

Longevity and Government

Like all developed economies, Australia is addressing the economic challenge of increasing personal longevity. The catch cry is 'share the burden' with a particular focus on costly 'entitlements' available to older people.

Flaws in the logic?

- Older people have made a major contribution to the intellectual, social and economic growth that now benefits the whole community. Shouldn't they reap some reward from those following who start with much more community wealth?
- Age is an unreliable basis for allocating support. Rather than decreasing, differences between people increase with age. Needs-based allocation of resources is fairer and more clearly identifies who benefits and why.
- Raising the age of access to superannuation savings, disability payments, age pensions and health benefits means those who are 'needy' find life increasingly difficult. The more self-sufficient appear to be penalized for their increasing longevity which they have already funded through a life of saving and taxes.
- Older people should be encouraged and acknowledged for ongoing active participation in the community they have created, not blamed for its economic malaise.
- Discrimination against age is a political time-bomb. As the proportion of voters over age 50 approaches half the total votes, their ballot box influence grows.

If I ruled the world...

Two of the biggest challenges for our community are increasing longevity and climate change.

The climate change debate continues to be plagued by disagreement over causes and solutions and the consequent politicization of the scientific debate.

Increasing longevity has no such impediments. We know it is occurring and roughly its pace. We can model the outcomes and adapt to new information.

Yet at both the personal and community level our approach is piecemeal. We should look at the big picture and the opportunities to influence change.

So, if I ruled the world I would establish a program to increase longevity awareness throughout the community.

Firstly, as individuals we need to know how we can manage our own longevity and make a difference.

Secondly, I would mandate the training of professional advisers like health care specialists, financial advisers, accountants, estate planners, economists, career advisers and human relations professionals so they appreciate the personal and community impact of longevity.

Finally, I would have the bureaucrats develop a 'longevity impact' filter through which every policy they devise passes before implementation.

Passing the buck?

It's easy to pass the buck to government if social change is not being properly addressed.

Government is typically focused on short term solutions which maintain power by spending money. Long term issues are swamped by populism.

We should take responsibility for ourselves. We need to manage our own increasing longevity.

Longevity Awareness

My Longevity promotes personal and community longevity awareness.

The SHAPE Analyser highlights five areas in which each of us can influence our quality and length of life. Revisit your own results and identify the opportunities and problems which influence your own longevity outlook and management.

Develop an action plan. Take more control. Future postings on the website and in our newsletters will focus on what you can do.

Over 70,000 personal analyses have been completed on the website, showing the thirst for reliable information about longevity,

Our aim is to satisfy your demands for more 'how to' information so we can all identify and build on our capabilities, experience and potential.

David Williams