

Media release: Seniors Rights Victoria, Safe and Equal partner to train Orange Door and family violence workers in elder abuse prevention and intervention

Melbourne, 10 June – Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV), COTA Victoria, and Safe and Equal have launched a new partnership to build the capacity of The Orange Door and specialist family violence sector across Victoria in recognising and responding to elder abuse.

Supported by funding from the Victorian Government's Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, the organisations will deliver the Elder Abuse Capability Development Program over a two-year collaboration. Announced today by the Honourable Ingrid Stitt MP, Victorian Minister for Ageing, this initiative will equip staff with the skills and knowledge needed to take action against elder abuse.

Forming the core of the partnership, Seniors Rights Victoria and Safe and Equal will use their subject matter expertise in elder abuse and family violence prevention and intervention to develop and deliver tailored training and resources to approximately 1,400 employees of The Orange Door, alongside specialist family violence case managers.

"Safe and Equal is proud to be part of this vital initiative. Older people experiencing family violence often face unique barriers in accessing safety and support and it's critical that our frontline workforce is equipped with the skills and confidence to address these complexities," said Safe and Equal CEO Tania Farha.

"This partnership reflects our commitment to an inclusive family violence support system that ensures all victim survivors – regardless of their age or stage in life – can access the tailored support they need, when they need it."

The most recent study of elder abuse prevalence in Australia has found that 1 in 6 Australians aged 65 years and over had experienced at least one recognised form of elder abuse over the previous 12 months.

"This program will be a key part in ensuring that the family violence system can meet the needs of elder abuse victim survivors," said CEO of Seniors Rights Victoria and COTA Victoria, Ben Rogers.

"Elder abuse is a unique, often overlooked form of family violence, and it's crucial that we provide those working in the sector with the tools required to intervene or prevent it from occurring."

Minister Stitt's announcement of this partnership was [part of the launch of Seniors Rights Victoria's Beyond Age project](#), which seeks to challenge ageism – one of the key drivers of elder abuse.

"We're extremely excited to partner with Safe and Equal and pool our expertise to provide better outcomes for specialists and the older Victorians they support, and to have it announced as we gather to observe World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2025," Mr Rogers continued.

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

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.

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Further context

- The most recent study of elder abuse prevalence in Australia found that 1 in 6 people 65 years and over had experienced at least one recognised form of elder abuse over the previous 12 months.
- This suggests that 160,000 older Victorians are reporting that they have experienced elder abuse each year, demonstrating the clear need for training and supports.
- Elder abuse comes in many forms. It can be financial, emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, or social. Elder abuse can occur once or many times and can vary in severity from subtle through to extreme and can include one or a combination of the different types of abuse.
- Elder abuse is most often perpetrated by someone known to and trusted by the older person, such as family members, relatives, or friends, with two thirds of reported elder abuse being perpetrated by the adult children of an older person.
- Elder abuse affects people of all genders and all walks of life. The abuse, however, disproportionately affects women – two-thirds of people seeking help from SRV are women.
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and LGBTQIA+ communities are additionally vulnerable to elder abuse, as are older people living in rural and regional communities.
- In 2023/24, the SRV helpline received a total of 12,356 calls, with advocates able to make contact and assist 3,556 callers with 5,131 unique issues.
- SRV data from 2023/24 indicates that 58% of alleged perpetrators of elder abuse are the adult children of the victim-survivor.
- The average number of days a case remained open was 538 days, with the longest closed case running totalling 1,259 days (almost 3.5 years). Due to the increasing complexity of matters, we are experiencing a greater volume of cases spanning longer periods of time.

For further information

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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. 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.

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

Safe and Equal is the peak body for Victorian organisations that specialise in family and gender-based violence across the continuum, including primary prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery. We are an independent, non-government organisation.

Our work prioritises the safety of all people experiencing, recovering from or at risk of family and gender-based violence.

While we know that most family violence is perpetrated by men against women and children, we recognise that family violence impacts people across a diversity of gender identities, social and cultural contexts, and within various intimate, family, and other relationships.

We apply an intersectional feminist lens in our work to address the gendered drivers of violence, and how these overlap and intersect with additional forms of violence, oppression, and inequality.

<https://safeandequal.org.au>