

Media release
16 November 2011

Time to get real about preventing elder abuse

Council on the Ageing Tasmania (COTA Tas) has welcomed the publishing of instances of elder abuse today as another step towards addressing the problem head-on in Tasmania.

COTA Tas CEO Maxine Griffiths said the organisation was working with the State Government as a member of the Elder Abuse Prevention Advisory Group to implement the Government's Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy.

"Elder abuse is something we are very concerned about in the Tasmanian community and we call for additional resources to support advocacy and a helpline for those in need to contact," said Ms Griffiths.

"We have been funded by the Community Support Levy to develop elder financial abuse prevention information targeting older Tasmanians and their loved ones.

"It is important that as a community we support the right of older Tasmanians to be informed about how to recognise when they are being financially abused as we have seen in the cases published today.

"They need to be educated and understand how to prevent it from happening to them as well as how to report it."

Ms Griffiths said the information would be developed in the form of 'information sessions', which will be delivered by COTA's Peer Educators to groups of older people as a pilot in southern Tasmania and are set to take place midway through next year.

"A multi-faceted approach to the prevention of elder abuse is needed and Government alone cannot be expected to 'stop' older Tasmanians from experiencing abuse. We can however expect Government to provide resources and information," she said.

"Preventing elder abuse is everyone's responsibility so it is important that the Tasmanian community is informed about elder abuse – how to recognise it, what to do if we do recognise it and to stand up and advocate for older people.

"We also need to break down the myths that elder abuse happens primarily in aged care facilities and services as it is far more widespread than that."

COTA is a leading advocate and source of trusted information, giving older Tasmanians a voice.

ENDS

For more information: Maxine Griffiths, COTA Tas, 0448 281 897