

SUNBURY

# Elder abuse under the spotlight

A SUNBURY health service is shining a light on an often-overlooked problem by marking World Elder Abuse Awareness Day earlier this month.

Sunbury Community Health client support worker Maria Bowman said highlighting the issue would spur victims to speak up.

"It's often under-reported because abuse is carried out predominantly by people in positions of trust," she said.

A study by the National Ageing Research Institute found 92 per cent of elder abuse was carried out by

known and trusted people, with 66 per cent of perpetrators being adult children.

Ms Bowman said older people suffering abuse often ended up in a "catch 22".

"When an (abusive) adult child lives with an older parent, they may be providing transport, supervision and a bit of company," she said.

"If you remove the adult child from the situation it can actually leave the older person quite vulnerable or force them into care before it's required."

She said adult children returning home could place

significant pressure on older parents.

"Grandparents can find themselves in a situation where they are (supporting) adult children and care providers to grandchildren."

Seniors Rights Victoria manager Jenny Blakey said the rising cost of houses meant adults in crisis were left with fewer options.

"There's not enough accommodation for people to have somewhere to go to, apart from going back to their parents," she said.

"Things might not be going particularly well,

which then leads to the abuse and the conflict."

Ms Blakey urged older Australians to have a "difficult" conversation with their adult children about moving back home.

"Work out what might be the arrangements in terms of finances, looking after the house and who's expected to cook," she said.

"You matter, you have rights and you need to make sure you're not being taken advantage of."

You can get confidential advice from Seniors Rights Victoria on [1300 368 821](tel:1300368821).