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## Message from the Editor



We received lots of positive feedback on our autumn edition of Golden Years that ran the Dementia and Ageing theme. Copies are distributed to 1,000 service providers and I hear that Golden Years is passed around widely. I am always pleasantly surprised when I meet readers who are not even on the official distribution list. One person told me it is a great community based newsletter that informs people widely of issues and best practice in multicultural aged care.

This winter edition raises issues such as language barriers faced by culturally diverse seniors who wish to remain as independent as they can. Several programs showcase ways to assist older people of non-English speaking backgrounds to navigate the maze of aged care services.

We are running the special theme of *Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness in this issue*. Mistreatment of older people who live at home is a hidden issue. Abuse is usually a breach of trust by a family member or close friend of the older person. Nobody likes to think of themselves as a victim and people do not like to admit that a family member is the perpetrator. Welfare and aged care staff who deal with community-dwelling culturally and linguistically diverse older people sometimes suspect that something is wrong.

It takes confidence and some specialised knowledge to respond in the appropriate way to suspected mistreatment whilst preserving the dignity of those concerned. Contributors have sent in an extensive collection of articles on related topics which provide a good basis for developing a better understanding of abuse of older people in ethnic communities. Issues are presented from the point of view of the older person, health professionals, legal advocates, carers, the Victorian government, the ethnic community-based providers, and international networks trying to establish a world where older people can live safely and with dignity. This edition provides both hope and practical strategies for moving beyond the winter of our discontent concerning the wellbeing of culturally diverse seniors.

Dr Irene A Bouzo, *Editor*

## Reader Responses

I just received my copy of Golden Years (Issue Number 96, Autumn Edition March 2009). Congratulations it's a wonderful edition. The articles are excellent. I'm sure it will be a very useful publication for many involved with Dementia.

Thank you again for the opportunity of being a part of your publication. I look forward to further editions.

There are occasions where I sometimes forward copies of some great newsletters/articles that have come across in my desk. Recently, the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria dedicated the whole issue of Golden Years, their newsletter on ethnic aged care issues to the topics of Dementia and Ageing.

I thank the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria for giving me permission to forward it on in its entirety to all on my contact list, both nationally and internationally.



## Aged care services: How well informed are CALD older people?

Klaudia Vainshtein is a Senior Project Officer at the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing. For the last four years she has provided hundreds of information sessions to thousands of migrant elderly in Victoria; conducted numerous community focus groups and delivered training to the aged care staff. Klaudia has organised successful seminars targeting all professions in the aged care industry.



Ageing people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are facing many challenges. As a result, these elderly may not fully benefit from the opportunities and choices available to enhance positive ageing. The Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing conducted a small study to identify the barriers facing migrant elderly people from ethnically diverse communities and the strategies that could address such barriers.

A series of focus groups (total 48 people) were conducted with migrant elderly from six ethnic backgrounds: Arabic, Chinese, Macedonian, Serbian, Spanish and Sri Lankan within the Melbourne metropolitan region. The questions included:

- What do you know about available aged care services?
- Where would you seek help/information about aged care services?
- What would you understand if information on aged care issues was provided in English?
- What would you like to know about aged care services?
- How would you like to receive information about aged care services?

The study outcomes identified five main barriers to use of aged care services:

- Lack of proficiency in English
- Limited access to information
- Lack of knowledge about aged care services
- Intergenerational issues
- Communication

### **Lack of proficiency in English**

Of the interviewed participants, 36 out of 48 people were unable to read and understand information provided in English, and only 5 people read the local English newspaper. The vast majority relied on print, radio and TV information in their own language. This is one of the major implications for service providers, given that more than half the participants said they would understand less than 20% of any information provided in English.

### **Limited access to information**

Of the 48 migrant elderly 5 learned about available services from Migrant Resource Centres and the local councils; 11 from family members; 9 from Centrelink and health services; 7 did not know where they could seek information; and 2 said that would go to the police station or ask a taxi driver. It seems that taxi services are seen by some elderly people as part of the aged care or government system that assists older people.

### **Lack of knowledge about available services**

Poor access to information from adequate sources results in migrant older people knowing little or nothing about aged care services, as was the case for half of the participants. One of them explained, "I was looking after my parents and my in-laws. I knew nothing about aged care services."

On many occasions Centrelink was mentioned as a 'one-stop' organisation that could assist with any age related issues. No one person could identify a specific aged care service organisation that could provide information on aged care.



# Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness

## *Language Barriers*

### **Aged care services: How well informed are CALD older people? .... continued**

#### **Intergenerational issues**

Many participants were taking care of their parents without any type of assistance and had no knowledge of what services were available for older people. At the same time, although most relied on their children for communicating with healthcare professionals, they didn't expect to be looked after by them in their old age. Only six people expected their children to look after them.

#### **Poor communication**

Ageing migrant elderly are not sufficiently informed about their choices and rights. What's more, their wishes and needs are not always listened to or acted upon. Migrant elderly are often confused about where to go or who to contact for information about aged care services.

Although many organisations try to reach out to migrant elderly, some do this ineffectively. For example, there is no point in producing glossy brochures if the intended audience cannot read and understand them. Organisations should be culturally responsive and keep in mind their clients' specific needs. Information needs to be presented in plain English, translate the most important parts in the preferred language of clients and use professional interpreters whenever needed. Use of adult children as interpreters is not professional and could result in miscommunication or could even have more damaging implications. One of the elderly men participating in the study said, "At the meeting in the nursing home no professional interpreter was present, so my daughter was used as interpreter. It was humiliating to talk about private issues in front of her."

#### **How well informed are Australian migrant elderly?**

In short not well enough. Older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds want more information on options and choices. They also would like to be consulted and be heard. More than half of participants said they would like to know as much as possible about services, while 6 of 48 people would like to know about aged care services sometime in the future. Most said they would like to learn about options in aged care by means of presentations/seminars and written material (32 of 48 people) in their own language. Some would like to be kept informed through ethnic radio programs (9 of 48 people). As many as 70% percent would like to be given the opportunity to ask questions about issues important to them.

An essential merit of this study is that it gives voice to the participants' viewpoints. This offers the best chances of identifying strategies that are most likely to help overcome the barriers highlighted above. Such strategies include enhanced communication and better access to information through various means (presentations, publications, and radio programs) in their preferred language.

This study also points to the fact that many organisations within the aged care sector are not effectively reaching elderly from culturally diverse backgrounds, despite the majority of participants expressing a desire to know more about aged care options. These findings have important implications in terms of developing effective dissemination strategies that provide equal access to aged care services to all potential clients. Enhanced communication is needed to ensure that migrant elderly can benefit from aged care services that are available to all older people in Victoria.

#### **Klaudia Vainshtein**

*Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing*



### **Glossary of Aged Care Terminology**

A resource for interpreters and translators to ensure the consistency translations of aged care terminology. Visit the weblink: <http://www.culturaldiversity.com.au/Default.aspx?tabid=106>



# Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness

## *Language Barriers*

### Supporting Bilingual Staff at Work

Many services, especially those working with ethnic aged clients, could not function without staff members who regularly use more than one language at work. At present, however, there are no universally accepted standards, qualifications or assessment measures for bilingual staff.

The Victorian Government's language services policy recognises that bilingual staff are an important part of language services, but does not elaborate on how they can be used. In 2008 the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health (CEH) published a set of guidelines to assist Victorian Government departments and funded agencies in recruiting and employing bilingual staff.

The Bilingual Staff Research Project, funded by the Victorian Multicultural Commission, employed a staged consultative process to develop the guidelines; this included a discussion paper, a public forum and roundtable discussions involving government, ethnic communities, service providers and the language services sector. Two key findings are outlined below.

The distinction between two-way and three-way communication encounters was not always clear. The report therefore offered the following definitions: two-way communication involved staff communicating in English and another language as part of their occupation or function; three-way communication involved staff communicating in English and another language to facilitate communication between two or more parties. The report also describes differences between bilingual staff and interpreters.

Culture is considered an integral part of effective communication but needs to be addressed separately. Many respondents believed culture is an important component of the definition of a bilingual staff member, while others felt that working effectively between or across cultures required a separate skill set and need not be embedded within the definition of bilingual staff.

Guidelines that emerged from this project covered risk management; how to effectively work with bilingual staff in your organisation; language skills to consider when employing bilingual staff; strategies for the recruitment of bilingual staff; and organisational considerations.

CEH will develop and promote training to support the growth of bilingual workers in government-funded services. It is also seeking to develop partnerships with health service providers to encourage and support the development of bilingual workforce models that can be documented and shared.

For the detailed report and the guidelines, including methodology and discussion paper, please visit [www.ceh.org.au/resources](http://www.ceh.org.au/resources). For further information contact Spase Velanovski on (03) 9342-9703 or [spasev@ceh.org.au](mailto:spasev@ceh.org.au).

#### **Spase Velanovski**

*Project Officer, Health Sector Development, Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health*



## **Language Resources**

Interpreting services from ECCV Multicultural Aged Care Services Directory 2009

Oncall Interpreters and Translator Agency Ph 03 9867 3788 email: [bookings@oncallinterpreters.com](mailto:bookings@oncallinterpreters.com)

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) Ph 13 1450

Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service (VITS) Ph 03 9280 1955; 03 9280 1941

Language resources at the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing

website [www.culturaldiversity.com.au](http://www.culturaldiversity.com.au) Options in Aged Care translations in 20 languages

A resource for aged care providers, health professionals and community workers to inform their clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds about available aged care services.

Visit the weblink: <http://www.culturaldiversity.com.au/Default.aspx?tabid=238>



# Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness *Language Barriers* Supported Access Pilot and Beyond

The Supported Access Pilot Project (SAPP) is a three year program, funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS) in close collaboration with Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria. In seven of the eight organisations



being funded, bilingual Supported Access Workers assist Home and Community Care (HACC) eligible people, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to access and negotiate HACC and other related services.

Agencies involved in the pilot include the Australian Greek Welfare Society (AGWS), Chinese Community Social Services Centre Inc (CCSSCI), Macedonian Community Welfare Association (MCWA), Australian Polish Community Services (APCS), Victorian Arabic Social Services (VASS), Community Organisation for Italians and Australians of Italian descent (Co. As. It.), Fronditha and Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre.

Feedback from ethnic welfare and community-based agencies indicates that bilingual Supported Access Workers are welcomed by the culturally and linguistically diverse communities. They are in demand not only for their supported access role but also for their compassion and willingness to address broad aged care issues beyond the HACC range of basic support services.

*Introduced Aged Care Services to potential client at the promotion counter at Centro Box Hill North Shopping Centre*

The eight agencies currently providing referral and access support to the culturally and linguistically diverse community are also referring to other services that are just as important in enhancing the person's independence at home. These include referrals to do with income support, housing and immigration and citizenship issues. Taken together they comprise a very involving and time consuming package for the workers. Many Supported Access Workers are finding that they are working beyond the pilot brief in that they are expected to relate to their clients in a case management way. This is partly due to limited culturally and linguistically specific services available in the community, especially for the smaller and less established communities such as those from northern Africa and the Middle-East. Training issues for the Access Workers are frequently discussed at the regular ECCV/SAAP meetings.

For those communities struggling with settlement and integration the most pressing issues needing immediate attention are often those that have more to do with surviving in basic accommodation before taking advantage of care services. Feedback from the workers highlights the importance of older people maintaining their independence from premature institutional care through access to care services that provide improved nutrition and adequate accommodation.

The role of the Supported Access Worker is to provide the support required and act as a cultural bridge between the culturally diverse older people and HACC services. Increasingly the Supported Access Workers find themselves dealing predominantly with migration and settlement issues in the new and emerging communities and are faced with a plethora of such challenges. Fortunately these are being recognised, if not addressed in the very comprehensive SAPP Data Collection soon to be analysed by the newly appointed SAPP evaluators.



*Information session at Chinese Community Social Service Centre's PAG Knox*



# Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness *Language Barriers* Supported Access Pilot and Beyond...continued

Feedback from HACC eligible older non-English speaking people indicated the wide-reaching lifestyle benefits they gained through the Supported Access Project. Several women from Middle Eastern Countries of origin have had the opportunity to develop computer skills and as a result have been able to access further information. Engagement with bilingual workers has opened improved lifestyle options for older CALD people.

The formal evaluation of the SAP Pilot by Effective Change Consultants through DHS has commenced. The workers and multicultural service providers now expectantly await the evaluators' analyses of their data and comment on the direction the project is taking.

I expect the issues facing the evaluators, reporting on the effectiveness and the reach of the pilot will raise several complexities of ageing well in the context of cultural diversity. Let's hope the findings enhance and clarify the aims beyond those envisioned at the outset of the project.

**Helen Dubberley**

*HACC Project Officer, Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria*



*Information session at Manningham Senior Citizen's Club*

## MEDIMATE in Macedonian Language *Correct Use of Medicines*

The Macedonian Community Welfare Association (MCWA) together with the National Prescribing Service Limited (NPS) and the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Australia (FECCA) worked on creating a translated version of the pre-existing MEDIMATE booklet. This booklet emphasizes the importance of correct administering of medicines based on knowledge for the prescriptions and being actively involved into choosing medicines. Therefore, MCWA sought this as an opportunity to provide the Macedonian Community with this highly important information in the language they would be able to read and understand. We hope to reach out to the elderly population of Macedonian background with these messages of correct use of medicines to prevent any unwanted accidents or mix ups. Thus, this project has mainly an educational and preventative purpose.

The process of translating the material involved signing up a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NPS and collaboration with an accredited translator who proofread the content of the booklet, previously translated by MCWA.

MEDIMATE is now available in a printed version, limited edition only, as well as a downloadable PDF file on the MCWA website ([www.mcwa.org.au](http://www.mcwa.org.au)) and on the National Prescribing Service website on the following link:

[http://www.nps.org.au/consumers/tools\\_and\\_tips/medimate/brochures/medimate\\_macedonian](http://www.nps.org.au/consumers/tools_and_tips/medimate/brochures/medimate_macedonian)

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff at NPS for their professionalism, enthusiasm and support throughout the process of the Macedonian MEDIMATE.

**Diana Sterjovska**

*Macedonian Community Welfare Association*





# Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness

## *General*

### Meals Victoria Launch

***We delivered 2,000 CALD meals***



*Irene Bouzo, ECCV and  
Nelson Mathews, Meals Victoria*

The Meals on Wheels program is not just about food. I was pleased to receive an invitation and attend the launch of The Meals Victoria Provider Survey 2008, on 4 March 2009. It was the most comprehensive survey ever undertaken on Meals on Wheels in Victoria and was launched on behalf of the Hon Lisa Neville, Minister for Senior Victorians by Don Nardello, MP for Melton at the Angliss Restaurant, William Angliss Institute in Melbourne. Nelson Mathews, the spokesperson for Meals on Wheels highlighted some of the major issues raised by the report such as volunteer recruitment and ageing. "Meals on Wheels is not just about nutrition," said Mr Mathews, "the social aspect as well as the social welfare role are vital and need to be recognised." He explained further, "Many lives are saved by follow-up and early intervention of the Meals on Wheels service."

All ninety-six Home and Community Care (HACC) funded agencies took part. Meals Victoria is the primary network group for Delivered Meals providers. The careful planning and survey consultation resulted in an outstanding 100% participation rate which exceeded all expectations.

Guest speaker Maree Lyster, the Home Care Coordinator of the Shire of Murrumbidgee gave a tragically touching account of the bush fire devastation and the contribution of the HACC workers. "Home Care workers were checking on people in their homes under the direction of the Department of Human Services," she said. "Meals on Wheels workers were trying to establish the whereabouts and safety of clients. We were checking the direction of fires before contacting clients," commented Marie.

The launch was attended by over 100 participants. Over a cup of coffee several people told me they delivered meals to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) clients whilst the Meals Victoria Survey indicated that the majority of meals were not targeted at CALD clients. Nevertheless, the section in the report on Choice of Meals indicated that about 77% of providers catered for CALD meals of some type.

Over the past few years Meals on Wheels providers have been under greater pressure to meet individualised needs related to different cultural preferences. Comments from survey respondents showed that many providers made an effort to meet CALD needs where they existed in significant numbers. Typical survey participant comments in the report were:

- They (CALD clients) just have to ring up and inform us what they want...at the moment (we can offer) Italian, Chinese, Kosher, Greek.
- We have a high (CALD) client base...a lot of pasta...we change the menu according to our customer base.
- Last year we delivered over 2,000 CALD meals.
- Different providers said they had Indian and Asian chefs and others delivered Mediterranean type, Asian type and Middle Eastern type meals.

Overall a significant proportion of providers indicated in the report that there was 'no demand' for the supply of CALD meals. A number indicated their CALD meals were not authentic. One respondent said, "Whatever we try to do it is never the same as 'mamma' made." Other providers made an effort to supply CALD meals when "there is enough to meet bulk requirements".

The launch was an important event because it acknowledged the significant role of Meals on Wheels beyond simple meals delivery such as monitoring and reporting on the clients' physical and social wellbeing on a regular basis. Meals Victoria marks an important milestone in providing input for meeting the changing demographics and increasing needs of Victoria's ageing population. Don Nardella mentioned that the whole report would be available on the website: [www.mealsvictoria.org.au](http://www.mealsvictoria.org.au)

**Irene Bouzo**  
*Policy Officer Aged Care, Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria*



*Irene Bouzo, ECCV with participants at  
Meals Victoria Launch*



## Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness

# *Elder Abuse Prevention*

## When an Older Person Feels Powerless

### RDNS Multidisciplinary Approach

Elder abuse is an unfortunate reality for some people. When an older person becomes frail or suffers from significant health problems, they often turn to family members or trusted friends for assistance.

Sometimes this trust is abused emotionally, physically or financially and the older person feels powerless about being able to do anything to stop this. They may feel vulnerable and afraid to admit to what is happening. In other situations, they may believe if they take any action, that the consequence might be that they have to move out of their home into residential care. Or they may feel a personal responsibility towards their abuser and be reluctant to take action which might lead to the abuser being prosecuted or charged by the police or some other negative consequence.

When these or similar circumstances occur to an older person from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background; language, cultural and also religious barriers can impact on the person's ability to believe that they are able to or should take any action. Language is often a difficult barrier to overcome if the person who is being abused is dependent upon their abuser to be able to communicate with other people.

At Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS) a multi disciplinary approach is taken if staff become aware that some form of elder abuse may be occurring to our clients or their carers.

RDNS nurses and community care aides are often the first staff to become aware of a possible abuse situation. In some situations these staff may be the only social contact the older person has apart from family.

Depending on the nature of the concern, case conferences may be held between nursing, social work and other allied health staff to discuss the concerns and to plan what the most appropriate strategies may be in any given situation.

In situations where the client or carer is from a CALD background and has limited English language skills, RDNS staff have access to a number of CALD resources to ensure that clients/carers have equitable access to the support services that RDNS can offer them.

RDNS has policies and practices to ensure that professional interpreters are used at every critical point of care with clients and their carers. This does not mean that family members are excluded from RDNS client/carer interactions but does mean that clients/carers have the choice of having other family members present or not.

RDNS also has a range of translated information, which meet it's stringent translation standards, to ensure that these can be easily understood by most people from different linguistic backgrounds.

This includes translated information about how non-English speaking clients/carers can contact RDNS staff using the RDNS language line. This enables clients/carers to be automatically connected to a telephone interpreter whenever they want to phone RDNS, so they can if they choose do this confidentially and without having to depend upon anyone else to be able to do this.

This enables the client/carer to be able to request a visit from an RDNS social worker. By doing this they can have access to someone who they can talk to about any problems they have. RDNS social workers can also provide clients/carers with a wealth of information about the range of options they have to take action to address these problems, as well as providing counselling to help them make decisions about this. RDNS social workers can also link them with other support services available from organisations such as Seniors Rights Victoria, State Trustees and the Office of the Public Advocate who can further assist older people or people with a disability, to uphold their rights depending on their individual circumstances.

RDNS social workers, nurses and other staff have access to ongoing cultural training as well as support from locally based RDNS multicultural resource staff (who make up RDNS's Cultural Diversity Resource Group) to assist them in their work with clients/carers from CALD backgrounds.

In doing this RDNS strives to meet it's policies both in terms of appropriately managing elder abuse situations and in valuing cultural diversity.

**Rosemarie Draper**

*Royal District Nursing Service, Social Worker & Multicultural Resource Contact – RDNS Frankston & Rosebud*



## Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness

# *Elder Abuse Prevention*

## Seniors' Rights Victoria

Most families in Australia have harmonious and trustful relationships between their members. However in some families this is not the case. Research indicates that around 2% to 7% of older people will experience some form of elder abuse. Elder abuse is any act that causes harm to an older person that is carried out by someone they know and trust such as family or friends.

Elder abuse takes many forms including physical, social, psychological, emotional, financial, and sexual. Abuse can be subtle to extreme and is often complex with no single explanation.

The risk of elder abuse occurring increases when the older person is isolated, there has been a history of family abuse, fractured family dynamics exist or there is a dismissive attitude towards older people.

After the release of the report "Supporting the Safety and Dignity of Senior Victorians" in December 2006, the Victorian Government adopted a whole-of-government approach to addressing elder abuse and funded a specialised free legal and advocacy service, Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV).

SRV provides a range of services including a telephone help line, referrals, legal advice, advocacy and community and professional education.

Since opening in April 2008, SRV has received 1304 calls. Of these, 920 related directly to elder abuse and of these 43% were identified as financial abuse and 33% were psychological/emotional abuse.

While not all cases of elder abuse will result in legal redress, the following case study from SRV's files demonstrates the type of assistance that can be provided.

A 78 year old woman living independently at her semi-rural property becomes ill and requires hospital admission. The woman's adult estranged daughter visits and demands that her mother sign an Enduring Power of Attorney (Financial). After placing her mother under considerable duress, the 78 year old woman relinquishes and signs the document.

After her hospital stay and with capacity but some diminishing physical abilities, the 78 year old woman plans to return home. However her daughter finds an aged care facility that will accommodate her mother and arranges for her mother to be transferred to the facility. Still recovering from her illness the 78 year old woman is unable to resist her daughter's arrangements.

A friend visits the 78 year old woman at the aged care facility knowing that she is there against her wishes. The friend gives the 78 year old woman information about SRV.

After the friend's visit, the 78 year old woman telephones the Help Line at Seniors Rights Victoria and is referred to the Legal Service. A SRV solicitor visits the 78 year old woman in the aged care facility. The SRV solicitor suggests a number of options to the 78 year old woman and takes instruction from her. A subsequent representation by the SRV solicitor in the Victorian Civil and Administration Tribunal results in the Power of Attorney being revoked and an independent guardian being appointed for the 78 year old woman. Consultation between the SRV solicitor and the independent guardian results in the 78 year old woman returning home, with the support of an aged care package, arranged by the SRV Advocate.

To contact SRV for advice, information or to book a community or professional education session, telephone 1300 368 821. Seniors Rights Victoria is now live on the web: [www.seniorsrights.org.au](http://www.seniorsrights.org.au)



**Celebrate World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2009**

**Show the world you care about ending elder abuse and neglect.**

**"Wear something purple" on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, every June 15th**

**Theme: My World...Your World...Our World – Free of Elder Abuse**

**For further information visit <http://www.inpea.net/weaad.html>**



## How State Trustees can help...

**State Trustees has been helping the Victorian community since 1939 by offering a comprehensive range of Trustee, Executor and personal financial administration services.**

We understand and respect the sensitivity of different cultures within the community and provide a personal solution to help individuals with their financial needs, in order to make the most of their financial opportunities.

Jolanta emigrated from Poland in 1962, and lived by the sea with her husband, both working two jobs to achieve their goals of owning their own house and securing a future for their son.

Recently widowed and with failing health, Jolanta's son decided that he and his wife could look after her better by moving into her house. While they went to work, Jolanta cooked, cleaned and did the washing ready for their return at night. During this time, her son asked her to sign some forms in regards to her house. Having little English, and not understanding the legalities of the forms, Jolanta did as he asked.

Her health began to deteriorate and her son put her into a nursing home, against her wishes, which did not cater to her cultural needs. When a bond needed to be paid, Jolanta found that her house now belonged to her son. She found herself with no home, no money and no possessions to speak of.

The nursing home contacted State Trustees, who were able to organise an independent interpreter to join them in discussing an Enduring Power of Attorney (Financial) and how they could assist her. As her Attorney under the Enduring Power of Attorney (Financial), State Trustees were able to work with Jolanta and the nursing home to facilitate a move into Polish accommodation, where her needs and traditions were respected, and where she could converse with staff and residents in her own language.

State Trustees ensured that all documents were translated for her and she was connected with culturally sensitive support services. An investigation regarding the documents she signed about her house has begun.

"I have met people from the old country who also live here and we have lovely times chatting together" Jolanta stated, "The staff understand and respect me and I am happy that I don't need to worry about the future. I never thought my family would behave in this way, as we were always taught to look after our parents. I don't see my son anymore and that is very sad".



Just like Jolanta, State Trustees can work with you to help and support your financial and legal decisions. With more than 70 years' experience, we have the expertise to perform the role of a Financial Attorney, with the added benefit of being independent and impartial.

This case study, while fictional, is based on real customer experience. Names and identities of persons and facts have been changed to protect confidentiality. Any similarity between a person's name to the scenario described in the case study is unintended and coincidental.

For further information on  
Enduring Powers of Attorney,  
please contact Attorneyship  
Services on **9667 6165**

**STATE TRUSTEES**



## Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness

# *Elder Abuse Prevention*

### **Abuse by Carers or Against Carers?**

Caring for someone you love, whom you have a duty or a responsibility towards, is a part of everyone's culture. While there are many positive aspects to caring, it can also be very demanding and draining especially over a long period of time. Abuse of the carer only adds to the existing stresses and strains.

A limited review of relevant literature shows that most studies have examined the incidence of the abuse of an older person by their carer. Very little appears to be written when the reverse is the case, certainly in Australia. A few years ago, the northern region Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre (Carer Links North) presented a paper on 'Violence and older women in care-giving situations' (2003). It categorised observed occurrence of violence in three ways:

- Violence against the carer which pre-existed the care giving situation;
- Violence against the carer associated with the illness/disability of the care recipient;
- Violence experienced by the woman as a care recipient, the classic elder abuse situation.

As a carer educator for Carers Victoria, I have observed that an existing difficult or abusive relationship does not improve once a family relationship evolves into a carer/care recipient situation. It usually gets worse. What follows is based on the experience of listening to carers stories over many years.

Abuse of a family carer can be manifested as verbal, psychological or physical or financial abuse. The carer may be in a particularly vulnerable position when trying to assert the rights to be treated with respect and meet some of her/his own needs as well as those of the person being cared for.

Physical abuse can occur as a result of cognitive impairment and carers need to be supported in finding appropriate solutions. Beatings can occur and inappropriate sexual behaviour can be especially difficult for a carer to cope with. Family carers are reluctant to seek help in these circumstances as they seek to protect the dignity of the person they care for. Carers of people with a mental illness or a disability are also vulnerable to physical and verbal violence. When a family carer talks about needing respite, a husband says to his wife 'It's your job to care for me; you're paid to do it'. This can mean preventing the carer from access to respite or opportunities for activities outside the home. It should be recognised that Carer Payment is not a salary providing the benefits associated with paid employment (superannuation, leave entitlements, holiday pay and work cover) but an income support measure. This is a rather common story resulting from the community's misunderstanding of carers' roles and rights and the nature of the payment.

Or, there may be the adult children who berate a mother who even 'thinks' about applying for a carer allowance to care for their dad, and believe she shouldn't attend a seniors group as a break from caring because her 'place' is with her husband. There is also anecdotal evidence of financial and psychological abuse of carers who come to Australia on a Carer Visa, to care for a family member, sponsored by their families.

Carers can be intimidated by the person receiving care and other members of their families, and may feel powerless to change their situation. The issue of abuse of the carer within families is a sensitive subject but the conversation needs to begin so that carers can be adequately supported to meet these challenges.



**Joyce Rebeiro**  
*Carers Victoria*



## Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness *Elder Abuse Prevention*

### **Elder Abuse Prevention in Ethnic Communities Forum**

There is no hard data to show that elder abuse in culturally and linguistically diverse communities is growing. Detection in general, however, is increasing according to Alison Beckett of the Department of Human Services (DHS) Aged Care Branch. Ms Beckett was the guest speaker at the forum Elder Abuse in Ethnic Communities hosted by the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) in Carlton on 21 May 2009. Marion Lau, ECCV Board Member set the scene with a warm welcome and Ross Barnett, Executive Officer, ECCV wished the 50 participants a productive day.

Alison Beckett explained that the Victorian Government has provided funding of \$5.9 million over four years to develop a multi-sector, multi-department response. The Victorian Government Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy currently being developed includes a Training Kit for professionals, Seniors Rights Victoria an advocacy and legal service, a financial abuse awareness strategy and the practice guide for the prevention of elder abuse entitled *With Respect to Age 2009*.

Ms Beckett made the important distinction between mandatory reporting and empowerment models. She explained that the Victorian Government model was based on principles and practice that support the empowerment of older people as the key to preventing elder abuse through community education, support and awareness raising.

The second guest speaker was Julie Nelson, Manager of Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) and her colleague Gary Ferguson pointed out that elder abuse is a serious breach of trust in relationships which may be of a physical, financial, psychological or sexual nature or involve mistreatment and neglect.

Ms Nelson described the work of SRV which provided hotline advice so that people have increased confidence to handle suspected abuse. She indicated that by the service had 1,300 calls in the first 12 months and that the majority of SRV reported elder abuse was financial (43% of reported cases) and emotional/psychological (33% of reported cases). Ms Nelson described the SRV as a highly personalised service. To overcome language barriers she encouraged the callers with a non-English speaking background to telephone an interpreter first and then get them to telephone the SRV hotline.

Following the two presentations Mr Ferguson facilitated small group discussion of a real life scenario case study of abuse. He concluded with a plenary discussion of appropriate responses and key issues arising from the case study, especially in culturally diverse populations.

The ECCV host Marion Lau provided a summary at the conclusion of the forum affirming the aspiration that the forum would stimulate increased understanding and strategies involving the identification and handling of mistreatment of older people in the non-English speaking community.

Positive feedback provided in Evaluation Surveys completed by participants indicated that 96% of those who replied found the topics presented were useful and relevant. 92% of the respondents agreed that the forum added to their knowledge of resources for elder abuse prevention in ethnic communities and 92% said that they had made useful work-related contacts and networks during the forum.

For information on the Victorian Government elder abuse strategy refer to the Office of Senior Victorians website:

[www.seniors.vic.gov.au/web19/osv/dvcosv.nsf/headingpagesdisplay/elder+abuse+prevention](http://www.seniors.vic.gov.au/web19/osv/dvcosv.nsf/headingpagesdisplay/elder+abuse+prevention)

**Dr Irene Bouzo**

*Policy Officer Aged Care, Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria*





### Reclaiming Respect and Dignity

“A large part of the problem in identifying and addressing instances of personal abuse – whether it be against children, spouses or elders - is the term itself” writes Marion Lau, OAM, JP, Chairperson of the Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria (ECCV) Aged Care Policy Committee, in her foreword to the ECCV Discussion Paper *Reclaiming Respect and Dignity: Elder Abuse Prevention in Ethnic Communities (March 2009)*. The policy paper was developed in response to the increasing participation of Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria (ECCV) in the Victorian Governments’ elder abuse prevention initiatives.

The goal of the paper is to help progress much needed open discussion in the multicultural community on the largely hidden issue of the mistreatment of culturally and linguistically diverse seniors. It includes a section on definitions of elder abuse based on the work of Barney Cooney (2005), former senator and human rights activist. Mistreatment of older people, states the paper, covers a range of behaviours that may be financial, physical, sexual, psychological, emotional and social. The appendix contains some useful sample case scenarios to assist with understanding the wide ranging nature of elder abuse.

Recommendations in the Discussion Paper affirmed by the Victorian Charter of Human Rights cover areas of:

- policy development in the ethnic aged care sector;
- professional development for staff in ethno-specific welfare and community-based organisations;
- elder abuse awareness community education for non-English speaking seniors, their families and carers;
- the need for establishing strategic alliances across sectors such as healthcare and tertiary education to facilitate community education on culturally diverse elder abuse;
- the allocation of resources to facilitate such activities.

The document lists current empowerment initiatives in elder abuse prevention undertaken by the Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD). In addition it provides a summary of a situational needs analysis on elder abuse issues in the culturally and linguistically diverse community conducted by ECCV. Highlighted are concerns that multicultural older people with little or not English are particularly vulnerable and have significant barriers accessing assistance in situations of abuse. Another concern raised was that the lack of understanding of cultural expectations in multicultural settings may lead to inappropriate treatment of suspected abuse.

The discussion paper is a useful resource to assist community-based aged care providers develop organisational protocols and find out more about the mistreatment of older people with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. *Reclaiming Respect and Dignity: Elder Abuse Prevention in Ethnic Communities* is available in PDF format on the ECCV website [www.eccv.org.au](http://www.eccv.org.au)

**Dr Irene Bouzo**

*Policy Officer Aged Care,*

*Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria*



<http://eccv.org.au/doc/ReclaimingRespectandDignity.pdf>



The Victorian Parliament Law Reform Committee would like to hear about your experiences with powers of attorney documents.

Under current Victorian law, there are different types of powers of attorney for different situations and different types of decisions, such as financial, medical and lifestyle decisions.

The Committee has heard that lack of consistency between these different documents means that power of attorney documents may be confusing both for members of the community and the organisations they deal with.

The Committee has heard anecdotal reports that sometimes powers of attorney documents are abused. Vulnerable people are sometimes put under pressure to grant power of attorney or an attorney may do something that he or she does not have the power to do. The Committee is seeking to understand the extent of abuse of these documents and to identify ways to minimise abuse.

Sharing your thoughts and experiences will help the Committee to make recommendations to Government about how Victorian power of attorney laws can be streamlined and simplified.

If you'd like more information about how to make a submission to the Committee please telephone 03 8682 2851 or visit [www.parliament.vic.gov.au/lawreform](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/lawreform). Written submissions are due by 21 August 2009.

## DECLARATION of RESPECT for SENIORS

*World Elder Abuse Awareness Day*

*We, the undersigned ...*

- believe culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) seniors deserve to live safely with dignity, and as independently as possible, with the supports they need.*
- are concerned about the risk to our older residents who suffer from neglect or are victims of financial, emotional or physical abuse.*
- will monitor for signs of abuse such as physical trauma, withdrawal, depression, anxiety, fear of family members, friends or caregivers.*
- recognise World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and encourage everyone to commit to build safer communities for our elderly residents.*
- believe that eliminating abuse to older persons is everybody's responsibility.*

*Signed:*



Based on Municipal Declaration in A *Tool Kit for Taking Action: Step by Step*, International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse



## Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness

### *Elder Abuse Prevention*

### Notes to Remember

- 15 June (annually) World Elder Abuse Awareness Day – accessible at <http://www.inpea.net/weaad.html>
- 18 June 2009 Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) forum:  
*World Elder Abuse Awareness Day – Global to Local* **closed**
- 30 July 2009 Meeting the needs of Muslim Families in the Aged Care Setting - For further information contact: Klaudia Vainshtein tel: 03 8823 7900 email: [klaudia@culturaldiversity.com.au](mailto:klaudia@culturaldiversity.com.au) or visit [www.culturaldiversity.com.au](http://www.culturaldiversity.com.au)
- 21 August 2009 Submission deadline for Inquiry into Powers of Attorney conducted by Parliament Law Reform Committee telephone 03 8682 2851 or visit [www.parliament.vic.gov.au/lawreform](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/lawreform).
- 28 August 2009 Migrant Families in Aged Care: an Intergenerational Perspective - For further information contact: Klaudia Vainshtein tel: 03 8823 7900 email: [klaudia@culturaldiversity.com.au](mailto:klaudia@culturaldiversity.com.au) or visit [www.culturaldiversity.com.au](http://www.culturaldiversity.com.au)
- 9 October 2009 Multicultural Seniors Concert, Town Hall, Melbourne
- 15 October 2009 Caring For Ethnic Carers – a joint Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV)/Carers Vic Aged Care Forum. For Expressions of Interest contact Irene Bouzo tel. 03 9439 4122 email [ibouzo@eccv.org.au](mailto:ibouzo@eccv.org.au)
- 19-25 October 2009 National Carers Week
- 29-30 October 2009 2009 Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) Conference welcomes you 'Strengthening Multiculturalism and Building Social Inclusion.' Shepparton, Victoria For further information and to register visit [www.fecca.org.au](http://www.fecca.org.au) or tel 02 6282 5755
- 3-6 May 2010 International Federation on Ageing 10th Global Conference: *Climate for Change: Ageing into the Future* at the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre.  
Abstract Submission Deadline: 7 October 2009.  
To submit abstracts and receive regular updates subscribe to the live website [www.ifa2010.org](http://www.ifa2010.org)

