

Lots of little kindnesses': Valuing the role of older Australians as informal volunteers in the community

Author/s: Warburton, Jeni McLaughlin, Deirdre | **Year:** 2005 | **Publication type:** Journal article | **Peer reviewed:** | **Topic area/s:** Social Inclusion

Reference:

Key Words:

volunteering, social engagement

Research aim:

This paper describes the ways in which older people contribute to their communities and families as informal volunteers. The paper explores the ways that older people contribute to their families and to the community and the outcomes associated with these activities.

Results/Conclusion:

Two specific themes emerged from the data: first, the ways in which older people contribute to strong inter-generational relations, and second, how they provide essential mutual support that permits many older people to remain living in the community. Many are reciprocal interactions that add value to the lives of individuals and offer positive social roles in later life, and they may be particularly important for those from minority cultural backgrounds or at risk of social isolation.

Implications:

older people are integral to community and civil society and, therefore, that social policy should respond to the ageing of Australia's population and recognise the positive contributions of older people, rather than emphasising the costs of demographic change.

Cultural Group(s):

Location of study:

Queensland

Age group:

55-93 (90% aged 65+)

Number included in study:

184

Type of participants:

Community dwelling residents

Research approach:

Qualitative

Type of data:

Primary

Secondary data sources used:

Specific scales or analytical techniques used:

Implications/ Recommendations:

Notes: