

**Legal Support in a Collaborative System Panel.
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SA Police.**

SA police are federally funded to run Home Assist.

- Consists of a small team that runs out of the federal office.
- Mandated to provide security assessments of aged peoples homes, work with aged, but also people with disabilities and/or their carers.
- referrals through victim contact officers who are located in local police stations.
- If someone is a victim of a crime we get in contact with them to see if they want a security audit done of their home.
- that person might be a victim of a break-in, a domestic violence victim, or accosted in the street: they are considered to be vulnerable people in the community.
- elderly need a targeted service it might not be dealt with in the same way as a wider service.
- Police officer sits down with the elderly person in their home, for forty-five minutes to an hour, they make recommendations and we fax them through the local council.
- some local councils send handymen out to fix things, we prefer that we deliver the service.
- we talk to the people delivering the services about elder abuse people's rights. In SA we have a policy of doing volunteer checks of all those who do volunteer work; with paid employment there is Federal Legislation around that police checks.
- to help older people, we need to find out that the abuse is happening.
- there are questions around privacy principles-should carers and family be present when talking about abuse with clients.
- police are trained to look out for those things, when we're in the home we can do checks and provide information about violence to some degree.
- Its terrible when you see a case of fraud or burglary and know that the son or the daughter is also abusing them. Sometimes it's not a crime, because the older people consents, they feel obliged.
- In the Indigenous Community, younger people are hitting up elders for taxi vouchers, food, money and the obligation the older people feel seems more apparent than with white communities.
- In SA, a marketing campaign has been launched against this abuse which shames the behaviour. Using terms Indigenous people acknowledge.
- from a police perspective there are barriers, reporting is one, having the confidence in the police to tell them is another
- With Home Assist which operates especially for the elderly, we also have family violence investigation sections. Family violence services, trained detectives and police. Elder abuse and family violence? Is it separate? Is it

part of it? Where does it sit? We would be doing a disservice by removing it out of that model.

- police have acknowledged that it's important, that it's a crime, one that should be dealt with, with the same severity and interest as other crimes.
- Needs consistency across the country, a far more coordinated approach, between support services, police victims.

Do we need specific legislation around the issue of abuse of elderly people?

- No, I think it should be focus on education rather than legislation but we need tougher penalties for those who abuse older people.