Age and Place:

Bringing local government on board

Dr Jane Bringolf

COTA
COTA NEW SOUTH WALES

Issues

More older people living in the community than in care

Issues of ageing are interpreted as care issues

Often phrased in the negative – burden, cost

Ignores the opportunities and benefits of an ageing population

Local government – where "rubber hits the road"

Outline of Project

Aim: Increase awareness of the issues related to an ageing population at local government level

Goal: To get local government personnel thinking about an ageing population in practical terms

Objective: To understand how the built environment and societal attitudes help or hinder activities and participation of older persons

Outline of the Process

1. Collate and analyse existing checklists on liveability and age-friendly environments

2. Call for councils to participate in project by Local Government NSW

3. Develop a workshop process to get understanding of older population

4. Devise a resource for use by other councils

Five Features for Older People

1. Footpaths
2. Seating
3. Lighting
4. Wayfinding
5. Toilets

PLUS

- Parking considered covered under standards, but for those without mobility badges – placement of parking spaces is also important

Stage 3: Getting an understanding

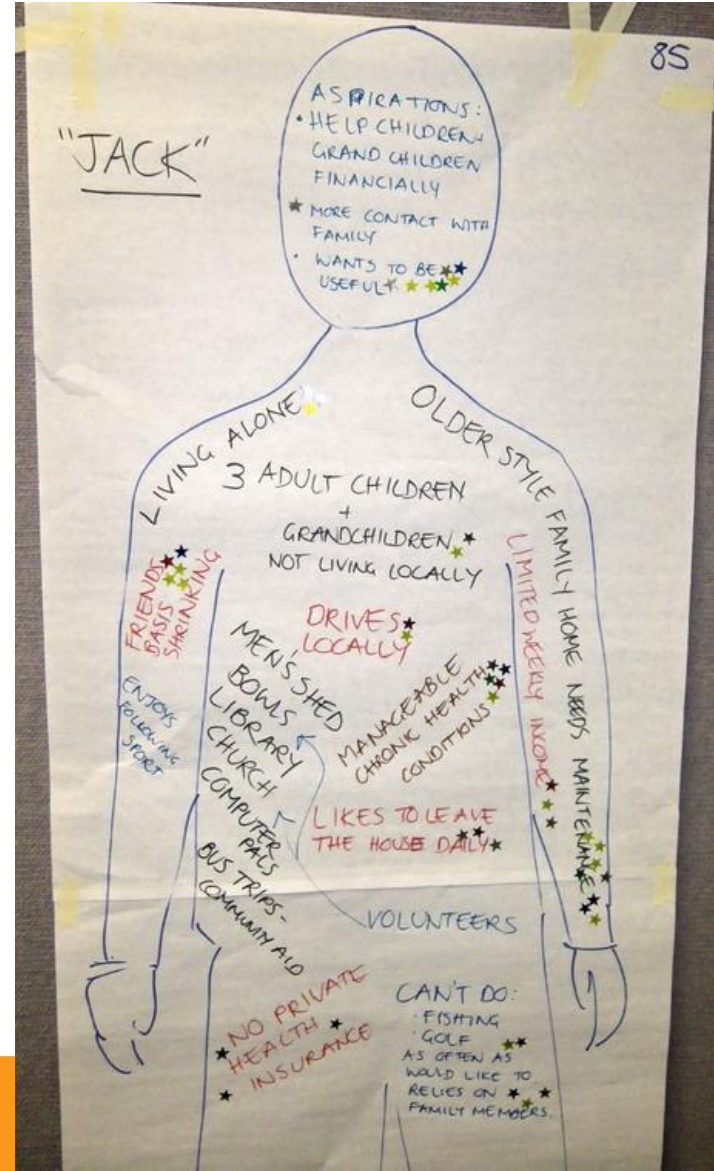Devised a workshop with four main parts:

1. Understanding the diversity of older population

2. Understanding interaction of older population with built environment

3. Incorporating this understanding into Council planning processes

4. Incorporating this understanding into their own councillor or staff role

Council Workshops

- Individual workshops for each Council (5 hrs)
- Participants invited from across Council departments, community service providers, community members, Councillors
- Council provided venue, sent out invitations, encouraged attendance
- COTA provided workshop design, workshop facilitators, materials, and catering

Based on people known to workshop participants:

Aged around 55: 65: 75: 85: 95

Exercise 2: Every Picture Tells a Story

- Each person given a picture taken in the local environment: shops, streets, buildings, parks

- Asked to look through the eyes of the archetypal older people created in Exercise 1.

Your comments ...

Entry/Exit of vehicle in disabled parking difficult as no continual flat seat surface/blocking of bike lane if taking time to enter/exit vehicle (increased risk to elderly & bike users). Visibility of elderly to those cars rounding the bend.

Very busy area - vehicles + pedestrians disabled parking area not clearly distinguished from paved pedestrian area

No lights or stop sign/give way only. Tricky with vehicles entering & backing out of loading zone as well as driving both directions.

Your comments...

Looks pretty good however the leaves need to be raked away. They would be slippery.

Small PRINT of bus TimeTable for Elderly

Lumps of concrete footings around posts higher than the rest of concrete ~ trip hazard.

Cannot access seat if using walking aide (gap not big enough between shelter + front post.

Advertising blocking visibility (have to get up to see things

Contrast colour of step.

Exercise 3: Council Strategic Plans

Apply learning from previous exercises to goals in Council Community Strategic Plan

Each group works on a set of goals from their Council's Plan, eg:

Environment

Social

Economic

Governance

Exercise 4: What can I do?

Each person reflects on the work so far – the archetypes, the environment, the Council plan

- List ideas of what they can do
- Choose one action they can undertake tomorrow
- Announce their action to the whole group

Take home message

The workshop process showed:

- Council staff can learn from residents and apply this to their work

- Checklists and standards do not change attitudes

- Attitudes can be re-formed to be more inclusive

Ongoing work

WHO Age Friendly Cities and Communities

- Workshop process can be can be used, adapted and extended to enable councils to become members of the WHO Global Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities (WHO GNAFCC)

WHO AFCC 8 Domains

A useful framework for analysis and action

1. Outdoor spaces and buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Social participation
5. Respect and social inclusion
6. Civic participation and employment
7. Communication and information
8. Community support and health services

Plans and attitudes

Plans and strategies do not change attitudes

Attitudes change plans

Understanding the perspectives and diversity of older people is the key

A change in attitudes reflected in plans brings success

Thank you!

Jane Bringolf

Liveable Communities Project Manager

COTA NSW

jane.bringolf@cotansw.com.au