Positive Ageing Strategy 2010 - 2015
Part One - Policy

Active, included and respected – creating ‘age-friendly’ places in Yarra Ranges
Acknowledgement of country

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners, the Wurundjeri people, as the custodians of this land. We also pay respect to all Aboriginal Community Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of this region.

Contribution of community members, organisations and staff

The contribution of older residents, service providers and Yarra Ranges Council staff has provided important insight and information. The contributions have been used to formulate the strategies and actions which will contribute to the ongoing development of a positive, respectful and inclusive place for older people in Yarra Ranges.

The work has been supported by Councillor Terry Avery and Councillor Jeanette McRae.

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The gifts of age

- affection
- memories
- humour
- respect
- wisdom
- experience
- dignity
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Our vision

Yarra Ranges aspires to be a vibrant and dynamic Shire, based on strong local communities living in a place of great natural beauty. We value and respect all our citizens and are committed to working together with our community to promote the contribution of older people to community life. The wisdom, knowledge and experience of older people are an integral part of our lives – it completes the whole picture of our community. Older people enrich our lives and help us to know who we are, where we have come from and how past experiences have contributed to what we now value.

We respect older people’s rights to make their own decisions about their lives and to continue to live with dignity in the place of their choice. We will work to create environments which enable our older residents to remain active and involved in their local communities and to live and enjoy life in the way that they choose.

We will continue to work to create safe environments which encourage older people to remain independent and to be socially and physically included in community life. This means promoting access to information that can assist older people to make informed choices and working with our community to ensure that older people have a continued sense of place in our communities.

We value the contribution of older people in our workplaces and are committed to providing flexible and supportive environments that encourage the ongoing contribution of older workers.

Importantly, we want to build communities where older people can be progressive and evolving members of our community and to develop a truly “age-friendly” place in Yarra Ranges.
Forward from the Mayor


This strategy and five year plan outlines council’s commitment to creating strong, healthy and connected communities, where our older members are valued, supported and able to actively take part in and contribute to their community. Council has identified ‘responding to population ageing’ as one of the ten key areas that need to be addressed over the next four years. It is intended that this strategy and plan will enable this by strengthening partnerships between council, state departments of Health and Human Services, community, service providers and other key stakeholders.

Council provides a range of services to assist older residents to live independently in their homes and local communities where they are surrounded by friends, social networks and familiar surroundings.

The Positive Ageing Strategy aims to achieve an age friendly community by:

– developing a culture where older people are integral to the community
– promoting positive participation in community life
– informing and engaging older people
– delivering quality services

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people and organisations that contributed their experiences, professional expertise and enthusiasm in developing the Positive Ageing Strategy and Action Plan 2010-2015.

Cr Len Cox
Mayor
Positive ageing policy

Statement of intent

This policy guides the council’s approach to creating an environment where older people will choose to continue to live and contribute to community life. It outlines Council’s commitment to creating a safe and inclusive community for older people – residents, visitors and those who work in the municipality. It also outlines Council’s ongoing commitment to provide services for older people who may require support to continue to live independently.

Relationship with Vision 2020 Community Plan and Council Plan 2009 - 2013

Vision 2020 is a shared vision of the Yarra Ranges community. It is an optimistic statement of what we hope for and aspire to in the future, for both people and places.

Vision 2020 is based on the simple idea that, if we decide as a community where we are going, chances are we will get there. Only by working with the entire Yarra Ranges community can Vision 2020 be realised.

This policy provides the framework for action for achieving the community’s vision for Yarra Ranges in 2020, to be one of the special places in Australia, for its beautiful natural environments and its strong human dimension.

The spirit of the people is as evident as the beauty of the surroundings. Each local community is strong, and the individuals in each are respected. Age and racial differences are valued, and people live in respectful harmony with their environment, Indigenous heritage and each other.

Responding to an ageing population is one of the ten council priorities outlined in the Council Plan 2009-2013.
Policy objectives

The Yarra Ranges Council Positive Ageing Strategy, Policy and Action Plan 2010-2015 provides a framework for action in Yarra Ranges, targeted at creating an ‘age-friendly’ city. Council is committed to supporting communities and individuals to value and celebrate growing older. The strategy builds on the range of actions already in place across the municipality, to create communities where residents can continue to engage in the community as they grow older, where their contribution to day-to-day life of communities is valued, their experience and wisdom are respected, their advice sought and active participation in community life is ongoing.

The action plan is a blueprint for an integrated approach across the whole of council, with strategies for working collaboratively to develop a workplace that is inclusive of all people, promoting a culture in the organisation and the community of respect for the contributions of people as they grow older.

Policy statement

Definition

The concept of “active ageing” is central to developing a positive approach to growing older. The approach developed by the World Health Organisation who underpins this Policy:

Active ageing is the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.

The strategy and action plan focus on working towards creating safer and more inclusive communities and supportive environments for older people.

Principles

The following principles underpin the Positive Ageing Policy, Strategy and Action Plan:

1. Older people are valued and respected.
2. Older people are encouraged and supported to make their own decisions about their own lives.
3. The wisdom and experience of older people are an integral part of community life.
4. Older people are involved and engaged to participate in the community, both actively and passively.
5. Information and communication is easily accessible for older people.
Council role

Council will demonstrate leadership and commitment in creating a community that values and respects older people by:

- working collaboratively across areas of council to create safe and inclusive environments for older people
- promoting the positive contribution of older people in the community
- facilitating planning for a range of community facilities and activities which enable access for older people and encourage their participation
- delivering quality Home and Community Care services, in accordance with the Home and Community Care Act 2007 and consistent with the principles of the Active Service Model, for residents who require assistance and support to remain living independently
- advocating for the development of aged care facilities which enable older people to remain living in the municipality when they require supported care
- further developing partnerships with federal and state governments, local service providers and local businesses to continue to develop communities which are inclusive and welcoming of older people
- working with local residents to implement and review actions which will contribute to the development of an “age-friendly” municipality.

Related policies, strategies and plans

This policy and the Strategy and Action Plan which articulate the actions to deliver this, are integrated with Council’s Community Wellbeing Plan. The key directions and strategies of this Plan provide the context for the specific actions that will support Yarra Ranges to move towards an “age-friendly” environment.

Other related plans and strategies include:

- Disability Action Plan
- Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan
- Indigenous Reconciliation Statement
- Economic Development Strategy
- Township Commitment Policy
Implementation, review and evaluation

Periodical reports on implementation of the Positive Ageing Action Plan will be provided to the Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee and the Committee’s advice reported to council. The Positive Ageing Reference Group (PARG) will monitor progress on the implementation of the specific actions. Membership of the PARG will be nominated representation of residents, key local businesses, neighbourhood houses and service groups, invited community service agencies, a councillor and council staff.

The strategy and action plan will be reviewed annually, with key actions linked to departmental business plans in council.

An overall review of the policy, strategy and action plan will occur in 2015.
The population in Yarra Ranges is growing older. This trend is consistent with other cities around the world - population ageing and urbanisation are two global trends that together comprise major forces shaping the 21st century (WHO, 2008). People are living healthier, longer lives. According to the UN Population Division, during the next 40 years, the number of people in the world aged 60 years or older is expected to almost triple, increasing from 672 million people in 2005 to nearly 1.9 billion by 2050. One person in 10 is 60 years or older, but by 2050, the rate will be one person in five. (www.unfpa.org)

Older people in Yarra Ranges

Yarra Ranges had an estimated resident population of 145,487 persons, as of 30 June 2007, making it one of Melbourne’s most populous local government areas. (LGAs)

Characteristics of the population include:

Population

- there was a total of 15,506 persons (or 10.6%) aged 65 or more years in the Yarra Ranges in 2007

- the population is expected to age significantly over the next 10 and 20 years. The population aged 65 years and over is projected to rise from 16,486 people in 2009, an increase of almost 8,500 people, to 24,974 in 2019 and to 30,057 in 2029. This is an increase of over 50% in the first ten year period and an increase of 82% overall between 2009 and 2029.
Health status

- Life expectancy in Yarra Ranges (79.7 for males and 84.9 for females in 2006) increased in line with that in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) and Victoria as a whole.

- People aged 85 years or more are significantly above average presentation rate to emergency departments for the widest range of diagnoses. Injury and poisoning, and diseases of the digestive system, had an above average admission rate across the largest number of age groups.

- There were a total of 2,174, or just under 15%, people requiring assistance with core activities. (2006 Census)

Employment and voluntary or unpaid work

- One thousand and forty two people aged 65 years and over were continuing to be employed in the paid workforce in 2006. The majority of these individuals were aged between 65-69 years (694 people) but some people continued to work after 75 years of age also – 221 people. 68.5% of the oldest workers were male (87 people).

- A high number of older people volunteer their time to the community. There were a total of 2,695 persons over the age of 65 years who indicated that they provided their services voluntarily to an organisation at the time of the 2006 ABS Census. This was almost 20% of that population.

- A high number of residents aged 75 years or more also volunteered their time, with almost 100 people aged 85 years+ still volunteering.

- A total of 1,397 persons over the age of 65 years provided unpaid care for a child, of whom 88 provided care for their own child.

- One thousand and forty two persons over the age of 65 years provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability.

Income

- A significant majority of people aged 65 or more years, especially females, had an income of $399 per week or less.

- The number of age pension recipients in Yarra Ranges rose by 5% between March 2008 and March 2009, from 15,977 to 16,760. The rate of recipients was by far the highest in the postcodes covering Yarra Junction and surrounds, at 128.3 per 1,000 residents; the Millgrove/Warburton area, at 124.1 per 1,000 residents; Healesville/Badger Creek, at 116 per 1,000 residents; and Kilsyth at 114.7 per 1,000. These are also Yarra Ranges’ four most disadvantaged postcode areas.
Household type
- The predominant type of household was a couple in a registered marriage (7,600) followed by lone person households, of which there were 3,193
- There was a significant increase in the number of lone person households for people aged over 85 years.

Community indicators
When compared to the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) and Victoria as whole, Yarra Ranges residents:
- are more engaged in the their community
- participate more in cultural and arts activities
- are more engaged in civic activities, such as public hearings and signing petitions.

However, using the same comparison, Yarra Ranges residents:
- perceptions of their own health and wellbeing are lower
- felt less safe during the day and night when walking alone
- had experienced greater limitations with transport
- were less tolerant of cultural difference.

Reflecting the higher levels of disadvantage in Yarra Ranges than the EMR, a higher proportion of Yarra Ranges residents indicated that they ran out of food or could not afford to buy food during the previous twelve months and housing is more affordable.

Figure 1: Expected increase in population 65+ years, 2009-2029, Yarra Ranges

Source: Yarra Ranges Council and id consulting

1These data are based on Community Indicators Victoria data, using a 2007 survey and Census 2007 data.
An ageing workforce

One of the major challenges for all Australian businesses, large or small over the next decade will be to evaluate the impact of an ageing workforce on their business, and implement strategies to overcome the challenges accompanying this world-wide phenomenon. As the population ages, there will be a decline in the number of working Australians, putting a strain on our businesses, the economy and public services. (NSW Business Chamber, 2010)

The profile of the workforce in Yarra Ranges Council indicates a significant older workforce with the average age of all staff being 49 years and with greater than 65% of current staff being at or beyond the potential retirement age of 55 years within the next 10 years.

Retention, attraction and development of a balanced workforce capable of delivering on the goals of the organisation are a key strategy. (Yarra Ranges, People Strategy, 2009-2012)

The World Health organisation ‘age-friendly’ cities framework

WHO has developed an “age friendly” cities framework, as a guide for cities to maximise the opportunities for health, participation and security for older people. This framework provides a very useful way for considering broadly the range of factors which contribute to the development of an “age friendly” city. It is a tool for a city’s self-assessment and a map for charting progress. Based on the results of a global project, which consulted with older people in 33 cities across 22 countries, it is robust and reliable. The concepts in this guide underpin the directions of this strategy, as the council works towards creating a more age-friendly municipality.

In an age-friendly city, policies, services, settings and structures support and enable people to age actively by:

- recognising the wide range of capacities and resources among older people
- anticipating and responding flexibly to ageing-related needs and preferences
- respecting their decisions and lifestyle choices
- protecting those who are the most vulnerable
- promoting their inclusion in and contribution to all areas of community life.

(WHO, 2008:5)
A number of factors (determinants) were identified as influencing active ageing. All of these factors and the interaction between them are important in how well people age and how cities can create environments which support active ageing. These are:

- economic determinants
- health and social services
- behavioural determinants
- social determinants
- physical environment
- behavioural determinants
- personal determinants.

These determinants are overlaid by gender and culture.

The WHO refers to “active ageing”. People in Yarra Ranges consulted in the development of this strategy have indicated that they prefer the term “positive ageing”. When considering the applicability of the WHO framework to Yarra Ranges, the term “active ageing” can be substituted for “positive ageing”.

**Figure 2: Determinants of active ageing**

![Diagram showing determinants of active ageing](Source: reproduced from WHO 2008:5)
Eight features of cities were developed by WHO to reflect the determinants of active ageing and used in discussions world-wide to develop the guide. These topic areas influence how people live their lives and are able to live. These have provided a framework for the development of this Positive Ageing Strategy for Yarra Ranges. (see Table 1)

Table 1: Age-friendly city topic areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Area</th>
<th>Influences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor spaces and buildings</td>
<td>Personal mobility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Safety from injury</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Security from crime</td>
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<td>Respect and social inclusion</td>
<td>Health behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social participation</td>
<td>Social participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civic participation and employment</td>
<td>Engagements of older people in recreation, socialisation, and cultural, educational and spiritual activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and information</td>
<td>Opportunities for citizenship, unpaid work and paid work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community support and health services</td>
<td>Social and health determinants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The benefits of an ageing population

The growth of the older population poses challenges in managing the workforce, at the same time as working towards creating communities where the contribution of older people is seen as being more than their capacity to contribute to the economy in a financial way. The majority of analyses focus on this as a “problem”, highlighting the challenges for the economy in a community where the proportion of people who have retired from the workforce is higher than those who remain working. But, there is also clear evidence that older people want to, and can, continue to contribute the community well beyond their retirement from the formal workforce.
“… older people increasingly want to remain economically active and make a contribution to development. Societies need to recognise the strengths of older persons and empower them. Human rights, sustainable human development and poverty eradication programmes must be developed, designed and monitored at all levels with older people playing an active role. The forces of progress that have brought about longer life spans and smaller, healthier families must now be marshalled to foster a sense of community, solidarity and care towards the elderly.” (UN Population Division)

Australians are healthier and more active and more productive than ever before

- Life expectancy is increasing for both males and females, but increasing more rapidly for men, as a consequence of improved access to health care, improved technologies in health, better nutrition, improved safety in the workplace and more people participating in physical activity (AIHW, 2010, Gibson, 2010, Healy, 2004). The current trends indicate that by 2026, at least 43% of 80 year olds will be males compared with 37% in 2006 and 32% in 1986. This means that there will be more intact marriages and less social isolation, with the corresponding social benefits. (Gibson, 2010)

- On average, over one-quarter of all health care costs over a lifetime are attributable to the last year of life but the cost of this last year does not rise with age – if anything, it falls when compared to younger people, as older people are treated less extensively. (Healy, 2004)

- Increasingly, people are demanding to remain independent for as long as possible, with social policy supporting the concept of “ageing in place” and services being available to support people to remain active for as long as possible. The proportion of people living in aged care facilities has dropped significantly over the past 20 years. On Census night 2006, just 12.4% of people aged 80+ were living in nursing homes, hospitals or other institutional care; in 1986, it was 20%. In 1986, 41% of Australians aged 90+ lived in institutional care; this had dropped to 28% in 2006. (Gibson, 2010)
Many individuals will be able to maintain their independent lifestyles

- Many people retiring now have sufficient superannuation to support them. For younger people who will retire in 20+ years, they have been contributing to superannuation for some period of time and thus, the demands for the age pension will diminish.

- The average wealth of Australians almost doubled between 1986 and 1997, due to the high rate of home ownership among the baby boomer generation, the strong growth in share prices and in the value of superannuation. (Healy, 2004, quoting a NATSEM study)

Older people are significant contributors to paid and unpaid work

Older people currently reaching retirement age do not see retirement in the way that previous generations did. At the same time, older people continue to be significant contributors in the unpaid workforce.

- While a number of older people want to retire early (before 65 years) there are also large numbers of older people who wish to remain working, not only because of financial imperatives, but also because they wish to continue to keep working. (Hamilton, 2006)

- Older people are high contributors to unpaid work – working as volunteers in the community or caring for older or disabled relatives. At the time of the 2006 Census, approximately a quarter of 60-70 year olds are involved in volunteer work (23%), one in every ten people (11%) aged 80 and over were still engaged in volunteer work and one in every twenty people over 90 years engaged in volunteer work across Australia (Gibson, 2010). In fact people aged 65 years and over contributed 22% of all volunteer work undertaken in Australia. (Gibson, 2010)

- Older people also provide a significant amount of care and assistance to people with a disability, a long-term illness or problems related to older age. It is estimated that nearly 454,000 people aged 65 and over provide assistance to a person with a disability or long-term illness. (ABS 2007)
The stereotypes about older workers are myths

There are several stereotypes about older workers - when compared to younger workers, their performance is poorer, they have a lower ability to learn, they are a poor investment because they won’t remain long and they cost more due to poor health and absenteeism. However, the research demonstrates that these stereotypes are myths. In fact, the opposite has been demonstrated:

- Extensive research shows very little evidence that job performance declines as employees age. In fact, performance often improves with age, and when declines are found, they tend to be small. Some evidence shows that job performance actually increases with age when measured by productivity and peer evaluations. (Posthuma and Campion, 2009)

- Older workers do not often give lower returns on investments, such as training, because older workers are less likely to quit, and the payback from such investments tends to come in the short term. (Posthuma and Campion, 2009)

- Employee age is less important to job performance than individual skill and health. There are much greater differences within age groups than between age groups. (Posthuma and Campion, 2009)

Older people’s participation in social networks is a significant component of wellbeing

- The majority of older Australians are actively involved with the people around them. In 2006, 96% of people aged 65 years and over had some form of contact at least once per week with family and friends outside their household. But, social contact declines with age, with people aged 85 years and over having significantly less social contacts than people aged 65-74 years. (Benevolent Society, 2009)

- Maintaining social contact is critical for maintaining health and wellbeing. It can help maintain a sense of self worth, even in the face of serious illness or disability and contribute to motivating physical activity. Engagement in social activities is associated with optimal cognitive, physical and emotional functioning. (Benevolent Society, 2009)

2 Posthuma and Campion (2009) undertook an extensive analysis of the research into older workers, identifying the stereotypes and analysing available research. This summary highlights some of the key stereotypes examined.
Addressing the challenges dilemmas of disadvantage

While overall, Australians are faring better now than previous generations and this is anticipated to impact on their capacity to engage positively in the community into the future, the research also clearly indicates that a large proportion of Australians will experience poor health, increasing poverty and unstable housing as they grow older.

The circumstances of low-income earners are quite different to that of higher earners and this has a significant impact on the lifestyle that people are able to maintain once they retire. In fact, it may be that the majority of older people, including the generation of baby boomers who are currently moving into retirement, will struggle to fund their own retirement, as compulsory superannuation was introduced too late into their working lives. (Hamilton and Hamilton, 2006)

Housing has also been identified as a significant factor impacting on older people’s capacity to age positively. This is influenced by the lack of public housing, the cost of maintaining one’s own home, particularly on decreasing income, and private rental. The research indicates that, excluding the indigenous population, one of the most disadvantaged demographic profiles for a person is to be old, single, poor, female and in private rental accommodation. (Kimberley and Simon, 2009:47)

*The impost of private rental on retirement income is the key contributor to social exclusion and a life lived in poverty.* (Kimberley and Simon, 2009)

The consequences of social isolation can also be profound. The evidence shows that social isolation is association with depression, other mental illnesses and decreased capacity to manage one’s own health. (VicHealth, 2008)
The views of the community, agencies and staff were sought in the process of planning for an older population in Yarra Ranges. Three key questions guided the consultations and the development of actions for the future:

- what does “positive ageing” mean for residents of the Yarra Ranges?
- what actions/activities are you currently working on that contribute to supporting positive ageing in the community?
- how can we work together to create a more livable and accessible municipality for older residents?

What does ‘positive ageing’ mean in Yarra Ranges?

Community members – residents, service providers and staff – identified a number of factors which are important to ageing “positively” in Yarra Ranges. These include:

- having a choice of a place to live
- determining one’s own future
- having access to opportunities to continue to participate in community life
- having access to information to enable independent decision-making and advocacy for oneself
- being socially included
- being regarded as a valued member of the community.
Achieving this means overcoming the stereotypes of older people in the community, promoting healthy ageing and developing a culture where older people are respected. People considered that the following approach was important to overcoming the stereotypes:

- older people are able to contribute with energy and new thinking – learning and creativity are life-long
- ageing ≠ elderly
- older people are able to adapt to change but they need access to information
- older people make a significant contribution to the community, through volunteering their time to community activities
- the stories and experiences of older people are important for the “memory” of the community and need to be preserved and recorded.

Defining ‘older people’

Defining “older people” poses dilemmas. The consultation considered concepts that permeate our thinking such as “70 is the new 60”. Many people aged 80+ still did not regard themselves as “aged” or “old” because they are fit and active and engaged in the community. Chronological age is becoming a less useful predictor of patterns of living, with older people being increasingly diverse in their characteristics. (Taylor, 2003)

There was a strong sense that it is important to not generalise about older people. People have different skills, different expectations and different aspirations. Older people are not a homogeneous group and thus the activities, supports and opportunities need to reflect this.

To support planning in Yarra Ranges, “older people” are those aged over 60 years. Within this cohort, there are many people who are fit and active and who do not regard themselves as “older” and would not participate in any activities for older people. However, they can be “time rich” – “People with Time (PWT)” - a result of having reduced their paid working hours, having adult children who do not require the intensity of support or may have retired from the full-time workforce, with greater opportunity to participate in community activities and to contribute.
Not all older people are fit and active. We know that Indigenous Australians have a life expectancy which is significantly lower than other Australians, with increased health concerns. Many other residents also experience chronic illness which impacts on their quality of life and their capacity to be active members of the community. Planning for the needs of the more vulnerable older people in our community is an integral part of this strategy.

Our challenges

Yarra Ranges faces a number of challenges in continuing to develop a community where older people can continue to live in, and contribute to, the neighbourhoods where they have lived for many years. Many older people in Yarra Ranges are socially and economically disadvantaged. They were denied the opportunities for higher education and employment which impacts on their financial capacity to remain independent. Many also have limited access to adequate superannuation to self-fund their retirement, which will mean dependence on the aged pension and thus limited income.

For some, they are experiencing considerable hardship in maintaining their independence in housing which is in need of maintenance which they cannot afford, living in areas which are geographically isolated and becoming, increasingly, a fire-risk in summer. Many are also becoming more socially isolated, as their families move to other areas to live.

Travelling in Yarra Ranges poses a challenge for older people, many of whom are dependent on public transport. The challenges include:

- frequency of public transport
- access to public transport
- social isolation that can occur without this access.

Climate change is one of the most significant challenges to Australia’s long-term economic sustainability. Climate change threatens living standards through its impact on the environment and on the economy (Australian Government, 2010). This will impact on the whole of the community – the cost of living, the structure of the workplace, the economy generally and the way in which people adapt to daily living.
As our community grows older, we need to adapt our communication styles and interactions, to enable all people to access information. This means taking into account font size of written communication, the extent to which information is available electronically and to be respectful of physical changes that impact on communication, such as hearing and sight loss. This means developing skills across the whole of the community, but particularly for staff who communicate with residents on a daily basis.

The oldest members of our community will require additional support to remain living in their community. This will place increasing pressure on council resources to provide support services as the number of older people grows.

What we could do differently

Residents, service providers and staff consulted felt that there were a number of areas where we could do things differently – actions that would assist to engage older people better and support the development of an “age-friendly” municipality. These have formed our approach for actions for the next five areas. They include:

Developing a culture where older people are integral to the community

Working with community groups and engaging older residents

1. Work more strategically with seniors groups, U3As and heritage groups, to support integrated approaches to service delivery. This builds on the work already underway in the re-development of council facilities to develop integrated facilities. The redevelopment of the Yarraburn Centre and planning for the development of hubs in Kilsyth and Healesville are examples of this.

2. Improve the coordination and communication across council and with other service providers, to make connections with others who are working with the same groups. This will support a more collaborative approach and develop better use of resources.
3. Facilitate regular forums with residents, to discuss areas of interest, share knowledge, seek views on issues and concern, find out what people want and need and engage older people in decision-making. This would include all areas of Council responsibility, service providers and local businesses.

Areas that were identified include:

- ongoing advocacy in relation to public transport, including community transport
- developing models to localise service delivery
- improving access to services, including increasing library access for people with limited mobility.

Facilitating a culture which respects older workers

1. Implement a flexible approach to working, including working from home.
2. Provide internet access to services and information.
3. All departments to be committed to promoting an “age friendly” culture in Yarra Ranges, both internally and externally.
4. Develop mentoring activities and opportunities.
5. Promote fluidity of roles and sharing wisdom and experience.
6. Plan for changing health needs internally and externally.
7. Capitalise on opportunities, e.g. harness older people’s skills and abilities in the community setting.
8. Help older people to re-package and promote their skills (career/vocational development).
9. Promote diverse patterns of employment because there will be a change in the way people work. This has implications for policy and HR.
10. Embed cultural/practice expectations of staff, e.g. front of house staff, customer service.
Promoting participation in community life

1. Housing options are suitable and adaptable to all ages and life stages.
2. Rest stops and benches are available in public places to benefit the whole community.
3. Use of community hubs as an opportunity for intergenerational activities, experiences, forums, etc.
4. Develop a greater understanding of what different age groups want. Facilitate groups that promote community discussion to understand what they really need/want.
5. Maintenance of assets is guided by an understanding of facility use, awareness of access concerns and is timed for the most convenience to all.

Improving communication

1. Technology training for staff (council and community organisations) who then train residents of the municipality.
2. Community Link provides information in a range of forms, have staff that work well across all age groups and can relate effectively.
3. Communication styles are more face to face, not relying on the internet for information provision (not everyone has access or knows how to use it).
Building on our achievements

The Positive Ageing Strategy developed in 2006 – “A Positive Future – Positive Ageing in the Yarra Ranges 2006-2009” – provided a framework for linking strategies and actions across Council to build a culture of positive ageing across the municipality. The Key Result Areas established for this Plan are still relevant. Over 80% of the 47 strategies and 63 actions in the plan have been achieved.

This update of the strategy builds on this initial work. It simplifies the actions, linking these with the work which is occurring across council.

Conversations and actions will continue to occur over the life of this strategy, working towards achieving a culture in Yarra Ranges where older people are respected and valued.

What is working well

The community consultation identified a number of areas where current activity is working well and supporting the achievement of an “age-friendly” municipality. These include:

- advocacy in relation to public transport has resulted in increases in bus services and upgrading of facilities
- repairs to footpaths, park benches and other amenities are done promptly
- new toilets and refurbishing of existing ones have resulted in easily accessible, open and light facilities
- road works across the municipality have facilitated increased access
- the arts and cultural activities promote involvement of older people.
What we are currently doing

Council and other services are currently working on a range of activities that are contributing to a positive environment for older people in Yarra Ranges. These include:

Within the organisation

- people and performance:
  - building leadership capacity in outdoor area
  - commencing work on succession/career path planning opportunities,
    e.g. part-time work, mentoring etc – across the organisation

- disability/diversity review – new initiatives examined to ensure that they are people friendly

- development of community hubs as intergenerational places – all age groups have access

- capital works - access for all:
  - footpath accessibility
  - bus stops
  - street furniture
  - public toilets
  - landscape
  - safe, solid walking surfaces
  - bus stop – DDA compliant

- Recreation Open Space Strategy specifically addresses the needs of older people

- varied communications media to cater for diverse needs:
  - website, printed materials in larger font sizes
  - Shire-wide audio files for people with sight impairment

- supporting advocacy efforts to better public transport/affordable accessible housing
- rates - recovery and hardship policy:
  - recover rates after death
  - no interest
  - assessment of income/expenditure
  - maintain equity approach for business development and hardship

- information management
  - one million dollars for awareness training
  - back-scanning all archives

- housing strategy
  - implementation of planning scheme changes
  - accessibility built into planning scheme

- arts, culture, heritage:
  - majority of consumers are ‘people with time’
  - museum opening – telling stories

Within the community

- promoting independence for older people through encouraging use of local gyms and facilitating access for this to occur
- offering weight training to promote strength enhancement to prevent falls
- promoting and developing a range of intergenerational activities and agency collaboration to benefit the community
- the spin-offs from organised groups which add to people’s lives, e.g. Probus has developed a theatre group, radio program which allows older people to tell their stories
- developing elder abuse policy and program that is community specific
- developing an integrated referral system to streamline processes for older people using community services
- primary school children engaging in activities and interacting with residents of aged care facilities.
Anticipated outcomes at the end of five years

- council to have a better understanding of positive ageing
- council strategies in place to support staff growing older
- council strategies in place to support positive ageing across the community, including strategies to engage a wide range of people in the process
- reference group from the community that is active, vibrant and committed to working collaboratively across the community.

Implementing and reviewing the strategy

The actions outlined in this strategy reflect the consultation that has occurred with older residents, service providers and staff in the council. The following were considered important to facilitate implementation and review of the strategy:

- clear ownership across the organisation and leadership by council in the community to deliver on the key result areas
- identification of actions in council business plans
- annual progress reports.

To achieve this, dedicated resources are required, with strong links between the Disability Action Plan and the Community Wellbeing Plan, with strong community engagement.