

Introduction

Revd Kevin McGovern,
Caroline Chisholm Centre for Health Ethics:
The Older Person: giving and receiving care,
7 October 2015



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Outline

1. What is ageism / age discrimination?
2. Three voices opposing ageism

Ageism / Age Discrimination

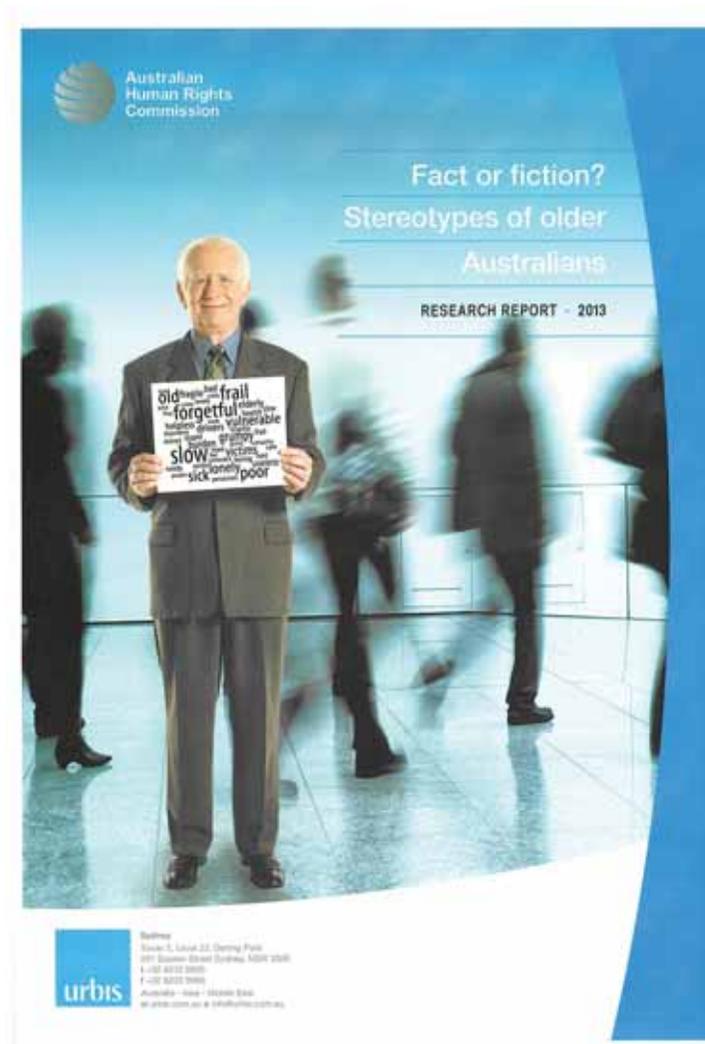


- “prejudice or discrimination because of a person’s age”
 - negative stereotypes
 - negative attitudes
 - negative behaviours



Australian Research

- *Fact or Fiction? Stereotypes of older Australians*, from the Australian Human Rights Commission (2013)
- <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/age-discrimination/publications/fact-or-fiction-stereotypes-older-australians-research>



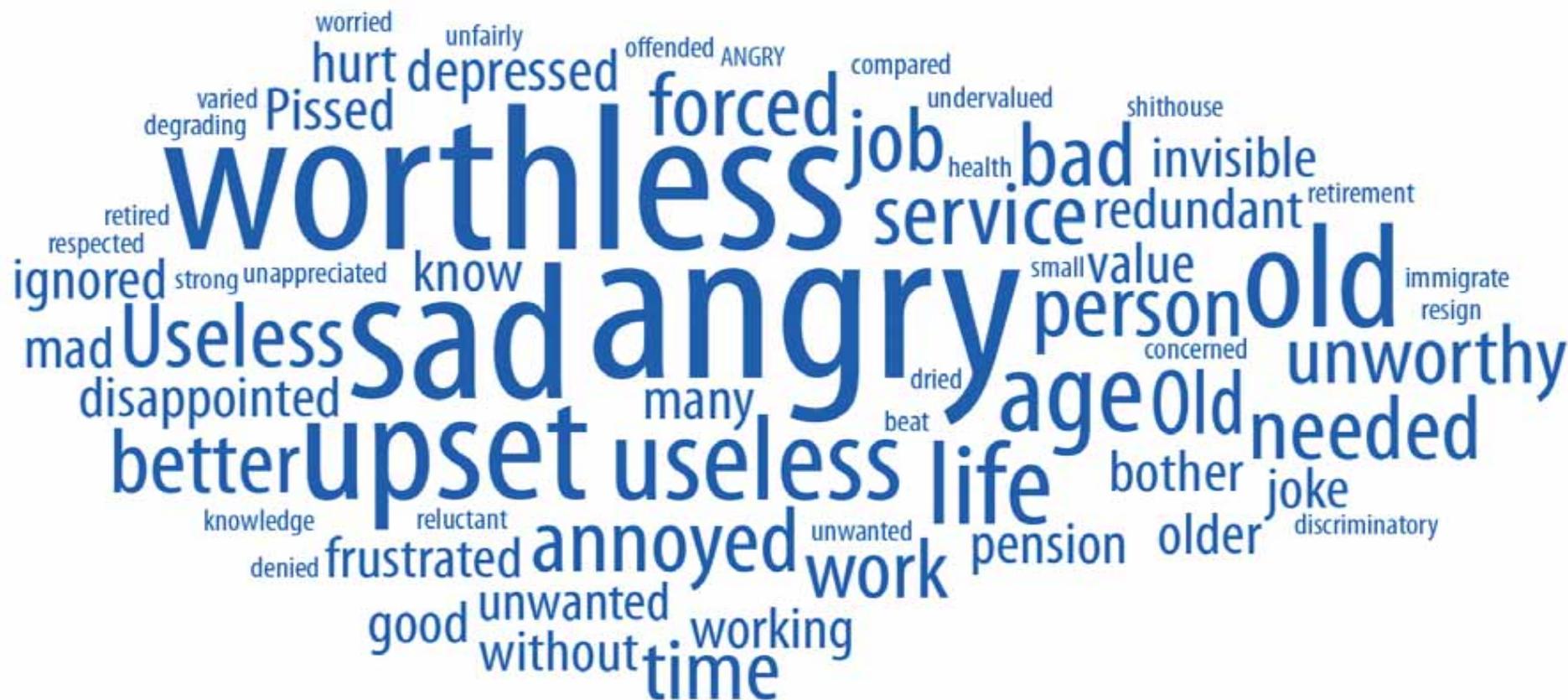


Examples

- being turned down for a position
- being ignored
- being treated with disrespect
- being subjected to jokes about ageing
- service invisibility – service people ignore you
- product invisibility – overlooked in product promotion
- relationship invisibility – feeling like a burden on others
- cultural invisibility – lack of representation in popular culture
- **psychological abuse**
- **financial abuse**
- **physical and/or sexual abuse**



It hurts!





Sr Elvera Sesta PBVM



- a Catholic religious sister
- a former school principal who has returned to classroom teaching
- a columnist for The Catholic Leader, Brisbane
- “Developing wisdom over the years,” 1 February 2015



Sr Elvesta Sesta (cont'd)

- In Japan, old age is “greatly respected.”
- “How different is age treated in our culture here today.... In some instances, it is almost as if the aged are discarded...”
- “Yet the aged very often have a lifetime of wisdom.”
- “The various lines that cross our faces tell the story of our lives. They have been years in the making and we should treasure them.”
- “Although we may not think of ourselves as wise, our wisdom has been growing bit by bit.”



Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP



- Federal Member for Hasluck (Western Australia)
- the first Aboriginal member of the House of Representatives
- also the first Indigenous Federal Minister: he is Assistant Minister for Health with a special focus on aged care



Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP (cont'd)

- “I think...Australia’s own treatment of its ageing population will be different once we acknowledge that some of our most skilled and gifted people are in their 60s and 70s.”
- “It seems strange — in Aboriginal society we have elders, that we revere: their knowledge, their skills are paramount in shaping some of the direction that we take ... and yet in Australian society we are prepared to let that same knowledge of eldership dissipate instead of harnessing it and using it.”
- “Our bodies do weary, they do become frail, but it doesn’t stop our mind from being creative and providing the type of thinking that is needed.”



Pope Francis



- the People's Pope, the Pope of the Poor
- 78 years of age (born 17 December 1936)
- Meeting of the Pope with the Elderly – 28 September 2014
- General Audiences about the elderly – 4 and 11 March 2015



Meeting with the Elderly

- “Elderly people are being abandoned... which is actually real and hidden euthanasia! It is the result of a throw away culture which is so harmful to our world.... We are all called to oppose this poisonous, throw away culture!”
- “A people who does not take care of grandparents...has no future! Why does it have no future? Because such a people loses its memory and is torn from its roots.”



Meeting with the Elderly (cont'd)

- “In a special way, old age is a time of grace, in which the Lord renews his call to us: he calls us to safeguard and transmit the faith, he calls us to pray, especially to intercede; he calls us to be close to those in need.... The elderly, grandparents have the ability to understand the most difficult of situations...”
- “We Christians, together with all people of good will, are called to patiently build a more diverse, more welcoming, more humane, more inclusive society.... we need a society which measures its success on how the weak are cared for.”



General Audiences

- “A culture of profit insists on casting off the old.... They are thrown away.... it is a brutal thing, it is a sin!”
- “The quality of a society, I mean of a civilization, is also judged by how it treats elderly people and by the place it gives them in community life.... This civilisation will move forward if it knows how to respect wisdom, the wisdom of the elderly. In a civilisation in which there is no room for the elderly... this society carries with it the virus of death.”
- “Where there is no honour for elders, there is no future for the young.”



General Audiences (cont'd)

- “It is true that society tends to discard us, but the Lord definitely does not! The Lord never discards us. He calls us to follow Him in every age of life, and *old age has a grace and a mission* too, a true vocation from the Lord.”
- “These elderly persons throughout society ought to be a reservoir of wisdom for our people.”
- “We are able to remind ambitious young people that a life without love is a barren life. We are able to say to young people who are afraid that anxiety about the future can be overcome. We are able to teach the young who are overly self-absorbed that there is more joy in giving than in receiving.”

A Concluding Thought



- The world is full of problems. But it is also full of the overcoming of problems.



Presenter

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