

Older People Speak Out



Empowering Seniors Since 1993

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PROMOTING THE VALUE OF OLDER PEOPLE

ELDER ABUSE – WE MUST BE AWARE AND LOOK FOR ANSWERS

My recent visit to the Elder Abuse Unit meeting reinforced the horror that elder abuse is in our community. It has such a huge impact on the lives of older men and women.

Abuse comes in a number of forms. There is physical abuse in which old people are deliberately physically abused within the community. Sometimes the abuse comes from people they do not know but more often this abuse comes from within the neighbourhood or the family. Sometimes it can also come from the people who you would least expect – a professional who has failed to ensure their safety.

An example of this happened recently. I was called by the daughter of a woman living in a nursing home. She went to visit her mother and found to her horror the mother sitting alone left covered with another patient's urine and faeces. She had been in this situation for approximately 4 hours.

Bill Benson and I reported the incident and informed the appropriate bodies. We must remember that neglect can also be a form of abuse.

Val French AM

OPSO President

Lifetimes

Promoting Positive Ageing

March 2016

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Happy Easter

from OPSO



Image from Freedigitalphotos.net

OPSO Motivates Griffith Uni Students

During February OPSO President Val French and Roz Young visited the Griffith University Logan Campus where Val was invited by Dr. Sandra Woodbridge, (Program Director Bachelor of Human Services) to speak to a large group of students.

The students were from a number of schools across the university including nursing, psychology, public health as well as social work, human services and child and family studies.

Val spoke of her life's journey at length and why she felt the need to bring about the organization Older People Speak Out, which is to empower older people and support those in trouble who were vulnerable or did not have the knowledge of where to go nor who to contact when confronted with problems affecting their lives.

Val also outlined how she had set up various other organizations such as the National Carers Association, Queensland Council of Grandparents, all of which are an absolute necessity to also support those in the community.

The students were impressed by Val's commitment to serving the community and the various organizations she has brought about to assist others. The Students were very enthused by Val's talk and asked many questions

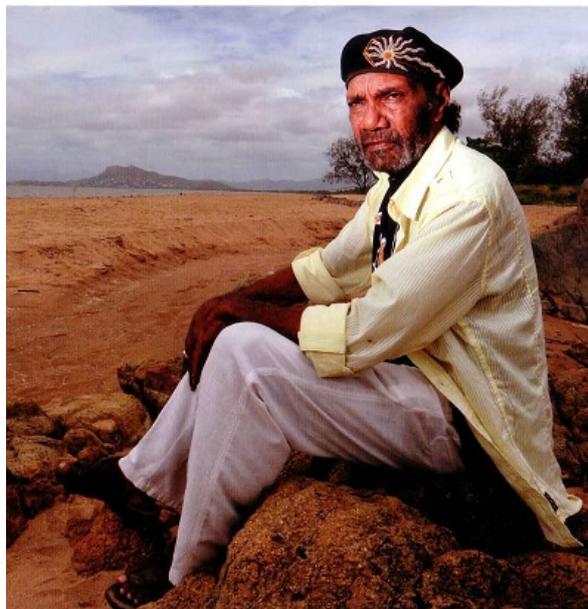
At the end of the talk Val asked students what they would like to have achieved by her age?

The response from a student summed it up nicely "I'd like to be just like you."

Men and Expectations

Researchers have found that traditional beliefs about masculinity cause a reluctance and delay in men seeking help and generally attending to their own health and wellbeing.

According to researchers older men have lived through a period in which masculinity has been strongly associated with strength, independence and being a provider. This has often set a benchmark of the “real man”. As a result older men often strive to live up to this benchmark by maintaining their sense of masculinity and their autonomy. This can lead to older men thinking they need to continue to be self-reliant, strong, a provider for the family and able to resolve their own and others’ problems.



Often their wives and families share these expectations and depend on older men to “pull themselves together” seeing any vulnerability in the man as letting them down.

Society continues to reinforce what it is to be a “real man”, and who can blame older men from pretending things are fine and withdrawing from engagement with society when they don’t feel up to being a “real man”.

Maybe it’s time we all accepted that real men don’t always have the answers, aren’t always on top of things, sometimes neglect themselves because they are programmed to look after others and that it’s not easy being a real man in the face of what society expects of a “real man”, especially as men age.

The more real men just get out there, be themselves and challenge traditional expectations and the more we support them to do so, the sooner things will change for all men. Distraction is the key. We all feel isolated at times, sometimes that thick skin we prided ourselves on feels tissue paper thin and we feel exposed and vulnerable. It may be a confidence issue or you might need to speak to your doctor. Some underlying health issue might be bringing you undone.

The important thing is to back yourself, take care of yourself just as you would someone you cared about who was struggling. Try a little kindness toward yourself.

Learning something new, playing a group game, sharing experiences with others allows us to forget ourselves, and stop feeling like Robinson Crusoe.

We’re social beings and we need the company of others to validate us. None of us always get positive feedback, from others, but there will always be someone who gets you, you just have to keep getting out there until you find them and they will become your friends - whatever age you are.

Colleen Frith

Manager Wynnum 60 & Better Programme Inc.

Was 45 Years worth a steep parking fine?



As I left my car in a one-hour zone (nothing else being available in parking-poor Paddington), I nearly bumped into a parking inspector taking photos of all the parked cars in the street. Quandary: should I just leave now, and miss seeing *45 Years*, or risk a fine of around \$200? Was a movie about a 45th wedding anniversary worth that much?

Well, if I didn't go then, I'd pretty much run out of time to see it, and I had promised a review of it to *Life Times*. So, what the heck. I walked onwards.

First surprise came on entry into the cinema: it was nearly 3/4 full - not something I'm used to, as a keen daytime movie-goer who generally finds that I'm one of only a few scattered members of the audience, if not the only one. It turned out to be a special Golden Oldie members' viewing, but nonetheless, a very impressive turnout, and one that proved to be entirely in sync with the spirit of the film. Waves of sympathetic chuckles (with, not at), for example, in the sole sex scene with its attendant challenges.

Second surprise was the sudden realisation that the film's settings in beautiful landscapes and an oh-so-English city were, in fact, in Norfolk, which we'd spent some highly enjoyable weeks exploring on a visit some years ago, to our then overseas daughter and husband.

But the film itself was the thing, and it has totally polarised reviewers. On the one hand, for example, the *Australian Financial Review's* critic quite simply hated it, and one would have to say that reactions to aspects of ageing might have had something to do with that, as suggested by the following comments:

- "Normally (Charlotte) Rampling has a kind of ageless appeal, but in *45 Years* she is every bit of 70."
- "Geoff is played by Tom Courtenay, who made his name as a rebellious youth in films such as John Schlesinger's *Billy Liar* (1963). Courtenay is 79 this year, and seems to be under instructions to make it seem like 99."
- "*45 Years* is as grey as a November day in England, and just as depressing. The pace is somnolent from start to finish."

continued...

On the other hand, however, there were those like *The Guardian's* reviewer, who absolutely loved it and couldn't praise it highly enough:

- “Superbly nuanced performances from Charlotte Rampling and Tom Courtenay and exquisite direction by Andrew Haigh, who also co-wrote the film, turn an apparently everyday story of a marriage in quiet crisis into something rather extraordinary. A subtle examination of the persistence of the past and the fragile (in)stability of the present, this is a portrait of a rock-solid relationship facing a fissure that cuts to its very core in the runup to the titular wedding anniversary.”
- “Courtenay and Rampling are at the top of their game throughout, drawing us into their hopes and fears even as we watch them from a distance.”

When a film splits opinions like that, it becomes especially interesting to check it out, to see in which camp you belong. For me, it was definitely that of *The Guardian's* reviewer, who pretty well summed up my take on it.

Writing too much more about the film (which some critics did) would give away too much of the story, so I'll confine myself to just a few extra comments. There was a very clever use of the beautiful song *When Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*, repeated at various points in the film as a sort of leitmotif that hits a crescendo at a significant point towards the end of the movie.

At the same time, and unusually, you only gradually noticed that any music that was featured came as part of the plot, from radios turned on, records or bands playing and so on. Otherwise, there were just the normal sounds of conversations and everyday noises from in and outside the home. It was a welcome change from how much we are normally directed to emotional reactions by the constant barrage of theme music.

And last and probably least was which way the film leaned on the hot button issue for older women and – increasingly – for older men, of whether to dye or not to dye, as demonstrated through the starring couple and the two supporting actors playing a married couple who were their long time best friends: while it was fine for the men to have grown grey with age, Rampling remained a russet brown while her friend was honey blonde. Heigh ho.

Oh yes, and to answer my question, the film would have been worth the parking fine. But, happy day, the inspector must have gone off to lunch, because there was no ominous note stuck in the windscreen wiper when I got back to the car.

Anne Ring © 2016

Educating the Police about Older People

During his time as Queensland Police Commissioner (2000 – 2012), Commissioner Atkinson formed a Task Force to investigate crime against older Queenslanders and ways to reduce the incidence. Two OPSO representatives were included, Val French and Bill Benson.

Initially the CMC was tasked to investigate the causes of these crimes, and following due consideration, a number of initiatives were pursued:

1. **Fear** of Crime was recognised as a genuine concern almost as severe as being a victim.
2. Statistics were compiled indicating that while seniors were the **safest** aged group, they were also the most **fearful** of crime.
3. **Elder Abuse** was identified as the major cause of crime against seniors.
4. The handbook Confident, Safe and Secure Living in Queensland was commissioned, printed and has subsequently been revised and reprinted and is available in all Police Stations for distribution when needed.
5. **OPSO was tasked to talk to all recruit intakes** into the Police Academy about understanding seniors' issues, how to communicate with seniors and how the Police can help. Extracts from the CMC research was incorporated into this presentation.
6. A CD was produced to reinforce the lecture material.



Image courtesy of www.abc.net.au/news

A presentation was drafted and many OPSO members (past and present) have taken part in making sure that all the intakes of police recruits have heard the older generations talk. The presentation is updated regularly and after several iterations, Marjorie Green and Tony Townsend now present the material. They cover a lot of ground in explaining where seniors come from, why they think like they do, and the issues faced, while the main focus on getting the message across is the personal experiences of the presenters. Change is inevitably a large part of the presentation, together with individuals responses to change as they age, either positive or negative ageing. Historical aspects include reaction to the increasingly multi-cultural nature of the population, gender equality and the rise and fall of the economy, while individuality is stressed.

From this background, the role of the Police in understanding and communicating with older Queenslanders is explored, together with an explanation of seniors' attitudes to the law. Community policing is a very important area of these interactions.

These presentations are always enjoyed by both presenters and recruits alike and generally lead to some interaction as well as questions about the content

OPSO gratefully acknowledges the support and advice of all our sponsors.



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