

1300 368 821

Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) is a free service that has been established to help prevent elder abuse and safeguard the rights, dignity and independence of older Victorians.

SRV provides a range of services in relation to elder abuse, including a telephone helpline, referrals, legal advice, advocacy, community and professional education.

The service operates from offices in central Melbourne, as well as sites in Melbourne's outer east and regionally in Bendigo. Services are also being established throughout Victoria via local area networks and pro bono legal affiliations.

The only service of its kind in Victoria, Seniors Rights Victoria aims to lead research, policy and advocacy on issues of elder abuse, mistreatment and neglect. It will also be the first point of contact for people and services responding to this issue.

Older people may self-refer to SRV, or be identified through existing services. Experience indicates that callers or clients may not necessarily identify their situation as abuse; it is often only through exploring the person's concerns and issues that an underlying situation of abuse is uncovered. Consequently the pathway into SRV is not always direct or through anticipated channels.

Funded by the Victorian Government through the Office of Senior Victorians (OSV) and Victoria Legal Aid (VLA), the service is led by Council on the Ageing (COTA) in partnership with the Public Interest Law Clearing House (PILCH), Eastern Community Legal Centre and Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre.

Available Services

Telephone Information, Support and Referral

SRV operates a helpline. Callers to 1300 368 821 are provided with information on elder abuse, including services available to assist in relation to elder abuse and referrals to appropriate agencies including SRV's own legal practice.

The telephone helpline is supported by staff and trained volunteers.

Legal Service

SRV operates a legal practice across its central and regional sites, pro bono legal clinics at outreach locations and a secondary consultation service for community agencies. Services include information and advice for older people on issues related to ageing, with a priority area being elder abuse.

SRV also engages in test cases, which can be highly effective in achieving the goal of preventing elder abuse.

SRV is committed to assisting older people in their local communities and will encourage and

Mission Statement

Seniors Rights Victoria seeks to empower older Victorians so they can take the steps to live in safety, with dignity and independence.

What is elder abuse?

Elder abuse is any act that causes harm to an older person that is carried out by someone they know and trust, such as family or friends.

Elder abuse may be physical, social, financial, psychological or sexual; and can include mistreatment and neglect.

actively support community legal centers to act for the client.

Short-Term Individual Advocacy and Support

SRV provides short-term assistance to clients who are particularly vulnerable, primarily where no relevant local service is available. The purpose is to provide older people who are experiencing or at risk of elder abuse with the support they need to enhance their safety, security and wellbeing. This may include information, referral, liaison and short-term counseling. Where possible, this is a face-to-face service.

Advocacy

SRV is developing specialist knowledge in elder abuse and is using this to undertake a range of activities which assist in advocating for older people and their needs, this includes:

- Collecting data and identifying trends relating to the nature and extent of abuse
- Forming strategic relationships with tertiary institutions
- Developing links with interstate and overseas abuse prevention organisations and research institutions
- Distributing relevant information to stakeholders

Local Area Networks

SRV is establishing partnerships and working with local services and networks to ensure effective and timely responses to issues of abuse at a local level. Liaising with existing community networks is important in identifying existing expertise and facilitating the sharing of information and resources, as well as refining referral pathways.

Community Education

Broad community awareness-raising activities will be conducted in conjunction with the Victorian Government. However, more tailored information and education sessions for community groups and older people are also being delivered by SRV. A peer-to-peer training method will be used for community education sessions, in which older people deliver the training. Sessions will target older people, their families and carers.

Community education sessions will include information about:

- Abuse in its various forms
- Rights of older people
- Options for action
- Legal issues

Printed materials and a website are in development. Community education sessions are also available to meet the needs of Culturally and Linguistic Diverse (CALD) and Indigenous communities.

Professional Education

A professional education strategy is currently in development. The aim of this education will be to improve the capacity of service providers to identify and respond to people experiencing abuse. This training will occur within a preventive framework, working to minimise the impact and prevent the recurrence of abuse.