

The Hon Yvette D'Ath MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
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Dear Attorney-General,

The financial abuse of older people is an insidious and growing social problem. It affects some of the most isolated and vulnerable members of our community leaving them not just without adequate finances, but without a home or a safe place to live.


Almost 9 out of 10 Australians want their Governments to do more to help prevent the financial abuse of older people. The forthcoming Council of Attorneys-General meeting on Friday November 29 is an opportunity to address the harmonisation of Power of Attorney Orders empowering older people to work with family and frontline staff to prevent and avoid risks of abuse. In 2017, the Australian Law Reform Commission recommended that nationally consistent laws governing enduring Powers of Attorney be adopted. The same report also recommended a national register be established after agreement on national consistency was in place. Now, more than two years later, it is time to take action.

At the *Stop Elder Financial Abuse* campaign launch in Canberra on 17th October, Federal Attorney-General, the Hon Christian Porter MP said: *"Having had several months now to consider a variety of options, my plan is to proceed in two stages. Stage one will be to seek amendments in each of the state and territory jurisdictions on their power of attorney laws to the bare minimum required to actually help allow the creation of a register. A physical register which the Commonwealth will obviously be a large funder of, organiser and administrator. Then as a second stage we would move that further harmonisation of laws around the types of issues that go directly to the protection of vulnerable people."*

We acknowledge the good work many jurisdictions have done to establish places to report and investigate suspected elder abuse. But now is the time to address the issue at the heart of the problem, the harmonisation of Power of Attorney orders so we can all work together to protect older people from abuse.

As the Queensland Attorney-General, we call on you to agree to take action to harmonise Power of Attorney orders immediately enabling the establishment of a national register. This will ensure State and Territory governments are doing all they can to help older people at risk of abuse in our community.

Your sincerely



Mark Tucker-Evans
Chief Executive
25 November 2019