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Page 1 of 1

# Left to live in rags of dead

Shelly Hadfield

AN ELDERLY widow has been left to live in dead people's clothes after her son lost her home in a business that turned bad, according to State Trustees.

State Trustees manager Steve Cowell said the man had been unable to get a loan to start his own business, and encouraged his mother to sign over her house to him. The son had power of attorney for his mother's affairs after her husband died.

Within nine months the business fell on hard times, the woman was moved into a nursing home, and the house was sold.

The woman is not eligible for Centrelink payments because she gave her house to her son.

State Trustees has been appointed as the woman's administrator, because she does not have the money to pay nursing home

fees and is being dressed in clothes left by the home's deceased residents.

"When you speak to the son, he had all the best intentions," Mr Cowell said.

"He does not understand that was his mother's asset, that she spent her life building. She trusted the son to do the right thing by her."

In another case, a son given power of attorney for his elderly mum decided he needed to protect her assets from his sister, with whom he had a bitter relationship, so he transferred the assets to his wife. The plan went well until he and his wife separated, leaving her the sole owner of all of his mother's assets, including her house and car.

Other recent examples seen by law firm Slater & Gordon include:

**A DAUGHTER** who helped her mother to buy a house, after the elderly woman sold her own house. The daughter put the new property in her own name.

**A WOMAN** who discovered her daughter had been using her credit and Eftpos cards overseas.

**AN ELDERLY** woman who came out of a nursing home after a period of poor health to find a friend with power of attorney had put her house on the market and had cleared out the property.

Slater & Gordon's Michael Clohesy urged people to pick someone they trust when granting a power of attorney, to limit it, and to make two nominees to keep an eye on each other.

Seniors Rights Victoria's hotline is 1300-368-821.