MEDIA RELEASE
Friday 25th February 2022

**Older women's inequalities in focus
this International Women's Day**

In a national first, on Monday 28th Feb the Older Women's Network and Celebrate Ageing Ltd will launch a community campaign to ensure the inequalities experienced by older women are in focus on 8th March, International Women's Day.

In addition to the sexism that drives gender inequalities – older women experience ageism, which results in older women being:

- the lowest income earning family group (see here)
- the largest group of unpaid carers - 70% of carers are women (see here)
- the fastest growing group of homeless - increase of 31% between 2011-2016 (see here)
- more likely to live in poverty - 34% of single older women (see here)
- more likely to experience workplace discrimination (see here)
- more likely to experience Elder Abuse than men (see here)
- more likely to be among the 50 sexual assaulted in residential aged care each week (see here)

The #OlderWomenCount campaign, 2022 has been designed by artist Suzanne Phoenix to engage the community in reflecting on the inequalities older women experience, and the change needed to create equality. Phoenix, whose photographs have appeared in the National Portrait Gallery, has curated a photographic exhibition exploring what IWD means to a broad range of cis and trans women and gender diverse people – every IWD for the past decade.

Phoenix has produced a bold logo with the words 'Older Women Count' for a series of street posters distributed through the urban landscapes of Melbourne and Sydney in the week leading up to IWD. Phoenix said:

> *I wanted to create something that was simple and visually striking. Something that represents how much there is still to do and something that represents the IWD theme of 'Break the Bias' – I want to break the biases older women experience. I want older women to be included in IWD. The posters will reach a broad audience and we have asked the community to help us find the poster by photographing them and tagging us on social media with the hashtag #OlderWomenCount. We have also*

printed stickers for people to share and we are calling on people to download the free logo and print it onto a Tshirt.

Project partners the Older Women's Network of NSW are delighted with the interpretation of the campaign by Phoenix. Chair, Beverly Baker, said:

There is so much work to be done to build respect for older women, and we need so many champions. We love that Suzanne is helping people to understand the inequalities older women experience, we can't do it all – we need so many allies. This year the theme of IWD is #BreakTheBias – we need to make sure that strategies for gender equality include older women, because there is an ageist bias. This campaign warms my heart – it's about others picking up this critical issue and that's what we need to make change happen.

The project webpage (celebrateageing.com/olderwomencount) will include images of the posters in their urban locations and project coordinator Dr Catherine Barrett, CEO of Celebrate Ageing Ltd said:

I hope people in rural and regional communities will download the image and post it as well. We need to whole country on board to create change. That's one of the critical aspects of this campaign – it says that the responsibility for change lies with us all; but first we need to make sure people know what the problem is. Older women are wonderful women and deserve to be treated with respect. We don't want a croissant at an IWD breakfast this year – we want a revolution.

MORE INFORMATION
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