



STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY
Mr Jeremy Hanson MLA (Chair), Dr Marisa Paterson MLA (Deputy Chair),
Ms Jo Clay MLA

Inquiry into ACT Budget 2021–22
ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
26 October 2021

Asked by Dr Marisa Paterson MLA on 26 October 2021: Dr John Boersig took on notice the following question(s):

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In relation to:

DR PATERSON: Thank you. My question is in respect to one of the priorities of Legal Aid over the next three years is to provide support to victims of elder abuse.

Dr Boersig: Yes.

DR PATERSON: So I was wondering if you can talk about how many, you know, numbers of people that you do support in respect to that issue?

Dr Boersig: The actual numbers I would have to get back to you by. We delivered this through a range of programs. One is the Old Persons Legal Service and in that context we have one ongoing position and then we have got an additional person that has been helping during COVID.

As you will expect, we have had to take particular care in relation to older people. Their abuse was already hidden. COVID did not help that and so we have been making greater efforts to work with a range of partners, particularly COTA, but other service agencies so that we are maintaining contact with as many people as possible. But in terms of the actual numbers I would have to get back to you about that. We will be collating those for our annual report.

DR PATERSON: Great, and do you feel that one person is enough to be dedicated to that issue, to those matters?

Dr Boersig: Well, we have found in COVID that we needed additional support and we have support until next June now with two people. One of the problems with elder abuse is identifying its prevalence in the community. If you parallel it to domestic violence generally, you will know that the changes—as we have shone a light on domestic violence over the last five years, more and more people have come forward. I reckon we need to do the same thing in relation to elder abuse. It is a complex task because of the interrelationship between family members as well.

DR PATERSON: Yes, thank you.

THE CHAIR: Sorry, just before we move to Ms Clay, I will just confirm that you will take that number of elder abuse victims on notice?

Dr Boersig: We will.

Dr John Boersig: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

Legal Aid ACT provided assistance to 709 people in relation to elder abuse in 2020-2021 and 120 from 1 July to 31 October 2021.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Signature:



Date: 2/11/21

By the Chief Executive Officer, Legal Aid Commission (ACT), Dr John Boersig