

# STORYTELLER CREATES SOME HUGH AND CRY

**UNHAPPY ENDING:** Kapara Aged Care resident Brian Vercoe, 87, with toddlers Olivia Stevens and less-than-impressed Hugh James from a preschool playgroup. Picture: MARK BRAKE



OLIVIA Stevens and Hugh James are fortunate to have grandparents and great-grandparents. But the 11-month-olds are also the centre of attention for some substitute grandmas and grandpas in a unique playgroup building bonds between young and old. The duo attend an Intergenerational Playgroup held each Monday morning at Kapara Residential Living, in Glenelg South, which started

last year to provide important social interaction for isolated residents. ACH Group lifestyle co-ordinator Michelle Williamson said the idea, delivered with Playgroup SA, was "a no-brainer" in improving the wellbeing of residents. "Our residents love children; sometimes they don't get a lot of visits from family and grandchildren," she said. "It's also creating conversations between mothers and

residents as to what it was like raising a child in their day; what the differences in raising children. "As well, it's also breaking down barriers about aged care and what people think of aged care." Brian Vercoe, 87 – who has been at the Moseley St home for 15 months – is usually front and centre reading stories to the children. "I've always enjoyed children – I've got five of my own," he says.

"It's good fun and the kids are amazing." Olivia's mother, Bec Stevens, 30, of Morphettville, agreed with the findings of the National Values Assessment survey that Australians want a nation that values caring for its elderly. "It is important because we are all going to get old one day – it's good to start them young and interacting with everyone," she said. **- RENATO CASTELLO**

but we reserve the right to complain about it," he said. That is one of the purposes of My Big Idea – to find solutions from ordinary Australians, away from government. "Australians like nothing more than having a go at politicians," says MBI founder Ralph Ashton. "My Big Idea is designed to spark a deeper conversation about Australia's future, encourage and support action by everyday Australians, and instil a sense of possibility. It's

not just about big, grand projects. It's about having a go at any level. It's about taking ownership of our future." In the survey, housing affordability was next most common desired value, followed by accountability and – a little further down the list – honesty. The latter two contrast strongly with the view of many Australians, who see blame and corruption as rampant in our culture. They were named the top 10 general culture values after bureaucracy, wasted

resources and uncertainty about the future – and ahead of short-term focus, unemployment and crime/violence. All those have negative overtones, with the more positive "freedom of speech" and "law enforcement" rounding out the 10. In March, ANUpoll asked Australians what they think is the most important problem facing Australia today. The economy at 27 per cent, immigration (13 per cent), better government (9 per cent) and global warming (8 per

cent) were the most common individual responses. However problems about caring for the elderly were also prominent. In the Barrett values survey, "equality" was in the top 10 for just one age-based split of respondents – those aged 20 or under. Housing affordability was the most common value respondents when the survey was last held in 2009. Since that survey, caring for the elderly has increased in prominence and environmental awareness has dropped out

of Australia's top 10 desired values. In a separate recent values survey, the 2012 World Values Survey, two-thirds of Australian respondents agreed or strongly agreed that older people are not respected. Four in five disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that older people get more than their fair share from the government. And more than 90 per cent were opposed to the statement that older people are a burden on society.

PERSONAL VALUES	CURRENT CULTURE VALUES	DESIRED CULTURE VALUES
Values or behaviours that Aussies believe most reflect who they are.	Values or behaviours that people believe most reflect how Australia operates.	Values or behaviours respondents most want to see in their nation
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caring</li> <li>Family</li> <li>Honesty</li> <li>Friendship</li> <li>Respect</li> <li>Compassion</li> <li>Humour/fun</li> <li>Trust</li> <li>Fairness</li> <li>Responsibility</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bureaucracy</li> <li>Wasted resources</li> <li>Uncertainty about the future</li> <li>Freedom of speech</li> <li>Blame</li> <li>Corruption</li> <li>Short-term focus</li> <li>Unemployment</li> <li>Crime/violence</li> <li>Law enforcement</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caring for the elderly</li> <li>Affordable housing</li> <li>Accountability</li> <li>Employment opportunities</li> <li>Caring for the disadvantaged</li> <li>Effective healthcare</li> <li>Governmental effectiveness</li> <li>Concern for future generations</li> <li>Honesty</li> <li>Economic growth</li> </ol>