

MEDIA RELEASE

June 14, 2019



LEGAL AID WA JOINS FORCES WITH ADVOCARE TO ENHANCE SUPPORT TO THOSE EXPERIENCING ELDER ABUSE

Legal Aid WA (LAWA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Advocare to ensure seniors who call the Elder Abuse Helpline have the best possible outcomes.

As part of the partnership agreement, those who call Advocare's Elder Abuse Help Line can now be directly transferred to Legal Aid WA if they require legal advice.

The announcement recognises World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on Saturday June 15 and will also allow Advocare advocates to make direct contact with lawyers at Legal Aid to obtain information about legal issues that might impact on vulnerable older Western Australians.

In addition, lawyers at Legal Aid WA will be able to make direct contact with advocates to refer their clients for non-legal advocacy, support and referral.

In January LAWA opened the Seniors Rights and Advocacy Service to respond to a high number of cases and provide specialised legal assistance to elderly West Australians. Since then lawyers have already assisted 186 West Australians affected by elder abuse.

LAWA's Director of Civil Law Justin Stevenson said the agreement reflects a shared vision and joint commitment to provide effective, responsive and seamless advocacy and legal services to older Western Australians.

"About 1 in 20 older Western Australians will suffer some form of elder abuse, with over 60 per cent of the abusers of older people being their sons or daughters," he said.

"Financial abuse is the most likely form of elder abuse and we are working to ensure seniors have access to justice in these sometimes vulnerable situations.

"The memorandum will enhance the support to protect the rights of older Western Australians and empower those affected by elder abuse," Mr Stevenson said.

Advocare's services are made available to older people seeking information and support with the aged care system and those experiencing elder abuse, concerned friends, family members, professionals, and the community. Support services include the WA Elder Abuse Helpline, the National Aged Care Advocacy program and the Community Visitors Scheme.

WA Elder Abuse Helpline : 1300 724 679

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