

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Ageing through the eyes of older Tasmanians

A new research project is deconstructing stereotypes about ageing by looking at the process through the eyes of those who are living it.

Sociologist with the University of Tasmania, Dr Peta Cook, has been providing older people living independently in greater Launceston with digital cameras and asking them to explore what is important in their lives.

Dr Cook will be displaying her research project as part of Senior's Week with an exhibition in the Launceston LINC called *Images of ageing by older people: an exhibition*.

"Some 14 per cent of the Australian population is over the age of 65 but a lot of the imagery of older people portrays ageing in a negative light," Dr Cook said.

"In the media we often see stereotypes of older people. In television and movies, they are busy-bodies or in mental decline but these images we have might not correlate with reality.

"The images my research is collecting reveal the dynamism of ageing: the changes, dilemmas, beauty and empowerment that older age can bring."

Dr Cook said 12 people were involved in her research, which also involved interviews with participants. She aims to build the research into a larger project.

"I'm seeing that ageing is a time of discovery, not decline. People want to keep challenging themselves, expanding their knowledge and experience, and discovering new things," Dr Cook said.

"One of my participants has recently started to play the ukulele. She's over the age 85 and wants to keep her fingers nimble as she deals with arthritis but she also wants to push herself and try something new."

The project was funded with a University of Tasmania Research Engagement Grant and a small grant from the University's Institute for the Study of Social Change.

A selection of the images collected in the project will be on display in the Launceston LINC until 17 October. Dr Cook will be at the exhibition on Tuesday 13 October at 1pm, and Saturday 17 October at 10am, to explain the research and answer questions.

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