

Thursday 18 May 2023

Media Statement

New Research: Age-Related Discrimination Is Rampant In Western Australia

Perth WA, 18 May 2023: Research released by the COTA Federation has revealed over one third of Western Australians have faced age-related discrimination since turning 50 (37%), and a further 28% have experienced employment-related discrimination.

In its third edition, State of the Older Nation (SOTON) details the experiences and views of 2,750 Australians aged 50 and over, and this year paints a bleak picture with almost half (45%) of older Australians believing that things are getting worse for them, which is a sentiment mirrored by older Western Australians (46%).

The COTA Federation 2023 Report highlights an overarching pessimism that is underpinned by fewer older Australians feeling financially secure, more reporting difficulties accessing health services, reports of age discrimination and worries about their risk of homelessness, with sentiments even worse among vulnerable people.

"Though these findings are upsetting, they are perhaps unsurprising. Every time we talk about the issues that affect older Western Australians age-related discrimination comes up", explains COTA Western Australia CEO Christine Allen.

Age-related discrimination is insidious and impacts the everyday life of older Western Australians, from housing to health through to access to information and digital inclusion. With government and service providers increasingly expecting clients to act and engage online older Western Australians are getting left behind.

"It can be subtle, but the fact of the matter is ageism is an endemic issue and permeates every aspect of the lives of older Western Australians. Tackling ageism is essential, particularly in education and awareness, as older Western Australians have made significant contributions to the community throughout their lives. As a community, we must look at ways to better utilise the skills and experience of older members of our community"

"Another major issue for older Western Australians is digital inclusion which remains a key area of concern. While digital technology has the potential to greatly enhance the lives of older Australians in Western Australia, we constantly hear about difficulties accessing ever increasing amounts of information and a lack of digital literacy, particularly evident in rural and remote areas."

COTA (WA) has been aware of these issues for some time and has taken every opportunity to raise them whenever appropriate. We will continue to be active in this area and are hopeful that the

recently released WA Government's Seniors Strategy 2023-2033 will provide a springboard for discernible progress in these and other aspects of the lives of older Western Australians.

-ENDS-

Disclaimer: The research was undertaken by SEC Newgate Research in compliance with the Australian Polling Council Quality Mark standards. The Long Methodology Disclosure Statement for this research can be viewed here: <https://www.newgatecomms.com.au/disclosure-statements/>

The following documents are available on the COTA (WA) website:

- COTA (WA) Media Release
- COTA State of the Older Nation: Summary Report
- COTA State of the Older Nation: Full Report

To view or download the these documents go to:

<https://www.cotawa.org.au/media-statement-new-research-age-related-discrimination-is-rampant-in-western-australia/>

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About Council on the Ageing Western Australia [COTA (WA)]

COTA (WA) was established in 1959 and is the peak body for older Western Australians.

COTA (WA) is a Federation Member of the National COTA network.