



The Coalition's Policy

Key Commitments

Older Australians should feel safe, cared for, and respected.

Older Australians should be comfortable that they can exercise their rights fully and that their choices will be respected, in the same way as the choices of other Australians.

Unfortunately, there are worrying signs that older Australians are not always safe, cared for, and respected.

More needs to be done to protect the rights of older Australians.

We have already commissioned the Australian Law Reform Commission to conduct an inquiry into laws and frameworks to safeguard older Australians from abuse.

We will also develop a national plan to better protect the rights of older Australians, including from all forms of abuse.

The national plan will include:

- developing measures to enhance the knowledge base, relating to:
 - the nature and prevalence of elder abuse
 - risk factors
 - the effectiveness of existing prevention, intervention and remediation measures and programmes at all levels of government
- developing measures to facilitate co-ordination, communication and sharing of practices
- developing options for a national elder abuse hotline
- developing pilot training programmes to educate frontline staff
- developing a national awareness campaign to educate and to change attitudes and values

Our commitment will help ensure older Australians feel safe, cared for, and respected.

Our Plan to Protect the Rights of Older Australians

Older Australians are not always safe, cared for, and respected. Victoria's recent Royal Commission into Family Violence noted that:

"It is clear that there is a lack of understanding of older people's experiences of family violence among mainstream service providers and within the community generally. People who work in services who come into contact with older victims of family violence often have difficulty identifying and responding to family violence, particularly when the older person is reluctant to report the violence to police..."

... There is a need for expansion of existing awareness and preventative strategies. Just as prevention of family violence requires a focus on gender, prevention of family violence against older people also needs to expose and address ageism. For as long as older people are viewed as less capable and dependent, and are not valued for their contribution to our community, this form of abuse will continue."¹

The Coalition recognises that more needs to be done now to protect the rights of older Australians.

We will develop a national plan to better protect the rights of older Australians, including from all forms of abuse.

The national plan will include:

- developing measures to enhance the knowledge base relating to:
 - the nature and prevalence of elder abuse
 - risk factors
 - the effectiveness of existing prevention, intervention, and remediation measures and programmes at all levels of government
- developing measures to facilitate co-ordination, communication and the sharing of best practices
- garnering state and territory support to implement the current Australian Law Reform Commission reference concerning elder abuse through the Law, Crime and Community Safety Council
- developing options for a national elder abuse hotline

¹ Royal Commission into Family Violence (2016) *Volume V*, pp.89 and 90.

- developing pilot training programmes to educate frontline staff, initially in the Australian Government and contracted service providers
- developing a national awareness campaign to educate and change attitudes and values, for example:
 - recognition of the rights of older persons
 - greater awareness of the nature and prevalence of elder abuse
 - recognition that elder abuse is not a ‘private, family’ matter
 - identifying available support and resources for those suffering from elder abuse, or looking after someone who may be suffering from elder abuse
- identifying potential enhancements to Family Relationships Centres to enable them to better protect the rights of older Australians, particularly (but not only) in the context of family violence and intra-family alternative dispute resolution
- identifying barriers to initiating civil or criminal enforcement of existing laws intended to protect people from offences including assault, neglect, fraud, breaches of consumers’ rights, and theft

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The Choice

The Coalition believes the rights of older Australians should be a bi-partisan issue, fully supported by all major parties.

We are promoting this policy because we value human dignity and we value the past, present and future contributions of older Australians.

The Coalition has always stood for promoting the rights of individuals to make choices and to have those choices respected.

Costs

The Coalition will invest \$15 million to develop a national plan to better protect the rights of older Australians.



For further details of the Coalition's plan go to
www.liberal.org.au/our-plan
nationals.org.au/our-plan/