COTA
For older Australians

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International Day of Older Persons: longer lives need long term planning

As the world marks the International Day of Older Persons, this year's UN theme of Rethinking Systems for Longer Lives highlights the need for a long term, whole-of-government plan for ageing, COTA Australia says.

COTA Australia Chief Executive Officer Patricia Sparrow said Australians were living longer than ever and the health, aged care and housing systems they rely on needed to be planned around those extra years to ensure they are healthy, productive, dignified and equitable.

"Today is about recognising older Australians and the contributions they make in their communities across the country.

"Australians are living longer than ever, and that is good news. Too often, older people are treated as a problem to be managed, but longer lives are an opportunity, as long as we plan for them."

"Countries around the world are using today to ask whether their systems are ready for longer lives. The Governments 2026 Intergenerational Report shows the scale of the change that's coming in Australia with the number of people aged 85 and over set to triple. We know it and now we need a plan to match it.

"That plan should make sure older people can get care then when they need it, live in homes that suit them and stay connected to their communities, with every part of government working towards that goal.

"It also needs to tackle ageism, so no one is written off at work or in any other situation, for their age.

"When older people stay well and active, the whole community benefits from what they bring.

"On this International Day of Older Persons, we're asking the Federal Government to commit to a 10-year plan for ageing, so the extra years Australians are gaining are good years."

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