

03. [REDACTED] 26 May 2016

Thank you for being willing to hear my story or experience on elder abuse. I actually do not mind if my name is used as I want to be able to show others, carer's and advocates for older people that we need to be "the voice" for older people.

I will make a start on my story. Despite having lost our home cars and possessions in a fire on [REDACTED], my husband did grab our computer as we went out the door. So I have records of all correspondence and dates recorded on there. I will try and provide as brief as I can run down, but certainly am happy to add to and provide more information as needed. I am happy to speak to someone as well. Due to work commitments we might just have to schedule a time for this.

I will first show you my plea "So who is going to help my Dad"? Which I have forwarded onto every MP, our Minister for Health, COTA, SRV, Older People's Advocacy in Melbourne. This is emotional but will give you a "grasp" of the story. The story does need a "tidy" up, but will give you the picture. Also underneath that will be the audio from my radio chat 106.5 ABC, Gaye Patterson. I am certainly no radio voice....and to many umm's ....but I think I got a generalised message across in a short space of time.

I will put some more information underneath the following.

**Subject: "My Story" - [REDACTED]**

I am writing to you today to plead my case against Elder Abuse. Please see my true story detailed below.

My passion is for improving care and attitudes towards older people....and to say loudly ....NO EXCUSE FOR ABUSE. I am an ex - Nurse with many years' experience of looking after our ageing community.

How have I tried to fight this experience....I volunteer. I am a Consumer Representative on the Advisory Committee at our local Hospital and have just finished on a project with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) - "Social Connections for Older People -Ageing Well Hume Region". I am a member of COTA and Health Issues Centre in Melbourne. I have worked with DHHS and the National Ageing Research Institute to share my mother's story in the "Best Care for Older People in Hospital: The Patient Experience" - DVDs and have recently participated in the launch of the new online resource 'Older people in hospital'. I have presented at forums and take every opportunity I can to voice and advocate for all vulnerable and older people. Our Parents, our GrandParents .....

Kind Regards,  
[REDACTED]

" SO .....WHO WILL HELP MY DAD ...?"

Come sit next to us on the bed .....and listen to our story. My dad is a retired widowed farmer living with dementia in regional Victoria. I am his daughter ....his carer and advocate. Dad has three children.

Some days it's hard to sit on the bed next to Dad and not cry when the frustration and heartache creeps in. ...I try not to and can't for him... you see we (my own family) are all he has left out of his own immediate family. My Dad is a victim of Elder Abuse, his only son the perpetrator. I don't think we have accurate statistics on elder abuse because of our proud

silent, isolated rural community out here. That community of older people don't voice up easily and if they don't who will raise the issue for them?

My first experience of caring for a parent was for my Mum, we lost her over 5yrs ago. Behind the apron and activity of my sick Mum was my Dad hidden in the background.

The whole story started over 20 yrs ago when I married my husband and we built our home on the family farm. We were subjected to daily harassment, which included verbal abuse, at times violence, property damage and death threats from my brother. Dad always said...."it's okay I can sort him out...I can handle him". The truth was that he could not. We eventually had to seek help from the police, which ended with my brother charged with drug trafficking, illegal weapons etc. We thought the intervention order would protect us...it did not, it made it worse. He was again charged with drug trafficking on another occasion, he never went to jail. He had a partner and 3 kids.

At times the police were frustrated as they knew he was a drug supplier to a local bikie gang. They watched him....and we endured the legal system that truly let us down.

Three years ago, we had to sell our home and leave; this was due to the continual abuse and violence that we and my Dad had to deal with. We had to leave Dad behind as he would not leave his home and beloved farm. I had a son by this stage and I needed to protect him. I realised I can no longer fight this daily abuse or have my son hiding under the coffee table. We eventually were run out of our local school as my brother and partner put their children into the same school. We had picked this school as it was the best option to distance ourselves with no chance of contact with them. They moved their children to our school, knowing we were there. We had to obtain more intervention orders due to the ongoing abuse. Sadly my son becomes a direct victim from abuse and bullying from their children. My son received counselling from the school. After this we had no choice but to move schools as we had no further help from the school or school system.

Although we left the farm, my support and efforts never stopped for my Dad, I kept cooking meals, taking him to appointments, washing his clothes ....whatever I could do. Dad should not have been driving but when his license was removed he would continue to do so. He drove into his sister's every Friday and stayed the weekend. She also had dementia. This was our only point of physical contact with Dad.

On my family's last visit to the farm to check on my Dad (we have intervention orders in place) and take him some meals, my brother appeared and tried to push my Dad over, he attempted to smash the window and made death threats...I called 000. I hear my son screaming in the background, my husband trying to console him. We never returned to the farm again to check that my Dad was ok as it is no longer safe. The nightmare continues. He is still not in jail for this or the many other incidents that have occurred over the past years. I think there was a fine of \$300 and a conviction this time.

My Dad has been diagnosed with dementia. After a long process, the team that diagnosed him made an application to VCAT to appoint a Guardian and an Administrator. Dad was appointed an independent medical guardian and a financial administrator in April 2015. Sadly in this time, Dad's health has been deteriorating due to other issues, he is not able to care for himself and he has been increasingly reliant on what care that my brother provided. He has had many admissions into our local hospital. The last discharge was on a Friday night

from hospital into the care of my brother. He was found many days later by a community worker coming to do a shower assessment. He had been vomiting since discharge, it was the middle of winter and the house was ice cold....he had no fire lit or evidence of wood...that was supposed to be supplied my brother. Nobody could get him on the phone. He nearly collapsed in the shower during the assessment. Dad was readmitted back into hospital and eventually entered a transitional care program. His guardian decided that he could not return home due to the lack of support and concerns for his care, and it had become clear that he was no longer able to care for himself.

Dad is in a partnership with my brother in the farming business, but Dad is the owner of the properties. So he is asset wealthy, but considered income poor. He has no income. The bank accounts are changed, the livestock and wool cheques disappear....and then he is scammed of over \$40,000 by scammers.

I thought the appointment of his guardianship and administration would protect him.....it hasn't and the abuse continues whilst he is in hospital, to the point that a Social Worker took paperwork out of my brothers hands. He was trying to get Dad to sign something. I think it was to do with signing over Dad's property and changing his will. My brother put in a complaint to the Hospital. He has also continued to hold off giving Dad money and continues to harass him about his will. Because of his assets, Dad does not get a pension; he is totally reliant on income from his farm, which my brother will not provide.

I reported the last incident of abuse whilst Dad was in transitional care, to our local police. As there were no witnesses, only my Dad's words, who shakes as he speaks and still tells the story to this day, referring to his son as "Shit Bag". The police told me that 'it's history' they say there is nothing they can do, that they must wait until my brother does something before they can act. I feel like my attempts to protect my dad have been futile and that the system can only do something when it's too late.

The guardian and administrator are located in Melbourne, over 4 hrs away. They are reliant on my information and reports as to what is happening daily. I can't work full time as my role is to advocate for Dad and the time it takes to deal with the phone calls every day is significant.

We are now involved in a litigation battle due to the writ my brother served against myself and my Dad. My brother believes he is entitled to everything with no responsibility to support my Dad in his time of need for permanent care. He believes the properties are now his. He has placed caveats on my Dad's properties.

Amidst all of this, the time that dad can spend in transitional care is limited. He has been in transitional care since September 2015. He is 81 yr old man about to turn 82 yrs in April, a victim of elder abuse, who is living with dementia, with no access to his funds and it has been my experience that our systems to safe guard and protect him are letting him down.

We had a recent family meeting involving the administrator and guardian, organisation representatives and the transitional care team.

The administrators say that Dad has not had an income for 2 years. Yet he is in a partnership, and owns assets worth over 1 million dollars?

So I wait, I can't eat, I can't sleep, I have no idea what is going to happen. At the final hour I have some reprieve, an Emergency Carer's package of 2 weeks respite for my Dad was granted.

A court appearance to lift the caveats on Dads property reveals another loophole under the Guardianship Act. My brother has suggested that Dad needs a Litigation Guardian and now the court is adjourned till April 14, when we must do it all again.

My brother has provided the Administrator with funds to cover 1 month of respite care for my Dad. Originally he stated he would do this if the caveats are left in place. It buys us time, but is not a surety or guarantee of future payments for Dad's care and there is nothing in writing. The residential care facility will happily provide more respite time, but will not accept Dad permanently without the surety in writing of guaranteed funds for care. I don't blame the organisation. They are a small country facility trying to survive to accommodate their future community. I blame our system.

So as I sit on the bed next to my Dad....we both fight the frustration, heartache and tears with what is happening....I wonder how we will both get through this nightmare. Dad has dementia but he knows what is happening. He knows that his second daughter has not contacted him since Mum died. He knows what his son is doing. He scans the local paper to keep track of the sales of livestock and wool from his farm being sold independently, not in partnership. He knows there will be nothing left by the time this is settled in court. For a man that has worked so hard and tirelessly all his life for his family this is just so unfair. I fear if laws and common sense do not step up ...my family will lose everything in the fight to protect my dad.

"██████'s Voice

██████ did a ABC Radio interview with Gaye Pattison  
Chief of Staff ABC Goulburn Murray (Albury, Wodonga & Shepparton)

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At this point in time I feel the systems currently in place have let my Dad down and myself and my family.

Here are some of the issues

- The Office of Public Advocates and the Financial Administrators are 4 hrs away. They have been reliant on my advocating for my father. If I was not able to do this or prepared to do this my father would not be here today.
- Although being appointed "Guardianship and Financial Advocacy" this has not protected my father from the ongoing abuse. Financially my brother has continued to abuse my father over the 12 month period since appointment by VCAT in April last year. He has sold off livestock, wool and possibly other assets independently although in a partnership with my brother. Evidence has been in various news papers re: Sales. My father has received no income from these. Any money received is under the control of his son.

When and if the son wants to pay.

- Emotional , mental and continuous harassment has still occurred with myself going to the Police and asking for intervention orders or orders to protect my father and nothing could be done. My father has requested he never see his son again, his son visited him last week and intimidated him again. My father has again become fearful he will lose his bed and not get any money unless he sees his son.

- The VCAT appointed Financial Administrators ( [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] ) are not accountable to anyone as a private organisation (recently taken over by [REDACTED] ). My complaints to the Financial Ombudsman and VCAT have both been dismissed.

I will stop here , as there is so much. But as a general overview - there are no laws (or adequate laws) or systems in place to protect my father from both financial and other abuse.

I would be happy to talk to someone at any stage and provide as much information as I can.

I have also spoken with [REDACTED] from Senior Rights - Advocacy for Older people in Melbourne. She suggested I contact you as well.

Thank you for your time, I look forward to discussing this with you further.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]