



PRESS KIT FOR...

The 100+ Club

Just keep breathing...

A FLICKCHICKS FILM PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH SCREEN QUEENSLAND AND THE AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION





Logline

With not a lot of time on their side, three sprightly Aussie centenarians are *still* in hot pursuit of some big dreams. They may have all been late starters, but they are certainly strong finishers.

Short Synopsis

The world's only social club for centenarians, the 100+ Club, has some remarkable members on its books. At a time in their lives when most people have long given up on chasing dreams, Ruth (101), Olive (103) and Dexter (a spring chicken at 100) are on a mission to complete some unfinished business. Ruth - the planet's oldest competing athlete - is out to break her own world throwing records, all-round entertainer Olive is determined to stage one last performance, while outback author Dexter hopes to finish his fifth and quite possibly last book. Most centenarians insist they're not terribly special ("age is just a couple of numbers on a piece of paper") but as *The 100+ Club* reveals, there's nothing at all ordinary about this group of Australians.



Ruth DOB 23.08.1909
ATHLETE

One Page Synopsis

Welcome to one of the world's most exclusive clubs, where you don't have to be fabulously wealthy or connected to be on the membership list, you just have to be old... *very, very old!*

And membership is certainly booming of late: Centenarians represent the fastest growing demographic in Australia and the developed world. Most centenarians will insist that they're not terribly special but as *The 100+ Club* reveals, there's nothing at all ordinary about this group of Australians.

This half hour documentary not only takes a peek inside this unique club but also follows three of its remarkable members over what could well be one of the last years of their long lives.

There's **Ruth** who, despite the fact that she is practically blind and has no competitors in the entire athletics world, is on a mission to break her own world records (in the shot put, discus, javelin, hammer throw and weight events) at the 2010 Australian Masters Athletics Championships in Perth. She's training hard for them, three times a week, with her 72-year-old daughter and coach, Helen (who, herself, is a former Olympian). Day one of competition sees Ruth performing in the individual hammer and shot put events, but walking away with no new records. Day two, and Ruth's a no show on the field for the javelin and discus. The big flight over to Perth and previous day's efforts may have taken their toll: she's got cramps and has opted to spend the day resting up in her motel room. Doubts are now creeping in as to whether Ruth will even be able to finish the competition, let alone break another world record.

In her 103rd year, versatile performer **Olive** feels she has at least another stage play in her – two weeks before her 100th birthday, she came second in the Brisbane City Council's Senior Idol competition, plus last year, she directed and starred in a musical. And with the help of her trusty accompanist and best friend, 84-year-old Ken McDonald, everything seems to be on track for another crowd-pleasing performance. She's busy rallying the crew and learning lines when she falls sick and learns she has bowel cancer, with only days to live.

Two months after successful surgery, Olive is up and about again, though her energy levels aren't what they used to be ("but that's not unusual when you're old") and she sadly acknowledges the curtain has now closed on her stage career. But maybe not entirely ... she might just have another song in her.

Dexter may not be able to see the end of his pen but this doesn't seem to stop him from riding his motorbike around his grandson's outback property, and giving him a hand in the yards. The former cattleman is now writing his fifth book – his autobiography titled *After 100* - but he frankly predicts it could be his last and that someone else may even have to write the final chapter ("When you're 100, you're not far off the grave, I'm quite well but things can happen quickly").

Dexter has penned his tomes with the help of his faithful friend, Bob – a 50-something teacher who has spent just about every Saturday night for the past six years, transcribing the centenarian's barely legible words into a computer file.

Dexter's autobiography is coming along nicely – they're half way through - when Bob breaks the sad news that he may be getting transferred down south. For Dexter, time is of the essence, in more ways than one.

An affectionate portrait of some extraordinary Australians, *The 100+ Club* also lightly tackles important issues around our ever-ageing population.



“Stalking centenarians is not as easy as one would think. They can move, and they wait for no one.”

Our entry into the glorious world of centenarians all started with a newspaper article in *The Courier-Mail* on April 4 2008. When I spied the inconspicuous story, declaring the upcoming 100+ Club soiree, I had a weak knee moment and instantly knew we were onto something big.

Despite this, almost 10 months passed before we called the club’s manager, Ken Mawdsley, with the idea to film the club and its members. The timing turned out to be somewhat uncanny. Ken and his directors had only just discussed the prospect of making a documentary about the club the night before, at a board meeting.

We knew we had a cracker of a story, but we didn’t know *exactly* what shape the narrative would take until after we filmed the club’s three annual events: the High Tea in March, the Lord Mayor’s luncheon in July, and the Premier’s Christmas do.

We soon discovered we had no shortage of characters to stalk: as you’d well imagine a club of this type is packed with personalities. In the end, our three key centenarians just ‘came naturally’. They were all comfy with the camera, very witty (i.e DEXTER: “I had my earphones repaired the other day, they’re so good I can hear now without them!”) and importantly, were all still chasing dreams. What’s more, the three were very late starters at their various pursuits.

After filming the three events, we’d shot enough material to produce a 4-minute promo trailer that we then pitched at the Australian International Documentary Conference, in the hope of securing funding. Thankfully, it managed to pique the interest of ABC TV who later gave it the green light. Screen Queensland then also came on board to complete the

Age-old tips from 100+ club

EXERCISE, vegetables and “no worries” are the answer to a long life.

That was the advice on offer at the annual 100+ Club morning tea this week, which brings together a special group of Queenslanders who have cracked the 100-year barrier.

The exclusive social club, run by the Queensland Community Care Network, once counted the late Queen Mother as an honorary member and is the only club of its type in the world.

Claribell Kelly, who turns 102 this year, plans to celebrate the milestone in style by going skydiving. She went for a Harley-Davidson ride for her 101st and says the secret to a long life is not to worry too much.

“There’s just too much of it these days and I’ve never been

one to do it. It takes it out of you in the long run,” she said.

Harry Newbery, grandfather of Australian diving great and Beijing hopeful Robert Newbery, turned 100 last November and still exercises half an hour every day.

“It’s what keeps us young, I think. It’s what I tell my 10 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren,” he said.

Florence Marshall took the cake as the oldest lady at 106 years of age. After 73 years of marriage and raising her daughters Claire, 74, and Mary, 76, Ms Marshall said “vegies” were the answer to “notching up the century”.

“We always had a massive vegetable garden out the back. You have to get those greens into you,” she said.

Alex Dickinson

20 The Courier-Mail Friday, April 4, 2008

financing.

Interestingly, we were also offered private funding/ sponsorship from a funeral company who saw the trailer but we graciously declined citing possible “conflict of interest”.

With TV deal in hand, we set about stalking our beloved centenarians over the following year. Dexter lives in Roma, 500 km from Brisbane, so we made two trips out there, all up spending seven days filming. A mighty effort for anyone let alone a centenarian, waking up each day to a full day’s film shoot. Olive and Ruth both live in Brisbane, so we were able to visit regularly (and still do, for either cups of tea or Sunday roast dinners at the local bowls club!). We also followed Ruth over to Perth to capture her endeavour to break world records at the 2010 Australian Masters Athletics Championships. Imagine our alarm when, on the morning of day two of the comp, we knocked on Ruth’s hotel door only to learn she was going to be a no-show that day. We were not only worried about Ruth’s condition but also had visions of returning to Brisbane without a story. Turns out, Ruth was “saving herself for the weight pentathlon”.

Working with this age group, proved to be somewhat of a challenge: We had to be constantly mindful of not tiring out our talent – multiple takes were simply not an option. Shoots had to follow a strict routine of morning tea, lunch, followed by a two hour nana nap and then afternoon tea.

Throughout the year, the ‘time-critical questions’ (as we called them) also hung over us like heavy clouds: Would our characters “last the distance” (as Dexter would say)? Would they live to see the finished film broadcast on television? Fortunately, at the time of writing, all of our characters are still with us. Though Dexter has remarked that we took a year off his life for every day we filmed him. We trust he was joking!

Mandy Lake, Director



**Dexter DOB 13.01.1910
OUTBACK AUTHOR**



If it's not already obvious, we *love* old people.

And we find it rather disconcerting that, unlike in a lot of our neighbouring countries, 'old' seems to have a bad smell about it here. Our elderly are viewed as a drain on the social security system and we don't see much about them on tele either.

As 100+ Club manager, Ken Mawdsley, observes: "Once people go into, or get past a certain age, they disappear." Ruth, our sprightly athlete, poignantly points out: "No one wants to talk to an old person." Dexter's mate, Bob Mathews ('The Decoder'), sums it all up rather nicely: "Our older Australians, and I'm fast becoming one of them, are invaluable. You can't put a price on their head. They are an invaluable resource. We're not using them enough. We're just letting them go. Oh he's old. Oh she's old. The wisdom, the knowledge, the resource that they are is dreadfully wasted." Whenever I hear this line in the film, it still manages to bring a wee tear to my eye.

So ... some motivation behind this film was to help highlight a few issues that our older Australians face, as well as to help defy expectations and bust a few myths ("No, centenarians *don't* need to be wrapped up in cotton wool!"). We wanted to show what they *can* do, not what they *can't* do. We wanted to pay homage.

By way of paying homage, I was determined that we create a very 'good-looking' film, so our DOP Dave Russell put a lot of energy into setting up the scenes and interviews. And I have to say, I'm rather chuffed with the outcome.

We were also conscious of *not* focusing upon the usual themes that one usually finds with stories about centenarians – that is, the scrutiny of past lives and 'secret' to longevity. And besides, centenarians can get rather prickly about THAT question, particularly Ruth. Although, I rather suspect that, after seeing the film, viewers will be left with little doubt as to how our characters made it into one of the world's most exclusive clubs.

It was indeed a privilege to be able to enter the world of centenarians for they certainly are a special breed, and we have come away from the experience all the richer from having talked to old people. Hard to believe really, that nobody would want to talk to them...



"You can't help getting older, but you don't have to get old."
George Burns

Ruth Frith

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia - DOB 23.8.1909



At 102, Ruth Frith is the oldest competing athlete in the world, but she will tell you she "doesn't know what all the fuss is about" and "age is just a couple of numbers on a piece of paper". She spent many years of sitting on the sideline "minding everyone else's bags", when at the age of 74 Ruth laced up her running shoes, joined the Australian Masters Athletics and claimed her place in track and field events across Australia and around the world. Despite the fact that Ruth is practically blind and has no competitors in the entire athletics world, she is on a mission to break her own world records. She pushes her personal bests at every meet, in the shot put, discus, javelin, hammer throw and weight events. Ruth is often found pumping iron in her personal gym, or on the sports field with her coach (daughter and dual Olympian, Helen Searle). If you're looking for Ruth, be prepared to move quickly...

Dexter Kruger

Roma, Queensland, Australia - DOB 13.1.1910

Outback author Dexter Kruger told us he "lost a year off his life for each day we filmed" but we're pleased to report that he is "feeling so good now" he "could easily do another 100 years"!

Dexter is up against the ultimate deadline. He's writing what he believes will be his final novel, if he can only hold out to the last page. Though he can't see "beyond the tip of his pen", he insists his books are worthy of the painstaking effort it takes him (and his faithful transcriber, Bob), to put thoughts on paper. He wrote his first book at 86 after the death of his beloved wife, and has penned four novels since. Born and raised in outback Queensland, he has tended cattle for most of his 100 years. Still at home on a quad-bike, Dexter helps drove cattle on his grandson's property in Roma. But writing is "the most important thing" in his life. Ever the salesman, Dexter admits his books are very good – and has used 100+ Club meetings to flog many a copy!

"They're very well worth reading and I think you should buy one!"



Olive Webber

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia – DOB 29.8.1907

Olive found the whole filming process intriguing and bewildering at times – particularly when our camera guy put the lights way down the garden to shoot an inside scene. “I wondered what the devil you were up to!” she says. But being the seasoned performer that she is, Olive wasn’t too worried by having a film crew stalk her: “Somehow my nature seems to accept things.”

Now in her 104th year, Olive has only one regret in life: that she never gave herself the chance to become a professional actress - she was “busy with children” - but at the age of 56 she joined the Queensland Country Women’s Association and was involved with their shows for more than 40 years as an actress, director, singer and writer. Never one to be satisfied without giving her best, Olive was 89 when she first started having singing lessons: “I don’t really know how it happened but I just had that feeling I could do better.” She lists her second placing at the Brisbane City Council’s Senior Superstar Competition as a career highlight.

Although Olive would liked to have had the chance of “doing more important performing work”, she says “the impossible dream seems to be going to happen, because I’ve longed to be on the television and I think I’m going to be on television”!



**Olive DOB 29.08.1907
ALL-ROUND PERFORMER**



Mandy Lake

Director/Writer/Co-editor

“Groucho Marx once famously remarked that he didn’t want to be the member of a club that would accept him as a member. And, for the most part, I agree but this is one club that I’m dying to get into.”

Ex-photojournalist Mandy Lake came home to roost (roast?) in the glorious world of filmmaking in 2004 when she co-established Flickchicks film production house with producer Margie Brown.

Since then, Mandy has directed, written and edited dozens of documentary-style films for government and corporate clients including, *Sudden Impact* and *Second Chance* for the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, *Walk in My Shoes* (a federally-funded doco about bullying which is now touring Australian schools), *Through Our Eyes* (for Guide Dogs Queensland), and an *Australian Story*-style series of docos for the Queensland Government about the impacts of workplace injuries.

Outside of the government/corporate realm, Mandy has directed several short films including the documentary *A Fowl Fairytale* which proved to be popular on the festival circuit and was a finalist in the documentary and comedy categories at the Heart of Gold International Film Festival.



Margie Brown

Producer

“After spending time with a centenarian, you leave with a spring in your step and sore smile muscles. For the life of me, I can’t understand why anyone wouldn’t want to sit down and talk with our elderly.”

Following illustrious careers as a Zambesi river guide, moth breeder and journalist (she also authored the well-received *Careers That Started in Science* book), Margie Brown turned to producing in 2004 after co-hatching film production house Flickchicks with director Mandy Lake.

She has since produced dozens of documentary-style films for government and corporate clients across Australia, as well as festival favourite *A Fowl Fairytale*, a short documentary which was a finalist in the documentary and comedy categories at the Heart of Gold International Film Festival and invited to screen at various festivals across the country.



David Russell

Director of Photography

“I’ve aged 100 years filming *The 100+ Club!*”

David Russell is an award-winning lighting camera operator with more than 25 years experience in the industry, shooting features, documentaries, TVCs and corporates.

He graduated from the Queensland College of Art as Student of the Year in 1984 and has since received 14 A.C.S. awards including the Gold Award 2005 for TVC production and the Silver Award 2008 for TV promos.

He began his career in Victoria at what is now WIN TV, as a camera operator, editor and lighting specialist on television commercials, current affair shows and kids’ morning programs. Not afraid to get in front of the camera, he occasionally appeared as Skelator from *Masters of the Universe*: “Those were the days in regional TV where you’d jump off camera, put on a costume, perform and then get back on camera!”

Never one to sit around or miss an opportunity, David began shooting documentaries on his weekends and considered these the “fun projects” to do after hours. In 1997, David picked up his sticks and launched his freelance-camera-operator business, Light Force Productions, across Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

A highlight of his career has been his position as camera supervisor/camera operator from 2001 – 2008 on Network Ten’s *Big Brother*. He was in charge of camera coverage and managing all camera crews within this role. David also worked on the reality series *I’m a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here* and was DOP on the feature film *Shadows of the Past*.





A blurb about the club...

The 100+ Club, the world's only social club for centenarians, was born in 1993 with a birthday wish...

"We got a call from one of our volunteers who was visiting a gentleman called George Cartwright," Queensland Community Care Network (QCCN) manager, Ken Mawdsley, says. "He was turning 100 and this volunteer had asked George what he wanted to do. And he said he'd really like to have morning tea, or afternoon tea with one of his peers. And it got back to us and we're thinking, 100 years of age - why not? So it took us about three or four weeks to find another 100-year-old in Brisbane and then to persuade the aged care home to let that 100-year-old out to have morning tea with George. And that's how it started."

Today, membership is booming with (at the time of writing) 132 on the books. The club's aim is to bring centenarians together through a variety of functions, notably luncheons hosted by Brisbane's Lord Mayor and the Premier of Queensland, so they may talk to someone their own age and share their memories and stories.

"You've gotta remember 100 years ago if you were invited to dinner with the Lord Mayor or with the Premier, it was a big deal," Ken says. "So if you look at them at these functions they get dolled up. They get their best on. They get their finest on. They love being waited on, it's just something they never had back when they were younger, something they'd dreamed of."

The club is unfunded and relies on QCCN staff volunteering their time to organise the functions, other special events and sponsorships for supplying the member's badges, certificates and bi-monthly newsletters.

For more info about the club, please visit:

<http://www.qccn.org.au>

<http://www.facebook.com/100plusclub>

<http://twitter.com/#!/100plusclub>



“The Queen is working overtime on those letters!”

The 100+ Club is experiencing unprecedented growth in membership, thanks to the fact that Australia and the world is in the midst of a longevity revolution.

Here’s a few interesting stats:



The number of centenarians is projected to increase nine-fold by 2050, from approximately 454,000 in 2009 to 4.1 million in 2050.

Source: The United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, “Population Ageing and Development 2009.”

<<http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/ageing/ageing2009chart.pdf>>



Centenarians are the fastest growing age segment of the Australian population. Their numbers have increased by 8.5% per year over the past 25 years. In 2006, they represented 0.12% (3154/2 644 469) of the population aged 65 years and over.

Source: Richmond, R. (2008) “The changing face of the Australian population: growth in centenarians.” The Medical Journal of Australia (Online) 188 (12) <http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/188_12_160608/ric11255_fm.html>



At the time of the 2006 Census, there were 3154 centenarians in Australia, 797 men (25%) and 2357 women (75%). This number is expected to increase to 12 000 by 2020 and 50 000 by 2050.

Source: Richmond, R. (2008) “The changing face of the Australian population: growth in centenarians.” The Medical Journal of Australia (Online) 188 (12) <http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/188_12_160608/ric11255_fm.html>



Most centenarians: have a good sense of humour; don’t take things too seriously; have an innate ability to deal with stress; are very active well into their 80’s and 90’s; live in non-industrial and less toxic environments; have children that seem to be following in their footsteps, that are in their 70’s or 80’s with very few age related disorders; never smoked heavily or abused alcohol.

Source: Goodman, S. (2010) “Commonalties Among Centenarians”. The Centenarian (Online), <<http://www.thecentenarian.co.uk/>>



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The Centenarian (2011) – An extensive guide on living to one hundred.
<www.thecentenarian.co.uk>



If you want to know more about **Flickchicks** (the people who produced this film), please check out:
www.flickchicks.com.au
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-100-Club-doco/180117138675349>
https://twitter.com/#!/Flickchicks_AUS



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Credit line for the production

A Flickchicks film produced in association with Screen Queensland
and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Credit line for publicity

SCREEN QUEENSLAND and FLICKCHICKS in association with the
AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION present THE 100+ CLUB
director of photography DAVID RUSSELL edited by MANDY LAKE and MARIA RITA BARBAGALLO
produced by MARGIE BROWN written and directed by MANDY LAKE



Screen Queensland



ABC
Television



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Complete credits

SPECIAL THANKS TO

100+ Club members, family and friends

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Dexter Kruger
Olive Webber

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Lady Mayoress Lisa Newman and staff
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Karen Prince
Denise Quinn

Roma Lutheran Church
Roma Uniting Church
Brett Stephens
Christian Tittel
Edwina Waddy
Philip Watson
Grace White

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

Senior Superstar performance by Olive Webber courtesy
of Pauline Bell, Abigails Entertainment
Photos courtesy of Queensland Community Care Network,
Gillian O'Grady, and Allan Saunders

MUSIC

Kevin MacLeod

"Don't Dilly Dally On The Way"

Music and Lyrics by Fred W. Leigh and Charles Collins
Sung by Olive Webber, piano by Ken McDonald

"Happy Birthday (To You)"

Writers - Mildred Hill/Patty Hill

"The Impossible Dream"

(Mitch Leigh/Joe Darion)

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Sung by Olive Webber, piano by Ken McDonald

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