



Economic abuse places older Victorians at risk

Melbourne, 26 November – Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria and Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) have shone a spotlight on a specific form of elder abuse and family violence as part of Economic Abuse Awareness Day 2025.

De-anonymised stories of older Victorians experiencing economic abuse, marked by an asterisk (*) – alongside ways in which people can seek help if facing similar situations – have been published to the COTA Victoria and SRV websites and social media channels. These heartbreaking stories have been published in acknowledgement of Economic Abuse Awareness Day and marks the larger 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence initiative.

Drew* shared how he lost control over his finances following an attempt to support his own daughter and grandchildren after a divorce; he also explained the ways in which he has safeguarded himself in future. Michelle* shared a similar story, detailing how she was forced to surrender her own property after exhausting her savings to care for her daughter and grandchildren.

“Family violence doesn’t stop when you get older, and it isn’t always a partner,” Michelle said. “Sometimes it’s your own child. Leaving isn’t simple when love, guilt, and money are tied up together.”

Help is available, but resources are stretched thin. Seniors Rights Victoria is the only Community Legal Centre dedicated to preventing and responding to elder abuse within Victoria and has attempted to reach as many older Victorians in need of its services as possible by restricting its helpline to those directly experiencing, or at risk, of abuse. Upon re-opening its helpline to provide support for friends and family of those being abused, call rates skyrocketed 80% between 13 October and 13 November.

Prior to accepting third-party calls, SRV opened 103 cases in the 2024-25 financial year. Of those, 57 cases (or 55%) included financial abuse; 14 (or 25%) of those cases had more than one type of economic abuse present.

Beyond 16 Days of Activism, these stories form the core of a broader initiative at COTA Victoria that looks at the main causes of financial insecurity for older women in Victoria. The project will lead to clear recommendations for government, supported by services that help prevent and respond to economic insecurity as women age. These include issues around work, housing, superannuation, caregiving, and family violence.

"The stories we are sharing today are a central part of our policy work," said CEO of COTA Victoria and SRV, Ben Rogers. "Addressing older women's economic security requires coordinated measures across equitable employment opportunities, housing solutions, financial literacy education, and violence prevention.

"Older women in Victoria face disproportionate economic insecurity, shaped by gender, age, and systemic inequities. Despite policy recognition through targeted initiatives, significant gaps remain," Mr Rogers continued. "If not addressed, they'll add to the compounding effects of lifetime income inequality, family violence, disrupted work patterns due to unpaid care, and structural ageism."

If you are experiencing financial hardship, harm, or stress, you can contact a financial counsellor for free, independent, and non-judgemental information, advice, and advocacy. The National Debt Line can be reached at 1800 007 007; [its website also lets you find a counsellor in your local area](#).

If you are in Victoria and experiencing any form of elder abuse, help is available through Seniors Rights Victoria's confidential helpline on 1300 368 821. Our website, seniorsrights.org.au, also features resources for concerned friends or family members.

For nationwide assistance, please call 1800 ELDERHelp (1800 353 374). You can also access [additional resources in 20 different languages using the Australian Human Rights Commission website](#).

If it is an emergency, call 000.

Additionally, those interested in contributing to our research and advocacy relating to older women's economic security can [register expressions of interest via this form](#).

Spokespeople from COTA Victoria and Seniors Rights Victoria are available to discuss these matters further upon request. Please reach out using contact information located below.

– ENDS –

Further information

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About us

Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria is the leading not-for-profit member 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.

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. It is the only Community Legal Centre dedicated to preventing and responding to elder abuse within Victoria.

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.