

# The Voice of Older Western Australians.

## White Paper 2025





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# Introduction

## The Voice of Older Western Australians, now in its second year, underscores the resilience of Western Australians aged over 70.

Once again, the report - commissioned by non-profit aged care provider Juniper and built by independent market research consultancy CoreData WA - includes a Happiness of Older Western Australians Index.

The Index explores the essential components of happiness nominated by older Western Australians and weighs up the importance of each element of happiness and the extent to which older people are engaged in those activities. The result is the overall 2025 Happiness Index score.

This year's Index reveals an increase in happiness among women, driven by an ability to participate in activities that are important to them, in particular spending time with friends and exercising.

However, the research findings also reveal widespread concern, not just about aged care services themselves but how to get face-to-face advice when it comes to understanding how to access them.

In the context of national concern about productivity and other costs of ageism, solving access and communication problems could play a vital role in improving health outcomes for older Western Australians.

Well-timed investment in the health and wellbeing of older Western Australians and concrete plans to tackle the impact of ageism, explored in greater detail in the body of the report, is a central focus of Juniper's advocacy for the coming years.



## Background

Juniper is one of Western Australia's biggest non-profit, local aged care providers, championing individualised care that keeps customers connected to the people, passions and places they have always loved.

The organisation, which celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2024, works to empower all older Western Australians to hold onto their independence and identity as they journey into old age, supporting them to take pleasure in a life well lived.

It does this through commitment to exceptional care, accommodation and support services in Home and Community, Residential Aged Care, Transition Care and Retirement Living communities across the state, from metropolitan Perth to regional and remote communities as far north as the Kimberley, to the Great Southern in the south.

Juniper's services allow older Western Australians to continue living close to family and friends, connected to their communities.

The organisation takes seriously its role as an advocate for older Western Australians.

*The Voice of Older Western Australians* explores the experience of older Western Australians, including what it means to live well, ageism and the barriers to happiness.

A core outcome from the research is the **2025 Happiness of Older West Australians Index**, an attempt to measure what older people say brings them meaning and hope and how the drivers and levels of happiness among older Western Australians change over time.

The Index emerges in the context of Inspector General of Aged Care Natalie Siegal-Brown's September 2025 "clarion call" for an "urgent change in approach ... if the underlying intent of the (Aged Care) Act (2024) is to be more than just an aspiration".

The 148 recommendations of the 2021 Final Report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety have yet to be implemented. The current system of aged care is complex, with differing services, eligibility thresholds, assessments and funding.

Working together on robust, long-term solutions for older Western Australians requires commitment to the bigger picture.

Older Western Australians consistently say they worry about the aged-care system, cannot understand it, or what they are entitled to and are unsure about whether they will get access to it if they need it. Juniper believes we need to listen to what they are telling us and act now to address it.

### About this research

This research encompasses the views of older Western Australians in the general population and was conducted via a quantitative online survey in September 2025.

That study consisted of 201 Western Australians aged 70 and over. This year's respondents were mostly living in Perth, with 16% living in a regional area.

# CEO Reflection

## At a glance

- Older Western Australians are even more upbeat in 2025, particularly women as they spend more time doing things that are important to them.
- While happiness trends upwards, older people continue to experience ageism and its impact.
- Australians of all ages have the right to be treated fairly and to enjoy the same opportunities as others, yet ageism continues to be the most accepted form of prejudice in Australia.
- Older people feel confusion and concern when trying to learn about, and access, aged care services and support, which impacts their wellbeing.

## Juniper's *Voice of Older Western Australians* White Paper has provided a great barometer when it comes to gauging the sentiment of, and society's perceptions, towards older Western Australians.

Now in its second year, the research paints a portrait of everyday older people, their experiences, what it means to live well, ageism and the barriers to happiness.

While this year's report reveals an increase in happiness among women, driven by their ability to participate in activities that are important to them, it also unearths issues that need to be addressed as a matter of priority, not just by Juniper but society as a whole.

Nearly three quarters (72%) of older Western Australians say they have experienced aged-based discrimination,

an increase compared to 2024 (66%), with complaints of being spoken to in a patronising way rising significantly to two in five (40%) up from 29% last year. Women reported being spoken to in a patronising way (51%), almost twice the rate of men (28%).

This is deeply concerning and not at all acceptable in 2025. While there have been well-intentioned initiatives like the WA Government's *Challenge Your Bias* campaign — launched last year to raise awareness about age-related discrimination — as a society we really need to be doing more collectively to address these issues.

Australians of all ages have the right to be treated fairly and to enjoy the same opportunities as others, yet according to the Australian Human Rights Commission's 2024 report, *Shaping Perceptions*, ageism continues to be the most accepted form of prejudice in Australia and is most experienced by those who physically appear older.

Our report shows ageism can lead to negative attitudes to older people, impacting their self-esteem and overall well-being.

As observed last year, while older Western Australians see their generation as knowledgeable, resilient and wise, they believe society sees them as boring or complainers ... or doesn't see them at all.

**"As a professional with a long career, to be suddenly treated as someone who doesn't know anything is galling to say the least,"** one respondent said.

It's easy to see how this would make someone feel: **"It makes me feel worthless, like I have nothing to offer."**

Without doubt, ageism can have a massive impact on people's self-esteem and overall well-being, even causing them, as one respondent reported, to **"disassociate from society"**.

It's why we need to be doing more collectively to combat age discrimination and stop treating older people like they are a burden or invisible.



**“These insights reinforce the urgent need for inclusive, accessible, and well-communicated support systems that empower older Western Australians to live healthy, connected and dignified lives.”**

It is essential we continue to raise awareness, promote inclusivity — as a way of ensuring all individuals, regardless of age, have equal opportunities and rights — and call out discrimination when we see it.

This isn't too much to ask. Everyone deserves the fundamental right to be treated with respect and to stay connected to what truly matters, such as family and community, which is why we stand with the Human Rights As We Age Network in calling for the human rights of older Australians to be enshrined in a national Human Rights Act and framework.

This call for action is especially urgent when we consider other ongoing challenges older Australians face on a daily basis.

While many older Western Australians are finding greater purpose and meaning in their lives, our report shows cost of living and family concerns continue to weigh heavily on their overall happiness.

As one of the respondents said: **“The cost of living is making life much more mundane as living on a pension makes life a bigger struggle.”**

In addition, the fear remains for older people becoming a burden on their families, who are themselves grappling with financial strain.

The report also mentions confusion and concern among older people trying to learn about, and access, aged care services and support, and the impact this has had on their wellbeing.

There’s a tendency to assume older people can easily access these services, when in reality it’s not always the case for everyone.

Not being able to learn about or access services doesn’t just impact older people on a personal level, it also puts further strain on their families along with both primary and tertiary health systems.

Finding solutions to improve access and communication is vital and could significantly improve health outcomes for older Western Australians.

After all, we know Australia has an ageing population, with the number of people turning 75 set to rise sharply from 35,000 per year to 50,000 in the next three years and remain at that level for the next 30-40 years.

These perceptions, feelings and lived experiences are likely to persist unless we confront the systemic cultural issues surrounding the way we treat older people.

Strategic, well-timed investment in the health and wellbeing of older Western Australians, coupled with concrete action to reduce the impact of ageism, will be central to Juniper’s advocacy in the coming years.

We view this report as an opportunity to deepen our understanding, strengthen education for those we care for, and reaffirm our role as educators and advocates for older people.

These insights reinforce the urgent need for inclusive, accessible, and well-communicated support systems that empower older Western Australians to live healthy, connected and dignified lives.

**Russell Bricknell**  
CEO, Juniper Aged Care

**“The cost of living is making life much more mundane as living on a pension makes life a bigger struggle.”**

– Female, 70-79 years



# The Happiness Index

## Taking the happiness test, the 2025 Happiness Index.

CoreData WA calculated the happiness of older Western Australians by asking them what was essential to their happiness, weighting the answers in order of importance and multiplying that by the extent to which people could take part in those activities.

Activities such as spending time with family, socialising with friends, exercise and taking part in meaningful hobbies and activities make a greater contribution to the Happiness Index score than activities older Western Australians rated as less essential to happiness, including religious and spiritual faith, local outings and travel.

A Happiness Index Score of zero to 49 is 'low', 50 to 69 is 'moderate' and 70 to 100 is 'high'.

The 2025 Happiness of Older Western Australians Index score rose slightly to 69.5 points, from 67.9 points last year, at the top end of the 'moderate' happy band.

Women reported the biggest upswing, breaking into the 'high' happy band with a score of 71.2 points, up from 61.9 points.

Men are also a little happier, at 67.2 points, up from 65.8 points.

Those in their 80s, at 65.2 points, are happier than last year (61.6 points). Those in their 70s scored 66.1 points, a dip from last year's 67.2 points.



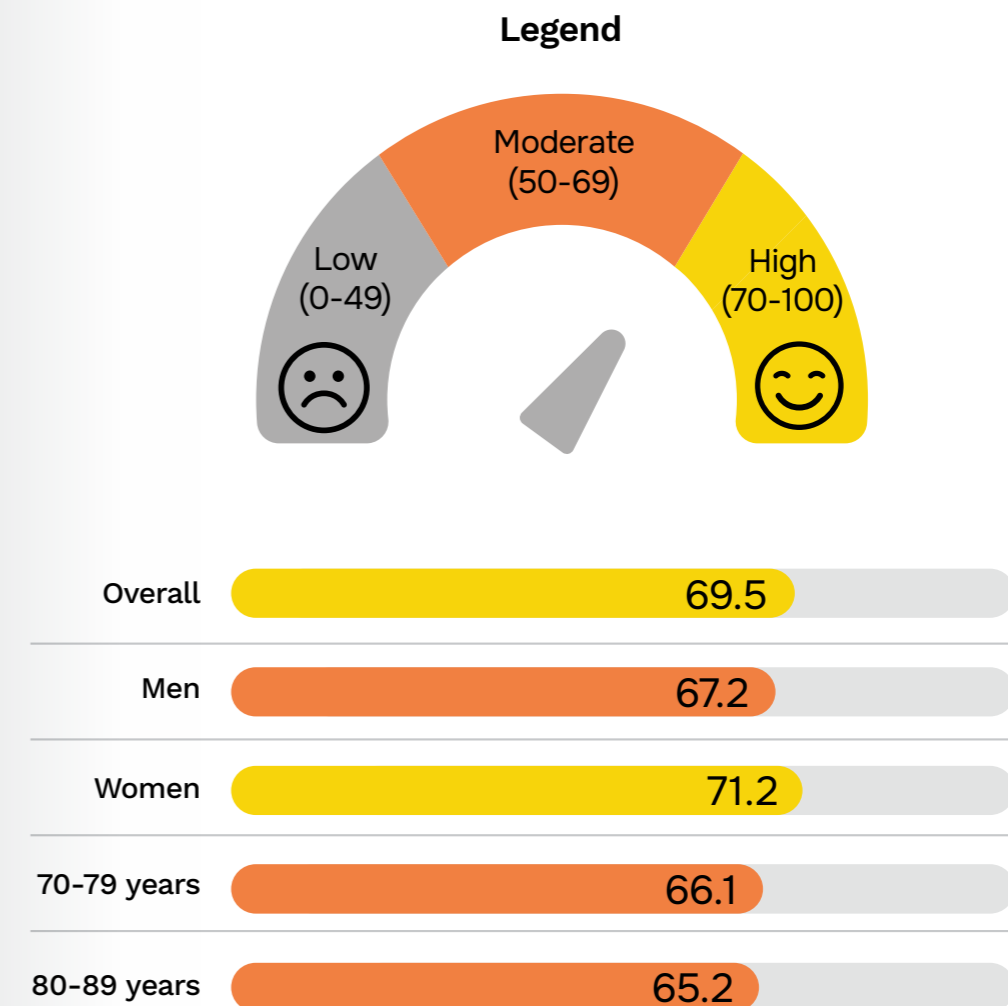
### Case Study

#### A retirement filled with community

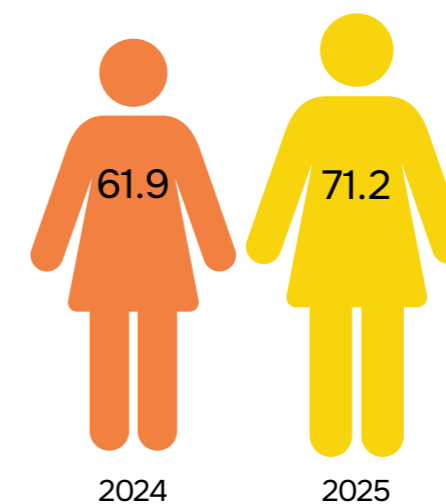
Decorated teacher, Michelle, is now thoroughly enjoying a new chapter of her life. From painting fellow residents to compiling books of her artworks, Michelle feels enriched in retirement.

**“It’s become my little world here (at Rowethorpe) – there’s a real community feel. It has changed my life as it gets you more social and outgoing. My petrol bill has gone down dramatically, but my interests have gone up dramatically.”**

### 2025 Happiness Index score (1/100)



### Women 2025 Happiness Index score (1/100)



# Older Western Australians are even more upbeat in 2025

On many indicators, including mental health, standard of living, family relationships and friendships, older people were happy or extremely happy.

The research found happiness with mental health rose with age while happiness with physical health declined. More than half (55%) were extremely happy with their mental health, but only one in four (24%) were happy with their physical health.

Those living with a partner (44%) were also happier than those living alone (33%).

Overall, Western Australians aged 70 years and older remained 'moderately' happy, while women's happiness increased to 'high' as they spent more time doing things important to them, like catching up with friends and exercising.

Like last year, men remained more likely than women to say they were not spending as much time with family and friends as they would like. As a result, men considered they were not as happy with their connection to community and reported lower levels of happiness overall.

**“Retired, lost weight and (have more time).”**

– Male, 70-79 years

More women (41%) were extremely happy with life (up from 28% last year) and slightly fewer men were (38% vs 43%). Women were also much happier than men with the level of choice and control they had over their lives (53% vs 37%) and their sense of purpose (45% vs 37%).

Western Australians in their 80s reported higher overall happiness (48%) than those in their 70s (37%) across most aspects of life, except physical health. The greatest differences were seen in mental health (69% vs 51%), family relationships (62% vs 50%), and the level of choice and control over their life (57% vs 42%).

One in four older Western Australians said they are happier now than they were 10 years ago. This is largely attributed to reduced work-related stress (43%, up from 30% in 2024), strong relationships with family and loved ones (28%, up from 26%), and participation in meaningful activities (23%, consistent with last year). Other key contributors to increased happiness include financial comfort, good health, and satisfaction with their living environment.

This year, more older Western Australians said they were extremely happy with their sense of purpose (41%, up from 37%). However, fewer felt extremely happy with their personal safety (47%, down from 53% in 2024) or their level of choice and control over life (45%, down from 51%).

However, possibly due to cost-of-living pressures, fewer cited 'financial comfort' as a reason for being happier than they were a decade ago when compared to last year (11%, down from 19%).

**“I have retired and now live a good life, travelling, looking after grandkids, lots of adventure and lovely relationships with family, kids and friends, living a simple but fulfilling life.”**

– Female, 70-79 years

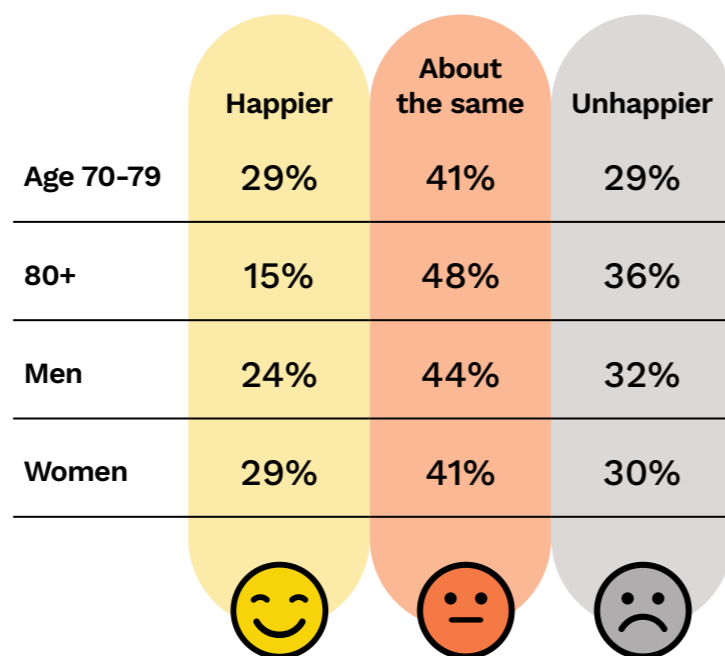


# Are older people happier now?

One in four older Western Australians report being happier now than they were 10 years ago. However, there was a notable difference between age groups.

Among those in their 70s, 29% said they were happier than a decade ago. In contrast, only 15% of people in their 80s felt happier, with 38% feeling less happy than 10 years ago.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that in 2024/2025 the average age at retirement was 63.8 years. Since retirement — and the expected relief from work-related stress it brings — is a major contributor to happiness, it's likely people experience greater life satisfaction in their 70s as they reflect on both their working years and their life after retirement.



“I can't do today what I was able to do ten years ago. The mind is willing but the body is not.”

– Male, 80+ years

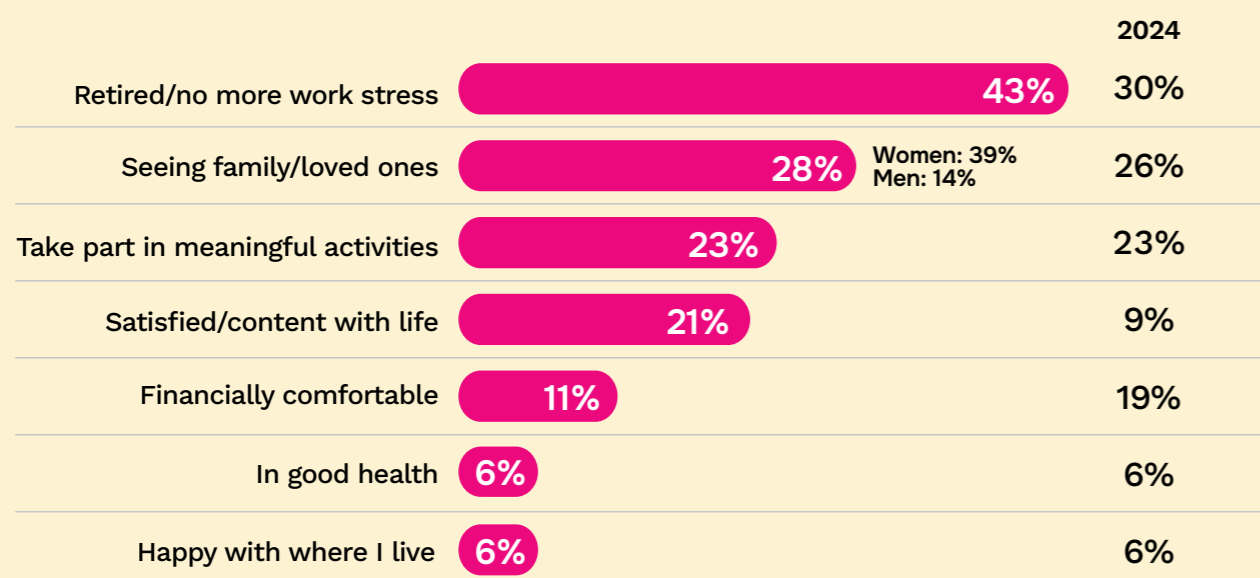
For those people feeling unhappier than they were 10 years ago, the main driver was declining health.

Of note, 31% of people aged 80+ reported that “not being able to do things that are important to me” was a reason for unhappiness, compared to 15% of those aged 70-79. This year, family concerns and financial concerns increased from last year. This may reflect the current cost of living concerns in Western Australia.

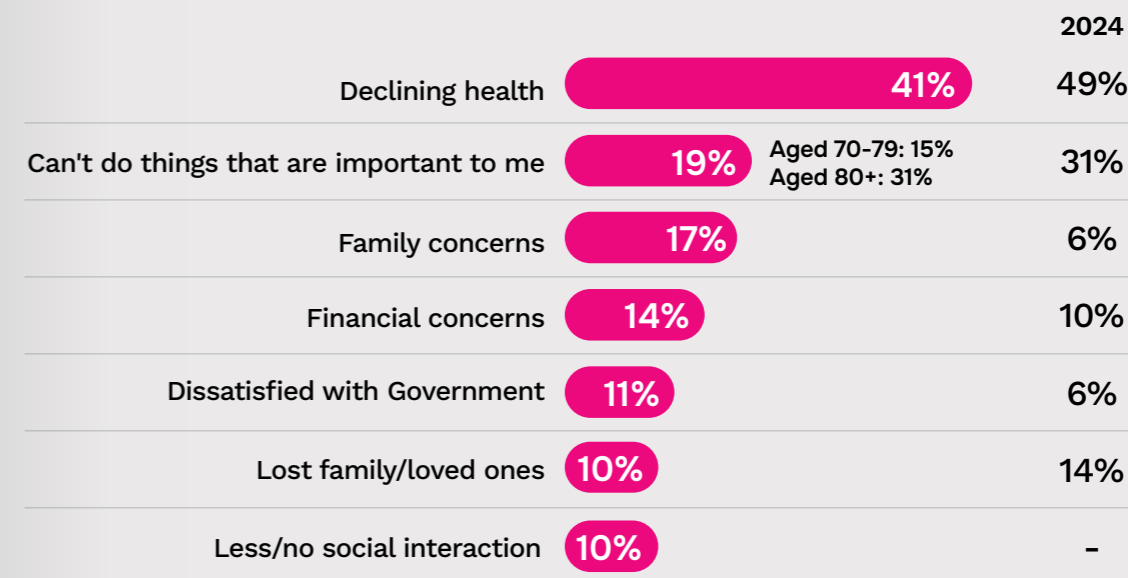
“Settled into retirement and find it easier to relax and it's great being able to what you want and when you want, and with whom!”

– Female, 70-79 years

## Reasons for being happier than 10 years ago



## Reasons for being unhappier than 10 years ago



## Case Study

### Malcolm stays close with family

While Malcolm Stone may have left his frequent skydiving days behind him, family connections remain central in his wellbeing living in residential aged care. His daughter Jen visits most days and takes him to catch-ups with loved ones on weekends.

“My daughter Jen means a lot to me. I’m very grateful to have her. It’s been great having her as my carer over the years and now.”



“My concern is that we have worked hard for 60 years and are self-funded retirees living a modest lifestyle and appear to be continually trying to cope with rising cost of living with very little assistance for State or Federal Government (far higher than Government quoted figures for inflation or cost of living increase etc). Seniors appear to be becoming a burden on the Government and the younger generation. I get the impression that State and Federal Government and the younger generation wish that seniors did not exist. State and Federal Government only promise care and assistance for seniors, however, that assistance is tied up in so many rules etc that the assistance is virtually non-existent.”

– Male, 70-79 years

“The cost of living is making life much more mundane as living on a pension makes life a bigger struggle.”

– Female, 70-79 years

“I have no mortgage, lots of friends and family.”

– Female, 70-79 years



# What is essential to happiness?

It might be different strokes for different folks, but when it comes to the essential elements of happiness, older Western Australians were remarkably clear about what they valued most: family, friends, exercise, meaningful hobbies and activities and caring for family members.

Caring for family members (55%, up from 50%), local community outings (29% vs 21%) and travel (29%, up from 22%) were slightly more essential to happiness this year.

Volunteer work remained essential for more than one in four, respondents as does religious or spiritual faith for more than one in five.

In 2025, women continued to find socialising with friends and family, local community outings and volunteer work or giving back more essential to their personal happiness than men.

For men, participating in meaningful hobbies and activities was more essential to their happiness than socialising, which elicited the biggest difference in the genders (76% for women and 52% for men).



## What is essential to my happiness?

	Not important at all	Somewhat important	Essential	
Spending time with family		26%	72%	
Socialising with friends	3%	32%	65%	*This is an increase from 59% in 2024
Participating in meaningful hobbies and activities	3%	40%	57%	
Exercise	3%	39%	57%	
Caring for family members	5%	40%	55%	
Outings to places in your local community	12%	59%	29%	*This is an increase from 21% in 2024
Travel	19%	52%	29%	*This is an increase from 22% in 2024
Volunteer work or opportunities to 'give back'	17%	56%	27%	
Religious or spiritual faith	52%	26%	22%	

## Top four elements essential to happiness



## What is essential to my happiness for men and women?

Men		
	Spending time with family	66%
	Participating in meaningful hobbies and activities	61%
	Exercise	56%
	Caring for family members	54%
	Socialising with friends	52%
	Travel	27%
	Volunteer work or opportunities to 'give back'	22%
	Outings to places in your local community	20%
	Religious or spiritual faith	16%
Women		
	Spending time with family	78%
	Socialising with friends	76%
	Exercise	58%
	Caring for family members	56%
	Participating in meaningful hobbies and activities	54%
	Outings to places in your local community	36%
	Travel	31%
	Volunteer work or opportunities to 'give back'	31%
Religious or spiritual faith	27%	

Older Western Australians remained content with their connection to community, with four in five reporting they were happy or extremely happy.

While family and friends, exercise and meaningful activities were the foundational elements of happiness, at least two in five of those surveyed were not doing as much of these as they would like.

Nearly a third (32%) did not socialise with friends as much as they would like and

nearly half (47%) did not exercise as much as they would like. Even more (57%) were not travelling as much as they would like to.

Women were more likely to be taking part in the activities that contributed most to their happiness such as spending time with family (61%), socialising with friends (70%) and exercise (51%), whereas men were more likely than women to take part in religious or spiritual faith activities (65%) and local community outings (56%), which contributed least to their happiness.

**“I am happy with my family, my health and my life in general and I feel that I have become stronger in my mind because of this.”**

– Female, 70-79 years

### Case Study

#### Rolling towards better health

A dozen Juniper Elimatta Retirement Living residents play bowls weekly, keeping them active and connected.



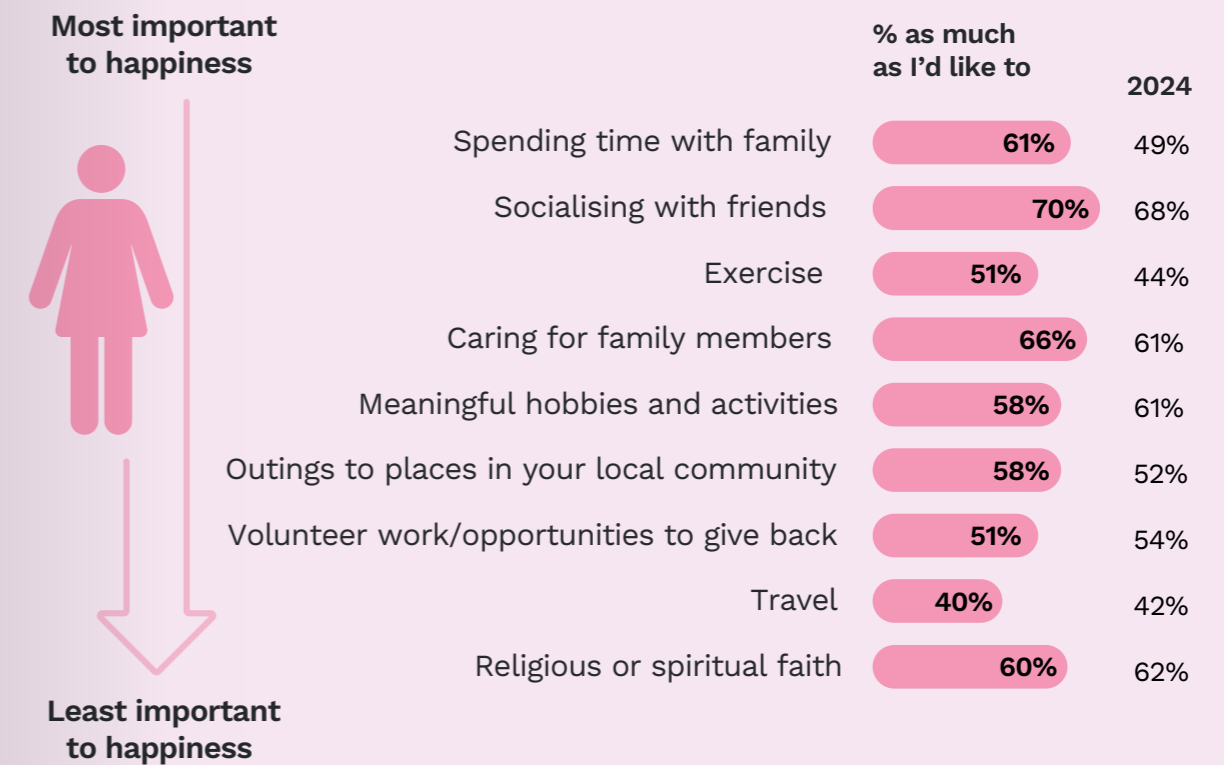
**“It’s the people and the camaraderie. I enjoy the fellowship, it’s good exercise and there’s a little bit of competition,”** group member Beverley Jones said.

**“We have a competition with a retirement village down the road annually – it’s such a nice social get-together.”**

#### Extent to which I’m doing what makes me happy



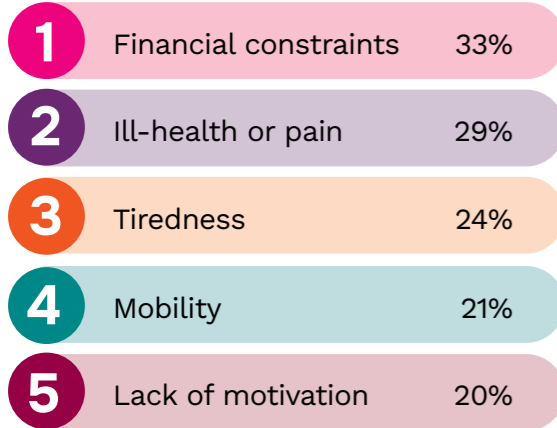
#### Extent to which I’m doing what makes me happy



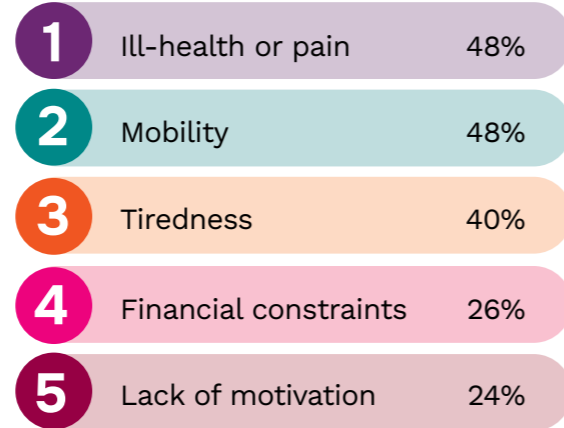
When asked what is holding older Western Australian back from taking part in things that are essential to their happiness the top barriers differed as you age.

What's stopping older Western Australians from doing what makes them happy?

Top 5: aged 70-79 years



Top 5: aged 80+ years



Case Study

A tote-ally great friendship

Two retirement living residents have created a great friendship built from the sight of a tote bag.



“I was delighted to look at Frances’ bag to see The Ring Cycle and I said ‘oh a fellow Wagnerian’, and then we also discovered that we had both worked in the justice system too. When I think of my friendship with Frances, it’s been one of the most valuable things that I’ve found here at Rosemount because she is the most wonderful listener, and is very understanding” Lyn Koehler said.

“I’m not in a retirement village to retire, I’m out every day.”

# The barriers to happiness

The research asked respondents what they felt were barriers to their happiness.

More than half (54%) report health issues as the primary barrier to happiness.



Almost two in five people (38%) nominate loss of independence as a barrier.



More than one in three people (33%) have financial concerns



More than one in five people (22%) experience stress or anxiety



One in five people (20%) feel undervalued due to their age



Limited access to services and support is an issue for almost one in five (19%) older Western Australians.



More than one in ten people (12%) feel a lack of social connection.



One in ten people (10%) feel that their housing or living conditions are barriers to their happiness.



### Things change as you age

Not surprisingly, health and independence barriers become more common with age.

70s vs 80s	What are barriers to happiness?	70s	vs	80s
		Loss of independence	33%	
	Health issues	50%		67%

There were also some differences in experiences between men and women. Men reporting their biggest barrier to happiness was health issues compared to women.

However, more women reported barriers to their happiness compared to men about financial concerns, stress or anxiety and feeling undervalued due to their age.

Men vs Women	What are barriers to happiness?	Men	Women
		Health issues	60%
	Financial concerns	30%	35%
	Stress or anxiety	19%	25%
	Feeling undervalued due to my age	18%	22%

### Which barrier would older Western Australians choose to eliminate?



Health issues  
**38%**



Financial concerns  
**20%**



Loss of independence  
**13%**

This suggests many may view loss of independence as an inevitable part of ageing, or that reducing financial stress could help address independence challenges.

**“Because I feel more isolated and with ageing, my health condition is declining and my physical pains are increasing!”**

– Female, 70-79 years

Men (44%) and those in their 80s (57%) were more likely to wish away health concerns compared to one in three women and those in their 70s. About a quarter of those in their 70s and women were more likely to wish for fewer financial concerns than men and those in their 80s.

Men vs Women	What barrier would you remove?	Men	Women
		Health issues	44%
	Financial concerns	12%	29%

### Case Study

#### Art keeps Ricky looking to the future

Diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease more than a decade ago, Ricky Muthukumaraswamy has not let the condition limit his artistic productivity.

With the help of Juniper Home Care services including personal care, domestic assistance, social support, transport, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, Ricky has been able to continue the art he loves so much at home.

**“It’s helped me keep doing what I want to do, it opens the doors for people who want to continue with their hobbies.”**



# What are the top concerns as people age?

Eight in 10 (80%) were concerned about falls and injury and not being able to stay in their own homes as they get older. Women (28% worries me a lot) report this more than men (19% worries me a lot)



Almost eight in ten (78%) are worried about not being able to remain at home as they age.



Almost seven in ten (67%) report not understanding the aged care system



Almost seven in ten (66%) are worried about being a burden on their family.



More than six in ten people (64%) do not understand what government funded support they are entitled to.



Half of older people (52%) have concerns over loneliness and isolation.



Half of people feel uncomfortable asking family for help. Women (25% worries me a lot) report this more than men (17% worries me a lot)



Less than half of people (44%) did not feel safe in their home.



## Worries and concerns similarly centre on health and independence.

Women (28%) were more likely to be concerned about falling and injuring themselves than men (19%), and more commonly felt uncomfortable about asking family for help (25% vs 17%).

On the aged care system, two thirds (67%) expressed concern about not understanding it, not being able to get access to it when they need it (67%) and not understanding what government support they are entitled to (64%).

### Case Study

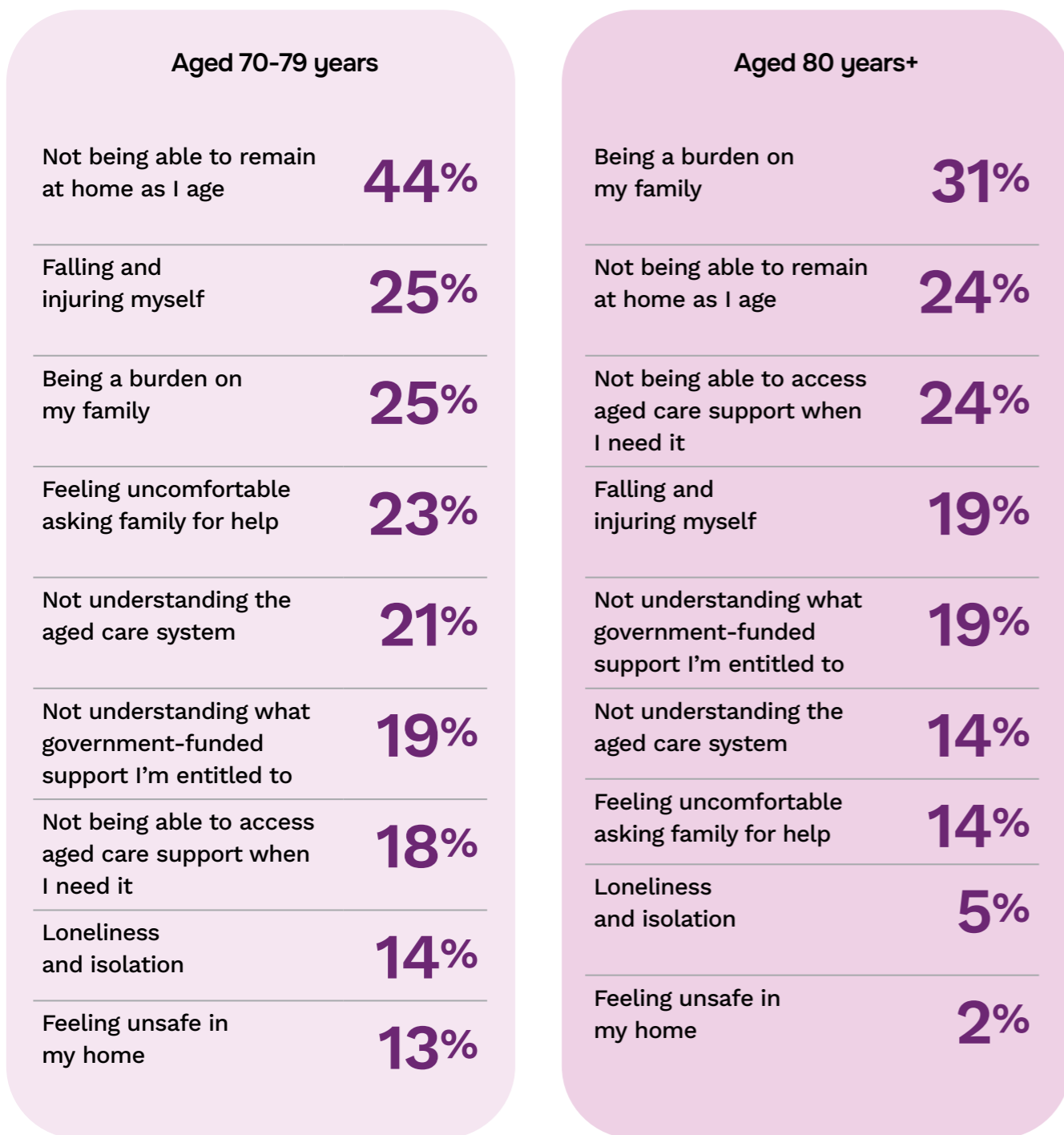
#### Ken's brush with happiness

Without having navigated the aged care system and secured funding for support at home, Ken Rich would not be able to stay at home with the love of his life, wife Vanda, while pursuing his passion for painting.

**“I go to bed knowing the next day is going to be the best day I ever had because I get to paint. I've got an army of Juniper people because while my mind is active, the feet don't always follow the mind. It all means we are able to stay at home, and I can keep painting a picture a day.”**



Concerns also change as you age.



“ I can't do now what I did then. I have peripheral neuropathy which has affected my balance and how I walk. I cannot walk quickly or far without getting fatigued.”

– Male, 70 -79

However, as they move into their 80s, Western Australians become more concerned about being a burden on their family and less worried about being able to stay in their home. This heightens their anxiety about access to the aged care system.

Older Western Australians who declared themselves unhappier in 2025 than they were 10 years ago outlined compelling reasons, including declining health (41%), not being able to do the things that are important to them (19%) and family (17%) and financial (14%) concerns. Those in their 80s were twice as likely to say they were unable to do the things that were important to them (31%) than those in their 70s (15%).

One in 10 were unhappy with the government, had lost family or loved ones and had little or no social interaction.

Compared with 2024, the proportion who said they were unhappier than 10 years ago due to poor health had declined (41% vs 49%), as had those with the inability to do the things that were important to them (19% vs 31%).

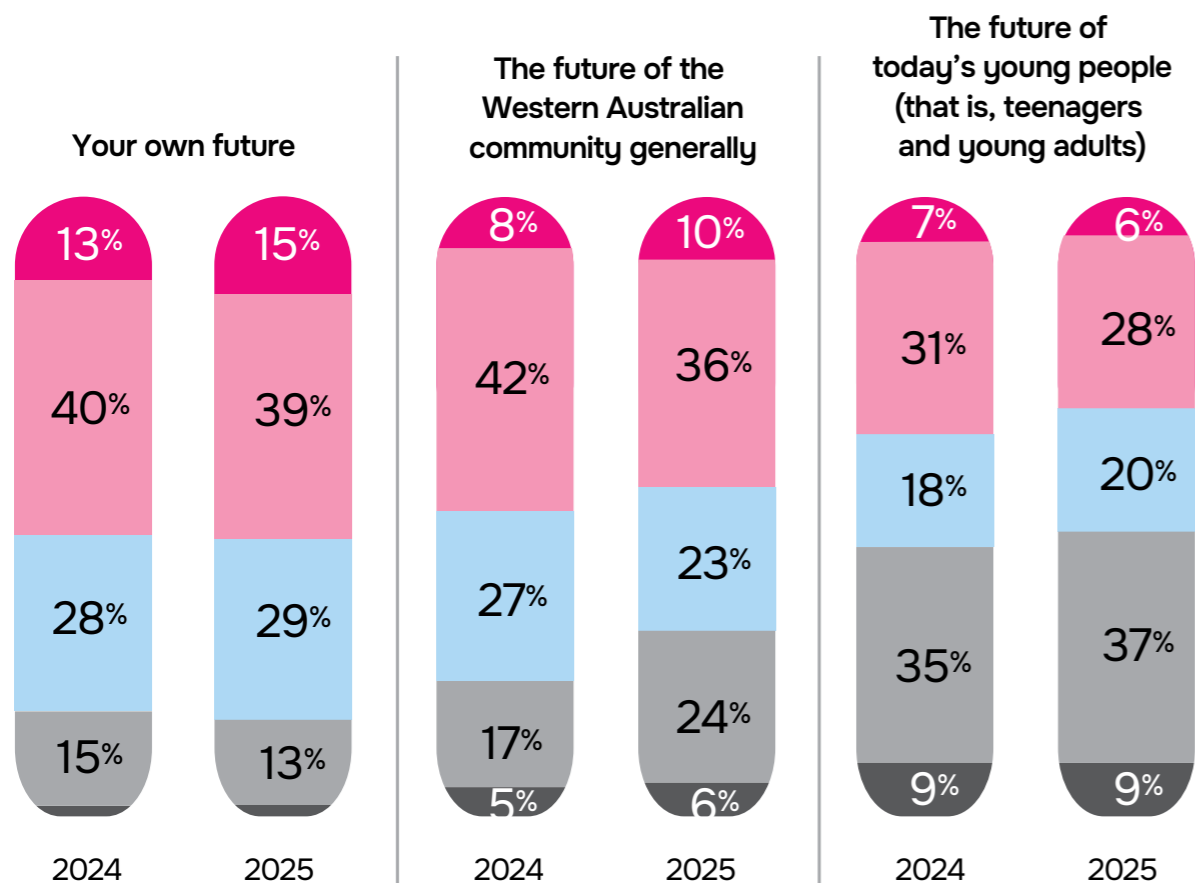
However, nearly three times as many cited family concerns (17%, up from 6% last year), and the proportion who said this was due to financial concerns (14% vs 10%) and the government (11% vs 6%) had also risen slightly.

“ State and Federal Government ... promise care and assistance for seniors, however, that assistance is tied up in so many rules that the assistance is virtually non-existent.”

– Male, 70 -79



Levels of optimism about...



Legend

- Very optimistic
- Somewhat optimistic
- Neither optimistic nor pessimistic
- Somewhat nor pessimistic
- Very pessimistic

Interestingly, while older Western Australians remained optimistic about their own future, they were more pessimistic about the future of the WA community.

Almost one in three were pessimistic in 2025, compared with one in five in 2024.

For themselves, however, older Western Australians retained their sunny outlook, with more than half (55%) somewhat or very optimistic.

**“ I have no friends and my family cannot come and visit me when they are in my area.”**

– Female, 70 -79



# The impact of ageism

## How do older people see themselves and how do they believe society sees them?

Older Western Australians told us their generation was knowledgeable, resilient, and wise, mostly consistent with last year. However, they did not believe the community shared that view.

While 67% viewed their generation as knowledgeable, up from 60% last year, only 30% believed society looked at them this way.

In line with WA Government concerns and AHRC findings, Juniper’s research reveals older Western Australians believed they were invisible (51%), perceived to be boring (48%) and complainers (47%), with results

similar to those of a year ago. Three in 10 older Western Australians (29%) felt they were treated with less respect than when they were younger, on par with last year.

There was little evidence State and Commonwealth Government push backs against age-related discrimination were gaining traction within WA or elsewhere.

Apart from the WA Government’s *Challenge Your Bias* campaign launched in October 2024, which aims to raise awareness about age-related discrimination, the urgent need for enforceable human rights for older Australians was taken up by the Human Rights As We Age Network (HRAWAN).

A coalition of groups spearheaded by the Australian Human Rights Commission and the International Federation on Ageing, the HRAWAN wants human rights of older Australians enshrined in a national Human Rights Act and Framework.

The WA Government’s *Challenge Your Bias* guide points out that Western Australians are living longer, ageism is culturally ingrained, and that it has a negative impact on physical and mental health. “Ageism is associated with social isolation, loneliness, financial insecurity and a reduced quality of life,” it concludes with an undertaking to support older people in Western Australia to feel valued, safe and empowered to lead happy and fulfilling lives in age-friendly communities.

Nearly three quarters (72%) of older Western Australians said they had experienced aged-based discrimination, up slightly on 2024 (66%).

A greater number reported experiencing discrimination this year than last year

(72% vs 66%), with complaints of being spoken to in a patronising way rising significantly to two in five (40%) from 29% last year. Women reported being spoken to in a patronising way, almost twice the rate of men.

Overall, hearing someone make negative comments about older generations rose compared to a year ago (31% vs 23%), with those in their 70s (37%) reporting this at a much greater rate than those in the 80s (10%).

Although two in five were able to shrug off negative comments, more than half experienced negative emotions including anger, withdrawal and frustration. Respondents also reported feeling undervalued, frustrated and sad.

Of concern were anecdotal reports this behaviour leaked into the medical sphere, with one respondent seeking diagnostic testing elsewhere, potentially compromising care.

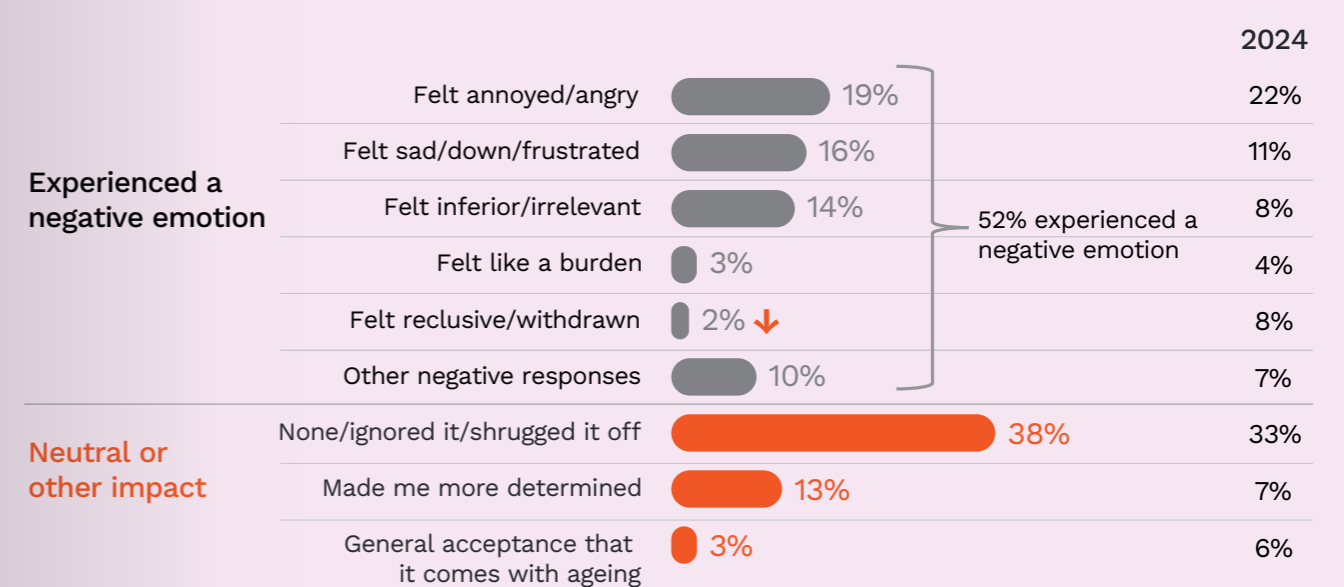
### I see my generation as...

- Knowledgeable
- Resilient
- Wise
- Respected by others
- Optimistic
- Inspiring
- Pessimistic
- Grumpy
- Complainers
- Open to change/new ideas

### I believe society sees my generation as...

- Invisible
- Boring
- Complainers
- Grumpy
- Knowledgeable
- Resilient
- Respected by others
- Wise
- Pessimistic
- Rude

### The impact of experiencing age-based discrimination





Impacts of ageism



“Extreme annoyance - as a professional with a long career, to be suddenly treated as someone who knows nothing is galling to say the least.”

Female, 70-79 years

“Made me angry and feeling that I was consuming resources which should go to younger people.”

Female, 70-79 years



“Found it frustrating but also made me feel there was nothing I could do about it - whilst I appreciate help being offered, I am not totally useless nor incompetent, just because I have grey hair!!”

Female, 70-79 years

“Made me feel sad and wanting to cry. Couldn't stop thinking about it all day.”

Female, 70-79 years

“It made me angry. I will not be dismissed, spoken down to or be made feel invisible. I always challenge anyone who does. Baby Boomer bashing is quite rife in our culture at the moment. That is their problem, not mine and I will always tell them so.”

Female, 70-79 years

“Extremely frustrated, like you know you have broken something and they don't believe you so you have to go somewhere else to get a positive Xray. Or in the shop you want to buy a fridge but nobody will serve you.”

Female, 80+ years



“Sometimes frustrating but generally I am ok with these attitudes. I don't expect to be taken too seriously at my age.”

Male, 70-79 years

“I decided it was their problem and worked/socialised with people who did not have these issues.”

Female, 70-79 years

“It actually has made me more determined to continue to voice my opinion, particularly as the main offenders are the politicians and in particular my local state member for the seat I am in in WA.”

Female, 70-79 years

“Accepted that was part of ageing and I know and have confidence in myself.”

Female, 80+ years

“I just brush them off as I feel these people are ignorant and not worth spending time with.”

Female, 70-79 years

“Made me change to a totally different medical centre. Made me assert myself or took a family member with me to stress my points I wanted answers to.”

Female, 70-79 years

“Made me much stronger in a quiet, determined way.”

Female, 70-79





# Conclusion

**The CoreData WA research commissioned by Juniper for the 2025 Voice of Older Western Australians White Paper again demonstrates the resilience and optimism of older Western Australians.**

This cohort is more upbeat in 2025 compared to 2024, driven by women who spend more time doing things that are important to them.

Older Western Australians also remain optimistic about their own future, however, almost one in three are pessimistic about the future of the WA community.

Despite this sunny outlook, it does not remove the need for urgent government action to improve access to services that could improve health and wellbeing and address the underlying causes of systemic ageism.

When older people are connected to family, friends, community and exercise, the whole community benefits. There is little doubt timely access to quality support helps older Western Australians stay happier and healthier for longer, ultimately strengthening their contribution to the community and reducing costs.

This report, outlines the need for targeted work to combat ageism and address issues that limit the capacity of older people to improve their physical and mental health. The government and community are simply not moving fast enough.

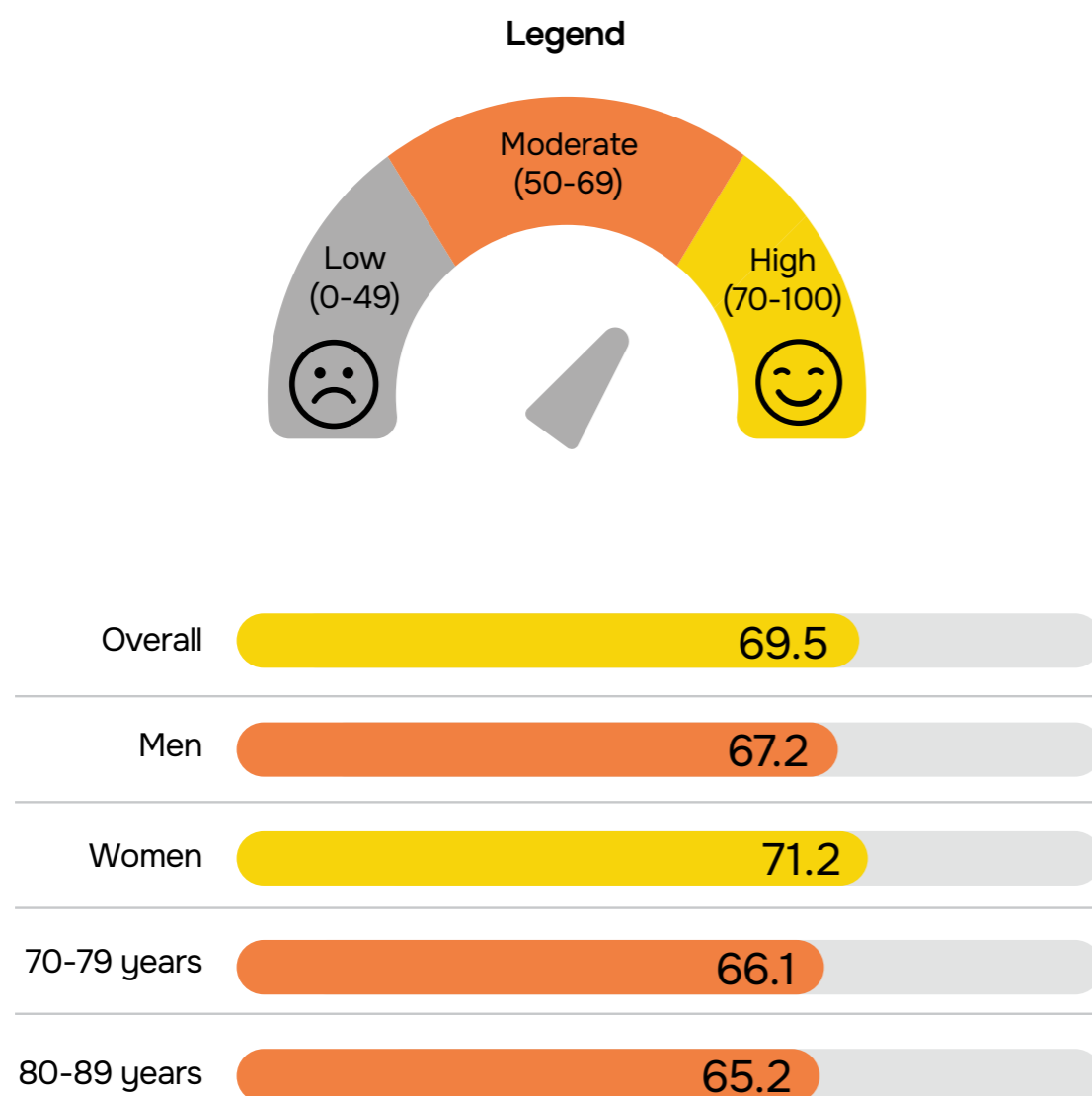
At a minimum, older Western Australians are telling us we need to find more effective ways of communicating the supports that are available. The need for more home care, residential care, mental health services and well-trained workforce is not in dispute. But addressing it remains urgent.

It is no longer enough to declare we want to be part of a conversation about how we support our older people's health, wellbeing and connection to loved ones. We need to take decisive steps to make this aspiration a reality. We need to listen to what older Western Australians are telling us.

# Recommendations

The Voice of Older Western Australians continues to be important. For the second year, older Western Australians have shared what they feel is essential to their happiness. They have also shared their concerns, worries, barriers to happiness and how they feel society views them.

2025 Happiness Index score (1/100)



**Q**

So how do we shift the barometer from content to happy for older Western Australians?

**A**

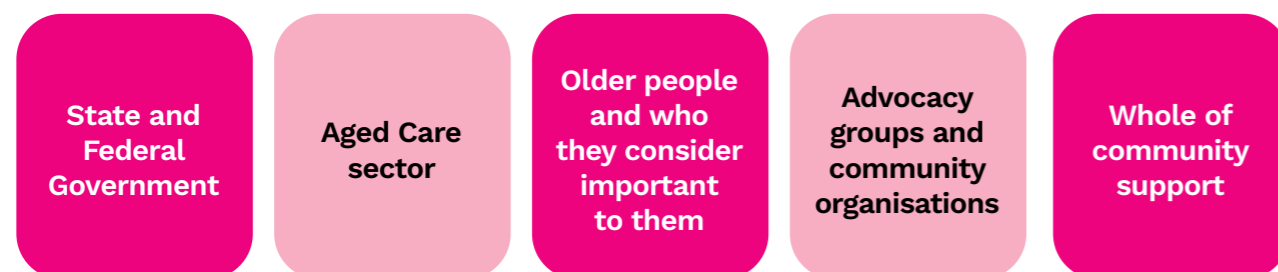
The answers lies in what older people have shared with us through this research.



**“ I am doing volunteer work in our church café and love it.”**

- Female, 70 -79

## Who needs to be involved in creating change?



### Older people and their support networks

The voices, values and lived experiences of older people must guide all decisions.

- Family, friends and chosen communities can play a vital role in advocacy and care.
- They can help services ensure relevance and dignity.

### Aged care sector

Residential, Retirement and home care providers should be implementing cultural practices in their everyday service delivery.

- Training staff in cultural safety, empathy, and person-centred care is essential to workforce development.
- Providers can be innovation drivers, piloting new models of care that reflect diverse cultural needs.

### Advocacy groups and community organisations

Advocacy groups provide a voice for the vulnerable, amplify concerns and push for policy reform.

- Community organisations can act as cultural connectors, especially important for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and First Nations communities.
- Both can create programs and grassroots initiatives that foster inclusion and wellbeing.

### State and Federal Government

Through policies and funding, they set the regulatory framework and allocate resources. Through their policies and funding mechanisms, they define the regulatory framework and distribute resources.

- Through strategic leadership, they can champion age-friendly policies and national campaigns
- Monitoring and accountability to ensure standards are met and progress is tracked.

### Whole of community support

Urban planning, transport, and public spaces must be inclusive and age-friendly.

- Schools, businesses, and local groups can foster respect and connection through intergenerational engagement.
- Media, education, and public discourse play a role in challenging ageism.

### Cultural change is not linear – it requires ongoing collaboration, feedback, and shared responsibility.

Long-term investment in older people's happiness will require ongoing collaboration. We have identified five additional groups in society whose actions can help shape older people's well-being.



### Education and training institutions

- Universities and TAFEs can shape future aged care professionals and embed cultural competence and gerontology in curricula.
- Professional development providers can offer ongoing training for aged care staff in cultural safety, trauma-informed care, and inclusive practices.

### Private sector and employers

- Businesses and employers — especially those in retail, hospitality, and transport, which interact with older people daily — can adopt age-friendly practices and support older workers.
- Tech companies are innovators in assistive technology, digital inclusion, and smart home solutions that empower older people.

### Legal and regulatory bodies

- Human rights commissions advocate for the rights of older people and monitor age discrimination.

### Faith and cultural institutions

- Churches, mosques, temples, and cultural centres often provide community and spiritual support.
- Cultural elders and leaders — especially in First Nations and CALD communities — hold influence and insight into respectful care practices.

### Volunteer networks and peer support groups

- Volunteers play a huge role in social connection, transport, and companionship.
- Peer-led groups involve older people supporting each other through shared experiences, advocacy, and education.

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**The voice of older  
Western Australians.**



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