



# COTA Victoria

2017 - 2018 REVIEW

*Promoting Opportunities.  
Protecting Rights. For people 50+*





# PROTECTING RIGHTS

## SENIORS RIGHTS VICTORIA



Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) is the COTA Victoria program that is the key state-wide service dedicated to preventing and responding to elder abuse. Elder abuse is any act that causes harm to an older person and is carried out by someone they know and trust. The abuse may be physical, social, financial, psychological or sexual and can include mistreatment and neglect.

SRV provides information, support, advice, casework and education to help prevent elder abuse and safeguard the rights, dignity and independence of older Victorians.

Our services include a Helpline, specialist legal services and short-term support and advocacy for individuals. We have a leadership role in policy development, law reform and education, and work with organisations to raise awareness of elder abuse.

### 10th Anniversary

We celebrated our 10th anniversary this year. Since 2008, we have had:

- 22,063 calls to our Helpline
- 4,382 older people receiving personalised assistance through advice and casework
- 29,182 participants in community education sessions
- 12,247 participants in professional development sessions
- Production of nine different information sheets and the booklet, *Care for Your Assets: Money, Ageing and Family*.

*Below: Seniors Rights Victoria staff and stakeholders.*



# OUR PRACTICE

The SRV confidential telephone Helpline provides information, support and referrals.

In 2017–18, the Helpline service received 3,462 calls (3,379 the previous year), of which 3,315 were related to elder abuse or associated issues.

Women made up more than 77 per cent of all callers. We recognise that elder abuse can affect all older persons and cater our services accordingly.

The most prevalent issues were financial abuse at 47 per cent (up from 25 per cent in 2016-7) and emotional/psychological abuse at 34 per cent (up from 24 per cent). Other calls related to guardian and administration issues, aged care facilities,

adult children returning home, wills, neglect and social abuse. Clients often experience more than one type of abuse.

A significant number of SRV callers were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, with 240 advices made to clients whose birth country was not Australia, representing 46 countries where English is not the first language.

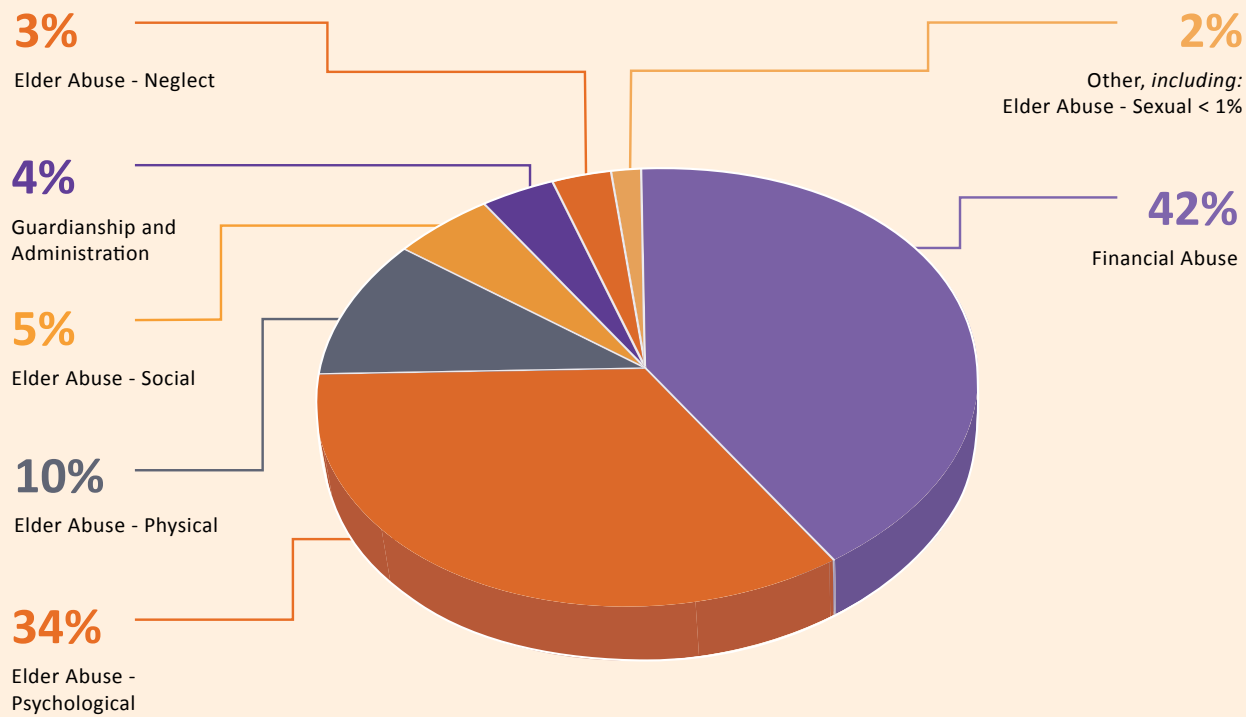
Overall we provided 2950 instances of information, 512 advices (legal and advocacy) and 752 secondary consultations to other organisations. Sometimes a caller receives information and advice on more than one issue.

## Casework

If a client requires further assistance after receiving advice, where the issue fits within our guidelines and there is capacity to do so, a case is opened.

SRV casework is delivered by both our advocacy and legal services. We opened 187 new cases (including Health Justice Partnership cases) and closed 159 cases.

New Cases by Problem Type  
2017-2018 Financial year





## LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE

*Above: Elder Abuse as Family Violence discussion papers.*

SRV is an influential thought leader, working for positive change for and with older people. The past year resulted in significant results from our engagement in constructive opportunities to stop elder abuse.

The Federal Attorney-General Christian Porter MP launched Elder Abuse Action Australia (EAAA) in June 2018. SRV is an inaugural board member of the EAAA, a growing network of organisations and individuals engaged in elder abuse prevention and support around Australia.

As a result of our success in raising awareness of elder abuse as a form of family violence we are active in Victorian Government committees.

We participate in the Family Violence Steering Committee, the Ministerial Taskforce on the Prevention of Family Violence and the Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group.

We contribute to consultations on matters including support and safety hubs, information sharing and police implementation of relevant Royal Commission of Family Violence recommendations.

We also continue to develop closer relationships with Family Violence services.

The publication of five discussion papers was a significant contribution to understanding the relationship between family violence and elder abuse. These were: *Elder Abuse as Family Violence*; *Elder Abuse, Gender and Sexuality*; *Preventing Elder Abuse*; *Criminal Law and Elder Abuse*; and *Mandatory Reporting*.



## Community Education

SRV's *community education program* underpins our empowerment and prevention frameworks. It raises awareness of elder abuse. It also builds community capacity to respond and enable older people to take action.

Delivered by the Community Education Coordinator with peer educators, we provide accessible resources, workshops and presentations to older people, family members, carers, community groups and service providers.

We also provide professional education for management, staff and workers in aged and community care, health services, local government and legal services.

In 2017-18, SRV delivered:

- 93 community education sessions to 3121 participants
- 27 professional education presentations to 752 participants
- A new recruitment process for peer educators

## Supporting the Integrated Model of Care

SRV developed new partnerships with the DHHS Integrated Model of Care sites responding to elder abuse and the delivery of training with the Bouverie Centre.

## World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) - 15 June

In 2018, priority was given to delivering community education to older people during the month of June. There were 19 presentations to 681 participants attending a range of forums.

WEAAD partnerships occurred with Frankston City Council, Mitchell Shire, Yarra Council, MPower (Warrnambool), Banyule City Council and Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council.

We also presented to direct home care workers and elders at the Aboriginal Advancement League.

We used our WEAAD resources to support Victorian events by updating all marketing collateral, supporting media coverage and updating WEAAD website information.

We provided WEAAD promotional material for a digital campaign at Airport West Shopping Centre and distributed 5000 bookmarks to every library in Victoria.

## Elder Abuse Prevention Networks (EAPN)

SRV is supporting the development of local Elder Abuse Prevention Networks across the state by working with them in primary prevention activities.

Funded by the Victorian Government, the EAPN will operate at 10 sites in regional, outer urban and metropolitan areas at an individual and community level, to raise awareness and educate communities about the rights of older people.



*Jeanette Lane and her husband Graham from PACE, at the launch of the Ballarat Elder Abuse Network.*

# FUNDERS, SPONSORS, SUPPORTERS AND ALLIANCE PARTNERS

COTA Victoria is a not-for-profit organisation reliant on funding and assistance from a variety of Government, philanthropic, corporate and individual contributors. We also work closely with a broad range of community organisations and alliances. We are very thankful for the assistance we receive.

## FUNDERS

Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services  
Victorian Legal Aid  
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Victorian Department of Justice and Regulation  
Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet  
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Casey-Cardinia Foundation  
City of Brimbank  
City of Casey  
Collier Charitable Fund  
COTA Australia  
Energy Consumers Australia  
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation  
North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network  
Palliative Care Victoria  
Sidney Myer Fund & Gay and Lesbian Foundation Australia  
State Trustees Australia Foundation  
The J.O. & J.R. Wicking Trust  
(The Wicking Trust) Equity Trustees  
Victoria Law Foundation

## PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Alfred Health Advance Care Planning  
Ballarat Community Health  
Bouverie Centre  
Carers Victoria  
Clayton Utz Foundation  
Consumer Action Law Centre  
Country Women's Association (Victorian Branch)  
Dementia Australia  
Domestic Violence Victoria  
East Gippsland Shire Council

Eastern Community Legal Centre  
Elder Rights Advocacy  
Energy and Water Ombudsman  
Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria  
Fair Go for Pensioners Coalition Inc  
Family Mediation & Counselling Victoria  
Federation of Community Legal Centres  
Financial and Consumer Rights Council  
Frankston City Council Positive Ageing Program  
Golden Days Radio 95.7FM  
Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative  
Health Issues Centre  
Health West  
Housing for the Aged Action Group  
Human Rights Law Centre  
Justice Connect  
Latrobe City Council  
Law Institute of Victoria  
LIFE Activities Clubs Victoria Inc.  
Macedon Ranges Shire Council  
Maddocks Lawyers  
Maurice Blackburn Lawyers  
Mental Health Victoria  
Merri Health  
Mornington Peninsula Shire Advisory Committee of Elders (PACE)  
Municipal Association of Victoria  
National Ageing Research Institute Ltd  
Neighbourhood Houses Victoria  
Office of the Public Advocate  
Open Place  
Palliative Care Victoria  
Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages Victoria  
Residents of Retirement Villages Victoria  
Russell Kennedy Lawyers  
South West Carer and Respite Services Network

Southern Melbourne Primary Care Partnership  
Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust  
St Vincent's Hospital  
Star Health  
Swinburne University  
Transgender Victoria  
U3A Victoria  
Val's LGBTI Ageing & Aged Care (GLHV)  
Victoria Police  
Victoria Walks  
Victorian Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisation  
Victorian Committee for Aboriginal Aged Care and Disability  
Victorian Community Transport Association  
Victorian Council of Social Services

## ALLIANCES

Oral Health Alliance  
Assistive Technology for Older People Alliance  
Agenda for Ageing Alliance

## SPONSORS

### Our sponsors:

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Goodcompany

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Lander and Rogers, lawyers  
Hawker Britton



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