



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs

Inquiry into older people and the law

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 7 May 2007

Chairman: Peter Slipper MP

Public hearings and open forums on older people and the law

Sydney 14-15 May 2007

The question of how well the legal system meets the needs of Australians aged 65 years and over will be on the agenda of public hearings in Sydney next Monday and Tuesday (14-15 May).

The House of Representatives Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee will hear from a range of organisations and individuals in relation to its inquiry into older people and the law. Specific topics that are being investigated include how the legal system deals with fraud and financial abuse against older people, the administration of power of attorney provisions, family agreements, discrimination, and barriers to older Australians accessing legal services.

“Older people are often reluctant to discuss legal matters for a variety of reasons including a lack of awareness of legal processes, the cost of legal assistance and a fear of isolation from family members. It is therefore important that the Committee investigates the adequacy of legislative regimes in addressing the needs of older Australians”. Committee Chairman Peter Slipper says.

Organisations appearing before the Committee include the NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing, the Trustee Corporations of Australia, the Aged Care Rights Service, the Legal Aid Commission of NSW and the NSW Guardianship Tribunal.

Mr Slipper has also called for members of the public to provide their own perspective on older people and the law. “While we have a number of service delivery and advocacy organisations appearing before the committee, it is also important for us to hear first hand the views of older Australians. That is why I am inviting members of the public to come along and have their say at an open public forum at the hearings”.

The hearings will be held at the **SMC Conference Centre, 66 Goulburn St, Sydney on Monday 14 May 2007 and Tuesday 15 May 2007.**

The hearings will commence at 9:30am and are open to the public to observe. The public forums will be at 3:00pm - 4:00pm on 14 May, and 11:00am - 12:00 noon on 15 May. The Committee is not able to investigate individual cases or provide legal advice. Public hearings are also planned for other capital cities.

For media interviews:

Please contact the Committee Chairman, Peter Slipper MP on (07) 5443 3555 (electorate office) or on (02) 6277 4975 (Canberra).

Or Mr Slipper’s media adviser, Richard Bruinsma, on 0417 486 673.

For background information, including the full terms of reference and copies of submissions, please contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 2358 or visit the inquiry website at:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/laca/olderpeople/index.htm> .

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