



# Referrals from Community Health to the Seniors Legal and Support Service

## THE SENIORS LEGAL AND SUPPORT SERVICE

or SLASS is a partnership between Caxton Community Legal Centre and Metro South Health and Metro North Health. It is the first Health Justice Partnership of its kind in Queensland and has been funded by the Commonwealth Government for a period of three years as a response to increasing elder abuse.

## WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE

There is no formal definition of elder abuse in Australian or Queensland law. The Seniors Legal and Support Service (SLASS) adopts the definition of elder abuse by the World Health Organisation that says: 'Elder abuse is a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person'. Recent data from the [National Elder Abuse Prevalence study by the Australian Institute of Family Studies](#) found one in six older people reported experiencing some form of elder abuse. One in ten perpetrators were intimate partners, but more than half were the sons or daughters of the older persons.

## HOW SLASS WORKS WITH OLDER PEOPLE

The Seniors Legal and Support Service will be adopting a human rights approach to working with older people. This means we will be supporting an older person to exercise their right to autonomy and self-determination. It

also means we will be working from a supported decision-making model if there are issues of capacity, rather than a best interests model.

## WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF SERVICE

The SLASS community social worker will be able to assist the patient with their personal and social issues. The SLASS lawyer may assist with the following legal issues (please note that this is not an exhaustive list):

- domestic and family violence
- grandparents' rights
- property matters or granny flat issues
- loans, guarantees and banking issues
- capacity, EPAs, guardianship and administration.

The service will not be investigating or providing advice regarding consumer law, aged care complaints, or hospital or medical misconduct or negligence.

The service will not be drafting EPAs but may assist with a revocation of an EPA in urgent circumstances.



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## HOW CAN SLASS WORK WITH YOU IN THE COMMUNITY

1. Patient referrals—if a patient consents to being assisted by SLASS, please contact the SLASS Social Worker (Sally Richardson) on 0427 727 399 to discuss and make a warm referral.
2. Secondary consultations—if your patient does not consent, or you wish to provide some legal information to a patient who does not wish to speak to the lawyer directly, you may have a de-identified and hypothetical discussion with the SLASS lawyer by calling 1800 959 494.
3. Information sessions—SLASS will be delivering training on red flags and risk factors for elder abuse and other legal topics. To book an in-service, email [SLASS@caxton.org.au](mailto:SLASS@caxton.org.au). Please visit our website for more information at [www.caxton.org.au/how-we-can-help/seniors-legal-and-support-service](http://www.caxton.org.au/how-we-can-help/seniors-legal-and-support-service)

## CAXTON COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE

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