



Businessman Everal Compton (right) celebrates his 80th birthday with Treasurer Wayne Swan at the tax forum in Canberra yesterday.

PICTURE: ANDREW MEARES

Work-ready seniors want a slice of the cake

By **RICHARD WILLINGHAM**

BUSINESSMAN Everal Compton spent his 80th birthday talking about superannuation, sharing cake with longtime friend Wayne Swan and speaking about his dangerous love of malt whisky.

Mr Compton, who is chairman of a panel on the economic potential of seniors, wants to end discrimination against older Australians staying in the

workforce, and suggested giving businesses a tax cut if they employ an older person to help keep people off the pension.

His contribution to the two-day tax forum added a bit of spice to an event which, outside of economists and tax aficionados, was fairly dry.

"I think it is important to say that I'm six months younger than Rupert Murdoch. I wanted you to know that. The difference [between] me and him is that I

pay my taxes and I'm not sure Rupert does," Mr Compton said as he opened the debate.

"I believe we need to be looking at the incentives to bring older people back into the workforce."

There are 3700 Australians who are 100 years of age and by 2050, he said, there would be 50,000 centenarians and 5000 people would be 110.

"I haven't been able to get WorkCover since I was 70, which

is the greatest discrimination of all time . . . because the insurance companies take one look at me and decide I am going to fall down the step." He said the only reason he would ever fall over was "because of my passion for scotch whisky".

He also said the superannuation guarantee should be abolished.

While 80-year-old Compton held up the senior end of the forum the young were not for-

gotten with Prime Minister Julia Gillard praising year 12 student Keelin Murphy, who attended as an observer.

"There have been a fair few jokes along the way about age and equity between generations," Ms Gillard said.

"I would like to thank her for her attendance and I hope the discussions that we have thought through here are ones that are going to make a difference for her generation as well."