



2024

AGE FRIENDLY UNIVERSITIES WORKSHOP

WORKSHOP REPORT





ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

TITLE

Age Friendly Universities Workshop

CONVENORS

- Professor Nancy A Pachana FASSA | University of Queensland
- Professor Alpha Possamai-Inesedy FASSA | Western Sydney University

DATE AND PLACE

31st October 2022

On-line and in-person at Western Sydney University Parramatta South Campus, Sydney.

FUNDING

This workshop was funded by the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, as part of the 2022 Workshops Program. Find out more at:

<https://socialsciences.org.au/workshops-program/>

CITATION

Pachana, N.A. and Possamai-Inesedy, A. (2024). *Age Friendly University Workshop*. Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. <https://doi.org/10.60651/KFYC-3Z13>



OVERVIEW

The Age Friendly Universities workshop was held on-line and in-person at Western Sydney University Parramatta South Campus, Sydney on 31st October, 2022.

The workshop drew together students, researchers, and community stakeholders from a range of disciplines and perspectives to share insights on how universities in Australia can contribute to the well-being of their members, the wider Australian community, and older people themselves, in terms of quality and meaning as well as contributions and intergenerational projects. |

In bringing together a wider range of practitioners, students, experts and community stakeholders, the participants at this national workshop collectively identified ways of producing innovative ways to contribute to ways to combat ageism and enhance age-inclusivity within and beyond university campuses. This workshop acknowledges the importance of this work in this, the UN Decade of Healthy Aging (2021-2030).

The workshop consisted of the following sessions:

1. Opening Keynote: Age and ageing need to be reconceptualised for the Decade of Healthy Ageing | *Professor Stephen Birch*
2. Plenary 1: How do we promote age inclusivity and fight ageism? | *Dr Peta S. Cook and Professor Nancy A Pachana*
3. Presentation: The role of the University in fulfilling the goals of the UN declaration of the Decade of Healthy Ageing | *Professor Alpha Possamai-Inesedy and Dr Jed Montayre*
4. Presentation: Australia and the protection of older persons | *Professor Catherine Renshaw*
5. Plenary 2: University-community partnerships to promote age inclusivity | *Dr Andrea Petriwskyj*
6. Presentation: The value and opportunity afforded by being an AFU from a student perspective | *Ms Sophie Griffiths*
7. Homicide Defences for Women in Abusive Relationships: Perspectives from Germany and Australia | *Kerstin Braun, Caitlyn Nash, Rachel Dioso-Villa*
8. Discussion: Fulfilling the goals of the UN declaration of the Decade of Healthy Ageing | *Actions in the policy space (Professor Stephen Birch) Actions in the teaching and learning space (Professor Alpha Possamai-Inesedy) Actions in the research space (Professor Nancy Pachana) Actions in the community engagement space (Dr Peta Cook)*
9. Interactive Session: Roadmap for action | *All*

CONVENORS

- Professor [Nancy A. Pachana](#) FASSA | *The University of Queensland*
- Professor [Alpha Possamai-Inesedy](#) FASSA | *Western Sydney University*

PARTICIPANTS

- Professor [Stephen Birch](#) | *Director and Taylor Family Chair of UQ's Centre for the Business and Economics of Health*
- Associate Professor [Peta S. Cook](#) | *School of Social Sciences, University of Tasmania*
- Dr [Jed Montayre](#) | *School of Nursing & Midwifery, Western Sydney University*
- Professor [Catherine Renshaw](#) | *School of Law, Western Sydney University*
- Dr [Andrea Petriwsky](#) | *COTA Qld*
- [Sophie Griffiths](#) | *The University of Queensland*

On Monday, 31 October, 2024, the inaugural Age-Friendly Universities Workshop took place virtual and in-person while supported by the Western Sydney University's Social Justice Network, the University of Queensland Ageing Mind Initiative and the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.

The Age-Friendly Workshop featured keynote delivered by Professor Stephen Birch, discussing 'How age and ageing need to be reconceptualised for the Decade of Healthy Ageing.' Presentations addressing key areas of concern facing the ageing population, including attracting older students to universities, promoting age inclusivity, and fighting ageism, whilst concluding with the development of a roadmap for action.

WORKSHOP OUTPUTS

SESSION 1

IF COST EFFECTIVENESS IS THE ANSWER, CAN SOMEONE TELL ME THE QUESTION? THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HEALTH CARE SYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY

STEPHEN BIRCH

The first session provided important context for the broader discussion of the workshop. Professor Birch is a pioneer in the field of health economics. He has developed and applied new methods for the economic evaluation of health care systems, with particular emphasis on equity in health care resource allocation, and needs-based approaches to health care funding and health workforce planning. During his career, he has been a consultant with WHO and the World Bank, as well as serving on many expert panels and advisory councils for health workforce planning in Canada and the UK. In Australia, he has advised on health service and health workforce planning, access to care in underserved populations and needs-based allocation of resources and provider remuneration. In his talk he emphasised that public health care systems need to have planning aligned to system goals (needs), taking account of demographic shifts, technological advances, and the rising expectations of healthcare consumers. Planning must be integrated across services, workforce and expenditure functions. But often these basic conditions are not met. This is particularly true in terms of provider capacity to meet requirements.

Integrated needs-based planning and management considers impact of health care policies on service/workforce /expenditure requirements. Strategies for sustainability include avoiding perpetuating inefficiencies by extrapolating from the past without consideration for future scenarios.

SESSION 2

EXAMINING COMMUNITY NEEDS AND WANTS FOR AN AGE-FRIENDLY, INTERGENERATIONAL CITY

PETA S. COOK

Younger and older people enjoy and value living in the City of Clarence, often using the words 'lucky', 'fortunate', 'blessed', and 'grateful' to describe the liveability of the area. Arts are an important and defining feature of the City of Clarence, including public art, Rosny Farm, Bellerive Community Arts Centre, and the Clarence Jazz Festival. There was a clear desire that support of the arts should continue and even increase. Rural/ less urban suburbs are expanding, and services and infrastructure in these areas needs to be reviewed in light of these changes. Natural values, and place identity, attachment and meaning, need to be accommodated into development planning to increase community satisfaction and 'buy in'. Older adults wish to age-in-place, which can be made possible through diverse housing options and more timely community services. Finally, U3A provides significant health, social and wellbeing benefits for older adults.

SESSION 3

UNDERSTANDING AGEISM AND AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

PETA S. COOK

This session focused on understanding ageism and age-inclusive initiatives from an Age Friendly Community viewpoint. An ageing population – and older people – are often framed as a ‘problem’ and ‘burden’. This helps to fuel ageist stereotypes and myths. We might well ask, “What about opportunities and the potentials unlocked with increased longevity?” Intergenerational contact and interaction breaks down structures and norms that can hinder and prevent positive and meaningful intergenerational relations. Age Friendly Cities and Communities (AFCCs) provide “an inclusive and accessible community environment that optimizes opportunities for health, participation and security for all people, in order that quality of life and dignity are ensured as people age” (World Health Organization 2015). AFCC frameworks need to be responsive, specific, contextualised, intergenerational and inclusive.



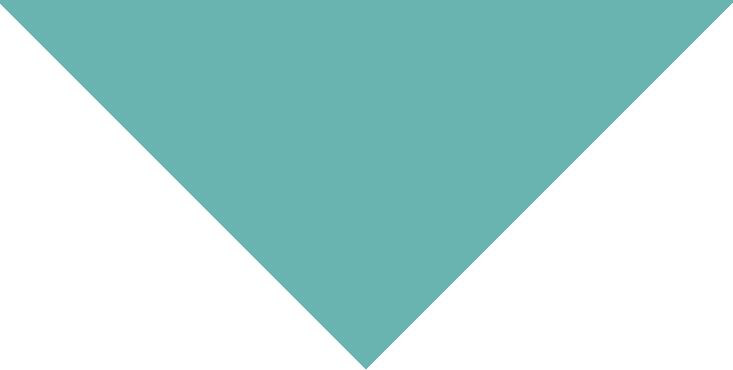
THE MAKING OF AGE FRIENDLY UNIVERSITIES

JED MONTAYRE

International efforts toward promoting age-friendliness in higher education institutions are important steps in creating communities that are appropriate places for older adults to thrive. The Age-Friendly Universities – Global Network (AFU – GN) was formed through a combined commitment of three universities, Dublin City University (DCU) in Ireland, Strathclyde University (SU) in Glasgow, and Arizona State University (ASU) in the United States. AFUs promote age inclusivity and diversity in higher education, and embrace lifelong learning, engagement and civic participation in older people.



The World Health Organization (2021) reports that globally, one in two people hold ageist attitudes.



The 10 principles guiding the AFU - GN are as follows:

1. To encourage the participation of older adults in all the **core activities** of the University, including educational and research programs.
2. To promote personal and career development in the second half of life and to support those who wish to pursue **second careers**.
3. To recognize the **range of educational needs** of older adults (from those who were early school-leavers through to those who wish to pursue Master's or Ph.D. qualifications).
4. To promote **intergenerational learning** in order to facilitate the reciprocal sharing of expertise between learners of all ages.
5. To widen access to **online educational opportunities** for older adults to ensure a diversity of routes to participation.
6. To ensure that the university's **research agenda** is informed by the needs of an aging society and to promote public discourse on how higher education can better respond to the varied interests and needs of older adults.
7. To increase the understanding of students of the **longevity dividend** and the increasing complexity and richness that aging brings to our society.
8. To enhance access for older adults to the university's range of **health and wellness** programs and its arts and **cultural activities**.
9. To engage actively with the university's own **retired community**.
10. To ensure regular **dialogue** with organizations representing the interests of the aging population.



The Age-Friendly University Global Network is an association of higher education institutions committed to promoting positive and healthy aging and enhancing the lives of older members of the global community through innovative educational programs, research agendas, curriculum development, online education, health and wellness activities, arts and culture programs and civic engagement opportunities.

SESSION 4

AUSTRALIA AND THE PROTECTION OF OLDER PERSONS

CATHERINE RENSHAW

Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that:

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

A Convention on Rights of Older Persons would help to address ageism, recognise the intersectionality of ageism and other “isms” (e.g. racism and sexism).

Universities have an important role to play in contributing to discussions around such initiatives.



Australian universities could and should play a role in advancing the development of a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

SESSION 5

UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE AGE INCLUSIVITY

ANDREA PETRIWSKY

Building on the previous discussion, University partnerships with community organisations such as Council on the Ageing (COTA). COTA Australia adheres to five primary policy principles:

- 1. Maximise the economic, social and political participation of older Australians and challenge ageism.** COTA supports policies and programs that encourage and facilitate the inclusion of seniors in all aspects of Australian life.
- 2. Promote positive views of ageing, reject ageism and challenge negative stereotypes.** COTA supports initiatives that recognise the capacities and contributions of seniors and actively combat ageism.
- 3. Promote interdependence and consciousness across generations.** COTA promotes policies that take account of the needs of the entire community for sound economic and social development.
- 4. Redress disadvantage and discrimination.** COTA believes that all people have the right to dignity, to security, to access high quality services, and to equality in participation in communities.
- 5. Protect and extend services and programs that are used and valued by older people living in Australia.** COTA develops policies and provides advice on maintaining and improving services and programs that seniors use and value. These include primary health care, hospitals, pharmaceuticals, employment services, utilities, public transport, residential care, housing and community care.



SESSION 6


THE VALUE AND OPPORTUNITY AFFORDED BY BEING AN AFU FROM A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

SOPHIE GRIFFITHS

This session discussed various projects aimed at increasing feelings of inclusivity for older students, particularly undergraduates, while attending university. Solutions for increasing inclusivity included hearing the voices of older students, who are quite disparate, and being conscious of the many demands on older students' time.



Indifference or hostility encountered in person and online was unfortunately a feature of many older students' experience at University.



CONCLUSIONS

This workshop explored the intersecting ways that an Age Friendly University might assist with efforts to combat ageism, improve community cohesion, and assist older persons to pursue a number of rights including access to education in the service of personal growth or to secure better employment. Continuing challenges exist in the high rates of ageism, social isolation and marginalisation experienced within Australia. Universities have an important role to play, both directly in their contact with older people and in their role of training the citizens of Australia more broadly.

REFERENCES

World Health Organization (2015) Measuring the age-friendliness of cities: A guide to using the core indicators. Kobe: WHO Centre for Health Development.
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