

Section 3

Summary of qualitative research findings

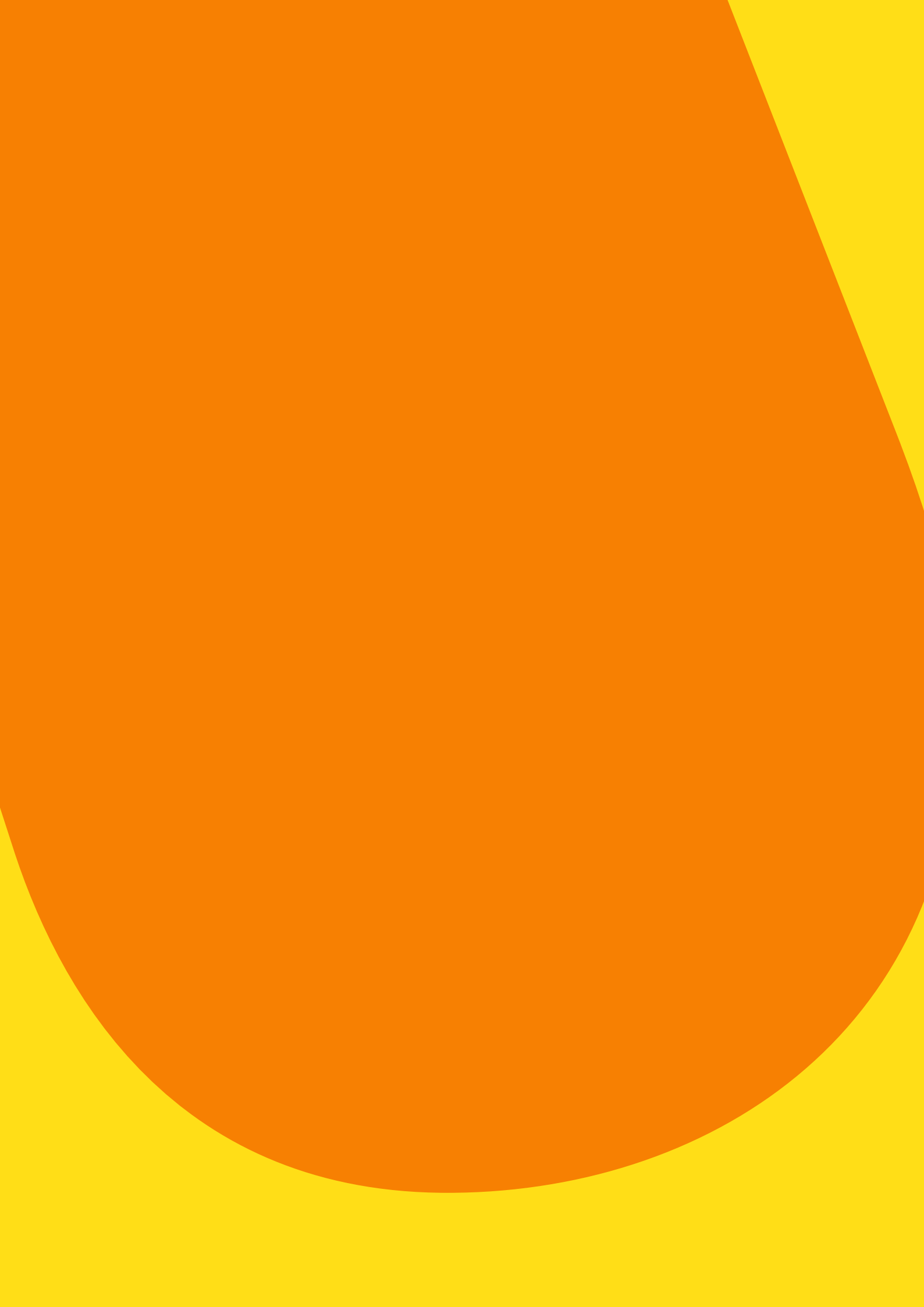


TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	88
1.1. This document	88
1.2. Research objectives	88
1.3. Research methodology	88
2. Research findings	90
2.1. Key findings	90
2.2. Age is not a number	90
2.3. People have mixed views about getting older	90
2.4. People look forward to choice, freedom, contribution and flexibility	91
2.5. Both negative and positive words came to mind when thinking about older people	91
2.6. The key influences on attitudes towards ageing are personal experiences	93
2.7. Participants generally struggled to suggest actions that could or should be taken to address ageism	94
2.8. However, the few suggestions that were made to address ageism were insightful	95
APPENDIX	98
Appendix A: Discussion Guide	98
TABLES:	
Table 1 – Participant profile	89
Table 2 – Words associated with older people – Negative	92
Table 3 – Words associated with older people – Positive	92

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. THIS DOCUMENT

This report summarises the findings of the qualitative component of research conducted to inform the development of a National Advocacy Campaign for older Australians, commissioned by The Benevolent Society (TBS).

1.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the focus groups was to:

- explore how people feel about getting older, and why
- explore people's views and perceptions of older people, and when people become 'old'
- identify any major fears or worries that people have about getting older, and where these ideas might come from
- identify what, if anything, people look forward to in older age, and where these ideas come from
- assess whether people think older people receive a 'fair go', and why/why not
- explore reasons underlying people's attitudes and behaviours towards older people
- explore people's understanding of 'ageism', and how it might be addressed.

1.3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Four focus groups were undertaken with community members aged from 18 and above at the Urbis Sydney office. The age breakdown for each group is as follows:

- Group 1: 55 – 64 years
- Group 2: 18 – 30 years
- Group 3: 65+ years
- Group 4: 31 – 45 years.

Each focus group lasted for approximately 1.5 hours.

Unique discussion guides were developed to aid with facilitation of Group 1/Group 3 (n.b. participants aged 55+) and Group 2/Group 4 (n.b. participants aged 18 – 45 years).

Copies of the discussion guides are attached at Appendix A.

During the discussion, participants were asked their opinion on the following three statements:

- People who do not retire at 65 are taking jobs away from younger people.
- Health services should ration the amount of money they spend on keeping very old people alive.
- People should expect less independence as they get older.

Questions relating to these statements are contained in Section Three of the discussion guides.

Fieldwork took place on 13 June 2017 (Group 1 and Group 2) and 14 June 2017 (Group 3 and Group 4). In total, 35 participants took part in this phase of the research. Participant profile is shown in Table 1, overleaf.

		Group 1: 55 – 64 years	Group 2: 18 – 30 years	Group 3: 65+ years	Group 4: 31 – 45 years
Total number of participants		8	10	9	9
Gender	Male	3	5	5	5
	Female	5	5	4	4
Marital status	Single	1	3	4	6
	Married/De facto	7	7	5	3
Employment status	Student	0	0	3	1
	In employment	4	5	4	5
	Home duties/ Unemployed	1	0	2	3
	Retired	3	5	0	0
Parental status	With children	6	9	2	4
	Without children	2	1	7	5
Income	Less than \$50,000	1	3	1	2
	\$50,000 - \$99,999	2	6	1	1
	\$100,000 - \$149,999	1	1	4	4
	\$150,000 or more	4	0	3	2

2. RESEARCH FINDINGS

2.1. KEY FINDINGS

- There was a variation in attitudes, beliefs and perceptions both within and across the four focus groups. Although the groups were segmented by age, not all views expressed were determined by the age of the participant. Nevertheless, some of the discussions were influenced by a person's age or life-stage, as might be expected.
- Participants' attitudes towards and perceptions about ageing were mostly driven by culture, especially the extent of personal contact with older people (e.g. close family members such as parents and grandparents). For example, when participants were asked to reflect on how they formed views on ageing, an unprompted discussion of family members was common. Positive experiences with older family members tended to be linked to more positive attitudes about ageing, and vice versa.

"My parents have been in homes up in Queensland. It turned me off, nursing homes, the smell of the place it was woeful. They try and do their best and that sort of thing but you know it's pretty bad." (Female, 60+)

- While focus group participants were engaged in discussion on ageing and older people, many struggled to articulate who might be able to influence attitudes towards ageing and what they could do about it.
- Notwithstanding differences across and within the focus groups, several common themes emerged in the discussions. The remainder of this report summarises these themes.

2.2. AGE IS NOT A NUMBER

There is broad agreement that 'age is not a number', with participants commonly reflecting that they either knew 'very young' 80-somethings or 'very 'old' 50-somethings. The start of old age was also typically suggested to be relative, influenced by a

person's chronological age, life stage, culture, health, and attitude. Older participants tended to also acknowledge, sometimes with laughter, that their definition of old age had shifted as they matured, with old age always starting somewhere in the future.

2.3. PEOPLE HAVE MIXED VIEWS ABOUT GETTING OLDER

Focus group participants expressed mixed views (including within and across groups) when asked about getting older; however, participants most commonly noted that they:

- disliked and/or feared getting older
- accepted and/or were looking forward to getting older.

The former view was marginally more commonly held by participants. A few participants – including a 22 and 65-year-old – stressed that they rarely think about getting older.

Participants who feared getting older typically reported being most worried about a loss of cognitive function, with fear of physical illness or deterioration mentioned far less commonly. These participants also commonly expressed worry about a loss of identity and independence, both of which were strongly associated with 'going into a nursing home'. Some participants expressed worry about:

- being a burden in old age
- having regrets about life achievements.

For a significant number of participants, poverty and a lack of financial resources was a major source of anxiety. This view was, not surprisingly, particularly common amongst participants reliant on income support, unemployed, and/or single. Financial fears were just as common among young participants as older participants, with several younger participants

reporting that they feel very insecure about their long term financial prospects due to the difficulties in obtaining a job and purchasing a home. These younger participants also expressed concern about whether they will accrue sufficient superannuation to live comfortably through retirement.

2.4. PEOPLE LOOK FORWARD TO CHOICE, FREEDOM, CONTRIBUTION AND FLEXIBILITY

When probed, most participants acknowledged that there are several, and sometimes many, things to look forward to in older age. Most commonly, participants associated older age with an increase in freedom – or ‘being your own boss’ – and with feeling more confident in themselves and accepting of who they are. People also noted being less constrained by timetables and deadlines. Less commonly, participants associated older age with space and time for self-investment, such as formal or informal education and training, travel, and contributing skills and knowledge in a new way (e.g. by volunteering). A few older participants reported that they are ‘over working’, and looking forward to engaging in more meaningful activities in retirement.

For some participants, older age was associated with improved life satisfaction, a state attributed to having more social and family connections, and the time to develop and nourish stronger relationships. Relatedly, some participants reflected that older people tend to be more content, secure, experienced, and knowledgeable than younger people, resulting in increased resilience in the face of unexpected problems.

Some younger participants spoke forcibly about finding life in their 20s tough and stressful. Particular stressors noted by participants included social and family expectations, as well as the likelihood or not of securing employment, finding a partner, having children, and buying a house. Some young participants appear to fear ‘failure’, and are concerned how life choices (e.g. choosing not to follow a traditional life path) will impact them in the longer term. Many younger participants acknowledged looking forward to their 30s and 40s, a life stage they associated with increased security (financial and otherwise) and closer personal relationships. These participants sometimes reflected that the ‘foundation’ for a happy old age is laid during the 30s and 40s, and that they would be fearful if they failed in this endeavour.

2.5. BOTH NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE WORDS CAME TO MIND WHEN THINKING ABOUT OLDER PEOPLE

Focus group participants were asked to write down three separate words that came to mind when they think about older people. Some participants listed only negative words, others listed only positive words, and still others listed a mix of positive and negative words (or words which could be construed as positive or negative depending upon the context). Overall, negative words were listed more commonly than positive words, and tended to be associated with physical and mental deterioration, social isolation, negative attitudes and behaviours, political persuasion or behaviour, and finances (see Table 2, overleaf).

Table 2 – Words associated with older people – Negative

Physical and mental deterioration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frail • Dependent • Depressed • Senile • Slow (which can be good or bad)
Social isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lonely • Vulnerable
Negative attitudes or behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opinionated • Interfering • Impatient • Stubborn • Demanding • Inward-looking • Self-obsessed
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socially conservative • Racist • Intolerant
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial burden

On the whole, younger participants were more likely than older participants to note ‘political’ negatives. This appeared to be underpinned either by a ‘party political view’, or by the perception that older people are ‘anti-youth’ and out of touch with youth needs and perspectives.

In contrast to negative words and associations, positive words listed by focus group participants were mostly related to older people’s personal attributes and qualities (see Table 3, below).

Table 3 – Words associated with older people – Positive

Thinking of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unselfish • Generous • Compassionate • Kind • Caring • Empathetic
Relaxed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calm • Carefree • Happy • Stable • Secure • Survived struggle
Valuable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wise • Knowledgeable • Story-teller • Contributes • Role models • ‘Glue’ that keeps family together • Family historians • Cultural custodians
Resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive despite setbacks • Adjusting to new circumstances • Good emotional coping skills • Taking things in their stride

Age was not the most significant driver of whether participants listed positive, negative, or a mix of words; rather, perceptions appear primarily driven by personal experience of old age, or by observations of the experiences of older relatives. On the whole, participants who had a positive experience of older age, or had positive role models, tended to possess a more positive view of ageing and older people. In contrast, participants who had a less positive experience of older age, or who lacked positive role models (e.g. relatives are bored or socially isolated) tended to possess a more negative view of ageing and older people.

“I think it’s some people’s exposure to elderly, some people never had any grandparents, some people were brought up by their grandparents so they have different attitudes.” (Female, 60+)

It should be noted, however, that there was general agreement that a person’s experience of old age will vary, often substantially, depending on:

- their financial security (i.e. to survive, have freedom to travel, enrol in study, and so on)
- whether they have close family around them (to provide connection and meaning)
- their cultural background (i.e. the degree to which their culture respects and values older people and includes them in community life)
- their physical and mental health (i.e. the degree to which you can maintain independence)
- their own attitude towards ageing (i.e. positive or negative).

There was a strong view amongst some of the older participants that a person’s personal attitude towards retirement and ageing was critical, suggesting:

You have to treat retirement like a job

[You have to] work hard at it [retirement]

[You have to] make the most of it [retirement].

Participants who reported that they were looking forward to or enjoying retirement tended to have a generally positive outlook on life, commonly noting that they are keen to learn, travel, and engage in new activities.

“My partner is, he’d hate me to say this, but he’s 72 and he’s the youngest most vibrant man I’ve ever known. He’s just still working, still passionate about life so you can’t even, you’d think 72 you’d class as an old person but if you saw him you’d say no way, he’s so youthful. It’s attitude.” (Female, 55-64)

In contrast, participants who were more pessimistic or worried about getting older had often observed family members or friends:

- physically decline (or die) relatively young
- give up on interests
- live a life lacking structure or meaning
- become increasingly socially isolated.

While worries about old age were commonly related to financial security, participants who had a generally pessimistic attitude tended to report more commonly that they are struggling to find structure and meaning in retirement.

2.6. THE KEY INFLUENCES ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS AGEING ARE PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

As noted above, the findings of this research strongly suggest that people’s perceptions of, and attitudes toward, ageing, are primarily shaped by personal experiences, usually observing close family members or friends.

Even after prompting, focus group participants rarely acknowledged the role that the media has in shaping perceptions and attitudes; however, a small number of participants acknowledged that the media sometimes plays a small role. For example, a few older participants reflected that portrayals of older people are uncommon in ‘traditional media’, including television programs, advertisements, newspapers, magazines, and film. A small number were also critical of stereotypical portrayals of older people, and a few questions why people aged over 60 or so were referred to as ‘elderly’ (e.g. in a news item, ‘an elderly 62-year-old woman was knocked down’).

In contrast, young participants tended to stress that their perceptions and attitudes (including toward

ageing) are rarely shaped by the media, primarily because they are not exposed to traditional media on a regular basis (i.e. they do not watch free to air television, listen to radio, or read newspapers).

Participants indicated that connection with older people mainly occurs within the family or with older friends. To a lesser extent, the workplace was also identified as an environment where connection with older people occurs.

The environments in which people connect with older people was found to influence some participants' perceptions of ageing. Specifically, exposure to people living in nursing homes was found to negatively impact on attitudes towards ageing.

Other drivers that influence people's attitudes towards ageing and older people include:

- the extent to which people could see a connection between themselves and older people: I will be old one day
- the level of empathy people have for other people, more generally
- cultural traditions and norms which respect and revere older people
- the extent to which people value 'community' and aspire towards strong communities.

These drivers were also found to underpin participants' views on whether or not Australian society values older people, with responses to this question falling into two broad categories:

At a service level: Most participants were of the view that older people are relatively well catered for in terms of the service availability. When expressing this view, participants typically compared Australia to other countries, with Australia cited as being much more focussed on supporting older people than the US, South Africa, the UK, or Asia.

At an individual level: Participants were typically of the view that older people are less respected than in the past, and less respected than they should be. This was viewed as being especially true in Anglo-Saxon families and communities, with participants commonly suggesting that older people are more valued and socially included in Mediterranean and Asian cultures.

2.7. PARTICIPANTS GENERALLY STRUGGLED TO SUGGEST ACTIONS THAT COULD OR SHOULD BE TAKEN TO ADDRESS AGEISM

Many participants found it difficult to identify who could or should take action, and what actions could or should be taken to address ageism. Ageism was not something that some participants had necessarily experienced, witnessed or thought to be a major problem in Australia. As a result, participants commonly reported not giving the issue much thought prior to focus group participation.

Participants who had experienced discrimination – usually in the workplace – tended to be fatalistic about the prospects of any change. As an example, while some participants recognised that age discrimination in the workplace is illegal, they noted that it is very difficult to prove, and almost impossible to police. The two areas that participants were most concerned about were ageism in the workplace and the health system. In all cases, this concern was driven by either their own experience of age discrimination, or that of a family member.

2.8. HOWEVER, THE FEW SUGGESTIONS THAT WERE MADE TO ADDRESS AGEISM WERE INSIGHTFUL

While participants found it difficult to immediately identify suggestions for addressing ageism, as the discussions progressed, several recommendations emerged. These recommendations typically related to actions for government, business and employers, health professionals, the media, communities, and older people themselves. Each of these categories is discussed in turn below.

Government

There was consensus amongst participants that governments have a responsibility to address age discrimination. Specific actions for governments suggested by participants comprised:

- funding retraining schemes for older people
- funding computer training/skills programs for older people (n.b. these skills were viewed as fundamental to current and future work)
- paying employers incentives to recruit and retain older workers; however, a small number of participants acknowledged that schemes of this nature already exist
- setting 'quotas' for the number of older people employed in government and/or the private sector (i.e. similar to gender quotas)
- establishing an advisory committee to advise government on all areas of policy – not just health or aged care – through an 'ageism' lens (e.g. transport, housing, education, and so on).

Businesses and employers

Employers are also seen to have a key role to play in addressing ageism. People feel that employers can show leadership in recognising the value that older people can bring to different sectors and workplaces and that efforts should be made to encourage and showcase such efforts. It was suggested that showcasing employers who challenge stereotypical views about older workers can help to create positive role models and encourage other employers.

There was some sense of scepticism amongst participants with regard to the likelihood of changes within large corporations. Several participants were of the view that people were categorised as past their 'use by date' early in these settings. In contrast, there was thought to be greater potential in the small business sector, as well as in family businesses, with were typically viewed as being more 'age friendly'.

"Employers, that's the problem. You have to get the employers onside if the government wants people to work until 70. You've got to give some tax concessions, like payroll tax or something or other." (Male, 65+)

In addition to promoting more inclusive employment practices, participants suggested that businesses could improve the portrayal of older people in marketing material and advertisements. Some of the older participants were especially disparaging of advertisements for travel or insurance, where older people are, according to participants, commonly portrayed in 'passive' pursuits such as river or sea cruises. These kinds of portrayals did not resonate with many older focus group participants, who viewed themselves as curious, active, and adventurous. A small number of participants felt that big business should be more appreciative of the older people's 'dollar spend', which can be considerable, and provide more diverse depictions of older people.

Health professionals

While participants identified ageism in the health system as one of the major areas of concern, only a few people mentioned the role health professionals could play in addressing ageism. The primary suggestion was that health professionals need training in 'personalising care'; that is, training that focuses on both the 'people' and 'medical' aspects of their work.

"I think there should be [more training], they're trained as nurses but they're not trained, the babies, they're trained to look after babies but are they trained to look after elderly people, because they can be a lot like babies?"
(Female 65+)

The media

Interestingly, the media received relatively little attention in focus group discussions, even when prompted. There was a plea among some participants in the older groups for 'more older people on TV', including in leading roles.

"We need more shows like EastEnders!" said one young woman – reflecting on the show's focus on a local community, in which people of all ages are involved as central characters in the ongoing narrative.
(Female, 31-45)

Communities

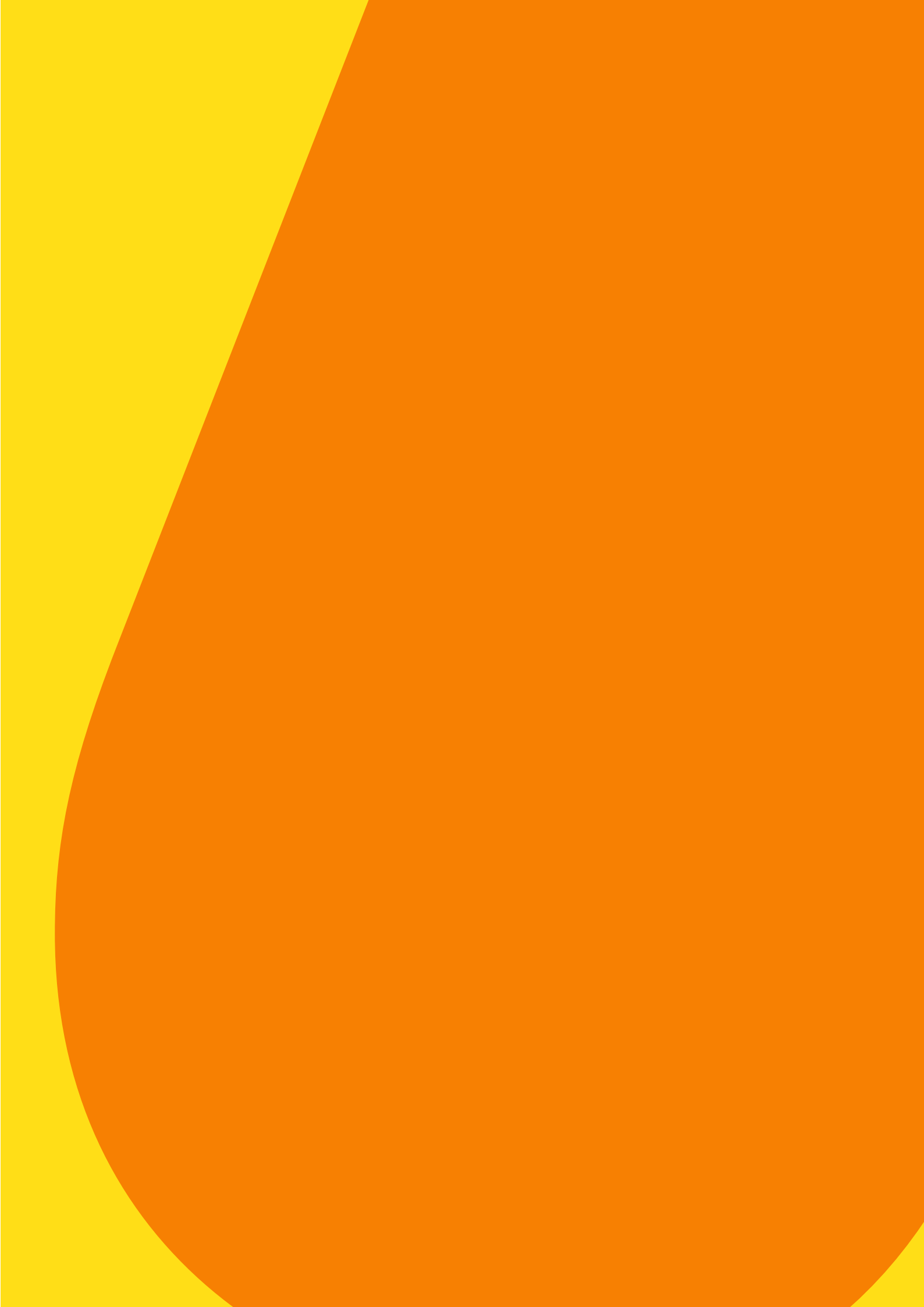
Relatively few people had ideas about what communities could do to address ageism. However, the following suggestions were made by a small number of participants:

- providing more opportunities for people of all ages to live, work and socialise together
- providing more structured programs that encouraged increased contact between older people and younger people.
 - For example, one participant spoke favourably of a program which entailed grandparents visiting primary schools to help students with reading.
 - Another participant was impressed by a Swedish program which required trainee doctors to live in residential care/retirement villages while studying. According to the participant, the trainees develop empathy for the residents, while the residents benefited from the regular contact with younger people.
- encouraging younger people to 'think ahead' to the time when they themselves will be older
- organising local/community events that are inclusive of people of all ages 'to bridge the gap'
- developing mechanisms for older people to give time and knowledge to supporting new Australians settle into Australia, particularly those with no family.

Older people themselves

Finally, some participants observed that older people themselves can do things to challenge age stereotypes and discrimination, with one participant noting:

"You can't give older people a voice. Older people have to use their voice." (Male, 65+)



APPENDIX A DISCUSSION GUIDES

NATIONAL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN FOR OLDER AUSTRALIANS DISCUSSION GUIDE – 55 + YEARS

JUNE 2017

INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

Urbis has been commissioned The Benevolent Society to undertake research relating to older Australians. We would like to understand your attitudes toward ageing and older Australians, and your experiences relating to older people.

- Introduce self, co- moderator, and The Benevolent Society if present as observers.
- The focus group will last for around 90 minutes.
- There are no right or wrong answers, we just want to hear your views.
- The only rule is that one person speaks at a time!
- Housekeeping (phones, toilets, catering)

If you have any questions about this interview or the research, or would like to share additional comments afterwards, please contact Caroline Tomiczek at Urbis on 02 8233 9928 or ctomiczek@urbis.com.au.

Now let's start by going around the table and introducing yourself – just your first name will do and tell us the name of your favourite movie.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

- This discussion guide should not limit but provide a guide of the range and coverage of issues that will come out of the research project.
- It is a guide for discussion, and will not be used as a script - phrasing, wording, and order will be adapted as appropriate.
- This guide does not represent a complete list of the questions that will be asked or covered in each interview. The coverage and flow of issues will be guided by the researchers and informed by the participants. All questions are fully open-ended.
- Some questions are similar because they are trying to get at an issue from a number of angles and to validate responses / views.
- Reported issues / data will be probed for evidence/ examples wherever relevant.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

SECTION ONE: ATTITUDES TOWARDS GETTING OLDER (15 minutes)

I'd like to start with talking about your thoughts about getting older.

1. How do you feel about getting older? Anything else?
[Probe for positive and negative feelings]
2. What immediately comes to mind when you think about ageing and getting older? Thoughts? Feelings? Behaviours? Images? Anything else?
[Map on butcher's paper and discuss]
3. Do you have any fears or worries about getting older? If not, why is that? If yes, what are your fears? Why do you think that?
4. What, if anything, worries you most about getting older? [If concerns about ageing mentioned] Where do you think these concerns come from?
[Probe for media/arts representations (e.g. books, movies) and personal experience]
5. What, if anything, are the things about getting older that you enjoy or are looking forward to? Why do you say that? [If positive aspects of ageing mentioned] Where do you think these positive ideas come from?
[Probe for media/arts representations (e.g. books, movies) and personal experience]

SECTION TWO: ATTITUDES TOWARDS OLDER PEOPLE (20 Minutes)

We're now going to discuss your attitudes toward older people.

6. I'd now like you take a minute and write down three words that immediately come to mind when you think about older people.
[Explore responses]
7. When do you think old age begins? And what about very old age? Why do you say that?
8. When do you think someone becomes old? Is it when they reach a certain age? Or is it when something happens? Why do you say that?
9. What do you think are some of the great things about older people? Why do you say that?
10. What do you think are some of the not-so-great things about older people? Why do you say that?
11. Do you think we value older people? Why do you say that? Do you think this has changed over time?
12. Have you heard of the term ageism? What does that mean to you? Just give us your best guess if you are not sure.



SECTION THREE: BEHAVIOURS TOWARDS OLDER PEOPLE (20 minutes)

I'm going to show you some statements other people have made about older people.

[Three statements from Question C1 on questionnaire shown to participants]

13. How common do you think this view is in our society? Why do you say that?
14. Who do you think is most likely to hold this view? Why do you say that?
[If appropriate: probe for whether they hold the view]
15. What sorts of things might make someone agree with this statement? Anything else?
16. What sorts of things might make someone disagree with this statement? Anything else?

SECTION FOUR: AGEISM AND ADVOCACY (25 minutes)

We are now going to talk a bit more about stereotyping and discrimination against people based on their age.

17. Do you think older people in Australia generally receive a 'fair go'? Why? Why not?
[Probe for media, popular culture, employers, big business, the government, societal views/
Australian culture]
18. Where, if anywhere, do you think older Australians are least likely to be given a 'fair go'? Why do you think that is?
[Probe for impact on older people]
19. Is there a time in your own life when you feel you have been treated unfairly or been discriminated against because you are older? What was that? What impact did that have on you?
20. Who or what do you think has a big influence, positive or negative, on how people think about getting older or older people? Why do you say that?
21. What, if anything, do you think government could do to ensure that older Australians are likely to be given a 'fair go'? Anything else?
22. What, if anything, do you think employers could be doing to ensure people of all ages are recruited, trained and promoted at work on their merits? Anything else?
23. What, if anything, do you think health services could be doing to ensure all people get the same treatment options regardless of their age? Anything else?
24. What, if anything, do you think big business could be doing to be more welcoming of older people? Anything else?
25. What, if anything, do you think the community or sports organisations could be doing to be more inclusive of older people? Anything else?

- 26.** Thinking now of the media (TV, radio, magazines, social media etc.), do you think there is anything that media organisations or government could or should be doing in relation to portrayals of ageing and older people? Anything else?
[Probe: What are some positive images of getting older? And some negative images?]

SECTION FIVE: THE FUTURE (5 minutes)

Finally, we're going to have a quick chat about the future.

- 27.** What action, if any, do you think would most effective in addressing ageism? Anything else?
28. If ageism was successfully tackled, how would Australia be different? Anything else

THANK YOU AND CLOSE

APPENDIX A DISCUSSION GUIDES

NATIONAL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN FOR OLDER AUSTRALIANS DISCUSSION GUIDE – 18-45 YEARS

JUNE 2017

INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

Urbis has been commissioned The Benevolent Society to undertake research relating to older Australians. We would like to understand your attitudes toward ageing and older Australians, and your experiences relating to older people.

- Introduce self, co- moderator, and The Benevolent Society if present as observers.
- The focus group will last for around 90 minutes.
- There are no right or wrong answers, we just want to hear your views.
- The only rule is that one person speaks at a time!
- Housekeeping (phones, toilets, catering)

If you have any questions about this interview or the research, or would like to share additional comments afterwards, please contact Caroline Tomiczek at Urbis on 02 8233 9928 or ctomiczek@urbis.com.au.

Now let's start by going around the table and introducing yourself – just your first name will do and tell us the name of your favourite movie.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

- This discussion guide should not limit but provide a guide of the range and coverage of issues that will come out of the research project.
- It is a guide for discussion, and will not be used as a script - phrasing, wording, and order will be adapted as appropriate.
- This guide does not represent a complete list of the questions that will be asked or covered in each interview. The coverage and flow of issues will be guided by the researchers and informed by the participants. All questions are fully open-ended.
- Some questions are similar because they are trying to get at an issue from a number of angles and to validate responses / views.
- Reported issues / data will be probed for evidence/ examples wherever relevant.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

SECTION ONE: ATTITUDES TOWARDS GETTING OLDER (15 minutes)

I'd like to start with talking about your thoughts about getting older.

1. How do you feel about getting older? Anything else?
[Probe for positive and negative feelings]
2. What immediately comes to mind when you think about ageing and getting older? Thoughts? Feelings? Behaviours? Images? Anything else?
[Map on butcher's paper and discuss]
3. Do you have any fears or worries about getting older? If not, why is that? If yes, what are your fears? Why do you think that?
4. What, if anything, worries you most about getting older? [If concerns about ageing mentioned] Where do you think these concerns come from?
[Probe for media/arts representations (e.g. books, movies) and personal experience]
5. What, if anything, are the things about getting older that you are looking forward to? Why do you say that? [If positive aspects of ageing mentioned] Where do you think these positive ideas come from?
[Probe for media/arts representations (e.g. books, movies) and personal experience]

SECTION TWO: ATTITUDES TOWARDS OLDER PEOPLE (20 Minutes)

We're now going to discuss your attitudes toward older people.

6. I'd now like you take a minute and write down three words that immediately come to mind when you think about older people.
[Explore responses]
7. When do you think old age begins? And what about very old age? Why do you say that?
8. When do you think someone becomes old? Is it when they reach a certain age? Or is it when something happens? Why do you say that?
9. What do you think are some of the great things about older people? Why do you say that?
10. What do you think are some of the not-so-great things about older people? Why do you say that?
11. Do you think we value older people? Why do you say that? Do you think this has changed over time?
12. Have you heard of the term ageism? What does that mean to you? What impact could ageism have on older Australians? Just give us your best guess if you are not sure.

SECTION THREE: BEHAVIOURS TOWARDS OLDER PEOPLE (20 minutes)

I'm going to show you some statements other people have made about older people.

[Three statements from Question C1 on questionnaire shown to participants]

13. How common do you think this view is in our society? Why do you say that?
14. Who do you think is most likely to hold this view? Why do you say that?
[If appropriate: probe for whether they hold the view]
15. What sorts of things might make someone agree with this statement? Anything else?
16. What sorts of things might make someone disagree with this statement? Anything else?

SECTION FOUR: AGEISM AND ADVOCACY (25 minutes)

We are now going to talk a bit more about stereotyping and discrimination against people based on their age.

17. Do you think older people in Australia generally receive a 'fair go'? Why? Why not?
[Probe for impact on older people]
18. Where, if anywhere, do you think older Australians are least likely to be given a 'fair go'? Why do you think that is?
[Probe for media, popular culture, employers, big business, the government, societal views/
Australian culture]
19. Who or what do you think has a big influence, positive or negative, on how people think about getting older or older people? Why do you say that?
20. What, if anything, do you think government could do to ensure that older Australians are likely to be given a 'fair go'? Anything else?
21. What, if anything, do you think employers could be doing to ensure people of all ages are recruited, trained and promoted at work on their merits? Anything else?
22. What, if anything, do you think health services could be doing to ensure all people get the same treatment options regardless of their age? Anything else?
23. What, if anything, do you think big business could be doing to be more welcoming of older people? Anything else?
24. What, if anything, do you think the community or sports organisations could be doing to be more inclusive of older people? Anything else?
25. Thinking now of the media (TV, radio, magazines, social media etc.), do you think there is anything that media organisations or government could or should be doing in relation to portrayals of ageing and older people? Anything else?
[Probe: What are some positive images of getting older? And some negative images?]

SECTION FIVE: THE FUTURE (5 minutes)

Finally, we're going to have a quick chat about the future.

26. What action, if any, do you think would most effective in addressing ageism? Anything else?

27. If ageism was successfully tackled, how would Australia be different? Anything else?

THANK YOU AND CLOSE

