

February | March 2017

# 50 SOMETHING

Australia's over-50s magazine



**Leo Sayer**

Songs for a generation

**Adam Liaw**

Singapore chilli crab

**Collectors**

What motivates them?

**Valentine's Day**

Finding love online

# LEE KERNAGHAN

Still feeling the pulse of country Australia

# Refer your friends and be rewarded

For 40 years, National Seniors Australia has been the leading, independent, not-for-profit membership organisation lobbying for a better deal for Australia's over 50s. We rely on the support of our members to ensure we can continue to fight on the issues that matter to the over 50s such as age discrimination, employment, superannuation, pensions, health care and aged care.

## Every voice counts.

If you know family and friends who want to add their voice and be heard, suggest they join us. They'll get access to a heap of benefits such as subscription to *50 something*, access to independent financial information, exclusive offers from our Member Benefits program, discounted travel, affordable insurance products and they can get involved in one of our 130 community branches. If they join before 31 March, you'll receive a \$10 WISH gift card\*.



To join, visit [nationalseniors.com.au](http://nationalseniors.com.au), call us on **1300 76 50 50** or complete the form below.

Referring member no. \_\_\_\_\_

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### MEMBERSHIP AND PAYMENT DETAILS

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\*Offer ends 31 March 2017. Limit of one gift card per single or joint membership referral. Not valid with any other offer. Please ensure the referring membership number is quoted at the time of purchase to receive the \$10 WISH gift card.



**National Seniors**  
**Australia**

RFF2017



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## FIRST UP



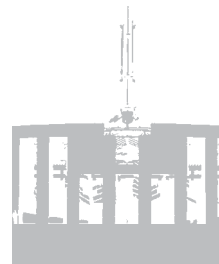
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## EPICUREAN



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Collectors



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## TIME OUT

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A Remarkable Life



Tech Spec

## LETTERS

## Age Pension assets test unfair

I can only agree with Marion Dunn of Morley in WA (Letters, *50 something*, December 2016/January 2017).

I continually wrote to my then Federal Member regarding the unfairness of the new Age Pension Assets Test legislation which was passed in the Federal Parliament in mid 2015.

The group targeted were the aged who had been good citizens who had worked hard, served their country, saved for their old age and paid tax on their superannuation contributions. Not only was it unfair, but also discriminatory.

This legislation will create a new poor in this country – ‘self-funded’ retirees! After all, they have already got one leg in the grave, so they aren’t going to be around for too long.

So, how can we maintain the rage? I would suggest by continually lobbying politicians of all persuasions, until we can get a fair and just outcome for all concerned and to voice our dissatisfaction at the ballot box, loud and clear!

**Kay Benson**  
Bribie Island, Qld

The new assets test limits and the harsher taper rate will cause many aged pensioners to suffer financial hardship.

It is bad enough that the Australian Age Pension is the second lowest in the OECD after South Korea, without this sort of attack being perpetrated on vulnerable senior citizens.

I am well aware that the threshold has been raised to \$250,000 for single homeowners, but this is not a lot of money in 2017.

To add insult to injury, the deeming rates have not been lowered in a very long time, while interest rates have continued to plummet.

**Coral Carmichael**  
Ferny Hills, Qld

Having received a letter from Centrelink in early November stating that only people with significant levels of assets other than their home will have their pension reduced, I’m a little surprised to discover that the total value of the so-called ‘significant assets’ (investments, possessions) that have to support me for the rest of my life are less than 60 per cent of the annual salary paid to the public servant who heads Centrelink.

It will be interesting to see just how annoyed people get over this.

**Gordon Murray**  
Nimbin, NSW

## Cooking for one

I enjoy reading *50 something* but I am disappointed in the recipes. They are all for four or six servings. Yet many ‘50 somethings’ live in households of only one or two people.

Please can we have recipes designed for those of us who live alone.

Keeping ourselves interested in food is essential to good health. Interesting recipes with ingredient sizes for one serving would help keep us enthused about preparing meals for ourselves.

**Judith Amey**  
Shenton Park, WA

*We will keep your comments in mind for future food articles – Ed*

## Family stories important

I couldn’t agree more with Judith Caine (Letters, *50 something*, December 2016/January 2017) regarding the importance of recording family stories.

In 2011, I put together a photo album for my parents to celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary and was overcome by the depth of conversation the album generated between my parents and other family members.

In 2013, I was able to present them with a book about their life together based on interviews I conducted with my parents and aunt. The main audience for what is now referred to as ‘The Book’ was their grandchildren and great grandchildren.

My parents celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary in April last year. The Book is still kept within arm’s length and is greatly cherished.

**Carol Enderby**  
Paddington, Qld

## CHATTER BLOGS

On ‘Should Sussan Ley resign?’

The law needs to change, so that the polities’ travel entitlements match public service entitlements and punishments. – *Terry (Cairns)*

On ‘the biggest news story of 2016?’

The most gobsmacking event was Donald Trump becoming President of the USA. – *Lorikeet*.

On ‘will the economy get back on track...?’

In the next term? Most unlikely.  
– *Bob B*



Write next issue’s best letter to WIN the Panasonic KX-TGM420 Series amplified cordless system, a home phone solution designed for easy and improved communications for anyone affected by hearing loss. Valued at \$129.95 (RRP), this highly reliable cordless phone simplifies everyday calling with a voice volume up to 40 decibels (dB) to make caller voices easier to hear. So you don’t miss a call,

the base unit can be set to ring loudly at up to 112 dB. Understand every word more clearly with ‘Slow Talk’, which slows the speed of speech in real time and when checking voice messages. For visual support, bright red LED visual ringers on the base unit and handset flash when there is an incoming call. The handset includes a large white-backlit 1.8-inch LCD screen and a big keypad to make calling quick and simple in any lighting conditions. For more information, visit [panasonic.com.au](http://panasonic.com.au)  
Kay Benson wins The Maggie Sampler gift hamper from the last edition.

## Write to us

**Email:** [50something@nationalseniors.com.au](mailto:50something@nationalseniors.com.au)  
**Post:** 50 something Letters  
GPO Box 1450, Brisbane Qld 4001

*Letters may be edited for clarity and brevity*



## NEWS

### Balloons over Canberra at sunrise

If a hot air balloon ride is on your bucket list, the 31st annual Canberra Balloon Spectacular might be the event for you.

From 11-19 March 2017, pilots will inflate their balloons on the lawns of Old Parliament House from 6.15 am each day before ascending to create a spectacular backdrop against Canberra at sunrise. Balloonists from around the world come to participate.

Breakfast vendors and weekend entertainment add to the festival atmosphere. Balloon riders and spectators are welcome. Entry is free and balloon rides range in price depending on each vendor.



Canberra Balloon Spectacular

Image courtesy of Events ACT

Image courtesy of Clarence Jazz Festival



CJF Band at the Boardwalk

### Soft shoe shufflin'

The Clarence Jazz Festival on Hobart's eastern shore is a nine-day celebration of live music held on 18-26 February, featuring local, interstate and international artists.

From traditional jazz to New York swing, rhythm and blues from the Creoles of Louisiana, gypsy jazz, funk, Latin American and French blues, the festival provides a plethora of musical styles sure to inspire a jitterbug or Charleston Tap.

The festival kicks off on Saturday, 18 February, with a party on the lawns of Rosny Farm celebrating 21 years of the event with swing bands – *Shuffle Club*, *Lucky 7*, and *Yesterday's Gentlemen*; and street food, bars and a jazz exhibition. Tickets are \$30.

Three ambassadors will join the festival – Melbourne saxophonist and vocalist Paul Williamson, Sydney trombonist and vocalist Dan Barnett, and violinist and vocalist George Washingmachine.

"The Clarence Jazz Festival has grown to be an important part of the Australian jazz festival network and this, along with its 21st, is worth celebrating," said ambassador Dan Barnett.

"The three of us will be bopping hard and enjoying the best of what Tasmania has to offer, all together for the first time!"

Free twilight concerts will be held each evening at waterfront locations, with festival goers encouraged to bring a picnic rug and their dancing shoes. The Jazz Lounge will open at historic Rosny Barn for special acts later in the night, including Canadian headliner Mike Field, with tickets at \$10. The event culminates in a full weekend of free entertainment at the Bellerive Boardwalk.

For further details: [clarenceartsandevents.net](http://clarenceartsandevents.net)

### Seniors world record attempt

On Friday, 10 March, over 50s will gather at Sir James Mitchell Park in South Perth for a 30-minute outdoor exercise class in an attempt to break the unofficial world record which currently stands at 148 participants. This forms part of a People Who Care community health expo featuring market stalls, free health checks and entertainment.



## Southern hemisphere's largest horticultural event

The Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show returns to the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens from 29 March to 2 April.

The event showcases various garden displays – from edible, achievable, mature woodland and sculpture gardens; to garden products, fresh flower sales and floral design installations; garden-themed cafés, bars and high tea spaces; and a program of seminars, demonstrations and Q&A sessions with industry experts. Double Chelsea Flower Show silver gilt medallist and Selling Houses Australia co-host, Charlie Albone, forms part of the team of award-winning talent creating the main show garden.

Gardens by Twilight takes place on the Friday evening when visitors can enjoy the show until 9.30pm.

For ticket information: [melbflowershow.com.au](http://melbflowershow.com.au)



Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show

Image courtesy of Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show

## Icehouse still rocking

It's been 40 years since they performed their first live show to a crowd of 30 in Warriewood, just north of Sydney. They were then known as Flowers and, after securing a record deal, released their debut album – *Icehouse* – in 1980, with hits *Can't Help Myself* and *We Can Get Together* which reached multi-platinum status.

They changed their name to Icehouse in 1981 and embarked on an overseas tour to the USA, Canada and the UK. They've sold millions of albums nationally and internationally, had eight Top 10 albums and more than 30 Top 40 singles. The band was inducted into the ARIA Hall of Fame in 2006.

Icehouse will tour with James Reyne, Daryl Braithwaite, Shannon Noll, Dragon and Pseudo Echo from February to April throughout regional Australia as part of the *Red Hot Summer Tour*. Stops include Mt Gambier, Launceston, Bateman's Bay, Hunter Valley, Jacob's Well and Bendigo.

Their *40 Years Live* show tours Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane, Tamworth and Sydney from January to June.

The band will also perform a concert with James Reyne and Clare Bowditch at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne on Sunday, 12 March.

For tour dates: [www.icehouse-ivadavies.com](http://www.icehouse-ivadavies.com)

To win two tickets to see ICEHOUSE in Hobart on 17 March, post your details with your membership number on an envelope to: 50 something ICEHOUSE competition, GPO Box 1450, Brisbane QLD 4001 or enter online at [nationalseniors.com.au/competitions](http://nationalseniors.com.au/competitions). Entries close 26 February.



Iva Davies, ICEHOUSE

## Celebration of science

The World Science Festival returns to Brisbane for its second year from 22-26 March, and includes a regional program with events in Gladstone, Toowoomba, Townsville and Chinchilla. The festival is a celebration of science, technology, engineering, maths and the arts.

Some of the world's greatest thought leaders will converge on Queensland including: philosopher and author, Professor AC Grayling; creator of the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) Scientific Collaboration, Professor Barry Barish; Scientist in Charge at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Marco Leona; Australia's Nobel Laureate, Professor Brian Schmidt; Australia's Chief Scientist, Dr Alan Finkel; immunologist and 2006 Australian of the Year, Professor Ian Frazer; and Australian favourite, Dr Karl Kruszelnicki.

Program highlights include a display of the world's biggest and most powerful particle accelerator, the Large Hadron Collider; taxidermy demonstrations; seminars on a range of topics such as gravitational waves, astronomy, carbon neutrality and ocean action; the critically-acclaimed play *Constellations*, the turtle hatchery; and a two-day family program turning South Bank parklands into a free science playground, *Street Science*.

For further details: [worldsciencefestival.com.au](http://worldsciencefestival.com.au)

Queensland Museum secured the event in an exclusive licence agreement with World Science Festival New York. The event will run in Brisbane annually until 2021.



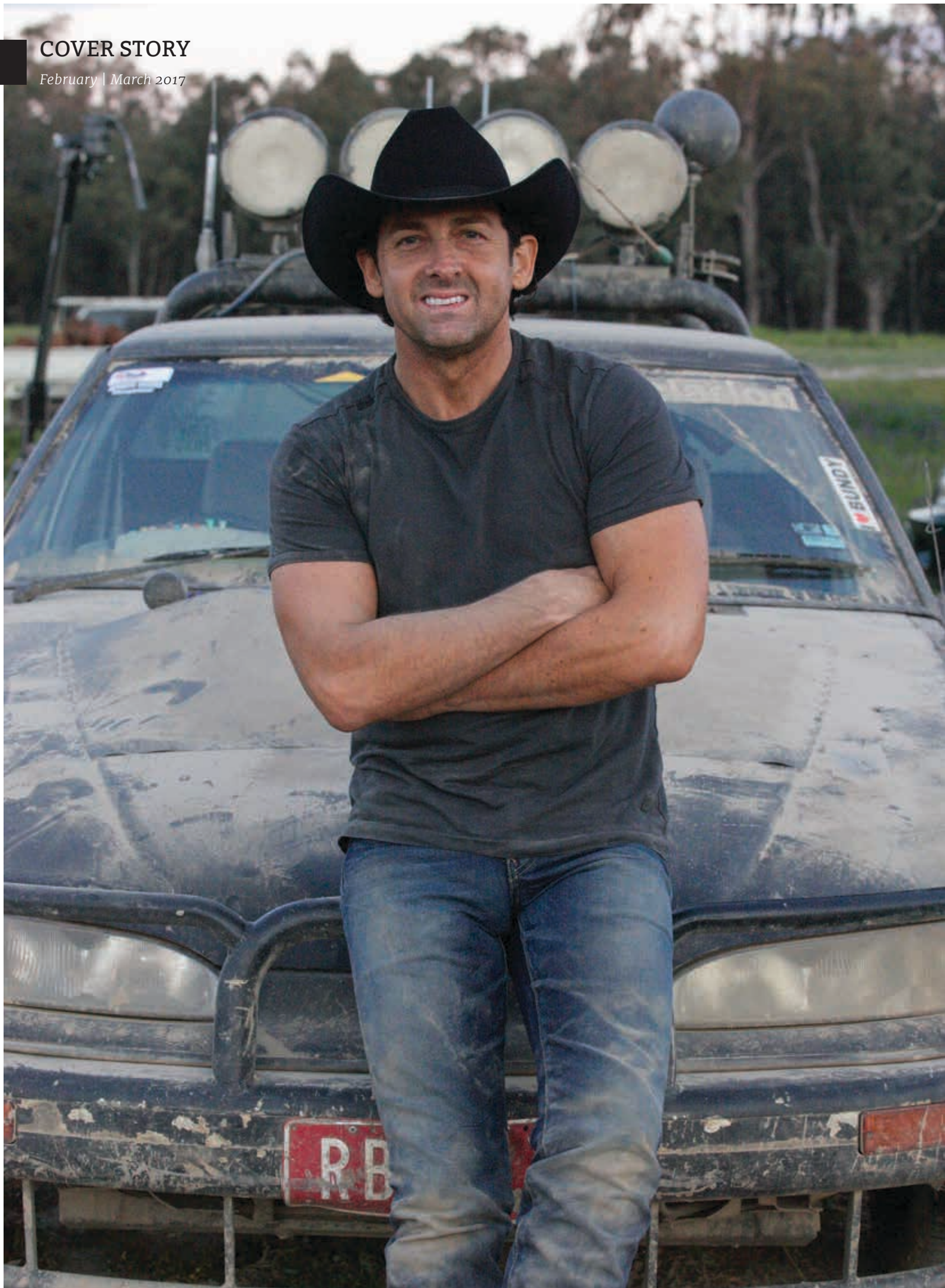
Dr Karl Kruszelnicki

Image courtesy of Queensland Museum – Extreme Moments in Science



## COVER STORY

February | March 2017





# Boy from the bush

To most Australians, Lee Kernaghan is the man in the black hat who was named Australian of the Year after fund-raising for drought-hit rural communities.

To his fans, he's a country music icon.

Lee burst onto the scene with *Boys from the Bush*, the hit song he first performed live at the Tamworth Services Club in January 1992 and released as a single later that year.

Since then, he's racked up 33 number one hits on the Australian Country Charts, sold two million albums and won 36 Golden Guitars at the Country Music Awards of Australia, more than any other artist except the legendary Slim Dusty.

He also has been inducted into the Country Music Roll of Renown, along with his father Ray, also a country singer.

Lee has won three Australian Performing Rights Association (APRA) awards and four Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) Music Awards.

In 2015, he was the recipient of ARIA's Outstanding Achievement Award for his album *Spirit of the Anzacs*, the highest selling Australian album of that year – in all genres.

On a wider stage, he was awarded the Order of Australia (OAM) Medal in 2004 and named Australian of the Year in 2008, in recognition of his support of rural and regional Australia. His *Pass the Hat Around* tour raised more than a million dollars for drought-ravaged country communities.

It all sounds like a dream success story, but there was a time when Lee Kernaghan was burnt out by the grind of performing cover versions to empty pubs and clubs and, in 1990, he had all but given up the idea of making a living through his music.

That all changed the following year when he co-wrote *Boys from the Bush* and other tracks. The rest is country music history.

In 2017 Lee will be on the road again, with the *Boys from the Bush 25th Anniversary Tour*.

**Rosemary Desmond** caught up with Lee to ask what inspires him.

**Apart from your father Ray, who has had the biggest influence on your song writing?**

I couldn't pin it down to one particular artist, but Slim (Dusty) has always been a huge inspiration. One of the greatest highlights of my life has been recording *Leave Him in the*

*Longyard* with The King (Dusty), back in the early days of my career. It just stands out as one of the finest moments.

**What was it like being part of a travelling country music family?**

We were very fortunate that back in 1978, Dad packed up the whole family and our musical instruments into a GT Falcon and a 26-foot Millard caravan and we headed around Australia on the *Rick and Thel Carey* tour. As a 13-year-old, I was exposed to country music day in, day out, as we travelled across Australia and that's where country music was really born inside of me. The late '70s was also a turning point in country music in America. People like Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson and Hank Williams

Jr were starting to break through with their own brand of country/southern rock and that really appealed to a 13-year-old boy from Albury. Through my teenage years I worked with Dad in the pubs and clubs around the Riverina and when I was

17, we hit the road with *Waltzing Matilda*, 'the world's fastest truck' and a mega outdoor show that Dad had put together. That really catapulted me into country music as a career path. It was probably the 1982 tour with Dad that turned it around for me and sent me 'down a country road'.

**Is that what inspired you to write this music?**

My real inspiration is Australia, our people, our way of life and the things I see as I travel around the country. Touring is such a big part of what I do – that's where I get to feel the pulse of Australia and turn as much of that into songs as I can.

**You have worked overseas though...**

Back in my early twenties, I spent quite a bit of time in Nashville (Tennessee) and some of the best songwriters are over there but something kept drawing me back to Australia. When I made my first album *The Outback Club* (1993), that was it for me because any thoughts of doing things internationally were gone because I was singing about the bush and utes and circle work and a younger generation of Australians living and working on the land. I didn't want to water that down by making it a product that would fit into an international market. It had to be 100 per cent Australian.

**How long will you be on tour in 2017?**

It's an epic tour that will take us all over Australia. We're kicking off in Tamworth and rolling out across Australia throughout the rest of the year.

**Would you still call yourself a 'boy from the bush'?**

I spend most of my time travelling through the bush but I'm located just south of Brisbane now; bringing up a family and getting kids off to school, you've got to be close to the major centres. Getting myself around the country, I have to 'fly in, fly out' quite a bit. But for anyone who spends their formative years in rural or regional Australia, there's something just gets stamped inside you that never leaves you, no matter where you go in Australia or the world. It's certainly where my heart lies.

**With around 80 per cent of the population living within 50kms of the coast, do you think most Australians understand the hardships of life on the land and in the outback?**

I've seen the cities really come to the fore in terms of bushfire relief, drought relief and flood relief concerts that I've been a part of. That's one of the great things right around Australia – it's not really where you come from, if there is an important community cause where help is needed, Australians do stick together and they certainly do pass the hat around.

**What else do you want to achieve?**

For me, I think just happiness. It's what we all strive for. Your health is so important and no matter what you are able to accumulate in life, it's not really worth anything if you don't have your health. I try and get to the gym three or four times a week and pay for my sins.

**But you are only 52, so are you going to keep doing what you do?**

I really love this (career) and whenever you release a new album, you've got all these new songs which are like new members of the family who have suddenly arrived. I've got some fantastic duets on the new record. I've recorded with John Williamson, the McClymonts, James Blundell, Adam Harvey, the Wolfe Brothers. My wife Robby and sister Tania also joined me in duets, so I'm really excited about the new songs. ■

# One man band

Leo Sayer's songs are earworms – they get into your head and stay there.

They are also unforgettable soundtracks to the '70s for many Baby Boomers. When they heard *You make me feel Like Dancing*, they wanted to do just that.

And while Sayer became a huge success in his own right, he has also written countless hits for Sir Cliff Richard, Three Dog Night, Tina Turner, Gene Pitney, Jennifer Warnes and Dolly Parton.

**Rosemary Desmond** asked the British-born singer about his favourite recordings and about the tumble that led him to become one of the last people to talk to Elvis Presley.

Leo Sayer was on tour in the US in 1977 when shortly before a concert, he fell eight metres off a stage and was rushed to hospital.

Luckily, he suffered no broken bones but his hit song *When I Need You* had gone to number one in America a month earlier and the accident created headlines.

Sayer went on with the tour unaware the fall had taken its toll.

"I got as far as Memphis, where I collapsed into a ball in the dressing room, in a state of 'after shock', I guess," Sayer said.

"A huge guy came in, picked me up and took me away with him to recuperate in nearby Huntsville, Alabama."

The man, whose name was Michael, was an ex-gridiron player, who later became a therapist.

Sayer said Michael healed his injuries and also told him he worked for a famous man in Memphis who was worried about him and wanted to help him.

On the day before Sayer was due to leave, Michael handed him a phone, telling him his boss wanted to talk to him.

"It was a shock to hear Elvis on the other end, and though I didn't believe it at first, seeing Michael smiling and nodding in front of me, I knew it was true.

"Elvis was charming, even sang my songs back to me, and invited me to come and see him in Graceland the very next day.

"As I didn't have to be at the next show for a week, it was an offer I just couldn't refuse!



Image courtesy of Christian Dowling

## It was a shock to hear Elvis on the other end

"That night I was so pumped up, I couldn't sleep. I had a radio cassette recorder, one of the first models, and I used to tape the local blues, gospel and country stations.

"On the day we were due to leave, late in the afternoon, I turned it on and started recording, to calm my nerves at the prospect of going to meet The King. I still have the tape I made.

"I had punched 'record' just before hearing: 'The singer, Elvis Presley was brought into Memphis' Baptist Memorial Hospital just now, dead on arrival'.

"Michael charged into the room, said a quick cheerio and rushed off to Graceland. We were in tears – everybody was."

Now 68 years old, Sayer can look back with pride on a career spanning four decades.

Asked which of his records was the best, Sayer said: "I'm proud of them all, but *Giving It All Away* is the one that always stays pertinent with time. It created my first chart hit too, when released as a single in 1973 by Roger Daltrey of *The Who*.

"The lyrics are about not being underestimated, about growing up, gaining wisdom and not taking any crap: Realising you have to stand up for yourself."

He can also look back at the kind of public recognition that would turn others green with envy.

"Shopping on 5th Avenue, New York, shortly after *You Make Me Feel Like Dancing* hit No.1, someone spotted me and shouted out the news.

"I thought I was going unnoticed, but everyone around turned to look and I was carried up to my hotel by hordes of fans, hoisted up on someone's shoulders. Now that's what I'd call famous!"

Leo Sayer is guest presenter on 24 and 25 February at the Melbourne music panel event *The Masters of Sgt. Pepper*, celebrating the 50th anniversary of *The Beatles'* famous studio album. Further details at [www.showbiztickets.com.au](http://www.showbiztickets.com.au). He is also at the Ghost Rock Winery in Tasmania on 4 March and in the Speigeltent at the Adelaide Fringe on 16 March. ■

# Leading research into ageing

Newly-appointed Director of Research, Professor John McCallum, spoke with Kristie Forrest about his vision for the future direction of National Seniors' research program.



**We represent the over 50s  
and we advocate for them**

One of the biggest issues impacting seniors, according to John McCallum, is dealing with policies and a culture of ageing that doesn't fit with a life expectancy of 100 years.

"We really need to shift that dependency and inactivity culture to a more productive ageing model," he said.

"This model is not just about keeping yourself busy. As people age, they can continue to be productive in the public space, influencing the economy, through flexible work options and volunteering, which would help curb loneliness."

John says social isolation and loneliness are major issues for older people and are as risky as smoking, drinking, being overweight and not doing enough exercise.

"We really have to stop people becoming socially isolated, and that really depends on families and communities in the first instance, but there's also a role for governments in this space."

Mental health – particularly the propensity for depression in nursing homes – and the financial implications around superannuation and pensions are other important items on the agenda.

"We have to deal with these topics, pick some priorities and work hard on them – creating better policies and better ways of living, so we leave a better legacy for future generations," he said.

The Queensland-born professor has an extensive academic career, heading up university faculties and working on major research projects in Australia and overseas.

"My big research projects include the Australia-Japan Collaboration in Aged Care, the Asset and Health Dynamics of the 'Old' (AHEAD), the Vietnam Veterans Mortality Study and many other projects."

John considers the Dubbo Longitudinal Study, and the development of a health faculty at the University of Western Sydney, among his greatest accomplishments.

"We are still publishing from the Dubbo Study 30 years after it started with findings on what happens to older people's health and social care, including cardiovascular health, dementia, incontinence, depression, loneliness and service use."

As Executive Dean of Health at the University of Western Sydney, he established the faculty starting with nursing.

"We had the biggest nursing school in Australia and started new health science programs each year, finishing up with a medical school," he said.

More recently, he established the Research Translation Group at the National Health and Medical Research Council and National Institute for Dementia Research.

John is currently chair of the Cognitive Decline Partnership Centre (CDPC) governance authority.

"The CDPC brings together aged care service providers, Alzheimer's Australia and the National Health and Medical Research Council doing practical work aimed at improving outcomes for people who've lost cognitive function, a key area of concern for older people," he said.

He is realistic about the role of research at National Seniors Australia.

"We're not solely a research institute; we're also committed to transforming research findings into useful knowledge and action."

"While National Seniors will continue to conduct research, we will also work with others and glean ideas from around the world to form a strong knowledge base to support our advocacy agenda."

"We represent the over 50s and we advocate for them. We will continue to leverage these assets to raise research money and take on strong strategic partnerships, both nationally and internationally, for meaningful collaboration which results in better ideas, better research and ultimately better outcomes for older people." ■



# Until dementia do us part

A diagnosis of dementia poses some life-changing questions for those affected by it, lawyer Brian Herd writes.

Suffering from dementia, your husband of 53 years has had to move into residential aged care, a fate you hoped would never befall you.

It has become just too difficult (if not expensive) for him to stay at home with you. It is affecting your health and the quality of your lives. As much as the children say they will help, they usually cannot, particularly in those long lonely nights when he is at his worst. He has mutated from your partner to your patient.

After being rusted on to each other for so long, here you are, at home by yourself. It is, to say the least, disruptive if not distressing. Psychologists are wont to call it an 'adjustment disorder'. That anxiety is not alleviated by your many visits to the aged care facility to see him, only to be met by a blank stare of indifference or even a sheer lack of recognition.

What to do with the rest of your life now?

- Is it to be a diligent and dutiful spouse albeit separated by circumstance and for you to live for him and not for yourself or
- Is it for you to adjust and find a new meaning in life for those many extended times when you are not with him?

Admittedly, there are significant legal and financial implications in such an event, including:

- Should you change your Will? (There could be good reasons to do so)
- Should you change your Enduring Power of Attorney?
- How are you going to support both yourself and him in 'two homes'?
- Should you downsize?
- How will your pension be affected?

A seldom discussed issue is a moral one, with a bit of pragmatism thrown in.

How far does your love or those ancient marriage vows go? Do you mothball your life or embark upon another journey?

I recently listened to an interesting presentation by two couples. Let's call them Bob & Carol and Ted & Alice.



This is the story I heard:

- Bob was married but not to Carol. Bob's wife, Judy, was a resident of an aged care facility and in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's. Carol was Bob's new 'partner';
- Alice was married but not to Ted. Alice's husband, Barry, was still living at home with Alice and was also in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's. Ted was her new 'partner' who also lived in the same home with Alice and Barry.

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**As much as the children say they will help, they usually cannot**

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The picture may appear a little bit confusing but the bottom line was:

- Neither Bob nor Alice desired or wanted a divorce from their respective spouses, Judy and Barry, as they didn't think that was right or appropriate just because

their spouses were suffering from Alzheimer's;

- However, at the relatively young ages of 68 and 66, neither Bob nor Alice believed that they should necessarily put their lives on hold to suffer in silence in being a forlorn and separated martyr to the cause of their respective spouse's condition; and
- They each had decided they should adjust their lives and continue as best they could and, to that end, create a new relationship.

Such scenarios provoke thoughts about how we live our later lives when confronted by this unwanted 'separation'.

For those who remain singularly devoted, they can become like a shadow to a stranger. For others, it is a time of finding a new happiness and meaning outside the strictures of those vows and the devotion to duty.

You may not want to follow in their paths but, if you are in this situation, at least give some time to thinking about what your new life means and what you want it to mean. ■

## GARDENING

# Help your garden survive summer

Towards the end of summer we're all feeling a bit tired and listless after months of scorching heat. Your garden feels the same way, writes Angie Thomas of Yates Australia.



Even in temperate zones, hot summer weather can cause plants to wilt and burn, soil quality to deteriorate and lawns to become dry and patchy.

In the tropics and subtropics, copious summer deluges can leave the soil depleted of nutrients.

But there's no need to despair. Having a lush, green, healthy garden in late summer is achievable using a few simple steps:

- **Use a soil wetter** – over time and particularly during periods of hot weather, the soil surface can develop a waxy, water-repellent layer which prevents rainfall or irrigation effectively penetrating the soil. Applying a soil wetter helps to break down the water-repellent layer, allowing moisture to move into the root zone where it's needed. This is particularly important in potted plants, which dry out much faster than in-ground plants.
- **Regular, deep watering** – it's tempting to give lawns and garden plants a quick water every day, however they benefit much more from a deep, thorough watering a few times a week. This creates more intense layers of moist soil which encourages plant roots to grow deeper. Small amounts of watering can lead to shallow root growth, leaving plants more vulnerable to dry conditions.

The exception is potted plants and hanging baskets, which may require watering every day as they can dry out rapidly.

- **Nurture the soil with organic matter** – this encourages earthworms and beneficial soil microorganisms, provides a source of gentle slow release plant nutrients and enables the soil to absorb moisture like a sponge. The more organic matter we add to our soils, the healthier and more 'summer resilient' they become. Organic matter includes compost and pelletised manures mixed into the soil when planting new plants and then tickled into the soil surface every six weeks.

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## The easiest way to feed plants is to use liquid fertilisers

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- **Apply mulch** – whether it's in the vegie patch, on pots or around flower and shrub beds, applying a 3–5 cm layer of mulch helps to reduce moisture loss and protects the soil from direct sun. Organic mulches such as pine bark or eucalyptus chips, sugar cane mulch and lucerne straw will also break down over time, adding valuable organic matter to the soil.

- **Feeding** – given enough water, plants and the lawn can continue to flourish during summer. Think of how lush and green the wet summer tropics are. Well-watered plants need to be fed to support their summer growth. During summer, the easiest way to feed plants is to use liquid fertilisers. These can be diluted in a watering can or applied via a hose-on applicator, which makes feeding large garden areas quick and easy. Feeding will encourage lovely green leaves, colourful flowers and healthier plants.
- **Pest and disease alert** – pests such as mites are a common summer problem, as are caterpillars, aphids and whitefly. Look out for mottled leaves and spidery webs created by mites, leaf holes left by caterpillars and yellowing plants from sap-sucking aphids and whitefly. Yates' Citrus & Ornamental Spray takes the guess work out of summer pest control as it curbs the most common pests on roses, flowers, vegetables and citrus. Water plants well beforehand and then apply Citrus & Ornamental Spray in the cool of the early evening.

By doing a few simple things in your late summer garden, you'll keep it happy and healthy well into autumn. Happy gardening! ■



# Riding the Rocky rail

Kerri-Anne Kennerley travelled in style through the majestic Canadian Rockies onboard the iconic Rocky Mountaineer train with her sister, Jan.

Here, she shares her travel diary with *50 something*.

## Day One• Vancouver

Vancouver is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful cities in the world, with its magnificent harbour framed by striking coastal mountains. I'd been to Vancouver a few times before, but couldn't wait to explore it again with my sister Jan, who was a first-timer to Canada. It was such a treat to stay at the Fairmont Waterfront Hotel, which boasts sweeping views across the harbour and a convenient location – just a short jaunt to restaurants, shopping and the world-renowned Stanley Park.

The first stop on our itinerary was the Capilano Suspension Bridge Park, which is one of Vancouver's most popular attractions. We experienced a treetop adventure on wooden bridges suspended between trees, which wound through the lush coastal forest. Some of the bridges were over 30 metres above the forest floor, allowing us to see how the birds and squirrels view the world.

The highlight of the day, however, was coming face-to-face with two black bears living in a large enclosure on top of Grouse Mountain. Several years ago, I met these bears as cubs when I broadcast my morning show from Vancouver. Local wildlife experts explained a new trial program where orphaned bears, who normally wouldn't have survived in the wild, were placed in this new park. I'm happy to report that seven years later they are thriving – and a lot bigger than when I saw them last!

**Day Two• Rocky Mountaineer to Kamloops** Rocky Mountaineer has long been on my must-do list, and it was incredibly special to share the experience with my sister. A world-renowned luxury train, Rocky Mountaineer offers a front row seat to some of the most spectacular scenery in the world. We travelled on the legendary *First Passage* which took us from Vancouver to Banff over two majestic days.

On the first day aboard our GoldLeaf carriage, we carved our way through the city to the wilderness on the historic Canadian Pacific railway. I imagined the travellers over 130 years ago on this same rail route, who would have been just as awestruck with the dazzling scenery as we were. Following alongside the powerful Kicking Horse River, we saw how vast and forceful nature can be. The custom-designed, glass-domed coaches put us right in the middle of the action. Looking up, we could see eagles flying overhead looking for food to take back to their nests, and we were alerted to a mountain goat somehow managing to stay sure-footed on what seemed like an almost vertical drop.

A nice change of pace was moving to the lower-level dining room for breakfast and lunch. How the talented chefs create a

perfect soufflé on a moving train is amazing. The à la carte, three-course fine dining menu made us feel like we were feasting at the most exclusive restaurant in the world – with astonishing views

sweeping past, as we made our way towards an overnight stop in the city of Kamloops.

## Day Three & Four• Rocky Mountaineer to Banff

Bright and early the following morning, it was on to Banff in style, along raging rivers, past glacier-fed lakes, and into the rugged and magnificent Canadian Rockies.

The train's hosts became like friends throughout the two days on board. Even though they had been on that journey so many times before, they seemed genuinely excited to be there again. They told engaging stories and shared their encyclopaedic knowledge of every river, waterfall and



mountain that we passed. Just when we thought the view could not get any better: bear alert! The train drivers are always keeping their eyes peeled for wildlife and keep in radio contact with every carriage to ensure everyone knows which direction to look. It was my favourite sight: a black bear standing at the side of the tracks, observing us observing him. I'm sure he was thinking, "There go those crazy humans again!" He just stared right back at us, as if posing for a photo.

I couldn't wait to show off Banff to my sister when we arrived that evening. A picturesque alpine village with remarkable history, I've been lucky enough to visit several times, both in summer and winter. We stayed at the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel, which was built Scottish Baronial-style in an era of grandeur, during the 19th century as one of Canada's grand railway hotels. We enjoyed riding the Banff Gondola to the top of Sulfur Mountain for panoramic views, before wandering around the town's charming shops, restaurants and bars.

## Day Five & Six• Jasper

The next day we set off by motor coach along the Icefields Parkway, a scenic road that threads through the Canadian Rockies in a miracle of modern engineering. 'Breathtaking' isn't sufficient to describe the landscape we saw along the way; we travelled in awe of nature's work as the mountainous peaks and glaciers loomed magnificently around us.

We arrived at the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge, a sprawling lakeside resort, which is situated in the heart of Jasper National Park.

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**The custom-designed, glass-domed coaches put us right in the middle of the action**

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## TRAVEL

### When we left our cabin for dinner, we were met by two elk playing around, butting heads and antlers

When we left our cabin for dinner, we were met by two elk playing around, butting heads and antlers. There's something you don't see at home!

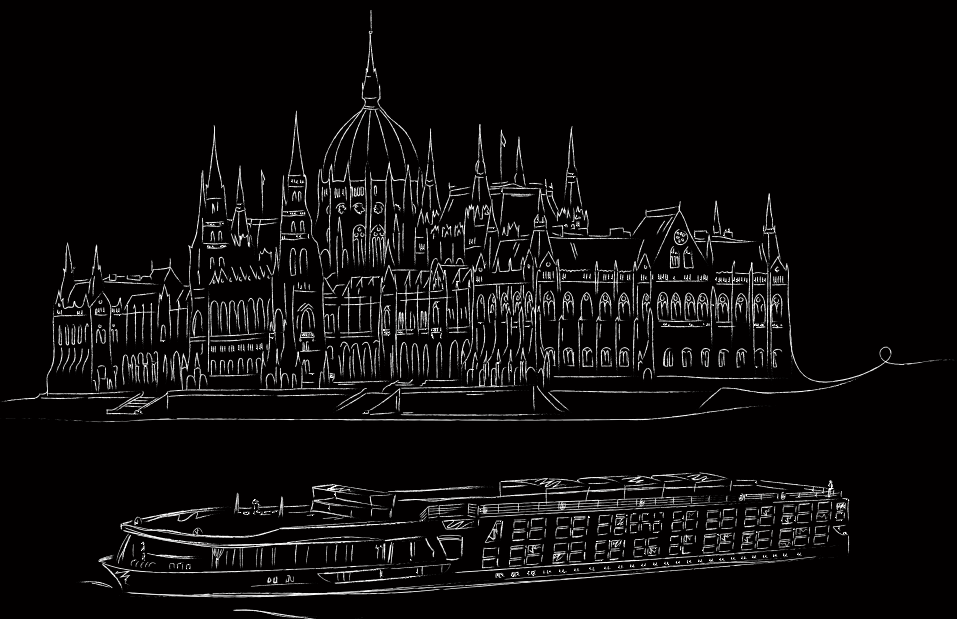
Jan and I are both golfers and it was such a joy to play on the resort's pristine golf course. During the game, we spotted wandering elk, a coyote running across a fairway, and birds that kept the sky alive. All too soon, we found ourselves flying back to Australia. I love home, but I also

love to experience the world around us – and I doubt I will ever tire of Canada and everything Rocky Mountaineer has to offer. It's too hard to pick one highlight; however, travelling in luxurious comfort, with sensational service, while reconnecting with my sister made for a magical holiday that will long be etched in my memories. My number one tip? Don't leave it too late. Life is to be lived now.

[www.rockymountaineer.com](http://www.rockymountaineer.com) ■



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## A REMARKABLE LIFE

Each issue, *50 something* will feature the life story of a member of National Seniors. This is Tim Blick's story.



I was born in 1946 in New Jersey, the son of first generation Americans. My relatives came from northern and southern Europe. Dad, an aspiring career naval officer, kept me on the move most of my formative years. It was exciting in some respects, but rather limiting in others.

I left New Jersey at 19, starting my second year at the University of Colorado. It was 1965 when things were heating up with the Vietnam War and the draft was on.

Many young men were either made, broken or had fled – but one thing was for sure, we all began to seriously doubt and distrust the American way. I didn't flee; I got an honourable discharge and finished up at university.

In 1972 I joined a radical Christian group called the Children of God. I could see the writing on the wall with America. It was while in this group that I decided to come to Australia that year.

I had a rather childish idea that the further away I was, the happier and safer I would be. I fell in love with Australia, travelling all over, enjoying the open spaces, the beaches and the people.

I met my wife Leonnie in South Australia and we spent our first year together in the South Island of New Zealand.

Back in Sydney, I worked as a hotel sales executive. But after this, Leonnie fell ill and was eventually hospitalised with stomach cancer.

We did not trust pharmaceutical drugs, especially chemotherapy, and decided to move to Katoomba in the Blue Mountains in early 1982 after Leonnie was given a six months diagnosis.

It didn't take us long to discover the wonderful world of alternative and natural medicine and the support it offered.

With the help of a naturopath and a doctor working together, within eight months Leonnie had recovered, regained weight and started to grow hair again.

We made amazing progress and met some terrific people while living in the Blue Mountains. But we still consider Leonnie's recovery a miracle.

After this, we travelled to Indonesia and became missionaries in East and Central Java. Years later we returned to Perth where I worked for a time in my mother-in-law's restaurant.

Later, we went to Melbourne where we got involved in street work with youth for three years. Our boys were getting serious ear infections during the winter so we decided to move to a milder climate in Sydney.

The family was growing and so, after having five boys, we decided to step out of our demanding life of helping others and come to the North Shore of Sydney in 1991.

I worked full-time for 14 years, teaching English to young overseas adults preparing for university. Leonnie became a childcare worker. We had another boy and eventually bought a house in Frenchs Forest East.

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**You have to travel overseas to really appreciate where you are from**

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We consider ourselves very fortunate to be living in this beautiful country. You have to travel overseas to really appreciate where you are from.

I became an Australian citizen in 1982 after happily surrendering my US passport.

I have been retired for a little over two years. I can't say I have settled into it, by any means, and intend to get into volunteer work after my wife recovers from her stroke.

My life is currently filled with caring for Leonnie, my adult sons and their families.

I am a new member of National Seniors, having recently picked up their magazine while in the Forestville Library.

**Tim Blick**

**Frenchs Forest, NSW**

*National Seniors has a network of 130 community branches across Australia. To find a branch near you, call 1300 76 50 50 or visit [nationalseniors.com.au](http://nationalseniors.com.au).*