Creating Age-friendly Communities in Western Australia



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This publication will be reviewed and updated as required to reflect the changing needs of agencies interacting with older people and the wider community.

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Minister's Foreword

The State Government is committed to developing age-friendly communities that empower and support older Western Australians.

This Toolkit not only reflects this commitment but establishes a 'best practice' benchmark for creating age-friendly communities, irrespective of population size or geographical location.

The core principle of age-friendly communities is purposeful engagement with older people themselves, and this remains the essential element of the new Toolkit.

This 2021 edition of the Toolkit is a revised, updated version of the original version published in 2006. In the years since, the publication has been used by over 80 Western Australian local governments and has seen the State become a world leader in age-friendly practises.

The review and revision of the Toolkit is timely. With an ageing population, there is a greater need to ensure people's environments are age-friendly to assist them in accessing the activities and services required to live fulfilling lives.

Being age-friendly is not about deciding what is good for older people. Rather, it recognises that older people themselves know better than anyone about their own lives – what they have done and what they would like to continue to do.

It respects and supports people of all generations in living their best lives possible and fosters collaboration across sectors to achieve sustainable outcomes for our communities.

I trust this Toolkit is a useful, practical companion and serves as a supportive guide to help build and sustain age-friendly communities right across Western Australia.

Hon Don Punch MLA

Minister for Disability Services; Fisheries; Innovation and ICT; Seniors and Ageing





Introduction

In 2005, the World Health Organisation (WHO) embarked on a ground-breaking initiative to develop the Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide (the Guidelines)¹ in response to two significant global trends - population ageing and the growth of cities. WHO collaborated with 33 cities globally, including the City of Melville, in partnership with the Western Australian (WA) State Government.

The Guidelines support civil society to actively include older people themselves to assess the environment in which they live. The Guidelines can also be adapted to create age-friendly communities irrespective of population size or geographical location.

Appreciating that accessing the views of older people is more effective at the local level, the State Government again collaborated with the City of Melville to develop the Age-friendly Communities: A Western Australian Approach (the Toolkit). The Toolkit was based on the Guidelines and designed specifically for all Western Australian local governments.

The Toolkit's consultative approach uses the perspective of older people to determine how to become more age-friendly. This 'bottom up' approach informs top down strategy.

By adopting an age-friendly approach, communities can:

- ensure that their older population that is, non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 60 years and over and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 55 years and over - remain included in the planning and decisionmaking process;
- be certain that the needs of their older residents are accurately identified through the direct consultation process; and
- implement actions that contribute to the wellbeing of all in the community.

The updated Toolkit

This Toolkit has been updated to include the background of age-friendly communities and the benefits it brings to a community. It provides a method for respectful and direct consultation with older people and those who engage with older people, helping inform their strategic, business and corporate planning to create age-friendly communities. The Toolkit also outlines how this information can be used to determine actions to create age-friendly communities.

At the end of this Toolkit, Appendix D provides a range of further resources which may be used for further information and more specific guidance in the design and implementation of age-friendly communities.

It must be acknowledged that a number of organisations and individuals around Western Australia provided their input, feedback and views during the development of this Toolkit update. We wish to thank each of these organisations and individuals for their invaluable contributions.

WHO. 2007. Global age-friendly cities: a guide. https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/43755

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What is an Age-friendly Community?

The Guidelines describe an age-friendly community as a place where '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 age-related needs and preferences;
- respecting their decision and lifestyle choices;
- protecting those who are most vulnerable; and
- promoting their inclusion in and contribution to all areas of community life'.²

The development of the Guidelines determined that every aspect of a person's life can be addressed within the following eight domains:

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

These eight domains do not highlight specific issues, rather they serve to provide the context in which the impact of those societal trends and challenges will be experienced. You can read about the eight domains in the Guidelines.

The WA State Government is committed to supporting people to live their best lives possible as they age. The WA State Government embraces age-friendly policy and practices and is committed to expanding the reach of age-friendliness throughout all sectors in communities across the State.

The age-friendly approach is proven to be the most effective way to do this. It is a clear process enabling identification of the positive features and barriers in relation to the physical and social environment at the local level.

For an individual to age well means to do, and to be able to do, the things that are of value to them. Although desired activities will be different for each person, to neglect the needs of older people to age well, will not only disadvantage older people, but the whole community.

Adopting an age-friendly approach:

 ensures active engagement at the local level with older people themselves, their families and carers, and service providers who interact with them;

² Ibid, p. 5



- promotes collaboration across multiple sectors to design and implement initiatives addressing identified barriers; and
- provides a strong but flexible framework for governments at all levels to achieve positive outcomes for the whole community.

Dementia-friendly communities

There is also a growing movement to create dementia-friendly communities due to the increasing prevalence of dementia in the community. There are resources online to help local governments or organisations who wish to include dementia-friendly principles within their age-friendly action plan.

See Appendix D: Resources for further information on dementia-friendly communities.

Why is being age-friendly important?

An ageing population

Western Australians are living longer. As at 30 June 2019, 388,708 Western Australians were aged 65 years and over³. This age group currently represents 14.8 per cent of the total WA population.

It is projected that by 2031, the proportion of people aged 65 years and over will represent 18 per cent of the population. People aged 85 years and over are forecast to nearly double during this time⁴. The increase in this particular cohort is a result of people living longer from having access to advances in medical technology and medicines.

Longer life expectancy is both an achievement and a challenge. While most older Western Australians age safely, independently and well, an increasing number are vulnerable to poor life outcomes because they live alone, are at risk of social isolation, and/or are dependent on others to manage daily living due to health issues. The ability for older adults to engage, and have solid connections, in their community takes on even greater importance since the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is, therefore, a growing imperative for whole of community commitment and action to ensure that older people remain active and participate in their community. An age-friendly approach supports this. The consequences of neglecting to engage with any population cohort, intentionally or unintentionally, de-values that group of people and so reduces the richness and diversity of the community.

A commitment to becoming more age-friendly at all levels of government, civic society and business will see the well-being and sustainability of our communities grow.

³ Data source: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Cat. No. 3101.0 Australian Demographic Statistics Tables. Released 19 December 2019.

⁴ State of Western Australia. 2019. Western Australia Tomorrow, Population Report No. 11, Medium Term Population Forecasts for WA 2016 to 2031. Published: Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/western-australia-tomorrow-population-forecasts

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Sustainable development

The term 'sustainable development' was first coined in the 1987 Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future⁵. In response to environmental degradation, the United Nations commissioned the report to explore the connections between this issue, social equity and economic growth.

The report noted that 'Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'6. Importantly, the report linked sustainable development with outcomes for individuals stating that '...sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to fulfil their aspirations for a better life'7.

The notion that a sustainable global future is reliant on positive interrelationships between the health and wellbeing of individuals, the environment and economic development, remains current in policy development and dialogue at the international level.

In September 2015, the UN Sustainable Development Summit adopted Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda)⁸. The resolution included a commitment by member states to achieve '…sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner'⁹. The Agenda comprises 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and 169 targets.

The SDG that is relevant to age-friendly communities is Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. Goal 11 centres around the fact that more than half of the population is urbanised. Increasing migration of people into cities has led to uncontrolled development, particularly in poorer nations. Implementing age-friendly communities can assist in developing sustainable cities by making them accessible to all people, no matter their age. Developing age-friendly communities means that people are respected and included, can move through the city with ease, are safe, have access to services, employment opportunities are plentiful, and there is access to natural areas for enjoyment and rejuvenation.

Also in 2015, the World Report on Ageing and Health¹⁰ was released outlining a new way of thinking about healthy ageing, shifting from an absence of disease to a focus on the functional capacity of individuals and how to integrate care that enables older people to remain connected to and participate in their community.

⁵ Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf

⁶ Ibid. p. 26

⁷ Ibid

⁸ United Nations. 2015. Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld/publication

⁹ Ibid, p. 4

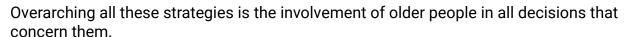
¹⁰ WHO. 2015. World Report on Ageing and Health. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565042

In May 2016, the Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health (the Global Strategy)¹¹ was adopted by the 69th World Health Assembly. The Global Strategy provides a political mandate for the action that is required to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to experience both a long and healthy life.

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The Global Strategy calls on countries to achieve this through five specific objectives:

- commit to action on healthy ageing;
- 2. develop age-friendly environments;
- align health systems to the needs of the older populations;
- develop sustainable and equitable systems of long-term care, at home, in the community and/or in dedicated facilities; and
- 5. improve data, measurement, and research on healthy ageing.



To advance the fulfilment of the SDGs, and in response to the World Report on Ageing and Health¹², it was determined that a Decade of Healthy Ageing was required to focus global action on Healthy Ageing.

On the 14 December 2020, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2021-2030 the Decade of Healthy Ageing. This is an opportunity for governments, civil society, international agencies, professionals, academia, the media, and private sector to commit to sustained action to improve the functional ability of older adults¹³.

Addressing the determinants of functional ability

Healthy Ageing is defined by the WHO's World Report on Ageing and Health '...as the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables wellbeing in older age.'14

¹¹ WHO. 2016. Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/global-strategy-and-action-plan-on-ageing-and-health-summary

¹² WHO. 2015. World Report on Ageing and Health. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565042

¹³ https://www.who.int/initiatives/decade-of-healthy-ageing

¹⁴ WHO. 2015. World Report on Ageing and Health. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565042

The determinants of health include:

- the social and economic environment, such as access to employment, stable income and education, access to formal and informal support networks inclusive of cultural customs and traditions:
- the physical environment, such as clean water and air, safe homes and communities, access to healthy and affordable food choices; and
- the person's individual characteristics and behaviours, such as gender, genetics, coping skills.

The WHO's World Report on Ageing and Health¹⁵ states that the '...process of Healthy Ageing argues that all sectors share a common goal: to build and maintain functional ability.'

Functional ability is defined as that which '...comprises the health-related attributes that enable people to be and to do what they have reason to value. It is made up of the intrinsic capacity of the individual, relevant environmental characteristics and the interactions between the individual and these characteristics.'¹⁶

There are five key domains of functional ability essential for older people:

- the ability to meet their basic needs;
- the ability to learn, grow and make decisions;
- the ability to be mobile;
- the ability to build and maintain relationships; and
- the ability to contribute.

Addressing these domains within the context of community investment, serves to create age-friendly communities.

The community's social and physical infrastructure influences the wellbeing of older people, which means that individuals may have little, if any, opportunity to directly control many of the determinants of health. By being age-friendly and understanding factors which have a favourable or unfavourable impact on the functional ability of individuals, civil society can actively maintain the positive aspects, and implement strategies to improve the negative features or barriers.

¹⁵ WHO. 2015. World Report on Ageing and Health. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565042 p. 159.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 28.



How does age-friendly fit with local planning?

Using an age-friendly approach can help inform plans that are required to be developed by local governments by providing evidence of community need from directly consulting with the community. Below are two examples highlighting how this approach would be beneficial.

Local Government Act 1995

Under section 5.56 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, all local governments are required to 'plan for the future'. As part of planning for the future, a local government is to prepare a strategic community plan that:

- covers a period of at least 10 years;
- · sets out the vision, aspirations and objectives of the community; and
- is reviewed at least every four years.

Community consultation is required to develop or review a strategic community plan, as is inclusion of a description of the extent of community consultation. Adopting an age-friendly approach where older people are directly consulted supports the development of action plans and strategies for the strategic community plan.

Disability Services Act 1993

Under Part 5 of the *Disability Services Act 1993*, all local governments are required to develop a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP). Local governments must ensure that they perform their functions outlined in the DAIP with the intent of furthering the principles outlined in Schedule 1 (Principles applicable to people with a disability) and Schedule 2 (Objectives for services and programmes) of the Act. Local governments must consult with the public on a DAIP and it should be reviewed every five years.

The principles between a DAIP and the creation of age-friendly communities are aligned as they both ensure that communities are inclusive and that services and activities are readily accessible.

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Connection through the Age-friendly Network

WHO has created a Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities (the Network). There are now over 1000 cities and communities that are affiliates or members of the Network covering 260 million people in over 40 countries.

The Network is designed to connect cities and communities worldwide to help find solutions to becoming more age-friendly. To join this network, a demonstration of commitment to continual improvement in developing the age-friendliness of their community long term is required, such as the development of a strategy or action plan.

Western Australia has been an Affiliate of the Network since 2017 and there are currently five Western Australian local government authorities that are members:

- City of Cockburn (2015)
- City of Fremantle (2016)
- City of Melville (2011)
- · City of Rockingham (2012)
- City of Wanneroo (2019)

Cities and communities can apply to be a member of the Network by completing an application form and a letter of commitment, as well as commencing the four steps of the Network cycle¹⁷. These steps are outlined below:

- 1. Establish mechanisms to involve older people throughout the Age-friendly Cities and Communities cycle;
- 2. Develop a baseline assessment of the age-friendliness of the city or community;
- 3. Development of a three-year action plan based on the findings of the baseline assessment; and
- 4. Identification of indicators to monitor progress against this plan.

In other words, completing an age-friendly plan based on this Toolkit can lead you to becoming a member of the Network.

The membership requires active engagement with the submission of at least one age-friendly practice per year¹⁸. Being a member gives you access to an international network of age-friendly cities and communities through member-only online discussions.

Age-friendly Western Australia

The number of other Western Australian local governments which have adopted the age-friendly approach continues to grow. To date, 85 local governments have received funding support by the State Government to develop age-friendly plans and implement actions. This equates to 82 per cent of the Western Australian population¹⁹ now living

¹⁷ WHO. Application form to join the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

¹⁸ WHO. Submit Your Age-Friendly Practice. https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/submit-afp/. Accessed 2 February 2020

¹⁹ Based on Local Government Area statistics from the 2016 Census https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/census



in a community committed to the age-friendly process and effecting improvements commensurate to the expressed needs of their residents.

Opportunities to connect with other local governments

It is strongly recommended that local governments collaborate in their planning processes and/or implementation of age-friendly projects. Greater outcomes can be achieved including:

- better integration of services at the local level, such as transport options connecting to health support services in adjacent areas;
- increased awareness of local and neighbouring services and events, which may improve social connectedness; and
- improved efficiencies and effectiveness in resources management, such as, delivery of services across neighbourhoods, which might otherwise be prohibitive by a single provider.

Case Study: Connecting with other local governments

Age Friendly Regional Partnership

The Cities of Joondalup, Wanneroo and Stirling each have high numbers of older residents. Each city undertook their age-friendly research separately but collaborated throughout the process.

At the conclusion of the research, the cities jointly assessed their findings to identify overarching issues of concern. This action enabled the development of an age-friendly regional partnership. This partnership has proved valuable for sharing of age-friendly learning and opportunities to jointly implement age-friendly actions.

Opportunities to connect with other organisations and businesses

Creating an age-friendly community does not rest entirely with local government. However, local governments can play a key role in collaborating with community groups, state government, and businesses to help bridge the gaps in services and programs needed as identified through age-friendly research.

For example, in response to the increasing number of people living with dementia in the community, local government may wish to approach businesses with a view to implementing strategies to help families and carers of people with dementia maintain their social connectedness.

Smaller projects can have a profound effect on the wellbeing of older people. It is often the case that one-on-one interventions can assist in helping an older person cope with a sudden event, such as the loss of a partner, or a health episode. Developing a 'new normal' after a life-changing event can reduce social isolation and help that person to live well as they age.

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Case Study: Age-friendly businesses - metropolitan

City of Melville – Melville Age-friendly and Accessible Businesses

The City of Melville has had great success in raising awareness of the accessibility needs of their residents in relation to commercial services through the Melville Age-friendly and Accessible Businesses (or MAFAB) network.

The network is made up of local businesses committed to implementing accessible and age-friendly initiatives that improve the customer experience for seniors and people with disabilities, including those living with dementia.

The MAFAB Network has recorded a number of achievements such as the launch of a memory café; a foundation member was awarded the 2016 WA Seniors Business Award; and hosting of mall walking for seniors.

Case Study: Age-friendly businesses - regional

City of Greater Geraldton – Seniors User-friendly Business program (SUB)

The City of Greater Geraldton developed the Seniors User-friendly Business (SUB) program which is designed to assist businesses to become more age-friendly and to be recognised for their commitment to seniors' user-friendly practices.

The four-step program requires the business to review the state of the business and make age-friendly changes. A mystery shopper will then visit or contact the business and assess the changes. Feedback is provided back to the City's SUB Coordinator and findings are discussed with the business. Businesses recognised as being age-friendly are recognised in the SUB directory and can be promoted as a SUB.

Local Government Professional Age-friendly Communities Network

As an Affiliate, the WA State Government delivers the Age-friendly Communities Program by continually promoting age-friendly principles and collaborating with stakeholders.

Through the Local Government Professional Age-friendly Communities Network (AFCN), established in 2015, Communities works collaboratively with local government to support the WHO's age-friendly communities approach. A number of local governments have used this approach for strategic planning for their communities.

The AFCN hosts regular forums providing opportunities to understand the WHO age-friendly methodology, profiling age-friendly projects and programs, and more recently, local government age-friendly responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. These events are also open to State Government representatives, Council on the Ageing WA, and key sector stakeholders.





Age-friendly Ambassadors

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Age-friendly Ambassadors are engaged through an age-friendly communities program to become ambassadors. Ambassadors are used around the world in age-friendly communities to connect older people with the services and information they require to be able to live in their home. Ambassadors can also represent the voices of older people about issues affecting their community and encourage networking and participation in activities.

The responsibilities of ambassadors can be tailored to the needs of the community and the resources of the organisation so may be different across communities.

See Appendix D: Resources section for links to examples of age-friendly communities developing an ambassador program.



Social trends and drivers for an Age-friendly Community

At the core of an age-friendly community is a focus on the wellbeing of older people within that community and the implementation of initiatives that address identified barriers to people ageing well.

Across any time period, events will arise that can cause immediate distress to large numbers of people, for example through a global financial crisis, a natural disaster, or a community-wide health situation such as an influenza epidemic. There are also trends that may not be regarded as requiring an urgent response but present significant impact as more people experience the same or similar challenges. For example, increases in unemployment or a desire to be more environmentally responsible.



Governments across the globe aim to prepare for these events and trends to reduce the negative impact on their communities. Civil societies, which have chosen to directly engage with the older people, may be better prepared to address such circumstances.

Similar to the eight domains in the age-friendly research methodology, societal issues and trends are not mutually exclusive.

A person with **dementia** may withdraw from social activities due to embarrassment with their forgetfulness and choose to reduce their connection with friends and community.

Struggling to keep up with advancements in **technology** can lead to perceptions of, or actual, ageism and result in reduced community connections.

A health event, such as a fall, or chronic illness, can result in greater **dependency** on fewer people, which can in turn increase the risk of experiencing elder abuse.

Lack of financial **security**, such as homelessness, a low- or no-income stream, or lack of employment opportunities can reduce a person's capacity to remain connected.

The interconnectedness of these challenging social trends provides an opportunity for local governments and organisations to develop initiatives addressing multiple issues simultaneously.

Snapshot: Ageism

WHO defines ageism as 'the stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination directed towards others or oneself based on age'.²⁰

²⁰ WHO. Global Report on Ageism. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240016866 (Accessed 18 October 2021)



At the core of ageism is an assumption that older people are unable to, or worse, have no right to, make decisions about their lives. Another aspect is that people assume older people are 'out of touch' or lack particular abilities because of their age. Ageism, whether overt or hidden, has serious consequences on many aspects of an older person's life. Ageism impacts on a person's confidence, quality of life, job prospects, health, and control over life decisions and is often an underlying factor contributing to elder abuse and social isolation.

It is often hidden but pervasive. Institutional practices and policies can perpetuate stereotypes about older people. Ageism can be found throughout society, and can be linked to discrimination in access and equity in a number of areas, including but not limited to:

- employment;
- health care;
- · aged care;
- · housing;
- · digital inclusion; and
- financial security.

Concerns and experiences of ageism in each of these areas have been reported in some Western Australian local government age-friendly research reports. The age-friendly approach engages with older people who are the best source of information to know what is working well, what is absent and what the experiences of older people have been and are. Adopting an age-friendly approach to planning and practices can help to address structural ageism.

Case Study: Combatting ageism

Life in Pictures short film competition

A collaborative project between the Department of Communities and Revelation Film Festival, and endorsed by the International Federation on Ageing, the Life in Pictures short film competition was designed to address ageism by promoting positive images and stories about ageing.

Revelation, with the reputation as being Australia's leading independent film festival, presents over 200 national and international independent films over 13 days.

Using the artistic and film-making skills of people of all ages, the films highlight overcoming the challenges of ageing and celebrate the achievements of older people.

Snapshot: Elder Abuse

Elder abuse is defined as '... a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, that occurs in a relationship with an older person where there is an expectation of trust and where that action causes harm or distress to the older person'.²¹

²¹ WHO. Elder Abuse. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/elder-abuse (Accessed 18 October 2021).

It is estimated that approximately between two and 14 per cent of older Western Australians – between 7,000 and 49,000 people – are experiencing or have experienced some form of abuse. Prevalence rates are not exact because of the nature of elder abuse and subsequent under-reporting.

When an older person experiences abuse from someone they trust and may depend upon for support, either physical or emotional, it may be very difficult to accept that they are being abused, and/or take steps to stop the abuse. Adult children are the main offenders, but other family members, friends or acquaintances can also commit elder abuse.

Elder abuse can occur anywhere, although it mainly occurs in private settings such as the home of the older person or alleged perpetrator. It can also take place in institutional settings. There are many types of elder abuse and often a person may experience multiple types simultaneously.

Table 1 - Types of elder abuse

Туре	Description	
Financial	The misuse or theft of an older person's money or assets	
Psychological/ emotional	Any behaviour that causes an older person mental anguish, and/or to feel shame, fear, powerlessness or worthlessness	
Social	Intentional prevention from having social contact with family or friends, or accessing social activities	
Physical	The infliction of pain, injury and/or physical force on an older perso	
Neglect The intentional or unintentional deprivation of basic and professional care		
Sexual	A broad range of unwanted sexual behaviour	

An age-friendly community enhances the connectivity between residents, families, businesses, community groups and support services. When professional organisations and services, which interact with older people, have greater understanding of the nature of elder abuse and can recognise the signs of abuse, their capacity to respond is increased and the incidence of elder abuse can be reduced.

In November 2019, the State Government released the WA Strategy to Respond to the Abuse of Older People (Elder Abuse) 2019-2029. The 10-year strategy, which is the State's first ever strategy into elder abuse, outlines four priority areas: raise awareness and early identification; prevention and early intervention; integrated and coordinated response; and data and evidence. See **Appendix D**: **Resources** for a link to the strategy and other elder abuse resources.

Snapshot: Social Isolation

Social isolation is a complex issue that can affect Western Australians of all backgrounds.

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Social isolation has detrimental effects on a person's wellbeing, including mental health issues, poor sleep and cognitive function, all of which impacts on a person's ability to do the things that they value in their lives. It is often associated with loneliness. However just because a person is socially isolated, it does not necessarily mean they are lonely, and vice versa.

As there are no universally accepted definitions, the figures can vary from study to study but it is estimated that about a third of older Australians experience social isolation or loneliness, while approximately seven to nine per cent can be severely lonely.²²

A range of factors impact on a person's risk of becoming isolated and/or lonely. This includes experiencing a life-changing event such as a major health issue, loss of a spouse, loss of income, or becoming a carer. Language difficulties, physical distance, and a lack of access to transport are also factors.

Specific population cohorts are also more vulnerable to social isolation including:

- Older people
- Cultural and Linguistically Diverse people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- People living in regional and remote areas
- · People with disability
- LGBTI+ people

People with multiple disadvantage are also more vulnerable to experiencing isolation. As with elder abuse, people who are socially isolated or lonely will often hide their feelings, and not share their concerns or seek help. Consequently, identifying people in the community who are isolated can be challenging.

However, being age-friendly can address some of the barriers contributing to social isolation at the community level, such as better access to outdoor spaces and better transport options, and better communication of health supports.

²² Aged and Community Services Australia. Social isolation and loneliness among older Australians. Issues Paper No. 1. October 2015. https://www.acsa.asn.au/getattachment/Publications-Submissions/Social-Isolation-and-Loneliness/1015-Social-Isolation-and-Loneliness-Paper.pdf.aspx?lang=en-AU. Accessed 28 January 2020.

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Case study: Reducing social isolation

Shire of Mukinbudin

Rural and regional areas experience greater challenges in maintaining social connections. The Shire of Mukinbudin is located approximately 300 kilometres northeast of Perth. Mukinbudin has a small population with fewer than 200 people aged over 55 years and responded to concerns regarding access to health-related services due to distance from regional and urban centres.

The project contained many components, such as trips to neighbouring towns and an overnight trip to Perth; information sessions on healthy eating; support for cancer patients and their families; and complimentary use of community buses to the sporting complex for residents to attend aqua aerobics classes.

By increasing opportunities for connections through social and physical activities with services and activities such as these, this project resulted in an increased sense of community and addressed residents' concerns.

Snapshot: Dementia

There are nearly 42,000 Western Australians who currently live with dementia. This is projected to double by 2036²³. Approximately 70 per cent of people with dementia live at home and in their community.

Anyone can develop dementia and it presents itself as a range of symptoms including memory loss, difficulty performing well-established tasks, being disoriented, and/or change in mood or disposition. The impact of having a diagnosis of dementia on an individual and their family can be overwhelming. The disease will progress differently for each person, as will the impact on the person living with dementia and their family. Stigma and misunderstanding about the disease can contribute to a person withdrawing from social interaction and subsequently become isolated.

Dementia is the leading cause of death in women and second leading cause of death in men²⁴ so it is important that there is awareness about the disease and information on how to support people living with dementia is increased.

In May 2019 the WHO released Guidelines on risk reduction of cognitive decline and dementia (the WHO Dementia Guidelines)²⁵. The WHO Dementia Guidelines review scientific evidence finding that healthy lifestyle choices such as regular exercise, not smoking, avoiding harmful use of alcohol, controlling weight, eating a healthy

²³ Alzheimer's WA. Statistics and Publications. https://www.alzheimerswa.org.au/about-dementia/resources/publications/. Accessed 28 January 2020.

²⁴ Alzheimer's WA Annual Report 2018/19. https://www.alzheimerswa.org.au/helpsheets/publications/

²⁵ WHO. Risk reduction of cognitive decline and dementia: WHO Guidelines. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/risk-reduction-of-cognitive-decline-and-dementia (Accessed 18 October 2021)



diet and maintaining healthy blood pressure can help prevent cognitive decline and dementia. The WHO Dementia Guidelines are designed for health care providers, governments, policy makers and planning authorities to help them make decisions, formulate advice and design programs that encourage healthy lifestyles.

Creating age-friendly and dementia-friendly communities and environments are the best pathways to help reduce the stigma associated with the disease and improve health and wellbeing outcomes for people living with dementia.

Case Study: Dementia friendly Communities

Alzheimer's WA

Memory cafés are designed to encourage people living with dementia and their families and friends to enjoy morning tea together in a safe and welcoming setting.

Alzheimer's WA, in partnership with cafes across metropolitan and regional areas, hold morning teas once a month. The aim is to create an environment of inclusion and to help reduce the stigma often associated with dementia.

Guidelines have been made available to businesses that wish to become a memory café with a checklist of points to consider²⁶. It is also recommended that a business discuss becoming a memory café with Alzheimer's WA first to ensure the concept is considered fully and implemented successfully.

Snapshot: Technology

For many older Western Australians advances in technology are a double-edged sword. Technological advances in medicine can help us to continue to lead active lives. However, for some people, keeping abreast of new technologies such as information sharing platforms or accessing online payment systems, can be challenging. Digital literacy and accessing technology enables people to keep connected with family and friends and stay up-to-date with the activities and news of their community. Digital literacy and accessing technology also provides a quick way of knowing what services are available to enable them to age in place.

Many government agencies and businesses are favouring the internet and social media as their primary, sometimes only, means by which to inform their customers or clients.

This is clearly a challenge for many who cannot access technology due to a variety of reasons including: cost, acumen, lack of training or access to training, fear of being scammed, physical location, language, or outdated equipment.

Digital exclusion has significant impacts for older people including reduced access to employment, the economy, civic participation, information and social connections. The opposite is true for those who are actively participating digitally.

²⁶ Alzheimer's WA Memory Café Guidelines https://www.alzheimerswa.org.au/about-dementia/supporting-person-living-dementia/memory-cafes/

The Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) measures the level of digital inclusion in Australia by measuring not just access to the internet, but also affordability and the digital skills across demographics. Scores are measured Low (<55), Medium (55-70) and High (>70) with the higher score meaning there is a higher level of inclusion. It is acknowledged that digital inclusion declines as age increases, particularly when looking at digital access and skills. Compared to Western Australia with an ADII score of 64.1, older adults that are 65 years old and over have a score of 51.1. Digital skills has an ADII score of 35.4 which is 15 points behind 50-64 year olds and 28.3 points behind 25-34 year olds. See Appendix D: Resources for information on digital inclusion.

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Developing age-friendly strategies allows local governments and the wider community to more readily identify gaps in residents' technological literacy and respond appropriately.

Case Study: Technology

Shire of Capel – Keeping in Touch

The Shire of Capel, in response to needs identified by older residents, delivered a 'Keeping in Touch' project. The project primarily offered computer classes but also transport options and social outings.

After the initial introduction of computer classes, and with some changes to delivery to better meet the needs of potential participants, a number of participants ended up joining the Bunbury Seniors Computer Club.

Senior residents who engaged with the program are reported to have forged new friendships and social networks using new technology.



Age-friendly Communities Toolkit

Good planning at the front end of an age-friendly project will ensure a satisfactory conclusion and can accommodate unexpected events.

You should determine what resources you already have or can leverage from. This can include staff, infrastructure, volunteers, among other things, and how these may reduce the costs of the project without compromising its integrity. If you require a consultant, be specific about the work that they will need to undertake and have a clear budget. Keep in mind that consultants may encourage participants to speak more freely.

The steps to becoming age-friendly are outlined below and will help you to determine what aspects of your community or organisation are working well and what can be improved.

The way that you choose to undertake each step will depend on a variety of factors, including, but not limited to the resources available to you, timeframe, existing plans and current projects.

The five steps to becoming age-friendly:

- 1. Undertake a community profile
- 2. Engage stakeholders
- 3. Analyse and report on research findings
- 4. Develop an action plan
- 5. Monitoring and Evaluation

Undertake a community profile

A comprehensive community profile through a desktop assessment will provide context for the age-friendly project by providing an overview of the community's demographic and economic characteristics including, but not limited to:

- · number and proportion of residents by age;
- gender;
- sexual orientation;
- ethnic diversity including cultural, linguistic and religious characteristics;
- health status information, such as the number of older people living with dementia, disability, and/or chronic illness;
- · country of birth;
- household composition;
- employment status;
- highest educational level;
- civic engagement statistics;
- income level; and
- housing type and tenure.

A summary of services available to older people is also useful to know. You can undertake a review of the services provided by state and local government, private organisations, not-for-profits and volunteer service providers.

The community profile builds a picture of the older people that are in the community which helps to identify cohorts to be targeted for consultation so that they are adequately represented in the project.

TIP #1:

If service providers operate across the region, consider collaborating with neighbouring local governments and/or share the results.

Engage stakeholders

Throughout your project, communication is key. Inform your community about the project and its progress as it occurs. Consider developing a communications plan that outlines how you will inform the community and when. This could involve many types of methods such as electronic and/or hardcopy newsletters to subscribers, online blogs and notifications on social media channels such as Facebook. The community will appreciate proactive communications, particularly if they are involved in the focus groups.

Gathering information directly from older people themselves is the cornerstone of the age-friendly approach. However, information should also be gathered from carers of older people and service providers to get a better idea of what is and isn't working for their clients.

Methods for gathering information can be through focus groups, surveys, and/or one-on-one interviews. You may also wish to ask the group which method of consultation they feel comfortable engaging in.

Older people can be recruited through online or newspaper advertising, through local community groups, or by invitation. Appendix A has sample participant information forms to gather information about participants and to ensure a representative sample is involved.

Questions for participants

Suggested discussion questions for focus groups are included in Appendix C. These questions can also be used to develop an online and/or hard copy survey in addition to, or to complement, focus group conversations and interviews.

The suggested questions are categorised into the eight age-friendly domains and ask about the positive features and barriers to being age-friendly under each of these domains. The questions are designed to explore how well older people can function, in terms of their own capacity, in their local area, and in relation to the topic under discussion.



Focus groups

Hosting focus groups provides the best way to engage with older people. The opportunity for interaction between participants leads to fruitful discussion about the matters raised and often can result in potential solutions. In addition to garnering vital information, older people have reported that they felt a great sense of usefulness being involved in the process. Links to further information on designing and facilitating focus groups can be found in Appendix D: Resources.

Surveys

Not all older people who wish to participate will be able to, or want to, attend a focus group. A survey made accessible both online and in hard copy is a good alternative. Although the information gathered may not be as rich in detail, providing another way for the community to participate will indicate the commitment to direct consultation.

Promotion and distribution of the survey is as important as the content of the survey. Engaging with local service providers and community groups will help in the distribution of the survey to those who, for example, may reside regionally or may not have internet access or acumen. Or an older person may only be able to access the survey online.

One-on-one interviews

It may be difficult for some people (e.g. carers of older people) to either attend a focus group or use surveys. In such cases, a one-on-one interview may be required to allow them to participate and provide in-depth insight into their challenges. Interviews can be done in person, over the phone or via video conferencing.

TIP #2:

If resources allow for it, set up a reference group to help guide and support the project. People can be invited to attend or you may canvas the community for expressions of interest. However, you must define the role of the reference group members prior to seeking people to participate so that they are aware of their responsibilities.

A chairperson could be a local age-friendly champion or a well-known member of the community. Key staff from the local government may also be involved.

Some of the actions of the reference group may include:

- Timeline development
- Budget
- Engagement of consultants, facilitators, or researchers
- Promotion and communication of the planning activity, focus groups, or surveys in the community
- Addressing any deficiencies in canvassing specific cohorts

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Focus group composition

There will be a number of things to consider when deciding how to compose the focus groups. The optimum number of participants for each focus group is approximately ten people. You may need more or less focus groups to achieve a satisfactory representation of views. It is suggested that a minimum of four focus groups are held, for example:

- Older people age 60 74;
- Older people age 74+;
- · Carers of older people; and
- Service providers.

Focus groups can also be composed from within suburbs. Some suburbs may have an older population than others and differing needs may be identified between each.

You can compose the focus groups to reflect the community profile for that age group or you may choose to have a focus group that is reflective of a particular cohort. For example, if you have a high number of people in a specific cohort such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or a culturally and linguistically diverse population, you may wish to have a focus group that consists of just that cohort.

It is important to acknowledge that participants are more likely to feel comfortable in a group with similar people. It is important to be aware of any specific cultural protocols, and that facilitators are trained to deal with topics sensitively and with appropriate cultural awareness when working with specific groups of people.

Consider using existing networks to find participants for each focus group such as:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander networks or engage directly with Elders;
- multicultural organisations for those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- health services for those who are more isolated and less connected to their community, including representatives of residential aged care facilities located in the local area;
- gender based organisations such as the local Men's Shed and Country Women's Association (CWA);
- LGBTI+ networks such as GLBTI Rights in Ageing (GRAI) to engage with older people
 of diverse sexualities and gender identities;
- mature age education providers who may assist in recruiting those who have limited communication skills and are not as engaged as others in the community; and
- youth groups might also assist in promoting the engagement of older family members in focus groups, particularly from culturally and linguistically diverse and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth groups.



Where there may be difficulty in recruiting enough people for the recommended four focus groups, the format of the focus groups sessions can be adjusted to suit participant numbers.

TIP #3:

For local governments who may have experienced a growth of 'tree/sea-changers', or where the community profile indicates that many people aged over 60 are working into later life, consider holding 'pre-seniors' workshops targeting people aged 55+.

Depending on the number of service providers from each industry, it may be advantageous to hold three separate focus groups: government, private, and voluntary organisations. However, there are benefits in collectively canvassing the views of all types of service providers in the same session, such as:

- promoting interaction between hitherto unconnected organisations;
- · recognition that the outcomes of their work are closely aligned; and
- opportunities to collaborate on future projects as identified during the session or following analysis of the information report.

TIP #4:

Consideration could be given to holding a specific focus group involving owners or managers of for-profit businesses in the local area, such as banks, restaurants and retail outlets. Representatives may provide a different and useful perspective about their experiences with older customers who may not necessarily engage with any part of their local government, aside from paying rates.

Case study: Focus group recruitment

Engaging specific population cohorts

Shire of Nannup - Men

Recognising that the views of men were under-represented, the Shire of Nannup co-opted a health check-up van for men, in the community. Anticipating that their wives would encourage their husbands to visit the van, attendees were asked age-friendly questions during the visit.

City of Perth - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse populations

The City of Perth recognised that there was a high proportion of older Asian residents in the City of Perth. To ensure the community were engaged adequately, two focus groups with Mandarin and Cantonese interpreters were held to make people feel more comfortable in participating.

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Focus group organisation

To attract the maximal number of participants, consider these points.

- **Time of year:** Consider the seasonal movements of the older people in your community. Do they tend to travel to warmer climates in winter or vice versa? Also consider other similar consultation processes that may be occurring to avoid confusion about what the focus group is intending to achieve.
- **Time of day:** Too early in the morning or too late in the day may also prevent interest in participating.
- Number of sessions: You may wish to provide more than one session for each of the focus groups as you may capture people that are interested but unable to attend a face-to-face session.
- Venue location: A venue which participants may already be familiar with, such as
 the local library or community hall, may be more suitable and promote more candid
 conversations thereby enhancing the information gathered and promoting a more
 positive experience for participants. Accessibility for those who have mobility, visual
 and/or hearing issues is also important and older people prefer parking close to
 the venue.
- Transport: Options for transport to and from the venue should be considered, especially for those who may no longer drive, or where public transport is limited. Where public transport is available, and especially where services can be infrequent, try to align timing of the event with timetables. A small reimbursement to cover travel costs may be offered.
- Catering: Having catering at a session is an important part of bringing people
 together. It could be as simple as some biscuits or fruit, or tea and coffee and may
 also be an opportunity to promote healthy eating. You may need to request details of
 participants dietary restrictions.

Consider how the sessions will be recorded:

- Engaging a note-taker for each focus group: To ensure smooth running of the focus group, having a dedicated note-taker will allow the facilitator to fully engage with participants.
- Audio or video recording of each session: Having video and/or audio to back up the
 note-taker will ensure that important content is included for analysis of the focus
 groups' information. Participants will need to be advised in advance if sessions will be
 recorded, generally prior to nominating their participation.
- Photographing participants interacting during the focus group session: These photos
 can be used to further promote the age-friendly project. Seeing fellow residents in
 local media often engenders a greater sense of ownership of the project. If you are
 intending to take photos of the event for future promotion and/or reporting purposes,
 written permission should be obtained from each participant.



Case study: Aboriginal seniors

Pilbara Regional Council - Engaging Aboriginal people

The Pilbara Regional Council engaged a consultant to interview older people in the Pilbara. Acknowledging the vast expanse of the Pilbara and the number of remote communities, the consultation process involved different consultation methods to engage the community.

Martu Elders were engaged as well as community members from Nullagine. From Nullagine, the consultants travelled to meet with residents at Warralong Community. They engaged residents at the Marble Bar council chambers and also met with older residents at the local pub.

The consultants were unable to directly access all remote communities but were able to supplement their information by ensuring they sought the views of service providers, health advisers and community members who had some knowledge of, and association with, these communities.

Analyse and report on research

An age-friendly approach uses the lens of older people as the primary guide for creating an age-friendly community. Collecting participant information enables a better understanding and comparison with the community profile, thus ensuring that the information gathered is representative of the community. Armed with this data, gaps can be identified and actions can be developed.

Use the data acquired through the consultation and engagement processes to consider if all population cohorts have been engaged with. If there is limited time to acquire additional information, consider including an acknowledgment of the absence of views, noting how those views will be sourced in the future.

Consideration of the impact of the findings on how it meets an older person's functional ability (see Addressing the determinants of functional ability) will provide a more robust and comprehensive report.

After conducting the research at the local level and collating the information, re-visit or canvass other sources of information, both internal and external to your local government to add value to the report, as other perspectives may contribute to better planning and management of resources at the local level.

Consultation data collected should stay confidential and sit with the team undertaking the consultation. It should be used appropriately when reporting, for example, de-identifying specific comments.

TIP #5:

Be mindful of the fact that some participants may not be comfortable in having their comments quoted in the final report, even if it is de-identified, so always ask before including. ••••••••••••••••••

Report on research findings

The analysis of the data collected from the focus groups, surveys, and other relevant information, should be presented in a report for endorsement by the organisation. Consider how and when the report will be presented to the community as part of your communications plan.

A report of the findings should include:

- **Executive summary:** provide a brief overview of the whole project. It should be able to be read as a standalone section;
- Community profile: use graphics to make the data more visually appealing;
- Methodology: describe the recruitment and sampling procedures and the characteristics of the participants;
- **Summary of the findings:** including for each population cohort and comparison across groups in relation to the eight domains;
- Limitations: describe the limitations that influenced the results; and
- Next steps: how the information will be used to inform the development of your age-friendly action plan.

Develop an action plan

An action plan outlines the detail for implementing age-friendly principles. The action plan should identify key actions, timelines, budget and who is responsible. The action plan could be included as a section of the age-friendly research report or be a standalone document.

An action plan provides:

- a measurement tool by which to assess the efficacy of the age-friendly project; and
- information about proposed actions (such as ongoing business as usual and new actions) highlighting collaboration opportunities with other sectors of the community, including businesses and not-for-profit organisations and/or adjoining local governments.

Preparing an action plan demonstrates the commitment of an organisation or government agency in becoming age-friendly. For local governments, it can also be used as support when applying for membership to the WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities (see Appendix D: Resources).

Prioritise findings

As part of the action plan, it may be beneficial to prioritise the key themes and issues that came out of the initial focus groups.

Workshops could be conducted with participants from the initial focus groups, surveys and interviews to assist in prioritising the themes and issues. This would also give another opportunity to engage with senior residents. Timeframes for implementation could also be determined during these sessions.

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Prior and during these sessions, participants will need to be reminded that the findings will be prioritised by the organisation in the context of the broader community needs but that the input of the focus groups is valued.

Evaluate the action plan

An important step in creating an age-friendly community is developing performance indicators, monitoring the progress and evaluating how effective the changes are. There are many resources on monitoring and evaluation, with some specific to age-friendly communities, but some things to consider are outlined briefly below.

A vital part of monitoring and evaluation is the development of indicators. Indicators can be developed from the actions to be implemented in the action plan and used to assess the effectiveness of the actions. Depending on the size of the community, indicators can be simple or complex. Indicators can also be qualitative or quantitative and may be output or outcome focussed. These need to be carefully thought out as poorly constructed indicators will not allow you to fully assess the effectiveness of the implemented actions.

Evaluation of the action plan should ideally involve the participation of the community as the actions implemented are for them, so they are well placed to judge whether those actions are working or not. The same focus groups can be used at this stage for consistency, but you may also wish to invite new people to participate for a new perspective. Other methods to evaluate include the use of interviews and surveys.

No matter which methods you use, questions will need to be based around the indicators.

You will also need to outline how often you will evaluate your action plan. It is recommended that the first evaluation is a year after release and then five years after release of the action plan, but you may choose a shorter timeframe.

Through the evaluation, you may discover that some actions may not have had the best outcome so be prepared to consider alternative actions to achieve better results.

You will need to decide who will evaluate the action plan. This can be done internally or you can commission a consultant to undertake the work.



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Appendix A: Participant information forms

Participant Information Form Older People

Na	me: Phone:					
Em	nail:					
Ado	dress: Postcode:					
ans	ease complete this Information Sheet by ticking the appropriate box or writing in your swer. We need this information so we can describe the characteristics of the people who part in this research project. If you have any questions, please contact					
1.	Age (optional):					
2.	I identify as:					
3.	Present employment status: Retired Work Full-time					
	☐ Work Part-time ☐ Unemployed (looking for work					
4.	Present occupation or last major occupation:					
5.	How would you describe your current health?					
	☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor					
6.	Do you have any health problem that limits your ability to do your normal daily activities?					
	☐ Yes ☐ No					
7.	What is the highest level of schooling you completed?					
	Primary School Secondary School					
	☐ Technical or further educational institution (e.g. TAFE) ☐ University or higher					
8.	Do you rent, or own the home where you live?					
	Rent Own home					
	Other e.g. co-housing, please describe					
9.	Who lives in your home with you? (Tick all that apply)					
	☐ No-one else but me ☐ Other relatives (Number)					
	Spouse/partner Non-relatives (Number)					
	Children (Number)					
10.	. What suburb do you live in?					
Ple	ease return this form to:					
For	r further information email or call					



Participant Information Form Carers of Older People

Nar	me: Phone:				
Em	ail:				
Add	dress: Postcode:				
ans	ase complete this Information Sheet by ticking the appropriate box or writing in your swer. We need this information about you so we can describe the characteristics of the ople who took part in this research project. If you have any questions, please contact				
	on				
1.	I identify as:				
2.	Present employment status: Retired Work Full-time				
	☐ Work Part-time ☐ Unemployed (looking for work)				
3.	. Present occupation or last major occupation:				
4.	What is the highest level of schooling you completed?				
	Primary School Secondary School				
	☐ Technical or further educational institution (e.g. TAFE) ☐ University or higher				
5.	Are you currently providing support or care to an older person(s) who (please check all that apply):				
	☐ Is physically disabled ☐ Is visually impaired				
	☐ Has difficulty moving or walking ☐ Has dementia				
	☐ Is hearing impaired ☐ Other				
6.	What is your relationship to the older person(s) you care for?				
	Parent/Parent in-law Other relative Non-relative				
7.	Do you receive carer respite to give you a break from your carer role? $\ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \$				
8.	. If yes, how often are you relieved of your duties? Rarely Sometimes Often				
9.	Generally, how long is the duration? $\ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ $				
10. If no, would you prefer not to take respite					
	you're not aware of respite services Other				
11.	Does the person(s) you care for live in your home?				
	☐ Yes ☐ No				
12.	In which suburb does the older person you care for live?				
Ple	ase return this form to:				
For	further information email or call or call				

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Participant Information Form Service Providers

Name:		Phone:			
Organisation:					
Email:					
Address:		Postcode:			
answer. We need this information al	bout you so we ch project. If yo	the appropriate box or writing in your can describe the characteristics of the u have any questions, please contact			
	Female	☐ Non-binary			
2. Present occupation:					
3. In what sector of the community are you employed?					
Public sector (e.g. local gove	rnment)	Private sector			
Voluntary sector (non-profit)					
4. How long have you been employed in this occupation in the local community?					
Less than 2 years	2 to 5 years	Over 5 years			
5. How much experience do you ha	eople as clients in your work?				
☐ A lot – over 5 years	A mod	lerate amount – up to 5 years			
A little – Less than 2 years	None				
Please return this form to:					
For further information email		or call			

Appendix B: Introductory comments

When conducting a focus group, there are some things to keep in mind to help it run smoothly:

- It is important that participants feel relaxed and safe to share their views. They should be informed about the purpose of the session and the ways they can contribute.
- 'Rules' should be set at the beginning of the session to ensure all participants' views are valued and that each will have the opportunity to comment.
- Participants' expectations about the timing of actions to address identified barriers should be mentioned at the start of the session.
- Depending on the number of attendees, the event could start with an ice-breaker activity.
- Some participants may find topics confronting so allow people to leave or take a break if people become overwhelmed. You may find some participants tend to dominate the conversation or sway away from the topic, this can be difficult to navigate, try to guide them back or find a pause to validate and summarise their points and maybe ask someone else's opinion.

Sample Introduction (amend as necessary)

My name is, and I will be guiding you through this discussion workshop.

Thank you for being here today. I do appreciate the time you are taking away from your normal routine.

You may have noticed that the session is being recorded for audio transcript. This is so that we don't miss anything you say. Please be assured that your specific comments will not be personally identified in the final report. So that we can understand the tape it is important that only one person speaks at a time, and we will make sure that everyone has a chance to have their say.

We also have a photographer for the day. A consent form will be circulated. If you do not wish to be photographed don't sign the form, but please do make yourself known to the photographer who will not include you in the pictures.

An age-friendly community is one that enables older people to live in security, maintain their health and to participate fully in society.

From your experiences as (an older person/a carer/a service provider) I want to hear about the positive experiences or good features of your (city/community) that show the ways in which the community is age-friendly.

I also want to hear about any negative aspects and/or the bad features that are not age-friendly.

And importantly, I also want to hear your suggestions about how these matters can be addressed to improve the age-friendliness of the community.

There are no right or wrong answers. Every person's opinion is important.

Finally, I need you all to be aware that not everything you identify as a barrier to your wellbeing, can, or will be able to, be addressed immediately. I can confirm however, that (LGA/organisation) has committed to act as quickly as possible on your information and suggestions to improve the age-friendliness of this community.

To investigate the age-friendliness we will be investigating eight themes.

In each of these areas, I'd like you to think about and comment on:

- · your positive experiences;
- your negative experiences; and
- your ideas about what could have happened, or suggestions to be implemented to improve those experiences.

If any of the discussion content causes feelings of distress or great concern, please do feel free to take a break if you need to. Or, if you do not feel comfortable with sharing a private but important experience with the group, please do talk to me during the break.

The following question is a suggested warm-up/ice-breaker:

For carers: Please tell us your name and who you are caring for. Then I'd like to invite you to please mention one good and one challenging feature of the community for the older person who you care for.

For service providers: Please tell us your name, who you work for and the type of work you do. Then I'd like to invite you to please mention one good and one challenging feature of the community for older people living in the community.

Optional: 'Or if you do not wish to mention one good thing and one challenging thing about your community, you may write it down on a piece of paper to review later.'

Let's get started with the first topic, Outdoor spaces and buildings...



Appendix C: Questions for focus groups and interviews

The questions below cater for the eight domains of age-friendly communities but it is not an exhaustive list. You may wish to include more questions within each domain. The questions can be used for each focus group with slight changes, depending on the cohort but specifically for older people, carers of older people and service providers. Options for some questions can be seen and are to be used depending on the cohort. Some themes and questions within the themes may not be relevant to a cohort. It is recommended that the questions are included in the final report.

Warm up question				
Older People	Carers	Service Providers		
Please tell us:	Please tell us:	Please tell us:		
 your name how long you have lived in the (city/district/community) one thing you like about living in the (city/district/ community) one thing you don't like about living here 	 your name who you are caring for one good and one challenging feature of the community for the older person you care for 	 your name who you work for one good thing and one challenging feature about the community for older people living in the community 		

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings			
Older People	Carers	Service Providers	More specifically
What is it like to step outside your home to go for a walk, to get some fresh air, do some errands or visit people?	What is it like for the older person you care for to step outside their home to get some fresh air, run errands or visit people?	From your observation and professional experience, what is it like for older people in the community to step outside their home to go for a walk, to get some fresh air, do some errands or visit people?	 Are there enough green spaces? Is there enough outdoor seating? Are these well maintained? Are there enough public spaces? Clean and pleasant? Are the footpaths well maintained? Free from obstructions? Reserved for pedestrians? Well-designed (non-slip, wide enough for wheelchairs, sloping kerbs)? Are there enough pedestrian crossings? Are they safe to use? Are they well-designed (non-slip markings, visual and audio cues, adequate crossing times)? Do drivers give way to pedestrians? Is there a lot of traffic? Are there separate cycle paths? Do people feel safe getting out and about? Are there measures to increase safety (e.g. adequate street lighting)?

What is it like to go into buildings such as government offices, civic buildings such as libraries, or shops?	What is it like to go into buildings such as government offices or shops?	What is it like for older people to go into buildings such as government buildings or shops?	 Are services co-located together? Are they convenient? Are they accessible? Are there special customer service arrangements for older people? Do buildings have adequate signage? Are there seating or rest areas? Are there enabling design features such as ramps, elevators, railings, stairs, lighting, non-slip floors? Are there enough public toilets? Are they well-maintained? Are they accessible?
Transportation			
Older People	Carers	Service Providers	More specifically
Describe your experience using public transport in your community.	Describe the experience of the person you care for in using public transport in their local community.	What is the public transport system like for older people?	 Is it affordable? Costs consistent and clearly displayed? Are services reliable? Are services frequent enough when you want to travel? What about on nights, weekends, and holidays? Are local areas and services accessible? Can you/they get where you/they want to go? Are the routes and connections well-designed? Are buses and trains well maintained? Are they accessible? Is there priority seating and is it respected? Are buses and trains crowded? Do you/they feel safe on the public transport? Are there specialised transport services for older and disabled people? Do drivers stop at designated stops? Do they stop close to the kerb to assist you/older people to get off safely? Are bus drivers courteous to older people? Are transport stops conveniently located? Are they easy to get to? Are they safe, clean, well lit and marked? Is there enough seating and shelter at transport stops? Is information provided about routes, schedules and accessible buses? Is there a community transport service? Are taxis and other rider-share services (e.g. Uber) accessible and affordable? Are drivers helpful and courteous?



Do you drive? What is it like for you to drive in your community?	What is it like for the person you care to drive around the local community?	What is it like for older people to drive around the local community?	 Are roads well-maintained and well lit? What is the traffic flow like? Are roads free of obstructions? Are traffic signs and intersections visible and well placed? Are traffic signs easy to understand? Are there driver education and refresher courses? Are they well promoted? Is there enough parking? Is it conveniently located, close to facilities and safe? Are there drop-off spots? Are there enough? Are they conveniently located? Are they safe to use? Are there priority seniors parking bays and/or drop-off spots for people with special needs? Are there enough?
What alternative transport options are available to you? For example, perhaps a scooter, gopher, cycling or walking.			 Are these parking bays respected? Do you have a motorised scooter/ gopher? Can you use the road safely? Is there a purpose-built pathway? Are there places to leave the scooter in shopping centres, or other places, such as health service facilities or recreational centres? Are there enough gopher charging stations on or near your route? Do you have an electric car? Are there enough recharging stations available? Do you have access to or utilise active transport (walking or cycling) options? Do you feel safe when walking or cycling? What would help you to feel safe (if you use active transport already)? What would help you to feel safe (if you are considering using active transport but have concerns)?
		Are there alternative transport options for older people?	 Are motorised scooters/gophers being used locally? Can they be used safely on the road? Is there a purpose-built pathway? Are there places to leave the scooter in shopping centres, or other places, such as health service facilities or recreational centres? Do older people use active (walking or cycling) transport? If they cycle, are there facilities to lock their bikes?

Housing			
Older People	Carers	Service Providers	More specifically
Tell me about the type of housing you live in.	Tell me about the type of housing the older person you care for lives in.	Tell me about the type of housing older people in the community lives in.	 Is housing affordable in the area? Is housing well constructed? Do you/ they feel comfortable in your home? Is housing well designed for older people, e.g. level surfaces, wide passages, etc? Is the home easy to get around in? Are there enough home maintenance and support services? Are these affordable? Are you/they able to modify your/their home if needed? Are there options and are supplies available and affordable? Do providers understand the needs of older people? Do you/they live close to services and the community? Do you/they feel safe in your/their home? Are you/they able to move about easily? Do you/they feel safe from crime at home?
If your needs change, are there choices for housing to accommodate those needs in your local area?	If the needs of the older person you care for changes, are there choices for housing to accommodate those needs in their local area?	If the needs of older people change, are there choices for housing to accommodate those needs in their local area?	 Are there enough housing options for older people in your area? Can you/they 'rightsize' if you/they wish? Are there enough housing options with appropriate services for older people who are living with dementia or who have other health issues? Are you/they aware of aged care facilities in your neighbourhood or close by, should you/they and/or your/their partner be unable to stay in your/their own home in the future? Have you/they visited any residential facilities in your/their area?



Respect and Inclusion			
Older People	Carers	Service Providers	More specifically
In what ways does your community show, or not show, respect for you as an older person?	In what ways does your community show, or not show, respect for the older person you care for?	In what ways does your community show, or not show, respect for older people?	 Are older people regularly consulted by public, voluntary and commercial service providers on how to serve them better? Are there services and products to suit varying needs and preferences? Are service staff courteous and helpful? Are older people visible in the media? How are they depicted – positively? Without stereotyping? Are older people recognised for their contributions? Are older people respected by younger people?
In what ways does your community include, or not include, you as an older person in activities and events?	In what ways do you think the community includes, or does not include, the older person you care for in activities and events?	In what way do you think the community includes, or does not include, older people in activities and events?	 Do community events attract all generations? Do they accommodate older people's needs and preferences? Are older people included in "family" events? Do schools provide opportunities to learn about ageing and older people? Are older people involved in school activities? Do financially disadvantaged older people have good access to public, voluntary and private services?

Social Participati	on			
Older People	Carers	Service Providers	More specifically	
Tell me about your participation in other activities like education, culture, recreation, or spiritual activities.	Tell me about the participation of the older person you care for in other activities like education, culture, recreation, or spiritual activities.	Tell me about the participation of older people in other activities like education, culture, recreation, or spiritual activities.	 How easily can you/the person you care for/older people socialise in their community? Are activities and events: Affordable – no hidden or extra costs? Conveniently located, accessible, easily accessed by public transport and well lit? Held often enough? Are they at convenient times? Are they held at various locations? Are they interesting and varied to appeal to a range of people? Are they well publicised with good information provided? Is there outreach to include older people at risk of social isolation? 	
Communication a	Communication and Information			
Older People	Carers	Service Providers	More specifically	
What is your experience of getting the information you need in your community, for example, about services or events? This can be information you get by telephone, radio, TV, internet, social media, in print, or in person.	What is the experience of the older person you care for in getting the information they need in their community, for example, about services and events? This can be information they get by telephone, radio, TV, internet, social media, in print, or in person.	What is your experience of older people getting the information they need in the community, for example, about services or events? This can be information they get by telephone, radio, tv, internet, social media, in print, or in person	 Is information provided regularly? Is it distributed widely? Is it easy to understand? Is printed matter appropriate, e.g. the font size and layout? Is there a centralised information source? Are automated telephone answering services clear and easy to follow? Does electronic equipment have large buttons and big lettering? Do you/they own or have access to a smart phone, tablet computer (e.g. ipad) and/or a computer? What about the internet? Is it affordable? Can you access the internet in public places? Is person-to-person service available on request? Is verbal communication promoted to older people? Are older people at risk of social isolation able to get information about services, community events and other matters? 	



Civic Participation and Employment

[This topic may not be relevant for older people who are being cared for by a carer]			
Older People	Carers	Service Providers	More specifically
	Are any of the people you care for doing paid or unpaid voluntary work?		
	[If no people being cared for volunteering or in paid employment, skip this topic]		
Tell me about your experience with paid employment, if you are employed now, or if you are looking for work.	Tell me about the participation of the older person you care for in paid work, if they are employed now, or if they are looking for paid work.	Tell me about the participation of older people in paid work.	 Are qualities of older workers promoted? Are there flexible and appropriately paid opportunities for older workers? Are older workers discriminated against because of age? Are workplaces adapted to meet the needs of disabled people? Are older people encouraged to take up self-employment opportunities? Is training provided for post-retirement options?
Tell me about your participation in public community affairs, like community associations or local government councils.	Tell me about the participation of the person you care for in public community affairs, like community associations or local government councils.	Tell me about the participation of older people in public community affairs, like community associations or local government councils.	 Is membership or participation of older people encouraged? Are older people consulted on key matters?
Tell me about your participation in voluntary work.	Tell about the participation of the older person you care for in voluntary work.	Tell me about the participation of older people in voluntary work.	 Are there flexible options and a range of opportunities to suit your/their different interests? Is information provided on opportunities? Is training/guidance provided? Are volunteers recognised for their efforts? Is compensation provided for personal costs?

Community Support and Health Services			
Older People	Carers	Service Providers	More specifically
What is your experience with the services in the community to help older people?	What experiences to the older person you care for have with services in the community to help older people?	Tell me about the health and community services available to help older people.	 Is there an adequate range of services? Do home care services include: health, personal care and housekeeping? Are the services affordable? Are services well promoted? Is appropriate information provided on services? Are health and community support services conveniently located? Can you get to them via public transport? Are buildings well-constructed and fully accessible? Are retirement villages and residential care facilities located close to services and the community? Is service delivery coordinated? Is the administration simple? Do staff respect older people? Are they trained to serve older people? Does emergency planning consider older people?

Before we finish, are there any other issues or areas we haven't discussed that you want to raise?



Appendix D: Resources

Age-friendly Ambassador

City of Bayswater

Age Friendly Ambassador Program

https://www.bayswater.wa.gov.au/olderadults

Colac Otway Shire Council (Victoria)

Positive Ageing Ambassadors Toolkit

https://www.mav.asn.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/7082/Positive-Ageing-Ambassadors-Toolkit.pdf

Leeds Older People's Forum (UK)

Age Friendly Ambassadors

https://timetoshineleeds.org/friendly-communities/age-friendly-ambassadors

State of Victoria with Macedon Ranges Shire Council

Age-friendly Ambassadors Project

https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/get-involved/for-organisations/online-toolbox/connecting-seniors/age-friendly-ambass

Age-friendly Businesses

City of Greater Geraldton

Seniors User-friendly Business program (SUB)

www.cgg.wa.gov.au/work/doing-business-in-greater-geraldton/geraldton-senior-user-friendly-business-sub-program.aspx

City of Joondalup

Age-friendly Business Checklist

https://www.joondalup.wa.gov.au/kb/resident/make-your-business-age-friendly-4

City of Melville

Melville Age-friendly and Accessible Businesses (MAFAB)

https://www.melvillecity.com.au/our-community/age-friendly-melville/melville-age-friendly-accessible-business-network

Age-friendly Communities – Background

World Health Organisation

Age-friendly World (including information about the Global Network)

https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/

World Health Organisation

Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide

https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/43755

World Health Organisation

Ageing: Healthy ageing and functional ability

https://www.who.int/westernpacific/news/q-a-detail/ageing-healthy-ageing-and-functional-ability

World Health Organisation

World report on ageing and health

https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565042

World Health Organisation

Decade of Healthy Ageing

https://www.who.int/ageing/decade-of-healthy-ageing

https://www.decadeofhealthyageing.org/

Age-friendly Communities Toolkits - Examples

Change dept to Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

Queensland: An Age-Friendly Community Toolkit

https://www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/our-work/seniors/queensland-age-friendly-community/age-friendly-toolkit

Government of South Australia

Age-friendly Neighbourhoods: Guidelines and Toolkits for Local Government https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/resources/age-friendly+neighbourhoods+guidelines+and+toolkit+for+local+government+2012

New South Wales

The Integrated Age-Friendly Toolkit for local government in NSW https://www.lgnsw.org.au/Public/Public/Policy/Ageing-files/Ageing.aspx

Age-related Policy

International Federation on Ageing

https://www.ifa-fiv.org/

Council on the Ageing Western Australia (COTA WA)

https://www.cotawa.org.au/



Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

Umbrella Inc

An organisation that delivers culturally appropriate aged care services. https://www.umbrellacommunitycare.com.au/

Dementia-friendly Communities

Alzheimer's WA

https://www.alzheimerswa.org.au/

Dementia Australia Dementia Friendly Communities

https://www.dementiafriendly.org.au/resources

Dementia-friendly Manjimup

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmoDZBI2XII

Digital Inclusion

Measuring Australia's Digital Divide: The Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2020

https://www.digitalinclusionindex.org.au/

Office of Digital Government

https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/office-of-digital-government

Disability

Disability Access and Inclusion Plans

www.disability.wa.gov.au/business-and-government1/business-and-government/disability-access-and-inclusion-plans/

People with Disability WA (PWdWA)

https://www.pwdwa.org/

Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness

Advocare

https://www.advocare.org.au/

Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse

https://www.apea.org.au/

Commonwealth of Australia

National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australian (Elder Abuse) 2019-2023 https://www.ag.gov.au/RightsAndProtections/protecting-the-rights-of-older-australians/Pages/default.aspx

Elder Abuse Action Australia

https://eaaa.org.au/

Legal Aid WA

https://www.legalaid.wa.gov.au/find-legal-answers/your-rights/elder-abuse

Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre – Older People's Rights Service https://www.nsclegal.org.au/legal-help

Older Person's Advocacy Network

https://opan.com.au/

Western Australia

WA Strategy to Respond to the Abuse of Older People (Elder Abuse) 2019-2029 https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-communities/elder-abuse-strategy

Engaging Stakeholders

Bang the Table

How to ask engaging questions (downloadable guidelines) https://go.bangthetable.com/ebook/engaging-questions

Focus Groups

Carey, M. A., & Asbury, J. E. (2016). Focus group research (Vol. 9). Routledge.

Kamberelis, G., & Dimitriadis, G. (2013). Focus groups: From structured interviews to collective conversations. Routledge.

Krueger, R.A. (1989). Focus groups: a practical guide for applied research / by Richard A. Krueger. Sage Publications

Rabiee, F. (2004). Focus-group interview and data analysis. Proceedings of the nutrition society, 63(4), 655-660

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Fatemeh_Rabiee/publication/7906250_Focus_ Group_interview_and_data_analysis/links/0deec52f261efa277c000000/Focus-Group-interview-and-data-analysis.pdf



Sallee, M. W., & Flood, J. T. (2012). Using qualitative research to bridge research, policy, and practice. Theory into practice, 51(2), 137-144.

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00405841.2012.662873

Legislation

Western Australian Acts and Regulations

https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/

LGBTI+

GLBTI Rights in Ageing Inc (GRAI)

https://www.grai.org.au/

Local Government

Department of Sport, Local Government and Cultural Industries

Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting

https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/local-government/strengthening-local-government/intergrated-planning-and-reporting

Local Government Professionals: WA:

LG Professionals WA provides a range of services for members and local government professionals.

https://www.lgprofessionalswa.org.au/

WA Local Government Association

https://walga.asn.au/

Monitoring and Evaluation

Government of Canada

Age-friendly Communities Evaluation Guide: Using Indicators to measure progress https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/aging-seniors/friendly-communities-evaluation-guide-using-indicators-measure-progress.html

World Health Organisation

Measuring the age-friendliness of cities: a guide to using core indicators https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241509695

Statistics

Australian Bureau of Statistics

https://www.abs.gov.au/

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)

https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/seifa

Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development Goals - Australia

https://sdgs.org.au/

Sustainable Development Goals

https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html

United Nations

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/



