



Embargo 14 June

Raising awareness of elder abuse

Council partnered with a number of local service providers to support a free public forum for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, officially held on 15 June 2016.

The forum, Legal Matters and Ageing, on 14 June, helped participants learn about wills, powers of attorney and elder abuse prevention. Held in conjunction with South Gippsland Hospital, Gippsland Southern Health Service and Leongatha RSL, the community education event was supported by Senior Rights Victoria and featured guest speaker, Gary Ferguson.

The Leongatha event was one of a number held worldwide to raise awareness of elder abuse and highlight ways to challenge such abuse.

Council's Manager Community Services, Bart Ruyter, said sometimes family, friends and carers may not know their actions amount to elder abuse.

"Elder abuse is mistreatment of an older person that is committed by someone with whom the older person has a relationship of trust such as a partner, family member, friend or carer," Mr Ruyter explained. "The abuse may be physical, social, financial, psychological or sexual and can include mistreatment and neglect. It can lead to serious physical injuries and long-term psychological consequences."

Seniors Rights Victoria works to prevent elder abuse from occurring by offering free legal advice and information as well a range of educational and advocacy activities.

"Council is committed to helping to safeguard the rights, dignity and independence of older residents," Mr Ruyter said.

Seniors Rights Victoria provides information, support, advice and education to help prevent elder abuse. For more information go to www.seniorsrights.org.au or contact Senior Rights Victoria's free, confidential helpline on 1300 368 821.

PR1854 6/6/16