

Age Friendly Illawarra supports Australia's first Ageism Awareness Day on Friday 1 October, 2021

Age Friendly Illawarra is an alliance that aims to create opportunities for older people to lead active, engaged lives and contribute positively to Illawarra communities.

On this inaugural national Ageism Awareness Day we're delighted to support and ignite conversations across our workplaces and networks on what ageism means to us.

Ageism is an important issue, presenting itself in the way we think, feel and act towards others based on our perception of age. It can be conscious or unconscious, but we see ageism reveal itself across workplaces, relationships, and in the structures of our social environments. Ageism can be damaging individually and collectively. There is evidence that ageism harms our health and wellbeing and costs society measurable value in contribution and impact.

According to a recent report from The Australian Human Rights Commission '[What's age got to do with it?](#)' ageism exists even when we're not aware of it and it affects Australians across the adult lifespan. While fairness and equality matter across the generations, despite the commonalities there are some tensions. The report provides a current picture of the patterns of ageism experienced by Australians of all ages with a focus on relationships between the generations.

Conversations about ageism are the best way to combat ageism and acknowledge the myths and stereotypes that have been adopted and perpetuated by our culture. We can talk to each other to challenge attitudes and encourage change that we might not even have realised needs to happen. The conversations generated out of Ageism Awareness Day can evolve into widespread constructive progress in the way people around us engage with the topic of ageism and their level of awareness of the issue.

Across the Illawarra we are proud of our local and regional strengths to celebrate what our older residents bring to our community. However, there are many opportunities where decisions are made that may have neglected to consult with the voice of the full age spectrum of contributors. We also see many stereotypes and assumptions playing out in the narrative across media and public conversations.

If you're part of an organisation, you have an incredible opportunity to impact change through dialogue. You might also wish to consider your organisation's capacity to influence change, the level you want to create change and if you are asking the right questions to avoid skewing the responses.

This Ageism Awareness Day, we would like to encourage our networks and supporters to self-reflect on the role they play in combatting ageism. Individually, you can also take action by completing the Ageism Awareness Quiz or signing the [Pledge](#) against ageism. There is even an [online launch event](#) where Dr Marlene Krasovitsky will facilitate a discussion with Monica Trapaga, Kay Patterson AO and Robert Tickner about ageism.

Bust most importantly, let's work together to build our vision of a region for all ages. To create the community, infrastructure and supports that embrace every life-stage and provide a cohesive Age-Friendly environment. When we create Age-Friendly Communities, we create communities that are supportive for all ages with systems and structures that enable and empower individuals.

Ask yourself today, what are you doing to join the conversation against ageism?

Please get in touch at contact@agefriendlyillawarra.org or on [Facebook](#).

#EveryAGECounts and #AgeismAwarenessDay2021