

Living Well in Yarra

Background and Issues Paper for Yarra's
Active and Healthy Ageing Strategy 2018-24



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Purpose

This Background Paper is written to assist in the consultation for the next Active and Healthy Ageing Strategy. It provides an insight into the current policy climate, an overview of successes to date, and informs the reader of other projects that are happening elsewhere in order to stimulate discussion. Readers are invited to use this Paper to reflect on their experience of living, working and playing in Yarra and propose actions, initiatives and advocacy that Council could undertake directly or support to ensure that Yarra is a welcoming city for people aged 50 years and over.

The story so far

Older People¹ make up 25% of the total Yarra population and greatly influence the diversity of Yarra, not just in age, but also ethnicity, lifestyles and their contribution to the community. Council values the contribution Older People make to the community and the economy and works to encourage residents to age well in Yarra. To achieve this goal, Council has worked in a variety of fields to ensure that Yarra is as Age Friendly a city as possible, including reviewing the local infrastructure planning, health and social planning.

Council endorsed its [River of Life Positive Ageing Strategy 2007-2016](#) in 2006. Council consulted with the community to develop Stage Two Action Plan, 2014 – 2017, adopting the vision of ‘A City for All Ages’, and in August 2014 Council endorsed the Action Plan for implementation across the municipality. Council established the Active Ageing Advisory Group (AAAG) to provide advice and oversee the implementation of the actions each year.

The Action Plans focus on influencing both the work of Council, and building the community’s capacity to engage with issues directly and deliver outcomes that meet their needs. Some examples of actions from the Action Plan include:

- Aged and Disability Services (ADS) celebrated the International Day Against Homophobia/transphobia/biphobia (IDAHOBIT Day) in May 2017. A guest speaker from Gay Lesbian Health Victoria spoke of the stigma and discrimination that many LGBTI people have lived through. Over the past three years, all ADS staff have undertaken training in understanding the lived experiences of older LGBTI people, working towards ensuring our services are welcoming and inclusive of older LGBTI residents.
- Council funds the Community Engagement Officer’s position to support the health and wellbeing of residents through staying engaged in community activities in their local neighbourhoods.

¹ Council defines Older People as all people aged 50 years and over. Council acknowledges that the experience of people in this age bracket is in no way uniform, but offers a simple frame through which to view our community and design programs and policy to meet their varying interests and needs.

- During 2017 members of Council's AAAG have consistently discussed the issue of the lack of affordable and suitable housing available for older residents in Yarra, preventing them from ageing in place. The AAAG is advocating for Council to support the development of an older person's housing strategy.
- Supporting the Residential Care Network in conducting 'Celebration of Life' events across the year

In addition to this work, Council has supported other community development initiatives such as:

- distributing *Commonwealth Home Support Programme* funding to community groups so that they can foster their local connections and enrich their community. Many of these groups are local ethnic groups, and this funding allows them to meet regularly and maintain their cultural practices.
- running the Living Longer Living Stronger exercise program across two Leisure Centres
- trialing intergenerational activities including Grandparents Storytime at the Libraries, music activities during Seniors Week, and collaborations with local schools
- providing funding to Neighbourhood Houses to operate local activities to bring residents of all ages together for the purpose of forming relationships and staying engaged

All of this community development work sits alongside Council's service delivery, including:

- administration of the Meals on Wheels program to residents.
- in-home care for eligible older residents
- daily group programs through its Willowview Service
- home maintenance services
- community bus services

What does Yarra look like?

In 2016, approximately 25% of the Yarra population was aged 50+ and 11% was aged 65+. This compares with 31% and 14% of the Greater Melbourne population, respectively. While Yarra is experiencing some of the ageing predicted for Greater Melbourne, it is considerably slower, and the municipality is forecast to maintain its young age profile. Nonetheless, although compared with Greater Melbourne there is proportionally slower growth in the 50+ population, there continues to be notable increase in actual numbers forecast for these age groups.

In terms of cultural diversity among older age-groups, Yarra is showing a different picture from Victoria generally. Reflecting the significant earlier waves of migration,

and established older Vietnamese, Greek and Italian communities, 36% of Yarra residents aged 65+ were born in non-English speaking countries. The proportion of residents from CALD backgrounds tends to increase with age. While in the short-term Yarra is likely to stay well above the average for Australia, in the longer-term this is likely to decrease as the greatest growth in the overseas born population is from English speaking countries (such as the UK and New Zealand).

Nearly 60% of the 80+ population is female. This gender imbalance tends to become even more pronounced in older age groups, following a similar pattern to Victoria and Australia generally. The implications of this gender imbalance are significant as many women experienced reduced capacity to work and save over their life, and consequently have a small nest egg, if any at all.

Building on our successes

The AAAG has held two public forums on Dying with Dignity. This area is emerging as a hot topic again as the Victorian Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill was passed in late 2017 and is expected to come in to effect in mid-2019.

The Municipal Association of Victoria is introducing work to encourage Councils to embed content on death and dying across a range of social areas (from early years through to arts & culture) and the work of the AAAG has provided a solid foundation for this.

Championed by the AAAG, the Men's Shed on the Collingwood

Housing Estate is an example of an excellent project that brings people together from a range of ages and socio-economic backgrounds to learn new skills, build friendships and create community. Under the auspice of the local Neighbourhood House, and funded by Council, the Men's Shed has been successfully running since 2010.

The AAAG guiding principle is to collaborate with Council and the community in raising awareness of ageing issues and promoting a Yarra culture that responds to the needs and aspirations of all residents 50+ years.

AAAG will engage with, and advocate for, Yarra's older residents in order to:

- Support the rights of older people as a consequence of:
 - a) State, Commonwealth and Local Government; or
 - b) Non-government organisation's policy
- Identify an issue or action that compromises the life of older

World Health Organisation (WHO) Age Friendly City – Building Inclusive Communities

Age Friendly cities foster opportunities for older people to enjoy social and economic participation, good health, and a sense of belonging and contributing. To achieve this, partnerships between older people themselves and government, community organisations, businesses, services and other agencies are critical in building the fabric of an Age Friendly city. Yarra is well served by a dynamic and well connected community support and health services sector. Many state-wide agencies are located in Yarra. With four community health centres, nine neighbourhood houses, disability support, housing and mental health agencies, hospitals and drug and alcohol agencies, churches, material and financial support agencies available, there is significant capacity within the community to build capacity and resilience.

In 2016, Council signed the Statement of Support and Partner Endorsement of the Municipal Association of Victoria's Age-Friendly Victoria Declaration. The Age-Friendly declaration is underpinned by the World Health Organisation's Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide. This Guide is grounded in the social determinants of health with a particular emphasis on the role that culture and gender play in people's ability to age well. The Guide proposed eight 'core features' of an Age Friendly city, and these are used as the framework for this Background Paper. The eight Core features are:

1. housing
2. social participation
3. respect and social inclusion
4. civic participation and employment
5. communication and information
6. community support and health services
7. outdoor spaces and buildings
8. transportation

<http://www.mav.asn.au/policy-services/social-community/ageing-disability/ageing/Pages/age-friendly-cities-communities.aspx>

This framework offers an approach to consider what programs, policy and advocacy in these eight fields will best help create a more liveable Yarra for Older people both now, and into the future.

Current Policy Climate

In 2017 the national portal, My Aged Care (MAC), was introduced as the main entry point to the aged care system in Victoria. Older residents requiring in-home assistance now contact MAC in the first instance, who then connect them with a Regional Assessment Officer. Once the reforms are fully implemented, the delivery of care can be provided by a range of organisations, of which Council is just one.

The MAC system is based on an open and competitive market model for providers and is designed to increase individual consumer choice. This may have implications for vulnerable groups in being able to access care and having equity of access to services in the future.

In light of the MAC reforms, Council will review its role in service delivery, and this may in turn influence the approach to creating an Age Friendly Yarra. While Council's direct involvement with individual older residents might be impacted, action relating to improving local infrastructure, and building the capacity of the community will continue to be vital. We know that social connection and neighbourhood engagement are important to ageing well, and this work will continue as a priority of Council regardless of any changes to service delivery. In fact, these reforms provide an opportunity for Council to review its strategies for supporting older residents to age well in Yarra, with a particular emphasis on the more vulnerable cohorts within the municipality.

These vulnerable cohorts consist of two main groups: those people who were vulnerable when younger (such as Public Housing residents, People with Disability, Aboriginal People etc) and whose vulnerability only increases with age, and people who move to Yarra in their later years and may have limited local social networks and are at risk of becoming vulnerable in their later years. Both of these groups are at risk of social isolation, which is a determinant of other poor health conditions.

In 2016 the Commissioner for Senior Victorians released "Ageing is Everyone's Business: A report on isolation and loneliness among senior Victorians". The report examines the causes for loneliness and social isolation amongst older people, and proposes opportunities for tackling the problems with a joined up approach. The report contends that local government has a "vital role as an enabler of joined-up local community responses to isolation and loneliness and connecting local needs with local resources such as volunteering, use of venues and coordination support. This can link with the focus on building more age-friendly communities including providing infrastructure and environments that facilitate and support social participation for older people." Our role is to promote local solutions to meet this end.

The Commissioner also noted the role of volunteering in building social participation. Council will be embarking on its own Volunteering Strategy in 2018, which will take into account the contribution Older People make in building the social capital in Yarra.

Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is now incorporated in the

Council Plan 2017-2021. Here Council's commitment to 'develop new strategic directions for support of older people and people with disability' is noted and provides the foundation for the Age Friendly City Strategy.

Council is also reviewing the way in which we partner on our Strategy development and implementation. We are currently exploring greater synergies with the Access & Inclusion Strategy and looking for ways we can leverage off common actions to create a city that is inclusive for all. Not only will this deliver on actions that support Older People and People with Disability but it will also strengthen advocacy calls for mutually beneficial initiatives. This is underlined by a view to extending that collaboration across Council (including families and young people) to build an Age Friendly city for all rooted in the principles of Universal Design, and intergenerational connection. We understand that people can, for example, experience social isolation or limited mobility at any age, and we are working to ensure our responses to these issues support residents from all life stages.

Themed examples of Best Practice for Consideration

The following section highlights an array of demonstration projects, new initiatives and key trends that are considered best practice from other Councils and businesses from Melbourne and Internationally. These brief summaries can be used in Council's consultation to generate discussion around local solutions to shared themes.

While some of these examples are programs that Council could directly run itself, others are community or business initiatives that, together, create a more Age Friendly municipality. Council recognises the many organisations that run programs to increase the life experience of Older People in Yarra, including: the community health centres, Neighbourhood Houses, environmental groups, ethnic groups, faith groups, sporting groups, choirs and the many other local agencies that play a pivotal role in creating a welcoming and supportive community for Older People. It is together that we can deliver a whole of community approach to building an Age Friendly city.

In considering these examples, it is worth noting how Council may advocate for, support, or directly run similar initiatives adapted for the local context.

WHO Core Feature 1: Housing

Ageing in place is also an important aspect of housing and often refers to the capacity of older people to remain living as independently as possible within their community where they belong and feel connected. During 2017 members of Council's AAAG have consistently discussed the issue of the lack of affordable and suitable housing available for older residents in Yarra, preventing them from ageing

in place. The committee is advocating for Council to support the development of an Older People's Housing Strategy.

Housing is an important issue for many older residents in Yarra. We know that there are older people who are 'asset rich and cash poor' as they bought their properties when the municipality was more affordable, and may now be in receipt of the Age Pension. Council understands this position and does not take legal action against Pensioners with overdue rates, allowing them to continue living in their family home.

Ageing in Place is a concern for residents in both private and public housing. For residents in Public Housing, there are concerns around the appropriateness of housing, including accessibility to the ground floor, air-conditioning and ability to retrofit dwellings to meet the needs of older residents.

The highest concentration of older people in Yarra is found in the Retirement Villages and the Housing Estates. Yarra has almost half the number of Retirement Village spaces than the Greater Melbourne average (only 326 per 100,000 people).

Supported accommodation and residential care homes also play a role in ageing in place. Over the past decade a number of Yarra based residential care homes have closed, leading to there being less care beds per head of population than prescribed under national standards. Financial pressures coupled with outdated building standards have contributed to this decline. In the past year, several new developments have commenced, reversing this trend (Sambell Lodge re-development and TLC home). There is an opportunity here for Council to foster dialogue about housing options for Older People and connect Older People in like situations to consider creative solutions to rethinking housing options in later life.

The proportion of people living alone in Yarra is gradually increasing with age. However, in the Census results, the number 'not stated' is quite high so the actual numbers could be much higher.

Between 2011 and 2016, nearly 7,500 people aged 50+ moved to Yarra either from overseas or elsewhere in Australia. Of this group, 39% were living in high density dwellings. This presents an opportunity to better engage with this cohort of people who may have a wealth of experience to share in Yarra and also may be vulnerable to social isolation.

In Yarra the number of older people who are renting has increased since the last Census, though as the overall population has also increased, the proportion is consistent at 23% of the total Yarra population. Council can review the way in which it interprets and implements planning laws to support older people to have more flexibility when considering housing options for later in life. There is also an opportunity to play an advocacy role on behalf of older residents. "State and local government planning laws that make subdividing blocks difficult are limiting the options for seniors seeking to age in their current location" wrote John Daly from the Grattan Institute.

The development at 205 Gipps St Abbotsford consists of 61 dwellings, 25 of which are subsidised through Common Equity Housing Limited. These types of developments can provide inspiration for thinking of other ways housing may be developed to suit changing demographic needs. Further, they give examples of how advocacy to support older people with specific housing needs might be bolstered by the support of disability advocacy groups.

In Heathcote, Victoria a village is being built to specifically support residents with dementia. This village is being created to allow residents as much mobility as possible and support them to live by their own rhythms and interests. A \$25 million on site research facility is also planned for the village.

[\(www.domain.com.au/news/heathcote-health-in-central-victoria-puts-forward-proposal-for-township-for-dementia-patients-20170930-gyqf24/\)](http://www.domain.com.au/news/heathcote-health-in-central-victoria-puts-forward-proposal-for-township-for-dementia-patients-20170930-gyqf24/)

Internationally, the French Baba Yaga model is a specially designed urban cohousing model for older women. The women live independently and complete 10 hours of 'chores' weekly to contribute to the smooth running of the centre. The Canadian version has retrofitted an existing apartment building, and is welcoming of all genders. (<https://seniorplanet.org/senior-housing-alternatives-urban-cohousing-the-babayaga-way/>)

Homelessness is a growing concern in Yarra. The number of people experiencing homelessness in Yarra fluctuates, but is in the vicinity of 845 people on any given night. We know that across Victoria approximately 12% of homeless people are over the age of 55, and if we apply this rate to the Yarra population we see that approximately 100 Older People are homeless in Yarra on an average night. It is worth noting that the ways in which this data is collected tends to significantly underrepresent people who are homeless. Mission Australia has recently reported that the rate of homelessness amongst Older People is growing considerably.

WHO Core Feature 2: Social Participation

Overall, in 2016, 22% of the Yarra population aged 50+ reported performing voluntary work. Volunteering is slightly higher than the average among the population aged 50 to 64 years (23%), and highest (25%) among the population aged 65 to 69. It then begins to decline among older age-groups. Volunteering has strong correlations with social inclusion and people having a feeling of being valued.

Social isolation and loneliness are positively correlated with poor health and higher mortality rates. Studies have found that loneliness can have an impact on people's lives equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Holt-Lunstad and Smith "puts the heightened risk of mortality from loneliness in the same category as being an alcoholic" and new research from Brigham Young University shows that "loneliness and social isolation are just as much a threat to longevity as obesity." (<http://news.byu.edu/news/prescription-living-longer-spend-less-time-alone>)

Council run a variety of group programs that older residents can join, or are referred to, and the community are also funded to run a variety of programs themselves. These can take the form of church groups, sporting groups, ethnic groups etc. While these programs need continued support, it is also worth exploring opportunities to attract harder to engage older people who may not have affiliations with any particular group, or may have additional barriers to participation due to their health, English proficiency, disability, fear of experiencing homophobia etc.

Older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) residents grew up when homosexuality was illegal in Australia and homophobia was standard practice. The impact of this on people now can be very challenging, even if they have been 'out' for a long time. As LGBTI people may become reliant on others in their older age, they might experience feeling more vulnerable to homophobic comments with less ability to decide who cares for them.

Some older people choose to go 'back into the closet' out of fear of homophobia in later years. Some people may feel they need to 'straighten up' their home so that they feel safe and free of homophobic prejudice if carers visit them at home. Further, they may feel that their rights are neglected in their end-of-life planning.

www.starobserver.com.au/news/national-news/victoria-news/older-lgbti-australians-invisible/154727) ("[No need to straighten up: Discrimination, depression, anxiety and older lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex Australians](#)" Report by Beyond Blue 2014).

In light of this some Councils have pursued the Rainbow Tick to signal to LGBTI clients that Council staff are trained, and sympathetic to the experience of LGBTI people.

Other older LGBTI people find that it is later in life that they have the confidence to come out for the first time. There are opportunities to explore how Council may support older people who are coming out later in life and connect them in to the community. (www.starobserver.com.au/features/coming-out-closet-later-life-mature/158757)

The experience for older people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds is important to consider in Yarra where 36% of the population aged 65+ were born in a non-English speaking country. In Yarra, 19% of the population aged 65+ do not speak English well or at all. Research shows that these people may "present later for services, including screening and diagnosis of health conditions, they often present at crisis point." (Improving the healthy ageing experience of older CALD Australians – Australian Mosaic.)

Yarra Leisure run the Living Longer Living Strong exercise program which is available to all people aged 50+. There are 27 sessions run each week across Richmond Recreation Centre and the Collingwood Leisure Centre. One of these is a Chinese specific group. These group programs address both physical health and build social connectedness.

The City of Melbourne's Healthy Ageing Team partnered with the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health and the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing to trial an exercise program tailored specifically for CALD older people. The 'Have A Try program' engaged CALD seniors with a predominantly sedentary lifestyle and introduced them to a range of "easy exercises to do at home and in groups to improve their health and fitness."

Older CALD people, including migrants from English speaking countries, have particular life experiences that need to be recognised when considering their social inclusion and health generally. Older CALD people's "migration experiences; their language and culture; their strength of connection to their country of birth as well as to their Australian community; their support networks, including family, and their personal perceptions of what being old should be like" all heavily impact on how a person ages in place (Australian Mosaic).

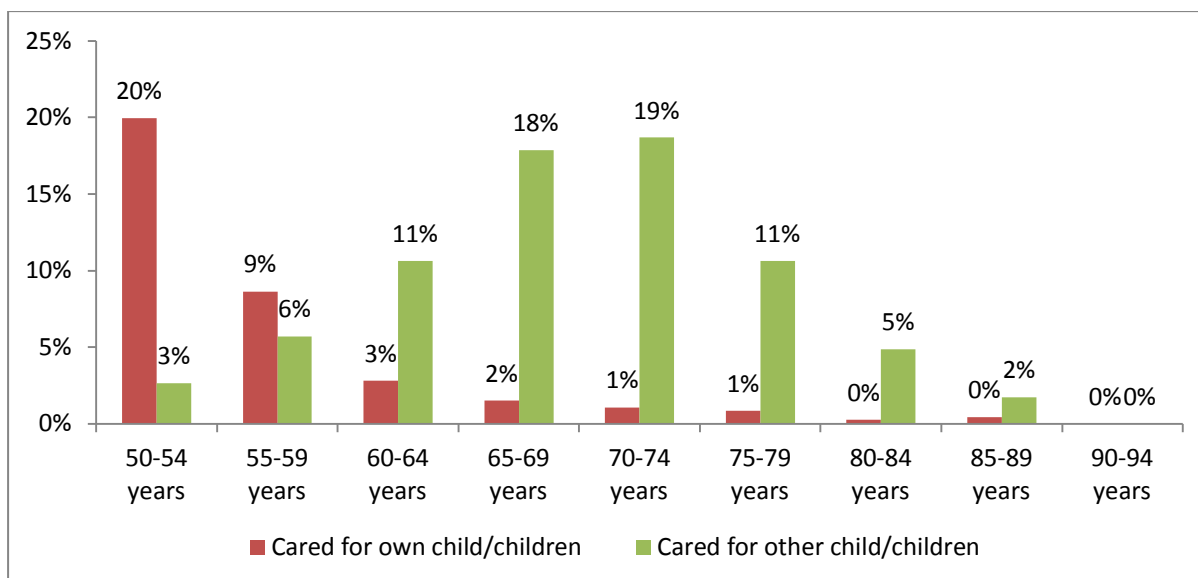
While Yarra is home to a large variety of active ethnic groups, for some groups there are challenges as the younger generations are not following in the footsteps of the older members. The challenges facing groups with shrinking membership are considerable.

Intergenerational activities where older and younger people join each other to participate in an activity or event provide an opportunity for older people to be 'valued as individuals that still possess lifelong skills' and not just passive recipients of care. These sorts of programs challenge stigma and provide benefits to all. Playgroup Victoria partnered with the National Ageing Research Institute in evaluating an Intergenerational Playgroup held at a Residential Aged Care Facility in 2009. They found benefits for the young children, the new mothers and the older people as well.

<http://theconversation.com/combining-daycare-for-children-and-elderly-people-benefits-all-generations-70724>) (www.abc.net.au/news/2016-05-13/intergenerational-playgroup-brings-smiles-to-young-and-old/7411770)

The growing costs of childcare is putting a strain on some families, leading to them leaning more on grandparents to step into caring roles. COTA NSW chief executive Ian Day has commented that a "substantial proportion of people over 50 are providing 20 hours or more of childcare a week," (www.smh.com.au/money/her-money/the-hidden-childcare-subsidy-for-grandparents-20160224-gn2x3f.html) The impact of this trend includes an economic benefit as the childcare provided by older people allows their (adult) children to participate in the workforce. However Older People might be performing this role out of obligation, and at the expense of participating in other activities.

Among the 50+ population in Yarra, 11% cared for their own child or children and 4% for other children. However, this varies notably by age group, peaking among the population aged between 65 and 74 years with nearly one in five residents in this group carrying out childcare for other children. This presents an opportunity to consider how we partner with Children's Services, Libraries and Leisure Centres for example on how we design and market our programs and services.



WHO Core Feature 3: Respect and Social Inclusion

The 2017 Melbourne Human Library event at Federation Square invited people to ‘borrow’ a person for 20 minutes to tell them about their life story, and thereby build understanding and connection. ‘Living Books’ available for check-out at the event included ‘titles’ that address racism, intolerance, stigmatization and misunderstanding. These sorts of creative programs can help to ‘break the ice’ between people who might otherwise rarely cross paths.

On 22 June 2017, the Ambassador for the Prevention of Elder Abuse launched a new publication “Your Voice: Trust your choice” which provides tips for seniors making enduring powers of attorney.

It is estimated that between 2% and 10% of older Australians may be subject to elder abuse. The report predicted that the prevalence of elder abuse is expected to rise as Australia’s population ages. (<http://theconversation.com/explainer-what-is-elder-abuse-and-why-do-we-need-a-national-inquiry-into-it-55374>)

Council has taken a lead in developing a local Elder Abuse Protocol in partnership with local agencies to assist in the identification and reporting of possible elder abuse situations. The Protocol recognises the importance of ensuring older people maintain autonomy in decision making while at the same time offering support if necessary.

The Casserole Club is a trial project in neighbouring Councils which fosters community connectedness by helping residents share extra portions of home-cooked food with others who are not always able to cook for themselves. The Casserole Club allows residents to give back to their community whilst sharing their delicious home cooked food. The trial is funded by the Victorian Government Department of Health and coordinated by the Municipal Association of Victoria.

The Victorian Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill was passed in late 2017 and is expected to come in to effect in mid-2019. There may be an opportunity for Council to host education forums, or engage with this legislation in other meaningful ways for the community.

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) are driving work with LaTrobe University around normalising death and embedding death literacy across a range of Local Government Services from Youth Work to Arts and Culture Services.

The MAV are also progressing their 'End of Life Project' which aims 'to explore how local government can play a role in building the capacity of communities to better accept that dying is a part of life and encourage more Victorians to actively participate in caring and supporting people at the end of their lives at home and in their community'.

As noted above, the Commissioner concluded that addressing loneliness among older people is 'everyone's business' – we all have a role to play as neighbours, business owners, members of community groups or service providers in reaching out to and creating a welcoming and supporting environment for older people.

(<https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/services-information/commissioner-for-senior-victorians/government-response-to%20ageing-is-everyones-business>)

Using a gender lens, we know that older women face homelessness at greater rates than men and '34% of single older women live in permanent income poverty' largely due to their much smaller rates of superannuation, if they have any at all. While these structural issues will require a sustained coordinated approach to address the issues, initiatives such as Money for Jam are exploring ways that older women can create small roles for themselves to supplement their income and relieve a little of the financial, and sometimes social, stress they are under.

(<https://womensagenda.com.au/latest/28303/>)

In recent years Council has created a number of Pocket Parks around Yarra. The park on Richmond Hill has become a focal point for older Italian men who live locally and enjoy meeting up most afternoons to play chess. Aged Services wants to encourage the development of more of these parks in local neighbourhoods, around the municipality.

WHO Core Feature 4: Civic Participation and Employment

Manchester City Council invited pledges from businesses and individuals to create a more age friendly city. These included: real estate agents, home shares, seating options and social cafes. All pledges, no matter the size, were welcomed as they help cultivate a culture of inclusiveness.

(www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200091/older_people/7115/older_peoples_charter/4)

This program offers a model on how Local Government and business can together work to increase inclusion.

A growing factor in people's ability to participate in civic life, is their ability to access the internet to receive information. While 47% of people aged 45 years and older primarily use newspapers / radio for their main information source, 62% regularly use online resources.

Research has found that Skype, e-mail and even social media apps like Instagram are becoming 'vital tools to keep the elderly connected' with people over the age of 75 showing the 'steepest rise in usage'. (www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-04/elderly-use-of-social-media-and-technology-on-the-rise/8240508)

The Diversity Council of Australia has conducted a research project "Grey Matters: Engaging Mature Age Workers" that looks at the key factors of why older people are leaving the workforce, and what it would take to reengage them. Older people are willing to work, and open to upskilling and training, but prefer roles with flexibility especially with starting and ending times. (www.dca.org.au/research/project/grey-matters-engaging-mature-age-workers)

While much is made of older entrepreneurs being 'the fastest growing segment of new business owners in Australia, with almost 35 percent of all new businesses consisting of 'seniorpreneur' start-ups' this may point to the fact that necessity begets ingenuity. According to the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, 'these new ventures often take the form of self-employment as a way out of unemployment'. (http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/2016/04/07/seniorpreneurs-australia-business_n_9638002.html)

WHO Core Feature 5: Communication and Information

The 'digital divide' refers to the poor technological literacy and access to the internet by some older people and the way in which their limited use of technology locks them out of fully participating in many daily activities. As banks and post offices become fewer, and the expectation of many businesses and government is for people to source their information online, older people are disproportionality left behind. This 'digital divide' can exacerbate feelings of 'social isolation and exclusion from the digital economy.' (www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2014/march/1393592400/robyn-annear/old-folks-new-technology)

We know that 69% of Yarra residents aged 50+ accessed the internet from their dwelling, compared with 80% of the general population. This presents an opportunity to consider how Council can continue to facilitate support for Older People to access the internet.

However many older people happily engage with technology, and, with the introduction of touch screens, some have increased social outcomes from being able to email and Skype with distant family. (<https://www.acma.gov.au/theACMA/engage-blogs/engage-blogs/Research-snapshots/Digital-lives-of-older-Australians>)

A Finnish company, Pieni piiri, has developed a "Skype for grannies" app specifically pitched at older people without any previous IT skills. (www.thirdsector.co.uk/digital-round-up-skype-grannies-moves-digitalised-care-older-people/digital/article/1425269). Wearable technology is the next frontier with wearable heart monitors already proving to be 'extremely popular gifts among elderly Australians' (<https://australianageingagenda.com.au/promotion/?mvi=9e0021bbe7114dcf95f824771ec6ea01>).

In the case of city wide Emergency, older people's communication preferences are critical. If there is a heatwave or an evacuation Council has to know the best way to disseminate information to different groups of people. This may involve calling individuals on a register of high needs clients, or sending information out via senior's centres. http://journals.lww.com/thehearingjournal/Fulltext/2014/07000/Emergency_Communication_Excludes_People_with.10.aspx

WHO Core Feature 6: Community Support and Health Services

It has been reported in the UK that some survey respondents expressed that they found dementia more frightening than developing cancer. This is reflective of a culture which highly values "somebody who thinks clearly, remembers accurately, consumes consistently' and so dementia represents a 'sort of [social and cultural death](#), in addition to the privations and suffering from the condition itself' for the individual and their loved ones. There is discussion around the role of 'collective memory' and how people can still be of value, even with advanced dementia, and what we can learn about ourselves through this process. (<https://theconversation.com/why-are-we-so-afraid-of-dementia-83175>)

Elder abuse is particularly prevalent amongst people with dementia (though not exclusively). (www.fightdementia.org.au/media-releases/people-with-dementia-at-increased-risk-of-elder-abuse). The Australian Law Reform Commission released its report 'Elder Abuse—A National Legal Response' in June 2017 calling for a national, coordinated response to clamp down on elder abuse – with a particular focus on working with financial institutions to put in place measures to protect older people's finances from potential abusers.

It's not a sexy topic, but "...heterosexual adults over 45 have recently seen increases in HIV, gonorrhoea, herpes, syphilis, chlamydia and genital warts." There is scope within the Municipal Health Plan to do some work in this area. (<http://theconversation.com/why-over-45s-are-at-risk-of-sexually-transmitted-infections-new-findings-69539>)

WHO Core Feature 7: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

While the idea of a late life 'sea change' still holds currency, there is a case to be made that cities offer a preferable location in which to age. As mobility may reduce with age, there is benefit in living in proximity to social and medical care. Cities must adapt to the growing needs of older people who are travelling in their local neighbourhoods. Universal design that facilitates people walking in safety and with ease will facilitate healthier outcomes not just for older people, but for all local residents. (www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/blog/urban-environments-ageing-population-design)

Creating a culture of shared spaces is achievable when both the physical and social infrastructure are designed to be inclusive or all people. (<http://theconversation.com/contested-spaces-we-need-to-see-public-space-through-older-eyes-too-72261>)

Neighbouring Boroondara Council voted to create a 'playground for fitness in the elderly' and Darebin Council has installed outdoor gym and fitness equipment in their All Nations Park that older people are encouraged to enjoy. They also run free Tai Chi classes in the park.

Yarra Council's Infrastructure Plan states that the 'traditional senior citizen hub model is facing challenges... with questions around their future viability' creating an opportunity to evolve 'meeting spaces to ensure older people remain engaged and spaces are relevant'. The new Bargoonga Nganjin hub in North Fitzroy in a shared space incorporating Yarra's Library Service, the Maternal Child Health Nurse, meeting rooms which are regularly used by older ethnic groups, and provides a fully accessible 'Changing Places' toilet. This hub model fosters greater intergenerational opportunities where people gather around shared interests rather than simply by age cohort.

Older people and people with limited mobility may require more rest stops when walking around their neighbourhood. A lack of rest spaces can discourage people from independently shopping and going about their daily life. Whereas many streets in Yarra are too narrow to accommodate traditional park bench style seating, there is an opportunity for Council to support residents who choose to incorporate a seating element in their own front fence (see photos below for reference).

WHO Core Feature 8: Transportation

Yarra's Community Transport service provides a regular bus service to eligible residents for various activities at local Neighbourhood Houses, Health Centres, Epworth Pool, Seniors Hubs in Collingwood and Richmond and local shopping centres. Friendly and professional drivers collect residents from home in accessible busses and drive them to and from their destination during business hours.

Brisbane City Council runs its 'Council Cabs' service, which organises shared taxis at scheduled times for residents who find it difficult to get to their local shops. Council

Cabs are available to people over 60 years old, mobility impaired, or a Pensioner Concession Card or Centrelink Seniors Card holder.

The Council Cab operates weekly in most Brisbane suburbs. In some areas, services are offered twice a week. The service picks you up from home and takes you to your local shopping centre. Each one-way trip costs between \$1 and \$3. This fare is paid to the driver at boarding.

City of Port Phillip's "Walk Plan 2011–2020 Feet First: Making pedestrians the priority" picks up the actions from a range of social plans and knits them together in an overarching Walking Plan. By bringing the needs of a range of age cohorts into one walking plan, the aim of universal access is championed.

Senior pedestrians, currently account for almost half of all pedestrian fatalities in Victoria. This provides an opportunity for a communications campaign.

(www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/services-information/commissioner-for-senior-victorians/government-response-to%20ageing-is-everyones-business)

Accessible walkways are important not just for Older people but also for People with Disabilities, and parents with prams and young children in particular. This highlights the value of universal design and the opportunity to design and build a city for all.

The annual 'Walker Rally' in Oslo Norway was received attention for being a creative and inclusive event that encourages Older People to be visible and engage with their city. Participants receive prizes for participation and also for most creative walker (or wheelchair or walking stick. The route draws people through the city centre, and offers a fun and inclusive way to bring people together from all life ages and stages.

Consultation on the New Strategy

These examples are intended to promote thought around issues, ideas and initiatives that will equip present and future Older People in Yarra with opportunities and platforms to engage with their local neighbourhood and feel supported to enjoy ageing in Yarra. The consultation on the new strategy will take place in early 2018.

