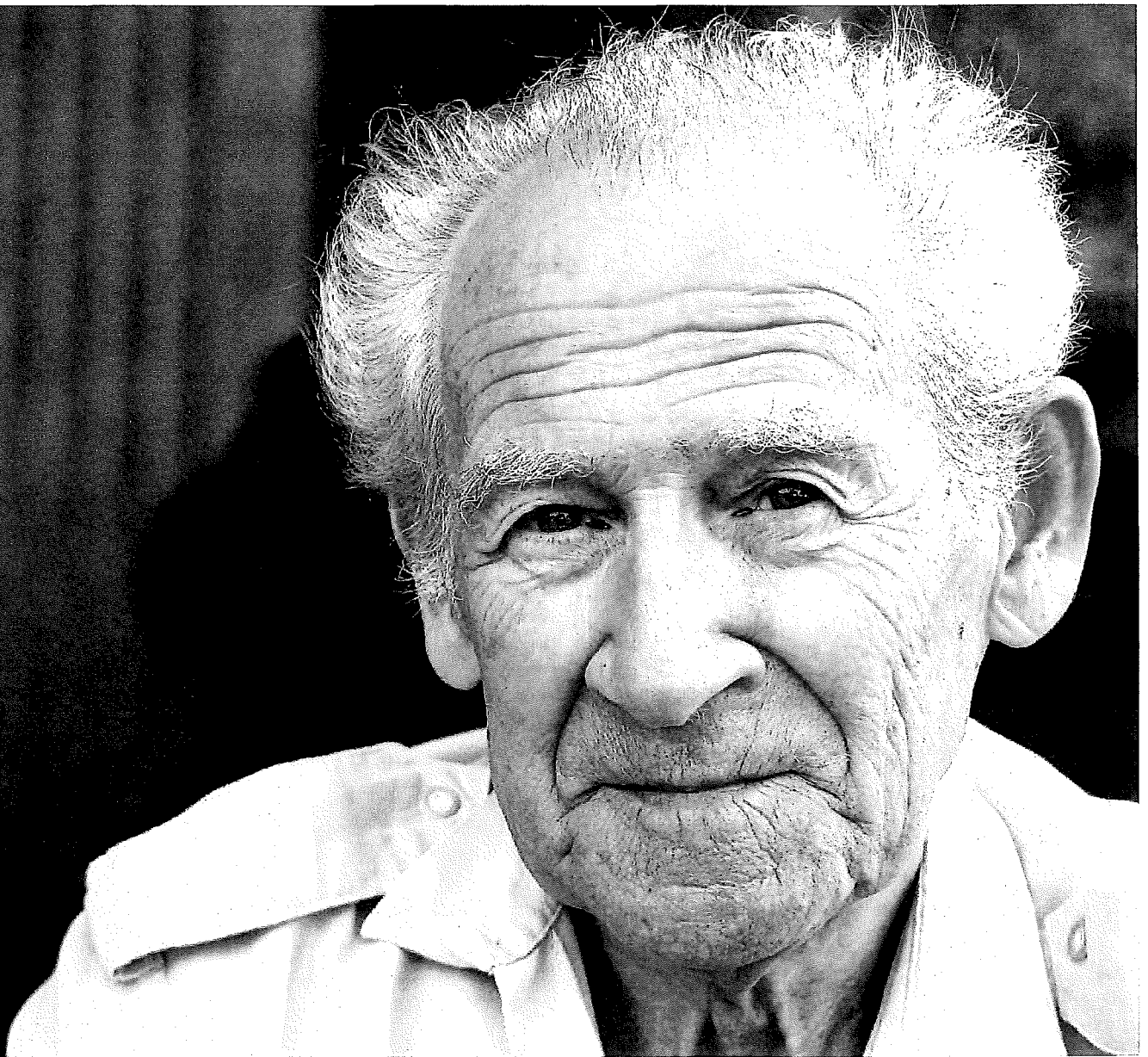


National Elder Abuse

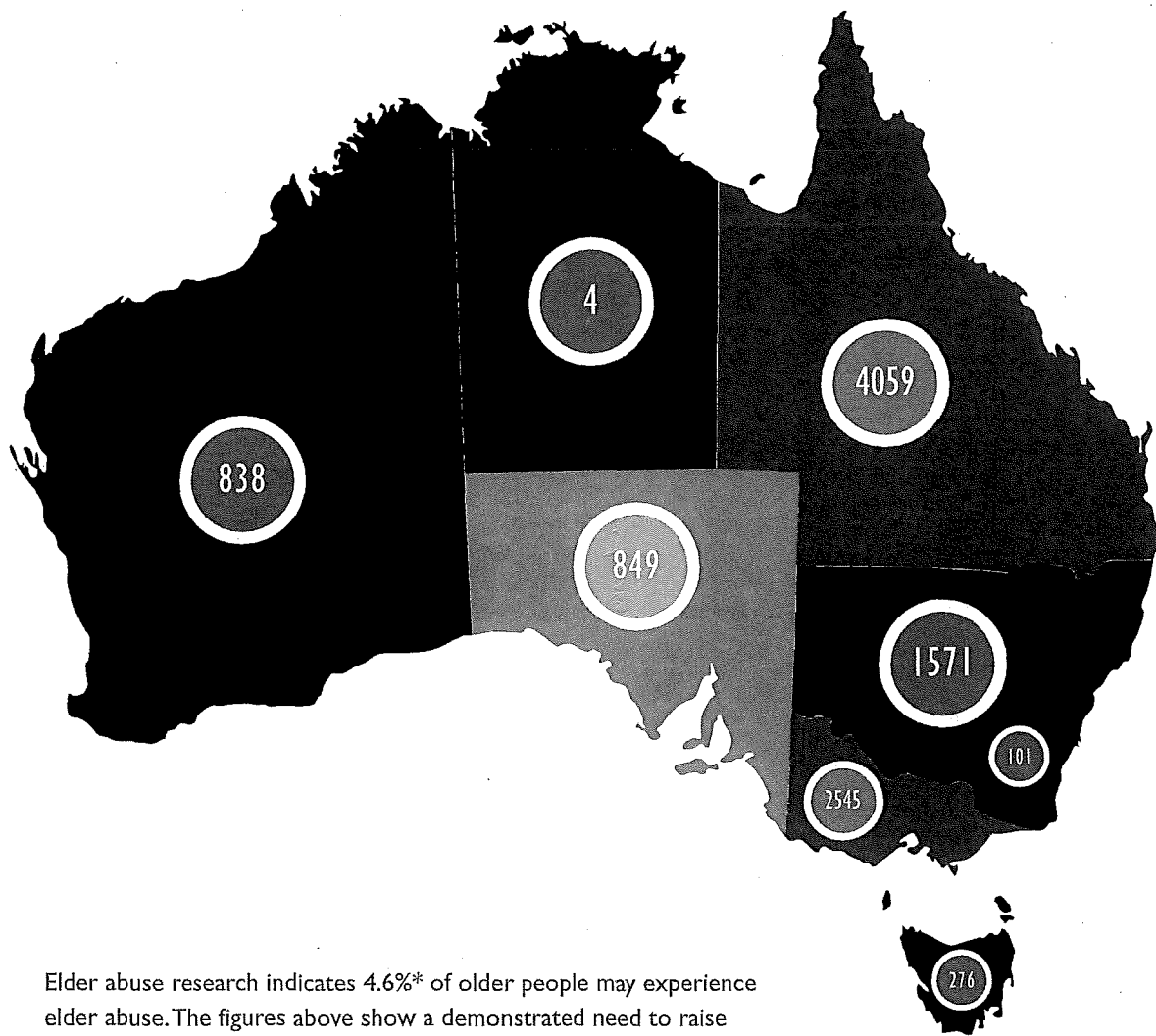
Annual Report 2014 - 2015



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Number of Elder Abuse Information and Advocacy Cases by State









Elder abuse research indicates 4.6%* of older people may experience elder abuse. The figures above show a demonstrated need to raise the profile of elder abuse, to protect older people from abuse.

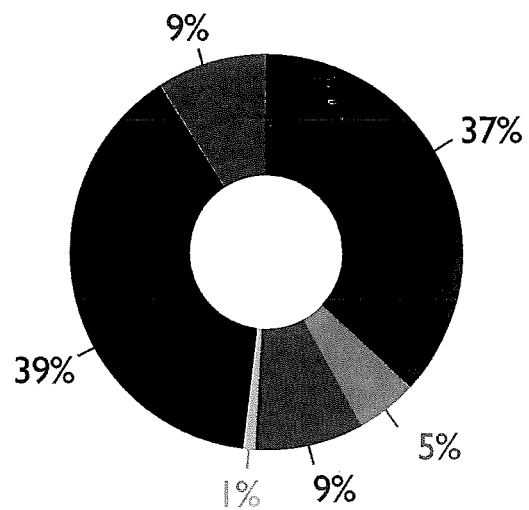
* Clare, M., Black Blundell, B., Clare, J. (2011) Examination into extent of elder abuse in Western Australia: A qualitative and quantitative investigation of existing data, University of Western Australia.

The World Health Organisation, defines elder abuse as 'a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person.'

www.who.int/ageing/projects/elder_abuse/en/

Types of Elder Abuse

	Financial	37% of cases
	Social	5% of cases
	Physical	9% of cases
	Sexual	1% of cases
	Psychological	39% of cases
	Neglect	9% of cases



Financial

- Non repayments of home loans
- Forced changes to legal documents
- Misappropriation of money
- Denying access to personal funds
- Forging signatures
- Misuse of a bank card
- Misuse of an Enduring Power of Attorney



Social

- Preventing contact with family or friends
- Cancelling services
- Withholding mail, or disconnecting the phone
- Living in, and taking control of the person's home
- Preventing the older person from engaging in cultural or religious practices



Physical

- Slapping, hitting, kicking, tripping, shoving, burning or bruising
- Physical restraint
- Over or under-medicating
- Handling an older person too roughly



Sexual

- Sexual assault
- Sexual harassment
- Inappropriate touching
- Sexually offensive materials against an older person's will
- Making unwanted comments about an older person's body



Psychological

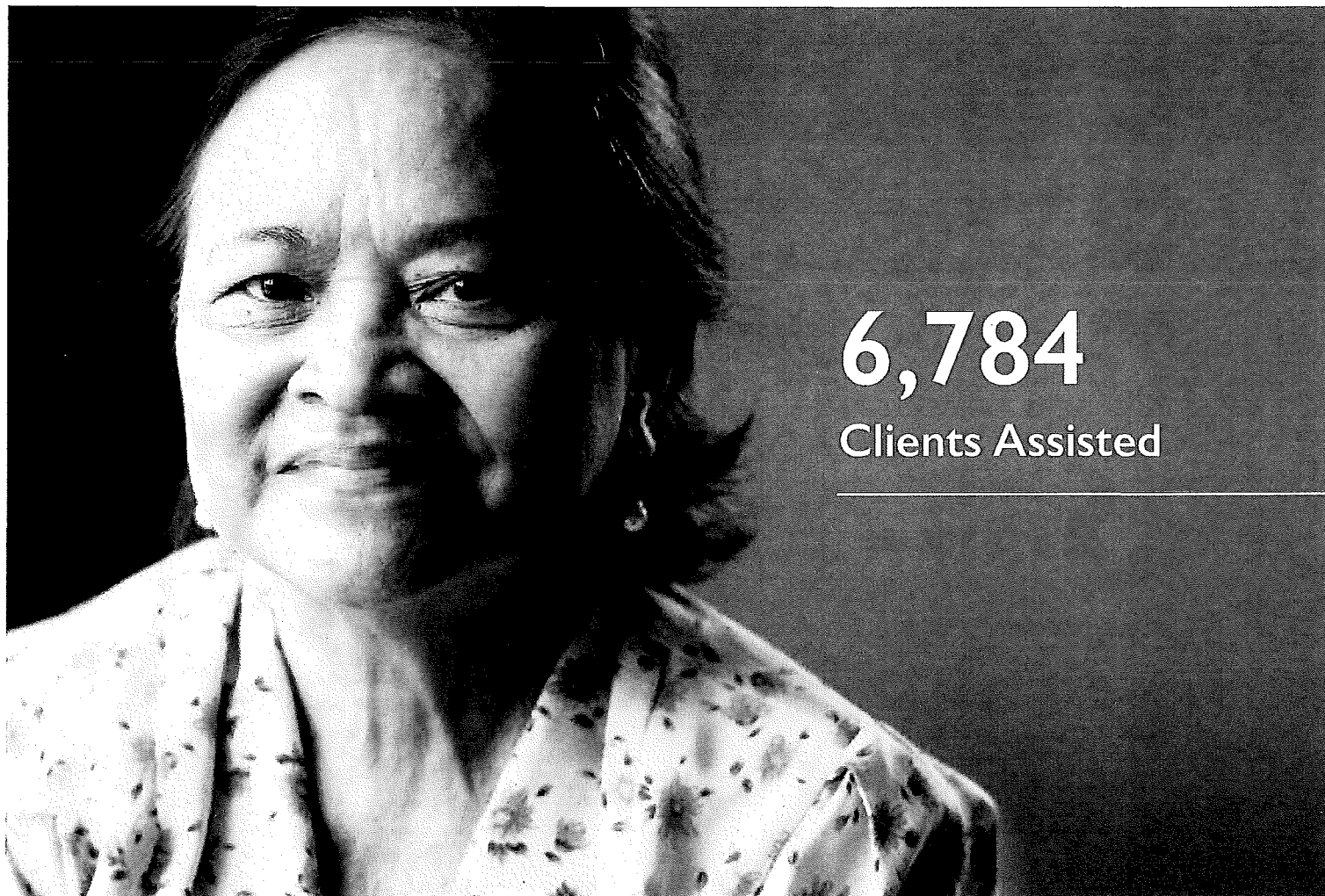
- Verbal intimidation, humiliation, harassment, shouting
- Threats of various forms
- Withholding affection
- Removal of decision making power
- An enduring guardian acting inappropriately



Neglect

- Preventing an older person from accessing aged care services
- Receiving carers allowance but not providing care
- Failing to provide adequate food, water, clothing, medical treatment, medication, warmth or shelter

Total Clients



6,784
Clients Assisted

In 2014-15 agencies assisted 1,033 clients who identified as having additional needs*.

Additional needs are defined as either:

- Culturally and linguistically diverse people
- Rural and remote people
- People with a disability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Care Leavers - people who have previously been in care
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people

*Not all clients provide this information.

Profile of an Elder Abuse Perpetrator

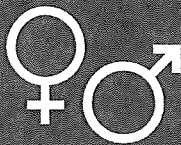
63%
are sons and daughters.

Others include:

Friends and neighbours
Siblings
Carers
Parents
Spouse
Grandchildren
Niece / Nephew



Abuse often occurs behind closed doors, typically in an older person's home.



Perpetrators are equally male and female.



Substance abuse, drug addiction and mental health issues are common in perpetrators.

Advocacy and Information

1,258
Advocacy cases

8,985
Information calls*



The Oxford English Dictionary defines an advocate as 'a person who puts forward a case on someone else's behalf'.

Advocacy is the preferred model in elder abuse prevention, as it enables advocates to support the wishes of the older person whilst encouraging their autonomy under a model of empowerment.

In many cases clients are perfectly capable of self-advocating, but may need extra information to be able to proceed. This information can include information about support services, information about rights and responsibilities, or often just someone to listen to their story.

Elder abuse agencies across Australia offer information services, and provide clients with all the information, resources, referrals and support they need to self-advocate.

*Information calls include out of scope calls, referrals and general enquiries about elder abuse.

Education and Information Sessions



810
Sessions

17,595
Attendees

Raising awareness of how to recognise and respond to elder abuse is everyone's business and a critical part of reducing abuse. Elder abuse agencies across Australia cover 7.69 million square kilometres to provide education and information sessions to:

- Staff working with older people
- Older community groups
- Aged care consumers and
- Special needs groups

People who attend elder abuse education sessions, report feeling:

- More empowered
- Able to recognise and respond to elder abuse
- Resourced with enough information to become an elder abuse champion

Elder Abuse Helplines



6,515

Calls to helplines

The elder abuse helplines across Australia are designed to give people an easy, visible and timely avenue to access support and assistance about elder abuse.

The helplines are staffed by well trained professionals where callers can expect confidentiality, free help and a quality service.



Helpline Numbers

Australian Capital Territory 02 6205 3535

New South Wales 1800 628 221

Queensland 1300 651 192

South Australia 1800 372 310

Tasmania 1800 441 169

Victoria 1300 368 821

Western Australia 1300 724 679

Case Studies

Rosa

Rosa's son Mark was living in Australia with his wife and suggested that Rosa move to Australia to live with them. She sold her home and many of her belongings and used what she had left over from the sale of her home to build an extension on her son's property where she could live. Rosa did not receive independent legal advice about this arrangement. Her name was not put onto the title of the property and there was no agreement in place about what Rosa would receive in exchange for the improvement she had made to the property.

Mark and his family were very busy and Rosa was left to herself. It was challenging being in a new country with a new language, and driving on the other side of the road made getting around difficult. She found herself to be very lonely. Her relationship with her son and his family deteriorated over the years.



Mark lost some investments that he had been relying on and was struggling to meet mortgage repayments. Six months later Mark told Rosa that they had to sell the property and downsize and there would be no room in the new house for Rosa. They refused to repay more than Rosa's initial investment in the property even though Rosa had spent that amount 15 years before and the property had greatly appreciated in value.

Rosa sought assistance from an elder abuse prevention agency. A caveat was lodged on the title of Mark's house. Mark and his wife had to negotiate with Rosa to have the caveat removed before the house could be sold. As a result of the negotiations, Rosa received enough money from the sale of the property to secure an independent living unit. The unit was found as a result of collaboration between the elder abuse prevention agency and a community housing organisation.

Rosa is happy in the new unit, particularly as she was able to stay in the same neighbourhood and keep her cat. She hopes to be able to rebuild her relationship with her son and his family over time.

Case studies courtesy of Seniors Rights Victoria.

Case Studies

Gwen

Gwen's son Craig lived with her in her home on a rural property about one hour's drive from Melbourne. Craig had issues with his mental health and drugs and was abusive towards her. He stole money from her purse, threatened to kill her and made no contribution to household expenses.

Despite Craig's increasingly volatile and violent behaviour, Gwen felt strongly that she did not want to take action. She felt caught in a terrible bind between feeling responsible for helping her son and needing to feel safe in her own home.

Despite Gwen calling police to report the abuse, they did not take out a Family Violence Intervention Order on her behalf. As a last resort, and feeling fearful for her safety, Gwen went to her local court in person to make an application for an order.



Craig was removed from the house after the interim order was granted. Gwen continued to feel unsafe despite the order being in place and changing the locks on her property. Craig breached the order by coming to her property on several occasions and she had to call the police.

A number of administrative errors caused delay in Gwen getting a final Intervention Order which caused her additional and unnecessary distress. She had significant mobility and health problems which made it very difficult to attend court, which was more than an hour away.

However, a magistrate did exempt her from attending two court mention dates once a medical certificate was provided. Gwen hopes that Craig now leaves her in peace and quiet for the duration of the 12-month Intervention Order, and that they can rebuild their relationship one day.

Case studies courtesy of Seniors Rights Victoria.

Elder Abuse Agencies

Australian Capital Territory

ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service
(02) 6242 5060
adacas@adacas.org.au

New South Wales

NSW Elder Abuse Helpline
1800 628 221
eahru@chcs.com.au

Seniors Rights Service
1800 424 079
info@seniorsrightsservice.org.au

Northern Territory

Darwin Community Legal Service
Aged and Disability Advisory Service
1800 037 072
info@dcls.org.au

Queensland

Elder Abuse Prevention Unit
1300 651 192
eapu@uccommunity.org.au

South Australia

Aged Rights Advocacy Service
1800 372 310
aras@agedrights.asn.au

Tasmania

Advocacy Tasmania
1800 441 169
advocacy@advocacytasmania.org.au

Victoria

Seniors Rights Victoria
1300 368 821
info@seniorsrights.org.au

Western Australia

Advocare Incorporated
1300 724 679
rights@advocare.org.au

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Advocare Incorporated compiled information from elder abuse support agencies across Australia to prepare this report. Later versions of the Elder Abuse National Annual Report hope to include statistics and information from many more agencies working throughout Australia.

For any information about this report or media enquiries, please contact:

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