



# Liveable Communities Project Final Report



## Acknowledgements

COTA NSW acknowledges the contributions of participant councils, without whom this project would not have been possible. Our thanks go to:

William Davies, City of Ryde  
Todd Fergusson and Johanne Campbell, Gilgandra Shire Council  
Lynda Hepple, Great Lakes Council  
Joanne Petrovic, Richmond Valley Shire Council  
Nicola Mercer, Kyogle Shire Council  
Joanne Ruffin, Berrigan Shire Council  
Marilyn Gilbert, Tumbarumba Shire Council  
Ruth Jacka and Carol Sinclair, Lane Cove Council  
Kathryn Sloane, Liverpool City Council  
Nicola Robson, Wingecarribee Shire Council

A special thanks to Professor Peter Phibbs, Urban Research Centre, University of Western Sydney, for his support throughout the project and for his assistance at the workshops.

Thanks also to Local Government NSW for their support in recruiting participant councils.

COTA NSW also acknowledges the support of the project's steering committee:

Catherine Bridge, University of New South Wales  
Melissa Burne, City of Ryde  
Gareth Collins, Roads and Maritime Authority  
Margaret Kay, Local Government and Shires Associations  
Ian Day, COTA NSW  
Sigrid Patterson and James Marshall, Office for Ageing, NSW Department of Family and Community Services

The project was funded by the Ageing Grants Program, Office of Ageing, Ageing Disability and Home Care, NSW Family and Community Services.

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December 2012

Supported by the



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## Executive Summary

While an ageing population has been the subject of national and state government plans, it is often at local government level such plans are implemented. The idea of liveable communities encompasses concepts of social inclusion and healthy and productive lifestyles. Liveable communities are sustainable communities, both socially and environmentally. The focus of this project was on social sustainability rather than environmental considerations such as water and energy conservation.

There are several resources in circulation related to liveable communities and social inclusion but their application is patchy at best. The first part of the project was to analyse these guidelines and checklists for aspects important for older Australians. The second part of the project was to raise awareness of population ageing and the issues for local government.

Overall the workshops achieved the aim of raising awareness of the needs of an ageing population in relation to the built environment. While the workshops were mainly targeted towards council staff, community service providers and community members also benefited from the awareness raising exercises. Community service providers were able to fine tune their awareness of how older people interact with the built environment, and older community members are now thinking more about their future needs and those of their friends, family and neighbours.

The five step process introduced facts and trends about population ageing; heightened awareness of the diversity of older people; increased the understanding of how older adults interact with the built environment; linked the issues to the Community Strategic Plan; and converted ideas into practical outcomes.

The picture analysis exercise was probably the most awareness raising part of the workshop. This exercise alone raised much discussion about the day to day activities of older people, such as getting to the shops and medical appointments, and being able to socialise.

The community strategic plans varied considerably in terms of style, content, visions and goals. One of the most consistent themes emerging from all workshops was the need for council staff to better understand the roles of colleagues from other departments and to facilitate better communication between council and the community. Transport and transport infrastructure such as footpaths, bus stops and seating featured strongly in discussions.

Although housing was not specifically introduced as a topic for discussion, in several instances there was some re-thinking about housing and accommodation for older residents other than retirement villages.

Although the workshop process achieved the desired effect of raising awareness it remains to be seen if this is sufficient to bring about the paradigm shift in attitudes and awareness across all council staff and planning processes. However, change begins with the first step and these workshops could be considered as that first step.

# Introduction

While an ageing population has been included in national and state government planning and policy development, it has thus far not fully reached local government level. Yet the implementation of many national and state plans and policies require involvement and implementation at local government level.

There are several resources in circulation related to liveable communities and social inclusion. The needs of specific groups, such as children and people with dementia, are the subject of specific resources, and are for the most part, compatible with the broader concepts of liveability. The World Health Organisation publication on age-friendly cities, which is specific to older people, is also compatible with liveability concepts<sup>1</sup>.

## 1.1 Background

The aim of the project was to promote and create liveable communities for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds at the local government level.

The idea of liveable communities encompasses concepts of social inclusion and healthy and productive lifestyles. Liveable communities are sustainable communities, both socially and environmentally. The focus of this project was on social sustainability rather than environmental considerations such as water and energy conservation.

As many factors are inherent within the concept of liveable communities, several disciplines and stakeholder interests are involved. Housing, public facilities, public transit systems, pedestrian and cycle access, and safe and attractive recreation spaces, all require consideration.

According to the Planning Institute of Australia, planners specialise in the designing of communities, balancing built and natural environments, community needs, cultural significance and economic sustainability, and aim to improve quality of life and create vibrant communities<sup>2</sup>. The objective of the project was, therefore, to inform the decision-making processes within management and environmental planning processes at local government level.

While local government planners have a key role to play in preparing for an ageing population, the issues touch all areas of local government operations. For example, issues for older people in waste collection and recycling, the design and placement of footpaths, access to library resources, and access to public transport. It is, however, acknowledged that local government's powers are, at times, limited by overarching state policies and national legislation, and conversely, by their lack thereof.

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, 2007, *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide*.  
[http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global\\_age\\_friendly\\_cities\\_Guide\\_English.pdf](http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Planning Institute of Australia, 2009, *Healthy Spaces and Places*  
<http://www.healthyplaces.org.au/userfiles/file/HS&P%20An%20overview.pdf>



The NSW Office for Ageing had previously commissioned the Urban Research Centre at the University of Western Sydney to undertake a study of local government's preparedness for an ageing population which resulted in a report, *Local Government and Ageing: Final Report*<sup>3</sup>. The study found that local government was not yet considering the needs of an older population in their planning processes. On the basis of this study and the close connection with this project, one of the report's authors, Professor Peter Phibbs, was invited to assist with the development and delivery of the project.

## 1.2 Governance

A steering committee was set up for governance purposes. The terms of reference for the steering committee were to help guide the project and provide input and expertise to at various stages. Specifically, the committee was to agree on the local government areas to target, review progress against the project plan, review checklist content and review the final report. Meetings were held at critical project milestones to review progress and guide future activities. The project commenced in July 2011 and was scheduled for completion December 2012.

The steering committee consisted representatives from:

- NSW Office for Ageing (Sigrid Patterson/James Marshall)
- Local Government and Shires Association (Margaret Kay)
- Roads and Maritime Authority (Gareth Collins)
- University of New South Wales (Catherine Bridge)
- City of Ryde (Melissa Burne)

and COTA NSW staff:

- Chief Executive (Ian Day)
- Policy Manager (Lisa Langley)
- Project Manager, Liveable Communities (Jane Bringolf)

Project commencement

## 1.3 Participant councils

It was initially decided to work with six councils to assist with the development of a resource for planners working in local government.

The NSW Local Government and Shires Associations circulated to its member councils a request for expressions of interest to participate in the project. Thirteen councils indicated they were interested. These thirteen councils represented a good cross section of local government areas across the State varying in size, economy, and location (rural/urban, coastal/inland).

After a reassessment of the project timing and deliverables, it was considered possible to work with all thirteen councils. The participating councils were:

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<sup>3</sup> O'Brien, E., Phibbs, P., 2011, *Local Government and Ageing – Final Report*. University of Western Sydney. <http://www.lgsa.org.au/sites/lgsa.org.au/files/imce-uploads/35/local-government-ageing-2011.pdf>

Kyogle  
Richmond Valley  
Gilgandra  
Narromine  
Great Lakes  
Lake Macquarie  
Ryde  
Lane Cove  
Liverpool  
Waverley  
Wingecarribee  
Tumbarumba  
Berrigan

The individual council contact personnel were mainly community service staff, particularly ageing and disability workers, and the project began by interviewing (by telephone) each of the contact persons about various aspects of their particular council, their key issues, and what they hoped to gain from participating in the project. At the end of the interview and discussion process ten councils decided to go ahead. Narromine, Lake Macquarie and Waverley decided not to participate.

## **1.4 Resource analysis**

At the same time the interviews were carried out, several checklists and guidelines were collated. The objective was to examine existing checklists and guidelines related to healthy and age-friendly environments and assemble the most appropriate items into an “age-friendly” resource suitable for planners.

From this initial work on checklists and guidelines, together with the interviews with council personnel, the most suitable method to meet the overall aim of the project became clearer.

## **Devising the method**

During the process of collating the various checklists and best practice guides, and in conversation with regulatory and strategic planners, it became apparent that another checklist was unlikely to deliver the desired results.

The issue was not the lack of information available, or the formats in which they are presented: rather, it was impediments to implementing the ideas and best practice promoted by these resources. These impediments might be institutional (laws and regulations), educational (not part of professional training), and/or attitudinal (not being aware of the implications of certain actions and decisions).

It was decided that the workshop method was the best option for promoting the needs of older Australians in the planning and design of the built environment, while at the same time carrying out an analysis of the existing resources for a potential accompanying checklist.

## Document analysis

A detailed analysis of the resource documents was carried out and while many contained worthy liveability attributes, the needs of an ageing population were absent or non-specific. Common themes from these resources were: encouraging improved health and exercise, attractive built form, and appealing and safe open spaces.

Nevertheless, using feedback from the telephone interviews with council staff and analysis of the resource, five features emerged as important aspects for older people when they are out and about in the public domain. These were:

- Footpaths
- Seating
- Lighting
- Wayfinding
- Toilets

Although this is a simple list, its simplicity is beneficial in two aspects. First it is easy to memorise, and second, they are the features most needed and yet most often absent or problematic in the public domain. A five page document was constructed which explained the reasoning for these features and is shown at Appendix A.

The simplicity of this list indicated that including the needs of older people in the planning processes at local government level need not be complex or difficult. However, finding a way to raise awareness levels about the importance of these features, as well as other aspects of the design of the public domain, could prove more difficult.

## 1.5 Workshop method

As the project was now entering the period prior to the Christmas and summer holiday season, it was decided that March and May were the best months to hold the workshops.

Each council was given a list of potential dates and asked to select their preferences. Kyogle Shire Council and Richmond Valley Shire Council agreed to a joint workshop, which, at this stage, reduced the number of workshops needed to nine.

To ensure the workshop was pertinent to each participating council, it was important to view first-hand the elements of the built environment specific to each council area. Visits to participating councils were organised for November, December, and February. More detailed information was gained about each council, its culture, the local area and the issues for older people.

Once the discussions with council staff were complete and the existing resources analysed, the method and delivery techniques were designed and constructed as described in detail in the next section.

## Method

The aim of the project was to find a way to encourage local government personnel to consider the now established concept of 'liveability' from the perspective of an ageing population. It had been established that yet another checklist or guide, no matter how admirable, would have little, if any, effect than previously published resources. It became apparent that unless good ideas and best practice are embedded in legally enforceable instruments, they were unlikely to be implemented.

During informal discussions with planners and other local government personnel, it became clear that perceptions of older people and their everyday lives were perhaps based on old stereotypes. A process of re-thinking the lives and needs of an ageing population in the context of current trends was therefore required. It was assumed that once staff understood the importance of the issues, policies and other documents could be adapted to be more inclusive of older Australians. It was decided that a workshop process using adult learning principles and techniques would be the best approach.

### 2.1 Workshop administration

Each participating council was asked to provide a venue suitable for holding the workshop and to send out invitations to staff, community service providers, and community members. The costs to councils were staff costs in terms of time spent and provision of a venue. COTA NSW covered the catering costs, workshop materials and facilitator costs from the funds provided by the Office for Ageing. No registration or attendance fees were charged to participants.

As the council community services workers are in close contact with the target audience, it was considered more appropriate for invitations to be sent by them. An attractive invitation and workshop outline was devised and circulated, mostly by email. Invitees were asked to RSVP to the council staff member, who provided names for name tags, and assisted in assigning people to the individual working groups. Invitations were sent out up to six weeks in advance and reminders 7 – 10 days prior to the workshop.

The next step was to design the workshop content and processes, set the aims, goals and objectives, design the activities, and develop workshop materials.

### 2.2 Workshop outline

The workshop consisted of five main steps which were designed to:

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Step 1: | Introduce participants to facts and trends about an ageing population                |
| Step 2: | Heighten awareness of the diversity of the ageing population                         |
| Step 3: | Increase understanding of how older people interact with the built environment       |
| Step 4: | Link the issues of an ageing population to the goals in the Community Strategic Plan |

## Step 5: Convert ideas into practical outcomes

These five steps were translated to learning outcomes within a framework of adult learning principles. Consistent with such principles, peer learning formed a major part of the workshop process. It was assumed that much of the information and knowledge required was already inherent in the experiences of participants. The process of learning from peers can often be more influential than learning from designated 'experts'. A secondary reason for using peer learning methods is that each local government area has features specific to its location and planning policies which would be unknown to an external 'expert'. The overall approach, therefore, was to maximise the knowledge of workshop participants using techniques to explore and capture this knowledge.

Consideration was given to the four main learning styles, one of which is usually preferred (although not exclusively) by individuals in a learning situation:

- using theory and evidence as a basis for learning (theorists)
- knowing how it can be applied in a practical way (pragmatists)
- using a hands-on activity to test and trial (activists)
- taking time to reflect and synthesise information (reflectors)

### 2.3 Workshop set-up

To ensure every participant had equal opportunity to contribute, participants were seated in small groups of 4-6 around tables, café-style. Prior to the arrival of participants, the tables were set with written instructions for each of the exercises, notepads, pens, coloured felt pens, sheets with coloured stick-on stars, and sticky notes. Setting up tables prior to the arrival of participants indicated from the outset that this was not a seminar or conference, but a day where participants were expected to provide input.

To facilitate the first activity, life size body outlines (male and female) were drawn on large sheets of paper and hung around the room. The number of outlines was equal to the number of workgroups. It was expected that having these outlines visible as participants arrived would help generate an atmosphere of anticipation of what was to come.

Where possible, participants were assigned to particular workgroups in advance of their arrival to ensure a good mix of council staff and councillors, service providers and community members in each group. Where this was not possible, participants were encouraged to choose a place to sit and were reorganised after the introductory session.

Two methods for forming workgroups were considered: one where participants stay together in one group for all exercises; and the other where participants change groups after each exercise so that they work with different people throughout the day. The former was used based on feedback by council staff that the latter method had been used at other times and had proved unpopular. An example of the café style set up at the Berrigan workshop is shown in Figure 2-1.



**Figure 0-1: Workshop groups in session**

## **2.4 Workshop opening and welcome**

The Mayor of each participating council was invited to give an opening address and in most cases the Mayor or Deputy Mayor was able to do this. General managers were also invited to address participants, and this was offer was taken up in two councils. Figure 2-2 shows the General Manager of Great Lakes Council, Glenn Hanford, addressing workshop participants. The involvement of senior council personnel was thought to provide encouragement to participants, particularly council staff. The workshop facilitator briefly introduced participants to the process for the day before introducing the introductory session.



**Figure 0-2: General Manager Glenn Hanford**



## Step 1: Introductory session

### Context

This session set the scene for the day and directed participants' thinking to the topic. The session covered statistical information about the projected increase in the proportion of older Australians across Australia, and within the participating council's local government area. An overview of the expectations of Australian entering their retirement years was also included.

### Process

The fifteen to twenty minute session was delivered in lecture mode by Professor Peter Phibbs using a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation contained material from the *Local Government and Ageing Report*, statistical information – national and local, and material from research on the expectations of an upcoming older generation.

An overview of the key findings from the *Local Government and Ageing Report* was provided to participants, which in brief are:

- Across NSW, not a sharp awareness of the issue outside the community services staff, although other staff "get on board" after they are walked through the issues
- New strategic planning process in NSW is providing opportunities for the issue to be given greater prominence in Council
- Overall, a common concern of Councils is the high level of social isolation amongst older Australians

The study also raised policy implications, which briefly are:

- Better transport is a key issue for many areas
- Better coordination between levels of government and NGOs
- Particular strategies need to be adopted to address social isolation
- More sharing of resources and ideas between councils is needed
- Better data need to be collected so that the impact of ageing can be measured more accurately
- More scientific research is needed rather than relying on anecdotal evidence

The introductory presentation also covered the myths and stereotypes related to older people, such as they are all frail and have nothing to offer, and that they all need special accommodation, care, and products.

A list of the five features drawn from the checklists as explained in Appendix A was also presented to participants with a brief explanation. This led participants into the first exercise "Who are we talking about?" in which participants discussed and highlighted the diversity of older Australians.

## Step 2: Diversity of the ageing population

### Context

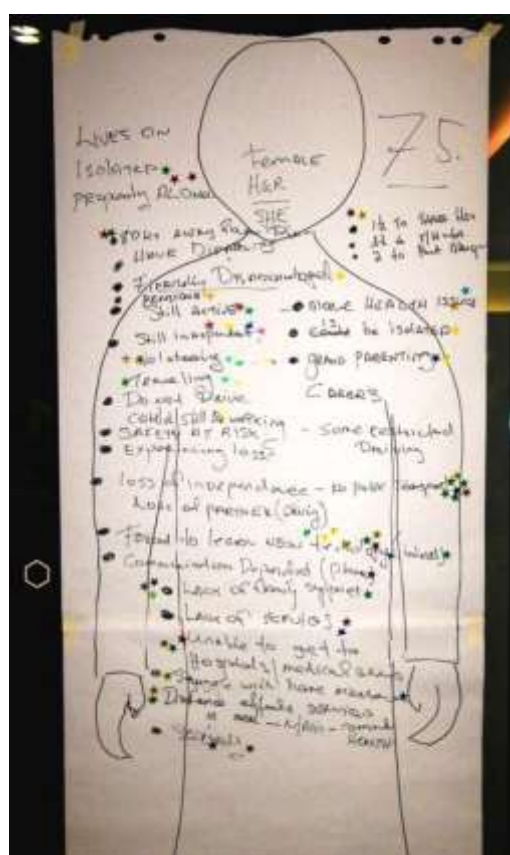
The objective of the session was to familiarise participants with the diversity of needs and interests across the forty to fifty year span of people who are considered 'older'.

This was the first exercise where participants were required to work in a group. As such, time was allowed for people to become acquainted as well as work on the assigned task. Adding a physical element (moving from sitting to standing as a group) helped to raise the energy level of the group activity. Sufficient time was given to this activity to assist with group formation and to ensure all members of the group had the opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

## Process

Each workgroup was assigned a particular age group (55, 65, 75, 85 or 95). Participants were asked to consider where the person lived, who they lived with (people, pets), what type of dwelling they lived in, their activities in a typical day or week, their concerns and their aspirations. In short, to create a 'story' about the life of a person in their assigned age group. Participants were also encouraged to personalise their archetype by giving it a name.

Each workgroup was asked to leave their seats and move to one of the body outlines hanging around the room. With coloured felt pens in hand they were invited to write words, sentences or pictures that depicted their archetypal person. Participants were encouraged to base their discussion on people they know in their assigned age group. Two examples of body outlines showing comments and stars are shown in Figure 2-3.



Rather than have each group explain their archetype to the whole group, which could become a lengthy process, participants were asked to take a sheet of stick-on stars from their table and go to each archetype and place stars on comments of interest and/or agreement. Towards the end



of this activity participants collected morning tea refreshments and brought them back to their table.

Once everyone was seated, the activity was briefly reviewed by the workshop facilitator to bring out the salient points, particularly the diversity across the age groups. It was emphasised that the archetypes would be the reference point for all other activities during the day. The next step was to view the built environment through the eyes of older people using the archetypes as a reference.

### **Step 3: Interaction with the built environment**

#### **Context**

The aim of this activity was to gain a better understanding of the way in which older people interact with the built environment. Prior to the workshop, photographs of the participating council's local area were taken. Familiarity with the locations was considered essential for two reasons. First, some participants would likely have personal experiences interacting with the environment and could fully explain these experiences to others in their workgroup. Discussing experiences with peers was considered essential to the learning process. Second, by identifying with the locations it was more likely that participants would have a greater sense of ownership and connection than when examining pictures of unfamiliar environments. In short, it was more real and practical rather than theoretical.

The pictures were mostly of street scenes, open spaces, shopping centres, toilet blocks, bus stops, street crossings and public buildings. Two or three additional pictures of older people in different settings were added to the mix to help generate discussion about stereotyping. In most workshops, sufficient photographs were taken to ensure a different picture for each participant. Where this was not the case, some pictures were repeated across different workgroups. Photographs were photocopied onto an A4 page with room for comments below (see example in Figure 2-4).

#### **Process**

The session was introduced using PowerPoint slides of two bus stops. Participants were invited to make comments to the whole group about the suitability of their design for older people. This discussion contributed to the explanation for the next part of the exercise.

Each workgroup was given a selection of photographs and were asked to keep in mind the discussion of the archetypes as they analysed the pictures. They were instructed to write their comments in the space below the pictures and advised that these worksheets would be collected and included in a report to their council. Participants worked alone initially, and then discussed their analysis with their workgroup until all pictures had been discussed.

After sufficient time was given for everyone to complete their analyses, each group was asked to nominate a volunteer to take the pictures with the group's comments and discuss these with another workgroup. While discussing the pictures, the volunteers were asked to document any new ideas gained from this workgroup.

If time permitted, the volunteer performed a second rotation to another workgroup. Once the discussions were complete, the volunteer returned to their original group and provided the feedback from their discussions in the other group(s). These worksheets were collected for feedback to the participating council.



My Comments:

- This is not a dedicated crossing. People are encouraged to go to pedestrian crossing. No ramp either side here for wheelie walker or wheelchair access.
- Only able bodied person should use this non-dedicated crossing
- Should Australian Standards be changed and re-considered to increase mobility
- Gardens restrict vision for drivers.
- Wide street to centre for incapacitated who are tempted to cross at non-designated area.

**Figure 0-4: Example of picture handout with comments typed up**

This method of sharing findings was chosen for two reasons. First, the level of peer learning is increased with members of each workgroup being actively involved. Second, the time taken to share each picture with the whole group would likely be lengthy and possibly laborious for people with shorter attention spans.

The next step, which was after a lunch break, was to link the learning and insights of the first two exercises to the key document that drives the work of each council – the community strategic plan.

## **Step 4: Linking with Community Strategic Plan**

### **Context**

Councils in New South Wales are required to meet the conditions of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. In brief, this Framework requires strategic plans, operational plans, timeframes and budgets to be linked so that plans can be fully implemented and success measured. NSW councils were at different stages with the development of their community strategic plans: some started the new process three years ago and others were finalising their plans at the time the workshop was run. Consequently the community strategic plans of some participant councils were more developed and easier to work with than others.

The goals of most community strategic plans are necessarily broad and non-specific and most are not targeted at particular groups of residents. As older people (along with many other population groups) are rarely mentioned specifically in these plans, the aim was for participants to see how goals could be translated into actions that included the needs of older people.

The objective of this activity was to give participants time to think about ways in which they could apply the learning from the previous two sessions. This activity required a higher level of conceptual thinking than the previous two exercises.

### **Process**

The session was introduced and the purpose explained using two examples from the participating council's community strategic plan, which were displayed on two PowerPoint slides.

Prior to each workshop, the main goals of the participating council's community strategic plan were identified. Each individual goal (and sub-goals) was printed on the top half of an A4 page with space for ideas and comments on the lower half of the page. These became the participant worksheets, an example of which is shown in Figure 2-5.

Where the number of goals exceeded the number of workgroups, the goals considered the easiest to analyse were selected. Where the number of goals was less than the number of workgroups, two workgroups were assigned the same goal.

In most cases, each goal included a list of sub-goals or objectives, and each workgroup was asked to choose two with which to work. Participants were asked to take their learning and insights from the previous two activities and apply this to the two sub-goals they had selected from the list. In applying their learning, participants were asked to work as a group and list actions that their Council could take to ensure older people are included and their needs accommodated at the implementation stage of the plan.

In a similar fashion to the picture analysis activity, each group nominated a volunteer to take their goals and ideas and discuss them with another group. Again, if time allowed, the volunteers moved to a second group before returning to their original workgroup. Similarly, they brought back any additional ideas or comments from the other group(s). These worksheets were collected for inclusion in the report to Council.

|  |
|--|
| <p><b>People Goals</b></p> <p>1.1 Wingecarribee community has access to a variety of cultural, recreational and sporting opportunities</p> <p>1.2 Wingecarribee people have a healthy lifestyle and inclusive community services and facilities are provided locally to meet the needs of our community</p> <p>1.3 Wingecarribee fosters a diverse, creative and vibrant community</p> <hr/> <p>How can these goals include older Australians?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choice of concerts for the elderly and provide venue.</li> <li>• Playhouses, art galleries, theatres, transport, disabled access to buildings, parking. Planning for older peoples' use of exercise equipment in parks etc. for older people.</li> <li>• Sporting facilities more seating, covered areas.</li> <li>• We do have a lot of places available for people but sometimes not always accessible to everyone.</li> <li>• Connecting footpaths, decent width for more safety and sharing with scooters (electric). "Work for dole" people who could put some of these facilities in place</li> </ul> <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build and maintain performance spaces that are accessible and attractive for older people.</li> <li>• Support and encourage sporting groups to cater for masters competitions and return to sport.</li> <li>• Provide low cost easy access events.</li> </ul> |
|--|

**Figure 0-5: Example of Goal worksheet with comments typed up**

## Step 5: Identifying practical outcomes

### Context

The aim of this session was to review the day's work and bring the learning into sharp focus, and to give participants a sense of achievement beyond gaining an increased understanding of the issues facing the older population. The objective was for each participant to identify at least one action they could accomplish that would benefit older residents.

## Process

Using a worksheet with instructions for the activity, each participant was asked to reflect on the previous activities: the diversity of the older population; their interaction with the built environment; and the ideas generated by analysing the goals in the community strategic plan. Participants were asked to identify one action they could implement in their job tomorrow or the following week that would make the community more inclusive and/or better meet the needs of older residents.

Although this was an individual activity, participants were encouraged to discuss their ideas with their workgroup. The aim of the discussion was to assist those participants experiencing difficulty with this exercise and to build on ideas. Each participant was asked to write their commitment on the worksheet ready for collection and inclusion in the report to Council.

Once sufficient time had passed for everyone to complete the exercise, each person was asked to announce their proposed action to the whole group. The purpose of making the announcement to the whole group was to gain more commitment for the action and for ideas to be shared. This exercise brought the workshop to the closing session.

## Closing Session

### Context

The purpose of this short session was to review the learning from the day, to thank participants for their contributions, and provide an opportunity for participants to reflect and make final comments to the whole group.

### Process

The facilitators briefly reviewed the archetypes, the picture analysis, the goals from the community strategic plan, and the commitments made in the last session. Key points were emphasised. Participants were advised that the worksheets would be collated and typed up into a report for their Council. Participants were encouraged to fill out workshop evaluation sheets. Where the Mayor or another Councillor participated in the workshop, they were given an opportunity to make closing remarks.

## 2.5 Reporting back to councils

All the worksheets were collected from each workshop and shaped into an individual report for each council for their particular use. The report provided a brief outline of the process as well as extensive appendices containing:

- a narrative formed from the body outlines depicting archetypal older persons;
- all the pictures that were analysed;
- all the worksheets related to strategic goals;
- all the individual commitments; and
- a summary of the evaluation sheets.

These individual reports were not published in this format by COTA, but the content was used to formulate this report.

## 2.6 Participant workshop evaluation

At the end of each workshop, participants were given a one page evaluation sheet which asked them to rank the individual sessions using a Likert Scale (Very Good to Very Poor). Additional questions included:

- Did the workshop help you understand the issues facing Council in relation to an ageing population?
- What could we do to improve the workshop?
- What was the most valuable part of the workshop for you?
- Any other comments?

A total of 194 evaluation forms were returned (not all participants completed a form and not all forms were complete). Across all the exercises there were 465 responses for 'Very Good' and 539 for 'Good'. There were 33 occasions of 'Neutral' and 11 of 'Poor' and none for 'Very Poor'. The picture analysis exercise was marginally the most popular exercise. Some neutral responses were explained by not being present for the activity.

In answer to the question "Did the workshop help you understand the issues facing Council in relation to ageing population?" there were 135 responses to 'A Lot', 51 'A little' and 2 responses for 'Not at all'. Many of those who responded with 'A Little' or 'Not at all' qualified this in the comments section by saying that they already knew the issues.

Comments regarding improving the workshop were largely related to taking less time for the workshop. However, there were more comments indicating that participants appreciated the time given for in-depth discussion. Indeed, this theme was repeated throughout all the workshop evaluations. Based on personal conversations at the end of the workshop, those who thought the process could be shortened were most likely to be council staff who had not realised that the learning was in the process, not just the content.

A post workshop survey was carried out six months after the workshops were run using an online survey tool, *SurveyMonkey*. The aim of the survey was to ascertain whether the impact of the workshop had any lasting effects. There were 67 responses, most of which indicated that the positive effects remained with participants. The low response rate may be due to lack of interest in the survey and/or the workshop, or due to Internet Service Providers blocking emails containing web links which look like spam mail. The detailed results of the survey are reported at the end of the next chapter.

## Workshop Findings

### 3.1 Older people – who are they?

Using the comments written on the body outlines, a narrative was constructed for each archetypal person developed by the workgroups. These were compared across the workshops but within the same age grouping. As participants were asked to form these archetypes based on the people they know, it is likely that the archetypes contain reflections of their own lives and how they perceive themselves in the future. An overview of each age grouping follows.

#### 55 year old archetypes

At 55 most archetypes were continuing life as before with just a few inklings that they are ageing. Still in the workforce and socially and physically active, 55 year olds are mostly thinking of financial security rather than planning for their future living arrangements and proximity to services. Some were grandparents or looking forward to this prospect, while others were still supporting late teenage or university students. Common themes in this age group were:

- Living in their own home, which is freestanding, owned outright or mortgaged
- Supporting late teen/adult children living at home
- Supporting their adult children with informal child care and babysitting
- Still part of the workforce either part time or full time
- Enjoying social and sporting activities, with some mention of volunteer activities
- Concerned about future finances
- Noticing physical changes in their bodies, but either not yet troubled by them or had them under control with medication
- A mention of being carers for ageing parents
- Mostly they were partnered (one was divorced)

Two contrasting examples of archetypal 55 year olds follow. One has a relatively affluent lifestyle without financial concerns, while the other juggles multiple roles against a background of minimal financial resources.

“Jenny is 55 years old and lives with her husband in a large house near the water. They are a two car family and they also own a boat and a holiday house at Port Macquarie. They have three adult children and two grandchildren. Jenny has not worked full time since the arrival of the first child and left the paid workforce entirely some five years ago. She is a volunteer with the church and with a local charity, and also supports the local art gallery and arts centre. Jenny has a very active social life: she belongs to the book club and the garden club, is a theatre-goer, and plays social tennis. She and her husband like to travel overseas for holidays at least once a year. Jenny likes to look after her appearance and goes to the hairdresser once a week and admits to having some cosmetic work done. She aspires to be the family matriarch and keep on living the good life.”



“Maria is 55 years old and migrated to Australia from Laos in her twenties. She and her husband are still paying off the mortgage on their home where they raised four children, two girls, who are now married, and two sons who still live at home. Maria’s life is very busy and she rarely gets time for herself: in addition to her own household duties and looking after the vegetable patch in the garden, she supports her ageing parents, who live in their own home, and helps out with the babysitting for her daughters. Maria and her husband and their extended family don’t speak English at home and she has never had formal language lessons. Consequently her ability to read and write English is limited, although she can understand spoken English very well. When time allows at the weekends, she and her husband go to the local club for a meal in the bistro to get a bit of time to themselves. Her joints are becoming a little stiff and arthritic, but not too troublesome at this stage. However, it is a reminder that she is getting older and she is starting to think about the future and their financial security when they both stop working. They only have the basic level of superannuation paid by their employers, so once the money runs out they will be fully dependent on the Age Pension.”

### 65 year old archetypes

Lifestyles of this grouping are depicted as busy and sociable, but with growing concerns about their health, particularly those in rural areas who have to travel significant distances for specialist appointments. The desire to travel was one theme continuing from the 55 age group, as was living in the family home. Being a grandparent is expected at this age which also brings child care and babysitting duties as well as care for ageing parents. Concerns about finances at 55 appear to be replaced by concerns about health at 65. Common themes in this age group were:

- About to retire from the workforce if not already retired
- Some partnered, others divorced or widowed
- Beginnings of becoming carers for partners and/or parents
- Health issues becoming more prominent, but under control
- Grandparenthood now established and undertaking regular child care and babysitting
- Volunteering more prominent and first mentions of the Men’s Shed and U3A
- Lifestyles still busy with family, social, and volunteer commitments

Two contrasting archetypes follow: one is widowed, not in good health and showing indications of becoming socially isolated, while the other is partnered, socially active and managing a busy lifestyle.

“Jim is 65, widowed and lives in his own home. He is working full time and at the point of giving up work now that his health has deteriorated. Jim has several medical conditions: enlarged prostate, heart disease, high blood pressure and the beginnings of osteoporosis. Jim wears glasses and recently got fitted for hearing aids. He had a fall last year and it has taken him a while to get over it, and this also caused him to feel frustrated and depressed. However, giving up work means that his financial situation is not good – his superannuation is very basic – and he doesn’t know how long he will be able to afford his car. Most of his family live interstate, but he has one daughter nearby and he sometimes looks after the grandchildren for a few hours at the weekends. He has heard about the Men’s Shed and thinks he will check them out when he retires.”



"Daniella is 65 years old and lives out of town in her own home with her husband, two dogs and a cat. She is employed full time as a shop assistant. She has three children and five grandchildren and helps out with child minding when she is not working in the shop. One grandchild has Asperger's and needs a lot of attention. She also does what she can for her father who has dementia. Once a month she has a spot on the local volunteer community radio station. Daniella manages to do the household shopping in her lunch break and this gives her time to also involve herself with the church community at the weekend. She does some of her shopping online. Daniella is concerned about her financial security and as she doesn't have a lot of superannuation she is not sure how to go about planning for retirement. Living out of town means time spent travelling, not just to work, but to medical appointments. Having so many commitments, Daniella often neglects her own wellbeing and has been putting off a minor medical procedure that she knows she should have."

### 75 year old archetypes

At 75 years of age, living in one's family home with a long term partner remains a recurrent theme regardless of location. Life appears to be a little more of a struggle as health issues begin to become problematic particularly if one partner needs care support. The need for support services is mentioned in this grouping, but knowing about them or how to apply for them appears to be an issue. Themes at this age are more diverse. Some commonalities are:

- Continuing to live in the family home regardless of location or suitability
- Body functions becoming more problematic, but not yet stopping participation in activities
- Active grandparenting is continuing
- Maintaining social networks and undertaking a physical exercise activity
- Carer duties becoming more prominent, particularly caring for partners
- Likely to be on a full or part Age Pension

The two archetypes below show the diversity of life at 75 years.

"Fred is 75 years old and has been happily married for 53 years, but he and his wife have different aspirations for their future living arrangements. Fred wants to stay on the farm for as long as possible, but his wife is ready to move into town. Fred's general health is quite good although he does suffer with his back sometimes and he has to keep an eye on his skin for cancer. Fred hasn't yet retired although his family are suggesting that he do this soon. In the end it might be the weather that pushes him – another long drought or flood. The future looks uncertain for Fred – he doesn't know if he will qualify for a part pension and it is unclear what will happen to the farm when he eventually leaves. Fred enjoys the company at the Men's Shed and the Gun Club."

"Elizabeth is 75 years old and lives in the family home in town with her 85 year old husband who has dementia, which was brought on by a minor stroke. Her family, two children and four grandchildren live out of the area, but visit regularly and try to support her in her caring role. As a carer, she spends most of her time at home and consequently many of her activities are home-based. She cooks for the church's fund raising events and keeps a small vegetable garden. However, with the family's help she is able to get out once a week to participate in U3A and a weekly game of bridge.

Elizabeth aspires to visit her daughter who lives in Canada, but is not sure how she can make this happen. As she keeps good health, Elizabeth expects to be driving well into her eighties and knows that the car is the link to her social life and the means by which her husband can get medical attention. She doesn't know what she will do if and when she has to give up the car. Elizabeth has heard that there are community support services that could help her with her husband's care, but she hasn't applied for it yet."

## 85 year old archetypes

A change in living arrangements emerged in the 85 year old age group with the first mention of moving to a self-care unit, or considering this move. Also included in the mix is living in a flat or unit. However, most are continuing to 'stay put', some with the support of community care services. Most are dependent on the Age Pension which means they have to budget carefully and choose free or low cost activities. Between the ages of 75 and 85 the archetypes have become widowed and at this age issues of potential social isolation emerge. Common themes are:

- Living alone, mostly in the family home
- Concerns for social isolation
- Greater dependency on home based care services
- Those with a car desire to keep driving, but know this is time limited
- Dependency on others for transportation to activities and medical appointments
- Dependency on the Age Pension

The three narratives that follow have several similarities – living alone, receiving help, still active in the community, but beginning to have concerns for the future.

"Muriel is 85 years old and lives with her dog in the family home, a single storey weatherboard house. She has several general health issues and feels she is always at the doctor for something. She takes medication for her heart and blood pressure, and generally eats what she wants. Muriel has continence issues and some hearing loss, and this sometimes prevents her from socialising with new people. She belongs to a club that organises group holiday tours, which she enjoys because they all know each other well. Fortunately she is still able to drive and this means she can continue with U3A, but the upkeep of the car means there is not much money left to do other things. The cost of heating her home in winter is also a concern as the costs keep rising. Her family do not live nearby, but she usually sees them for birthdays and Christmas. When they visit, they usually help her clean up the yard."

"Sadie is 85 years old and is living on her own in a 'care' setting. She gets some assistance with the heavier house cleaning, but now needs help with the garden. Sadie goes to the Day Care Club once a week where she does some craft and Tai Chi. She still gets out and about around town in her little car and uses her walking frame for assistance when walking, and consequently Sadie still manages to do a little volunteer work for the church and the CWA. She is starting to worry how she will manage in the future as she is feeling much more dependent on others to do things for her – she fears loss of her physical, emotional and financial control."

"Les is 85 years old and living with his cat in the family home which he owns outright. He still drives around town for short trips, but is not as active as he used to be. He

volunteers once a month with Meals on Wheels and helps out where he can at the RSL club where he is on the welfare committee. He enjoys a game of bowls and goes to church where he meets up with friends and neighbours. He thinks he could do more with his week if his driver's licence would allow him to travel a bit further afield, and if he had a little more disposable income. While he enjoys good health now, he has heard that there are community services that can help out if things get more difficult."

## 95 year old archetypes

The trend to living in supported accommodation is depicted at this age. However, not all are in this situation. Some are still living in the family home, and one is living with family. Loss of sight and hearing are mentioned more at this age and all are receiving some form of home based assistance. Home modifications and assistive technology are mentioned for the first time in this age grouping. All are living alone except one. Common themes are:

- Increasing frailty resulting in loss of confidence
- Eyesight and hearing is deteriorating
- Mobility is more problematic
- Memory loss more apparent
- More likely to be living in supported accommodation
- Receiving home support services
- Enjoy socialising, but also happy to spend time at home

The two selected archetypes reflect similar lives, but perhaps with different perspectives on life. Both intend to live out their lives in their current home.

"Myrtle is 95 years old and lives alone with her cat and the support of community services. Her home has been modified and she has a ramp to the front door and grab bars in the bathroom, a toilet seat riser and an emergency call button (VitalCall). Myrtle is expecting to live long enough to get a letter from the Queen, although she may not be able to read it due to the deterioration in her eyesight. However, Myrtle still has a quick mind and still knits baby goods for the church fete. She is able to do the large print crossword and enjoys a game of bridge. Myrtle is losing her confidence to go out alone, as she doesn't feel safe, particularly when crossing the road, because of her failing eyesight. Myrtle is quite content to live out her days at home and has no intention of living in a village or hostel."

"George is 95 and lives on his own in a public housing house and was widowed fifteen years ago. He and his wife spent all their married life in this house and raised their two children here, and had their grandchildren to stay many times as they were growing up. But now he is worried about being moved out into a single aged pensioner unit away from everyone and everything familiar. He knows the Department of Housing are looking closely at his case. George has experienced several bereavements in the last fifteen years, first his wife, then one of his sons and recently one of his children died in a road accident. He feels depressed a lot of the time and the worry about being moved out is adding to his anxieties. In spite of this, he hopes to "live another year" – he's not ready "to go" yet and hopes he will see more of his family. George's mobility is not good – he has a wheeled walker but he doesn't like using it. He gets meals on wheels, home care and lawn mowing. Most days he sits at home watching the TV. He knows about

computers and mobile phones, but feels he is too old to learn about the new technology. George doesn't get out much because of the cost of transport."

### **Summary of Archetypes**

Workshop participants appeared to have little difficulty in constructing archetypes based on people they know. The presence of community service providers in each group enhanced the discussion as they could draw on their clients for discussion points. This breadth of knowledge also helped to inform council staff who were less familiar with the needs and aspirations of older people, or the diversity within and between the older age groups. This activity was successful in drawing participants' attention to the realities of life for older people.

### 3.2 Every picture tells a story

As explained in the methods section, each workgroup was provided with a set of photographs depicting street scenes, open spaces, public buildings and facilities, and shopping centres and plazas. Each picture was printed at the top of an A4 page with room for participants to make comments below. Once their task was explained and examples given, each workgroup was given sufficient time to view and discuss each of the photographs assigned to their workgroup.

In carrying out this exercise it became apparent that local residents were able to focus on particular details of the design and/or construction beyond the expectations of the facilitators. In some cases, participants detailed information about the difficulties interacting with the particular location, and in some cases, go beyond the borders of the pictures to explain their experiences. For example, in Gilgandra, a general picture of the main street brought forth concerns about difficulty accessing the pharmacy, particularly for people who have reduced mobility. Parking, lack of seating and shade all became topics of discussion.

While the Disability Discrimination Act and the Access to Premises Standard make provision for accessible (disabled) parking at strategic points, these are strictly reserved for persons with a mobility permit. But not everyone with reduced mobility has a mobility permit or is considered eligible. Consequently being able to park close to shops and other facilities can be an issue in some locations.

It was through this exercise and ensuing discussions that the five key features identified through the checklist analysis came to the fore. Indeed, this exercise consolidated these as key features for older people. In addition, it became clear that parking was also an issue, with or without a mobility permit, and should be added to the list. A more detailed description of common themes follows.

#### **Pedestrian access and footpaths**

Lack of footpaths in both rural and urban locations was a major issue. Footpaths were evident in main streets in all council areas as well as some well-established residential areas. Where grassed areas were intended as footpaths (consistent with the 'garden suburb' concept) these were assessed as difficult for wheelchair use, whether being pushed or self-propelled, mobility scooters, and difficult for people with baby strollers and shopping trolleys.

There are two other issues with grassed walkways, particularly in rural areas where the distance from the home to the property boundary and then to the roadway is often wider than in urban areas. Driveways in rural settings may also be grassed rather than concreted. The first issue is the distance that garbage bins need to be pulled over grass and the second is the maintenance of this grassed area, which is the responsibility of the resident. For older people this can become problematic. Where councils offer a "wheel-in-wheel-out" collection service, either free of charge or for a small fee, and where the resident subscribes to this, garbage collection becomes less of an issue. However, even when footpaths were present there were concerns such as:

- A steep gradient towards the kerb, which causes pain for people with hip problems, and difficulty for people pushing strollers, wheeled walkers, wheelchairs and shopping trolleys as they keep veering towards the kerb (see Figure 3-1)
- Incomplete footpaths which end unexpectedly, or do not connect to important points such as bus stops (see Figure 3-2 )
- Paving with trip hazards and footpaths with overhanging shrubbery making travel difficult for people with wheeled mobility devices
- Kerb ramps, where present, were often steep and sometimes too narrow for a double stroller, or for a single stroller and a small child walking alongside (see Figure 3-3 )
- Kerb ramps that were poorly finished and were not flush with the roadway or the pavement (see Figure 3.3)
- The inconsistent placement, style and colour contrast of tactile ground surface indicators on or near to kerb ramps and road crossings (see Figures 3-4 and 3-5)



**Figure 0-1: Footpath sloping steeply to the kerb**



**Figure 0-2: Footpath ends unexpectedly**





**Figure 0-3: Kerb ramps poorly designed and constructed**



**Figure 0-4: Inconsistent placement of tactile markers in the same location**



**Figure 0-5: Confusing application of tactile markers**



Also associated with footpaths was access to shops and other facilities where steps were evident (Figure 3-6), or inappropriately applied or designed ramps. One common theme was stepped access to country hotels and pubs, (Figures 3-7, 3-8) which can be the focal point of social and community activities in these localities. It was interesting to note that several councils have banned the use of sandwich boards on footpaths as these were considered a hazard, particularly for people with low vision.



**Figure 0-6: Stepped access to shops**



**Figure 0-7: Stepped access to hotel (1)**



**Figure 0-8: Stepped access to hotel (2)**

Poor placement and/or lack of pedestrian road crossings were mentioned in all rural workshops. The feedback indicated that if the road is maintained as a state or national road, there are restrictions on pedestrian crossings, even if the speed limit through the main street is restricted to 50 kilometres per hour. While pedestrian refuge islands and street narrowing was acceptable at strategic locations, pedestrians are expected to give way to traffic. In Berrigan one crossing sign (see Figure 3-9) advises pedestrians to give way to vehicles. It should also be noted that many roads in country towns in New South Wales are very broad, reflecting the settlement days of bullock drays and mid-street parking (see Figure 3-10). This makes safe crossing by slow moving pedestrians more problematic.



**Figure 0-9: Pedestrians give way to vehicles in country towns**





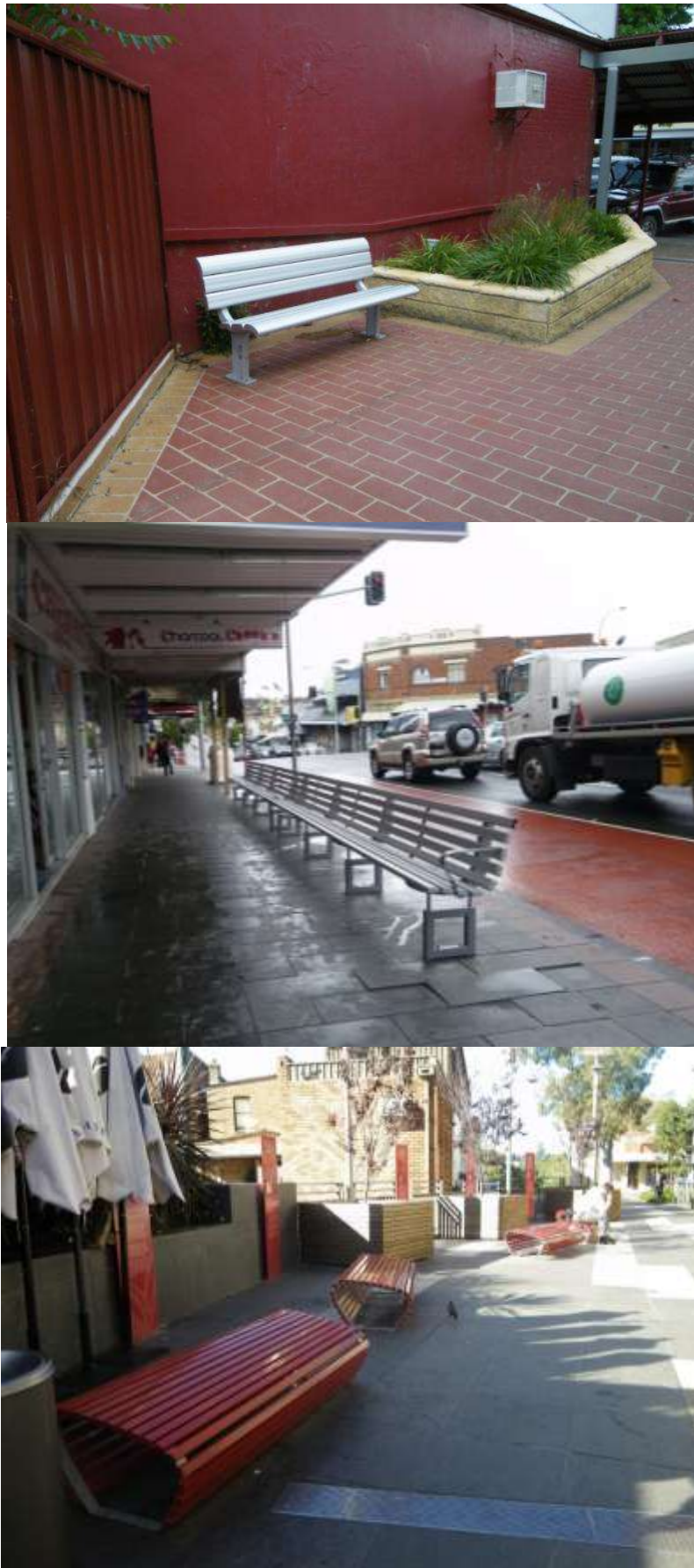
**Figure 0-10: Wide streets are a common feature in country towns**

### Seating in streets and open spaces

Seating to allow a person to rest or wait for a bus was discussed in all workshops. While many main streets provided seats, their placement, height or design was not optimum. As the examples show in Figures 3-11 and 3-12 street seating design varies considerably. Seating, with backrests and armrests, which is situated in shady locations was considered optimum. Whether the seating faced towards or away from the roadway and traffic depended upon the location. If the seating was provided at a bus stop, being able to watch for the bus was more important for orientating the seating.



**Figure 0-11: Street seating varies from town to town (1)**



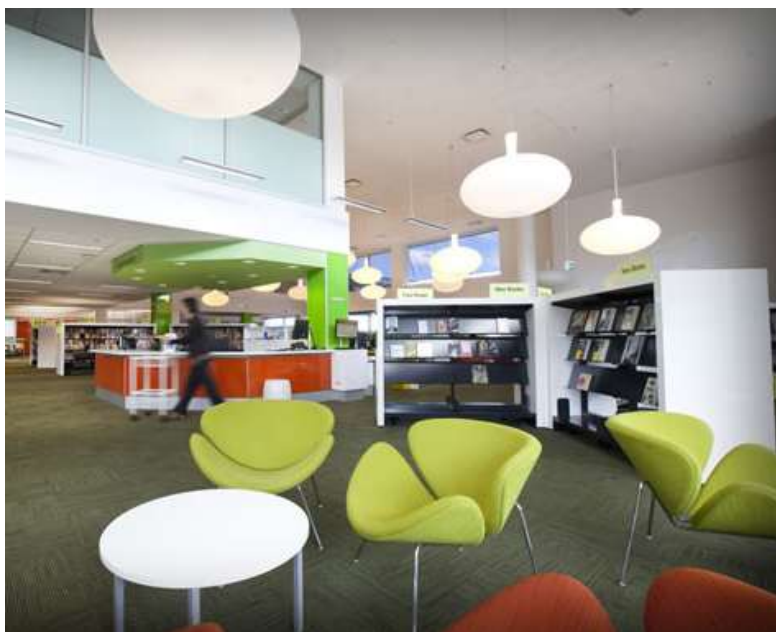
**Figure 0-12: Street seating varies from town to town (2)**

Functional seating was preferred over “funky” seating in all situations, including public places such as shopping centres and libraries as shown in Figures 3-13 and 3-14.

People who have difficulty rising from seats are concerned that if they sit down, they may not be able to get up again, at least, not with dignity. Consequently unusual seat design does not inspire confidence in their use, whereas standard style seating with backrests and armrests does. This is not to say that attractive seat design cannot be installed in public places. Providing a range of seating types in the one location gives people of all ages and abilities a choice.



**Figure 0-13: Shopping centre seating**



**Figure 0-14: Library seating**



## Lighting

Good and even lighting is required during daylight hours as well as at night. Lighting is often considered in terms of safety and visibility at night. People with low vision require good lighting to read signs, instructions and keypads. People who experience difficulty with visual perception, such as judging distance and discerning shapes, also require good lighting, particularly evenly distributed lighting. This means lighting design should avoid pools of light and reflective surfaces. Where the floor surface is heavily patterned, the situation is exacerbated.

Figure 3-15 shows reflections of spot lighting together with irregular floor patterning which some people find confusing in terms of where to walk. Figure 3-16 shows a short shopping mall where the lighting is placed regularly, but not evenly, and is reflected in the flooring. Also, the black section is level, but it can look like a ramp, a step or a large hole in the ground for people with perception difficulties. Nevertheless, this mall is a good example of incorporating a change in level which uses the available distance to minimise the grade.



**Figure 0-15: Spot lighting and irregular patterning**



**Figure 0-16: Reflections and pools of light are confusing**

Most people from their mid-forties onwards begin to experience age-related vision loss or changes in visual acuity. Consequently, low vision is a very common occurrence in the population.

One other theme emerging from the workshops was the co-location of street lighting with tree plantings where the lighting is obscured by the trees. The conflict between street shade and street lighting can likely be resolved by appropriate landscape design.

## Wayfinding

Wayfinding is more than just signage: it begins with the design of the built form that considers how people will move through a place or site easily and successfully – that is, without getting lost, and easily finding the place they were looking for. Prominent landmarks, such as sculptures and fountains, are also useful cues for helping people find their way and spatially locate themselves.

Signage is part of wayfinding: it can direct people to places (toilets and lifts) and label places so people know they have arrived at the right place. Both are essential. Wayfinding can also be achieved in map form for people who are skilled at reading maps. Directional signs to maps are also needed but are often omitted. While large shopping malls often provide maps to help orient people, these are rarely, if ever, signposted.

It is also important to use conventional and internationally recognised signage and to avoid fancy fonts and scripts. Using a combination of colour, symbols, lettering and numbering in multi-level and large car parks is often useful. Care should be taken however, to ensure the labelling of each floor and section is unique and not repeated in any part of the facility. Repeat signage styles are sometimes used when additional car parking is added later in a different part of the facility.

Figure 3-17 shows an inventive strip map for a shopping mall that is intended to locate the reader in their current position relative to the mall. Interestingly, the comments in the workshop where this picture was used, indicates the difficulty in designing maps that the majority of people will find useful.

Comments from the workshop where this picture was analysed included the following: visually confusing, lettering is too small, sideways orientation of lettering not easy to read, need reference to landmarks, not just street names, not enough colour contrast, and the need for universal mapping for people who do not have English as their first language.



**Figure 0-17: Shopping centre signage for wayfinding**

## Toilets

Access to public toilets becomes a major factor when out and about for many people as they age. Fear of 'having an accident' can prevent some older people from venturing to places where there are few, if any, toilets, or toilets that are accessible. One of the key issues for older people is access to accessible (frequently labelled 'disabled') toilets when they have a wheelchair, wheeled walker, or need the assistance of a carer. Parents with small children and/or with children in strollers also find accessible toilets very convenient.

In many country locations, and in some suburban shopping centres, accessible toilets are locked. When the need is urgent, it is very frustrating to find the toilet locked and/or with instructions to call for an attendant to bring the key. One shopping centre example is shown in Figure 3-18 where the potential user is required to ring a mobile number to gain access.





**Figure 0-18: Locked toilet in a shopping centre**

Councils are however, required to comply with disability discrimination legislation and the Access to Premises Standard with new construction and refurbishment of existing facilities. The new facilities shown in Figure 3-19 received a good response with comments such as: room to leave mobility aid outside; wheelchair friendly; spacious; easy access – wide doors; straight access; and central location. Nevertheless, a trip hazard was identified along with a poorly located pole, and no easy access parking.



**Figure 0-19: Well designed and located toilets**



### **Attitudes to older people**

Included in the mix of photographs at each workshop were three pictures of older people in different situations. One depicted a man and a woman pointing fencing foils at each other, the second showed four women in their 50s wearing sporting apparel and holding a netball, and the third showed two women in a city street sitting on a ledge.

The first picture shown in Figure 3-20 depicting two people fencing elicited two distinct sets of responses: those that thought age was not a barrier to continuing to enjoy activities and trying new things, and those who thought this activity was unsuitable and dangerous for older people.



**Figure 0-20: Attitudes to older people depend on your perspective**

Typical responses in favour of the activity were:

- Anyone can do anything
- There is always a way to adapt an activity to cater for all ages and abilities
- Still trying and experiencing life – not 'stuck at home'
- A new skill to learn
- Focusing on ability and not disability
- Older people having a good time – having fun – keeping active
- Good for social interaction
- Picture is breaking stereotypes - Outside the box – excellent!
- Decreased mobility does not stop activity
- An excellent activity – taking a risk is part of life

Typical responses showing concern about the activity were:

- They need safety gear – goggles and clothing
- Seems an inappropriate activity for this age group, but could not stop them
- Unsafe to use walking frame one-handed
- Impact on workers, OH&S guidelines – a program such as this would be difficult and impossible to implement especially in a government setting
- Bystanders at risk
- Fun but too dangerous for elderly
- With poor vision and mobility, not a suitable activity.

The picture depicting older women in a sporting scene shown in Figure 3-20 was seen as positive for health and socialisation, and that there should be no barriers to continuing involvement. Typical responses were:

- Sport is not just for kids
- Good to see an older team

- Age people are beautiful especially if they can still play sport
- Positive role models for healthy ageing -
- Opportunity for participation, inclusion, socialising
- Shows me it is possible to continue to actively participation in sport, be social
- Inspiring to see 55 age group active and socialising
- Sporting groups for retirees, a good idea
- Intergenerational activity
- Thinking young, not vegetating
- A fast game – good for eye and foot coordination
- Feeling valued and included in the community
- Opportunity to share wisdom with younger generation

This picture also elicited some comments about the adequacy of the local facilities for netball, such as: poor parking, dark and dingy toilets, surface quality of the courts, and poor access. There was one comment about the stress on joints in older age due to the hard court surface.



**Figure 0-21: Sport is good at any age**



**Figure 0-22: Absence of seating is a problem**

The third picture shown in Figure 3-22 was used in two workshops. It shows two older women, possibly mother and daughter, sitting on the edge of a platform constructed to support two columns. Some participants thought this was just inappropriately designed and poorly located seating. The majority of participants thought this picture indicated that much needed seating was not available and this was a last resort.

### Summary of the picture analysis

The process of discussing the attributes within the photographs, and in some cases, beyond those captured in the picture, was enlightening for both participants and workshop leaders. Many aspects of the public built environment came under scrutiny and some participants were surprised at how many comments they could contribute. The small group discussion process also allowed peer learning to occur where older

community members and community service providers could explain why certain aspects of streetscapes, public buildings, and road crossings were not optimal in terms of safety and/or access, or constituted barriers to access. Overall, this exercise highlighted that the details of design are important, and that engineers, safety officers, asset managers, landscape architects and waste managers all need to understand the importance of these details.

The pictures depicting older people in non-stereotypical situations received a positive response overall. Allied health professionals and aged care workers, however, were less enthusiastic about the picture depicting two people fencing. They were likely considering the situation from the perspective of their professional roles and their duty of care. This raises the philosophical dilemma of weighing the rights of older people to make their own decisions and to take risks against protecting them from something dangerous (for their age).

## Other issues

While the built environment served as a catalyst for focusing attention on an ageing population, there were many other issues arising in discussions. These issues link with some of the ideas that emerged in the next session when participants were asked to think about ways in which the goals in the Community Strategic Plan could be applied to the older population.

### *Garbage collection and recycling*

In all workshops the issues of manoeuvring large garbage bins from the house to the street was discussed. Some councils offer a service for residents who cannot move their bins to the street each week. Great Lakes provides a “Wheel-In -Wheel-Out” service for residents who pay a small fee which is added to the rates. This service was written into the garbage collection agreement with the contractors where the operators would bring the bin to the collection vehicle and return the empty bin to the property.

Some participants believed this service was not necessary because this could be done, indeed, *should* be done, by friendly neighbours. A contrary view was that some people prefer to look after their own needs so they can maintain a sense of independence and dignity.

With space in landfill sites now at a premium, recycling by residents has become more important. Some councils run education programs for school children to show what happens to the garbage at the landfill and recycling plants. There was a perception that older people may not fully understand how and what to recycle because recycling is a relatively new concept. In some workshops, thought was given to methods for informing and educating older people about recycling.

### *The role of the library and librarian*

In all workshops, the role of the library and the librarian was highlighted as a key resource for older people. While the nature of libraries is changing with the advent of new and electronic technologies, older people continue to look to libraries as their link to services and information beyond that of borrowing books.



Librarians were present at most workshops, and possibly the most unexpected finding is the lack of knowledge that other council staff had about the role of their council library, the breadth of librarian skills, and the range of services libraries can offer.

#### *Utilising senior skills and time*

While many of the workshop discussions were focused on assisting older people either through services or design of the built environment, there were some discussions about the contributions older people can make. These ranged from helping children to read and being volunteer tour guides for visitors, to assisting with bushland regeneration schemes and developing peer education programs for seniors.

#### *Economic benefits of older people*

Capitalising on the disposable income of the more affluent retirees and “grey nomads” was another regular theme, particularly in rural areas where tourism is a significant part of the local economy. Discussions on this aspect began in the picture analysis session and were continued into the next session on the goals from the Community Strategic Plan.

### 3.3 Goals from the Community Strategic Plan

This activity required participants to reflect on the discussions in the previous two exercises (who are we talking about, and how do they interact with the built environment?). Each workgroup was given one goal, with sub-goals, from their council's community strategic plan and asked to examine it from the perspective of older people.

Some participant councils completed their Community Strategic Plan some three years ago, while others were in the process of finalising their processes and documentation. Consequently, the style and information contained in plans were quite varied. However most plans were based around economic, social, environmental and governance themes.

Within these themes were notions of liveability, health and wellbeing, cultural harmony, economic development, care for the environment and heritage, and leadership. As we were working with a diverse group of participant councils, with equally diverse community strategic plans, it is not possible to consolidate the information in a meaningful way. Consequently the key aspects of this exercise are reported separately for each council.

#### Berrigan Shire Council

Berrigan Shire Council is situated in the Murray Region and has four major settlements: Toomswal and Barooga in the south, and Berrigan and Finley to the north. It is bordered by the Murray River and the Victorian border in the south, Corowa Shire to the east, Jerilderie Shire to the north, and Conargo Shire to the west (see Figure 3-23). It is approximately three hours drive north of Melbourne and seven hours south west of Sydney.

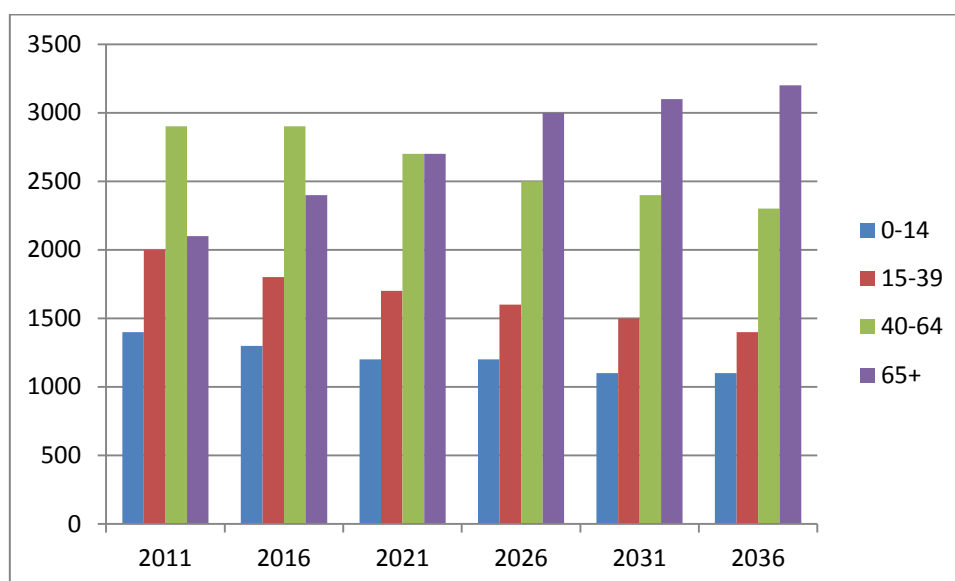
**Figure 0-23: Map showing council boundaries in the Murray Region**



**Source: NSW Division of Local Government**

Due to its proximity to the Victorian border, its pleasant climate, and relatively flat surrounds, Berrigan Shire attracts retirees from Melbourne and other parts of Victoria as well as New South Wales. Population growth is therefore expected in the older age groups rather than younger age groups. According to Berrigan Shire's projections, 48% of residents will be over 55 years of age by 2027<sup>4</sup>. In 2010 the population was 8670 and this is projected to grow overall by 816 people to 9486 by 2022<sup>5</sup>. Population projections for Berrigan shown in Chart 3-1 indicate an expected increase in people aged over 65 years.

**Chart 0-1: Population projections for Berrigan 2011 - 2036**



*Source: NSW Statistical Local Area Population Projections 2006-2036, NSW Department of Planning, 2010*

The document "Berrigan Shire 2022: A community Strategic Plan – Creating our preferred future" was the outcome of community consultations carried out in the four main townships in the Shire. The main theme emerging from all the consultations was economic development. Consequently the Berrigan Shire Vision is:

"In 2022 we will be recognised as a Shire that builds on and promotes our natural assets and advantages to create employment and economic activity to attract residents, families and tourists."

Transport was the issue raised most often together with the need to boost tourism as a means of sustaining the economy. Berrigan Shire attracts retirees from Melbourne due to its location on the river and climate and relatively affordable housing prices. The availability of manufactured and relocatable homes is also attracting retirees to the area.

Key ideas centred on establishing a bus service between the four main centres, establishing a taxi service, and providing facilities for "Grey Nomads" travelling through. The overall focus on economic development in the Community Strategic Plan influenced

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.berriganshire.nsw.gov.au/Portals/0/documents/What%20trends%202022.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://forecast2.id.com.au/Default.aspx?id=393&pg=5210>



discussions and ideas from all workgroups regardless of their assigned topic. Consequently, older people were most often discussed in terms of their potential to support the local economy. Detailed information from this workshop session follows.

Strategic Outcome 1 focuses on sustainable and natural built landscapes as shown in Box 1. The workgroup chose to work with the first strategic objective: Support sustainable use of our natural resources and built landscapes. However, as expected in open discussion, ideas ranged across several areas, particularly tourism, specifically the means by which to attract Grey Nomads. (Tourism is also captured in discussion on Strategic Outcome 4, Diverse and Resilient Business.)

Ideas for attracting older tourists included:

- Constructing and maintaining good amenities for older people at river beaches
- Free facilities for travellers with caravans and motor homes to dump their septic waste and take on fresh drinking water in the hope they will stay longer and contribute to the local economy
- Encouraging older people to be volunteers at the local tourist information centre, which needs to be highly visible
- Bid for caravan, camping and motor home festivals and musters to come to Berrigan
- Provide Wi-Fi and internet services for tourists

### **Box 1: Strategic Outcome 1**

#### *Sustainable Natural and Built Landscapes*

#### **Strategic Objectives**

- 1.1 Support sustainable use of our natural resources and built landscapes*
- 1.2 Retain the diversity and preserve the health of our natural landscapes and wildlife*
- 1.3 Connect and protect our communities*

Ideas for conserving the natural environment included:

- Link existing environmental groups with each other and encouraging older people to participate
- Increasing awareness of recycling – develop an awareness raising program for older people, and have a 'wheel-in-wheel-out' bin service

Ideas for the built environment included:

- Look at how the BCA can be used to encourage universal housing design and put universal housing in the planning guidelines
- Improve the lighting on public streets
- Need to overcome the financial constraints so footpaths, kerbing and guttering can be improved.

### **Box 2: Strategic Outcome 2**

#### *Good Government*

#### **Strategic Objectives**

- 2.1 Berrigan Shire 2022 objectives and strategies inform Council planning and community led projects*
- 2.2 Ensure effective governance by Council of Council operations and reporting*
- 2.3 Strengthen strategic relationships and partnerships with community, business and government*

Strategic Outcome 2, Good Government, was not provided to workshop participants for analysis as it was assumed other strategic outcomes were more relevant to workshop participants. The strategic objectives are reported in Box 2 for reference.

Berrigan's Strategic Outcome 3 is "Supported and Engaged Communities". The two strategic objectives are to: create safe, friendly and accessible communities; and to support community engagement through life-long learning, culture and recreation (see Box 3).

Improving links and communication between existing groups, improving physical access in the built environment, lack of public transport, and investigating the needs of the older population in the Shire.

### **Box 3: Strategic Outcome 3**

#### *Supported and Engaged Communities*

#### **Strategic Objectives**

*3.1 Create safe, friendly and accessible communities*

*3.2 Support community engagement through life-long learning, culture and recreation*

Ideas for creating safe, friendly and accessible Communities included:

- Linking service clubs (e.g. Lions and Rotary) so they can focus on one project or goal to get one project completed sooner rather than having several projects running over a longer period.
- Improving the design of the infrastructure to make it more accessible, including seating, lighting and parking, and for access for emergency services
- Encouraging feedback from older people – run a survey and utilise older volunteers to do this
- Encouraging businesses to improve access to their premises by setting up an awards program, and provide free Council advice for businesses wanting to embark on modification
- Ensuring existing HACC services are well publicised and promoted and encourage greater agency consultations and collaboration to ensure all services are provided
- For housing, ensure appropriate lot sizes in specific areas close to services that would be suitable for all ages including older people

Ideas for community engagement through life-long learning, culture and recreation included:

- Find ways of attracting and supporting volunteers, both younger and older people
- Educate older people to be independent of their spouse so that if they are left alone (spouse death or going to a nursing home) – such as cooking for men and money management – perhaps something for Mens Shed?
- Establish a taxi service in Berrigan as part of improving transport options for people
- Provide transport assistance for people wanting to go to sporting venues
- Provide transport between and within the four main centres in the Shire

Strategic Outcome 4 focuses on economics and supporting local businesses in terms of job creation, promoting tourism, and connected transport infrastructure (see Box 4).

Many ideas and comments were generated for these objectives although they tended to range across several topics. Effective transport systems were seen as a key factor in realising some of these ideas.

Ideas for investing in local job creation, retention and innovation were:

- Attract volunteers to tourism, the library, Mens Sheds and in the local aged care facilities
- Lobby for financial assistance for people to retrofit their homes so that older people could age in place and the construction industry could get a boost
- Investigate potential for an Allied Health Exercise Group – could be a new small business opportunity

#### **Box 4: Strategic Outcome 4**

*Diverse and resilient business*

##### **Strategic Objectives**

- 4.1 Invest in local job creation, retention and innovation*
- 4.2 Strengthen and diversify the local economy*
- 4.3 Diversify and promote local tourism*
- 4.4 Connect local, regional and national road, rail and aviation infrastructure*

Ideas for strengthening and diversifying the economy were:

- Maintain support for current processes: i.e. potato farm and chip factory
- Mount local campaigns and improving customer service, marketing and introducing a mystery shopper program
- Create a community food garden

Ideas for diversifying and promoting local tourism were

- Attracting and supporting volunteers for Tocumwal Tourism
- Staging big events such as Big Golf Day, Big Bowling Day, String Music Festival
- Staging winter events on the river with the Paddle Steamer
- Investigating possibilities of staging an annual muster with Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia
- Making Berrigan Shire a Grey Nomad destination (instead of just a fuel stop) with sports packages, face-lift for caravan parks, improved council amenities, water point and black-water dump, access to Wi-Fi, and cheap meals.

Ideas for connecting local, regional and national road, rail and aviation infrastructure were:

- Establishing a local bus route between the four towns and connecting with the rail at Cobram (just over the river border in Victoria), and if successful, connecting by bus to Albury to connect with NSW rail and airport
- Find ways of making sure residents know about the new transport service
- Establish the 130 km freight rail link from Tocumwal to Narrandera
- Ensure any new infrastructure is age-friendly design

### Summary

Berrigan Shire is actively seeking to increase its population by attracting retirees to the area. However, they need appropriate services in place to continue with this strategy.

The key features arising from this workshop were:

- the need for a bus service between the four main centres and linking to the existing rail network, and improved transport options overall
- mobilising older people into becoming volunteers to support economic activities and social services
- attracting tourists to stay longer and spend money in the Shire
- coordinating services and disseminating information about services in the Shire

### Tumbarumba Shire Council

Tumbarumba Shire Council is also situated in the Murray Region at the easternmost boundary (see Figure 3-24). Because of its proximity to the Snowy River, the Kosciusko National Park, and the snowfields, Tumbarumba Shire has more in common with councils to its north and east than those of the Riverland plains to the west.

**Figure 0-24: Map showing location of Tumbarumba in the Murray Region**



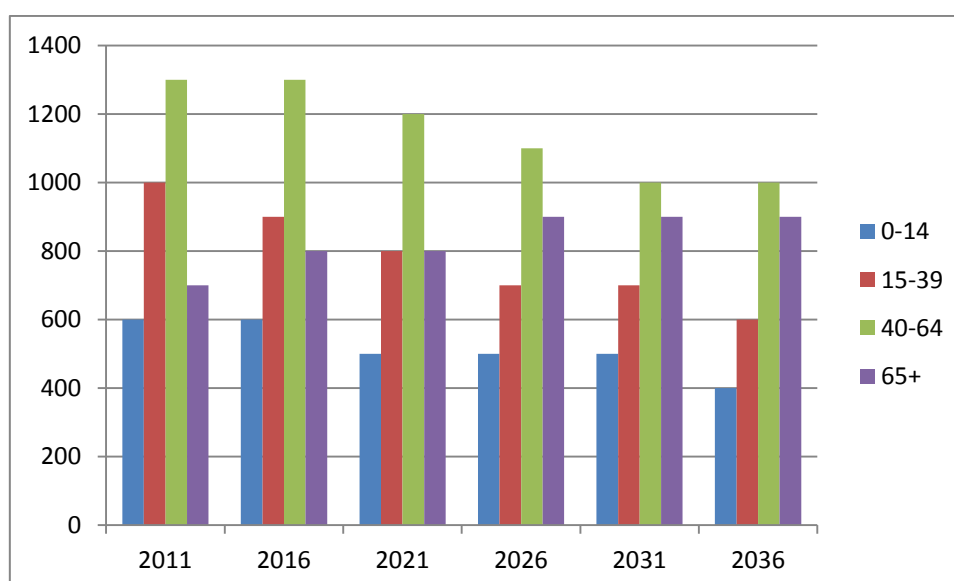
*Source: NSW Division of Local Government*

The 2011 census data shows that the population was 3358 persons, and the median age was 44 years, compared to the national median age of 37 years. People aged 65 years and older made up 19.7% of the population. More than a quarter (28%) of the adult population undertook voluntary work through an organisation in the previous twelve months, compared with the state average of 16.9%. The population is projected to increase to 4031 people by 2021<sup>6</sup>.

Chart 3.2 shows the NSW Department of Planning population projections from 2011 to 2036. A decrease in the mid age groups between 40 and 60 years and an increase in persons aged 65 years and older is expected.

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2011/quickstat/LGA17450](http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2011/quickstat/LGA17450)

**Chart 0-2: Population projections for Tumbarumba Shire**



*Source: NSW Statistical Local Area Population Projections 2006-2036, NSW Department of Planning, 2010*

At the time the workshop was held in March 2012, Tumbarumba Shire had not completed the process of developing its Community Strategic Plan. However, working documents, largely consisting of a list of actions, were made available from which some Goal Worksheets were constructed. Worksheets for participant groups were constructed under the general headings of Social, Economic, Recreation, Infrastructure, and Environmental Goals.

The most prominent theme emerging from this workshop was the need to pay more attention to disability access which then led to the recommendation that the local access advisory committee should be reformed.

#### *Environmental Goals*

Comments relating to environmental goals were mainly about access and safe pedestrian crossings, extending footpaths and providing seating on walking tracks. There was some concern about the compatibility of pedestrians and cyclists sharing pathways.

#### *Recreation and Leisure Goals*

Comments relating to recreation and leisure goals also included access issues, for residents and tourists.

#### *Economic Goals*

There was one comment under this heading and that was to make the community an attractive place to live.

#### *Social Goals*

Once again, there were several comments relating to disability access together with comments about health care. Specifically:

- Council should have a nominated position on Council for disability in all areas, and to have people who understand disabilities to be on the planning committee
- Improve access on both sides of the main street and reduce trip hazards
- Provide access ramps where needed
- Improve the grade of the slope in the main street – no good for people with bad hips and knees
- Check the application of tactile ground surface indicators is correct and/or present
- Need more allied health services from Murrumbidgee Health
- Do an audit of the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) to see if improvements are needed
- Need more cooperation between all community groups to make sure information about services is getting out

### *Summary*

As stated earlier, Tumbarumba Shire was in the process of developing its Community Strategic Plan when the workshop was run. Consequently the Plan lacked more formally devised strategic goals. However, it became apparent throughout the workshop that physical access was a major concern and needed addressing if the Shire's older population is to be supported. There was agreement at the end of the workshop that the disability access committee should be re-established.

## **Wingecarribee Shire Council**

Wingecarribee Shire, more commonly known as the Southern Highlands, is situated in the Illawarra Region and is bordered to the north by Wollondilly, Goulburn Mulwaree in the West, Wollongong to the east and Shoalhaven to the south (see Figure 3-25).

**Figure 0-25: Map showing Wingecarribee within the Illawarra Region**



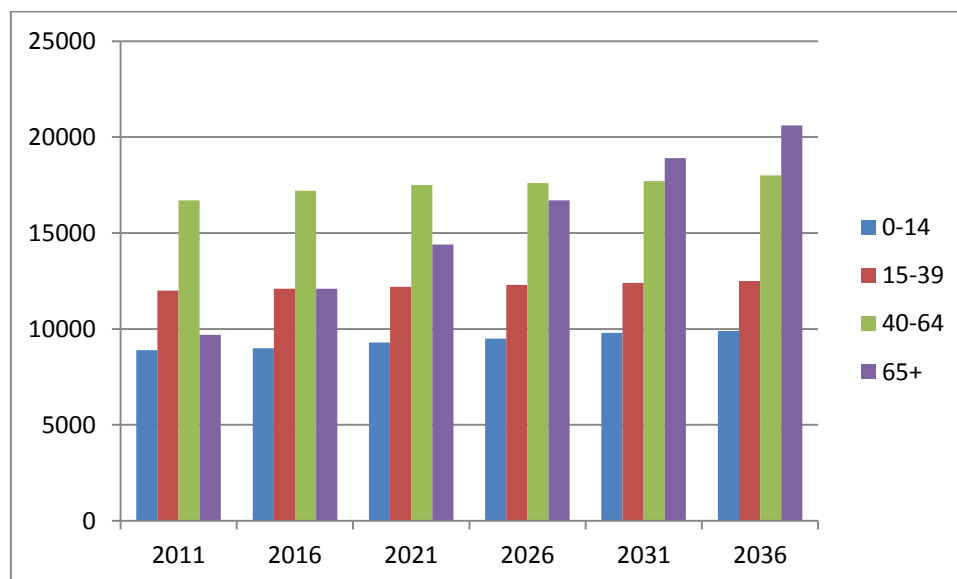
*Source: NSW Division of Local Government*

The three main centres are Mittagong, Bowral and Moss Vale, with numerous smaller settlements scattered throughout the Shire. This area contains part of the catchment for Sydney's water supply with two major storage dams (Avon and Nepean) and part of the Shire also forms part of the catchment for the Warragamba Dam.

Wingecarribee's population in 2006 was 42,272 and the median age was 42, compared with 37 for Australia. People over 65 years of age represented 18% of the population compared with 13.3% for Australia. Indigenous persons accounted for 1.3% of the population<sup>7</sup>.

Wingecarribee Shire has a history of attracting retirees and this trend is expected to continue. The Shire's older population is projected to expand significantly between 2011 and 2036, while other age groups remain steady. Chart 3-3 shows a projected doubling of the 65+ age group from 9700 persons in 2011 to 20,600 persons in 2036.

**Chart 0-3: Population projections for Wingecarribee Shire 2011-2036**



*Source: NSW Statistical Local Area Population Projections 2006-2036, NSW Department of Planning, 2010*

The Shire's Community Strategic Plan is titled, "Wingecarribee 2031+: our future our choice". Key Strategic themes are Leadership, People, Places, Environment, and Economy. The vision for Wingecarribee Shire is:

"In 2031 we will be a healthy and productive community, learning and living in harmony, proud of our heritage and nurturing our environment."

The first goal of Wingecarribee 23031+ is Leadership which focuses on, fostering trust and respect, encouraging collaboration, promoting open communication, and being visionary and creative (see Box 5). A long list of points was generated for this goal and

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/>



these are collated under the themes of Councillors and staff, collaboration and information, and specific comments relating to the Aboriginal community.

The main points relating to elected Councillors and Council staff were:

- Continue with monthly meetings for people to meet with Council officers in different areas
- Continue with Council online forums
- Rotation of Councillors positions to cover every aspect – to know who to go to
- Councillors to have a limited term, say maximum of two terms
- Put people before politics and cease public slanging matches
- Councillors to show high standards in role modelling to earn respect and trust
- Recognition of cultural diversity and engagement with marginal groups is needed
- Planning has to be inclusive of all people – the framework has to be adaptable to the wider community

#### **Box 5: Leadership Goals**

- 1.1 Our leadership is based on mutual trust to foster and embody values of respect, responsibility, integrity and ethical governance
- 1.2 Wingecaribee leadership is visionary through creative thinking a practical planning
- 1.3 The Wingecaribee community has strong networks that supports collaboration, partnerships and empowerment
- 1.4 We act in an inclusive manner with open information, communication, views and participation
- 1.5 We all work together in a flexible and responsive way utilising community values to achieve our vision for Wingecaribee 2031+

Specific comments relating to developing collaboration and providing information were:

- Providing information about services for older people via the local media, council newsletters and rates notices, setting up information kiosks in outlying communities, and via community association newsletters
- Holding regular forums and interagency meetings similar to HACC forums so that services know who is doing what
- Utilising GPs RSLs, CWAs, service clubs, and Medicare to distribute information helpful to older people
- Recognise that the role of Librarians is changing to cover more than just books

Specific comments relating to the Aboriginal community were:

- Develop an Aboriginal Mentoring Program and work with indigenous elders in the community
- Have a designated Aboriginal Councillor position
- Council officers to engage in Aboriginal culturally matched service delivery – this needs training and monitoring
- Aboriginal Elders can provide cultural respect competence training for Councillors and Officers

The People Goals contained three elements: access to cultural, recreational and sporting opportunities, encouraging healthy lifestyles, and fostering diversity and creativity (see Box 6). The topics emerging from discussion were the visual and performing arts,

sporting events, and the accessibility of venues and events. The cost and availability of insurance cover for events run by community organisations was also raised as an issue.

The key points related to the arts and sports were:

- Playhouses, art galleries, theatres and transport to them requires disabled access and parking
- More awareness of community groups that are struggling to continue to provide services and events because of dwindling membership – perhaps the community would rally support if they knew they were struggling
- Sporting facilities need more seating and covered areas
- Support and encourage sporting groups to cater for masters competitions – this might encourage people to return to sport
- Assist sporting groups to provide grounds and facilities that assist and attract attendance by older people
- Events must have transport, toilets and have easy physical access and have these features advertised as well as the content of the event
- Costs should also be considered especially for retirees on restricted incomes

#### **Box 6: People Goals**

- 2.1 Wingecarribee community has access to a variety of cultural, recreational and sporting opportunities
- 2.2 Wingecarribee people have a healthy lifestyle and inclusive community
- 2.3 services and facilities are provided locally to meet the needs of our community
- 2.4 Wingecarribee fosters a diverse, creative and vibrant community

Key points related to healthy lifestyles were:

- Planning for exercise equipment in parks that can be used by older people
- Get a government grant for health promotion?
- Have a preventative health expo with a focus on older people

Points raised in relation to accessibility were:

- More care is needed about the type of street trees planted so the roots do not lift the footpath and make trip hazards
- Connect footpaths and make them a decent width for safety and sharing with mobility scooters.
- More toilet facilities
- Perhaps need a purpose built venue that is accessible

The Places goals relate to transport, maintaining the heritage and village characteristics into the future, encouraging housing options, and maintaining attractive urban design (see Box 7). As places are frequented by people, there was some overlap with the previous set of objectives with issues of accessibility of venues and events being raised.

Key points raised in relation to transport were focused on expanding and improving community transport options:

- Council to lobby State Government for a better rail system and more community transport services

- Expand community transport to include shopping and other activities, such as getting to the Senior Citizens Centre, not just health related transport
- Outlying villages need more transport access particularly at weekends
- Encourage more people to volunteer for community transport
- Allocate times to community groups to use community transport vehicles on a regular basis for their members
- Link footpaths and cycleways to existing future public transport
- Free parking needed for workers – not in prime places in the commercial strip, but at least convenient
- Parking is needed near to parks and walking paths

### Box 7: Places Goals

- 3.1 Wingecaribee is linked by an integrated and efficient transport network
- 3.2 Wingecaribee has maintained a distinct character of separate towns and villages
- 3.3 Urban design in Wingecaribee creates inspiring places where people want to be
- 3.4 Wingecaribee housing options are diverse
- 3.5 Wingecaribee is recognised as a place of significant heritage

Comments relating to the built environment were:

- Public places should be warm, friendly and with art and music, and should also be accessible and safe for older people
- Have creative performance spaces and somewhere to display local culture
- Link areas for easy walking access and not having to rely on transport
- Have exercise machines for public use in outdoor public spaces
- Maintaining the heritage theme is a challenge for Council to provide safe footpaths and access – conflict between modern design and heritage, but we need to plan for 20 or 30 years on, not 1880
- Need a policy that allows subdivision options to downsize (build a granny flat) without penalising pensioners
- Need housing design that creates flexibility in the future as the demographic changes
- Sporting venues need seating and toilets
- Create community gardens for growing food in unused Council space and link to education opportunities

Wingecaribee Shire environment goals cover protection of the natural environment, sustainability, reduced waste generation, and having a carbon neutral economy (see Box 8). Access to transport and recycling also featured strongly in the discussions.

Key points relating to the natural environment were:

- Older people can be encouraged to participate in lobbying protests and

### Box 8: Environment Goals

- 4.1 Wingecaribee's distinct and diverse natural environment is protected and enhanced
- 4.2 Wingecaribee communities live sustainably by choice
- 4.3 Wingecaribee achieves continuous reduction in waste generation and disposal to landfill
- 4.4 Wingecaribee community has a carbon neutral economy

environmental protection groups, and also to volunteer for Landcare and Bushcare groups.

- A less car dependent community will benefit older people if there is more public transport available

Comments relating to living sustainably by choice were:

- Establish community gardens to help people to live sustainably
- Education and support for obtaining energy efficient appliances
- Make sure information about energy efficiency and recycling is in formats suitable for people with low vision
- Council to help/subsidise groups providing education on environmental matters to get their information out to the community
- Help older people to get information about energy saving and recycling from the library and from internet technology – train older people to use computers
- Establish and support volunteer programs that promote sustainability
- Establish education sessions on sustainability and advertise it to attract older people to show how it can be done – e.g. car sharing, using available bus services, recycling and reusing things. U3A could help with this.

Comments relating to reducing car dependency were:

- Install more bike racks and bike stands outside key facilities, such as the health centre and the library
- Make bus transport more user friendly, with bus shelters, seating, and flexible pick-up

Comments relating to waste reduction and recycling were:

- Some older people are experienced at re-using and re-cycling things, so use this expertise and set up a group, like the Mens Shed – a recycling shed – where things could be fixed by volunteers and given to others to use. Examples are old computers and fridges. Council could help set this up and promote it.
- Free disposal for appliances and advertising this, especially when purchasing new energy efficient goods.

The economic goals are focused on learning, tourism, agribusiness, and providing employment (see Box 9). The workgroup assigned this set of goals found them broad and with unfamiliar terminology, such as 'sustainable business'.

The key point was that a growing ageing population should provide jobs for more younger people. These are not just in direct care and support services, but in educating older people, refurbishing and maintaining infrastructure, and in providing entertainment, health and sporting activities.

### **Box 9: Economic Goals**

- 5.1 Wingecarribee is a centre for learning
- 5.2 The 'Southern Highlands' is a recognised tourist destination throughout Australia
- 5.3 Wingecarribee has agribusiness suited to our distinct climate and geography
- 5.4 Sustainable business and industry thrive in Wingecarribee
- 5.5 Wingecarribee's diverse economy drives a wide range of job and career opportunities

Although Wingecarribee Shire expects a continued inward migration of retirees, they recognise the need to attract younger people and families into housing and jobs that will support the ageing population.

### *Summary*

Wingecarribee Shire has both rural and urban elements, is a popular tourist destination with many arts and craft shops, heritage venues, and a vibrant performing arts community. The climate is attractive to retirees from Sydney due to its rural setting yet is an hour's drive to the outskirts of Sydney. The population projections indicate that all groups under the age of 65 years will grow steadily, but not as fast as the over 65 age group, which will double within 25 years.

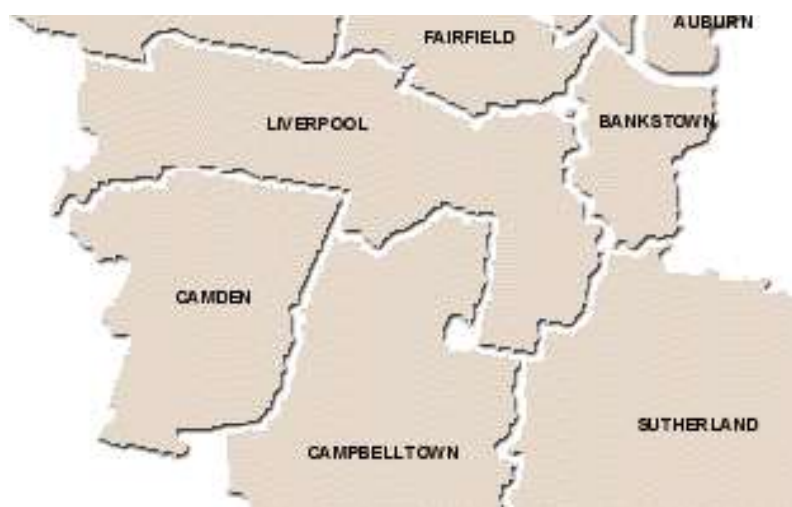
The workshop discussions revealed a desire to maintain heritage values for both aesthetic and economic reasons, yet ensure environments were able to accommodate the needs of people as they age. This community has a strong focus on visual and performing arts and consequently accessible venues and events featured strongly. Wingecarribee is serviced by rail to Sydney, but the focus was on local bus routes and community transport as both a community service and as a means of reducing car-dependency and thereby minimising carbon emissions.

In this session, the Aboriginal community also featured in the comments. These comments focused on educating Councillors and Council staff about Aboriginal culture in the local community. Through improved understanding, Council plans, policies and practices could be both inclusive and specialist where needed, but most importantly, sensitive to Aboriginal culture.

## **Liverpool City Council**

Liverpool City Council is situated in the south western section of the Sydney Outer Region. It is bounded by Bankstown to the east, Fairfield and Penrith to the north, Camden and Campbelltown to the south, and Sutherland to the south east (see Figure 3-26).

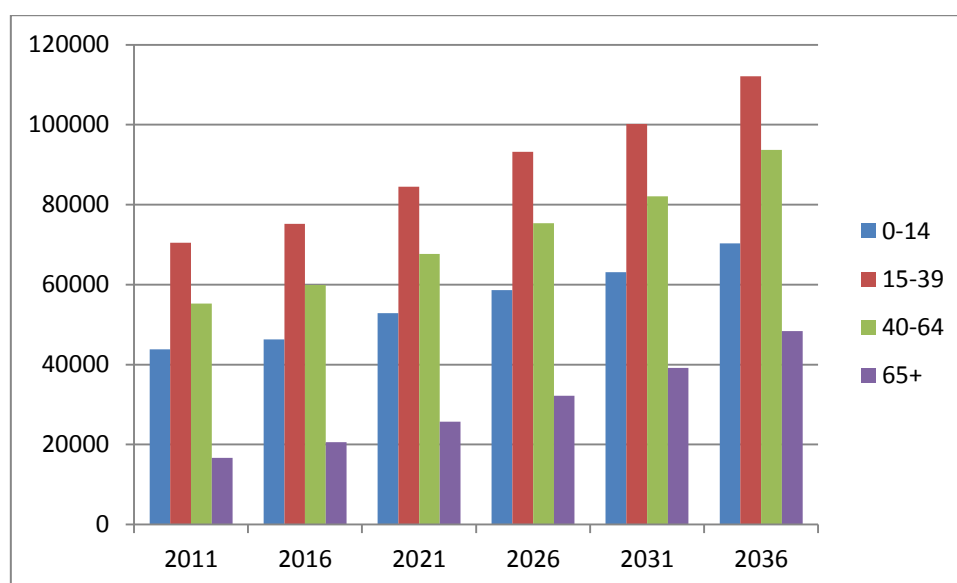
**Figure 0-26: Map showing location of Liverpool in the Sydney Outer Region**



*Source: NSW Division of Local Government*

Liverpool is one of the largest metropolitan (305 square kilometres) and one of the most diverse local government areas in the state, and is experiencing rapid urban growth across previously designated agricultural lands. In 2011 the population was 180,143 showing a growth rate of 8% since 2006<sup>8</sup>. Liverpool is very diverse: 40% of residents were born overseas and 140 different languages are spoken at home. The population is relatively young at an average of 33 years, but the 55+ age group was the fastest growing showing 17% growth between 2006 and 2011<sup>9</sup>.

**Chart 0-4: Population projections for Liverpool City 2011-2036**



*Source: NSW Statistical Local Area Population Projections 2006-2036, NSW Department of Planning, 2010*

Chart 3-4 shows that while the younger age cohorts are expected to grow at a greater rate than many other local government areas, the number of people aged 65+ is also expected to grow. Although the 65+ age group is a smaller number proportionate to the population compared to other areas, it represents large actual numbers rising from 16,700 persons in 2011 to 25,700 in 2021 and to 48,400 in 2036.

Liverpool City Council's community strategic plan is titled, "Growing Liverpool 2021" and the vision is:

"Liverpool, a vibrant historical region city of growth, prosperity and diversity"

The community strategic plan has twelve goal sections:

1. Liverpool is the vibrant regional centre for South West Sydney
2. Neighbourhoods and villages are well designed, safe and clean
3. Urban development is consistent with sustainability principles
4. Liverpool is a socially inclusive and healthy community

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0014/2372/Liverpool-in-brief-2011census-data.pdf](http://www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/2372/Liverpool-in-brief-2011census-data.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au](http://www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au)

5. Council and the community work together to support environmental sustainability
6. The culture and diversity of Liverpool is recognised and valued
7. There is an efficient and highly connected transport system
8. Urban infrastructure meets the needs of a growing community
9. There is access to comprehensive education and training
10. Liverpool has a range of business and employment opportunities
11. Decision-making processes are transparent and the community has opportunities to be involved
12. The community is supported by a well-managed and responsive Council

As it was not possible to cover all twelve goals in the workshop exercise, goals 1,2,3,4, and 7 were chosen as being the most relevant for participants.

The first, Liverpool is the vibrant regional centre for South West Sydney, has five objectives that include quality spaces for civic and cultural events, business development focused on health services, and creating employment in the commercial centre (see Box 10).

The group focused on activities for older residents to keep them socially and physically active. Low cost or free transport was seen as essential for encouraging activities. As expected in such a culturally diverse community, activities reflected this.

Key ideas for this goal were:

**Box 10:**  
**Liverpool is the vibrant regional centre for South West Sydney**

- 1.1 Provide quality spaces that support an active social and cultural life for all ages including civic and other events*
- 1.2 Encourage and promote businesses to develop in the hospital, health and medical precinct*
- 1.3 Further develop a commercial centre that accommodates a variety of employment opportunities*
- 1.4 Encourage commercial and retail development in the city centre, including the southern part of the city*
- 1.5 Provide vibrant community and cultural activities and events*

- Have another name for the "Seniors Centre" to encourage people who did not identify with the term "senior" and have activities such as movie nights and film festivals, exercise programs and yoga, dance nights, speed dating, zoo days, city days, and cultural days and events
- Council to provide funding to cultural institutions such as the Casula Powerhouse to have regular cultural activities that are low cost for seniors and in collaboration with other cultural institutions
- Utilise netball courts and parking areas to have Car Boot Sales and doing activities such as Tai Chi
- Adequate transport is essential to get to local businesses to shop and have regular sale dates for older people with limited funds, as well as transport to employment for people aged over 55 years
- Parking and permits for designated areas for older people, not just people with mobility permits for 'disabled' parking, shuttle buses to shopping and events
- Council has the records of rate payers so it would be easier for them to help maintain a connection with the growing population of older Australians and that way they can see if they are being attended to



The second goal focused on the design and maintenance of neighbourhoods and villages and included objectives for developing appropriate planning policies, improvements to public areas, fostering a sense of safety and civic responsibility, and revitalising retail centres (see Box 11).

The focus of this group was on safety in relation to the design of the built environment (footpaths, bus stops and toilets) and modifying human behaviour through police presence, community forums and installation of CCTV in strategic places.

Key points for continual improvement to public areas were:

- Public areas should be safe, not overcrowded with trees and well lit
- Put more into the budget for regular maintenance and inspection of pathways and ramps, install wider seating, toilets and parking suitable for older people and people with disabilities, and keep grass and overhanging shrubs under control

**Box 11:**  
**Neighbourhoods and villages are well designed, safe and clean**

- 2.1 Develop and implement planning policies that respond to environmental, social and economic considerations*
- 2.2 Undertake continual improvement to public areas*
- 2.3 Foster neighbourhood pride and a sense of civic responsibility*
- 2.4 Facilitate development of a community sense of safety in public spaces in partnership with police, local stakeholders and residents*
- 2.5 Encourage the revitalisation of local retail centres*

Key points for developing a sense of safety in public places were:

- Have a round table meeting with Police, Council and Seniors groups and talk about the issues for older people and people with a disability
- Have a safety forum and information sessions for older people
- Have CCTV in risky areas and in hidden corners
- Have police liaison officers working in the community educating people about safety and also to help people not to be scared of Police

The third goal focuses on including sustainability principles in urban development. The objectives included: planning policies that connected housing, commercial development and transport infrastructure; providing infrastructure in new developments; providing a mix of housing types, and supporting housing affordability (See Box 12).

The group chose to work with the objectives that covered provision of appropriate infrastructure in new urban developments, and housing affordability.

Key points related to infrastructure for new developments were:

- Council to take advice from aged people (as representatives on planning boards, etc) and include them in consultations at the beginning of the process, and also have an access team or access auditor involved

- Need to have collaboration with community services and other departments on health, transport and developers need to include appropriate facilities when planning new estates
- Garbage collection issues need to be considered in multi dwelling units – individual bins that have to be taken to the kerb each week versus larger communal bins that get emptied in situ
- New developments need to include some affordable housing and allow for ageing in place
- Some houses need to be large enough to have ageing parents stay

Key points related to housing affordability were:

- Homes in retirement villages are not affordable unless a person has a house to sell – retirement villages are not an option for private renters
- If people want to go to a retirement village, there needs to be a way to pay it off over time
- Council should provide subsidised housing in the same way as some other councils
- Conduct a housing affordability study in Liverpool to see what is really happening
- Build some smaller homes that could be more affordable

**Box 12:**  
**Urban development is consistent with sustainability principles**

*3.1 Implement planning policies which encourage commercial and residential high-rise in major centres near transport interchanges, complemented by open space and facilities*

*3.2 Provide appropriate infrastructure for the communities of new urban areas as they are being settled*

*3.3 Regulate for a mix of housing types that responds to different population groups such as young families and older people*

*3.4 Support urban renewal*

*3.5 Support housing affordability*

The fourth goal is about socially inclusive and health communities. The objectives cover support for community groups, ensuring people know about services, access to services, services for Aboriginal people and migrants, and to facilitate the development of community leaders (see Box 13).

The workgroup focused on objective 4.2, awareness of services, and objective 4.4, access to services for people with a disability. Key points were:

- To raise awareness about services and facilities, Council could
  - run forums in the daytime, evening and weekends
  - do mail-outs, letterbox drops and email in community languages according the highest number of ethnic groups
  - utilise CentreLink, radio and media releases, local papers and the website
  - design a directory
  - go to meetings where stakeholders meet
- Council could involve other agencies to raise awareness of services, such as GP surgeries, hospitals, chemists, shopping centre, hairdressers, ethnic papers and SBS TV, church groups, sports clubs, and service clubs

To support access to services for people with a disability Council could:

- Provide sufficient clearway for people in wheelchairs to go around tables and chairs in the Plaza
- Provide benches and chairs for people to sit on in the Plaza
- Have ramps, handrails, parking spaces near amenities on the footpath
- Good and useful signage and lighting
- Have a disability expo and liaise with disability organisations
- Ban pushbikes and skateboards on footpaths
- Provide information in community languages
- Make shopping centre managers and owners aware of access issues

One other issue was raised in discussion: the commercial rates charged to community groups when hiring Council venues. This was seen as a barrier to encouraging more community groups to run events and sessions, particularly education sessions and support group meetings.

Goal number seven focuses on the transport system. Objectives include user friendliness, providing a range of transport options, managing road and traffic issues, maintaining related infrastructure such as footpaths and bus shelters, and enhancing road safety (see Box 14). The workgroup chose to work with the last two objectives, transport infrastructure and road safety.

Key points raised about transport related infrastructure were:

- Educating bus operators and drivers to be aware of older passengers
- Bus shelters should be clean and have adequate lighting, seating and access to the bus and around the shelter, a level surface at bus stops to board the bus, and bus stops on both sides of the road, not just one side

Key points raised about road safety for all users were:

**Box 13:**  
**Liverpool is a socially inclusive and healthy community**

- 4.1 Support community organisations, groups and volunteers to deliver coordinated services to the community*
- 4.2 Raise awareness in the community about available services and facilities*
- 4.3 Deliver high quality services for children and their families*
- 4.4 Support access and services for people with a disability*
- 4.5 Support initiatives that improve health, education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal people*
- 4.6 Support access to services and assistance for migrants and refugees*
- 4.7 Facilitate the development of community leaders*

**Box 14:**  
**There is an efficient and highly connected transport system**

- 7.1 Promote an integrated and user friendly public transport service*
- 7.2 Support the delivery of a range of transport options*
- 7.3 Deliver and maintain a high quality local road system including provision and maintenance of infrastructure and management of traffic issues*
- 7.4 Deliver and maintain a range of transport related infrastructure such as footpaths, bus shelters and bikeways*
- 7.5 Enhance road safety for all road users*

- Well maintained footpaths and linking footpaths to key places such as bus stops and pedestrian crossings
- Construct pedestrian refuge islands in the middle of wide roads
- Place pedestrian crossings near bus stops
- Place signage where it is not obscured by power poles or overgrown shrubbery
- Council to run community road safety awareness workshops

### *Summary*

Housing and infrastructure for older people and the need to include older people at the design and development stage of new urban developments was raised in discussions. Also, collaboration and consultation between the relevant government departments at the beginning of the planning process was also needed. Liverpool has a high proportion of people from culturally diverse backgrounds and in some cases larger homes are needed to house three generations. Housing affordability is a significant issue as most older people cannot afford the retirement village option.

A comprehensive list of places to place information about community services was constructed, and it was assumed Council would be responsible. Practical solutions were provided for people with a disability. These focused on physical access (ramps, handrails, parking, signage, lighting), and consulting more with older people and people with disabilities.

The design details of bus stops and shelters that should be clean and well lit were suggestions for improving transport and street safety. Connecting road crossings to bus stops and footpaths to the kerb at bus stops were also discussed. Council road safety awareness programs were also supported.

## **City of Ryde**

The City of Ryde is also located in the Outer Sydney Region in the north west sector and covers approximately 41 square kilometres. It is bounded by Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby in the north, Parramatta in the west, the Parramatta River to the south and Lane Cove and Hunters Hill to the east (see Figure 3-27).

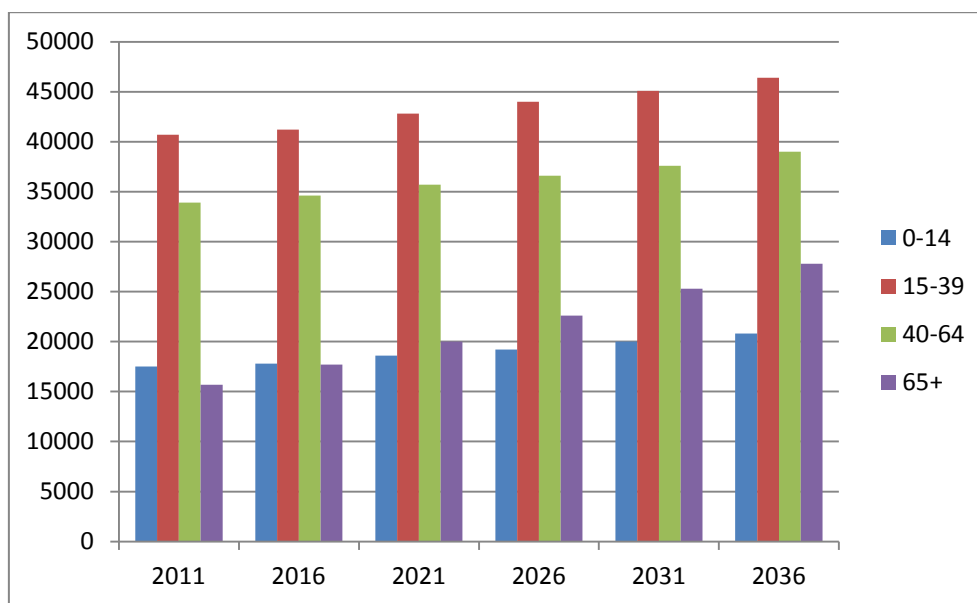
**Figure 0-27: Map showing City of Ryde within the Outer Sydney Region**



*Source: NSW Division of Local Government*

Similarly to Liverpool, Ryde is experiencing significant population growth in all age groups, particularly in the mid age range (see Chart 3-5). By 2021, the proportion of the population aged over 60 years is expected to remain at 2011 levels which is approximately 19% <sup>10</sup>. However, the absolute number is projected grow from around 15,000 to 27,000 BY 2036 as shown in Chart 3-5. Also similarly to Liverpool, Ryde has a culturally diverse population with several ethno-specific support groups active in the area.

**Chart 0-5: Population projections for City of Ryde 2011-2036**



*Source: NSW Statistical Local Area Population Projections 2006-2036, NSW Department of Planning, 2010*

The Ryde 2021 Community Strategic Plan is titled, "Lifestyle and Opportunity @ your doorstep". The City of Ryde vision is:

Our vision will respond to and deliver on the aspirations of our community –  
City of Ryde: The place to be for lifestyle and opportunity @ your doorstep.

Seven Outcomes are listed in the Plan:

- A city of liveable neighbourhoods
- A city of wellbeing
- A city of prosperity
- A city of environmental sensitivity
- A city of connections
- A city of harmony and culture
- A City of progressive leadership

<sup>10</sup> <http://forecast2.id.com.au/Default.aspx?id=306&pg=5210>.



The first goal, liveable neighbourhoods, has objectives that focus on safe and vibrant neighbourhoods where people can enjoy a sense of identity and that are sustainably designed. Discussion focused on establishing good communication between Council and older residents and finding ways in which local communities could interact.

Key points raised were:

- Encourage good communication between Council and older age groups and between Council and other government departments in the planning process - plan to incorporate the needs of older people
- Create communal spaces such as village squares in new shopping centres where older people can gather and have coffee, etc.
- Create intergenerational inclusiveness – and have more community events in family friendly locations
- Create cultural inclusiveness and understanding – have opportunities to mix and break down barriers by providing opportunities for small and localised meetings and find ways to integrate newcomers
- Have safe and accessible footpaths and community transport to more places

The second goal, wellbeing, has objectives focused on healthy lifestyles, community service provision, and connectedness (see Box 16). Some responses were similar to the previous goal with comments about accessibility, transport and connectedness.

Key points discussed were:

- Footpaths need to be wider, well maintained and well lit, cycle paths need to be separate, pedestrian crossings need to be safer and have kerb ramps, and street landscaping should allow visibility between traffic and pedestrians
- Parks and open spaces need to be accessible and have good seating with shade, so older people will be encouraged to walk more
- Have activities such as Tai Chi in the parks, a swimming program, activities at community centres – some can be ethno-specific, and education about fitness and health

#### **Box 15:**

##### **A city of liveable neighbourhoods**

*A range of well planned clean and safe neighbourhoods and public spaces designed with a strong sense of identity and place.*

1. *All residents enjoy living in a clean safe and vibrant neighbourhoods*
2. *Our community has a strong sense of identity in their neighbourhoods and are actively engaged in shaping them*
3. *Our neighbourhoods thrive and grow through sustainable design and planning that reflects community needs*

#### **Box 16:**

##### **A city of wellbeing**

*A healthy and safe community, with all supported throughout their lives by services, facilities and people.*

1. *Our residents are encouraged and supported to live healthy and active lives*
2. *All residents feel supported and cared for in their community through the provision of ample services and facilities*
3. *Residents feel secure and included in an environment where they can connect socially and are supported by their neighbours*

- Council's planning should include more aged care facilities and also encourage granny flat development, and promote home modifications to help people remain independent and safe at home.

The third goal, prosperity, has objectives that focus on economic growth and providing local employment (see Box 17). How to support businesses to prosper and invest, and how to encourage employment of people over the age of 55 were the focus of discussions. The key points were:

- Transport to and from work must be made easy, and transport infrastructure must be planned to grow with the population and increased business activity
- Strategies to encourage older people to work and employers to employ them are needed
- Local shops and shopping centres need to be age-friendly and accessible, and not have a major road to cross between housing and the local shops – large shopping centres are not age-friendly, but corner shops are
- Having convenient parking near shops helps encourage local purchasing
- Think about having shops, health services and other services in the same location so they are easy for older people to get to
- Enable zoning changes to encourage small businesses and other businesses to decentralise
- Provide education programs for people who want to set up their own small business, and also to think about businesses that focus on the needs of older people
- Have to take care that business growth and associated infrastructure does not create more isolation for older people

The fourth goal, environmental sensitivity, is about protecting the natural and built environments, living a more sustainably and managing the impacts of climate change (see Box 18). Recycling, tree planting, and Council clean-ups were the main topics of discussion. Key points were:

- Use rainwater, natural light and ventilation in public buildings and facilities, and new businesses and building to have solar power.

#### **Box 17:**

##### **A city of prosperity**

*Creating urban centres which champion business, innovation and technology to stimulate economic growth and local jobs*

1. *Our community and businesses across the city flourish and prosper in an environment of innovation progression and economic growth*
2. *Our city is well designed and planned to encourage new investment, local jobs and business opportunities*
3. *Macquarie Park is recognised globally and locally as an innovative education and technology hub*

#### **Box 18:**

##### **A city of environmental sensitivity**

*Working together as a community to protect and enhance our natural and built environments for the future.*

1. *Our residents, businesses and visitors collaborate in the protection and enhancement of the natural environment*
2. *To encourage and enable all our residents to live a more environmentally sensitive life*
3. *As we grow, we protect and enhance the natural and built environments for future enjoyment and manage any impacts of climate change*

- Have a facility for collecting old paints and battering, and have organised garage sale clean ups to prevent dumping, and encourage people to have garage sales so that more things can be re-used and not go to landfill

The fifth goal, connectedness, and the sixth goal, harmony and culture were not used in the workshop but are presented here for reference in Box 19 and Box 20 respectively.

**Box: 19**

***A city of connections***

*Access and connection to, from and within the City of Ryde. Providing safe, reliable and affordable public and private travel, transport and communication infrastructure*

**Box: 20**

***A city of harmony and culture***

*A welcoming and diverse community, celebrating our similarities and differences, in a vibrant city of culture and learning.*

The seventh goal, leadership, focuses on a well managed Council that delivers value for money, is concerned for the future of Ryde, is trusted, and keeps residents well informed (see Box 21). Most of the discussion involved communication strategies in relation to being informed. Valuing residents was expressed in terms of volunteering, and value for money focused on discounts for seniors. The key points from discussion were:

- Keeping older people informed through involvement on committees when deciding major works and deciding council priorities, and having a communication strategy for older people to have input
- Use the local community radio to get the message out, especially for people with low vision and perhaps have a program where people can ring in for information
- Look at ways in which social media for the 55+ age group can be taken up
- Discounts for older people for admission tickets to facilities and events, and explore partnerships with other providers to get discounts because Council can't provide everything
- Provide more opportunities for older people to volunteer as a way to contribute and to get recognition

**Box: 21**

***A city of progressive leadership***

*A well led and managed city, supported by ethical organisations which deliver projects and services to the community by listening, advocating and responding to their needs.*

1. *Our city is well led and managed*
2. *The City of Ryde will deliver value for money services for our community and our customers*
3. *Our residents trust their Council, feel well informed, heard, valued and involved in the future of their city.*

***Summary***

Ryde population projections predict growth in all age groups, and while the proportion of older people is not expected to change in the next twenty years, the actual number of older people will rise over that time. Ryde is a culturally diverse city that is highly

urbanised yet has many bushland reserves that require protection. The main theme arising was provision and design of basic infrastructure to support older people whether in recreation, sport, active travel, employment, volunteering, or social activity. Ways of involving older people in decision-making and two-way communication between Council and older residents was also a key feature. Creating local family events as well as cultural events were seen as ways to keep people connected within and between all age groups.

### Lane Cove City Council

Lane Cove is part of the Sydney Inner Region and shares its northwest boundary with Ryde, is bounded in the southwest by the Lane Cove River and Hunters Hill, North Sydney to the east and Willoughby to the north east (see Figure 3-28).

**Figure 0-28: Map showing location of Lane Cove within the Inner Sydney Region**



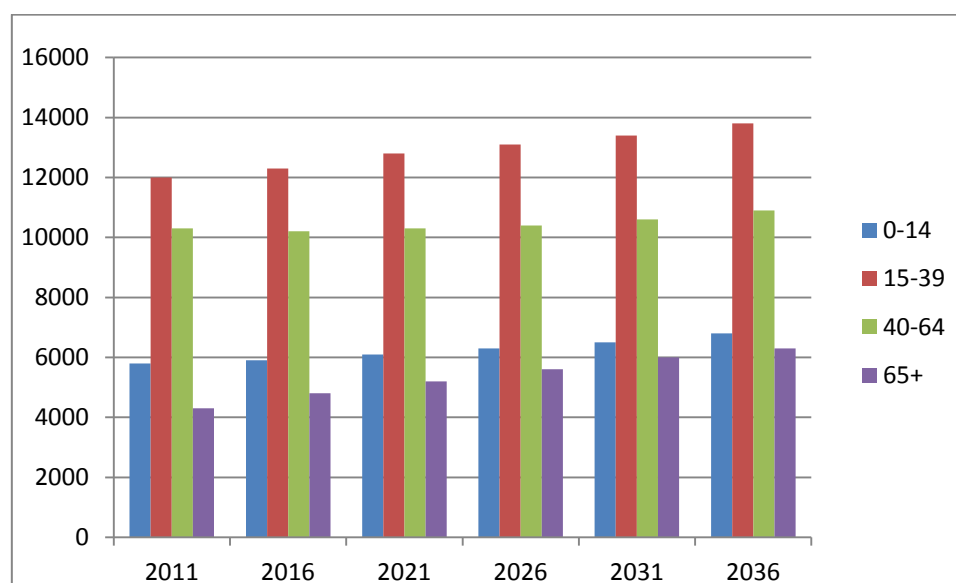
*Source: NSW Division of Local Government*

The proportion of people in the older age groups is not expected to increase significantly in the next twenty to twenty five years. The population of Lane Cove in 2011 was approximately 32,000 and the projected population is projected to be 37,800 in 2036. The proportion of people aged over 65 years is projected to rise from 13% to 16% in 2036, (an increase of 2000 people from 4,300 to 6,300)<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/HousingDelivery/Populationandhousingprojections/tabid/124/language/en-AU/Default.aspx>

While these numbers are relatively small in comparison to many other local government areas, 2,000 people represents more than one third of the total projected growth numbers of 5,500 for Lane Cove. Chart 3-6 shows the NSW Department of Planning population projections for Lane Cove.

**Chart 0-6: Population projections for Lane Cove 2011-2036**



*Source: NSW Statistical Local Area Population Projections 2006-2036, NSW Department of Planning, 2010*

The Lane Cove Council community strategic plan, "Lane Cove 2025" was adopted by Council in 2011. The Council's vision is "Lane Cove for a better quality of life" and the Mission is "To be aware of and responsive to the diverse needs and aspirations of the Lane Cove Community". The Plan was developed around six themes:

- Our Society
- Our Built Environment
- Our Natural Environment
- Our Culture
- Our Local Economy
- Our Council

The first goal, our society, has seven objectives covering connectivity, wellbeing, community services, recreation, health, education, and community safety (see Box 22). The workgroup chose to work on Community Connections, Community Services and Facilities, Healthy Lifestyles, and Community Safety (points 1, 3, 5 and 7 respectively in Box 22).

Intergenerational activities for younger and older people to participate in activities together were discussed in relation to creating opportunities to mix socially and build ties outside family groups. Ideas included:

- school children interacting with older people at care centres rather than just performing songs and then leaving
- having a playground in or near an age care village or an onsite cafe to encourage more intergenerational engagement
- the library having more activities where older people could share skills with younger people, or doing activities together such as scrapbooking, art and using computers
- collecting information for “living books” – human libraries
- encourage the development of community gardens, street parties, markets in church hall and garage sales.

In terms of offering quality services, the discussion focused on improving communication between existing services as well as promoting these throughout the community. Discussion revealed that many services were unaware of either the existence of each other or an understanding of the role of the service. Consequently, encouraging attendance at the local community service interagency meetings was seen as a priority. Council was viewed as having a significant role in facilitating improved communication between agencies.

Increasing awareness of existing facilities for health and fitness, and finding out what activities older people might use to help maintain their health and fitness were the key points arising from the discussion on healthy lifestyles. Council was considered to be in a good position for providing information through rates notices, the website and local media.

Discussion about personal safety elicited the suggestion that a roundtable meeting should be held to discuss what is being done, find out what the community wants, and to identify gaps. It was mentioned that Attorney General’s Department has funding for

## **Box 22: Our Society**

### ***Goal - An inclusive interconnected and active community***

1. *Community Connections: To ensure that Lane Cove has opportunities for all sectors of the community to mix and build ties beyond their immediate family, social or cultural group*
2. *Community Wellbeing: To identify ways to enhance the community’s sense of well being. To address strategic gaps in social and welfare services to target groups*
3. *Community Services and Facilities: To ensure that Lane Cove offers quality services and facilities that are accessible, relevant, affordable and well used. To integrate services and achieve seamless service provision by government and community agencies*
4. *Recreation: To maximise the opportunities for all the community to participate in active recreational activities and events. To increase levels of physical activity of all demographic groups*
5. *Health: To encourage healthy lifestyles at all life stages. To ensure the healthcare needs of the community are met*
6. *Education: to increase access to high quality learning opportunities and education services*
7. *Community Safety: To increase feelings of personal safety. To increase perceptions of Lane Cove as a safe place to live and enjoy community life. To encourage behaviours where people respect each other and their environment*



road safety. The way that streets and infrastructure is designed also affects safety and a sense of safety.

The second goal, the built environment, has six objectives related to: sustainable development, housing, assets, transport, parking and traffic. The workgroup chose to work on encouraging high quality planning and urban design outcomes, and ensuring infrastructure keeps pace with population growth (see Box 23 for the full list of objectives). Ideas generated by the group included:

- Council could be more proactive in private developments – not just stick to the regulations, but be more creative in how to serve the community better
- Implement the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) and assess the urban environment for impediments to participation and social interaction
- Council needs to do more research on the future population and its needs and involve community members prior to getting professionals in – find out what is important to the community and run workshops with seniors to help with planning
- Use of development contributions (S.94) have to be well thought through and designed appropriately

The third goal, natural environment, was not examined in the workshop, but an outline of the content of this goal is shown in Box 24 for reference.

The fourth goal, culture, has three objectives: facilitating creative expression by different cultural groups, providing places and spaces for cultural events, and celebrating cultural diversity (see Box 25 for more detail).

Discussions about culture and identity included comments about performing and visual arts as well as ethnic cultural diversity and the ageing of migrant populations. Ideas for including older people in cultural activities were:

#### **Box 23: Our Built Environment**

##### **Goal – A well designed, Liveable and Connected Area**

1. *Sustainable Development: To balance sustainability, heritage & growth of Lane Cove. To encourage environmentally sustainable development. To encourage high quality planning and urban design outcomes.*
2. *Housing: To promote a range of sustainable housing options in response to changing demographics*
3. *Assets, Infrastructure and Public Domain: To ensure assets and infrastructure cater for increased population growth, are well maintained and support sustainable living.*
4. *Transport and Mobility: To promote integrated transport options that link people to work, services and facilities. To encourage the use of sustainable transport options*
5. *Parking: To ensure that community needs for adequate and accessible parking are met. To manage public parking to be more sustainable.*
6. *Traffic: To ensure traffic volumes and speeds accord with local conditions and road type. To alleviate road congestion and improve safety*

#### **Box 24: Our Natural Environment**

##### **Goal: A Green Community and a Beautiful Natural Environment**

1. *Environmental Impact:*
2. *Bushland Management:*
3. *Waterways Management:*

- Provide free or low cost entertainment that includes transport and have specific days or events for seniors only in the plaza
- Clubs to find ways to attract older people who don't or wouldn't normally attend a club
- Advertise events where older people will go or look
- Identify what older people want and what different cultural groups want

The sixth and last goal, local economy, incorporates objectives related to local businesses and services, encouraging economic growth, and encouraging businesses to be socially and environmentally responsible (see Box 26 for more detail).

Encouraging people to shop locally elicited several ideas that were focused on making local shopping more convenient and easier to access. Discussion indicated that people leave Lane Cove to shop and that local transport was an issue as well. Ideas discussed included:

- Have a parking system where people over the age of 75 years could have access to easy parking one day a week for three hours without penalty in Council parking spaces. This will help local businesses to survive because not everyone wants to use community transport
- Provide good seating at all markets and access to public toilets on market day and festivals
- Promote local businesses to all community services in Lane Cove so that Day Centre excursions stay in the locality – perhaps attract excursions from neighbouring councils
- Devise a map and timetable to promote markets to everyone

#### *Summary*

How to share information across the Council and other agencies and services in the area was a common theme throughout discussions.

### **Box 25: Our Culture**

*Goal: A Community Rich in Culture with a Unique Identity*

1. *Culture & Creative Expression: To facilitate creative expression by supporting a diverse range of cultural festivals, activities, groups, arts & events. To maximise community participation in cultural and creative activities. To support cultural groups with resources, facilities and information.*
2. *Cultural Spaces: To ensure adequate and appropriate facilities and spaces for arts and cultural activities. To promote cultural diversity within cultural spaces and facilities*
3. *Cultural Identity: To promote Lane Cove's cultural identity with strong connection to place. To protect and celebrate Lane Cove's cultural diversity, identity, history and heritage through cultural programs including festivals, events and activities.*

### **Box 26: Our Local Economy**

*Goal: A Vibrant and Sustainable Local Economy*

1. *Local Services: To encourage the community to shop locally and to purchase locally made goods & services. To foster a strong partnership between Council, Lane Cove ALIVE; the Lane Cove Chamber of Commerce and businesses in developing villages which are commercially successful and socially and culturally active.*
2. *Business Precincts: To encourage a diverse range of businesses in lane Cove including home businesses. To develop Lane Cove's business precincts to contribute to employment and economic growth*
3. *Sustainable Business Practices: To encourage local businesses to adopt sustainable practices. To encourage businesses to act responsibly towards the community and the natural environment*

The plaza is viewed as an attractive place for residents and improvements to access to further encourage people to get out and about were identified. The library has many programs for older people and the librarian was given the opportunity to explain these to participants. It was then revealed that Council staff are generally unaware of each other's roles and programs of work and that more needed to be done to reduce this lack of knowledge. Keeping local small businesses viable was also a major topic for discussion and linked with providing events and festivals that were culturally and age inclusive.

## Great Lakes Council

Great Lakes is a coastal council within the Hunter Region. It is bounded by Taree and Gloucester in the north, Dungog to the west and Port Stephens to the south (see Figure 3-29). Great Lakes is a popular retirement destination offering a pleasant climate and rural atmosphere within two hours drive north of Newcastle, and three hours north of Sydney. Great Lakes Council covers 3,373 square kilometres, and has a coastline of 145 kilometres. Forster and Tuncurry are the main centres to the north and Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest to the south. There are several smaller coastal and inland settlements scattered throughout the Council area. Several national parks and the Myall Lakes sit within the Great Lakes boundaries.

**Figure 0-29: Map showing location of Great Lakes within the Hunter Region**

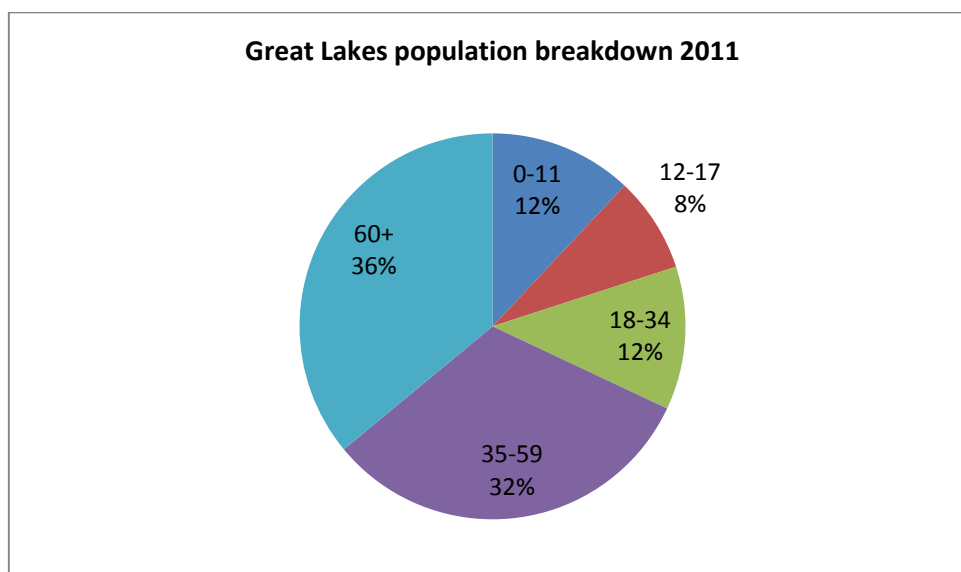


*Source: NSW Division of Local Government*

Great Lakes has one of the oldest populations in New South Wales with approximately 36% of the population aged over 60 years (see Chart 3-7). This trend is expected to continue with the number of persons over 65 years projected to double between 2011

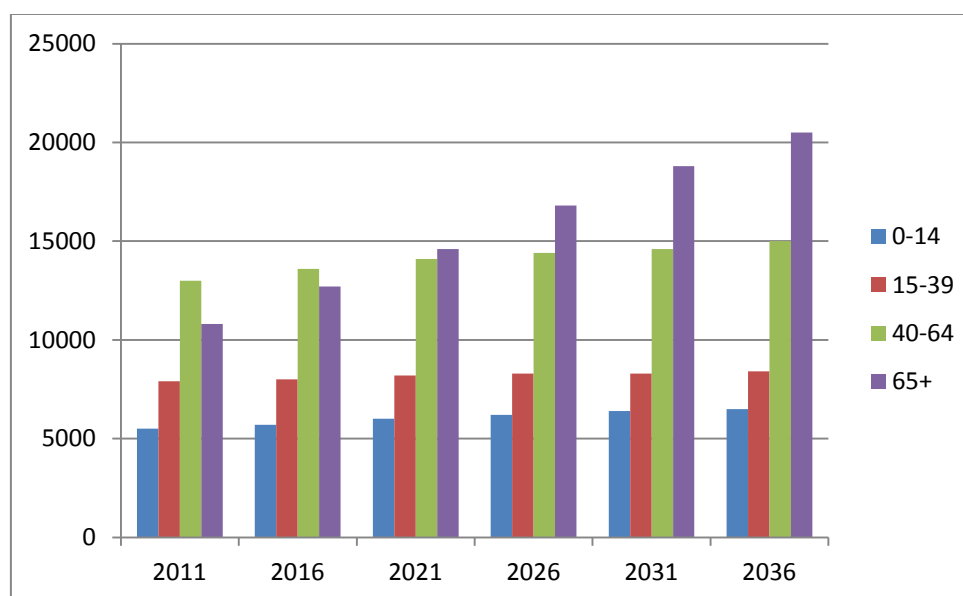
and 2036 from 10,800 to 20,500 <sup>12</sup> Chart 3-8 shows the projected population change in the same period .

**Chart 0-7: Population Great Lakes by age 2011**



*Source: NSW Statistical Local Area Population Projections 2006-2036, NSW Department of Planning, 2010*

**Chart 0-8: Population projections for Great Lakes 2011-2036**



*Source: NSW Statistical Local Area Population Projections 2006-2036, NSW Department of Planning, 2010*

The Great Lakes Community Strategic Plan, Great Lakes 2030, was endorsed by Council in April 2011. The vision is:

<sup>12</sup> New South Wales Statistical Local Area Population Projections, 2006-2036.

A unique sustainable and enhanced environment with quality lifestyle opportunities created through clever development and appropriate infrastructure and services.

There are four key directions or goals:

1. Embracing and protecting our natural environment
2. Planning for balance
3. Unique locations with a common purpose
4. Leadership to challenge and inspire

Discussion covered most of the objectives of the first goal, embracing and protecting our natural environment (see Box 27 for detail). Negatives and positives about an increased aged population were discussed: while there are costs associated with infrastructure, a larger population should result in improved health services for everyone; and while development can encroach on the natural environment, it can allow for more walkways and viewing areas in open spaces and parks.

There was a suggestion that the Council should own aged housing and associated facilities with the view to making a profit that could be used to fund more accommodation and improve infrastructure. However, it was also suggested that potential retirees be informed about the current lack of infrastructure before moving to the area.

Zoning issues were also a topic of discussion with the suggestion that a re-zoning study should be carried out. Zoning for granny flats and allowing more subdivision of large house blocks before allowing more high rise was preferred.

Great Lakes has a well-established “Wheel-in-Wheel-out” garbage collection service for older people. A small fee applies for this service which is added to the rates. However there was much discussion about other aspects related to waste and recycling. Ideas included:

- Provide ongoing education programs for older people about recycling and the impact of waste on the environment and the need to reduce landfill waste
- Have tours of the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) located at the landfill site so that older people can see the recycling process – service clubs could perhaps assist

**Box 27: Embracing and protecting our natural environment**

*Goal: Protecting the natural environment while addressing the challenges of population growth:*

1. *Allowing for our increasing population and associated development without impacting on our natural environment*
2. *Ensuring the development that does take place is sensitive to the natural environment*
3. *Planning for and minimising the potential impact of climate change*
4. *Managing the impact of mining and agricultural industries on the natural environment*
5. *Embracing our natural environment to develop a green economy*
6. *Ensuring we explore every opportunity to sustainably manage our waste.*



- Provide an annual bulky waste clean-up for residual and scrap metal and reusable items and Council to offer a service to help older people with this

The second goal, planning for balance, acknowledges that Great Lakes Council is expected to cater not only for their residents, but also large numbers of visitors. Finding the balance between the needs of residents, the environment, the local economy, and the pressures on infrastructure is indeed a balancing act.

Transport infrastructure and managing the impact of tourism were the main topics of discussion. Key points were:

- Bus stops need to be more accessible with footpath links, shelters and information boards to help visitors and locals – a gap analysis is needed for this
- Car parking that is well linked to facilities with good access; and road safety awareness for pedestrians, cyclists and mobility scooter users is needed
- Need to find ways to encourage more people to use public transport rather than their cars
- Investigate potential for summer bus services for the main visitor season with mini buses – perhaps do shuttle bus runs that are free
- Investigate what funding is available for bus stops and other infrastructure and apply for it
- Cater for active holiday-makers with more cycleways and promotion of local walks
- Find out what older people want – a significant increase in older people means infrastructure has to support parking, access, and scooter use

The third key goal, unique locations with a common purpose, focuses on maintaining the character of the villages and small towns, and

#### **Box 28: Planning for Balance**

*OBJECTIVE: Providing appropriate services and infrastructure, community facilities and opportunity for residents to continue to enjoy their existing lifestyle balanced with the impact of increases in population, addition development and influx of tourists.*

1. *Improving our road network – within towns and villages and across the Great Lakes area – to cater safely for increasing traffic movement*
2. *Providing improved public transport*
3. *Establishing equitable access to appropriate health services*
4. *Developing appropriate community, sporting and recreational facilities and services*
5. *Providing opportunities for young people across the Great Lakes*
6. *Providing improved access to educational facilities, particularly at tertiary level and ensuring skill development*
7. *Supporting existing business and attracting new business to locate within the Great Lakes to increase the supply of job opportunities.*
8. *Achieving a balance between increasing tourism and managing the impact of additional facilities and visitors.*

#### **Box 29: Unique locations with a common purpose**

*OBJECTIVE: Ensuring the unique character of our towns and villages is maintained while developing a network of services and community linkages that will also strengthen each community.*

1. *Improved safety for residents and tourists*
2. *Maintaining the charm of the village lifestyle many people enjoy while delivering the services they need.*
3. *Fostering greater communication between our communities, including Aboriginal communities*
4. *Ensuring social cohesion across age groups, between towns and villages, and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities*
5. *Protecting the unique character of towns and villages while fostering area-wide cooperation.*



at the same time, keeping them linked and well serviced. Links between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities is also an objective (see Box 29 for more detail). The topics discussed were improved safety for residents and tourists, and protecting the character of towns and villages and fostering cooperation.

Safety covered public education programs to keep safety at the front of mind, providing free home safety audits, and improving the built environment to reduce hazards, including easy access to buildings, parking, and rest stops.

Discussion about protecting the character of villages and towns and fostering cooperation raised the following ideas:

- Encourage volunteering through Dune Care, Land Care, Heritage Walks and Talks – this helps identify uniqueness – and provide resources for a volunteer register
- Start a community leadership program and choose leaders who are already active
- Cooperation between villages and towns needs the support of a good transport system

The fourth key goal, leadership to challenge and inspire, has specific mention of children and young people in relation to leadership (see Box 30). The workgroup chose to work with the first point of a regional approach to issues, and the second point, developing and inclusive and engaged community.

Discussion on a regional approach centred on having a coordinated approach to protection of the environment, transport services, housing and health services by having the 'right' people on the 'right' committees and participating in regional networks. Having representatives from the senior population on these committees, by invitation was also suggested.

Discussion about developing an inclusive and engaged community generated a long list of ideas, most of which required the involvement of volunteers. In general volunteering was viewed as a way of overcoming isolation and providing social interaction. Specific ideas included:

- Involving younger people to mix with older people in volunteering, such as helping to deliver meals on wheels, and working with schools to promote intergenerational activities
- Encourage employers to give 'volunteering leave', especially to older employees who are soon to retire so they get involved in community activities before they retire – need a program for this

### **Box 30: Leadership to challenge and inspire**

*OBJECTIVE: Providing honest and accountable community leadership including the development and implementation of the community strategic plan.*

1. *Developing a coordinated regional approach to our issues*
2. *Developing an inclusive and engaged community*
3. *Encouraging youth representation in our community groups and in leadership positions*
4. *Ensuring the voice of children is heard in decisions and actions affecting their future*
5. *Ensuring actions taken and decisions reached are sustainable*
6. *Removing red tape and assisting those who seek to provide appropriate services and facilities*
7. *Keeping the community informed each year of progress in implementing Great Lakes 2030.*

- Investigate what the local large shopping centre can do to help create a sense of community – are there activities that can be done on shopping centre premises and/or car park, especially in the tourist off-season

Other means by which to keep people connected, included and engaged were:

- Plan for multi-generational homes and housing and ensure land use zoning doesn't contribute to isolation and exclusion
- Consider all people when planning infrastructure and events – children, parents with prams, older people and people with a disability
- Council can communicate activities and events via a newsletter, the website and the local media and through the library and to support services

### *Summary*

Great Lakes is a rural coastal area with national parks, large waterways and coastal frontage. As a primary target for retirees from Sydney, it already has a high proportion of resident retirees. It is also a popular destination for holiday makers, particularly in the school holidays. Consequently the human impact on the natural environment needs to be carefully managed. They want to build their economy around retirees, but at the same time continue to attract tourists and maintain the environment the tourists and residents currently enjoy. Overall, Great Lakes is challenged by issues of climate change and environmental protection, while at the same time needing to expand the infrastructure and services to cater for continued inflows of retirees.

Public transport, active travel and connectivity were key issues for both residents and tourists. Volunteering was seen as a way of reducing social isolation as well as providing services and maintaining the character of villages and towns. Waste management was a recurring theme where difficulties in garbage collection were only part of the discussion. Making sure older people understood the need to recycle and dispose of waste correctly was also an element in environmental protection. The role of land use planning in minimising isolation and exclusion was mentioned along with considering people of all ages in the design and placement of developments.

## **Gilgandra Shire Council**

Gilgandra Shire is situated in the North West Region of New South Wales. It is bounded by Coonamble in the north, Warren and Narromine in the west, in the south by Dubbo and in the east by Warrumbungle (see Figure 3-30). The Shire covers an area of 4800 square kilometres, which is mostly agricultural land producing sheep and cattle grazing and wheat crops.

The main centre is the town of Gilgandra with a few smaller settlements scattered throughout the Shire. The nearest major centre is Dubbo in the neighbouring council area. Three major highways pass through the town – the Newell, Oxley and Castlereagh Highways.

Gilgandra Council owns and provides all the aged care services in the Shire: a hostel for Aboriginal men (Jack Towney Hostel), and a retirement village, an aged care hostel and

a dementia unit, as well as employment for people with disabilities. Gilgandra Shire Council is therefore a major employer in the Shire.

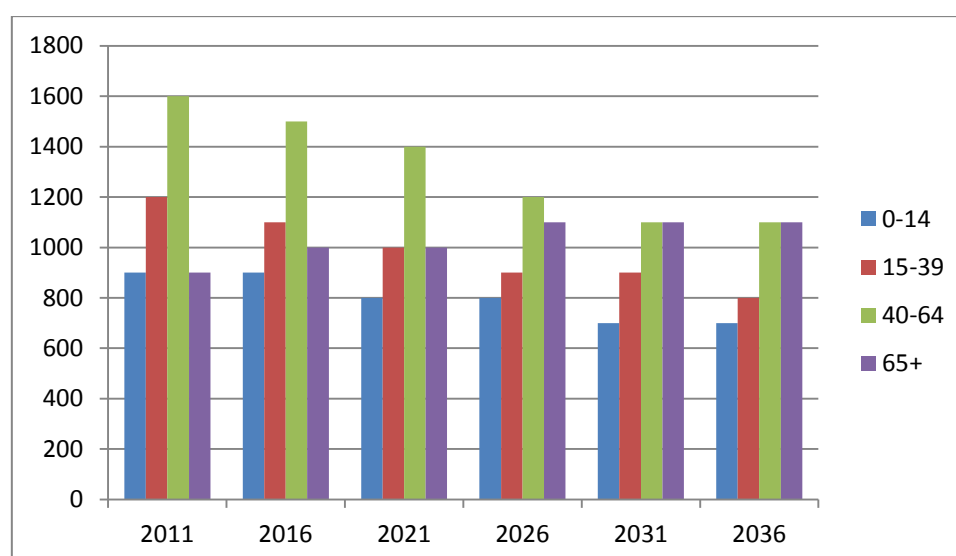
**Figure 0-30: Map showing location of Gilgandra within the North West Region**



*Source: NSW Division of Local Government*

Gilgandra Shire has a population of approximately 4700 which is projected to decrease to less than 4000 by 2031 (see Chart 3-9). Although the overall population is projected to decrease, the older population is projected to increase. Gilgandra is well serviced by specialised aged accommodation and consequently, less older people are likely to move out of the Shire to a major centre such as Dubbo, which is approximately an hour's drive from Gilgandra.

**Chart 0-9: Population projections for Gilgandra 2011-2036**



*Source: NSW Statistical Local Area Population Projections 2006-2036, NSW Department of Planning, 2010*

Gilgandra has a large indigenous population with more than 12% of the population identifying as Aboriginal, 20% of whom are over the age of 45 years. The median age for Gilgandra is 41 years and more than 30% of the population is aged 55 years and over.

Gilgandra's Community Strategic Plan covers the period 2009 to 2020. The vision for Gilgandra is:

In 2020 Gilgandra will lead by example with its proud sense of community, an ability to provide outstanding human services and the capacity to deliver contemporary economic outcomes that pursue environmental sustainability.

The key goals are:

Inclusive Community  
Thriving Environment  
Growing Economy  
Strengthened Infrastructure  
Catalyst Projects

The first goal, inclusive community, focuses on community wellbeing, providing services, developing Aboriginal leadership, and to develop plans for developing activities for the arts, sports and recreation (see Box 31).

Transport to services was a major topic of discussion because the key services are provided in or Dubbo or are administered from Dubbo.

There was also discussion about integrating services for better and more sustainable service provision and for Council to find ways of making sure people know about the services.

It was noted that volunteering helps people to feel needed, provides social interaction and helps mental wellbeing.

### **Box 31: Inclusive Community**

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- *To improve community wellbeing (physical and mental)*
- *To stimulate community pride, with a particular focus on youth*
- *To be proactive in the provision of quality community services*
- *To enhance service quality and sustainability through the integration of service provision*
- *To work with the Aboriginal community to develop clear strategies that empower Aboriginal leadership, pride and opportunities*
- *To establish an arts and cultural plan*
- *To develop the tools to monitor, measure and enhance the contribution of volunteers in the community*
- *Establish a sport and recreation plan*

### **Box 32: Thriving Environment**

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- *Develop strategies to activate appropriate preservation of cultural, heritage and natural assets*
- *Minimise the environmental impacts of waste and improve resource recovery rates*
- *Work with all stakeholders to mobilise community awareness to take action to reduce our ecological footprint*
- *Develop appropriate land use planning strategies for sustainable development which embraces the community's unique and valued environment, as well as optimising economic opportunities*
- *Provide quality, transparent regulatory functions that meet community needs*

The second goal, thriving environment, covers the built environment, heritage values, minimising waste, and sustainable development in land use planning.

The workgroup focused discussion on minimising the environmental impacts of waste and improving resource recovery rates (see Box 32). Regular, say three monthly, letterbox drops to remind people to recycle. Also an explanation about how the recycling waste is hand sorted, with perhaps a photograph of people sorting, might help people understand the importance of recycling. Also, educate people to have two containers in their kitchen, one for recycling and one for general waste.

The third goal, growing economy, focuses on pursuing grant opportunities, ensuring financial sustainability, education networks, attracting new business, and developing tourism (see Box 33).

The workgroup chose to work on the objective about attracting new business to the area. The focus of discussion was on tourism and transport, particularly the lack of taxi transport in Gilgandra. Key ideas were:

- Have a caravan waste dump facility for travellers with adequate parking, good signage to it with access to the street and advertise it widely on travel sites, particularly those that attract Grey Nomads
- Investigate feasibility of setting up a taxi service and/or set up a mini bus taxi service.
- Establish inter-town transport to closest outlying towns (Collie, Eumungerie, Tooraweenah, Gulargambone, and Armatree)

The fourth goal, strengthened infrastructure was not included in the workshop, but is shown in Box 34 for reference. The objectives are centred on planning for roads and pathways that are accessible and progressing the infrastructure program.

### **Box 33: Growing Economy**

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- *To provide quality support services to all stakeholders of council and ensure financial sustainability*
- *To aggressively pursue grant opportunities*
- *To facilitate the creation of an education strategy that links key institutions through networking*
- *To develop a governance plan*
- *To attract new businesses to the community and support existing business, with a particular focus on rural industries*
- *To maximise the potential of Gilgandra's location on highways*
- *To work collaboratively with industry and stakeholders to develop an economic and tourism development plan*
- *Develop employment and training programs to engage people requiring tailored support in work opportunities*

### **Box 34: Strengthened Infrastructure**

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- *Undertake proactive planning to ensure appropriate infrastructure renewal*
- *Improve existing road infrastructure to meet community needs*
- *Provide a network of pathways that link wheelchair pedestrians, pedestrians and cyclists to important destinations*
- *Maintain forward works infrastructure programs that meet community needs*
- *Create and maintain quality, inspiring green spaces that encourage people to be active and involved in their natural surrounds*

The fifth goal, catalyst projects, links with the infrastructure goal with objectives to beautify the main street precinct, zoning requirements, waste management and asset management (see Box 35).

The workgroup focused on providing internet technology, and developing a contemporary residential and industrial precinct.

Technology discussion focused on how social isolation of older people can be overcome by using internet communications technology, particularly in communicating with younger members of the family. Specifically:

- Providing free internet for older people with training in how to use computers and the internet
- Begin with captive audiences in Cooee Retirement Village and the Jack Towney Hostel
- The library can also be a place to learn about computers and to get free access to the internet

Discussion about developing a contemporary residential and industrial precinct involved the notion of developing partnerships with developers to build housing suitable and affordable for a mix of people. This is also a way to attract more people to the area and to have homes where people can age in place. This would also require a community hall and perhaps a corner shop and a park. The difficulty with any new development is having it close to town and having transport.

### Summary

Gilgandra has well-established aged care services with hotels and a village of independent living units which they plan to extend. Keeping up with technology is important and was seen as both a way of connecting with family members but at the same time could cause isolation if it kept people at home. Transport, as in all rural communities is a problem. It was recognised that more could be done to attract tourists, particularly Grey Nomads, to stay overnight instead of just travelling through.

## Richmond Valley and Kyogle Councils

Due to their proximity and regional connections, Richmond Valley and Kyogle Shire Councils agreed to a joint workshop. Kyogle and Richmond Valley are situated in the Richmond Tweed Region of New South Wales. Kyogle is bounded to the north by the Queensland border, to the east by Tweed, Lismore and Richmond Valley and Tenterfield

### Box 35: Catalyst Projects

#### OBJECTIVES:

- *To be a leader in community technology provision by working with stakeholders to deliver leading edge applications that promote equitable digital literacy*
- *Revitalise main street (incorporating beautifying the main street, providing some green space in the main street and linking with the VIC and CHC)*
- *Develop contemporary residential and industrial precinct*
- *Develop a whole of Council asset management plan*
- *Assess need for new Council buildings including depot and library and complete projects as required*
- *Develop strategies to promote the health and value of the Castlereagh River*
- *Significantly improve the rural roads of the Shire*
- *Develop a Waste Management strategy*



in the west. Richmond Valley is bounded by Lismore to the north, Kyogle to the northwest, Clarence Valley in the south, and the coast to the east (see Figure 3-31)

**Figure 0-31: Map showing location of Kyogle and Richmond Valley within the Richmond Tweed Region**

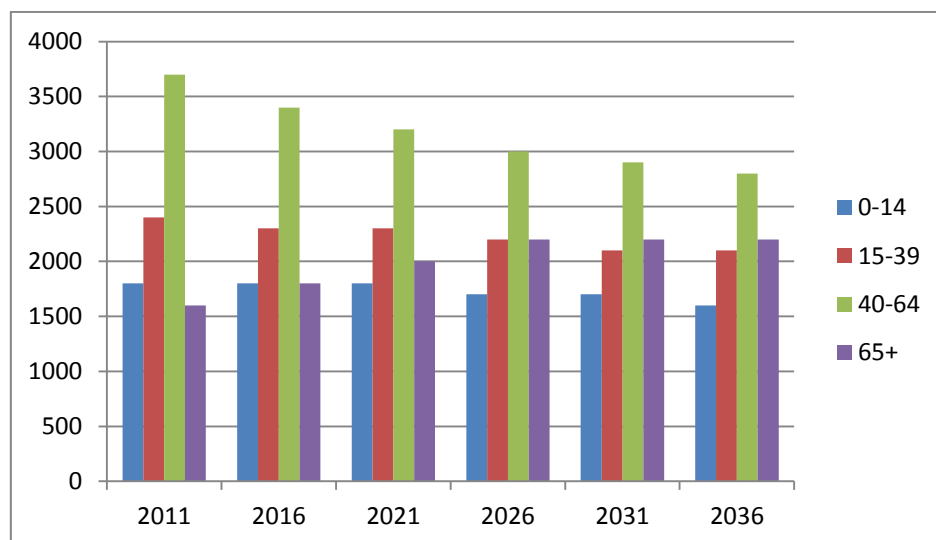


*Source: NSW Division of Local Government*

## Kyogle

Kyogle Council covers an area of 3,589 square kilometres and holds the Toonumbar National Park, The Border Ranges National Park, and twelve state forests. The Richmond River runs through the Kyogle. Cattle grazing, dairy farming and forestry are the primary industries. Kyogle is approximately one hour's drive from Casino and Lismore, and two and a half hours from Brisbane.

**Chart 0-10: Population projections for Kyogle 2011-2036**



*Source: NSW Statistical Local Area Population Projections 2006-2036, NSW Department of Planning, 2010*

The Department of Planning projections show a fall in population overall, but an independent study suggests an increase from approximately 9,500 in 2011 to 15,000 by 2031 rather than a decrease to 8,900 in 2031 (Kyogle Council Local Growth Management Strategy, 2010). Regardless, the proportion of older people is expected to grow as more retirees are attracted to the area. Kyogle's Aboriginal population was 489 representing 5.3% of the population at the 2011 census, compared with 2.5% for New South Wales<sup>13</sup>.

Kyogle Council's Community Strategic Plan 2010 – 2020 has the following vision:

Working together to balance Environment, Lifestyle, and Opportunity

The Key Strategic Priorities are:

1. Governance and community service
2. Roads and infrastructure
3. Village life
4. Economic development
5. Environment and planning
6. Waste and Water

As there was just one workgroup from Kyogle in this workshop, the goal selected for discussion was the third key strategic priority, village life. This goal focuses on social aspects, protection of heritage and environment, and promoting a sense of community. Box 36 provides the objectives in detail. The remaining five goals are not presented here but can be found in the community strategic plan.

Lack of and costs of transport was a major topic of discussion and it was suggested that a survey to investigate transport needs should be undertaken. It was expected that once the NBN arrives, some health services can be provided via the internet. As Kyogle has a large Aboriginal community, more should be done for reconciliation. Kyogle is a small council with very limited resources and discussion was mostly about the lack of services. Specific ideas were:

- A community and cultural centre is needed to bring people together for events
- A mobile health service for dental, diabetes, ears and eyes and other medical services is needed

#### **Box 36: Village Life**

##### **OBJECTIVES:**

- *Promote a strong sense of community.*
- *Coordinate and support safe, accessible and secure services and facilities.*
- *Support social and recreational clubs and organisations throughout the area.*
- *Ensure Local Environmental Plans, Development Control Plans, and strategies are in place to guide the future development of the Council area and enhance village life.*
- *Provide a safe and pleasant atmosphere in Council's parks, gardens and recreation areas and pursue their steady improvement.*
- *Provide for the protection of items of Aboriginal and environmental heritage.*
- *Support, promote and initiate cultural activities within the Kyogle area.*

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2011/quickstat/LGA14550](http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2011/quickstat/LGA14550)

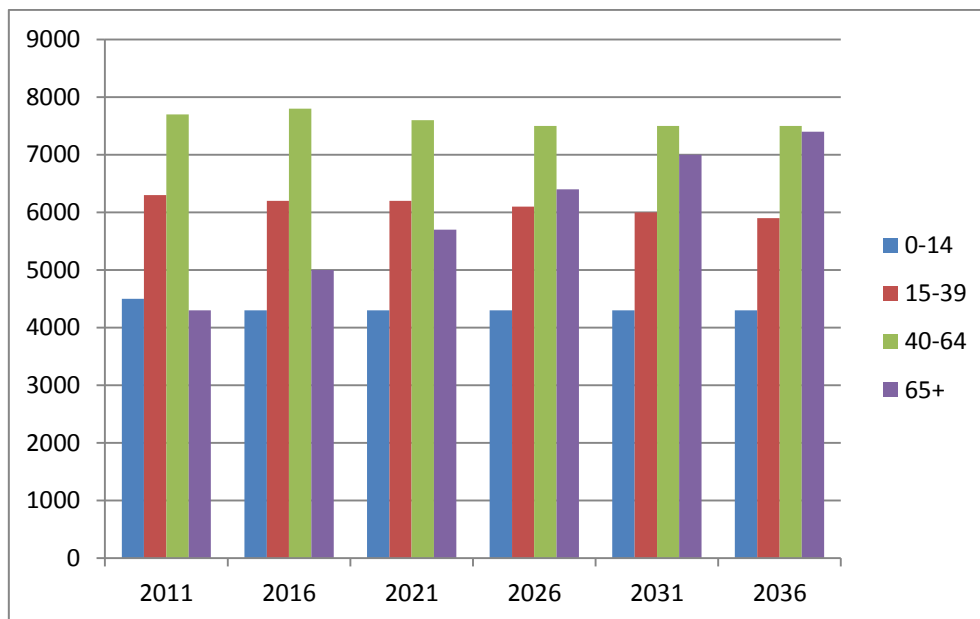
- Lobby the Minister for a local bus service and a train service from Casino to Brisbane

## Richmond Valley

Richmond Valley has a coastal strip and a large hinterland area with state forests, national forests and nature reserves. The Council covers 3,050 square kilometres. The main town is Casino with major communities in Evans Head, Woodburn, Coraki, and Broadwater. Tourism is a major focus for economic development on the coastal strip, while agriculture remains the basis of the economy in the council area. There are plans for more aged care and retirement village developments in the area.

Richmond Valley has a population of approximately 23,000 and the population is increasing by 1.4% per year, which is above the State average of 1.2%<sup>14</sup>. The area has an Aboriginal population of 5.5%. Chart 3-11 shows the older population increasing significantly in the next twenty to twenty five years without a corresponding increase in other age groups.

**Chart 0-11: Population projections for Richmond Valley 2011-2036**



*Source: NSW Statistical Local Area Population Projections 2006-2036, NSW Department of Planning, 2010*

The Richmond Valley Community Strategic Plan 2011-2024 was adopted by Council in May 2011. The vision is:

The development of community and natural attributes of the area to enable a pleasant and sustainable lifestyle

<sup>14</sup> Richmond Valley Community Strategic Plan, 2011

There are seven focus areas of the plan:

1. Environment
2. Local Economy
3. Community and Culture
4. Recreation and Open Space
5. Rural and Urban Development
6. Transport and Infrastructure
7. Governance and Process

The first of the seven is the environment. The long term goals include preservation of the waterways, responding to climate change and environmental protection, including farming practices and tourist activity. This goal was not utilised in the workshop but is shown here in Box 37 for reference.

The long term goals under the heading of local economy included increasing employment opportunities, promoting tourism, and supporting a diversity of local businesses (see Box 38).

The workgroup focused on an active Aboriginal employment strategy and increased local food production for their discussions.

The involvement of Aboriginal elders in any discussions, committees and working parties was seen as key to gaining better cross cultural awareness and understanding. Some of the thoughts were:

- Employ Aboriginal elders in roles that require leadership and cultural education
- Be aware that the older age of Aboriginal people is much lower than non-Aboriginal people and this might impact on employment

### **Box 37: Environment**

#### **1. Long Term Goals:**

- 1.1 *Preservation of Waterways (Clean up and preserve the health of our rivers, Eradicate pests (flora and fauna) from and repair local riparian zones, Protect local wetlands)*
- 1.2 *Respond to Climate Change and Sustainability issues (Develop a strategy to address rising sea levels and other factors, Reduce local carbon and chemical pollution)*
- 1.3 *Environmental Protection (Improve local farming practices, Manage local tourism, Apply sustainability principles to local environmental protection activities, provide effective regulatory control services for environmental, and public health)*

### **Box 38: Local Economy**

#### **2. Long Term Goals:**

- 2.1 *Employment Opportunities (More local employment, A diversity of local employment opportunities, An active Aboriginal Employment Strategy, More young people engaged in local training and employment,)*
- 2.2 *Tourism and Promotion (Increased tourism in Richmond Valley, more vibrant town centres)*
- 2.3 *Business, Industry and Agriculture (More funding for business development, All local shops occupied, Increased availability of industrial land, Council pro-active in local business development, Increased local food production)*

Increased local food production was interpreted within the framework of community gardens and the benefits of these such as increased health and feeding needy families.

Community and culture is the topic of the third goal and includes, community safety, educational opportunities, entertainment, heritage, and social inclusion (see Box 39).

Entertainment and facilities, and social inclusion were chosen for discussion. The key points for entertainment and facilities were to support many of the goals already

established in the plan, such as increasing the focus on younger people and the arts. The goal of developing a new retirement village and nursing home was not supported on the basis that this was not a preference for local older people. The newly established Casino Community and Cultural Centre, a multi-functional facility, was considered sufficient for most events and community activities. Key points were:

- The establishment of a local cinema will need to consider physical access and genre of the films for the local community
- Any arts and cultural activities will need to consider older people more – for films, festivals, and the arts – and to consider easy access

Discussion about establishing a strong sense of social inclusion included the need to fund people to run volunteer programs as well as provide education for Aboriginal reconciliation. Promoting respect and understanding between age groups was also discussed as a means of creating a sense of place and belonging for all people and to build social inclusion.

The fourth goal, recreation and open space focuses on sporting and recreational facilities (see Box 40). Discussion indicated that the existing indoor multi-purpose sports centre is underutilised, but rather than focus on older people, the workgroup felt the focus should be on younger people. Older people have an interest in younger people as well as their own needs. Key points were:

- Council to assist with youth activities, particularly in the school holidays, and get more kids involved
- Provide local holiday recreation activities for children in all areas of Richmond Valley – Coraki has an excellent facility in the Youth and Community Hall but needs trained

### **Box 39: Community and Culture**

#### **3. Long Term Goals:**

- 3.1 Safety and Educational Opportunities (Increased community safety particularly at night, diverse education opportunities offered locally, ability to respond to disasters/emergencies. Minimise disruption and damage to properties as a result of flooding)*
- 3.2 Entertainment and Facilities (Establish a local cinema. Focus on young people; focus on performing and visual art. More local festivals and events, facilities for community use; plan for an ageing community. Develop new retirement village and nursing home. Ensure that Coraki and Casino Hospitals and medical services are retained and improved)*
- 3.3 Heritage (Installation of Aboriginal public art across Council. Increased availability of public information on local cultural and heritage sites, retention of art deco architecture)*
- 3.4 Social Inclusion (A strong sense of place. A strong local focus on reconciliation; increased community and volunteer partnerships with Council; a community that is friendly for old and young alike; diverse cultural opportunities available to the community)*

### **Box 40: Recreation and Open Space**

#### **4. Long Term Goals:**

- 4.1 Sporting Amenities (More sporting facilities and playing fields throughout the area, An indoor multi-purpose sports centre in our local area, consolidate facilities into multi use areas)*
- 4.2 Recreational Facilities (Better promotion of local recreation and healthy living options. Better disabled access to local pools and other recreation facilities, More parks with facilities for young people Local holiday recreation activities for children, Safe, clean parks with plenty of shade,*

- people and an organisation to provide the service
- Coaches should be involved in promoting teams to the Casino Sports Centre with help from Council and local media
- Other cultural activities where older people can volunteer and also get interaction with young people (who can teach 'oldies' how to use new phones, etc.)

The fifth goal, rural and urban development, focuses on land use planning and development processes (see Box 41).

Housing development was discussed in terms of having a mix of housing types and being more accessible and designed for all ages, and also to be affordable. Ensuring developer contributions were sufficient to provide all essential services in new developments was also raised.

The sixth goal, transport and infrastructure, focuses on maintaining and improving road and rail links and services, particularly during floods, public transport, communications technology, and upkeep and access of the public domain and buildings. This goal was not used in the workshop but a brief outline of the objectives is shown in Box 42 for reference.

The seventh goal, governance and process includes diversifying funding sources to prevent rate rises where possible, establishing a business development unit, maintaining strong community engagement, keeping the community informed, and establishing effective processes for consulting with the Aboriginal community. This goal was not included in the workshop discussions, but a brief overview of the goal is provided in Box 43 for reference.

#### **Box 41: Rural & Urban Development**

##### **5. Long Term Goals:**

*5.1 Land Use Planning (Ensure urban development is balanced and sustainable, Release and rezone land for urban development, development controls to retain country atmosphere, Ensure high rise development does not occur, Encourage more housing development)*

*5.2 Development Processes (Establish simpler, easier processes for development applications, Ensure local services and infrastructure are adequate)*

#### **Box 42: Transport and Infrastructure**

##### **6. Long Term Goals:**

- 6.1 Road (well maintained and improved, cross-council co-ordination for better road access during floods)*
- 6.2 Rail (return of local rail services where economical)*
- 6.3 Public Needs (Better local public transport, improve local IT infrastructure for broadband)*
- 6.4 Facilities (Improved maintenance of town entrances, Improved disabled access, maintain and operate local airfields, Build more clean and accessible public toilets)*
- 6.5 Maintain, improve and plan for appropriate public infrastructure*

#### **Box 43: Governance and Process**

##### **7. Long Term Goals:**

- 7.1 Revenue and Funding (Council is funded from a variety of revenue streams,)*
- 7.2 Communication (Establish local business development unit, Conduct community engagement, Community information is distributed effectively, establish effective processes for indigenous consultation,)*
- 7.3 Civic Leadership (Council will provide effective leadership through policy formulation)*
- 7.4 Statutory Compliance (Council is required to comply with legislation and has to manage the associated risks)*



### *Summary*

Transport and health services or lack thereof was a common theme throughout workshop discussions. While the aim of the workshop was to focus on an ageing population, older members of the community also showed concern for younger people and their needs for recreation, sport and school holiday activities. The needs of children and younger people are perhaps an aspect of ageing that is not often considered, but is certainly a consideration for grandparents and for grandparent carers.

## **3.4 Putting it into action**

This exercise was designed to be a review and summary exercise so that participants could reflect on what they had learned and how they could put it into action. The main targets for this exercise were council staff, but community service providers and community members were also able to identify an action they could undertake.

The most often mentioned action from the workshops was taking action to better communicate and promote the existing services within the community. This was followed by investigating the needs of older people aside from care services, and improving cross communication between agencies. Although transport and tourism were prominent in discussions related to the strategic goals, these were not evident to the same degree in the actions people proposed to take.

Not all individual actions are reported here. Absent are comments rather than actions, and commitments to help friends and neighbours more often. Those that are included here are reported as they were written in the worksheets.

The most relevant commitments are categorised into the following groups:

- Transport
- Public Domain
- Housing and Accommodation
- Provision and Promotion of Services
- Communication and Information Sharing
- Health and Safety
- Sharing learning from the workshop
- Comments about planning or by planners
- Tourism
- Internet and Communications Technology
- Other

## **Transport**

Transport actions fell into two categories, those relating to acquiring improved services, mostly by bus, and those relating to community transport. Lobbying for funds was a regular a feature. Commitments related to transport were:

- Look at implementing a shuttle bus for shopping days and/or activity days to help get an idea of who could need help.

- Look at private bus and transport services we can work with
- Promote the community bus service to all
- Get more volunteers to help with transport
- Contact local member about transport for older people and advocate for a bus
- Write a bus application/submission
- Use statistical information to lobby for more funding for transport. Write a tender for funds
- Keep ideas/forefront – work with funding bodies.
- Look at what a free loop bus would look like here in town.
- Active Travel – walking and cycling to recreation and/or chores. Think laterally about ways to engage older residents to leave the car at home, particularly for short trips – 2-3 km. Develop strategies to implement these ideas over the next 6 months
- Gather ideas on transport issues and advocate on their ideas.
- Implementing a shuttle bus for shopping days and/or activity days to help get an idea of who could need help
- Implement a survey on transport needs in our council area
- Write a submission on the Transport Master Plan - write to the Minister for Transport - we need more community transport too - talk to Linda Wirth
- Look at opportunities to expand sustainable transport connection to service the community

## Public Domain

Built environment actions covered many of the concerns raised in the picture analysis exercise. Accessibility of the public domain and facilities featured strongly. Commitments related to the public domain were:

- Continue to speak to managers of some of the ideas brought up on the workshop. eg: More seating required on local roads near shops and in the parks and sporting grounds.
- If I see the footpath or anything damaged that belongs to Council, I will report to Council.
- Be on the lookout for traps of access in the community. Have council check the kerbs in the town centre and elsewhere because they are too steep and scooters scrape their bottoms
- Encourage more older people to use the Eastwood Rest Centre - contact welfare organisations to bring groups to the Centre
- Include "access" issues in program design, include: shade, seating, access to toilets (when developing environmental ed. programs).
- Take access to buildings more vigorously to ensure compliances with disability standards. Enforce disability standards within Council buildings.
- Influence greater fund allocation for maintenance of existing footpaths to eliminate hazards and trip point rather than all funding to new footpaths which currently builds more unsustainable assets. Suggest that council set up an access committee once more
- Encourage the use of the shopping centre as a social hub for older people. Investigate opportunities to reduce social isolation e.g. walking groups (bonus benefit – Health).

- Designing new cultural infrastructure to be accessible for older people
- Can we have a ramp into the local swimming pool for easy access for elderly and disabled (young and old)?
- Escalate the need for a crossing opposite the Admin Centre.
- Encourage the Chamber of Commerce to raise awareness amongst their members about making their premises accessible to older people and the opportunities the ageing population presents to business if they can cater for it appropriately.
- civic precinct to give flexible space for public especially the elderly, but also for all
- Ensure that ideas for walkways at aged units are realised - see that council considers it
- Lobby for a walking track around Rotary Place and the Hospital

## Housing and Accommodation

Housing and accommodation was raised in almost all workshops either as specialised housing in retirement villages and hostels, or in terms of more choice in housing type and encouraging house designs that suit people across their lifespan.

- Look at ways to retrofit homes before people have a fall
- Diverse land sizes for diverse population
- Promote universal housing policy controls - Development Control Plan - Council Resolution; Promote planning agreements requiring footpath accessibility for manufactured home estates.
- Would like to see micro-villages (for aged from 50 years old) within the community to include doctors, caterers, carers, transport for the resident group).
- Council to make Forster like a "Florida" type area, with more upmarket shops and hospitality industry to make up for the lack of other industry, more local jobs, caters to the elderly but also considers youth and families in the mix.
- Promote and implement more adaptable and Livable Housing.
- Ageing in place - need to look at development plans
- Source a copy of the liveable housing guidelines.
- Consider these issues in the next Development Control Plans, look at my village from today's perspective and suggest we consider this topic for the village plan
- Write to the Minister for Housing about the difficulties of rental accommodation for single older people
- Advocate for better housing and other facilities.
- Encourage more 'long-term' design of dwellings to incorporate any future changes to occupants and their physical abilities.
- Build more units in the town that people could rent and build more hostel accommodation

## Provision of Services

Developing events and activities fell into two categories – one for older people specifically, and others that encouraged intergenerational interaction. Developing programs and activities to reduce social isolation were a major feature.

- Supply supportive information related to clients' needs.

- Re-think how the services can utilise the council services and businesses more for future outings and programs.
- Outreach Services Librarian to attend networking meeting – Community Aid. Discuss Seniors Services with Library Management Team. Promote Library events to Seniors Agencies and Newsletter list.
- Develop joint projects for a 12 month calendar of events that include activities for people 50+ that are flexible in time and include partnerships.
- Investigate opportunities to reduce social isolation e.g. walking groups (bonus benefit – Health).
- I will concentrate on planning events/functions/activities that will bring together diverse community groups, eg. youth and seniors to promote interaction and engagement.
- Continue to refer clients for services to maintain their independence to live at home.
- Active living while getting older is the focus rather than aged care for my activities.
- Publicise opportunities for women to volunteer at the Rest Centre Tea Room
- Visit the library to experience the set up so I can inform clients and patients of their services
- Transport Training - how to use trains, buses, taxis, walking, cycling: organise an in-service by ACAT at U3A
- Run my workshops again - "Creating the World we Want to Get Old In"
- Support a music group for older people – older musicians getting together. Research arts and culture programs for older people.

## Promotion of Services

Promotion of existing services was a popular target in all workshops and particularly with community members who work for services voluntarily. The actions largely related to distribution of brochures and promotional material in more places more often.

- Update brochures and talk to local media
- Easy to follow and understand brochures, signage, stickers, distributed to all households at regular intervals, eg every three months.
- To inform older people of the service provided by waste management of the wheel-in wheel-out service to help older people with their garbage bins for a small fee.
- Send brochures on HACC services to clients.
- Deliver promotional material to community aid, library, and seniors centres.
- Extend publicity of CWA and the Tea Rooms and the benefits to older people - use brochures and posters and speaking to people
- Continue to provide information to GPs and Nurses regarding services and general information on ageing and community issues.
- Promote our service locally.
- Consider producing separate "aged" brochure.
- With the monthly mail out and placing an ad in the local paper, I would like to add a flyer to make people aware and perhaps to "Dob-a-Senior-in-your Street in" and gently make the senior aware of activities that they may or may not know about

- Immediate strategy: Distribute the community Information Directory more widely – eg Doctors' surgeries.
- Promote the Men's Shed with brochures
- As part of standard service provision ensure older persons are informed of when and how to contact their local council
- Utilise Council libraries for distributing information

## Communication and information sharing

This topic was a major theme across all workshops: services and government departments communicating and sharing information more effectively. While most councils support a local interagency, it appears that these have either lapsed or are poorly attended. However, they were recognised as an effective means of keeping abreast of activities of the local services and to help reduce duplication. Communicating with client groups and older people are also reported here.

- Educate the community. Highlight statistics when speaking to groups. Advocate on behalf of services and clients to increase funding.
- Ask for carers and clients to attend the Ageing & Disability meeting for their input. Send email to appropriate person to implement the above.
- Arrange a forum for feedback from clients on a regular basis. Make sure the information creates actions
- Keep networking with Council in ensuring that we offer more lifestyle and leisure activities/programmes for our clients.
- Sharing of information. Agencies – need to have more of a co-ordinated approach. Who is providing what services, what are the gaps
- Council customer service staff to have better understanding of funded services that are on offer for the aged when people make enquiries
- Ensure to contact Council to provide information and obtain information re: services in the council area.
- I am going to probably have a bit more understanding of some phone calls from people who tell me "I am 87" and have this problem and appreciate the "active members" of our population who leave many young people behind with their attitude to life
- Get more research on aged residents from the field, rather than reports or the net/websites. Make contact with local aged groups and arrange a visit.
- Talk to the community to ask what they would like to see – Survey for Over 50's, Council Meetings. Advocate.
- Broaden communication channels between agencies and community
- Improve council communication and interagency communications to disseminate information
- Feedback to the local vision impaired support group from today – including passing on some contacts from today
- Organise an interagency meeting to exchange knowledge and ideas with other programs, NGOs and Departments
- Develop specific strategies for contacting, consulting, informing, communicating and collaborating with older people.

- Seek information on services already available in Council area (update our information) – for sharing with the clients we see in this area – particularly around access and services
- Organise talks to the local Adult Day Centre Groups (Social) on recycling.
- Follow up with an invitation to the respective “older living” groups to be a guest on ‘B2B’ Aboriginal Community Radio program at Mittagong to promote social inclusion and connectedness
- Include Senior’s Officer more actively in plans for Plaza activities and consult with seniors to ensure activities are service friendly and/or designed, designated seniors activities

## Health and Safety

Road safety, avoiding falls and provision of exercise equipment are the key actions listed:

- Public exercise equipment is needed - Explore options for outdoor multipurpose exercise equipment - Investigate potential – seek information and research – look at existing facilities (Neville Web, Hyde Park) – explore possible location for consultations and work collaboratively with colleagues
- After talking to people in my group I was made aware of a project that involved seniors which may be suitable for my work with older drivers. I will now try to include seniors into the Road Safety Officer program
- Advocate on behalf of the aged regarding access and safety.
- To improve and educate the public on accessibility and what they can do to improve safety on shared cycle ways
- Report to The Senior Falls & Access Committee on the importance of intergenerational involvement.
- Continue to advocate for a hydraulic weight lifting facility for aged people to help build their core body strength
- Carry out a safety audit of Council’s footpaths, ramps, parking areas

## Sharing learning from the workshop

Several participants noted that key people from their council were not present at the workshop and that the information they had gained was pertinent to the work of their colleagues. Community volunteers also committed to providing feedback to their various organisations.

- Share what I learned today with my team and discuss ideas.
- I will listen and take on board and where possible implement recommendations from today’s workshop.
- The first thing I will do is write a summary report of this workshop and share it with my colleagues at the next staff meeting
- Share information from the issues raised in this workshop with the leadership team
- Bring these ideas up at the Welfare Committee - put forward to form an access committee.



- To raise the awareness of my colleagues at work about the issues that was discussed today.
- Bring the ideas brought up today when making decisions.
- Educate customer service centre on aged services available.
- Encourage all areas of Council to consider and think about older people and issues, concerns, ideas that need to be discussed and planned for before proceeding.
- Report back to manager about these ideas.
- Promote and discuss with colleagues at work re: this workshop and start conversation. Bring awareness.
- Continue to speak to managers of some of the ideas brought up on the workshop. eg: More seating required on local roads near shops and in the parks and sporting grounds.
- Report back to Access Committee and raise the issues of the day
- Discuss the ideas and goals we have discussed today with my fellow members, CWA. Come up with things we can do to help older people socialise, exercise and participate in goals for the future. Be kind to town planners!!

### Comments about planning or by planners

Most of the actions reported here are related to development applications, development control plans, strategic plans and ageing strategies. Thinking about older people when making decisions also features in the listing.

- Read the Town Plan and make sure it is discussed at council meetings
- Include my ideas on access in Council's DCP
- Consider these issues in the next Development Control Plans, look at my village from today's perspective and suggest we consider this topic for the village plan
- We are currently reviewing our 2012/13 operational plan. More significantly Council will be reviewing its 20 year community strategic plan with the newly elected Council in 2012/13 and ensure this issue is well reflected, particularly as it's a 20 year plan and consideration of our demographic. I can review that to see where our gaps maybe in catering for our ageing population.
- Be aware of needs of the elderly and disabled in the assessment of DA's. Notwithstanding, assessment requirements are governed by statutory processes
- I do not believe that we should be looking at the provision of facilities as a singular task, but improving on the public space with better access, lighting, accessible playgrounds, picnic shelters etc. everyone benefits. We need to integrate these services "better". It was interesting hearing comments back on the public seating, eg. needing arm rests etc. – which is a small thing and easily fixed.
- Promote universal housing policy controls - Development Control Plan - Council Resolution; Promote planning agreements requiring footpath accessibility for manufactured home estates.
- Plan for seating, toilets, security in my development. Think more about the diversity of needs within the "aged residents" group
- Incorporate older community into my DA Program. Take into consideration older people when designating new access paths under disability access program for Council's open spaces.

- Consider the elderly when doing design for Row Street Upgrade
- Think about strategies to encourage Council staff to change their practices/thinking to be more realistic regarding the increasing proportion/numbers of old people and plan for the people better. Encourage my unit to take more responsibility to think about and include more older people in strategies and activities.
- The first thing I will do is write a summary report of this workshop and share it with my colleagues at the next staff meeting. Perhaps they will have something to say, too, to add to what has already been discussed. Whatever their feedback is, I will relay this to the Council Worker on Aged and Disability. I would like to reach out to the elderly and those living with a disability on the grassroots level to inform them of services available to them and to find out what help they need from Council and other agencies. Wishful thinking? Perhaps.....
- Being on the frontline of Council I can gather information or feedback on issues for the older population and report it to the relevant Department.
- In reviewing, planning project, activities, ask, "how is this inclusive of older people's needs?"
- Currently working on strategic plan for the library - include longer term strategies for growing the library as a place for people to go/contact to find out about the range of services available
- Encourage council with their planning for the main street upgrade
- Ageing strategy – ensure outcomes are fed into this. Ensure Council is aware of changing demographics
- As the coordinator of Council's building surveying (certification) team I can research the link between public and commercial buildings and the public domain and improve access to buildings and associated facilities, and coach my staff to improve the standard of access to building from the public domain.
- In my design work, understand the importance for older people to have access to the community and therefore design projects that will enhance this opportunity.
- Encourage other people in my team to look at the need to provide for older people in their design work

## Tourism

As mentioned earlier, tourism was an important topic of discussion but was perhaps too difficult for individuals to tackle.

- Look at Grey Nomad marketing or activity plan
- Have a sign as you come into town that in effect says we welcome "Grey Nomads" and that older citizens are respected.

## Internet and Communications Technology

Country areas are keen for the arrival of the National Broadband Network with the hope that some medical services can be provided from major centres to local centres via the Internet. They also recognise that overcoming the digital divide is important if rural areas are to keep up with technological advances, and use internet communication to stay in touch with family members.

- Look at ways of getting the National Broadband Network sooner and utilising it to best advantage locally
- I will look into ways to provide free internet training for older people
- Apply for funding to do a needs analysis for IT hardware and software and training to use computers for residents and the local aged hostel

### Other commitments

- Investigate developing Age Friendly Environment Awareness training for Councillors
- Actively promote the town to highlight the positives of living in a smaller community; work to promote greater employment opportunities, which in turn will assist with providing resources to the elderly community
- COTA needs to be more proactive in getting the right people to these workshops. Identify the typical roles within Councils that have influence over the planning and delivery of Council services that impact on the aged, ie. Library co-ordinators, recreation planners, strategic planners, etc.). When identifying a person within Council of sufficient influence who will support COTA's work and who will compel these people to attend future workshops. Otherwise, you are leaving too much to chance.
- Comments about councils owning and operating different forms of accommodation for older people with the expectation that council will make a profit which can be used to improve infrastructure etc.

### Summary

This exercise received a good response and most participants engaged with enthusiasm. Whether participants follow through with their commitment is not the main point of the activity. Rather, the exercise was designed to review the key points of the day, consolidate their increased awareness of older Australians, and to empower participants to take action where they can.

### 3.5 Follow up Survey

Each council contact person was sent a link to an online survey using Survey Monkey and asked to distribute the link to workshop participants. While the main intention of the survey was to ascertain the impact of the workshop on council staff, many service providers and individuals also completed the survey.

The survey was open throughout August and September 2012. Opportunity to provide narrative responses formed the major part of the questionnaire. The questions were open ended and respondents were not forced to answer all questions. Although the response rate is low (67), this could be due to difficulties with emailed links being assessed as junk mail by Internet Service Providers (ISPs). However, the responses gathered provide some insights into the type of outcomes resulting from the workshop.

In summary, two thirds of respondents now think more about an ageing population in their day to day work (66.7%), and the same number carried out the commitment they made at the end of the day. Actions taken as a result of the workshop included:

- Discussing the issues in the workplace and with friends and volunteer groups
- Becoming more aware of the issues
- Focusing on improving information about services available
- Ways to include older people in planning processes and delivery programs

Actions intended in the future were similar to those above or were intended to build on work already undertaken:

- Using enhanced awareness of the issues to play an advocacy role
- Updating or developing policies that impact on or relate to older people
- Reviewing and developing social service and information provision

Pedestrian access, footpaths, transport and access to buildings and the public domain featured strongly in actions respondents felt they were unable to make but wanted to. Housing and accommodation was also raised in response to this question, as well as improvements to social services.

Respondents were given an opportunity to make any final comments and these fell into two categories: comments about the issues already raised, and comments about the workshop itself, which were mostly positive and encouraging.

The specific questionnaire responses have been themed and are reported as follows.

#### **Q. As a result of the workshop, do you think about an ageing population more often in your day to day work?**

|      |    |       |
|------|----|-------|
| Yes  | 44 | 66.7% |
| No   | 1  | 1.5%  |
| Same | 21 | 31.8% |

#### **Comments:**

- As I am in the ageing population I often wonder what the future will be.

- Impressed on other staff and Managers the need to bring forward writing a new Council Strategy for Older People
- Support the population with activities to increase their healthy living and ageing through my project however, I do feel that I understand more of the issues the ageing population is facing.
- I provide assistance whenever possible
- More aware of the ability of individual's to contribute.
- I am involved with my aged Mother so yes.
- Yes. Projects that have the needs of older people need to consider many issues that came out at the workshop.
- I keep thinking of what else I can do for them, to make their life more enjoyable and meaningful.
- As I am in that age bracket it is a subject that comes up often amongst the people I mix with on various occasions.
- Trying to be more aware of needs of the elderly population, making contact, taking time to talk to the lonely and housebound.
- We have a huge ageing population. How will hospitals and age care facilities cope? People over 65 should start making their home liveable for the older age i.e. ramps, shower, toilets hand rails, low maintenance yards etc.
- I now feel a sense of frustration because I have been shown that Councils and Governments are aware of what should be done - but how can these works be funded!!
- Live with it every day
- Interesting
- Work in the field of ageing (x6)

## **Q. What actions have you taken as a result of the workshop?**

### **Discussed with others, reported back**

- Asked friends what problems do they encounter in daily 'getting out and about'.
- Talk to Councillors
- Talk to Councillors
- Discussed with planning manager
- Discussed issues that were raised with colleagues and other service providers in the area
- advised others on the impacts
- Dissemination of information to staff in team
- Spoken to the residents in our independent living units for ideas
- Coaching my staff on access considerations
- Reported to the members of the Bowral Hospital Auxiliary about what we did at the workshop
- Been talking to people about the issues.

### **Awareness of issues increased**

- The workshop enlightened me to Age facilities, safety standards and the needs of Seniors in the community
- How it translates to our business.

- More aware of the dangers of crossing roads, and driving my car, making sure I cross at designated areas, paying more attention in parking my car, when and where, trying to shop outside school times i.e. between 9:30 and 4 pm.
- Become more aware of the needs of our ageing population.
- Been more aware that the age of applicants for positions is not relevant
- I am more aware of the issues older people deal with
- More awareness about the aged in town.
- Ensure infrastructure staff consider suitability of older people.
- Taken note of many things relevant to ageing population
- Consideration of the elderly environmental point of view - streetscape, visibility, seating etc.

### **Actions related to information**

- Library has drafted a local Seniors Service Directory
- started working on a Seniors information brochure
- Organise tutorials for them that will keep them up to date with technology and online communication, such as Skype, Facebook, etc.
- Informed our local support group of the workshop and provided some relevant contacts for the group.
- Organised updated info on all the community services in our geographic area.
- Taken some of the links to further information and put together a resource list for my co-workers.
- Gathering information on all support services available and keeping a file.
- Circulated among friends the Travel Training Brochures etc.

### **Actions related to planning**

- Beginning research into a council Ageing Policy
- Commenced work on an Ageing Strategy
- Take further action to initiate work on Strategic Plan
- More emphasis on planning for an ageing population in the redevelopment of our hall as a performance centre.
- Consideration of disabled in planning and construction of bus stops, seats, shelters and kerb ramps
- Assessing proposals more closely with a view to determining if anything can change to accommodate seniors and people with a disability
- Printed the Livable Housing Design Guidelines
- More emphasis on getting access to buildings right
- More consideration of local environment based on information received at workshop.
- Bus Stop audit
- Sourced information on the types of ageing housing facilities in our local area

### **Other Actions taken**

- Installed hand rails next to steps and in the toilet. Meeting my neighbours and offering help or support if and when needed. Making a phone call to friends I haven't seen for 2 weeks
- A ramp has already been installed at Target



- Push for better wages for home care staff, greater numbers in the industry, allowing more aged persons to live in their own homes and communities
- Promoted the development of a community bus
- Continue to do what I always do - keep asking for access to be improved everywhere - giving Council a hard time
- The workshop helped me to secure help for myself and my Mother.
- I have followed up on my commitment to promote the Mens Shed
- Actions undertaken as per commitment at workshop
- Wasted my breath
- None or nil (x4)
- All my work involves the aged
- Involved in aging population daily
- same as before

**Q. What actions do you plan to take in the future as a result of the workshop?**

**Advocacy Actions**

- Become more of a VOICE to the local council and other government outlets (i.e. people friendly awareness) instead of huge developers taking over.
- As secretary of my local senior citizens club I invited members from all other senior clubs in our shire to attend a gathering in our centre. 74 attended. Senior clubs membership has declined over the past 10 years and one now very low in member numbers. Why is this so? I promote Seniors Clubs at every opportunity.
- Continue on the Council Welfare Committee
- Support the Bus project - listen to the needs and wants of our Seniors and try to provide options via the Library Service
- continue to highlight issues for our aged community
- Still keep nagging Council. I want to fix the problems.

**Actions related to Planning**

- Complete Ageing Strategy
- improve pedestrian walking facilities
- Consider this aspect when we are establishing projects.
- Continue to consider (2) in future planning and construction
- Strategic planning currently underway will have increased emphasis on needs of the aging
- Designing ageing housing facilities with a better understanding of the day to day issues that elderly people face.
- Make suggestions that may result in a more proactive approach to development
- Include strategies in long term plan especially related to recreational and lifelong learning activities in the library.
- Be aware of older people and including them in planning, through ease of access, where possible.
- Continue the partnership with Ryde Council to support the project plan
- Consider facilities for aged, including open space needs
- Greater focus on access to and within buildings.
- Ensure appropriate consideration of issues discussed when undertaking projects
- I will be incorporating in my design plans measures that will assist the older people

- Continued monitoring of approvals in relation to the aged and access
- Keeping this as a priority in planning capital works and events
- Encourage all areas/sections of council to consider the needs of older people in planning, projects and policies.
- Encourage Council to look at its works program and how it can improve on what it already does

#### **Actions related to social services and information**

- Organise info sessions on health issues for seniors.
- I have already utilised some of the organisations represented on the day.
- Working more closely with Community Services staff, further review of library collections
- Ensure a range of activities and social engagements are available in the aged care community
- Encourage local service providers to work together to address some of the issues raised. Develop programs that target a range of residents rather than only a few
- Ensure our information about aged services is up to date
- try to have more housing- care transport etc.
- Keep more up-to-date.

#### **Other actions**

- I have put myself forward as a candidate in the Council elections
- Try to make payment for our service easier
- Involve representation of older persons in survey of infrastructure suitability
- Have an agenda item at residents meetings for suggestions
- Safety. Welcoming people to Gilgandra and letting them know that we care about our citizens. Making an effort to make access easier - making people generally more aware about people who need a hand. We have great facilities here.
- Keep looking for answers and try to find out more about services available. Look into shopping by phone through supermarkets for people with disability, to have affordable access to transport.
- Think more about more experiences members of the community
- Plan more for my retirement

#### **Q. What actions or changes do you want to make but are unable?**

**None, nil, not an issue (x10)**

#### **Pedestrian, transport and access issues**

- Try to lobby for more pedestrian crossings, and public toilets (clean ones) to be incorporated into large supermarkets.
- Would like to see upgrade of access for pedestrians with or without walking aids to crossings at Bundanoon Railway Crossings. Tallong Railways Stn. is a problem when getting on/off trains
- Give priority to pedestrians in main streets - cannot do so because main streets are State/National highways
- I can't mend the footpaths and gutters that people trip over
- Additional footpaths, but \$ is an issue
- Making access issues a higher importance (some of those pictures were a real eye opener)

- One of the issues is transport - getting more difficult - high step from platform to train, buses not driving in parallel to the kerb.
- Create simple improved access to information on services to aged. Hold talks/events for aged clientele with transport provided
- Encourage management to have a better understanding of the DDA and the impact on the planning process at all levels.
- More upgrading of public transport facilities for disabled access, but limited by available funding

### **Social services issues**

- I would like our local council to be more helpful to senior clubs. More exercise groups for aged - at low cost, speakers on maintaining good health and nutrition and managing a budget on the pension and eating fresh good food.
- I would like to see 'wellness' centres and easier access to health care available locally. The Library Service provides many resources to health care and provides facilities for Tai Chi sessions, Scrabble mornings and Mah-jong afternoons are a good start to social inclusion for Seniors which is always good for health.
- Much easier payment system for clients with limited mobility
- Provide more Internet classes for seniors but can't due to lack of qualified volunteer tutors.
- Would like to be able to influence more suitable accommodation in LGA

### **Housing and accommodation**

- Housing
- More suitable accommodation in the future.
- At this point I would like to be able to determine the % of older persons who stay alone in their own house by choice, and their preferred choice of housing if they had to move, to better predict future housing needs.

### **Attitudinal issues**

- Always a challenge to change culture in an organisation so that needs of ageing population are considered at every step
- Difficulty in engaging all areas of council to see that the issues of older people need to be considered in all areas of work
- Get "aged care" out of the ghetto mentality of the various bureaucrats
- Developers need to include in their designs measures that will assist older people
- Have all levels of Council involved in planning, not have planning see community services as the 'soft' section but be involved in planning and infrastructure

### **Not enough funding**

- Cannot do more work in addition to my existing workload - requires additional resources
- Limited funding

### **Other**

- Should I be voted a position on Council then I will be better positioned to promote matters to benefit the seniors.

### **Q. Did you carry out the commitment you made at the end of the day?**

|                     |    |       |
|---------------------|----|-------|
| Yes                 | 37 | 66.1% |
| No                  | 5  | 8.9%  |
| Partially           | 14 | 25%   |
| Skipped question 11 |    |       |

### Comments

- I have to ask why membership is so low in seniors clubs - when I find out the answer I will take action to remedy this. There are lots of old lonely people out there!
- There is no power in the power of one. Nearly 10 years I have complained to this council about access to certain building but nothing has been done.
- This interesting workshop was shortened / rushed because of another commitment. The "making of commitments" was not part of the shortened program.
- My concerns were for more aged care and upgrade of the footpaths of my own street. Council are building a retirement village which will not meet the needs of the aged in the district. Footpaths still not upgraded.
- Community Information Directories were distributed to all local Doctor Surgeries and medical centres. We are hoping that people who may be socially isolated will find this tool with access to local services useful. A number of medical centres have called for more copies.
- My commitment was to visit some housing for ageing people but time has not yet allowed this
- Continued with nagging - that was my commitment.
- I would need to be reminded what that commitment was!!
- General Manager's secretary rang me and asked to explain about my idea about a sign that welcomes visitors to Gilgandra. They are working on it. I am very pleased about that. I am more aware of the aged and do what I can - I have helped one lady in particular.
- Involved in aging population daily
- To update our community services info.
- The day was a help to me.
- Trying hard!

### Q. Any other comments?

#### About the issues

- Group Manager has recently called key staff from the whole group to emphasise the need for everyone to consider older people for all projects initiated by Community Life Group and Other Groups. I believe this realisation came partly as a flow on from the Workshop
- Assumption by COTA that Ryde will have a financially, well-resourced ageing population. Assumption population will be healthy to volunteer in environment sector, wouldn't this be better done by younger school leavers or those on the dole?

- I realise some older persons can be rather reluctant to use public transport and community resources - perhaps better services and accessibility may be the answer - country areas seem to be behind in this. However we do love to live in Wingecarribee!!
- Community transport is very good service but not all pensioners can stretch their pension to cover cost of a trip to seniors club. Provide free transport to and from seniors clubs.
- Although the council building is due to be pulled down, they could still do something about the lighting at night for safety now. Have a good working relationship with the customer service person. Just got to get public transport right for older people and people with prams.
- Looking forward to reports and interested to see information from other councils.

### **About the workshop itself**

- Many thanks for arranging these workshops and for interesting speakers, judging by the numbers attending same, it proves a point.
- It was a really worthwhile day - Thank you
- A good seminar with a good balance of group participation and information
- enjoyed the workshop very much thank you
- Thank you for a wonderful workshop and well done
- I couldn't stop talking about the workshop. I thought it was an interesting and informative day. It was good to have people stand up and give their opinions and ideas - it was fantastic. Even my husband enjoyed it and he doesn't usually like these sorts of things. It opened up areas I don't usually think of - very enlightening. I feel that Council is moving forward on the issues - they immediately installed a ramp at Target.
- It was an important day of information leading to increased awareness
- Good workshop - made people who don't regularly deal with the elderly stop and think
- Worthwhile workshop
- Very well presented and informative
- That was a wonderful workshop. Any follow-up?
- It was a very encouraging day. The local support group were incredibly responsive to and appreciative of the event. It acknowledged the community.
- It was a very worthwhile day
- It was a very well organised, very useful workshop.
- Enjoyed the workshop
- Although the workshop was interesting it could have been more targeted to certain professionals.
- Workshop should have addressed which items to prioritise - I know there are a lot of things to do and are wrong, but I want to know which items have the biggest impact and as such should be prioritised

### **Survey conclusions**

Although the intended focus of the survey was to ascertain the impact of the workshop on council staff, the survey responses revealed that community service providers and community members also benefited from the workshop. At the workshops it was expected that service providers and older community members would have insights into issues of ageing and share these with council staff during their discussions. However, the

survey, and the evaluation forms both indicate that service providers and community members also increased their understanding of the issues and found ways in which they could contribute to making improvements.

Overall, the workshops appear to have achieved their aim in raising awareness of the issues of an ageing population as well as facilitating council staff, service providers and community members to achieve simple and cost effective outcomes, and in identifying issues for further attention and action.



## Summary and Conclusions

### Summary

Overall the workshops achieved the aim of raising awareness of the needs of an ageing population in relation to the built environment. While the workshops were mainly targeted towards council staff, community service providers and community members also benefited from the awareness raising exercises. Community service providers were able to fine tune their awareness of how older people interact with the built environment, and older community members are now thinking more about their future needs and those of their friends, family and neighbours.

The archetypal older person exercise clearly highlighted the lack of homogeneity in the section of the population labelled as 'older' 'aged' or 'senior'. This is an important step in planning for an ageing population as a 'one-size-fits-all' approach will not counter the myriad of issues facing an ageing population. This means, for example, that zoning for an ever-growing number of retirement villages or manufactured home sites, is not going to suit the accommodation needs of everyone over the age of 55 years. While some older people will continue to choose such accommodation, if they can afford the costs and if the contract arrangements suit them, others will want to stay in their local neighbourhood if not their existing home.

The picture analysis exercise was probably the most awareness raising part of the workshop. This exercise alone raised much discussion about the day to day activities of older people, such as getting to the shops and medical appointments, and being able to socialise. The design details of the built environment were discussed in terms of what worked and what did not work for older people. It was also recognised that design elements which suit older people also suit people of all ages, including parents with prams and people with trolleys and mobility devices. Consequently, it did not have to be 'special' or separate design – just good design.

Community service providers and community members were very engaged with this exercise and several commented at the end of the exercise that they could have spent more time talking about the pictures. Some council staff, however, expressed some frustration with this exercise as they were aware of the issues but felt they were unable to resolve them due to lack of funding.

The third exercise based on the community strategic plan was a more difficult exercise for some participants, particularly community members who were not familiar with the local government planning processes. This exercise also required a higher level of conceptual thinking than the previous two exercises. While the first two exercises generally allowed service providers and community members to explain their issues, this exercise highlighted some of the difficulties in implementing and funding ideas. In some instances this provided an opportunity for groups to have useful discussions about priorities.

The community strategic plans varied considerably in terms of style, content, visions and goals. One of the most consistent themes emerging from all workshops was the need for

council staff to better understand the roles of colleagues from other departments and to facilitate better communication between council and the community.

Being able to get out and about was also a key theme and was reflected in other themes such as health, recreation, leisure, education and the economy. Consequently, transport and transport infrastructure such as footpaths, bus stops and seating featured strongly in discussions. Tourism was a major topic in rural areas as much of their economy depends upon travellers. Through discussion there was a realisation that their communities should cater better for older travellers and holiday makers as this is a growing segment of the tourism market. Linked to tourism was the importance of maintaining heritage buildings and protecting natural environments for the benefit of tourists as well as local residents.

Most councils were also concerned about waste reduction, recycling, and environmental sustainability. At first glance garbage collection may not necessarily connect with issues of ageing. Consequently, discussions about the difficulties some older people face in manoeuvring waste bins highlighted the fact that issues of ageing affect all sections of local government – it is not just a community services department issue solved by more aged care services. Where councils have instituted 'wheel-in-wheel-out' services for older people, not all staff were aware of this. Difficulties with this everyday activity served to remind other staff that ageing is the business of all staff across the council.

Although housing was not specifically introduced as a topic for discussion, in several instances, the link was soon made between being able to get out and about in the public domain as well as being able to live at home. Questions were raised about the suitability of increasing the number of retirement villages as the only solution to ageing-in-place, which led to discussion about providing housing choice for older Australians who want to remain in their current home and locality.

As the workshop allowed for detailed discussion to take place within groups, it became apparent that information about existing services was not equally shared across council staff, community service providers and community members. This led to discussions about the importance of information dissemination, networking between services and between council departments. Representatives of groups such as CWA, U3A and RSLs for example, also became aware of the value of promoting their services. Information sharing and dissemination was a focal point of the next exercise which was focused on putting ideas into action.

The relatively low cost of promoting services, providing information, and setting up networking groups was perhaps one of the reasons information dissemination featured strongly in the fourth exercise, putting ideas into action. Improved transport options were more problematic, more expensive, and in many cases, required the support of state government. Nevertheless, the importance of this issue in the lives of older people, particularly if they do not drive or own a car, was acknowledged as a major contributor to being independent, maintaining a sense of wellbeing, and being able to minimise social isolation.

Attention to detail in the design and construction of the public domain also received significant attention. Of particular note was the commitment to being more vigorous in ensuring compliance with disability access standards. This indicates a previous lack of

understanding of the importance of these mandatory standards and design details for older people and people with disabilities.

During this exercise there was some re-thinking about housing and accommodation for older residents other than retirement villages. While local government has little control over housing per se, it does have some control over local development control plans and there were some commitments made to consider more adaptable and liveable housing designs in future development control plans.

## Conclusions

The main challenge of the workshop was to bring about a paradigm shift from “aged care” to one of “age inclusiveness” and from “older people are the aged and disability worker’s responsibility” to one of “older people are everyone’s responsibility”. The responses to the last two exercises showed indications of a better understanding that the lives of older people are broader than providing a community transport bus, a retirement village, a seniors centre, and providing special ‘seniors’ concerts and events. However, existing notions that older people are the responsibility of aged and disability workers likely caused much of the non-attendance by other key staff members.

Although efforts were made to communicate face to face with council planners and other staff prior to the workshop, this did not always result in their attendance. Circumstances and events on the day, such as sickness or an office crisis are not unexpected. However, across almost all workshops there was a consistent non-attendance by council planning staff on the day in spite of registering for the event. Others attended for one session believing the workshop to be a lecture style event rather than an active awareness-raising process. Consequently these staff thought they could attend one or two sessions and rely on others to tell them about the missed sessions. This led to comments by council staff who participated in the full workshop that COTA had failed to have the most important staff at the workshop.

Many staff indicated that they would discuss the workshop with colleagues and managers to help raise their awareness of the issues. Whether this has had the desired effect is not clear. However there was one comment in the follow up survey that indicates in one council at least, there has been further action as a result of the workshop.

The workshop evaluation sheets and subsequent online survey provided consistent results. Apart from positive responses about the workshop process and facilitation, most respondents believed they had learned from the process and now had a heightened awareness of the issues as well as ways in which they might resolve some of these.

Overall the workshop process achieved the desired effect of raising awareness with participants, but whether this is sufficient to bring about the paradigm shift in attitudes and awareness across all council staff and planning processes is not clear. However, all change begins with the first step and these workshops could be considered as that first step.

A subsequent shorter workshop for staff only might help improve awareness of the issues now that the topic has been raised by the first workshop. However, workshops

for council staff alone are unlikely to result in the same level of success for councils which were not part of the workshop series. The success of the workshops in this series hinged significantly on the input of community service providers and community members to provide the tangible and real life experiences which were essential to the awareness raising process.

The final step in this project is to produce a resource for local government that will assist in dealing with the issues of an ageing population. This resource will be in the form of a workshop facilitation guide complete with all the supporting documentation required to plan, promote and implement a Liveable Communities Workshop.

## Appendix A

### Basic Age Friendly Checklist



# Basic Age Friendly Checklist

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Footpaths</b>           | <p>The design and size of footpaths is one of the key elements for encouraging people to get out and about.</p> <p>To encourage people to walk socially and for exercising together, paths should be wide enough to take two mobility devices side by side, such as baby strollers, scooters and wheelchairs.</p> <p>Mobility devices also need seamless footpaths and paths of travel with no lips, trips or steps. However, streets need well defined edges with no roll-top kerbs as these are easier for people to negotiate and to board buses and cars.</p> <p>One of the main issues of designing footpaths is the trend towards 'shared paths' for both pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>Some older people, particularly those with early dementia, find fast moving people and cyclists disorientating and they fear for their safety as their reflexes are not as good as they used to be. In short they fear being run down.</p> <p>Pedestrians are also wheelchair and scooter users, as well as people pushing prams, not just people walking.</p> |
| <b>Basic items</b>         | <p>Provide footpaths as soon as possible in new developments</p> <p>Provide footpaths on both sides of the street</p> <p>Provide footpaths to transport stops and stations with concrete aprons across nature strips and under seating</p> <p>Footpaths should be wide enough for two mobility devices to pass</p> <p>Provide a seamless transition between footpaths and street crossings and into buildings</p> <p>Minimise conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles</p>  |
| <b>Additional features</b> | <p>Use travelators rather than escalators as these are difficult for some people to negotiate</p> <p>Locate lifts so that they are easily accessed, well signed and visible to the street</p>   |
| <b>Avoid</b>               | <p>Anything that will lift pavers and cause trip hazards later</p> <p>Gravel</p> <p>Walking on grass or denuded ground</p> <p>Breaks in the path of travel caused by missing paving or architectural barriers</p> <p>Placement of street works that break the path of travel without sufficient attention to accessibility for people with mobility difficulties</p>  |
| <b>Seating</b>             | <p>Street and open space seating encourages people who have poor mobility to continue getting out and about</p>   |



If people experience pain in walking or become breathless and know there is a seat, fear of getting stranded, embarrassed or falling is minimised

Seats must be well placed and not in the line of pedestrian traffic and if outdoors, offer some shelter from the elements, particularly summer sun

Street seating also encourages social inclusion. In some neighbourhoods strategically placed seating encourages older people to gather informally.

People who have difficulty rising from seats require arm rests upon which they can push themselves to a standing position

Seats placed on grass or surrounded by grass or gravel are not easily accessed particularly for people with mobility devices

### Basic items

Seats should be placed at regular intervals in street settings and shopping strips. Seats at bus stops can serve as both transport and pedestrian seating, in which case ensure sufficient supply

Seats should be placed on level concreted ground with a concreted wheelchair and pram access space alongside.

Seats to be set back from the main pedestrian path of travel but with a continuous footpath

Seats must have arm rests and back rests

Seats should be protected from the elements but at the same time be visible from all directions for passive surveillance

### Avoid

Setting seats too high, too low or on sloping ground

Upholstered public seating without arm rests and/or low to the ground

Seating that will not accommodate larger bodied people

### Wayfinding and Signage

Wayfinding design is the process of organising spatial and environmental information to help the user find their way

Although signage is a common solution to wayfinding, sources of confusion can be caused by factors such as the way items are named and labelled and the design of the building itself

Consequently, signage is a part of wayfinding but not the total solution for users being able to find their way through the environment

Some people have difficulty locating themselves in space and get easily disorientated in unfamiliar environments, and others lose their spatial wayfinding capability with the onset of dementia

The positioning of key landmarks together with signage that is clear and easy to interpret should be considered in developments

When designing signage and wayfinding for people who require Braille, refer to Vision Australia for guidance

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Basic items</b> | <p>Street signage should have large lettering, colour contrast, plain fonts and non-reflective surfaces</p> <p>Street and business signs should be easily read by both pedestrians and drivers</p> <p>Signage should be well placed so that it is visible from all directions</p> <p>Signage should be continuously placed if leading from a distance, for example leading to toilets, lifts, separate accessible entries, or landmarks</p> <p>Transport stops to be well signed</p> <p>Include orientation features such as landmarks and architectural cues</p>  |
| <b>Avoid</b>       | <p>Heritage style fonts and colours unless essential. Include alternative signage nearby.</p> <p>Placing wayfinding signs where there is a lot of visual 'noise', that is, alongside many other signs and hoardings</p> <p>Just labelling doors, such as toilet doors, without including signage indicating where the door is located</p>  |
| <b>Toilets</b>     | <p>Being able to find and use a public toilet is a necessity for everyone when they are out and about.</p> <p>Some people need a toilet more frequently or urgently</p> <p>If toilets are not easily located or poorly maintained it can impact on a person's confidence to spend time away from their home base.</p> <p>If a person has poor levels of continence they may only go to places where they know a toilet is nearby, easily accessed and minimal chances of needing to queue</p> <p>Equal space given to toilet for men and women is not effective if men have to wait also while women queue. Consideration should be given to more cubicles for women</p> <p>The size of cubicles need to consider larger people, ability to get in and out with a small child, bags, or luggage, and the placement of sanitary items within the cubicle</p> <p>Ability to open and close the door and use latches should also be considered. Outward opening doors create greater accessibility, for the 'ambulant toilet' in particular, but there should be a handle to pull the door closed on the inside of the door.</p> <p>At least one accessible toilet should allow for a carer of the opposite sex to attend and assist. Accessible toilets within gender specific toilets prevent this.</p> |
| <b>Basic items</b> | <p>Public toilets outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well maintained and accessible</p>   |

Provide at least one unisex toilet to allow carers to enter and assist (companion toilet)

Ensure clear and visible signage to public toilets

Allow sufficient space for a person to enter a cubicle with bags or small children

Consider the difference in overall allocation of space required by men and women to reduce queuing times by women

Ensure an accessible path of travel to all toilets

## **Avoid**

Locking accessible toilets

Gravel or uneven paths to outdoor toilets from the main path of travel

## **Lighting**

Lighting is often considered in relation to safety after dark, but lighting covers more aspects than safety

Light levels are also important in daylight hours, particularly for people who are blind or have low vision

Subdued or low light levels can make reading and wayfinding difficult in both day and night conditions

Pools' of light interspersed with darker spaces, both day and night, are problematic for people who are blind or have low vision, and for people who have difficulties with visual perception.

## **Basic items**

Lighting should be even and without glare and designed and placed to minimise pools or strips of light

Lighting should be designed and placed to minimise pools or strips of light across surfaces

Maintain lighting and replace faulty lights when needed to avoid light pools and dark patches

Provide good lighting after dark in public spaces

Provide good lighting after dark at bus stops

## **Avoid**

Glare from reflective surfaces - also consider the suitability of the surface

Placing trees and shrubs where they will grow under a light source