

Over Bl**dy Eighty

A marvellous collection of personal stories
from older Australians



Urgent assistance

People who are depressed or who have anxiety may be at risk of suicide, and if so, they need urgent help.

If you, or someone you care about, is in crisis and you think immediate action is needed, call emergency services (triple zero – 000), contact the person’s doctor or mental health crisis service, or go to your local hospital emergency department.

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Foreword



Noeline Brown is a highly-acclaimed and well-respected actor and media personality, an active community member and an Australia Day Ambassador. In 2008, Noeline was appointed as the Ambassador for Ageing.

The Federal Government created the Ambassador for Ageing role to ensure older Australians have a strong voice, a direct link to government and a person to promote positive and active ageing.

Older people are an integral part of society and the more we celebrate the stories and lives of people over 80, the better!

As Australia's Ambassador for Ageing, I have been involved with various organisations including the Council on the Ageing and University of the Third Age. Through this work I have witnessed the wonderful contribution and brilliant stories of older Australians.

Being positive and happy are very good things, but everyone has their days or times when they aren't feeling the best. It's so important that we speak to one another about how we are feeling and don't close ourselves off from the world. Things happen

in everyone's life from time to time – you experience blows and sometimes things can take a toll on you. I'm a 75-year-old actor, with a large and loving family, but that isn't to say that I and members of my family haven't experienced periods of depression throughout certain parts of life.

People's resilience and positivity in moving forward always brings a smile to my face. The great strength within communities and deep friendships stand out in these stories of older Australians – and is something which deserves attention and celebration.

“The more we celebrate the stories and lives of people over 80, the better!”

Projects such as the *Over Bl**dy Eighty* campaign are brilliant ways to celebrate the strengths of older Australians and showcase the talent, passion and amazing stories of such an integral part of our society.

People over 80 have such wonderfully wise and unique stories to share and I hope you enjoy reading some of them in this booklet!

I commend *beyondblue* on their work in making sure Australia knows that just because you're over 80, it doesn't mean you need to stop laughing and living!

I hope you enjoy the following inspiring stories from these wonderful people.

With warm regards,

Noeline Brown

Australia's first Ambassador for Ageing

Sybil Latham, 92



Richmond VIC

A football fan and former nurse, Sybil has maintained a positive attitude to life despite enduring some difficult times. She lives on her own and enjoys socialising with her many friends – most of whom are half her age.

How do you keep active?

I live on my own in a large house, where I've been for 38 years and do most of the housework myself. I don't need much assistance, but if I do my daughter and her family are always there to help.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I read anything I can get my hands on, which is great for keeping my mind active. I get *The Age* every day, and do all the crosswords and puzzles in it. I read the paper to get a sense of what's happening in the world. I also buy lots of different magazines. I love football and follow it closely, especially my team the Fremantle Dockers!

“Age is all about attitude.”

What advice do you have for people over 80?

Older people need to remember that they can do anything. I worked till I was 78, as a trained nurse in a nursing home in St Kilda and I was older than many of the residents! There are lots of things I want to complete. Age is all about attitude; I've never ever thought there's anything that I can't do.

What's the best thing about being over 80?

Just still being alive! I had three sisters and a brother, but they have all passed away and most of my friends never reached 80. I wake up every morning and think "Oh, I've got another day!".

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

I've had some terrible things happen to me over the years and I've always thought to myself "You're not the first one to have this happen to you and you won't be the last".

The worst thing was seeing my husband crash his small aircraft during take-off in Western Australia in 1968. He was 48 years old. My 12-year-old niece and I were sitting in the back of

the plane when two other people asked my husband if they could have a fly. I offered to get out and let them come in; that's why my niece and I survived.

What makes you feel happy?

A bottle of champagne! My neighbours and I celebrate anything we can. Most of them are half my age or even younger, but I get on with them great. They all look after me and also send me food – I will never starve! But the most important thing that anyone can give an elderly person is their time, to come and sit and have a chat and gossip. A lot of people are lonely because they don't have enough social interaction with others.

I am lucky in that respect as I am particularly close with one neighbour who visits me often. In 2006, we were both featured in 'The Two of Us' section of *The Age's* Good Weekend supplement. Meryll referred to me as: "My 85-year-old neighbour who's full of old-fashioned spunk!".

Doug Grant, 90



South Perth WA

Doug is the living embodiment of the maxim 'healthy body, healthy mind'. Taking up cycling more seriously in his later years, he now rides distances people half his age would find challenging – including a 200-mile bike ride in the USA!

How do you keep active?

I joined the Perth Over 55s Cycling Club 17 years ago. At the beginning, a 20km bike ride was about my limit. But since then I've improved, riding many thousands of kilometres.

I ride about 100km a week, both by myself and with the club. My biggest cycling achievement was riding 200 miles in two days, at age 80 and 83, from Seattle to Portland in the USA. There were about 9,000 riders involved and about 8,995 were younger than me! A few of the riders, including my Seattle-based son, were Australian and we referred to ourselves as the 'Aussie Posse'! I'll be doing the ride again next year. As preparation, I recently rode 200km with our club, in under 11 hours – including food stops.

I also go for a walk with my wife most mornings.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I read a lot, mainly just non-fiction and in particular, cycling books. I use the computer too, and I also find that learning to use the tech gadgets my sons keep giving me for my birthday helps to keep my mind alert – I read the instruction manuals and can usually get myself out of strife.

What advice do you have for people over 80?

Get a pushbike. This will help keep you both physically and mentally healthy. If you join a club you also get the social benefits whilst learning the ropes, the safety aspects, and how to look after both the bike and yourself.

“I read books on self-help and philosophy.”

What's the best thing about being your age?

Looking forward to my next birthday! I've got a lot more left – I'm not old at all. I have no medical ailments whatsoever, which I attribute to my cycling.

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

I read books on self-help and philosophy – they often contain valuable advice and inspirational stories that can help you put your problems in perspective, and focus on the positives. My wife had cancer 13 years ago, but she's now fitter than ever and we have stayed positive throughout.

What makes you feel happy?

Waking up every morning, next to my wife. For my 80th I was given a card which read: "Four out of five doctors recommended that, at your age, you should be slowing down. Soooo, 'Party on' with doctor number five!" I'm doing something like that, even though I don't drink or smoke! I cycle instead. When I'm out on a bike I'm not really working, I'm just keeping my mind happy and enjoying the scenery.

Patricia Coe, 89



Hawthorn VIC

Patricia has an appetite for literature and likes to keep her mind active and her days busy. She began an Arts degree in her sixties and completed her Ph.D. at age 70. Currently, she does volunteer work with refugees and asylum seekers.

How do you keep active?

I used to swim a lot, but now enjoy gardening and a walk around the block. I also drive a car – I love it. My favourite thing is to drive from Victoria up to New South Wales – sometimes I wish I was a taxi driver.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I'm addicted to cryptic crosswords and I read constantly in both English and French. I'm learning Italian and Russian. One of my favourite authors is Dostoevsky, and I'd love to read his novels in the language in which they were written.

As well as water colour painting, I also attend Feldenkrais exercise, French conversation and current affair classes.

I've experienced depression and anxiety for many years and although I have sought help, I have also discovered that mental

and intellectual challenges help a lot. I'm very lucky that I find most things interesting – particularly languages. I love words and taught linguistics at Deakin University until I was 75.

What advice do you have for people over 80?

I think that once we reach this stage of life, we should be advocating something – such as the rights of people who are from other cultures. I think we should open our hearts first – and then our minds – to other people.

What's the best thing about being your age?

Nobody looks at you anymore, so you can be pretty well invisible and say exactly what you want to, and they just think you're an eccentric old person!

“I enjoy living alone and am independent in every way.”

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

I first began experiencing depression at a young age, but didn't get any help because at that time people just weren't aware of the illness. I found it especially difficult walking into a classroom, as both a child and an adult, but I have no such problem walking into a classroom to teach or lecture, and that's because I have a sense of purpose about it – purpose is important.

What makes you feel happy?

Finding a word I don't know! It also makes me happy to see my grandchildren. I enjoy living alone and am independent in every way, but it is nice to spend time with family.

I derive a lot of happiness from seeing something good happen to the refugees among whom I volunteer – men whom I respect and love. But I am absolutely not a do-gooder. I just do the decent thing for people who need a bit of help.

Max Lee, 86



Monbulk VIC

Max has experienced considerable personal hardship throughout his life. He lost a son to suicide and a wife to Alzheimer's. Through all the hard times, Max has managed to stay healthy and happy, and leads an active life in Victoria's picturesque Dandenong ranges.

How do you keep active?

I do ten minutes of exercises every morning before breakfast and I'm a member of a Probus walking group. We go on 3km walks every week and my wife Judith and I also go walking a lot in the Dandenongs – we're lucky to live in such a great spot.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I do a lot of reading, especially challenging technical and medical material. I recently finished a book on astronomy and have been reading a lot about brain research.

What advice do you have for people over 80?

Try to have chronic medical problems fixed or managed. If you're living on your own, seek out one or more friends who you can see regularly and find at least one person to have as a confidante.

Eat healthy foods, do appropriate daily exercises and take walks with friends.

Read ANYTHING that interests you and join a library if necessary.

What's the best thing about being your age?

At this stage in life, you have a certain knowledge and wisdom which you can share with others and hopefully do them some good. Having experienced depression myself – both personally and through my son – and having read a lot about it, I can often spot the signs early, and I do try and educate others as best as I can.

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

My son took his own life, which was obviously devastating for my wife and me. So, we took a holiday to get out of the house and then saw a psychiatrist.

I'd urge anyone to seek professional help if necessary – it can make a huge difference.

I've been through some tough times. I retired from my electrical engineering job to look after my wife who had Alzheimer's. Caring for her on

my own was a tough task, but if you use your ingenuity, and are dedicated to it, you will be able to look after a person whom you've loved all your life.

What makes you feel happy?

Achieving anything makes me happy. I also find happiness by making my current wife happy.

I believe that mental health has too often been neglected. It's just as much of an illness as any other disease, and you should always seek help if you need it.

“At this stage in life, you have a certain knowledge and wisdom which you can share with others and hopefully do them some good.”

Ruth Brown, 92



Maryborough QLD

Ruth's 'can-do' attitude and positive outlook is inspirational. Living her life in accordance with her two favourite mottos, "be prepared" and "waste not, want not", Ruth makes the most of every single moment.

How do you keep active?

I played lots of sports when I was younger, but I gave them up due to arthritis when I was around 50. These days, even though I have my own car, I try to walk as much as possible. If I don't walk, I don't sleep.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

Two of my biggest passions are bridge and mahjong. I teach 'auction bridge', play social bridge and teach and play mahjong. I'm an active member of four local clubs, I play the piano, drive every single day and read as much as I can. I do love the theatre – in fact, the reason I moved to Maryborough was because they had a drama company there!

What advice do you have for people over 80?

Try and stay physically active, but the most important thing is to keep mentally active. Play board

games and card games and try and get out to the library to read books and newspapers.

“Even though I have my own car, I try to walk as much as possible.”

What's the best thing about being your age?

You don't have to cook for a family anymore! You can finally please yourself and do what you want to do, when you want to do it, and how you want to do it. Your life is now your own and you don't always need to please somebody else. I feel freer now than I've ever felt.

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

Through the hard times, I've never lost hope and have always believed that things would eventually get better. My mother died when I was just three days old and I was brought up by various relatives. One of the places where I felt safe and happy was at school. When I was six years old, I made up my mind to be a school teacher and I later achieved this ambition, first as primary and then high school.

When I was eight, I adopted the motto, "be prepared".

I married a farmer and two years later we had a son born with cerebral palsy, which was particularly hard in those days. I cared for him myself whilst also working on a farm. I also had a child who was born with brain damage and died within hours of his birth. These were trying times, but it's important to reach out to people who you can rely on and be strong.

If you are not strong, you have to develop your character to become strong, so you can face difficulties you might encounter.

What makes you feel happy?

Feeling needed and being able to help other people. What I hate most of all in life is waste – whether it be a waste of time, effort, money, intelligence or ability. So my life has been a concerted effort not to waste anything. I was a child of the Depression and every day that I lived with my beloved grandmother, she used to say to me, "Waste not, want not". She influenced my character. My father brought me up to be disciplined, but my grandmother taught me how to live.

Livio Benedetti, 84



Sydney NSW

Livio is a charming character with a wonderful story to tell. Arriving in Australia from Italy in 1954, Livio had almost completed a law degree when he decided to change paths and become a social worker.

How do you keep active?

I do a little bit of exercise to try and keep my muscles strong. I live near the beach which is nice. I come from a city that was on the water, so it's important to me that I'm near the beach.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I work for an association where I help people and give advice. I write a column every fortnight for an Italian newspaper called La Fiamma – the articles are usually focused around problems and issues directly related to the elderly.

Reading is a big part of my life and I have around 700 books. I have collected them my whole life. I love history; I have so many history books. They call me the local historian at the association because I bring in so many history books.

What advice do you have for people over 80?

The best thing to do is to keep active. It's hard when you have some health problems because you have to reduce the activities, but you can always do something that is not so tough on your body. Joining community groups is very important. You should try and meet up with the community once a week. Get involved with tours and that sort of thing. Just keep yourself happy and keep living!

All communities, including Italian people, tend not to talk about depression because it is surrounded by stigma – but *beyondblue* is waking people up!

“Keep yourself happy and keep living!”

What's the best thing about being your age?

When you wake up in the morning to start another day, you need to be happy! Be optimistic. I do have little problems, but I remain optimistic and that's the best thing about my age.

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

I haven't had many big problems, which is lucky but I think remaining optimistic and being positive is the most important thing.

What makes you feel happy?

To be involved – if I don't do things I get bored. I do a lot of work with the Italian community here and I think that it is very important; that everyone is part of a community.

Jean Perkins, 88



Glenbrook NSW

A person with many interests, Jean's later years have been jam-packed with action and activities, and enriched by a healthy dose of spirituality. She likes to think of herself as a 'Woman of the Universe' – travelling, writing, singing, acting, modelling and refusing to be restricted by her age.

How do you keep active?

I watch a television exercise program every day and follow their example, doing a variety of exercises for 30 minutes at a time, such as yoga, Tai Chi and weights. It's a healthy way to start the day.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I've always been interested in creative pursuits. I've acted a lot, I belong to a women's barbershop chorus and I paint. I've been involved with the University of the Third Age (U3A) for quite some time. I also just finished a two year part-time course in Visual Arts at TAFE.

I've learnt many languages through the U3A too, including Japanese, Arabic and Spanish, and I'm currently teaching myself Mandarin by CD.

I also belong to a spiritual group, whose philosophy is based on the Chinese concept of Tao. It teaches compassion and unconditional love, which I find beautiful.

What advice do you have for people over 80?

If you are over 80 and you have a strong will to do something, just do it. Go to U3A or join some other groups. Human interaction is very important and you have to remember to live YOUR life.

I have five children and 14 grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren and a great-great grandchild is on the way. I love them all, but I also do my own thing. That's why I've travelled so much – all over Asia, South America, Tahiti, Syria, Europe and I've been around Australia. I went to Japan in 2012 and it was a wonderful experience. I used a fold-up walking stick to help me get around and see everything.

What's the best thing about being your age?

I'm now at the philosophical stage of life, where you begin to ask: "What's it all about?" If you're as spiritual as I am, you come to understand that

the material stuff doesn't matter. I think there's a certain enlightenment that comes with age.

How have you overcome difficult periods in your life?

I did a 'Transformation' course many years ago. It teaches you to get rid of the things that make you angry and is all about catharsis and forgiveness. That, and my sense of spirituality, helps me to overcome any difficulties I may encounter.

What makes you feel happy?

My spiritual learning and being grateful for my little house. I'm grateful for my art and my singing and for the wonderful friends that I have. The key is to appreciate life.

“If you are over 80 and you have a strong will to do something, just do it.”

Denis Joynt, 89



Deception Bay QLD

Denis describes his life as “joyous” and “full of surprises”, which he attributes, in part, to his interest in yoga and meditation. Mentally and physically fit, he has spent most of his 85 years teaching others.

How do you keep active?

I teach and practise yoga – I’ve been practising for 50 or 60 years, and teaching it for 20. I started when I was in New Zealand, after a visit from a prominent international yoga teacher. I also eat fairly sensibly, take vitamin supplements and go for a walk twice a day.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I have meditated regularly for about 35 years and continue to do so once or twice daily. I teach adult classes in psychology too. I’ve been teaching my whole life. My first job was teaching primary school at 18. I continue to keep up to date with what’s going on in the world of psychology, reading as many books and journals as I can.

I helped set up a new university in Papua New Guinea and after that, I worked for UNESCO for three years, leading a team to rebuild a teacher training college in Nigeria after their civil war.

What advice do you have for people over 80?

Keep mentally active. When I noticed that my memory was beginning to deteriorate with age, I became interested in brain-training exercises and now my memory is back.

I'd also advise other OBEs to get involved in challenging activities to keep your brain active. One of the best things you can do is to learn a new language.

What's the best thing about being your age?

Everything! I am surrounded by loving family and friends, and I am lucky to have a partner who supports me to a fantastic degree and shares many of my interests. Life is, and continues to be, full of delightfully stimulating surprises.

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

Meditation has made a tremendous difference. I used to suffer from various ailments, but since I've been practising meditation, many of these have disappeared. Yoga and meditation provides you with peace of mind. I'm interested in the teachings of Eastern philosophies, especially Buddhism.

What makes you feel happy?

Living! I believe that the natural state of mankind is joyousness, and if you are not experiencing joy, then something's wrong. Thanks to my partner, my meditation and my yoga, I'm in a state of joyousness all the time.

“Life is, and continues to be, full of delightfully stimulating surprises.”

Grace Ching, 86



Strathmore VIC

Grace takes pleasure in the simple things of life, knowing that she can set her own pace and make her own rules. She is contented being in her garden and spending time with her children and grandchildren.

How do you keep active?

I am a really keen gardener and I spend up to five or six hours in the garden each day in the warmer months. I enjoy the digging and turning over the soil, everything to do with gardening.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I am writing up my family's history and my daughters and I have conducted a lot of research – it's quite interesting. Being a first-generation Australian of Chinese origin, our family has over 100 years of history in Australia, and has lived through two economic depressions.

What advice do you have for people over 80?

Keep active – both mind and body – and make sure you involve yourself with your family and friends. I have kept in touch with past colleagues from work, some of whom have also retired, and I believe that is important. I think family is so very important.

I live with my son and he has modernised and renovated our 40-year family home, making it more spacious and much more comfortable.

What's the best thing about being your age?

The retired atmosphere and the fact that I can do whatever I want to do! There's no big rush each day and I can do things in my own time.

One of the most interesting things I have done is volunteering on the Sunshine Coast to monitor turtles. As a 'monitor', my role was to walk along the beach in the early morning and look for signs of the turtles, and where their nests were.

“I have kept in touch with past colleagues from work, some of whom have also retired, and I believe that is important.”

Over the past 24 years, a small group of us have developed a community garden in our suburb – it is flourishing well. Children are encouraged to participate and it is a wonderful

way to meet people further afield and with common interests.

Our goals in the months ahead are to develop a section of the garden for children's activities, as well as a quiet area for those who wish to sit, relax and enjoy the local community garden surroundings.

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

I have been lucky and blessed with good health, and I haven't had that much difficulty throughout my life. Being close to family is important and having your children around for support, when needed, is ideal.

What makes you feel happy?

Being with family, being close to nature and enjoying the garden. The Australian fauna and flora are so amazing. The native trees attract beautiful native birds and it is such a sight. We once had a flock of about 50 pink and grey galahs in the grevillea of my garden! It was absolutely fantastic.

Arthur Edward Ingle, 87



Farrer ACT

Arthur and his wife, Judy, keep themselves busy by researching family history, studying at the University of the Third Age (U3A) and involving themselves in various clubs. Arthur believes that physical and mental exercise is important for positive health and happiness.

How do you keep active?

I take a walk each day for at least 20 minutes and I belong to a walking group. I finished my newspaper delivery when I retired 26 years ago, so to keep fit I started walking to the newsagent to collect my newspaper.

Soon after retiring, I joined a tennis club and have played once a week ever since. I also play golf once a week.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

In the first 15 years of retirement, I was heavily involved with family history, both as a volunteer at the family history society library and by researching my own family's history. This culminated in self-publishing my paternal family history.

My wife became addicted to the same activity and we both travelled widely in Australia and overseas, in the cause of

research, as well as attending Genealogy Congresses in various cities.

I have attended a number of U3A courses on various topics, usually involving history. I always have a book involving history or biography by my bed. I was Vice President of a Church History Society for 10 years. Our social life is still quite active and we have meals with friends and relatives in our home or at clubs. We also love to go to the cinema and theatre.

The computer keeps presenting me with new challenges as technology advances. I attend an Apple User Group meeting once a month to try to stay with the pace of technology.

What advice do you have for people over 80?

See that you have a healthy balanced diet and that you exercise each day – I recommend walking and swimming. Partake in brain challenges as often as possible. It is also important to have meaningful conversations with others – discussion and debate on matters of common interest.

What's the best thing about being your age?

The short answer is still being alive with reasonable mental and physical abilities still intact!

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

You need to try and think clearly about what might be done to overcome the difficulty. If nothing you can do will help, I suggest you try not to allow problems to affect your sleeping and anxiety levels too much. My Christian faith has been a great support throughout my life.

What makes you feel happy?

Realising that I am one of the lucky ones in this world – born in Australia, comfortable in retirement, greatly blessed with good health and a caring wife who sees that I eat the right things and generally keeps me on my toes!

“It is important to have meaningful conversations with others.”

Olive Usher, 87



Nambucca Heads NSW

Residing on the picturesque mid-north coast of NSW, Olive has a zest for life and a desire to help others. She has spent much of her 87 years living on farms and loves nature. She is extremely active, writes poetry, loves gardening, and finds great comfort in her Christian faith.

How do you keep active?

I live in a self-contained unit in a retirement village and my life is full. I go for a walk every day along the beautiful foreshores of the Nambucca coast. I have many friends where I live, so I often bump into them on my walk and stop to have a chat. I take part in exercise classes once a week and I also do Tai Chi. For the past 10 years, I have been helping out an organisation called 'Wrap with love' which sends knitted wraps (made by volunteers such as myself) to people around the world who are in need.

I love gardening and have a little plot where I live. I grow vegetables which I use to cook with – although I'm a better farmer than a cook! I also socialise often, eating out with friends every week and my children visit me regularly.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I enjoy cryptic crosswords and Sudoku and I read a lot – especially about natural history and trees. I also write poetry – humorous poetry usually. The last poem I wrote was a love story about two fleas!

What advice do you have for people over 80?

Live life to the fullest! The minister at my church gave us some great advice recently: “Instead of looking back at all the good times that you’ve already had, you should look forward to all the good times that are coming.”

What’s the best thing about being your age?

Most of my worries are now over. I have enough money, I get enough help when I need it, and I’ve got friends. I’ve had a good life. There have been hard times, but I really am very fortunate.

I’m so lucky to be born in Australia and particularly, to be born on the NSW coast. I do worry for my grandchildren however – I think the lives they’ll have to lead will be tougher than mine was.

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

I’m an optimist, which partly comes from my Christian faith. My faith is hugely important to me. It gives me comfort and allows me to cope with the hard times. I’ve also travelled to countries less fortunate than our own, to work with missionaries. I’ve been to Peru and Brazil and have seen first-hand how hard some people have it, and how lucky I am.

What makes you feel happy?

My family, my friends and nature. Living on the coast means I am able to appreciate the beauty of nature – sunrises especially. I’m also happy because I have everything I need – enough to eat, clothes, a house to live in. I’m very content and lucky to be living in such a beautiful part of a beautiful country.

“There have been hard times, but I really am very fortunate.”

Dr Robert Vincent Anderson, O.A.M. “Uncle Bob”, 84



Greenslopes QLD

Dr Robert Vincent Anderson is an Aboriginal Ngugi man from Mulgumpin, Moreton Island, and is known to many friends and family as “Uncle Bob”. He has received many awards for his passion and efforts to promote the wellbeing of Aboriginal people.

How do you keep active?

Reflexology treatments were the turning point in my physical health and wellbeing. They restored my confidence in my physical mobility and assisted me to get the support I needed to correct a number of underlying medical conditions.

I also walk a reasonable distance most days, including the times I visit my traditional Country.

During the summertime, I go down to the pool twice a week for water-walking, swimming and kicking-type activities in the water.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I am on the Griffith University Council and we meet four to five times a year. We look at policy and matters pertaining to the university. I also work with COTA (Council on the Ageing) Queensland’s Safe and Confident Living Project.

I am also on a range of reference groups.

What advice do you have for people over 80?

It's important to be positive and think good things. Always have a smile on your face and be courteous and polite to others. I like to encourage young people and let them know older people do care for them.

What's the best thing about being your age?

The best thing about being this age is being able to relax and feel you've made a contribution to the wellbeing and progression of society.

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

It's important to seek advice and assistance if you are going through something you can't handle yourself. I'm not afraid to ask for help. Another thing I do is 'walk country' (mil binnung).

When you 'walk country' you need to observe and listen and the Country will talk to you.

What makes you feel happy?

Visiting my traditional Country (Moreton Island and Stradbroke Island) makes me happy. Meetings with elders and community gatherings also

make me happy. Aboriginal people are environmentalists – we observe and listen to the Land.

Twice a year, I visit the graves of my Ancestors to pay respects to my forebears – this is a traditional practice in respecting the elders.

Being in a loving relationship is central to my happiness, along with the connection and love I share with family and friends. I have a loving and supportive partner, a son and daughter, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren and talking to them and spending time with them all is very important. People and camaraderie make me happy as well – everyone has a story to tell.

“Reflexology treatments were the turning point in my physical health and wellbeing.”

Ann Rose, 92



Murwillumbah NSW

A former English teacher, model and relationship counsellor, Ann has led a varied and interesting life and continues to embrace new experiences – including Skype and Facebook!

How do you keep active?

I always make sure I eat healthily and stay active. I swim in a physiotherapy pool and use a 'walker' for shopping and walking, although I also drive a car. I've been fond of walking all my life. I've practised yoga for many years, which is great for my physical wellbeing, as well as my mental health.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I'm not afraid of technology and rely on my laptop. I use it mainly to keep in touch with my family and friends via email and Skype. My grandson created a Facebook account for me to use, which keeps my brain active.

Yoga is very helpful – it has taught me how to discipline my mind. As an ex-English teacher, I try and read as many books as possible. Also, driving regularly contributes to my mental health.

Another way I've kept my mind healthy and active was by completing a course in effectiveness training for women. It teaches you how to take greater personal responsibility for your own life and learn how to communicate effectively with others.

What advice do you have for people over 80?

Even though you may feel weary at times and want to sleep, you must try and keep your mind active in a healthy way. Keep doing your crosswords, keep writing to your friends, keep reading if you enjoy it, and try and maintain a group of friends to go out and socialise with.

What's the best thing about being your age?

Being thankful and praising God every day that I still have all my senses. My personal Christian faith is enormously important to me. When you get to my age, you know that you've truly tested your faith over the years, and it's what will keep you going.

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

Having lived alone for eight years since my husband died, and after 59 years of happy marriage, I have had to adjust to life as a single person. Loneliness, anxiety and depression loom large unless they are addressed. I've tackled this by keeping my driver's licence, keeping my laptop computer and keeping in touch with family and friends. I know it sounds like such a cliché, but I do think people should take it one day at a time – it's important to live in the now.

What makes you feel happy?

I feel happy when I realise how much I have to be grateful for. In the great balance sheet of life, mine definitely shows a plus sign! I also have wonderful friends and family and four loving children.

“In the great balance sheet of life, mine definitely shows a plus sign!”

Peter Toy, 90



Augusta WA

Residing in the quiet Western Australian town of Augusta, Peter enjoys quality time with his friends and community. He believes that the key to a happy and healthy life is keeping your body and mind active and never forgetting that everyone has something to give.

How do you keep active?

I play a fair bit of sport including tennis, bowls and golf. We've got a nice beach called Flinders Bay and I swim about four times a week. I go to Margaret River where they have an indoor heated swimming pool and do water aerobics once a week as well.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I play bridge at the bridge club, as I believe it's important to keep your mind going. I am also learning a new language, Hebrew, after a recent trip to Israel. I volunteer at the Resource Centre which has computers and where people can go to do photocopying, video conferencing and those sorts of things. It's quite like an internet café. We have recently added a radio station called Two Oceans FM. We are always looking for volunteers and it's a great way to meet people your own age. It's just marvellous!

What advice do you have for people your age?

You have to eat well. I eat lots of fruit and we are lucky because fruit is grown down this way. Fresh food is important. Exercise is also important and so is keeping your mind active and being part of a community.

What's the best thing about being your age?

There is an unspoken understanding between older people. I go down to Flinders Bay for a swim with a big group and the Shire has now built a shelter shed and BBQ area for us, with stools and tables. We take our thermos for coffee or tea, and some of the ladies will also make biscuits or cakes for everyone to enjoy.

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

You can't rush into things and I think it's important to have someone to talk to. They are the two most important things to me. You need someone that you can confide in – it's important to talk to others about what your private things are.

What makes you feel happy?

Community – I think you have to love your community and love the people in it. Although they won't always do what you think they should do, they are your community. You may think, "Crikey – he's a character", but everyone has something to add. Even if it's just two or three minutes in the day, it's important to talk to everyone to find out what they're thinking and their attitudes – this is what creates understanding and a sense of community.

“Community – I think you have to love your community and love the people in it.”

Bette Burnard, 91



Adelaide SA

Bette is not afraid to take a risk. Her love of flying has seen Bette go hot-air ballooning and jump out of a plane. When she's on the ground, Bette believes in keeping her mind active by reading books and spending time with her friends.

How do you keep active?

On my 75th birthday, I went hot-air ballooning in South Africa and I flew over Victoria Falls in a light aircraft. I sky-dived for my 80th birthday and for my 82nd birthday, I went for a flight in an open cockpit bi-plane, which was good fun.

For my 83rd birthday, I did an aerobatic flight in a Super Decathlon doing loops and dives and all those things, it was

great fun. I'm hoping, finally, to organise a flight in a World War II fighter plane, so by that time, I think I've done about everything I can do in a small plane. I've been in helicopters, a Learjet and a sea plane – and I've been gliding.

I also love to travel. I have travelled to Africa six times, done several trips to England and I recently visited Dubai.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I love reading, especially autobiographies and biographies. I love to take an interest in things around me and I enjoy quiz shows and doing crosswords. I also like playing cards and I have some very close friends who I visit regularly.

What advice do you have for people over 80?

Try something new! Don't think, "Oh, I couldn't do that" – just try it. Keep your mind active! I love reading and have lots of friends, so I like to keep myself busy. If you think it's going to be interesting, just give it a go.

What's the best thing about being your age?

Having wonderful memories – I love sitting around with my friends and reflecting on what

we did when we were young. Even though I was a teenager during the war years, I still had such lovely times. I really love sitting back and remembering all the wonderful things that have happened and are happening in my life.

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

Having wonderful friends around and having someone to talk to is really important – someone who will sit and listen to you is one of the nicest things. I'm quite a tactile person, I like getting hugs from people and that's always nice. If someone sees that you are feeling a bit miserable and gives you a hug, and sits down to talk to you, it will always make you feel better.

“I love to take an interest in things around me.”

What makes you feel happy?

Listening to the things other people have done and hearing my friends talk about their grandchildren and great-grandchildren and the thrill they get seeing them develop – that's one of the nicest things to hear.

Albert Sidebotham, 88



South Launceston TAS

Albert has an infectious positive attitude and zero interest in growing old gracefully. Fond of sports and the arts, he is healthily competitive and believes you're never too old to learn something new.

How do you keep active?

I go to the local PCYC (Police & Community Youth Club) where they have fitness sessions for seniors. I do weights and bench presses, and walk about 2km. I also play tennis every Saturday morning for around three hours. I've been playing for 50 years – I haven't really improved all that much in that time, but at least it keeps me fit!

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I think you constantly need to work to keep your mind active and you can't afford to be complacent. Occasionally, when I have nothing to do, I may be tempted to just fall asleep on my chair, but then I say to myself, "This is no good, so get off your arse!"

I do crosswords and read a lot. I also socialise regularly – interaction with other people helps your mind stay active and keeps you feeling young.

What advice do you have for people over 80?

Join a club, any club, for the social benefits. I also go to the movies regularly, for free sessions, and meet plenty of people there.

My wife died six years ago and since coming to the retirement village, I have struck up a friendship with one of the ladies here – we share the same sense of humour and the same attitude to life, and also cook for each other often (although the last meal I cooked her was a disaster!). That's what it's all about – interaction with other people.

What's the best thing about being your age?

Memories – looking back on the life I lived. I've done a lot: theatre work, singing in musicals, dancing and much more, but I also live in the present and look to the future.

I have a lot to look forward to. I have five children, nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. One of my daughters once gave me a book, *Fifty things to do before you die*.

One of them was 'learn an instrument', which is why I have recently learned to play the harmonica.

“Learn an instrument.”

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

I believe I've led a relatively charmed life. The only downsides have been the losses of family, but other than bereavement, I've generally landed on my feet most of the time. I think some of it goes back to when I was younger and a working-class teenager in England. It was a tough time and we had to be strong.

What makes you feel happy?

I'm lively all of the time, as my friends will tell you. I enjoy being around like-minded people and my family. I feel young, I act young and most people would say that I seem young. I've had a good life and I still have more life to live.

Inge McNeil, 85



Padstow NSW

Born in Germany, Inge came to Australia in the early 1950s after having spent a spell in Glasgow with her Scottish husband. She believes the key to good mental health is to keep socially active.

How do you keep active?

At the age of 70, I joined the Older Women's Network Bankstown Wellness Centre. Now, 11 years later, I am still enjoying the activities and friendships I have made there.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I've been doing Tai Chi at the local senior citizens' centre for 10 years. I find it to be very

helpful; you feel relaxed while you're doing it and you have to keep your mind active to remember the movements. It's a social thing too – we all enjoy a cup of tea and some biscuits afterwards.

I also read a lot – mainly English history but I read fiction, too. In fact, I can't go to sleep without a book.

What advice do you have for people over 80?

Don't sit around at home every day – try and keep yourself active. Make friends and join clubs – the local papers have adverts about what clubs are on, and you're always made welcome at these places.

What's the best thing about being your age?

That you can say "no"! I have a new kind of independence these days, and can do the things that I want to do.

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

Losing a husband after 60 years of marriage is very hard to take, but I have a support group of close friends who I've known for 50 years. I think it's very

important to have a good group of people around you.

What makes you feel happy?

Happiness is a very hard thing to define – I'm just contented, and I am able to enjoy life. I have a sense of peace, which comes with age I think. You're not afraid of dying anymore.

“Don't sit around at home every day – try and keep yourself active. Make friends and join clubs.”

Maria Rosaria Oliveri Del Castillo, 93



Fremantle WA

Maria loves practising reiki and being surrounded by “the wonders of nature”. Her philosophy is to be as active as she was 20 years ago. Having overcome depression twice, Maria’s journey has made her stronger and she has a positive attitude.

How do you keep active?

I keep active by walking, stretching, dancing, reading, studying, being with my friends and praying.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I read, write, converse with people and take part in prayer groups. I talk on the phone and do everything in the house, I solve crosswords and I don’t go to the doctor all the time! Old age is not an illness! The mind has unlimited power.

What advice do you have for people over 80?

Not to think about age, but continue to do the same things that you did 20 years ago.

What’s the best thing about being your age?

Smiling and giving others smiles and kind words. The secret to life’s fulfilment is the ability to communicate to others through our actions. It is important that

our actions truly reflect who we really are and not what others want us to be.

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

By accepting and realising that life is not just a bed of roses. By looking at people who are in a worse position than mine and by telling myself that “you are you” – and having faith in myself.

I overcame depression twice in my long life. The first time, at 39 years of age after giving birth to my fifth daughter and again, at 81 years of age, after having an operation for breast cancer and losing my 54-year-old son.

At times, the heart gets enveloped by a blanket of snow. The snow can become ice or it can melt away – it is up to us! It has been a difficult journey, but it has made me stronger. It is very helpful getting out and looking at the wonders of nature. Listening to music, being interested and inquisitive and doing things for other people also help. By doing things for other people, we are also helping ourselves.

What makes you feel happy?

Seeing happy people around me! I volunteer in the community by giving people reiki at a local health centre and I have set up a Shalom group in Italian. It makes me feel calm, lucid and cheerful! I wish everybody a long and full life – tomorrow is another day!

“At times, the heart gets enveloped by a blanket of snow. The snow can become ice or it can melt away – it is up to us!”

Terry Bradford, 96



Palmerston NT

Terry Bradford is a charming Territorian with a quick wit that would challenge most people. At 96, Terry takes nothing for granted and lives every day to the full. International travel, conversation and tai chi are some of her favourite things and she believes that everyone can benefit from something as simple as having a good chat.

How do you keep active?

Keeping active and busy isn't a problem for me. I keep in touch with friends in Council on the Ageing (COTA), Carers NT, Temhco (Top End Mental Health Consumer Organisation), Probus and the local bowls club.

Tai chi is my favourite weekly outing and exercise. And just for fun, I go down to the local school and teach the little (sometimes unwilling) boys to knit. I only learnt to knit about a year ago.

“I suggest that older folk forget about age. Age is just a number – don't sit and fade away ... there are loads of things that you can DO!”

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I have retired from so many different jobs. My last job gave me an overseas trip and said "Don't hurry back!". I use my computer and keep active in the local library. I'm still trying hard to learn and remember the moves in mahjong.

I tend not to do things 'on the double' anymore. I'll hold onto the hand rail when there is a long line of steps. I can't hear so well out of one ear, but I think it's quite funny. I call it my old war wound.

What advice do you have for people over 80?

I suggest that older folk forget about age. Age is just a number – don't sit and fade away. There are loads of things you can talk about or better still, there are loads of things that you can DO! Look up your local contact for a club or community group, talk to whoever answers the phone and you are on your way – that first big step is all it takes.

What's the best thing about being your age?

Talking to people – I can sit on a bench at the bus station and someone will always talk to me. Most times, it's to the advantage of both of us.

How have you overcome difficult periods in your life?

There have been many tough times and there will no doubt be more. The will of God will never take you where His Grace will not protect you.

What makes you feel happy?

It will make me very happy if there is a slight smile on your face as you read this book and you are saying "Well, I can't do that, but I sure can do something". My most valued possessions are my passport and driver's licence (both bearing a photo strangely resembling Mahatma Ghandi's grandma). Is that really me? And always the wonderful gift of laughter.

Nigel Brookman, 93



Strathalbyn SA

Nigel has spent most of his life around horses and still rides his pony most days. Also, he hasn't let his diabetes or low vision stop him from becoming a computer whizz and an amateur artist.

How do you keep active?

I own a pony called Joe, who I ride each day for at least 30 minutes unless the weather is too poor. I have five acres of land on my property to ride around, as well as nearby trails with beautiful scenery.

I have been riding horses ever since I was a young boy, when it was the easiest way to get around my family's farm in the Adelaide Hills. As I grew older, I kept riding them as I simply love the feeling. My late wife Ann shared this passion too, and we saw a great deal of the world together from the saddle, riding horses across Australia, Europe and Canada.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

In her later years my wife Ann had Alzheimer's, so it became important for us both to remain mentally active. She wasn't interested in the usual brain games people play, so instead

we decided to try art classes. A family friend kindly offered to give us some lessons in painting and drawing. Since Ann's death in 2010, I've continued making art and am part of a local art group.

I also write emails to family and friends, and personal memoirs on my computer. When I was in the Royal Australian Air Force as a Wireless Air Gunner, in my down time I learnt how to touch type on typewriters. I had no idea then how valuable this skill would be when computers came around!

“If you keep yourself occupied, this will have a positive influence for your body and mind.”

What advice do you have for people over 80?

Make the most of what you are able to do. If you keep yourself occupied, this will have positive benefits for your body and mind.

What's the best thing about being your age?

I like feeling appreciated by my family for the role I have played in their lives and for the stories that I can share with them. It was one of my granddaughters who

encouraged me to start writing memoirs on the computer so that she could read them. I'm trying to document the most significant times in my life and I think about these moments a great deal before I write them.

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

When hardships arise, I make an effort to focus on what I can do, rather than what I can't. I was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes in my twenties and was discharged from the RAAF, becoming a farmer instead. My sight has deteriorated considerably since then, but armed with a magnifier I am still able to do most of things that I could before. The sooner you accept things like this, the quicker you can find solutions that work for you to get on with living.

What makes you feel happy?

It makes me happy to see what my younger family members are up to and how they are flourishing. I also feel happy when I'm out riding Joe. Riding with others slows the journey down a little, but it makes for good conversation. Joe is a social pony, so I think he likes this as much as me!

Blanche Mateljan, 87



Roleystone WA

Blanche is a gardening fanatic who finds that the older she gets, the more comfortable she feels in her own skin. She is a valued volunteer at her local botanic gardens, and finds joy in books, music and dancing.

How do you keep active?

I love gardening and I find this keeps me moving during the day. I help to maintain the gardens around the village where I live and have a close connection to the Araluen Botanic Park, where I have been a committee member for more than 20 years.

I was also part of a group that helped save the Araluen Botanic Park from being sold. I am proud to be known as an Honorary Member of the Araluen Park, as I'd like future generations to discover and appreciate the gardens.

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I have always had a strong appreciation of the written word, so I keep my mind active by reading books. Whenever I read a book, I become very connected to the world in which it is taking place. When I've done a lot of reading at home, I feel as if I've done a lot of travelling!

What advice do you have for people over 80?

Be thankful for all of the things that you have and what you are able to do. Always remember that you deserve to be in control of yourself and have a say in what is happening to you.

If you live in a retirement village, I would recommend regularly leaving the village to mix with different people. You can be exposed to fresh ideas and ways of thinking and will have stories you can bring back to tell friends in the village.

And if you can, become a volunteer. You will be pleasantly surprised at the good things that happen.

What's the best thing about being your age?

When I was young I was a shy and reserved girl. Now that I'm older, little things that once kept me from speaking up don't seem to matter anymore. I feel uninhibited and can express myself freely, laughing as often and as loudly as I'd like. I feel like I am at just the right spot in my life.

“I feel like I am at just the right spot in my life.”

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

I grew up during the Great Depression and was one of 13 children, but my Mother was always an optimist. She passed this quality on to me, so I now overcome difficulties by staying hopeful.

Losing my husband in the early 1980s was very painful, but I've found peace. I own a large illustration of the Desiderata poem which I often read. Part of the poem says, "Whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should."

What makes you feel happy?

I get a lot of happiness from listening to music. I regularly go to the opera and to the theatre, and also love keeping my hands busy with pottery, cooking and cake decorating.

My children live in the same area as me, as well as my five grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. This is wonderful because I can see them growing up and they are also happy knowing they are close by to help me if needed.

Gweneth Hosking, 85



Illawong NSW

Gweneth has not let her physical challenges get in the way of leading a full life, with books, films, music, her expanding family and her faith keeping her positive and making the most of every opportunity.

How do you keep active?

I try to do whatever exercises I can in my wheelchair, which I have needed to use outside the house since I had a stroke when I was 72 and am now confined to almost 100 per cent. Even before this time physical activity was a challenge for me, as I was born with double clubbed feet. The condition meant I was often in hospital for operations as a child. Whenever I am struggling I recite to myself the motto "I am perfect, whole and complete. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me".

What do you do to keep your mind active and healthy?

I love to read books, especially biographies, and enjoy watching films and listening to music. I also like to set myself simple mental tasks based on the environment around me.

“You are never too old to change and improve, or to make new friends.”

What advice do you have for people over 80?

You are never too old to change and improve, or to make new friends. If you feel like you don't have any friends, you can try to be a friend to someone by reaching out to them. If you are kind and friendly, people will typically respond in a positive way. I'd also advise people to make sure they tell the people that are important to them that they love them. You never know when the last time you say it will be.

What's the best thing about being your age?

I never expected to live to this age, so I feel blessed to even still be around! I might not be as mobile as I used to be, but I still have a functioning mind and mouth. This means I can share my many years of experiences with my expanding family. It brings me great satisfaction to share our family history with the younger ones.

How do you overcome difficult periods in your life?

I have had my fair share of difficult times. Immediately after the birth of my fifth child when I was 32, I was diagnosed with melanoma and was told I would only have three months to live if I didn't remove it instantly. I will always be humbled by the memory of the maternity nurses taking such good care of my new daughter while I was recovering from my cancer operation. About 20 years later it was cancer that took my husband's life, only three weeks after my mother had died.

During those times I kept myself afloat by being grateful for all the kindness and love I was shown by the people around me. In dark times I also draw strength from my religious faith, and see Christ as a powerful source of strength.

What makes you feel happy?

It makes me happy to reminisce on these joyful moments, particularly the busy days when I ran a business, or the special moments I spent with my husband. It also makes me feel happy to spend time with my ever-growing family.



Brian, 68

"I'm Brian. I'm the captain of my soul and I'm the **master** of my destiny. I can **make positive decisions** about my life which **help** me to be the best I can."

At 68, I'm striving to be the best I can be, physically, emotionally, and to make sure my brain is as good as it can be for as long as it can be. Like a lot of men I didn't really want to open up, I'd gotten myself into a black hole and I was living in darkness but talking to my regular doctor and counsellor helped me recognise the things I can do to combat my depression.

To talk to someone today or to find out more call:

 1300 22 4636

 Watch Brian's story online at
beyondblue.org.au/olderpeople



Organisations and contacts

The following pages provide a list of organisations focused on activities and programs for older Australians.

Council on the Ageing (COTA)

Council on the Ageing offers a range of programs for older people, many with a focus on health and wellbeing. To find out more, visit www.cota.org.au or contact COTA in your state or territory:

ACT	02 6282 3777
NSW	02 9286 3860
NT	08 8941 1004
QLD	07 3316 2999
SA	08 8232 0422
TAS	03 6228 1897
VIC	03 9654 4443
WA	08 9321 2133

Senior Citizen Centres

These centres offer a meeting place for seniors and their activities. To find out more about your closest centre, contact your local council.

Probus Club

Probus is an association for active retirees who get together in local clubs to provide regular opportunities for people to keep their minds active, expand interests and enjoy the fellowship of new friends. To find your local Probus club, contact Probus Centre:

Toll free within Australia
1800 630 488

Email: probus@probus.com.au
www.probus.com.au

Community centres/ neighbourhood houses

Community centres or neighbourhood houses host a variety of groups which focus on staying active – and have affordable membership fees. Activities may include aerobics, yoga, Tai Chi, dancing and walking groups.

To find community centres or neighbourhood houses in your area, contact your local council or community health centre.

U3A – The University of the Third Age

Volunteer tutors and course leaders offer programs for people who are over 50, retired or no longer working full-time. U3A helps people develop new social networks, share their skills and experiences and keep their brain and body active. There are no academic prerequisites or entrance requirements, other than an interest in learning and wherever possible, sharing knowledge and skills.

To find out where your closest U3A is located, visit www.u3aonline.org.au

Men's Sheds

Men's Sheds are places where men of all ages, particularly older men, can come together to socialise, network, make friends and learn and share skills. Men's Sheds aim to provide an environment where men feel confident to gather, talk and share information.

To find out where your nearest Men's Shed is visit www.mensshed.org

If you don't live near a Men's Shed, or you're unable to attend one, you can also visit www.theshedonline.org.au, which aims to recreate the atmosphere of 'real life' Men's Sheds – but can be accessed by anyone, anywhere, via the internet.

Rotary Australia

Rotary is a worldwide organisation of business, professional and community leaders. Clubs are non-political, non-religious, and open to people of all nationalities and cultures. Rotarians are able to develop business networking opportunities while building lifelong friendships.

For more information and to find your nearest club, visit **www.rotaryaustralia.org.au**

Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to become involved with a local community or to participate in an activity that is of interest.

To explore volunteering opportunities, visit **www.volunteeringaustralia.org**, or call the Volunteering centre in your state or territory:

ACT	02 6251 4060
NSW	02 9261 3600
QLD	07 3002 4600
NT and SA	08 8221 7177
TAS	03 6231 5550
VIC	03 8327 8500
WA	08 9482 4333

“ If sharing my experience assists one person on their journey then I will be very happy. I believe passionately in the *beyondblue* organisation and am privileged to have been provided with the opportunity to get involved. ”

Les, blueVoices member



Join blueVoices

Make a difference to others experiencing anxiety and depression



If you've experienced anxiety or depression, or supported others through their journey, you are welcome to join our reference group and online community, blueVoices.

Opportunities to participate are varied and often take place online, so you can get involved no matter where you live in Australia.

Your contribution will make a difference to others experiencing anxiety and depression by informing and guiding *beyondblue*'s work and ensuring that the voice of people with experience is heard.

To read more, or register, visit
www.beyondblue.org.au/bluevoices

No matter your age, background or location, we welcome your involvement.

blueVoices members provide feedback, tell their stories and help us develop a wide variety of *beyondblue* projects, campaigns and resources.

beyondblue values the experience and insight shared by blueVoices members and we look forward to your involvement.



Hope. Recovery. Resilience. Find out more at www.beyondblue.org.au






Where to find more information

beyondblue

www.beyondblue.org.au

Learn more about anxiety, depression and suicide prevention, or talk through your concerns with our Support Service. Our trained mental health professionals will listen, provide information, advice and brief counselling, and point you in the right direction so you can seek further support.

 1300 22 4636

 Email or  chat to us online at www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport

Head to Health

headtohealth.gov.au

Head to Health can help you find free and low-cost, trusted online and phone mental health resources.



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