

Seniors' Safety Services



Seniors' Safety Awareness Sessions

Seniors' Safety Workshops

Why These Services Are Needed

One of the most compelling myths circulating today is that older Australians are most likely to become victims of crime¹. In fact, the opposite is true, with personal violence offences least likely to be committed against men and women aged 55 years and over².

Unfortunately this unrealistic perception of crime, often reinforced by the media, results in many seniors significantly restricting their activities and lifestyle choices for fear of victimisation. Seniors can enjoy their freedom of movement and lifestyle by putting their fear of crime into perspective and by being aware of the real risks to their safety and practical strategies to address them.

One such risk is elder abuse. In Australia, it is estimated that 1 in 20 people over the age of 65 experiences some form of mistreatment by someone they trust³. Seniors are often bullied, intimidated, ignored, neglected and abused physically, emotionally, sexually and financially, often by family members and others they trust³.

Older Australians are also more likely to experience consumer fraud than other types of crime⁴. They are particularly vulnerable to door-to-door selling, being sold items over the telephone and mail order purchases⁴.

Personal Safety Australia Senior's Safety Services aim to:

- Inform seniors (men and women aged 60 years and over) of the actual risks to their safety
- Provide a range of practical strategies to reduce these risks and maximise their safety in all situations
- Enable seniors to identify and effectively respond to potential threats to their safety
- Reduce the risk of victimisation
- Increase self-confidence and commitment to safety
- Develop problem-solving and assertiveness skills
- Encourage the development of a Personal Safety Plan
- Enhance seniors' wellbeing and quality of life
- Encourage seniors to reach their potential.

References:

¹ Australian Institute of Criminology 2007, *Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics: Frequently Asked Questions* (online). Available http://www.aic.gov.au/stats/faqs/older_people.html [Accessed 31 December 2007].

² Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006, *Personal Safety Survey*, Canberra (p.6).

³ McCarthy, P., Rylance, J., Bennet, R. & Zimmermann, H. 2001, *Bullying: From Backyard to Boardroom*, 2nd Edn, The Federation Press, Sydney (p.131).

⁴ Australian Institute of Criminology 2007, *Older People and Crime: The risk of criminal victimisation for older people* (online). Available: <http://www.aic.gov.au/research/olderaust/victimisation.html> [Accessed 14 January 2008].