

# The Silencing of Older Women

The #2024Embalden National Festival:  
Combating Ageism & Building Respect for Older People

## Sponsorship Information

Ageism has devastating impacts on older people - and the health care system, the workplace, the economy and our culture. Global research shows 1 in 2 people are ageist and ageism: accounts for \$1 in every \$7 spent on health care (USA data), can reduce life expectancy by 7.5 years, underpins much of the Elder Abuse experienced by 14% of older people, costs \$850 billion annually in workplace discrimination (USA data) and \$10.9 billion in financial abuse/fraud (Australia data).

Older women experience ageism in unique ways – due to the compounding impacts of sexism and ageism. This results in older women being the lowest income earning family group, more likely to live in poverty (35% of single older women), the largest group of unpaid carers and more likely to experience family violence and elder abuse. There is a pressing need to focus on the ageism experienced by older women.

In 2018, [Celebrate Ageing Ltd](#) launched [Embalden](#), a national festival to help combat ageism and build respect for older people. The annual Festival brings together community leaders, service providers and older people to learn from each other and accelerate the pace of culture change to prevent ageism and Elder Abuse.

The 2024 Festival will include a Symposium, a Congress of Older People's Voices from the Margins and Exhibition of Street Art.

### About Celebrate Ageing Ltd

Celebrate Ageing Ltd is a charity established in 2013 to combat ageism and build respect for older people. We use evidence, art and story-based approaches to build momentum for culture change.

Our programs include the [Elder Leadership Academy](#) (Fellowships for older people to co-lead change), [The Margins](#) (outreach to marginalised older people), and [the Centre for Intergenerational Power](#) (intergenerational collaborations to combat ageism and build stronger communities).

Our work also involves partnerships with marginalised groups of older people, service providers, governments, advocacy, and peak bodies.

## Theme: The Silencing of Older Women

The 2024 Festival theme *The Silencing of Older Women* recognises the need to understand the unique ways older women experience ageism - and combat the subsequent rises in poverty, homelessness, abuse, violence and murder. It explores the ways families, communities, services and policies can contribute to the silencing of older women.

It explores how a gender lens can enhance elder abuse strategies and how a life span approach can help to prevent family violence. It offers practical solutions to achieve these goals.

## Program

The #Embolden2024 Congress and Symposium will be hosted online and art-based activities facilitated in communities. The program includes the following activities:

- **Street Art Exhibition (1<sup>st</sup> September – 1<sup>st</sup> October)**  
A month of art-based activities led by services, organisations, groups and communities. The exhibition focuses on Ageing and Body Positivity and Respect for Older Women. The exhibition will include street posters, vox pops, intergenerational exchanges and social media campaigns. Sessions at the Symposium will reflect on the power of art to create change.
- **Congress of Older People's Voices from the Margins (2<sup>nd</sup> October)**  
The online Congress includes presentations by older women from marginalised groups. Presenters will discuss their experiences of ageism and other forms of marginalisation and share small, practical steps for change.
- **Symposium (3<sup>rd</sup> October)**  
The online Symposium will explore representations of older women in popular culture as drivers of inequalities, including the recent increase in older women killed by intimate partners and sons. Strategies for change will be presented and will include primary prevention activities and a framework for equity in services - particularly family violence and elder abuse services. The role of families, communities and older women will also be explored.

## Delivery

The 2024 Festival will primarily be hosted online to enable wider participation. The registration fee will be small (with the option for free participation) to ensure the event is accessible. Embolden will return to a face to face event in 2025.

## Evaluation

The #Embolden2023 event was hosted in regional Victoria and attended by over 100 delegates who rated the event as relevant (6.5/7), reported learning new knowledge/skills (6.5/7) that had practical application (6.6/7) and 86% planned to utilise what they learned (link [here](#)). Evaluation comments from the 2023 event included:

- *Great presentations and demonstrated a great insight into the various worlds of the Australian ageing community*
- *Well run: well facilitated: intelligent - substance and way it's run*
- *What a fantastic event. Loved the stories, welcome country, variety of marginalised people speaking, networking opportunities and June's activity [on marginalisation] - clever! Unfolded well - (smiley face) well done!*
- *Well organised - thank you to Catherine and all those from Celebrate Ageing*
- *Very inspiring event. I am keen to make some changes based on what I've learnt*
- *Such important education and learning for me, hearing directly from people is so powerful*
- *Congratulations to Catherine and the Celebrate Ageing members for an amazing congress. Well done!*
- *Bravo! Amazing!*
- *Thank you for creating this amazing space for learning and sharing. Thank, thank you, thank you (big smiley face).*
- *This has been an informative and uplifting symposium*
- *This was an entirely new experience for me. Everyone's contribution, everyone's acceptance of me was amazing*
- *Loved the diversity of life experiences.....this is real life*
- *Hats off to the organisers for curating such a line-up*
- *It was very powerful to hear these voices - especially in succession*
- *It was brilliant to hear all the different stories and voices. Of course, relevant to reflect on and learn from these different lived experiences*
- *It allowed many different stories to be told and it was beautiful to see the diversity of ageing*
- *The stories shared showed how marginalised our ageing population is ...*
- *Discovered issues that I have not considered before*
- *I thought I was really conversant with marginalisation in aged care but I came away thinking about the many faces of marginalisation.*

The inaugural Embolden2018 was attended by over 250 delegates (60% providers), growing to over 400 in 2019. Participant evaluation gave an average rating of 4.8/5 for usefulness in 2018 and similarly 4.9/5 in 2019.

## Outputs

We want the Embolden Festival to make a difference. We want delegates to leave inspired – and with resources for change. To help achieve this we produce a webpage of resources from each Embolden event (see [emboldenfestival.com](http://emboldenfestival.com)).

Each webpage includes a report summarising key insights, providing links to additional resources, and outlining an action plan for delegates.

The #Embolden2023 report included a series of critical theories of change developed from discussion at Congress and the Symposium.

## Partnership opportunities

In recognition of the financial difficulties facing many services and groups – partnership opportunities are flexible. This includes:

- Major partners (\$15,000): logo and link to your website on the #Embolden2024 webpage and report from the event, a message in the report foreword, brief welcome address and 5 registrations for the event
- Partners (\$5000): logo and link to your website on the #Embolden2024 webpage and report from the event and 5 registrations for the event

If you would like to discuss other partnership or sponsorship opportunities, please contact the Embolden curator Dr Catherine Barrett

- Phone: 0429 582 237
- Email: [director@celebrateageing.org](mailto:director@celebrateageing.org)

## Previous partners

We are grateful to all the organisations and services who supported our past events including the [Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care](#), [Elder Rights Advocacy](#), [Older Person's Advocacy Network \(OPAN\)](#), [Australian Association of Gerontology](#), [ADA Australia](#), [The Older Women's Network NSW](#), [QueerSpace Drummond St](#), [City of Port Phillip's Older Persons Consultative Committee](#), the National LGBTI Health Alliance's [Silver Rainbow LGBTI Inclusive Ageing and Aged Care](#), the Victorian Government through their [Multicultural Festivals and Events Program](#), [Older Person's Advocacy Network](#), [Elder Abuse Action Australia](#), [Communities of Respect](#), [Alfred Health](#), [Caulfield Health](#); [The City of Ballarat](#); [The Care Page](#); [The National LGBTI Health Alliance](#); [Hammond Care Dementia Centre](#); [Seniors Rights Service](#); [Switchboard Victoria](#); [The Ageing Revolution](#); [Aged Care Matters](#); [Better Place Australia](#); [Meaningful Ageing](#); [Bayside City Council](#); [Glen Eira City Council](#); [Knox City Council](#); and [COTA Victoria](#).