

WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

Statement by Minister for Seniors and Ageing

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston — Minister for Seniors and Ageing) [9.05 am]: I rise to inform the house that today is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Governments and organisations in societies across the globe are acknowledging that elder abuse is unacceptable. Elder abuse is any act that causes harm to an older person within a relationship of trust, such as family or friends. There are many types of abuse, including physical, financial, emotional, sexual, social and neglect. Elder abuse remains underreported. Research tells us that up to 12 000 older Western Australians may be experiencing elder abuse today. The shame associated with declaring that their own loved ones are causing them harm prevents them from seeking help. It is not fair or acceptable to assume that because a person has not spoken out or acted to stop it, that it is okay—nor is it fair or acceptable when we know that abuse is occurring to leave it to the person experiencing it to sort it out for themselves. Today I am pleased to announce this government's support of a review of the elder abuse protocol guidelines. The protocol guidelines were developed by the Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse to assist organisations and individuals to respond to elder abuse. This review will see the guidelines updated to inform agencies and individuals of the new and existing support services available and best practice strategies to respond effectively to elder abuse. Much has changed in the community since the previous edition. There are greater pressures on many to meet increasing costs of living. However, placing undue pressure on older family members is not the answer. Many of us are still not quite sure what to do when we witness or suspect elder abuse, but doing nothing allows the abuse to continue. The updated elder abuse protocol will deliver a much needed resource to service providers and the wider community. I ask all members to encourage their constituents to call the WA Elder Abuse Helpline or Advocate for advice if they or their friends are experiencing elder abuse. Like many of my parliamentary colleagues, I am wearing the purple ribbon for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day to highlight this issue.