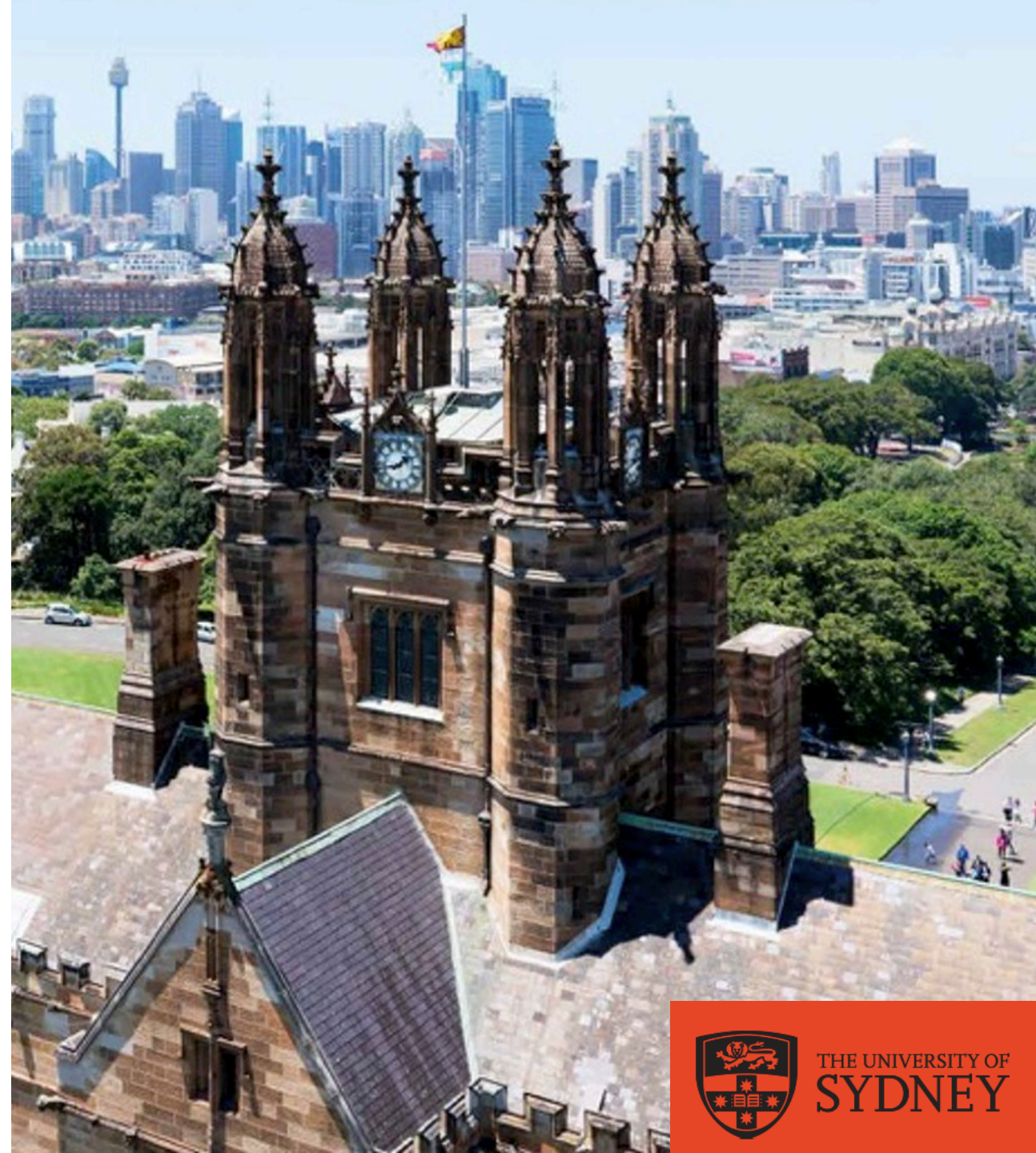


Inclusive by design.

Reimagining Technologies with/for Older People

A/Prof. Barbara Barbosa Neves

PhD, FRSA, FHEA



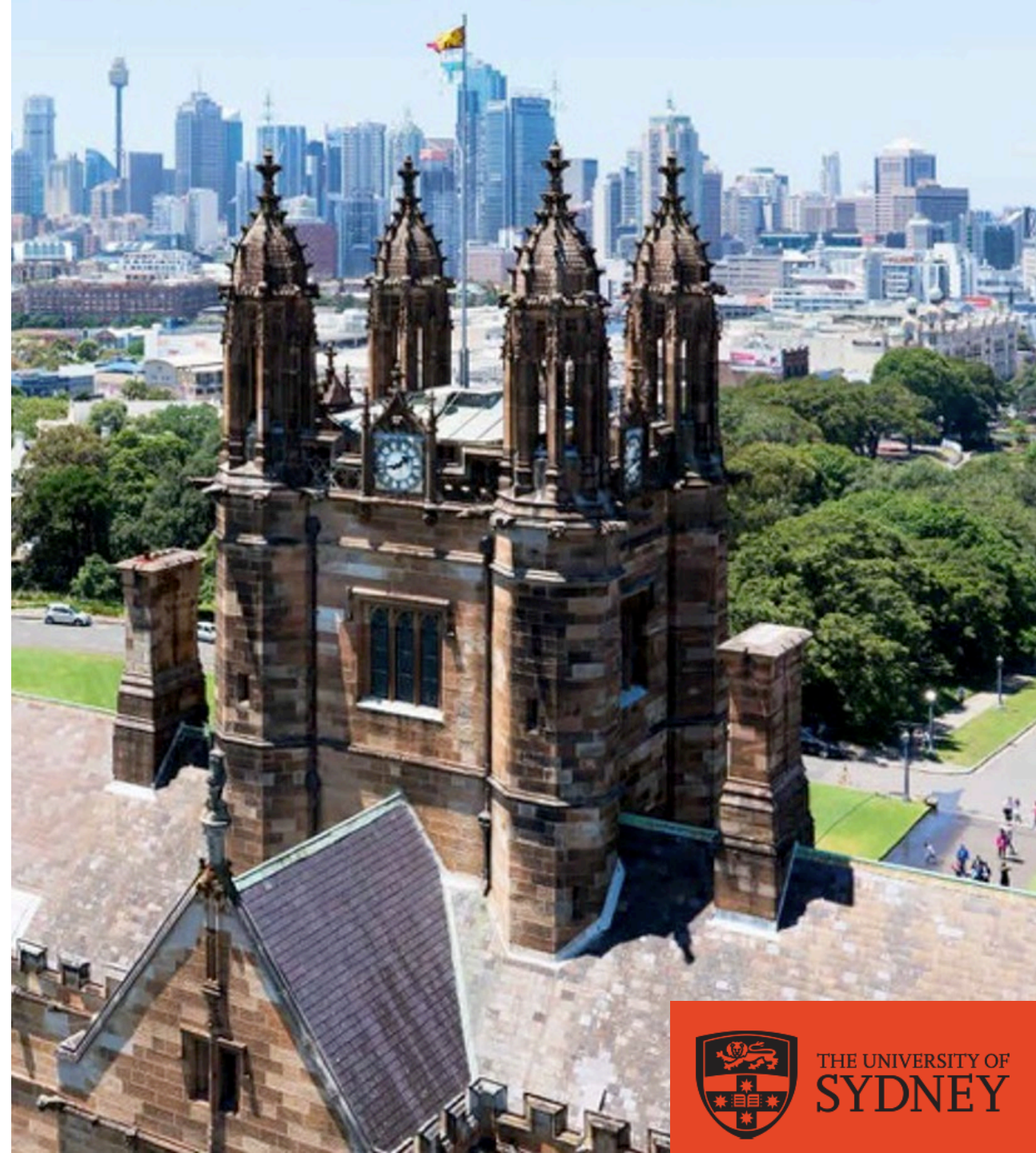
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SYDNEY

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Context: Aged Care Under Pressure

- Staff shortages
- Substandard care
- Social isolation & loneliness
- Rapidly ageing population

The 'Solution':

- Robots
- Monitoring & fall detection
- Chatbots
- AI decision-support systems



- AI is not just technical.
- It is social, political, cultural, and material too.

Three Studies, One Thread

1

AI Imaginaries and Uses

Interviews with AI developers,
care staff & advocates

2

AgeTech Companies

Websites of 33 companies
across 4 continents

3

Fall Detection AI

Datasets used to train
AI fall detection models

Study 1

How is ageing viewed by those designing and implementing AI for care?

Semi-structured interviews with AI developers, care staff, and advocates (n=18)

Survey with providers (n=101)

(with Alan Petersen, Mor Vered, Adrian Carter, Emiko Omori — Monash University, 2020–2022)



Stereotypes about older generations: distrust of/inability to use tech + biomedical representations.

“They’ve been brought up in a generation [with] stupid sci-fi movies... that always paint a negative picture.”

Mark, AI Developer

“They’ve been brought up in a generation [with] stupid sci-fi movies... that always paint a negative picture.”

Mark, AI Developer

“The older generation doesn’t like technology.”

Kathy, Care Staff

“They’ve been brought up in a generation [with] stupid sci-fi movies... that always paint a negative picture.”

Mark, AI Developer

“The older generation doesn’t like technology.”

Kathy, Care Staff

“Aged care gets staffed with the older generation and change management is difficult to do... Younger people are always open to new ideas...”

Sam, Advocate

Ageism

- Older people are all the same (passive, homogenous, technophobic)
- Ageing is always seen as a problem, a cost

Neves et al., 2023, 2024, 2025



Study 2

What are AgeTech companies selling?

Analysis of company websites offering AI for aged care

(with Geoffrey Mead, Naseem Ahmadpour, Alex Broom, Kal Gulson – University of Sydney)



caring ai

Home Features Contact Us

AI-Powered Resident Monitoring

Transforming senior care with intelligent monitoring and analytics.

Request demo

What We Analysed

33

companies

Top 100 results, 2024
Oceania, N. America,
Asia & Europe

5

AI types

Carebots · Chatbots
Sensors · Decision systems
Clinical apps

3

methods

Content analysis
Thematic analysis
Semiotic analysis

Three Dominant Logics

Carefication

Ageing as 'condition' requiring constant monitoring, management, and control.

AI Solutionism

Complex social problems are reduced to technical issues, only solvable through AI.

Datafication

Older people as data points – to be monitored, scored, and optimised.

Study 3

Who is present in AI fall detection data?

Analysis of datasets used to train AI-based fall detection models

(with Geoffrey Mead — University of Sydney, 2026)



Imagen

Absent Bodies, Absent Contexts

Participants become sets of movements – separated from their bodies and contexts.

Older people are mostly absent from the data.



**AI holds great promise for improving care for older people,
as long as it does not exacerbate or introduce ageism”**

WHO, 2022

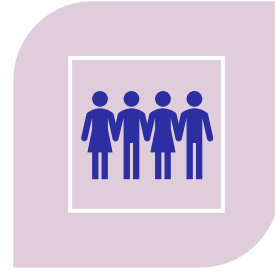
We are not there yet.

Age-related biases remain broadly overlooked in AI research and development.

Challenges for ageing and care futures



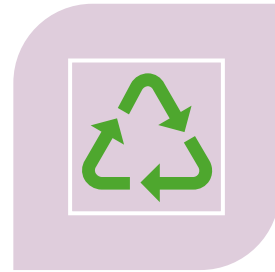
REPRESENTATION



INCLUSION &
SOCIAL JUSTICE



AGENCY &
DIGNITY



CARE SYSTEMS

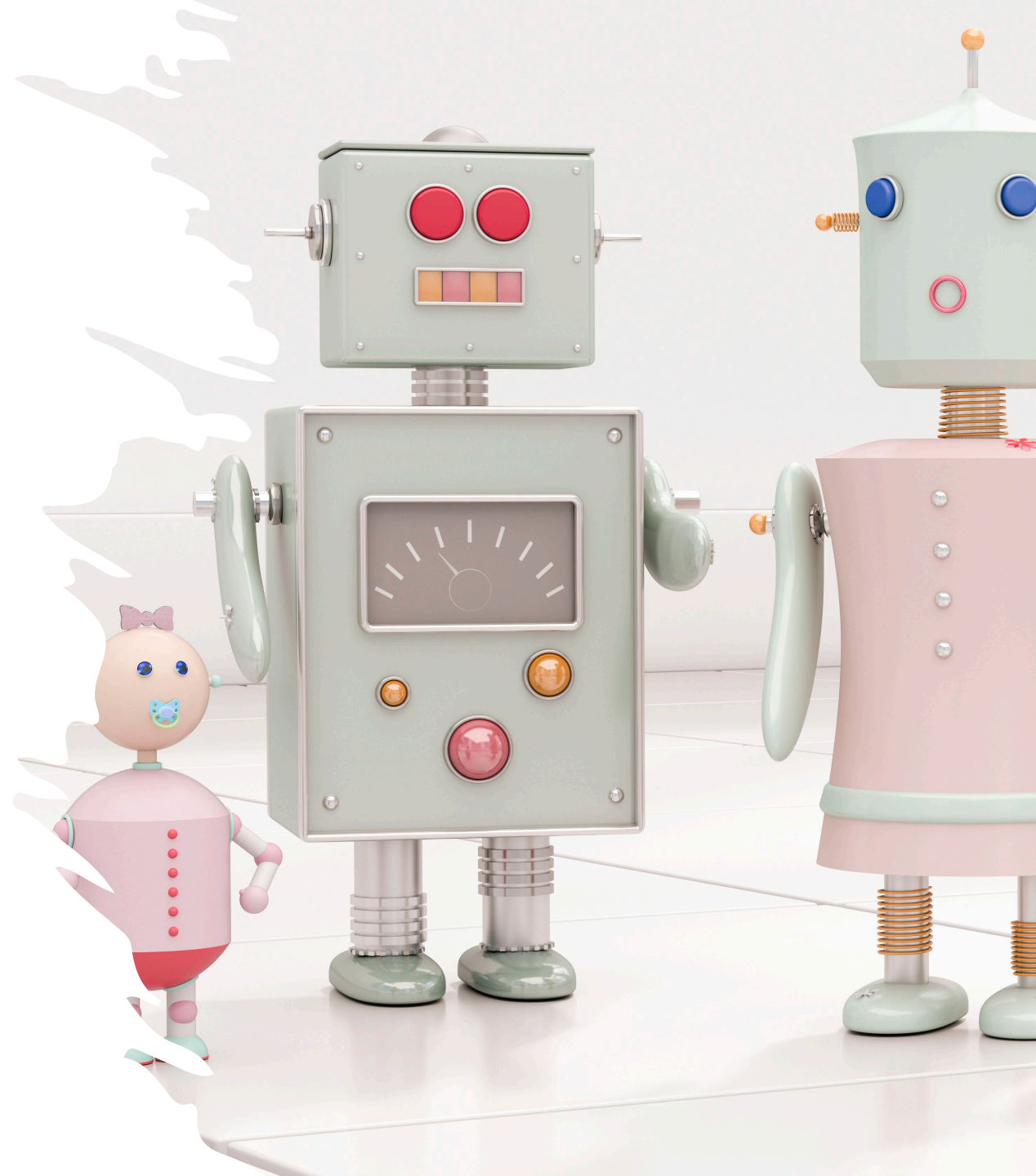
Steps for Inclusive and Equitable AI in Care



Reject one-size-fits-all

Design & implementation must reflect diversity of experiences, needs, and aspirations of older people.

Care is
relational,
multi-
dimensional



Steps for Inclusive and Equitable AI in Care

1

Reject one-size-fits-all

Design & implementation must reflect diversity of experiences, needs, and aspirations of later life.

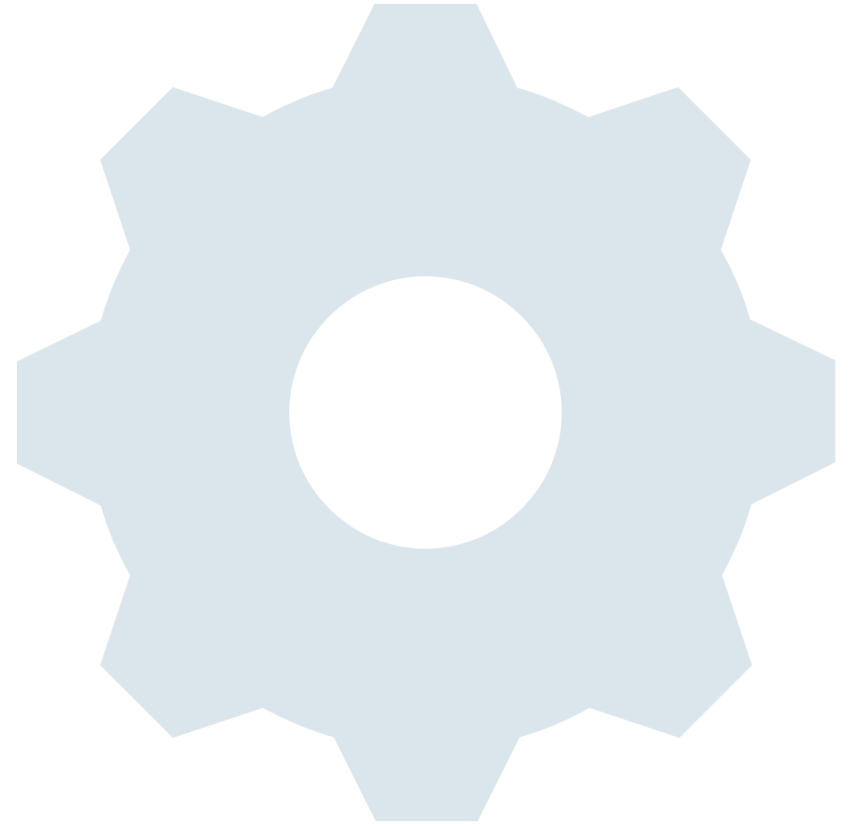
2

Take co-design seriously

Not token consultation – genuine involvement of older people in shaping technologies that affect their lives, from concept to deployment.



‘Comprehensive’ Co-Design



Steps for Inclusive and Equitable AI in Care

1

Reject one-size-fits-all

Design & implementation must reflect diversity of experiences, needs, and aspirations of later life.

2

Take co-design seriously

Not token consultation – genuine involvement of older people in shaping technologies that affect their lives, from concept to deployment.

3

Challenge technosolutionism

Scaling AI before understanding contexts is not innovation – it is risk displacement onto the most vulnerable.



Communities of Practice

Technology that genuinely supports older people is possible.

But it requires us to treat technology and innovation as social and technical systems — not just engineering feats.

Who is this for? · Who was involved? · Whose assumptions are embedded? · Who governs these systems?

Thank you.



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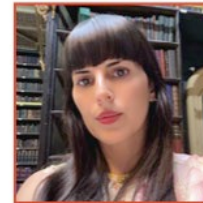
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AI Social Science

Sydney Centre for Healthy Societies



RESEARCH LEADS



Dr Barbara
Barbosa Neves



Professor
Kalervo Gulson



Dr Geoffrey
Mead



Professor
Alex Broom