



THE QUEENSLAND COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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ENQUIRY INTO OLDER PEOPLE AND THE LAW

In most cases the law is there but access to the law by older people is hard to achieve.

Barriers:

The isolation of country people also isolation in the home within the town.
 Traditional values held by many older people prevent them asking for help.
 There is a fear of ramifications of making a complaint, such as losing any future help.
 There is a lack of advice about resources available. Often only a telephone number which leads on to more numbers, although many older people are not confident about discussion personal matters on the phone.
 The Privacy Act can be restrictive when service providers are handicapped from accessing information which is integral to further treatment.
 Many of the service providers do not have the training to handle serious problems so a social worker attached to the local hospital would be beneficial.

Suggestions:

Provide more people and activities to advertise the services available. This could be done in group lectures at sites where people meet and are comfortable eg Bowls Club, RSL Club, CWA meetings or Community Care Centres.

Advice on the computer is often fragmented so a Central Data Base set up by the Federal Government which covers service directives in all States would be advantageous for the computer literate.

Family Agreements:

Enduring Power of Attorney for the older person is regarded as vital but a big percentage of the aged do not understand the benefits so there is a need for the public to be better informed.

Advanced Health Directives should be completed by every adult so there is a suggestion that it should be made mandatory when a person gets a licence, a pension or makes a will.

There is a law regarding the mandatory reporting of child abuse, also mandatory reporting of abuse in Aged Care Facilities so it should be mandatory to report abuse of the frail or disadvantaged in their own homes.