



Warm Safe Home project to raise awareness of elder abuse leading up to World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2024

Melbourne, 1 February 2024 -- Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV), a key service provided by the Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria and the only Community Legal Centre dedicated to preventing and responding to elder abuse within the state, has partnered with Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG) to revitalise the Warm Safe Home project.

The trio will actively work with other community groups and grassroots organisations to raise awareness of elder abuse, housing affordability, and other issues facing older Victorians in the lead up to World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) on 15 June.

Originally developed in 2020 by Dr Becky Nevin Berger of the South West Victoria Elder Abuse Prevention Network, the Warm Safe Home project uses community art and the icon of the house to talk about older people's right to feel safe and live free from fear.

"In situations of elder abuse, the home can become a place of danger," said Seniors Rights Victoria & COTA Victoria CEO, Chris Potaris. "Raising awareness of the scourge that is elder abuse ahead of WEAAD is of utmost importance.

"Elder abuse comes in many forms. It can be financial, emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, or social. It can occur once, or many times and can vary in severity from subtle through to extreme," Mr Potaris added. "Most often, elder abuse is carried out by someone known to the older person, with two thirds of abusers being an adult child."

Thousands of older Victorians are struggling to find affordable housing due to the current rental crisis and too little investment in public and community housing. Many end up staying with family and friends temporarily, and are more vulnerable to elder abuse as a result.

“More and more older people, especially those on low incomes, can’t afford their rent, or are retiring without having paid their mortgage,” said HAAG Executive Officer Fiona York. “A lack of affordable housing in Victoria is making it more likely for older people slip into homelessness as they age, or become trapped in abusive situations.

“Having a safe, secure and affordable home is central to people’s wellbeing as they age and must be made a priority.”

As part of the project SRV, COTA Victoria, and HAAG will invite groups to create small-scale model houses that represent what a warm, safe home means to them. During events where these homes are created, groups will be encouraged to discuss elder abuse in all its forms, including conversations about respecting older people, what elder abuse looks like, and to spread the message that everyone has the right to live in a warm safe home.

Participating groups will be provided with a comprehensive Warm Safe Home toolkit and crafting templates to facilitate artistry, creation, and engagement in the months leading to WEAAD.

Once completed, participating organisations will arrange to display the homes in public places in their local areas, online as part of the WEAAD website, and as part of a showcase awareness event that will be held at the Melbourne Town Hall on 13 June 2024. More on the launch of this showcase event will be shared in the coming weeks.

If you or someone you know in Victoria is experiencing elder abuse, help is available through Seniors Rights Victoria’s confidential helpline on [1300 368 821](tel:1300368821).

For nationwide assistance, and to access additional resources in 20 different languages, please contact the Australian Human Rights Commission on 1800 ELDERHelp (1800 353 374).

If it is an emergency, call [000](tel:000).

– ENDS –

Further information

Steve Wright
Marketing and Communications Manager
SRV & COTA Victoria
Telephone: +61 3 9655 2159
Email: communications@cotavic.org.au

Kye While
Media Advisor
Housing for the Aged Action Group
Telephone: 0419 116 269
Email: media@oldertenants.org.au

About us

Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) is the key state-wide service dedicated to advancing the rights of older people and the early intervention into, or prevention of, elder abuse in our community.

SRV has a team of experienced advocates, lawyers, and social workers who provide free information, advice, referral, legal advice, legal casework, and support to older people who are either at risk of or are experiencing elder abuse. SRV supports and empowers older people through the provision of legal advice directly to the older person.

<https://seniorsrights.org.au> | <https://elderabuseawarenessday.org.au>

Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria is the leading not-for-profit organisation representing the interests and rights of people aged over 50 in Victoria. For over 70 years, we have led government, corporate and community thinking about the positive aspects of ageing in the state.

Today, our focus is on promoting opportunities for and protecting the legal rights of people 50+. We value ageing and embrace its opportunities for personal growth, contribution, and self-expression. This belief drives benefits to the nation and its states alongside communities, families, and individuals.

<https://cotavic.org.au> | <https://oldernotalone.com>

Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG) is one of the only Australian organisations specialised in the housing needs of older people. Coming from grass-roots beginnings over 40 years ago, HAAG today is over 800 members strong. It is committed to finding long term solutions to the housing crisis facing older people in Australia.

<https://oldertenants.org.au>