

MEDIA RELEASE

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COTA Australia commends whole-of-government approach to tackling elder abuse

Leading seniors' advocacy body, COTA Australia, today welcomed the launch by Attorney General Christian Porter of the *National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians*, including the rollout of a new national, elder abuse free call number and a series of national trials of frontline services.

Chief Executive of COTA Australia, Ian Yates, commended the Federal and state/territory governments for working together to rollout a decisive action plan to reverse the growing incidence of elder abuse suffered by far too many older Australians.

COTA Australia welcomed the introduction of a national framework, which will involve all levels of government, something for which COTA has long advocated.

“Over the last few years we have heard harrowing accounts of elder abuse which have been completely unacceptable. Sadly I suspect we will hear similar such stories come out of the hearings of the Aged Care Royal Commission - but we also need to remember that equally sadly and objectionably, most elder abuse happens within families in the community.

“Elder abuse takes a myriad of forms, including psychological abuse, financial abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse, and often a combination of these. Too often incidences of elder abuse go unreported because they are carried out by carers or trusted individuals such as family members.

“Every single older Australian deserves to be confident they will be safe from elder abuse in all its forms and in the event that they are abused, they should have access to resources that will allow them to safely reach out for help and support receive necessary protection,” said Mr Yates.

In particular, COTA Australia welcomes the announcement of a new national elder abuse free call number, which will allow older Australians in every state and territory to confidentially discuss cases of elder abuse, and receive referrals and information, so they can be protected.

“In a perfect world, elder abuse wouldn't exist at all and every older Australian would be treated with the respect and dignity they rightfully deserve; however, in reality we know this isn't always the case. Therefore, when incidences of elder abuse do occur, older Australians should be able to access safe and reliable services to report an incident and receive advice and support,” said Mr Yates.

COTA Australia welcomes the allocation of \$18 million over four years under the *More Choices for a Longer life* package to rollout a series of national trials of frontline services designed to support those older Australians who are victims of elder abuse.

“These trials, which will be rolled out in every state and territory, will allow the Government and the sector to identify which services are most effective in providing support to victims of elder abuse, and then incorporate these into a longer-term plan to put an end to elder abuse.

COTA Australia looks forward to working with all levels of government, the organisations involved in the frontline service trials, and most importantly, older Australians themselves, to monitor the implementation of these trials and the national plan.

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