

# The secret to ageing gracefully

By NYSSA SKILTON

AGEING gracefully is all about attitude – in both the maturing individual and their community.

This was one of the prevailing messages aired at a forum for research on ageing and longevity at the Australian National University during the week.

Keynote speaker Professor Felicia Huppert, of Cambridge University, said a positive attitude about growing older was just as important as diet and exercise.

“The scientific evidence is very strong that our negative social attitudes towards ageing are causing a lot of problems for older people,” Professor Huppert said.

“There are such terrible negative stereotypes around ageing, that they think they’re not good,

## Positive social attitude may be key

they think they can’t use the technology, they think they have nothing to offer.”

Professor Huppert said changing social attitudes about ageing could lead to older people having “good health for a long, long time”.

“At this point in human history, people are ageing well,” she said.

“[Older people] have a good deal they can contribute and that recognition in itself could do an enormous amount to improve the health and contribution of older people.”

The forum took place to promote multidisciplinary research in ageing.

Researchers from across the

ANU gathered to address the challenges facing Australia as its population ages.

Forum organiser Associate Professor Kaarin Anstey, of the ANU, said by 2020 there would be 4.2 million Australians aged 65 years and older.

“It’s going to change the shape of our society and change what we’re used to seeing in terms of family structures and the different needs that people have,” she said.

“Researchers from a range of disciplines need to work together to prepare government and industry for these changes, and to learn how individuals can age well in their families and communities.”



The ageing forum’s keynote speaker Professor Felicia Huppert, of Cambridge University, left, with Associate Professor Kaarin Anstey, of the ANU. Photo: GARY SCHAFER



Heritage advisory committee coordinator Deb Purss, Woolla owner Peter Smith, Woolla manager Terry Hart, and Eurobodalla’s heritage adviser Peter Freeman discuss Woolla’s history.

Photos: by LAURELLE PACEY

## Eurobodalla’s forgotten high country heritage

By LAURELLE PACEY at the South Coast

EUROBODALLA’S heritage is usually associated with the coast, but the shire also has some fascinating high country history, as members of Eurobodalla Shire Council’s Heritage Advisory Committee found last weekend.

The Upper Deua Valley, south of Braidwood, is fairly remote with tracts of it part of Deua National Park.

In some of the remaining freehold areas, mustering cattle still depends on a good horse, good dogs and an intimate knowledge of the valleys and where the cattle run. Until the 1960s, the only access was by horse.

“For some time we felt we needed to recognise and look at preserving the social history and that farming background of the Upper Deua River,” committee chairman Fergus Thomson said.

“So we decided we needed to come in and work with the people who currently own some of the places and people who know its history.

“Our idea is then, with the owners’ permission, to place the two remaining homesteads on the shire’s heritage register and in that way hopefully ensure their longevity.”

Owner of the extensive Woolla property is Peter Smith, who is

keen to have the original homestead heritage-listed. “It represents an era in rural life that’s fast disappearing,” he said.

He knew the former owners, Nellie, Neta and Vern Davis for many years. The horizontal slab house with four rooms and split timber flooring was built in 1925. In the 1950s, a separate kitchen was built in the same style.

“Nellie and her daughter, Neta, seemed to do all the heavy work, like cutting and splitting timber, building the cattle yards and working the cattle,” Mr Smith said.

“There so many things here that are just part of the way they lived and the way they did things and I want to preserve them and look after them so people in the future can appreciate how they lived.”

Terry Hart runs cattle at Woolla and helps his brother when needed to run cattle further up the Deua Valley where they use Alpine as their home base.

The homestead at Alpine is made of rammed earth, comfortable, and has a good feel about it.

“It was built by Lester Blanchard well over 100 years ago,” he said.

Mr Hart would like to see the homestead maintained.

“If heritage-listed, hopefully there would be some funding towards a new roof,” he said.



The owner of Woolla, Peter Smith, shows heritage advisory committee members the bridle track between his property and Araluen.

## Tracking the region’s history

THE BRIDLE track through the Upper Deua, between Woolla and Alpine, is part of a network of tracks that link the coast with the Monaro, Braidwood and the Southern Tablelands.

Eurobodalla Shire Council Heritage Advisory Committee chairman Fergus Thomson said the network was significant.

“Each track is not an isolated part of the history of the shire’s hinterland . . . They provided a social connectivity as well. It’s how they moved their cattle and pigs to market, and how they

brought in supplies and took produce like corn and wattlebark out, and how they went for medical help.”

Upper Deua cattleman Terry Hart says there are bigger tracks in the network wide enough for sulkies or drays, but most were bridle tracks suitable only for horses. Woolla owner Peter Smith said it was likely the tracks were Aboriginal. Mr Thomson said many of the tracks had been preserved and maintained by local horse groups, though some were becoming difficult to find.

LAURELLE PACEY

### IN BRIEF

#### Sydney burial crisis

SYDNEYSIDERS are being warned their city is running out of burial plots. The NSW Government estimates cemeteries across the city’s greater metropolitan area will be full in a little over 40 years. A discussion paper, to be released today, says rising land values, burgeoning suburbs and industrial parks, and the push for more public open space have stopped the establishment of new cemeteries in the region, which is home to a quarter of Australia’s population.

#### Vic bushfire threat

RESIDENTS close to a bushfire east of Melbourne are ready to evacuate, with the fire 1.5km from homes. Now covering 800ha, it is burning 9km south-east of Gembrook, about 80km from Melbourne, after breaking out on Friday in the Bunyip State Park. Department of Sustainability and Environment fire management officer Paul Brockhoff said residents have been asked to remain alert and stay tuned to local radio stations. Reports of suspicious activity in the area are also being investigated. The Bureau of Meteorology had warned of winds of up to 90 km/h.

#### Airport heroin find

CUSTOMS allege an Australian man travelling from China was carrying 51 packages of heroin in his stomach when arrested at Sydney Airport during the week. A 31-year-old man will face Parramatta Local Court charged with attempting to import heroin into Australia. A Customs spokesman said officers stopped the man after he arrived on a flight from Guangzhou on Tuesday. The maximum penalty for this offence is 25 years’ imprisonment and/or a \$550,000 fine.

#### Bar fight death

A 36-YEAR-OLD father of four shot dead in an east Sydney bar fight was an inspiration and had a heart of gold, his grieving family say. Solomon Penitani died after being shot in the chest several times in the main area of Churchill’s Sports Bar, in Kingsford, at 4am yesterday, after Anzac Day celebrations. The 24-hour venue had advertised Anzac Day celebrations, including two-up, starting from 1pm on Friday. Police have ruled out robbery as a motive and are viewing CCTV footage and interviewing witnesses who were in the gaming and main bar areas.