



Robyn Preston MP

Member for Hawkesbury

MEDIA RELEASE

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COMMISSIONER TO PROTECT HAWKESBURY'S MOST VULNERABLE

Adults with disability and older people in Hawkesbury now have a powerful advocate in their corner with the appointment of Robert Fitzgerald AM as NSW's first Ageing and Disability Commissioner.

The Commissioner began work today tasked with protecting adults with disability and older people from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Member for Hawkesbury Robyn Preston MP said the strong, independent body will provide support and referral services for Hawkesbury families as well as raise awareness through education programmes.

"The Commissioner will be given the power to initiate investigations, compel information from individuals or organisations, as well as apply for an execute search warrants with the assistance of police," Ms Preston said.

"The Commissioner will also have the capacity to help the Hawkesbury community detect cases of abuse, neglect and exploitation through education and awareness programmes."

Multiple public inquiries have highlighted opportunities for Government to strengthen safeguards for adults with disability and older people.

Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services Gareth Ward said it marks an important milestone in the state's history.

"Never before has our state had a body specifically tasked with investigating allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with disability and older people," Mr Ward said.

"The NSW Government is committed to protecting the vulnerable. We won't just talk about what can be done - we are delivering real reform that will change lives for the better."

To get in touch with the Commissioner's Helpline, call 1800 628 221 (business hours Monday to Friday) or visit www.ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au for more information.



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