

Media Release
Thursday, 11th June 2020

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day: Together we are better, always!

ARAS has held an annual WEAAD conference for the past 14 years, and this year will be hosting an inaugural WEAAD online forum, with **'Together we are better'** as the theme.

The forum will be held on Friday, 12th June 2020, from 10am-11.30am ACST, and will be opened by the Honourable Stephen Wade MLC, Minister for Health and Wellbeing.

Carolanne Barkla, Chief Executive of ARAS, says, "The theme resonates appropriately with our current circumstances and the need for collaboration and community awareness of the abuse of older people in particular during this COVID-19 pandemic".

Ms Barkla adds the forum will focus on how government agencies, service providers, advocacy groups and the community can all work together to deliver quality care and support services to older people with compassion, without compromising their rights, to ensure their ongoing wellbeing. The forum will also focus on gaps in current supports, aligned with recommendations from the Australian Law Reform Commission Report: Elder Abuse - A National Legal Response (ALRC Report) as well as best practice in prevention, responding to abuse of older people and adult safeguarding.

Abuse of older people can be defined 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 and distress to an older person'. Abuse can take various forms such as physical, psychological, emotional, sexual or financial abuse. It can also be the result of intentional or unintentional neglect. WHO 2002

The Hon. Dr Kay Patterson AO, Age Discrimination Commissioner, will present on ageism and abuse of older people. The Commissioner champions the rights of older workers, focusing on the blight of abuse of older people and encouraging innovative solutions to homelessness amongst older Australians.

Janet Anderson PSM, Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner, will present on ways to protect aged care consumers in the context of a pandemic. The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission is at the forefront of the drive to ensure aged care providers deliver safe and quality care to older Australians and is the primary point of contact for consumers in relation to that quality and safety.

Carolanne Barkla will give an overview of ARAS service delivery in 2018/2019 as well as an abridged version of her annual State of the Nation presentation, which will reflect on a small number of outstanding recommendations of the ALRC Report.

Geoff Rowe, CEO of ADA Australia, will present on his observations from the Paul Tys Churchill Fellowship, including world's best practice in preventing and responding to elder abuse in aged care and the community. Adult safeguarding, in the context of COVID-19, will be presented by Cassie Mason, Director, Office for Ageing Well, SA Health.

Abuse of older people is a complex, global health and social issue, which needs to be addressed and prevented. ARAS is encouraging communities to stand up speak out and to share messages on its Facebook page to mark WEAAD 2020 whether it is wearing a purple ribbon or hosting a virtual morning tea, it is important that we all know and understand the impact of abuse of older people. Every one of us deserves to lead a safe and happy life, free from abuse, as we age.

Media contact:
Carolanne Barkla
Chief Executive
0439 206 184