Longevity 2030: A Global Crisis and Opportunity

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Foreword

PrimeLife Partners is an Australian social enterprise aimed at transforming how we live, age, care and retire. A pioneer and leader building a longevity ecosystem, PrimeLife Partners is redefining the longevity concepts, frameworks and solutions that are no longer fit for purpose. The company is led by founders Anne-Marie Elias and Dr. Abby Bloom, who are well-known and highly respected experts in ageing, longevity, care, heath, technology and innovation.

PrimeLife Partners leads with practical initiatives, identifying problems and priorities through roundtables; forming a membership-based community embracing innovators, entrepreneurs and a range of large and small companies in the ecosystem; and matching innovation solutions with funding and living lab opportunities.

Anne-Marie and Abby have written this paper to spark the conversation about the challenges and opportunities of Longevity 2030, to better inform policymakers across government and industry, and to encourage wiser decision-making and better resource allocation.

Executive Summary

We are living longer than ever before. Longevity 2030 is a demographic, social and economic turning point. It signals both a profound challenge and an unparalleled opportunity, globally. The World Health Organization predicts that by 2050, the global population aged 60 and over will double to 2.1 billion people, with those aged over 80 tripling to 426 million. Similarly, in Australia, 20% of the population will be aged 65 or older by 2030. By 2050 this group will represent 25% of the population (Intergenerational Report 2020), challenging the adequacy of pension systems, healthcare, and the workforce. This is the beginning of powerful and world-changing demographic trend that will continue beyond 2030 until at least 2050. The time to prepare our society and economy is now.

The World Economic Forum's Longevity Economy Principles, unveiled in January 2024, underscore the economic significance of longevity. These six principles, ranging from ensuring financial resilience to addressing longevity inequalities, establish a comprehensive framework for navigating the intricate web of challenges and opportunities presented by longevity.

Australia is at a critical juncture: in 2030 we will have more people aged 65 and older than those aged under 18 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, ABS Population Projections), a surge in retirement across generations, and a declining workforce on the horizon. Despite the alarm sounded by six Intergenerational Reports produced by the Australian Treasury since 2002, Australia is unprepared to meet the fundamental needs of its ageing population.

PrimeLife Partners, was launched in Australia to build and advocate for a resilient longevity ecosystem in Australia, addressing these challenges via four pillars:

1. Financial Security
2. Housing
3. Care and Living

4. Consumers.

This framework tackles immediate concerns and lays the foundation for a unified and coherent approach to securing Australia's economic future while improving the well-being of its ageing population.

Pillar 1: Financial Security

Despite its world-leading superannuation system launched in 1992, the financial security of Australia's older citizens faces a formidable challenge. With the increase in HECS debt, growth in house prices locking a generation out of home ownership, stagnant wage growth for over a decade and high energy prices, increasing numbers of Australians will not benefit from this work-related retirement savings system. PrimeLife Partners supports enhanced financial literacy, proactive engagement by superannuation funds, and a recalibration of retirement calculations to avert a looming crisis.

Pillar 2: Housing

The lack of affordable and appropriate housing is at critical levels (Productivity Commission Report on Government Services 2024. With a significant and increasing proportion of Australians renting or facing rising mortgage repayments (ABS) and other cost of living pressures, innovative solutions - such as co-housing, intentional communities, and residential design using universal principles within an affordable envelope - are vital to avoid spiralling homelessness. PrimeLife Partners collaborates with housing and financial experts to stimulate and support creative solutions for secure and affordable housing.

Pillar 3: Care and Living

The current paradigm of care needs to undergo a transformative shift to focus on community-centric, technology-driven solutions. The harmful myth that older people age in residential aged care (nursing homes) is an impediment to effective solutions. Most older people want to age in their own home. With an emphasis on ageing in place, technology such as wearables, Internet of Things, and other emerging innovations can redefine the care landscape, enabling affordable, independent living for more older people.

Pillar 4: Consumers

Growing demand for care and support services in Australia is propelling the longevity market from an estimated value of $60 billion in 2021-22 to a projected size of $110 billion by 2026-27. PrimeLife Partners understands that the expectations of more tech savvy Boomers and Gen X, who differ from previous generations. We encourage seamless, tech-integrated solutions tailored to the needs of younger Boomers and Gen X as they move into retirement and later life.

Business, governments and industry have an opportunity that is soon to be an imperative to respond to the changing face of ageing and retirement. Longevity 2030 demands a collective, informed, and innovative approach. PrimeLife Partners is the enabler, steering Australia through the intricate challenges and unparalleled opportunities of longevity, forging a resilient and vibrant future for our nation.

Introduction: Navigating Longevity 2030 - A Call to Action

The impact of people living longer is creating both challenges and opportunities globally. The World Health Organization predicts that the number of people aged 60 and older will double by 2050. This sets the stage for what we call Longevity 2030, a pivotal turning point that demands collective action directed by informed and careful planning. Australia has 6 years until a turning point at which the complexities of an aging population will transform our economy, society, and healthcare systems now and for future generations.

This document, a call to action, navigates the contours of Longevity 2030, identifying the challenges and unveiling the opportunities that demand a unified response. Led by the visionaries at PrimeLife Partners, this exploration journeys through the four pillars of Financial Security, Housing, Care and Living, and Consumers, forging a blueprint to fortify Australia's longevity ecosystem.

A Global Crisis and Opportunity

The impact of longevity is both a challenge and an opportunity facing nations around the world. According to the World Health Organisation, by 2050 the number of people aged 60 years and over will double to 2.1 billion. The number of persons aged 80 years or older is expected to triple between 2020 and 2050 to reach 426 million. By 2030, 1 in 6 people in the world will be aged 60 and over, with major implications for pension systems, health care and workforce.

The World Economic Forum flagged longevity's economic significance in its Longevity Economy Principles, released in January 2024. The product of a broader Longevity Economy Initiative, it is aimed at raising the profile of an ageing population and triggering discussion about the impact of longevity on the global economy.

The six longevity principles are:

- Ensure financial resilience across key life events;
- Provide universal access to impartial financial education;
- Prioritise healthy ageing as foundational for the longevity economy;
- Evolve jobs and lifelong skill-building for a multigenerational workforce;
- Design systems and environments for social connection; and
- Intentionally address longevity inequalities, including across gender, race and class.

The report calls for whole of government, corporate and community collaboration to cope with longevity's challenges and capitalise on its opportunities.

How can the private sector create better solutions for this demographic transformation?

How can the public sector support more equitable and inclusive policies that support all generations?

How is the idea of retirement transforming in the new and rapidly shifting multi-stage life?

The Longevity Economy Initiative principles can act as an important guide to building a longevity ecosystem and economy that respond to the financial, health, and social wellbeing needs of our ageing population.

The Impact of Longevity on Australia

2030 is the year that the impact of longevity will hit home globally. Here in Australia, we will have more people aged 65 and older than under 18 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, ABS Population Projections) ; more people retiring across generations than ever before (including both Boomers and Gen X -- people born between 1965 and 1980); more people (90 percent) ageing in place in our communities (AIHW Aged Care); and, barring government intervention, our workforce will decline to a size far below what it is today, with serious implications for Australia's economy for many years to come.

Australia's longevity market will grow to $110 billion by 2026-27 (Treasury, Intergenerational Report , 2023). 2030 is six years away and despite six Intergenerational Reports produced by the Australian Treasury - the first in 2002 and the latest in 2023 - alerting us to the looming issues, we have not adequately prepared to meet the basic needs of people as they age, live, care, and retire. Critically, we have effectively run out of carers.

The 4 Pillars of Australia's Longevity Ecosystem

PrimeLife Partners is dedicated to building a longevity ecosystem that advances innovation to enable Australians to age, live, care, and retire, better.

Applying a fresh lens to longevity, we bring together the key sectors and players, driving the discussion to focus on the four areas critical to the longevity economy:

1. Financial Security

2. Housing

3. Care and Living

4. Consumers

Defining the ecosystem with these four pillars establishes a solid foundation for Australia's new, unified approach to longevity. It provides roadmap for governments, corporates and industry in critical areas that need decisive and collaborative action, so that as a nation we can futureproof our economy and people.

The Lucky Country

Australians are lucky. We have a pension system and – since 1992 - a compulsory superannuation system with mandatory employer contributions. We have social and affordable housing, though the supply has not kept up with need or demand. Age pensions and super balances for many - notably women and contract workers - are not enough to live on in retirement. Australia's ageing population and looming retirement boom will create a 6 per cent shortfall in the number of workers needed to maintain current gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2030. This means that many of the underlying assumptions for the retirement calculations and predictions we still rely on are out of date, false, or incomplete, and are no longer fit for purpose.

Longevity has two components, lifespan and healthspan: how long we live, and how many years of good health and independence we enjoy. With growing numbers of people enjoying longevity, and a growth in the number of Australians needing varying degrees of support in their final years, Australia has effectively run out of carers. We have relied on migrants and refugees to supply the aged care workforce, along with the unpaid work of family members - notably women. Of the 2.65 million unpaid carers in Australia, 70% of all carers and almost 60% of primary carers are in the workforce, meaning our workplaces need to be cognisant of this increasing to 2030 and beyond (Carers + Employers).

Waiting lists for government-subsidised home care are over 12 months; the hourly rates for carers exceed the ability of most Australians to pay out of pocket while they wait; and consequently, we have a 'sandwich generation', where people across our workforce are managing the care of children and parents concurrently. Exacerbating the current and future demand for carers in their own homes, exposés and inquiries into residential options (nursing homes) have reinforced ageing Australians' determination to age in their own homes as long as possible.

Loneliness is now recognised as a social epidemic, yet we don't have systemic solutions that account for its impact on chronic health decline and disability. Less than 2% of Australia's health budget is spent on prevention, and emerging ideas like "social prescribing" are unfunded by health authorities (Reducing social isolation and loneliness among older people)

Pillar 1: Financial Security

Without financial security we cannot live the life we want in our later years.

A large and growing proportion of Australians are or will be left to rely on the age pension or have insufficient superannuation at retirement to last through their lives.

Most superannuation modelling and calculations today are based on several assumptions including owning one's home outright, holding private health insurance, and household and lifestyle expenses that represent outdated stereotypes. Divorcees, low-income workers like frontline workers, and hospitality and factory workers are in danger of retiring without adequate income. Both the World Economic Forum and the Australian Government identify that with improved financial literacy in their 30's, 40's or even

50's, these workers might have made better choices to improve their financial prospects. Australia's super funds have been criticised for failing to provide the education their customers need at each stage of their superannuation journey, and while they are now responding, it will be too late for millions of Australians as noted in the Retirement Income Review, Treasury.

FINANCIAL SECURITY

Cilla, 61, raised two children mostly as a single mother after her divorce at 41. Having dropped out of university to be a full-time mother she had few marketable skills but has been making enough income as a freelance bookkeeper to pay rent and expenses– as long as she continues to live 2 hours out of Sydney. Never employed with mandatory superannuation, she knows she will probably have to turn to her adult children for money once her limited super and savings run out.

The Actuaries Institute have written papers and reports on looming challenges in financing longevity and the need for regulatory and policy reform in our thinking, services and products for retirement. Andrew Gale and Stephen Huppert published Retirement Matters (2023) and urged that we move beyond the three pillars of retirement (pensions, superannuation, savings) and add another two pillars to the equation, home equity (for those who own their homes) and part time work in retirement (for those who can get work). They strongly recommend better financial advice and guidance across the retirement continuum.

What does superannuation cover for those who have it?

According to Association of Super Funds of Australia (ASFA) Retirement standard (September 2023), in theory to have a comfortable retirement at 67 years of age, a couple needs a balance of $690,000 and singles need $595,000. All this presumes home ownership and does not cover renters or the growing proportion of retirees who may not have fully paid off their mortgages.

For a high proportion of people, Australia's superannuation system is not an effective financial solution for their retirement. Many people who retire with insufficient funds to sustain them through their retirement year will exhaust their superannuation and will have to rely entirely on a full (Government) pension. We hear and read a lot about retirees who are frugal, not spending their superannuation at a rate high enough to enjoy the lifestyle available to them for fear of it running out or preferring to leave it as an inheritance, but what about those whose super will be consumed long before they have lived out their lives? We need to be looking 25 years into the future and innovating now for financially secure longevity.

While the Albanese government deserves praise for its work in February 2024 to guarantee improved minimum pay rates for gig economy workers, we need to identify longevity measures that will sustain the later years of today's under 30-year-old freelance, gig and contract workers.

In 2019-2020 34% of households in Australia were renting, and the 66% of homeowners included a large proportion who have mortgages on their properties (Housing Occupancy and Costs, 2019-20 financial year | Australian Bureau of Statistics). Indications are that the proportion of renters will increase due to high and increasing property prices not keeping up with inflation and interest rates. Rents have increased significantly in the past few years especially in capital cities where rents have been exorbitant and where rental supply in seachange and treechange areas is not meeting current demand. The 2021 Census found that 20.6% of over 55s were renters in Australia, and research by AHURI found that 440,000 older households will be unable to find or afford suitable housing by 2031. We have much to do to ensure that older Australians have safe and secure housing in their later years.

Australia's superannuation modelling never really considered part-timers, freelancers or women taking time out of the workforce to care for children or other family members. Super funds have not sufficiently educated members to understand compound interest - the dramatic difference made by consistently adding insignificant amounts to their super; or the importance of planning the kind of retirement casual and gig economy workers imagine early enough to make it happen.

According to Canstar, based on their super balance in their 30s, women face a massive super gap in their 60s, "Women currently in their 60's face the biggest super gap, more than $267,736 based on this data."

The age pension and superannuation presume home ownership which was the norm back in 1994 when over 70% of households owned a home (with or without a mortgage) compared to 66% in 2019-20. . The proportion of retirees owning their own home will continue to decline due to high interest rates, a shortage of supply, the rising cost of housing, the high cost of energy, taxation policies preferencing investors rather than first home buyers, an increasing burden of HECs debts, a rise in the number of those living in multi-generational poverty and a future of work being transformed by increasing automation. We need to think about the home ownership projections for 2030 and beyond, and how many Gen Xers (born 1964-1980) and Millennials (born 1981-1996) will own their homes outright when they want or need to retire. The fundamental assumptions and calculations about the cost of a minimal let alone "comfortable" retirement need to be reassessed.

Based on what the data is telling us we are heading for a crisis. Freelancers, part timers, those with student debt, parents (or grandparents) who take time out of the workforce to care for children and loved ones, and those on low incomes, are set to retire on extraordinarily little and many are likely to be at the mercy of a volatile rental market.

Our pension and superannuation systems are not now delivering or likely in future to deliver the expected relief and financial security we will need as we live longer than ever before. There is widespread agreement about the need to reengineer financial security in retirement. We have much to do to meet the retirement financing challenges ahead. There are some encouraging signals of change. Super funds are being asked to work harder to support consumer literacy about and planning for retirement, and some reform is being considered to address capping super balances. Several start-ups now address specific areas of financial literacy and security in retirement, including Financy, Epic Retirement, WOW Women and Super Fierce, who are empowering women to take charge of their financial futures. Hustle Cover by CoverHero has been building fintech products to support freelancers and gig economy workers.

We need these and more startups to attract greater attention from investors and media because they play a vital role in complementing the financial security offered by the larger, more established companies.

Pillar 2: Housing

Steadily rising rates of cost of living have placed financial pressure on retirees on low and limited fixed incomes at retirement. We have seen an increase in women over 55 and older people living in cars and caravan parks, while the fastest growing group of homeless people in Australia are older women. (NSW Inquiry homelessness and women over 55)

Home ownership increases with age yet despite this over 30% of Australians aged 55-64 are renting their homes (ABS 2019-20). In addition, while 66% of Australians are homeowners with or without a mortgage, only 30% of all Australian householders own their homes outright, with no mortgage. (Australian home ownership).

Renting in retirement is unaffordable and is no longer a realistic option, especially for those relying entirely on the (Government) age pension. Underinvestment in social and affordable housing over four decades has left us in a dire situation of undersupply, with waitlists of up to 10 years, and a desperate need for innovative solutions for housing. The Conversation has covered these issues frequently demonstrating the speed of change: a 73% increase in older renters over the decade 2011-2021 has led to an Ageing in a housing crisis.

The documentary Under Cover highlighted the plight of women across Australia living in cars and caravans with little support available. Yet, according to AHURI, there are over 1 million unoccupied dwellings and over 13 million spare bedrooms in Australia, predominantly in homes owned by 55-74 year olds. The Australian government has focused on incentives to downsize, and some governments are cracking down on AirBnB globally In Australia some local councils are attempting to limit the number of days for short-term rentals.

Multiple pilot studies have been funded by governments on potential solutions to the housing crisis of Australia's seniors. Few have received enough support to scale or continue to the point of being thoroughly evaluated or self-sustaining. Successful models include Wesley Home share, established in 2000 in Victoria to pair older people with mature age workers in exchange for reduced or no rent and light support.

Overseas, a wider menu of housing solutions has alleviated the same problems Australia faces. Innovative models include co-housing, and co-living, which are beginning to gain traction in Australia as mechanisms that enable people to live independently longer and within an intentional community (Senior Cohousing, Cooperative, Shared Housing; Co-housing works well for older people, once they get past the image problem). Despite people coming together to coinvest in new models of housing, their structure is proving challenging for Australia's largely inflexible planning regulations, banks and other lenders, developers, communities and local councils and limiting their adoption. Planning controls, development finance and lending institutions are not designing products for co-lending and co ownership, so the onus remains on potential residents to navigate stakeholders such as lenders, developers, councillors, councils and communities about the merits of co-housing (CoHousing Australia).

According to the Foundation for Intentional Community there are thousands of intentional communities around the world, and 38 in Australia from Tasmania to Western Australia. An intentional community is a group of people with shared values who choose to live together in a cooperative community. It allows people to pool their resources and build a lifestyle that supports sustainability and intergenerational living. In NSW, Narara Eco Village established an intentional community in 2019, starting with a vision of founder, Lyndall Parris, who began talking about her dream of community living in the 1990s.

PrimeLife Partners will work with actuaries, financial institutions, and private and community housing organisations to stimulate and enlist support for innovative solutions to the increasingly dire housing situation of Australia's seniors. Longevity data, snapshots and best practice reports will help educate and empower stakeholders to drive the change in polices and regulations to enable new models of housing.

Pillar 3: Living and Care

Living longer does not necessarily mean living better. The support older Australians need as they age under the burden of chronic illness is already exerting severe and increasing pressure on carers. For many years Australia's focus of funding and attention has been on residential aged care - nursing homes - yet over 90% of people aged 65+ are living in the community (Older People and Aged Care AIHW). The fundamental premise underlying care and living support and funding for Australia's ageing population is - at best - incompatible with the desires and needs of Boomers and Gen X. At worst, this approach is fundamentally outdated and misguided.

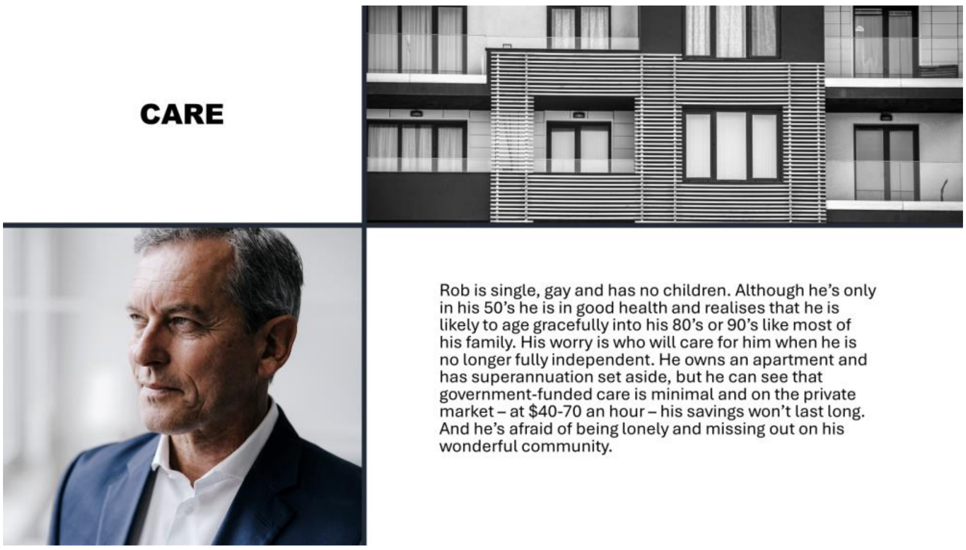
Confronting as it is, we need to accept that (residential) aged care is end of life care - whether that be 6 months or 6 years. The average age of residents is 85 and average stay 2.5 years with exit due to death.

Older-Australians Entering-Residential-Aged-Care. Residential aged care absorbs most of the funding and attention aimed today at longevity but it only meets the needs of a very small slice of Australia's older population.

With such a high proportion of older Australians choosing to age in the community, not in aged care, we need a fundamentally different system of support and funding. Ageing successfully in the community takes a multi-generational village, anchored in strong connections within community and family. The opportunities and benefits have been widely viewed on the ABC in Old Peoples Home for Teenagers which pairs teens with older people in retirement villages for an intergenerational experiment.

For family carers who are still working and have infants, toddlers, school, or university-aged children still at home, the pressure is immense, whether their parents are in aged care or in the community. Care responsibilities are a leading factor in the decision of mid- and high-level working women to reduce their working hours or leave the workforce entirely.

Technology can help. In the home, the 'Internet-of-Things' can connect devices to set medication and other reminders, turn on lights and many other functions that become difficult for less mobile older people. Wristbands can track health status and send instantaneous messages to paid and family carers. Voice-activated devices can assist less mobile people to live independently longer. The availability of inexpensive, over-the-counter hearing aids - costing a fraction of the price of high-end devices - can expand accessibility and use to restore a functional level of hearing and delay physical and psychological decline associated with hearing loss in old age. In practice, hearing aids reduce social isolation, falls and potentially slow the rate of cognitive decline. Older tech like personal alarms will soon be superseded by technology in accelerator- and IoT-enabled mobile and wearable devices that are already here and more like the 'Apple' watches so many younger Boomers and Gen X already rely on.



For now, we have a generation of older people ageing in the community with some tech skills. Most have mobile phones which keep them connected to family and the wider community. Around 30% of seniors are not tech savvy, but their children and grand-children are, and with their help seniors can use and benefit from devices and apps like iPad, Alexa, and FaceTime to stay connected and monitor wellbeing.

Younger Baby Boomers (those born from 1955-1964) are much more technologically fluent than outworn stereotypes lead many to believe. Many people approaching 65 or 67 are still in the workforce, utterly self-reliant with technology, and curious and eager to keep learning.

Australia's pension age increased from 65 to 67 for those born after 1957 (DSS Age Pension), leading to the implicit expectation that Australians will generally remain in the workforce until then. In theory working even longer will presumably be encouraged. In practice, however, working longer is not well accommodated. While the focus is on creating productive intergenerational workforces, the reality is that people over the age of 50 face overt and unconscious bias in employment. As a result of the decline in births over several decades and the barriers to employment of older workers there will be a 6% shortfall in Australia's workforce by 2030 according to Australia 2030: Prosperity through innovation – A plan for Australia to thrive in the global innovation race. Without policy and practical interventions the gap is likely to increase. Experts predict a greater likelihood of a shortage of workers than a shortage of jobs. For this reason, policies and initiatives to accommodate older workers may very well be decisive for Australia's future longevity economy. Bunnings has already tapped into mature aged workers, and startups like Maturious are pioneers in improving the employment outlook for mature age workers, benefiting organisations desperately seeking experience as well as talent.

Australians are lonelier than ever: the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare in a report on Social isolation and lonelines (2023) found loneliness across all ages, young and old. We understand the causative link between loneliness and physical and mental wellbeing. Transport is a powerful enabler or inhibitor of people's independence and ability to participate in community activities as they age. Those who lose their ability to drive need access to affordable and community transport to remain connected and mobile in the community. Tackling loneliness requires a vibrant multi-generational local community that works to keep seniors active and engaged. Local government has a crucial role to play in supporting older people in the community by providing transport and opportunities for engaging in social and cultural events and physical activity through community facilities including libraries, parks, arts and cultural and community centres.

Initiatives like social prescribing are gaining momentum in Canada, the UK and more recently Australia. Social prescribing involves providing non-medical support to boost a person's wellbeing and can include exercise, meditation, social clubs, art or pet adoption. Social prescribing has been found to be effective in the treatment of older people with chronic illness, depression and dementia. There is a movement in Australia led by Dr JR Baker Chair of ASPIRE the Australian Social Prescribing Institute of Research and Education is leading the way to promote understanding of the benefits of social prescribing.

A 2020 report by the Royal Australian College of GPs and the Consumer Health Forum recommended that social prescribing be included in routine healthcare (incorporated in the Federal Government's 10 Year Primary Health Care Plan) and that Primary Health Networks expand pathways to include social prescribing pathways for patients.

Pillar 4: Consumers

By 2030 over 20% of our population will be over 65 years of age and the last of the Boomers and those who worked into their 70's will be retiring (Intergenerational report, 2020).

On the one hand the demand for care and support (childcare, disability care, home care and aged care) is predicted to grow from around $60bn in 2021-22 to more than $110bn by 2026-27 (Treasury, Intergenerational report 2023). On the other hand younger Boomers, Gen X and Millennials will expect to spend their disposable funds in a marketplace that respects their value as consumers and designs and supplies products that meet their needs and preferences. These future retirees will be vastly different from their predecessors, the Silent Generation, with higher expectations - and vocally articulated demands. Boomers and Gen X will be spending more money on different goods and services than their parents, including leisure, travel, and entertainment, patterns that are already well-established. They will spend money on technology to simplify their lives and expect services to cater frictionlessly to their needs. They will not silently tolerate being patronised and they will choose to spend their money on products and services that are designed for them, not their grandchildren or grandparents. The proliferation of travel and leisure products designed for single Boomers and women in their 50's is an example of the market acknowledging that this is a substantial and longer-term opportunity.

The increasing integration of artificial intelligence will make using technology easier for even the most challenged users and will further reduce the technology gap in the workplace (Why Gen X and boomers stand to benefit from the use of AI in the workplace).

The influential Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show in January 2024 showcased an astounding array of consumer products designed to help people who are ageing or living with disability to live and age better. Futurist Mark Pesce wrote in Cosmos about the exciting developments in automation and noted "a vast growing range of electronic services aimed directly at the market for people who want to "age well" like WIM Robotics' Wearable Mobility helping people walk longer with less strain, enabling users be more mobile thereby improving independence and wellbeing.

Contrary to stereotypes, consumers aged over 65 are more tech savvy than ever (70% tech savvy vs 30% who are not (Care-Connect-Connectivity-Report). Boomers and Gen X have worked in and used technology for many years, including smartphones and smartwatches, smart TVs, and electronic banking. Consumer demands are about to change focus as Gen X and the younger Boomers move through their later years, including their expectation that devices be interoperable and integrated with health, care and lifestyle products and services.

CONSUMER

Vince and Maria are both 86 and living in the community, they had professional careers that provided them with retirement wealth. Vince has dementia and Maria is no longer able to walk without a walking frame. Vince ventures out in the community, goes to the local library and club, Maria attends local seniors hydrotherapy and yoga classes.

Technology such as mobile phones and smart watches help keep Maria and Vince connected to their kids and each other. Google Home in Italian helps remind them of appointments and daily schedules as their adult kids work fulltime and are raising their own families.

Living near their children and grandchildren means weekends are full of family activities, weekdays Vince and Maria have paid carers dropping in three days a week. Carers help get them to medical appointments, shopping and social outings. The cost of care is $580 per week and will increase as their needs increase.

The Internet of Things (IoT) in the home has been discussed for decades, yet we Australians have been slow to leverage solutions that could help people live independently longer. The delay comes at the expense of older people, their families, and carers. Currently, families are patching together devices as best as they can. More effort is needed to help people understand, select, personalise and maintain the technology available, the burden cannot be solely on consumers. According to Telsyte-IoT at Home, “the IoT at Home is forecast to reach $4.4 billion in Australia by 2025, as smart home automation adoption climbs a technology adoption s-curve much like the ones that previously turned the Internet, mobile phones and television into everyday things.”

Professor Alex Mihailidis, Scientific Director and CEO of AGE-WELL Network of Centres of Excellence, reported in Australian Ageing Agenda, identified how technology is advancing a number of products and platforms helping older adults maintain their quality of life, support their caregivers and ease pressures on long-term care.” He flagged these life-changing innovations in particular:

- wearables
- health monitors
- remote therapies
- virtual exercise systems
- medication management tools, and
- daily management tools for people living with dementia.

The Australian Research Council Research Hub for Connected Sensors for Health is focused on designing, manufacturing and certifying connected sensors for improved health outcomes. Australians are using these devices at an increasing rate. However, government funding support focuses largely on research and pilot studies, not subsidies or other incentives to rapidly scale use, despite the benefits to service efficiency, end-user and family convenience, and health outcomes.

Boomers and Gen X have been using social media, Alexa and Google Home, their FitBits and devices for many years. They look and seem more youthful than their parents at the same age. They are travelling, joining local activities such as cycling, kayaking, sailing, yoga. Travel options, health, care and lifestyle products that don't stereotype the 65 and over market will be in high demand. Age friendly environments and universal design will become more important to support older people affected by reduced mobility or cognitive decline living in the community.

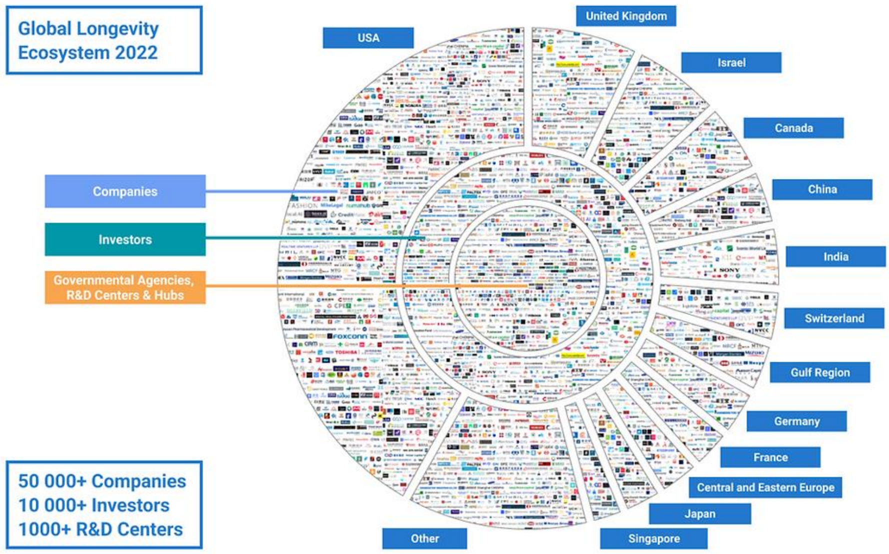
Products like Touchstone Life Care and Violet play an important role in helping people develop later life plans that help their family and friends know how they want to live in the event of diminished capacity.

Beyond research and pilot programs, technology needs to become more integral to enabling independence for Australian seniors. Australian startup AKIN uses generative AI to support wellbeing and aims to work across a person's life course. AKIN has live use cases in multiple sectors including disability and aged care, and in 2021 they teamed up with LG to develop home help for families.

What is missing is the vision to see the potential, not only for Australia, but for the world and investment in these innovative ideas to help get them off the ground, including subsidies or other financial incentives - especially for vulnerable people who cannot afford them, or even afford the WiFi connectivity that is a prerequisite.

The Role of Innovation

Innovation is urgently needed to effectively address the challenges and opportunities of a Longevity Economy. Australia lags behind peer nations like Canada, the US, Singapore and the UK, who have a clearly defined and well supported longevity ecosystem and have put in place policies and initiatives to address the convergent issues and opportunities of longevity. The Longevity International's Ecosystem Map 2022 shows the wide range of products and services being developed to support longevity in other countries. Australia isn't even on the map. It should be, and we aim to get it on the Longevity Innovation Map.



Australia has thousands of entrepreneurs and researchers working on practical solutions that can improve our lives and generate globally relevant, exportable solutions for the elsewhere in Asia Pacific, which alone is predicted to hit US $4.56 trillion (Ageing Asia).

So how do we get there? By unpacking the challenges and opportunities in the four areas of Financial Security, Housing, Living and Care; and Consumers, and by building an ecosystem that meets the reality of people in Australia's longevity economy. We need change across sectors, and we need to support the people and organisations who want to drive the change, fast.

PrimeLife Partners: Addressing Australia's Longevity Challenges and Opportunities

Australia's longevity ecosystem must be guided by well-informed, evidence-based policies that encourage and support collaboration among government, private sector, and community-based organisations; applied innovation; and dedicated funds to develop and scale innovative solutions. All are necessary; none on its own is sufficient. The combination is needed to enable, incentivise, implement and sustain a systemic approach for the benefit of Australia's current and future generations.

We need to redefine the longevity ecosystem so that governments, companies, community organisations, charities and individuals can come together to build a successful and sustainable longevity ecosystem, supporting the longevity economy of today and across the next 25 years of demographic transition. We need to identify what is already there, where the gaps are, and how parts of the ecosystem that interact can drive synergies as well as impact, replacing the disjointed, outdated landscape we have today.

PrimeLife Partners has begun to play a leading role in defining this emerging ecosystem - catalysing discussion, and stimulating innovation to build the products and services needed to meet the needs of the longevity economy. In 2024 we will facilitate inclusive roundtables to address each of the 4 pillars of Australia's longevity ecosystem.

We will continue to generate short publications summarising issues and progress. We will inaugurate a membership-based community that enables ecosystem-wide communication and cross-fertilisation to accelerate innovation. We will showcase exciting and promising developments that demonstrate Australia's deep and untapped capacity for innovation. We will connect innovators with organisations and governments that need practical, affordable, scalable solutions. In short, we will create the links, network, support, and opportunities for a successful and sustainable longevity ecosystem for Australia.

Conclusion: Forging Australia's Longevity Future with PrimeLife Partners

As we head to Longevity 2030, Australia has the opportunity tackle the challenges and embrace the opportunities for transformation in how we support an ageing population. As this document sets out the four pillars of Australia's longevity ecosystem, PrimeLife Partners is here to drive the conversations, enable and mobilise government, industry, community and no-for-profits to work towards a sustainable longevity economy.

The four pillars of Financial Security, Housing, Care and Living, and Consumers, provide a blueprint for a resilient ecosystem, offering not just a vision but a tangible pathway to navigate the complexities of Longevity 2030. As PrimeLife Partners organises roundtables, fosters communities, and champions innovation, Australia's longevity economy becomes a reality. PrimeLife Partners embodies the spirit of proactive change, ensuring that Australia not only adapts to Longevity 2030 but emerges as a global trailblazer in the pursuit of a promising longevity future.

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