

#OlderWomenCount campaign, changing culture to value older women's contributions and combat inequalities.

Artists and advocates are joining forces in Feb for a 3 week campaign to promote respect for the 2.2 million Australian women aged 65 years+

The campaign culminates on International Women's Day, which celebrates the contributions and achievements of women – but too often does not include older women.

The campaign is a partnership between Celebrate Ageing Ltd, the Older Women's Network NSW, Photos Punctuate My Life and Elder Right's Advocacy who share concerns that older women are: the fastest growing group of homeless, the lowest income earning family group, the largest group of unpaid carers, more likely to live in poverty and are more likely to experience workplace discrimination, Elder Abuse, sexual assault and family violence.

The campaign includes a paste up in a graffiti lane way in Melbourne by an older artist to launch a social media campaign calling for people to share stories about the contributions and achievements of older women.

The campaign will also host an online event launching an Australian first checklist for the inclusion and valuing of older women. Project partners are passionate about creating culture change:

There is growing awareness of the inequalities for older women, but awareness isn't enough, we need change. We need a grass roots movement that calls out the ageism and sexism older women experience – in every home, community, service, event and policy. We need to stand together and say ENOUGH!!! It's a mistake to believe that only those who perpetrate abuse and violence against older women need to change. We must all take responsibility for the daily microaggressions and the eroding of respect for older women. Celebrate Ageing CEO Dr Catherine Barrett

We are tired of seeing the statistics about older women's homelessness and abuse. The ageism and sexism that older women face is so disempowering. We are told that we are no longer beautiful or smart and have nothing to contribute. We are bombarded with messages that invisibilise us – and that may be on top of our experiences of racism, ableism and queerphobia. Older women contribute so much to society – and – even if they didn't, they still deserve to be treated with respect. Yumi Lee, CEO of the Older Women's Network NSW

As the CEO of the peak body advocating for older people in Victoria, I witness the disrespect and devaluing of older women every day. There is an urgent

need for service providers and the broader community to understand that we all have a role to play in preventing abuse before it occurs. One way to achieve this is by reflecting on the contributions and achievements of older women, and that's why we are proud to support the #OlderWomenCount campaign. Debra Nicholl, CEO Elder Rights Advocacy

Every year for the past decade I've curated an IWD photographic portrait project to bringing together inspiring, courageous and often outspoken cis and trans women and gender diverse people to create a visual snapshot of the fierce, funny and extraordinary people who inspire me. Every person is asked to respond to the questions 'What Does International Women's Day Mean To Me?' in their own written words. Older women are a critical part of this celebration. In the wildness and diversity of the project, ensuring older woman are included, visible and heard in this mix is imperative and it strengthens the work. Suzanne Phoenix, Photos Punctuate My Life

Campaign webpage: celebrateageing.com/olderwomencount

Contacts

- Dr Catherine Barrett, Phone: 0429 582 237
- Yumi Lee, Phone: 0431 142 079
- Suzanne Phoenix: 0438 780 911
- Debra Nicholl, CEO Elder Rights Advocacy: 0418 372 243

