



COTA NEW SOUTH WALES

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 10 July 2012

COTA NSW WELCOMES STATE GOVERNMENT ACTION ON ABUSE OF OLDER PEOPLE

“Older people experiencing abuse just want it to stop. It’s that simple. However, tackling the abuse of older people is a complex undertaking,” says Ian Day, CEO of Council on the Ageing NSW (COTA NSW).

“We know that the abuse of older people takes many forms. It encompasses everything from financial abuse to physical abuse. For this reason, you need to be able to bring many players together to stop abuse when it occurs. Given this we’re very pleased that the State Government understands that a wide-ranging approach to this issue is necessary.”

The State Government’s Ageing Strategy commits it to establishing an Abuse of Older People Helpline and Resource Unit. “We believe this is the right strategy to address the abuse of older people,” says Mr Day.

“A helpline that just addresses the abuse of older people is vital. It means people in the community will know where to turn if they’re experiencing – or witnessing – abuse. It also means that staff can be trained to advise callers about the options available to them to stop abuse. Sometimes callers will be advised to contact the police, other times they may be advised to contact a social worker or a legal professional. Most importantly, staff will be familiar with the wide range of responses that might be used to address a caller’s particular experience.”

“Until now, NSW has been lagging behind other jurisdictions when it comes to addressing the abuse of older people. And the issue is big: according to a study by the Australian Institute of Criminology, 50,000 people aged over 65 are being abused in NSW. That said, we need more information about how, where and why older people are being abused. So we are pleased that the State Government also envisages that the Abuse of Older People Helpline and Resource Unit will collect data and undertake community education.”

“Like everyone else in the community, older people have a right to safety. We believe that this initiative will make a real difference to many older people.”

END

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