

Human Rights Council – 38th Session

Side Event
World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
18 June 2018

Australian Intervention

Thank you co-sponsors for organising this timely and important event.

Australia is deeply concerned by the abuse of older people and welcomes the opportunity to hear from the experts here today about the ongoing challenges in protecting the human rights of their older citizens. With the World Health Organization (WHO) estimating that the prevalence rate of elder abuse in high- or middle-income countries ranges from 2% to 14%, there is a need for further action.

Australia is implementing a range of social and legal responses to reduce the impact and frequency of elder abuse, and notes that the fundamental human rights of older persons are not different to the broader population.

Australia is committed to the protection and promotion of human rights of all people. The importance of protecting the rights of older people is rooted in the basic principles found in the human rights instruments we all adhere to. Australia's current efforts to respond to elder abuse will enhance the rights of older people and improve the lives of all Australians.

A focus for Australia is the reduction of incidences of financial abuse. Ms Beaulieu's [panellist] comments were interesting on the link between financial abuse and suicidal ideation among elderly. We are concerned about the misuse of legal documents which allow proxies to take control of the financial arrangements of older people, given the significant impact on quality of life that can arise from theft and misappropriation of money. We ask the panel about the experience of other countries in protecting the financial autonomy of older people, particularly those in care-dependent situations.

233 words