

Respect for Seniors Campaign: Background & Approach

An initiative of St Ives Uniting Church and UnitingCare Ageing Northern Sydney Region

Respect for Seniors is a grassroots campaign that empowers individuals and communities to share the vision of a more respectful society.

- Our goal is to create a safe, caring community where we can all age with dignity and respect.
- Through this campaign we aim to tackle ageism which devalues and disempowers older people. Promoting age friendly communities, in which abuse is not tolerated, should be one of the goals in our Australian culture. A fair go for all – no matter how old.
- An initiative of St Ives Uniting Church, the project has funding from UnitingCare Ageing Northern Sydney Region to develop programs that will contribute to the prevention of elder abuse. Elder abuse can range from disrespectful relationships, psychological or financial abuse by adult children to long-term domestic violence. The project is aligned with Ku-ring-gai Council's recognition of the importance of addressing domestic violence.
- This evidence-based social education program takes a strengths-based approach through its focus on respectful relationships and as such it mirrors aspects of the Federal Government's National Plan in response to Domestic Violence.
- A major initiative of the project in 2009 was the inaugural 'Wear Purple Day' held at St Ives Uniting Church on 14 June to acknowledge World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and to publicise the project's positive approach to preventing abuse through promoting "Respect for Seniors".
- In 2010 Uniting Churches in the Ku-ring-gai and Sydney North Presbyteries are invited to hold a similar event. At St Ives Uniting Church the inaugural 'Annual Elders Interview' will add another dimension to the project.
- In 2009 the project team facilitated several "Community Conversations" with selected focus groups on the concept of respect. These events are one of the social education and awareness raising resources being developed within the project. Resource Kits will soon be available to assist interested groups to run their own "Community Conversations".
- The project extends an invitation to all interested members of the community to become part of the campaign in any way that complements what they are currently doing. We would love to hear about any ideas that could help achieve a safe caring community where we can all age with dignity and respect.

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