

April | May 2014

50something

AUSTRALIA'S WIDEST CIRCULATING OVER-50S MAGAZINE

Thing of Beauty

A 1964 Porsche Carrera GTS

Aged Care Changes

When, Where & Why

Fred Chaney

A Lifelong Crusade

Gluten Free Gluttony

Flourless Chocolate Cake
& Kumara Latkes

Account Based Income Streams

All You Need to Know

A portrait of Petula Clark, a woman with blonde hair styled in a bob, wearing a red turtleneck sweater. She is holding a large white rose in her hands. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with red and white structures.

Petula Clark

"I loved Fred Astaire Truly"

50something

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Sixties superstar Petula Clark now 81, is still touring. Rosemary Desmond catches up with her.

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It was but a grain of an idea last issue when Ian and Sandra Gillies wrote in voicing their concerns over suggestions that the family home should be included in the pension assets test.

On a hunch we published their letter, and called on you to let us know if it was important to you also.

Judging by the strength of your responses, it is. We haven't run your letters in this issue because mostly they're a show of support.

But the common message in all (but one) is: We've worked hard, paid taxes, raised families and covered the mortgage – and no one's taking our homes off us.

The bad news is that, since then, there's been an onslaught of interests questioning the generosity of the pension assets test – from the Grattan Institute to the Productivity Commission, and, oddly enough, Australian Workers Union national secretary Paul Howes.

Just how effective these groups have been in reshaping government thinking will be made clear in the Commission of Audit report and the May federal budget announcement.

The good news is that, so far, it is a debate that neither the Coalition or Labor want to get entangled in. Both, it seems, recognise the sanctity of the family home and what it represents in the Australian way of life.

Let's hope it stays that way. Watch this space for updates.

Sarah Saunders
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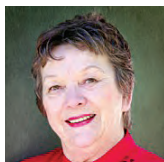
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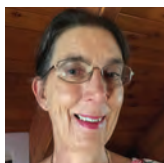
Ornithologist Penny Olsen is an associate professor at the Australian National University. Her most recent books are *Cayley & Son: The Art and Life of Neville Henry Cayley & Neville William Cayley* (2013), *Flocks of Colour* (2013) and *An Eye for Nature: The Life and Art of William T. Cooper* (2014).



A high-profile clinical and nutrition researcher for more than 20 years, Peter Clifton joined Baker IDI in July 2009. While he was at CSIRO, he co-authored *The CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet* books. His primary research interest is the use of diet in the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease and its risk factors: obesity and diabetes.



Kaye Healey is a retired editor and publisher of a series of books on Australian social issues. She is an award winning writer and author of several books on retirement and ageing. Kaye is a Jungian therapist and lives on her 5acre farm in the Southern Highlands of NSW.



After a lifetime of teaching in places as diverse as Zambia and PNG as well as Australia, Mary Tibben is now developing a new and long-postponed career as a writer. Originally from UK, she has been happily settled in rural Queensland for the past 25 years.



Paul Joshua is an automotive enthusiast in the final stages of his Science and Journalism degree. Born in Singapore, he's lived in Brisbane for most of his life, other than when travelling at every possible opportunity. He is passionate about anything with a motor, particularly the two-wheel variety.



50 something's Agony Planner scribe is ipac technical services head, Colin Lewis. Colin has over 20 years' experience in superannuation and retirement incomes and has held senior regulatory, consulting and technical roles throughout the financial services industry.

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National Seniors
Australia

How often do we say that ageing issues do not get enough attention in the public debate?

Not this time.

Recently we've seen an extraordinary range of characters, commentators, experts and would-be experts, lining up for a headline on ageing.

The issues have been diverse – from pension age to eligibility tests, employment and the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

The commentary has conveniently been framed in the negative – the end of the world is nigh. Even a considered speech from the Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank, Philip Lowe, was reported in terms of an ageing population threatening to entrench a growth-stifling culture of risk aversion...from parliament to boardrooms and even to the design of children's playgrounds.

The negative narrative extends to an unwillingness to recognise the productivity opportunities and contribution that an ageing population is and will continue to deliver.

The key starting point to recognition of the contribution by older Australians is the challenge of employment and links to proposals to raise the pension age.

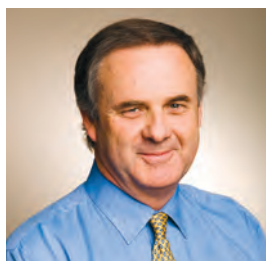
The proposition has been floated for a shift in the pension age to 70 years at some point in the future. Australia is a frontrunner in shifting the age from 65 to 67 by 2023.

Sound arguments are advanced about the health, capacity and opportunity that 65s have today to continue in the workplace, compared to a century ago when the pension was created. Indeed many people currently choose to work past age 65.

There is also no doubt that growth pressure on the economy will continue to be a driver for this debate.

What is conveniently glossed over is the continuing blight and impediment of mature age unemployment.

Oft quoted but too frequently ignored, is that 55 year olds who lose their



Michael O'Neill
CEO National Seniors Australia

jobs face an average of 72 weeks out of employment – substantially longer than other age groups.

Regrettably, the growth in the number of over 50s accessing the disability pension indicates many never return to the workplace and are quietly shuffled out of the employment market.

The damage to the wellbeing, health and financial outlook for these older Australians is mirrored in the loss recorded by their families, communities, and indeed, the nation.

Disturbingly, there is an increasing view that the decade ahead will see pressure on traditional white collar and middle management occupations as the march of technology will cause seismic shifts in employment patterns.

Consider that Access Economics research for the Human Rights Commission has revealed that a five per cent increase in participation by the over 55s would provide a \$48 billion dollar boost to the economy – equivalent to 2.4% of national income.

A shift in attitude across the community including business, government and individuals is necessary – and, yes, it will require individuals to accept that traditional patterns of employment will disappear. Community attitudes to ageing will be critical in ensuring a level playing field for workers.

The distraction of a long-off shift in the pension age being painted as the panacea for future fiscal challenges really is a nonsense. Let's have the debate when we have, as a nation, demonstrated our capacity to ensure sustainable employment and participation for people in their 50s and through to their 60s.

In the meantime, note to self: concentrate on risk aversion and its impact on playgrounds, supermarket aisles, drinking coffee, walking in the park, going to theatre, celebrating birthdays...such an adjustment in lifestyle is required. ■

National Seniors joins panel

National Seniors has joined the Advisory Panel on the Blueprint for an Ageing Australia.

Established by the former Labor government and then disbanded by the current government late last year, the Panel has been taken under the wing of progressive think tank Per Capita.

The Panel is charged with producing a Blueprint that capitalises on population ageing. National Seniors will provide research, analysis and the grassroots views of its members.

Other panellists include former National Seniors chairman Everaldo Compton; community leader and businessman Neville Roach; Flinders University professor of ageing Gill Lewin; and former deputy prime minister Brian Howe.

The Blueprint is due in September, following community consultations. Support the Panel's work at Pozible <http://www.pozible.com/project/177631>

Brisbane man wins book prize



Photo Kirsten Hughes ©

Tech-savvy children playing computer games and the author's childhood memories of make-believe planes made of wooden crates have inspired the winner of the 2014 National Seniors Literary Prize.

Bruce Gannaway of Mt Warren Park in Queensland was chosen as this year's winner with his novel *The Last Eaglehawk*, an adventure set in 1942 Australia where a group of forgotten children are recruited and trained to fly small fighter-planes against the advancing Japanese empire.

National Seniors and Random House hold the literary contest each year for unpublished authors aged 50 and over. Gannaway receives \$2000 cash, a three-year National Seniors membership, e-book publication, cover design, 12 printed copies and the opportunity for further print-on-demand versions.

colouring her world

Synonymous with the sixties, singer Petula Clark, at 81, is still on tour. Rosemary Desmond gets the lowdown on dancing with Fred Astaire and ending up under a piano with Sean Connery.

It's been 50 years since *Downtown* rocketed Petula Clark to pop music stardom.

Her signature 1964 hit set Clark on track to a stellar career.

But it did not start that way.

Attending a 1942 BBC Radio broadcast with her father at the age of nine, Clark famously volunteered to perform in front of a theatre audience made nervous by an air raid during the Blitz.

She became a BBC regular and was described as "Britain's Shirley Temple", later singing at the national post-war victory celebrations in Trafalgar Square.

Following her movie debut in the 1944 wartime comedy *Medal for the General*, Clark went on to a stage, film and singing career spanning seven decades.

Her upbeat hits became a sound track for the 60s and 70s and included *Downtown*, composed by Tony Hatch, who became a long-time musical collaborator.

A two time Grammy winner, Clark has sold 70 million records and has a string of other pop chart-busters such as *I Know a Place*, *Colour My World*, *A Sign of the Times* and *Don't Sleep in the Subway*.



This is My Song was written for her by the legendary Charlie Chaplin. She recorded it in several languages.

Clark was Fred Astaire's final onscreen dance partner in the 1968 musical *Finian's Rainbow* and once drank cocktails under a piano at a party with a then little known actor named Sean Connery.

She has been separated for many years – but not divorced – from her French husband Claude Wolff. The couple have three children, Barbara, Kate and Patrick and two grandchildren.

She lives in Geneva, has been honoured by the Queen and by her peers in the music world and owns homes in Switzerland, France and the UK.

Now 81, Clark could afford to live a quiet life of luxury anywhere she chose. Instead, the songstress with the golden voice is still doing what she loves and retirement is the last thing on her mind.

On your Australian tour, are you singing songs from your latest album *Lost in You*, or some of the old standards?

I'm not going to be doing all of the songs from *Lost in You*, but I'll certainly be doing quite a few and some of the old ones as well, just as I did on my recent tour of the UK.

Do you ever get tired of singing *Downtown*?

No. Toni Hatch wrote *Downtown* for me. He wrote a lot of great songs and they are still great and I don't feel embarrassed going on (stage) singing songs...I don't care how old they are. I re-recorded *Downtown* for *Lost in You* and I certainly enjoyed doing it.

Why did you want to become a singer?

There was a war going on when I was a young child and we lived outside London and it used to get pretty hectic with the bombing. So my sister and I used to go off to spend time with my grandparents in Wales where everybody sang and it was a very musical environment. I sang naturally because I am not a trained singer and the first time I sang in public was in Wales. I didn't want to be a singer...I just was.

Did you find it difficult to transition from a child singer to an adult singer?

It wasn't easy. People liked to call me "England's Shirley Temple" but I wasn't. In Shirley Temple's case, they snatched her away from the audience so she could

grow up and get past what they call "that awkward age" whereas I did all my growing up in public. I had a television show and I didn't go into hiding during my adolescence and it wasn't easy because frankly people didn't want to see me growing up. I was under contract to the Rank organisation and they kept me in little shorts and socks and my hair in bunches because I was more valuable to them as a child.

What was Fred Astaire like to work with?

He was just incredible. Of course I was excited and scared about dancing with a man who was that famous. When you meet someone you have admired for so long, it can be a disappointment. But he was just so funny and musical and we had a great time together and when it came to dancing with him, he just made it so easy for me. He was a true perfectionist but he worked harder than anybody else and used to spend all his weekends rehearsing in the studio when everybody else had gone home. I loved him truly and I think he loved me.

How many grandchildren do you have and do you see them much?

I have two but they live in New York, so they are not exactly around the corner. They come back to us here in (Geneva) Switzerland at Christmas and they go to the chalet (in the French Alps) and they have their summer holidays here too.

You still have an incredible voice and you are still performing at the age of 81. Is age just a number to you?

To be honest with you, I think the whole age thing is a bit of a bore. If people didn't remind me of it, I wouldn't think about it. I am privileged because I do something that I love. I have a nice life and my voice is still in great shape, so why not just stop thinking about it and get on with it.

So you don't have any plans for retirement?

Good God, no! I can't imagine...what would I do? Of course I would do other things...I'm not one of those showbizzy people who always have to be "on" all the time. I love nature and have a chalet up in the Alps and I love being with friends and going to the theatre, the opera, listening to music and writing. But music is where my soul is...it's just who I am.



Household Name Petula in *Stars On Sunday*, 1970s

Do you think women can have it all... marriage, career, children?

I can only speak from my own experience. It's hard. I thought that I would be superwoman and I would be able to do it all – and do it all well. And that's the thing. Basically, I think that being a good wife and mother is a full time job if you want to be really, really, good at it. Being a good performer is a full-time job if you want to be really, really, good at it. But something has to go and it was a compromise both ways for me. My family life was a compromise and so was my career, there is no doubt about that.

I read that there is a new man in your life. Is there anything you can tell me about him?

I would rather not talk about it. In my inner circle, we are all aware of it. There might be a time when I do (want to talk), but not right now.

Have you had any cosmetic surgery?

I had a little bit done, way, way, back when we did some makeup tests. When I was a kid I had an accident and had a scare near my eye and it was decided that had to be corrected and when that was done, the other side had to be done but I haven't had what you would call big cosmetic surgery.

I read that you were once sitting under a piano with Sean Connery....

It was a long, long time ago and he was not the huge star that he is now. But there was a group of theatrical and musical people and we had these parties which were a lot of fun. We were drinking gin and cider or something and we finished up under the piano together. I don't remember it but he (Connery) did remember it and reminded me so it was more memorable for him than it was for me.

Petula Clark is touring Australia in April and May. Check local newspapers for details.



Respected Fred Chaney greets fellow veteran campaigners at the 40th anniversary of the 1976 referendum

Chance Encounter

Former Fraser Government minister and indigenous rights campaigner, Fred Chaney, is the 2014 Senior Australian of the Year. Casey-Ann Seaniger caught up with him.

A chance encounter with an Aboriginal woman one bright afternoon in Western Australia led an impressionable 14-year-old boy down a path he never would have imagined.

It was 1950s' white Australia, and Fred Chaney, a private school boy from a well-to-do family was holidaying at a local farm.

Chaney doesn't reveal much about the Aboriginal woman he met that day except to say she was 'isolated' and he became puzzled about where she fit into society.

Questions about her identity lingered on the teenager's mind for many years and, then, on a separate visit to the bush as a uni student at age 17, Chaney came across a community of marginalised Aborigines.

Chaney saw vulnerable women being preyed upon, families living in abject poverty in tin sheds, and people's right of movement heavily restricted.

"I thought it was entirely wrong, I saw all sorts of things that I thought were very contrary to the Australian ethos," he remarked.

"I've always been treated well and so has my family and it seemed to me very strange that the people Australia didn't treat well were the people who had been here the longest."

These accidental encounters, which he describes as the biggest influence on his life, ultimately led Chaney into a life of campaigning for indigenous reconciliation and human rights.

With his privileged upbringing, and his involvement with the Liberal Party of Australia, Chaney admits he is an unlikely crusader for Aboriginal rights.

But it's his strong belief in equality that has Chaney admired by so many in the community.

During the 1960s at university, Chaney became an early advocate for Aboriginal voting rights which led to the 1967 referendum.

"I realised Aboriginal people didn't have the right to vote, they weren't even counted as Australians and they were really deprived of what I thought was normal involvement in Australian life."

In one of Chaney's first cases as a lawyer, he defended an Aboriginal woman who was accused of neglecting her six children.

"When I took the case to court there seemed to be complete confusion in the court because people didn't know how to actually deal with an application that was opposed to a removal," he said.

The case was eventually dismissed after Chaney gathered overwhelming evidence from people in the community who said she had always been a terrific mother.

The public servant who brought the case to court confessed to Chaney they had received complaints of too many Aborigines in east Perth so they wanted to lock children up in institutions.

Chaney remembers following another powerful case where a mother from a stable domestic family had unknowingly signed over her children shortly after giving birth; nurses had drugged her because they believed she'd already had enough children.

Both of these cases had a stinging impact on Chaney, who then went into federal politics after being inspired by his own father, Sir Fred Chaney, who was a minister in the Menzies Government.

As Minister for Aboriginal Affairs from 1978 to 1980 his empathy for Aboriginal people did not cause a clash with Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser but it did cause a stir in the states.

"I had some real trouble with the state premiers, Sir Charles Court in Western Australia and Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen in Queensland, but thankfully I was fortified by having the strong support of my own prime minister."

Since retiring from political life in 1993 after 20 years in politics, Chaney has remained active speaking at rallies against Aboriginal deaths in custody and helping indigenous people from the Stolen Generation get justice.

The 72-year-old was recently named the 2014 Senior Australian of the Year for his commitment to reconciliation and human rights.

For many years, Fred was deputy president of the National Native Title Tribunal and was the founding co-chair and director of Reconciliation Australia where he now serves on the board.



Helping Hand Fred Chaney at the Arnhem Land Garma Festival, 2008

Chaney helped establish the *Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia* and is now on the board of the *Central Desert Native Title Services* and the *Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation* which has supported more than 1000 Aboriginal students to reach their potential through education.

Chaney recently said that reconciliation was ongoing despite the 2008 apology to the Stolen Generation.

He said the poor rates of unemployment, education, life expectancy and infant mortality and the high incarcerations rates amongst the Aboriginal population are all issues that should be front of mind for governments.

"The one thing that has been proved in the past decade is that putting people in jail is counterproductive and it's terribly expensive to society," he said.

"We are at risk of losing another generation if we are not careful, not to child removal, but to jails."

Chaney agrees with AFL player and fellow Australian of the Year award winner, Adam Goodes, that it's time to have a national conversation on racism.

"I don't think you can expect a child to be successfully educated in a classroom where this is racism and I don't think you can expect a person to succeed in the workplace where there is racism."

Reflecting on his life, Chaney says he is most proud of his work with the *Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation*.

Looking forward, Chaney will be working with the Foundation along with government and various organisations to help improve the lives of Aboriginal people.

"All through my life I have come across circumstances which, as a citizen, I thought needed to be changed.

"That desire hasn't left me." ■



Let's build **A NATION** for *all* ages

It's time to build a nation that embraces every generation. A nation that recognises the positive contribution older Australians make in our lives, in our workplaces, and in our communities. If we do, we'll build a stronger, wiser, healthier, kinder and more productive nation, a nation for all ages – and that's a big plus for all of us.

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