



**EMBARGOED 12:01AM THURSDAY 15 February 2018**

## **VICTORIA'S FIRST COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN TO TACKLE ELDER ABUSE LAUNCH**

The first action plan developed specifically to assist the community to tackle elder abuse in Victoria was launched today by Colleen Pearce, Public Advocate of Victoria.

The plan, developed by the National Ageing Research Institute with support from Seniors Rights Victoria, the Office of Public Advocate, and community service providers, identifies gaps and sets out 10 priorities to address elder abuse.

The priorities include the need to clarify the relationship between family violence and elder abuse; raise community awareness of elder abuse and promote a positive of older people to reduce ageism; increase ways to help older people disclose elder abuse without fear, and provide education and training on elder abuse for all health professionals in health and aged care services.

"Elder abuse is a serious problem in Victoria yet, like many issues that affect older people, it is treated as a second class problem," Associate Professor Briony Dow, Director of NARI, said.

Dr Dow said that while there has been increased focus on elder abuse and considerable government and philanthropic investment since the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence released its recommendations in March 2016, current government and non-government responses are still not effectively coordinated.

"This action plan lays out simply what needs to be done to tackle the complexities of elder abuse by the community. It contains the views of older people," she said.

NARI research has shown that tackling elder abuse is difficult not least because older people do not want to talk about their experiences.

"Many older people we have spoken to feel deep shame and fear further abuse," Dr Dow said.

Elder abuse is gaining increased attention worldwide due to global population ageing. Population prevalence studies in the UK and Canada have found that approximately 5% of people aged over 65 experience one form of abuse in any one year, with the World Health Organisation estimating that 10% of older people globally are victims of abuse.

The Elder Abuse Community Action Plan for Victoria has been funded by Gandel Philanthropy.

### **About NARI**

The National Ageing Research Institute (NARI) has for over 40 years been bringing research to life to improve health outcomes and aged care practice, as well as to guide policy to invest in solutions for positive ageing for Australia's older people.

### **Media inquiries:**

**Penny Underwood on (03) 9818 8540 or [mediawise@mediawise.net.au](mailto:mediawise@mediawise.net.au)**