



Inquiry into Elder Abuse in Queensland

About this paper

The Education, Arts and Communities Committee (the Committee) has launched its Inquiry into Elder Abuse in Queensland (the Inquiry).

This paper provides information about the various forms elder abuse may take.

What is elder abuse?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines elder abuse as *a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person*.¹

Elder abuse is:

- **More common than you think.** 1 in 6 older Australians report experiencing abuse.
- **Close to home.** Perpetrators are often in the family, most commonly adult children.
- **Hidden and underreported.** Almost two thirds of older people don't seek help (61%).²

Different forms of elder abuse

Physical abuse is an act that causes physical pain or injury to an older person. It includes, but is not limited to, actions such as hitting, pushing or kicking. Inappropriate use of drugs or physical restraints is also an example of physical abuse.

Sexual abuse is any sexual behaviour performed without an older person's consent. It includes sexual contact and non-contact acts of a sexual nature that cause an older person to feel uncomfortable or threatened, or cause physical hurt.

Psychological or emotional abuse is an act that causes emotional pain or injury to an older person. It includes, but is not limited to, insults or threats, humiliation or disrespect and controlling behaviours such as confining or isolating the older person.

Financial abuse is the misuse or theft of an older person's money or assets. It includes, but is not limited to, using finances without permission, using a legal document such as an enduring power of attorney for purposes contrary to the interests of the older person, withholding care for financial gain, and selling or transferring property against the older person's wishes or without the person's knowledge.

Social Abuse is forcing someone to become isolated by restricting their access to others including family, friends or services. This can be used to prevent others from finding out about the abuse.

Neglect is the failure of a carer, or other responsible person, to meet an older person's basic needs such as food, housing and essential medical care. It includes, but is not limited to, providing inadequate food, drink or supervision, isolating the older person, allocating medication inappropriately and failing to meet physical needs (e.g. in relation to hygiene and skin care).³

¹ World Health Organisation, *The Toronto declaration on the global prevention of elder abuse*, 2002, eapon.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/toronto_declaration_en.pdf.

² Queensland Government, Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety, *What is Elder Abuse?*, 2024, dcssds.qld.gov.au/campaign/stop-elder-abuse/what-elder-abuse.

³ As above.



EDUCATION, ARTS AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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If you need help

Elder abuse hotline

Free, anonymous and confidential assistance,
9am–5pm, Monday to Friday.

- **1300 651 192** (Queensland only)
- **(07) 3867 2525** (rest of Australia)

In an emergency, call triple zero (000).

More information

Australian Human Rights Commission
[Elder Abuse](#)

Australian Human Rights Commission [Elder abuse: Shift your perspective](#) (YouTube)

Australian Human Rights Commission
[Elder Abuse. Know the signs](#) (YouTube)

Department of Families, Seniors, Disability
Services and Child Safety
[What is elder abuse?](#)

The Inquiry

If you would like to have your say or relate your experiences, the Committee invites submissions on any aspect of the Inquiry, from all interested parties.

For further information visit the [Inquiry webpage](#).

To make a submission, please read the [Guide to making a submission](#), then lodge your submission [here](#).

Committee Members

Nigel Hutton MP (Chair)
Member for Keppel

Corrine McMillan MP (Deputy Chair)
Member for Mansfield

Wendy Bourne MP
Member for Ipswich West

Nicholas Dametto MP
Member for Hinchinbrook

Ariana Doolan MP
Member for Pumicestone

Jon Krause MP
Member for Scenic Rim

Please feel free to share this information with any interested stakeholders in the community.

Scan QR code



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