO any of the following:

- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Unexpected death
- Stealing or financial coercion by a staff member
- Neglect
- Inappropriate physical or chemical restraint
- Unexplained absence from care (i.e. there is a ‘missing person’)

For now, the SIRS is still only applicable to residential aged care settings, where the facility receives an Australian Government subsidy for its aged care services. It may however, extend to home based aged care services in 2022.

Differentiating between priority 1 and 2 incidents:

The scheme differentiates between Priority 1 and Priority 2 incidents, which are handled slightly differently. Priority 1 incidents are obviously of a more serious nature and require reporting to the [Commission](#) within 24 hours. The latter (from Oct 1st, 2021) need to be reported within 30 days of becoming aware of the incident. Reporting to police is required if the incident is of a ‘criminal nature’. Reports are made to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission via the provider’s My Aged Care Provider Portal.

The SIRS is here (cont...)

The Serious Incident Response Scheme, April 1st 2021

Incident management obligations

On top of reporting obligations, aged care facilities are also required to implement an effective incident management system. This is essentially about learning from the incident, sharing those learnings and working to stop or reduce the likelihood of the event(s) happening again.

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission powers

The Commission is responsible for receiving reports and administering the SIRS, as well as more broadly regulating the residential aged care sector. It is now able to issue compliance notices to facilities where obligations under the SIRS are not met. The Commission continues to publicly display its [register of complaints directions issued](#) and [register of non-compliance and regulatory actions](#).

Further Information

A lot more information is available on the **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's website** here:

- <https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/sirs>

You'll find more **resources for providers** here:

- <https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/sirs/provider-resources>

You can see **insights and statistics** about incident reporting since the SIRS began here:

- <https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/sites/default/files/media/sirs-insight-report-may-2021-updated-23-june-2021.pdf>

Compass.info

Guiding action on elder abuse

Establishing a knowledge hub was one of the key priorities outlined in the [National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians. \(Elder Abuse\) 2019-2023.](#)

[Elder Abuse Action Australia](#) (EAAA) was established to be a national voice for elder abuse issues and funded to create the knowledge hub resulting in the website: www.compass.info.

Compass is a national platform for older people, anyone with concerns about an elder abuse incident or general industry to seek help and information. Resources from across the country have been centralised here, including key information about how to stay safe or support others to reach safety. Brochures, factsheets, videos (and more) relevant to your state/ territory are easily searchable.

The service directory can also help you locate the right service for your situation, by narrowing down your search based on the issue type and location.

The federal Government's 1800 ELDERHelp number will divert your call to your area's central elder abuse contact point.

Visit: www.compass.info

OPALS - an innovative Health Justice Partnership

Taking on elder abusers

The Older Persons Advocacy and Legal Service (OPALS) is an innovative Health Justice Partnership between Caxton Legal and the Metro South Hospital and Health Service.

Health justice partnerships involve embedding legal supports into healthcare settings, with the understanding that social, legal and health problems are often intertwined.

The Health Justice Partnership began in 2019 and by August, 2020 the partnership released its [first year report](#). This contains some telling case studies about how the service model works to support older people.

This year, the partnership has published an in-depth [webinar](#), which details how the service model has developed, produced positive outcomes and detail the possibilities for health justice partnerships throughout QLD.



QCAT launches new website and more...

Improved accessibility

Guardianship and Administration matters have become one of QCAT's largest growing jurisdictions. In response, QCAT has undergone a major project aimed at increasing information and accessibility to its application and hearing processes for decision-making issues relating to adults.

Some of the major features are:

- A total redesign of their [website](#)
- 3-part video series about QCAT hearing processes:
 - [Before the hearing](#)
 - [At the hearing](#)
 - [After the hearing](#)
- A revision of [application forms](#), including addition of the 'missing persons' form (to come into line with legislative amendments)
- An improved 1300 number

Improved 1300 number:

A new 'on-hold text messaging service' has been integrated into QCAT's existing 1300 number. This very unique system allows people to receive text messages that direct them to information of interest, while still remaining in the queue to speak to an operator!

A new Public Guardian and Public Advocate

Welcomes and farewells

With the appointment of a new Public Guardian and a new Public Advocate, it's time to offer both some welcomes and farewells.

Natalie Siegel-Brown served as QLD's Public Guardian for four years, until 2020. We would like to congratulate her on her achievements and also welcome Ms Shayna Smith who now takes on the role. Ms Smith previously served as Deputy Public Guardian and has acted in the Public Guardian role since March 2020. Welcome (officially)!

Mary Burgess has been the Public Advocate for 5 years up until the end of July, 2021. Thank you again for your all of your great work! Dr John Chesterman begins his role as the Public Advocate in August. Dr. Chesterman previously held the role of Deputy Public Advocate in Victoria. Welcome and we look forward to your advocacy work here in QLD!

7th National Elder Abuse Conference

Walk the talk!

Is it August already? It sure is and that means you might want to think about getting your tickets for the 7th National Elder Abuse Conference. **Early bird prices finish 15th Oct. 2021.**

“What about COVID lockdowns?”, I hear you say! Well, this conference will be accessible both in person AND via a virtual platform. Delegates using the virtual platform will still be able to attend sessions, connect with peers and visit the virtual exhibition hall, all from the home or office. The virtual tickets also price in a bit cheaper for the budget conscious.

A program should be available soon, so keep an eye on the website or subscribe for updates [here](#).

When: 14th - 15th February, 2022

Where: Wrest Point Conference Centre
Hobart, Tasmania

Website: nectarcc.eventsair.com/

ACT introduces elder abuse crime

The 1st elder abuse criminal law in AU

The ACT has become the first state to introduce criminal offences specifically targeting *elder abuse*.

Technically, the laws protect *vulnerable people* defined as, any adult with a disability, and any person aged 60+ who ALSO has an additional vulnerability such as illness or social isolation. The laws apply to both institutions and individuals.

Further, the new laws add a sentencing consideration when the victim is a *vulnerable person*. Penalties reach up to an \$80,000 fine/ 5 years imprisonment.

The new laws are meant to complement existing measures, though differing opinions about effectiveness have been voiced. In the previous [Australian Law Reform Commission report on elder abuse](#) it considered that, “rather than creating a new elder abuse offence, other initiatives such as the establishment of specialist elder abuse units by police and improvements in support for vulnerable witnesses may better achieve improvements in criminal justice responses” (p. 369).

The laws took effect April this year.

