

FORUM HELD IN MALENY TO DISCUSS PROTECTING ELDERLY FROM ABUSE

Speak Up Now - Help Save Lives - Maleny & Blackall Range, recently held an Elder Abuse forum to cover the legal aspects of protecting our elders. The audience viewed a video play developed by the **Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc** giving an easily accessible way of explaining the pitfalls in our relationships with the elders in our families.

QCWA and **Maleny Blackall Range Lions Club** provided the morning tea that began the program, followed by the showing of the video play and a Q&A session.

A spokesperson for the Speak Up Now committee, Val France, said the questions raised in the Q&A session were very relevant.

"The questions proved the value of this forum and brought up issues that were obviously of concern to members of the audience. We were pleased that the panel of experts we assembled were able to answer them or offered private counselling and advice later", she said.

The panel included Julian Porter, Managing Solicitor Suncoast Community, Tove Easton, **Easton Lawyers** Ben O'Rourke and Lola Mashado **Relationships Australia Qld**, and Stacy Oehlman (Centacare Domestic and Family Violence Services, Sunshine Coast, formerly SCOPE).

Attendance was open to all members of the community and included representatives sent by many community groups.

Participants agreed the program was a thought provoking way to learn about individual rights and responsibilities and especially in terms of Powers of Attorney. A survey completed by most of the attendees indicated the value of the forum as 'most useful', 'good to learn there are services available', 'great panel'.

The Speak Up Now committee includes representatives of Rotary, Lions and Zonta clubs.

It is committed to taking these concerns into future events. There are more ideas for forums in the new year.

Hairdressers are seen as an important resource as they often hear about instances of abuse, so an information session will be held for them.

In addition there is the possibility of a community fun event to let people know the group is working hard to eradicate domestic and family violence on the Blackall Range.

Pictured: Q&A panel with Val France, Ben O'Rourke Relationships Australia, Julian Porter Suncoast Legal Services, Tove Easton Lawyer, Stacy Oehlman (SCOPE), absent Lola Mashado

