



Neighbourhood Design and the Activities of Older Home Owners

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ABS Estimates 2004-2021

- % of 65 yrs and over will have doubled
- % of 85 yrs and over will have quadrupled

Intergenerational Report 2002

- 40 year forecast of huge budget blowout due to ageing
- Increased costs of health and aged care

New Policy Initiatives

- Superannuation, taxation, retirement age
- DoHA Community For All Ages Speakers Series
- DoHA/ALGA Age Friendly Urban Environments

UNSW AHURI Research Project

- Housing, Land and Neighbourhood Use by Older Home Owners
- Funded by AHURI and DoHA



International Literature Review

National Survey of Older Home Owners

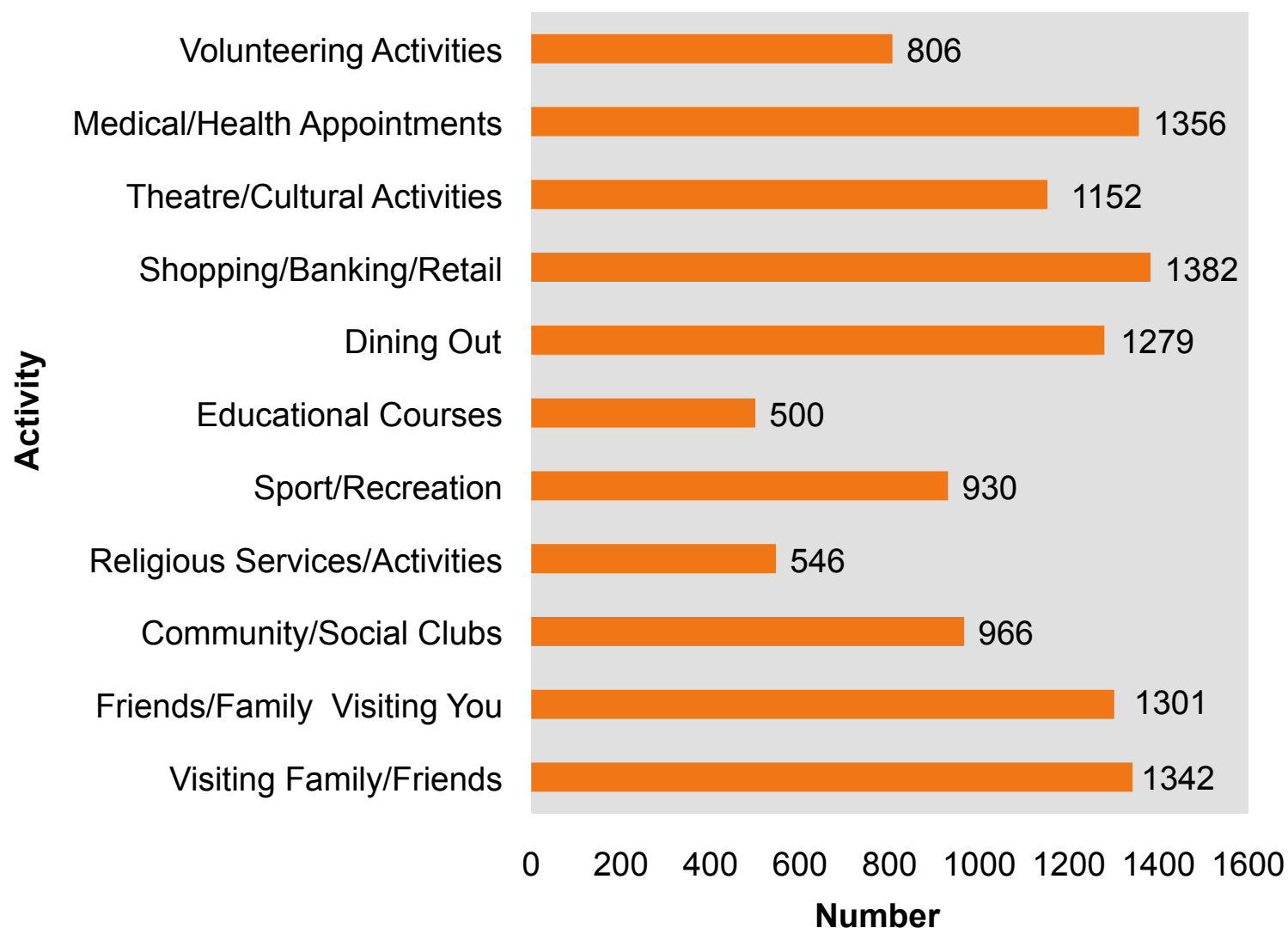
- National Seniors Association '50 something' magazine
- 1604 older home owner respondents
- Good representation of states, age groups, employment status

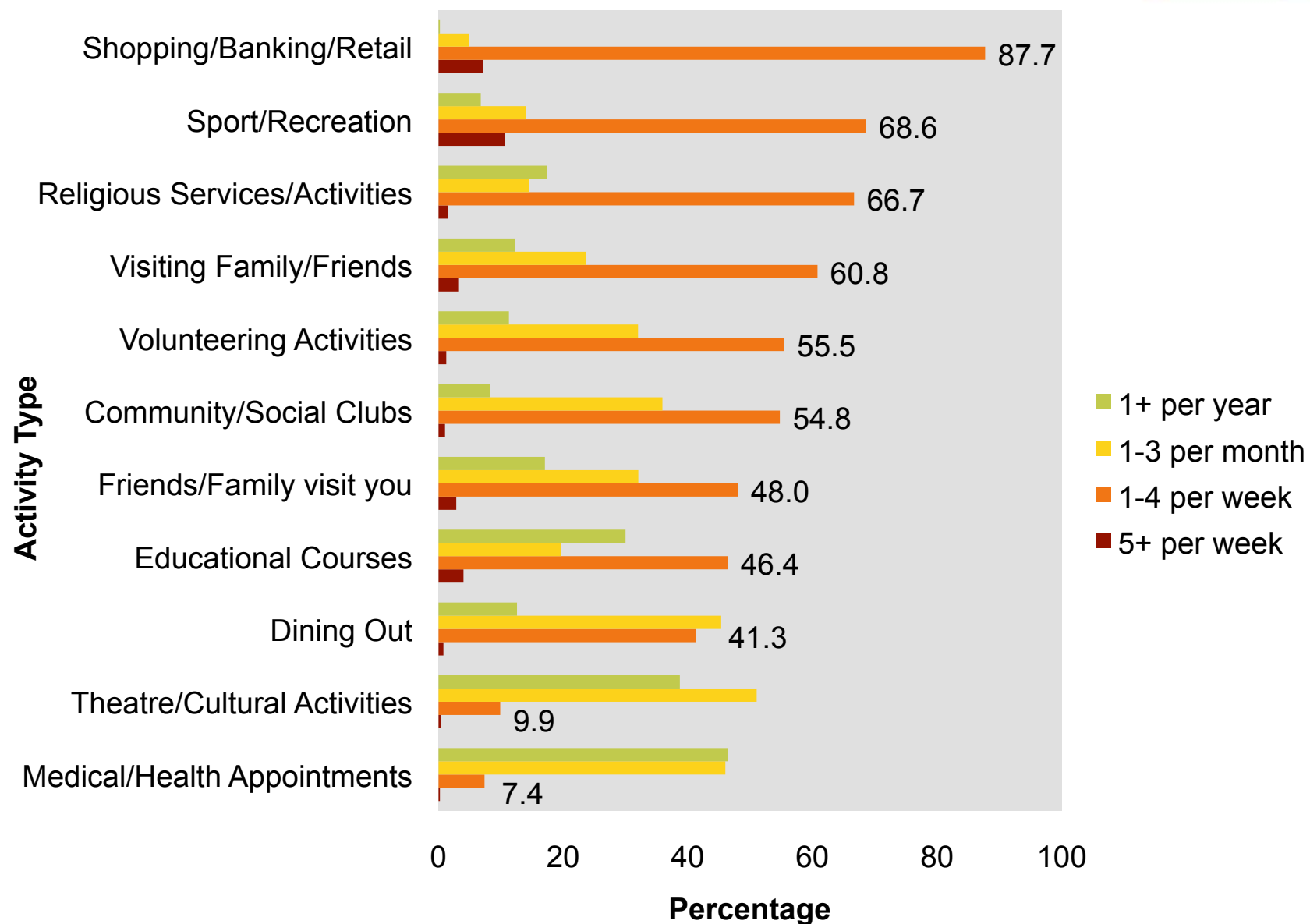
In-depth Interviews

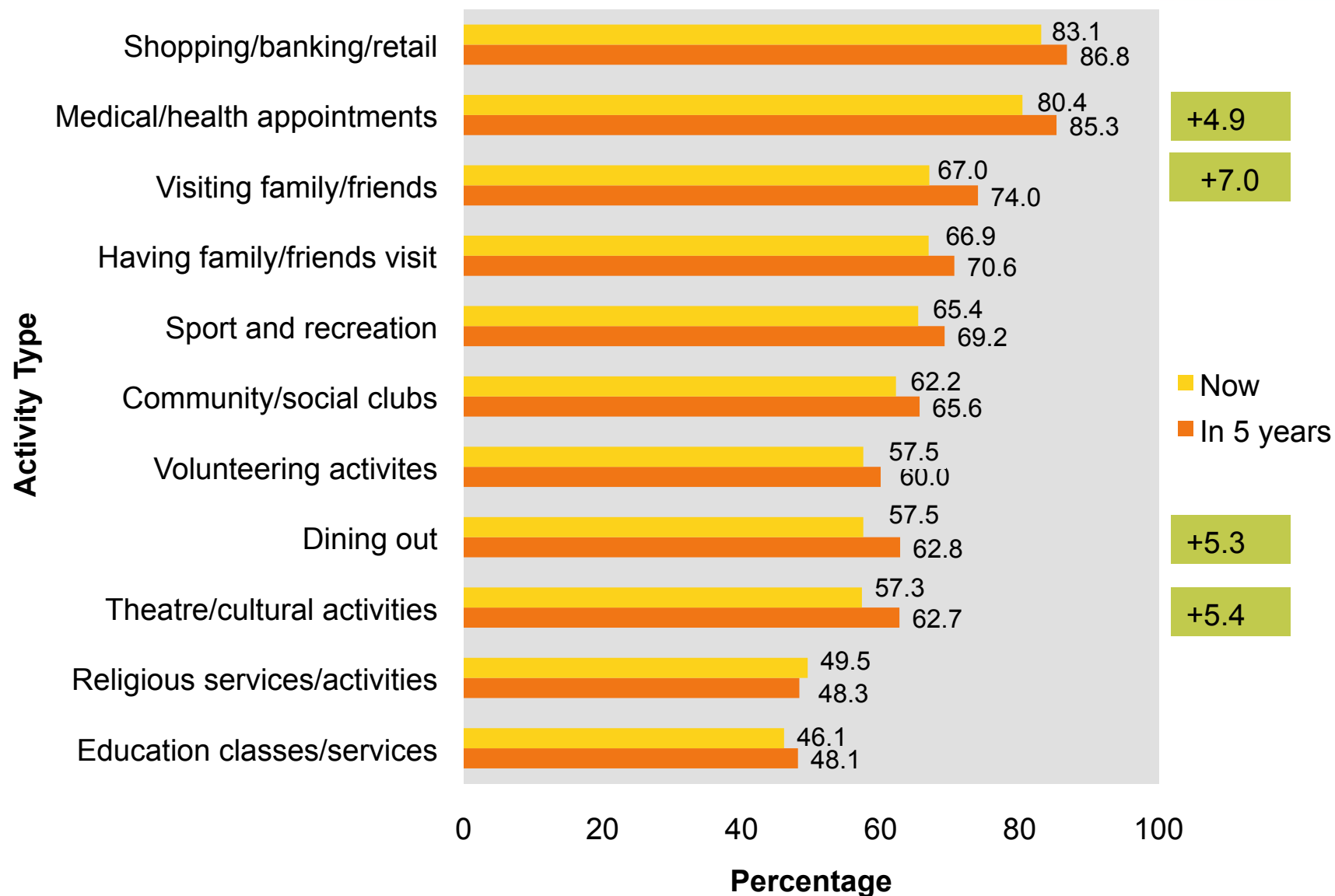
- 69 interviews from NSW, Vic, Qld, WA and ACT
- Purposive sampling (location/age/assistance/dwelling type)
- Conducted in the home
- Photographs home (with permission) & neighbourhood

Cost Benefit Analysis and Economic Modeling

- Visitable, Adaptable and Universal Design
- Economic modeling of implementation scenarios









We looked to downsize, the problem is that we like our area where we are. It is an easy home to look after, the sun is nice, the yard is easy to look after, we're close to our church, we're close to two shopping centres. You've got a main shopping centre there. If we sold this you would most likely have to buy a newer, smaller house and we'd pay the same amount for that as this. We'd be a bit further out and at the moment the traffic problems from people that are from the other side of the hill are tremendous... So we stay here.

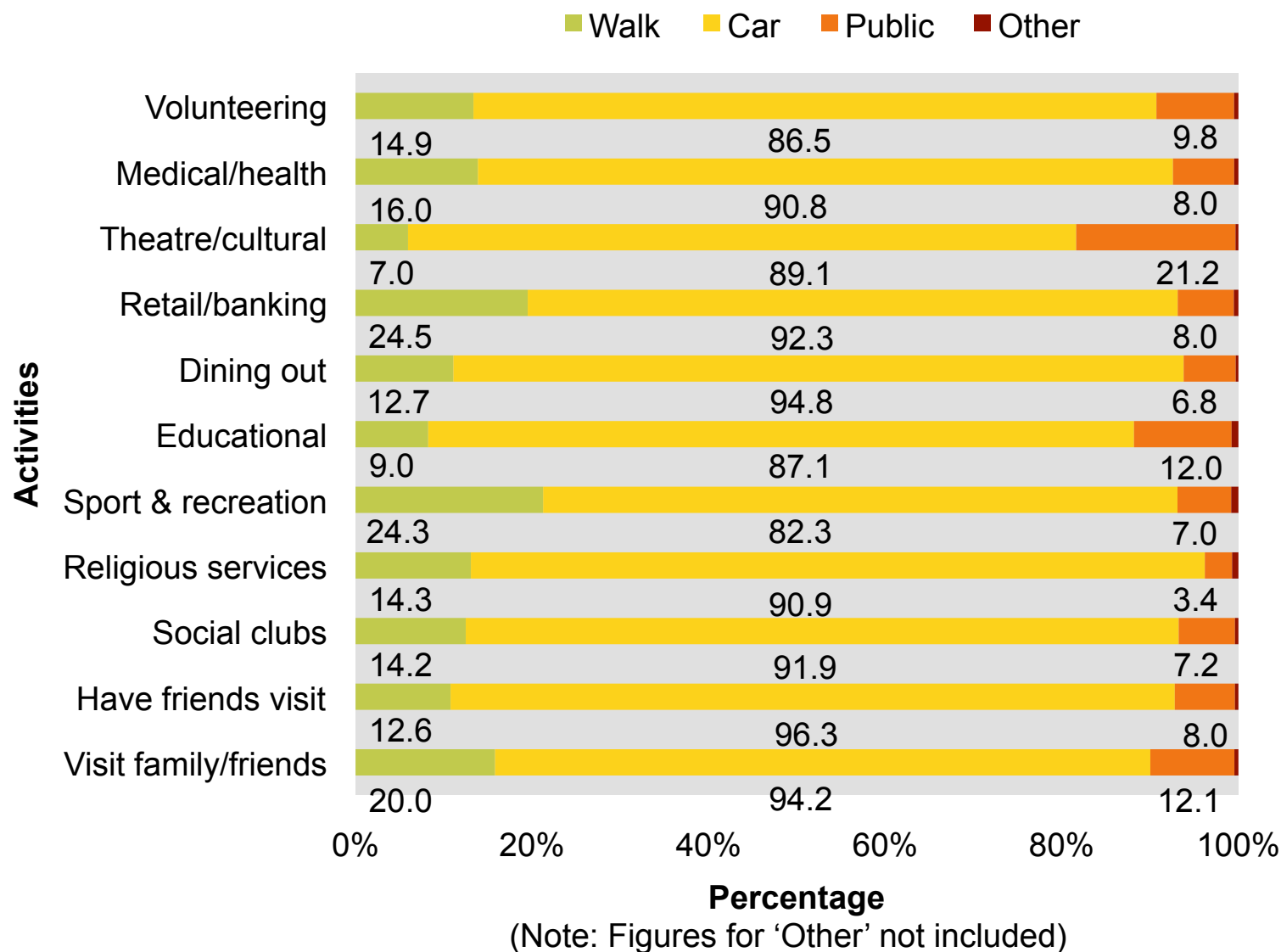
(Female 75-79 yrs, living alone, attached house, regional, pensioner requiring assistance)

But whether it's five years, or seven years, or ten years...when we come to the point where we're really geriatric, [we will] go to [the local town]. Not necessarily an old people's home. Just a place [within] walking distance from all the amenities.

(Male 65-69 with partner, CALD, regional, self-funded retiree)

Importance of Close Proximity of Activities to the Home

ACTIVITY TYPE	NOW			IN 5 YEARS		
	Females %	Males %	F-M %	Females %	Males %	F-M %
Visiting family & friends	67.8	65.7	2.1	77.3	68.8	8.5
Having family & friends visit	67.6	65.8	1.8	74.1	65.2	8.9
Community and social clubs	63.4	62.2	1.2	69.1	60.1	9.0
Religious services & activities	48.7	50.7	-2.0	47.6	49.4	-1.8
Sport and recreation	66.3	63.9	2.4	70.1	67.6	2.5
Education classes & activities	50.3	37.5	12.8	54.2	35.6	18.6
Dining out	59.2	54.6	4.6	64.8	59.6	5.2
Shopping, banking & retail	84.9	80.2	4.7	89.1	83.1	6.0
Theatre and cultural activities	59.6	57.3	2.3	66.0	57.2	8.8
Medical & health appointments	80.5	80.4	0.1	86.3	83.7	2.6
Volunteering activities	58.5	55.9	2.6	62.1	56.3	5.8





Freedom & Independence

[W]e've got two cars. ...But I bought that car because of things I wanted to do, and he wasn't always available to take me, and he wasn't always willing to take me if I was going somewhere where I couldn't take the bus and the train. ... Actually it cost me more money to buy that car than anything else, but that doesn't matter, it's freedom. ...So it means I can come and go when I please, to places where there's no access with the bus and the train.

(Female 65-69 yrs with partner, suburban, separate house)

Necessity Due to a Disability

[Public] transport [is] available but as I cannot walk without a walker I must use car.

(Female 85+ yrs with partner, capital city, separate house, working part-time, assistance required)



Inadequate Public Transport

We rely on our cars here, because it just isn't very good public transport. It has improved in the last year there's been extra buses put on down here to cope with increased travel but still not very good.

(Female 60-64 yrs with partner, suburban, separate house, self-funded retiree)

Impact on Social Participation

That's what has happened since I've become older. My friendship or my meeting [friends] is practically shutting down completely, because...not being able to drive, I don't go, I have no social thing out of club.

(Male, 80-84 yrs with partner, CALD, suburban, attached house, pensioner requiring assistance)



Barriers to Public Transport Use

- Absence of services (outer suburbs & regional areas)
- Excessive distances or steep access to transport nodes
- Irregular or unreliable services
- Inconvenient or circuitous bus routes
- Changes or cancellation of bus routes
- Queues and lack of seating at bus stops
- Excessive transfer waiting times between modes
- Lack of parking at stations (middle of the day)
- Crowding on trains and busses
- Difficulty negotiating stairs at stations and onto busses
- Concern about crime and anti-social behaviour on public transport and at transport nodes



Framework for Analysis (Quinn et al, 2009)

Seven key elements of neighbourhood design that impact on the participation of older people in activities outside the home

- Paths of travel
- Transport infrastructure
- Buildings
- Open spaces
- Wayfinding
- Safety and Security



Key issues arising from the interviews

- Absence, or only partial provision, of paved footpaths: requiring older people to either walk on the road, uneven verges or unmade paths;
- Poorly maintained, damaged or uneven surfaces: resulting in risk of tripping and falling;
- Paths that were too narrow, especially for wheelchairs and other assistive devices;
- Footpaths dangerously close to busy roads: presenting a safety risk for pedestrians;
- Lack of, or inadequate frequency of, pedestrian crossings: be these in the form of zebra crossings, traffic lights or under/overpasses;
- Inadequate lighting at night: increasing the risk of tripping, falling and assaults



Non-existent



Discontinuous



Damaged



Narrow/steep



Obstructed



Close to street



In some areas there is [a footpath]. In some areas there isn't. The route that I take on my morning walk, some of it's got great footpaths, but I usually walk on the road, it's actually safer. [T]he footpaths are a bit up and down and you're likely to trip and there's grass...I took a friend for a walk not that long ago and she slipped on the... slight verge of grass that goes to the road... and she actually broke a rib.

(Female 60-64 with partner, separate house, suburban, self-funded retiree)

[It's] pretty hard to go out locally for a 'walk'... No footpath!, no kerb and guttering, dangerous...in [a] popular suburb 6-8 mins from [Regional Town] CBD. Hard to meet neighbours if disabled [or] invalid.

(Female, 60-64 with partner, regional, separate house, assistance required)



Key Design-related Issues:

- Excessive distances or steep access to transport nodes;
- Lack of seating and shelter at bus stops;
- Lack of parking at railway stations;
- Difficulty negotiating steps at stations or onto buses;

I have to walk up the hill [to the bus stop] and I rarely ever do that because it's getting too difficult.

(Female 65-69 living alone, attached house, pensioner, assistance required)

I mean, getting out of the bus and getting on the step, and I'm in the city, I don't know where is the gutter, [there are] all these hazards.

(Male, 80-84 yrs with partner, CALD, suburban, attached house, pensioner requiring assistance)



Going to [town centre name] and having to catch buses up there, the norm now seems to be people stand in queues. And... some people, young or old, can't stand. Now, what I do, I'll sort of tell people, I'm sorry, but I can't stand, and then I'll walk up and down. But it's a bit difficult, yes. So I think a few seats along where people have to stand would be a good idea. I suppose people can take walkers and sit on them...but then they can't lift them up into the buses, so that's another problem.

(Female 65-69 yrs, living with two sons, CALD, flat/apartment, suburban, pensioner)

It's nice to get to [station name] for the train, it's very quick to the city. But you do have to get there and there aren't any [car] parks there. If you're not there before 9:00am or 8:00am there's no parking, so it's a problem.

(Female 60-64 yrs with partner, suburban, separate house, self-funded retiree, assistance required)



Key building access issues:

- Lack of seating;
- Steps at entrances (with no ramps);
- Lack of handrails on stairs.

One thing I do find when you're going into places like art galleries and that, I really do wish there were more seats, and even shopping malls...but they tend not to build them, because then they get loiterers and such...and...I think that's why they don't do it.

(Female 60-64, with partner, attached house, capital city, pensioner, assistance required)

I have trouble going down public stairs [if] it doesn't have a rail, that's all. Looking down, I can't quite see where the edge is. ...But going up is alright because you can see the steps ahead of you. You can get a rhythm. But not going down. I have to lean on the rail so if I start to fall I can grab on before I fall over. *(Female 70-74, pensioner requiring assistance)*



Well, the post office does not have access. It is two large steps and they are cut in like that. So when you come out the door you have got to watch you don't fall down that step there.

(Female 60-64 yrs, living alone, regional, separate house, self-funded retiree)



Most common concerns:

- Lack of, or damaged, seating;
- Lack of, or damaged, public toilets;
- Lack of handrails on stairs.

[The lack of benches] is [a problem], isn't it? In fact that's the reason why [partner's name] can't walk, because he needs to sit down every... five minutes or so, and he really can't. It's the same with shopping centres. He needs to sit down...so we only go to the shopping centres when he knows that it's got seats, because he loves to go shopping, but you know. Benches would be fantastic. Benches at bus stops would be just lovely to have a bit of a rest.

(Female 60-64 with disabled partner, separate house, suburban, self-funded retiree)



If you were to go walking around the streets of [this] and close by suburbs, and it wasn't a main street where there are restaurants, there is no seating; there wouldn't be anywhere you could stop and go to the toilet if you needed to.

(Female 60-64 yrs with partner, attached house)

You know it would be nice if you had somewhere, if you said lets go for a walk, you pick up the paper on a Sunday morning, you stroll and you have a cup of coffee and pick up hot bread or whatever you know. It's pretty lacking, it is very much lacking.

(Female 60-64 yrs, living alone, flat/apartment, working full-time)



Most common concerns:

- Lack of parks
- Inappropriately designed or equipped parks

There isn't really anything around the place. I don't know of any parks. If you were to go out walking I don't think it would be that pleasant.

(Female 60-64 yrs, living alone, flat/apartment, working full-time)

[speaking of how often she used a nearby park] Not very often, no. I mean I have, but...Just because I find it's got a slope on it, and again with my knees...Yes, and I just don't find it easy to walk around the park. I've done it, but ... it's not good for me, with my knees. ...You've got to walk on wet lawn... but it's more the slope part that I find difficult.

(Female 70-74 yrs, living alone, separate house, suburban)



Main issues:

- Legibility of street pattern
- Confusing bus routes and signage

I guess the main problem with the area is that it is not in squares, it goes around in circles and can be difficult for people to find us here. ...I've gone and collected people that have lost themselves.

(Male 65-69 yrs with partner, separate house, suburban, working part-time, assistance required)

I am not quite used to using the bus. It takes such a long time to wait for a bus and then it is very confusing for me. The buses are very confusing to me. All I know is two routes, taking the bus route to [hospital name], ...or going to the city using the train and then take another bus to the Embassy...

(Male 85+ yrs, with partner, CALD, suburban, attached house, pensioner, assistance required)



Key Issues:

- Unsafe walking at night (particularly women)
- Inadequate lighting
- Local crime hotspots (hotels)
- Vegetation providing concealment

Well it's not safe, I wouldn't feel safe. I mean, I used to, [but I] haven't gone out for a while. I miss out on it. I used to go dancing on a Monday night, and used to go on a Wednesday night, used to go down to the centre down there, that would be on a Monday night, and you'd drive down there, get out, dance, and drive home. And it's fairly well lit up there for when you park your cars, but even then, some of the cars got broken into. So you always have to be on the lookout and be careful and that. So no, I definitely would not go around walking after dark, no.

(Female 65-69 yrs with partner, suburban, separate house, assistance required)



I'm a bit frightened to walk around the streets here, because I have to say, and it sounds awful, but some of the people in [town name] are very questionable, and there's a lot of crime happens down here, which is really sad. ... I mean I once had my bag snatched, and that's sort of traumatised me to the point where I don't really like walking around the streets. I've done it, and I do it, but...it doesn't give me much pleasure. I'm a bit anxious ... There's footpaths all over the place and little walkways that go through. But I'm scared, I get into a walkway and I think, heck, I'm stuck between two fences and if somebody comes the other way, I'm sort of, you know...

(Female 70-74 yrs living alone, regional, attached house, pensioner)



Some of the lighting could be improved slightly, because [there are] a lot of trees down here, for example in that park, that is a fairly isolated area and if there was a risk of being mugged or anything like that, which there isn't at the moment, but if it became that way with an old person being more at risk, there could be a problem down there because it is very isolated, just where the pedestrian overbridge goes.

(Male 60-64 yrs, living alone, CALD, capital city, separate house, pensioner)

No, I wouldn't [go out at night] because as I've said, we've had break-ins here, and there is a pub up the road there, and a pub on [street name], and Friday evenings, the natives are very restless and very noisy. So I personally think, to be on the safe side, you must use your own common sense, as old as you are.

(Male 60-64 yrs, living alone, CALD, capital city, separate house, pensioner)



- The participation of older home owners in activities outside the home is diverse and frequent;
- Living within close proximity of most activities participated in is considered important by the majority;
- Older home owners are highly dependent on private motor vehicles to access these activities;
- There are many barriers preventing greater public transport use by older home owners;
- The design of the neighbourhood can influence participation of older home owners, including:
 - Provision, location and design of paths of travel
 - Design of transport nodes and infrastructure
 - Accessibility of buildings requiring public access
 - Provision and design of street furniture and fixtures
 - Provision and appropriate design of open space
 - Legibility of road patterns and residential layouts
 - Design for safety and security



- Age friendly cities initiatives intersects with healthy cities, sustainable cities, inclusive environments and environmental criminology (CPTED) initiatives.
- Progress is being made towards more age friendly neighbourhoods both internationally and locally
 - Internationally – WHO, I'DGO and WISE programs
 - Locally - DoHA/ALGA age friendly cities initiatives
 - Locally - NHF/PIA/DoHA/ALGA healthy cities initiatives
 - Locally - Proposed Access to Premises Standard
 - Locally - Disability Standards for Public Transport (2002)
- Progress on the ground is very uneven with a few LGAs only adopting age friendly and healthy cities strategies to date
- The design of many neighborhoods, and much transport infrastructure is not age-friendly
- Many regional centres appear to be worse off
- There is an urgent need for a coherent set of guidelines for age friendly neighbourhoods, and their consistent application.