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13 May 2013

Dr Jane Barratt
Secretary General
International Federation on Ageing

Dear Dr. Barratt,

We write in support of the call by the United Nations for a legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons.

Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre is a not for profit community legal centre in an area of coastal NSW traditionally recognised as a retirement location, with significant numbers of older people concentrated in the three local government areas covered by our service.

The incidence of elder abuse within our community is escalating as the number of people aged 60+ continue to rise. The increase in the number of older people with dementia only adds to this serious problem. For older people, the opportunity to advance and protect their legal rights can be complicated by family dynamics and the reliance on family to support them as they age.

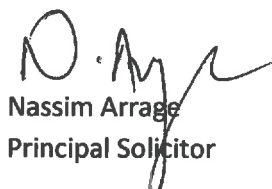
In order to make a difference to the way we perceive and treat older people, governments around the world need to take serious steps to addressing ageism and elder abuse. It is particularly important to encourage our community to value older people for the contributions they have made, and continue to make, to society. An internationally recognised legal instrument which promotes and protects the rights of older people is critical if we are to address both ageism and elder abuse.

Respect for older people (as with anyone) comes about when governments and international human rights agencies such as the United Nations are prepared to lead the way with actions which send clear messages about the way we treat one another.

An internationally recognised legal instrument which helps to protect the rights and dignities of older people is an excellent and much needed step towards addressing ageism, and in the longer term, elder abuse.

Yours Faithfully

Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre


Nassim Arrage
Principal Solicitor