

# Busselton Health Study

## Baby boomers study launched

FIVE thousand Busselton “baby boomers” are to take part in a new four-year study on healthy ageing, which will feed into the Busselton Health Study, one of the world’s longest running epidemiological studies.

The Busselton Healthy Ageing Study (BHAS) was launched in Mitchell Park last Friday by Vasse MLA Troy Buswell, in conjunction with the Busselton Population Medical Research Foundation Inc (BPMRF).

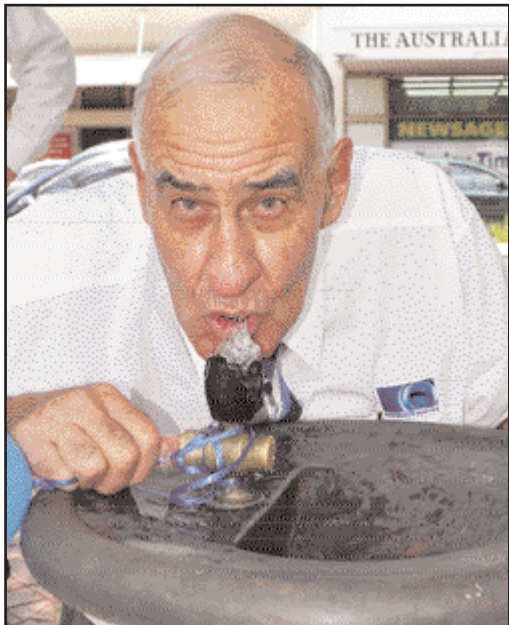
It will establish a unique data resource to assist in developing management programs aimed at healthy ageing and will influence future clinical care, personal behaviour and government health policy.

The study will investigate environmental, social, behavioural, genetic and common disease factors, which underlie health and function into old age. It will also identify and expose pre-clinical, clinical and lifestyle risk factors for disease, disability, loss of function and reduced quality of life.

Among the speakers at the launch were the chair of the BPMRF, professor Bill Musk, vice chair, associate professor Alan James and Busselton Water chairman Cr David Reid. There were also interactive health displays and demonstrations.

The internationally respected Busselton Health Study commenced in Busselton in 1966 at the instigation of visionary local general practitioner, Dr Kevin Cullen. With the support of the University of Western Australia, volunteer health specialists and the cooperation of virtually the entire Busselton community, more than 16,000 residents have taken part in it.

Baby boomers are classified as having been born between 1946-64.



**Thirsty work:** David Reed trying the fountain.

## Turning on the tap

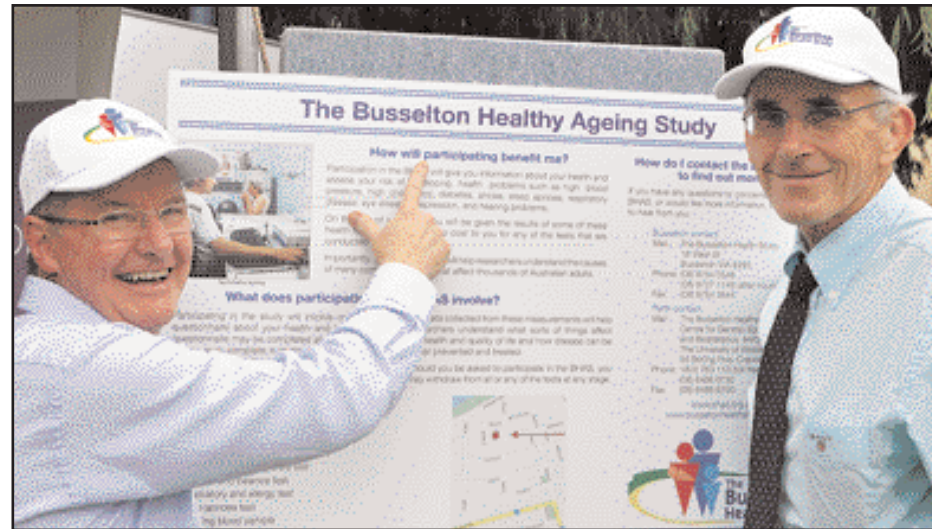
A NEW drinking water fountain for Mitchell Park was officially opened last Friday during the launch of the new Busselton Healthy Ageing Study.

The water fountain, which is suitable for disabled access, was installed to commemorate the alignment of Busselton Water and the Busselton Health Study.

Board chairman, Cr David Reid said, “The Busselton Health Study is considered as

unique as Busselton’s water supply. There is a great deal of synergy between the life-giving properties of our high quality water supply and the life-saving results from the extraordinary medical research.

“In order to continue collecting this valuable data and continue its analysis, the Foundation needs considerable levels of support and Busselton Water aims to assist, by helping to raise the profile of the study.” Cr Reid said.



**Ready to study:** Professor Bill Musk, right, and associate professor Alan James.

The initial study was the basis for an ongoing series of surveys, which have established a unique bank of population health data spanning several generations, which has become a valuable resource for researchers in WA, Australia and throughout the world.

The new phase of the BHAS will explore why some people are able to remain healthy and active throughout their senior years, while others suffer ongoing illness and infirmity. The BHAS will collect measures on vision and hearing disorders, respiratory and cardiovascular disease, muscle strength and physical function, obesity, diabetes, sleep disorders, bone health, spinal pain, mental health and cognition.

Although Busselton’s population has increased from around 4000 in 1966 to more than 30,000 in 2010, it has remained ethnically and socio-economically stable and there has been no change in environmental influences, such as industrial air pollution because wine growing, tourism, leisure pursuits, and dairy farming remain the main industries.

The archived collection of data from these Busselton studies has been



Sarah Devereux tests Marcella Becker.

described as a national Treasure by the Government of Western Australia.

No other Australian population sample has been monitored for respiratory disease prevalence for as long as Busselton.

For more information about the Busselton Healthy Ageing Study, visit <http://www.bhas.org.au>