

## **Hon Stephen Wade MLC** Minister for Health and Wellbeing

Tuesday 15 June 2020

### **New Campaign to Stop Aboriginal Elder Abuse**

Respecting the rights and safety of older Aboriginal people is the focus of a new video series being unveiled today, to coincide with World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

Minister for Health and Wellbeing Stephen Wade said Office for Ageing Well has launched the set of videos as part of its Respect.Connect awareness campaign, which will target Aboriginal communities over the next five years.

“Office for Ageing Well has joined forces with Aboriginal community representatives for the first time, to develop the videos featuring Aboriginal ambassadors talking about the importance of keeping Elders safe,” Minister Wade said.

“The Respect.Connect campaign emphasises that valuing and respecting Aboriginal Elders and their wisdom is the pathway to maintaining culture and building a better future.

“The videos are a way to capture attention and encourage Aboriginal community members, including Elders, to think about the importance of standing up for their rights.”

The online videos feature Aboriginal Elders and advocates as ambassadors, including Kurna Elder Frank Wanganeen and his grandson, Joseph.

Uncle Frank Wanganeen said Elders play a vital role in their communities, providing continuity through stories about history and ancestry.

“As an Elder, I have a responsibility now to pass on what I have learned to my grandkids,” Mr Wanganeen said.

“They can then share that with their grandchildren to make sure we keep our stories alive.”

The videos also feature Joanne Willmot, who received an Order of Australia Medal in last year’s Queen’s Birthday Honours list for her service to the Aboriginal community.

Wakka Wakka woman, Joanne Willmot OAM, said she hopes the campaign will encourage Aboriginal communities to come together to help address the issue of elder abuse.

“We are all a part of the problem and we all have to work together to create the solution,” Ms Willmot said.

“Any attempt at change must first address respect for Elders and the important role they play in keeping culture safe for generations to come.”

Elder abuse or mistreatment is an act that causes harm to an older person and is carried out by someone they know and trust, such as a family member, friend, or caregiver. The mistreatment can be physical, social, financial, psychological or sexual, and can include neglect.



Office for Ageing Well Director, Cassie Mason, said she hopes the campaign will communicate the importance of standing up for the rights of Aboriginal Elders.

“Elder abuse can be a difficult subject to discuss, but it is important that we all recognise and respect the rights of older Aboriginal people,” Ms Mason said.

“We know there are many barriers to the reporting of mistreatment, but this campaign will highlight that there is support available for Aboriginal people if they or someone they know is being mistreated.”

If you have any concerns about your own situation or someone you know, call your local Aboriginal Health Service or the SA Abuse Prevention Phone Line on 1800 372 310 for free confidential advice and support or to make a report.

For more information and to view the campaign, go to [www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/respectconnect](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/respectconnect)