

June | July 2013

50something

AUSTRALIA'S WIDEST CIRCULATING OVER-50S MAGAZINE

**Kids, Cubs,
Flying Trapeze**
Away with the Circus

Comfort Food
Pudding that Won't
Tip the Scales

Midlife Moments
The Case for HRT

Federal Budget Special
What it Means for You

A close-up portrait of actor Steve Carell, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. He has short, dark hair and a light beard. He is wearing a dark, textured blazer over a dark button-down shirt.

Steve Carell

World's Funny Guy Turns 50

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20 The Last Laugh
Steve Carell has hit fifty carrying the mantle "World's Funniest Guy". Casey-Ann Seaniger puts him to the test.

40



22 Razzle Dazzle You're never too old to teach or join the circus discovers Rosemary Desmond.

24 The Matter of Mum Family indecision can see the fate of your elderly parent in the hands of the state, warns Margaret Arthur.

29 Agony Planner Struggling with super, pensions or property investments? iPac finance expert, Colin Lewis, has the answers.

31 Midlife Moments Gynaecologist Barry Wren argues the case for hormone therapy in post-menopausal women.

38



First Up

9 Letters

12 News

14 Campaigns

16 Executive Diary

18 Budget Update

Epicurean

35 Books & Movies

36 Top Shelf Artist Claude Monet's great love was his Giverny garden, writes Sophie Matthiesson.

38 Mountain of God Armed with a trusty GPS, Graham Stephenson navigates his way to a tiny hilltop Sicilian village.

40 Comfort Food Former Weight Watchers instructor Annette Sym shares sweets that won't tip the scales.

Time Out

43 Puzzles

Crossword, Sudoku, Jumble

44 Sport

Ian Malin picks his British Lions favourites

46 Tech Spec

Discovering your local Library

50 The Last Word

Sight is a global issue



Early results from the member election demand survey reveal older Australians don't ask for much. We just want the fundamentals: jobs, a comfortable retirement, secure savings and a health system that won't fail us (p15). These are the things that allow us to get on with living happily and well. They're also things that cross and resonate between generations.

Beyond education and disability money, there was very little in the federal budget in the way of extra spending (p18).

And, interestingly, we didn't really seem to mind. Is it that we're waiting for election sweeteners closer to September? Or has the public mood switched to slow and steady?

If it's the former, watch our weekly e-newsletter *Connect* (subscribe at news@nationalseniors.com.au) or checkout out the August/September *50 something* for a list of free marginal seat forums around the country. At these you'll get a chance to tell your local politicians what you really want.

If it's the latter, sit back and enjoy the other stories this issue. We meet two teachers who joined the circus in their 60s (p22); take a windy road to a hilltop Sicilian town (p38); and discover a decadent chocolate winter pudding that won't make us fat (p40).

Ah, the simple things in life.

Sarah Saunders – *Editor*

contributors



Ian Malin has written about rugby union for the *Guardian* and *Observer* newspapers for the last 30 years. He is the author of two books, *Mud, Blood and Money*, *English Rugby Goes Professional*; and a history of the England rugby union team.



International art curator at the National Gallery of Victoria, Australian Sophie Matthiesson worked for the Royal Academy of Arts and the *Art Newspaper*, London while completing an MA in 18th century art at Sussex University. Later a lecturer in art history at the universities of Manchester and Leeds, her doctoral research is on artists in prison in the periods of the French Revolution.



Dr Barry Wren is a gynaecologist and co-author of the new book *Menopause: Change, Choice & HRT* (Rockpool Publishing \$24.99). He was the first president and founding member of the Australian Menopause Society and has worked for 40 years in researching the facts of the menopause and its treatment.



Margaret Arthur is a senior associate at reputable Brisbane elder law firm Carne Reidy Herd. Margaret's expertise extends to wills, estates, enduring powers of attorney, guardianship, Centrelink, superannuation, and family succession and disputes. See more at www.crhlaw.com.au.



50 something's Agony Planner agony uncle 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.



Henry Tung is *50 something's* regular Tech Spec columnist. Henry has taught computers in NSW high schools for about 15 years and is now the IT manager for the Anglican Technical College Western Sydney. Henry prefers cycling and hiking to computers.

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Chasing Utopia

As a 'sea-changer' of 12 years, I particularly enjoyed "Fancy Free" (*50 something* April/May 2013) which allowed me the opportunity to further reflect on whether I had made 'the right move' and whether my decision had met my expectations...made me happier and had worked.

I ultimately reached the conclusion that I have certainly appreciated the benefits of living in a wonderful scenic location which encompasses both the country and the seaside

...but realistically admit that on a personal level, I have struggled with adapting to a small town 'retirement area' environment where there is little change in social activities.

I have often considered moving on but ended up deciding that the search for the 'perfect utopia' could be never ending and stayed. I now enjoy the beaches and countryside and pursue social activities elsewhere...feeling the happier for it.

Cherie Hartwig
Urunga NSW

Professor Amanda Gordon's take on retirees blindly pursuing a sea change dream, is so true. Bright-eyed retirees understandably find such lifestyle attractions difficult to resist, but sadly, they fail to grasp the realities of living in, rather than just visiting, small and charming seaside towns.

Having sold their suburban residences, couples driven by old and glorious holiday memories, head for cheaper coastal abodes. "Goodbye and good luck," yell the waving families as mum and dad depart, leaving behind a burning bridge.

Then guess what? Dad collapses on the boat ramp and mum suddenly develops serious health problems. She can no longer drive and the nearest health services are perhaps hours away. The busy family can only sympathise from afar as other elderly local folk struggle to meet her growing needs.

An isolated case?

No. I was once a country health service administrator in this very popular coastal region. Nothing has changed.

Neil Longbottom
Minlaton SA

May I congratulate you on the fine production of *50 something* magazine.

It is always a good read – but – on seeing the article 'Fancy Free' on page 22 I was totally disappointed to see that you included a 'yankee picture of a left-hand drive vehicle' to illustrate the article. Why-o-why did you do that?

Finally I am appalled in their position that the political parties have taken in the current situation relating to NDIS. To consider an arbitrary number of 65 years leaves a lot to be desired in how our politicians (of all parties) treat 'us older folk'.

Les Cooper
Blackburn Vic

Not so Famous Flyer

Bouquets to Peter FitzSimons for his controversial views as covered so well by Rosemary Desmond last issue. Of great interest to me was his yen for biographing famous Australians. I wonder if has he thought of Sir George Hubert Wilkins, until more recently relatively unknown by Aussies until featured as an intrepid cine photographer, pilot, wartime hero and explorer by Dick Smith in his Antarctic and Arctic flights.

In 1994 I had the pleasure of piloting (in-flight) the replica of the 'Southern Cross' from Adelaide to Jamestown for a fly-in commemorating Wilkins' life (he was born in nearby Mount Bryan East). Dick Smith flew in with Nancy Bird Walton who spoke at the dinner on the Saturday night.

The replica was built in Adelaide by a group including Dick Smith and featured in many air shows around Australia.

The original aircraft is on display at Brisbane Airport and was manufactured by Anthony Fokker for Wilkins to use in his Arctic explorations, with the name 'Detroit'. It was later sold to Charles Kingsford Smith as most Aussies know!

John Wilkins
Darwin NT

No Republic

I enjoy reading your magazine and it contains plenty of useful information.

Regarding politics, I think it is ok to put in anything that affects seniors directly. However, something as divisive as the republican cause should probably not find a place in the magazine.

As for Peter Fitzsimons ("Packing Punches", *50 something*, April/May 2013), I find him to be very self-opinionated. He has a total disrespect for Australia's heritage, flag, and constitution. I have yet to see a proposed new flag that is well designed.

Chatter Blogs

On downsizing your home...

A smaller home only makes sense if you live near your family and friends – so they have no need to stay with you.

Nanna Kay

On the federal budget...

To compare governments with the private sector, as some resident economists do, when the private sector has greater risks of success and failure and market risks to manage, is plain stupid. I don't want Australia to go 'down under' like the rest of the world. **Weg**

On the NDIS levy...

NDIS per se is to be applauded however it will blatantly discriminate on the basis of age, offending the government's own legislation. **Rob**

Have your say on the weekly National Seniors blog www.nationalseniors.com.au/blog

Online picks

For budding artists, Nyra Aherne from Tasmania nominates <http://www.paintingsilove.com> "It is free but if you want to take part in extra activities there is a small yearly subscription," she says. "I have made many new friends from around the world, whom I chat to on Skype or make contact through Facebook or emails. You see some amazing work and in my case I have picked up lots of ideas and helpful hints along the way".

Know a cool, interesting or useful website? Email us: 50something@nationalseniors.com.au

The republican system that he espouses is simplistic, deeply flawed and open to political abuse. Furthermore, I object to these celebrities using their fame as a platform to advance their pet projects.

Mostly they do not have the expertise to comment, but they have the power of persuasion. History shows this can be very dangerous.

I hope we see no more of this type of thing in *50 something*.

Charles Page
Ridgewood WA

Living on the Edge

I loved the article by Thomas E. Muller about his trip to Columbia and Venezuela. It is beautifully written and constructed and I loved his ending line: "The adventure spirit stings a little when you dab it on a raw, untrained boldness". What a wonderful inspiration to have our own travel adventures when we retire. The all night electrical storms without thunder draw me to Venezuela but I would give canyoning a miss! The article prompted me to find out more about Thomas E. Muller who lives on the Gold Coast. His life is as interesting as his travel article. More please from this writer.

Jennifer Gleeson
Forest Lake Q

Dairy Sources

I was disappointed to see the somewhat outdated advice in 'Women's Business' (*50 something*, April/May 2013) that three dairy sources should be eaten daily. The Harvard School of Public Health has stated that milk isn't the only, or even best, source of calcium.

It recommends looking beyond the dairy aisle in the supermarket for plant sources of calcium.

The dairy industry also has many concerning animal welfare issues including the killing of male calves which are the 'unwanted by products' of this industry. Many informed consumers are turning away from dairy for both health and ethical reasons.

Gayle D'Arcy
Doolandella Q

Lucky Generation

I agree with David Carvosso ("The Last Word", *50 something*, April/May 2013).

The first sentence of my autobiography, written about 10 years ago, read: "I was born into what I consider to be the Lucky Generation."

However being a woman, I count among my blessings, the advent of the contraceptive pill just before I married, and being born in 1944, before the true Baby Boomers arrived. So I avoided that dangerous period known as the "Swinging Sixties". I was married by 1964, and was never tempted by multiple partners.

So I avoided the problems of people who don't marry for life, and consequently my children do not come from a broken home as so many do these days.

And of course I benefited from what is known as "Women's Lib." I didn't have to give up my job for marriage as some did, even in the 1970s. As a teacher, paying into a government super fund, I am now enjoying a retirement free from financial worries.

H Beneke
Banksia Beach Q



Write next issue's best letter to win a Kobo Vox eReader valued at \$239. More than an eReader, the Vox is for books, magazines, movies, TV shows, music, apps, games, web browsing via Wi-Fi and more. The Vox comes pre-loaded with email, Facebook, Twitter, web and media players, and can access almost three million books through the Kobo bookstore. Cherie Hartwig wins a Uniden SSE35 cordless telephone and emergency alert pendant for her letter.

Historical anniversaries can be a signpost for reflection and review. 2013 is the 50th anniversary of the letter from Birmingham City Jail. It is an anniversary of great symbolism but also one with contemporary application.

Reverend Martin Luther King was incarcerated in Birmingham at Easter in 1963 for protesting about laws segregating people on the basis of their skin colour. His protest is regarded as one of the defining moments in the fight for racial equality. King wrote to southern religious leaders about the segregation issue in a powerful letter which challenged them and the practice of justice in their beliefs.

In this country we have Commonwealth laws prohibiting sex, disability, race and age discrimination. Each area continues to be a challenge – impacted by long held views, cultural differences, societal attitudes and, for some, simple bias.

Whilst we as an organisation legitimately focus on discrimination based on age, we recognise the harmful tentacles of sex, race and disability discrimination also find their way into the lives of older Australians.

Age discrimination has existed forever – stereotyping people because of a date on the calendar. Some attitudes are borne of well meaning, others reflect a commercial interest or financial preference; all reinforced when the laws of the land differentiate because of the calendar.

Discrimination in employment impacts harshly. Skills, experience, desire to work, loyalty can count for nought. The research is clear that age discrimination by

employers and recruiting agencies is the major barrier.

Progress is being made. The experience of being guided around the floors of Bunnings by a wise grey hair is the kind of leadership that contributes to change.

Unfortunately legislated discrimination remains. Consider a person who is retrenched from employment. Recognising the financial challenges this creates, taxation laws provide for special treatment of the redundancy payment... except if you are aged over 65. Yes, a retrenched over-65s redundancy is treated differently and less favourably despite an older worker facing a much greater time on the unemployment queue than a younger worker.

The landmark DisabilityCare Australia, the renamed national disability insurance scheme, contains a similar bias. Disability support and services are provided to people under age 65 without charge, funded primarily by the extension of the Medicare levy paid by all. National Seniors welcomes and supports the scheme, indeed we acknowledge the importance of the reform to older Australians who provide care for adult children.

What is unacceptable is that eligibility is determined by the same calendar used in employment, in redundancy arrangements and elsewhere. A blunt, unfair and discriminatory tool to exclude people who acquire



Michael O'Neill
CEO National Seniors Australia

a disability after their 65th birthday. Instead of accessing DisabilityCare Australia, people who acquire a disability post 65 are shunted into the aged care sector where they will pay for the service and, with respect, deal with a system which struggles to cope with its core task.

For the very old or people with significant psycho-geriatric disabilities, aged care is most suitable. However a wide range of vision, hearing or similar conditions are not suited to treatment in the aged care system, particularly for younger seniors who may still be in the workforce or leading active lives.

Progress in age discrimination has been made. There is greater awareness. But it is all the more disappointing that legislated discrimination is condoned and embraced and that there is silence from those charged with responsibility.

Finally I note these words in the Birmingham City Jail letter: 'injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere'. It is time to throw off the shackles of injustice that the calendar introduces to our society.

PS National Seniors is simplifying and strengthening its structural processes. Visit "Our Story" at www.nationalseniors.com.au to see the proposed changes. Email your input to structure@nationalseniors.com.au



Minister launches research centre

Federal Ageing Minister Mark Butler relaunched the National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre (PAC) in Melbourne in May. Mr Butler spoke of the importance of good quality research for informing public policy and educating the community about leading healthy and productive lives. National Seniors members and representatives from academia, government and business attended the launch. The centre relocated from Canberra in January. The next PAC event is a free one-day forum on life-long learning on June 25. Details: Contact Bernadette on 03 9650 6144 or b.trahair@nationalseniors.com.au

Older, happier

A new PAC report *Staying Connected: Social Engagement and Wellbeing Among Mature Age Australians* has found that people aged 70 to 89 have the highest overall life satisfaction of the over-50s. This is despite reporting poorer health than younger seniors. Their secret, say researchers, is social interaction – this group is most likely to state that they socialise as much as they want. Details at www.productiveageing.com.au

FEDERAL BUDGET SPECIAL

Penny Pinching

Older Australians escaped harsh cuts in the federal budget – but there were very few wins, writes senior policy adviser Marie Skinner.

In a climate of cuts to family allowances and the baby bonus, seniors on government pensions emerged unscathed. However there was no joy for those struggling to survive on the **Newstart Allowance**. Despite concerted lobbying from welfare and business groups to increase the unemployment benefit, it stayed as is. Instead the income free area has lifted to \$100 a fortnight to allow an increase of \$32 in earnings before benefits are reduced. This does not acknowledge the difficulty experienced by the over-50s in accessing casual or part-time work.

For those utilising the **Pension Bonus Scheme**, 1 March 2014 was announced as the final date for backdated registration. The scheme closed on 20 September 2009 and is only available for seniors who were eligible prior to that date.

Other small scale initiatives for older Australians include a family home **downsizing support** trial and extension of the **Broadband for Seniors** initiative. The \$112.4 million downsizing trial will allow seniors who have lived in their current home for at least 25 years and who downsize to age appropriate housing to invest 80 per cent of excess sale proceeds (up to \$200,000) in an interest earning account that, left untouched, is exempt from the Age Pension means test for up to 10 years.

The Broadband for Seniors initiative provides \$9.9M over 4 years with a focus on new technology and \$2,000 training grants through the Broadband for Seniors kiosks, cyber security issues and multimedia devices.



Unscathed National Seniors CEO Michael O'Neill addresses the media on budget night

National Seniors continues to raise the significant disincentives to seniors' access due to the costs of computers, other technologies and internet plans in Australia.

Several budget announcements will impact on seniors' ability to access timely and affordable **health** services and meet health care costs.

Small enhancements include the World Leading Cancer Care package which allocates \$226.4M to extend the target group for breast screening beyond the current 69 years, expand the McGrath Breastcare Nurse Program and chemotherapy medicines, establish three prostate cancer research facilities and improve treatment records.

The two yearly **Breastscreen reminder letters** will be sent to women aged 70 to 74 years.

National Seniors has lobbied extensively for this increase and would prefer to see no age restriction to the target group, given the higher incidence of breast cancer amongst older women. However access for older women to free breast screening continues albeit without the reminder letters.

A small scoping study on the cost-benefits of wound management will be conducted within existing departmental resources. National Seniors supported advocacy for assistance with the cost of effective wound treatment including compression bandages.

Seniors are likely to be exposed to higher health care costs. In spite of bulk-billing by GPs at highest ever levels, the AMA is predicting higher gap fees for patients with the freeze on the Medicare rebate for GP visits and the deferral of the usual November increase to the scheduled fees.

The **Net Medical Expenses Tax Offset** for out of pocket expenses above \$2,060 is also being phased out. Only those people who claim the rebate in 2012-2013 will be eligible to claim in the following two years, and claims will be subject to income thresholds.

The 0.5 per cent increase to the **Medicare Levy** to partly fund the **NDIS**, now DisabilityCare Australia, was a flagship announcement in the budget. The budget provided no indication of how an already stretched aged care system would accommodate disability care for people aged 65 and older who acquired a severe or profound disability and are excluded from DisabilityCare Australia. ■

For more information, email policy@nationalseniors.com.au

The Last Laugh

How does it feel being the world's funniest man? Casey-Ann Seaniger catches up with Hollywood superstar and all round nice-guy, Steve Carell.



Worth an estimated \$45 million and branded the world's funniest man, it is easy to jump to conclusions about actor Steve Carell's life.

When I found out I was interviewing Carell, I wanted to know how he managed to conquer one of the toughest businesses there is – comedy in Hollywood.

The answer was not what I expected, but then again, Carell is like that: a man of contrasts who is clearly blasé about the scale of his success.

As the son of an engineer and a psychiatric nurse, a career in film and comedy seemed unlikely for Carell, who, describes his young self as the type of child who 'would rather hear a story at a party rather than tell a story'.

When Carell was filling out his application for law school, he stopped at the question: 'Why do you want to be an attorney?'

He couldn't answer the question and he didn't want to fake it.

"I had absolutely no idea. Uh, to make a lot of money and sue people? To be hated based solely on my job title? I couldn't come up with one good reason," Carell says.

And that is when he decided to make a detour into acting.

For Carell, now 50, acting was only meant to be a 'one or two year thing'. It turned out to be anything but.

Over the past 10 years Carell has cracked it big in films such as *Get Smart*; *Bruce Almighty*; *Despicable Me*; *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy*; *Dinner for Schmucks*; *Evan Almighty*; *The 40 Year-Old Virgin* and *Little Miss Sunshine*.

But it was his character as the socially awkward Michael Scott on the U.S. version of *The Office* which landed him millions of cult-like followers.

When Carell left *The Office* in 2011 after almost seven seasons, ratings reportedly plunged from around eight million in 2007-8 to about five million in 2013.

His performances have led to countless Emmy and Golden Globe nominations, including the prestigious Golden Globe for Best Actor in Television Comedy.

But none of this seems to concern Carell too much as he brushes off the unwanted labels given to him by his peers of "Hollywood's nice guy" and "the world's funniest man".

Carell puts his success down to luck and says it has nothing to do with sacrificing it all to make it in the cut-throat world of Hollywood.

Carell seems truly content with just making his actress wife Nancy, and his two children, Elisabeth and John, happy, and there seems to be few juicy secrets hiding in this man's cupboard.

Instead you find a well-grounded, family man who maybe, just maybe, is strangely ordinary and just like the rest of us, trying to figure out where he belongs.

Why do a voice role in a children's cartoon movie like *Despicable Me*?

I thought the story was funny and charming and really entertaining. It seemed like a movie I would want to see whether I was a kid or not.

Did the principles of friendship and family also attract you to the film?

All of the themes are very relevant and they are themes I identify with as a dad. When you become a dad as Gru becomes a dad, you have no idea how much it's going to change your life. I related to it because I knew exactly what that felt like. Everything changes, priorities shift and it forms the type of person you become.

How has life been after *The Office*?

It's been good. Doing the show was a very intense daily commitment and it just seemed like the right time to move on and do new things, but I am still in touch with all of my friends there. You know it's bittersweet, it's certainly sweet for the fact that we all had that experience but it's hard to say goodbye to something that had been so precious to you.

You are also a big history buff; what is your favourite era and what historical character would you like to play on film?

I guess I would say Lincoln but that's off the table now isn't it...(laughing). Boy I don't really know. I haven't really thought about what historical figure I would play. I grew up on the east coast in Massachusetts so growing up I studied a lot of early American history – the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, but I never really thought about it in terms of portraying a character. It's more of a hobby than anything else.

What's been your most memorable movie and why?

The 40 Year-Old Virgin was memorable because I had no idea that the movie would be successful or that anyone would see it. Frankly, Judd (Judd Apatow) and I just wanted to make a movie that we thought was funny and we used ourselves as the barometer for that.

I remember the chest waxing scene well because it was actually real. Have you ever had a wax since then?

I never have and I never will.

I heard you danced to Gangnam style in a shopping centre to embarrass your daughter. What did she think of it?

(Laughs)... Well I didn't go full blast into it but it was mostly at my daughter's expense to just tease her and make her laugh. But I would never push it so far that she would disown me as her dad. There's always that fine line between having fun and scarring your children for life.

What is your secret to a happy marriage?

There is absolutely no secret. There is no magic potion for a successful relationship or marriage. She was just right and I just kinda lucked out.

Are you scared about getting older?

I'm not, no. It seems an irrelevant thing to fear because it's inevitable. I must say I had the best 50th birthday. I went to this surprise party, 150 friends showed up. I was literally able to take stock of my life and my career, my family and the friendships that I've gained over the years. It was actually an incredible reaffirming thing for me so I guess I had sort of the opposite experience ...there's no crisis going on.

Looking back on your life, what do you attribute your success to?

Oh boy, I think luck mostly. There's a lot to be said about being in the right place at the right time. I just lucked out. I can't really imagine it's much more than that. I had some very fortuitous breaks and I never aspired to any of this.

What's next for you to achieve?

Oh. I suppose I would like to become a competitive swimmer...(laughing)

So, how's your backstroke?

Pretty terrible... now is not the time to engage in professional swimming career. It's funny, I guess you reach a certain point and you're like 'wow I'm not going to be a professional athlete...that train has left the station'. ■

Despicable Me 2 opens 20 June

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International flights included



14 Night Magic of Malaysia

Experience the magic of Malaysia. Admire the Kuala Lumpur skyline, take in the beauty of the highlands and immerse yourself in the culture and flavours of the exotic. Enjoy a visit to the world's largest water village, Kampong Ayer "The Venice of the East". This program includes all airfares, taxes and most meals and will be escorted by professional tour leaders Steve and Ann Gaunt.

Members Price: \$5,499*
Non Members Price: \$5,699*
MEMBERS SAVE \$200
 prices are per person twin share
Singles price available
Departs: 04 Aug 2013
International flights additional



25 Night Britain and Ireland In Depth

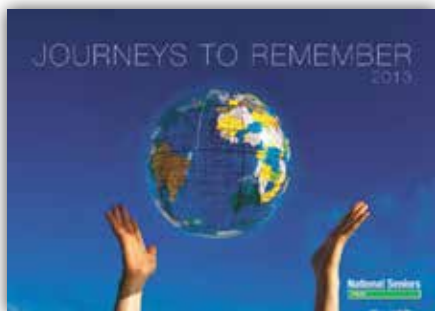
Travel the length and breadth of the country, visiting the iconic sights and marvelling at the scenic countryside. Uncover cultural jewels, heritage and history as you explore the best that Britain and Ireland have to offer including an Edinburgh Military Tattoo experience. LAST SEAT SALE on now for 2013! Bookings open for 2014.

Members Price: \$16,455*
Non Members Price: \$16,995*
MEMBERS SAVE: \$540
 prices are per person twin share
Singles price available
Departs: Apr – Sep 2014
2014 at 2013 prices



34 Night Rockies, Alaska and New England

Experience the best of east and west Canada and enjoy a magical cruise to Alaska. Wander the Butchart gardens in Victoria, witness glaciers breaking away in Alaska, venture into the Athabasca Icefields, discover Montreal and Ottawa, cruise Niagara Falls, enjoy an Amish experience in Lancaster and discover New York. FLY FREE offers available on selected departures.



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Members Price: \$3,995*
Non Members Price: \$4,095*
MEMBERS SAVE \$100
 prices are per person twin share
Singles price available
Departs: 13 Sep 2013
Domestic flights additional



9 Night Kimberley Explorer

Join Bombora tours on this fascinating journey of sweeping ranges, broad tidal flats, small pockets of rainforest, incredible gorges and waterfalls among the fiery red backdrop of the Australian desert in the National Heritage listed Kimberley. The Kimberley remains one of the world's last great wilderness areas. The sheer beauty will make you never want to leave.

Members Price: \$7,620*
Non Members Price: \$7,920*
MEMBERS SAVE: \$300
 prices are per person twin share
Singles price available
Departs: 6 Aug 2014
International flights included



14 Night Grand Chairman's River Cruise

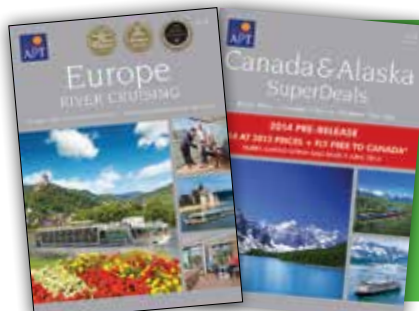
Experience Central Europe on this enchanting cruise between Amsterdam and Budapest, hosted by the National Seniors Chairman, David Carvosso. Enjoy guided sightseeing including a baking demonstration in Miltenberg, beer tasting in Nuremberg and visits to Würzburg's Residenz, Regensburg's Old Chapel, the Benedictine Abbey, St. Martin's Cathedral and Fishermen's Bastion.

Members Price: \$10,665*
Non Members Price: \$10,995*
MEMBERS SAVE: \$330
 prices are per person twin share
Singles price available
Departs: 23, 26, 30 Apr 2014
International flights included



21 Night Rockies Odyssey and Alaska Cruise

Travel on this popular touring program through the Canadian Rockies. Journey through the heart of the most beautiful mountain scenery on earth savouring the magnificent scenery. Enjoy a two day Rocky Mountaineer journey before embarking on a seven night Holland America cruise through the spectacular Inside Passage to Alaska. FLY FREE, just pay taxes.



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*Prices were correct at the time of printing but may fluctuate. Bookings are only confirmed with a deposit and are subject to availability at time of payment. Offers available for a limited time only.

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National Seniors
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The Last Word

National Seniors was recently invited to be part of a Global Ageing & Vision Advocacy Summit in Barcelona. The summit was jointly hosted by the Macular Disease Foundation Australia (MDF) and the International Federation on Ageing (IFA). National Seniors has a supportive working relationship with MDF in our advocacy activities in Australia and is a member of the international body, IFA. I was pleased to represent National Seniors at this summit and participate in the workshops over two days in April.

There were 22 delegates representing 11 countries from around the globe. The countries represented were diverse in their political structure (e.g. USA, Denmark and China) and hence the ability of organisations to advocate on ageing or vision issues varied considerably between countries.

There are currently 810 million people aged over 60 in the world and 58 million turn 60 every year. The effect of the baby boomers being experienced in first world countries is yet to be felt in many developing countries. Hence the issues of London and New York will be replicated in Mumbai and Beijing in years to come!

The delegates also represented countries that have varying availability and capacity for vision and eye disease checks, corrective services and eye surgery (e.g. Australia and Brazil). For example the difference between the over-servicing in some first world countries (yes, apparently some cataract surgery happens too early) contrasts with Brazil and China which reported their economies and lack of trained ophthalmologists and optometrists was a concern in responding to service demands.

Although vision loss is linked with ageing, blindness is not. The summit was told that 75% to 80% of vision loss is preventable. This can range from corrective lenses through to surgery. With a reported cost of vision loss worldwide in 2010 of three trillion dollars it is not difficult

to see the savings that can be made if good prevention strategies were implemented.

Poor vision often results in falls, leading to incapacity. This frequently results in the need for carers. The costs, both monetary and social associated with the need for care, are substantial. Older people are not all the same, but they all want to be independent. It was also reported that vision loss often results in social isolation and this has its own ramifications.

A healthy, well balanced, nutritious diet is essential for healthy eyes. Interestingly the eyes require a similar diet to the heart and brain, so a nutritional diet is beneficial to a number of organs that tend to falter as we age.

The summit also provided me the opportunity to network with similar organisations such as DaneAge (Denmark) and the Canadian Association of Retired Persons. It was clear that many of the issues facing the over-50s are similar across the globe. It was also acknowledged the value that seniors contribute to society and this resonates with Australia's current report "Realising the economic potential of senior Australians".

The summit explored the capacity of the ageing and vision sectors to join in effectively advocating for and representing the interests of seniors in relation to vision impairment.

The message to governments is that prevention is cheaper and better than cure.

We can assist by staying healthy through diet, lifestyle (smoking accounts for 20% of world blindness) and regular health and vision check-ups.

David Carvosso

Chairman

National Seniors Australia

