Article Type: Bookshelf

Population Ageing & Australia's Future. H. Kendig, P. McDonald, & J. Piggott (Eds.). ANU Press, Canberra, 2016. ISBN 9781760460662 (paperback) 9781760460679 (ebook). The ebook is available free online at press.anu.edu.au

Each year, the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA) meets to discuss contemporary issues across the constituent disciplines. In 2014, leading social sciences presented to peers, representatives of government and peak organisations, and some community members on the topic of 'Population Ageing & Australia's Future'. The presented evidence, updated over the subsequent two years (2015-2016), is detailed in the book's chapters, in the form of narrative overviews on a comprehensive range of topics.

The first part of the book covers economic and demographic considerations: the second, health and wellbeing. The third section considers individual, family and governmental responses to the landscape. Andrew Polger provides a concluding chapter, highlighting the scale of the ageing phenomenon and the need to move away from viewing the situation through a crisis lens, instead addressing it at a policy level as part of the response to forward planning across the life course. The book does not systematically offer strategies or recommendations for intervention: rather it provides an academic perspective on contemporary issues related to an ageing society, a compilation of relevant evidence, and the opportunity for guided reflection on the way forward.

This is a book that should serve as a reference source for interested parties across all disciplines in gerontology. Different users will gain from its content in different ways, depending upon their personal goals. For example, interesting comparisons were made between Australia and other countries: in particular, Pakulski's chapter on Poland and Ogawa and colleagues' on Japan. These afford a useful antidote to political and media rhetoric on Australia's circumstances. Other authors deliver their expertise on a range of topics, such as freeing up housing capital to support later life (Ong).

Health and wellbeing is my area of expertise, so I enjoyed reading the chapters in Part 2. Anstey's well-presented critique of the evidence base on cognitive health, when read in conjunction with other chapters, gave me a fresh perspective on the importance of optimising cognitive reserve at an

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individual and societal level. Authors such as Bateman and Piggott note the benefits of our superannuation and government pension systems. However, the changing landscape—preparing for retirement as a process, continuing to participate in later life, negotiating the complexities of the retirement income system, and making decisions on accessing funds for accommodation and health needs—highlights the value of supporting policy development to promote financial literacy, information technology and infrastructure.

In summary, the book gives a curated scholarly overview of a comprehensive range of gerontological topics. The only missing topic that I believe would have complemented the content is the diversity of our ageing society, particularly its multicultural nature and implications for policy development.

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