

**FINANCIAL ABUSE OF OLDER PEOPLE**

*Statement by Minister for Seniors and Volunteering*

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah - Minister for Seniors and Volunteering)** [2.10 pm]: I am pleased to inform the house of two significant events that will help improve community awareness about elder abuse in this state and help protect our valued seniors from financial abuse and exploitation. Tomorrow I will join representatives from the banking and finance sectors at a breakfast I am hosting to raise awareness about the nature of financial abuse and exploitation of older people in Western Australia. Later in the day I will host a forum that will be attended by a number of seniors at the Perth Town Hall to raise awareness about the issue. These events, organised by the Office for Seniors Interests and Volunteering, will involve Dr Alexandre Kalache, head of the World Health Organisation's ageing and life course team; Mr Colin Neave, the Australian Banking and Financial Services Ombudsman; and Ms Michelle Scott, the Western Australian Public Advocate. Dr Kalache will speak of how events earlier in life can have an impact on vulnerability and the risk of elder abuse and exploitation. Mr Neave will speak on what the banking sector could do to help prevent financial abuse and exploitation. Ms Scott will provide information about how the Office of the Public Advocate can protect vulnerable adults from abuse and exploitation when an older person has a decision-making disability. Information from these two events will support the development of new initiatives, in addition to those outlined in the state government's active ageing strategy, which aims to enhance the quality of life for Western Australians and reduce the incidence of elder abuse in our community. This includes the establishment of the Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse WA, which has recently developed a new elder abuse protocol to assist organisations to develop policies and procedures to help workers recognise and respond to elder abuse. One further initiative, which I announced earlier this year, is the establishment of a new legal service that will be funded in the new year. The service will provide legal information, advice and advocacy to older people experiencing elder abuse. This service will complement the advocacy provided by Advocare and the protection for vulnerable young people who have a decision-making disability provided by the Office of the Public Advocate. The Office for Seniors Interests and Volunteering aims to work with the banking and finance sector early in the new year to identify ways the Carpenter government and industry can work together to protect older people from financial abuse and exploitation by those they trust.