

RETIREMENT

THE CONCEPT



TEMPLER REFLECTIONS

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The Temple Society Australia is a free-thinking, Christian-based faith community. We are guided by Jesus' message of love, with each person free to follow their own spiritual path in line with their conscience. Our community is shaped by compassion, harmony and connection, and grounded in trust, acceptance and respect. *Templer Reflections*, edited by our Faith & Spiritual Elders, offers a space to share thoughtful perspectives, personal reflections and matters of faith.



RETIREMENT

EDITORS

Mark Herrmann, Ingrid Hoffmann and Christa Lingham

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The Temple Society Australia respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather, the Wurundjeri, Woi-wurrung; the Ngaruk-Willam clan of the Boon Wurrung; and the Wallumedegal Peoples. We recognise their spiritual and cultural connection to country, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.



Often when you
think you're at the end
of something, you're at
the beginning of something else.

FRED ROGERS, AMERICAN TV PERSONALITY

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From the Editors

MARK HERRMANN, INGRID
HOFFMANN & CHRISTA LINGHAM

Following the praise that flowed for *Young Ideas*, the last edition of *Templer Reflections*, it was rather daunting to take on views from the other end of the human life cycle, retirement.

But since all three editors of this issue are at various stages of experiencing the 'R' word as their recent reality, we were able to bounce off each other and to commission wise and intriguing contributions from others at this stage of maturity. And, one hopes, maturity does equate to wisdom!

While some ancient Romans got to retire with a pension at a relatively young age, retirement has changed a bit over the centuries. Emperor Augustus' scheme for soldiers paid a decent sum after 25 years, so their retirement age could be from as young as 42 while they were still strong and healthy!

Everyone's story – while unique – may offer readers hints or suggestions on what worked for them, challenges and where to look for advice. Perhaps you've already put your feet up, are just beginning your working life, with retirement but a distant dream... or are somewhere in between.



Editors enjoying their retirements, clockwise (from top left):
Mark with his wife Marianne, Ingrid and Christa with her husband Rod.

In December 2024 *The Conversation* (Australia and New Zealand) – publisher of research-based news and analysis – produced an online series of articles on retirement, perfect timing for us. We also tapped into Hugh Mackay – social researcher and author, including of *Advance Australia... Where?* – who has made a lifelong study of the attitudes and behaviour of Australians. Perhaps we too can gain an insight from their advice.

For Doris Frank's *Heritage Pages* we visit the lesser-known Templar settlement of Walhalla, located near Jaffa on the Mediterranean Sea. Enjoy the visit to the settlement and maybe one of you has the answer to the question Doris is asking. Happy reading!

Note to readers: Although prepared some 12 months ago, this edition of *Templar Reflections* has had to take a back seat to more pressing matters. We can now... finally... present it for your reading pleasure. Please note that in the intervening period much has changed for some of the contributors.

When are you retired?

MARK HERRMANN

Former Beatle George Harrison sang, *“Yesterday, today was tomorrow. And tomorrow, today will be yesterday.”*

When asked for my employment status, I’m not afraid to state “retired”. That happened in October 2020 when I left the TSA Office and the workforce. But I’m not retired from life. That will undoubtedly come one day, but not just yet.

I awake to my alarm (otherwise I’d sleep until 10 or 11am), quickly establish what day it is and look forward to it. My wife will likely have already risen, watered the garden, put on a load of washing and gone to the gym.

I try a morning jog (hardly a run) of 5km twice a week, generally following the same route. My weekly Saturday bike ride with a friendship group is a must, a staple (we might only miss a couple of times a year through inclement weather), where we combine a reasonable distance cycling with an obligatory stop for coffee, a snack, the General Knowledge crossword and Quiz from *The Age*. Our

destinations observe certain criteria. Currently – and for the past 5-6 years, interrupted a little by COVID (where we circled the velodrome within our 5km limit) – we’re heading to Melbourne suburbs alphabetically: “W” at the moment. An occasional hit of tennis also doesn’t go astray. Pickleball anyone?

To exercise the grey cells, I look to complete a number of daily puzzles. Starting with *The Age* Quick and Cryptic crosswords, I also do *Wordle* and a few online teasers.

I have regular volunteer commitments at CHAMPION (a very early start on Mondays) and at St John’s Anglican Church, Bentleigh, for maths tutoring (on Thursday afternoons). The singing group in the Chapel on Wednesday evenings – complete with legendary suppers – is a weekly highlight. And, striving to make it fortnightly, I donate blood plasma in return for the odd party pie and snack.

Somehow the days (and nights) are easily filled. My volunteering naturally extends to the Temple Society. I have continued as an Elder, am invited to Regional Council meetings (as TS President, engaging regularly with the TGD in this capacity), am a member (and minute taker) of the Community Care Support Group, do the odd spot of proofreading for *Templer Talk*, etc, as well as working on the Community Spaces Concept Team. Given TSA’s membership, I also serve as President of the Knox Interfaith Network.

When asked, my wife simply answers with a smile, “He works as much as before, but just doesn’t get paid for it!” I think this (the first bit) is exaggerated.

I guess my efforts for and with the TS are, in some ways, merely an extension of what I previously did in paid positions. Here the pandemic was actually a help. Lockdown Melbourne in 2020 meant working from home and “attending” meetings via Zoom. Continuing this pattern after the TSA AGM in October (when Irene Bouzo was elected as Regional Head) proved instinctive and uncomplicated.

So, I’m happy to continue contributing where I can, for as long as I might be seen as useful. I suspect I don’t do enough work around the home, but life in retirement is good.

American actor Dick Van Dyke puts it in a way I can but agree: “To me, retirement means doing what you have fun doing.”



He works as much as before, but just doesn’t get paid for it!

MARK’S WIFE, MARIANNE

My retirement challenge: 60 days of prayer

IRENE BOUZO

When I retired from my full-time job five years ago, a line from *Fiddler on the Roof* came to mind. In the musical, the main character sings *If I were a rich man* dreaming of less work and more time for prayer and religious study. It was strange to remember that, after so many years, but it made me realise – retirement was my chance to learn and grow in my spiritual journey.

Prayer and I had always had a complicated relationship. It never came naturally to me and, honestly, I often avoided it. But something in me was craving a challenge – a real challenge, not just another fitness plan or diet tweak.

I considered the usual suspects: a 60-day workout routine, a deep dive into nutrition, committing to regular swimming. I had the time, the resources and plenty of expert guidance to make those things happen. But the more I thought about it, the more those options felt... too easy. Too comfortable. If I was going to push myself, I wanted

something that truly stretched me – something I resisted, even disliked.

Then it hit me.

As an Elder, I sometimes included a prayer in my contemplation services – often the Lord’s Prayer to honour community traditions. But my own personal practice? Non-existent. I admired those who started or ended their day in gratitude, effortlessly weaving prayer into their lives. It was something I had never truly embraced.

That was it. Prayer would be my 60-day challenge.

At first, I dreaded my daily morning prayer routine. To keep myself accountable, I set strict guidelines. I had to choose a prayer from my book and say it aloud. I had to sit outside, watching the clouds and nature. I had to commit at least five minutes. I had to start with intentionality by saying, “This is my prayer.” Repeating the same prayer every day was allowed.

I disliked the routine. I forced myself through it, relieved when it was over. *Just keep going* became my mantra. I marked off each day on a calendar – 10 days, 20 days, 25 days – but it never got easier.

Then, around day 30, something shifted.

I no longer felt uneasy about my morning prayer – I actually looked forward to it. The resistance I had carried for so long just... lifted. I felt lighter, more at peace, and that feeling stayed with me throughout the day.

Some mornings, I prayed for just a few minutes; other times, I lost myself in it for half an hour. I discovered new prayers, wrote my own and bookmarked favourites that spoke to me. I found prayers for loss, gratitude, hope, conflict – words that were fit for the moments in my life.

Prayer had stopped feeling like a task. It had become something I craved.

By day 60, it wasn't a challenge anymore – it was just part of my day. And I didn't stop there.

I kept going, not out of obligation, but because I wanted to. I started writing prayers for friends and acquaintances who I felt needed them. I even began running regular phone prayer sessions, sharing this practice with others.

What started as resistance had become a source of connection, comfort and peace.

My 60-day prayer challenge started as a personal test, something I thought I would struggle through and then move on from. But it became so much more. Prayer transformed from a daily task into a source of meaning in my life. It deepened my spirituality, strengthened my relationships and gave me a newfound sense of purpose in retirement.

Looking back, I realise that retirement isn't just about slowing down – it's about opening up. Opening up to new experiences, to growth and, in my case, to a practice I had once resisted. What began as a

challenge became a gift, one that continues to shape my days and enrich my journey forward.



Retirement isn't just about slowing down – it's about opening up.

IRENE

One key lesson you can learn from your retirement is that it's not just about stepping away from work – it's about embracing new opportunities for growth and self-discovery. Retirement offers the chance to explore things you never had time for before, like deepening your faith, learning new skills or strengthening connections with others. It's a time to reinvent yourself and discover new sources of meaning and purpose. What you do with that time can shape your well-being and bring a new sense of fulfillment, and even challenge, into your life.

Life after work

BRIDGEWOOD PRIVATE WEALTH

Whilst the notion of living longer is a blessing, it does mean that we need to find ways to fund our lifestyle. Retirement for many will last as long as our working lives. The key challenge is this: will we have sufficient money to enjoy our extended lives?

The “R” word

The concept of retirement has only existed for around 100 years and today’s baby boomers are the first generation to face the real prospect of outliving their financial resources. The ‘baby boomer’ generation is rejecting the notion of retirement. In fact, according to the researcher Hugh Mackay, “retirement is a word they’d rather not use because it carries connotations for them of elderly folk sitting on the verandah with pipe and slippers”.

So, far from contemplating “retirement” the baby boomers are looking forward to a healthy, active and engaged period where they can continue to exert influence and control over their lives. As Mackay observes “they will be looking for new ways to de-stress without appearing to have dropped out or given up”. Importantly, the boomers have found a new word to describe this period, replacing “retiring” with “refocusing”.

Dreams versus realities

How achievable will this period of active, engaged “refocusing” be for those contemplating life after work? Unfortunately studies show that many people have under-saved, underinvested, over-borrowed and underinsured. This has been exacerbated by the 2008–2009 global financial crisis, which continues to affect the value of accumulated assets.

What can I do to offset these uncertainties?

Refocus my expectations and priorities. Re-design my lifestyle around my projected financial resources and realistic capabilities. Be clear about what income my investments will generate and adapt my spending accordingly.

Work longer. Postpone the transition from full-time work and continue to build my asset base and investment strategy.

Be patient. Asset values tend to return to previous levels after major downturns.

Best of all – combine all three strategies and refocus your ambitions around what’s important and meaningful in your life. This is a valuable time to reflect and reconsider your plans. We recommend you seek advice to help you make the right choices.

Together, good planning and professional advice are the keys to ensuring you are prepared for life after work.

Abridged excerpt from “*Lifestyle*”, Bridgewood Private Wealth: bridgewoodprivatewealth.com.au/lifestyle

Never too old

NICK MATTISKE

It's a seductive image. Yet in his forthcoming book, Australian Christian writer Rodney Macready bluntly states that the common Australian cultural understanding of retirement is not 'a biblical concept'. Macready suggests that Christians have been too willing to endorse the idea of 'leisured retirement'. Too often we can simply assume the values of our surrounding culture and (sometimes unconsciously) legitimise them by 'Christianising' them a little. It's not that retirees are consistently selfish, but the sentiment is often expressed that, 'if I have served the church in my younger years, I deserve something of a break in retirement'. This has had a noticeable impact on the life of the modern church, particularly when it comes to volunteering. In the past, participation has traditionally increased when members reach retirement age – but some congregations have begun to notice quite the opposite.

In his insightful book *The Good Life*, social researcher Hugh Mackay makes a distinction between living with purpose and being happy. No doubt a certain amount of happiness can be derived from retiring and focusing on oneself, but this is not exactly what makes for a 'good life'. Serving others is the purpose for which God has placed us on earth. One volunteer church worker in a city congregation – let's call

her 'Jane' – says, 'I've always been convinced that the church, whether local or corporate, is Christ's body on earth, and that my chief call is to serve this body'.

Jane goes on, 'I firmly believe that in my latter years I'm not called to serve my needs and whims', though she concedes that 'the freedom to manipulate one's time means there can be more of these pleasures, perhaps'. She travels, attends concerts and is always willing to share her thoughts on movies she has seen. But when it comes to serving God, 'whether you are retired or not', it is 'a continuum'. She savours the extra time retirement has given her to better discern how she can serve.

Retiree 'Jack' volunteers in his local church, helps out with disability support, ferries elderly neighbours to appointments and spends time at an inter-denominational drop-in centre that provides emergency food parcels, financial assistance and (just as importantly) a sympathetic ear. He perhaps proves the old maxim that if you want a job done, you should ask a busy person. When asked what inspires him to volunteer, he simply quotes Matthew 25:35: 'I was hungry and you gave me something to eat.' At the drop-in centre Jack is clearly inspired by various churches working together.

Retirement, the concept

INGRID HOFFMANN,
WITH SIBLINGS PHILLIP AND ELIZABETH

As an editor tasked with gathering material on the subject of retirement, my approach is to uncover others' thoughts and feelings on this state of being in later life. Technically I am semi-retired, a grateful position for one who found herself, soon after officially completing her career, quite alarmed by the appellation 'retiree'. I did not relate to it, I missed work, felt untethered. When the offer came of casual work in my former profession three months later, it was to me a gift from the goddesses.

In this contented circumstance I embrace the idea of being semi-retired at age 71, with the blessing of good health, good friends and a loving (also ageing) family. Curious about family dissimilarities, I sought the experiences of my two retired siblings, Phillip and Elizabeth Hoffmann (my middle sister, Monika, is in 'transition to retirement', working part-time). I posed three questions to both.

IH: How is retirement unfolding in terms of your quality of life?



The Hoffmann siblings: Ingrid, Phillip, Elizabeth and Monika

PH: In terms of my quality of life, retirement is still a work in progress. The main reason for this is that timing-wise I didn't quite manage to retire on my own terms. Contract work dried up for me at the end of 2018 and I wasn't able to find work again between then and when COVID hit, which effectively precipitated an earlier than expected retirement by 2-3 years. Because of the way this unfolded and the loss of autonomy I felt about this at the time, I struggled with the whole idea of retiring, as I wasn't even sure when to declare that I was retired for a couple of years. After that period of uncertainty passed and I gradually reconciled myself with the idea that I am a retiree, my quality of life has improved noticeably. My identity is more stable as

a result. I like the balance I've been able to establish between travel, numerous volunteer commitments (mostly sitting on not-for-profit boards) and leisure time to pursue various hobbies and interests. This is now a good blend of structured and unstructured time for me.

EH: I guess I'd have to say my quality of life is better. I have time to devote to myself, my friends, my family and to charity. I have sufficient funds to support myself without concern and I own a house. And I don't have the worries and stresses that came with my career.

IH: How do you look back on your career?

PH: I look back on my career with a reasonable amount of satisfaction, although I'm not completely free of second-guessing and misgivings about it. I'm happy enough with the variety of the roles I've had, and I more than once walked away from comfortable, lucrative roles to look for new opportunities. However, I occasionally experience nagging doubts about having lived up to my full potential, especially in terms of giving back to the world and leaving the world a better place through more substantive career contributions.

EH: I look back on my career with satisfaction, some pride and a touch of nostalgia.

IH: Is there a shift between how you perceived yourself internally as a working person and how you do so as a retired person?

PH: Yes. Workplaces tend to generate a sense of belonging, participation and teamwork (even if the roles we occupy are less than

ideal), which in turn can contribute significantly to self-esteem. I have been fairly diligent about finding other ways to make up for this loss, in my case volunteer work that leverages some to the managerial, educational and policy-oriented skills I developed. This, too, is a work in progress, and it's something I am conscious about needing to cultivate. Ageing can easily bring with it a sense of irrelevance and reduced self-esteem, and so I look for ways to stave that off.

EH: There is no shift between how I perceived myself as a working person and how I do now that I am retired, and why should there be? Work did not define me to myself, nor does retirement. We should not live to work, we should work to live, and when there is no longer a need to work, we continue to live our best lives.



We should not live to work, we should work to live, and when there is no longer a need to work, we continue to live our best lives.

ELIZABETH

Phillip's Afterword

Another thing that the workplace obviously offers is lots of structured time. I would advise retirees to consider well in advance what that

means for them and the extent to which they will want or need to compensate for it, if at all. Like I said, this is working out fairly well for me so far.

To that point, having one or two side hustles to bring in some pocket money is a good idea, especially if it's necessary, but diverse sources of income is a good idea regardless, as financial advisers often recommend.

Elizabeth's Afterword

For those considering or approaching retirement, I recommend you leave yourself time to make the adjustment. Don't commit to too much right away to fill in what you may see as empty time. Give yourself the opportunity to unwind and rediscover the things you enjoy doing. This is your time of life!

My fellow editor Mark was also curious about his brother's experience of retirement and commissioned Rob Herrmann's entertaining reflection, adding further variety to the approaches and tips we gathered. Christa mentions her sibling's circumstances too, as part of her own decision-making process on transitions to retirement.

After absorbing our many contributions on the retirement theme, I can only echo the sentiment: this is *my* time of life!

Contemplating the next stage (of life)

CHRISTA LINGHAM

Retirement is hard. This is a quote from *The Last Remains* by Elly Griffiths, a book I am currently reading.

I have been contemplating retirement for quite a while. In 2020, just as COVID hit, and Victoria and Melbourne went into extensive lockdowns, I stepped into a full-time role in an essential services industry for the first time in twenty years. Was that a shock? Yes, but it was supposed to be for twelve months, yet in the end it was just over two years. When people asked me what I was doing when I resigned, I always called it part-time retirement, as I still needed to do the invoicing for and dealing with our existing clients, while Rod worked mostly with one major client.

Rod and I have been running our own food technology consultancy business now for over twenty-five years. This always gave us the luxury of being able to flex time off when needed and, of course, the ability to work anywhere in the world. We have never travelled without having

to check work emails and respond within a reasonable time frame. It is a two-edged sword but, without it, keeping up visits to my mother and care for his would have been very difficult. It gave us a freedom which is so easily taken for granted.

Currently we are in the process of winding up the business, only working with existing clients, and starting to transition to retirement – it should be done in a couple of years. So, I am seriously looking at those we know who have already retired and what their lives look like now.

Looking around me, I see so many different models and timings of retirement. There are family members who retired well below the official age, and I have looked at them with some degree of envy. All have managed to fill their time fairly productively and had planned or have plans to keep busy.

It is a luxury for some to retire early, but there are many considerations that need to be made. For those retiring with partners, it is usually not too long before the other retires too. I got told it is difficult to keep getting up early while your partner sleeps in and that feeds into your decision.

Living in a farming community, I see other models. There are those families who run the farm as a business and it supports those who have retired through a self-managed superannuation fund. Superannuation rule changes have hit many of these businesses hard. Others are happy to share farm – a system where the landholder shares in the profits (and losses) with the person who actually farms the land. There are others who, when the time comes, sell up and

move out of the community. Mostly these are people whose family doesn't want to continue farming and they consider deeply what their next life stage will bring. I have also seen those planning to sell pivot, when they realise their daughters are interested in farming.

As I mentioned, we are transitioning to retirement. The last twelve months have given us some insight. Rod's working hours dropped significantly. We hadn't planned this, but his time has been taken up with doing all the farmwork that has been neglected over past years. This includes our vineyard, started eight years ago with my brother. This year it is taking up more time than before because we have the time, and I expect that our retirement plans will be shaped by this. As the vines age, the greater the yield of grapes will be and the greater the amount of wine produced. I can see it already morphing into a business, but maybe one that gives more freedom to go away, to visit and to help family out if needed.

One thing I have noticed by not having to regularly be in Melbourne, we hardly ever go and this is something we must rectify. Not having to be somewhere makes it so easy not to go and to lose the connections you have there. It also seems to be harder to visit family members outside of Melbourne – because the weeks stretch out before you and there will be time in the future.

As the quote put it – retirement is hard – but only because we need to find how best to shape our days. Life keeps us on our toes and the plans we have can be changed by many things; illness and getting older are two things that mostly come to mind. Plans should include the thought to do what we can while we are able; and to remember the best laid plans can go awry.

How do you know when it's time to retire? 7 tell-tale signs

CHURCHILL LIVING GROUP

Everyone deserves a happy retirement, but choosing when to retire is a pickle. Are you ready to leave the routine and purpose of work life, and do you have the money to support your future? You may want to retire, but it could be a case of the right place, wrong time. So when is the best time to retire?

1) You can afford to

The main way of knowing when it's time to retire is to check your financial situation. If you've paid off all of your debts – mortgage, car bills etc – then you are already in a pretty solid position. Beyond this, you'll also need to calculate if your budget will allow you to enjoy a comfortable retirement. Crunch the numbers, calculating the monthly

costs of living against your savings and pension, and you should be able to work out when is the right time to retire.

2) You have something else to do

There's nothing worse than retiring earlier than you should, and quickly discovering you have nothing to do with your free time. As boring as it becomes, work life gives you a sense of purpose as you go about your daily life. Without this, you will need something productive to fill your time. So if you're bursting to explore the world, pursue a new passion or learn a new skill, retirement is the time to do it.

3) You are no longer supporting children or parents

If you are still supporting kids or grandkids, now might not be the best time to retire. The costs of getting your children through life – unless they are capable and have jobs of their own – are considerable, and may restrict how much money you have in retirement. If you also have elderly parents who need support, retirement becomes an even more distant possibility. Once your kids have flown the nest, you can start getting excited about the possibility of retirement.

4) You are at the retirement age (or older)

While there is no official retirement age in Australia, to be eligible for the Age Pension you must be at least 67 years of age, though you can choose to work beyond this point if you wish. However, this shouldn't be the be all and end all of your retirement decision – you can retire early if you have the funds!

5) Work is affecting your health

Is work having a negative impact on your health? Retirement could be the relief you need. Work life can be stressful, and you may get to a point where you resent the early mornings and busy commute. You can explore the option of working flexible hours or a less-stressful job, but retirement might be the safest bet to any underlying health issues. You may even be eligible for early retirement with ill health.

6) Your partner wants to retire too

If your decision involves your partner, it helps if you are both on the same page. Retirement is a decision that needs to be made together, and your vision of an ideal retirement should ideally be aligned. However, if your partner wants to continue working when you want to retire, it might not be the best time!

7) It's time for you to relax

You haven't had a spa day for as long as you can remember. Your last beach holiday is a distant memory. You can't remember the last time you haven't been thinking about work. All key signs that it is time for you to relax, and enjoy a work-free life!

Originally published by Churchill Living. Available at: <https://www.churchill-living.co.uk/news/retirement-life-style-news/how-do-you-know-when-its-time-to-retire-7-tell-tale-signs/>

Is this all there is?

SUSAN MOORE

The age at which Australians can receive the pension has risen to 67, meaning many of us are working longer. But the length of time we are expected to spend retired has also risen, because we are living longer. It's not unreasonable to expect the retirement phase will last about 20 years, perhaps longer. How should people approach it?

Are retirees satisfied? In 2018 a colleague and I surveyed nearly 1000 Australians aged 55 and over who described themselves as fully or substantially retired from the workforce. Most were very satisfied (51%) or satisfied (35%) with their retirement, and the majority rated their post-retirement life satisfaction as better (47%) or the same (39%) as it had been when they were working.

What do retirees like most?

Retirees in our survey talked about freedom: to sleep in, travel, catch up with friends and family, renovate, garden, get fit, try art classes, learn Italian and, if they can afford it, spend up big. But even freedom can have a downside. One woman from the survey said after four months she got sick of it, asking "Is this all there is?"

So what did retirees miss most? Money was a big issue for nearly 20%, and about one-third felt their financial position had worsened, even though the group had mainly worked in professional and white-collar jobs. But the things they missed most were social – the opportunity to make new friends, to engage in new activities and to feel useful. They said things like: *I miss the companionship of working in a team and some of the social connections I once enjoyed.*

Work not only provides income and social contact, but it also has the capacity to engender a sense of meaning and purpose. Some retirees commented specifically on this: *I miss the sense of purpose. While it was hugely stressful, I felt useful. Now I keep feeling at a bit of a loss as if I should be doing something.*

Identity loss

Work provides us with status, it enhances our sense of self. Achievement of work goals can build confidence and self-esteem. When we meet a new person, often the first question they ask is, “What do you do for a living?” It can feel as though your work defines you as a person, rather than your many-faceted self. Not surprisingly, our study respondents frequently commented on retirement as challenging their sense of identity.

The retirement journey

So it is important to remember retirement is not just an event, it’s a process. In any major life transition, it’s necessary to adapt our roles and expectations. Even the most exciting life changes, such as becoming a parent or winning a lottery, involve psychological

work. We are likely to experience strong emotions, both positive and negative, as we experiment, fail, lose heart, try something else and eventually adjust to a new reality.

These adjustments might be greater for retirees who go from full-time work to full-time leisure, than for those who move gradually through part-time or casual work or who quickly take up new activities they've been planning for years.

Mark Cussen, a financial planner specialising in retirement, argues the retirement journey takes us through several psychological stages, including a honeymoon phase in which new retirees feel relieved as the constraints of working life are removed.

However, the initial sense of freedom loses its novelty value. Some then go through a phase of disenchantment. Life can feel boring, lacking in purpose or weighed down by domestic duties and activities that do not challenge or bring joy.

The 'best years of our lives'

The final phase is adaptation, involving a re-orientation of identity from worker to someone who finds meaning and purpose in a different set of activities.

This change usually involves renegotiating relationships with family and friends, as well as experimenting with new activities, interests and friendship groups.

Over time, most retirees develop a new, non-work identity. New routines, different social worlds and re-imagined goals are established. Many describe these years as the best of their lives.

What makes a successful retirement?

Research assessing the strongest predictors of adjustment to and satisfaction with retirement is complex because there are so many potential variables to be measured and controlled. But these are often distilled down to several key factors including physical health, finances, psychological health, leisure activities and social integration.

Studies assessing gender difference in adjustment to retirement are equivocal, but somewhat dated. Nevertheless, many commentators agree women generally have fewer problems adapting socially. Women tend to have stronger non-work networks, are more integrated into their communities and have a more multifaceted sense of identity than those men who define themselves largely in terms of their work.

However, the average woman is less financially prepared for retirement than a man as a result of taking time off work for children or other caring responsibilities. Women also dominate many of the lower paid jobs. But for both sexes, studies indicate pre-retirement planning helps ensure a secure retirement.

Work out what's important

Money isn't everything. Lifestyle planning including post-retirement activities, new roles and interests, prioritising mental and physical

health and maintaining your social contacts are also vital aspects of a workforce exit strategy.

How are you planning to stay mentally stimulated? What strategies do you have in place to manage stress and maintain good physical health? And what about friendships? Loneliness is being described as an “epidemic” among the elderly, especially those without a partner.

How will you build a new social life that may include but does not rely on former work colleagues? How will you negotiate a family life that keeps you connected without becoming a domestic slave?

A well-planned retirement

Retirement has the potential to be a wonderful phase of life in which it is possible to strengthen relationships and achieve goals that you didn't have time for in your middle years when you were consolidating your career and home life.

It's a time to live out some of your dreams, work through a bucket list perhaps, and have some fun as well as planning what sort of legacy you will leave for future generations.

What's the secret? In short, plan your finances, maintain a healthy lifestyle, stay socially integrated, challenge yourself mentally, stay positive and be flexible.

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How much do you need to retire?

BRENDAN COATES & JOEY MOLONEY

How much do you need to save for a comfortable retirement? It's a big question, and you'll often hear dire warnings you don't have enough. But for most Australians, it's a lot less than you might think.

You spend less in retirement

Australians tend to overestimate how much they need in retirement. Retirees don't have work-related expenses and have more time to do things for themselves. And retirees, especially pensioners, benefit from discounts on council rates, electricity, medicines and other benefits worth thousands of dollars a year.

While housing is becoming less affordable, most retirees own their own home and have paid it off by the time they retire. Australians who own their home spend an average of 20-25% of their income on housing while working, largely to pay the mortgage. But that falls to

just 5% among retiree homeowners, because they are just left with smaller things such as rates and insurance.

And whatever the income you need at the start of your retirement, it typically falls as you age. Retirees tend to spend 15-20% less at age 90 than they do at age 70, after adjusting for inflation, as their health deteriorates and their discretionary spending falls.

Most of their health and aged-care costs are covered by government.

So how much superannuation do you need?

Consumer group Super Consumers Australia has crunched the numbers on retiree spending and presents three robust “budget standards”:

- a “low” standard (that is, enough for a person who wants to spend more than what 30% of retirees do)
- a “medium” standard (spending more than what 50% of retirees do), and
- a “high” standard (more than what 70% do).

Crucially, these estimates account for the significant role of the Age Pension in the retirement income of many Australians. The maximum Age Pension is now \$30,000 a year for singles and \$45,000 a year for couples.

To meet Super Consumers Australia's "medium" retirement standard, a single homeowner needs to have saved only \$279,000 in super by age 65 to be able to spend \$41,000 a year. A couple needs only \$371,000 in super between them to spend \$60,000 a year.

To meet their "low" standard – which still enables you to spend more than 30% of retirees – single Australians need \$76,000 in super at retirement, and couples \$95,000 (while also qualifying for a full Age Pension).

That's provided that you own your own home (more on that later).

Ignore the super lobby's estimates

Australians should ignore the retirement standards produced by super lobby group the Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia.

Their "comfortable" standard assumes retirees need an annual income of \$52,085 as a single and \$73,337 as a couple. This would require a super balance of \$595,000 for a single person and \$690,000 for a couple.

But this is a standard of living most Australians don't have before retirement. It is higher than what 80% of single working Australians, and 70% of couples, spend today.

For most Australians, saving enough to meet the super lobby's "comfortable" standard in retirement can only come by being uncomfortable during their working life.

Most Australians are on track for a comfortable retirement

The good news is most Australians are on track.

The federal government's 2020 Retirement Income Review concludes most future retirees can expect an adequate retirement, replacing a more-than-reasonable share of their pre-retirement earnings – more than the 65-75% benchmark nominated by the review. Even most Australians who work part-time or have broken work histories will hit this benchmark.

Most retirees today feel more comfortable financially than younger Australians. And typically, they have enough money to sustain the same, or a higher, living standard in retirement than they had when working.

Rising mortgage debt doesn't change this story

More Australians are retiring with mortgage debt – about 13% of over-65s had a mortgage in 2019/2020, up from 4% in 2002/2003. But the government's Retirement Income Review found most retirees who used \$100,000 of their super to pay off the mortgage when they retire would still have an adequate retirement income.

This is, in part, because many would qualify for more Age Pension after using a big chunk of super to pay off the mortgage. And retirees can get a loan via the government's Home Equity Access Scheme to draw equity out of their home up to a maximum value of 150% of the Age Pension, or \$45,000 a year, irrespective of how much Age Pension you are eligible for.

The outstanding debt accrues with interest, which the government recovers when the property is sold, or from the borrower's estate when they die, reducing the size of the inheritance that goes to the kids.

But what about renters?

One group of Australians is not on track for a comfortable retirement: those who don't own a home and must keep paying rent in retirement. Nearly half of retired renters live in poverty today.

Most Australians approaching retirement own their own homes today, but fewer will do so in future. Among the poorest 40% of those aged 45-54, just 53% own their home today, down from 71% four decades ago.

But a single retiree renting a unit for \$330 a week – cheaper than 80% of the one-bedroom units across all capital cities – would need an extra \$200,000 in super, in addition to Commonwealth Rent Assistance (according to the government's Money Smart Retirement Planner).

This is why raising Commonwealth Rent Assistance to help renting retirees keep a roof over their heads should be an urgent priority for the federal government.

Australians have been told for decades that they're not saving enough for retirement. But the vast majority of retirees today and in future are likely to be financially comfortable.

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The “R” word

ROB HERRMANN

Hmm, the “R” word, plan don’t panic!

This is not the “R” word that economists prattle on about, but the other one – retirement! Something which is much more personal and significant, and possibly one of the most important, difficult and potentially stressful decisions we must make, providing we are fortunate enough to get this far in life.

As a soon to be retiree, many thoughts have swirled through my mind. Firstly, and of necessity, these were of a financial nature – how much have I got, how much do I need, how long might I live, will I be able to afford holidays, a new car and, most importantly, good wine? All relevant questions, but as we are all in different situations, and I don’t have any answers, I won’t discuss further.

What is common to all is that retirement signifies a major life change, hopefully for the better. How will it feel not to be a slave to an alarm clock, what will it look like, will I be bored?

In the past, age 65 signified retirement for most, decision made. These days, retirement age is much more flexible; on the one hand, we live longer than ever before, tempting later retirement, while on

the other hand, many of us have superannuation funds which might allow earlier retirement. Most of us will, by this point, have our Seniors Myki card and access to cheaper cinema tickets. I even received life membership of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, giving me free annual subscription after 40 years of paying fees. However, as I am soon to retire, this won't save me a penny!

Like most things in life, planning ahead is helpful. This should not be a rigid agenda as I imagine that one of the major attractions of retirement will be to allow more flexibility for however we choose to spend our time.

Many of us have careers requiring ambition, responsibility and long hours, leading to devoting much of our time to our jobs and not so much to family, interests, hobbies and activities outside of our work. This is where I feel some preparation is most important. I have been lucky enough to gradually cut down my work hours (helped by the COVID epidemic) and therefore transition steadily into my upcoming retirement. Attention to the fostering of friendships, discussion with colleagues, rekindling of previously ignored sporting interests, spending more family time and discovering new hobbies can all be relevant to the aspiring retiree. We live on a small farm with a vineyard. This was planted a few decades ago and has now become a focal point of my retirement, along with a plan to extract more value from my annual golf membership fee.

Personally, I hold no fear of being bored in this next phase of my life, which – given my favourable genetic profile – will hopefully be healthy, fulfilling and long-lasting. That reminds me: please remember to take care of your health, stay as active as you can or, as mum always said,

“Use it or lose it.” There is little point entering retirement in poor shape and not being able to enjoy whatever life holds for you; an ageing body is restrictive enough, don’t make things worse by neglecting it!

Some of my colleagues have expressed a fear of retirement based on a feeling of lost identity, expressed by another author as “relevance deprivation syndrome”. The most obvious example being recently retired politicians not being able to shut up and keep their noses out of current discussions. This syndrome often afflicts people who are wedded to their career to the exclusion of family and other interests, emphasising again the importance of gently planning what’s to come.

So, think ahead, don’t be scared, this should after all be fun times. Foster family and friends, nurture or discover interests and hobbies and, above all, stay as healthy as possible. Remember that no one amongst us has all the answers or knows it all. As Bob Dylan sings in his song *My Back Pages*, “I was so much older then, I’m younger than that now.”

Here’s to good health and many happy days!

PS Don’t forget to do your faecal occult blood test!

My early stage of retirement

ANNETTE WAGNER-HESSE

I'm in the early stage of retirement, as many of you will know. I was at the same workplace for 39 years. This workplace supported me and my family in very difficult personal times, provided a richly creative and stimulating environment, relationships with generations of students, their families and a huge variety of colleagues across different disciplines. Of course, there were challenges, annoyances and hurdles, but overall I can say confidently that I loved my work.

I approached the notion of retirement cautiously, gradually reducing my work commitment and allowing other interests to flourish again. I feel it's now time to live consciously in the moment and set a few goals.

One of the things I found particularly hard about leaving my workplace was the feeling I had to tear out very deep roots that I'd developed in that place. It felt painful and like facing a dreadful loss, until a dear friend reminded me: there's no need to sever those roots. My roots will stay with me and ground me into the future. I'm grateful for them and for the depth of experience they have provided.



Annette enjoying her retirement in Germany, 2025

When asked what my dreams, ideas and thoughts are for the future, a long list quickly formed. The problem with this long list is that I feel overwhelmed and unable to start, or I begin several tasks without finishing them. I realise I can say no to some things and need to prioritise others. I need to realise that it won't be like being on permanent holidays either. Having a tidy, clean, relatively de-cluttered house and well-tended garden might be goals, but not ones I can achieve overnight after decades of being a single parent, carer, breadwinner and homemaker while striving to participate in the wider community.

I've been encouraged by relatives and friends who have been on this retirement journey a bit longer than me, and I've really appreciated

their sage advice and kind support. I realise it will take time to find a balance in this new way of living.

Recently, at the nature service in January, I spoke about the four rooms of our “house” that Rumer Godden mentioned.

There is an Indian proverb that says, “Everyone is a house with four rooms, a physical, a mental, an emotional and a spiritual. Most of us tend to live in one room most of the time, but unless we go into every room every day, even if only to keep it aired, we are not a complete person.”

I know I really must pay more careful attention to my physical self. It was often neglected in the past. I’ve enjoyed comparing notes with my sisters on our respective health care routines and am enjoying gradually feeling a little fitter. I spent a lot of time in the mental and emotional rooms of my house while teaching, parenting, caring and interacting with many people. Despite attending Templer services regularly, I now realise that I benefit from airing my spiritual room more frequently.

In conclusion – while just bemoaning the fact that, despite giving up work, I still didn’t have enough time for everything because my list of things to do kept getting longer and longer – another good friend suggested: don’t make a list of what you want to do, make a list of what you have done. I quietly reminded myself of all the things that have gotten done in these first few weeks of retirement. Suddenly it seems like a full and abundant time and I am grateful for it. What excellent advice!

Further reading: *You Are A House With Four Rooms* by Renee Langmuir

Walhalla

DORIS FRANK



Recently I was asked why the name Walhalla was chosen by the Palestine Templers for their settlement a short distance from Jaffa. Today there is not much left of the original settlement, which was perhaps best known for being the site of the *Gebrüder Wagner* iron foundry and workshop. This enterprise, one of the largest in Palestine, also offered employment to many Templers. Visitors to that area today would not see much of the original – at the site of the Wagner factory now stands a high-rise tower. Other important buildings were the German Consulate, the Jaffa/Sarona school (opened in 1912) and the Franz Lorenz café – reopened in 2012 as the Neve Schechter Centre for Contemporary Jewish Culture.

The Templers had outgrown their old settlement at Jaffa, which was based around the *Amelican*¹ colony and the prefabricated buildings brought by the original settlers from Maine, USA. The Hotel Hardegg (now the upmarket Drisco), the Frank *Gasthaus* and the hospital were the mainstay of the settlement. The Wieland tile factory and cement works – another significant venture in Palestine – was also later relocated to Walhalla. Today it is transformed into a fashionable shopping precinct with restaurants known as HaTachana (the Hebrew name for the old railway station). Templer families purchased

¹An American Protestant Christian Restorationism movement, led by George J. Adams, that founded the American colony (named *Amelican* or *Adams City*).

or leased properties in other parts of Jaffa as well. As there were hardly any vacant lots left in the old *Kolonie*, some Templers in the late 1880s bought land 500m north of the Jaffa colony, in a place that was later named Walhalla. It offered attractive development opportunities, being located right on the Jaffa-Jerusalem railway that was built between 1888 and 1892. The Templers were aware new residential districts would develop along the railway line and that land prices could be expected to rise.

There was a plan to build a rail link between Jaffa and Jerusalem as early as the middle of the 19th century, when the enormous economic potential of Jaffa's position was realised. It was ideally situated, as a port city, to serve the capital, Jerusalem. However, some issues, of which the *Sublime Porte* (Turkish Government) was precisely informed by the European Powers after the Crimean War, still had to be dealt with:

1. The city walls prevented the expansion of Jaffa.
2. Jaffa lacked a modern port.
3. A firm road and rail link between Jaffa and Jerusalem was needed.

The railway was eventually built and the Turkish Government caused considerable difficulties once again. The workers employed for the construction were mainly Arabs from Egypt and Italians, but the Germans also profited by renting out rooms and feeding the workers.

Walhalla, situated close to the railway line and outside the narrow confines of the city walls, satisfied two of the said conditions for the region's development. The Jaffa waterside was easily accessible by a narrow track railway, but the port was in fact never built.



Walhalla Schule (front)



Uhlherr Haus

The Templers bought blocks of land close by to keep the distance to the settlement and its social facilities as short as possible. A contemporary report says: “The sandy area beyond the Nablus Road, separated from the Colony by only a single strip of gardens, was continuously filled by new houses next to the Egyptian Colony to the east and north.”

As the table (from the *Warte*) shows, six families bought blocks of land at Walhalla, but only that of Franz Lorenz (1828-1909) was with a house. All the other blocks were listed as *Weinbergboden*, vineyard land, at the titles office. Not until later did the Templers begin to build more houses there. The Wagner family bought a block and built a large iron foundry from 1890, as well as several houses. More Templers followed this example: the Theodor Wolfer (1861-1939), Hermann Leonhard Uhlherr (1875-1920), David Philipp Eppinger (1867-1936), Hugo Carl Wieland (1853-1922), Franz Lorenz, Weller and several Wagner families, as well as Paul Konrad Breisch (1880-1916) and others.

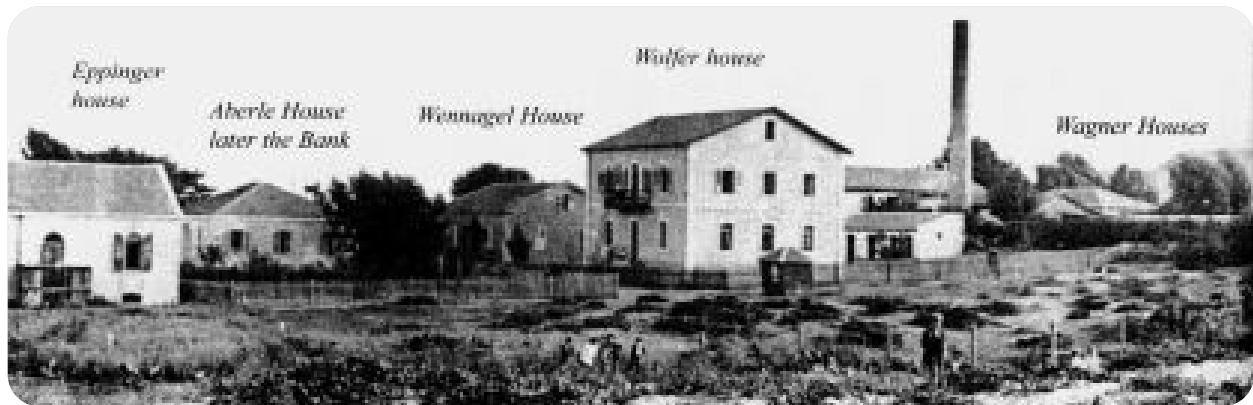


Gebrüder Wagner factory (1940 approx)

Land owned by Templers in Walhalla

Lot No	Title particulars	Name of owner	Denomination and distance of property
80	No. 8 (1886)	Franz Lorenz	Weinberg Weg zur Mühle
81	No. 4 (1887)	Franz Lorenz	House, 556 Ellen* Weg zur Mühle
82	No. 73 (1887)	Franz Lorenz	Weg zur Mühle
96	No. 37 (1890)	Paul Tietz	Weinberg, 2329 Ellen*
97	No. 38 (1890)	Paul Tietz	Weg zur Mühle, Walhalla
98	No. 39 (1890s)	Matthäus Frank	Weinberg, 1974 Ellen*
99	No. 190 (1890s)	Matthäus Frank	Walhalla
100	No. 41 (1890s)	Theodor Wolfer	Weinberg, 2069 Ellen*
101	No. 42 (1890s)	Theodor Wolfer	Walhalla
102	No. 43 (1890s)	Eduard Aberle	Weinberg, 1667 Ellen*
103	No. 44 (1890s)	Eduard Aberle	Walhalla
104	No. 45 (1890s)	Julius Aberle	Weinberg, 1629 Ellen*
105	No. 46 (1890s)	Julius Aberle	Walhalla

* *Ellen* is a unit of measure (cubit)



Walhalla houses

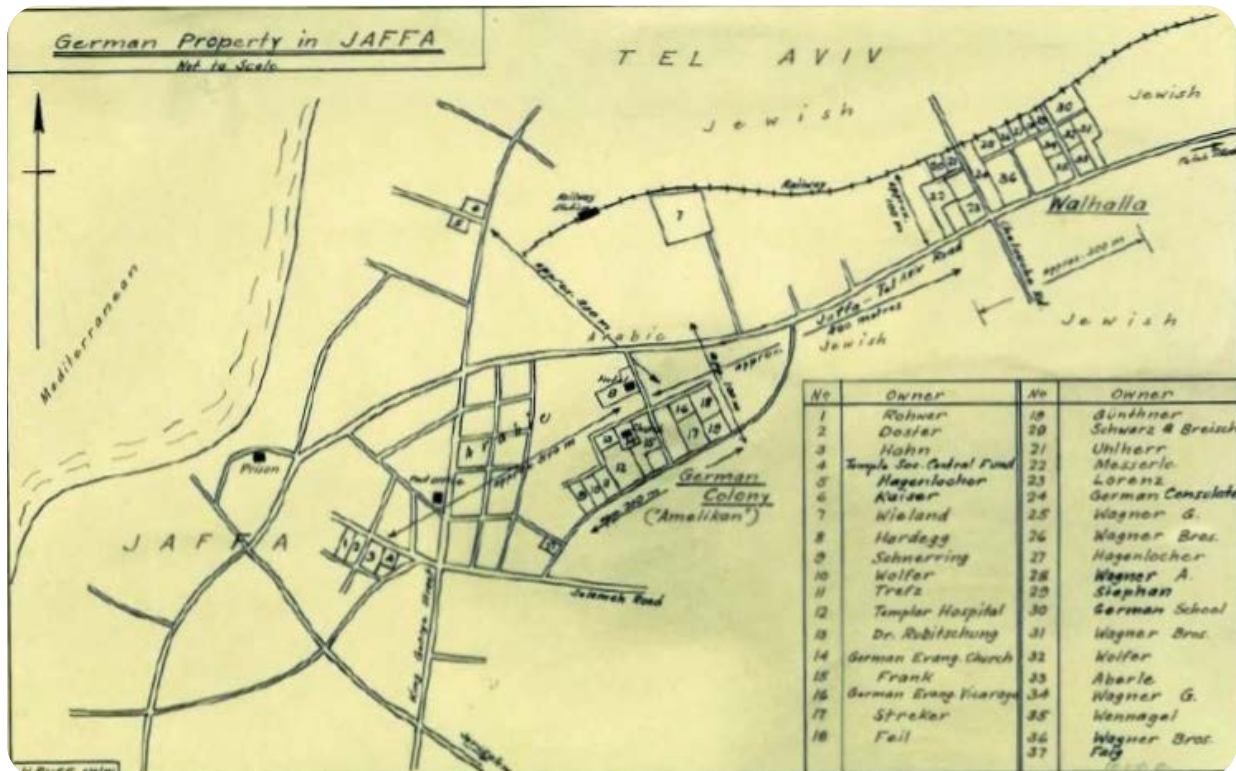
The design and comfort of the houses received favourable mention in the press of the day. Walhalla was probably one of the models for the founding of Tel Aviv by Jewish colonists in 1909. Lorenz built a roomy two-storey house next to his old single-storey one, and opened his café there. It was the venue for the first silent movies in the area.

David Eppinger, teacher at the settlement school, also tutored the young in music. From 1906 onwards, he was the conductor of all the Jaffa choirs (ladies', men's and mixed). He also founded a brass orchestra named *Concordia*. The Jaffa German Club relocated some of its meetings to Walhalla. Under the direction of Paul Tietz (1858-1928), the Club was very nationalistic: the birthday of the King (of Württemberg) was celebrated every year, and a family night was held on Prince Otto von Bismarck's birthday.

Much of this information comes courtesy of Dr Jakob Eisler and his extensive research. Some vestiges of the Walhalla settlement remain, the Uhlherr house being one. Currently Shay Farkash, conservator and member of the Council for Conservation of Heritage Sites in Israel, is researching elements of the house as it is being restored.

ChatGPT suggests that Walhalla's name likely reflected the Templers' cultural and religious heritage, possibly symbolising a heavenly or idealistic vision of their community in the Holy Land. I can accept that suggestion.

As interesting as all this research was in finding out more of our Templar history, the question as to why this settlement was named Walhalla remains unanswered.



German Property in Jaffa. One of many maps recreated by Helmut Ruff. TSA Archive



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