

National Charity launches 'Bank' of Intergenerational Kindness Project

The *Bank of Intergenerational Kindness* promotes acts of kindness for people doing it tough in the context of the global cost of living crisis. For example, Australian data shows that after 12 interest rate hikes in 12 months, almost 1 in 3 Australians are struggling to make ends meet (highest rates of financial stress are experienced by 35-54 year olds) and this is having a major impact on the mental health of 1 in 2 Australians.

Bank Coordinator Dr Catherine Barrett is passionate about the power of kindness to create social change, having launched the Kindness Pandemic Facebook group in 2020 to spread acts of kindness for people doing it tough due to the Covid19 Pandemic. The group grew to 570,000 members in 2 weeks and was voted *The Most Uplifting Facebook Group in the World* at the 2022 Facebook Community Awards. Barrett said:

We needed acts of kindness when the Covid19 Pandemic hit and we need them now, when so many people are struggling to make ends meet. Until this crisis is over, one thing we can do is reach out and support each other. Acts of kindness got so many of us through the Covid19 Pandemic – now we need them to help us through the cost of living crisis.

Kindness won't make the cost of living crisis go away, but it will help us to get through it. Acts of kindness can offer practical support as well as the emotional support that comes when people see that others care.

Barrett who set up a national charity to combat ageism and build respect for older people says the cost of living crisis has led to a significant rise in ageism directed towards older people – which she says is unhelpful for several reasons:

Intergenerational buck passing – or blaming older people isn't helpful or accurate and is a distraction from identifying root causes and real solutions to this critical issue. It is also contributing to a new problem – a rise in the levels of ageism directed towards older people. Ageism erodes person confidence, respect in families and cohesion in communities – and places further burden on the economy.

Ageism can reduce life expectancy by up to 7.5 years (US data) and underpins the Elder Abuse experienced by 16% of older people globally (Global data). Additionally, research on economic costs show that **annually** ageism:

- accounts for \$1 in every \$7 spent in the USA on health care for the eight conditions with the highest health-care costs among older people – a total of \$63 (USA data)
- costs £31 billion in health care in the UK (UK data)
- costs \$850 billion in workplace discrimination (USA data)
- costs \$10.9 billion in financial abuse/fraud (Australian data)

To help reduce the harm to older people, our communities – and – further damage to the economy, we need to reduce the ageist responses to the cost of living crisis. An approach that brings generations together could help alleviate the current financial issues and combat ageism in the longer term.

The Bank of Intergenerational Kindness is calling people from around the world to reach out in their families, friendship networks and communities to support each other – across all generations.

We are also asking people to email their acts of kindness with us – so we can share these stories to encourage others to replicate the acts of kindness and to build hope in others.

More info contact:

- Dr Catherine Barrett 0429 582 237
- web: celebrateageing.com/kindnessbank