



**Media Release**

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## **COTA calls for action to mark Ageism Awareness Day**

Australians must take action to address the scourge of ageism and governments at all levels have key leadership roles to play, including the Federal Government at the national levels, says the Council on the Ageing (COTA) Australia, the peak body for older Australians.

The call marks Ageism Awareness Day (7 October 2022) – a day designed to draw attention to the widespread existence and impacts of ageism in Australia and globally.

COTA Australia Chief Executive, Ian Yates, said that while Australia has taken some steps in learning how to end ageism, there here is still a very long way to go.

“Ageism is endemic in Australia,” Mr Yates said. “The Australian Human Rights Commission last year found that 90 per cent of Australians agree that ageism exists in this country, yet we are still yet to see some of the simple, concrete measures that older Australians have been asking for put in place to address this critical issue.

Mr Yates said the new Federal Government has the opportunity to take a number of steps over the coming year to address ageism, including:

- establishing a Productivity Commission inquiry into the prevalence and costs of ageism in Australia, including particular terms of reference in relation to workplaces and health services; and
- introducing stronger age discrimination laws following a high priority inquiry by the Australian Law Reform Commission.

“Ageism is costing Australia dearly as a society, both from an economic and a social perspective. Conducting a broad reaching inquiry into the costs of ageism is an important starting point and something the Federal Government could then move on swiftly.

“Our Age Discrimination Laws are also failing to deliver, are not fit for purpose, and need major upscaling. We need an inquiry conducted by the Australian Law Reform Commission into the barriers and solutions to tackling ageism and age discrimination and to recommend legislation for tackling this.

“For far too long ageism has been an accepted form of discrimination in Australia. It’s time we stopped accepting ageism and negative messages about ageing and started taking proactive steps to address the problem.

“People of all ages, including older Australians, should be valued and respected and have their contributions acknowledged. Throughout their lives, from start to finish”

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