



MEDIA ALERT

CONTENT EMBARGOED TO APRIL 12, 2023

12 April 2023

Health Justice Partnerships key to tackling elder abuse.

Attorney General Hon. Mark Dreyfus KC to launch Elder Abuse Evaluation Reports

Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC) and its partners Eastern Health and Oonah Belonging Place are proud to release major Evaluation Reports from two significant Elder Abuse response programs – ELSA and ROSE. The reports will be launched by Attorney General Hon. Mark Dreyfus KC at Eastern Health in Box Hill at 11.00am on the 12th April 2023.

Both the Final and Summary reports (www.eclc.org.au/elderabuse) examine the key integrated, multidisciplinary elder abuse programs ELSA and ROSE, operated by ECLC over the last three years (2019-2023) in partnership with Eastern Health and Oonah Health & Community Services Aboriginal Corporation.

The reports both **share key lessons** for service providers delivering elder abuse services, **advocate for the expansion of integrated elder abuse services**, and **draw attention to systemic gaps** that must be addressed in order for elder abuse to be resolved.

Ultimately, the independent evaluation found that:

“...both programs have achieved their goals to the highest level possible... The evaluation findings clearly support the adaptation of the ELSA and ROSE models to other geographical locations and their continuation and expansion...”

The independent evaluation was undertaken by La Trobe University, RMIT University and the National Ageing Research Institute (NARI). A mid-term report (2022) was also commissioned in 2022 and is [available here](#).

Established in 2019, the ELSA and ROSE programs were created as part of the National Plan to respond to the abuse of older Australians, funded by the Commonwealth Government.

The programs were initially funded for three years and due to the success of the programs, funding has now been continued. The ‘elder abuse trial’ services are now known as Specialist Elder Abuse Services.

Both ELSA and ROSE use an integrated practice models combining lawyers and other community service professionals including elder abuse advocates (often social workers) and financial counsellors.

Michael Smith, ECLC CEO says that the Centre is honoured to work with victim survivors of elder abuse and is proud of the Centre’s ongoing work to prevent, intervene early and respond to the scourge of elder abuse in the community. He believes that the highly positive evaluation reflects the landmark achievement of the collective success of these programs.

“ECLC and its key partners have again demonstrated that collaborative approaches both improve access for older people needing assistance and comprehensively improve outcomes. Research in this area remains limited and we believe this report will both add to the evidence base and be an excellent resource for all those concerned about the devastating and widespread impact of elder abuse,” said Mr. Smith.

“ECLC is honoured to have Attorney General Hon. Mark Dreyfus KC launch this very important report that highlights the amazing work the ELSA and ROSE teams have been undertaking and the importance of the integrated practice models in tackling elder abuse in Melbourne,” said Smith.

“The partnership between ECLC, Eastern Health and Oonah has been a key element to the success of ELSA and ROSE and we are pleased that the government is recognising the vital importance of these models that are built on strong partnerships,” added Smith.

Eastern Health Chief Executive David Plunkett spoke of the important work of the Eastern Community Legal Centre.

“Eastern Health has a strong collaborative partnership with ECLC and we acknowledge and thank them for their leadership in tackling elder abuse. The community of the eastern region of Melbourne continues to age and grow, and it critical that our consumers feel safe and empowered when accessing healthcare services.”

Amanda Hand, CEO of Oonah Health & Community Services Aboriginal Corporation acknowledged the importance of the partnership with ECLC’s ROSE team. “It has been really positive for Oonah to support the elder abuse programs and the evaluation, ensuring cultural safety and improving access for our Community’s Elders.”

Elder abuse is a serious problem in Australia and across the globe, with **one in six Australians over 65 years of age experiencing abuse** ([AIFS, 2021](#)). Elder abuse occurs when a person causes harm or distress to an older person. Elder abuse can be psychological, financial, physical, sexual, or neglect. Adult children and family members (including intimate partners) most commonly perpetrate elder abuse.

To find out more about ECLC’s ELSA ad ROSE programs, please visit www.eclc.org.au/elderabuse.

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