Growing Older Gracefully

Many older people too sick to retire

NEW research shows that the vast majority of older people still working and who have chronic health conditions are on low incomes and cannot afford to retire.

The second study for National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre (NSPAC), headed by Professor Deborah Schofield of the University of Sydney, shows 80 per cent of those aged between 65 and 74 with ongoing health problems are earning $500 a week or less. Only 2 per cent earn more than $1,500 per week.

This is in sharp contrast to the 54 per cent in the same age group but without chronic health problems who earn $500 a week or less and the 12 per cent who earn $1,500 a week or more.

80 per cent of 65 - 74 year olds with ongoing health problems are earning $500 a week or less.

National Seniors chief executive, Michael O'Neill, said the new report '*Working beyond 65 - what's realistic?*' backs up existing evidence that it's in the interests of both governments and individuals to have older people working longer - if they are willing and able to do so.

"Staying in the workforce past age 65 lightens the load on taxpayers," O'Neill said.

"It also helps older people enjoy a higher standard of living in retirement and gives them the social interaction of the workplace which has its own mental health benefits.

"If they have chronic health conditions but can manage to keep working, they will be better able to afford the medical care and equipment they need.

"Unfortunately, many older people in poor health but still working believe they will never be able to afford to retire."

Other report findings include:

-Men were almost three times as likely to be employed past 65 as women.

-Arthritis was the largest single contributor to the loss of full time employment, and those with other conditions including back problems, diabetes and heart disease were twice as likely to be out of work than those people with no such health worries.

-Nearly half (49 per cent) of those with a chronic health condition said they had no plans to retire, compared with one quarter (23 per cent) of people without a chronic health condition.

Still working? New research shows that the vast majority of older people still working and who have chronic health conditions can't afford to retire.

Community minded

THE staff at Tobin Brothers Funerals Queanbeyan pride themselves on their community connection.

Local Tobin employees Mistie Dal Molan and Julie McInnes are well-known in the Queanbeyan community, having guided many local families through their times of loss.

Tobin Brothers specialise in prepaid funerals and also offer Justice of the Peace services.

PICTURED RIGHT: Julie McInnes, Mistie Dal Molin and Garth Leggett of Tobin Brothers at this year's Anzac Day march. Tobin Brothers has provided cars for elderly diggers on Anzac Day for the last 40 years.

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