



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

SPEECH

Monday, 16 June 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Albanese, Anthony, MP

Source House
Proof Yes
Responder
Question No.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (11:29): I am pleased to support the motion that has been moved by the member for Makin, which brings World Elder Abuse Awareness Day to the attention of the chamber. It is true that we have an ageing population and in these circumstances it is the case that there are tragic reminders from time to time about the isolation in which many elderly people find themselves. There was a time when I was the shadow minister for ageing and seniors—now many years ago— and when I had the opportunity to visit nursing homes and other facilities that look after elderly Australians right across the country. During that period I was heartened by the hard and passionate work of the staff in those aged-care facilities—everyone from the doctors and nurses to the cleaners and those who maintained those facilities. The compassion they showed for elderly Australians was, indeed, inspirational.

We know too that for many elderly people their later years in life are extremely difficult. As the motion indicates, they suffer from physical, mental, emotional, financial and medical neglect from time to time. This is something that occurs throughout the world, and this is why this day is recognised internationally. Abuse of the elderly shocks our community. I certainly come from a culture which respects and puts elderly people up on a pedestal. That is the case throughout Australia, but, unfortunately, we have a circumstance whereby some of our elderly are left very isolated. In my community there are more boarding houses than any other electorate in Australia. These are largely people who do not have family support and do not have friends to call on. That is why it is important that governments continue to play a role in this issue.

The World Health Organisation defines elder abuse as follows:

Elder Abuse is a violation of Human Rights and a significant cause of injury, illness, lost productivity, isolation and despair.

That is why, since the mean spirited budget was handed down in May, the recent debate about carers is of such concern. Those who are carers in our community should receive the gratitude and support, not just of those they are caring for, but also of the community as a whole. That is because they are looking after their loved ones and they are treating them with the respect

they deserve. In addition to that, of course, they are also saving the government money through that care, which reduces the pressures on our formal aged-care facilities. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to our carers. I conclude by congratulating the member for Makin on this important initiative and say that World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is a day for all of us to reaffirm the respect that we have for older Australians.