

Inquiry into Elder Abuse in Queensland

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Elder abuse takes many forms and the person being abused is not always aware of what is happening. Case in point I have a friend in her 70's who was living with her daughter and granddaughters and yet she was the one who was doing all of the cooking, cleaning and shopping, taking granddaughters to work and the list goes on. No money for the shopping was handed over, she was also paying her share of the rent and just wasn't making ends meet – she is on the pension. I listened to her when she was talking and often she would be telling me about the goings on in the house – how she was expected to do all of these things and financially she struggled to make ends meet. One day I just said to her you do understand that this is a form of elder abuse – she was shocked. She had been a nurse, a district nurse and also looked after the elderly in their homes and yet she had just accepted what was happening to herself without questioning it.

Until I mentioned it. We did a lot of talking and she decided that she couldn't do anything until she found somewhere safe to live. Another friend helped with that. It took a couple of months to save the money to be able to move, I have no idea how she did it because every penny was accounted for. It is 12 months since she has moved into the new place, she has contact with her family but it is limited and she only assists with food if asked due to the nature of her daughter's work and the price of rents going up. Both granddaughters are saving for their own cars and understand that if they need to be taken anywhere then it is under my friend's rules. Over all my friend is a lot happier BUT she is not able to get on the housing list due to her being a co signer for a loan that her daughter took out to buy a place at one time. I have done as much as I can in this regard too – no idea what her daughter has been telling her about the property (daughter will never live there again) and the loan. From what I can work out she has been to housing and it was a strong 'no' to being able to apply for accommodation. Now my understanding is that housing would be getting women (and men) in what I will just say similar situations whereby they are on a mortgage and the relationship has broken down and I would assume that housing would be found for them – please correct me if I am wrong. I was not happy when my friend told me this – I know that housing is a problem BUT there is a rather large vulnerable group of women (and men) that are being let down. They are lucky if they have friends who can assist them BUT they are also in the same age group and what happens when they cannot stay where they are due to becoming infirm or their other half passing away and the work load is too much?