

Media Release: Ageism, Elder Abuse and the care of older Australians

Relationships Australia – working with families to negotiate the complex issues related to ageing and to reduce incidence of the abuse of older people across Australia.

New research released today by Relationships Australia reveals a growing awareness of ageism and the abuse of older people in Australia, while highlighting an ongoing need for education and support to help reduce their impact within society.

The survey, launched on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (15 June 2020), surveyed the views of over 1,300 respondents on the prevalence of ageism, as well as the experiences and perceptions of carers in the Australian community. The survey was conducted against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and provides useful insights into the challenges and vulnerabilities facing older Australians in this difficult time.

Nick Tebbey, National Executive Officer of Relationships Australia said today: “The pandemic has brought into sharp focus the risks faced by Australia’s ageing population and the need for ongoing support and services that ensure their rights to safety, dignity and agency.

“Encouragingly, almost 90% of respondents held the view that all Australians have the right to receive proper care in their old age, however only 56% of respondents currently providing care to a family member or friend reported receiving enough support in their roles, and the same number expressed having felt frustrated by their role. Despite this, 77% of carers reported enjoying aspects of their roles, revealing the importance and dedication of carers across the country”, said Mr Tebbey

Recognition of the prevalence and impacts of the abuse of older Australians has increased (from 25% to 61%) compared to a similar survey conducted by Relationships Australia in 2016, however concerning results indicated that 43% of respondents knew someone who had been affected by such abuse.

“It is essential that the Australian public know where to seek assistance in preventing and overcoming the abuse of older people, and there is a need for further education and support in this regard” said Mr Tebbey, noting that some 48% of respondents remained unsure of where they could seek help.

If you would like to find out more, [read the full report here](#).

Relationships Australia believes that all people, regardless of their age, should be able to live their lives free from any kind of abuse, and should be supported to have happy and healthy relationships with all those around them. We offer counselling and dispute resolution services to families with ageing related family issues across more than 30 sites nationally.

Relationships Australia is the home of Neighbour Day, encouraging social connections to tackle loneliness, which disproportionately affects older people in Australia.

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