



Promoting opportunities. Protecting rights. For older Victorians.



Victorian Legal Services
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Media release: Seniors Rights Victoria, Better Health Network announce Health Justice Partnership to combat elder abuse

Melbourne, 05 February – Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) and Better Health Network (BHN) have announced a new Health Justice Partnership that will provide SRV's expertise in elder abuse intervention and prevention to older Victorians receiving care from BHN.

This initiative aims to provide multi-disciplinary support to older people experiencing or at risk of experiencing elder abuse, and has been made possible through funding from the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner's Grants Program.

As part of the partnership, SRV will deliver specialised training in recognising and responding to elder abuse, and will be operating an on-site advice clinic at BHN's South Melbourne location.

The clinic will provide advice on elder abuse and related matters such as intervention orders, guardianship, administration and care arrangements, family agreements, powers of attorney, debts, and property disputes.

Older people attending BHN can drop into the advice clinic as needed and its trained professionals will be able to fast-track referrals to access SRV's free legal service.

"Older people deserve to feel safe and supported in their communities," said Avital Kamil, Manager and Principal Lawyer of Seniors Rights Victoria. "This partnership with Better Health Network strengthens our ability to prevent and respond to elder abuse. It will be a vital resource in protecting the rights and dignity of older Victorians."

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The initiative provides older clients easier access to protection against elder abuse, said Amanda Murphy, BHN Executive Director, Business Enablement.

“Elder abuse is insidious, often undetected, and can take many forms. By working with Seniors Rights Victoria, Better Health Network can help safeguard our clients’ against mistreatment, while working to support their overall health and wellbeing,” she said.

If you are in Victoria and experiencing elder abuse, help is available through Seniors Rights Victoria’s confidential helpline on 1300 368 821. Our website – seniorsrights.org.au – also features resources for concerned friends or family members.

For nationwide assistance, and to access additional resources in 20 different languages, please contact the Australian Human Rights Commission on 1800 ELDERHelp (1800 353 374).

If it is an emergency, call 000.

-- ENDS --

Further context

Elder abuse comes in many forms. It can be financial, emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, or social. Elder abuse can occur once or many times and can vary in severity from subtle through to extreme and can include one or a combination of the different types of abuse.

Elder abuse is most often perpetrated by someone known to and trusted by the older person, such as family members, relatives, or friends with two thirds of reported elder abuse being perpetrated by the adult children of an older person.

Elder abuse affects people of all genders and all walks of life. The abuse, however, disproportionately affects women – two-thirds of people seeking help from SRV are women.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and LGBTIQ+ communities are additionally vulnerable to elder abuse, as are older people living in rural and regional communities.

For further information

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About us

Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) is the key state-wide service dedicated to advancing the rights of older people and the early intervention into, or prevention of, elder abuse in our community. It is the only Community Legal Centre dedicated to preventing and responding to elder abuse within Victoria.

SRV has a team of experienced advocates, lawyers, and social workers who provide free information, advice, referral, legal advice, legal casework, and support to older people who are either at risk of or are experiencing elder abuse. SRV supports and empowers older people through the provision of legal advice directly to the older person.

<https://seniorsrights.org.au> | <https://elderabuseawarenessday.org.au>

Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria is the leading not-for-profit organisation representing the interests and rights of people aged over 50 in Victoria. For over 70 years, we have led government, corporate and community thinking about the positive aspects of ageing in the state.

Today, our focus is on promoting opportunities for and protecting the legal rights of people 50+. We value ageing and embrace its opportunities for personal growth, contribution, and self-expression. This belief drives benefits to the nation and its states alongside communities, families, and individuals.

<https://cotavic.org.au>

Better Health Network (BHN) is a not-for-profit organisation that has been providing primary and allied health care services to the communities across south-eastern Melbourne for nearly 50 years.

We were formed by the voluntary amalgamation of Central Bayside Community Health Services (CBCHS), Connect Health & Community and Star Health in 2022.

Experience and compassion are at the core of our holistic approach to healthcare. We celebrate our history, community and diversity, while working to be at the forefront of best-practice to support our clients' needs.

<https://bhn.org.au>