

## Keep a healthy perspective on the virus

Our community is being economically hit 'to save the oldies' - especially with existing health conditions. Should we older people be grateful? How and why could we contribute?

Defending our community from threat is a natural response. We can do it on a national and global scale because we are now industrialised and socialised - the same reasons that have doubled our longevity over the past two centuries. But are we all paying too big a price? Is the impact out of proportion to the benefits?

For an insight into preparing better for a pandemic such as COVID 19, see [here](#) for a thoughtful view from Bill Gates some years back.

## What's the situation with older people?

Let's look at the Baby Boomers, the first of whom were conceived in 1945. Their expected longevity was 71 for a female and 66 for a male. By 2020 the survivors are 75 and could on average live to 85 and 81 years respectively.

So the first female boomers alive today have already lived 4 years longer than expected and on average are forecast to live another 10, a total bonus of 14 years. Male boomers have lived 9 years longer than expected with another 6 ahead – a bonus of 15 years. On average, the bonus is about 20% for both. Not bad!

We become more different from each other as we age so these averages not necessarily you or me. But they do suggest many 'older' people have already done very well. It puts the potential coronavirus impact on us into perspective.

## Making the best of the situation

Since we are still here, how might we make the best of our good fortune? Those most likely to

survive in good shape are working on staying well, especially respiratory health. Exercises that keep our lungs healthy are good: practice hand hygiene and distancing. Fit and healthy people seem to get over the virus and can reduce the burden on society.

In addition, consider putting more back than we take out for as long as we can. We're already on 'bonus time' so let's not waste it.

- Maintain a positive mindset and don't be fearful. We've come this far by taking life on so don't let up. Be an example to others. A positive attitude is a strong factor in our longevity.
- Find ways of being supportive, like grand parenting for parents working from home. Although perhaps more at risk, the trade-off between helping and risk can often be well managed.
- Volunteering is good. People who volunteer for one thing tend to live longer (and better) than those who don't. Pick something you'll get out of bed for: committed, not just involved. Enthusiasm is even more infectious than the coronavirus!
- Support small businesses offering personal services like those we grew up with. Your example may help our kids and our grandkids realise that personal service and consideration are at the core of a thriving community. What a legacy!
- Contact friends regularly to motivate and support them. Remind them it has been pretty good for most of us.
- Get your affairs in order with your own Longevity Plan. It will help you and those nearest to you to identify and seek best answers to the challenges of getting older and reduce anxiety about the future.