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Policy now for rapidly ageing Australia 1 in 3 aged 60+

Australia's governments must act now to reap long term rewards from the opportunities an ageing Australia presents, according to Population Ageing and Australia's Future, the 2014 symposium of the Academy of Social Sciences Australia (ASSA).

As more than a third of Australians will be past 60 by 2030, it is now critical to adjust policy settings so that the hundreds of thousands of people approaching the age to leave the workforce can do so with confidence for the future.

"Australia is, due to ageing baby boomers and increasing longevity, facing unprecedented numbers of older people. We need a multidisciplinary approach to meet the challenges faced by individuals and society, and also to benefit from the potential of large numbers of healthy and active individuals who can continue to contribute beyond outdated parameters," said Peter Spearitt, Chair of Public Forums, ASSA.

Australian and international experts, including the Age and Disability Discrimination Commissioner The Hon Susan Ryan AO - who delivered the keynote speech outlining the social and economic impacts of rejecting older workers - addressed issues including the Government area of promoting population health and wellbeing. Key topics included confronting age discrimination, building social support and participation, and addressing social inequalities and diversity in terms of gender, socio-economic resources, ethnicity and geographical location.

"Australians need to be pro-actively and constructively addressing these issues now. We are building the critical thinking and knowledge base to inform ways of ageing well and improve an ageing Australia," says Hal Kendig, Chief Investigator, ARC Centre of Excellence in Population Ageing Research (CEPAR).

Professor John Piggott, CEPAR Director, comments that "increased superannuation contribution rates and extended workforce participation have been high on the public agenda this year, and we need further action on retirement funding options, and the extent of the Government's role."

This symposium is followed by a round table to form a multidisciplinary approach to address key challenges identified, in anticipation of the next Government Intergenerational Report, and to develop and fund resources to mitigate societal and economic impacts and support individuals and their families to fullest participation.

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