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# Addressing ageism in healthcare crucial for all Australians

Addressing ageism in healthcare will improve the experience of older Australians and support healthy ageing for people of every age, COTA Australia says.

The call comes as the Australian Human Rights Commission releases a report, *The age barrier: older adults' experiences of ageism in health care*, and unveils plans to combat ageism in healthcare - including improving collaboration with the health sector, strengthening evidence, and raising awareness of the issues.

Chief Executive Officer of COTA Australia, Patricia Sparrow, said that as Australians live longer, tackling inequity in systems like healthcare is becoming increasingly urgent.

"Reports of older Australians being dismissed, overlooked or treated differently within the health system are unfortunately all too common," Ms Sparrow said.

"Practical steps such as improving training on ageism for frontline staff are important. This isn't about pointing fingers at individuals - it's about acknowledging the ageism that has been embedded in healthcare for decades and taking action to fix it.

"Responsibility to address ageism sits with government, businesses, the community as a whole and each of us individually."

Ms Sparrow said that addressing ageism delivers benefits far beyond older people.

"Ageism hurts us all. If we improve our systems for older Australians, we improve the system for everyone. A health system that responds well to older people is a system that treats every patient with dignity, respect and evidence-based care."

Ms Sparrow said that with Australians living longer than ever before, preventive health and early intervention are increasingly critical. As a community we need to support healthy ageing and ensure older Australians have equal access to the health services they need.

"Without serious action, the inequities built into our current systems will persist and continue to make life harder for everyone, young and old."

"If Australia commits to tackling ageism, we will be a more inclusive, cohesive and prosperous country."

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