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MEDIA RELEASE

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The Faces of Ageing: through our lens

The Faces of Ageing: *through our lens* exhibition is a collaborative project between the Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland and Queensland University of Technology (QUT).

When it comes to older age, the broader media often depicts seniors in a way that is either overly positive or negative, thus missing the reality of the lived daily experiences of older adults.

Three Community Ambassadors - Zelda, Bob and David – worked as co-researchers, guided by researchers from QUT with COTA Queensland staff took photographs and conducted interviews to document the “*Faces of Ageing*” across their local communities of Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast, and Roma and surrounds. Ambassadors photographed and interviewed more than 20 community residents, endeavouring to better understand what brings most meaning to their lives as they age.

This exhibition visually represents what the Ambassadors found: the importance of meaningful relationships with friends, family and the broader community (*Walking Together*); the desire to cherish and embrace the present moment (*The Time is Now*); the importance of contributing to the lives of others through volunteering (*Making a Difference*); the value of diversity and of looking forward to the future (*The Face of Ageing*); and the sense that older age brings with it an opportunity both to deepen engagement with long-loved hobbies, and to take on new interests and adventures (*Curious Endeavours*).

As the Ambassadors explained, the photographs reflect “*survival, strength, courage, adventure, positiveness, joy and laughter*”. Despite the varied backgrounds and life challenges of many community participants, the Ambassadors identified a deep positivity and resilience. Sharing the stories of these men and women, one Ambassador said “*they were ageless to some extent – it was amazing to hear what they had done, what obstacles they had overcome and how optimistically they viewed the future. While ageing has its downside (which is more physical slippage) there is a good deal to be optimistic about*”.

This project, as Ambassador Zelda poignantly summarised, reminds us that life - at every age – is to be engaged with, understood and celebrated. As you engage with this exhibition, we challenge you to take a moment to pause and reflect on your own personal narrative, experiences, and expectations of ageing.

“Every single one of us has our own story, so the lesson is to acknowledge me as an individual – don’t just look at the surface and see the wrinkles and grey hair, or frail exterior. Ask me what my story is and what makes me feel inspired and motivated now. What’s life like for me now and even though I might be 90, what dreams do I have and what else do I want to achieve? These days it’s important to ask myself, “if not now, then when?”

The Exhibition opens at SANDBAG Community Centre on 10 October and will be on show until 2 November 2018 before relocating to Roma in December 2018.

People viewing the **Faces of Ageing: *through our lens*** Exhibition will have the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas on ***What Healthy Ageing Means to them.*** This will be collected by COTA Queensland and will inform our programs and advocacy work.

Tickets for the launch are available through Eventbrite.

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