

MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED until 1 October 2016

Celebrate International Day of Older Persons by “rejecting ageism, and embracing your ageing in order to live longer and better”

Australia’s leading seniors’ advocacy body, COTA Australia, has marked the 2016 United Nations International Day of Older Persons today (October 1) by encouraging all Australians to embrace their ageing in order to live longer and better lives.

This year’s theme - ‘Take a Stand Against Ageism’ - aims to challenge negative stereotypes and misconceptions about older persons and ageing.

COTA Australia Chief Executive Ian Yates said research cited by the World Health Organisation reveals that older people who have negative attitudes towards aging live 7.5 years less than those with positive attitudes, and have poorer recovery from disability and disease.¹

“If we embrace our ageing we will be happier, healthier and around for a lot longer,” Mr Yates said.

“Internalised ageism is still a major issue that is not sufficiently recognised. Older people who internalise ageist attitudes die sooner.

“Negative attitudes and stereotypes about ageing also underpin an enormous amount of discrimination in the workplace - reducing economic productivity; and in the wider community – diluting development of social capital; and shortening lives and adding to our health and aged care costs.”

Mr Yates said governments and the community must work together to take a stand against ageism as a major curse in our society, especially in the context of Australia’s ageing population.

“While people should challenge ageism whenever they experience it, and help each other identify and eradicate internalised ageist assumptions and attitudes, governments must also create a stronger regulatory framework to eliminate age discrimination, and raise public awareness through community education and campaigns,” he said.

“As a society and as individuals we need to realise that older Australians are not a burden but have much of continuing and even increased value to contribute as they age; and that older people who are valued live healthier, more productive and more fulfilling lives.”

Find out more at the United Nations Day of Older Persons at
<http://www.un.org/en/events/olderpersonsday/>

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¹ http://www.who.int/ageing/events/idop_rationale/en/