

# PRODUCTIVE AGEING FORUM, 17 May 2007

## 'café conversations between consumers, researchers & policy makers'

### INTRODUCTION

National Seniors Australia and the ARC/NHMRC Research Network in Ageing Well, in collaboration with the Department of Health and Ageing, facilitated the inaugural 'Productive Ageing Forum' on 17 May 2007 in Melbourne.

The key objectives of the 'consumer-led' research Forum were to:

- promote the concept of productive ageing;
- showcase the work of current research in productive ageing; and
- provide a forum for interaction between key representatives working in the field of ageing - consumers, researchers and policy makers.

The Forum featured nationally renowned speakers covering a broad range of issues relating to consumer-led research and policy making. Differing perspectives of productive ageing were presented by the participants at the Forum, representing the views of consumers, academia and government.

### PARTICIPANTS

Participants at the Forum included representatives from, amongst others, the Office for an Ageing Australia, Office of Senior Victorians, National Seniors Victorian State Policy Group, Ageing Well Network members, Environment Victoria, the Australian Nursing Federation, and the Benevolent Society.

### SPEAKERS

Mr Michael O'Neill, National Seniors Chief Executive, welcomed participants to the Forum and set the scene for the day. Mr O'Neill also acknowledged the work of Prof. Susan Dann in establishing the Productive Ageing Centre as an authority on productive ageing research and education.

Mr Andrew Stuart, First Assistant Secretary, Ageing and Aged Care Division at the Department of Health and Ageing, presented the Government's take on productive ageing to Forum participants.

Speaking from a consumer perspective, former Miss World, Belinda Green, gave an entertaining account of her experiences of getting older.

Recipients of National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre (NSPAC) research grants and representatives from partner universities involved in PAC research collaborations provided an overview of recent research activities:

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| ▪ <i>Optimising Computer Training for Seniors</i><br>Prof. James Kehoe, UNSW     | ▪ <i>The Process of Participation and Phased Retirement</i><br>Prof Michael Drew, QUT              |
| ▪ <i>Assistive Health Technology in Ageing Communities</i><br>Sara Newton, NSPAC | ▪ <i>Technology and Consumer Chronic Disease Management</i><br>Ana Hutchinson, Victoria University |
|  | ▪ <i>Volunteering and Productive Ageing</i><br>Dr Jeni Warburton, ACA UQ                           |

Participants then broke into two cluster dialogues – *older people participating productively* and *older people and technology* - to discuss aspects of the research presentations in more detail.

## CAFÉ CONVERSATIONS

Prof. Stephen Mugford facilitated 'café conversations', of which the purpose was to generate open discussion and encourage active participation from all participants. The initial question asked to open the session was, *'what would it take to develop an effective research agenda re. productive ageing?'.* The issues generated by this question formed the basis for a mind-mapping exercise.

## OUTCOMES FROM MIND-MAPPING EXERCISE

Six mind-maps were made, covering the topics of: **employment (specifically nursing); diversity; productive ageing; the strategic research framework; volunteering; image and branding.**

A number of questions were asked relating to each topic: **what we know; what we don't know; what we need to know; who we partner with to progress these issues; and which participants would be prepared to team up to help take the enquiry forward.**

The issues raised in *'what we need to know'* will help inform NSPAC's research agenda. These are:

<b>Employment (nursing)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ How to update skills and engage older workforce?</li><li>▪ What incentives are needed to attract people to work in isolated areas?</li><li>▪ How to enhance opportunities and knowledge about the availability of alternate jobs in the industry?</li></ul>
<b>Diversity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ How does a broad policy affect diverse groups if they have not been involved in research?</li><li>▪ Peak bodies, such as NSA, need to reflect the research findings to represent diversity in society</li><li>▪ Issues of cultural competency in research</li><li>▪ Does NSPAC's database have a good representation of diverse groups?</li><li>▪ How to ensure outcomes of research reach diverse groups</li><li>▪ Examine what specific aspects of diversity are important</li></ul>
<b>Productive Ageing</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What happens if you are not 'productive'?</li><li>▪ Can you age productively alone?</li><li>▪ Can you age productively in residential care?</li></ul>
<b>Strategic Research Framework</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Is research being disseminated effectively and to the relevant groups?</li></ul>
<b>Volunteering</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Working longer versus volunteering – is it a choice that has to be made?</li><li>▪ Will coming generations continue to support/be involved with traditional volunteering organisations and activities?</li><li>▪ How to address the needs of people who want to volunteer but face disincentives to doing so</li><li>▪ Possibilities for peer and youth mentoring</li></ul>
<b>Image/Branding</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Divisions within generations of people 50+</li><li>▪ Desired self-image of different groups of people 50+</li></ul>

## PLENARY SESSION

Mr O'Neill facilitated the closing plenary session and thanked the National Seniors' staff and participants for their contribution to the day. He then invited Prof. Hal Kendig, Convenor of the Ageing Well Network, and Mr Kevin Vassarotti, Director of the Office for an Ageing Australia, to make some closing remarks. Comments were made about the importance of consultation and collaboration between government, organisations and individuals, and the opportunity for the Productive Ageing Centre to act as a disseminator of knowledge and research. Prof. Kendig also linked the outcomes of the day with the *Research Collaborations with Consumers* workshop being held by the Ageing Well Network the following day (May 18).