

MEDIA RELEASE

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“POLITICAL CORRECTNESS HAS GONE MAD” CLAIM AUSSIE SENIORS

Survey Reveals Nine in Ten Respondents Believe Political Correctness is Ruining Society

These days ‘political correctness’ plays an overwhelming role in what people feel they can, or should, say. Exploring this further, a new study released today by the Australian Seniors Insurance Agency shows that the vast majority of seniors believe people are too politically correct in modern society (87.9%).

The *Modern Australian Manners* report is the seventh instalment of *The Australian Seniors Series* - an ongoing national survey investigating the shifting attitudes, concerns and emerging trends affecting Australia’s over 50s.

Today’s world is very different to the world that seniors grew up in, particularly as a result of underlying pressures to abide by the rules of political correctness and other ‘socially acceptable’ behaviours. Yet, eight in ten seniors agree that there is too much of a focus on this and that ‘having to be politically correct all the time’ is ruining society (86.0%) and is inauthentic (86.6%).

General Manager of Marketing and Australian Seniors spokesperson Simon Hovell said, “Seniors today respect the Aussie values of mateship, equality and taking it on the chin, so it comes as no surprise that they find the rise of political correctness inauthentic and quite annoying.”

In fact, it seems Australia’s over 50s pride themselves on remaining authentic, with almost half of seniors agreeing that they don’t ever feel pressured to alter their behaviour to suit certain social environments (43.2%). A further 25 per cent claim that at times they do feel pressured to adapt their behaviour, but that they do not care and would rather stay true to who they are.

This commitment to authenticity positions Aussie seniors in good stead with almost one third agreeing that they no longer care about social norms or pleasing others as much (31%) and one in five feeling more self-assured and confident (19.2%), resulting in a better sense of humour as they age (26.9%).

Nan Bosler, President, Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association, says, “In some respects political correctness pressures are shaping future generations, however seniors are not letting this pressure deter them from staying true to themselves and their beliefs and they should be respected for that attitude.”

“Australia’s older generation have been through a momentous amount of change and challenges, and this has made them a resilient bunch who value good humour and are not easily offended by light-hearted teasing. Therefore, it is easy to understand why this generation can be frustrated with certain political correct filters that are assumed in modern-day living,” Mrs Bosler said.

Interestingly, it appears Australian seniors have mastered the art of injecting humour into would-be serious situations. The findings show seniors are using humour to lighten politically correct circumstances, with two in five admitting to having shared politically incorrect jokes (42.7%) and a third saying they have used humour in sensitive situations (32.2%).

Further, one quarter of seniors are using humour even if they know it might make some people uncomfortable (24.3%), and one in five admit to using it amongst inappropriate company (20.8%).

Exercising humour in challenging situations does not detract from the fact that seniors place a lot of value on basic manners and respect for others, with the majority of seniors ranking “not being rude or aggressive to staff” as the most important practice while eating out as opposed to minor behaviours such as keeping elbows off the table.

In public situations, it appears seniors place the utmost importance on ‘remembering Ps and Qs’, and forgetting to do so would be a social faux pas. Similarly, when it comes to conversational blunders three in five agree that ‘expressing racist, sexist, classist or ageist opinions’ is one of the greatest social faux pas you can commit in modern Australia (62.8%).

“Australia’s older generations were raised to respect one another and treat each individual equally. However, it does seem that these values have not withstood the test of time with most seniors believing that social etiquette in Australia has gotten worse over the past five years,” said Nan Bosler.

Among those seniors who say that social etiquette in Australia has worsened over time, more than four in five believe that people today ‘are ruder or more impatient with one another’ compared to in their younger years (84.4%). Additionally, more than two thirds of seniors agree that people today do not ‘demonstrate care for other people as much’ (68.8%), and three in five believe people ‘no longer care what other people think’ (62.6%) or that ‘people are less friendly and happy’ (62.4%).

“It seems that seniors today are challenging the status quo by placing far less importance on traditional social etiquette practices and modern politically correct behaviours, instead emphasising the value of being true to themselves, their beliefs and those around them. Plus, they keep their sense of humour in tact whilst doing so,” concluded Mr Hovell.

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About Australian Seniors Insurance Agency

Australian Seniors Insurance Agency was established in 1998 to provide cost effective insurance solutions for the mature Australian Market, a market too often ignored. Australian Seniors Insurance Agency offers car, home, travel, funeral, pet and accident insurance for Australians over 50.

About the 'Australian Seniors Series'

In order to explore the behaviours, values and concerns of senior Australians, CoreData surveyed online 1,000 typical Australians over 50 years old across the nation in June 2017. The sample collection employed soft quotas to monitor representativeness of the Australian senior adult population.

Hard quotas by state were also employed to ensure all the main states were represented with sufficiently robust samples of seniors in the research: NSW = 200, VIC = 200, QLD = 200, WA = 200, Remaining states/territories = 200. A total of 200 Millennials also took part in this survey.