

Media Release

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ACSA WELCOMES ACTION ON THE ABUSE OF OLDER PEOPLE

Aged and Community Services Australia (ACSA), welcomes the reported announcements from Minister Santoro on action on abuse of older people.

“ACSA supports any measure that will improve and refine the provision of care for older people wherever they live.” said Ms Sparrow, A/Chief Executive Officer. “The reforms announced today will build on a sound system of aged care and puts in place even further measures to ensure that older people continue to be treated with dignity, respect and most importantly, that they are safe when in the care of our members.”

ACSA has long supported the strengthening of the Complaints Resolution Scheme to provide it with independence and investigative powers. “Abuse of older people in aged care homes is very rare, but every instance needs to be fully investigated so that the systems in place in the aged care homes involved can be assessed and, if necessary, further improved.” said Ms Sparrow. It will be important that in any reform of the scheme the capacity for mediation on less serious issues is retained where appropriate.

The introduction of police checks and further training for staff are sensible measures for addressing the abuse of older people.

However ACSA does not support the introduction of mandatory reporting. “Mandatory reporting has a very patchy track record where it has been applied in the United States and in the child protection area in Australia. One commonly reported problem is that it can overwhelm the investigation capacity with scores of false reports and actually hamper the ability to deal with real cases” said Ms Sparrow. “The evidence does not support mandatory reporting as an effective way of addressing the abuse of older people. There is no point in introducing a potentially costly system if it will not improve the outcomes for older people.”

ACSA also welcomed the flagging of a significant funding boost for aged care in the May budget as well as reforms to improve the financial sustainability of high-care nursing homes. “Funding for the provision of high quality aged care services to meet the needs of Australia’s growing older population should be a priority for the budget and we look forward to hearing the details of these initiatives. ACSA believes the priorities are increasing funding to meet high care support needs, a sustainable capital funding system and increased funding for community care.” Ms Sparrow said

ACSA represents more than 1,200 church, charitable and community-based organisations providing housing, supported accommodation and community care services to around half a million older Australians, people with a disability and their carers.

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