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MEDIA RELEASE

Funding boost to fight elder abuse welcomed by older Australians

Australia's peak older person's advocacy body, COTA Australia, today welcomed the Federal Government's announcement it will provide \$2 million in extra funding support for the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) to continue tackling elder abuse in aged care and the community over the next two years.

Chief Executive of COTA Australia, Ian Yates, said older Australians are among those most vulnerable to financial, emotional and physical abuse, and more often than not incidences of abuse go undetected and are not redressed.

In the first year of funding OPAN received a combined 1,330 information contacts and conducted 285 sessions to educate older Australians and service providers about protecting people from elder abuse.

As well as elder abuse information sessions and programs, the free OPAN service also provides individual and advocacy support on all issues to do with aged care.

"Whether it manifests itself as financial abuse, emotional abuse or physical abuse, elder abuse is unacceptable and a sign of a much broader problem in our attitudes towards older Australians," Mr Yates said.

"All older Australians should be afforded the fundamental human right to live free from violence, neglect and abuse.

"The new funding will allow OPAN to trial a national elder abuse advocacy and prevention model based on models that have proven successful in South Australia and Western Australia

"COTA Australia is calling on all governments to strengthen efforts to tackle and prevent elder abuse.

"That must include the state and territory governments supporting the federal government's proposed national register of powers of attorney, which will assist to protect older Australians by providing accessible, trustworthy and up to date information about powers of attorney in all jurisdictions."

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