

“The Changing Lifecourse and Australian Social Policy”

Simon Biggs

Biggss@unimelb.edu.au

Sbiggs@bsl.edu.au

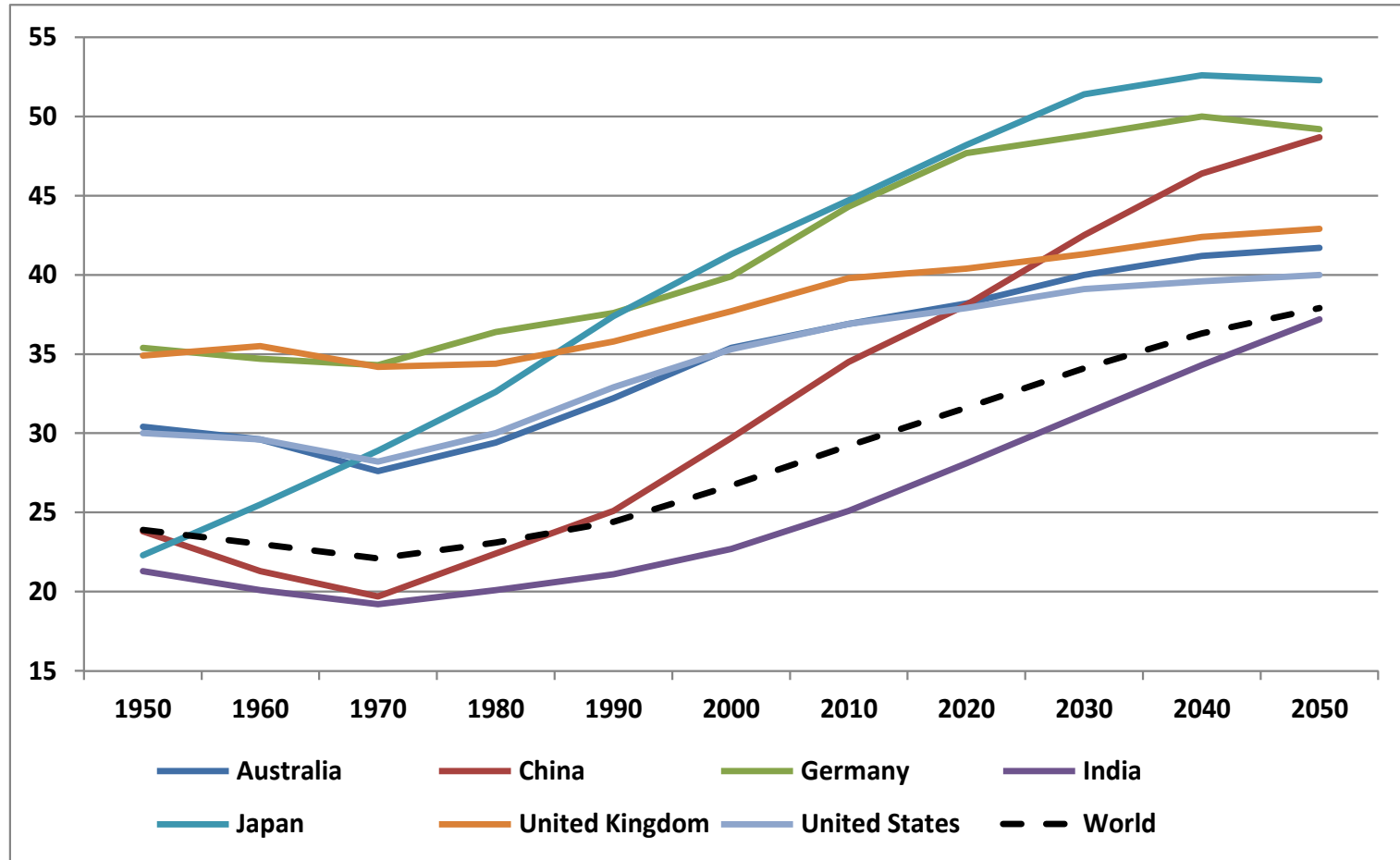
The Changing Lifecourse

Not just demographic change, a task
of cultural adaptation

The Changing Lifecourse

- People are living longer
- There are relatively fewer younger adults
- Education and retirement take up more time
- Older, richer, fitter
- The very old are increasing the fastest
- Everyone wants to live a long life, no-one wants to grow old

Median age of selected countries and world, 1950 to 2050



Number of people aged 65 years and over, by age group, 2012 to 2050

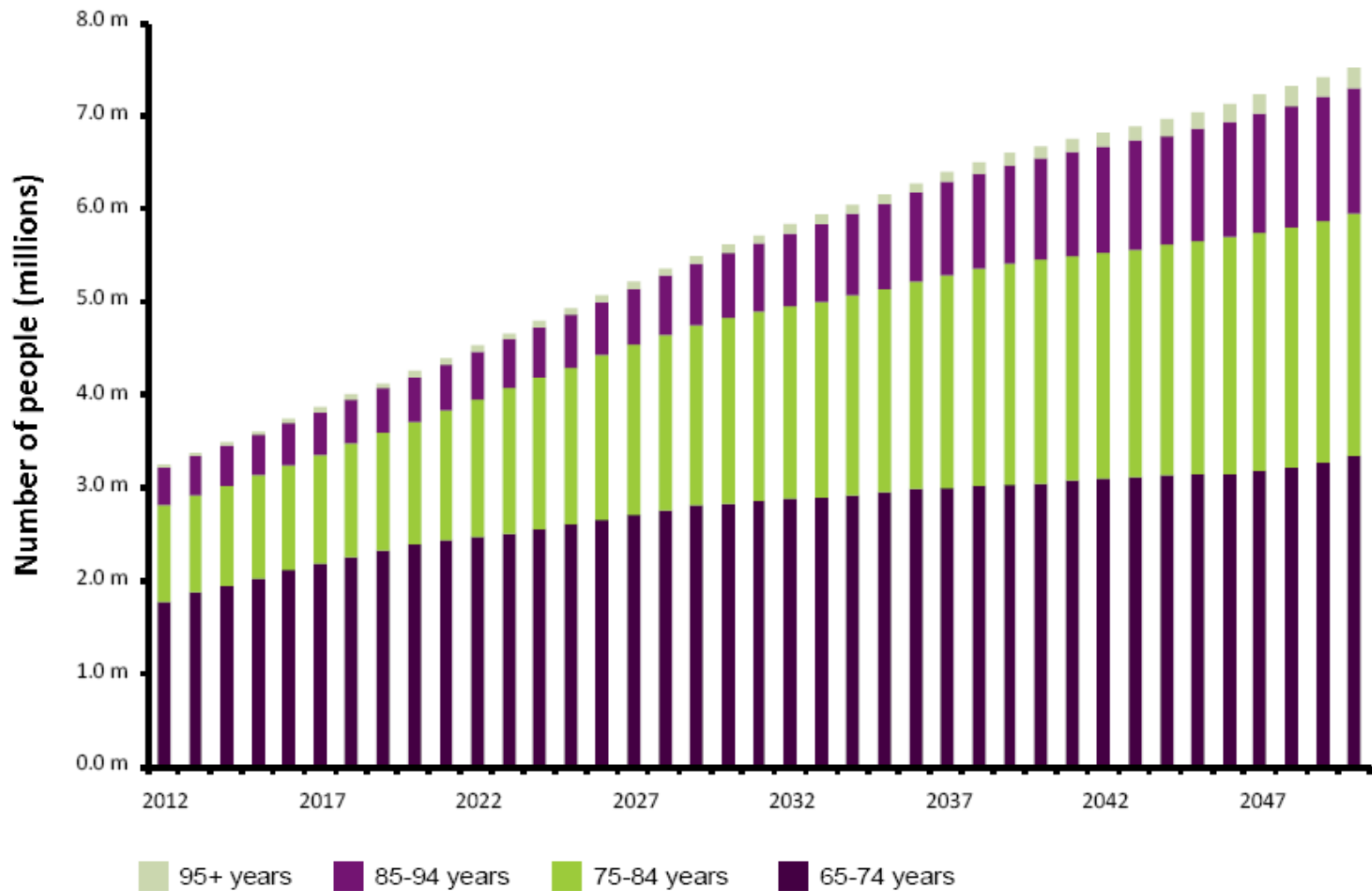
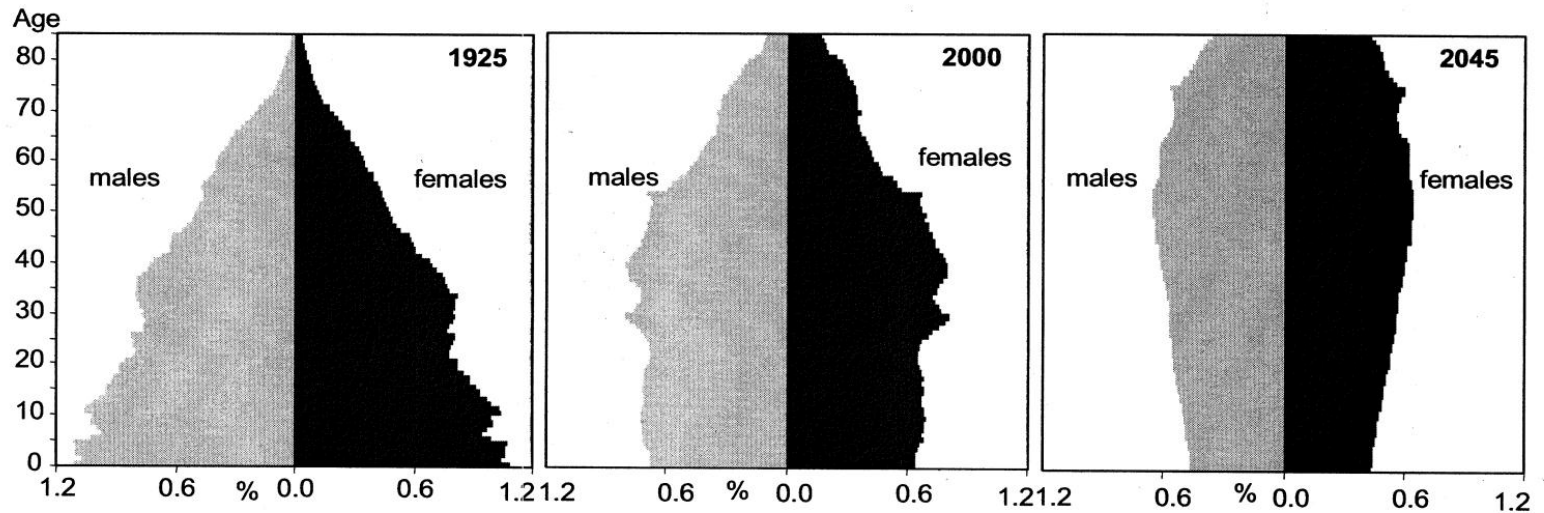


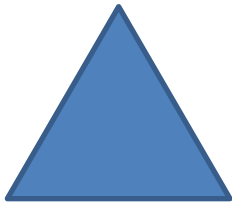
Figure 1

From pyramid to coffin

Changing age structure of the Australian population, 1925-2045



There's no going back



Rethinking the Lifecourse

Rethinking the Lifecourse

19th C (the working lifecourse)



1950s (the staged lifecourse)



1990s (the active lifecourse)



What to Do with Longevity?

The shrinking middle



Productivist ageing



The stretched lifecourse



Multiple Narratives

- Steady as she goes (extended leisure post retirement) or...
- Downhill all the way (extended period of infirmity/dependency)
- More of the same (lengthened period of productivism)
- The stretched lifecourse (extension of each part of the lifecourse - the rubber band)

The Ideology of Productive Ageing

“Any activity by an older individual that contributes to producing goods and services or develops the capacity to produce them”.

Caro, Bass & Chen, 1993.

OECD

- 1998 Report on 'Active Ageing',
- *Ageing and employment policies. Live longer, work longer* (OECD, 2006) does not use 'active ageing' focussing entirely on employment.

Australian Intergenerational Report 2010

- Policies to lift productivity and reduce barriers to participation also will help address the fiscal pressures of an ageing population by supporting higher economic growth over the longer term.
- The 2008-09 and 2009-10 Budgets included greater means-testing of the private health insurance rebate, an increase in the Age Pension age and reforms to benefit payments.

Caring for Older Australians 2011

increase aged care home stock

release housing equity

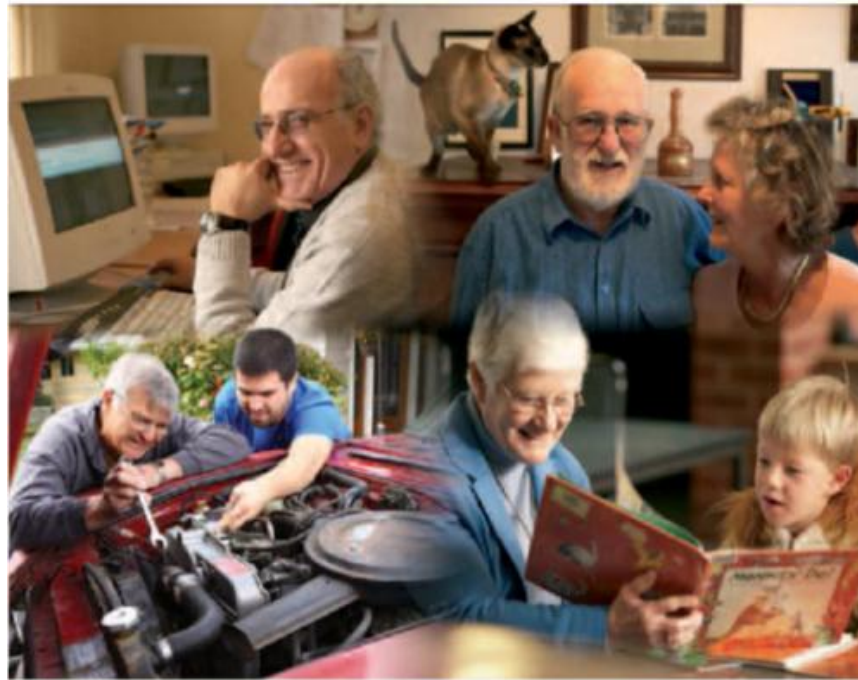
keep living in own homes/community

aged care workforce

Advisory Panel on the Economic
Potential of Senior Australians

Realising the economic potential of senior Australians

changing face of society



Turning Grey into Gold

- Housing
- Participation
- Lifelong learning
- Active ageing
- Volunteering and Philanthropy
- Age Discrimination

Main themes

- Broadened debate beyond burden and care
- Productive ageing, a longer working life
- Preventative life skills
- Multiple forms of contribution
- Older consumers and business opportunities

- A human capital approach

Living Longer Living Better

- Response to

EPISA

repositioning population ageing

Caring for Older Australians

reduce cost to government, community
embeddedness

Living Longer Living Better

- Staying at Home
- Supporting Carers
- Residential Care
- Workforce
- Consumer Support and Research
- Better Health Care Connections 19
- Tackling Dementia
- Older Australians from Diverse Backgrounds
- Building a System for the Future
- Positive Ageing Agenda for Australia
- New Steps to Realise the Potential of Senior Australians
- Aged Care Reform Measures

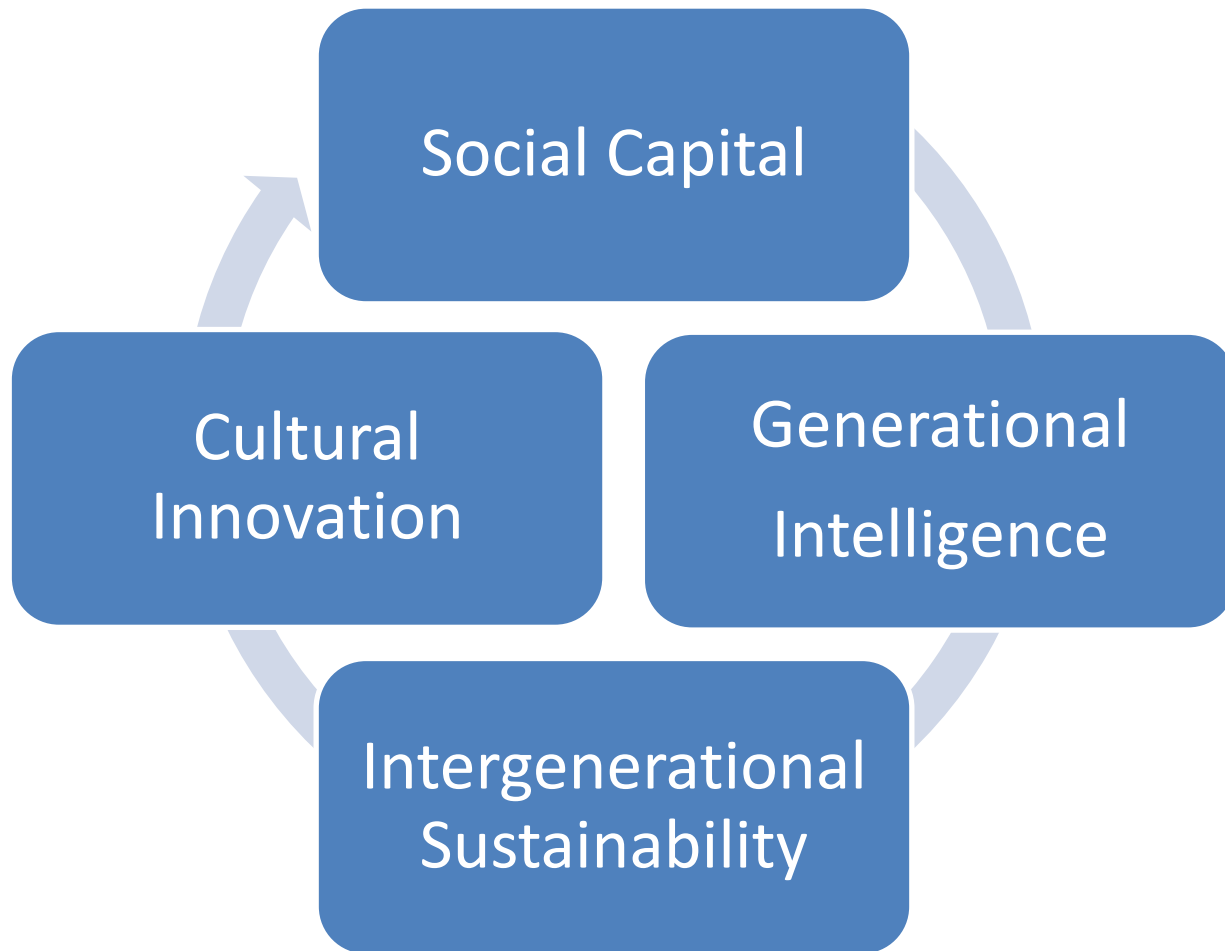
Contributing from a Stretched Lifecourse



- As workers- continued economic productivity
- As consumers- business opportunities and international 'silver markets'
- As family and community 'glue'
- As autonomous 'self-carers'

Creating a New Dialogue: Cultural Adaptation

Releasing Generational Capital



Cultural Innovation

- New roles adapted to a stretched lifecourse
- Greater attention to generational interconnection
- New ways of releasing specific potentials of a long life
- ‘By’ and ‘For’ Innovation

Remaining Questions

- What is the meaning of a long life?
- How do older adults contribute to society?
- Which part of the lifecourse- older workers, active agers, deep old age?

Making 'em Like Us

- Similar roles for younger and older adults
- Giving older adults a 'socially useful' role
- Reduce Age discrimination
- Increase economic productivity
- A pool of 'surplus labour'

European year of Active Ageing & Intergenerational Solidarity 2012

“Empowering older people to age in good health and to contribute more actively to the labour market and to their communities will help us cope with our demographic challenge in a way that is fair and sustainable for all generations”.

Enabling Opportunity

- Healthy Living and communities
- Housing
- Participation
- Life-long Learning

Generational Separation

- 'generational accounting'
- 'intergenerational equity'
- 'Intragenerational funding'
- 'User Pays'

Rethinking the Rethinking

Not a Burden

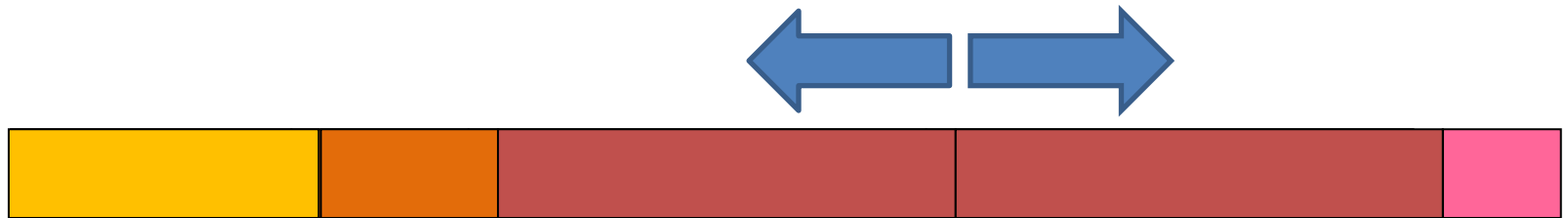
- Generational transfers
 - In Families they predominantly go down the tree
 - (Finch, 1995; Irwin, 2002; Majamaa, 2011)
 - In the public sphere generational altruism on large infrastructural investments (OECD, 2011)
 - Compression of morbidity means LESS of a burden when seen in life-course terms (Bloom, 2011)

Not Resentment

- Younger adults do not resent care, they want the right work-life balance that allows it (Gallup, Singapore, 2011; Karisto et al, 2011)
- Younger adults do not resent paying for other's pensions and health, they just want the same commitment for themselves (Azra & Kohli, 2008; Keck & Blome, 2008 ; Komp & van Tilberg; 2010; Roos et al 2011)

Complementarity

- Psychological changes in midlife and old age
- A change in existential direction
- Bodily challenges
- Discovering novel contributions



Generational Intelligence

The degree to which you can put yourself into the shoes of someone of a different age group?

Intergenerational Sustainability

- Solutions that endure over time
- Recognising complementary contributions
- Age-diversity requires negotiated settlements