



# Marriage good for men

If couples in Dubbo are anything to go by, marriage is good for men's health but not women's.

The city has been made world famous by a study in which the health of about 3000 people born before 1930 and living in Dubbo was tracked for 15 years.

Victoria University epidemiologist John McCallum said the study showed marriage may add almost a year to a man's life, but does little to boost the lifespan of women.

"One thought is that it's not so much marriage as the fact that it is the fitter people in a biological sense who get married," he said.

"In other words, people who are hardier and stronger, who are going to survive longer anyway, get married.

"The research also takes into account factors like smoking and drinking and found a man who was a smoker died 22 months earlier than a man who had not smoked, while female smokers died 15 months

earlier than their non-smoking counterparts."

However drinking was found to boost life expectancy for both sexes.

"Over the 15 years, men gained about nine months if they had been drinking moderate alcohol and women about five months," he said.

The scientists found the benefits of alcohol consumption accumulated with age.

"When we looked at the participants after 10 years, men gained eight months and women three months (over non-drinkers)," Professor McCallum said.

"Employment could also affect health. Women tend to do a lot of unpaid work while men like Dubbo's Peter Snare, who has had bypass surgery, were a good example of the benefits of keeping fit through work."

Professor McCallum yesterday presented the study's findings at the International Healthy Ageing and Longevity Conference.