

# Gen Seen Report 2024





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# About the report

The Gen Seen Report 2024 forms part of the Australian Seniors Research Series. In its latest instalment, this study explores how life is changing for Australians over 50, and how they're finding their place in a fast-evolving modern world. The research delves into unique challenges such as ageism, representation in the media, inclusiveness, and keeping up with the rapid pace of societal changes. The findings also shed light on the attitudes towards other generations and whether seniors feel seen by those around them.

The report is compiled based on research commissioned by Australian Seniors and conducted by MYMAVINS between 19 January and 12 February 2024. The research was conducted via a quantitative online survey, gathering 5,018 responses from Australians aged 50 and above.

The sample is representative of the general senior population of Australia in terms of age, gender, wealth, and state/territory.

## Important things to observe about the charts and figures

- Footnotes directly underneath the charts mainly refer to the sampling involved per question. This is to differentiate who was asked that particular question in the survey.
- Charts without a specific note represent questions that were asked to all respondents.
- The types of questions asked are also noted. For instance, 'Multiple responses allowed' appears when the question called for more than one response from the respondent.
- Some charts and figures may not be equal to 100% due to rounding differences. This is also true for summed up figures.
- Figures were determined from self-reported estimates provided by respondents.
- Outliers have been removed from certain figures. A specific note accompanies the data wherever this is applied.





# Key findings





# Key findings

## Happiness peaks and troughs through life

- Nearly 1 in 3 (32%) feel their happiest times have come post 50 years old. Notably, however, 2 in 5 (43%) respondents haven't reached their 60s, meaning they couldn't assess older life stages yet.
- When we focus solely on those in their 50s, 23% say this decade has been their happiest time. For those in their 60s, it's 24%, and for those in their 70s, it's 21%.

## Most feel they're yet to hit their prime

- Close to 3 in 5 (57%) feel they haven't yet hit the prime of their life. Among those who have, the average age is around 51 years old.

## Celebrity influence on attitudes to ageing

- Around 2 in 5 (42%) report that their attitudes towards ageing are influenced by celebrities.
- Close to 1 in 4 (23%) acknowledge that celebrities have a positive impact on maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and 1 in 5 (21%) are inspired by them to embrace ageing gracefully and confidently.

## Many peaks left to reach after turning 50

- Post 50, individuals report achieving several peaks in various aspects of life, with wisdom and life experience (35%) and life satisfaction (28%) being the most prominent. Only around 1 in 4 (26%) feel that they have no more peaks left to hit after turning 50.

## Most Australians over 50 feel they face stereotypes as they age

- Around 9 in 10 (90%) feel they face stereotypes about being older. The most common stereotypes include health issues and medical conditions (58%), physical and mental decline (44%), and being disregarded and ignored by younger generations (38%).
- About 3 in 4 (75%) experience emotional impacts from the negative ageing stereotypes they face.



## **Majority feel there are double standards between men and women ageing**

- Around 7 in 10 (70%) feel there's at least one double standard between men and women. Women are more likely to feel this way (77%) compared to men (62%).
- Overall, nearly 1 in 2 (47%) believe men face less pressure to maintain their physical appearance, and 2 in 5 (39%) note a disparity in societal acceptance of relationships with significantly younger partners.

## **Majority feel Australians become less seen or heard in society as they age**

- About 7 in 10 (73%) agree there's an age beyond 50 years where individuals become less visible.
- Close to 1 in 2 (47%) feel women who've experienced menopause are more likely to feel 'overlooked' or 'invisible' to society at large.

## **Ageism is prevalent and experienced by most**

- Ageism is deemed to be either extremely or reasonably prevalent for over 8 in 10 (81%).
- Around 7 in 10 (71%) experience some form of ageism. Social media emerged as the most likely place to experience ageism, reported by 3 in 10 (29%). Almost 1 in 2 (45%) say that they experience ageism the most among younger generations.

## **Most feel a decline in respect for older people among younger generations**

- Around 7 in 10 (69%) feel somewhat or much less respect for older people compared to when they were younger.
- This is attributed to decreased emphasis on traditional values (60%) and perceptions of older people being out of touch with modern technology (59%), and a lack of understanding or empathy towards older people's experiences (57%).

## **Many experience a disconnect with younger generations**

- More than 1 in 2 (55%) experience feeling a disconnect with younger generations.
- The majority (55%) believe that Gen Z (12–27 years old) are the biggest 'ageist' offenders. Close to 9 in 10 (85%) see a difference in beliefs, attitudes, or behaviours between individuals over 50 and Gen Z.



## Majority embrace ageing naturally despite societal pressures

- More than 7 in 10 (73%) of the population are embracing the concept of ageing naturally which includes accepting grey hair, wrinkles, and dressing comfortably.
- Despite this, around 2 in 3 (67%) still feel there are societal expectations around the appearance of those over 50 years old.
- Less than 1 in 2 (45%) are actively pushing back in the fight against age-shaming within the beauty industry.

## Many (especially women) struggle with body confidence issues

- Overall, 3 in 5 (60%) have struggled with body image issues after the age of 50, but this is more common among females (74% vs. 43% of males).
- Body confidence post 50 is better for close to 1 in 5 (19%), unchanged for nearly half (47%), and worse for 1 in 3 (34%). Women are more likely to feel that their body confidence is worse after 50 (39% vs. 28% of men).

## Age-related dismissal in healthcare is common

- Around 2 in 3 (61%) feel at least somewhat seen and heard by their health practitioner. However, 3 in 10 (31%) believe that experiences vary depending on the practitioner they're dealing with and almost 1 in 10 (8%) don't feel heard or seen.
- 2 in 5 (39%) of those not always feeling seen or heard (or that it depends on the practitioner) believe their symptoms are often brushed off as a normal part of ageing.

## Secrets to ageing well are taking care of yourself inside and out

- The key to ageing well includes being happy/content (80%), eating right (77%), and exercising (74%). Staying socially connected (62%) and looking forward to the future (62%) are also seen as crucial by many.

## Ageism in the workplace is common

- More than 3 in 4 (76%) consider ageism to be extremely or reasonably prevalent.
- Over 4 in 10 (42%) feel less heard or seen in their workplace since turning 50.
- Over 4 in 5 (83%) feel that older employees are generally undervalued and a similar proportion (78%) agree that the efforts of older employees often go unnoticed compared to younger generations.



## Most older Australians feel overlooked in marketing these days

- Around 2 in 3 (67%) feel that their age group is overlooked in marketing these days.
- However, only 1 in 5 (22%) have actually stopped supporting any brands who don't represent, design for or support the over 50s community well.

## Media portrayals don't feel accurate for most

- Over 1 in 2 (55%) feel advertising and media portrayals don't accurately capture the reality of being a senior.
- About 3 in 4 (75%) feel that they differ from the stereotypical image of a senior that's typically being portrayed in the media.



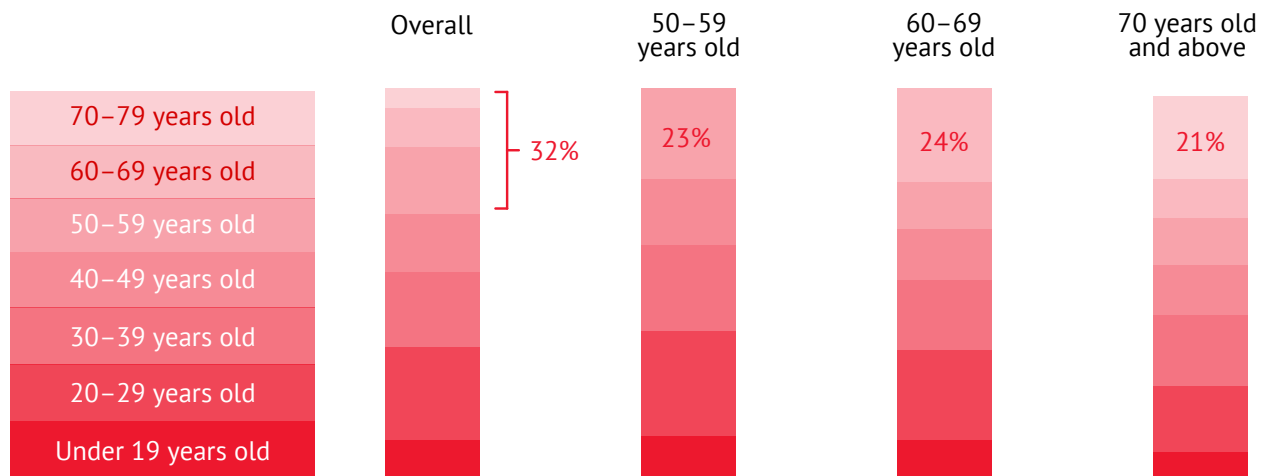
# Feeling older





# The best time of life

## Around what age have you been happiest in your life?

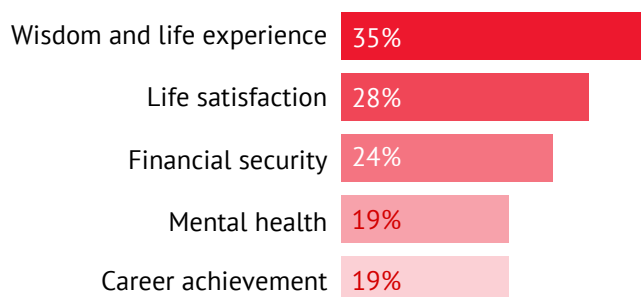


\*50-59 years old  $n = 2,181$ . 60-69 years old  $n = 1,702$ . 70 years old and above  $n = 1,135$ .

Nearly 1 in 3 (32%) feel their happiest times have come post 50 years old, notably though as many as 2 in 5 respondents had yet to reach their 60s meaning they couldn't assess older life stages yet.

When we just look at those in their 50s, 23% say this decade has been their happiest times, for those in their 60s, it's 24% and for those in their 70s, it's 21%. This suggests a trend where happiness peaks in young adulthood, slightly dips in mid-life, and then sees a resurgence in later years.

## Do you believe you've hit your 'peak' in any of the following after turning 50 years old?



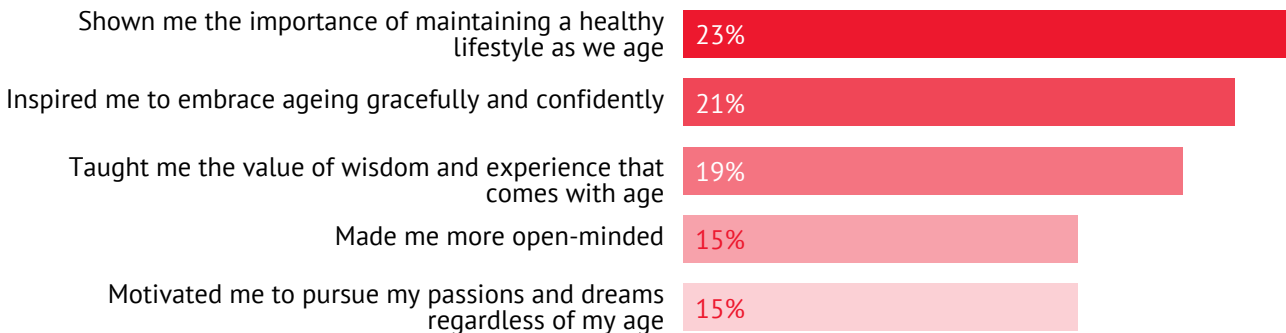
Post 50, individuals report achieving several peaks in various aspects of life, with wisdom and life experience (35%) and life satisfaction (28%) being the most prominent. Only around 1 in 4 (26%) feel that they have no more peaks left to hit after turning 50.

\*Multiple responses allowed. Top 5 responses only.

Close to 3 in 5 (57%) feel they haven't yet hit the prime of their life. For those who have, the average age came to around 51 years old.

# Celebrity influences

## Have any older or maturing celebrities influenced your attitudes to ageing?



*\*Multiple responses allowed. Top 5 responses only.*

Around 2 in 5 (42%) report their attitudes towards ageing are influenced by celebrities, with females more likely than males to feel this influence (47% vs. 37%).

Around 1 in 4 (23%) acknowledge that celebrities have a positive impact on maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and 1 in 5 (21%) are inspired by them to embrace ageing gracefully and confidently.

The most popular celebrity influences include Helen Mirren, Judi Dench, and Jane Fonda.





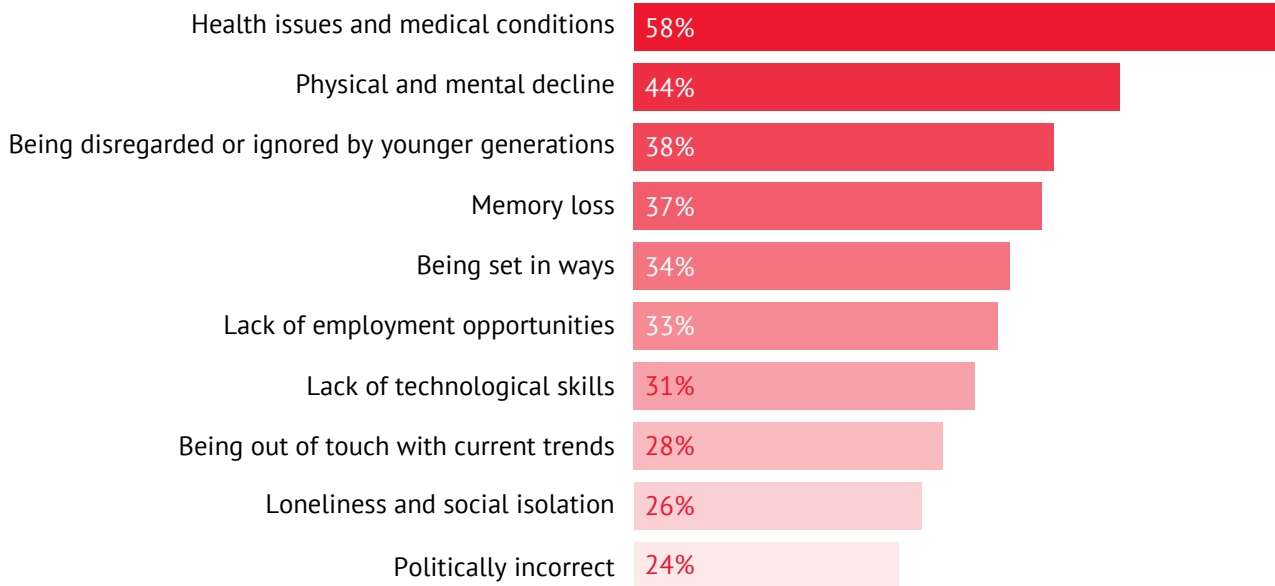
# Public perceptions





# Ageing stereotypes

What are the biggest stereotypes you feel you face as you get older?



*\*Multiple responses allowed. Top 10 responses only.*

Around 9 in 10 (90%) feel they face stereotypes around being older. The most common being health issues and medical conditions (58%), physical and mental decline (44%) and being disregarded and ignored by younger generations (38%).

Women are more likely to feel disregarded or ignored by younger generations (41% vs. 33% of men), while men are more likely to feel stereotyped as politically incorrect (31% vs. 19% of women).

Around 3 in 4 (75%) experience emotional impacts from negative ageing stereotypes they face. Most commonly, they express feelings of disappointment (41%), feeling patronised (26%), and a motivation to defy expectations (20%).





# Double standards

## Do you feel there's a double standard between the societal expectations on men and women when ageing?

Men face less pressure to maintain their physical appearance as they age, while women may feel more pressure to fight against the signs of ageing and maintain a 'youthful' appearance

47%

Men marrying much younger partners are more accepted, while women having much younger partners are less accepted

39%

Men are allowed to prioritise their careers and professional success, while women are often expected to prioritise family and relationships

31%

Men are expected to be financially independent and provide for their families, while women are expected to prioritise caregiving roles and be more dependent on others

27%

Men are often expected to remain sexually active and virile, while women may face societal expectations to be less sexually active

15%

Around 7 in 10 (70%) feel there's at least one double standard between men and women. Women are more likely to feel this way (77%) compared to men (62%).

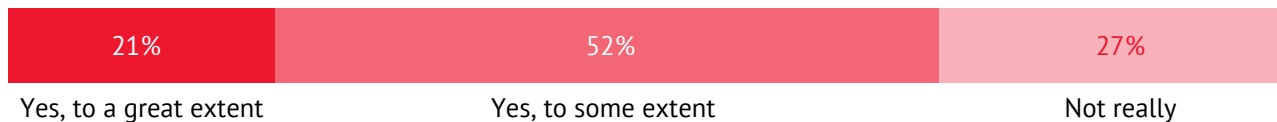
Overall, nearly 1 in 2 (47%) believe men face less pressure to maintain their physical appearance, and 2 in 5 (39%) note a disparity in societal acceptance of relationships with significantly younger partners.

When we break it down by gender, more than 1 in 2 women (56%) feel men face less pressure to maintain physical appearance compared to men (36%). Women also are more likely to feel there's a double standard in marrying younger partners (49% vs. 26% of men) and finally also a double standard when it comes to career prioritisation (39% women vs. 22% men).



# Experiencing ageism

**Do you feel there's an age beyond 50 years old where people tend to become less seen or heard in Australian society?**



Around 7 in 10 (73%) agree, at least to some extent, that there's an age beyond 50 years where individuals become less visible. The specific age varies greatly but 22% feel it's between 60–64, with 70–74 next most common (19%), followed by 65–69 (18%).

**How common do you think ageism is in society at large these days (i.e. discriminatory perceptions based on age)?**



The most common forms are workplace age discrimination (32%), the general treatment of the elderly and infirmed (23%), and treatment by the public (20%), followed by the perpetuation of stereotypes in media and advertising (14%).

Social media emerged as the most likely place to experience ageism, reported by 3 in 10 (29%), followed very closely by the workplace/job interviews (27%) and media representation (23%).

Almost 1 in 2 (45%) say that they experience ageism the most from younger generations, followed by strangers (20%) and retail or service industry workers (17%).

Close to 1 in 4 (23%) have ever been referred to as a 'Boomer' in a negative way or been dismissed or mocked with the phrase 'Ok boomer,' while as many as 14% of women report being referred to as a 'Karen' before.

Around 1 in 3 (33%) remain unaffected but the majority experiencing these slurs report emotional impacts—3 in 10 (31%) feel annoyed or frustrated, 3 in 10 (30%) feel patronised, 3 in 10 (30%) feel undervalued or disrespected and 1 in 5 (21%) feel misunderstood.

To help manage these ageist perspectives, the majority (58%) maintain a positive mindset, and almost half (48%) either engage in activities that bring joy and fulfilment or maintain an active lifestyle.



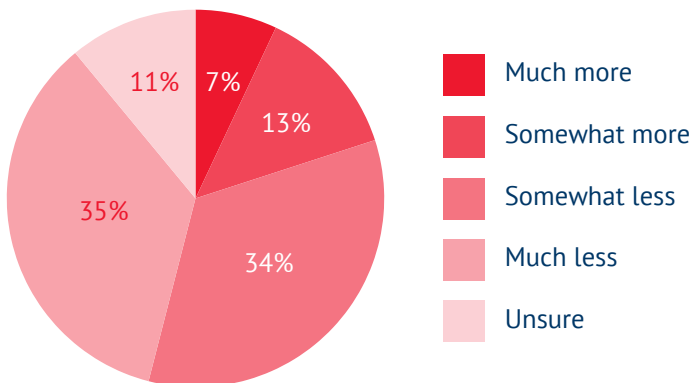
# Generational divide





# Disrespect and disconnect

**Do you think there's more or less respect for older people amongst younger generations than when you were younger?**



Around 7 in 10 (69%) feel somewhat or much less respect for older people compared to when they were younger.

This is attributed to decreased emphasis on traditional values (60%) and perceptions of older people being out of touch with modern technology (59%), lack of understanding or empathy towards older people's experiences and challenges (57%), changes in societal values and priorities (55%), and the influence of social media or popular culture (52%).

**Have you ever experienced instances where you felt disconnected or misunderstood by younger generations?**



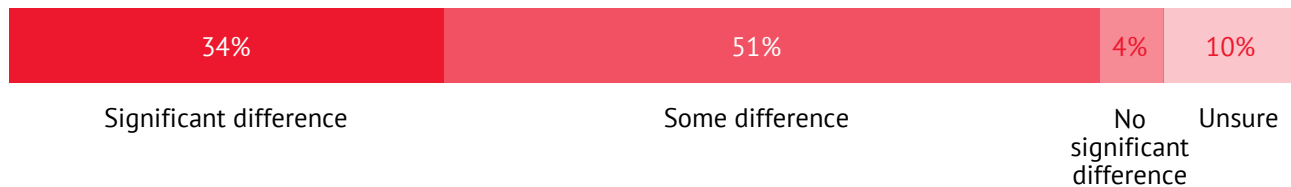
More than 1 in 2 (55%) experience feeling a disconnect with younger generations.

The majority (55%) believes that Gen Z (12-27 years old) are the biggest 'ageist' offenders, followed by Gen Y (28-43 years old) at 20%.



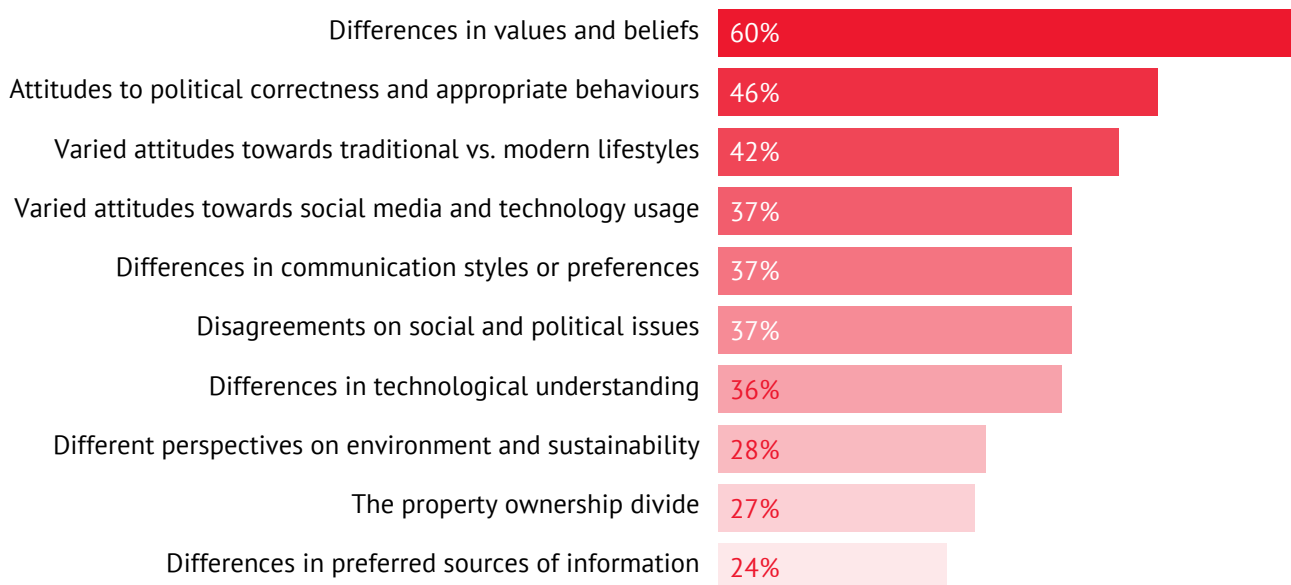
# Communication breakdown

**To what extent do you believe there's a difference in beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors between individuals over 50 and Gen Z?**



Close to 9 in 10 (85%) see a difference in beliefs, attitudes, or behaviours between individuals over 50 and Gen Z.

**What do you believe are the main sources of misunderstanding or tension between over 50s and Gen Z?**



*\*Multiple responses allowed.*

Key sources of misunderstanding include differences in values and beliefs (60%), attitudes towards political correctness and appropriate behaviours (46%), and varied attitudes towards traditional vs. modern lifestyles (42%).

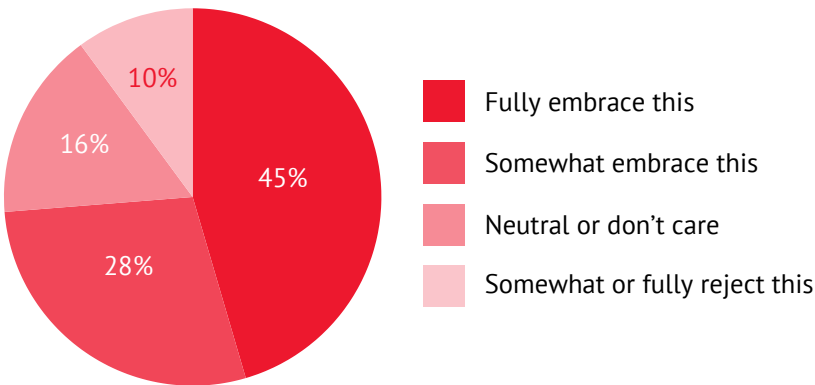


Ageing beautifully



# Societal pressures

## What best describes your attitude towards 'ageing naturally'?

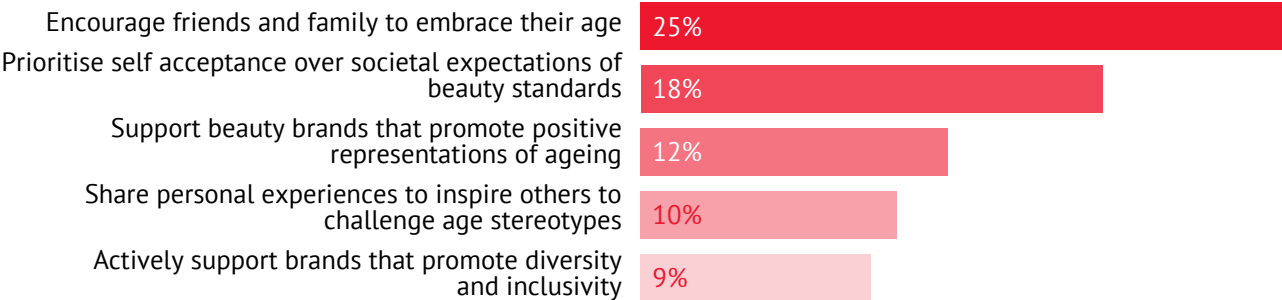


More than 7 in 10 (73%) of the population is embracing the concept of ageing naturally.

Nearly 1 in 2 (45%) fully embrace ageing naturally, which includes accepting grey hair, wrinkles, and dressing comfortably. An additional 3 in 10 (28%) only somewhat embrace this approach.

Despite this, around 2 in 3 (67%) still feel there are societal expectations around the appearance of those over 50 years old.

## Are you actively pushing back against 'age shaming' in the beauty industry?



*\*Multiple responses allowed. Top 5 responses only.*

Less than 1 in 2 (45%) are actively pushing back in the fight against age shaming within the beauty industry. Most commonly, 1 in 4 (25%) encourage friends and family to embrace their age. Other notable actions include prioritising self acceptance (18%), supporting positive representations of ageing (12%), and sharing personal experiences (10%).

Close to 1 in 2 (47%) feel women who've experienced menopause are more likely to feel 'overlooked' or 'invisible' to society at large.

# Body confidence

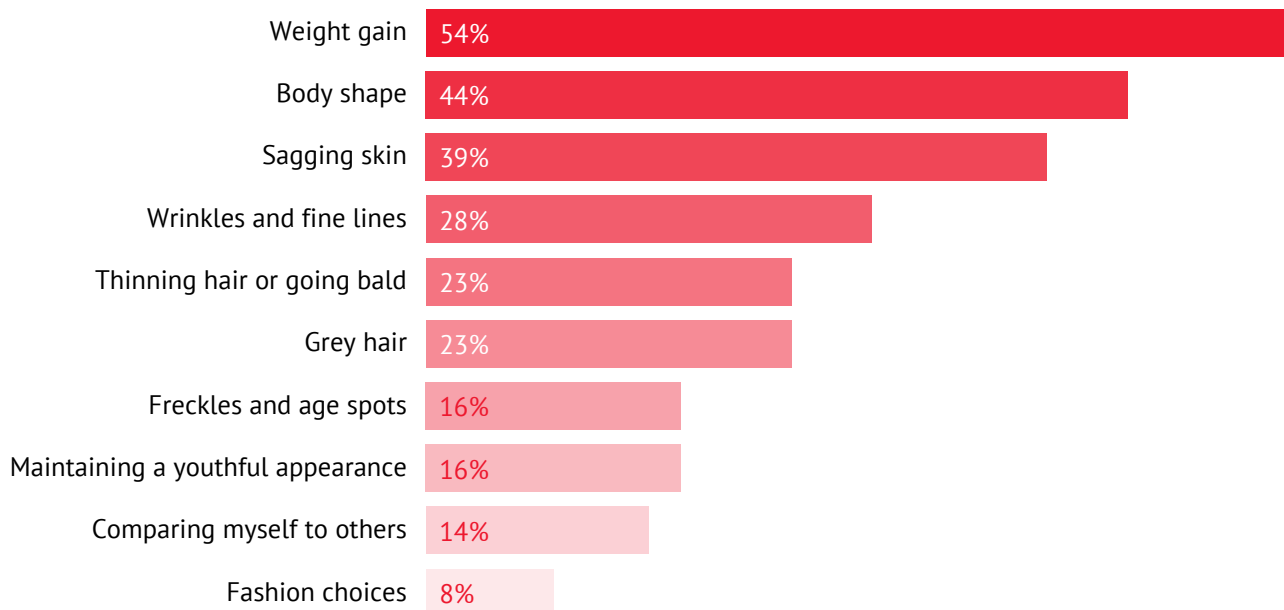
Overall, 3 in 5 (60%) have struggled with body image issues after the age of 50, but this is much more common among women than men (74% vs. 43%).

**Is your body confidence better, worse or the same now than it was before you turned 50 years old?**



Body confidence post 50 is better for close to 1 in 5 (19%), unchanged for nearly half (47%), and worse for 1 in 3 (34%). Women are also more likely to feel that their body confidence is worse after 50 (39% vs. 28% of men).

**If any, what are your biggest insecurities about growing old regarding your appearance?**



*\*Multiple responses allowed.*

The biggest insecurities about growing old relate to weight gain (54%), body shape (44%), and sagging skin (39%). Other concerns include wrinkles and fine lines (28%), thinning hair or going bald (23%), and grey hair (23%). Only around 1 in 5 (18%) claim to not have any concerns regarding their appearance as they age.



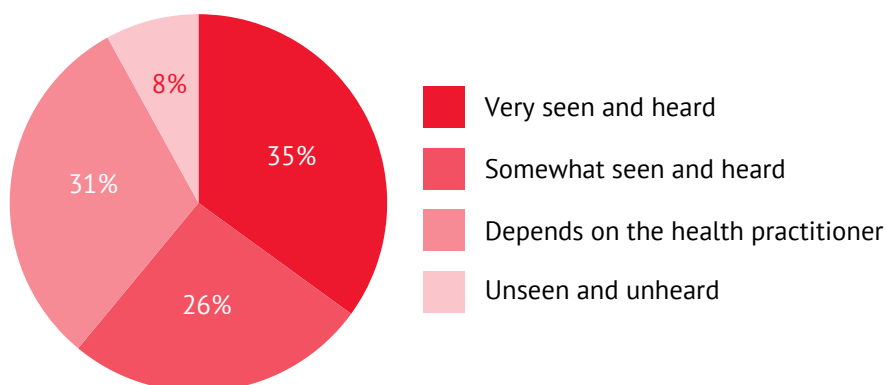
# Health and wellness





# Healthcare experiences

How seen and/or heard do you feel by your healthcare practitioner(s)?



Around 2 in 3 (61%) feel at least somewhat seen and heard by their health practitioner.

However, 3 in 10 (31%) believe that experiences vary depending on the practitioner they're dealing with. On the flip side, that leaves almost 1 in 10 (8%) who don't feel seen or heard.

Around 2 in 5 (39%) of those that don't feel seen or heard or that this depends on the health practitioner believe their symptoms are often brushed off as a normal part of ageing. Additionally, close to 1 in 3 (32%) lament a lack of attention to their concerns, and a similar proportion (29%) feel they're stereotyped, with their health issues too quickly attributed to age without proper investigation.

Women are also more likely to experience these issues compared to men.

Over 2 in 5 (43%) of those feeling dismissed by their healthcare practitioner due to age report feeling annoyed or frustrated, while 1 in 4 (26%) feel disrespected. Other negative emotions, such as feeling misunderstood (24%), offended or upset (17%), and demoralised (10%), highlight the profound impact of dismissal on patients' wellbeing. Only just over 1 in 10 (11%) report being unaffected or are unsure about this personal impact (15%).

These emotions are again more prevalent among women.



# Healthy conversations

## How comfortable do you feel talking about 'taboo' health subjects for those over 50 years old?

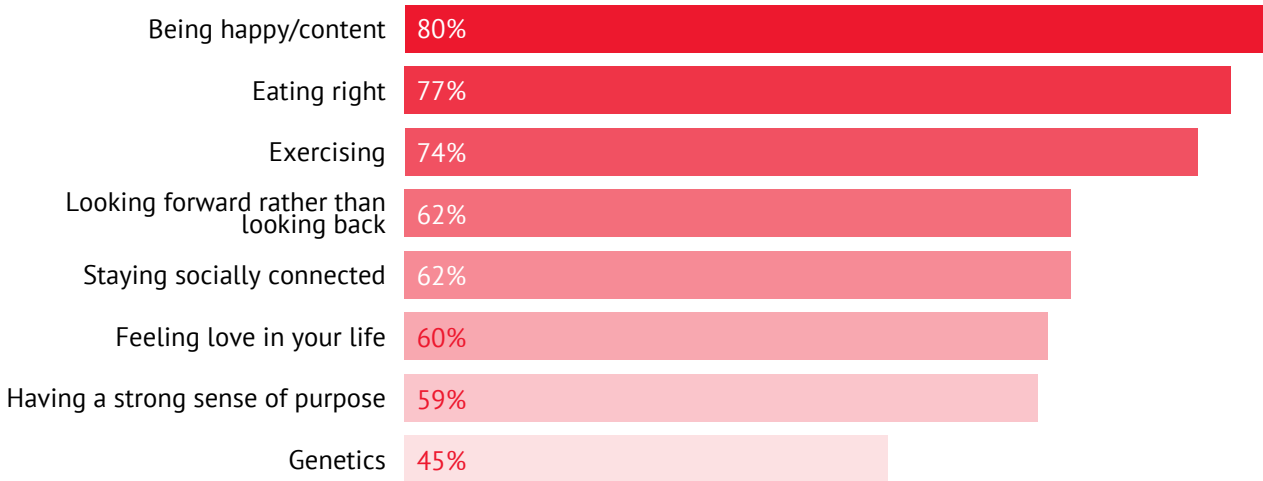


More than 4 in 5 (82%) feel at least somewhat comfortable talking about 'taboo' health subjects for those over 50.

Discussing taboo health subjects has seen some positive changes, with almost 2 in 3 (65%) noting an improvement in available resources compared to a decade ago.

Over 8 in 10 (85%) agree that older men face stigma and embarrassment over health issues like erectile dysfunction, and the same percentage agrees that societal perceptions can negatively impact older men's mental health.

## What do you think are the top 'secrets' to ageing well?



*\*Multiple responses allowed.*

The key to ageing well includes being happy/content (80%), eating right (77%), and exercising (74%). Staying socially connected (62%) and looking forward to the future (62%) are also seen as crucial by many.



# Workplace and careers



# Goals and aspirations

## How would you best describe the stage your career is in now?



1 in 2 of those employed (54%) report being on a steady career course, neither advancing nor winding down. Meanwhile, 2 in 5 (40%) are already in the process of winding down their careers, and only a smaller group (6%) is in the building-up phase.

## What career ambitions or goals do you have at this stage of your working life?



*\*Multiple responses allowed.*

Achieving financial stability and security is important for 1 in 2 (49%) employed Australians post 50. Achieving a better work-life balance is also a significant goal for 2 in 5 (37%) older working Australians. On the other hand, 1 in 4 (24%) indicate having no career ambitions or goals at this stage.



# Ageism at work

How common do you think 'ageism' in the workplace is these days (i.e. discrimination based on age)?



Post 50 visibility at work is also an issue for some, with over 4 in 10 (42%) feeling less seen or heard in their workplace since turning 50.

Employers are most typically seen to view employees differently starting at age 50–54 (24%), followed by 55–59 (19%) and 60–64 (15%).

Despite almost 9 in 10 (85%) feeling that younger generations doubt their technological skills, almost 2 in 3 (65%) like or strongly like working with younger generations.

Have you ever felt you've been overlooked in the workplace in any of the following situations?



*\*Multiple responses allowed. Top 5 responses only.*

Over 4 in 5 (83%) feel that older employees are generally undervalued, and a similar proportion (78%) agree that the efforts of older employees often go unnoticed compared to younger generations, with many feeling overlooked for job opportunities (27%), promotions (23%), and pay (19%).

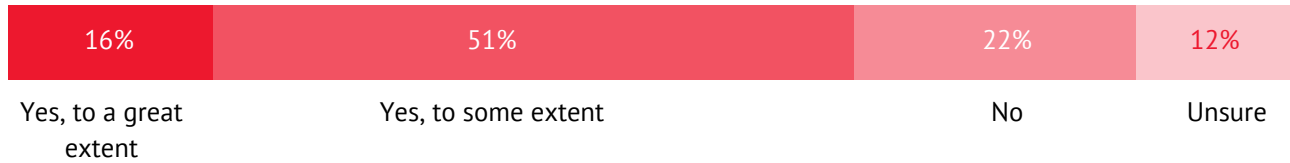
# Media and marketing





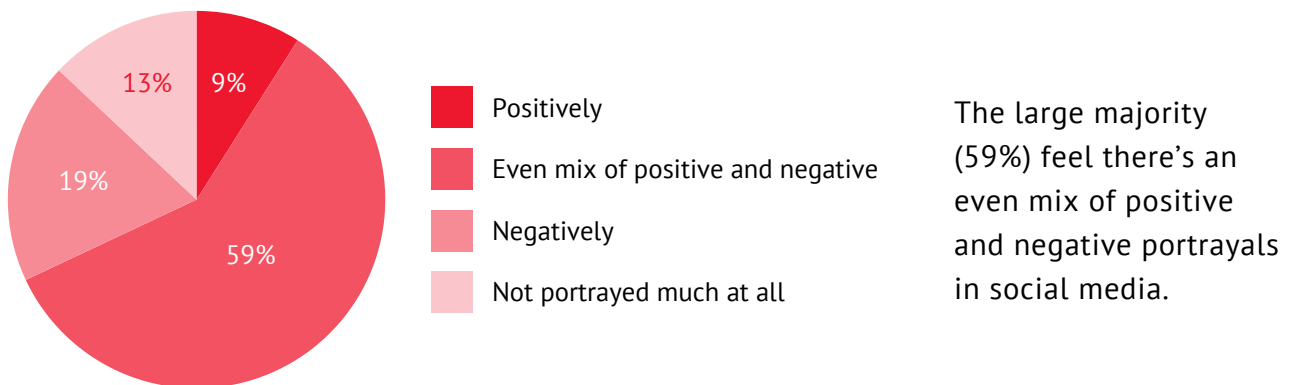
# Public portrayal

**Do you ever feel your age group is 'overlooked' in marketing these days i.e. not sufficiently acknowledged or represented?**



Around 1 in 5 (22%) have actually stopped supporting any brands who don't represent, design for or support the over 50s community well.

**How do you feel people over 50 years old are typically portrayed on social media platforms?**



Only 1 in 10 (9%) see the portrayal of over 50s as positive while as many as 1 in 5 (19%) view it as negative. Only 1 in 10 (13%) feel there's not much portrayal at all.

Over 1 in 2 (55%) feel advertising and media portrayals don't accurately capture the reality of being a senior. Only about 2% feel that the media captures the reality of being a senior, while a further 2 in 5 (43%) feel it's only being captured reasonably accurately.



# Ageist stereotype

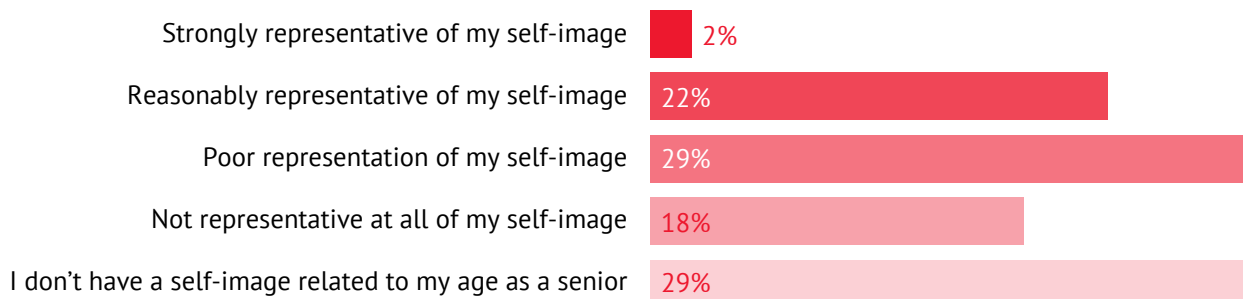
## What negative ageist stereotypes do you feel are perpetuated by the media?



*\*Multiple responses allowed.*

The most common negative ageist stereotypes in the media are the lack of technological skills (56%), followed by resistance to change (47%), and being less capable of adapting to new trends (44%). Other stereotypes include being less attractive (42%), less productive (35%), and out of touch with current events (34%).

## How much do you feel the media and general public perceptions of seniors (i.e. the stereotypical image) reflects how you personally see yourself?



Only around 1 in 4 (24%) feel media and general public perceptions of seniors (i.e. the stereotypical image) reflect how they personally see themselves, while almost 1 in 2 (47%) feel it's a poor representation or not representative at all.

It's not surprising then that 3 in 4 (75%) feel that they differ from the stereotypical image of a senior that's typically being portrayed in the media.





# More of the Australian Seniors Series coming soon...

## About Australian Seniors

Australian Seniors launched in 1998 to meet the needs of the often-ignored over 50s market. Since then, we've helped countless Australians protect the most important things in life—whether it's their family's future, valuable assets, or even their long-planned retirement.

We strive to be different through the diverse offering of our life, funeral, health, car, home & contents, landlords, pet, and travel insurance products by carefully selecting underwriters that share our vision of providing insurance that's simple, easy to understand, and cost-effective. That's why our policies have helped everyone from hard-working over 50s to self-funded retirees take control of the things that matter most.