

Minister Guy Barnett
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Dear Minister,

I am writing to urge the Tasmanian Government to take action to implement reforms that will achieve consistency in legislation governing Power of Attorney laws. The recent release of a [national report](#) from the Age Discrimination Commissioner reveals significant gaps in Australians' comprehension of Power of Attorney laws, leaving many older people at risk of financial elder abuse.

The Commission's report, *Empowering futures*, surveyed more than 3000 adult Australians to understand current levels of awareness and use of these documents and what Australians did or did not know about financial enduring powers of attorney. The research found there is limited public awareness and most Australians, approximately 87 pc, have not set one up for themselves. Having information that is standardised across the entire country was identified as a top need (93%).

We believe the report's findings highlight the need for immediate action to make Power of Attorney laws consistent as well as raising public awareness about them. This report lays bare the severe shortcomings in our current system that put older Tasmanians at risk. People's financial security and decision-making autonomy are being compromised by a lack of awareness and inconsistent and complicated legislation.

The report shows only half of Australians with a financial enduring power of attorney sought professional advice before implementation. Even more concerning, 37% gave this power to individuals with known risk factors for perpetrating elder abuse, highlighting the need for Governments to invest in awareness and education.

We ask that as Attorney-General, you advocate for consistent Power of Attorney legislation and for a national register to shield older Tasmanians from exploitation. It is vitally important we address these issues through legal reform Australia-wide and that Tasmania is part of this to ensure consistency.

We would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about this matter, and the work we are doing to raise awareness of elder abuse and its impact on older Tasmanians.



Brigid Wilkinson (she/her)

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Patron

Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC,
Governor of Tasmania