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When it comes to healthy ageing, it's time to rewrite the songbook

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Page 1 of 1

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In October, three generations of my family had the pleasure of seeing Sir Paul McCartney rock the Adelaide Entertainment Centre.

It is hard to think of an act, other than the Wiggles, that has so successfully crossed two generation gaps.

At 81, McCartney is the epitome of healthy ageing. It was unthinkable 20 years ago that an octogenarian would undertake a gruelling world tour, much less perform a set that lasted almost three hours.

And he seemed to do it so effortlessly.

He must be amused by his younger self, who thought that the best he could hope for at age 64 was a bit of gardening and a Sunday drive.

The increase in life expectancy is a blessing and is one that is making us reconsider our lifestyles once we have retired from paid work.

It is more challenging for treasury and the government, who must find ways to fund care for this growing cohort of people.



Rockin' on: Sir Paul McCartney in action in 2017

In Australia, there are now half a million people aged 85 years and older.

While the increase in absolute numbers has been significant, the share of the Australian population is set to grow even further in the next 40 years. We are seeing more people living independently into their 80s and 90s, and it is now not uncommon for someone to reach 100.

Not everybody is fortunate enough to have the quality of life of McCartney or Mick Jagger or, dare I say it, Keith Richards.

As we live longer, we are more likely to have more than one health condition, or co-morbidity, to deal with.

The recent formation of

the Aged Care Taskforce is a positive move, led by the Aged Care Minister Anika Wells.

The taskforce has been given an incredibly tight timeframe to come up with recommendations on how aged care is funded now and into the future.

There are important decisions looming for the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority too, who will inform government on the true cost of delivering aged care.

While the Beatles may have posthumously just released their last song, it might be time for Sir Paul to reprise the lyrics to an old classic: When I'm 104.

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