



Baw Baw Shire Council
Positive Ageing Strategy
2015

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Executive Summary

The ageing of the population is a worldwide phenomenon. Australia is following this same trend and at the local level, the projected population of people aged 60 and older will double from 2011 (10,019 persons) to 2031 (20,281). As the Baw Baw Shire Council population changes, community services and infrastructure will require change to adapt to the needs of this demographic group. To achieve this, there needs to be an agreed understanding of the key issues and the opportunities that may be present within the municipality. Additionally there needs to be an agreed way forward that involves all the key stakeholders to ensure the best possible outcomes for both older people and the broader communities of the Baw Baw Shire Council.

The Positive Ageing Strategy contributes to the implementation of the Council Plan 2013-2017, which is the strategic document based on the key priorities identified by the Council, and the aspirations for the future as expressed by the community representatives who participated in BawBaw 2050. Council's vision for 'happy, healthy people sharing prosperity and knowledge from living sustainably and in harmony with our rural identity, thriving villages, productive and inspiring landscapes' is the same vision guiding this strategy.

Council recognises the importance of the involvement of older people in the design and delivery of age-friendly initiatives, programs and policy. Thus a key action within the Positive Ageing Strategy is establishing a Positive Ageing Advisory Committee to oversee the strategy and report on outcomes throughout the life of the strategy.

Council's seven focus areas are founded upon the eight World Health Organisation (WHO) Age-friendly Cities focus areas.

The Positive Ageing Strategy and the role of the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee will be regularly reviewed in line with the Commonwealth's Aged Care Reform, *Living Longer, Living Better*.

Introduction

Baw Baw Shire Council's Positive Ageing Strategy 2015 aims to promote the wellbeing of older people within the municipality and develop age-friendly communities with policies, services and structures that support and enable people to age in place by:

- recognising the wide range of capacities and resources among older people;
- anticipating and responding flexibly to ageing-related needs and preferences;
- respecting their decisions and lifestyle choices;
- protecting those who are most vulnerable; and
- promoting their inclusion in and contribution to all areas of community life¹.

Focusing on people aged 60 and older encompasses a diverse range of individuals with different life experiences, wants and needs. Therefore an underlying theme of this strategy is valuing self-reliance, independence and capacity to make one's own decisions; enabling people to take responsibility for their own personal growth and development.

Council recognises the importance of the involvement of older people in the design and delivery of age-friendly initiatives, programs and policy. Thus a key action within the Positive Ageing Strategy is establishing a Positive Ageing Advisory Committee who will provide advice and assist Council to implement the strategy.

As the focus areas and actions contained within the Positive Ageing Strategy are wide-ranging it is recommended that the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee have key focus areas based upon community priorities.

The Positive Ageing Strategy contributes to the implementation of the Council Plan 2013-2017, which is the strategic document based on the key priorities identified by the Council, and the aspirations for the future as expressed by the community representatives who participated in BawBaw 2050. Council has other strategic plans that contribute to age-friendly communities such as our Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and Disability Action Plan. It is intended that the Positive Ageing Strategy will complement rather than duplicate, these other strategies. Council will also be guided by the World Health Organisation Age-friendly Cities Framework.

¹ WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 5.

So what is 'Active Ageing' and 'Positive Ageing'

Active Ageing is the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age². Active ageing allows people to realise their potential for physical, social, and mental well-being throughout the life course and to participate in society, while providing them with adequate protection, security and care when they need assistance³.

Positive ageing is a term used to describe the process of maintaining a positive attitude, feeling good about yourself, keeping fit and healthy, and engaging fully in life as you age⁴. Those who age positively live longer and healthier lives, and enjoy a better quality of life.



² WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 5.

³ WHO (2002) Active Ageing: A policy framework, 12.

⁴ www.psychology.org.au/publications/tip_sheets/ageing/

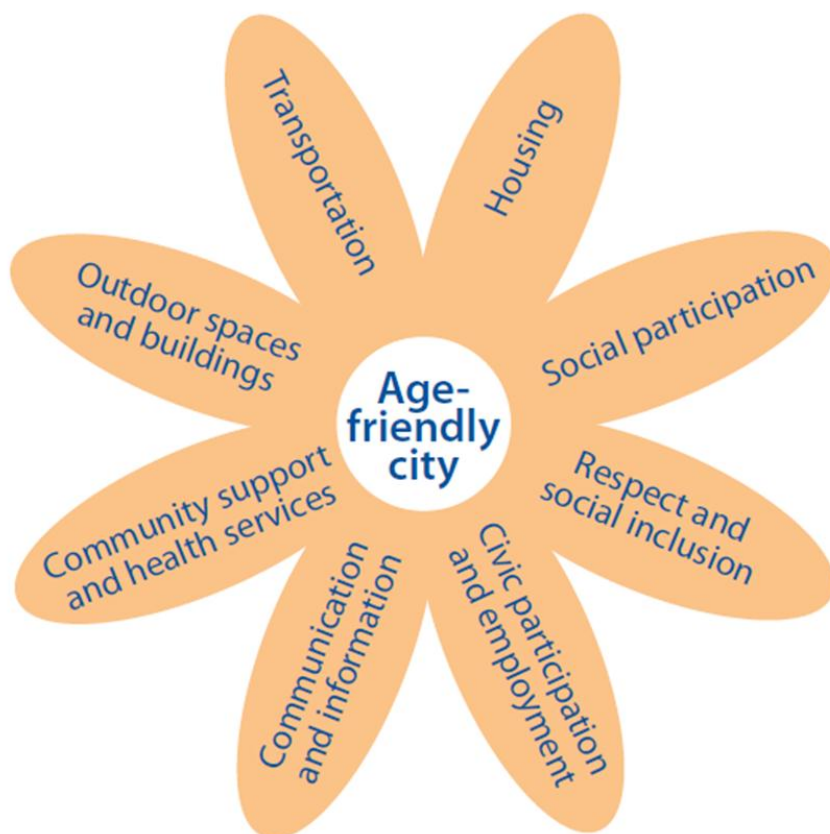
Policy Context

Developing age-friendly communities requires a whole of Council, whole of Government and whole of community approach. Thus development of this strategy has given consideration to priority areas outlined in global, national and state policies.

Global

The World Health Organisation (WHO) developed the Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide (2007) providing a framework to optimise opportunities for health, participation and security to enhance quality of life as people age. The guide built upon strategies to improve the experience of ageing and to improve environments for health and active ageing developed in the Active Ageing: A Policy framework (2002). The WHO's eight focus areas have influenced Council's focus areas.

Figure 1: Age-friendly city focus areas⁵



⁵ WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 9.

National – Living Longer, Living Better

In 2011, the Productivity Commission released its report on the aged care sector, Caring for Older Australians. The Federal Government responded in 2012 with its Living Longer, Living Better policy. One of the key aims is ensuring older people have more choice and control about their care, including staying in their home for as long as possible as care needs increase, if they wish to do so. Thus the aged care policy is based on the consumer-directed philosophy recommended by the Productivity Commission.

State - Seniors Count

The Victorian Government supporting age-friendly policies and programs supported the development of Seniors Count! – the Seniors Participation Action Plan 2014 - 2019. The plan was developed on behalf of the Government by the Ministerial Advisory Committee for Senior Victorians, led by the independent Commissioner for Senior Victorians, Gerard Mansour.

Seniors Count! celebrates the remarkable achievement of having longer, healthier and more secure lives that see many live beyond 80, 90 or even 100. It also recognises the care and support that may be needed. Importantly, it approaches the challenges of ageing with respect and dignity. Seniors Count! priority areas include:

- Address the digital divide of many seniors not connected to the internet
- Support the mature age workforce
- Improve understanding of health and ageing
- Create more age-friendly communities and
- Promote life planning for seniors.

Seniors Count! will also support seniors to:

- Have their voices respected
- Keep healthy and well
- Stay active within age-friendly communities
- Participate in work, learning and life planning
- Share their skills and contribute to the community.

Demographic information

Baw Baw Shire Council is a large peri-urban municipality, with an area of about 4,000 square kilometres. Baw Baw is a predominantly rural area largely used for dairy farming and agriculture and is more densely populated along the Princes Highway and Gippsland railway line⁶. Baw Baw Shire Council is in the top 5 growth 2011 – 2031 Regional Local Government areas for both largest (000s) and fastest (% per annum) growing⁷.

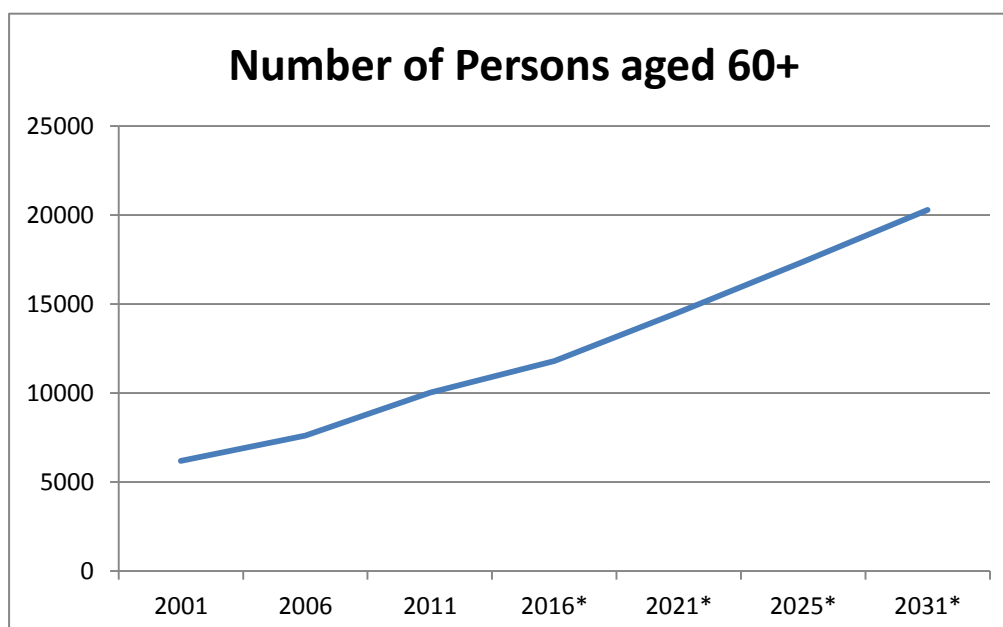
As shown in Table 1 the projected population of people aged 60 and older will double from 2011 (10,019 persons) to 2031 (20,281).

Table 1: Number of person aged 60 + and as a percentage of total population

Year	Persons aged 60+	Total population	Person aged 60+ as % of total population
2001	6195	26504	23.4%
2006	7603	37180	20.4%
2011	10019	43389	23.1%
2016*	11797	48489	24.3%
2021*	14533	56352	25.8%
2025*	17376	65441	26.6%
2031*	20281	74676	27.2%

*projected

Victoria in Future 2014 – Every fifth year from 2011-2031 – population by five-year age group and sex; Census 1996 and 2001



Victoria in Future 2014 – Every fifth year from 2011-2031 – population by five-year age group and sex; Census 1996 and 2001

⁶ <http://profile.id.com.au/baw-baw/about>

⁷ Victoria in Future (2014) Population and Household projections to 2051, p1.

Table 2: Demographic breakdown by age and gender

Age group	Male	% of those aged 60+	Female	% of those aged 60+	Total	% of those aged 60+
60-69	2845	26%	2888	26%	5733	52%
70-79	1756	16%	1697	15%	3453	31%
80+	758	7%	1155	10%	1913	17%
Total	5359	48%	5740	52%	11099	100%

Social Health Atlas of Australia: Victoria data by Local Government Area (2013)

Table 3: Age pensions (people aged 65 years and over)

	Age pensioners	Persons aged 65 years and over	% age pensioners
Australia	2,421,390	3,338,115	72.5
Victoria	594,880	838,988	70.9
Victoria excluding Greater Melbourne	192,885	255,463	75.5
Baw Baw Shire Council	5,850	8,024	72.9

Social Health Atlas of Australia: Victoria data by Local Government Area (2013)

A changing population

As these long-term comparisons demonstrate, our population is ageing:

- In Victoria in 1901 for everyone over 60 there were 4.3 children under 15
- In 1954 – the birth year of a 60-year-old in 2014 – there were 2.1 children for every senior
- In 2014 there are more seniors than children in Victoria – 0.9 children for every senior⁸.
- In 2013 there are more seniors (60 plus) than children (under 15) in Baw Baw Shire Council – 0.79 children for every senior⁹.
- In 2031 there will be more seniors (60 plus) than children (under 15) in Baw Baw Shire Council – 0.71 children for every senior¹⁰

⁸ Seniors Count! 2014–2019 Victoria's Seniors Participation Action Plan, p 2.

⁹ Social Health Atlas of Australia: Victoria – Data by Local Government Area (2014).

¹⁰ Victoria In Future 2014 – Every fifth year from 2011-2031

Action Plan

Council's Action Plan contains seven focus areas, which are founded upon the eight World Health Organisation (WHO) Age-friendly Cities focus areas.

Focus Area 1 - Outdoor Spaces and Buildings



The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life of older people and affect their ability to age in place¹¹. Baw Baw Shire Council residents value the attractive physical environment of the municipality such as our Civic Parks and the various Council facilities and buildings e.g. Libraries, West Gippsland Arts Centre and Senior Citizen Centres. Baw Baw Shire Council is committed to investing in quality and affordable infrastructure to ensure that outdoor spaces and building remain relevant and accessible.

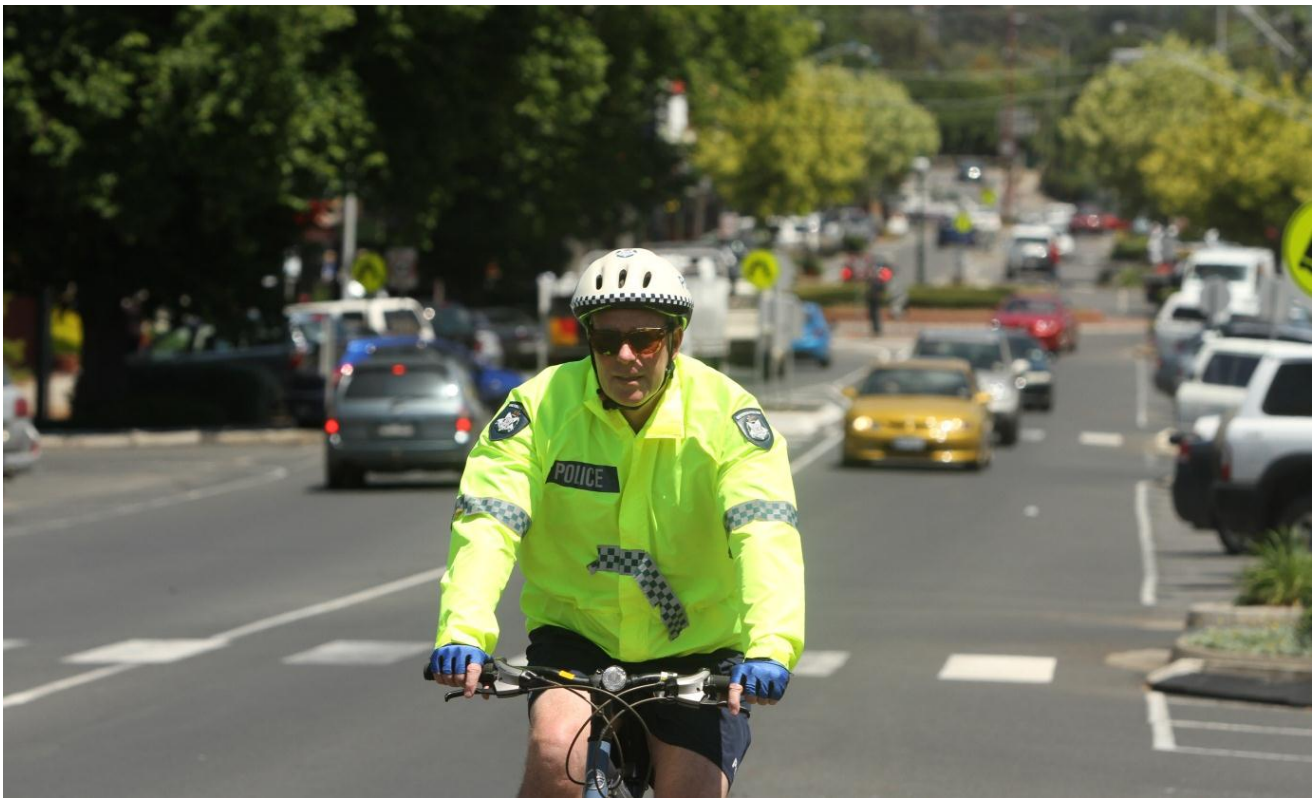
1.1 To promote the quality of life and independence of older people through the ongoing investment in community infrastructure and outdoor spaces that are inclusive, safe and accessible

1.1.1 To continue to invest in quality and affordable infrastructure with consideration to all relevant guidelines and legislation (e.g. WHO Age Friendly Framework and Disability Discrimination Act) including but not limited to community buildings, public toilets, footpaths, parks, seating etc.

1.1.2 Design public spaces that are safe and accessible and encourage physical activity and social interaction

¹¹ WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 12.

Focus Area 2 - Transport



Transportation, including accessible and affordable public transport, is a key factor influencing active ageing¹². Being able to move about the community determines social and civic participation and access to community and health services¹³. Council is committed to supporting individuals who experience transport disadvantage through the ongoing development of the Community Bus and Volunteer Transport program. Council will continue to advocate for ongoing improvements to public transport.

2.1 Maintain awareness of and respond to transport related issues impacting older people within the municipality

2.1.1 Continue to work with public transport authorities to advocate for improvements to public transport connectivity and infrastructure

2.1.2 Regularly review and develop the community bus services to reflect current and emerging needs of eligible residents

2.2 Increase the ability of older people to use all modes of transport so that they can move about safely, retaining their independence and social connections within the community

2.2.1 Expand our existing volunteer driver network and services to offer a greater range of affordable transport options

¹² WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 20.

¹³ WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 20.

2.2.2 Review and promote recharge locations within the municipality for people using electric scooters

2.2.3 Promote safe electric scooter use

2.2.4 Promote local mobility maps

2.2.5 Promote and facilitate walking and cycling as a healthy transport options

2.2.6 Support ongoing development of local walking groups

Focus Area 3 - Housing



Council recognises that there is a link between appropriate housing and access to community and social services in influencing the independence and quality of life of older people¹⁴. Council supports housing that allows older people to ‘age in place’ within the community to which they belong.

3.1 To advocate for appropriate housing within the municipality, which reflect the needs of an ageing population

3.1.1 Facilitate representation of older people in the development of housing strategies, policies and initiatives through the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee

3.1.2 Ensure housing design facilitates continued integration of older people into the community

3.2 Support older people to ‘age in place’ either in their own homes or in residential care

3.2.1 In partnership with the Commonwealth and State Governments ensure availability of quality support services to enable people to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible

3.2.2 Work with local services to support older people in vulnerable housing

3.2.3 Provide information to assist older people and their families to plan for and make informed decisions about maintenance, modification and residential care

¹⁴ WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 30.

Focus Area 4 - Respect, Inclusion and Participation



Social participation and social support are strongly connected to good health and well-being throughout life¹⁵. Participating in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities in the community, as well as with the family, allows older people to continue to exercise their competence, to enjoy respect and esteem, and to maintain or establish supportive and caring relationships¹⁶.

Older people report experiencing conflicting types of behaviour and attitudes towards them¹⁷. On one hand, many feel they are often respected, recognized and included, while on the other, they experience lack of consideration in the community, in services and in the family¹⁸. This clash is explained in terms of a changing society and behavioural norms, lack of contact between generations, and widespread ignorance about ageing and older people¹⁹.

Council will continue to support the social inclusion and participation of older people in the community in a range of ways including a focus on intergenerational social interaction and using emerging technologies to connect and communicate.

¹⁵ WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 38.

¹⁶ WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 38.

¹⁷ WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 45.

¹⁸ WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 45.

¹⁹ WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 45.

4.1 Promote intergenerational understanding and respect

4.1.1 Recognise the role and contribution of grandparents

4.1.2 Develop and deliver intergeneration projects for people of all ages to share interests and skills

4.1.3 Promote Libraries as community hubs encouraging disparate age groups e.g. young mum groups, early years etc.

4.1.4 Promote and support the nomination for Victorian Senior of the Year Awards

4.1.5 Continue to develop a library of positive images of older people which can be used in Council promotions and publications

4.2 Increase the level of inclusion and social connectedness of older people within the community

4.2.1 Continue to encourage and promote local groups delivering affordable and accessible activities

4.2.2 Facilitate the annual Seniors Festival.

4.2.3 Provide ongoing support for community activities within the municipality e.g. Senior Citizen Centres, community gardens and U3A.

4.2.4 Utilise technology where appropriate

4.2.5 Recognise and support the role of Carers

4.2.6 Provide opportunities for older people with dementia and their Carer to be involved in community activities

4.2.7 Investigate strategies to increase inclusiveness for older CALD and Aboriginal communities

4.2.8 Advocate and seek funding for health and wellbeing initiatives that focus on social connectedness

Focus Area 5 - Civic Participation and employment



Older people do not stop contributing to their communities on retirement²⁰. Many continue to provide unpaid and voluntary work for their families and communities²¹. Many older people enjoy working and would like to continue working after they could retire and some do²². Council will recognise just how much older people contribute, through work, volunteering and care giving to community life. Council will also provide options for older people to continue to contribute to their communities, through paid employment or voluntary work if they so choose, and to be engaged in the political process.

5.1 Increase civic participation for older people within the community

5.1.1 Establish a Positive Ageing Advisory Committee

5.1.2 Ensure older people are recognized and valued for their:-

- work within the community
- leadership roles
- volunteering

5.1.3 Continue to promote and support U3A through access to affordable community venues

5.2 Increase employment opportunities for older people with the community

5.2.1 Support older Council employees to transition to retirement through flexible working arrangements and maintenance of employment conditions

²⁰ WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 51.

²¹ WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 51.

²² WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 51.

5.2.2 Consult and work with local businesses to understand and promote mature age worker employment

5.2.3 Advocate to remove barriers to employment for older people

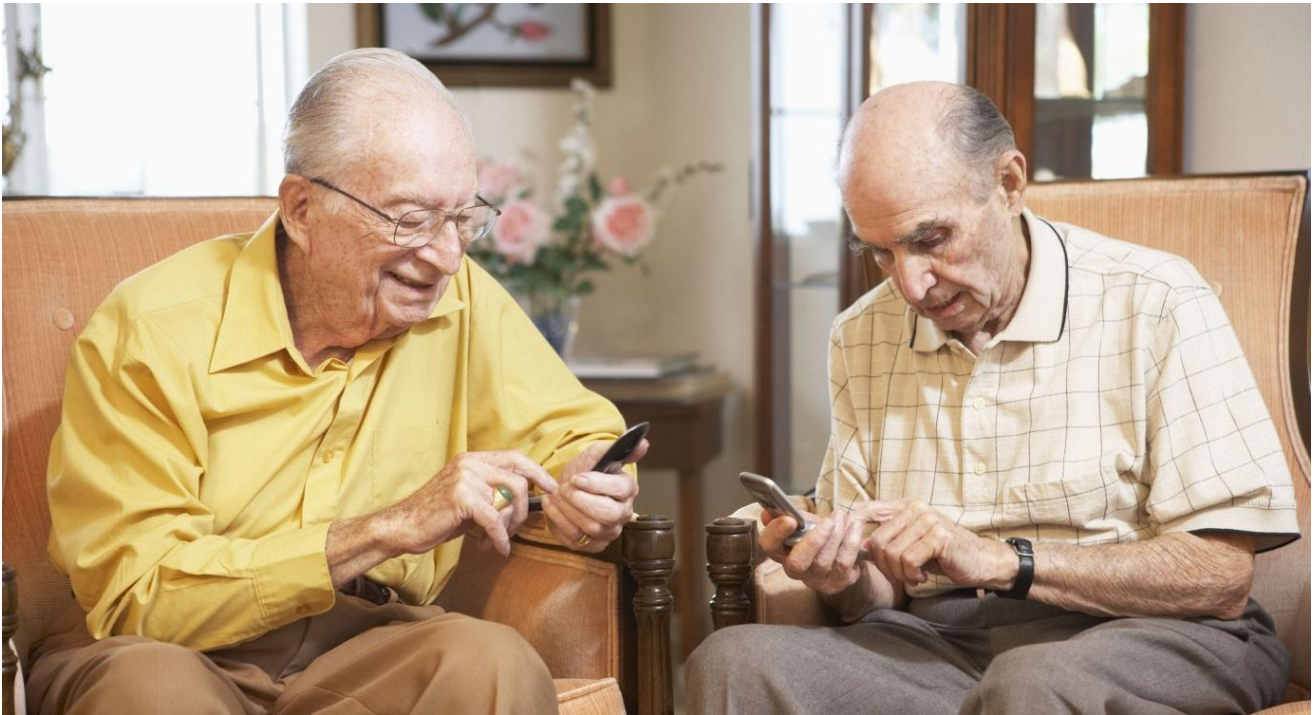
5.2.4 Partner with local businesses to promote and advocate for age friendly businesses

5.3 Play an active role in the provision and development of volunteering opportunities

5.1.1 Promote volunteering database and opportunities

5.1.2 Provide training opportunities for older volunteers

Focus Area 6 - Communication and Information



Staying connected with events and people and getting timely, practical information to manage life and meet personal needs is vital for active ageing²³. Rapidly evolving information and communication technologies are both welcomed as useful tools and criticized as instruments of social exclusion²⁴. Council will continue to provide relevant information that is readily accessible to older people with varying capacities and resources.

6.1 Develop and disseminate information to older people in a variety of formats in response to need

6.1.1 Continue to develop and use a variety of innovative, diverse and inclusive approaches to disseminate information to older people including written and broadcast media.

6.1.2 Ensure website meets AAA requirements

6.1.3 Facilitate annual seminars on topics of interest:

- elder abuse
- financial planning
- housing options
- health and well-being
- dying with dignity

6.1.4 Promote community programs enabling older persons to learn about and access technology

²³ WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 60.

²⁴ WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 60.

Focus Area 7 - Community and Health Services



Health and support services are vital to maintaining health and independence in the community²⁵. Council recognises the importance of community care in enabling people to maintain their independence and to 'age in place'. In partnership with Federal and State Governments, Council will continue to provide a range of basic support services.

7.1 Promote the health, wellbeing and independence of older people in their community

7.1.1 Continue to plan for the needs of an ageing population

7.1.2 Ensure services are well coordinated through collaborative partnerships e.g. Baw Baw Coordinated Care, Primary Care Partnership

7.1.3 Continue to develop and implement a wellness and reablement approach in the delivery of Support Services

7.1.4 Work in partnership with the Commonwealth and State Governments regarding the Living Longer, Living Better aged care reforms including the Home and Community Care (HACC) transition

7.1.5 Provide opportunities for feedback from service users to facilitate ongoing evaluation and development of Council services

7.1.6 Support and promote Council and community programs to encourage physical and mental activity for older people of all abilities

7.1.7 Advocate for adequate community health and support services

²⁵ WHO (2007) Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 66.