A BAD PRODUCT: GETTING AND SPENDING WE LAY WASTE OUR TREASURY POWERS

RESPONSE TO ''THE RETIREMENT PHASE OF SUPERANNUATION DISCUSSION PAPER'' (23)

Her name was Lola, she was a showgirl.

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I AM A RETIRED MEMBER OF STATE SUPER WHO HAS MADE HER ONLY CHILD (A DAUGHTER) HER ENDURING GUARDIAN WITH POWER OF ATTORNEY IN HER HEALTH AND FINANCIAL MATTERS. I ADDRESS KEY REASONS IN FREE AUSTRALIAN SERVICES TO YOU

Therefore, I first address the following two questions among others in the Retirement phase of superannuation discussion paper (2023), produced by the Government Treasury:

Q. What basic information do members most need to assist their understanding and simplify decision-making about retirement income?

They can have the choice of taking a government defined and indexed pension or manage their own affairs in the market. The former is already preferred by many. It allows more informed and cheaper personal and funding stability, without the need for more expensive, uncertain, stressful or free work done by anybody involved with the retirees' affairs. It avoids corruption which is endemic and encouraged in global society by the use of fintech and related technologies. A regional discussion of land and housing fund management and competition between bank holders and lenders of funds is attached. As an owner of funds and housing, I find my trust is broken with the Macquarie Bank. (It was never strong).

In the article ***Listed fundies' sins are out in the open***, in the **Australian Financial Review**, AFR 11.12.2023, p.40.) Jon Shapiro gives a related explanation and confirmation of Australian affairs as they don't appear to be seen by Treasury. The financial world is a truly new and complex world you seem to live in at AFR, yet I have a comparatively superior level of education and experience in related writing fields. The Treasury discourse, which I address below, frightens the life out of me. It appears so stupidly controlling, promising freedom, when they actually mean more private work and consumption under their control. Even all the young lawyers are not buying this, because life, including working life, is nicer in Australia than it is in New York or London. They appear too expensive and perhaps more nastily tricky and hardworking for juniors than here, according to the article, ***Young lawyers want to holiday, not work*** *(AFR, 15.12.23 p. 25)*. In New York or London, they found themselves ''*just working all the time''* while sacrificing the greater responsibility, independence and flexibility afforded to young lawyers in Australia. Lola and I stopped being juniors at fifteen. This more broadly inclusive approach has great potential to go much further. These matters are addressed later with respect to the treatment of the retirement phase of superannuation and the death of us, as individuals or pooled together with others.

In the article ***Listed fundies' sins are out in the open,*** Shapiro states that according to recent available trends, the fund managers on the stock exchange were the worst at managing their own businesses. He later states that it appears *most listed fundholders are a bad idea* *because it's hard to balance the interest of shareholders, who are demanding growth, with fund clients, who prefer to see an alignment of interests*. This seems a crucial truth which will either shift the national paradigm for investment towards healthier regional service approaches, or fall to spending money in old legal patterns, yet again. Some see shareholders as *having been led astray by a growth of at-all-costs attitude and a failure to do what the analysts are trained to do, act as fiduciaries and spot the difference between multiple arbitrage and actual value creation*. They can't do it? Try old-fashioned letters and services instead of numbers. The demise in correspondence and its replacement in tick-a box profusion is a comparatively gutless, useless, way of looking at a lot of things. However, it's cheap, time saving, avoids responsibility for anything and makes money. It encourages more narrow and limited views. (Sorry.)

I took Francis Wheen's **Karl Marx** (1999) to Melbourne recently and particularly loved Engels. This was an erudite, funny and greatly encouraging book. One recognises the world of letters immediately and is saddened at its passing. Nixon Apple, who I tried to ring and texted in Melbourne, has let me down, so I turn to the AMWU and ACTU which once employed him, and to anybody else on email who wants to have a go at openly informing or helping me find him to talk. As well as being my ex-defacto of 10 years in Sydney, Nixon was recipient of Queen's Birthday honours for services to superannuation and trade unions in 2019. He was the national pick for the same services in 2020. I represent trade instead of unions. I think he should meet me. Why help him hide? I will give a prize to anyone who delivers Nixon to me. This is not an idle promise. How much failed contact is harassment? We need to know because I only tried to ring and text him once. **How much should I try?** Men and women across the world, including police I bet, are hanging on these answers.

When I was a hippie, we used to say *''Íf you love something, let it go free, and if it loves you, it will come back to you''*. On the slender evidence available to me, they seldom come back, and that's just from Melbourne. As a primary lover of SBS TV, with Australian and foreign news, documentaries and movies, followed by ABC TV, I enjoyed watching **The Drum** when convenient. I was sad to see its last entire show although I enjoyed it a lot and agreed with its own estimation of its own general high importance. I hope it comes back in spite of its apparently poor ratings referred to in the article **Less is not more for ABC content boss**, in the Sydney Morning Herald (SMH 15.12.03, p. 30). The ABC's new chief content officer, Chris Oliver-Taylor, nevertheless states that success isn't always quantifiable and that a lot of their shows are about impact or value and whether they bring value to the taxpayer. Too right.

I strongly agreed that **The Drum** showed us many articulately informed new people discussing important topics for policy in any world where it is understood there are two sexes, traditionally standing in different relationships to children, for example. I agreed with almost everything the last 2023 show (about Hope) said about its own importance, despite the fact that having hope under all circumstances may seem silly to a materialist like me, for example, rather than to someone who believes in grace, like Julia Baird and her girly mates. Nevertheless, it doesn't matter about the low ratings because this is an hour every night which is occasionally very informing on largely hidden, costly topics. It doesn't matter about the ratings because the ABC and SBS are there partly to raise the general standard of debate and understanding of the alternatives out there in every sense of the word. (Choice, Joyce.)

Call me slow and stupid but I hate quiz shows asking random questions where people tot up numbers. I can't watch them. I can't help playing along so switch them off. I hate others' crosswords as well. I would strangle my sister if I lived with her. Speaking as a member of the ABC and SBS generation, plus mothers who naturally watch ABC kids shows, however, **The Drum** has huge potential for educating many of the wealthier Australians better in a way that Netflix romantic and dramatic stereotyping through the ages more seldom can, I think. (They aren't writing The Sopranos or Mad Men every day.)

If **The Drum** comes back, however, I guess you might call it **Marking time** with Julia Baird's view of life and fidelity with grace as usual. Like Barack Obama's championing of Hope as something to be kept alive no matter the cost, Baird is largely steeped in the American Dream, which is most appealing to younger generations because of its new global market strength and reach. For example, in the article **Why Wong is so wrong on Gaza** (AFR 15.12.23, p. 34) John Roskam criticizes Penny Wong, the Australian Foreign Minister, and Claudine Gay, the president of Harvard University. Wong apparently defended the Australian government decision to vote for a UN General Assembly resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza. In US university circles, Gay was asked if a student calling for the genocide of Jews would breach the university's code of conduct. She replied that it would depend on the context. Roskam thinks this demonstrated the moral corruption of the US and the intellectual corruption of academia. From a materialist, rather than idealist perspective, however, both women seem right for protecting women and children. Go on?

I have personally found the increasing US and Australian scholarly and professional view that **''words are violence''** and ***''all students are entitled to feel safe''*** to be increasingly out of kilter with reality. It seems to morally champion a comparatively short-sighted, limited and stupid avoidance, to support secret manufacture and sale of weapons, drugs and gambling facilities, for example. Violence is inherently different from words, to any-body. You have to puncture a person's skin with a semen or blood infected cock or needle to give them HIV/AIDS, for example. This happens to poorer women because the infected men who take them appear to do so in anal penetration, to avoid getting them pregnant or to avoid their menstrual flow.

Beliefs that silence is golden, on a scale from 1-10 with murder at the other end, is wrong and dangerous to societies which have realistic, rather than avoidance led views of life now and ahead. Discussion of coercive control at least gets past the fixed technology market and university led professional and related operational idiocies of the dominant US ideology. This is a world with atheists, Muslims and others in it in fast changing places. So, sue us? In my view, these matters are more likely to be discussed on **The Drum,** than in typical Labor, Liberal or other households saving male faces. Multicultural retirement and related personal issues appear largely unknown. (Why won't Nixon see me, for example? Should I leave him alone after he didn't reply to my call and text? I'm begging for information and guidance. Please help me to meet him again.)

I address these matters later in regard to general aspirations for superannuation funds in retirement, and Shapiro makes related vital points for direction. These findings, including those by Treasury, contradict what Treasury analysis recommends and what retirees and fund managers have repeatedly shown. **We want less, not more, risk. I am in a minority view, representing those who want to die with state assistance sooner, not later, after it has become more unpleasant and expensive for me and my loved one for me to do so.**

The Sydney Morning Herald's favourite economist for the last half-century, Ross Gittins, appears wrong again in the article '***We should make much more use of the budget to fight inflation''*** (SMH 16.12.2023, p.5). Gittins states '*We've always had two tools or instruments the managers of the economy can use to smooth its path through the ups and downs of the business cycle, avoiding both high unemployment and high inflation. One is monetary policy – the manipulation of interest rates - but the other is fiscal policy, the manipulation of government spending via the budget*. This ignores the fact that government can and does create value through investment on its own behalf and in helping others to invest better. This greater value creation and investment potential also occurs, ideally, on behalf of the Australian people and has increased greatly since the Superannuation Guarantee of 1992.

I address this later in regard to the **Retirement phase of superannuation discussion paper,** by the Government Treasury but turn first to answer another Treasury question:

Q. Where can government and industry reduce complexity in the retirement income system, and provide simpler consumer experiences?

Government should encourage large retirement funds to provide related plain language advice on how to make a personal will. The retirement fund should provide related will storage facilities. At present, anybody making a will tends to be forced into the arms of financial advisers and lawyers with increasingly complex and questionable, short-term and expensive, will storage and payment systems. They must operate in the comparative dark and I guess many go under and try something different to make a living. Currently these legal establishments for making wills and managing funds take no account of the NSW Health or other state systems for assisted dying or organ donation. From anybody's financial or health perspective, surely this is another big, costly mistake, for example. Australians will find it increasingly hard to protect themselves and get their wishes fulfilled, if the relationships between death, disability and personal choice are not addressed better. As a long-time atheist and feminist, able to live a comparatively simple life, I have sought to avoid any more risky and pushy approaches, from men included.

These matters are addressed later to provide retirees and those associated with them with suggestions for enabling fewer costs and less unnecessary and undesirable risk to the funds, unless they want to take it. This also avoids more anxiety through the increased complexity Treasury appears wrongly to suggest would be good for us, whether we are retirees or small fund managers. Complexity is driving us nuts and out of business. There are much simpler and better ways of managing big funds for future stability and wellbeing in current and future populations. Give us a clear, simple choice. A related discussion and copy of my simple will is found at www.Carolodonnell.com.au There are plenty of people besides lawyers and journalists who may be as well or better equipped to understand and explain the context of any apparent problem in writing, preferably making more open and cheaper recommendations for cheaper protective attempts.

ANALYSIS OF THE TREASURY POSITION AND WHY IT IS WRONG

Treasury states*, the Government is interested in feedback on the opportunities, barriers and challenges to improving the experience and outcomes of members in the retirement phase. The Government welcomes views on how these issues should be tackled and the merits and risks of different approaches. This process invites feedback on how this can be achieved through better availability of assistance, information, and well-rounded retirement products*.

The government cleft sticks are that Treasury is confused about whether we should, or should not, be taking more risk in old age, and in its opinion, rather than ours. I have been an independence loving woman, who realized early that such independence could only be achieved by gaining continuing financial stability under my own control as much as possible, with or without marriage. Thanks partly to comparatively good family, community and government choices, I'd be lying if I said it hadn't been easy. However, I don't think Treasury boys less than half my age should encourage me to take more risks in retirement. At 76 I take as many risks as I like and I don't like taking many. When I call for assisted death, for example, I want to get it painlessly, when and where I want it. Help my will. According to the evidence presented by Treasury a lot of fund managers don't like risking their small clients' money either. Surely nobody, including Treasury, should blame them.

TREASURY CONCERN IS HARD TO FATHOM AND ITS SOLUTIONS SEEM LIKELY TO MAKE HEALTH AND FINANCIAL INSECURITIES WORSE. THEY SHOULD MIND THEIR OWN BUSINESS TO MEET OUR WISHES AS ALREADY EXPRESSED AND THEORETICALLY LED BY GOVERNMENT

According to Treasury*, the take up of lifetime income products by members remains low, and the market remains underdeveloped. This is the case despite broader regulatory changes in 2017 to remove impediments to innovative product design, including extending the tax exemption on earnings in the retirement phase to these products. Since then, few new innovative products have come to market. Most funds only offer an account-based pension and a transition-to-retirement income stream product. Typical account-based pensions provide retirees with flexible access to capital, but without more guidance or active engagement from the retiree, they risk not effectively meeting the other two retirement income covenant objectives: maximising retirement income and managing risk*.

Treasury wants us to try to get and spend more in retirement? Why should I care? I prefer gardening to higher risk activity. Treasury should get out of my face. Stop spending my time, equanimity and money for me. Look at your own affairs and fix them for a change.

According to Treasury, *the Government's proposed objective of superannuation makes it clear that the purpose of superannuation is to deliver Australians with income for a dignified retirement. Australians, however, often perceive and characterise their superannuation balance as a 'nest egg' or an investment, rather than as savings to be drawn down to deliver retirement income.*[1] *Individuals spend decades accumulating superannuation savings and it can be difficult to* *shift to seeing it as income. The Review found some retirees held the view that they should only draw on the income earned on their superannuation assets, not the capital.*[2] *While this mindset is often held when people are saving for retirement, it can lead to lower living standards in retirement. For many, withdrawing at the minimum leads to a sub-optimal income stream.* (Why won't Nixon meet me to discuss this stuff? Does he have a financial adviser, or a wife, he also hides a lot of stuff from, for example? Should he hide?)

Sub-optimal by whose criteria? The Treasury paper does not appear to understand who government is expected to be serving, and hence the people of Australia appear wrongly directed for the future. This partially directed funding process is addressed attached, to consider the effects of bank and construction and housing management operations on the particular Australian ground below. I address a member's death, their will management and dispute related concerns later, as well as attached **with the aim of meeting fund members wishes for themselves better and cheaper.** Good law must have clear aims. Otherwise, it is a litany of authoritarian prescriptions becoming more nonsensical as time and technological practice are advanced by particular political interests, which multiply and lengthen existing law and costs. In such cases, and they are legion, law becomes largely the weird, expensive tool of lawyers and their acolytes. This Treasury paper mindlessly reinforces this problem. It is fixed by law with coordinated aims and plain language to meet on ground conditions, rather than allowing new law to control so people shrink or rebel under foreign control.

Plain English wills and end of life treatment opportunities should supplement indexed pensions. This enables more fund and personal stability, cost cutting to all and more genuine, not pretended or forced choice.

According to Treasury, *retirees are not maximising the benefit of their superannuation, with the pervasiveness of the 'nest egg' framing of superannuation balances making retirees reluctant to draw down on their superannuation savings. Government Review also called out the lack of innovative products available, and highlighted behavioural studies that found retirees are more likely to take up longevity protection when they receive sufficient explanation and information. There are currently 1.6 million people aged 65 and over receiving income from a superannuation product, but over the next 10 years, an estimated 2.5 million Australians will move from the accumulation to the retirement phase.*[3] *They will be retiring with higher balances, having benefited from a superannuation guarantee (SG) for a longer period of their careers. By the mid-2040s, most people retiring will have been receiving the SG at 9 per cent or greater for the duration of their working lives.*[4]

Treasury concludes: ***Australians – now more than ever – need to have access to the right information, advice, strategies and products to help them make the most of retirement through superannuation, and understand how it integrates with the rest of the retirement income system.***

Yes, too right! So why would you want the usual guys to do it? They appear to be part of the problem of high-risk operations promising high reward, but then dumping many lesser relationships at will in the dark, to forget them, moving onward. This has increased regional, intergenerational and personal inequality since the 1980s, in spite of the new and broad provision of financial lifetime incentives for growing physical and mental disability diagnoses.

On the other hand, if anyone wishes to have stability in retirement, Government is often in a better position to deliver it to them than they are themselves. In my case, for example, doing mathematics upsets me easily and iphones make me mad so I like to avoid the pair rather than relying on them much. Strangers often call me ''darling'' when I approach them with a problem, but I'm happy with this. Governments, with their ongoing comparative wealth of knowledge, power, expertise, interest, and funds, can meet their own objectives better than anybody who will die comparatively soon, whether they are in pain, dementing, incompetent with more expensive, new and quickly varied technologies, or not. (Grow up.)

Surely our powerlessness close to death is good argument for undertaking less risk, whereas Treasury appears to be encouraging more risk, if only by encouraging proliferation of new and confusing products of the kind that retirees and those who provide them with financial services are already trying to avoid. (Get it through your fat heads, we are avoiding loss. This is like avoiding AIDS through sexual fidelity.) A lot of us see markets as casinos where we are primed to lose and not make it. So, sue us because we prefer to buy up property to keep empty or rent out instead? Treasury is badly confused about what Government should be doing, which is representing the interests of all its people well.)

In the **Retirement phase of superannuation discussion paper**, Treasury laments that:

Retirees often do not have access to the right tools to assess what drawdown amount is best for their circumstances. Retirees may default to the minimum amount as a rule of thumb when faced with choice overload, concerns about the cost of aged care and medical expenses, or concerns about the risk of running out of savings. Some retirees may have minimum drawdown rates effectively chosen for them by their fund and are unaware they can even vary the rate of their superannuation pension.

Who is bearing this risk? Us retirees, I guess because we appear at the end of a trading chain, both like and unlike a common renter in the land, housing, utility and other markets. The World Health Organization regional analysis, response and action since 1946 deserves to be better understood, with new regional plans and operations to protect and enhance environments opened up early, in line with expressed national and personal aspirations.

We already have choice overload but Treasury recommends more? They must be kidding?

Why use the unfamiliar term *draw-down*, when *withdrawal*, is more common to the bank customer? I write as a member of State Super since long before I retired in 2007 at the age of sixty. I have been very contented with the indexed pension which State Super has paid into my bank account regularly without drama ever since. My daughter and her partner are repaying the loan I made to them for housing, with equal stability, cost and time avoidance to us all, recorded openly and faithfully by NAB. This reliable stability gives me enormous peace of mind, planning power, and comparative freedom of choice, as payment of my wage traditionally did for many years. Now I don't even have to do any work. Today I have not only the stability of having worked, but also the freedom from money worries and insecurities which this greater power of government pension now provides. It seems there are a lot of people a bit like me out there, but Treasury thinks it knows a lot better than us.

The **Retirement phase of superannuation discussion paper** is a bizarre Treasury product which suggests the ideal aim of every retiree should be to spend every penny they possess, before dropping dead from natural causes the day after. Surely nobody wants to live like that and we retirees would each prefer to do what we like with our accumulated funds for retirement, whether we appear relatively stupid to others in doing so, or not. Rightly or wrongly, for example, I think retirees who focus too much on their own preventive health care take terrible health and financial risks by not considering the unintended consequences of their actions for themselves and loved ones, such as even longer lives of increasing and increasingly expensive disability and business failure, for example. We can't stave off our eventual death forever, much as many of us would appear to wish that to be the case.

For whose benefit does Treasury speak? Surely not ours, as it pretends. In spite of its statistics, it seems to totally discount what retirees and fundies have said.

The Retirees cannot fix their own problems, even if they thought they could or wanted to, because the funds have their money and are in charge of how it is spent. I naturally assume that any government will outlive me, and knows more than I do about managing money; with all the advantages that economies of scale will lend them and not me; whose only recourse is a lawyer. Rightly or wrongly, I don't feel so sanguine knowing that Macquarie Bank has its hooks into my strata property through its determining alliance with strata managers and others supposedly servicing this place, while determining and using our strata funds. This state construction and housing fund management issue is addressed attached and at www.Carolodonnell.com.au under the Ecodevelopment side-bar.

In general, the Treasury sees a problem I don't see, and yet appears to recommend more of the same to fix it; more information, more potential choice and more potential products. I am a retiree and I fear all the guys like those at Treasury that are only pretending to care about me. They are just doing what is expected to advance their bureaucratic careers as traditionally expected. Surely, whether we are retirees or fund managers, we are likely to prefer to choose our own risks, rather than having more thrust upon us to deal with. The global market investment group appears to be the major Treasury preoccupation in recommending more choice and financial products for retirees to choose from. Bizarrely, we are invited to make these choices at the time in life we are most likely to be sick, demented, in pain, alone and unable to use the increasing number of commonly required sales and payment technologies properly for ourselves (and that's just the men.)

Treasury has no idea. Is it full of comparatively thoughtlessly thrusting young men who did maths and IT studies, for example? (Let us pray to our Gods to be over them soon?)

For many simple souls like me, there should be a simple pension and plain English written advice on how to make a will, and also a will storage mechanism for members, who write what they want and also keep the lot, with minimal verification required. Some of us don't spend as we don't trust or like the common possible alternatives for implementing our will. We think some may lie because they don't know or care what they are doing while hoping to move onward and upward because they are younger and in a better position to do it than us. Many of us know that we are not ''match fit'', compared to a short Irish mathematician who managed an international airline, for example. Why encourage us to take risk that government is far better equipped to take on our behalf? I don't trust myself with taking risk when government is better set up to do it. Give a sensible woman an indexed pension without anxiety every time. Don't pretend a pension is an annuity! It just costs us all more in work, anxiety and money. Who is supposed to be taking the risk, or following orders?

Treasury states: *evidence suggests varied reasons for low drawdowns*.

Why invent the word *drawdowns,* when the word *'withdrawals''* is better understood? I guess Treasury does so for the reason that it confuses the differences between the indexed pension and the annuity. Treasury wants to confuse people; so that they think more and different products are better for them. They are actually similar to what happened in the past; but now accompanied by many newer and more confusing terms and costs.

Treasury states: *While industry is moving in the right direction, there is still a long way to go. Superannuation funds need to do more to understand their members' retirement needs, set a vision for their members' retirement outcomes, and provide well-rounded retirement products. There is a role for government and regulators in creating an environment that supports these changes……. Government has committed to expanding the provision of retirement advice by superannuation funds through its Delivering Better Financial Outcomes package. This includes understanding and addressing the roadblocks in regulatory settings that currently prevent the provision of helpful retirement advice and information.*

Industry is moving in the wrong direction if balancing global and regional development needs appear resisted in the interests of those with the strongest forces and God on their side in law and with the principal parties, as distinct from in increasingly populous and ignorant disorders. To favour the electric car over free public transport development in Australia, seems wrong, for example. One can only admire the ring of free trams around Melbourne and the Wollongong free buses, as great. The manufacturing mindset should surely not continue to dominate where it is more properly seen as part of the canvas of regional government and related services to broader groups of poorer and ageing people, as distinct from servicing smartarses as usual. Kids without the bank or house of mum and dad behind them but who have siblings, tertiary education debts, and who are subjected to the vagaries and costs of modern work and housing, appear unlikely to be able to afford the electric car for a long while, if ever. (What does Nixon think about it? He won't answer me.)

That the global management of funds appears to have little to do with producing stability on the general and particular ground, seems to be a growing global problem, yet Treasury likes risk! Only God knows why but I bet they also like continual Hope, preferably accompanied by a closed mouth and a bad memory? This global and intergenerational problem is also shown in attached discussions of banking and related competition as they apply to Australian housing construction and management now and in future.

Treasury papers like this one are road blocks, if the writers are to be taken seriously. One assumes that in dialectical mode they may exist to point to the conflict of traditional trading interests that can only produce a lot more bad ideas for consumption because they are narrowly and carefully following their outdated feudal and occupational scripts.

We do not need new products or technologies to deal better with the effects of climate change driven by unequal production, consumption and death of many goods and bads, including people. Governments mainly need political will to make transitions which serve people they are supposed to represent better in future. Give us more freedom and fewer products? (I've got no idea what all these people who claim to be so busy are doing. Nick Hordern's book **Shanghai Demimondaine** claims Stalin's grandma had to ask the reporter who came to interview her, what Stalin and the others did for a living. (I know the feeling.)

The Treasury paints a picture of people who it considers too risk averse in their choices, whether this applies to retirees or to their financial service providers. The paper appears to see the provision of more diverse financial product options as good ideas to promote to both groups. Treasury appears totally to misunderstand the role of democratic government, which is to support and lead its people

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as well as possible in the interests of current and future generations.   The common tendency nowadays is to offload risk onto the weakest and most ignorant links in the global chain while pretending to care about them. This process is naturally enriching the already comparatively rich. The answers are in plain language schemes to serve particular individuals and environments, preferably openly so that all those interested are learning. Australian free to air broadcasting, journalism and related government inquiry, have been comparatively well set up for that. **Compare the pair** advertisements were good and could go much further in related directions in future.

While most people want to remain alive as long as possible, the environmental impact of this choice requires government investigation.   This is partly because another group of Australians are demonized for wanting to die earlier than normal in old age, or are frustrated in their efforts to kill themselves. This occurs because of the cultural, institutional and legal demand of some supposedly Christian God. This is usually assisted by medical and related care decisions made on their own behalf, especially if the person expressing a wish for a speedy death may be taken as demented or drugged.   I address these matters elsewhere, but point out low risk to health is seen as good, whereas low financial risk is seen as bad, by related interests. Where does Treasury stand on this, confused perhaps?

Surely if we are content with what anybody calls lower living standards in retirement, that is our business? Why exactly is the government delving into the matter of how we may spend our own money in comparatively risk-free ways?   We know more about our reasons for our consumption choices than government could in a million years. I tend to think that under the circumstances, government should stop pushing us around unless it wants to help us save unnecessary costs as a result of our longstanding naivete about money because others managed it for us during our working lifetime, when we generally received a regular wage in many cases. In other cases, we have traditionally relied on a family member providing our keep and lodging for us. We are babes in the woods facing people who are much better equipped in every way to rip us off by lying, because secrets have long been an approved way of life.

Treasury thinks it is a good idea for us to start managing our own funds now we are in retirement at last. This Treasury perception of our local life and the global environment is lunacy. We hate risk and are not stupid in either thinking or feeling we have better things to do than chase money, as if no time, anxiety and debt were involved in the calling for years. *''Getting and spending we lay waste our powers"*, may be true for many more of us today.

Government should act with equal concern about those left behind when anybody dies, rather than treating old people like me as if we owe it to others to live it up by spending more, including while taking more financial risks in retirement. I've been on trips in Europe with rich divorcees whose kids hate that! Treasury's is a mad inquiry as none of us is likely to be at our sharpest in any respect, physical or mental, after the age of seventy. Why does government persecute us to take risks we don't want to take? This seems the last thing likely to protect the health, happiness and stability of ourselves, our partners and children.

THE WELL-ROUNDED PRODUCT AND YEARNING TO BE FREE OF RISK, INCLUDING IN DEATH

Treasury states*: For many Australians, retirement represents a big and complicated life change. It is inherently challenging to navigate the different parts of the retirement income system, combine multiple income sources, consider the needs of your partner and dependents, and manage the numerous risks and changes in circumstances.*[5] *Retirees will face many of these complexities throughout retirement. Australians need better access to information, advice, and well-rounded retirement income products to help them navigate these challenges. Retirees remain worried about running out of savings.*[6] *In spite of this concern, 84 per cent of retirement savings are in account-based pensions which do not* *manage the risk of outliving one's savings.*[7] *To manage this concern, retirees seek to self-insure by withdrawing the minimum amount possible from their superannuation – around half of all retirees withdraw at the minimum drawdown rate, rather than considering alternative strategies or products to manage this risk.*[8]

Treasury sees a problem of the Government's own making, where we have chosen account-based pensions because we have the opportunity. It nevertheless thinks that those who are comparatively powerless, ignorant, weak and intent on living longer in many cases, should be able to fix it. Fat chance. Listen to the people and let them do what they want instead of pushing them around, me included. The future is in organ donations and incentives for regulated production of the living, disabled and dead body. This is the demographic case which fails without child reduction incentives for key women. The Australian government has provided these since fixing the male wage at federation at the beginning of the 20th century. I fear Treasury flinging away a century of understanding.

Treasury goes on, pointing to the related problem of the apparently risk-averse trustee: *The Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) and Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) recently completed a joint thematic review of trustees' retirement income strategies. While the review found trustees are improving assistance provided to members in and approaching retirement, "Overall, there was a lack of progress and insufficient urgency from RSE licensees (APRA regulated funds) in embracing the retirement income covenant to improve members' retirement outcomes."*[9] *The thematic review found that most trustees had not conducted an in-depth analysis of their members' income needs in retirement, and the majority lacked any metrics to assess the retirement outcomes provided to members.*

How could this silly numerical analysis help? Would it be an expensive waste of client's money, which would advocate more higher risk action, and so upset and confuse us further about our respective responsibilities as owners and/or investors of funds?

In 2014, according to Treasury, an Inquiry raised concerns about the lack of choice in regard to *''rounded products''* available in retirement. Six years later, the review similarly found that there has been insufficient attention to assisting members to optimise their retirement income through the efficient use of their savings. Since July 2022, superannuation trustees have had an obligation under the retirement income covenant to formulate, review regularly and give effect to a retirement income strategy. The strategy must help members achieve and balance the following three objectives: *maximise retirement income, manage risks to the sustainability and stability of that income, and maintain flexible access to capital.* Treasury states: ***These are the characteristics that define a well-rounded retirement product***. Who knew? God knows why Treasury thinks its recommendations would be more efficient.

However, according to all the cited research, *risks to their retirement income are a foremost consideration for many retirees planning their retirement income strategies. National Seniors' survey disclosed that over half of older Australians worry about their savings lasting through their retirement*. So, Treasury should listen to the people and stop suggesting stupid stuff to government. Treasury shows it does not understand the power and role of government, including in relation to its capacity to manage regional competition better, to produce greater social and environment benefits and to reduce costs for current and future generations.

Treasury cannot make up its mind, apparently, about whether it wants people to take more risks or fewer risks in retirement. Neither can Treasury outguess God in regard to when or how a particular individual is going to die, unless they give an indication in a will. The retirement income covenant supposedly requires funds to assist their members to manage risks to the stability and sustainability of their retirement income. However, it seems that Treasury actually wants people to make and spend as much money as possible during their retirement. Why? As a person of 76 I think government should promote a more stable economic environment for more stable and peaceful change in line with the general personal and population aspirations which members of government are elected to represent and lead. If this is ''low growth'', so be it. It seems Treasury pretends to be on the side of the retiree, but is far more intent on providing jobs, jobs, jobs, in comparatively pointless and confusing ways, calling for new product sales with new names for old ones.

How could anyone with a comparatively small pool of their dependants' money to lose, have the knowledge, trust or capacity to risk new allocations? Unless I was willing to be loose with the truth and uncaring, I would not enter this tricky numerical business. Government, however, is in far more powerful and informed positions if its goal is already to provide a universal service, like Medicare, national free-to-air broadcasting, or related stable pension payments, for example. It has already done well. The point of government is to study, absorb and manage risk, not unload it in the dark for us to manage at a time of life when we are facing a comparatively long, disabled, but expensive future with related standards of living which encourage us to feel deprived without access to more of the same. This seems expensively stupid and an expansion of fund threats, not better opportunities.

Treasury views on risk make confused, unstable life worse, not better. It states: *Mitigation of these risks* (living so long you run out of money) *can broadly include investment allocation (for example, lifecycle investment or glide paths and bucketing - which can be achieved through an account-based pension), spreading the risk across members (pooling) or some form of insurance (annuitisation – a lifetime income product). These strategies all require active work from trustees to provide risk-management options. Management of longevity and investment risk does not preclude members exercising choice in their retirement or being able to direct their investment strategy for their retirement assets.*

This sounds expensive and not for the faint hearted, especially if managing the little money of friends and relations. Let us retirees be paid a simple indexed pension unless opting out. Help me to get what I want as a retiree, not what someone selling me something wants for me instead. Surely that is the best duty of Government in representing and serving people?

In Australia, according to Treasury, *only 3.5 per cent of assets held in pension accounts are in annuities, while 84 per cent were held in account-based or allocated pensions.*[10] *Retirees can be reluctant to purchase annuities: a reticence that is not unique to Australia. The lack of annuitisation by retirees globally, despite the commonness of the concern about outliving one's savings, is known as the 'annuity puzzle'.*

This isn't a puzzle or bad. With an indexed pension, one assumes, retirees, service providers and governments can relax more, with more stable and stress-free lives, planning and doing what they want to do for themselves, rather than anxiously working to protect their money against the odds of their own fast failing incapacity, especially in the increasingly global dark, when they are also most likely to be fleeced. For example, I only trust a close family member or big government institutions as I have experienced them both as goods with great stable regularity throughout my life. It was only when I got into working for government in regard to private sector insurance treatments, in the 1980s, that my faith in lawyers, whose practice I had never known before except socially, was radically lost.

Government could cut costs in half and produce better, more stable systems of operation in the public interest, if the joint political will could overcome its own poorly designed, diagnostic and adversarial treatment assumptions and funding practices, in favour of broader, more informed and better written personal service. In the 1980s this was tried and later lost in state workers compensation insurance premium collection, as traditional forces reasserted themselves even more forcefully to create greater instability in darker global and financial arenas beyond our ken or control. One fears loss of use of superannuation funds in global market contexts where US and international forces still rule us in poor company with China and many less developed nations. Many still appear to be encouraging population growth to the detriment of women and kids left by ''freedom'' fighters. The problem of poverty appears highly related to that of comparative rural and urban overpopulation.

William Sharpe, who won the Nobel Prize for his work in investment decision making, has said, according to Treasury: "*the nastiest, hardest problem in finance is longevity... running out of money in retirement."* However, *many retirees take active engagement in their superannuation investments and manage their level of investment ris*k, also according to Treasury. Nevertheless, the writers continue: *longevity risk cannot be efficiently self-managed without access to appropriate financial products.*

Longevity risk can't be efficiently self-managed because we don't know how sick we will be and how expensive our care will be before we die, and neither does anyone else. We don't want to foist our care or its cost onto our children in many cases, whether they are going to be paid for it or not. The larger and stronger one is, the more carefully one's money is likely to be managed to one's advantage. If some money slops over the side in a big pool of it, nobody needs to get as alarmed as when managing one's small pool, or that of a few others, on one's own. These are good reasons to prefer a government pension and hate the Macquarie Bank anti-competitive alliance with strata managers and others to control and extract higher levies from strata plan owners to provide jobs, jobs, jobs, for mates, while also avoiding financial risks to themselves. If government wants to protect us and use our money wisely, I think government should do so and give use retirees a choice. To confuse differences between a pension and an annuity appears disgraceful, in this more realistic context. Related matters are addressed attached and at www.Carolodonnell.com.au

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ON THE NSW GOVERNMENT REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACT (2004)

The NSW Government is undertaking a review of the Regional Development Act (2004) to ensure it can respond to the current and changing needs of regional communities and reflects the NSW Government's commitment to transparency, accountability and probity in the use of public funds.

This submission answers the following questions from the review by referring to the response to the ***Retirement Phase of Superannuation discussion paper produced by Commonwealth Treasury***:

10. How can the Advisory Council help build the resilience, capacity and long-term sustainability of communities and industry?

A. Correct the Commonwealth Treasury assumptions to the responsible funding authorities, to meet the objectives of the Regional Development Act better.

11.Do you have any further suggestions for how the NSW Government can effectively respond to regional issues as part of this work?

A. Consider the regional project matters in related global and regional planning and development-based contexts, rather than in the dominant organisational and professional fintech contexts the funds and their lawyers normally inhabit in Melbourne, or Sydney, or Perth, for example.

One notes that as part of the 2023-24 Budget, the NSW Government initially committed $350 million for the Regional Development Trust Fund (the Trust) to support long-term strategic investment and reduce the reliance on ad-hoc grants funding as a primary source of Government support for regional communities.

One also notes the existing objects of the Act are to provide a framework for strategic intervention in the economies of regional NSW to:

i. help fill gaps left by the market system
ii. promote economic and employment growth in regions
iii. assist regional communities to capitalise on their regional strengths, to broaden and reposition the industry base of their regions and to develop new products and new markets
iv. develop regional or local solutions for regional or local business development problems.

This is primarily to point out that more tinkering with the Act appears unnecessary compared with the identification and commencement of projects suitable for early joint regional development. Land and housing management are discussed in related urban environments like Sydney and Melbourne attached, where products are ideally addressed as services to people first.

Cheers

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