

MEDIA RELEASE

17 August 2017

Tool kit helps appointees navigate powers of attorney

Queenslanders navigating the complex Enduring Powers of Attorney (EPOA) process can now breathe easy thanks to a new education resource that simply explains their roles and responsibilities.

An EPOA is a formal document giving a person the authority to make legally binding – financial or personal – decisions on behalf of another person, for example, if someone has failing cognitive health or may lose capacity to make decisions.

Launched by ADA Australia today in Brisbane, the video and series of informative fact sheets will help those making an EPOA as well as those legally nominated as EPOA to understand their legal duties and the documents involved, as well as when and how to make decisions.

ADA Australia hopes to reduce instances of misuse of power and financial elder abuse across Queensland.

According to ADA Australia CEO Geoff Rowe, the new resources – funded by the Queensland Government – will fill a much-needed education gap for attorneys navigating the complexities of the EPOA process, while ensuring those signing over decision-making rights are better protected.

“As an advocacy organisation, we are very familiar with the struggles and confusion people experience in completing, lodging and navigating EPOA forms and requirements,” Mr Rowe said.

“One of the common issues people have is understanding the intricacies of the decision to make an EPOA. Careful consideration should be given to who you choose to be your attorney. It is all quite complex and not something you can just tick and flick.

“Through our advocacy work, we saw many people ended up being financially abused within the EPOA environment – mainly due to a lack of understanding by one or both parties or an external party – and decided this was something we needed to address.

“For example, we noticed that some health professionals didn’t understand the role of an attorney and were, at times, accepting poor and improper directions.

“We hope that, by all Queenslanders having access to these materials as a proactive resource, we’ll see a visible reduction in the number of people being wronged.”

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice Yvette D’Ath said ADA Australia’s new resources were a much-needed addition for Queenslanders navigating this process.

MEDIA RELEASE

17 August 2017

“We hope increased education will lead to a decline in the number of people mistreated under EPOA arrangements,” Ms D’Ath said.

“As an EPOA, you may be required to make small or very big decisions, so it is important the attorney encourages their person to participate in decisions that affect them.”

Albany Creek resident Trina McLellan – whose family has been through the EPOA process with her elderly mother – said that a lack of available information at the time made the process overwhelming.

“We found ourselves presented with this document back in 2009 and the process was daunting at first,” Ms McLellan said.

“It’s important that people assigning a EPOA have the capacity to understand what they are signing and what power is being ceded.

“Something that explains the process simply would have been a godsend, so we would definitely welcome more information about this process.”

– ENDS –

To view the EPOA video, click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTdGpJ4uWzY>

Media contact: Bo Daly Cole Lawson Communications, 07 3221 2220.