

FINAL REPORT

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**Measuring the impact and influence of the ABC series on
intergenerational practice in Australia.**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Documentaries are designed to produce an emotional response in viewers and as such, are powerful tools in creating connections with their audiences (Bondebjerg, 2014) as they tell a story about real life with claims to truthfulness (Aufderheide, 2000). The ABC has released four documentary series on intergenerational practice, “Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds” (2019 & 2021) and “Old People's Home for Teenagers” (2022 & 2023). This study explored the systemic impact that the ABC series has had on intergenerational practice in Australia. Specifically, it sought to answer three key questions:

1. How did the ABC Show’s “Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds” (series 1 and 2) and “Old People's Home for Teenagers” (series 1 and 2) impact different populations desire to engage in intergenerational practice?
2. How did the ABC Show’s “Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds” (series 1 and 2) and “Old People's Home for Teenagers” (series 1 and 2) assist with funding?
3. Were the shows referenced or used as supporting material in any funding applications? If so, in what way?

To answer the research questions, we conducted a web scrape of intergenerational terms used on Facebook since the release of series 1, surveyed 821 members of the Australian public, and conducted nine focus groups and 20 semi-structured interviews involving 44 participants: which included 14 researchers, 15 organisational representatives, and 18 intergenerational facilitators, to address the research questions.

For the Australian public, the ABC series:

1. Significantly influenced the general public's perception of intergenerational practice, enhancing their appreciation of its societal value as well as its benefits to the wider community all the while reducing the number of barriers identified.
2. Contributed to the public's perception of increased comfort levels in interacting with older adults in residential aged care settings,
3. Significantly improved the appreciation for the work that goes into facilitating intergenerational practice programs.
4. Significantly raised the profile and search terms of intergenerational practice globally on social media outlets such as Facebook
5. Contributed to fostering social cohesion and inclusion in Australia.

For researchers, the ABC series:

1. Sparked new research interest in this field
2. Encouraged a broader exploration of intergenerational practices' potential.
3. Helped to attract funding for studies that assess the societal impact of intergenerational programs, making it easier for researchers to secure resources to investigate and evaluate the benefits of these initiatives.
4. Elevated awareness of intergenerational practice as a research stream and supporting the growth of a stronger global evidence base for the value of intergenerational programs in society.

For organisations, the ABC series:

1. Served as a highly effective communication tool, showcasing the positive societal impact of intergenerational practice and raising awareness at the organisational level.
2. Simplified and demystified the process of evaluation, making it more accessible for smaller organisations that may have limited resources or experience in this area.
3. Inspired new strategic investments, encouraging both existing organisations to enhance their intergenerational initiatives and prompting new social enterprise opportunities.
4. Became a valuable resource for use in funding applications, presentations, and reports, helping organisations articulate the value of intergenerational programs and effectively allocate resources to these initiatives.

For facilitators, the ABC series:

1. Acted as a highly effective communication tool, highlighting the benefits of intergenerational programs and demonstrating their positive outcomes, which helped gain broader support.
2. Inspired new career pathways and professional opportunities within the intergenerational field, encouraging individuals to explore roles dedicated to fostering connections across generations.
3. Provided creative inspiration for designing activities, offering facilitators fresh ideas to enhance engagement and interaction in their programs.
4. Supported participant recruitment by raising public awareness and interest, making it easier to attract individuals of all ages to take part in intergenerational initiatives.

The show was cited by researchers, organisations and facilitators when discussing intergenerational programs in newsletters, journal articles (n=5), funding applications, and corporate communications to organisational stakeholders. In addition, researchers, organisations, and facilitators all frequently referenced the program to explain intergenerational practice to others. By using the program as a relatable example, experts could effectively illustrate the core concepts and benefits of intergenerational initiatives. The program provided a practical, visual tool to convey how these practices foster connections between different age groups and their broader social impacts, making it easier for audiences to understand and appreciate the purpose and value of intergenerational work.

Combined, this study found the ABC series has had a significant impact within the broader community of Australia in fostering social cohesion and inclusion in Australia, creating new careers across social care sectors, connecting the social care sectors that were previously isolated, providing stronger evidenced based program material across Australia and demystifying intergenerational practice for the public, which has further assisted programs grow and evidence to demonstrate the value of intergenerational programs on reducing ageism, stigma, and improving the physical and mental wellbeing of all people living in Australia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Intergenerational practice has blossomed over the past 15 years as a unique way of building social connection and reducing isolation across population cohorts globally (Campbell et al., 2024). At their core, intergenerational programs aim to build meaningful connections and relationships between two or more generations (Jarrott, et al., 2021). These programs have also increased in popularity to address the consequences of increased migration, decreased connections between age cohorts and to address the increased care responsibilities that come with an ageing population and sandwiched generations (Jarrott & Lee 2022; Kamei, et al., 2022).

Intergenerational programs are defined as a collection of planned activities that foster cooperation, interaction and exchange between two or more generations (Kaplan & Sanchez, 2014). Typically, the programs involve interactions that promote social growth and learning between the young and the old. Key features of these programs are that they are:

- Purposeful
- Ongoing
- Reciprocal
- Foster mutual respect
- Create cohesive integrated communities
- Planned to meet a particular outcome

Importantly, intergenerational practice is not:

- Short once off visits – like a morning tea
- Non-interactive visits – like a visit to the place of care (without planned interactivity)
- Unplanned casual engagement
- Programs that include all ages without an intentional connection between the generations.

Research exploring the possibility of intergenerational practice in Australia re-emerged in 2014 and has since grown in popularity. A recent study of 572 residential facilities found that 18.2% had an active intergenerational program within their facility, 44.4% had a program that was suspended during the period of 2020-2022, and only 14% of aged care homes studied had never previously offered an intergenerational program (D'Cunha et al., 2023). This increase in popularity has likely been impacted by the hit series "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" and "Old People's Home for Teenagers". However, no research has examined the systemic impact that this series have had in Australia. Therefore, this study was designed to explore impact in more detail by answering the following research questions:

What impact has the ABC series had on intergenerational practice in Australia?

- a. How did the ABC Show's "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" (series 1 and 2) and "Old People's Home for Teenagers" (series 1 and 2) impact different populations desire to engage in intergenerational practice?*
- b. How did the ABC Show's "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" (series 1 and 2) and "Old People's Home for Teenagers" (series 1 and 2) assist with funding?*
- c. Was the show cited in any funding applications?*

These questions were then explored from the perspectives of 4 different stakeholders 1) general population (older population, younger people, adolescents, parents and children); 2) researchers; 3) organisational managers; 4) facilitators.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The *aim* of this research was to measure the systemic impact that the ABC series has had on intergenerational practice in Australia.

The *objective* of this research was to explore the impact that the ABC shows has had on increased funding, interest in intergenerational programs around the country and communities.

2. BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

Intergenerational programs have increased in popularity over the past 15 years as the world contends with an ageing population, increased care responsibilities, increased migration, and the decreased connection between older and younger people (Jarrott & Lee 2022; Kamei, et al., 2022). Globally, researchers have highlighted the importance of intergenerational programs as one way of breaking down ageism stereotypes (Lytle et al., 2022); improving adolescents' self-efficacy scores (Murayama et al., 2021); improving the reading outcomes in children (Rebok et al., 2004) and decreasing the likelihood of children participating in deviant or delinquent behaviour later in life (Ohmer, 2022). Together, recent evidence demonstrates that intergenerational programs benefit different population groups in different, but meaningful ways (Cohen-Mansfield & Muff, 2021; Jarrott et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2021). Intergenerational programs are supporting bonds between community members of all ages.

Whilst intergenerational programs have existed within an Australian setting for decades, little was known about their existence beyond anecdotal evidence. Moreover, the push for intergenerational programs to be part of the social fabric within Australia has increased over the past 10 years, generated in part by increased understandings of the importance of intergenerational practice, and part by the globalisation and recognition of the importance of a village in raising children. Assisting this push was the ABC docuseries “Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds” (series 1 and 2, first released 2019) and “Old People's Home for Teenagers” (series 1 and 2, first released 2022) on ABCTV and ABC iview. Documentaries were the fastest growing genre on streaming platforms in 2020 (Fischer, 2021). However, despite this fact, little is known about the impact that these series have had on society.

Documentaries are designed to produce an emotional response in viewers and as such, are powerful tools in creating connections with their audiences (Bondebjerg, 2014) as they tell a story about real life with claims to truthfulness (Aufderheide, 2000). Yet documentaries often rely on public support which can cause tension between the public value and its commercial goals (Livémont, 2018). The programs - "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" and "Old People's Home for Teenagers" received support from a diverse audience yet there were limited opportunities to discuss any tensions that arose.

Caty Chattoo's (2020) book titled "Story movements: how documentaries empower people and inspire social change" reveals the powerful ability of documentaries to inspire social change. Using the Walmart documentary as an example, she explained the importance of the firm in mobilising the public on social changes by revealing not only the company's business practices but also the impact that all distributors and supplies play in the story and the impact this company has on broader society. Chattoo (2020) further argued documentaries remain a critical part of democratic practices through civic storytelling and addresses social issues through creative mechanisms that strengthen civic society through collaborations and partnerships. These sentiments are also echoed by other scholars such as Hawes (2021), Ahn (2021), and Hart (2024). Importantly, documentaries allow for social change through engaging audiences to come together as a collective group to address social issues. However, whilst we know that documentaries have a strong ability to create social movements and foster social cohesion, what we don't know is the extent of these contributions within Australia and more particularly, in relation to the ABC series "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" and "Old People's Home for Teenagers". Thus, this study advances our knowledge in this area.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study set out to explore the impact that the ABC shows has had on increased funding, engagement in and interest in intergenerational programs around the country and communities. With the aim of measuring the systemic impact that the series on intergenerational practice in Australia.

Using a concurrent mixed methodology approach, this study explores the research questions with each population using a variety of methods as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of the methods used to answer research question by each population group.

Population groups	Research Question	Method Used
Australian population	1. How did the ABC Show's "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" (series 1 and 2) and "Old People's Home for Teenagers" (series 1 and 2) impact your desire to engage in intergenerational practice.	Digital scrape & Population Survey
Researchers	1. How did the ABC Show's "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" (series 1 and 2) and "Old People's Home for Teenagers" (series 1 and 2) impact your desire to research intergenerational practice? 2. How did the ABC Show's "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" (series 1 and 2) and "Old People's Home for Teenagers" (series 1 and 2) assist with funding? 3. Did you cite any of the ABC shows in your funding applications?	Focus group /Interviews
Organisations	1. How did the ABC Show's "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" (series 1 and 2) and "Old People's Home for Teenagers" (series 1 and 2) impact your desire to engage in intergenerational practice? 2. How did the ABC Show's "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" (series 1 and 2) and "Old People's Home for Teenagers" (series 1 and 2) assist with funding? 3. Did you cite any of the ABC shows in funding applications?	Focus group /Interviews
Facilitators	1. How did the ABC Show's "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" (series 1 and 2) and "Old People's Home for Teenagers" (series 1 and 2) impact your desire to engage in intergenerational practice?	Focus group /Interviews

Ethics statement

The research was approved by the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (GUHREC/2024/621).

Methods of data collection

Digital Scrape

Digital scrapes have emerged as a valid data strategy to merge data between “real” and “virtual” reality in social research (Rogers, 2009; Rogers, 2013). Web scraping is the “process of extracting and combing content that is of interest from the web in a systematic way” (Trezza, 2023). Application for web scraping for Facebook was submitted in August 2024 and was carried out in December 2024 after permission was granted on 30th November 2024. Facebook was chosen as the social media outlet to conduct the digital scrape due to the wider population range of participants compared to other social media outlets such as Instagram, X, and Tik Tok.

Population Survey

This study utilised the services of Prolific, a research data gathering company which specialises in panel surveys, to access a non-biased Australian public sample. Research has identified that data gathered through Prolific is high quality and is similar in data gathered by the general community (Stanton, Carpenter, Nance, Sturgeon & Villalonga Andino, 2022). The population survey first asked questions about the demographics of participants followed by explicit questions about intergenerational practice.

Sampling approach

We initially sought out a stratified sample of 200 older people (aged over 55 years), 200 parents of children under the age of 18 years, and 400 general population. A total of 997 responses were initially received, this included: 368 parents, 148 older people aged over 55 years, and 481 general population responses. After missing and attention data was removed, there was a total of 821 useable responses to the survey analysed.

Survey Measures

A stratified sample was used to collect data from participants across age ranges. In the survey, age was asked by the questions “In what year were you born?”. Gender was also asked using the question: “which of the following options most closely aligns to your gender?” with the response options being 1 = woman, 2 = man, 3 = non binary, 4 = A gender not listed here, 5 = Prefer not to answer.

The survey also asked questions regarding intergenerational practice in the following ways.

Previous experience

To examine participants previous experience with intergenerational practice we asked them “have you participated in an intergenerational practice program previously?” and provided four options 1) yes, as a participant, 2) yes, as a facilitator, 3) yes, as both a participant and facilitator and 4) no.

Interest in intergenerational practice

To examine their interest in intergenerational practice we asked “would you be interested in participating in an intergenerational program” as an open question in the survey.

Engagement with the ABC series

To determine if participants had viewed the ABC docu-series, the question, “Did you watch either the ABC Show’s “Old People’s Home for 4 Year Olds” (series 1 and 2) and “Old People’s Home for Teenagers” (series 1 and 2)? was asked. Data was then coded and analysed in two ways. First, the data was coded into four responses: 1) Yes, “Old People’s Home for 4 Year Olds” only, 2) Yes, “Old People’s Home for Teenagers” only, 3) Yes, I watched some of, or all of, both series; and 4) No, I did not watch either series. Then the data was coded as a binary yes/no question as the number of responses to 1 and 2 made data analysis difficult due to insufficient numbers.

Perception of Intergenerational Practice

To examine if the series influenced any perceptions of intergenerational practice in society. We compared the responses of those who had watched the show with those who had not on the following questions in the survey:

1. Does intergenerational practice have a place in society? (yes/no)
2. What are the benefits of intergenerational practice? (open-ended)
3. What are the barriers for you to participate in an intergenerational program? (open-ended)

Open ended questions were then analysed qualitatively using an interpretivist approach and then coded accordingly. These codes were then used to analyse the data using Chi Square analysis to compare the codes generated by those who had watched any of the series and those who had not.

Perceptions of Intergenerational workers

To examine if the series influenced any stigma or stereotypes of intergenerational workers, we asked participants a series of questions about how they perceive the qualities of an intergenerational workers. Participants responded on a five-point Likert scale to a series of qualities about the intergenerational role. The Likert scale ranged from 1= strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree. Example questions included: *Working in intergenerational practice is boring* and *Intergenerational facilitators should be proud of the work that they do*.

Focus Group and Interviews

In line with thematic analysis, this study aimed to achieve conceptual depth (Thomas, 2006) on the topics of interest. Purposive sampling was used to ensure a strong representation of voices were captured in this study. This involved using multiple data points to achieve triangulation across multiple time points. Purposive sampling included capturing the views of researchers, organisational representatives and facilitators of intergenerational programs.

Participants were invited to take part in the interview/focus group through a general linked in research participation call of the authors as well as through the member list of the Australian Institute of Intergenerational Practice.

A total of three online focus groups and five one-on-one interviews were held with 14 researchers across Australia. To capture organisational views, we conducted three online focus groups and seven one-on-one interviews with 15 organisational representatives across Australia. To capture the views of facilitators we held three online focus groups and eight one-on-one online interviews with 18 intergenerational facilitators across Australia. Note that three interviewees held dual roles of facilitator and organisational representatives.

In total, the views of 44 individual participants were captured during this process.

Interview guide

A semi-structured interview guide was developed and focused on the impact that the ABC series had on participants careers and individual lives. Table 2 presents the interview guide that was used for each group.

Table 2: Interview Guide.

Focus group/interview Questions for Researchers

1. How did you first hear about intergenerational practice?
2. What led you to research on intergenerational practice
3. Tell me about your research on intergenerational practice
4. What were you researching before intergenerational practice
5. Why did you start that?
6. Have you cited the ABC shows in any of your funding applications?
7. What value do you see the intergenerational programs on ABC having on your work

Focus group/interview Questions for Organisations

1. How did you first hear about intergenerational practice?
2. Tell me about the intergenerational practice programs that you have run?
3. What peaked your interest in running intergenerational practice programs?
4. Have you watched the ABC series on intergenerational practice?
5. Has the series had an impact on your practice? If so, how?
6. Was there anything in the program that resonated for you in relation to the work that you do?
7. Did you use any of the resources from the ABC to help your practice?
8. Is intergenerational program part of your strategic plan? How, detail.
9. Have you cited the ABC shows in any of your funding applications? How have you sought funding so far to cover your program.
10. What value do you see the intergenerational programs on ABC having on your work
11. Where to from here for you, how can you be better supported (what do you need to be better supported to continue these programs)

Focus group/interview Questions for Facilitators

1. How did you first hear about intergenerational programs?
 2. How did you get into a facilitator role?
 3. Why did you get into it?
 4. Have you watched the ABC series?
 5. Has the series had an impact on your practice? If so, how?
 6. What value do you see the ABC intergenerational factual program having on your work?
 7. Has having the series on ABC helped your practice in any way?
 8. Was there anything in the program that resonated for you in relation to the work that you do?
 9. What is the most challenging part of your role
 10. What is the most rewarding part of your role
 11. What are the most important traits for an intergenerational facilitator
 12. How can you better be supported in your role as a facilitator?
 13. What other resources do you need
-

Audio recording, software and data retention

All participants were asked if interviews could be recorded, where consent to record was not gathered, copious field notes were recorded by the researcher. Audio files were then transcribed via either a transcription service or through Microsoft teams meeting and checked thoroughly by the researchers. These notes and/or recordings were then manually coded by the researchers to identify emergent themes. All study documentation was retained in line with the national ethical conduct of research guidelines.

Consent

All participation with this project will be voluntary and all participants and stakeholders were asked to provide written or verbal consent to participate.

Sensitivity and bias considerations

Interviews continued with participants until saturation. Triangulation was achieved through using both interviews and focus groups.

Analysis

This study began with inductive open coding (Thomas, 2006) where statements or quotes from the research interviewees were coded with a word/phrase to summarise the main concepts. These codes were then grouped to create emergent themes. A reflexive thematic approach (Van Manen, 2023) was used for the coding with no a priori coding or theme identification prior to the elicitation of themes. To capture the cases, a draft was created by the lead researcher and circulated back to the participant for feedback and approval to include in the report.

4. FINDINGS

This section details the impact that the ABC series has had on society by presenting the data collected from each stakeholder group separately, then discussing them together.

4.1 General public and the broader society

Survey Results

To provide the most representative sample, we stratified the sample collection into older people (aged 55+), people with children and general population. The final cleaned sample examined included a total of 821 respondents between the ages of 18 and 87 years. This sample included 132 people over the age of 55 years, 309 respondents of parents with children under the age of 18, and 380 respondents within the general population of Australia. A total of 57% (n=468) respondents were female, 41.9% (n=344) identified as a man and 1.1% (n=9) identified as non-binary. Of this sample, only 6.3% had participated in an intergenerational program previously as a participant (4.9%, n=40), facilitator (0.9%, n=7) or as both a participant and facilitator (0.5%, n=4). Furthermore, 40.2% (n=330) of the population sampled had watched either Old People's Home for 4 Years Olds (n=150, 18.3%), Old People's Homes for Teenagers (n=25, 3.0%), some, or all, of both series (18.9%, n=155).

Upon examining the data to explore if there were any correlations between those who watched the show and reported outcomes for participants, the following was found. As there were no age interaction effects identified between the variables, the entire cohort was examined when analysing the results.

Importance of Intergenerational Practice to Society

A chi square test revealed that there was a significant difference between those who watched the show and the ratings they provided to how important they felt intergenerational practice was to society, $X^2(4, N = 783) = 51.40, p = <.001$. Figure 1 below presents a bar chart that depicts the ratings of importance provided between those who watched the show and those who did not.

Figure 1: Ratings of importance of intergenerational practice to society between those who watched the show and not.

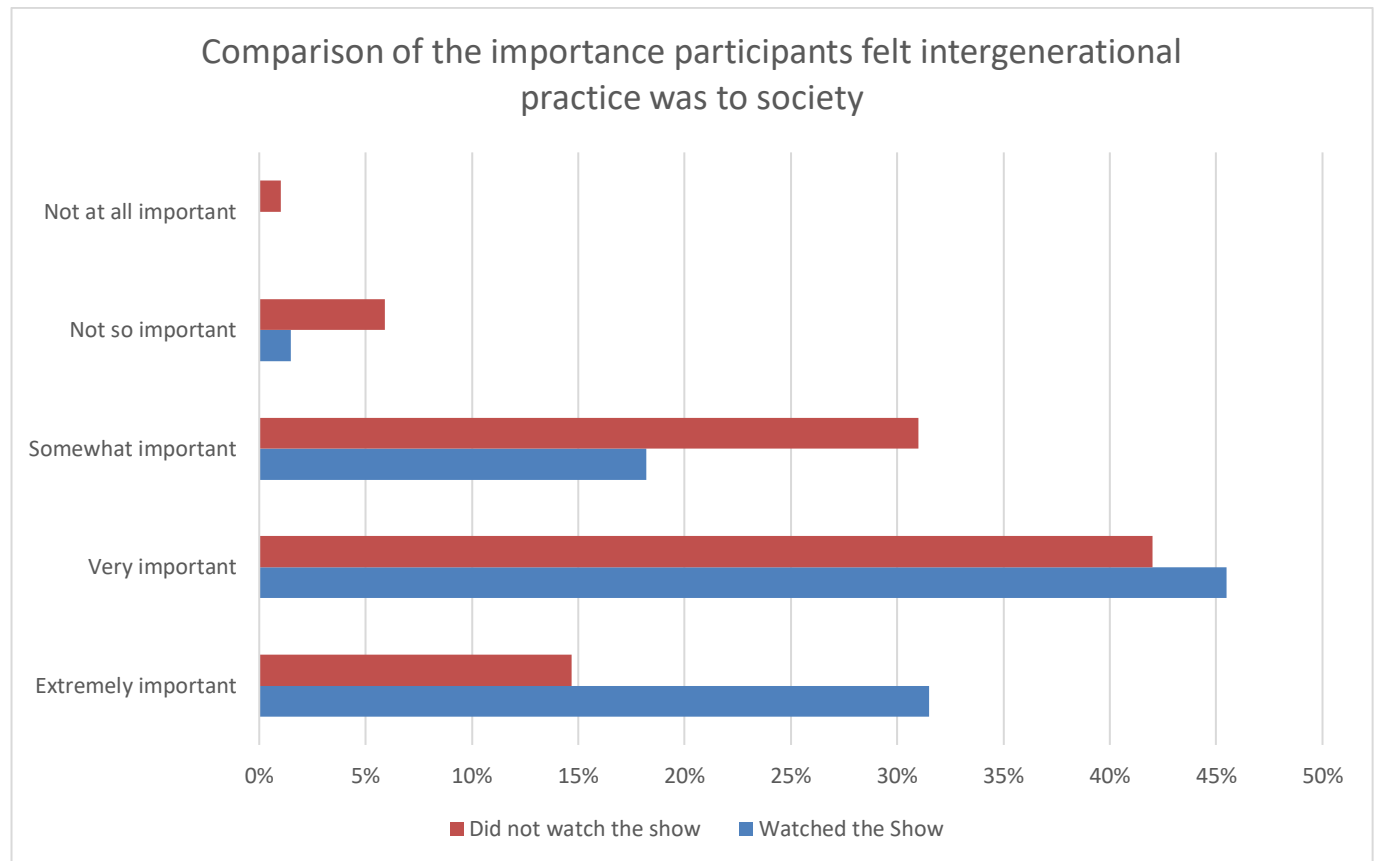


Figure 1 highlights that the show has contributed to a shift in attitude towards the importance of connecting generations within society. Those who watched the show reported more positive ratings overall as to the importance of intergenerational practice within society today.

Upon breaking this down further to either a specific version of the show or if they watched all of the series available, or none, the shift in attitudes become even clearer, as highlighted in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Importance of intergenerational practice by comparison of those who watched individual series.

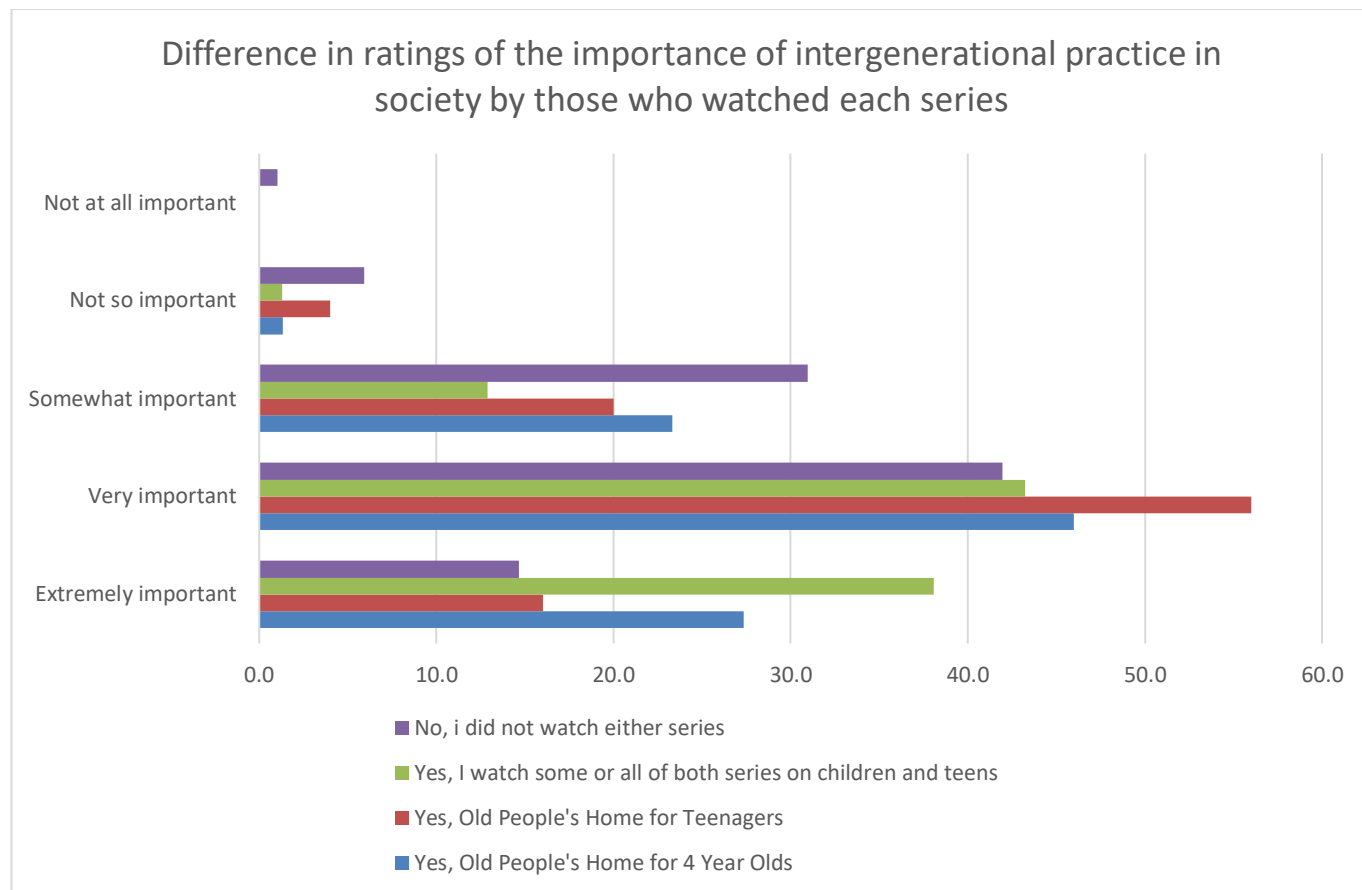
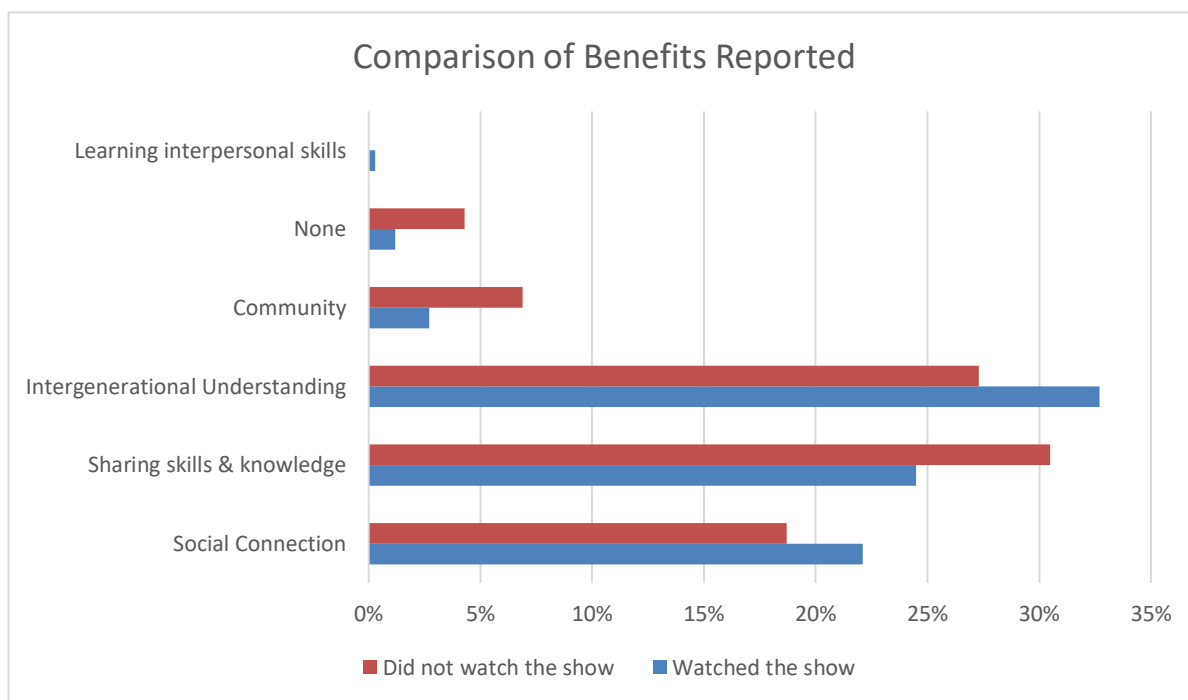


Figure 2 highlights that participants who had watched the show reported the importance of intergenerational practice to society as much higher than those who did not watch the show. This demonstrates the substantial impact that this show has had on society more broadly in changing the perceptions of value of intergenerational practice in Australia.

Benefits of Intergenerational Practice

Participants reported six key benefits of intergenerational practice in society. These included: changes to the health/welfare of older participants, social connection, sharing skills and knowledge between generations, increasing understanding between each generation, and creating a community. A portion of participants also reported no benefits at all. A chi square test revealed that there was a significant difference between those who watched the show and the benefits they reported intergenerational practice brings to society compared to those who did not watch the show, $X^2(6, N = 782) = 28.76, p < .001$. Figure 3 highlights the results of this test in graphical format.

Figure 3: Comparison of benefits reported by those who watched the show and those who did not.

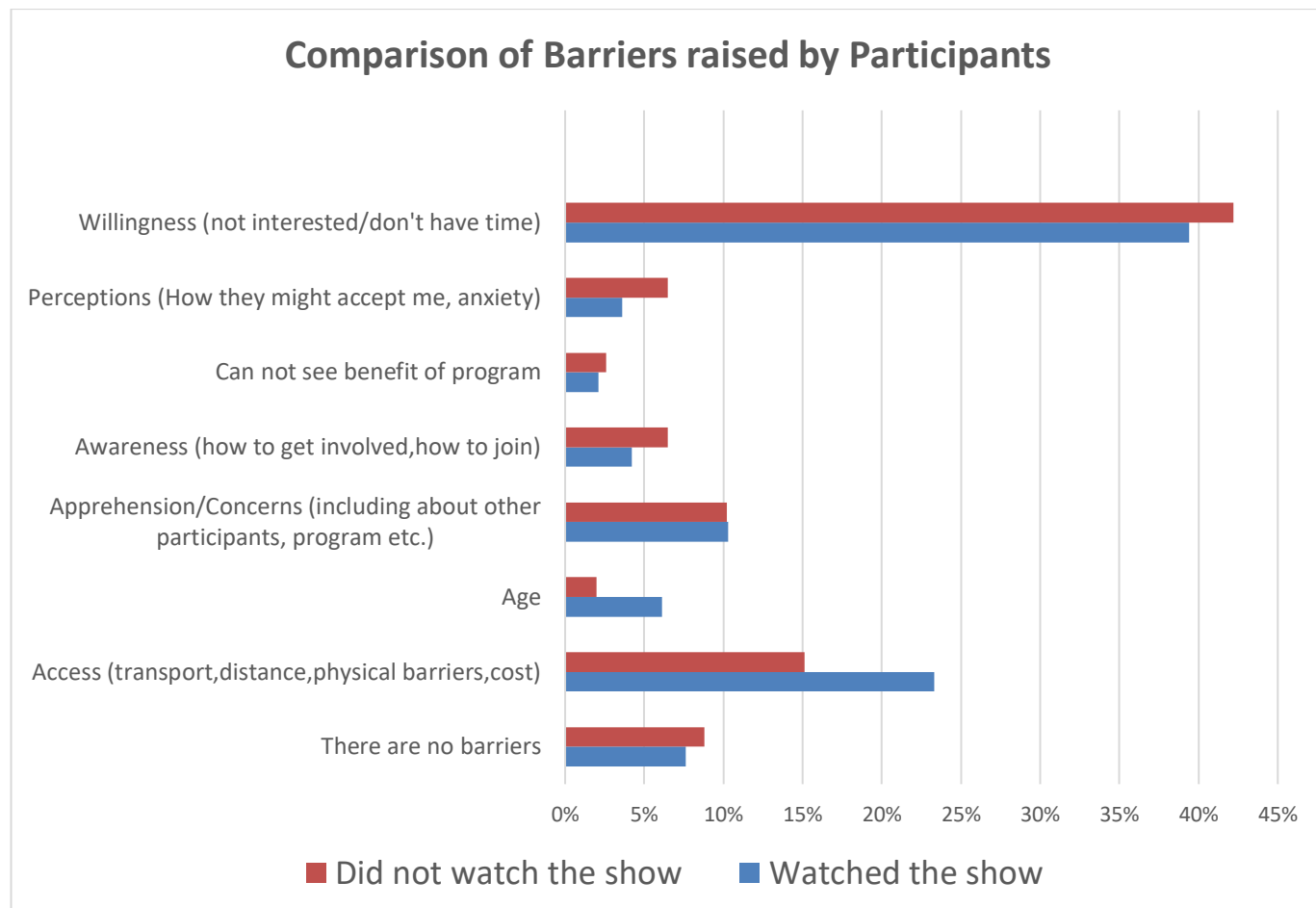


As highlighted in Figure 3, those who watched the show highlighted the benefits of intergenerational understanding, the interpersonal skills learnt between generations, and social connection, more than those who didn't watch the show. Whereas those who did not watch the show highlighted the benefit of sharing skills and knowledge and were not as confident about the benefits compared to those who watched the show. As evidenced, those who watched the show reported different benefits as to those who did not, which suggests that the show contributed to showcasing the benefits of intergenerational practice to the public.

Barriers to participating in intergenerational practice programs

Similarly, when reporting the barriers to intergenerational practice those who had watched the show and those who did not, significant differences were also identified between those who watched the program and those who did not, $X^2 (7, N = 780) = 21.60, p = <.01$. Those who had not watched the programs raised more apprehensions/concerns about the program, as well as concerns around how to get involved, self-perceptions of what they bring to the program, and their overall willingness to be involved. Figure 4 showcases the differences between participants further.

Figure 4: Comparison of barriers raised by those who watched the show and those who did not.



These findings suggest that the ABC docu-series had a significant impact on reducing public concerns about the program and increasing the publics' desire to become more involved in similar programs across Australia.

Impact that the program had on society more broadly

There was a significant correlation between those who watched the show and comfortability in visiting an aged care facility, $r(773) = -.10$, $p = .007$. There was no significant correlation between those who watched the show and comfortability in interacting with nonfamilial older adults, $r(773) = -.06$, $p = 0.09$. This suggests that the show may have had an impact on the comfortability of the public when visiting a residential aged care facility. However, as there was no data available that indicates whether this has moved over time, care should be taken when interpreting these results.

In regard to if the show had any impact on the expectation of their own perceptions of ageing, this study demonstrated no significant differences found between those who watched the show and their expectations of physical health in ageing, $r(773) = -.053$, $p = 0.138$; mental health in ageing, $r(773) = -.019$, $p = 0.59$; cognitive functioning in ageing, $r(773) = -.021$, $p = 0.56$; or their overall expectations of the ageing process, $r(773) = -.038$, $p = 0.29$. Suggesting the show had no influence on the perception of ageing in the general population.

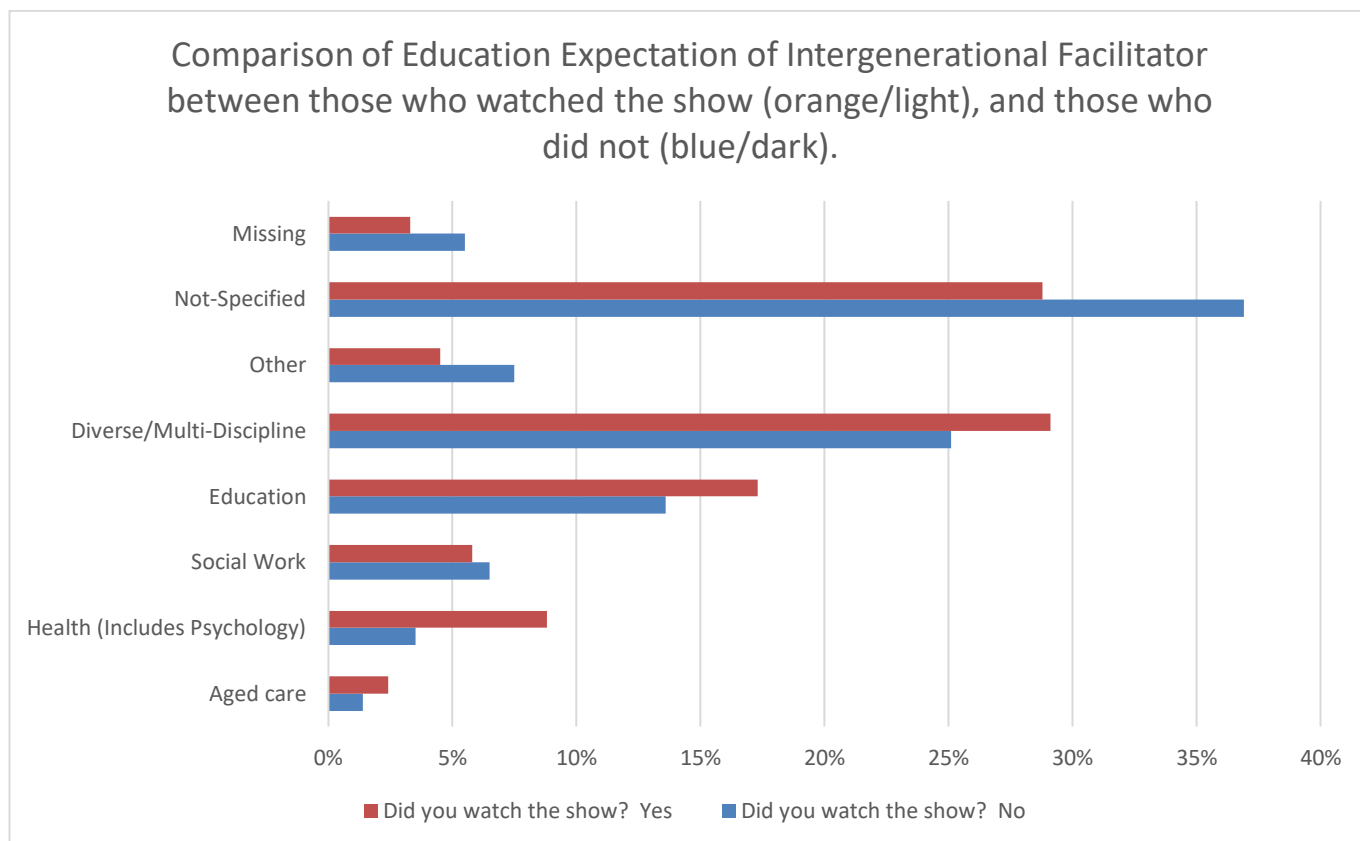
However, the show did seem to influence the perceptions of an intergenerational facilitator within the community. Interesting, there were 10 significant differences noted between those who have watched the show and those who have not on their perceptions of what a facilitator does and the background and experience of an intergenerational facilitator, as highlighted in Table 3.

Table 3: Significant differences noted between those who had watched the show and those who had not.

1. Those who watched the show felt intergenerational practice facilitation does require a lot of skills and education, $r(773) = .131, p = <.001$
2. Those who watched the show felt intergenerational practice was not boring, $r(773) = .181, p = <.001$.
3. Those who watched reported they would like to work in intergenerational practice, $r(773) = .168, p = <.001$
4. Those who watched the show felt that the work was highly rewarding, $r(773) = -.179, p = <.001$
5. Those who watched the show felt it was not easy to get a job compared to those who did $r(773) = -.086, p = .016$
6. Those who watched the show felt the work is not performed by low skilled workers, $r(773) = .119, p = <.001$
7. Those who watched the show felt the work was not more suited to overseas workers, $r(773) = .111, p = .002$
8. Those who watched the show felt the work was not more suited to some cultures over others, $r(773) = .110, p = .002$
9. Those who watched the show felt the work was not depressing, $r(773) = .098, p = .006$
10. Those who watched the show felt that intergenerational facilitators should be proud of the work that they do, $r(773) = -.149, p = <.001$.

Furthermore, when asked what the educational background they expect of a facilitator, participants who watched the show were more likely to indicate a higher level of educational background than those who did not as highlighted by Figure 5.

Figure 5: Comparison of educational background of intergenerational facilitator



Combined, the survey of the public indicated that the show may have influenced the respect and value for these roles in society. Moreover, the results highlight the value that docu-series have on changing attitudes within the general community and public about key issues.

Data Scrape Results

Upon examining the data from Facebook, there was an upward trend of posts created about intergenerational practice in Facebook platforms after the release of the show as highlighted in the figures below.

Note: the value of 100 in these figures refers to the peak post creation volume for the search query. A value of 50 means that half as many posts related to the search query was created. A value of 0 means there was not enough data for this search query.

Figure 6: Trends in posts created using the words “intergenerational practice”

Trends in posts created

Metrics displayed in the graph are normalized.

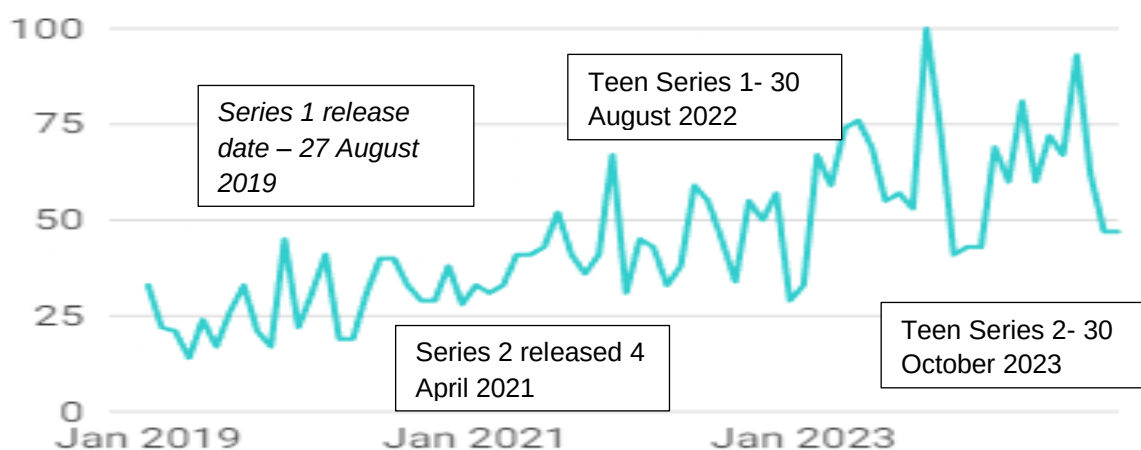


Figure 7: Trends in posts created using the words “intergenerational programs”

Trends in posts created

Metrics displayed in the graph are normalized.

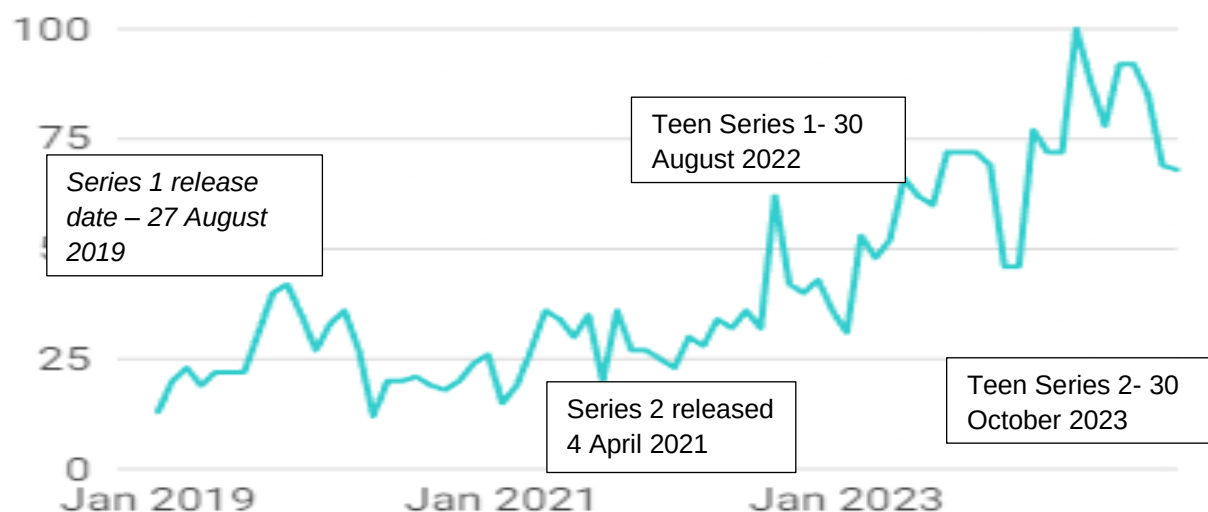
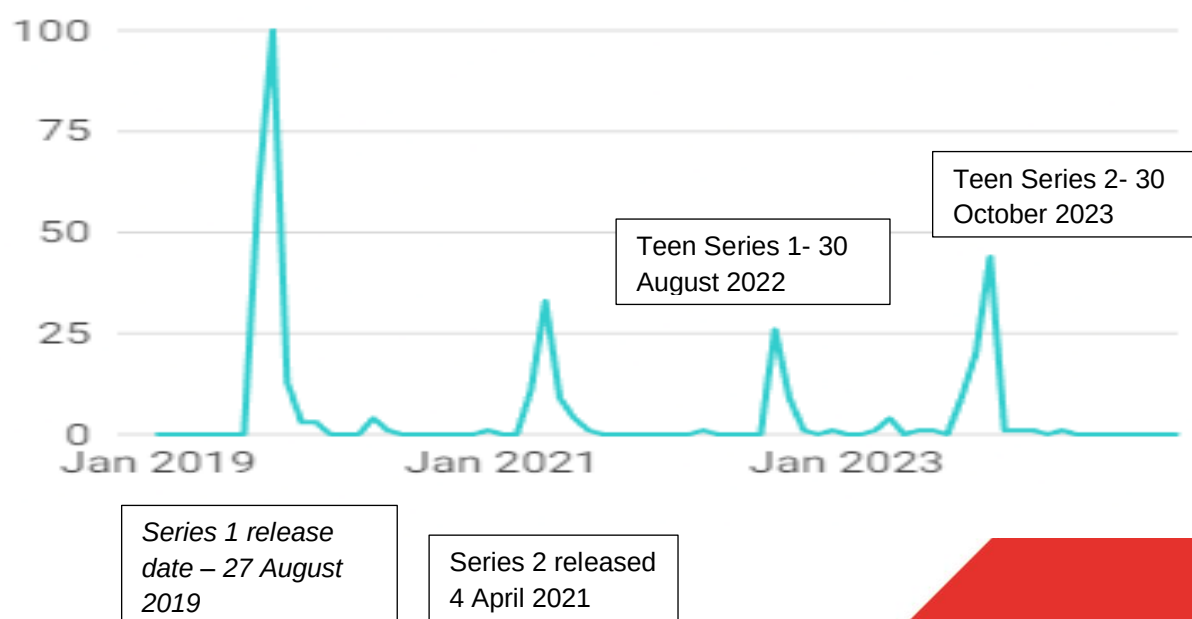


Figure 8: Trends in posts created using the search term “#oldpeopleshomesau”

Trends in posts created

Metrics displayed in the graph are normalized.



Combined, the survey and the data scrape findings all suggest that the ABC shows have an impact on the way the general public perceives the value of intergenerational practice on society, their comfortability levels interacting with older people in the community and residential aged care facilities and facilitate in breaking down stereotypes more broadly about working in this space. These are critical areas that contribute to reducing ageism within the broader society, and it is evident that the ABC docuseries played a strong role in positively impacting attitudes and behaviours of the public towards these programs, as well as all those participating within them.

4.2 Researchers

This study set out at answering three key questions that enquired into the impact that the ABC documentary had on Australian researchers in the intergenerational space. These were

- 1) How did the ABC Show's "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" (series 1 and 2) and "Old People's Home for Teenagers" (series 1 and 2) impact your desire to engage in intergenerational practice?
- 2) How did the ABC Show's "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" (series 1 and 2) and "Old People's Home for Teenagers" (series 1 and 2) impact your desire to research intergenerational practice?
- 3) How did the ABC Show's "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" (series 1 and 2) and "Old People's Home for Teenagers" (series 1 and 2) assist with funding?

Overall, this study found that the ABC series had four key impacts on researchers' careers. First, it **assisted a highly effective communication tool in demonstrating** the impact that intergenerational practice has on society. Second, it **assisted with acquiring funding** to research this impact further. Third, it **assisted with recruitment of participants** within studies. Fourth it was the **catalyst for a new research inquiry line**.

Theme 1: Assistance as a communication tool for intergenerational practice

The program was unanimously agreed by all interviewees to have been vital for communicating the benefits of intergenerational practice. Further, the program was incredibly valuable as it addressed ageism and key topics such as mental wellbeing and social isolation more broadly in society. For example, one researcher reflected:

"the ABC show has shown a spotlight on difficult issues in a very light touch gentle manner...and provides an entryway for tough discussions, which I hope begins conversations to how we support these programs at a policy level"

Another two researchers reported:

“The show was able to get us to reflect on grief, depression and loneliness and the difficult issues that happen in everybody’s lives at some point... so, I think in that respect it’s a really good start to having meaningful conversations with society and in a tone that is quite uplifting, so it gives people a sort of hope”

“The ABC series made people more aware of the fact that they can do things, and that the senior citizens around us are real, they’re not just mum and dads stuck in the tub chair in the corner, and that is really important”

Upon reflecting on the impact that the show has had on researchers’ careers, three researchers reflected:

“From a researcher’s point of view, the awareness is really important and to be able to reach parts of society and people who we want to create an impact on but (as a researcher) sometimes it’s a bit disconnected from the researcher, whereas this (documentary) connected it all.”

“The show gave me validation and confirmation that this is something that people are going to want and need and the path I was on, as a budding researcher, was the right one”

“The ABC program was able to provide a different lens on the impact that intergenerational practice has across different ages and cohorts and in different family structures, so it could show why this works for so many people on so many levels”

Combined all researchers agreed that the show has had a phenomenal impact on communicating the benefits of intergenerational programs and research within an Australian and even, global landscape.

Theme 2: Assisted acquisition of funding for future research

Some researcher cited the ABC series in their applications for funding applications, whereas others intended to do so at a later stage in their careers. However, all researchers agreed that the ABC show was a turning point in the intergenerational research literature in Australia as it was an easy reference point for the policy makers, funders, and the public to identify with the research stream and make a case for future funding. One example is provided below.

Theircare: Generations Connection program <https://theircare.com.au>

TheirCare is a family-owned business providing before and after school and vacation care. It prioritises care and partnership at the heart of their delivery of outcomes for children, families and schools. The national organisation received \$500,000 from the NSW Dept of Education to develop, implement and evaluate intergenerational programs in ten outside school hours care services during 2023-2024. The funding application was inspired by and noted the ABC show.

TheirCare worked with Griffith University and the Australian institute of Intergenerational Practice to prepare the application and then deliver on the intended outcomes. This funding allowed researchers the opportunity to present the first empirical study of intergenerational programs in Australian outside school hours care services. The findings provided global-first evidence on the impact that intergenerational programs have on primary school children and older adults in school holiday programs. The lead researchers believe the funding would not have been possible without the ABC series.

The TheirCare Generations Connections program is one example from a suite of programs. At least 3 major competitively funded research grants, worth over AUD \$7 million cited that they were inspired by the ABC series. In addition, the show inspired international collaborations, with some researchers acknowledging the show helped showcase their work but also encouraged international collaborations to further embed their research into practice globally.

Theme 3: Assisted recruiting participants

For some researchers, it helped with recruitment of their participants in their study. For example, one PhD student, who is conducting research on intergenerational programs between war widows and university students, reflected:

“I don’t think the students had seen the program, but the widows had and it helped them to understand what I was doing. I don’t think they felt reluctant because they had seen it and they understood what the program was about. So it helped me to get recruits for the widows in particular”

Others reflected

“The show sparked popularity and so many people jumped on board with the (research program)”

Theme 4: Catalyst for a new search inquiry line

For some researchers, the ABC series resonated with them enough to pivot their line of enquiry to intergenerational practice. Prior to the series, there was an emerging interest in intergenerational practice, however the ABC TV docuseries strengthened interest in the research stream and allowed some researcher to develop a new research interest steam, with two researchers reflecting:

“I watched the stories in the first season, and I found myself getting interested in the theology ... and older adult space... and...my background... was very clinical. I was interested in mental health wellbeing but from a clinical angle. Seeing (the program) and then getting involved in the intergenerational program that I did, it validated my passion and gave me a new sort of insight to addressing the issues... so I was really inspired in that way and it just sparked a whole new interest in intergenerational practice.”

“The show sparked my curiosity in a professional manner as I was curious to how it could be replicated in a system and the way the research outcomes could be collected... So I began researching this space”

Upon examining the breath of citations of the program, for the researchers studied, it was regularly used in conversations with others to help them relate to what they were studying, and used in conference presentations for background/context, as well as in official communication outputs such as publications, and confirmation of candidature reports for PhD students.

“I cited it in my confirmation report, just to show the growing interest from not only the media but also general public and industry. I also use it in everyday conversations when I speak to people when they ask me what I am doing. It really is like the best way for people to relate and see” (PhD candidate)

There were also four articles found on Google Scholar that officially cited the Australian ABC series, Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds (n=4) or Old People's Homes for Teenagers (n=1) in their papers (Giuffre, 2022, Morrison-Dayana, 2024; MacKinlay & Harrington, 2024, Ward, 2023; Wrigley-Carr, 2021)

Combined, this study found the ABC series to impact engagement in intergenerational research, pivot researchers' interest in the topic, and assist with the attraction of funding to research and evaluate the impact that intergenerational programs have on society.

4.3 Organisations

Similarly to researchers, this study set out at answering three key questions that enquired into the impact that the ABC documentary had on organisations within Australia. These were:

- 1) How did the ABC Show's "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" (series 1 and 2) and "Old People's Home for Teenagers" (series 1 and 2) impact your desire to engage in intergenerational practice?
- 2) How did the ABC Show's "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" (series 1 and 2) and "Old People's Home for Teenagers" (series 1 and 2) impact your desire to research intergenerational practice?
- 3) How did the ABC Show's "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" (series 1 and 2) and "Old People's Home for Teenagers" (series 1 and 2) assist with funding?

Upon exploring these questions with 15 different organisational representatives, this study found four key impacts of the ABC series on organisations.

1. It served as an effective communication tool, showcasing the positive societal impact of intergenerational practice and raising awareness at the organisational level.
2. It simplified and demystified the process of evaluation, making it more accessible for smaller organisations that may have limited resources or experience in this area.
3. It inspired new strategic investments, encouraging both existing organisations to enhance their intergenerational initiatives and prompting new social enterprise opportunities.
4. It became a valuable resource for use in funding applications, presentations, and reports, helping organisations articulate the value of intergenerational programs and effectively allocate resources to these initiatives.

Theme 1: Assistance as a highly effective communication tool for intergenerational practice

All organisational representatives reported that the ABC docuseries provided an excellent opportunity for them to showcase the benefits of intergenerational practice that would not normally be talked about.

Interestingly, whilst one organisation felt validated when watching the show as they interpreted it as an opportunity to showcase their existing program.

“I watched the ABC program and even though we’ve been running these programs for years, nobody would have known about them without the show. Now people can see the real impact it has on people, and it’s done in a very scientific way”

Another felt bittersweet validation, because whilst they were excited about the program and all its potential, at the time they were in a series of lockdowns and they felt unfairly done by, as their programs could only run online in their state.

“I was feeling really low watching the first episode. I found it really hard and I (had) mixed emotions. It was these emotions of, oh, this is so beautiful. This is lovely. I love this. This is what I see each week. This is amazing. And then there was this part of I’m still doing this online ‘cause I can’t get back face to face whilst their program was running on TV whereas I was still doing online, still using masks.”

Despite having mixed feelings, the interviewee acknowledged that, *“This is so good for the work that we're all doing that we want to do that, you know it's going to, it's going to amplify the awareness. It's going to get more people, you know, making these connections and doing this”*

This sentiment was also shared by all other interviewees who felt that the ABC docuseries provided a much-needed opportunity for their community to discuss key topics that were previously undiscussed, such as positive ageing and positive images of teenagers.

“I loved the way the series shone a light on the experiences of older people to the public. Many are living with social isolation, and this harms their mental health and wellbeing and often shortening their life. I also loved the way the program showed the positive impacts on both the older people and the teens, and that even though they were at different stages of life, often many of their experiences are similar”

Theme 2: De-mystified evaluation for smaller organisations

Interestingly, the ABC show also de-mystified evaluation for organisations and in some cases, motivated organisations to start collecting data on the programs they run.

“We talked about we could better measure the impact because you learn a lot about how they're talking about the effects on my older persons... we see it all the time, so maybe we need to be better documenting it... and from the ABC show we learnt how to document the impact of the programme.”

This learning is of value, as often local council run programs rely on attendance numbers in programs, however, they do not measure the impact beyond this criterion. Whereas the ABC show allowed organisations to de-mystify evaluation and show the importance of how evaluation techniques can demonstrate greater benefit to the wider community. Participants reported that this change of mindset was also assisted by the way the program showcased the evaluation aspect in an easy-to-use way.

Theme 3: Inspired strategic investment in the programs in existing companies and the creation of new social enterprises

For some organisations, it created new opportunities for new clients and strategic investment in the programs moving forward. For example, Intergenerational playgroups had been running their programs prior to the show, however the show provided them with an opportunity to expand these programs beyond their initial scope and hire personnel accordingly.

For four others interviewed, the show provided an opportunity to create a new career pathway when they were at an impasse in their career.

“For me, I was a secondary school teacher who saw the show and went “oh my goodness! I want to do that” So I ran a pilot programme last year, just a small one, and just loved it and want to do more of it! I have my next one starting this term.”

“It’s changed my outlook I guess on life and what a difference those programs have, so it’s just rolled on from there. I’ve just started in Tasmania, and I know these programs can make sure a difference in the lives of others”

Two examples of organisations that have emerged since the screening of the show are the Australian Institute for Intergenerational Practice and Intergenerational Learning Australia.

Australian Institute for Intergenerational Practice

<https://aiip.net.au>

Focus: Peak Body for Intergenerational Practice in Australia

The Australian Institute for Intergenerational Practice is a for purpose, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to advancing evidence-based intergenerational practice. Launched in 2021, this organisation has now become the peak organisation for intergenerational practice across Australia.

The ABC series has helped build momentum for the Peak organisation, **Australian Institute of Intergenerational Practice**. It connects over 300 members and hosts an annual conference, as well as monthly research translation and practitioner connection events to connect and showcase the talents and activities in the intergenerational space across Australia, but also internationally.

Intergenerational Learning Australia

<https://intergenerational-learning.com.au/>

Focus: *Primary & secondary school students, seniors in aged care homes, retirement villages and independent living.*

Intergenerational Learning Australia, founded and run by Greg Cronan, focuses on creating programs via video conferencing for schools and aged care homes. The first Intergenerational Learning Australia program commenced in June 2019 before COVID-19 and before the first series of Old People's Homes for 4 year old's. When schools and aged care homes were contacted by ILA after the first series of Old People's Home for 4 Year Old's, the common response was the teachers and aged care staff had seen the ABC TV series and were inspired to do something similar.

Whilst the seeds of intergenerational learning Australia were formed prior to the screening of the ABC series, the popularity and growth of Intergenerational Learning Australia can be, in parts, attributed to the popularity of the ABC series.

Internationally, this program has also inspired the creation of a new social enterprise, **Generations Connect New Zealand**, which aims to be a peak body in New Zealand like the Australian Institute of Intergenerational Practice.

“I started an organisation called Generations Connect New Zealand, primarily from watching the program. When I first saw it over here, I was fulltime teaching, so I had quite a different perspective coming from that education and benefit for the younger participants. But as the time has gone on, over the past 2-3 years I’ve now had experiences where I’ve explored more of the benefits from the older generation’s perspective.”

Theme 4: Assisted with funding, recruiting and program resourcing

The ABC show provided an opportunity for some organisations such as TheirCare, as highlighted earlier, to seek funding to deliver programs, as well as evaluate. Similarly, the show was cited in a micro-grant to deliver a pilot program in secondary schools in NSW.

For other organisations, the program resulted in new clients being attracted to them because of the program, and other clients who have changed their scheduled days specifically to attend the program.

“We definitely get clients who choose to go to the groups that we run the intergenerational program.”

This study has highlighted that the ABC series provided an avenue for organisations to seek funding, grow and attract participants as the show was easy to identify with program that enhanced communication about the program in the local community.

“You don’t have to really over-explain it, which I found that I had to do 10 years ago when I first started. The change in the society has had that’s been quite pronounced for me to see and to see the acceptance and everyone’s willingness to be involved, which is amazing!”

“Even if you haven’t heard about intergenerational practice, you only have to mention that show and people go... oh yeah! And they get it!”

Finally, the show allowed organisations who were seeking to offer intergenerational programs to begin to conceptualise some of the resource costs that may be involved. For example, one participant reported

“it gives you ideas around things you may not have thought of, as people that have always run playgroups, we didn’t think at first of the resources needed, for example, the chairs, tables at different heights, things like that. So when you see it on the show, it prompted ideas that we could follow up... it also helped with pre-planning and problem solving things that come up.”

Thus, the ABC series has had a significant impact on organisations ability to expand their programs in this space, such is the case in the Undurba State School Intergenerational Program.

Undurba State School

<https://undurbass.eq.edu.au/>

Focus: *Primary school students, seniors in retirement villages and independent living.*

Impact:

Mrs Michelle Plank, the Deputy Principal of Undurba State School, was inspired to create their intergenerational program, in partnership with Intergenerational Learning Australia and Bolton Clarke, after falling in love with the ABC series. Over the past 2 years the program has run on a Friday afternoon and has brought joy to the children, residents and all staff attending. The program has attracted small seed grants from local councillors and has shown significant improvements in the satisfaction and the behaviour of children and older adults, and credits the ABC show for showcasing the value that intergenerational programs have on society. Furthermore, attracting funding for the program through local councillors would have been much more difficult without the ABC program.

Finally, the ABC series were well cited by all organisational representatives, whether that was using the clips and examples to showcase the program when presenting on intergenerational practice programs at conferences. Or through the advertisement of programs through newsletters to recruit new participants. It provided a useful resource to remind people what the organisation was doing, and assisted in attracting new clients, participants and showcase the outcomes of the program when permission to share their own photos were not provided.

4.4 Facilitators

The researchers spoke to 18 facilitators of intergenerational practice and explored the research question: How did the ABC Show's "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" (series 1 and 2) and "Old People's Home for Teenagers" (series 1 and 2) impact your desire to engage in intergenerational practice?

Four key themes emerged, these were: assistance in communicating the benefits of intergenerational practice programs and their outcomes, inspired new careers and opportunities, assists with activity inspiration and assists with recruitment of participants.

Theme 1: Assistance in communicating the benefits of intergenerational practice programs and their outcomes

Like researchers and organisational representatives, facilitators noted the importance of the ABC series in creating awareness, as well as communicating the benefits for intergenerational practice programs. One facilitator reported:

"The ABC series is great as families are now aware of intergenerational practice...when I started out and talked about it to people, it was really foreign and now it's something that is so familiar with everyone and their now aware of the concept"

Whereas another reported,

"I loved the way the series shone a light on the experiences of older people to the general public. Many are living with social isolation, and this harms their mental health and wellbeing, often shortening their life. I loved the way the program showed the positive impacts on both the older people and the teens and that even though they are at different stages on life, often many of their experiences are similar. I had tears at many times during the series, especially the series with the teenagers."

Additionally, the ABC series showed how important connections are between teenagers and older people, and how significant those relationships and connections can really be. Moreover, it created awareness for the programs within the community, which assisted facilitators create programs and pathways for more programs, such as in the case of the STEPS program, highlighted on the next page.

STEPS

<https://heartandsoulstory.com/intergenerational-programs/>

Focus: Teenagers and seniors in residential aged care facilities.

STEP involves an 8- to 10-week facilitated journey that brings together teenagers and older people, mostly living in aged care, to connect, share stories, and build empathy. It has been operating since 2017 and it delivered face to face and virtually. It has been adapted and delivered as a dementia-specific program that was funded and filmed by Sutherland Shire Council in 2023.

Impact of the ABC show to the STEPS program

- Provided a platform for agent to leverage when promoting existing initiative
- Amplified reach of existing initiative by highlighting initiative on the show
- Created a surge of interest in existing initiatives
- Assisted showcase the value of the program to the community which improved interest
- Encouraged participants to directly engage with those who had the power to make change to prompt action.

Theme 2: inspired new careers and opportunities

The second key impact that the ABC series had on facilitators was to their individual careers. One facilitator reported:

“The show opened my eyes to the world of intergenerational practice and developed a passion in me I never expected. Since then, I have been blessed that it has led me to my position with (my organisation). I have spent the last 9 months supporting aged care facilities, community centres, schools and libraries to set up and effectively implement intergenerational playgroups.”

Another reported:

“My friend told me I needed to watch a show called “Old People’s Homes for Teenagers” and I watched it and thought, that’s what I want to do. So that was the catalyst for me starting to run intergenerational programs.”

Furthermore, the show generated awareness of the importance of good facilitation,

“I think a learning from the show is realising the importance of facilitation. For a meaningful and sustainable program, facilitation is really key. What brings people together? It’s not about whether you know it well or you don’t, it’s about bringing people together and the rest just happens naturally”

Although all facilitators noted the intense labour required to keep running these programs, on the whole, they are grateful for the ABC for creating a show that has changed their life.

Theme 3: Assists with activity and program inspiration

The ABC docu-series provided a pivotal resource that allowed facilitators to explore what they could do in their programs. It also provided a resource for them to refer to and for some, provided a motivation to continue when times got tough.

For example, one manager reported:

“Even for staff (inspiration)... one of my facilitators that runs the playgroup she has never done anything like that before so I told her to watch the program... she’s come back with all these notes and ideas... it was a good place to start when you haven’t seen it being done before”

One facilitator reflected on the role it plays in inspiring and motivating them on tough days.

“In times when I’m overloaded with work, I go back and even though I’ve got my own anecdotal reference points, I do like to watch and reiterate the magic that happens in those kinds of intergenerational relationships”

For other facilitators, the show provided a great creativity tool to inspire new activities

“Sometimes I will rewatch the show and although our program is different in most ways, it allows my brain to continue being creative about how we can run our sessions”

“The activities I really enjoyed watching. I think they’ve helped think a bit beyond what we think is possible so that’s been great. I love the colour run, I think that was a fantastic initiative and I love the physical side (of activities). It showcased again that you know, it doesn’t matter if you’re on a walker or in a wheelchair you can still participate and have fun. It shows that we’re all individuals but can come together and have fun”

The case study presented on the next page highlights how the ABC series have impacted the running of an intergenerational program in Buderim, Queensland.

Immanuel Early Learning Centre Buderim

<https://www.immanuel.qld.edu.au/belong/immnauel-early-learning-centre/>

Focus: Children two – five years, VIP's – senior residents from aged care facility and local community.

Immanuel Early Learning Centre is an approved long day care centre to provide education and care to children from 2 years up to and including over preschool age. It has places for 90 children each day. It is located near an aged care facility.

Impact:

The intergenerational program has been operating at Immanuel ELC for 6.5 years. The director was inspired by the British series – Old Peoples Home for 4 year Olds and wanted to introduce to her setting. The Immanuel ELC program expanded after the Australia program was broadcast – the VIP's joined our program because they had watched the show and realised that they could make a difference to children's lives – *'I think that the older persons didn't think they were worthy of coming to be with the children however when they watched the show and saw what was possible they were inspired to do the same'*. The director also reported that parents watched the ABC show and were keen to send their children to the centre because of the intergenerational program. Parents wanted their children to have connections with older members of our community.

Specifically, the ABC series:

- Amplified the reach of existing initiative by highlighting initiative on show.
- Created a surge of interest in existing initiative.
- Encouraged to directly engage those with power to make change.

Theme 4: Assistance with recruitment of participants

The show provided an excellent resource to assist recruit participants for facilitators with one mentioning:

“If anyone has difficulty understanding what intergenerational practice is or what to expect, we reference the show. Most of the time they have seen the show, but if they haven’t seen it, they’ll be like oh! I’ll go home and watch it. So, I think it benefits us in sharing information with community and consumers.”

Another acknowledged the show has helped recruit as *“a lot of our families and community have seen the show and everyone relates to it. It has also sparked a lot of interest within our playgroup setting because we’ve got almost 70 families that attend those, and they all recommend us because of the TV show.”*

Because of this and the breadth of audience views, facilitators widely cited the show in conference presentations, and funding applications regularly. They also used it in newsletters and in reference when recruiting any of their participants as a way of easily explaining the program. Furthermore, within organisations, facilitators use the program as an easy way to discuss their own programs to leadership meetings or CEOs. Thus, the show has provided an easy reference point to convince others of the value that intergenerational practice has on society.

Playgroup SA: PlayForever Playgroup

<https://www.playgroupsa.com.au/playforever.html>

Focus: Young children, parents and seniors in residential aged care homes. The PlayForever Playgroup is a session for important social interaction. It creates opportunities for children to further develop their skills, parents to create a local peer support network and provide isolated residents with vital community interaction.

Impact: Playgroup SA were running 16 programs prior to COVID, which saw a significant reduction to two programs. The reach and popularity of the ABC series assisted in generating community awareness which has enabled Playgroup SA to grow their offering to 30 intergenerational programs. Playgroup SA subsequently believe this has increased levels of joy and happiness, higher levels of self-esteem and more active participation in the community - particularly from the older residents. The organisation has chosen to create a position in their organisation that will facilitate the development of intergenerational activities.

The specific impact the ABC series has had on PlaygroupSA has been:

- Amplified reach of existing initiative by highlighting initiative on show.
- Created a surge of interest in existing initiative.
- Encouraged to directly engage those with power to make change.

5. CONCLUSION

Documentaries are a powerful tool to inspire and positively impact social issues. However, no research has examined the power that docuseries play in changing and influencing the broader society. Instead, research has stopped short by examining only how documentaries address social issues at the first layer of impact, however we do not know how documentaries, in particular, docu-series influence stakeholders differently, while also examining the role the docuseries has played on the broader society. This research study began to unpack this by measuring the systemic impact that the ABC show's "Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds" (series 1 and 2) and "Old Peoples Home for Teenagers" (series 1 and 2) has had on the Australian public. Specifically, the study unpacked the role these programs have played on the public and wider society, researchers, organisations and facilitators within an Australian environment. To present the overall conclusions this chapter will highlight the key findings of each stakeholder before presenting the overall conclusion of this study.

For the public and society

The ABC series was found to have a significant impact on the way the general public perceives the importance and value of intergenerational practice on society, their comfortability levels interacting with older people in the community and residential aged care facilities and facilitate in breaking down ageist stereotypes and more broadly about working in this space. In particular, those who watched the show reported intergenerational practice as more important to society than those who did not. Highlighting the significant value that storytelling through docuseries has on social cohesion and inclusivity.

Furthermore, this study found that those who had watched the show felt more comfortability in visiting an aged care facility. This finding is particularly salient as post COVID restrictions, the number of visitors to the elderly in nursing homes in Australia has anecdotally dropped. Moreover, loneliness in older adults in care homes are rising. While the actual number of visitors to nursing home remains unknown, programs such as the ABC docuseries “Old People’s Home for 4 Year Olds” (series 1 and 2) and “Old Peoples Home for Teenagers” (series 1 and 2) play a significant role in opening nursing homes back to the public post COVID and addressing loneliness.

Furthermore, this study found that those who watched the show demonstrated greater recognition and value that intergenerational practice has in society. There was greater empathy and respect for intergenerational workers and the role they play in society. Thus, we argue that the docuseries played a significant contributing factor in improving social inclusion and cohesion within the broader community.

For researchers

Upon examining the impact that the series has had on researchers, we found the series to have four key impacts on researchers: as an effective communication tool for intergenerational practice, assisting with acquiring funding and recruiting participants and as a catalyst for new research inquiries into intergenerational practice in Australia. In particular, the series played a significant role in convincing the public and funders/policy officers in the value of the intergenerational practice in society. As such, more grants were provided and more interest in the programs were generated, resulting in researchers spending less time finding participants and more time exploring the outcomes. This has generated significant research streams that have impacted the global production of knowledge on the value that intergenerational practice has on society.

Consequently, it was evident that the ABC series positively altered researchers career paths, by increasing engagement in intergenerational research and encouraging them to pivot researchers’ interest in the topic. This was assisted by the attraction of funding to research, which was made easier by the program, and encouraged the evaluation of the impact that intergenerational programs have on society.

For organisations

For organisations, the ABC documentary series had four key impacts: First, it served as an highly effective communication tool that showcased the positive societal impact of intergenerational practice and raising awareness at the organisational level. Second, it simplified and demystified the process of evaluation, making it more accessible for smaller organisations that may have limited resources or experience in this area. Third, it inspired new strategic investments, encouraging both existing organisations to enhance their intergenerational initiatives and prompting new social enterprise opportunities. Fourth, it became a valuable resource for use in funding applications, presentations, and reports, helping organisations articulate the value of intergenerational programs and effectively allocate resources to these initiatives.

These impacts were directly related to the emotional connection that the ABC series played on boards, executive teams and entrepreneurs across Australia. Whilst some social enterprises existed prior to the show, many were created because of the show and some business expanded their core business to include intergenerational practice after watching the show. Thus, the show played a significant role in re-shaping the program and policy offerings by these organisations in the broader community.

For facilitators

For facilitators, the ABC series had four significant impacts. First, it acted as a strong communication tool, highlighting the benefits of intergenerational programs and demonstrating their positive outcomes, which helped gain broader support. Second, it inspired new career pathways and professional opportunities within the intergenerational field, encouraging individuals to explore roles dedicated to fostering connections across generations. Third, it provided creative inspiration for designing activities, offering facilitators fresh ideas to enhance engagement and interaction in their programs. Fourth, it supported participant recruitment by raising public awareness and interest, making it easier to attract individuals of all ages to take part in intergenerational initiatives.

Prior to the program airing, facilitators struggled to find resources to demonstrate the value of the program to the broader society, as well as pedagogical evidence to program educational resources. However, the ABC show provided a vital resource to these facilitators and assists them complete their job daily.

Conclusion

Overall, these results demonstrate significant social impact that the ABC series have had on society in creating new career paths, assisting with accessing funding, improving the social connectedness of communities around Australia as well as improving attitudes to aging and intergenerational practice providers and facilitators. Without the ABC series, the ground swell for intergenerational practice in Australia would not be where it is today. Furthermore, social enterprises would not have been as successful, and research globally would not have had the evidence base that it has created because of more researchers being attracted to the space.

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