

How to make the most of the opportunity of ageing

Increasing lifespans are a consequence of our social development over the past 200 years. It's important to take full advantage of the opportunities this presents, as well as managing adverse consequences such as the current aged care debacle. How?

Having properly informed politicians

The surge in the numbers of older people has been forecast for years. Solutions have been available, but they have been regularly pushed beyond the short-term political horizon.

The political risk of this inaction is now rising fast, as Finland found when inadequate and poor-quality aged care recently overturned the long-term governing party.

The misconception that people simply 'get old' has underpinned many political responses. However, we become more different from each other with age, not more alike. Close personal support is required. Except as a last resort, institutions are more prone to poor responses for aged care.

Government who fund most aged care needs to guard against diversion of funds meant for personal care to the profits of operators. We should push for effective action by politicians.

Being ethical

It is 'ethical' to prolong life for almost any reason, yet this doesn't extend to the consequences. In many cases people are exposed to the risk of a remaining life which can range from miserable to atrocious, often without them realizing this. People should have the right to be better informed and be able to choose the most appropriate action for them, with support if necessary.

Being personally accountable

Aged care is required to attend to:

- Functional dependency – unable to manage normal activities of living
- Poor physical health
- Cognitive impairment
- Poor mental health such as depression

If we each address these earlier, our need for aged care support can often be delayed and our ongoing quality of life improved, often at lower cost.

Having access to good advice

Social support is a major positive factor in effective ageing. It's not just a matter of professional advice. As a community we should devote more resources to properly informing people about why longevity is increasing and what they can do to make a difference to their own outlook.

Poor financial literacy is a major obstacle for older people although professional advice is available. However, access to professional longevity advice remains limited. Resolving this has been our challenge at My Longevity.

We all talk easily in 'time'. By realizing our own time frame and its possible stages and influences as we age, we are more likely to make the best of the rest of our life.

Everyone benefits from a more informed and engaged older community, especially because it continues to grow.

This is why we developed the Longevity Plan – to enable each person to understand and prepare for their own journey while they are in reasonable shape.