



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**



WA Strategy to Respond to the Abuse of Older People 2019 to 2029 Action Plan

Progress Report for the period from 2022 to 30 June 2024



In November 2019, the WA Strategy to Respond to the Abuse of Older People (Elder Abuse) 2019 to 2029 (WA Elder Abuse Strategy) was launched. The Elder Abuse Strategy has the goal of ensuring that all older Western Australians are safe, respected, valued and live free from elder abuse. The Strategy sets out a whole of government plan for preventing and addressing elder abuse. It was informed by local, national and international evidence and best practice.

This Action Plan covers activities for the period 2022 to 2027.

The Action Plan focuses on the development and delivery of key initiatives to be implemented to achieve the four Priority Areas of the WA Elder Abuse Strategy:

- Priority Area 1: Raising awareness and early identification
- Priority Area 2: Prevention and early intervention
- Priority Area 3: Integrated and coordinated response
- Priority Area 4: Data and evidence.

The Action Plan is informed by a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to addressing all forms of elder abuse in communities throughout Western Australia (WA).

¹ The abuse of older people takes many forms, including financial, psychological, physical, sexual and emotional abuse.





A total of six State Government agencies are featured in the Action Plan as lead or partner agencies:

- Department of Communities (Communities),
- Department of Health (Health), including WA Country Health Service and Aged Care sector providers
- Department of Justice (Justice), including Court and Tribunal Services, Office of Public Advocate (OPA) and the Public Trustee
- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)
- Legal Aid Commission of WA (Legal Aid WA), including the Elder Rights WA (ERWA) legal service
- Western Australia Police Force (WA Pol).

In addition to the six State Government agencies, there are multiple businesses, community organisations, Commonwealth Departments and Universities that have committed to action as the lead or partner organisation and/or supported agencies to progress actions. They include:

- Advocare
- Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (APEA WA)
- Banking sector, Bankwest
- Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department
- Community Sector, funded Elder Abuse services Including Council on the Ageing WA (COTA WA), financial providers, project working groups and public libraries
- Carers WA
- Edith Cowan University SAGE Lab
- Indigenous Professional Services (IPS) Management Consultants
- Local Government Professionals Australia WA (LG Pro WA)
- Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre (NSCLC)
- University of Western Australia (UWA)
- Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA)
- World Health Organization (WHO).

Overview of priority areas, action areas and initiatives

Aligning with the four Priority Areas of the WA Elder Abuse Strategy, the Action Plan identified four key priority areas:

1. Raising awareness and early identification
2. Prevention and early intervention
3. Integrated and coordinated responses
4. Improving availability of data and evidence.

These priority areas set out the high-level direction to achieve the outcomes of the Strategy and details key initiatives (see diagram 1) that will support Western Australia to prevent and respond to Elder Abuse.

- Continuing the WA Elder Abuse Helpline and Information Service
- Providing state-wide advocacy and legal services
- Raising awareness and delivering education programs
- Conducting research on the mistreatment of older Aboriginal people in WA
- Conducting research into elder abuse drivers and protective factors in WA.

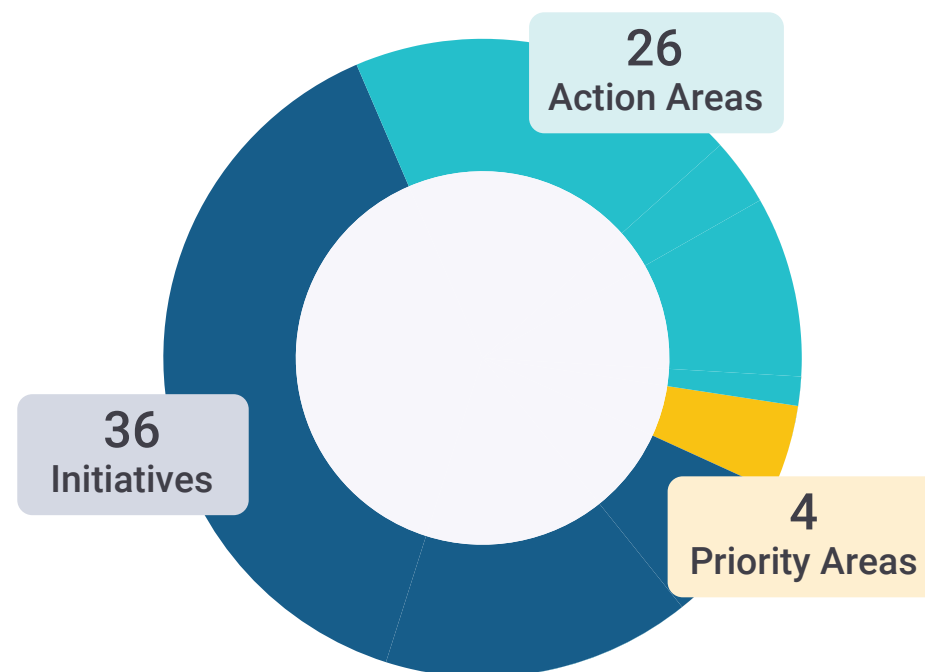


Diagram 1: Breakdown of Priority Areas, Action Areas and Initiatives

Overview of Progress Report (the Report)



The Report provides an update for the period 2022 to 30 June 2024 on activities undertaken by participating agencies as featured in the Action Plan. It should be noted that the majority of items listed are a representative overview on the types of activities undertaken within the WA public sector and not for profit State Government funded services since the commencement of the Action Plan in 2022.

Please note that there are elder abuse activities delivered across Western Australia facilitated by the not-for profit and/or private business sectors and Commonwealth Government that are not included in this Report.

An overview of the status of initiatives is provided in Diagram 2 and Table 1. Initiative statuses fall within three categories:

- **Completed:** Initiatives that have reached the specified end date.
- **Completed and ongoing:** Indicates initiatives that are completed and are continuing. This includes business as usual activities that do not have a specified end date.
- **On track:** Initiatives that are scheduled to commence in the next financial year.

The timing of these initiatives was identified in the Action Plan as:

- **Short:** activities/initiatives to commence within the next one-two years.

- **Medium:** to commence within the next three-five years.
- **Ongoing:** activities/initiatives which are currently underway and/or will be continuously undertaken.

Most initiatives represent ongoing work for lead agencies that were completed in 2022 to 30 June 2024 and will continue into the future. To reflect the nature of these initiatives, they have been marked as completed and ongoing.

Initiatives	Priority Area 1	Priority Area 2	Priority Area 3	Priority Area 4	Total
Completed	-	2	1	-	3
Completed and ongoing	5	9	9	5	28
On track	1	-	4	-	5
Total	6	11	14	5	36

Diagram 2: Status of all Action Plan initiatives



Table1: Status of all Action Plan Initiatives by Priority

The WA Elder Abuse Strategy and Action Plan aligns with the United Nations declaration that 2021–2030 is the Decade of Healthy Ageing and the State Government's:

- An Age-Friendly WA: State Seniors Strategy 2023-2033: The first State Seniors Strategy to support 'Western Australian seniors feel valued, safe, and empowered to lead happy and fulfilling lives in age-friendly communities'.
- Path to Safety: Western Australia's strategy to reduce family and domestic violence 2020–2030, a long-term plan for a WA where all people live free from abuse:
 - » Work with Aboriginal people to strengthen Aboriginal family safety.
 - » Act now to keep people safe and hold perpetrators to account.
 - » Grow primary prevention to stop family and domestic violence.
 - » Reform systems to prioritise safety, accountability and collaboration.



Focus area 1: Raise awareness and early identification

Action area					Outcome	
1	Build and enhance awareness and understanding of elder abuse and its causes.				<p>People are aware that elder abuse is a serious problem affecting our community and requires collective action.</p> <p>Older people from all backgrounds are empowered to protect themselves from abuse.</p> <p>Our community will be able to recognise the signs of elder abuse and respond in ways that protect the rights of the older person.</p>	
2	Improve early detection, self-identification and self-protection.					
3	Co-design targeted early detection, self-identification and awareness raising initiatives for diverse groups.					
4	Advertise a clear and simple pathway for anyone wanting information or help.					
5	Provide and promote avenues for inquiring about or reporting elder abuse.					
No.	Activity/Initiative	Action Area	Lead Organisation	Partners	Status	For the period 2022 to 30 June 2024
1i	Conduct a review into the quantum of elder abuse funding to examine which agencies and community organisations are funded to raise awareness and provide elder abuse education.	2, 3	Communities	Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse WA (APEA WA)	On track	To be completed in 2024-25.
1ii	Deliver community education initiatives to community members and relevant service providers regarding planning-for-the-future documents, the guardianship and administration system, and who to contact about elder abuse concerns.	1, 2, 4, 5	Office of the Public Advocate (OPA)	Northern Suburbs Community Legal Service (NSCLC), Legal Aid WA, Department of Health, Disability, Financial and Aged Care	Completed and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing community education program including online and face-to-face education sessions for community members and key service providers.• Delivery of education sessions, publications and an advisory service for community members and service providers.

No.	Activity/Initiative	Action Area	Lead Organisation	Partners	Status	For the period 2022 to 30 June 2024
1 iii	Conduct a review into the quantum of elder abuse funding to examine which agencies and community organisations are funded to raise awareness and provide elder abuse education.	2, 3	Communities	WA Police, Advocare, Council on the Ageing WA (COTA WA), Legal Aid WA, NSCLC, OPA, Public Trustee, APEA WA, Department of Health, Western Australian Local Government Association	Completed and ongoing	<p>Communities</p> <p>Communities has provided a range of resource to raise awareness of elder abuse, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy to Respond to the Abuse of Older People (Elder Abuse) 2019-2029 Action Plan is available at Elder Abuse and the Mistreatment of Older People • Resources including (but are not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 'The Mistreatment of Older Aboriginal Australians 2022 Report' » 'Mistreatment of Older Aboriginal People infographic' » 'Everyone's Business: Research into responses to the abuse of older people (elder abuse) in Western Australia' » 'Best practice guidelines for interviewing older people at risk.' • In 2023-2024, Communities made connections with the deaf community to seek to increase our understanding of the communication preferences of older deaf people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Auslan interpreters were available at the 2023 World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) presentations. • Communities is developing Easy Read documents that will be available in 2024-25. <p>OPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy Read Documents: Development of a growing suite of Easy Read publications to assist people with a cognitive impairment, those with lower literacy levels and those for whom English is not their first language, to more easily understand a range of concepts and processes regarding guardianship, administration and the role of the OPA and related agencies. • First Nations Audio Translations: Continue to develop First Nations audio translations of OPA publications into key Aboriginal languages. The Public Trustee's website at Financial Elder Abuse: Public Trustee contains information to promote community awareness of financial elder abuse and information on assistance.

Focus area 1: Raise awareness and early identification

No.	Activity/Initiative	Action Area	Lead Organisation	Partners	Status	For the period 2022 to 30 June 2024
1iv	Continue to promote and fund initiatives for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) to raise awareness about elder abuse and address ageism.	1, 3, 4, 5	Communities	Advocare, COTA WA, Legal Aid WA, NSCLC, APEA WA, local governments, Community Sector (including Bankwest)	Completed and ongoing WEAAD is 15 June annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WEAAD Collaborative Group (established in 2022) is led and chaired by Communities and includes representatives from NSCLC, Advocare, Elder Rights WA, COTA WA, Local Government Age-friendly Communities Network and Bankwest to plan a coordinated approach to WEAAD annually. 2024 WEAAD Regional Grants Program provided grants to 22 organisations (including seven Aboriginal organisations). Funding of \$60,000 (ex-GST) per annum is available for the WEAAD Regional Grants Program until 30 June 2027.
1v	Raise awareness of what constitutes mistreatment of older Aboriginal people and where to access support through localised initiatives in regional areas.	1, 2	Communities	Funded elder abuse services	Completed and ongoing	<p>Released the following research and resources in partnership with Indigenous Professional Services (IPS) Management Consultants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'The Mistreatment of Older Aboriginal Australians 2022 Report' 'Mistreatment of Older Aboriginal People' infographic.
1vi	Support the building of a National Knowledge Hub (to consolidate information and resources about abuse of older people in one online location, including for diverse groups of older people) by contributing appropriate resources.	4, 5	Communities	APEA WA	Completed and ongoing	In November 2023, the Elder Abuse Research Reports were submitted to the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department and made available to the public via the Compass Knowledge Hub.

Case Study 1 The Purple Road

The Purple Road is a community project developed by Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre in 2017. It is facilitated by volunteer peer educators and staff from the Older People's Rights Service (OPRS), a statewide service funded by the Department of Communities that offers a free legal and advocacy service to older people over the age of 65 (55+ ASTI) who are at risk of, or currently experiencing elder abuse by a trusted person, for example, family or friends.

The Purple Road aims to raise awareness and provide education on the issues of elder abuse. Elder Abuse can be one or more of these: financial, psychological (coercive), emotional (neglect), physical (sexual or violence). To raise awareness of this important issue, numerous senior community craft groups have created beautiful sections of the Purple Road. Each crocheted or knitted purple flower represents the unique and different stories of older people and their journey of ageing.

With over 40 community groups across Western Australia, the Purple Road reached 100 metres in time for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on 15 June 2024. Some of the sections were on display at Parliament House from 4 -14 June.

Amongst the 40 community groups, the Purple Road reached the Kimberley. The local craft group at Broome Library created a collaborative Purple Road with flowers made by locals as well as visiting travellers coming together for a unique piece. The Broome Purple Road was made over several months with the help of many – what a fantastic community effort to help raise awareness of elder abuse.

The Purple Road also made its way south with fantastic support from the Albany community. Local craft business, Empty Bobbin, was thrilled to offer this project to their older customers. They had such an impact having created such a beautiful namesake for the Purple Road.



Focus area 2: Prevention and early intervention

	Action area	Outcome
1	Promote positive views of ageing, and counter ageism in all its forms.	Older people are respected, valued and socially included. Older people are informed and supported. Carers of older people are informed and supported.
2	Recognise and celebrate older peoples' contributions to the community.	
3	Support older people to remain active and included in their community.	
4	Encourage and support the building of age-friendly and inclusive communities, through the use of the World Health Organisation Age-friendly Cities Framework.	
5	Ensure older people from all backgrounds can easily access information and support services.	
6	Ensure family members, carers and professionals have access to information about elder abuse.	
7	Work with carers organisations to co-design responses to address carer stress as a risk factor in the occurrence of elder abuse.	
8	Work with sectors and professional organisations in frequent contact with older people, their families and carers to recognise the signs of elder abuse and respond appropriately.	
9	Work with relevant sectors, industries and agencies to plan and build socially and physically inclusive communities.	

No.	Activity/Initiative	Action Area	Lead Organisation	Partners	Timing	For the period 2022 to 30 June 2024
2i	Continue to deliver and promote the WA Elder Abuse Helpline.	1, 5, 6, 8	Communities	Advocare	Completed and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WA Elder Abuse Helpline and Information Service received 1,649 calls between 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. Initiatives to promote the WA Elder Abuse Helpline are ongoing and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Information on Advocare and Communities' websites promoting the WA Elder Abuse Helpline and Information Service » The state-wide distribution of 8,000 Elder Abuse Helpline bookmarks in 2023, and 12,838 in 2024 in the lead up to World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. » Advocare's attendance at community events and delivery of education sessions.
2ii	Produce and distribute elder abuse awareness resources for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CaLD), including material translated into other languages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people people who are deaf or hearing-impaired, i.e. an Auslan video on Department of Communities website. 	1, 2, 4, 5	Communities	Communities to liaise with relevant stakeholders. Local governments, public libraries, community resources centres (Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development) and other appropriate organisations to distribute resources.	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific elder abuse awareness resources have been developed for Aboriginal, CaLD, and hearing-impaired people. Available at Elder abuse support services and resources

Focus area 2: Prevention and early intervention

No.	Activity/Initiative	Action Area	Lead Organisation	Partners	Timing	For the period 2022 to 30 June 2024
2iii	Fund the Age-friendly Communities grants program.	1, 2, 3, 4, 9	Communities	Local governments Community	Completed and ongoing (until 24-25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2023–2024, 16 organisations received a share of \$220,000 funding through the Age-friendly Community Grants Program. The Age-friendly Community Grants Program is funded through to 2024-2025. The grants program was delivered in two streams, one to support local governments to progress applications to join the World Health Organisation's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC) and the second for local governments and incorporated not-for-profit community organisations to implement age-friendly, active and positive ageing initiatives.
2iv	Participate in and support the work of the LG Professionals WA (LG Pro WA) Age-friendly Communities Local Government Network to promote the creation of age-friendly communities.	1, 2, 3, 4, 9	LG Pro WA	Communities Local governments	Completed and ongoing	<p>The Communities' Seniors and Ageing and Elder Abuse teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> regularly attend meetings with LG Pro WA, including the Age-friendly Communities Local Government Network. contributed \$50,000 as a one-off contribution for the Age-friendly Australia National Forum (6-8 December 2024) and had a representative on the Planning Committee.
2v	Participate in the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC).	1, 2, 3, 4, 9	Communities	WHO	Completed and ongoing	<p>The Communities' Seniors and Ageing and Elder Abuse teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> regularly attend WHO GNAFCC meetings assist with onboarding new WHO member affiliates internationally provided feedback and testing to WHO on a new online platform for member planning and reporting presented an article on An Age-friendly WA: State Seniors Strategy 2023-2033 for the GNAFCC quarterly newsletter delivered a spotlight presentation to an online meeting of international GNAFCC members and affiliates in January 2024 facilitate opportunities for GNAFCC to showcase their work internationally such as the City of Cockburn to present at the City Diplomacy Lab, and contributions to the French Réseau Francophone des Villes Amies des Aînés publication Gazette des communes facilitated the connection with the WHO GNAFCC Secretariat Office with LG Pro WA to inform planning for the 2024 Age-friendly Australia National Forum

No.	Activity/Initiative	Action Area	Lead Organisation	Partners	Timing	For the period 2022 to 30 June 2024
2vi	Continue to raise awareness of elder abuse through funding and supporting Seniors Week and the WA Seniors Awards.	1, 2, 3, 7	Communities	Communities funded elder abuse services	Completed and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities funded COTA WA to deliver the Seniors Week Community Grants Program and the WA Seniors Awards in November 2022, 2023 and 2024. Lotterywest matched Communities funding for the Grants and Awards in 2023. In 2023 grant funding of \$80,000 was awarded to 76 organisations. Communities promotes positive views of ageing in promotional materials developed for events such as the photo collage prepared for Seniors Week that was displayed in Yagan Square. Under An Age-friendly WA: State Seniors Strategy 2023-2033, Action Plan 2023 to 2027, there is an action to deliver a public campaign to address ageism in WA. With funding of \$400,000 over two years, the project includes innovative approaches to raise awareness of ageism, such as the Life in Pictures short film competition (completed), a statewide campaign over multiple media platforms, and a focus on older Aboriginal people.
2vii	Continue to ensure elder abuse is identified and officer awareness is improved through police recruit training.	1, 8	WA Police	Advocare, Departments of Communities and Health, Legal Aid WA, NSCLC, OPA, Public Trustee, Western Australian Local Government Association	Completed and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'Best practice guidelines for interviewing older people at risk' is available on the WA Police training website.

Focus area 2: Prevention and early intervention

No.	Activity/Initiative	Action Area	Lead Organisation	Partners	Timing	For the period 2022 to 30 June 2024
2viii	Establish regular meetings with Carers WA to collaborate on targeted early detection, self-identification and awareness raising of elder abuse, as carer stress and burnout is a risk factor for elder abuse.	6 7 8 9	Communities	Carers WA	Completed and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities' Seniors and Ageing team met with Carers WA in 2023 and arranged for the Carers WA CEO to be invited to become a member of APEA WA to maintain regular meetings and discuss carers issues related to carers with Communities and the wider WA elder abuse providers quarterly.
2ix	Promote awareness about the mistreatment of older Aboriginal people - connect with Community Resource Centres, other locations which are accessible to older Aboriginal people, and places where they already frequent, to promote awareness.	5 8 9	Communities	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), APEA WA in advisory capacity	Completed and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'Mistreatment of Older Aboriginal Australians 2022 Report'. 'Mistreatment of Older Aboriginal People infographic' Resources are available at Elder abuse support services and resources In June 2022, 2023 and 2024, Communities sent elder abuse resources by post to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCOs), Community Resource Centres (CRCs) and Local Governments across WA.
2x	Support service providers to assist isolated older people to socially connect with the broader community.	1 3 4 9	Communities	APEA WA	Completed and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were three Seniors and Ageing Grants that assisted isolated older people to socially connect with the broader community during the reporting period. Communities has delivered presentations/provided updates on the Elder Abuse Strategy at sector meetings including APEA WA.
2xi	Develop a Strategic Plan to guide the direction of APEA WA.	9	APEA WA	APEA WA members	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of the APEA WA Strategic Plan was undertaken collaboratively with APEA WA members and finalised in 2023.

Case Study 2 'Best Practice Guidelines for Interviewing Older People at Risk of Harm'

On 16 November 2023, as part of WA Seniors Week, the former Minister for Seniors and Ageing, Hon Don Punch MLA, launched a new guide for interviewing older people at risk of harm.

The '[Best Practice Guidelines for Interviewing Older People at Risk](#)' were developed through a collaboration between the Older People's Rights Service at Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre and researchers from the Social Ageing (SAGE) Futures Lab at Edith Cowan University with funding from Department of Communities.

These guidelines are a first of this kind and support legal and justice professionals, law enforcement, financial advisors and other relevant service providers in providing best practice legal and advocacy support services to older people in our community through improved interviewing practices.

The best practice guidelines were developed in response to a finding of research commissioned as a component of the WA Strategy to Respond to the Abuse of Older People, 2019-2019. This research found that professionals working in Western Australia have good awareness of elder abuse but need more resources to support interviewing practice when working with older people at risk of abuse, mistreatment or harm.

To respond to this need, the guidelines were developed with reference to relevant literature and informed by interviews and focus groups with Western Australian professionals working in relevant sectors. This process was guided by a steering group comprising members with subject matter expertise representing key organisations including Advocare, Council on the Ageing WA, Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre, Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing, Office of Commissioner for Victims of Crime, Department of Communities, and the Western Australian Police Force.

The steering group played an essential role to ensure the guidelines are fit-for-purpose and designed with professional end-users in mind. The guidelines aim to balance robust, evidence-based content with an accessible and user-friendly format. The guidelines use plain language, with key terms clearly defined, and employ design features like pop-out boxes, red flag indicators and colour contrasts to aid understanding.

End-users of the guidelines are encouraged to remember that when an older person at risk of harm is attending an interview, they are interacting with this person at what may be one of the most difficult and traumatic points in their life. The interviewer's manner and how you approach that interview is fundamental to how the older person will respond to and may influence how much information they are willing to share. Importantly, interviewing practice may also play a significant role in determining next steps for the older person.



Focus area 3: Integrated and coordinated response

	Action area	Outcome
1	Work with the Commonwealth and other Australian jurisdictions to implement the National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians.	<p>Older people are protected and can recover from abuse.</p> <p>Services and responses are accessible and appropriate to people from all backgrounds.</p> <p>Alleged perpetrators change their behaviour.</p> <p>The service and response systems are integrated.</p>
2	Monitor and progress findings and recommendations arising from relevant State and Commonwealth Parliamentary Committees.	
3	Monitor and respond to findings and recommendations arising from relevant Royal Commissions and other relevant State and Commonwealth inquiries.	
4	Improve legal and justice responses to elder abuse.	
5	Enact amendments to the Guardianship and Administration Act 1990.	
6	Ensure services are culturally safe, responsive, physically accessible, person centred and consistent with best practice.	
7	Investigate the development of perpetrator behaviour change programs and support services.	
8	Explore options to develop a common framework for information sharing and risk assessment for relevant government agencies and community organisations, that includes measures to ensure confidentiality.	

No.	Activity/Initiative	Action Area	Lead Organisation	Partners	Timing	For the period 2022 to 30 June 2024
3i	Deliver a metro-wide Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre (NSCLC) and Older People's Rights Service (OPRS), including state-wide Purple Road initiatives.	4, 6	Communities	NSCLC	Completed and ongoing	<p>Actioned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Service Agreement is in place until 30 June 2029. The Older People's Rights Service (OPRS) provides free legal advice and representation, crisis intervention and short-term counselling, support and advocacy to older people at risk of, or experiencing, elder abuse. OPRS delivered 794 services to 244 clients in Perth in 2023-24 and 137 of these people (56%), were over 80 years old. NSCLC is an active collaborative partner and worked with Communities on the promotion of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, specifically through its Purple Road initiative.
3ii	Deliver the Elder Rights WA (ERWA) service.	4, 6	Communities	Legal Aid WA	Completed and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$1 million annually to Legal Aid WA to establish and deliver 'Elder Rights WA' to support seniors and combat elder abuse. Elder Rights WA delivered 1,701 services to 376 clients across WA in 2023-24. The most common client concerns were guardianship and administration matters, financial abuse, and other property claims. In March 2024, in partnership with Umbrella Multicultural Community Care, Elder Rights WA launched the 'Perceptions of Elder Abuse in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities' initiative to develop a suite of culturally appropriate elder abuse resources and training materials.
3iii	Work with the banking sector to develop and implement measures to reduce the risk of financial elder abuse.	8	Communities	Bankwest	Completed and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities has engaged with the banking sector to raise awareness of financial elder abuse. Bankwest is an active member of the WEAAD Collaborative Planning Group (since 2022). In June 2023 and 2024, Bankwest sent an Electronic Direct Mail to approx. 800,000 customers in Western Australia about financial elder abuse and to raise awareness of WEAAD.
3iv	Maintain funding for a Vulnerable Seniors Peak until June 2024.	6, 8	Communities	COTA WA	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Vulnerable Seniors Peak ceased on 30 June 2024. A new Seniors Peak (under the State Seniors Strategy) commenced 1 July 2024 (delivered by Advocare).

No.	Activity/Initiative	Action Area	Lead Organisation	Partners	Timing	For the period 2022 to 30 June 2024
3v	Participate in advisory groups and national intergovernmental forums related to the implementation of the National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians 2019-2023 (and future National Plans) and advocate on issues of Commonwealth responsibility.	1, 2, 3	Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department	State and Territory Government departments, Community Sector, APEA WA	Completed and ongoing	<p>Communities is a member of the following National Committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint Implementation Executive Group and sub committees (Australian Government Attorney-General's Department): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Research and Data Priorities Working Group » Second National Elder Abuse National Plan Drafting Group, Communities has actively engaged with stakeholders to promote opportunities for feedback. Communities coordinated the data from relevant WA State Government Departments for the evaluation of the National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians 2019-2023. Monitored and responded to findings and recommendations arising from relevant Royal Commissions and other relevant State and Commonwealth inquiries including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety » Disability Royal Commission » National Disability Insurance Scheme Review.
3vi	Enact recommended amendments to the Guardianship and Administration Act 1990 arising from the 2015 Statutory Review to improve safeguarding provisions.	5	Justice	OPA, State Administrative Tribunal, Public Trustee, Department of Health	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department of Justice, Law Reform Commission, will conduct a review of the Guardianship and Administration Act 1990 (WA). Consultation is due to commence in 2025. Communities and the Department of Health WA provided a preliminary submission to the Law Reform Commission of WA for the review of the Guardianship and Administration Act 1990 (WA).
3vii	Investigate restraining order options applicable to an older person in a position to apply for / respond to a family violence restraining order.	4	Justice	WA Police Force, Court and Tribunal Services, Legal Aid WA, NSCLC	On track	<p>Justice: Legal responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WA's consideration of a standalone coercion and control offence will give due regard to the circumstance of elder abuse. Improve the use of the Restraining Orders Act (1997) for older persons in circumstances of Family Violence.
3viii	Investigate complaints and allegations that an adult with a decision-making disability may be at risk of abuse, exploitation or neglect and may require a guardian or administrator or is under an inappropriate guardianship order.	4	Department of Justice – Office of Public Advocate	WA Police Force, Court and Tribunal Services, Legal Aid WA, NSCLC	Completed and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please see www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au.

No.	Activity/Initiative	Action Area	Lead Organisation	Partners	Timing	For the period 2022 to 30 June 2024
3ix	Explore the introduction of vulnerable older adults safeguarding options to ensure that their health and wellbeing are always put first.	1, 2, 3, 4	Communities	Communities will consult with relevant stakeholders	Completed and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities funds multiple elder abuse services to support vulnerable older adults including Elder Rights WA, Older People's Rights Service and the WA Elder Abuse Helpline and Information Service. State Government agencies are members of the National Adult Safeguarding Roundtable.
3x	Explore options to develop a Western Australian Charter of Rights for Older Persons. (UN Principles for Older Persons, 1991)	6, 8	Communities	APEA WA	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work is underway to develop the Charter.
3xi	Update the Elder abuse protocol: guidelines for action.	6, 8	APEA WA	Advocare, APEA WA	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Elder Abuse protocol, guidelines for action are guidelines to assist staff and professionals working with older people to identify and response to Elder Abuse. This action is identified in the APEA Strategic Plan and will be led by APEA.
3xii	Review the Responding to elder abuse policy to assist relevant health services providers to identify and respond to elder abuse and support its early detection to reduce incidences in WA.	2, 3, 6	Department of Health	APEA WA	Completed and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WA's Department of Health has implemented the Responding to Elder Abuse Policy (the Policy), first published in September 2019. The Policy remains current and can be viewed on the WA Department of Health Website at: https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/About-us/Policy-frameworks/Clinical-Services-Planning-and-Programs/Mandatory-requirements/Aged-Care/Responding-to-the-Abuse-of-Older-People-Policy Preparatory work for a review of this Policy has commenced.
3xiii	Review the elder abuse e-learning modules in the aged care learning management system.	2, 3, 6	WA Country Health Service	Aged care providers	Completed and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WA Country Health Service has two programs available in the Learning Management System: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Abuse of the Older Person – Manager Module (AOP2 EL2) » Abuse of the Older Person – Direct Care Worker Module (AOP1 EL2). Both programs are under the Aged Care Directorate.
3xiv	Continue to provide funding to facilitate APEA WA.	1, 2, 3, 8	Department of Health	Advocare	Completed and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department of Health WA has a funding agreement in place with Advocare for specified elder abuse activities until 30 June 2025. APEA WA members include the Departments of Communities, Health, Justice, WA Police Force and elder abuse service providers in WA.

Case Study 3 Bankwest - working with the banking sector to develop and implement measures to reduce the risk of financial elder abuse

Bankwest has been a part of the fabric of WA for more than 130 years and, today, remains committed to supporting the communities of its home state, particularly those in vulnerable circumstances. Bankwest is actively involved in raising awareness of financial elder abuse through various initiatives and collaborations, including the strong relationship built with the Department of Communities and as a proud supporter of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Bankwest has also coordinated roundtable events, providing a platform for discussing the challenges faced by older Australians and exploring ways to better identify, support, and protect them.

In March 2024, Bankwest announced its digital transition as part of its ambition to be Australia's favourite digital bank and put in place a range of measures to support customers through that transformation. Key to that support was its Digital Banking Workshops, designed to empower customers – particularly those who are older or less digitally active – with the knowledge and skills to engage with digital banking safely, securely, and – importantly – with confidence. Bankwest has delivered more than 180 of workshops to more than 1300 customers.

A range of resources has been developed by Bankwest to educate and support older Australians and their families, notably the “Safe and Savvy Guide”, which is a comprehensive resource that provides practical tips on how customers can protect themselves from financial abuse and scams. This guide has been widely distributed and is available for use by any industry and any person – no matter who they bank with. This guide is complemented by educational videos and the Safe and Savvy

Banking education presentations that are conducted across retirement villages, community events, and council events. In addition to resources provided to customers and the community, Bankwest colleagues undergo specialist training from bodies such as the Public Advocate, as well as eLearning and Learner Home modules, to better understand and support customers experiencing elder financial abuse.

Bankwest has been actively engaged in the community to raise awareness of financial elder abuse, having participated in a range of critical strategic discussions, such as the Economic Abuse Awareness Group (EARG WA), hosted by Consumer Credit Legal Service WA, as well as various community events, including the Care and Ageing Well Expo, Seniors Week events, and supporting Rockingham Seniors. Critically, Bankwest also coordinates and hosts its Community of Leaders Forum, which gathers peak bodies together – such as Advocare and WACOSS, for example – to discuss challenges faced by their unique clientele, and how Bankwest and financial institutions could better support those customers. Bankwest also operates a Community Council, which includes sector experts available to provide individual advice and direction on specific issues, including those that affect older Australians.

Each year, Bankwest commissions its independent ‘Hidden Costs Report’, which provides insights into the prevalence of and attitudes towards financial abuse in Western Australia. This report includes an analysis specifically of financial elder abuse that is released each year to mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.



In 2024, Bankwest launched its dedicated Community Assistance Line (CAL) (1800 433 932, Option 3), complementing its range of existing specialty teams, with a remit that includes the specific support of those experiencing elder financial abuse. The CAL team is trained to identify and support customers in vulnerable circumstances and provides confidential consultations, while being able to connect customers with external support services, such as Advocare’s Elder Abuse Helpline, Good Shepherd, and 1800RESPECT.

Bankwest’s dedicated Scams and Fraud team also has training, support, and methods in place for its “Save Our 70s” initiative, providing additional investment in acknowledgment of older Australians being overrepresented in scam and fraud victims.



Priority Area 4: Data and evidence

Action area					Outcome	
1	Support and fund further research on elder abuse prevalence, drivers and experiences, including specific research and data collection on the experiences of more marginalised, vulnerable and diverse cohorts.	Elder abuse policies, programs and services are evidence based. The effectiveness of policies and programs can be measured and evaluated				
2	Support and fund research on carer stress and its relationship with elder abuse.					
3	Improve and facilitate data collection and sharing, in accordance with existing State Government and agency policies on data confidentiality.					
4	Support and contribute to the National Research Agenda on Elder Abuse.					
No.	Activity/Initiative	Action Area	Lead Organisation	Partners	Timing	For the period 2022 to 30 June 2024
4i	Determine which organisations and government agencies should be collecting data on elder abuse.	1, 3, 4	Communities	Commonwealth Attorney General, State and Territory Governments	Completed and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities has liaised with the Commonwealth Attorney General Department and provided feedback regarding comparable data collection for the Elder Abuse Helplines in all jurisdictions. The WA Elder Abuse Helpline and Information Services was engaged in this process (completed). Data is collected from the Elder Abuse Helplines Nationally quarterly (ongoing). Communities has reviewed all Communities funded Elder Abuse services reporting requirements (completed). Data is provided by all Communities funded elder abuse services through annual contract reporting (ongoing).

No.	Activity/Initiative	Action Area	Lead Organisation	Partners	Timing	For the period 2022 to 30 June 2024
4ii	Complete research into forms of mistreatment experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander older people and the unique challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander older people.	1, 4	Communities	Indigenous Professional Services (IPS) Management Consultants	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'The Mistreatment of Older Aboriginal Australians 2022 Report', completed. • 'Mistreatment of Older Aboriginal People infographic,' completed. • Resources are available at Elder abuse support services and resources
4iii	Complete research into elder abuse drivers and protective factors in WA.	1, 4	Communities	University of Western Australia (UWA), NSCLC and Project working group	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Everyone's Business: Research into responses to the abuse of older people (elder abuse) in Western Australia,' completed. Available at Elder abuse support services and resources
4iv	Continue to contribute to the development of an agreed set of national research priorities through participation on a national working group.	3, 4	Commonwealth Attorney General	All jurisdictions, with Communities being the WA representative	Completed and ongoing	<p>Communities represents the WA Government on the following National Elder Abuse committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Implementation Executive Group and sub committees (Australian Government Attorney-General's Department): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Research and Data Priorities Working Group » Second Elder Abuse National Elder Abuse Plan Drafting Group • National Adult Safeguarding Roundtable. • Communities was also a member of the Elder Abuse and Rural, Regional and Remote Communities Evaluation Committee.
4v	Continue to contribute to the national data picture on elder abuse.	3, 4	Communities	Advocare, Communities will consult with other relevant stakeholders	Completed and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities is a member of National Committees that address a national data picture on elder abuse as listed above (4iv). • Communities has supported Advocare regarding data collection for the WA Elder Abuse Helpline and have regular meetings to support Advocare with any issue that they encounter regarding data collection. • Communities is a member of the Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (WA). Communities regularly provides updates to the members regarding the national data picture on elder abuse.

Case Study 4 The Mistreatment of Older Aboriginal People Infographic



Priority 4ii) Complete research into forms of mistreatment experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander older people and the unique challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander older people.

In 2022, the Mistreatment of Older Aboriginal People Infographic was commissioned through IPS Management Consultants as an initiative of the WA Strategy to Respond to the Abuse of Older People (Elder Abuse) 2019 to 2029. The aim of the infographic was to provide culturally appropriate information regarding elder abuse and mistreatment for older Aboriginal people and the organisations that are providing support services.

The infographic has been made available at a diverse range of community events including (but not limited to) NAIDOC Week, Seniors and Ageing Expos, Seniors Week and WEAAD in both metropolitan and regional Western Australia.

The infographic can be viewed online at [Elder abuse support services and resources](#).

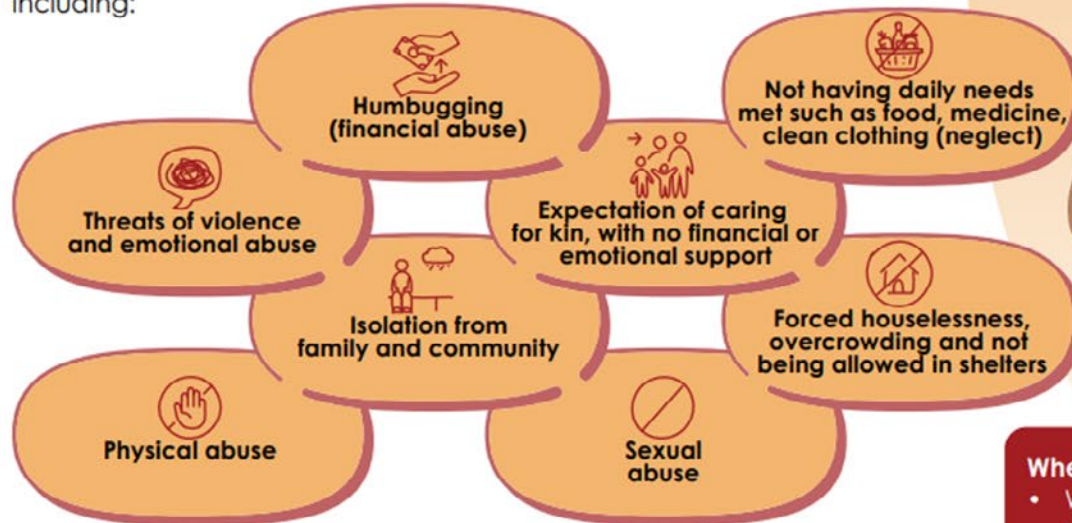


The mistreatment of older Aboriginal people

The mistreatment of older Aboriginal people is underreported. It's so common that people think it's normal behaviour, and many people don't share their stories because they don't want to hurt their family or feel shame. We need to care for older Aboriginal people, and the first step is recognising when they're being mistreated.

What is mistreatment?

Older Aboriginal people are experiencing various forms of mistreatment and neglect by people they trust within community, including:



Older people are struggling to identify that they're being abused, because their heart is to give, and they want to give. I think any parent wants to give to their family members.



Where to go for help:

- WA Elder Abuse Helpline 1300 724 679
- Have a yarn with someone you trust, like your doctor
- Elder Rights WA (state-wide legal service) 1300 650 579
- Older People's Rights Service (free legal advice and support in Perth metro area) (08) 9440 1663

Department of Communities

Postal Address: Locked Bag 5000, Fremantle WA 6959

Telephone: 1800 176 888

Email: enquiries@communities.wa.gov.au

Website: www.communities.wa.gov.au

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)

Telephone: 13 14 50

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment,
contact us through the National Relay Service.

For more information visit:

www.accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs