

ARTICLE

Stereotypes: the representation of older adults and ageing in Australian newspapers

Michael Butson¹  and Richard Wright²

¹Department of Management and Marketing, Swinburne University, Hawthorn, VIC, Australia and

²Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences, School of Sport and Recreation, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand

Corresponding author: Michael Butson; Email: mcbutson@swin.edu.au

(Accepted 24 February 2026)

Abstract

There is limited scholarly research that broadly examines the representation of older adults and ageing through an ageism lens in print and online newspapers, including national, state and local publications. Drawing on ageism and stereotype theory, this research examines how older adults and ageing are represented in Australian newspapers. Data were collected over a 16-week period, during which 2,652 statements relating to older adults or ageing were extracted from 804 media publications. A summative content analysis approach was employed, involving the quantification of key concepts followed by an interpretive analysis to identify underlying themes and codes. The findings revealed that approximately 42.0 per cent of statements portrayed older adults and ageing negatively, while only 6.5 per cent were positive. Dominant ageist and stereotypical representations centred on themes of vulnerability, frailty, incapacity and injury or illness. As populations continue to age, it is critical that scholars persist in analysing and challenging dominant media narratives that shape how older people are framed. Furthermore, audience reception studies are needed to examine how such representations are interpreted by the public, thereby deepening understanding of the media's role in shaping societal perceptions of older adults and ageing.

Keywords: ageing; ageism; stereotypes; media representation; Australia

Introduction

Individuals around the world are living longer, contributing to a rapidly ageing global population. By 2030, one in six people worldwide will be aged 60 years or older. Moreover, the number of individuals aged 80 and above is expected to triple between 2020 and 2050, reaching an estimated 426 million (World Health Organization 2025). Australia is experiencing a similar demographic shift, with one of the highest life expectancies globally. In 2020, approximately 4.2 million Australians, or 16 per cent

of the population, were aged 65 or older. This proportion is projected to increase to between 21 per cent and 23 per cent by 2066 (Butson et al. 2024). As society ages (Hyde 2024), negative attitudes and age stereotyping persist, particularly in Western countries such as Australia, New Zealand and the United States (Kite et al. 2005; Curryer and Cook 2021; Ayalon and Roy 2023). The role of the media, particularly news outlets, in perpetuating age stereotypes has been widely acknowledged (Imran 2023). As a key agent of socialization, the media plays a powerful role in shaping how older age is socially constructed (Butson et al. 2026). The way individuals are represented in newspaper articles, for example, can significantly influence public perceptions. Negative and stereotypical portrayals of ageing can have harmful effects, such as social exclusion, the creation of divisions and hierarchies, age-based health inequities and poorer health outcomes (Mikton et al. 2021; Wethington et al. 2016). These portrayals also reinforce negative attitudes towards ageing and perpetuate age-related discrimination. Conversely, positive and diverse representations of older adults can help challenge ageism and promote a more inclusive and respectful society (Imran 2023).

Unlike other forms of discrimination, ageism affects individuals universally as they age, making it nearly impossible for anyone to escape its impact. Addressing ageism, therefore, has the potential to benefit individuals across society. The labels applied to older adults by journalists tend to imply homogeneity, overlooking the diversity within this ever-expanding population. In different societies, older adults are identified as being 'senior citizens', 'old age pensioners' or the 'elderly', terms that frequently carry negative connotations (Makita et al. 2021; Morrison 2023). Negative stereotypes focus on what older adults can no longer do, or be, due to their poor health, physical and cognitive incompetency, unproductivity and unattractiveness (Reissmann et al. 2021). These negative representations are linked to a range of harmful phenomena, including ageing denial, the perceived 'unwatchability' of older age and age-based health inequities (Chen 2015; Mikton et al. 2021).

Older adults consume more news than younger individuals, with traditional print media usage (e.g. newspapers) being more popular than digital alternatives (Siiner 2017; Notely et al. 2021). Although gerontologists have previously explored television and social media's representation of older adults (Milner et al. 2011), newspaper content related to specific news events, including the Covid-19 pandemic (e.g. Bonnesen and Burgess 2004; Weicht 2013; Jeong et al. 2022; Zhang and Liu 2021) and visual ageism in newspaper advertising (Butson and Wright 2025), the authors are unaware of any exploration into the older adult discourse published within print and online newspapers, including national press to local publications. Collective, concentrated and coordinated international action is required to address ageism. Given the current demographic transition, with populations ageing globally, such action is essential to generate positive outcomes for older adults and society (Officer and de la Fuente-Núñez V 2018). As part of its recommendations for action, the World Health Organization (WHO) has called for a deeper understanding of all aspects of ageism, including its scale and determinants, as a prerequisite for reducing it. Furthermore, the WHO has recommended that research on ageism be conducted across countries to inform effective global responses (World Health Organization 2025). With this in mind, drawing on ageism and stereotype theory (e.g. Butson et al. 2023; Dionigi 2015),

the aim of the current study is to expand upon the US-based, Covid-19-focused studies of Jen et al. (2021) and Jeong et al. (2022) by examining the representation of older adults and ageing in Australian newspapers. The literature linked to ageism and stereotypes is reviewed further in the following section, along with a review of the role played by the media. This is followed by an overview of the summative content analysis method employed to collect and analyse the data. The results, discussion and conclusion are presented as separate sections.

Defining ageism and age-related stereotypes

Often described as one of the last socially acceptable forms of prejudice (Weir 2023), ageism involves stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination related to ageing and older adults (Burnes et al. 2019; Allen et al. 2022). The concept of ageism is frequently attributed to Robert Butler (1969), who compared its effects to those of racism and other forms of discrimination. Butler defined ageism as ‘prejudice by one age group against another’, highlighting the pervasive discomfort with ageing, particularly among younger and middle-aged individuals (Butler 1969, 243). More recently, Iversen et al. (2009) proposed a comprehensive definition, describing ageism as the presence of negative or positive stereotypes, prejudice or discrimination directed at older adults based on their chronological age or perceived status as ‘old’ or ‘elderly’ (Iversen et al. 2009). Ageism is typically rooted in negative and inaccurate assumptions that associate older age with decline and reduced productivity. In Western societies, ageist narratives are so deeply embedded that they often go unnoticed and unchallenged (Gendron et al. 2016).

Stereotypes, used to simplify complex information, contribute to this problem (Carlson et al. 2020). Ageism involves the creation of negative stereotypes about ageing and older individuals, which can lead to prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory actions towards older adults (Coelho-Junior et al. 2024). The term ‘stereotype’, first coined by Lippmann (1922), refers to the typical image that arises when thinking about a specific population group (e.g. older adults). Stereotypes play a key role in shaping how we perceive and interact with individuals, as well as how those within the stereotyped group perceive themselves (Dionigi 2015). Over time, tolerability towards stereotyping and the terms that are used to describe stereotypes can also change (Stewart and Raihani 2023). Stereotypes are not static; nor do they exist in a vacuum. They evolve over time, shifting from one generation to the next.

Stereotypes of older age and the ageing process

Stereotypical beliefs about ageing have led to the widespread acceptance of the myth that ‘to be old is to be ill’ (Stewart et al. 2012, 881). These stereotypes of ageing in society reinforce the view of later life as a time of poor health, and diminished physical and mental functioning (Dionigi 2015). Ageism is reinforced when older adults are depicted as frail, vulnerable, incapable, dependent and disabled, perpetuating damaging stereotypes. Studies have shown that older adults are often associated with disability, with some research suggesting that older adults and disability are frequently clustered together in societal representations (Butson et al. 2023). Older individuals

are often stereotyped as non-sexual beings who should not, cannot and do not want to have sexual relationships (Gocieková et al. 2025). Furthermore, societal stereotypes continue to portray sex among older adults as either repulsive or non-existent (Syme and Cohn 2021). As previously discussed, the dimensions and manifestations of ageism are not exclusively negative. In various aspects of life, older adults are also represented positively. For example, in family and social relationships, grandparents and elders are seen as integrated, connected and valuable contributors. In terms of physical fitness, many older adults are portrayed as spry and capable. Financially, they are often viewed as generous and supportive. In employment, they are appreciated for their experience and reliability. Personality-wise, older adults are frequently associated with wisdom, knowledge and the capacity to continue learning. Finally, in terms of appearance, they are often seen as elegant, kempt and charismatic (Swift and Steeden 2020; Rothermund and de Paula Couto 2024).

The impact of ageism and age-related stereotypes

The connection between age stereotypes and health behaviours is well established, with ageism contributing to a range of harms, disadvantages and injustices, including health inequities and poorer outcomes for older adults (Mikton et al. 2021). According to stereotype embodiment theory, age stereotypes are internalized throughout the life-course and influence how individuals perceive their own ageing (Levy 2009). Older adults may absorb negative stereotypes from the media and broader society, which can act as self-fulfilling prophecies. These internalized beliefs may negatively impact mental and physical functioning and lead to withdrawal from certain activities and social institutions (Lamont et al. 2015; Centre for Better Ageing 2023). Encounters with negative stereotypes (e.g. in media representations) about one's social group can also elicit stereotype threat. This refers to the fear of confirming or being reduced to a negative stereotype. The mere concern of being stereotyped can be enough to activate the effect (Kroon and van Selm 2024). Among older adults, stereotype threat has been shown to cause significant declines in cognitive performance and memory, as well as increased overestimation of age-related decline (Chasteen et al. 2012; Barber and Mather 2014; Armstrong et al. 2017).

In contrast to negative stereotypes, the effects of positive stereotypes of ageing are complex and often beneficial. Research indicates that positive perceptions of ageing can enhance memory performance, aid recovery from illness and injury, and improve physical balance, self-efficacy and engagement in healthy behaviours (Levy et al. 2012). Levy et al. (2012) found that older adults who hold positive views of ageing live, on average, 7.5 years longer than those with negative perceptions. Such attitudes are also linked to fewer depressive symptoms and higher levels of happiness (Dionigi 2015; Ng et al. 2016). Additionally, life expectancy is shaped by the 'will to live', which is generally stronger in individuals who maintain an optimistic view of growing older (Levy et al. 1999).

Media representations of older adults and ageing

Age-based stereotypes and attitudes towards older adults have been widely studied over the past two decades (Milner et al. 2011; Jen et al. 2021; Makita et al. 2021). Researchers

examining media representations have analysed content across print, television, advertising and social media platforms (Lee et al. 2007; Levy et al. 2014; Makita et al. 2021; Markov and Yoon 2021). For example, Makita et al. (2021) analysed over 1,000 tweets about old age and ageing, categorizing sentiment and identifying dominant discourses. Their findings closely aligned with those from studies of traditional media.

Media portrayals of older adults can reflect broader societal attitudes towards ageing (Ylänne et al. 2009; Milner et al. 2011; Jung and Sundar 2016). In an exploratory study on media coverage during the Covid-19 pandemic, Jeong et al. (2022, 2) describe news media not only as a key channel for disseminating information but also as playing a central role in shaping public perceptions of the pandemic and its impact on different groups. Their thematic analysis of 115 articles from four major US publications (*LA Times*, *New York Times*, *USA Today* and *Washington Post*) found that older adults were often portrayed unfavourably, depicted as a vulnerable group with questionable or limited societal value (p. 5). These findings were consistent with several other media-focused studies conducted during the same period (see Meisner 2021; Morgan et al. 2021; Ng and Indran 2022; Zhang and Liu 2021; Yang et al. 2024).

Journalistic language reflects underlying ideological positions and influences how society perceives social issues, rather than providing an objective account of reality (Chen 2015). In Western media, older adults are frequently depicted through ageist stereotypes that prioritize youth and frame ageing as a societal problem (Wada et al. 2015; Khalili-Mahani 2023). These portrayals often cast older adults as economic burdens, suggesting that they strain public resources and disadvantage younger taxpayers by living longer and requiring more support (North and Fiske 2012; Lytle and Levy 2022). Such narratives contribute to intergenerational conflict by reinforcing divisions between age groups (Australian Human Rights Commission 2024). In Australian media, older adults are frequently represented as vulnerable and a socio-economic threat, with their spending habits sometimes blamed for younger generations' financial struggles (Australian Human Rights Commission 2024). Such ageist portrayals harm older adults' participation in society and wellbeing. Addressing this issue requires evidence-based interventions to challenge stereotypes and promote positive representations of ageing (Australian Human Rights Commission 2023).

Newspapers aim to reflect public sentiment, express popular opinions, inspire desirable attitudes and expose societal shortcomings (Khalid and Ahmed 2014; Siiner 2017). They serve as a valuable source of data for analysing health and illness, which are among the most frequently covered public interest topics (Kiyimba et al. 2018). Newspapers also capture the sociological, political and cultural dimensions of society, reflecting the spirit of the times. Despite perceptions of declining readership, the rise of digital formats has enhanced their relevance and timeliness (Mondal 2023). As such, newspapers remain an important source of both scientific and social insight. Examining Australian newspaper representations of older adults provides insight into broader societal narratives and cultural attitudes towards ageing, beyond individual experiences of growing older (Imran 2023). This study contributes to existing research by analysing how older adults and ageing were portrayed in Australian newspapers over a 16-week period in 2024. The following section outlines the methodology, including the use of a summative content analysis approach.

Methods

This study used a summative content analysis approach, which involves counting the frequency of content occurrences followed by interpreting the underlying context of newspaper content (Zhang and Wildemuth 2017). Inspired by the Covid-19 studies identified in the previous section; this study focuses on the representation of older adults in Australian newspaper articles. Newspapers were purposefully selected to get a combination of national, state and local newspapers. As discussed within the previous section, adopting newspapers also had the following advantages (Kiyimba et al. 2018):

- Newspaper was readily available, easily accessible and cost-effective.
- Newspaper articles were available online, making them a convenient source of data.
- Newspapers are useful sources of data for researchers interested in socio-cultural and socio-political issues and health.
- Newspapers report on concepts from a local or national perspective, thus providing a direction for comparison regarding how certain ideas are represented.

Table 1 provides an overview of the 14 Australian newspapers selected. Data were collected over a 16-week period from 5 August to 24 November 2024, primarily from newspapers published in Victoria. This time frame and regional focus were selected because older adults featured prominently in public discussions about the ageing population, the cost-of-living crisis and changes to retirement funding. The timing also aligned with the Victorian Seniors Festival in October 2024. Fourteen newspapers were purposively sampled (Palinkas et al. 2015), including two nationals, four state and eight local outlets, to ensure a balanced representation. Local newspapers were prioritized due to their disproportionately high number in Australia. Every digital edition published during the study period was included. The American spelling of 'ageing' (*i.e.* 'aging') was excluded from keyword searches.

A total of 804 publications were examined during the four-month study period. Each newspaper was accessed through the publisher's website (*e.g.* www.theage.com.au/ and <https://dandenong.starcommunity.com.au/>). In addition to explicit references to individuals aged 65 or older, the dataset was compiled through a rigorous manual keyword search to identify mentions of older adults and ageing. Keyword searching is a method used to locate relevant content within documents and offers flexibility through a broad range of terms. Searches were conducted using each newspaper's digital search function and included terms such as 'old' (or 'older'), 'retire' (or 'retirement'), 'ageing', 'aged', 'elderly', 'senior', 'population' and 'grand' (*e.g.* grandparents, grandmother, grandfather, grandchildren). To ensure that each keyword accurately reflected references to older adults or ageing, the content was read in context, within either the full article or the surrounding paragraph.

Once content regarding older adults or ageing was identified, a summative content analysis approach was applied to analyse the data. Summative content analysis involves counting the occurrences of key concepts and then extending the analysis to identify and interpret themes and codes (Zhang and Wildemuth 2017). The analysis began by counting the occurrences of major themes (negative stereotypes, positive stereotypes or neutral representations) and their corresponding sub-themes (specific

Table 1. Overview of newspapers

| Newspaper title | Publication frequency | Ownership | National/state/local | Newspaper type |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|----------------|
| The Age | Daily | Nine Entertainment | State (Victoria) | Tabloid |
| Herald Sun | Daily | News Corp Australia | State (Victoria) | Tabloid |
| Sydney Morning Herald | Daily | Nine Entertainment | State (New South Wales) | Tabloid |
| The Financial Review | Monday–Friday (once on the weekend) | Nine Entertainment | National | Tabloid |
| The Nightly | Monday–Friday | Seven West Media | State (Western Australia) | Digital only |
| The Australian | Monday–Friday (once on the weekend) | News Corp Australia | National | Broadsheet |
| Geelong Advertiser | Monday–Friday (once on the weekend) | News Corp Australia | Local | Tabloid |
| Gisborne Gazette | Monthly | South Ward of Macedon Ranges Shire | Local | Tabloid |
| Wyndham Star Weekly | Weekly | Independent Australian family-owned media company | Local | Tabloid |
| Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay Star Weekly | Weekly | Independent Australian family-owned media company | Local | Tabloid |
| Cranbourne Star News | Weekly | Independent Australian family-owned media company | Local | Tabloid |
| Shepparton Advisor | Weekly | Independent Australian family-owned media company | Local | Tabloid |
| Dandenong Star Journal | Weekly | Independent Australian family-owned media company | Local | Tabloid |
| Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Star Weekly | Weekly | Independent Australian family-owned media company | Local | Tabloid |

types of negative or positive stereotype). The next step involved interpreting the identified sub-themes (Zhang and Wildemuth 2017). Identifying themes was carried out using NVivo (Version 14) and followed a deductive approach. This ‘top-down’ method

was employed to explore the content and representation of older adults and ageing in Australian newspapers. Deductive coding grouped the data according to ageism and stereotype theory. The identification of significant themes involved four phases: data immersion, primary-cycle coding, secondary-cycle coding and data display (Tracy 2020).

Data immersion consisted of reading and re-reading the newspaper articles to familiarize ourselves with the content. A set of predetermined codes, based on ageism and stereotype theory, was applied. Primary-cycle coding involved exploring the data, counting occurrences and classifying statements as negative stereotypes, positive stereotypes or neutral representations. Secondary-cycle coding involved assigning relevant sub-themes (*i.e.* the selected categories of stereotypes) to further elaborate on the representations of older adults and ageing (Bryman and Burgess 2002; Tracy 2020). In some cases, for example, the theme of ‘contributors’ was further narrowed by older adults’ contribution to ‘employment’, ‘community’, ‘family’ or ‘financial’. Many statements could be coded under multiple themes. For example, when negative terminology was used to identify older adults (*e.g.* ‘seniors’ or ‘the elderly’) alongside statements reinforcing illness or portraying older adults as frail, vulnerable or incapable, the statement was coded according to the latter themes, rather than the negative terminology to identify older adults.

Often, statements contained multiple themes (*e.g.* representing older adults as a socio-economic threat and framing ageing as a problem). In these cases, the statement was coded to align with the overarching theme of the article or text. Lastly, when statements included both positive and negative stereotypes, the benefit of the doubt was given, and these statements were coded as positive stereotypes. A codebook, developed in Microsoft Excel, was created by the researcher to guide the data analysis and facilitate the generation of conclusions (Tracy 2020). The codebook included three categories: major themes (*e.g.* negative or positive stereotypes), secondary codes (*e.g.* selected stereotypes) and raw data examples (derived from secondary-cycle coding). It also provided full definitions for each theme and code, along with relevant inclusion/exclusion criteria (DeCuir-Gunby et al. 2011).

The integrity measures adopted during the study were as follows. Author one maintained meticulous record-keeping throughout the study, documenting key details such as data collection dates and the methods used to obtain the data. All data were extracted from publicly accessible websites (digital newspapers), ensuring both relevance and validity. Given that the data analysis was conducted by a single researcher, efforts were made to ensure the reliability and validity of the results. At eight time points (twice each month), a third researcher independently coded the newspapers following the established procedures. A total of 84 publications (10.4 per cent of all publications) were independently coded. This included every Monday edition of the daily publications, as well as all weekly and monthly publications. Early in the study, a few discrepancies arose, particularly during the secondary coding of negative representations. In these instances, the researchers consulted relevant literature to resolve the discrepancies. By collaboratively analysing and interpreting these inconsistencies, guided by ageism and stereotype theory, all issues were resolved. The results and discussion are presented in the following sections, offering insights into the representation of older adults and ageing in Australian newspapers.

Results

A total of 2,652 statements pertaining to older adults or ageing were extracted from 804 media publications. Across the four-month data collection period, recurring topics included the ageing population, the cost-of-living crisis and reforms to retirement funding, which emerged as the most frequently discussed themes. A preliminary thematic analysis identified the following distribution of representations: 172 occurrences (6.49 per cent) were classified as positive (e.g. 'she also wants to give a shout-out to grandparents, whose unpaid care-giving makes modern family life possible' and 'older workers in particular are vital and highly valued leaders, mentors, and contributors to the workforce'), 1,124 (42.38 per cent) as negative (e.g. 'there aren't footpaths, and I have an elderly neighbour who can't get around when it gets wet' and 'many older Australians consistently tell us they find the application process overwhelming and difficult to understand') and 1,356 (51.13 per cent) as neutral. [Figure 1](#) presents a summary of the number and type of representations by newspaper publication. Neutral representations were characterised by the absence of explicit positive or negative framing and instead presented older adults in a descriptive or incidental manner. Examples of such representations include statements such as: 'there aren't a huge amount of kids in ... or older adults. The largest age group is ...'; 'older adults are invited to explore, engage and evolve'; and 'her lawyer, an older, straight, white man, invited her for a drink'. Additional examples include: 'it will be a precinct where everyone from young families to older persons can find something'; and 'I interviewed older adults who had children and grandchildren; the older woman, the professionals, and the young men ... all sensed the shift'. While quantifying the frequency of neutral representations is important for capturing the broader landscape of media portrayals, the remainder of this article, including the discussion, focuses on the positive and negative representations, as these offer more direct insights into prevailing societal attitudes and media framing of older adults.

The analysis of positive representations of older adults and ageing was guided by theory related to positive stereotypes, which frame older adults in a more favourable light by focusing on their strengths and contributions (e.g. Swift and Steeden 2020; Rothermund and de Paula Couto 2024). The findings reveal that these positive portrayals were equally distributed across different types of newspaper, including local, national and state outlets. No single type of newspaper or distribution (local, national or state) was found to represent older adults and ageing more positively than the others. The most prominent positive representation of older adults and ageing in the study was their role as 'contributors' – specifically to community and family as a grandparent – accounting for 59 per cent of the positive portrayals. The second most common theme was positive descriptions of older adults, representing 17 per cent of the positive representations. In contrast, themes such as older adults as information and knowledge sharers, being physically capable and being lifelong learners were less frequently featured, comprising 13 per cent, 6 per cent and 5 per cent of the positive portrayals, respectively. [Table 2](#) provides an overview of the themes related to the positive representations of older adults and ageing, along with examples drawn from the data.

Theory related to ageism and negative stereotypes guided the analysis of negative representations of older adults and ageing (e.g. Syme and Cohn 2021;

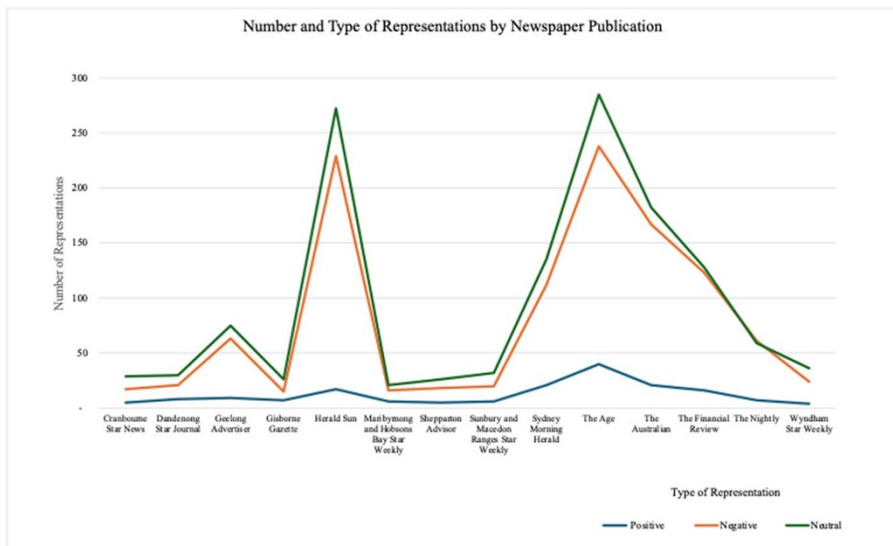


Figure 1. Number and type of representation by newspaper publication.

Lytle and Levy 2022). The summative content analysis revealed varying degrees of concern regarding the representation of older adults and ageing. Almost 27 per cent of the negative representations reinforced vulnerability, frailty and incapability. Meanwhile, 12 per cent reinforced illness or injury. The representation of older adults and ageing that reinforced vulnerability, frailty and incapability, and injury and illness was equally distributed across all newspapers included in this study. Interestingly, the use of ‘senior’, ‘elderly’ and ‘senior citizens’ to identify older adults was more common in local, smaller newspapers. State and national newspapers in this study were more likely to feature themes of intergenerational conflict, frame ageism as a societal ‘problem’ and depict older adults and ageing as socio-economic threats, with these themes making up 8.6 per cent, 6.4 per cent and 5.3 per cent of the negative representations, respectively. Similarly, these newspapers were also more inclined to include anti-ageing messaging within their content.

In contrast, themes such as negative descriptions of older adults, the intersection of disability and age, gendered ageism and negative stereotypes related to sexual activity were less frequently featured in the study. These themes accounted for 3.2 per cent, 2.8 per cent, 1.8 per cent and 0.6 per cent of the negative representations, respectively. Representations of sex and intimacy frequently depicted sexual activity among older adults, such as intercourse or masturbation, in a negative light. These portrayals often employed derogatory terms including ‘gross’, ‘ridiculous’ or ‘strange’. Ageing was sometimes presented as a justification for the absence of sexual activity, reinforcing ageist assumptions about desire and capability. Furthermore, certain locations associated with older adults were described as lacking ‘sex appeal’, contributing to a cultural narrative that prioritizes youth in discussions of sexuality. Gendered ageism was also evident, particularly in Victorian newspapers. This included expectations for

Table 2. Negative representations of older adults

| Type of representation (major theme) | Sub-theme | Examples | Number (%) |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|-------------|
| Negative representation | Identifying older adults | 'Police secretly urinating in an Aboriginal man's wine cask; challenging elderly, intoxicated Aboriginal men to fight' | 309 (27.5%) |
| | | 'The neighbourhood is comprised of middle-aged to elderly residents' | |
| | | 'Groups of silver-haired seniors and an enthusiastic bunch of teenagers' | |
| Negative representation | Reinforcing vulnerability, frailty and incapability | 'A focus on promoting the welfare of senior citizens ... The main problem our senior citizens face is that there is so many parks around, but they don't have facilities like toilet ...' | 300 (26.7%) |
| | | 'Had worked as one of many volunteer drivers, taking seniors to and from medical appointments ...' | |
| | | '... said the victims were all elderly people, targeted "due to their vulnerability"' | |
| | | 'Despite his increasing physical frailty, retirement was not an option' | |
| Negative representation | Reinforcing illness and injury | 'Heatwaves kill more Australians each year than any other natural disaster. Those who work outside, the elderly, those who have pre-existing medical conditions' | 136 (12.1%) |
| | | 'Most vulnerable are those aged over 65, children under four, people with disability and those in low socio-economic circumstances' | |
| | | 'As the population ages (and the climate warms), hospital overcrowding and ambulance times are bound to worsen' | |

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued.)

| Type of representation (major theme) | Sub-theme | Examples | Number (%) |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|------------|
| | | <p>'Older people are those with back and posture problems ... who might find vertical garden beds more accessible, making gardening less strenuous'</p> <hr/> <p>'Age-based segregation causes feelings of isolation and social disconnectedness, which in turn can lead to depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation and cognitive decline in older adults'</p> <hr/> <p>'We have an ageing population, escalating rates of dementia, ballooning elective surgery waiting lists largely for joint replacements, and on and on'</p> | |
| | Intergenerational conflict | <p>'If you are in your 20s and reading this thinking you are never going to have a career if all these ageing job-hoggers hang around into their 80s'</p> <hr/> <p>'The consultation process also favours older property owners with time on their hands, which further skews the system against younger would-be property owners'</p> <hr/> <p>'Younger Australians think older Australians are selfish, whether it's in relation to them hoarding all the wealth and real estate, or the climate'</p> <hr/> <p>'No one can escape the second-order effects of an ageing population. This means, above all, the tax burden on workers to prop up the retired, but not that alone. The life which this column tends to exalt, the life of big cities, depends on the young, whether as service staff or as conceivers of new ideas or just as unconscious providers of ambient energy'</p> <hr/> <p>'A challenge for people in my boat is to gracefully make way for a younger generation'</p> | 97 (8.6%) |

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued.)

| Type of representation (major theme) | Sub-theme | Examples | Number (%) |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|------------|
| | Framing older adults and ageing as a 'problem' or 'societal' burden | <p>'Will also face persistent deep structural problems, not least an ageing and shrinking population, stubbornly low levels of productivity and economic polarisation'</p> <hr/> <p>'We've seen what happens in country towns when you get an ageing and shrinking population – shops and restaurants often have limited hours ... That sleepy coastal town syndrome could easily be imported to some inner suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney. Our ageing population ... is also helping to warp our cities'</p> <hr/> <p>'Societal ageing is a driving force, with an ever-increasing number of frail people with complex needs[,] not just boomers, they're just the pioneers. So, too, our community's preference for better services paid for by a shrinking share of workers'</p> <hr/> <p>'This indicates there is a tacit, bipartisan agreement about how many people we need to bring here to slow the ageing of our established population'</p> <hr/> <p>'To address skills shortages and better serve a changing client base by attracting more women and younger Australians into an ageing and shrinking workforce'</p> | 72 (6.4%) |
| | Socio-economic threat | <p>'Lower debt was needed to create room for governments to support the transition from fossil fuels, increase military spending and care for an ageing population'</p> <hr/> <p>'Public finances are stretched even before the costs of geopolitical tensions and demographic ageing are included'</p> <hr/> <p>'How serious the challenge is – neither side will be able to escape the looming budget pressures of our ageing population'</p> | 59 (5.3%) |

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued.)

| Type of representation (major theme) | Sub-theme | Examples | Number (%) |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|------------|
| | Anti-ageing messaging | <p>'To come up with anti-ageing remedies ... to tackle cognitive and sensory disorders, cellular ageing and osteoporosis'</p> <hr/> <p>'Appearing to defy any signs of ageing, the 66-year-old posed up a storm ahead of the event'</p> <hr/> <p>'The fact they're both ageing and likely wondering about their relevance/obsolescence'</p> <hr/> <p>'De-ageing actors is just one way that filmmakers are tinkering with AI-driven facial replacement'</p> <hr/> <p>'Embarking on outlandish health treatments to regain the body of a teenager'</p> | 57 (5.0%) |
| | Descriptions of older adults | <p>'This was when silly old buggers were powerful influencers, and Hawke duly apologised to all elderly, silly and buggerlike Australians'</p> <hr/> <p>'is an ageing, potty-mouthed addict, a grieving and embittered woman who has shut herself off from the world'</p> <hr/> <p>'A good way to bore children is to take them to an older relative's house and force them to listen to a long adult conversation'</p> <hr/> <p>'These days retired but always angry'</p> | 36 (3.2%) |

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued.)

| Type of representation (major theme) | Sub-theme | Examples | Number (%) |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| | Clustering disability and age | 'My major policy is assisting with residents with disabilities and elderly residents' | 31 (2.8%) |
| | | 'With significant importance for older citizens and those of us living with a disability' | |
| | | 'These unpaid workers, who often fall into their roles out of necessity, make significant contributions caring for people with disabilities, or those who are elderly or infirm' | |
| | Gendered ageism | 'In a world where females are meant to slowly vanish as they grow older' | 20 (1.8%) |
| | | 'An older man in a position of power is experienced, and an older woman is over the hill' | |
| | | 'I think you need to look at her age ... to determine whether it is healthy or not. She's almost hitting 80' | |
| | Ageism, sex and intimacy | 'Getting older were other factors getting in the way of having sex' | 7 (0.6%) |
| | | 'A woman's body is not an autonomous locus of pleasure, particularly once it starts to sag. Older women expressing any kind of lust make themselves ridiculous' | |
| Total | | | 1124 (100%) |

Table 3. Positive representations of older adults

| Type of representation (major theme) | Sub-theme | Examples | Number (%) |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|------------|
| Positive representation | Contributors – ‘employment’, ‘community’, ‘family’ and ‘financially’ | <p>‘Have always been involved ... kinder duty, school and church fates, school council, junior sporting clubs – sharing the load’</p> <hr/> <p>‘More than three-quarters of older Australians are open to working beyond retirement age’</p> <hr/> <p>‘What a remarkable contribution; older people are giving back to the community and via unpaid care’</p> <hr/> <p>‘Have also observed grandparents playing a greater role in helping younger generations get into the housing market’</p> <hr/> <p>‘Target low-paid to fix nurse shortage ... So why wouldn’t retired nurses and other healthcare professionals work again? Aren’t we passing up a pool of healthy Boomers who would like to supplement their pensions?’</p> | 102 (59%) |
| | Positive descriptions | <p>‘The changing faces of older actors spooks me ... Pruny-faced actors[] rock. They’re real and authentic and believable’</p> <hr/> <p>‘How older people paved the way for changing attitudes and increased acceptance of LGBTI people today’</p> <hr/> <p>‘The theory is that we experience a U-shape in happiness as we age. Wellbeing is highest for people in their 20s, decreasing to the lowest point in our mid-life and then rising into old age’</p> | 30 (17%) |

(Continued)

Table 3. (Continued.)

| Type of representation (major theme) | Sub-theme | Examples | Number (%) |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| | Information and knowledge sharers | ‘Perhaps it’s another function of getting older, it’s the passing of generations and with them, connection, and history and a thread of life’s intricate tapestry’ | 22 (13%) |
| | | ‘Young people and young employees are always looking to older and wiser people for cues as how to behave’ | |
| | | ‘Seniors can become mentors and coaches and all adults can consider consulting work to share their knowledge’ | |
| | Physically capable | ‘Grandmother of three[] attributes her longevity to vegetarianism and a lifelong devotion to fitness’ | 10 (6%) |
| | | ‘Now I see people my age and older taking to the ocean from the rocks below[.] Swimming all the way across the bay and back every morning. I watch them with admiration and envy’ | |
| | | ‘I am more into sport than Gerry ... We’ve got a seven-year-old grandson and I’ve decided to teach him how to play cricket’ | |
| | Lifelong learners | ‘Older people with social media and other digital channels provided a pathway to raise awareness which has been boosted for some time by the increasing digital savviness of that cohort’ | 8 (5%) |
| | | ‘Unlike schoolchildren who have summer and winter holidays ... [o]lder people take classes (education) all year round. And the classes are full’ | |
| | | ‘Some older adults just take to tech like ducks to water ... disputes the stereotype that they are less adept’ | |
| Total | | | 172 (100%) |

older women to ‘become invisible in public life,’ such as in the workforce; greater social acceptance of visible signs of ageing like grey hair in men compared to women; and the framing of older women as ‘over the hill,’ whereas older men were often perceived as experienced or distinguished. Such gendered representations were notably absent from local newspapers.

Older adults were clustered with other populations perceived as ‘disadvantaged,’ particularly individuals with disabilities. This pattern of representation was most evident in national and state newspapers, where such groups were often listed together (e.g. ‘the elderly, the disabled, and those pushing prams’) or explicitly linked through conjunctions (e.g. ‘those with a disability and older adults’ or ‘having a disability or being retired’). These associations contribute to a broader discourse that frames older adults primarily in terms of dependency or vulnerability. Table 3 outlines the main themes associated with the negative representations of older adults and ageing, supported by illustrative examples from the data. Positive representations are examined in detail in the subsequent sections.

In sum, most representations of older adults and ageing identified in this study were negative or neutral. The findings also illustrate that the use of negative stereotypes is particularly evident in the way Australian newspapers discuss and portray older individuals and ageing. In the dataset presented here, for example, older adults were often portrayed as competing with younger individuals for resources such as health care, property, real estate and employment. These findings align with other research on the portrayal of older adults and ageing (e.g. Ng et al. 2016). The results also highlight the importance of critically examining language-use in Australian newspapers, specifically in relation to topics affecting older adults and ageing. The following section provides a discussion of the key themes to emerge from the data presented.

Discussion

Ageist language and terminology can diminish and devalue older adults. Ageism is often so embedded in public discourse that journalists may unintentionally reinforce harmful stereotypes. Terms such as ‘elderly,’ ‘senior’ and ‘senior citizen’ frequently carry negative connotations and were commonly found in local newspapers. Despite the smaller size and frequency of these publications, these publications used ageist terms more repeatedly, reinforcing concerns about local media’s ability to ‘look at issues from a broader point of view’ (Wilding et al. 2020, 89). Typically, older adults do not appreciate these terms applied to them (Avers et al. 2011). This terminology was predominantly found in local newspapers, with a noticeable peak in October and November, coinciding with advertisements and opportunities for ‘Seniors Month’. These publications tend to prioritize community interests (Hess 2024). These identities perpetuate damaging stereotypes about ageing. Instead, more respectful and positive terminology could be used (*i.e.* language that still accurately describes older individuals while promoting a more inclusive and diverse view of ageing). According to Morrison (2023), terms like ‘older adults,’ ‘older populations’ or ‘people over age 65’ are more appropriate.

The language identified across newspapers reveals a contradiction between the moral obligation to respect older adults and their simultaneous marginalization and

ridicule. Certain statements demonstrate concern for older individuals, acknowledging their economic and social vulnerabilities (e.g. 'will not be enough to offset many senior higher living costs' and 'why would the government penalise these people [older adults]?'). While such expressions may appear supportive, they can inadvertently reinforce narratives of vulnerability and dependency. In contrast, other representations adopt a dismissive or mocking tone, such as 'bumping into older Australians who always give me an irritated glare' or 'the hubris and narcissism of ageing politicians'. This duality aligns with what Gilleard and Higgs (2005) term the 'cultural othering' of older adults, a process amplified within media that privileges youth, productivity and aesthetic vitality. Othering occurs when individuals or groups are marked as fundamentally different from the dominant social norm, leading to stigmatization and the construction of an 'us versus them or others' divide (Mohamed and Modanloo 2024). This process fosters perceptions of inferiority, resulting in experiences of disrespect, indignity and further marginalization. The othering of older adults has tangible negative consequences at both individual and societal levels, including social exclusion and stigmatization (Søraa et al. 2020).

Despite the diversity of ageing, society and academia often label older individuals as a 'vulnerable' group, conflating vulnerability with frailty and incapability, and reinforcing notions of inevitable decline (Langmann 2023). Furthermore, the language used in newspapers is often dominated by negative and pessimistic attitudes towards older adults and ageing (Jeong et al. 2022). According to stereotype embodiment theory, older adults may internalize age-related societal stereotypes, which in turn can shape their behaviours and health outcomes to align with these socially constructed expectations (Levy 2009). Findings from this study echo the Covid-19 period, when policies aimed at protecting older adults frequently resulted in patronizing representations of older adults as uniformly vulnerable (Fraser et al. 2020). Despite an increased likelihood of chronic diseases, illness (e.g. Covid-19) and mortality in older age, the 'elderly', as they are often referred to collectively, represent a heterogeneous group that cannot be adequately described by generalized statements about their health or discourses of decline (Makita et al. 2021; Ng and Indran 2022; Zhang and Liu 2021; Langmann 2023). Particularly in relation to cognitive and physical abilities, current media representations of older adults should be carefully considered, as they may trigger stereotype threat. Stereotype threat refers to the anxiety or concerns that older adults experience when they are at risk of confirming a negative stereotype. When internalized, such stereotypes can adversely affect both mental and physical functioning and may contribute to reduced participation in certain activities and social institutions (Lamont et al. 2015; Centre for Better Ageing 2023). Older adults are not a homogenous group of defenceless individuals (Kessler and Bowen 2020). Framing older individuals as vulnerable, incapable or ill shifts the responsibility for ageing to 'others' (Skoss et al. 2024) and reduces older Australians to care recipients, overshadowing their social roles and diverse life experiences (Imran 2023).

Butler (1975, 35) described ageism as a process of dehumanization, stating that it 'allows the younger generations to see older people as different from themselves; thus, they subtly cease to identify with their elders as human beings'. Negative descriptors such as 'angry', 'silly' or 'irritable' further dehumanize older adults and reinforce their status as 'others' in society. This study found that older adults and ageing were

frequently portrayed as a 'problem' or 'societal burden', perpetuating stereotypes of dependency and decline. Such representations not only reinforce ageist narratives but also risk fuelling intergenerational conflict and deepening the perception of older people as fundamentally separate from the rest of society.

Despite ongoing demographic changes, ageism remains one of the most socially accepted and normalized forms of prejudice in Australia. At the same time, intergenerational conflict between older and younger Australians is becoming increasingly pronounced. This conflict refers to the collective tension and perceived unfairness between age groups, particularly around the distribution of resources. It is most commonly framed through the lens of the generational equity debate: a public discourse centred on questions of 'cost' and 'fairness'. In this study, older adults were often depicted as hoarding access to employment, property and financial assets, contributing to a sense of resentment among younger generations. Such representations not only fuel division but also risk oversimplifying complex socio-economic issues. During the Covid-19 period, there were encouraging signs of intergenerational solidarity (e.g. younger individuals working to keep older adults socially connected) (Fraser et al. 2020). However, these themes were not identified in the current study, where older adults were primarily discussed and represented differently.

Australia's ageing population featured heavily during the data collection period, frequently framed as a socio-economic threat. Older adults were described using deficit-oriented language, including as a 'difficult problem', a 'budget issue' and as contributors to 'public debt' and 'economic decline'. In some cases, concerns were raised about who would 'support' the ageing population and 'bear the brunt' of its associated costs. These discourses were most observed in publications that promote neo-liberal policy perspectives, such as *The Australian*, *Herald Sun*, *The Financial Review* and *The Age* (McKnight 2003; Lueck et al. 2015; Mockler 2025). Neo-liberalism, broadly understood as the revival of laissez-faire political economy, entails a shift in responsibility for health care and welfare from the government to the individual (Sinclair 2016). Notably, such narratives were largely absent from local newspapers included in this study. These publications, which are not owned by large corporate media groups, tended to prioritize community interests and were not easily classified within a neo-liberal framework (Hess 2024). This suggests that media ownership and editorial orientation play a role in shaping the ideological framing of ageing and older adults.

Older adults are frequently depicted through a dual discourse that frames them both as vulnerable and as responsible for broader social and economic challenges. On one hand, they are portrayed as physically frail, cognitively impaired and susceptible to environmental and systemic harms. These representations align with ageing-as-decline narratives, which emphasise loss, dependency and deterioration (Bytheway 2005). On the other hand, older adults are also constructed as impediments to societal progress, often framed as resource hoarders or as occupying employment and housing that could otherwise benefit younger generations. This reflects a discourse of intergenerational blame, in which older adults are held culpable for enduring structural inequalities (Laliberte Rudman 2006). Such dual positioning renders older adults simultaneously as subjects deserving of protection and as burdens obstructing social and economic advancement.

Anti-ageing emerged as a theme in the summative content analysis, accounting for 5 per cent of negative representations. These findings align with prior research showing that popular newspapers and magazines often depict older adults in ways that idealize youth and physical attractiveness (Wada et al. 2015). Anti-ageing messages promote negative perceptions of ageing, framing it as something to be avoided. Within the dataset, signs of ageing such as wrinkles, grey hair and baldness were often portrayed as shameful or unattractive rather than natural and expected (Palmore 2007, 1088). These messages are particularly harmful to older women, who face increased pressure to conceal their age and maintain a youthful appearance (Rochon et al. 2021). Anti-ageing narratives contribute to ageist attitudes and can negatively impact the health and wellbeing of older individuals. Given the presence of such representations, Australian newspapers should consider reframing ageing to reflect its diversity and complexity through more accurate and inclusive language and content.

The language used across Australian newspapers reflects a contradiction between ageing as a natural, inevitable process and ageing as something to be resisted or reversed. On one hand, ageing is constructed through a biomedical lens, associated with functional decline such as frailty and the loss of sexual agency. On the other hand, cultural narratives increasingly celebrate efforts to 'defy' ageing, promoting ideals of vitality and youthfulness. These narratives point to the rise of a 'rejuvenation imperative', where ageing bodies become sites of both cultural anxiety and technological intervention (Katz and Marshall 2003). Although less prominent, themes relating to disability and age, gendered ageism and negative portrayals of older adults' sexual expression also emerge and will be briefly addressed.

Stereotypes can arise from personal experience and societal influences. Once formed, they can make it difficult to accept information that contradicts them. Older adults are often stereotyped as non-sexual and uninterested in intimacy. In this study, negative portrayals of sexuality and ageing were rare, appearing only seven times, typically highlighting a lack of sexual desire or sexual activity among older adults being 'disgusting' or 'ridiculous'. Yet, research shows that older adults are living longer, healthier lives and value sex and intimacy (Syme and Cohn 2021). These stereotypes hinder proper sexual health support and, when internalized, can reduce sexual interest and prevent older adults from seeking medical care (Gocieková et al. 2025). Media often frames sexuality as exclusive to the young and attractive. A more inclusive approach that embraces diverse sexual experiences in later life could improve older adults' wellbeing, particularly in terms of sexual health (Towler et al. 2021).

Gendered ageism contributes to the marginalization and invisibility of older women, adversely affecting their health, quality of life and social participation. In Australian newspapers, this form of bias is frequently evident in employment contexts and reflects their subordinate position relative to men and younger cohorts. Older women experience intersecting discrimination due to sexism, ageism and other grounds (Merodio et al. 2024). This phenomenon is rooted in societal emphasis on youth and entrenched patriarchal norms, persisting globally despite women comprising the majority of the older population (Rochon et al. 2021). Addressing gendered ageism in the Australian media necessitates a critical examination of its role in both perpetuating and challenging such stereotypes, alongside the implementation of evidence-based interventions to mitigate its impact (Rochon et al. 2021). Again, to a

much lesser extent, negative representations of older adults included clustering older adults and disability. This form of ageism has also been identified within local government physical activity policy, reinforcing older adults as vulnerable and incapable (Butson et al. 2023). Clustering older adults and disability means that the media are not differentiating older adults on important issues. Recent literature has supported the need to shift the narrative on ageing within the media (Australian Human Rights Commission 2024).

Positive representations of older adults and ageing, such as being contributors, information and knowledge sharers and lifelong learners, accounted for only 6.49 per cent of the data collected. These findings are consistent with other studies that found that negative stereotypes dominated newspaper content (Chen 2015; Imran 2023). This suggests that Australian newspapers could do more to increase positive representations of older adults and ageing. Positive stereotypes have been linked to numerous health benefits, including increased engagement in health behaviours, fewer depressive symptoms and facilitated recovery from illness and injury (Levy et al. 2012; Dionigi 2015; Ng et al. 2016). More positive and diverse representations of ageing and older adults can help challenge ageism and promote a more inclusive and respectful society (Imran 2023). These findings show that media must rethink portrayals of older people, avoid stereotypes and promote positive, diverse images of ageing (Siiner 2017). Australian newspapers should improve diversity training on ageism to enhance reporting. The media and age sector can collaborate to provide accurate representations and reshape ageing narratives (Australian Human Rights Commission 2024).

Conclusion

‘A stereotype is the sluggard’s best friend’ (Gilbert and Hixon 1991, 509). Negative stereotypes about older adults are typically based on generalization and simplification, contributing to the false image of this population group (Milner et al. 2011; Morgan et al. 2021; Jeong et al. 2022; Yang et al. 2024). Stereotypes are not static, however, and transform over time. Furthermore, the terms that are used to describe stereotypes can also change, so counting the occurrences of major themes (*i.e.* ageism and stereotypes) and the associated results should be considered with caution. Older adults are currently perceived as representatives of a certain group, not as individuals, which is why they have negative traits attributed to them.

The negative stereotypes and descriptions faced by older adults, included being perceived as silly, awkward, angry and boring, reflect deeply ingrained ageist attitudes that are prevalent in society (Seegert 2016). These stereotypes contribute to the marginalization and devaluation of older individuals, portraying them as incompetent or burdensome. Negative age stereotypes degrade individuals’ performance, decision-making and self-esteem through social comparisons demonstrating the inferiority of older adults’ social identity compared to other groups. These negative representations can lead to older adults being treated as ‘second-class citizens’ and marginalized in various aspects of society (Carlson et al. 2020). This troubling sentiment reflects a disregard for the value of older lives and highlights an urgent need to address ageist attitudes and practices in society, including Australian media.

This study examines the media representation of older adults and ageing in Australia, offering new evidence of institutionalized ageism to scholars and practitioners seeking more positivity and diversity in relation to ageing and older adults. Our findings highlight the need for Australian newspapers to reflect critically on their representations of older individuals and an ageing population. The negative representation (e.g. reinforcing vulnerability and illness and framing ageing as a 'problem' or 'societal burden') highlights established concerns about how older adults are represented in the news media, particularly the impact of negative narratives about ageing and older people. The research and analysis presented here demonstrates that representations of older individuals and ageing are largely framed through negative or neutral lenses. More efforts are needed to ensure that portrayals of older adults are more balanced and reflective of their diversity.

Media portrayals directly influence public attitudes towards ageing, shape societal views of older adults and even affect how older individuals perceive themselves. Australian newspapers should therefore strive to create a more accurate and nuanced portrayal of their experiences of ageing, contributions and challenges. This is particularly significant in the current context of ageing populations worldwide, where older people are often overlooked and undervalued in social, economic and political spheres (Imran 2023). It is imperative that steps are taken to challenge and change this narrative. The parameters for reporting on older adults and ageing in Australian newspapers must be redefined to ensure that they remove discriminatory language and/or derogatory portrayals based on inappropriate stereotyping. It is equally important for journalists and editors of Australian newspapers to avoid inflaming existent, socially constructed tensions between generations, and resist the temptation to present old age as an economic or societal burden.

An increased awareness of the realities of ageing will become even more important as the older population continues to grow (North and Fiske 2012). Australian media professionals should focus on highlighting the diversity that exists within all generations and enhance their audiences' understanding of the differences between wealth inequalities and intergenerational conflict (Easton 2023). The authors recommend that journalists work more closely with the age sector to provide more accurate representations of older adults and assist in reshaping the narrative of ageing and older adults. While this study provides valuable insights into the representation of older adults and ageing, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study did not account for the full spectrum of stereotypes, both positive and negative, which may have led to the omission of certain representations of older adults. Additionally, visual elements such as the integration of text and images in newspapers were excluded. This is a significant limitation, as visual imagery can equally reinforce stereotypes about ageing. Another limitation concerns the use of the term 'elderly' as a search keyword. Although the term carries negative connotations and is generally discouraged, it was included due to its frequent usage in media discourse. Excluding it could have resulted in an incomplete dataset (Ng 2021). The study also focused predominantly on one Australian state, limiting the generalizability of the findings. To fully understand the extent of the issue, comparable studies should be replicated across Australia and internationally, focusing on the negative and stereotypical portrayals of older adults and ageing in newspaper media,

in order to better inform effective global responses. Additionally, audience reception studies are needed to understand how these representations are interpreted by the public, which would deepen our understanding of the media's impact on societal perceptions of ageing. Further research should also explore multimodal representations to assess how text, images and layout collectively shape narratives around older adults.

Ethical standards. Ethics approval was not required for this research.

Artificial intelligence tools were used solely for proofreading. No artificial intelligence tools were used for data analysis, interpretation of results or generation of content.

References

- Allen JO, Solway E, Kirch M, Singer D, Kullgren JT, Moïse V and Malani PN** (2022) Experiences of everyday ageism and the health of older US adults. *JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association) Network Open* 5, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.17240>.
- Armstrong B, Gallant SN, Li L, Patel K and Wong BI** (2017) Stereotype threat effects on older adults' episodic and working memory: a meta-analysis. *The Gerontologist* 57, 193–205. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnx056>.
- Australian Human Rights Commission** (2023) Changing Perspectives: testing an Ageism Intervention. Australian Human Rights Commission, 13 July. Available at <https://humanrights.gov.au/changingperspectives> (accessed 31 January 2025).
- Australian Human Rights Commission** (2024) Shaping Perceptions: how Australian Media Reports on Ageing. Available at <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/age-discrimination/publications/shaping-perceptions-how-australian-media-reports-ageing> (accessed 6 August 2025).
- Avers D, Brown M, Chui KK, Wong RA and Lusardi M** (2011) Use of the term 'elderly'. *Journal of Geriatric Physical Therapy* 34, 153–154. <https://doi.org/10.1519/JPT.0b013e31823ab7ec>.
- Ayalon L and Roy S** (2023) Combatting ageism in the Western Pacific region. *The Lancet Regional Health* 35, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lanwpc.2022.100593>.
- Barber SJ and Mather M** (2014) Stereotype threat in older adults: when and why does it occur, and who is most affected? In Verhaeghen P and Hertzog C (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Emotion, Social Cognition, and Problem-Solving during Adulthood*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 302–320.
- Bonnesen JL and Burgess EO** (2004) Senior moments: the acceptability of an ageist phrase. *Journal of Aging Studies* 18, 123–142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaging.2004.01.008>.
- Bryman A and Burgess R** (2002) *Analysing Qualitative Data*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Burnes D, Sheppard C, Henderson CR Jr, Wassel M, Cope R, Barber C and Pillemer K** (2019) Interventions to reduce ageism against older adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *American Journal of Public Health* 109, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2019.305123/>.
- Butler RN** (1969) Age-ism: another form of bigotry. *The Gerontologist* 9, 243–246. https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/9.4_Part_1.243.
- Butler RN** (1975) *Why Survive? Being Old in America*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Butson M, Jeanes R and O'Connor J** (2026) Promoting physical activity participation to older adults: a critical analysis of leisure facility advertising. *Managing Sport and Leisure* 31, 167–180. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2023.2228805>.
- Butson M, Jeanes R and O'Connor J** (2023) Identifying ageism within Australian local government physical activity policy: a critical discourse analysis. *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity* 32, 34–42. <https://doi.org/10.1123/japa.2022-0431>.
- Butson M, Jeanes R and O'Connor J** (2024) Experiences of older adults leisure-time physical activity in aquatic and leisure facilities. *World Leisure Journal* 67, 124–144. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16078055.2024.2351077>.
- Butson M and Wright R** (2025) Stereotypes: older adult representation in Australian newspaper advertising. *Media International Australia*. Advance Online Publication, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X25137514>.

- Bytheway B** (2005) *Ageism*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Carlson KJ, Black DR, Holley LM and Coster DC** (2020) Stereotypes of older adults: development and evaluation of an updated stereotype content and strength survey. *The Gerontologist* **60**, 347–356. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnz061>.
- Centre for Better Ageing** (2023) Ageism: what's the Harm? Centre for Better Ageing. Available at <https://ageing-better.org.uk/resources/ageism-whats-harm> (accessed 6 August 2025).
- Chasteen AL, Kang SK and Remedios JD** (2012) Ageing and stereotype threat: development, process, and interventions. In Inzlicht M and Schmader T (eds), *Stereotype Threat: Theory, Process, and Application*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 202–216.
- Chen C** (2015) Older adults as discursively constructed in Taiwanese newspapers: a critical discourse analysis. *International Journal of Society, Culture and Language* **3**, 72–84.
- Coelho-Junior HJ, Calvani R, Picca A, Landi F and Marzetti E** (2024) The influence of ageism on the hallmarks of aging: where age stigma and biology collide. *Experimental Gerontology* **196**, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exger.2024.112575>.
- Curryer C and Cook PS** (2021) Counting the costs of ageism: discrimination and Covid-19. *Australasian Journal on Ageing* **40**, 237–240. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajag.12993>.
- DeCuir-Gunby J, Marshall P and McCulloch A** (2011) Developing and using a codebook for the analysis of interview data: an example from a professional development research project. *Field Methods* **23**, 136–155. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X10388468>.
- Dionigi RA** (2015) Stereotypes of ageing: their effects on the health of older adults. *Journal of Geriatrics* **2015**, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2015/954027>.
- Easton C** (2023) Fuelling Intergenerational Conflict Will Not Solve the Inequalities in Society. Centre for Better Ageing. Available at <https://ageing-better.org.uk/blogs/fuelling-intergenerational-conflict-will-not-solve-inequalities-society> (accessed 6 August 2025).
- Fraser S, Lagacé M, Bongué B, Ndeye N, Guyot J, Bechard L, Garcia L, Taler V, CCNA Social Inclusion and Stigma Working Group, Adam S, Beaulieu M, Bergeron CD, Boudjemadi V, Desmette D, Donizzetti AR, Éthier S, Garon S, Gillis M, Levasseur M, Lortie-Lussier M, Marier P, Robitaille A, Sawchuk K, Lafontaine C and Tougas F** (2020) Ageism and Covid-19: what does our society's response say about us? *Age and Ageing* **49**, 692–695. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ageing/afaa097>.
- Gendron TL, Welleford EA, Inker J and White JT** (2016) The language of ageism: why we need to use words carefully. *The Gerontologist* **56**, 997–1006. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnv066>.
- Gilbert DT and Hixon JG** (1991) The trouble of thinking: activation and application of stereotypic beliefs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* **60**, 509–517. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.60.4.509>.
- Gilleard C and Higgs P** (2005) *Contexts of Ageing: Class, Cohort and Community*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gocieková V, Stašek A, Ševčíková A and Gore-Gorszewska G** (2025) The role of ageist sexual stereotypes in the network of sexual difficulties, sex and relationship satisfaction among adults aged 50+. *Journal of Sex Research* **62**, 1427–1441. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2024.2307441>.
- Hess K** (2024) Local Papers Are Central to Our Democracy: We Must Do More to Bring Them Out of Crisis. *The Conversation*, 10 September. Available at <https://theconversation.com/local-papers-are-central-to-our-democracy-we-must-do-more-to-bring-them-out-of-crisis-237987> (accessed 7 August 2025).
- Hyde M** (2024) Editorial – Beyond borders: exploring ageing in a global context. *Journal of Global Ageing* **1**, 2–8. <https://doi.org/10.1332/29767202Y2024D000000009>.
- Imran MA** (2023) Redefining older Australians: moving beyond stereotypes and consumer narratives in print media representations. *Media International Australia* **194**, 148–165. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X231208788>.
- Iversen TN, Larsen L and Solem PE** (2009) A conceptual analysis of ageism. *Nordic Psychology* **61**, 4–22. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1901-2276.61.3.4>.
- Jen S, Jeong M, Kang H and Riquino M** (2021) Ageism in Covid-related newspaper coverage: the first month of a pandemic. *Journals of Gerontology: Series B* **76**, 1904–1912. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbab102>.

- Jeong M, Jen S, Kang H, Riquino M and Goldberg J** (2022) Representations of older adults in Covid-related newspaper articles: a comparison between the perspectives of older and younger adults. *Journal of Aging Studies* **63**, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaging.2022.101081>.
- Jung EH and Sundar SS** (2016) Senior citizens on Facebook: how do they interact and why? *Computers in Human Behavior* **61**, 27–35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.02.080>.
- Katz S and Marshall B** (2003). New sex for old: lifestyle, consumerism, and the ethics of aging well. *Journal of Aging Studies* **17**, 3–16. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0890-4065\(02\)00086-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0890-4065(02)00086-5).
- Kessler E and Bowen CE** (2020). Covid ageism as a public mental health concern. *The Lancet: Healthy Longevity* **1**, 1–2. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2666-7568\(20\)30002-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2666-7568(20)30002-7).
- Khalid MZ and Ahmed A** (2014) A snapshot of role of newspapers in the contemporary newspeak. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science* **19**, 6–11. <https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-19550611>.
- Khalili-Mahani N** (2023) To Better Address the Needs of Older Populations, Researchers and Media Should Stop Fussing Over Aging. *The Conversation*, 12 January. Available at <https://theconversation.com/to-better-address-the-needs-of-older-populations-researchers-and-media-should-stop-fussing-over-aging-195626> (accessed 6 August 2025).
- Kite ME, Stockdale GD, Whitley BE Jr and Johnson BT** (2005) Attitudes toward younger and older adults: an updated meta-analytic review. *Journal of Social Issues* **61**, 241–266. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2005.00404.x>.
- Kiyimba N, Lester JN and O'Reilly M** (2018) *Using Naturally Occurring Data in Qualitative Health Research: A Practical Guide*. Cham: Springer.
- Kroon AC and van Selm M** (2024). Good intentions aside: stereotype threat in the face of media strategies to counter age bias. *Research on Aging* **46**, 480491. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01640275241249117>.
- Laliberte Rudman D** (2006) Shaping the active, autonomous and responsible modern retiree: an analysis of discursive technologies and their links with neo-liberal political rationality. *Ageing & Society* **26**, 181–201. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X05004253>.
- Lamont RA, Swift HJ and Abrams D** (2015) A review and meta-analysis of age-based stereotype threat: negative stereotypes, not facts, do the damage. *Psychology and Aging* **30**, 180–193. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038586>.
- Langmann E** (2023) Vulnerability, ageism, and health: is it helpful to label older adults as a vulnerable group in health care? *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy* **26**, 133–142. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11019-022-10129-5>.
- Lee MM, Carpenter B and Meyers LS** (2007) Representations of older adults in television advertisements. *Journal of Aging Studies* **21**, 23–30. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaging.2006.04.001>.
- Levy B, Ashman O and Dror I** (1999) To be or not to be: the effects of aging stereotypes on the will to live. *OMEGA – Journal of Death and Dying* **40**, 409–420. <https://doi.org/10.2190/Y2GE-BVYQ-NF0E-83VR>.
- Levy BR** (2009) Stereotype embodiment: a psychosocial approach to aging. *Current Directions in Psychological Science* **18**, 332–336. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2009.01662.x>.
- Levy BR, Chung PH, Bedford T and Navrazhina K** (2014) Facebook as a site for negative age stereotypes. *The Gerontologist* **54**, 172–176. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gns194>.
- Levy BR, Slade MD, Murphy TE and Gill TM** (2012) Association between positive age stereotypes and recovery from disability in older persons. *Journal of the American Medical Association* **308**, 1972–1973. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2012.14541>.
- Lippmann W** (1922) Stereotypes. In Lippmann W (ed.), *Public Opinion*. New York: Macmillan, pp. 79–94.
- Lueck K, Due C and Augoustinos M** (2015) Neoliberalism and nationalism: representations of asylum seekers in the Australian mainstream news media. *Discourse and Society* **26**, 608–629. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926515581159>.
- Lytle A and Levy SR** (2022) Reducing ageism toward older adults and highlighting older adults as contributors during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Journal of Social Issues* **78**, 1066–1084. Advance Online Publication. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12545>.
- Makita M, Mas-Bleda A, Stuart E and Thelwall M** (2021) Ageing, old age and older adults: a social media analysis of dominant topics and discourses. *Ageing & Society* **41**, 247–272. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X19001016>.
- Markov Č and Yoon Y** (2021) Diversity and age stereotypes in portrayals of older adults in popular American primetime television series. *Ageing & Society* **41**, 2747–2767. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X20000549>.

- McKnight D** (2003) 'A world hungry for a new philosophy': Rupert Murdoch and the rise of neo-liberalism. *Journalism Studies* 4, 347–358. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616700306493>.
- Meisner BA** (2021) Are you OK, boomer? Intensification of ageism and intergenerational tensions on social media amid Covid-19. *Leisure Sciences* 43, 56–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2020.1773983>.
- Merodio G, Martínez Ortiz de Zárate A, Zhu F and Morentin-Encina J** (2024) The impact of gendered ageism and related intersectional inequalities on the health and well-being of older women. *Research on Ageing and Social Policy* 12, 146–165. <https://doi.org/10.17583/rasp.15017>.
- Mikton C, de la Fuente-Nunez V, Officer A and Krug E** (2021) Ageism: a social determinant of health that has come of age. *The Lancet* 397, 1333–1334. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(21\)00524-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00524-9).
- Milner C, Van Norman K and Milner J** (2011) The media's portrayal of ageing. In Beard JR, Biggs S, Bloom DE, Fried LP, Hogan P, Kalache A and Olshansky SJ (eds), *Global Population Ageing: Peril or Promise?*, pp. 25–28.
- Mockler N** (2025) Accounting for teachers: changing representations of education in the Australian Financial Review 1993–2022. *Educational Review* 77, 1778–1797. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2024.2362171>.
- Mohamed AFH and Modanloo S** (2024) Re-thinking the concept of cultural competency in nursing care of older adults. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research* 57, 140–146. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08445621241272673>.
- Mondal A** (2023) Importance of newspaper reading habit for social science students: an analytical study. *International Journal of Research in Library Science* 9, 188–194. <https://doi.org/10.26761/ijrls.9.1.2023.1636>.
- Morgan T, Wiles J, Williams L and Gott M** (2021) Covid-19 and the portrayal of older people in New Zealand news media. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 51, 127–142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03036758.2021.1884098>.
- Morrison S** (2023) Don't Call Me 'Old': avoiding Ageism When Writing about Aging. National Institute of Aging. Available at www.nia.nih.gov/research/blog/2023/12/dont-call-me-old-avoiding-ageism-when-writing-about-aging (accessed 6 August 2025).
- Ng R** (2021) Societal age stereotypes in the US and UK from a media database of 1.1 billion words. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, 8822. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18168822>.
- Ng R, Allore HG, Monin JK and Levy BR** (2016) Retirement as meaningful: positive retirement stereotypes associated with longevity. *Journal of Social Issues* 72, 69–85. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12156>.
- Ng R and Indran N** (2022) Reframing aging during Covid-19: familial role-based framing of older adults linked to decreased ageism. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 70, 60–66. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.17532>.
- North MS and Fiske ST** (2012) An inconvenienced youth? Ageism and its potential intergenerational roots. *Psychological Bulletin* 138, 982–997. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027843>.
- Notely T, Chambers S, Park S and Dezuanni M** (2021) Adult media literacy in Australia: attitudes, experiences and needs. Available at <https://apo.org.au/node/327239> (accessed 6 August 2025).
- Officer A and de la Fuente-Núñez V** (2018) A global campaign to combat ageism. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 96, 295–296. <https://doi.org/10.2471/BLT.17.202424>.
- Palinkas LA, Horwitz SM, Green CA, Wisdom JP, Duan N and Hoagwood K** (2015) Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research* 42, 533–544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>.
- Palmore EB** (2007) Healthy behaviors or age denials? *Educational Gerontology* 33, 1087–1097. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03601270701700706>.
- Reissmann M, Geithner L, Storms A and Woopen C** (2021) Stereotypes about very old people and perceived societal appreciation in very old age. *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie* 54, 93–100. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00391-021-01971-y>.
- Rochon PA, Kalia S and Higgs P** (2021) Gendered ageism: addressing discrimination based on age and sex. *The Lancet* 398, 648–649. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(21\)01636-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)01636-6).

- Rothermund K and de Paula Couto MCP** (2024) Age stereotypes: dimensions, origins, and consequences. *Current Opinion in Psychology* 55, 101747. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2023.101747>.
- Seegert L** (2016) How Ageism Can Negatively Affect the Health of Older Adults. Association of Healthcare Journalists, 9 June. Available at <https://healthjournalism.org/blog/2016/06/how-ageism-can-negatively-affect-the-health-of-older-adults/> (accessed 6 August 2025).
- Siiner M** (2017) Let me grow old and senile in peace: Norwegian newspaper accounts of voice and agency with dementia. *Ageing & Society* 39, 977–997. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X17001374>.
- Sinclair J** (2016) Political economy and discourse in Murdoch's flagship newspaper, the Australian. *Political Economy of Communication* 4, 3–17.
- Skoss M, Batten R, Cain P and Stanley M** (2024) Vulnerable, recalcitrant and resilient: a Foucauldian discourse analysis of risk and older people within the context of Covid-19 news media. *Ageing & Society* 44, 1579–1596. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X22000897>.
- Soraa RA, Manzi F, Kharas MW, Marchetti A, Massaro D, Riva G and Serrano JA** (2020) Othering and deprioritizing older adults' lives: ageist discourses during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Europe's Journal of Psychology* 16, 532–541. <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v16i4.4127>.
- Stewart AJ and Raihani N** (2023) Group reciprocity and the evolution of stereotyping. *Biological Sciences* 290, 1–48. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2022.1834>.
- Stewart TL, Chipperfield JG, Perry RP and Weiner B** (2012) Attributing illness to 'old age': consequences of a self-directed stereotype for health and mortality. *Psychology and Health* 2, 881–897. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08870446.2011.630735>.
- Swift HJ and Steeden B** (2020) Exploring Representations of Old Age and Ageing. Centre for Ageing Better. Available at <https://ageing-better.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/Exploring-representations-of-old-age.pdf> (accessed 6 August 2025).
- Syme ML and Cohn TJ** (2021) Aging sexual stereotypes and sexual expression in mid- and later life: examining the stereotype matching effect. *Aging and Mental Health* 25, 1507–1514. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2020.1758909>.
- Towler LB, Graham CA, Bishop FL and Hinchliff S** (2021) Older adults' embodied experiences of aging and their perceptions of societal stigmas toward sexuality in later life. *Social Science and Medicine* 287, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114355>.
- Tracy SJ** (2020) *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact*. Newark, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.
- Wada M, Hurd Clarke L and Rozanova J** (2015) Constructions of sexuality in later life: analyses of Canadian magazine and newspaper portrayals of online dating. *Journal of Aging Studies* 32, 40–49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaging.2014.12.002>.
- Weicht B** (2013) The making of 'the elderly': constructing the subject of care. *Journal of Aging Studies* 27, 188–197. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaging.2013.03.001>.
- Weir K** (2023) Ageism Is One of the Last Socially Acceptable Prejudices. Psychologists Are Working to Change That. American Psychological Association. Available at www.apa.org/monitor/2023/03/cover-new-concept-of-aging (accessed 6 August 2025).
- Wethington E, Pillemer K and Principi A** (2016) Research in social gerontology: social exclusion of ageing adults. In Riva P and Eck J (eds), *Social Exclusion: Psychological Approaches to Understanding and Reducing Its Impact*. Cham: Springer, pp. 177–195.
- Wilding D, Giotis C and Koskie T** (2020) News in Australia: Diversity and Localism – Review of Literature and Research. Available at www.acma.gov.au/publications/2020-12/report/news-australia-diversity-and-localism (accessed 6 August 2025).
- World Health Organization** (2025) Ageing and Health. Available at www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health (accessed 10 October 2025).
- Yang FL, Au ATN, Wong JYH and Lou VWQ** (2024) The deprived or the devil? A content analysis of the media representation of older adults under Covid-19 in Hong Kong. *Ageing & Society* 44, 1388–1409. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X22000587>.
- Ylänne V, Williams A and Wadleigh PM** (2009) Ageing well? Older people's health and well-being as portrayed in UK magazine advertisements. *International Journal of Ageing and Later Life* 4, 33–62. <https://doi.org/10.3384/ijal.1652-8670.094233>.

- Zhang J and Liu X** (2021) Media representation of older people's vulnerability during the Covid-19 pandemic in China. *European Journal of Ageing* **18**, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10433-021-00613-x>.
- Zhang Y and Wildemuth BM** (2017) Qualitative analysis of content. In Wildemuth BM (ed.), *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, pp. 318–330.

Cite this article: Butson M and Wright R (2026) Stereotypes: the representation of older adults and ageing in Australian newspapers. *Ageing and Society* **46**, e44, 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X26100658>