

## Can Politicians Find Ways That Will Reward Longevity?

Lifespans are increasing but the political responses to this are fragmented. A third of potential voters are between 55 and 75 and the proportion is growing. How can our politicians do more to reward all of us for making the best of our longevity?

- **Let's get the labels right.** At My Longevity we define 'my longevity' as 'the rest of my life'. Our goal should be making the best of it. It's a simple, positive starting point, avoiding complex terms like retirement and ageing, which often have negative overtones and can inhibit thinking positively about our choices. We all benefit from simple perspectives that motivate us to act.
- **Acknowledge our individuality.** We become more different from each other over time, not more alike. This requires personal solutions, especially for each partner then the couple. Just treating a growing proportion of the population as 'old' discourages individuality and affects our enthusiasm to develop personal strategies and continue to contribute to the community as well.
- **Older people are a resource.** About 70% of longer living people retain a reasonable mental capability until they die, with decision making power typically remaining intact (if a little slower). This makes longer living people a valuable and under-utilised resource, able to continue contributing to community values and productivity.
- **Physical decline can be influenced.** A preventive health approach has a major impact. Politicians need to actively provide continuing education, encouragement and leadership to take the right steps earlier in our lives to really make the best of our longevity.
- **The cost of the growing longevity bonus is rising.** By living longer, we are exposed to uncertain costs. This can be countered if everyone is encouraged to contribute longer to their own welfare and the community for as long as they are capable and consider appropriate investment strategies. Even with increasing superannuation levels, some older people will require and deserve more support than others. Those more fortunate should contribute while they can.
- **Gender has a big impact on longevity outcomes.** Longer lifespans, poorer later life health and longer dependency for women need more recognition and attention from politicians.

We need to keep pushing our political representatives to agree on a national longevity strategy that doesn't turn into a political football every election. This would frame and focus the efforts of governments to ensure we get the maximum longevity benefits from and for the longer living community. See more at <https://nationallongevitystrategy.au/>.

Come to think of it, this list (and more) is what longevity planning addresses for each one of us! Time to review and update your own longevity plan – or subscribe for our full service if you aren't already a beneficiary (with a free plan for your partner).

*It's a good idea to update your SHAPE Analyser results regularly - why not do one now?*