

Financial abuse can take more than money: Next Chapter Innovation seeks solutions and support for older people

Commonwealth Bank · 2026-10-06 · English original

Commonwealth Bank is inviting community organisations with expertise in supporting older people and responding to financial abuse to develop and test new approaches to the issue, with up to \$1 million in funding available through the 2026 Next Chapter Innovation program.

Angela MacMillan, CommBank Group Customer Advocate, said: "Financial abuse of older people can have consequences that reach far beyond the money or assets involved. It can undermine an older person's independence and sense of security, erode their confidence and leave them with less control over decisions about their own life and future. That's why this year's Next Chapter Innovation program is so important."

The harm can also be difficult to recognise or speak about when the person responsible is someone an older person loves, relies on or trusts. National research found adult children were the largest perpetrators of financial abuse of older people, accounting for one in three cases, while only around three in 10 people who experienced this abuse sought help or advice.¹

Financial abuse can take many forms. It may involve pressure to give or lend money, possessions being taken without permission, misuse of power of attorney or financial decisions being made without consent. It can develop gradually and involve complex issues regarding family relationships, consent and capacity.

The broader challenge of elder abuse is significant. Around one in six Australians aged 65 and over living in the community have experienced some form of elder abuse, according to the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Financial abuse was the third most reported form of elder abuse.¹

The Next Chapter Innovation program will provide up to five not-for-profit organisations, social enterprises and community-led organisations with \$100,000 or \$200,000 to deliver projects over 12 months, alongside executive mentoring and other non-financial support from CommBank.

MacMillan said addressing financial abuse requires the experience and expertise of organisations that understand the realities facing older people.

"For many older people, financial independence represents a lifetime of work and the freedom to make their own choices. When someone takes advantage of that, particularly someone they love or trust, the impact can reach far beyond their bank balance.

"Community organisations working with older people understand the complexity of this issue and the barriers people can face in recognising abuse and getting support. We want to invest in that expertise and work alongside these organisations to develop and test new ideas that could make a meaningful difference. Next Chapter Innovation is about bringing together community expertise, new thinking and the Bank's support to find practical ways to help prevent financial abuse, identify it earlier and strengthen

support for older people.”

Backing community-led solutions

Through Next Chapter Innovation, CommBank is seeking to partner with organisations that have ideas for new or improved approaches to preventing financial abuse, identifying signs of harm earlier, protecting older people’s financial independence and strengthening pathways to support and recovery.

Projects could explore new approaches to preventing, identifying or responding to financial abuse, including issues such as misuse of powers of attorney, digital exclusion and reliance on others to manage finances, technology-enabled abuse, or strengthening pathways to support and recovery.

The latest cohort builds on two previous rounds of Next Chapter Innovation, which have supported community organisations tackling complex and emerging forms of financial abuse, including technology-facilitated abuse, dowry abuse, financial abuse in small business and financial abuse in First Nations communities.

An independent evaluation of the first cohort found the organisations engaged nearly 600 clients and service users, worked with more than 150 stakeholders through workshops and consultations, and developed two new practice models and guidelines to strengthen responses to financial abuse.

Practical support for older people now available

Alongside the new Innovation cohort, CommBank is also extending its financial wellbeing education for older people through a new Protecting Your Money in Retirement seminar.

The free sessions will provide practical information on protecting financial independence, planning ahead and recognising financial abuse, fraud and scams. Community organisations can contact their local CommBank branch to arrange a session.

Applications now open

Applications for Next Chapter Innovation are now open and close at 11.59pm AEDT on 31 October 2026. Eligible Australian not-for-profits, social enterprises and community-led organisations can apply for funding of \$100,000 or \$200,000 to deliver a project over 12 months, with successful applicants also receiving executive mentoring and other non-financial support.

Applications and program guidelines are available at commbank.com.au/next-chapter-innovation.

¹Australian Institute of Family Studies (2021), National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study: Final Report, Australian Government Attorney-General’s Department. The study was based on a nationally representative survey of 7,000 Australians aged 65 and over living in the community, with survey fieldwork conducted in 2020. The study did not include people living in residential aged care and was limited to people with the capacity to participate in the survey. https://aifs.gov.au/all-research/research-reports/national-elder-abuse-prevalence-study-final-report?utm_source=chatgpt.com

- Community
- Next Chapter
- Media release

Newsroom

For the latest news and announcements from Commonwealth Bank.

Things you should know

Media releases are prepared without considering an individual reader's objectives, financial situation or needs. Readers should consider the appropriateness to their circumstances. Visit Important Information to access Product Disclosure Statements or Terms and Conditions which are currently available electronically for products of the Commonwealth Bank Group, along with the relevant Financial Services Guide. Target Market Determinations are available here. Loan applications are subject to credit approval. Interest rates are correct at the time they are published and are subject to change. Fees and charges may apply.

Source: <https://www.commbank.com.au/articles/newsroom/2026/10/Next-Chapter-Innovation-seeks-solutions-and-support-for-older-people.html>