

Jeanette Garner



I have experienced ageism big time.

After 36 years of marriage I was told I had passed my used by date. He traded me in for a newer model (his words). Financially I had very little, e.g. no home (I had to sell up), no financial support, and no job. I was a stay at home mum so all I got was a widow allowance. There was rent to pay, running a car I managed to buy, and looking after two big dogs.

My ex lived and worked overseas, paid no tax, earned a lot of money and gave me nothing. I was told by a lawyer I even had to pay him half the money I got for our home.

Is this AGEISM?



Age 72

Jeanette Garner



Today I live on an aged pension, live in a Homeswest unit, and moving on is very important - not living in the past.

My experiences include independence (my ex was a bully), meeting people with all sorts of stories to tell and learning to make the most of what I have now.

Dreams for the future are important, even if they are dreams. E.g winning lotto and having my own home in my special area. Staying healthy is very important so I can have quality of life and have as much freedom as I can manage.



Age 72

Cal Swann



The invisibles

Once retired, I was not invited back into academia to share my 'corporate knowledge' with the next generation of designers. Not that they'd care to know I taught with Harry Beck, the designer of the London Underground map, or of many of the world great designers I was on personal terms with.

A bit did rub off, I got to learn a few things in 50 years of rubbing shoulders and designing with the best. I could still offer an insight or two, a perspective tempered by five decades of designing, research and a couple of student books on graphic design.

I was invisible overnight. Vanished without trace.

I emailed recently, an offer for a workshop to Murdoch University. The academic there looked me up on my Academia website, saw how old I was and didn't even reply. But my doctor, a humorous man about to retire, also reminded me of those politicians who retire from politicking and find a seat at the boardroom table - but only for three years.

After that, their contacts in influential politics are gone, their own influence no more. I bugged off to Denmark for three years after retiring, what chance did I stand?

Age 85



Cal Swann



Last December I had a triple bypass at The Mount Hospital, courtesy of surgeon Robert LARBALESTIER. No big drama, a condition discovered before potential disaster, and now a new lease on an active life, thanks to a fantastic health system and staff here in Perth.

Lucky me.



Age 85

Cal Swann



My wife and I were taking a short weekend spring break and towing our camper trailer (A'van) up to Dongara.

We were still about 40 minutes from Dongara on an empty road when she said there's a funny noise behind, slow down. At that moment a 4WD pulled alongside in the opposing lane beside us and signalled for us to pull in. On investigation the offside wheel of our camper was not just flat – it was shredded to bits!

The 4WD had stopped behind us and on seeing our panic expressions as we unloaded the back of the car to get at our wheel jack and levers, this young man asked 'Do you need any help?'

He proceeded to collect his own jack and tools and set about changing the wheel. He was fast and efficient and without his strength we would never have unscrewed the nuts to release our spare tyre. He and his wife and two kids in the 4WD were on their way home to Geraldton, he told me.

As I walked him back to his car thanking him profusely, I managed to call through the open window 'Your Dad's a very fine Dad!' to his young kids in the back who just grinned, thinking 'Yeah, we know that'. That young man had seen my white hair and beard and immediately offered to help.

Being recognised as an old bugger is not always a bad thing! I'm still indebted to that generous guy.

Age 85



Coral Morris



When I turned 50 I was forced to flee my family home in the middle of the night due to domestic violence.

Suddenly I found myself homeless living in my car and eventually a refuge closer to Perth took me in. This experience enabled me for the first time in 36 years to make my own decisions and to befriend some of the most amazing women who inspired me to continue gaining inner strength every day.

In time I set about rebuilding my life following a new and rewarding direction. I was able to spend time with my first grandchild and embrace life with a small but genuine circle of friends and family.

My faith never wavered and led me to The Salvation Army in Rockingham and a role was created for me as a receptionist to greet people of our community entering our centre. That was 14 years ago and I have met wonderful people from all walks of life. Volunteering has been what's kept me focused and enjoying this purpose filled stage of my life.

I have remarried to a wonderful man I met 14 years ago and have six grandchildren. I ballroom dance with my husband at the Autumn Centre and have met other seniors who enjoy this purpose filled stage of our lives.

Age is a state of mind. It's how we perceive it.



Age 64

Coral Morris



The satisfaction in seeing our grandchildren grow and enjoy the simple pleasures in life without stress of work.



Age 64

Sheena Edwards



Try being a woman over 70 and going into an electronic store.

Does anyone ask you if you need any help? No, they think you're there waiting for your grandson, especially if you're standing in the computer section. The look of surprise you get when you finally say "can I have some assistance please?".

It takes persistence to build up some credibility with the store so there is no point in being impatient or cranky or that won't help the next 'older woman' who is looking

for some help. Gradually they begin to recognise you as someone who has done their homework and won't take much sales persuasion if they can supply you with what you are looking for. The really canny ones soon recognise that not only might you be looking for something for yourself but you may want to share some of your new found enthusiasm for technology with children or grandchildren.



Age 74

Sheena Edwards

Running the Switched on Seniors Group for eight years as my 'retirement' volunteering has made that time fly.

The group meets every Friday for Seniors to learn how to use the iPad and iPhone to explore the online world of the internet and learn to do so much more than any of us thought we would be capable of.

Every week we learn something new - technology doesn't let us be content with the myriad skills, knowledge and experiences we have accumulated over our lifetimes. But we come with the same attitude that enabled us to change a truck tyre on a country road, or feed three generations of the extended family every Christmas without a shop bought item in sight.

We no longer throw up our hands in horror or shrink away without our needs being met when we hear the 'online' word.

Many of us have never owned a computer so we are amazed and very proud at how much we can do on this hand held device. We love the connection it has given us with our grandchildren and get very excited when we can show them something they don't know.

So don't assume that someone who is in their 70s, 80s or 90s won't know what you are talking when you talk about Google, Siri, Spotify, FaceTime, Skype, etc. But if these words still mystify you, then come and join us as we are a very welcoming bunch.

Age 74

Bert Winning



I am 61 years of age. My wife and I moved to Warnbro from South Hedland in December 2019.

I have always found it fairly easy to find work and have worked in a wide range of jobs. Since moving south to Warnbro I have been surprised how hard it is to find work even in a casual / part-time role.

Many of the jobs I have applied for have been in my area of expertise, training and experience, yet I have received one phone interview and rarely a response.

I consider myself very competent and have experience as a plumber, campsite manager, school chaplain, employment services co-ordinator and for the last two years a trolley collector for a large grocery chain store.

What is it about employing older folk? I am reliable, in good health and have always worked well in whatever capacity or role I am given.

What is it that makes employing a senior so unattractive?



Age 61

Bert Winning



We moved to Warnbro in 2019 to be closer to our family.

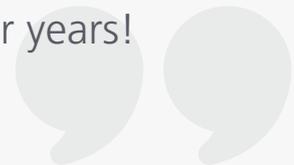
Our family includes our ageing mums and two grandchildren, aged 1 and 2 years. It has been a highlight to be close to family members and see more of our grandkids growing up.

I love seeing them grow and interact with us and their great grandparents. After 18 months in Port Hedland living closer to the beach is fantastic.

I love cool afternoon sea breezes in summer, winter rain and green gardens.

One of my highlights is taking my aged mum out to a park with our grandkids and seeing my mum's face light up when she sees the little ones running around wanting to ride on all the playground equipment.

Loving my senior years!



Age 61

Marilyn Price



Personally: at the end of March 2020, I had to stop doing my part-time professional work for several months, following the Prime Minister's order that those aged 70 or older should stay home.

Although I understand that this was meant to protect older Australians during the COVID-19 pandemic, there appeared to be no acknowledgement that some of us still needed/wanted to work as highly trained professionals.

This devastated me, and made me feel like I was forced on "the scrap heap", without a chance to plead my case.

Others: as a chaplain working in aged care, I am aware of ageism on a daily basis, mainly when elderly people's opinions are disregarded by care staff and medical personnel, or when the elderly are prevented from exercising their right to make choices in their everyday lives.



Age 72

Marilyn Price



I am currently working in my third professional career, never having been without work, and having studied and obtained five university degrees during my adult life.

I am fortunate to now work in a role that demands wisdom, extensive life experience, patience, and an array of problem-solving skills, and in a profession in which the fact that I am a senior is highly regarded and respected.



Age 72

Pamela Rudling

The worst experiences I have had since growing up to the tender age of 77 is being treated like an idiot when seeking help regarding the computer and how being told once should be enough to be told.

Also at the checkout at the supermarket sometimes being a nuisance because of slowness in completing the task and paying. Sometimes forgetting to collect the items because of the feeling I need to rush through. Seeking help on telephone services is another bug bare. A lot of the time the operator talks too fast and my ears are tuned into a slower pace, which can annoy people.

I need to remind them that they will get old one day. Well, we hope so and it was me who put them through kindergarten.

During my working life I had the opportunity to work while in the Army on a computer that was as big as a warehouse and its sole function was to send messages from one site to another. I worked in Woomera where they were experimenting with unmanned aircraft.

Now we have drones. Also working at Cooby Creek Tracking Station outside Toowoomba where we were experimenting with Satellite communications. Now we have telephones and wrist watches that use this technology.

AND I KNOW NOTHING.

Age 77

Pamela Rudling



The best thing about being a mature citizen is that I have more time to do things like gardening, visiting friends and drinking their tea and eating their biscuits instead of my own.

Also I can add to society in volunteering. At present at Aged Care....looking after the oldies!!!!



Age 77

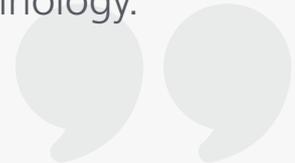
Janice Thair



On the whole I find people quite respectful to my old age but the other day at my Physiotherapy I was putting my next appointment into my iPhone by voice control when the young physiotherapist said "THAT IS SO COOL".

Would he have said that to a thirty year old woman???

No - just didn't think an old person could use technology.



Age 81

Anita Black



This is the year that a person could feel ageism taking the form of loneliness, depression or just old age.

My 80th birthday was as deflated as the huge golden balloons given me that still hang behind the bathroom door. They remind me of the happy event I couldn't have.

I felt unable to cope with travelling overseas any more, and I made an ageist decision at the beginning of the year when I decided not to go to Japan for my grandson's wedding.

Of course it was cancelled because of COVID-19 and a down moment became my joy when the wedding was held in his family garage with all the bells and whistles. It was so wonderful.

I now see nothing will stay the same so let's wait on change and the negatives in life will become joyful.



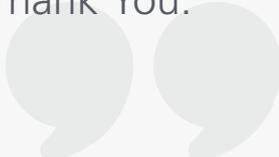
Age 80

Anita Black



When purchasing a new iPad I realised I had lost confidence and was lacking the necessary basic knowledge to use the shiny machine. Since joining Switched on Seniors I have learnt skills weekly and with practice can now apply the lesson aptly.

Currently, I am very excited to find the iPad equivalent to Word. It is called 'Pages' and is easily available free from the App store. I use it to write up memories from life for the family to read one day. Today I was taught how to email from the Pages document. The world is expanding for me with every lesson. Thank You.



Age 80

Anita Black



I like being 80 years old. My life is full and free.

It seems everything I need is easily available with very little effort. At least I feel that way at the moment. OK, I live alone so there is less house work, which is easily done at a pace to suit only myself.

Six years ago I chose to apply for a job. I was accepted as a Traffic Warden and have continued in this paid job. Monday to Friday I arise at 6.45am and work for an hour. The traffic is a little daunting but the greetings from the children make it worthwhile.

By 9.00am I am free to attend meetings, Art and Craft sessions and an iPad learning group. So that takes care of three mornings a week with plenty of time to shop, walk and just have coffee.

Ageism! I believe it is what you make it. Look at the negative and it hurts. Be positive and see the blessings we have in living in Rockingham where we have fresh sea air, bright sunlight and a lovely atmosphere to walk and relax.

I am so lucky.



Age 80

Ian Russell



On Father's Day 2014 while I was living in the Southern Highlands of NSW, I got a knock on the door.

When I opened it a man said "Hi Ian, I'm your brother Phil and this is my wife, daughter and two grandchildren." Roll forward to 2020 and I have moved to WA with my daughter Jude and found my sister Karen and a total of 33 siblings I never knew for 73 years.

My daughter and I now reside at Bethanie Waters Retirement Village in Port Kennedy. We are close to shops, beaches and transport, among beautiful people.

I have lost two wives to cancer, survived a heart attack, prostate cancer, pulled out of a burning car by firemen and a fall which necessitates using a walker. My darling daughter is my shining armour and with her we will survive the pandemic.

We live in the best state for me to see out my final days. I've always loved singing so every day I 'Kiss an Angel Good Morning' and 'Always Look On the Bright Side of Life'.

Wonderful Amazing - WA



Robert Richardson



As ageism is defined as the stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination against people on the basis of their age then I cannot say that I have personally experienced it.

This could be because I believe that negative comments only hurt you if you let them. Or as Eleanor Roosevelt quoted "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

However, as a past volunteer of the Older People's Right Service in Rockingham until funding was removed by the State Government I became aware of a number of people who were subject to elder abuse, particularly of a financial nature.

Children and/or grandchildren given responsibility to care for their elderly relative took advantage and misused that authority to the detriment of both parent and siblings.

This was often done by having the elderly person sell their house and apply the funds to building a granny flat or purchase a house for the relative to look after them.

Before long the aged person became 'too' frail and were shifted to an aged person's complex and the property sold under the ownership of the relative.

Other examples were in-laws exerting influence on a partner for assistance from the aged parent and any refused assistance resulted in the removal of contact with their family and particularly grandchildren.



Age 83

Robert Richardson

Elder life - it is what you make of it. Despite a number of chronic health issues the following summarises my current lifestyle:

- Almost daily visits to the gym at Aqua Jetty to enjoy the company of the younger 50 - 70 year olds.
- Regularly witnessing documents as a JP for over 38 years.
- Being a family history researcher for others, particularly unknown cousins with similar DNA.
- Researching own family history currently with a few lines back to Adam.
- Before COVID my wife and I taught 6 - 7 year olds gospel principles each Sunday and weekly at our temple in Yokine for ordinance work.
- Regularly ministering to church members to assist them in any way possible.
- Each Sunday attending the church sacrament meeting, often taking grandchildren to attend two meetings in the one day.
- Start each morning reading the scriptures.
- Regularly looking after the over 100 pot plants and small garden vegetable plots.
- Enjoying my local resident children and grandchildren and visiting their school functions and trying to keep in contact with my 36 descendants.
- Volunteering regularly at Castaways, Seniors and Carers Expo, and Have a Go Day and elsewhere where I can be of assistance.
- Attending the monthly Lung Association Meeting.
- Completing puzzles to keep my mind active and enjoy reading biographies and non-fiction books.

From the above you will see that I have found joy in the service to others and in endeavouring to live a full life.

Age 83

Valerie Turnell



I entered into the so-called older person scenario with a surprise really.

I did not feel any different to what I had always been and Age is just a number.

I cannot believe the amount of activities and opportunities that exist in and around Rockingham and do not have the time to be part of.

The people I mix with all have a great attitude, and older persons need to embrace what is on offer and realise entertainment and social life does indeed carry on, and music and song are a huge dose of medicine to us all, as is laughter.

Belonging to a club is important. I am an active member of Lions Club of Rockingham, Navy Club and Bowling Club (I do not play but am social). The Autumn Centre in Rockingham certainly has a lot to offer, and lovely meals 5 days a week, with a coffee shop where you can have meet-ups with friends.

Apart from our health problems we experience I believe this a great time in our lives when we can look after just ourselves and enjoy our freedom.

Age 73



Marie-Claire Morgana



Getting old is not easy

Getting old is not easy, but still it has its perks!

Not long ago, I used to bend, twist and turn. These days I do things around the home a little bit slower!

Not long ago, I used to run, walk fast. These days I walk slowly with the help of a walker!

Not long ago, I used to take off my clothes to go to bed. These days I put on a comfy nighty, warm socks and the only thing I take off are my glasses and my teeth!

Not long ago, in bed I used to cuddle up close to my hubby. These days I cuddle up to a hot water bottle!

Not long ago, I used to read the horoscope each morning to see my stars for the day. Now I read the obituaries to see who I outlived that day!

Since getting old I see more of my doctor than my hairdresser, and the chemist is my new best friend!

Oh yes, indeed getting old is never easy. So what are the perks?

Oh dear Lord... Not to have to go to work!



Age 70

Marie-Claire Morgana



Free range old chooks from Rockingham

Oh dear, we are both in our seventies!
What kind of future is there to be?
These days my poor body looks like an old hen
And the old rooster is always in pain.

In my twenties I was a pretty chick
Any young rooster I surely could have picked
Dreaming I was going to fly high and low
Until a new rooster became my beau.

Two eggs gently were laid in our nest
Instantly our freedom was put to rest.
We had to learn to care for our precious tiny beings
And we almost forgot our dreams.

With the passing of time, we lost feathers from our plumage
“Don’t worry” said our doctor, “It’s quite normal at your age!”
At night, both our teeth and eyes sat next to our bed
Without forgetting the old rooster’s hearing-aid!

Suddenly time now is our enemy, or is it our friend?
As it’s up to both of us to decide the end...
The old rooster decided to take up painting
And the old hen is doing some writing.

So freedom, open your doors of change
We might be old chooks from Rockingham
But we are... Free Range!

Age 70

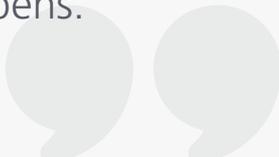


Ron Pease



Whilst attending a specialist not long ago I was having my hand inspected following micro surgery next to a young Carpenter with a cut wrist. He asked me what happened and after I said “my tendon just broke” he replied that it was because I was old that it broke.

I admit that I was lost for words, which rarely happens.



Age 73

Ron Pease

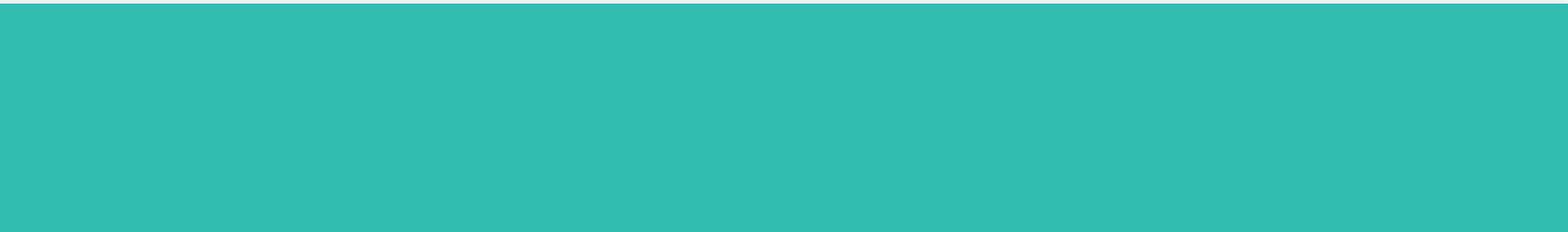


What I really enjoy is that I can now travel all over on public transport for free and do so often.

And after serving in the Defence Force for 48 years I have a card from the Government that allows me to obtain medical treatment for my ongoing injuries, which is of great comfort at my age.



Age 73



Debra Baker



The wonderful thing about getting older is that I can learn things for my own pleasure.

Since turning sixty, I have followed my interest in languages – been part of a French conversation group in Rockingham, brushing up on Spanish and learned some Dutch – and singing with the local Sing Australia group.

Even more exciting has been doing things I never dreamed of doing, like learning to play the ukulele, and jamming with joy with the group at the Autumn Centre.

Most importantly, I've learned to sail (and not get seasick). Although resident in Rockingham, my husband and I are cruising, currently in French Polynesia.

We've met the most amazing people. One woman lost her leg for health issues while on the other side of the world, but once she had a false leg and learned to swim with only one good one, decided to sail back home, a six month trip, with her husband rather than just fly home. Another man, half-paralysed by a stroke, cruises his boat in the UK, just needing help to dock.

I've learned to scuba dive and did so today on Fakarava atoll in the company of thousands of sharks.

Life is good!



Age 66

Janice Harwood



I was born in 1959 a late Baby Boomer. Some generalisations I have heard about our generation include:

- “Baby Boomers are the wealthiest and have the most disposable income for food, apparel and retirement programs.”
- “It’s older people who get to call the shots on pensions — yet they no longer have to cough up.”
- “The older generation is the real problem and how it’s responsible for many of the problems millennials have now been left to face.”

It is upsetting to hear such statements and perhaps younger generations don’t understand the way we have lived.



Age 61

Janice Harwood



In 1978 I completed a Diploma in Business Management (UK) and started work immediately.

No Gap Year or holidays, I paid my parents board while I lived with them.

I have worked hard all my working life and even as a single parent never relied on Government handouts. I've had no "privileges" - child care support assistance, paid maternity leave or First Home Buyers Grant, but experienced lower women's wages, a recession and 17.5% mortgage rates. Often not much in the fridge. My Superannuation only started in 1989 (3%).

I have worked two jobs at one point, and on weekends developed houses to get ahead. I have worked for Disability Services Commission and the Education Department

gaining promotions to high levels through personal endeavour. My taxes funded my previous generation's retirement.

We try to save to fund our retirement but it's hard as the means test and incentives continually change, and not in our favour, given how hard we have worked and that we have not had a full working life with the Super Guarantee.

But Australia has been good to me. It is a Lucky Country with so many opportunities.

Life can be challenging and I like to think that my past experiences, knowledge and wisdom can help support younger generations as they grow.

Age 61

