



# SECRETS & LIES

CHAPTER THREE

## AGELESS & BOOMING


UNCOVERING THE TRUTH  
ABOUT AGEING IN AUSTRALIA





# SECRETS & LIES

AGELESS &  
BOOMING IS THE  
THIRD CHAPTER  
OF A MAJOR  
NATIONAL STUDY  
UNDERTAKEN  
BY WPP AUNZ.



WHY DO WE PUT OUR HEAD IN THE SAND ABOUT AGEING?

WHAT DRIVES OUR UNCONSCIOUS BIAS ON AGEING?

WHY DO WE REJECT IMAGES AND ASSOCIATIONS OF GETTING OLDER?

WHAT ARE THE MYTHS OF THE GREY CLICHE?

WHY IS THIS AUDIENCE INVISIBLE AND IGNORED?

# INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO

## SECRETS & LIES



**Rose Herceg,**  
Chief Strategy Officer,  
WPP AUNZ

Rose has built a career as one of Australia's most respected futurists and social forecasters.

As Chief Strategy Officer, Rose consults to WPP AUNZ clients across its 70 operating companies on emerging trends, business strategy and innovation.

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the third Secrets & Lies report. This time, we've focused on the concept of ageing in Australian society. What we've discovered breaks all the conventions and perceived norms about what it means to get older. It uncovers the lies we've been telling ourselves about Australians over the age of 50.

Our role at WPP AUNZ is to help our clients better understand their important audiences so that they can connect and stay relevant. What better way to continue this in-depth understanding than with a report exploring our relationship with age? How do we view people over 50 and what drives these perceptions? More importantly, this report reveals just how badly we get it wrong.

More than a quarter of all Australians are over 50 and yet it's almost impossible to find organisations and brands that understand this high-value audience. This is all the more startling when you consider the unrivalled opportunity that lies in their enormous purchasing power.


Secrets and Lies: Ageless and Booming is based on comprehensive research of 2,500 Australians aged 50 to 79 years by WPP AUNZ agency, Lightspeed.

Our research reveals that this group is booming and growing. Australians over 50 treat age with a contempt only they can be afforded because of their lived experience. That's why we've called the report, Ageless and Booming.

Those of us in the marketing industry have so far failed to fully appreciate and embrace this audience. We need to engage them with the rigour and vigour they deserve.

Our series of Secrets & Lies reports has been phenomenally helpful in terms of uncovering the real truths about us as Australians. We hope this report opens your eyes to the exciting possibilities of the Ageless and Booming generation.





"AUSTRALIANS  
OVER 50 TREAT AGE  
WITH A CONTEMPT  
ONLY THEY CAN BE  
AFFORDED BECAUSE  
OF THEIR LIVED  
EXPERIENCE."



## ABOUT MICHAEL HENDERSON

Michael Henderson is a leading anthropologist, born in the UK, raised in Africa and educated in New Zealand. He works around the world studying human behaviour and motivation. Anthropologists study culture and the various symbols, rituals, norms, artefacts and ceremonies that combine in a unique manner to structure and activate the culture in daily life. For the past 35 years, Michael has immersed himself in studying what makes people tick and how this is influenced by the culture in which people have been born or chosen. Michael is the author of eight books on culture, values, performance, human meaning and motivation.



**MICHAEL HENDERSON**  
ANTHROPOLOGIST



# FOREWORD

MICHAEL HENDERSON | ANTHROPOLOGIST

## THEY SAY AN ELEPHANT NEVER FORGETS.

For hundreds of past generations, in cultures around the world, being an older member of the tribe, family or community was associated with being wiser. Being older and wiser has enabled tens of thousands of generations of our ancestors to remember things worth knowing. Valuable knowledge that could be passed on to the next generation.

This gathering and transferring of wisdom wasn't simply bestowed upon the elders as a polite or patronising mark of respect, but stemmed from a sensible and useful realisation. Elders had faced the many trials and tribulations of life. They had survived. Surviving was, and still is, a powerful motivator for human beings. Our species is the only species that is aware of its own mortality, and as such, goes way beyond instinctively 'fighting' to survive, but actually plans ahead to survive.

What better way to plan ahead than to speak to, and listen to, people more advanced in their years than we are? After all, these people have already survived famines, war, disease, harsh winters, droughts, handled disputes and negotiated and traded with communities, tribes and countries. And, if they hadn't experienced it in their own life time, chances are they can still recall what their own parents and grandparents passed down. Traditionally in human cultures, to have access to such knowledge provided foresight which in turn ensured people felt forewarned. By connecting and embracing with elders we literally and figuratively didn't have to reinvent the wheel every generation. We learnt from the generations before us.

## THE ELDERLY ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM?

But has modern society turned away from engaging with the life experience of our elders? Have we become biased against ageing? What happens when a culture is evolving so quickly that the central

knowledge base that traditionally provided such a steady hand on the tiller of effective decision making no longer fits in the context of a new world?

Previous generations had the luxury of building their life knowledge, common sense, or wisdom over longer spans of time where relative change was occurring at a slower, more isolated, rate and scale. Why would we look to them respectively for guidance and direction, when these elders received the vast majority of their formal education and perhaps life and work experience last century? What would they know about living in a fast-paced, constantly changing, patch upgrading, cryptocurrency, swipe left, world? It would seem in modern societies we have increasingly distanced ourselves from our elders (as the booming retirement village industry would seem to attest) and, despite the improved lifestyle and life expectancy, the aged are an uncomfortable reminder of our own mortality and inevitable physical demise.

**DEATH IS INEVITABLE.  
IT'S A SOBERING THOUGHT ISN'T IT?**

This outcome sits quietly at the back of everyones mind. Although we may not feel as if we pay any deliberate and daily attention to this reality, in fact, much of our decision making is subtly designed to avoid or delay this inescapable truth.

Our human ego hates the idea of death. So much so that it may even secretly deny that it is mortal itself. Everyone else will die of course. That's just the natural order of things, but me die? No, surely not. How could the world exist without me?

**IS THIS UNDERLYING FEAR OF DEATH,  
COUPLED WITH A BELIEF THAT ONLY THE  
YOUNG CAN OFFER RELEVANT WISDOM  
FOR SURVIVAL IN A TECHNO WIZARDRY  
WORLD, THE REAL REASON WE HAVE  
CREATED SO MUCH DISTANCE WITH OUR  
OLDER GENERATIONS?**

Of course, there are many cultures around the world where death isn't feared. Many indigenous peoples embrace death as a vital part of life. Some cultures celebrate death with rituals and ceremonies.

Consumer culture, on the other hand, seems to have adopted a morbid fear of death.


An important question for organisations to ask themselves is whether they have an unconscious bias against the elderly in society. The emphasis of this research report questions the wisdom of ignoring the older population as relevant, vibrant and not to mention affluent consumers and influencers.

Apart from the obvious sectors such as retirement, aged care and health services, many organisations are at risk of inadvertently ignoring a growing and wealthy market. This is not because they have deliberately chosen to do so. They are unconsciously embracing bias against an entire segment of society because these people remind us all of the unnerving fact that none us will get out of here alive.

Does your business have a strategy to engage this rich and growing segment of society? This report is a wonderful and timely trigger for that conversation.





A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a white sleeveless top and black leggings with a white floral pattern, is performing a handstand in a hallway. She is positioned next to a large poster for the Roslyn Packer Theatre. The poster features a blue and green background with a large white 'E' and 'D' and text about the theatre and choreography. In the background, a hallway leads to a door marked with the number '3'.

"SAY, 'I CAN'. BECAUSE IF WE  
OLDER PEOPLE SAY WE CAN'T,  
THEN EVERYONE ELSE WILL  
THINK WE CAN'T TOO"

Candide McDonald, 63



## AGELESS

The title of our report was inspired, in part, by Candide McDonald's 'Trend 2019: The Tribe, Age-less, Has Arrived'. Now 63 and Managing Editor of *The Stable*, she continues to flourish in her career as a creative copywriter and publisher. She's also actively engaged in her passions for dance and yoga. She regularly writes about the stereotypes of the 50+ audience, urging marketers and creatives to understand and value her tribe.

"The person in the photo featured is 63 years of age. She's not a typical oldie yet, but her tribe is growing. She's a baby boomer who didn't buy into the stereotypes. She knows how to use a mobile phone – for everything. She isn't getting flabby. She's no less able to do anything than she was at twenty-five. And her goal isn't to sit outside her Winnebago with a cup of tea, or even a glass of wine, watching the sunset. She's age-less. At least, that's how she sees it. The person in this photo is me."

## AGELESS & BOOMING: INTRODUCTION

Ageing is a loaded word but it's a topic that gets lots of play. It's bursting at the seams with emotion and angst. Beauty companies, the fashion industry, the media and many others treat it as something to be avoided at all cost.

And yet, Australians over the age of 50 are booming in number and lifestyle. They're embracing life with ambition, purpose and money in their pockets.

Ageing is poorly understood, particularly by business and marketers who largely ignore or misfire with this audience. Ageing is a pejorative and older people are rarely seen as ideal consumers. The fallacy is that they can't do tech. They're not cool. They're frail. Dull. Sick. They've retired from work and shut the door on meaningful life. They have no aspirations. They're boring, unattractive and irrelevant.

**None of this is true.**

**Our Secrets & Lies research has uncovered the chasm between the assumptions people make about ageing and the truth of how over 50s think, feel and live.**

**A NOTE ABOUT TERMINOLOGY:** throughout this report we have used "50+" and "over 50s" as a shorthand reference for people over 50 years of age. We recognise that this is a vast and diverse audience in lifestyle and life stage that requires proper segmentation for effective understanding and targeting. There are, however, many similarities in how this entire audience has been misunderstood by brands and organisations and "50+" has been used for ease of communication only.

SECRETS  
& LIES

# PART ONE

## MARKET CONTEXT

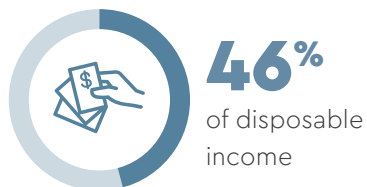
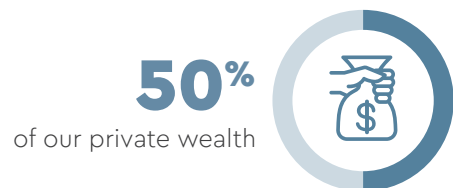
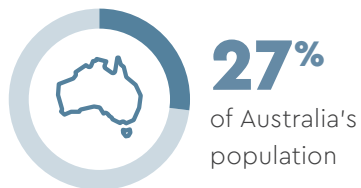
- A. LET'S TALK  
ABOUT THE SIZE  
OF THE PRIZE
- B. INVISIBLE AND  
IGNORED

MARKET  
CONTEXT  
1  
AGELESS  
+ BOOMING

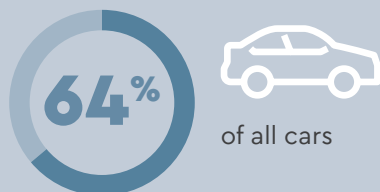


## A. LET'S TALK ABOUT THE SIZE OF THE PRIZE

If there was any uncertainty about the size of this market, the sheer weight of numbers tells a story of scale, influence and spending power. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) latest Household, Income and Wealth Report shows that over 50s make up:



So what does that spending power look like?  
Nielsen data shows that this group buys:



AND THIS TRIBE WILL ONLY GET BIGGER.  
BETWEEN NOW AND 2050, THE NUMBER OF  
PEOPLE AGED 65-84 IS EXPECTED TO MORE  
THAN DOUBLE.

## B. INVISIBLE AND IGNORED

Baby boomers are the generation with the highest disregard for age. Those born between 1946 and 1964 are the very same people who experimented with drugs in the 60s, protested the Vietnam War, waged relentless campaigns for women's liberation and revolutionised music.

Now into their 50s, 60s and 70s, they've spent a lifetime challenging the status quo to build a legacy of change and they're not about to become complacent or invisible now. When they weren't pushing against the establishment, they were working hard to build lives and families in a period of great economic uncertainty.



**DISLIKE THE WAY BRANDS,  
ORGANISATIONS AND MARKETERS  
COMMUNICATE WITH THEM.**

**"I LIKE TO GO ON XBOX AND  
INTERACT WITH MY SON AND FAMILY.  
I ENJOY EVENINGS PLAYING IT  
AS THEY'RE FAR AWAY."**

**Female, 60**

The over 50s segment is now being bolstered by Generation X, bringing even greater expectations of a full and active life in their later years. This is driven by a work ethic instilled by their parents.

This cohort is also transforming us as a nation – not least of all because of the profound impact this large and ageing population is having on social and economic policy. Our politicians and policymakers are actively grappling with this changing dynamic. But an entire world of commerce is yet to catch up.


The over 50s Australians outspend millennials in entertainment, auto, health, travel and almost every other category but 94 per cent dislike the way brands, organisations and marketers communicate with them.

Of all the marketing briefs received during the past 12 months, WPP AUNZ estimates that only two per cent of them focus on targeting over 50s. This demonstrates a stunning lack of understanding and respect for the audience. Not to mention an alarming lack of attention on those who have the most money to spend.

What most brands and marketers have failed to understand is that the over 50s audience is a new kind of mass consumer. It's a mature and diverse group of people enjoying the same things as the younger generations. They want to continue to be their best selves for as long as they can. And they want marketers to realise that they're just as interested in 'new' as everyone else.

Australia's over 50s are in much better financial shape than the rest of the population. They have the highest levels of wealth and disposable income, with a tendency to make financial decisions a little more quickly than other audience groups. They want to enjoy life and they're ready to pay for experiences.





So why is it that marketing to this audience is dominated by life insurance companies, retirement villages and incontinence products? And why do we insist on portraying this audience sitting on park benches or strolling hand-in-hand on secluded beaches?

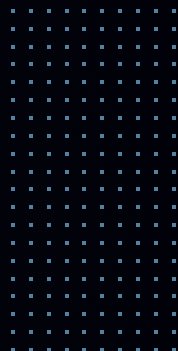
**WHEN IT COMES TO BUYING  
CONSUMER GOODS ONLINE,  
THE OVER 50S SPEND  
ABOUT \$40 BILLION MORE  
THAN MILLENNIALS AND  
GENERATION X EACH YEAR.**





**"PEOPLE NOW IN THEIR FIFTIES WILL BE BRINGING TO LATER LIFE A RANGE OF LIFE EXPERIENCES AND EXPECTATIONS THAT ARE PROFOUNDLY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF PREVIOUS GENERATIONS. THE BABY BOOMERS ARE THE FIRST GENERATION TO FACE THE NEW 'THIRD AGE' WITH ITS UNPRECEDENTED EXPECTATION OF A DECADE OR TWO OF RELATIVELY HEALTHY LIFE AFTER RETIREMENT."**

**SOURCE: NATIONAL SENIORS AUSTRALIA**



And if you think of this audience as technophobic luddites, you'll be surprised to learn they spend an average of 27 hours per week online. That's two hours longer than Millennials and Generation X. And they're bringing their purchasing power online, with 77 per cent regularly researching and buying products.

Marketing has an ageing blind spot. As an industry we need to deconstruct every outdated idea about people over 50. To ignore them is folly and misrepresenting them risks rejection. It is an expensive mistake to make.

Organisations and brands that accurately relate to, and connect with, this audience will win their attention and gain a bigger share of wallet.

**So, what are the key learnings from the research? What are the myths that should finally be put to rest? What Secrets & Lies are revealed?**





SECRETS  
& LIES

# PART TWO

## RESEARCH HEADLINES

- A. THE GREY DIVIDE
- B. STILL BREAKING  
THE RULES
- C. 50 AIN'T 80

RESEARCH  
HEADLINES  
**2**  
AGELESS  
+ BOOMING

## A. THE GREY DIVIDE

The great majority of our over 50s audience don't think of themselves as old. And they have no time for brands and organisations that lazily shove them into that category. The clichés and misnomers surrounding ageing are as insulting as they are inaccurate.

Marketing is littered with images of the over 50s slowing down, disconnecting, opting out and generally frittering away their time. And yet for a considerable chunk of Australians aged 50 to 79, this is a lie. Their 'secret' is that age is a state of mind.

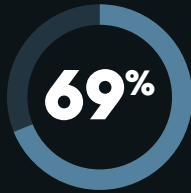
Our research shows 69 per cent saying age has never been less relevant and 78 per cent feeling much younger than their age. They reject the grey cliché of looking and getting old. They're fit and active. Engaged and curious. Deeply connected to their communities. Contributing in real and lasting ways. Almost two-thirds (61 per cent) say they're living the best years of their life.

**"I STILL WANT TO WORK,  
BECAUSE I WANT TO BE ENGAGED  
WITH PEOPLE AND ENJOY LIFE.  
I WANT TO WORK IN THE LOCAL  
COMMUNITY AND TO TRAVEL A LOT  
MORE. I'M A PHOTOGRAPHER AND  
I DO A LOT OF PRO BONO WORK FOR  
THE UN, FOR THE REFUGEE AGENCY  
SHOOTING STILLS IN WAR ZONES AND  
IN THIRD-WORLD COUNTRIES. AND I'M  
REALLY KEEN TO SEE MORE OF THE  
WORLD. IN FACT, AT CHRISTMAS THIS  
YEAR I'M GOING TO ICELAND, WHICH  
WILL BE MY HUNDREDTH COUNTRY."**

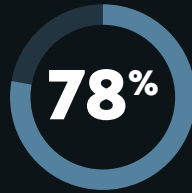
**Female, 60**



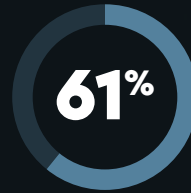
A large chunk of this group is in excellent health. They're health conscious and 78 per cent say 60 is the new 40. Private Healthcare Australia estimates there are 2.7 million Australians aged 55 to 75 who are deemed 'best risk' by private health fund insurers.



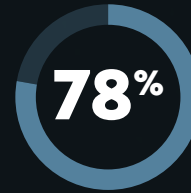
say age has  
never been less  
relevant



feel much  
younger than  
their age



say they're living  
the best years  
of their life.



say 60 is  
the new 40.



**"GETTING OLD TO ME IS JUST A STATE OF MIND. I FINISHED WORK OFFICIALLY LAST YEAR AND SINCE THEN, I'VE BECOME FITTER AND HEALTHIER THAN I HAVE BEEN IN THE LAST 20 YEARS. I'M ALSO DOING THINGS THAT ARE MUCH MORE EXCITING. I HAVE BECOME A VOLUNTEER AT THE LOCAL ZOO, I'M TRAVELLING A LOT MORE AND I'M SPENDING A LOT MORE TIME WITH MY FAMILY AND DOING THINGS THAT I ENJOY WITHOUT THE PRESSURES OF HAVING TO GO TO WORK. ALL I SEE FOR THE NEXT 10-15 YEARS ARE LOTS OF EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES AND I DON'T BELIEVE THAT I'M GOING TO ALLOW MYSELF TO GET OLD."**

**Female, 66**

## B. STILL BREAKING THE RULES

A classic misconception of this audience is that they're 'set in their ways'. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our research reveals that this is a time of enormous opportunity for a generation that's already reset so many of society's rules.

They're reevaluating and reinventing their lives in ways large and small.

The divorce rate among women over 55 saw double-digit growth from 2015–16 and many are getting remarried in their 50s. More than half of new clothing, household items and furnishings are purchased by people over 50. They're going back to university, starting new relationships and buying new homes. They're reshaping their lives and looking nothing like their peers of a generation ago.

Plenty of others are embracing single life. One-third of people over 55 have never married – a figure which has doubled during the past 15 years. More than half of women over 50 always expect to be sexually active. Imagine the opportunities here in fashion, gym memberships, cosmetics, hospitality and holidays.

This group is also challenging traditional work patterns. One-third of Australian start-ups are founded by over 55s – not the image the movie industry has perfected when marketing the entrepreneurial stereotype, where everyone is 20 years old and rides around the open-plan office on a scooter. They're also embracing the gig economy and people over 50 will account for most of the self-employed workforce by 2024.

And, despite what many assume, they're not blindly loyal to brands. Change is in their generational DNA and they'll happily move on from products or services that no longer meet their needs. They are happy to forge new relationships with brands and people.

The limits and perceptions placed on them by others are the most annoying to this demographic. Whether it's their children or wider society, our research reveals that assumptions are often wrong.



One third of  
Australian start-ups  
are founded by  
over 55s

## DITCHING & SWITCHING



**79%**

have moved on from brands that are no longer fulfilling or meaningful



**89%**

are open to trying new brands



**77%**

have moved on from people who are no longer fulfilling or meaningful




**73%**

agree they neither dress nor look like stereotypical age representations

"I'M STARTING TO GIVE MYSELF MORE TIME TO HAVE FUN. I'M THINKING ABOUT SELLING UP AND BECOMING AN ITINERANT SO I CAN TRAVEL AROUND AND SEE PEOPLE AND DO WHAT I WANT. ALWAYS BEEN SINGLE. IT'S NOT A BAD STAGE OF LIFE TO BE IN."

Female, 64





"WHAT EXCITES ME  
ABOUT MY CURRENT  
LIFESTYLE IS THAT  
I'VE COMPLETELY  
REINVENTED MYSELF.  
I'M DOING A NEW  
JOB AND I'M VERY  
EXCITED ABOUT IT."

Male, 62

## C. 50 AIN'T 80

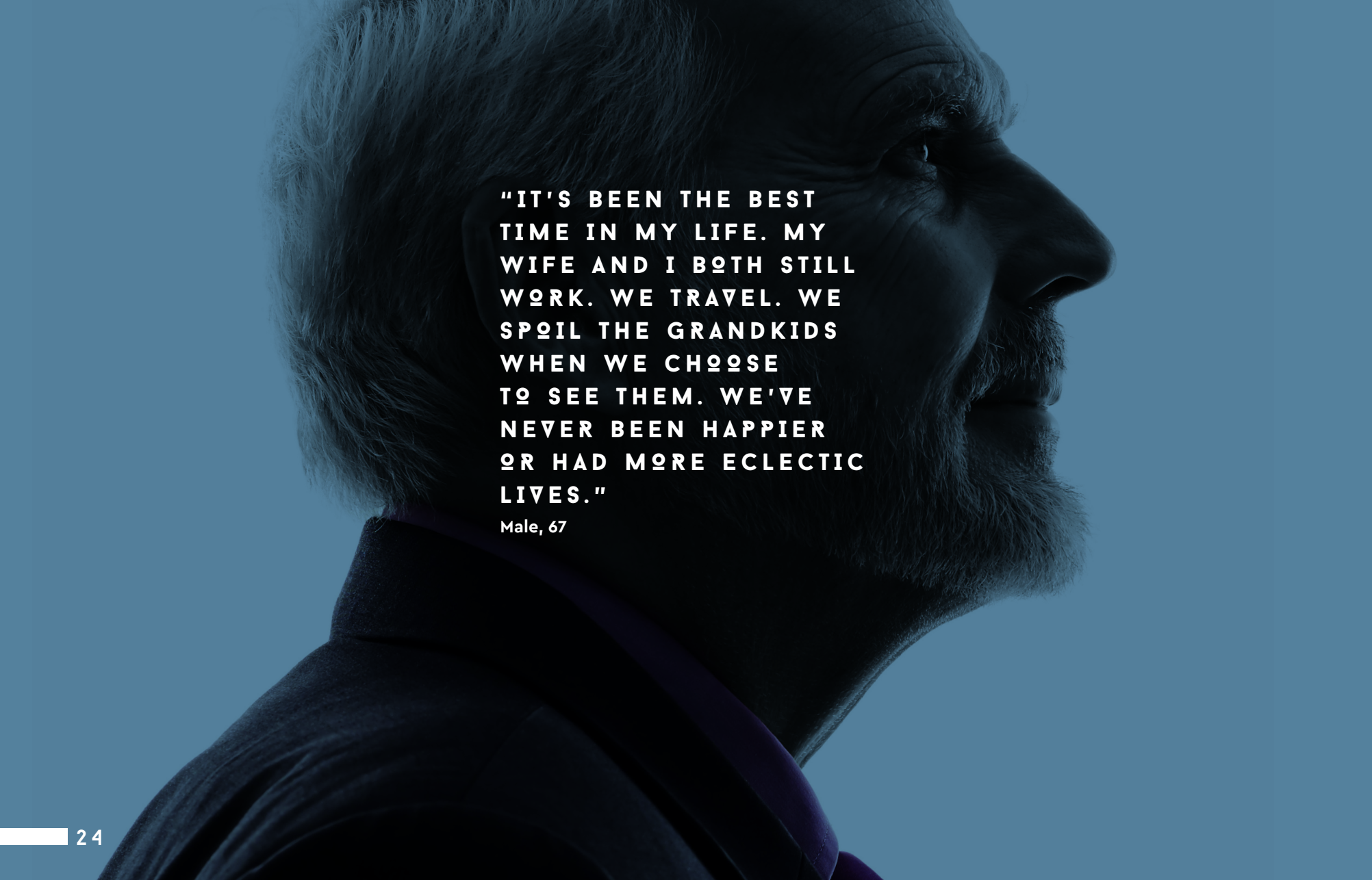
The risk of using 'over 50' as segmentation shorthand is that we treat this vast and diverse population as an homogenous group. It's symptomatic of how little attention is paid to this audience that they're typically lumped together with their parents without due consideration for these very different life stages. At worst its ageism, at best indifference.

Many Australians in their 50s are still busy raising kids, building careers and paying off mortgages. They're a long way off 80, and not even close to traditional retirement, but this distinction is often overlooked. They're doing the school drop off, playing competitive sport and planning weekends away with their mates.

But despite still doing the hard yards, they have a sense of self-assurance not felt in their 30s and 40s. That's why 71 per cent of them say they're happier and more comfortable in their skin than they've ever been.

Retirement becomes the big discussion topic once people hit their 60s. But the fact that the word 'retirement' hasn't been retired is an opportunity begging to be taken. That the retirement living industry hasn't thought up an entirely new descriptor limits the category. Language and imagery matter.

More and more of our over 50s have no intention of 'retiring' in the traditional sense. They might change the way they work, how they work, how much they work or even what they do for a living, but this 'ageless' sentiment lacks the new language needed to describe it.



"IT'S BEEN THE BEST  
TIME IN MY LIFE. MY  
WIFE AND I BOTH STILL  
WORK. WE TRAVEL. WE  
SPOIL THE GRANDKIDS  
WHEN WE CHOOSE  
TO SEE THEM. WE'VE  
NEVER BEEN HAPPIER  
OR HAD MORE ECLECTIC  
LIVES."

Male, 67



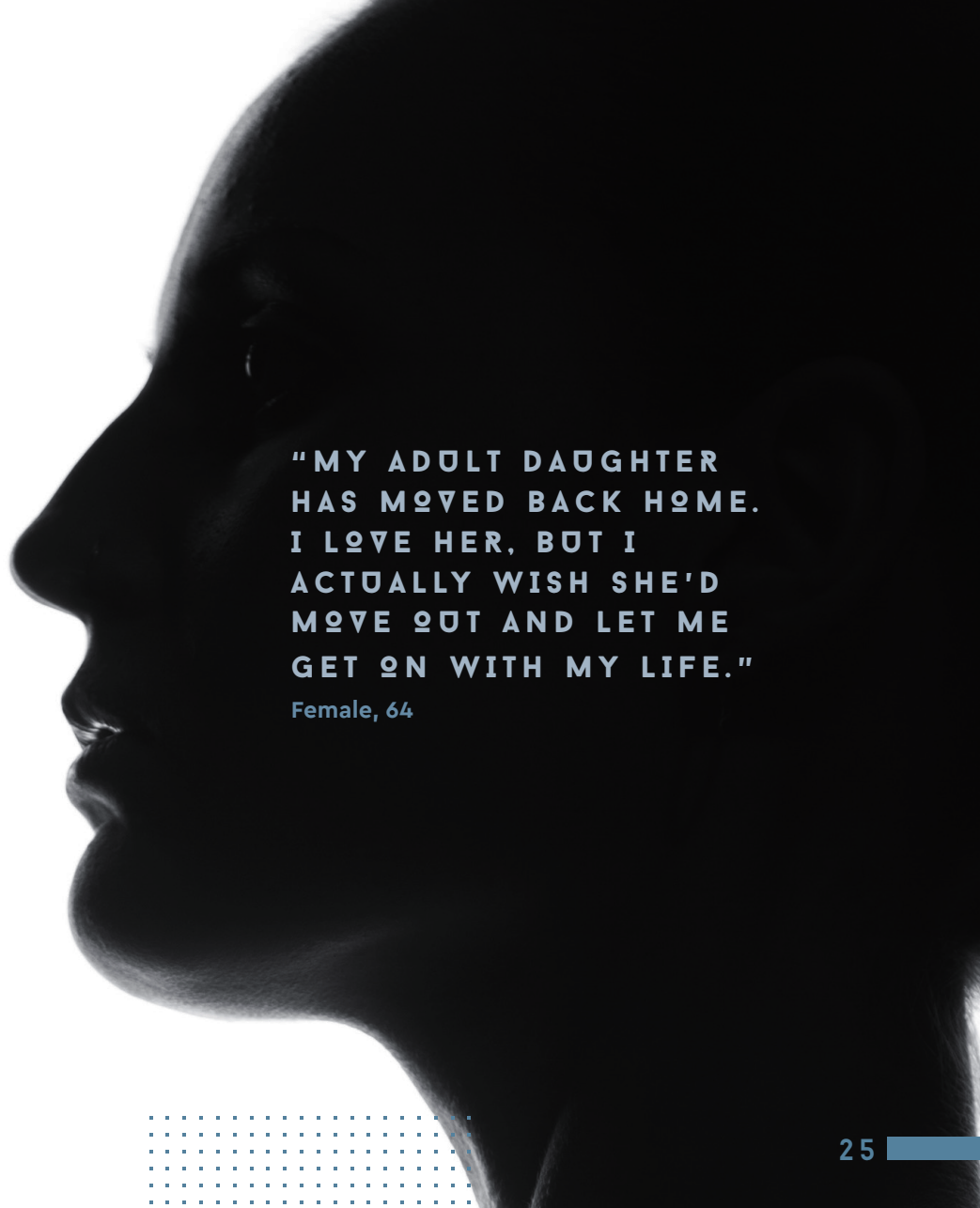
The Secrets & Lies research brings to the surface the overwhelming emotion that this generation feels.

## Freedom.

They're unencumbered. Their kids have lives of their own. For most in their 60s and 70s, their homes are paid off. They have money. Or at least enough of it.

They're looking to explore new interests – both paid and unpaid. They're starting a new relationship. Or a marriage.

## So what does mean for retirement...



"MY ADULT DAUGHTER  
HAS MOVED BACK HOME.  
I LOVE HER, BUT I  
ACTUALLY WISH SHE'D  
MOVE OUT AND LET ME  
GET ON WITH MY LIFE."

Female, 64

## **RETIREMENT AS IT'S DEFINED TODAY DOESN'T COME CLOSE TO DESCRIBING THE REALITY OF THEIR LIVES.**

Rarely is there a conversation (or even an option) of gearing up.

Learning new skills. Going back to school. Starting something new.

What would that 2.0 village look like?

The design of the facilities?

The housing choices?

The inclusions?

Are we talking about a campus for classes to study a new career?

A shared workspace similar to those that incubation hubs have created across all major cities around the world?


Giving young start-up talent access to experienced professional in the same space?

What would that space look like?

And would it look anything like what's currently on offer?

**SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE SOON, WILL OFFER AN ENTIRELY NEW APPROACH TO WHAT LIFE LOOKS LIKE FOR THE OVER 50S. AND THE WORD RETIREMENT WILL VANISH FROM THAT CONVERSATION. WILL AN EXISTING PROPERTY COMPANY OFFER THIS KIND OF LIFE AND LIFESTYLE OR WILL IT BE A NEW MARKET ENTRANT?**





**"I STILL WORK PART  
TIME BUT MY DAUGHTER  
KEEPS ASKING ME  
WHEN I WILL RETIRE.  
I DON'T NEED THE  
MONEY I JUST LIKE THE  
INTERACTION AND BEING  
BUSY WHICH KEEPS ME  
YOUNG."**

**Female, 63**



# PART THREE

## TOP 6 ACTIONS FOR MARKETERS



### GET FORENSIC

Challenge your assumptions and get serious about the accuracy of your data. Ensure you understand the consumer behaviour, purchasing habits and intentions of the over 50s audience in your sector. There's likely to be a significant new market to explore. Every time you get a brief to chase the 18-39 audience, investigate its relevance to the over 50s segment. A new pair of sneakers is just as relevant to an over 50s frequent flyer, with a fashionable but comfortable travelling wardrobe, as it is to a 20-something chasing an exit strategy in start-up land. An app that removes revenge porn, or fake news about personal history that has no business being on the internet, is just as relevant to an over 50s audience as it is to someone who didn't know life before the internet.

## 2. INVENT

Consider new business models, new products and brand repositioning to connect with this audience and unlock new revenue streams. The biggest revenues will likely come from new products and services created exclusively and entirely for this ageless market. Health optimisation will be a highly lucrative industry. A mobile intravenous drip service that comes to the home, office or airport lounge to infuse a big dose of vitamin C, iron or other dietary deficiencies directly into the bloodstream. An app that connects expertise and wisdom with young business founders for a fee. A site that connects students with people over 50 who have plenty of money but little time to do chores. There are countless new revenue streams available for those marketers who engage this audience. Ignite your imagination, do your due diligence and find one that suits your business.

## 3. CONNECT FOR REAL

Reflect the optimism and vibrancy of the over 50s audience – review your communications to ensure you're connecting with an audience that's gearing up not slowing down. Get funny, charming, quirky, disarming, honest, interesting and energetic when communicating to this audience. Don't remove the sexy. Beige gets you nowhere with audiences under 50 so why would it work with the ageless? Most importantly, find new language. Invent new words. Retirement? Why not Encore? Or Next Act? Or Life 2.0? Get busy creating a new vocabulary because the brands that do will win a large and entirely new fan base.



## **RECOGNISE THE CHANGE**

What role can your brand or organisation play for an audience reshaping their lives and reevaluating old relationships? If you're a brand in the tech space, remember that many small businesses are started by those over 50. Go where the money is. If you're in the business of dating, fashion, makeovers and beauty, recognise that this audience wants to look better than ever and has the money to make it happen. A business that could build any prototype product for a fee, based on detailed instructions from its inventor, could take thousands of over 50s from having an initial idea to having a business. Policymakers that recognise a segment gearing up, not slowing down, with innovative support services will benefit from even more seniors actively contributing to the economy and society.



## **DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN 50 & 80**

The over 50s aren't an homogenous group. A 50-year-old is likely still raising kids and paying off a mortgage. An 80-year-old is more likely to be managing complex health issues and dealing with a new living situation. There's a huge difference. Know exactly who your audience is and don't make the fatal mistake of offending the entire group. Make nuance your friend and investigate sub-segments across this 30-year age spread.



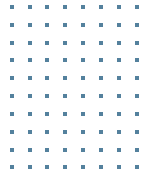
## 6. **MODEL DIVERSITY**

Look at your own business, department or agency and ensure your diversity and inclusion initiatives and hiring policies embrace the value, skills, expertise and voices of the over 50s. There's great value in a person who has withstood the cycles of a business and understands how to turn lemons into lemonade. Resilience is actively taught to the under 35s but comes naturally to most over 50s.

## **IF NOT YOU, THEN SOMEONE ELSE WILL.**

If you're not creating a strategic plan to grow your influence with the over 50s audience, know that your competitors will be. The sheer size and buying power of this group should be enough to encourage a rethink of your future focus.

Any one of these six actions is a doorway to new markets, audiences and revenues. All that's required is the imagination and the will.



## ABOUT THIS REPORT

Secrets & Lies: Ageless & Booming is based on research commissioned by WPP AUNZ and conducted by one of its specialist research and insights companies, Lightspeed.

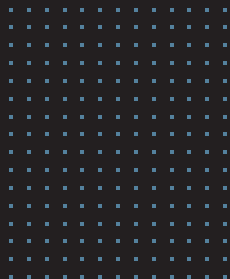
The Australian research comprised a quantitative survey of 2500 people aged 50–79 years. The same survey was also conducted with 1500 New Zealanders. For comparative purposes, we also surveyed 1000 Australians and 500 New Zealanders aged 25–34 years. The survey was conducted online with fieldwork taking place in August 2019. The sample was designed to ensure accurate age, gender and location representation.

The research was supplemented with third-party data including the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

SECRETS  
&  
LIES

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE  
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