

# Pensioners create web series finding humour in challenges of old age



Caroline Williams 08:35, Oct 09 2018 STUFF.CO.NZ

A group of north Auckland pensioners is creating a web series that mines the rich humour of the stage of life where "shame is left behind".

Whether attending funerals, arguing over card games or competing at the gym, *The Dusketeers* addressed the challenges of ageing with humour.

"It develops. We get ideas as we go along," said Carolyn Williamson, who plays Fleur.

The series covered the troubles, love and adventures experienced by the three heroines who live in the same retirement village.

"We are an elderly group and it felt important that we do it within our experience," said Cynthia Green, who portrays Molly. "That's our point of difference."

"We're trying to show the different characters that live in a retirement village," said Christine Doorman, who portrays Dot.



The Dusketeers in action. Sitting, Christine Doorman, Cynthia Green and Carolyn Williamson. Ian Miller is on camera and Nancy Miller on sound.

The web-series was directed and produced by Ian and Nancy Miller.

Ian had previously worked in production teams at Television New Zealand (TVNZ) and Canterbury Television (CTV) and taught Nancy about sound production.

After producing many one-off short films, the group decided to make the series.

Nancy, who was in charge of sound, said she sometimes had to stop herself from laughing during filming so she didn't accidentally move the microphone into the frame.

"We touch on everything, nothing gets left untouched," she said.

The group of 10 cast and crew members were part of a group called the Hibiscus Coast University of the Third Age (U3A), which supported people over the age of 55 who were interested in learning new skills.



SUPPLIED

The web-series revolves around three women living in a retirement village. One of the episodes approaches health problems in a playful way.

Green said the group was like "a continuation of something [she's] done her whole life".

"We wanted to show that old people can have fun and new experiences. Just because you're old doesn't mean you can't continue learning," Nancy added.

There were currently two episodes of [The Dusketeers on Youtube](#). New episodes were uploaded every Thursday.

The Dusketeers' revolves around Dot, Molly and Fleur, and makes light of the problems faced by women in their 80s living in a retirement village.

A strong sense of character helped the women bounce off each other to create a more fluid narrative.

"At first we were floundering, now it's like we're living a double-life," said Williamson, who enjoyed the "goofiness" of her character, Fleur.

"She's a vegetarian and into everything 'PC'."



The small film group is part of the Hibiscus Coast University of the Third Age, which supports people over age 55 learn new skills.

Green described her character, Molly, as strong-willed and the voice of reason.

"I try and boost Fleur's confidence and smooth out the sharp edges of Dot's character."

Of Doorman's character Dot, Green said she was a retired school principal who was dominant, aware and a perfectionist.

"She turned out a bit bossier than I really intended her to be. But I thought it was a good foil for the others to work from," said Doorman.



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Cynthia Green, who plays Molly, hopes to encourage people of a similar age to keep learning new skills.

The women all had backgrounds in theatre spanning from different ages.

In her youth, Williamson lived in a flat of university students who were studying drama and began tagging along to their rehearsals.

Green once performed as a main character in a production of Robin Hood and had appeared on Shortland Street.

Doorman was part of a play-reading group with Green and "accidentally" became a member of the film group when someone couldn't make it on filming day.

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