

# Elder Abuse Guide



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# Guide to help older people avoid abuse

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Elder abuse is increasing and can include financial, emotional or physical abuse. Instances of these crimes are predicted to rise as our population ages.

While elder financial abuse can happen to anyone – including you, there are certain groups who are at higher risk. It affects people of all cultural, financial and social backgrounds.

The information contained within this document is intended to focus on elder financial abuse and be a guide on how you can help protect yourself or someone you love. This guide will:

- Introduce the concept of elder financial abuse, and explain why it matters to you.
- Make sure you can recognise the types and signs of elder financial abuse.
- Give you practical steps to safeguard yourself and your loved ones against potential abuse – now and in the future.
- Provide an overview of scams and fraud – common types and ways to protect yourself.

As a customer owned bank, we are a member focused, values-driven organisation and we are committed to making banking easy, safe and accessible for all of our members – especially those most vulnerable. That's why we are ready to help with tools and information on how to help keep you and your banking safe.

## What is elder abuse?

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Elder abuse is the mistreatment of an older person, and it can take various forms ranging from physical and sexual assault, to neglect, psychological and financial mistreatment.

This abuse is not committed by a stranger, but by a trusted loved one, friend, or support person of the older person. It is challenging and complex to address, with evidence suggesting most instances of elder abuse are intra-familial and intergenerational. Often it may go unreported, as it can be difficult for a victim to talk about or report the abuse.

Sadly, elder financial abuse is the most common form of elder abuse prevalent in the community and is likely to increase as the Australian population ages. Those over the age of 50 are most at risk, but it can happen to anyone, including you or someone you care about.

## What is elder financial abuse?

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Financial abuse occurs when a trusted individual manipulates or compromises the financial decision-making of another individual. Often involving misusing or taking control of their money, financial resources, property or assets, without their knowledge, consent or understanding.





Relationships Australia defines elder financial abuse as:

“ The illegal, mismanagement or improper use of the older person's finances. This includes stealing money or possessions, controlling their finances without permission, threats or coercion to gain power of attorney or pressuring them for early inheritances. ”

Financial abuse can take many forms, and usually consists of purposeful actions over a period of time, rather than a single event. Higher risk groups include people:



- Who are alone or isolated.
- Have a physical or mental disability.
- Identify as having First Nation heritage.
- Are from a migrant or refugee background.
- Have a limited understanding of finance due to either language limitations or cultural barriers.
- Are from LGBTQIA communities.
- Are reliant on others for their care.
- Have been subject to other types of abuse in the past.









## Why elder abuse should matter to you

	It can happen to anyone (including you), and often starts much younger than you might think.
	It hurts people. Beyond financial loss, elder financial abuse often has other serious impacts including anxiety and depression. This can harm an older person's ability to look after themselves by limiting their access to a safe home, adequate food or medical care.
	As Australia's population ages, more and more people are susceptible.
	It could be happening right now to you or someone you love, but it can be hard to spot until it's too late.

## Common forms of elder financial abuse

Here are 10 of the most common types of abuse:

	<b>Abusing power of attorney</b>	Power of attorney gives a trusted person (the 'attorney') control over someone's assets and allows them to make financial decisions on their behalf. Abuse can occur if the attorney uses this power to take a person's assets for themselves or for others.
	<b>Pressure, threats and intimidation</b>	This occurs when someone attempts to force an older person to sign over ownership of assets, or make them a beneficiary of their will. The pressure may be physical, emotional or both.

	<b>Fraud and scams</b>	This occurs when a third party deliberately sets out to falsely gain a person's trust in order to defraud them and steal their money. Fraud and scams can take many forms, and are often targeted at older, more vulnerable people.
	<b>Abusing family agreements</b>	Often families enter into informal agreements that are designed to help everyone, but have no legal backing (e.g. older parents sell their home and split the profit with adult children). These agreements can unintentionally create various risks of abuse.
	<b>Improper use of funds</b>	This occurs when someone who lawfully has access to an older person's money uses it for unagreed purposes. For example, a carer could purchase things for themselves when buying groceries for the person in their care.
	<b>Theft</b>	While theft is a risk for all people, older people are particularly at risk, especially if they have care needs. Thieves can exploit an older person's specific physical or mental vulnerabilities.
	<b>Inheritance impatience</b>	This occurs when adults feel entitled to an ageing relative's assets. This could cause them to try and take their assets from them. Examples include stealing money from parents' bank accounts, or transferring assets to another person.
	<b>Guarantors gone wrong</b>	Often older parents will help their adult children purchase a home or start a business by being a guarantor to a loan. In some cases, this can create situations where the older parents might lose their home, despite there being no bad intent.
	<b>Failure to provide promised care</b>	This occurs when an (often well-intentioned) arrangement for family members to provide care to older relatives in exchange for financial assistance breaks down, often because of a change in circumstance (e.g. employment) for the younger person.
	<b>Emotional blackmail</b>	This can be one of the subtlest and least visible forms of abuse. Examples include an adult child refusing access to grandchildren, except in return for a loan; or an emotionally dependent adult child abusing their parents' concern by demanding money.



# Warning signs of elder financial abuse

There are 3 main categories of warning signs that elder financial abuse could be happening to you or somebody you know:

## Changes



Making a sudden change to the way you do your banking

## Confusion



Feeling surprised or confused

## Coercion



Feeling someone is pushing you to do things with your money that you feel uncomfortable about

Some specific examples include:

- Unauthorised transactions, withdrawals and transfers made from accounts and charged to credit cards.
- Coercion involving alterations to the will, power of attorney or enduring power of attorney.
- The appointed power of attorney not following directions or acting in the interest of the individual to whom they provide care.
- Forged signatures on cheques, bank accounts or legal documents.
- Unpaid bills, despite assigning that responsibility to a trusted person.
- An absence of mail, particularly delayed or missing bank statements.
- Threats of isolation or actualised isolation from friends and family if the financial abuser's demands are not met.
- Stolen or unpermitted seizure of assets, property or possessions.
- Feelings of guilt and obligation if the individual withholds financial assistance.
- Irregular and unusual spending patterns on the victim's account.
- Large, unexplained transactions or transfers to family/third parties.
- Limited ability or means to prove that financial abuse is occurring.
- The individual lacking awareness of their financial situation.
- Feeling pressured into being a guarantor to a loan without fully understanding obligations.

There are no circumstances in which financial abuse is acceptable, so if you think this might be happening to you, don't be afraid to seek help. Refer to the **How we can help** and **Other contacts and support services** sections of this guide for details on who to contact for support.

## How to protect yourself

There are several things you can do to protect yourself from elder financial abuse:

<b>Money</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Control and monitor your bank accounts.</li><li>■ Consolidate your accounts where possible so that it's easier to spot any unusual activity.</li><li>■ Understand all documents before signing them, never sign under pressure, and get legal advice if necessary.</li><li>■ Be careful who you give your banking and financial information to.</li><li>■ Keep your account access, i.e. access card/s and PIN/s, secure. Do not write PINs or passwords down or store them in your wallet or around the house.</li><li>■ Talk about financial matters with trusted family and friends.</li><li>■ Do not keep large amounts of cash at home.</li><li>■ Review your bank statements regularly to make sure there are no unauthorised transactions.</li><li>■ Replace any credit or debit cards that an abuser might be able to use.</li><li>■ Do not open joint bank accounts unless you want the other person to also have ownership of the money in the account.</li><li>■ Set up automatic payments and deposits, for example, for bills and pensions.</li></ul>
<b>Safety</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Maintain relationships with family, friends, and support networks, including groups in the community.</li><li>■ Have your own phone or another way to communicate, like email, and open your own mail.</li><li>■ Do not leave any mail lying around unopened.</li><li>■ Ensure that your cheque books and legal documents, such as your will and property deeds, are stored securely.</li><li>■ Do not sign any documents unless you fully understand them.</li><li>■ Think carefully before having someone move in or before moving in with someone.</li><li>■ Change the locks if someone who is or was abusive has a key to your home.</li></ul>
<b>Planning Ahead</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Build and set up the right support networks and have all the correct documentation in place to protect your financial future.</li><li>■ Plan for the future while you are still mentally capable, including preparing a will and deciding about powers of attorney.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Be careful when choosing someone to give a power of attorney to, make sure you trust them, and know that they will respect your wishes. Think about nominating more than one person and decide whether they will act separately or together.</li><li>■ Ensure you have an up-to-date power of attorney and send certified copies of important documents to a trusted person.</li><li>■ Make a plan for care you might need in the future, and do not rely only on family members to be your caregivers.</li></ul>
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## Build a support network

To protect your financial future, set up the right support networks, appoint appropriate third-party representatives and have all the correct documentation in place. This could include, where appropriate, establishing a power of attorney, third party authorisations and an up-to-date will.

Ensure your support network is trusted, has the right values and capabilities to help you and has no conflict of interest. It's also good to have more than one person in your network.

People you could consider are:



 <p><b>Family &amp; Friends</b></p>	<p>Family is an obvious choice to help with financial, legal and health-related matters, and the support of loved ones can be important for everyone. However, it's entirely up to you how much you want to discuss with each family member, and what sort of authority you give them over your money.</p> <p>If you are considering appointing a power of attorney (or any other type of decision-making authority), family is just one option. It is important to share your wishes and preferences with people you trust while you are healthy and not under pressure. There is no obligation to give decision-making rights to your son, daughter or any other relative. Consider your own relationship with each family member, and whether they have the right capabilities, intent and time to assist you – now and in the future.</p>
 <p><b>Medical Advisers</b></p>	<p>Doctors play an important role in assessing and maintaining your health. They can also play a significant role in determining your legal capacity to manage your financial affairs. This is critical if you have assigned an enduring power of attorney that will come into effect if you become unwell.</p> <p>You should develop a close relationship with your doctor and discuss these issues now. Ask your doctor what 'legal capacity' and 'decline' look like, how often you should be assessed and who should be alerted if your health declines. It is a good idea to have regular check-ups at an interval that makes sense for you in the context of your physical and mental health.</p>
 <p><b>Legal Advisers</b></p>	<p>Lawyers can play a significant role in helping to prevent abuse or unintended financial harm by formalising family agreements, such as granny flat or guarantor arrangements, or gifts and loans. A lawyer can also help you to draft your will. Lawyers also help in situations where financial abuse is suspected or experienced.</p> <p>They can help you to understand and create power of attorney documents, and provide documentation for you to share with your bank or accountant. The cost of not seeking advice on these matters can be devastating if relationships break down or you simply don't understand the implications of your choices.</p> <p>Free legal advice is available if you need it. For instance, there are community legal centres located across the country and State Trustees or Guardians. Their details are available in the <b>Other contacts and support services</b> section of this guide.</p>



	<p>Accountants help you with complex matters relating to tax, business ownership and property management, especially later in life.</p> <p>As you get older, you may no longer have the desire or ability to stay on top of these matters yourself. Accountants often have good visibility of your transactions and everyday spending so they can provide you with advice; this also helps them detect unusual or suspicious transactions occurring in your accounts.</p> <p>If you have an accountant, tell them about your power of attorney requirements and wishes so they can keep a lookout for any suspicious behaviour.</p>
	<p>Not everyone has a financial adviser, but if you do, they can help you with your planning for retirement and your finances more generally. It's important not to leave planning too late, and to have an appropriate level of investment risk you are comfortable with. If you own your own business, your financial adviser and accountant could work together to help you.</p>
	<p>Bank staff can help you with the everyday management of your finances and direct you to the right type of products and services for your needs and age. They can't set up a power of attorney document for you, but will retain any attorney documents you have, once you provide them. They can also help you arrange an 'authority to operate'. This enables a family member, accountant, or other trusted person you nominate to transact on one or more accounts that you grant them access to.</p> <p>Your bank can act as a useful partner in helping prevent, detect and stop elder financial abuse. You can ask bank staff to help protect you by creating limits on transactions, and update the records of any current attorney that you have in place, once you provide formal documentation. Bank staff can also investigate any suspicious transactions you see on your accounts.</p>

Your support network can assist with:

- Providing you with the best advice.
- Help you plan and provide for your future, including comfortable retirement.
- Set up your financial affairs to prevent abuse.
- Plan for a time when you might be unable to manage your finances (if your mental or physical health weakens).
- Help you consider and set up a power of attorney, or another type of authority to assist you with financial and legal matters.

## Picking the right team 'captain'

A good support team needs a good captain, and while you are fit and able, now is the time to choose that captain.

Five qualities every team captain should have include:

### Integrity



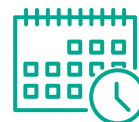
A person who will act in your best interests by saying and doing what is right

### Financial Sense



A person who is good at managing their money and your money

### Availability



A person who has the time to assist, and can help at short notice

### Courage



A person who will stand up for your rights and deal with other people for you

### Knowledge



A person who takes the time to know what they can and can't do, and takes their role seriously

## Ways support people can help

There are three ways someone can make decisions on your behalf:

### General power of attorney (POA)

A power of attorney (POA) is a legal document that allows you to appoint someone to act on your behalf – that is, to make decisions relating to property or financial matters such as:

- Buy and sell real estate or shares.
- Operate your bank accounts.
- Spend money on your behalf.
- Allocate gifts.

You can choose when it comes into effect, for how long, and for what purpose. This type of attorney can be useful when you have a specific period for which you need someone to act on your behalf.

**Note:** A general power of attorney is only effective while you have the capacity to make and communicate decisions for yourself. You might consider needing a power of attorney (POA) if you are:

- Experiencing (or planning for) a decline in your mental health.
- Injured, immobile or experiencing physical ailments that make it difficult to get around.
- In hospital, travelling or deployed in a foreign country.
- Live remotely and find it difficult to access services.
- Have difficulty managing your money yourself.

### Enduring power of attorney (EPOA)

This allows your attorney to make financial decisions on your behalf and continues on if you lose or suffer from diminished capacity. You can tailor it to meet your needs and impose limits. You can also choose when it comes into effect.

Clearly, an enduring power of attorney is important for giving you a say in what happens to your finances and affairs if your health deteriorates. If you don't have an enduring power of attorney, then once you lose capacity the opportunity to appoint someone is gone.

Often, an enduring power of attorney works well, but it comes with a significant amount of authority over your affairs, and can have different applications, depending on where you live. At the back of this guide we have listed several organisations you can contact for advice on how best to protect yourself.

### Third-party authority (TPA)

An authority to operate, or third-party authority (TPA), is a special type of authority that your bank can offer you in relation to your bank accounts.

A TPA gives another person access to one or more of your bank accounts without going through a full power of attorney process. It is arranged directly through your bank and allows the nominated person to perform transactions on specific accounts only. The authorised party will not be able to do things that aren't within their authority, such as opening new accounts or cards.

TPAs only apply to personal accounts – that is, you cannot give another person access to loan accounts or credit cards, for example.

Unlike a power of attorney, a TPA does not confer any legal power on the person to act on your behalf outside of accessing specific bank accounts.

It's important to realise that powers of attorneys and TPAs can coexist. This means multiple people may have access to the same accounts.

You can cancel a TPA at any time by contacting us.

This guide relates to appointing someone to make financial decisions on your behalf, but you can also appoint people to make medical and lifestyle decisions on your behalf.

## Risks and red flags to look out for

There is just as much risk of abuse with a TPA as there is with a POA. The nominated person has the same access to the nominated account(s) as your attorney, and is equally able to withdraw your money and use it for their own purposes.

Here are some steps to help protect yourself:

- Think carefully about who you give authority to.
- Talk to your bank staff before giving the authority.

- Don't give more access than is needed.
- If you have any concerns or reservations – don't do it.

## Safeguarding against scams and fraud

Even the most savvy and successful people can become victims of scams and frauds.

Scammers are incredibly clever at 'grooming' people and sometimes for a long time and are becoming increasingly sophisticated in how they deliver scams, taking advantage of new technology and communication methods to try and slip under your radar. They target older Australians and vulnerable persons such as people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with disabilities, prey on emotions and are experts in manipulation, trying to threaten, scare or confuse you.

### What is the difference between a scam and a fraud?

A scam happens when somebody gains your confidence in order to steal your money or information. Scammers often use sophisticated lies to trick you.

Account fraud usually happens when somebody accesses your funds without your knowledge or authority. You might not even be aware of the fraud until the fraud has occurred.

### Many victims, huge losses

Many people never know that they have been the victim of a scam or fraud. Those who are aware may feel ashamed to admit or report it. Victims often have difficulty believing they are involved in a scam even when the facts become clear.

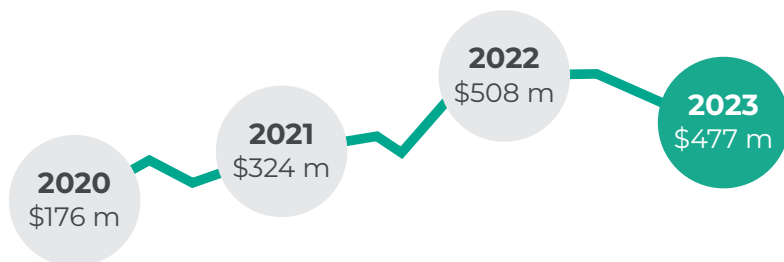
**\$477 million** ▼ **6.1%**

amount reported lost to Scamwatch

**301,778** ▲ **26.1%**

reports to Scamwatch

**239,237** reports in 2022



**65+** are the most impacted with  
**75,517 reported** and  
**\$121m** in losses

Source: **ACCC Targeting scams report 2023**

## Top contact methods

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) **Targeting scams report 2023** identified:

### Text message



**109,621** reports

**\$27 million**  
reported lost

### Phone



**55,418** reports

**\$116 million**  
reported lost

### Email



**85,941** reports

**\$80 million**  
reported lost

### Internet



**17,568** reports

**\$70 million**  
reported lost

### Social networking/ Online forums



**17,542** reports

**\$94 million**  
reported lost

Source: **ACCC Targeting scams report 2023**

## Understanding scams

Digital innovation and progress in banking technology has made it faster and easier for Australian consumers to access their money, but this has also introduced new opportunities for financial scams. Whether you're making a transaction through Online Banking, a Digital Wallet or our Mobile App, it's important to remain vigilant and keep your personal information secure.

Online platforms such as emails, social networking sites, smartphones and tablets make it easier to connect with people around the world and communicate in real time anonymously, privately or publicly. However scammers are becoming increasingly sophisticated in how they deliver scams, taking advantage of new technology and communication methods to try and slip under your radar.









### What is a scam?

Scams are attempts by criminals to purposefully and maliciously mislead you in order to get your money. Everyone is a potential target because scammers don't discriminate, and will target people of any gender, age-group or socio-economic background.



## Common scams

Scammers can take advantage of people in a variety of ways. While some might be easy to spot, others are so sneaky you may not know you have been scammed until it's too late. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. To help, we've put together a list of some of the most common financial scams and how to avoid them. While this is not an exhaustive list, the following should give you an idea of some scams to watch out for:

	<b>Romance and dating</b>	The scammer forms a relationship with you to extract money or gifts. They may convince you to transfer assets into their name or ask to become a beneficiary of your will. Often they will ask you for money to fix a non-existent health, travel or family problem.
	<b>Investment</b>	The scammer claims to be a stockbroker or portfolio manager offering you financial or investment advice. They will try to convince you to hand over money for an investment opportunity.
	<b>Buying and selling</b>	The scammer tricks you into paying for fake invoices, shopping at fake websites, or purchasing products at discount prices – products that you don't receive or don't work as described.
	<b>Unexpected winnings</b>	The scammer offers you the false promise of an inheritance or a share in a large sum of money in return for paying them a smaller up-front fee. This includes the well-known Nigerian scams, where the scammer claims to need help transferring a large sum of money out of their country, and lottery scams, where the scammer asks for a fee in order for you to claim winnings from a fictional competition.
	<b>Remote access</b>	The scammer calls you and attempts to gain access to your accounts or device by getting you to download software that gives them remote access to your computer. They will claim to be from a well-known company investigating a fabricated but seemingly real issue.
	<b>IT support</b>	The scammer contacts you by phone or email pretending to be technical support staff from a telecommunications or computer company. They sometimes request remote access to your computer and often try to convince you to transfer money or to buy a prepaid gift card to fix a fake technical issue.
	<b>Job opportunities</b>	The scammer offers you a quick and guaranteed way of making money with little effort. So-called 'pyramid' schemes often masquerade as multi-level marketing businesses by using payments from new recruits as "profit" for earlier investors.
	<b>Travel</b>	The scammer tricks you into claiming a free or discounted fictional holiday. To secure your 'booking', you may be asked to give the scammer personal information and credit card numbers.



## Simple steps to spot scams

It can be very hard to spot a scam. Here are some red flags to watch out for. Sometimes scammers use a combination of these tactics.

### Opportunities to make or save money

Scammers will deceive you into believing you're getting an incredible deal or offer. They will put pressure on you to act quickly so you don't miss out. Remember, deals that seem too good to be true, usually are.

### Sad stories and cries for help

Scammers will try and use your good nature against you. They will share stories of heartbreak and tragedy with you and explain why they need your help and your money.

### Links and attachments

Scammers try to catch you off guard and use links to send you to scam websites designed to steal your information and money. Scammers may also ask you to open attachments. These can install viruses that steal your information.

### Pressure to act quickly

Scammers don't want you to take your time and think things through. They want to catch you off guard and pressure you into taking action quickly. This can include making threats that something bad will happen if you don't act fast.

### Requests that you pay in unusual or specific ways

Scammers often ask you to pay using uncommon methods like preloaded debit cards, iTunes cards, or virtual currency like Bitcoin. Once this money is spent, you can't get it back.

### Request to set up new accounts or PayIDs

Scammers may ask you to set up a new bank account or PayID in order to pay them (or be paid by them). They may pretend to be your bank and tell you to transfer your money into new accounts to keep it safe.

### Unknown transactions

Keep an eye out for unusual and unknown transactions, whether small or large, particularly for \$1 (these small amounts are used to test if your account is active before taking out larger sums of money).

# Understanding fraud







As the use of technology increases, so do the opportunities for fraudsters. Automation and sophisticated software mean that fraudsters can potentially contact many more people than they would have been able to in the past. In addition, ever increasing ways of interacting with each other, especially social media, means that there are more ways than ever to reach people and try to mislead them.

## What is a fraud?

Essentially, fraud is a deceptive or deceitful act that causes one person to receive a benefit that they are not entitled to while depriving another person of something. You might not even be aware of the fraud until you notice it on your statement or receive a call from your bank.

## Common frauds

The most common types of fraud are designed to obtain money. However, fraud can also be used to obtain property or goods illegally or to avoid paying for services provided. In short, it's any activity where someone is trying to cheat you out of something that is yours. To help, we've put together a list of some of the most common frauds to watch out for:

	<b>Identity</b>	The fraudster uses your identity or personal information to commit a crime. This can involve the theft of your identity or the production of false identities and financial documents.
	<b>Card</b>	The fraudster uses your credit card details without your authorisation, either through card skimming or by convincing you to give out the information under false pretenses.
	<b>Business email compromise (BEC)</b>	Commonly known as a BEC or a payment redirection scam, is when a recipient receives a legitimate-looking email requesting a payment to new or updated account details. A fraudster is often impersonating a contractor, supplier, creditor or even someone in senior management such as the CEO and asks that an urgent payment be made.
	<b>Phishing</b>	The fraudster tricks you into giving them usernames, passwords or credit card details by posing as someone you can trust such as a suspicious phone call or link to a fake website.
	<b>Malware</b>	The fraudster sends you an email or text that looks legitimate but when you click on the link it installs software on your computer, phone or tablet that gives the criminal online access to your bank accounts.
	<b>Skimming</b>	The fraudster installs a device on an ATM or EFTPOS machine that reads and stores information from your card, which is then used to withdraw money or make purchases.

## Warning signs for frauds

Fraudsters are sophisticated and opportunistic and prey on vulnerabilities. Whilst they are constantly evolving their tactics, there are some core traits that almost all frauds include. If you can spot these then you're well on your way to keeping yourself safe. Here are some red flags to watch out for:

### Unsolicited contact

Frauds often begin with someone contacting you out of the blue. This could be a phone call, email, text message, or even someone knocking on your front door. With any unsolicited contact, it's important to verify that the person is who they say they are.

### Time pressure

Fraudsters will often try to create a sense of urgency to force you to make a decision without taking the time to consider it. If anyone is pressuring you to make a decision, whether that's a potential scammer or just a pushy salesman, it's smart to walk away and give yourself space to think the decision over.

### You're asked to keep quiet

Fraudsters often try to isolate their victims from their family and friends to take them away from their support network. If you're asked to keep quiet about an opportunity that has been presented to you, or about someone you are talking to online, then it could be a red flag that everything is not as it should be.

### You're asked to pay them

A large number of frauds involve victims being asked to pay a fee to unlock a greater reward – an inheritance, a lottery win or a free holiday. In scams targeting classifieds sellers, scammers often over-pay for an item and then ask for a small refund. No legitimate business or seller will ask you to pay an upfront fee to receive a prize or to sell something that you own.

### They're unwilling to meet in person

Whether you're trying to sell a phone through eBay, or think you may have met the love of your life through an online dating site, if someone won't meet in person it may mean they aren't who they say they are. Never send money to anyone that you have only met on the internet and if you're meeting someone for the first time then it's a good idea to meet in a public place that has security cameras or take a friend with you.

### They don't check out online

While fraudsters can be convincing, they are often easy to catch out if you verify their claims online by performing further research on google, searching for the business on the Australian Business Register or if they are offering financial advice then they should have an Australian Financial Services Licence and be listed on the financial advisers register and similarly if they are a charity they should be on the ACNC Charity Register.

## How you can protect yourself

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There are a number of ways to assist you in protecting yourself from scams and fraud. Be on the lookout for warning signs as mentioned above but also:

### Stop



Don't give money or personal information to anyone if unsure.

Real organisations won't put you under pressure to act instantly.

### Think



Pause and think before taking any actions.

Ask yourself does this call, email or text seem unusual?

### Protect



Act quickly if something feels wrong.

Contact the bank or other support services immediately to protect and assist with your accounts.

Familiarise yourself with our information and **security tips** to help keep your money secure. You can also find more information at **[scamwatch.gov.au](https://www.scamwatch.gov.au)**.

## How we can help

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There are many different ways we can help you to regain control of your banking. Of course this will depend on your personal circumstances as everyone's situation will be different. Our staff will also ensure that we respect your privacy and confidentiality. We know that telling us about your circumstances may be difficult, and our goal is to minimise you repeating your story.

We have also established specialised teams who can help you, or your authorised representative, regain control of your finances. Our staff will protect your confidentiality and safety at all times.

- **Financial Hardship Team** – support members when there may be changes in your circumstances that make it difficult for you to manage your debts and make repayments when they are due. Our team works with you to create a solution and offer a range of options to help best suit your needs. Email us on **[financialhardship@gcmutual.bank](mailto:financialhardship@gcmutual.bank)** or complete our online **enquiry form**.
- **Financial Crimes Team** – can help if you are concerned about the safety of your accounts, have suspicious transactions on your account or have fallen victim to a scam. Contact us immediately on 1300 364 400 or **[fraudmonitoring@gcmutual.bank](mailto:fraudmonitoring@gcmutual.bank)**

This team also provides specialised support to help ensure the safety and wellbeing of our vulnerable members impacted by elder abuse, domestic and family violence, financial abuse or problem gambling. It is important for us to help and support customers to navigate through their situation to financial independence. This may include:

- Arranging new accounts or other banking services.
- Working with different areas of the bank on the customer's behalf.
- Referring customers to external agencies and financial counsellors.



- **Deceased Estate & Support Team** – We understand that losing a loved one is a lot to process and can be an incredibly difficult time. Dealing with their finances may be the furthest thing from your mind and we're here to help make it as simple as possible. We have put together a **Deceased Estate Guide** to help you navigate this challenging time. Contact us on 1300 364 400 or email us at **deceasedestates@gcmutual.bank** to assist.
- **Translating and Interpreting Service** – If English isn't your first language, you can access a free interpreter service through Translating and Interpreter Services (TIS). This service is provided by the Department of Home Affairs and is available in over 150 languages. If you need to speak with our team in your preferred language, you can contact us on 1300 364 400 and ask our staff to arrange this service for you.
- **National Relay Service** – If you have a hearing or speech impairment, you can contact us through the **National Relay Service (NRS)**. You will need to **register with the NRS** prior to utilising their service.
  - TTY users, phone 133 677 then ask for 1300 364 400
  - Voice Relay users, phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 1300 364 400
  - NRS Chat users, connect to the NRS then ask for 1300 364 400

## Other contacts and support services

### National resources

The following are free Australia-wide services for carers or seniors and provide information, support and referrals relating to the abuse of older people. These services are confidential and callers remain anonymous. If you are a family member, concerned friend, neighbour or social worker who suspects elder abuse is happening, contact one of the services below:

Organisation	Services	Contact
<b>1800 ELDERHelp</b>	A free call phone number that automatically redirects callers seeking information and advice on elder abuse with the existing phone line service in their jurisdiction. The phone line has been established in collaboration with state and territory governments. Elder abuse phone lines are not crisis support services, and operating hours and services vary across jurisdictions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1800 353 374</li> </ul>
<b>Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission</b>	Provides a free service for anyone to raise their concerns about the quality of care or services being delivered to people receiving aged-care services subsidised by the government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au">www.agedcarequality.gov.au</a></li> <li>■ 1800 951 822</li> </ul>
<b>Relationships Australia</b>	Provides core services such as counselling, mediation and family dispute resolution (as well as associated early intervention and post-separation services). These services are funded by the government and are available in each state and territory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.relationships.org.au/what-we-do/services">www.relationships.org.au/what-we-do/services</a></li> <li>■ 1300 364 277</li> </ul>

Organisation	Services	Contact
<b>Better Place Australia</b>	Supports older people in resolving conflict and preventing elder abuse. Provides a range of mediation and counselling services for families, as well as financial counselling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.betterplaceaustralia.com.au">www.betterplaceaustralia.com.au</a></li> <li>■ 1800 639 523</li> </ul>
<b>Scamwatch</b>	Provides information to consumers and small businesses about how to recognise, avoid and report scams. Provides ways to report scams and obtain support if you have experienced a scam.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.scamwatch.gov.au">www.scamwatch.gov.au</a></li> </ul>

## Senior advocacy services

Advocacy is the process of supporting an individual so that their voice is heard.

Organisation	Services	Contact
<b>Capacity Australia</b>	Promotes public professional awareness and knowledge of individuals' human rights and their decision-making capacities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.capacityaustralia.org.au/about-capacity-australia/">www.capacityaustralia.org.au/about-capacity-australia/</a></li> <li>■ 0400 319 089</li> </ul>
<b>Council on the Ageing (COTA Australia)</b>	Promotes policy development, advocacy and representation for older Australians, across every State. Promotes, improves and protects the wellbeing of older people in Australia as citizens and consumers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.cota.org.au">www.cota.org.au</a></li> <li>■ 02 6154 9740</li> </ul>
<b>Dementia Australia</b>	Advocates for people living with all types of dementia, and for their families and carers. Provides support services, education and information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.dementia.org.au">www.dementia.org.au</a></li> <li>■ 1800 100 500</li> </ul>
<b>Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA)</b>	Advocates specifically on behalf of older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, their families and carers, to ensure their preferences and needs are included in the development of government aged-care policies and programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.fecca.org.au/www/ageing-and-aged-care/">www.fecca.org.au/www/ageing-and-aged-care/</a></li> <li>■ 02 6282 5755</li> </ul>
<b>National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)</b>	Delivers comprehensive and culturally appropriate primary health care to the community that controls it. Initiated and operated by the Indigenous community, NACCHO provides representation and advocacy relating to health services, information, research, and health programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.naccho.org.au">www.naccho.org.au</a></li> <li>■ 02 6246 9300</li> </ul>

Organisation	Services	Contact
<b>National Seniors Australia</b>	Represents the concerns of members (people aged 50 and over) to state and federal government, businesses and the broader community. Provides members with access to specialised benefits and services such as a dedicated travel agency, insurance, and research on ageing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.nationalseniors.com.au">www.nationalseniors.com.au</a></li> <li>■ 1300 765 050</li> </ul>
<b>National Social Security Rights Network (NSSRN)</b>	A member organisation of community legal services aiming to reduce poverty, hardship and inequality in Australia. They provide free legal services directly to current and former income support recipients and provide input into policy and legislative processes and its advocacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.nssrn.org.au">www.nssrn.org.au</a></li> <li>■ You can find state-based NSSRN links on their website</li> </ul>
<b>Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)</b>	Offers free and confidential services that focus on supporting older people and their representatives to address access to Commonwealth-funded aged-care services and to participate in decisions about their care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.opan.com.au">www.opan.com.au</a></li> <li>■ 1800 700 600</li> </ul>
<b>Silver Rainbow: LGBTI Ageing &amp; Aged Care)</b>	Works collaboratively with government, aged-care providers, related services and LGBTI older people to create an LGBTI-inclusive aged-care sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.lgbtihealth.org.au/ageing">www.lgbtihealth.org.au/ageing</a></li> <li>■ 02 8568 1123</li> </ul>

## Managing your money

These services provide advice on managing your money safely and planning for financial security for the future.

Organisation	Services	Contact
<b>ASIC MoneySmart</b>	Provides financial management resources, tools and information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.moneysmart.gov.au">www.moneysmart.gov.au</a></li> </ul>
<b>Get It In Black And White (Planning ahead tools)</b> <small>*New South Wales only</small>	Provides information and advice for future legal, health and financial decisions. Offers downloads of documents to help you plan ahead (will, power of attorney, enduring guardian).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.planningaheadtools.com.au">www.planningaheadtools.com.au</a></li> </ul>
<b>National Debt Helpline</b>	Offers free and confidential services from professional financial counsellors to help you tackle your debt problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.ndh.org.au">www.ndh.org.au</a></li> <li>■ 1800 007 007</li> </ul>

Organisation	Services	Contact
<b>No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS)</b>	Provides individuals and families on low incomes with access to safe, fair and affordable credit. Offers loans of up to \$1,500 for essential goods and services such as fridges, washing machines and medical procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.nils.com.au">www.nils.com.au</a></li> <li>■ 13 64 57</li> </ul>

## Legal assistance

These organisations provide free legal advice, with some providers also offering financial support for those needing to take legal action.

Organisation	Services	Contact
<b>Australian Financial Complaints Authority (AFCA)</b>	Provides accessible, fair, and independent dispute resolution for consumers and financial services providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.afca.org.au">www.afca.org.au</a></li> <li>■ 1800 931 678</li> </ul>
<b>IDCARE</b>	Provides free, government-funded support to victims of identity crime. Can help you to develop a response plan to take the appropriate steps for repairing damage to your reputation, credit history and identity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.idcare.org">www.idcare.org</a></li> <li>■ 1300 432 273</li> </ul>
<b>National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC)</b>	Independent community legal centres that provide free and accessible legal and related services to everyone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.nacalc.org.au">www.nacalc.org.au</a></li> <li>■ You can find state-based NACLC links on their website</li> </ul>

## Carer resources

These organisations provide carers (family and friends) with advice for supporting their loved one in an ethical and effective way. They also provide physical and emotional support.

Organisation	Services	Contact
<b>Carers Advisory Service (Carers Australia)</b>	Advocates on behalf of Australia's carers to influence policies and services at a national level. Works collaboratively with partners and member organisations (the network of state and territory Carers Associations) to deliver a range of essential national carer services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.carersaustralia.com.au">www.carersaustralia.com.au</a></li> <li>■ 1800 242 636</li> </ul>
<b>Carer Gateway</b>	Provides practical information and resources to support carers. Operates nationally and online. Provides an interactive online 'service finder' that helps carers connect to local support services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="https://www.carergateway.gov.au/#carer-support">https://www.carergateway.gov.au/#carer-support</a></li> <li>■ 1800 422 737</li> </ul>

## Aged-carer resources

These organisations provide both financial and legal information regarding rights and responsibilities of all parties.

Organisation	Services	Contact
<b>My Aged Care</b>	Provides help to those accessing government-funded aged-care services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.myagedcare.gov.au">www.myagedcare.gov.au</a></li> <li>■ 1800 200 422</li> </ul>
<b>National Aged Care Advocacy Helpline</b>	Provides information on aged-care services, makes referrals to assessment services, and provides information about carer support services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1800 700 600</li> </ul>
<b>Senior Rights Service</b> *New South Wales only	Protects the rights of older people. Provides telephone advice, advocacy, legal advice and educational services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.seniorsrightsservice.org.au">www.seniorsrightsservice.org.au</a></li> <li>■ 1800 424 079</li> </ul>

## Centrelink advice, benefits and payments

Organisation	Services	Contact
<b>Advice on Granny Flat Interests</b>	Helps people to understand, create and assess granny flat interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/topics/granny-flat-interest/27756">www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/topics/granny-flat-interest/27756</a></li> <li>■ 132 717</li> </ul>
<b>Rent Assistance</b>	Provides a regular extra payment if you pay rent and get certain payments from Centrelink.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/rent-assistance">www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/rent-assistance</a></li> <li>■ 132 717</li> </ul>
<b>Special Benefit</b>	Provides a payment if you are in severe financial hardship and can't claim any other income support from Centrelink.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/special-benefit">www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/special-benefit</a></li> <li>■ 132 850</li> </ul>
<b>Pension and carer payments</b>	Provides additional support for pensions and needs based payments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="http://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services">www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services</a></li> <li>■ 132 717</li> </ul>



## Scams and fraud

It is important to stay up to date and understand current scams and how to protect yourself.

Type of scam	Contact information
<b>Fraud and theft</b>	Your local police on 13 14 44
<b>Financial and investment scams</b>	Australian Securities and Investments Commission
<b>Centrelink, Medicare, Child Support and myGov</b>	Services Australia - Scams and Identity Theft Helpdesk on 1800 941 126
<b>Cybercrime</b>	Australian Cyber Security Centre
<b>Spam</b>	Australian Communication and Media Authority
<b>Tax related scams</b>	Australian Tax Office

As scams and fraud continue to rise, we're more committed than ever to protect your accounts.

We will	We will never
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Regularly monitor your accounts for unusual transactions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Send you unsolicited emails asking for information</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Actively seek to confirm with you any transactions that appear to be unusual via phone or email requesting confirmation of a transaction</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Ask you to disclose your PIN or personal banking details in an unsolicited email, SMS or telephone call</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Take proactive measures to restrict access to the account if we detect unusual activity and we are unable to confirm the legitimacy of the transactions with you</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Ask you to disclose your card number or any other information on your card</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Continue to invest in chip security that makes it more difficult for card details to be fraudulently copied</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Ask you to click on a link in an email which then asks you to log in to your account and verify your details</li></ul>

## Glossary

Term	Meaning
<b>Carer</b>	A person who fulfils the role of providing support, either full-time or part-time. He/she does not receive payment for this service, however, may receive some other recognition such as free or cheaper onsite accommodation. The range and level of support is agreed on by both parties, and depends on the needs of the senior and the willingness of the carer.
<b>Elder Abuse</b>	A single or repeated act or failure to act, including threats that result in harm or distress to an older person. This occurs when there is a relationship or expectation of trust, and where there is a power imbalance between the party responsible and the older person.
<b>Elder Financial Abuse</b>	The illegal, mismanagement or improper use of the older person's finances. This includes stealing money or possessions, controlling their finances without permission, threats or coercion to gain power of attorney or pressuring them for early inheritances.
<b>Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA)</b>	An enduring power of attorney is a legal document that lets you appoint someone to make certain decisions for you relating to finances and/or property on your behalf if your health deteriorates and you suffer from diminished mental capacity. You can choose when your power of attorney comes into effect and it can be tailored to your requirements.
<b>Fraud</b>	A fraud is when the customer did not authorise the transaction and/or method of loss. An example of fraud could be that your credit card is lost or stolen and then used by the fraudster.
<b>Power of Attorney (POA)</b>	Is a document created by your lawyer that grants one or more persons the authority to act on your behalf for financial and legal matters. This means that the designated person or persons can operate your bank accounts, spend money on your behalf, and buy and sell your assets: property and/or shares. The general POA is only effective while you have the mental capacity to make and express decisions for yourself.
<b>Scam</b>	A scam is when the customer willingly participated in the transaction but has been misled regarding the benefit or purpose. They can be more challenging to detect as they are disguised as genuine transactions.
<b>Will</b>	A will is a legal document that sets out how you would like your assets to be distributed when you die. A will is the best way you can ensure that your assets will be protected and distributed according to your wishes after your death.

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Any advice or information provided in this document is general advice only, and does not take into account your personal objectives, financial situation or needs. Before acting on any general advice you should consider its appropriateness given your personal circumstances. You should consider the Terms and Conditions for a product before acting on any advice to acquire it. Please consult with a financial adviser for personal financial advice.

It's **your** bank,  
because **you own it.**

**G&C Mutual Bank**

1300 364 400

[info@gcmutual.bank](mailto:info@gcmutual.bank)

[www.gcmutual.bank](http://www.gcmutual.bank)

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