

National Plan to End the Abuse and Mistreatment of Older People 2024-2034 – Executive Summary for public consultation

Our vision

All older people feel safe, valued and heard; have their rights protected and promoted; and live free from abuse and mistreatment

This National Plan commits to:

- Giving a voice to the **diverse needs** and **aspirations** of older people, and advocating for their **rights**
- Providing **national leadership** and direction to governments, service providers and community organisations working to **end the abuse and mistreatment of older people**
- Delivering **improved governance**, strong systems of **accountability** and robust **evaluation** mechanisms for the implementation of its commitments
- **Addressing gaps** and **outstanding priorities** from the first *National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians 2019-2023*.

This National Plan should be considered in conjunction with other Commonwealth, State and Territory Government strategies and reform efforts that either directly or indirectly address the abuse and mistreatment of older people.

Key principles underpinning the National Plan

The principles identify overarching themes that underpin the entire National Plan and actions to be taken under it by governments, stakeholders and the broader community.

Taking a human rights approach

A strong focus on prevention and early intervention

Combatting Ageism

Supporting individual decision-making, autonomy and dignity

Listening to and learning from the experiences of older people and diverse communities

A person-centred and trauma-informed response

The National Plan is a 10 year strategy with detailed activities to be captured in two, five-year Action Plans.

The abuse and mistreatment of older people (sometimes referred to as 'elder abuse') is a complex health, justice and social issue that can have devastating consequences for older people, their families, and communities. Abuse can be physical, sexual, psychological or emotional, financial or neglect.

First Nations people aged **50 years+** are considered older, which is reflective of a number of factors, including lower life expectancy.

The number of people aged **85 years+** will more than triple over the next 40 years



The **65 years+** age group is expected to more than double in the next forty years



The World Health Organisation 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.

This National Plan acknowledges the **diverse experiences and characteristics** of older individuals and is committed to ending the abuse and mistreatment of **all individuals**.

We recognise that people or groups can experience abuse and mistreatment **differently**, and at different rates, based on **exposure to discrimination and disadvantage which can intersect with ageism**. An example is people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Some individuals and groups can also face more **complex barriers** in **seeking and receiving support**. Abuse and mistreatment among older First Nations people can also be different, and experienced younger and at different rates.

Our efforts are informed by, and responsive to, the **diverse** needs of **communities**. We also seek to harness the **strengths**, and enhance the **protections**, that being part of a **connected community** can provide.

Visit the [website link](#) or scan the QR code to view the full consultation DRAFT National Plan



Focus Areas

These are the high-level priorities which will guide action over the life of this National Plan, and its underpinning Action Plans.

Focus Area 1	Focus Area 2	Focus Area 3	Focus Area 4
Increase whole of community awareness, education and engagement	Enhance legal frameworks and adult safeguarding responses	Strengthen the capacity and capability of services, including through targeted education and training for professionals	Address gaps in the evidence base and increase collaboration
Priority Actions	Priority Actions	Priority Actions	Priority Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Review existing communication resources on abuse and the rights of older people, to develop evidence-based national guidance 1.2. Invest in local community engagement activities to improve understanding of the abuse of older people, and strategies to prevent it 1.3. Ensure First Nations Peoples and other Priority Groups are involved in the design and delivery of communications addressing ageism and abuse 1.4. Develop initiatives to combat ageism and foster age-friendly communities 1.5. Identify, develop and promote abuse prevention initiatives targeted at the individual, community and system levels 1.6. Develop targeted, complementary communication campaigns and materials addressing ageism and the abuse of older people, and promoting help seeking 1.7. Continue to make improvements to Compass.info 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. Continue efforts to achieve greater national consistency in enduring power of attorney laws 2.2. Continue to raise awareness about the importance of planning ahead for decision making in later years and rights and obligations in relation to enduring instruments 2.3. Consider relevant recommendations of the Disability Royal Commission, through government responses in each jurisdiction 2.4. Strengthen safeguarding frameworks and clarify pathways for abuse to be reported and addressed 2.5. Explore enhancements to the role of institutions in preventing and responding to financial abuse 2.6. Continue to implement the Australian Government's response to the Aged Care Royal Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Identify best-practice quality and safety standards for specialist elder abuse services 3.2. Better target service responses and referral pathways to address the needs of people who cause harm to older people 3.3. Strengthen the 1800ELDERHelp phone lines, including by improving staff capacity and enhancing data collection 3.4. Increase equity of access to specialist services by considering service types, geographical distribution and the needs of First Nations Peoples and other Priority Groups 3.5. Strengthen the cultural competency and diversity of specialist service staff and embed a trauma-informed and culturally safe approach 3.6. Improve the scope and consistency of education for professionals in relevant occupations to ensure they are equipped to identify and respond to ageism and abuse 3.7. Engage with educational institutions to increase pathways for individuals who wish to develop expertise in preventing abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1. Develop a national evidence-based prevention framework 4.2. Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for this National Plan 4.3. Undertake research that addresses gaps in the Australian evidence base on the abuse of older people and ageism 4.4. Strengthen government, sector and community collaboration through investment in dedicated communities of practice 4.5. Strengthen engagement through investment in key forums such as the Australian Elder Abuse Conference Series