

Fifty *over* 50

Join us in celebrating the incredible Australians on our 2024 DARE Fifty over 50 list. These extraordinary 50 women and men have well and truly earned their stripes, and they continue to make a positive impact on our communities. Their stories inspire us and reinforce the value this demographic brings to our society, redefining what ageing means today, and in the future.

.....

All our nominees fall into one of the following five categories:

1. THE HIGH PERFORMERS

Demonstrating perseverance, agility and resilience, they continue to reach new heights.

2. THE QUIET ACHIEVERS

Committed to getting the job done without any fanfare or seeking accolades, they are the backbone of our communities and society.

3. THE THOUGHT LEADERS

Offer trusted, informed opinions in their area of expertise to educate and inspire.

4. THE INFLUENCERS

Use their status or position to increase awareness on issues and advocate for change.

5. THE TRAILBLAZERS

Leaders in their field whose achievements have a direct impact on making our world a better place.

.....

WORDS

Karen Burge, Monique Butterworth, Stephen Corby, Adriana Donnola, Pip Harry, Camille Howard, Ingrid Laurence, Trudie McConnochie, Chris Pearson, Bridget Ross, Sue Smethurst, Rachel Smith, Sue Williams.

Naomi Watts, 55

CREATIVE CHAMELEON

Australian actor and producer Naomi is on a mission to demystify menopause after discovering she was perimenopausal at age 36. “Going through menopause at such a young age was not easy,” she says. “My hormones were all over the place. I remember feeling so confused and alone, like I didn’t have control over my own body.”

So in 2022 Naomi launched Stripes, a wellbeing and beauty brand with a focus on education and ditching the stigma surrounding menopause. “There was a lack of open conversation and resources to help women navigate the changes we go through,” she says. “That’s why I’m now so passionate about raising awareness and encouraging more honest conversations.”

Known as a creative chameleon, Naomi is also making waves in her acting career, most recently playing New York socialite Barbara ‘Babe’ Paley in the TV series *Feud: Capote Vs The Swans*, to critical acclaim.

Naomi, who married fellow actor Billy Crudup in New York last year, told *Harper’s Bazaar* she avoids travelling for roles during the school year, so she can be a hands-on mother to her teenage children Sasha and Kai, by her former partner Liev Schreiber. When she does work, she loves the idea of playing strong women.

“As I get into the middle and latter part of my life, I’m okay with ageing. I am just always looking for dynamic people. Look, we’re half the population, we’re living longer. Why shouldn’t these stories be just as relevant and interesting as stories about men of the same age?” she says.



The High Performers



Andrew Hoy, 65
RIDING HIGH

Andrew may be one of Australia's most successful athletes, with six Olympic medals – including three gold – but the equestrian never worries he'll become too big for his riding boots. "Working with horses keeps you humble," he tells DARE. "You have to build credibility and respect afresh with every animal in a clear way each time."

Andrew is now training for his incredible ninth Olympics, in Paris, where the equestrian events are scheduled for the Palace of Versailles. "It's the most beautiful place and I would feel very privileged to compete there. People ask me about retirement because of my age and achievements, but if I thought about that, I couldn't focus. Instead, I prefer to concentrate on what I'm doing today and how I could be better tomorrow. I've never set out to make, or break, records. I just want to be the best I can be."



Jason Donovan, 55
NATIONAL TREASURE

His stint as teen Scott Robinson on *Neighbours* catapulted Jason to international stardom. Alongside touring and selling millions of pop albums, he's had countless TV and stage roles and is currently playing Frank N Furter in *The Rocky Horror Show* in Australia. "What still gives me a thrill after all these years? I just love working and engaging with other performers, I still love performing live," he tells DARE. "I like the fact that at my age I can approach work with a sense of confidence. My body sometimes tells me I'm older, but it's about keeping physically fit. I'm loving my ice baths at the moment!"

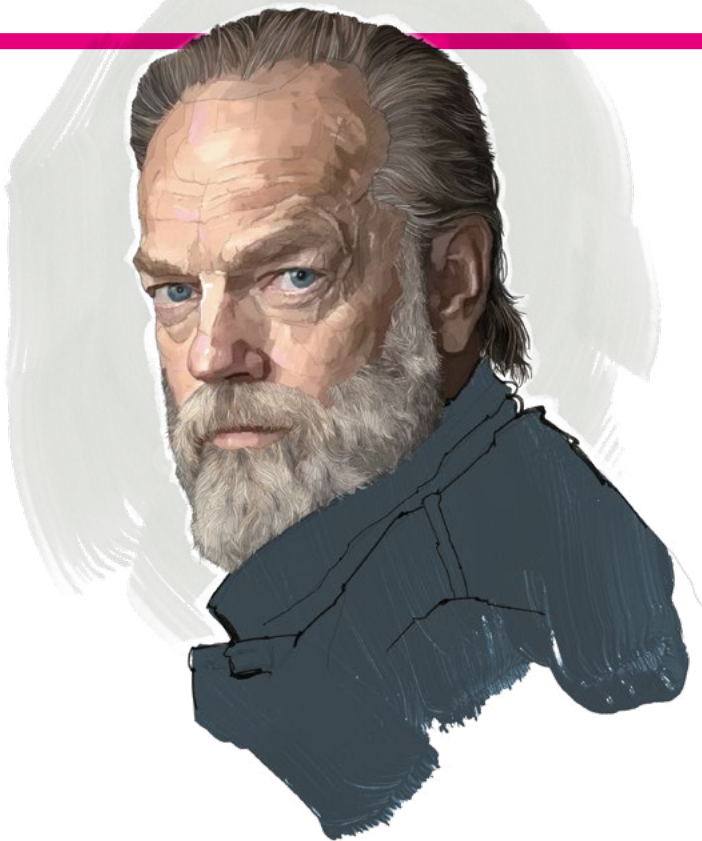
Jason says his family – his wife Angela and their three children – is everything: "I feel like all the hard work I did in my youth is paying off a bit for me now. I think one of the best things about being this age is that all you've experienced makes it easier to deal with life as you get older."



Marcia Hines, 69
AUSTRALIAN IDOL

Music legend Marcia reflects how lucky she is still to be doing what she loves: producing hit albums, performing in musicals and appearing on TV as a judge on *Australian Idol*. "It's just amazing to be doing all this," she tells DARE. "It's wonderful to remain relatively relevant! I'm having a ball, and loving being back on *Australian Idol*. We've all grown up with it – with some people coming up to me and saying they love watching the show with their grandmothers."

With her latest album out in 2023 (*Still Shining: The 50th Anniversary Ultimate Collection*) and a role as Teen Angel in *Grease the Musical* this year, Marcia next wants to sing duets with artists she loves, including Tina Arena. "There are a lot of people I'd like to work with, whose music I enjoy," she says. "It's lovely to be able to keep reinventing myself."



Hugo Weaving, 64
ROLE MASTER

One of our most acclaimed and awarded actors, Hugo is a master of stage and screen. He made his name in major Australian films such as *Babe*, followed by international blockbusters including *The Matrix* trilogy and *The Lord of the Rings* movies. Film was his own “great educator” in his childhood, Hugo says. “I was so thrilled about the world I was entering into and learning about – and it was film that did that.”

Despite his global fame, Hugo likes to stay local. “I do work in Australia. I’ve never lived in Los Angeles, I hate the place. I’d much rather live and work here and work on great Australian scripts.” Recently this includes streaming series *Love Me* and film *The Rooster* (he won 2024 AACTA awards for both projects) and an upcoming role in *How to Make Gravy*, based on Paul Kelly’s Christmas song. And with a long collaboration with the Sydney Theatre Company, Hugo is currently starring in its production of *The President*.

Keith Urban, 56
COUNTRY CHART-TOPPER

New Zealand-born, Australian-raised country star Keith’s love of music began in early childhood, and he followed his dreams all the way to Nashville. It was in America that he met his wife, fellow Australian star Nicole Kidman, and the couple now have two children. Keith’s career in the US is also going from strength to strength, with four Grammy awards, 12 studio albums and an ever-growing list of chart-topping hits and tours.

He hit new heights in 2023 with an induction into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame. “Being invited into the Hall of Fame is hands down one of the highest honours that’s ever happened to me,” says Keith, who is also set to release a new studio album – his first since 2020 – this year. “The songs are about hope, wild longing, working through things, and just sheer, mindless fun,” he says.



Helen Garner, 81
WONDROUS WORDSMITH

She’s won most of the accolades Australia has to offer but writer Helen, in her ninth decade, is finally conquering the rest of the world, with her books being picked up by the US and UK. “I couldn’t be more astonished this has happened at such a late age,” she tells DARE. “It was never my ambition to be published outside my country,” adds the Australia Council Award for Lifetime Achievement in Literature winner. “But this is, I suppose, the icing on the cake and, while it is very surprising, it’s also a very happy thing.”

Helen has just finished another book, about her grandson’s under-16 AFL team, which she followed for a year. “Becoming a grandmother is the best thing that’s ever happened to me,” she says. “It’s brought me enormous happiness, and they’ve told me to carry on writing about them.”



The High Performers



Terry Denton, 73
DRAWING GENIUS

Illustrator and author Terry has been giving kids (and adults alike) a laugh for more than three decades with his unique drawing style that takes readers on wild and fun-filled adventures. “I’m trying to draw quickly and make it look like I’m drawing quickly,” Terry explains. “So it seems very unskilful, but the key thing is the idea.”

His wicked sense of humour shines through in his work, which includes picture books, junior novels and collaborations with top Australian authors, including Andy Griffiths. The pair’s hugely popular *Treehouse* series has sold over 10 million copies in Australia and is on the shelves in more than 35 countries. Andy is one of his biggest fans. “To sit beside Terry while he is drawing is amusing and mysterious in equal parts,” he says. “He seems to literally ‘think’ through the drawing process itself.”



Toni Collette, 51
SCREEN QUEEN

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Toni’s breakout role in *Muriel’s Wedding*, and she’s hardly slowing down. In fact, news site Deadline Hollywood says she is “as busy as any actor in town”. With recent multi-award-winning turns in TV hits *The Power*, *The Staircase* and *Unbelievable*, she’s now turning her considerable acting talents back to the big screen and has just filmed her “dream” role in *Juror #2*, directed and produced by Clint Eastwood and co-starring Nicholas Hoult, the British actor who played her son in 2002 film *About a Boy*.

Toni is also in demand from other top directors, including Bong Joon-ho, whose most recent film, *Parasite*, won four Oscars including Best Picture. The South Korean director called her personally to ask her to star in his forthcoming sci-fi film, *Mickey 17*, she reveals. “He said, ‘Toni, I’ve been watching you a long time. I love your work and I want you to be in my movie.’”

Patti Newton, 79
ENTERTAINER EXTRAORDINAIRE

An icon of the Australian entertainment scene, Patti returns to the stage this year with a starring role in *Grease the Musical*, playing schoolteacher Miss Lynch in the show’s new Australian run. Devoted wife to TV legend Bert Newton for 38 years, it’s Patti’s time to shine. An accomplished radio, TV and theatre performer in her own right, she says it’s what Bert would have wanted for her after his death in 2021.

“When Bert passed, I was having problems, like everybody does, and I didn’t think I was ever going to succeed or get out of bed again,” Patti explains. “But it wouldn’t be what he’d want, he would want me to move on.” Last year, she played Bird Woman in *Mary Poppins*, “a beautiful character, but only a cameo role”, which she says was the perfect reintroduction to the stage. “I did *Mary Poppins* and now I’m so excited to do *Grease*.”

