

## **Community celebrates Respect for Seniors**

Members of the community of all ages donned purple and turned out in force to celebrate 'Respect for Seniors Week' at St Ives Uniting Church on Sunday 20 June.

'Respect for Seniors' is a grassroots campaign geared towards engaging the community by raising awareness of ageism and generating conversation about positive ageing. Organisers encouraged people to show support for older members of their community by wearing purple.

Noeline Brown, Ambassador for Ageing, attended on the day, speaking about the importance and contribution of seniors, saying "older Australians are literally this country's living memory; the repository of all that makes the wonderful nation we are today.

"We live in a time where we could strengthen the bridges that in former times were stronger between the generations – I would like us to rebuild the rivers of wisdom and experience that once flowed more easily from the old to the young."

Ms Brown also spoke of the vast majority of seniors continuing to contribute to society through volunteering, and that Australians over 55 years contribute an estimated \$75 billion annually to the economy through unpaid work.

Reverend Eric Drury, Director, Ministry and Mission, UnitingCare Ageing, spoke of the organisation's policy and practice of person-centred care. He said, "It is our aspiration that people within UnitingCare communities are encouraged to have a voice, to have choice and to be empowered for who they are. We seek to bring them honour and respect."

Students from Abbotsleigh and St Ives High School played an active role in the celebrations, including the inaugural Elders Interview with Judith Wheeldon AM. The students helped facilitate the interview alongside Rev Dr Douglas Purnell who was

recently awarded an Order of Australia Medal for service to the Uniting Church in Australia and to the community.

Gillian McFee, Director, UnitingCare Ageing, said that 'Respect for Seniors' was commemorated as part of Elder Abuse Awareness day.

"This campaign provides a vital reminder to everyone in the community of the damaging effects of ageism which occur when older people are exploited.

"'Respect for Seniors' raises awareness and asks the community to demonstrate their support and acknowledgement of the contributions of older people through positive actions, such as wearing the colour purple".

**END**

**For more information please contact Ingrid Hoff, Public Relations Assistant, UnitingCare NSW.ACT on 02 8267 4374 or [ingridh@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:ingridh@nsw.uca.org.au).**

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