

**The value and
opportunity
afforded by
being an AFU
from a student
perspective**

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Student Perspective



Sophie Griffiths

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Student Rep UQ AFU Committee

Areas of Interest:

Psychology of Ageing

Age-Friendly Constructs & Environments

- **My connection to the UQ Age Friendly initiative**
- **Projects we have done to advance AFU in the student body**
 - **Short video presentation**
- **What this work has led to for me in my path at UQ**
- **Discussion**

Ageing Mind Initiative

[Home](#) [About](#) [Community Events & Resources](#) [Research Events & Projects](#) [Publications](#)

UQ Age Friendly University Initiative

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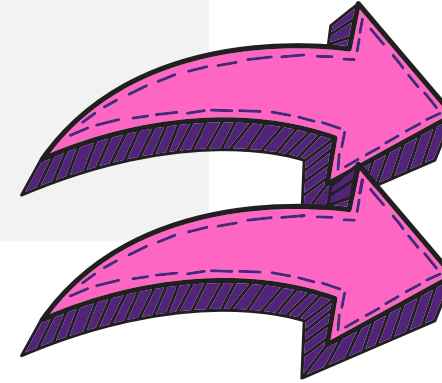
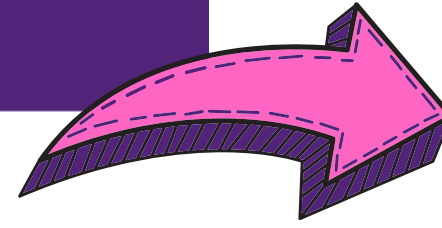
UQ Age Friendly University Initiative On the 28th August, 2019, the UQ Academic Board gave its assent to the pursuit of making UQ an Age Friendly University (AFU). On the 8th of July, 2020, UQ achieved its goal and became the first Age Friendly University in the Southern Hemisphere.

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Joining this network of global partners offers institutions the opportunity to learn about emerging age-friendly efforts and to contribute to an educational movement of social, personal, and economic benefit to students of all ages and institutions of higher education alike.

The value proposition for UQ in becoming an AFU is to better recognise unrealised potential and opportunities for engagement with older cohorts (including alumni) and offering strategic and generative intergenerational contact opportunities. The University has strong research and teaching strengths that could benefit from heightened awareness of age-related issues. Most importantly, the recognition of longevity as a dividend rather than a burden is key to driving positive social, policy, health and well-being initiatives [within Australia and beyond](#).

[View these Key Articles and Abstracts in Ageing for Psychology](#)



1. To encourage the participation of older adults in all the core activities of the university, including educational and research programs.
2. To promote personal and career development in the second half of life and to support those who wish to pursue second careers.
3. To recognize the range of educational needs of older adults (from those who were early school-leavers through to those who wish to pursue Master's or PhD qualifications).
4. To promote intergenerational learning to facilitate the reciprocal sharing of expertise between learners of all ages.
5. To widen access to online educational opportunities for older adults to ensure a diversity of routes to participation.
6. To ensure that the university's research agenda is informed by the needs of an aging society and to promote public discourse on how higher education can better respond to the varied interests and needs of older adults.
7. To increase the understanding of students of the longevity dividend and the increasing complexity and richness that aging brings to our society.
8. To enhance access for older adults to the university's range of health and wellness programs and its arts and cultural activities.
9. To engage actively with the university's own retired community.
10. To ensure regular dialogue with organizations representing the interests of the aging population.

The AFU Steering Committee is currently being formed; our reference group of academic and professional staff across Faculties, Schools and Institutes at UQ, external stakeholders, and current students and alumni is ready to translate our vision into reality.

Contact

I would invite anyone interested in learning more about this AFU Working Group and the Age Friendly University in general to send me an email at npachana@psy.uq.edu.au.

I appreciate everyone in the UQ community, and within its extended networks, who have expressed support for this initiative, and hope to be interacting with many of you over the next months to make this initiative a success.

Nancy A. Pachana, Ph.D., FAPS, FASSA

Program Lead

UQ Age Friendly University & Healthy Ageing Initiatives

Co-Director, [UQ Ageing Mind Initiative](#)



SSP Project

"How could we innovate the orientation experience for mature age students"

Student Perspective

Motivated students looking to connect and to find a sense of place and belonging at UQ

- Interest in longevity topics
- Believe strongly in the benefits of intergenerational engagement
- BUT Struggled with a sub-optimal start and disappointing experiences

UQ Perspective

- Commitment to the Age Friendly University initiative
- Commitment to student experience & engagement improvement
- Reflective of change in society driven by the growth of older age
- Broader alignment with the WHO decade of healthy aging and global report on ageism

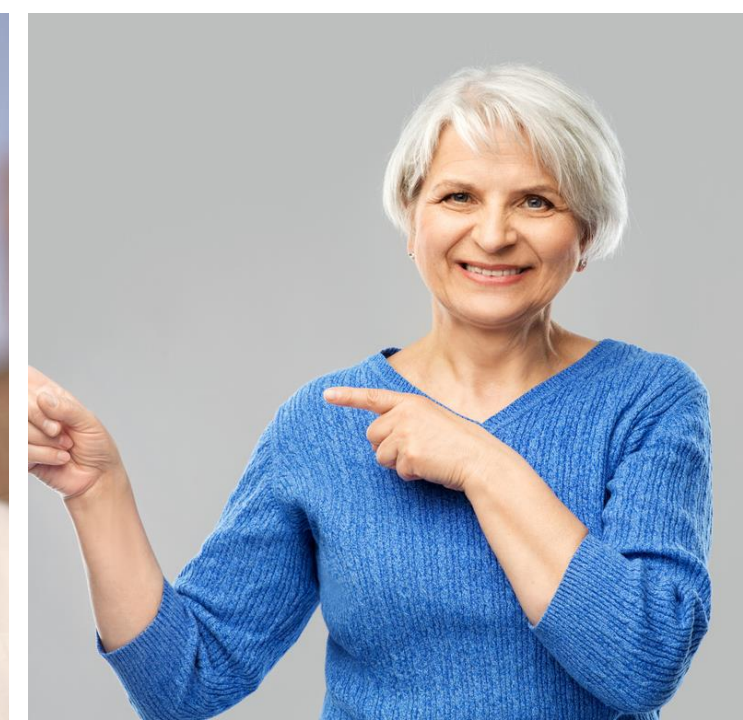
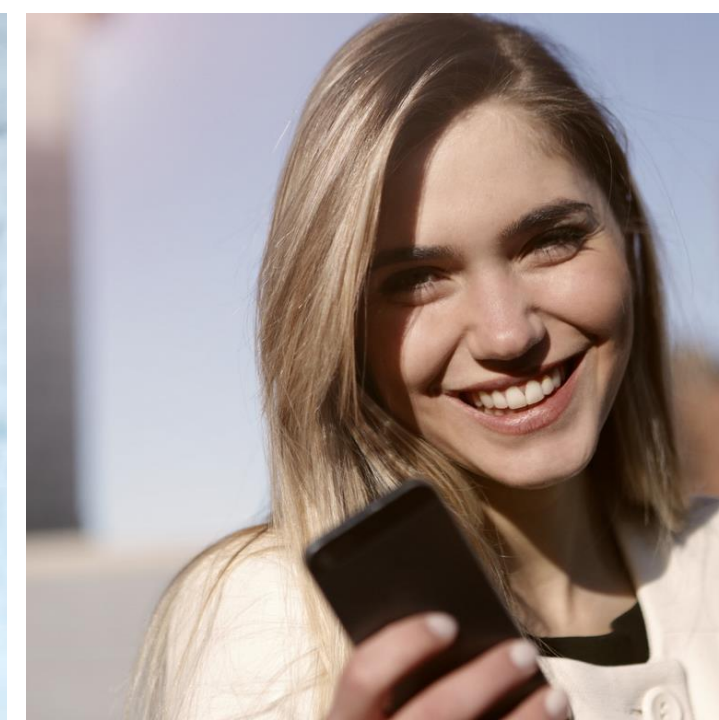
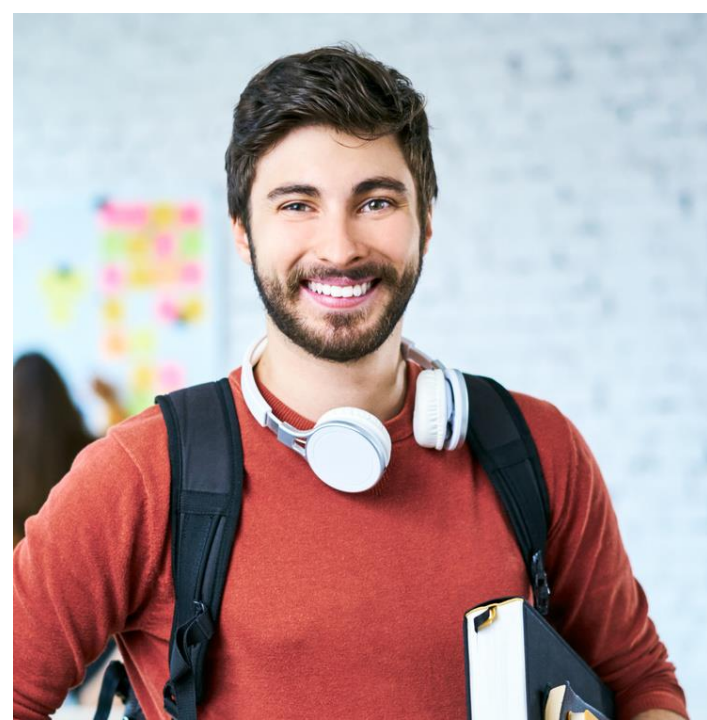
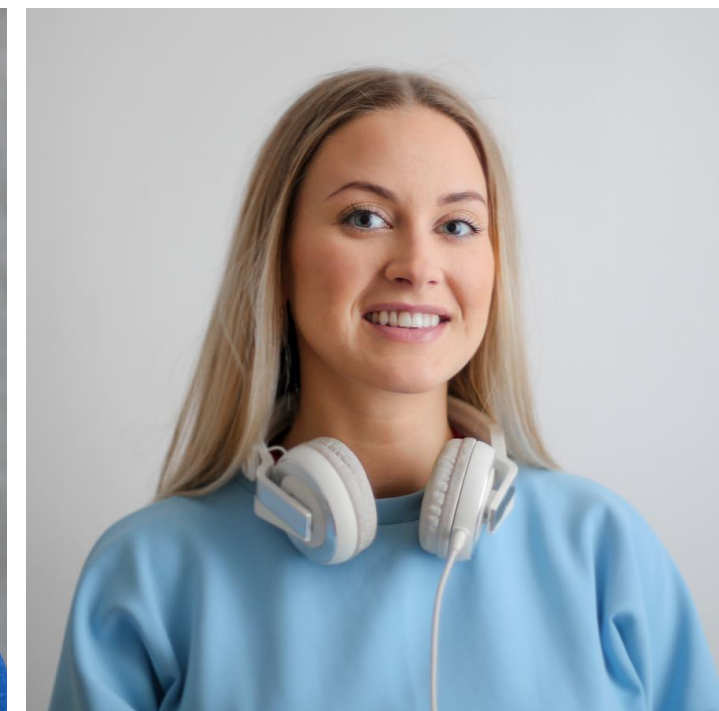
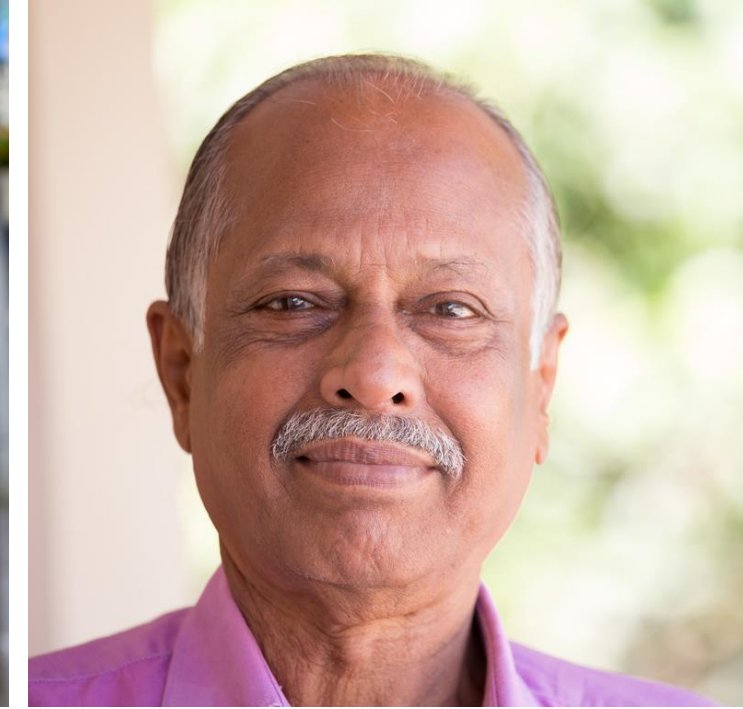


who is mature age?

Anyone not coming directly
from school.

2019 Snapshot

26-35	8,342	15%
36-50	2,828	5.2%
51-64	613	1.1%
over 65	47	0.08%



What did we do ?

Engaged, asked questions and researched



What did we learn?

From student consultation regarding orientation and transition period

Identity

MAS struggle MORE to find a student identity. During orientation, they feel more alienated than welcomed. Social events seem unattractive and exclusive for the younger cohort.

Outside pressures

More demands on their time from work, family and responsibilities. Battling other peoples opinions, questioning the validity of their decisions.

Key disappointments

Lack of personal welcome, feeling anonymous.
Lack of access to educators for meaningful interactions.
Lacklustre group experiences in classes.
Indifference or hostility encountered in person and online.

UQ AS AN AGE-FRIENDLY UNIVERSITY - orientation

The output of our SSP project

Ideation



REPRESENTATION	Personal welcome	Tailored orientation events to ensure attendance	improved in-class welcome	Pillars in Place
Age inclusive materials and references	Face to Face element essential	welcome lounge - with 'magic bar' style tech support	Improvements in T&L during critical transition period to FOSTER inclusive learning	by end of orientation and into transition the support pillars should be in place
In conjunction with diverse age representation	Personal, structured onboarding (corporate style)	social, informational and technical support	deliberately address and defuse stereotypes of university learners	stage set for next phase or connection and belonging
Specific 'new to uq' videos by MAS for MAS	3 or 5 pillars of support (ref: 5 good friends concept)	Specific sessions for older students	facilitated components to set the scene for how teaching and learning will occur - purpose is to bond the groups together	involvement in extra curricular LEARNING events
social pages and UQ life, UQ web site etc	introduction to real people form 5 different UQ areas	mix social and networking (not just social)	all in order to avoid those DREADFUL mute group sessions that no-one benefits from	taking advantage of career oriented networking
UQ supported social channel	UQ supported net-working (not only peer-to-peer)	age diversity in staffing of these events		looping back into becoming the next wave of MENTORS



Age-Friendly University Staff-Student Partnership Projects

PROJECT 2:
10 STUDENT STORIES, RESPONSES
TO THE QUESTION:

*"DID YOU KNOW UQ IS COMMITTED
TO BECOMING AN AGE FRIENDLY
UNIVERSITY?"*



[Link to Video](#) 4:17

UQ AS AN AGE-FRIENDLY UNIVERSITY - orientation

The output of our SSP project

Continuation



UQ Age Friendly University Initiative

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2020_ Finding my feet

Finding a connection and benefiting from UQ student enrichment opportunities: partnership projects & summer scholar program

2022_Developing a research question

Healthy ageing into the future: The role of higher education in a multi-stage life course, benefits and barriers.

Thanks for listening