



JUNE 15
WORLD ELDER ABUSE
AWARENESS DAY

Everyone has a right to
respect, dignity, safety.
Let's start a conversation

Queensland
WEAAD Activity & Resource Toolkit

Table of contents

- 3 Contributors and supporters**
- 4 About**
World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
- 5 About**
What is elder abuse?
- 6 Key Facts**
Elder Abuse
- 7 How you can get involved**
Ways to promote awareness
- 8 Host a facilitated conversation**
A conversation guide and information
- 13 Who can help**
Emergency, social support and legal support
- 18 Shining a light on elder abuse**
Turning Queensland Purple
- 19 Resources**
Downloadable marketing resources

Contributors and supporters

This toolkit was developed in partnership.

Click on the contributor and supporter logos below to be redirected to their website.



JUNE 15

WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

**Everyone has a right to
respect, dignity, safety.
Let's start a conversation**



**June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD),
An international day to voice opposition to the abuse of older people.**

Individuals and communities throughout Queensland will come together and show their support by hosting and attending a wide range of activities where people will have the opportunity to learn about Elder Abuse, its impacts and older people's human rights. The **official colour of WEAAD is purple** which represents wisdom, dignity, independence and creativity.

This toolkit has been created as a go to for information and links to support for anyone witnessing or experiencing elder abuse in Queensland. It has been developed through partnership between many pivotal agencies working to support victims, increase awareness within communities, and implement prevention and intervention strategies around the state.

This toolkit contains:

- Event and activity ideas
- Conversation guide
- Agency information
- Links to support
- Information and resources

For more information about WEAAD and to let people know about your events and activities visit www.cotaqlld.org.au/weaad.

JUNE 15

WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

**Everyone has a right to
respect, dignity, safety.**



What is elder abuse?

Elder abuse is any act—or lack of appropriate action— within a relationship of trust which results in harm to an older person. It can be emotional, psychological, financial, physical or sexual abuse, or neglect.

Signs of elder abuse

If you suspect an older person is being subjected to elder abuse, pay close attention and see if you can identify any of the signs or behaviour changes.

If you suspect elder abuse is happening, don't wait for proof. Call the *Elder Abuse Helpline* on 1300 651 192 for free, confidential advice and referral.

Elder abuse can include...

- Frightening someone by threatening to hurt a pet or break belongings
- Intimidating, humiliating, or harassing a person
- Threatening to evict someone or put them in a nursing home
- Stopping a person from seeing family or friends
- Denying someone the right to make their own decisions
- Pension skimming
- Selling someone's belongings without permission
- Misusing an Enduring Power of Attorney by taking money or property improperly
- Forcing a person to change their will
- Denying someone access or control of their own funds
- Not allowing services to help someone
- Neglecting a person's physical, medical or emotional needs
- Slapping, hitting, pushing or restraining
- Making unwanted sexual approaches or behaving indecently
- Monitoring people's phone calls, emails, text messages/restricting access
- Making someone feel unwelcome in their own/fearful of using communal living spaces
- Making constant requests for money/loans
- Questioning someone's capacity to make decisions and saying they have dementia or another condition

Ageism is one of the enabling factors of elder abuse. The Elder Abuse Prevalence Study (2021) empirically confirmed that the more ageist we are the more likely we condone elder abuse, and, the more ageist we are the less likely we are to recognise elder abuse.

For more information see page 11.

7

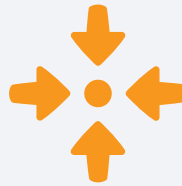
Key Facts

These have been taken from the Australian Institute of Family Studies National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study: Final Report, published December 2021.



1 in 6

older Australians (15%) reported experiencing abuse in the 12 months prior to being surveyed between February and May 2020.



Comes in many forms

Elder Abuse can take the form of psychological abuse, neglect, financial abuse, physical abuse, social abuse and sexual abuse.



Who is more at risk

People with poor physical or psychological health and higher levels of social isolation are more likely to experience elder abuse.



Often family

Perpetrators of elder abuse are usually family members, mostly adult children, but they can also be friends, neighbours and carers.



Alarming under reporting

Almost two thirds of older people don't seek help when they are abused (61%).



Often hidden

Elder abuse often remains hidden, with the most frequent action taken to stop the abuse involving the victim speaking directly to the perpetrator.



Family & friends

Family and friends are the most common source of support for older people who experience abuse. Find support services and resources on pages 13-17.

How you can get involved

During the week of 15 June, individuals and communities throughout Queensland will come together and show their support by hosting and attending a wide range of activities where people will have the opportunity to learn about Elder Abuse, its impact and older people's human rights.

In the week leading up to 15 June we encourage you to raise awareness of elder abuse and human rights by sharing the WEAAD campaign materials.

Below are some event and activity ideas you can use to get involved, raise awareness about elder abuse, and promote resources to find supports and services.

- **Host a morning tea** connecting people of all ages, cultures and abilities.
- Invite a **guest speaker** to discuss the issue of elder abuse.
- **Host a facilitated chat** using our conversation starters in this document
- Organise a **flash mob**.
- **Wear purple** to work during the week leading up to and including the 15th of June.
- **Help turn Queensland purple** to highlight the issue of elder abuse. Light up your local landmark, shopfront, workplace or community space.
- Organise a purple themed awareness walk, picnic or sausage sizzle in your local park.
- **Create an awareness display** in your workplace, school, council, library or shopping centre.
- Take the **EveryAGE Counts** online pledge to stand against ageism at www.everyagecounts.org.au
- Use the WEAAD social media tile, email signature, hashtags or editable event invite on page 19.



Let people in your community know about your event by registering it with [Council on the Ageing Queensland](#) by emailing info@cotaqld.org.au.

Everyone has a right to respect, dignity, safety.

Let's start a conversation

Host a facilitated conversation

We encourage you to connect and host a facilitated conversation about Elder Abuse. In this next section are some conversation starters to get you going along with some answers and information to share.

Conversation Starters

Who can be affected by elder abuse?

What do you think of when someone says elder abuse?

What is ageism?

What is coercive control?

Do you get to choose what happens on your home?

Are you treated with respect by family and friends?

Do you know how your money is being spent?

Do you feel safe at home?

How can we prevent elder abuse and encourage more respectful relationships involving older people?

Do you know the types of elder abuse?

Everyone has a right to respect, dignity, safety.

Let's start a conversation

Answers for Facilitator (and further information)

What is Elder Abuse?

A single or repeated act or failure to act, including threats, that results in harm or distress to an older person. These occur where there is an expectation of trust and/or where there is a power imbalance between the party responsible and the older person.

([Elder Abuse Prevalence Study: Final Report](#))

Who can be affected?

Abuse can be experienced by men and women from all cultures and races and by both rich and poor. An abused older person may live on their own or in a household. They could be taking care of themselves, caring for someone or being cared for by someone. The person doing the abusing is often someone the older person knows and should be able to trust; such as a daughter or son, grandchild, spouse, other family member, carer or friend.

Types of abuse

Financial abuse - the illegal or improper use of an older person's money or property, including the misuse of an Enduring Power of Attorney document.

Psychological abuse - causing mental anguish, fear of violence, feelings of shame, humiliation and powerlessness.

Physical abuse - inflicting pain or injury. It includes hitting, slapping, restraining or over/under medicating.

Social abuse - preventing a person from having social contact with family and friends or accessing social activities. For example, removing someone's phone, not allowing family and friends to visit.

Neglect - intentional or unintentional failure by a carer to provide necessities of life to a person who depends on them.

Sexual abuse - sexual assault, rape or any activity that makes an older person uncomfortable about their body or gender, for example unwanted text messages.

For more information see the agency descriptions and links on pages 13-17.

Everyone has a right to respect, dignity, safety.

Let's start a conversation

Stories of elder abuse

All stories give real examples of elder abuse and have been deidentified.

Neil had been living independently and happily in his home for many years. After Neil had a fall, his son James and daughter-in-law Courtney came to his home to look after him. They were only meant to stay for a short time, but ended up staying for over a year. James and Courtney often took his car for hours, leaving him isolated at home and unable to visit friends or attend his usual activities. Neil was also paying all of the bills for the house. Neil was referred to the Senior Relationship Mediation Service where the family decided that James and Courtney would look for other accommodation. James and Courtney returned Neil's bank card to him. They decided on a roster for using the car so Neil could go back to his coffee catchups and board game group. James and Courtney moved out after six months and their relationship with Neil improved.

Serena was referred to ADA Australia by QCAT when they received an application for a Guardianship and Administrative appointment from a hospital. Serena had a fall at home with a head strike and was not found for 2 days. In hospital it was discovered that she had had a stroke and some other contributing health conditions. It was expected that Serena would need some support with her affairs and may need a form of residential support going forward. ADA assisted Serena to have the least restrictive options of support provided to her. Her sister agreed to provide statutory health attorney support to Serena as needed, and she was appointed by QCAT as her Financial Administrator for one year only. Serena was facilitated to access rehabilitation and transition care, and to be provided support in her home.

Marianne was being cared for by her live in grandson Mitch, who was experiencing some personal troubles. His behaviour became aggressive towards Marianne and she asked him to move out, which he did. Marianne and her family agreed to mediation through the Senior Relationship Mediation Service. Marianne brought along a friend as a support person. Marianne shared that her strongest wish was to remain in her own home for as long as possible. The family acknowledged Mitch's mistreatment of Marianne. Mitch apologised to Marianne and showed evidence of changing his behaviours. Marianne invited Mitch to live with her as her carer again. The family decided together on Mitch's caretaking tasks. They agreed to review the arrangement in six months. Marianne felt her wishes were heard and honoured by her family. There was a greater level of family support and supervision for both Marianne and Mitch.

Hamad was placed in a Memory Support Unit in a residential care facility by his son and attorney, following the death of his wife. Two months after his wife's death, Hamad had been taken to a new GP that had assessed his capacity for independent decision making as inadequate. The Enduring Power of Attorney document was activated, giving his son the authority to make health and accommodation decisions. Hamad did have a dementia diagnosis, but this disease had not progressed significantly and once he recovered from his grief, his cognition and decision-making ability improved. Hamad self-referred to ADA Australia for advocacy, as he wanted to return home. His son had ignored his requests and Hamad was not free to leave the Memory Support Unit. His son had also given direction to the nursing home to stop allowing Hamad visitors. ADA assisted Hamad to get an updated capacity assessment and assisted him to negotiate with his son. Unfortunately, his son had already sold his house, but Hamad was assisted to a unit in a retirement village with support services.

Everyone has a right to respect, dignity, safety.

Let's start a conversation

Let's talk about Respect

Whether we are nine or 90, we all deserve to be safe, equal and respected. To prevent elder abuse from happening, we must understand how it works, and the underlying attitudes, structures and beliefs that drive it.

Elder abuse is hard to picture, but it happens every day. What starts out small doesn't always stay that way for long. It's important that we call it out!

- Caring for an elderly family member does not entitle you to take their money. There is no grey area, it's elder abuse and it's wrong.
- They're retired. They own their home. They've got plenty of super. No amount of self-justification makes elder abuse okay.
- Ageing does nothing to diminish your rights. Elder abuse is everybody's business.
- Family aren't entitled to a free pass for poor behaviour. Have the challenging conversation.

"The thing that has amazed me about getting older is the lack of understanding that we do have ideas, can contribute, are interested in what's happening in our world. You're not asked to give an opinion when you would love to." – Helen, Respect Older People: 'Call It Out' campaign.

For more information visit www.qld.gov.au/elderabuse

What is Ageism?

Ageism is discrimination, stereotyping or prejudice against a person or a group of people based on age. For older people, this form of discrimination can lead to isolation, shame and abuse. It is pervasive but often hidden.

It can distort our attitudes to older people and ageing and have profound negative impacts on our personal experience of growing older.

Ageism is not benign or harmless. It is a big problem because it impacts on our confidence, quality of life, job prospects, health, and control over life decisions.

Changing the social norms that underpin negative attitudes and behaviours towards ageing and older people is critical to reducing elder abuse.

We need to acknowledge our own inclinations to infantilise and disempower older people. Ageism can enable us as individuals to trivialise or minimise a story of abuse from an older person and dismiss complaints.

Many of us have internalised ageism. This can make us believe that if bad things happen to us, they are an inevitable part of ageing. This can be a risk factor for elder abuse.

Everyone has a right to respect, dignity, safety.

Let's start a conversation

What is Coercive Control?

Coercive control is when someone uses patterns of abusive behaviour against another person. Over time this creates fear and takes away the person's freedom and independence.

This dynamic almost always underpins family and domestic violence, which can include the abuse of older people (known as elder abuse).

Coercive control can happen in intimate partner relationships, even after they've ended. It can also happen in family relationships. For example, an adult child can use coercive control against a parent, or a person can use coercive control against an older family member they are caring for.

Coercive control can be hard to spot because the abuse can be subtle and targeted. People experiencing coercive control may not realise they are being abused.

People who use coercive control might convince others that what they are doing is a normal part of family relationships or caregiving. Coercive control can involve a range of different behaviours, including physical and non-physical abuse.

For more information visit: <https://www.ag.gov.au/families-and-marriage/publications/understanding-how-coercive-control-can-affect-older-people>

Leading with connection and respect

One of the simplest ways to prevent elder abuse, is to lead with respect and foster positive attitudes towards ageing in your community, family, and workplace. This can look like:

- Supporting young people to have mutually respectful, caring relationships with older relatives or neighbours
- Promoting or celebrating the voices and contributions of older people in your workplace or community
- Seeking the opinions and expertise of older people wherever appropriate, and ensuring their agency is upheld.

We can all call out ageism. This can look like:

- Not laughing at or actively calling out jokes or comments that discriminate against older people based on age
- Thinking about the unconscious biases you may hold, and doing the work to understand how ageism can affect the older people in your life or how you speak to or about them
- Advocating for policies in your workplace, local sports club or community group that support and are inclusive of older people, particularly older women.

Wrap up questions

1. **Has your view of what elder abuse is changed through our discussion?**
2. **Do you think you are being treated respectfully by family and friends?**

If a participant is requiring assistance they can phone the Elder Abuse Helpline on 1300 651 192 (Queensland) or 07 3867 2525 (interstate) for free, anonymous and confidential assistance, 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday. An operator will talk to them about their concerns and discuss support and referral options.

Everyone has a right to respect, dignity, safety.

Support is available

Who can help

Emergency, social support and legal services

*Each organisation description contain underlined links to downloadable resources.
Click the link to download and save.*

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call the police on triple zero (000). Do not attempt to intervene in a situation where physical violence may be occurring, as this may put you and others at risk.

Elder Abuse Prevention Unit

Elder Abuse Helpline on 1300 651 192 (Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm)

The confidential Queensland Elder Abuse Helpline is a contact point for anyone who experiences, witnesses or suspects elder abuse. When you call the Elder Abuse Helpline, we can talk through your concerns in a safe, confidential conversation. We can help you assess risk, examine relationship dynamics, seek pathways and options, ask questions and find out about support services. We take the time to listen and understand your situation and offer a safe, respectful space to talk.

- [More information in English and other languages](#)
- [How to help someone else](#)

Queensland Police Service

Non-Urgent: 131 444 Emergency: 000 Crimestoppers: 1800 333 000

The Queensland Police Service is committed to working with older people and the community to prevent, disrupt, respond and investigate domestic, family violence and harm to older people.

Elder abuse is everyone's responsibility and by working together, it can be prevented.

- [QPS Elder Abuse Brochure: Keeping Older People Safe](#)
- [QPS Senior Safety Information Sheet](#)
- [QPS Seniors Safety webpage](#)

Everyone has a right to respect, dignity, safety.

Support is available

Seniors Legal and Support Services

These services are available across Queensland to provide free social support and legal advice to people who are at risk of, or have experienced elder abuse.

For more information contact your nearest service:

Brisbane, Logan City, Beaudesert, the Redlands and Moreton Region

Brisbane Seniors Legal and Support Service

Caxton Legal Centre Inc.

Phone: (07) 3187 7187, or 1800 954 494.

Cairns

Cairns Community Legal Centre—Seniors Legal Service

Phone: 1800 062 608

Cape York Peninsula & Torres Strait (Outreach service only)

Cairns Community Legal Centre—Seniors Legal Service

Phone: 1800 062 608

Gold Coast

Sunshine Coast

Bundaberg

Gladstone

Mackay

Rockhampton

Relationships Australia Queensland

Phone: 1300 063 232

Hervey Bay

Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre—Seniors Legal Service

Phone: (07) 4124 6863

Ipswich

TASC Legal and Social Justice Services

Phone: (07) 3812 7000

Outback and Western Queensland (Outreach service)

ADA Law

Phone: 1800 232 529

Toowoomba

Toowoomba Seniors Legal Support Service

Phone: (07) 4616 9700

Townsville

Townsville Community Law—Seniors Legal Service

Phone: (07) 4721 5511

Everyone has a right to respect, dignity, safety.

Support is available

Relationships Australia Queensland

Phone: 1300 063 232

- Senior Relationship Services offers free support to connect, protect and empower older folks. Support options include counselling, mediation, legal aid, referrals, and more.
- Elder Abuse Prevention and Support Service (EAPSS): A free case management service which supports and assists those at risk of, or currently experiencing, elder abuse through individualised support and referrals.
- Senior Financial Protection Service (SFPS): A free service which helps older Queenslanders who are experiencing financial elder abuse. SFPS also educates older people to make informed financial decisions with their best interest in mind.
- Senior Relationship Mediation Service (SRMS): A free service which combines family mediation, family therapy, and individual support. SRMS focuses on the interests, rights, and personal safety of the older person.
- Senior Social Connection Program (SSCP): A free program which supports older people in the Northern Sunshine Coast and Gympie to access a range of peer support and community-based activities. SSCP aims to reduce social isolation and loneliness in older people.

Caxton Community Legal Centre

Phone: (07) 3187 7187 or 1800 954 494

FREE legal and social support services to promote safety and respect for older persons in the Brisbane, Logan City, Beaudesert and Moreton Bay North areas.

Caxton assists older persons and their supporters with a wide range of legal issues including:

- Elder abuse
- Grandparent rights
- Family and domestic violence
- Retirement village and retirement park rights
- Age discrimination
- Workplace and money issues

Caxton provides free education to the community. It also provides training to professionals on related areas of knowledge. Caxton advocates for fairer laws and policies for older persons.

Resources include:

- [Staying safe at home - English fact sheet](#)
- [Telling someone - English fact sheet](#)
- [Keeping money and assets safe - English fact sheet](#)
- [Making your own decisions - English fact sheet](#)
- [Five tips for being your own health advocate](#)
- [10 Tips for Protecting Yourself from Elder Abuse - English fact sheet](#)
- [New Guardianship Laws - English fact sheet](#)
- [Multilingual Fact sheets - Arabic, Chinese, Croatian, Greek, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Serbian and Tagalog.](#)

Everyone has a right to respect, dignity, safety.

Support is available

Office of the Public Guardian (OPG)

Phone: 1300 653 187 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4pm, local call cost)

The Office of the Public Guardian is able to investigate allegations of abuse (including financial abuse), exploitation and neglect (including self-neglect) of older people with impaired decision-making capacity to determine if their decision-making arrangements are adequate and appropriate, or whether a decision-maker needs to be appointed.

To assist people with planning their own future decision-making arrangements, OPG have an information pack which includes a [booklet about the importance of planning ahead](#) and factsheets on what is an [Enduring Power of Attorney \(EPOA\)](#), the [Responsibilities of an Attorney](#) and information regarding [future health care decisions \(Advanced Health Directive – AHD\)](#).

An Enduring Power of Attorney and Advance Health Directive are legally binding documents and can be downloaded from the Queensland Government Publications website at [Enduring power of attorney and advance health directive forms](#)

Watch OPG's "[What are the chances](#)" video which aims to motivate and explain the value of personally planning ahead.

Queensland Public Trustee

Phone: 1300 360 044

Queensland Public Trustee (QPT) provides a range of services to Queenslanders including Will-making, enduring powers of attorney, executor and financial administration services at 15 offices across the state. Each year QPT supports thousands of Queenslanders with reduced decision-making capacity, in addition to advocating on behalf of those who have fallen victim to the misappropriation of funds. Financial elder abuse is one of the most common forms of abuse experienced by older Australians.

For more information visit www.pt.qld.gov.au

ADA Australia

Phone: 1800 700 600

ADA Australia are your aged care advocates and community legal service, helping older people and people to speak up for their rights and needs. [ADA Law](#) provides advocacy support for people experiencing elder abuse in residential aged care in South East Qld and legal and social support seniors in Western Qld via the SLASS program. Useful resources include:

- [Duties and Responsibilities as an Attorney under an Enduring Power of Attorney \(EPOA\) in Queensland](#)
- [Flowchart – Making an EPOA](#)
- [Flowchart – Using an EPOA](#)
- [Making Decisions – Supporting clients and assisting Attorneys](#)
- [Being A Brilliant Attorney – How to support the people you care for when acting as an Attorney](#)
- [Healthcare decision-making resources](#)
- [Your Life Your Rights – Decision making with your Attorney](#)
- [Supported Decision Making Guide](#)

Everyone has a right to respect, dignity, safety.

Support is available

Queensland Government

For more information visit www.qld.gov.au/elderabuse

Compass

Phone: 1800 ELDERHelp (1800 353 374) an Australia-wide helpline

Compass.info is a national website navigating elder abuse in Australia. It provides quality videos, help sheets, help service contacts, newsletters and more.

For more information visit www.compass.info

Council on the Ageing Queensland

Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland advocates for the advancement of the rights, needs, interests, and futures of Queenslanders as we age and hosts the WEAAD Qld webpage.

For more information visit www.cotaqld.org.au

Office of the Public Advocate

Conducts systemic advocacy to uphold and protect the rights of Queensland adults with impaired decision-making ability.

For more information visit [Adult Safeguarding in Queensland](#)

The Statewide Office of Advance Care Planning

Phone: 1300 007 227

The Statewide Office of Advance Care Planning is a statewide service (funded by Queensland Health) that helps to promote the important processes of advance care planning. Queensland is the first State/Territory in Australia to have a statewide, standardised clinical approach to receive, review and upload advance care planning documents.

The Statewide Office of Advance Care Planning:

- Provides information and resources about advance care planning to the public and health professionals
- Adds advance care planning documents to the Queensland Health electronic hospital record
- Shares healthcare wishes with doctors involved in a person's care
- Connects people to advance care planning services in their local area

For more information visit [My Care My Choices](#)

Other confidential advice and support services

- Lifeline: 13 11 14 (24-hour crisis support line)
- Legal Aid Queensland: 1300 651 188 (8.30am to 4.30pm)
- DVConnect Womensline: 1800 811 811 (24 hours, 7 days a week)
- DVConnect Mensline: 1800 600 636 (9am to midnight, 7 days a week)

Shining a light on elder abuse

Join us in turning Queensland purple

We encourage you and your community to show your support and help raise awareness for elder abuse by turning Queensland purple during the week of and including the 15th of June.

A number of local councils are showing their support by lighting a number of buildings, bridges and landmarks purple.

Do you have a business, shopfront, or space you'd like to turn purple? Let us know by getting in touch with the team at eapu@uccommunity.org.au



Do you have feedback to share?

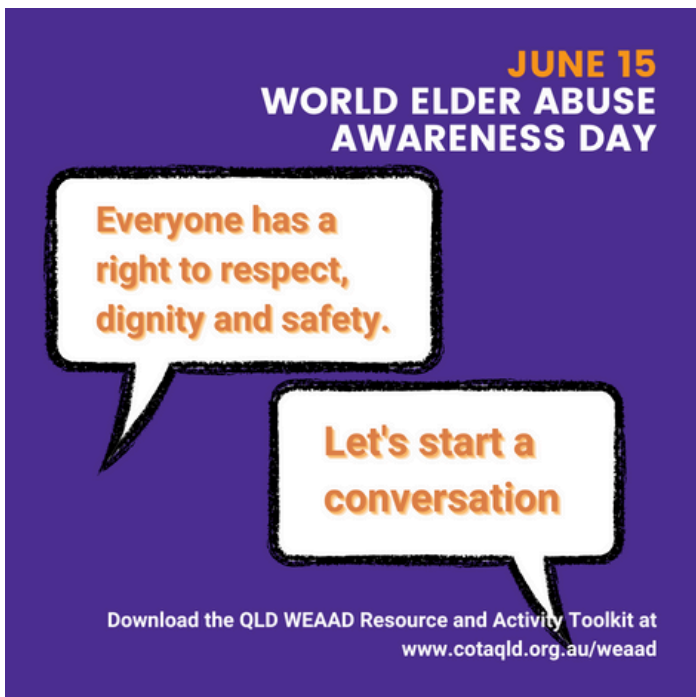
The intention for the future of this toolkit is to build upon the foundational work started in 2022 and updated in 2024 and 2025. In order for us to make improvements we need to hear from you. Please email all feedback to info@cotaqlld.org.au.

Promote WEAAD

Queensland World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
campaign downloadable marketing resources

Access and save these resources here

WEAAD social media tile



WEAAD editable event flyer



WEAAD email signature



WEAAD hashtags

