**BOLD - ROSEMARY DUNCAN**

**TRANSCRIPT**

Rosemary - My husband had passed away and I was alone on a large property with a lot of weeding and mowing and clearing to be done. One day at my local church, I saw this man with dreadlocks playing his guitar, strumming his guitar. So, I've spoke to him after.

Mapa - And we met each other, and say, "Oh, who are you?" And I said, "I'm Mapa." I just lost my wife. I have nothing. I have no money. I haven't had a car or anything. I just come with nothing. This is what Rosemary said to me, she loved me as a person, not anything else.

Rosemary - I was immediately drawn to him in some inexplicable way. Yes, so Mapa came to work on the property. I used to pick him up. He'd do the labouring work, often more than I asked. And better than most people that I'd ever hired here. Everyone loved his cheerful personality. So, we were very good friends for a long time. Mapa had a way of standing and looking across the land, assessing it. And one day as he was doing this, he took his shirt off. And I was immediately overcome by his physical beauty, his grace. And he just stood there and I was transfixed. And I was 73 years old, but I felt an incredible stirring for him. And it has never died. I fell in love with him at that moment.

Mapa - It's hard for me to explain, but for me, what I know, it works. Because I love her. There's no doubt about it. And this is my life. I never see the age. For me it's her love and kindness. That's it.

Jeremy - And when Rosemary and Mapa came together to see me about helping them get married, it was a surprise because they are very two unique, different people. But it was exciting as well because there's nothing quite like genuine love.

Rosemary - The whole scenario for those years before we married, I actually could never share my budding relationship with anyone, my budding relationship with anyone, which is a real violence because everyone, when they're falling in love, wants to ring up a girlfriend and chat about it. But there was no one for me to talk to because there was no one who agreed. And that's when I began to question the right of older people to have the same participation in society that everyone else has. And I started to think, "Why couldn't I have the right to love and be loved, like any human being?" And I began to see that older women were constructed in a certain way to behave. And if you stepped outside of that sacred labelling, you had to suffer the price. And all my ageing experience and the complexity of all my life's years were reduced to nothing. I was constructed as a fool, a crazy old woman, because I was asking people to grow. In the end, I decided I wasn't going to change. They had to change.

Jeremy - So, I think it's important to build inclusive communities for all generations, and particularly the ageing when it comes to remote regional towns. Because the community is ageing, so we need to embrace them and we need to let them know that they're still valued and they have something to contribute.

Rosemary - To me, it wasn't just a love story, as beautiful it was. It's not just a question of ageing, it's essentially a question of justice. People get a mindset when they get older. They slip easily into the versions that are being presented to us. But an older person is supposed to be well behaved, moderate, moral. We don't have any version that's comfortable, freeing, that addresses all our complexities. And we are very complex people with deep feelings and a life experience of loving and losing. And we want to bring that to the table. I think they often think to themselves when they hear my story now, "Good on her." How privileged I am to have met Mapa. We've lived this very quiet life here, and we are complete in each other.