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A BluePrint to Promote Respect for Older Women in Victoria

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Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

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Welcome

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Promoting and upholding the rights of Older Victorians for over 35 years

- Independent, professional Aged Care Advocacy
- Abuse of Older Persons: recognition and response
- Social Support Scheme
- Raising awareness of Gerontism (the ageism experienced by older people)

celebrateageing.com/BiscuitTin
Photographer: Chris Franklin

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A BluePrint on Respect for Older Women

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Aims are:

- Promote equality and respect for older women in Victoria

Process is:

- Broad consultation on what works
- Engagement through art-based approaches
- Reflection on what respect looks like
- Data analysis (early themes)
- Promote findings to strengthen what works
- Limitations and scope

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Underlying Principles

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Ageing is a gendered experience, older women are not equal, gender inequality increases with age, and change is complex

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A Gender Lens

Policies ..without consideration of gender, or which are considered 'gender-neutral' or 'gender-blind' policies, assume that gender is not a factor … [can exacerbate inequalities] (Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet, 2024)

https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/resource/download/aps-guide-gender-analysis-impact-assessment_0.pdf

Historical Inequalities for Older Women

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Generations of older women experienced:

- Limited property rights
- Ban on working in the public service after marriage
- Inability to secure a bank loan without a male guarantor
- No passport without a husband's authorisation
- No tubal ligation without husband's consent
- Having to prove husband's behaviour warranted divorce
- Limited superannuation
- Limited child support
- Marital rape immunity laws

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Contemporary Legacies of History

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Older women in Australia:

- The lowest income-earning family group
- Homelessness increased by 40% (2011-2021)
- The largest group of unpaid carers
  - 758,000 older people are unpaid carers
  - 67% are women
  - Twice as likely to report low well-being as the broader community

Gayle lived in a painter's van, insulated with bath mats, for five months before moving into her cabin. *(ABC Gippsland: Rachael Lucas)*

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-06-02/single-older-women-living-in-caravan-parks-amid-housing-crisis/103907710

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Other Contemporary Inequalities

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Violence and abuse

- 365,000 older women reported elder abuse in 2023
- 28 women aged 55+ were murdered in 2023 in DFV homicides, compared with 14 a decade earlier
- Most survivors of sexual assault in residential aged care are women

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Femicide Watch (as at 19th May)

- 19 women died from DFV in past 5 months
- 53% of the adults were aged 50+
- 4 cases involved parricide
- 3 cases were the result of IPV
- 1 perpetrator was a nephew
- 1 is listed as DV, but the relationship is not stated

https://australianfemicidewatch.org/database/

Gendered Inequalities Increase with Age

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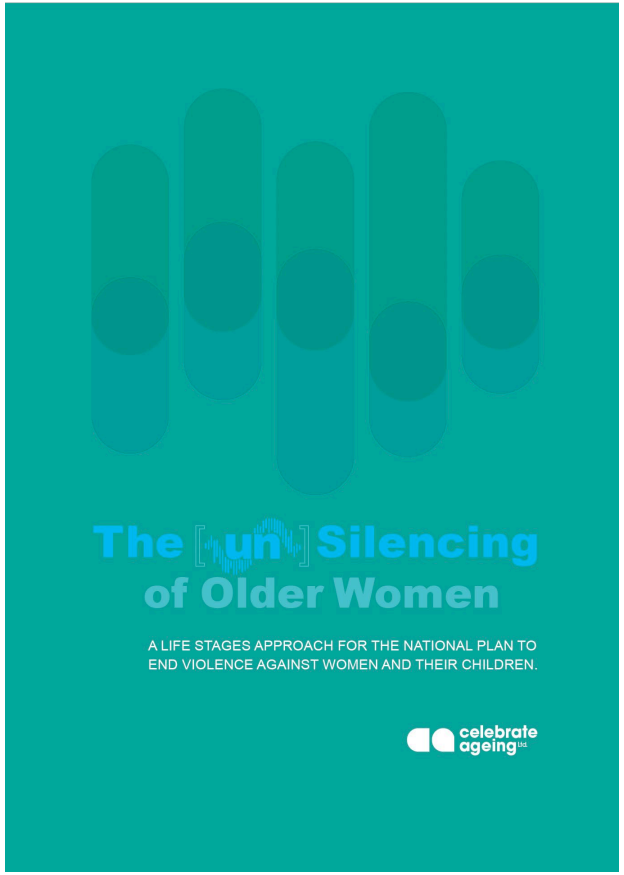

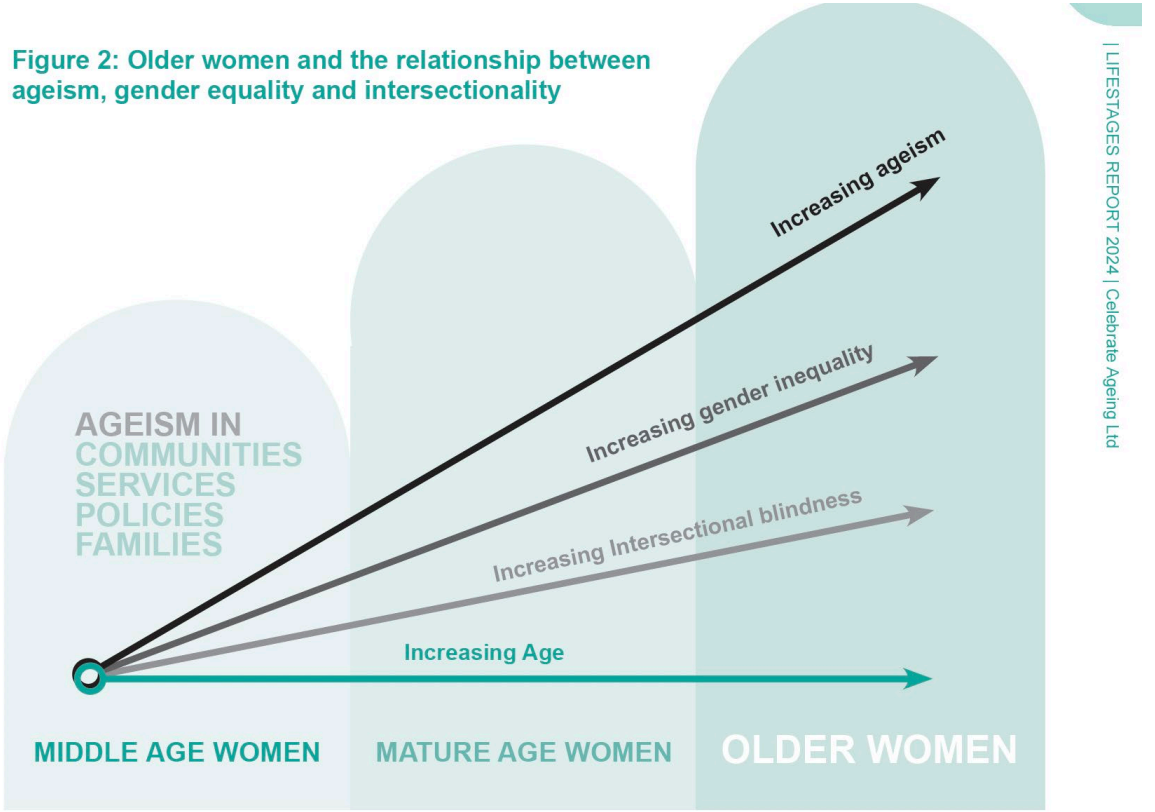

https://www.celebrateageing.com/uploads/1/5/3/9/15399992/ca4020_lifestagesreport_int.pdf

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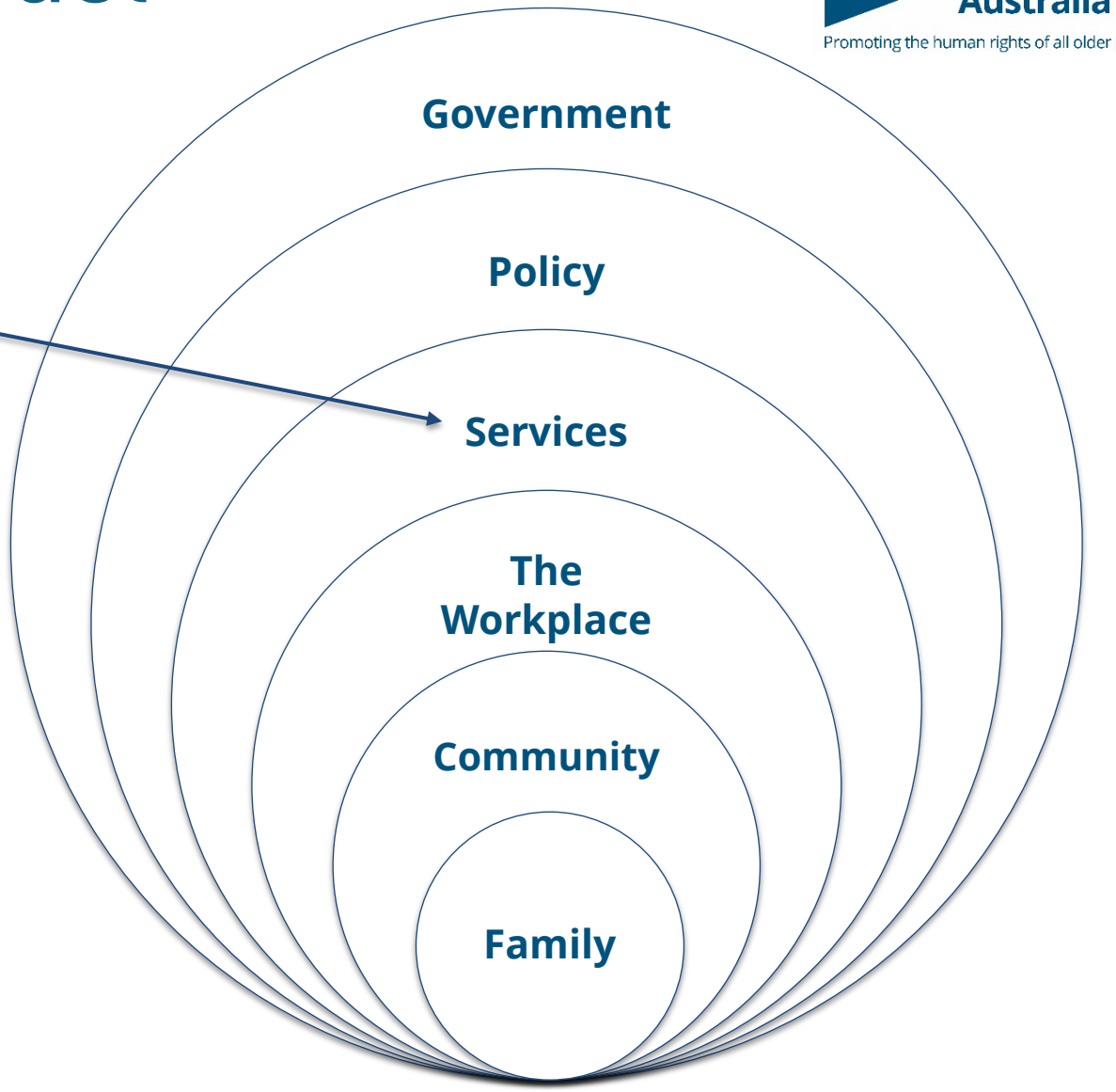
Socio-Ecological Model

Services

- Retail (shops)
- Health services
- Aged Care
  - Home based
  - Residential aged care



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Data Collection

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Gathering multiple perspectives on how respect is enacted and experienced

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Postcards

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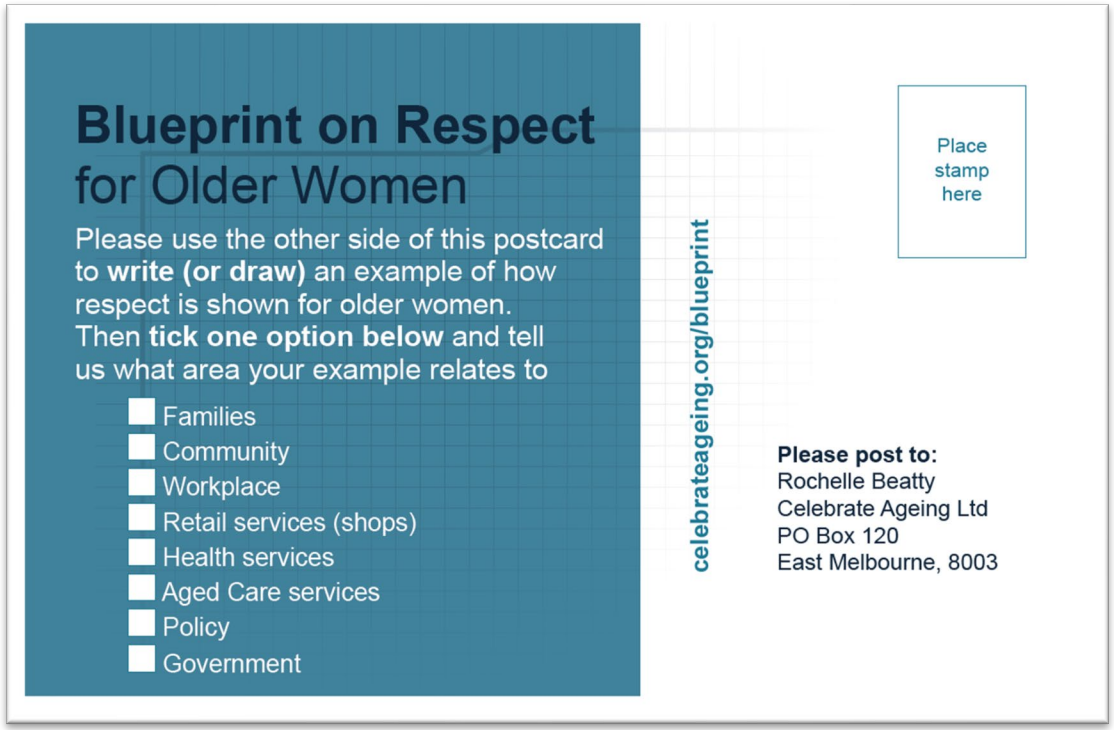

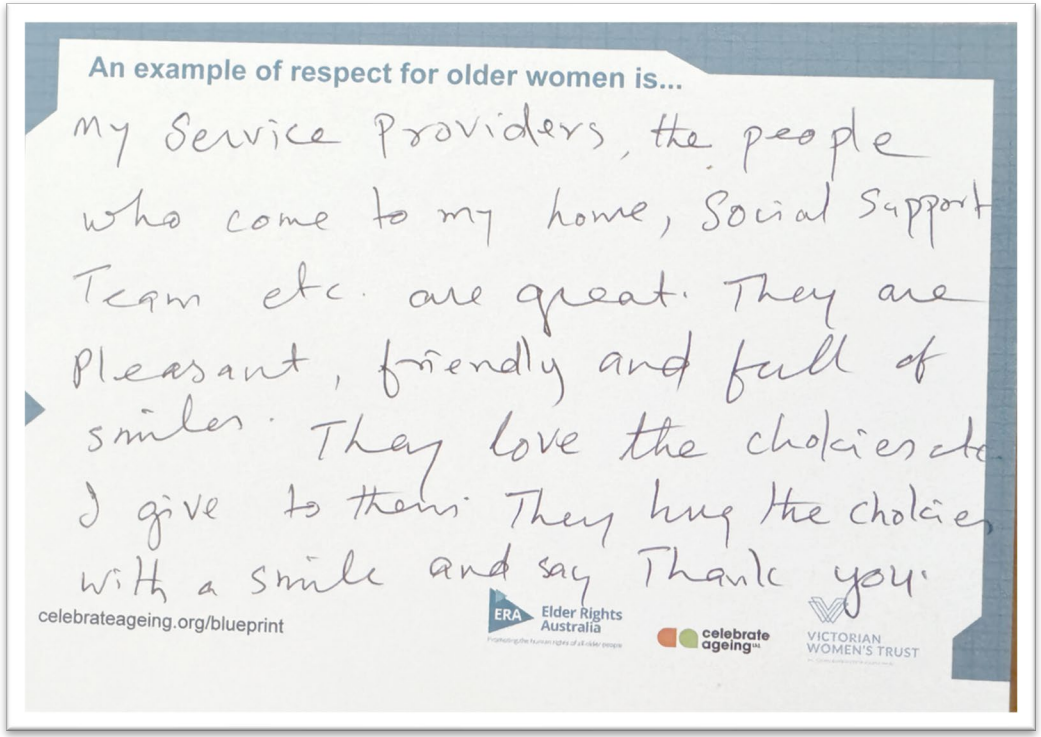

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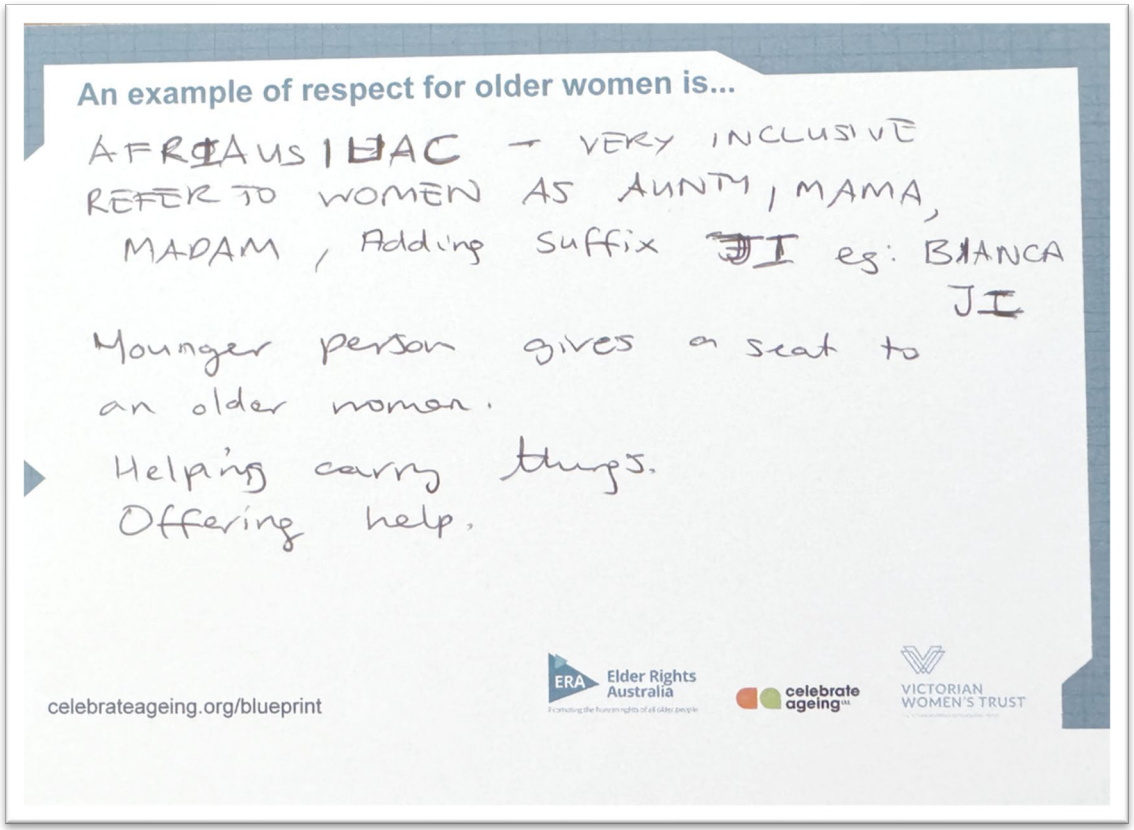

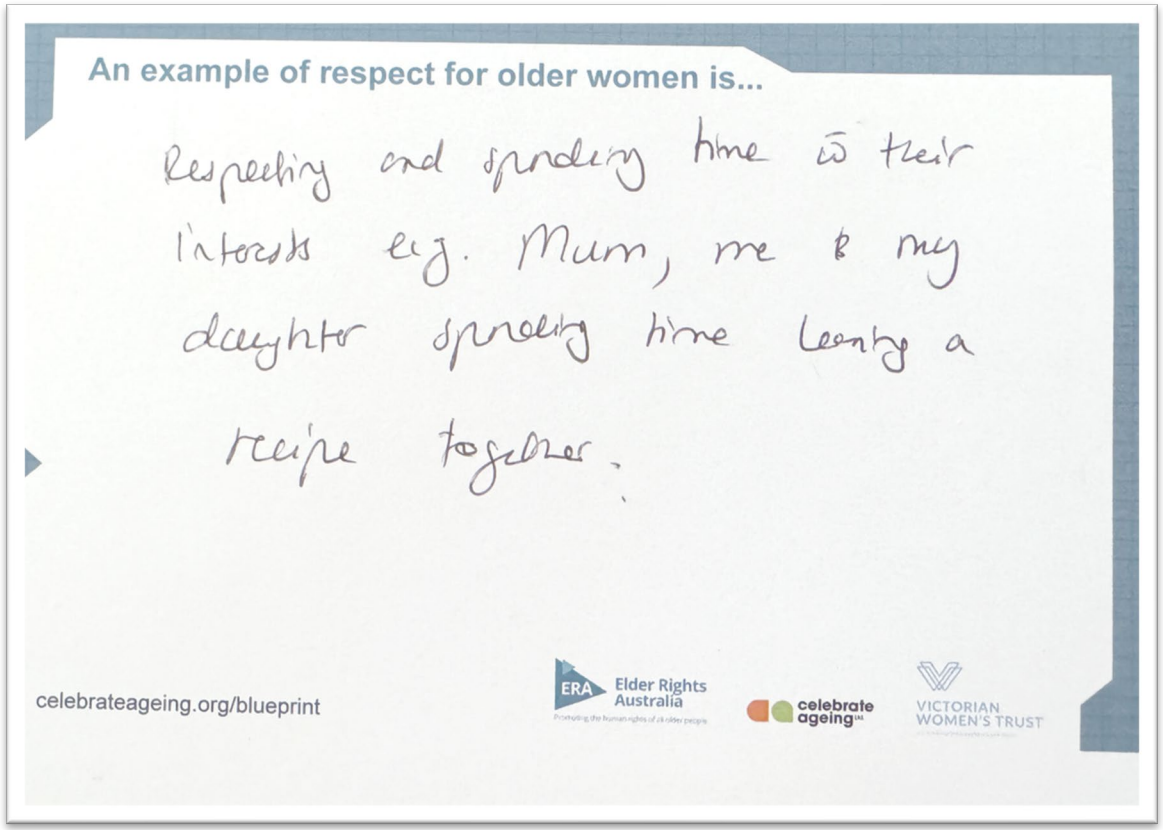

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Workshops in Residential Aged Care

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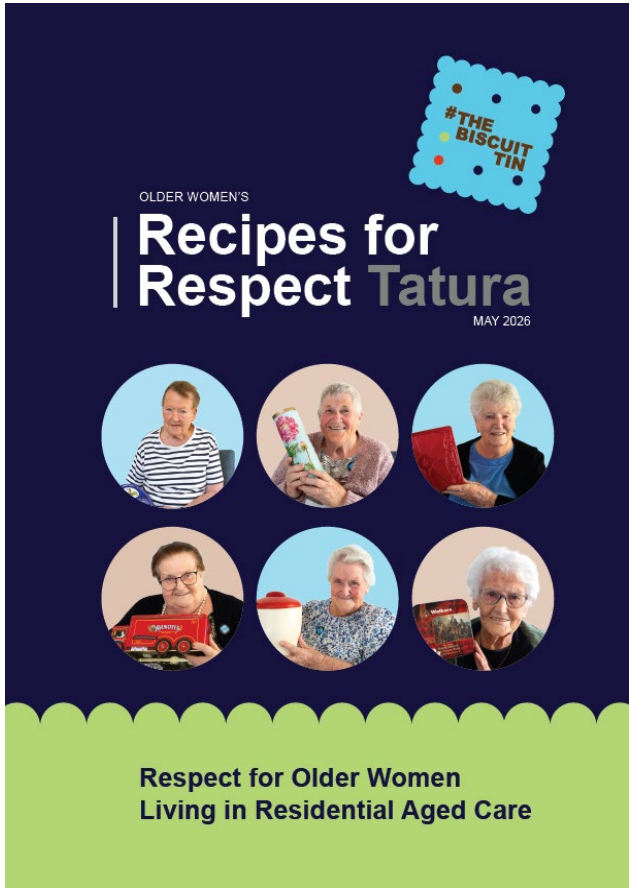

https://www.celebrateageing.com/thebiscuittin.html

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Kitchen Table

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The Muñoz Family

"You see that beautiful smile at the left back corner? That's my mom Lupita, the Centre, the nucleus of our family and the woman to whom we are thankful every day for raising three good people.

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Strong, Grey Women

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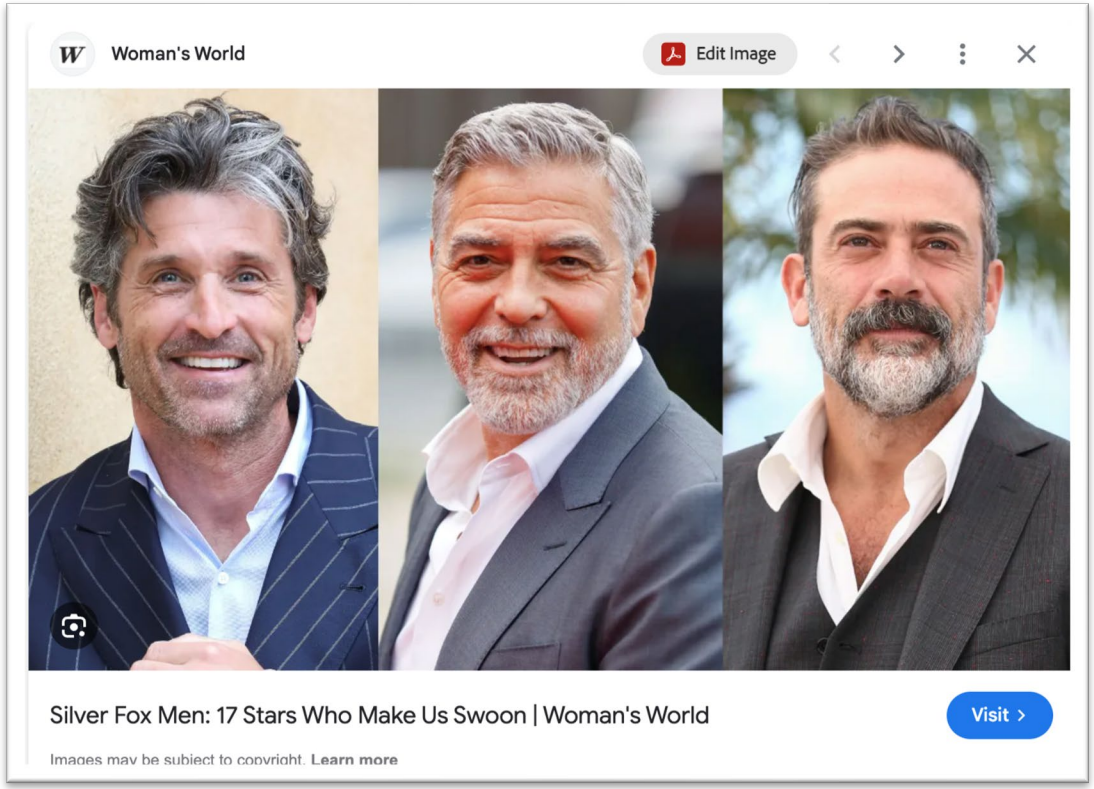
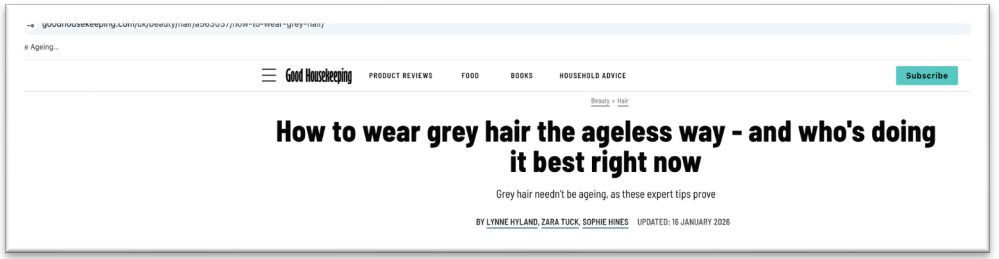
Decline to be Gray as long as Youth Beats in Your Heart

As long as you feel youth in your heart, you have a right to retain it in your appearance! Gray hair need not be submitted to meekly. If your hair is getting gray, faded or streaked know that it can be beautifully restored to color by applying nothing less than a mixture of Sage Tea and Sulphur.

Either prepare the recipe at home or get from any drug store a bottle of "Wyeth's Sage and Sulphur Compound," for only 75c. This is merely an old-time recipe improved by the addition of other ingredients. Thousands of folks recommend this ready-to-use preparation, because it darkens the hair so beautifully and naturally that no one can possibly tell. You moisten a sponge or soft brush with it, drawing this through the hair, taking one small strand at a time. By morning the gray hair disappears; after another application or two, its natural color is restored and it becomes thick, glossy and lustrous, and you appear years younger.





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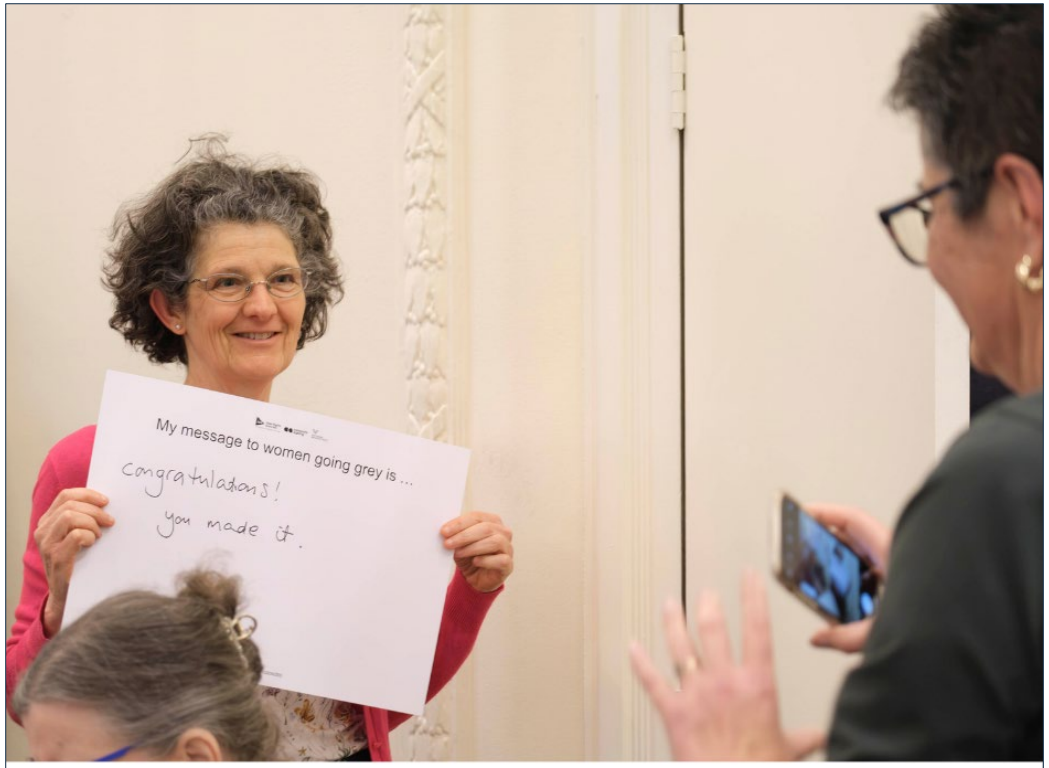

Strong, Grey Women
celebrateageing.com/grey

Photo: Suzanne Phoenix

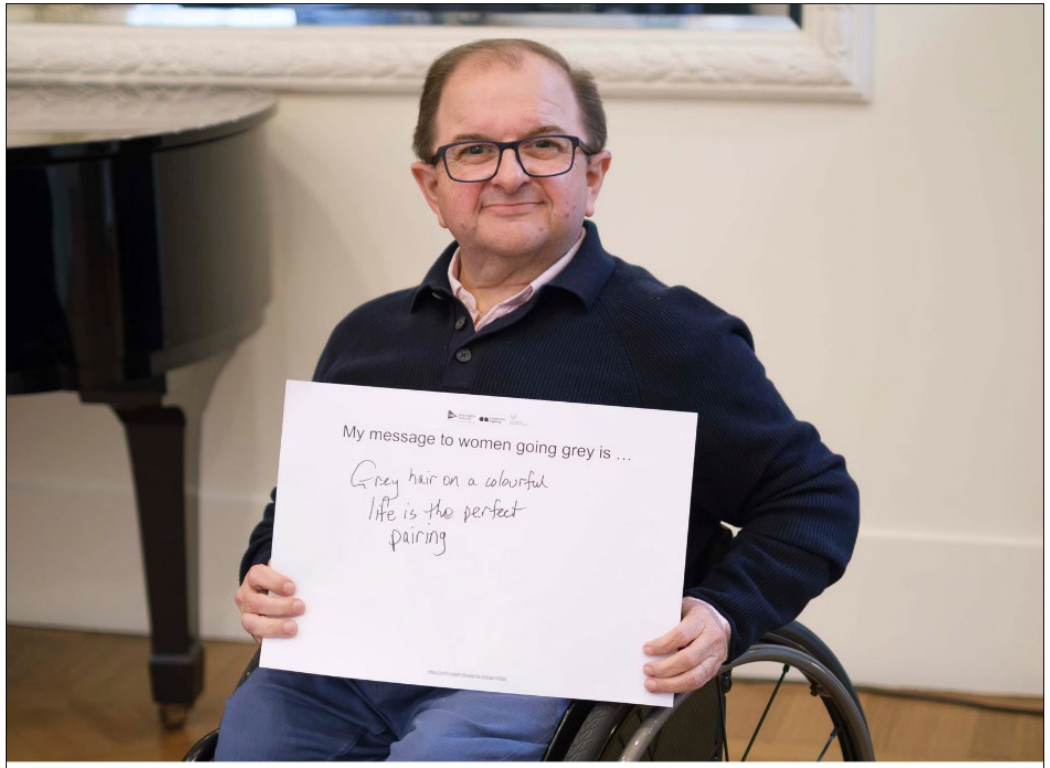

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Photo: Suzanne Phoenix

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Strong, Grey Women

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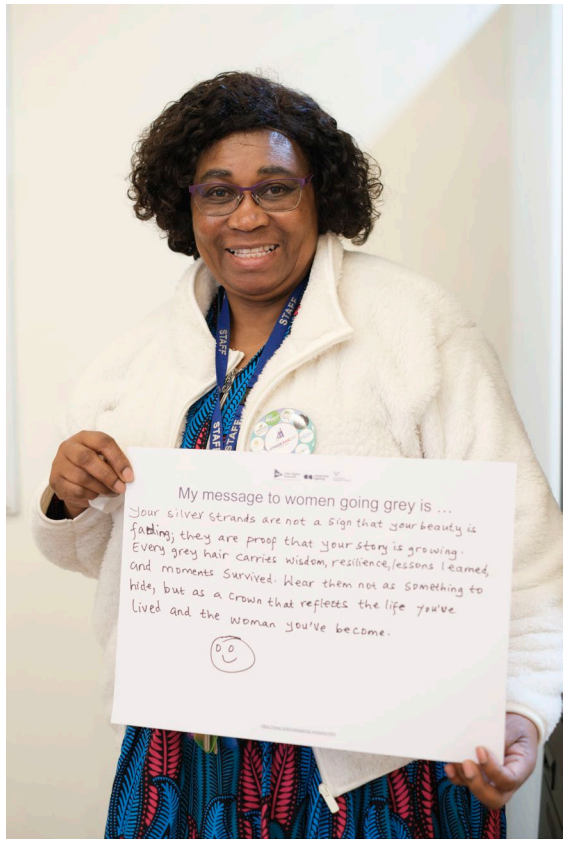
Your silver strands are not a sign that your beauty is fading, they are proof that your story is growing.

Every grey hair carries wisdom, resilience, lessons learned, and moments survived.

Wear them not as something to hide, but as a crown that reflects the life you've lived as the woman you've become.



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Art Competition

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Title: Fighters
Artist: Sarah-Nadia El Baset (21 years)
Medium: Digital

This piece represents how these brave women played a critical role in fighting for gender equality. They marched down the street protesting and demanding our right to work, to vote, to own property and so much more.

I admire and respect them all for how they have fought so hard to give us the freedom that we have today.

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Emerging Themes

Early analysis

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Emerging Themes:

- I feel seen and heard
- People ask me what I think
- I am recognised as contributing
- My contribution is valued
- My wisdom is sought
- I am included
- My decisions are respected
- Interests are taken into account
- My time is seen as precious
- My boundaries are respected
- I value myself

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How is Respect Shown to Older Women?

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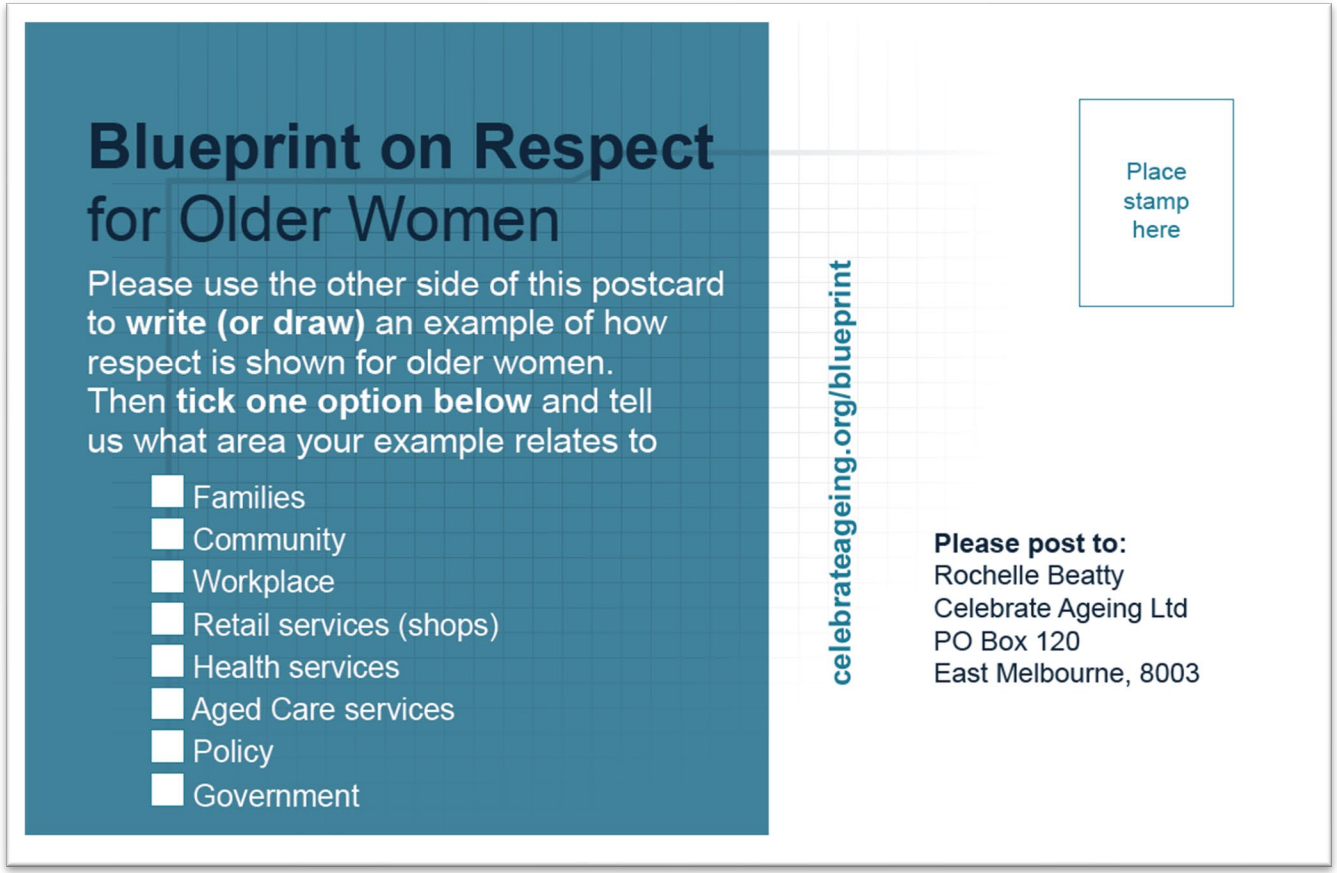

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Thank you

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