# TIPS & IDEAS: Selecting non-ageist images of older Australians

Helping you to choose or create images of older Australians for use in publications, websites and social media that avoid ageist stereotypes and emphasise positive imagery

Choose people that reflect diversity:

- A **range of ages** –people representing different age groups eg. 'young-old' (approximately 65–74), 'middle-old' (ages 75–84), and 'old-old' (over age 85)

- **Gender** diversity

- **Cultural** diversity

- Urban and regional **settings**

- Diversity in **sexual identity**

- A range of **abilities** – active people with no physical disability; people with physical disabilities (walking stick, walking frame, wheelchair, scooter)

- A range of **personal 'styles' and 'types'** –arty, sporty, conservative, business dress, casual and modern, dressed up for evening or special event, traditional dress (eg some cultures)
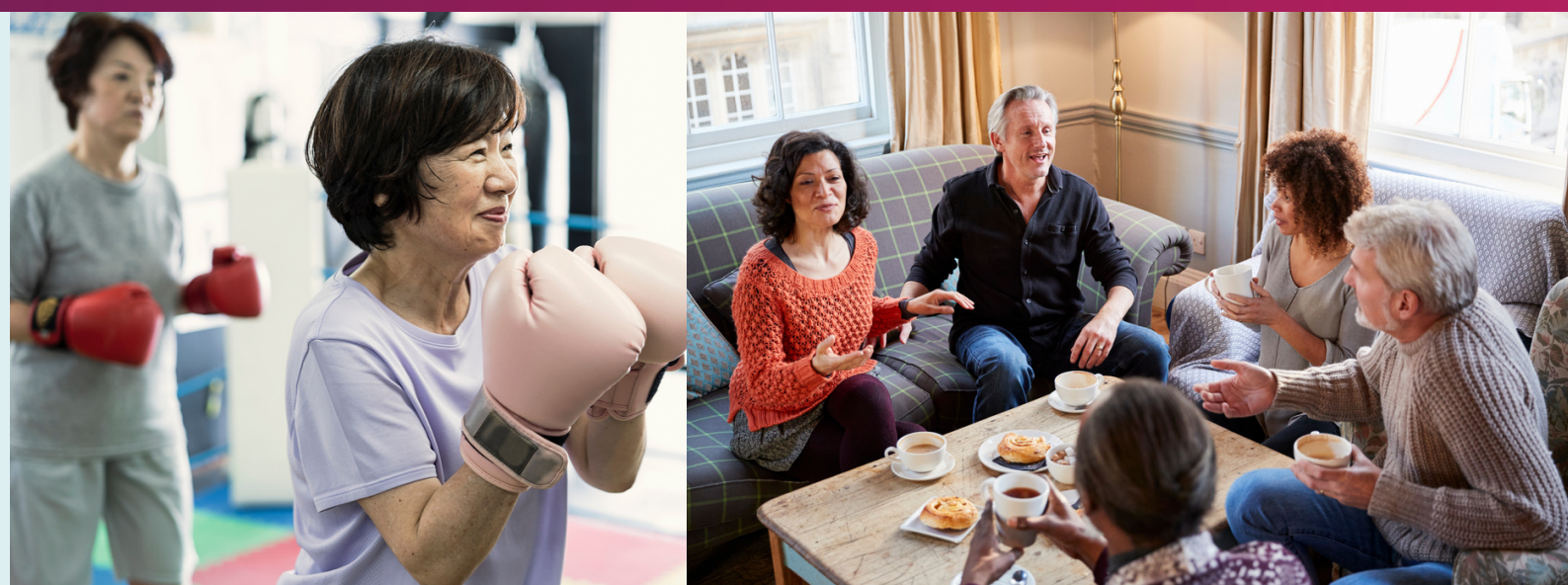
Choose a variety of settings:

- **In and around the home** – day to day domestic activities such as cooking, eating/drinking, reading, using IT, gardening, cleaning, maintenance, chatting, having a cleaner or carer visit

- **The home itself** – house, unit, townhouse, flat, apartment, mobile home, older or modern, clean or messy, small or large, diverse décor and styles

- **Out of the home** – different activities such as shopping, socialising, volunteering, learning, leisure activities, working, exercising, caring, maintaining health, with family or friends

- **Locations** – a mix of locations representing a diversity of parts of Australia such as busy urban settings, suburban, rural, regional, outback, different climates, and weather types

- **Keep it looking 'local'** – source images from Australian photographers if possible or only use images that reflect Australian settings and diversity, not that of other countries – pay attention to clothing, settings, landscapes, background products, plant and animal life, streetscapes
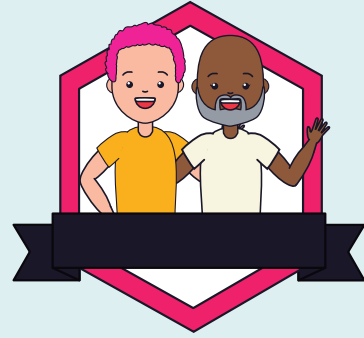
These tips were prepared in partnership with the Benevolent Society and EveryAGE Counts coalition, July 2021

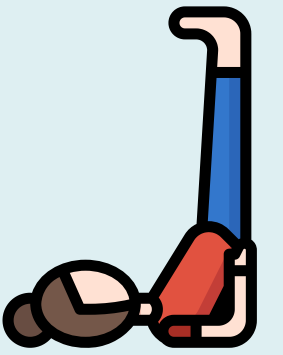| DO:	DON'T:
Show older people as a hugely diverse group – age, size, shape, interests, abilities, appearance, personal style, culture, socio-economic status, ethnicity, sexuality etc	Show the older person as inherently weak, passive, vulnerable and needy – even when unwell or requiring assistance, people need to feel they have agency and a voice
Show older people hanging out with people of different ages, such as volunteering together, with family members from different generations, working, and socialising with friends	Show all older people looking lost, lonely, frightened or depressed, except in designated contexts
Show a range of normal emotions in appropriate contexts – joy, surprise, disappointment, annoyance, sadness, excitement, relief	Choose images of older people that show a limited range of activities or with a limited range of people
Show older people as citizens and individuals with the same ordinary rights and responsibilities as all citizens –strengths, capacities, agency and independence in daily life	Choose images that overemphasise perfect, 'extraordinary' or 'heroic' older people - the immaculately dressed, 'forever young and beautiful', octogenarian marathon runners, skydivers, weightlifters - these do not represent the mainstream norm and are, for most of us, unachievable
Show the relationship between the carer and the person being cared for as equal and respectful, especially in a healthcare setting or at home with a paid carer - communicate a mutually supported teamwork approach of 'doing with'	Show all older people smiling as kindly and benign
Keep it real – natural images are better than images too contrived or staged, extraordinary and heroic images are also not the norm so avoid these	Choose images that physically position health professionals and carers standing or leaning over the seated older person, with arm around them, looking caring and protective - these reflect patronising body language and reinforce vulnerability and needing protection
Try to show support services and special equipment as positive 'enablers' that help people to remain independent and continue to do the things they want to do	
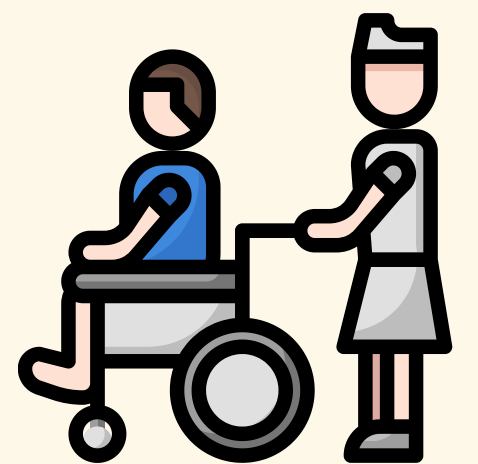
www.iepcp.org.au/key-project/ageism/

https://www.everyagecounts.org.au/