

## MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 21 February 2019

# Parliamentarians pledge to end ageism

MPs and Senators across the country have been challenged to tackle the complex issue of ageism against older people in Australia during a cross-party morning tea at Parliament House in Canberra today (21 February 2019).

At the event, hosted by Parliamentary Friends of Ageing and Aged Care, co-convenors, Senator Dean Smith and Ms Julie Collins MP called on all Parliamentarians to unite in a commitment to ending ageism by taking **the [EveryAGE Counts](#) campaign pledge:**

*"I stand for a world without ageism where all people of all ages are valued and respected and their contributions are acknowledged. I commit to speak out and take action to ensure older people can participate on equal terms with others in all aspects of life."*

Addressing the event, Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care, The Hon Ken Wyatt, MP, said: "To make the most of our longer lives, we must build a culture of inclusion and respect for older Australians.

"Ageing is an opportunity that all generations must embrace, so our Elders and communities are healthy, safe, connected and productive and older Australians can realise their full potential."

The EveryAGE Counts campaign is a national, coalition-led advocacy campaign aimed at shifting dominant negative social norms about ageing and older people and positively influencing the way all Australians think about ageing and older people.

Launched in October 2018, the campaign's vision is a society where every person is valued, connected and respected, regardless of age and functional health.

Campaign co-chair, the Hon Robert Tickner AO, said addressing ageism – especially in the workforce – is an issue for all Australians, irrespective of political backgrounds.

"Every Australian has the right to participate equally in our communities, to be valued and heard at every age. The very challenging goal of the EveryAGE Counts campaign is to shift destructive and deeply entrenched social norms that are currently limiting and preventing this equal participation," said Mr Tickner.

"If we want current and future generations to have the chance to age well – and our whole society to benefit from the full participation of all its citizens, including older people - it is essential that we adequately address the issue of ageism now."

“The number of Parliamentarians who actively participated in today’s discussions is promising and a positive step in our collective quest to stamp-out ageism in Australia – we hope all Australians will step up and do the same by visiting the website and taking the pledge at [www.everyagecounts.org.au](http://www.everyagecounts.org.au) ,” Mr Tickner added.

The EveryAGE Counts Coalition is made up of a diverse group of organisations, advocates and academics including, but not limited to, the Australian Human Rights Commission, COTA Australia, National Seniors, the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia, the Australian Association of Gerontology, Aged and Community Services Australia, Per Capita, the Regional Australia Institute and Older Women’s Network. [See [this link for the full membership of the Coalition Steering Group](#) committee.]

In order to achieve its goal of setting strong, new foundations for current and future generations to age well, EveryAGE Counts is built on a variety of social change activities, including:

- Advocacy, political engagement and public campaigning for policy changes and new policy initiatives (see [Policy Directions to Challenge Ageism](#))
- Addressing specific structural barriers to participation for older people, for example, in particular settings where ageist policies or entrenched practices prevent access or equal participation (e.g. in workplaces, healthcare settings)
- Increasing the diversity and accuracy of representations of older people in media, arts and public discussion
- Building a grassroots social movement so all Australians can be involved in the change they want to see
- Further research and policy development to ensure an evidence based approach

For more information visit [EveryAGEcounts.org.au](http://EveryAGEcounts.org.au), which includes a three minute video – *An Australia without Ageism* – spoken by Australian film legend, Bryan Brown. The website also invites Australians to [take the quiz: Am I ageist?](#)

NB: below is link to the list of CSG members

[https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/benevolent/pages/409/attachments/original/1544582636/Coalition\\_Steering\\_Group\\_members.pdf?1544582636](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/benevolent/pages/409/attachments/original/1544582636/Coalition_Steering_Group_members.pdf?1544582636)

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**About The Benevolent Society** - Australia’s first charity, working as a catalyst for social justice and change for over 200 years. Founded in 1813, The Benevolent Society advocates for a better life for all Australians, and provides in-home services for older Australians, and people with disability, as well as providing programs in Family support and early intervention. We help people age well and live their best lives, staying in their homes wherever possible. For more information, please visit [benevolent.org.au](http://benevolent.org.au), on Facebook/thebenevolentsociety or on Twitter - @BenevolentAU

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