

National Plan to End the Abuse and Mistreatment of Older People 2026-2036 – Executive Summary

Our vision

All older people are safe, valued, heard and respected; have their rights protected and promoted; and live free from abuse and mistreatment

This National Plan commits to:

- giving a voice to the **diverse needs** and **aspirations** of older people, and advocating for their **rights**
- providing **national leadership** and direction to governments, service providers and community organisations **to elevate the issue** of the abuse and mistreatment of older people and ageism, and **working to end it**
- delivering **improved governance, accountability and robust evaluation mechanisms** for the implementation of its commitments
- **addressing gaps and outstanding priorities** from the first *National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians 2019-2023*.

This National Plan should be considered in conjunction with other Australian, state and territory government strategies and reform efforts that either directly or indirectly address the abuse and mistreatment of older people.

Key Principles underpinning the National Plan

The Principles identify overarching themes that underpin the entire National Plan and actions to be taken under it by governments, stakeholders and the broader community.

Taking a human rights approach

A strong focus on prevention and early intervention

Ending ageism

Supporting individual decision-making, autonomy and dignity

Listening to and learning from the experiences of older people and diverse communities

A person-centred and trauma-informed response

The National Plan is a 10-year strategy with detailed activities to be captured in two 5-year Action Plans.

The abuse and mistreatment of older people (sometimes referred to as 'elder abuse') is a complex health, justice, social and economic issue that can have devastating physical, mental, financial, social and emotional wellbeing consequences for older people, their families, and communities. Abuse can take many forms, it can be physical, sexual, psychological/emotional, financial, neglect, cultural or spiritual.

First Nations people aged **50 years+** are considered older, which is reflective of a number of factors, including lower life expectancy.

The number of people aged **85 years+** will more than triple over the next 40 years



The **65 years+** age group is expected to more than double in the next forty years



The World Health Organization 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.

This National Plan acknowledges the **diverse experiences and characteristics** of older individuals and is committed to ending the abuse and mistreatment of **all individuals**.

We recognise that older people experience abuse and mistreatment **differently**, and at different rates. Some older people can be **exposed to discrimination and disadvantage that intersects with ageism**, for example, older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This can mean some individuals and groups face more **complex barriers in seeking and receiving support**. Abuse and mistreatment among older First Nations people can also be different, experienced at different rates and at a younger age.

Our efforts are informed by, and responsive to, the **diverse needs of communities**. We also seek to harness the strengths, and enhance the protections, that being part of a **connected community** can provide.

Focus Areas

These are the high-level priorities which will guide action over the life of this National Plan, and its underpinning Action Plans.

