Age Friendly City Strategy
2015-2016 to 2019-2020
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Mayor's message

It is with great pleasure that I present Wodonga Council's *Age Friendly City Strategy 2015-2016 to 2019-2020.*

This strategy comes at a very important time for our city.

Wodonga is quickly becoming a significant regional city and key contributor to Victoria's economy, liveability and vision for a 'state of cities'.

Wodonga's residential population is fast approaching 40,000 and the city services a catchment of 180,000 people, making it the largest city in North East Victoria.

Our central business area is rapidly changing and we are welcoming new residents at a rate that sees us currently named the fastest growing regional city in Victoria.

In line with national and international population trends, forecasts show that the percentage of our city's population aged 55 years and over will rise from 23.6 per cent in 2011 to 27.5 per cent in 2036.

This strategy has been developed to ensure that the council adequately plans its delivery of programs, services, facilities and infrastructure to accommodate our ageing community.

It also highlights the collaborations and partnerships that are critical in facilitating opportunities for achieving healthy, active and positive ageing.

As a council, we recognise the significant contribution that our older residents make to the fabric of our community and we are committed to empowering them to lead a long and active life.

We believe that this strategy provides a high-level and holistic overview of the opportunities and challenges that come from an ageing population.

We know, through both feedback from our community and our research, that the most important work a council can do to enable this is to facilitate opportunities in the areas of health, participation and security.

By framing this strategy around our three council plan focus areas of ‘Our People, Our City, Our Future’ we have addressed issues and opportunities relating to: healthy and active living; accessibility, safety and mobility in the built and natural environment; and employment, participatory and lifelong learning.

We look forward to implementing this strategy and achieving outcomes that will ensure our older residents continue to be highly valued members of our community.

Cr Rodney Wangman
Wodonga Mayor
Executive summary

Wodonga’s older people make a significant contribution to the fabric of the community. Providing opportunities for health, participation and security ensure older residents are given the best chance to lead a long and active life.

Along with the rest of the world, Wodonga’s population is ageing, meaning a greater proportion of our residents will be aged over 55 years in 2036 than there were in 2011. To ensure the city accommodates this growth in the aged population, significant planning needs to be undertaken. For the purpose of this strategy, older people are defined as people over 55 years.

Feedback from our community and service providers, along with policy direction from the three levels of government, research into best practice and the analysis of social demographic trends have all informed the development of this strategy.

This Age Friendly City Strategy outlines Wodonga Council’s priorities in making Wodonga an age friendly city and is structured around a framework of the three pillars that align with the Wodonga Council Plan 2013-2014 to 2016-2017: Our People, Our City, Our Future. The aim of the strategy is to work towards ensuring that our city supports and promotes healthy, active and positive ageing.

The strategy highlights how we can maximise our opportunities while dealing with the challenges that emerge as a result of an ageing and growing population. The strategy looks at ageing as a ‘life course’ that occurs over a period of time with needs, expectations and aspirations changing as people continue to age over time.

The strategy reinforces the need for a collaborative and collective approach that draws in all levels of government, community organisations, the private sector and the community. Furthermore, it requires a ‘whole of council’ approach to ensure that planning, development and delivery is well thought out, diverse in its thinking and takes into consideration multi-faceted approaches.

The three strategic objectives that have emerged and have informed the development of the strategy are:

- **To advocate for, and provide access to a range of opportunities that promote healthy and active living by older people.**

- **To work towards the creation of a sustainable built and natural environment that enhances and supports accessibility, safety and mobility for our older people across the city.**

- **As Wodonga continues to grow as a regional city, encourage and support opportunities for older people to realise employment, participatory and lifelong learning opportunities that meet their needs and interests.**

Implementation of the strategy will occur over a five year period, with an action plan and specific evaluation methodologies to monitor its effectiveness. The progress with these actions and indicators will be reported to the council yearly and results posted through a range of mediums out into the community.

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1. Profile.id
2. Stein, C and Moritz, I. *A life course perspective of maintaining independence in older age*
Introduction

What is an age friendly city?

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), an age friendly city “encourages active ageing by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age”\(^3\). To do this, a city needs to adapt its structures and services to be inclusive of older people.

This inclusivity is dependent on a whole of community effort relying on partnerships with individuals, businesses, community organisations and all levels of government. Through the development of this plan Wodonga Council aims to engage, empower and strengthen the community to encourage co-operative and collective practices that celebrate and embrace the contribution older people make to the liveability of our community.

Why is this strategy important?

Wodonga's older people make a significant contribution to the fabric of our community. To ensure that our older community members have opportunities for health, participation and security, planning must be undertaken to focus our advocacy efforts and resources into areas which will have the most positive impact.

Ensuring our older community is valued in our community is particularly important in the context of the global ageing population. The Australian Government’s 2015 Intergenerational Report has found that the number of Australians aged 65 and over is projected to more than double by 2054-2055, with 1 in 1000 people projected to be aged over 100\(^4\). In 1975, this was 1 in 10,000. At a local level, the percentage of Wodonga's population aged 55 years and over will rise from 23.6 per cent in 2011 to 27.5 per cent in 2036\(^5\).

How has it been developed?

This strategy was developed using the following methodologies:

- Research into best practice;
- Review of Australian and Victorian government policy and strategy documents;
- Review of the council’s related plans and strategies;
- Outcomes from the review of the Wodonga – Living Longer, Loving Life Strategy 2009-2013;
- Discussions with and feedback from relevant service providers and government representatives;
- Analysis of key social demographic trends; and,
- Feedback from our community.

The culmination of this work has resulted in a number of key issues and opportunities being identified that has informed the development of the plan and actions.

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\(^3\) World Health Organisation, *Global Age Friendly Cities: A Guide*, page 1  
\(^4\) Australian Government, *2015 Intergenerational Report*, page 1  
\(^5\) Forecast.id
Who are our older citizens?

Current age groups of our older residents

Wodonga has a lower percentage of its population aged 55 years and over (23.6 per cent) compared to both regional Victoria (30.9 per cent) and Australia (25.6 per cent).

Age groups - percentage of population

Source: Profile.id
Forecast change in age structure to 2036

In line with national and international population trends, forecasts show that the percentage of the city’s population aged 55 years and over will rise from 23.6 per cent in 2011 to 27.5 per cent in 2036.

Source: Profile.id

“Different activities for your health, socialising” are important.
In which areas of Wodonga do our older residents live?

The Melrose area currently has the highest number of residents aged 55 years and over (1804), while Killara-Bandiana has the lowest (44). Forecast mapping shows that the area with the greatest increase in population between 2011 and 2036 will be Wodonga South, with an increase of 1087 persons. Wodonga West is only slightly behind this growth with an increase of 1084 persons between 2011 and 2036.

By 2036, the majority of residents aged 55 years and over will live in the south-west corridor of Wodonga, comprising the areas of Melrose, Wodonga South and Wodonga West. These areas have the highest level of existing housing developments, with future development occurring primarily to the south and east of Wodonga. Ensuring appropriate infrastructure and services to these areas will be critical in ensuring positive outcomes for the city’s older residents.
Policy context

International

The WHO has developed an age friendly cities guide that helps cities to plan their delivery of services, programs and infrastructure to meet the needs of older people.

The guide highlights eight domains that cities and communities should address:
1. The built environment;
2. Transport;
3. Housing;
4. Social participation;
5. Respect and social inclusion;
6. Civic participation and employment;
7. Communication; and,
8. Community support and health services.

Australia

The Australian Government released its National Strategy for an Ageing Australia in 2001. The strategy sets goals and actions against five key areas:

1. Retirement income system;
2. A changing workforce;
3. Attitude, lifestyle and community support;
4. Health throughout life – healthy ageing; and,
5. World class care.

Victoria

There are two main policy frameworks that the Victorian Government is committed to delivering that contribute to a healthy population:

- The Victorian Health Priorities Framework 2012–2022 lays out “a clear, coordinated agenda for the future of the entire Victorian health system. It provides principles to guide decision making and prioritisation of innovation, investment and actions”. The framework is the basis for three supporting plans: Metropolitan Health Plan, Rural and Regional Health Plan and Health Capital and Resources Plan and the improvement of services for older community is one of the critical elements of this framework; and,

- The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2011–2015 “aims to improve the health and wellbeing of all Victorians by engaging communities in prevention, and by strengthening systems for health protection, health promotion and preventive healthcare across all sectors and all levels of government”.

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7 Australian Government, National Strategy for An Ageing Australia
Role of local government

Local governments across the state will be faced with both challenges and opportunities as a result of the changing ageing demographics over the next 15 to 20 years. The council is in the position of being able to influence quality of life outcomes through its leadership and advocacy, and policy and planning decisions that reflect considerations of the needs and aspirations of older people in the city.

Policy and planning

The Wodonga Council Plan 2013-2014 to 2016-2017 has been developed to guide the actions of the council for the four years of the plan. The plan identifies the council’s mission as “We will strengthen our community in all that we do”\textsuperscript{10}.

The council plan has been developed around three key areas – Our People, Our City and Our Future. It is a goal of the ‘Our People’ area to “promote positive and active ageing in our community”\textsuperscript{11}. The development of this Age Friendly City Strategy was identified as an action in the council plan. This strategy follows on from the existing Wodonga – Living Longer, Loving Life Strategy 2009-2013. The outcomes achieved are detailed later in this strategy.

In addition to the council plan, the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 requires all Victorian councils to develop and implement a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. This plan guides local governments’ actions to improving the health and wellbeing of all residents and links to the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2011-2015\textsuperscript{12}. This plan is incorporated into the council plan.

When building a healthy and sustainable environment for older people it will promote and support the health and wellbeing of all people in the city. All ages benefit from an environment that is healthy, well planned and sustainable as well as providing for intergenerational engagement and participation. Wodonga is in the unique position in that it can plan for strong growth in the ageing population in not only the growth areas but also within the CBA redevelopment.

Leadership and advocacy

Local government has a role in reinforcing the values of the community and in providing opportunity for older people to participate and contribute in a way that is meaningful and engaging. As Wodonga continues to grow as a regional city, a key opportunity is harnessing the skills and business acumen of its older population who are still wanting to stay employed and engaged. Council continues to play a leading role in working to attract a diverse range of business and industry that increases employment opportunities for our older citizens.

Through its leadership and advocacy role local government is in a position to work with all levels of government to ensure commitments to, and the needs of, older people are planned for and met to enable every opportunity to realise quality of life outcomes.

Council is well positioned to lobby levels of government at a Federal and State level for funding, grants, services and programs.

\textsuperscript{10} Wodonga Council Plan 2013-2014 to 2016-2017, page 9
\textsuperscript{11} Wodonga Council Plan 2013-2014 to 2016-2017, page 17
\textsuperscript{12} Wodonga Council Plan 2013-2014 to 2016-2017, page 14
Ensuring that all levels of government continue to deliver policy that is relevant and works towards an integrated and regulated system of aged care services, allied health services and programs is critical if there is to be a commitment to equity and access and an emphasis on promoting healthy, well connected and independent outcomes for older people.
Role of other stakeholders in the community

The role of other stakeholders in creating an inclusive and safe community for our older residents cannot be underestimated. It is important that these stakeholders understand the elements that contribute to positive outcomes for older residents.

Family, friends and neighbours

Families play a key role in ensuring older relatives keep active and engaged in the community, and in many cases family members take on the role of primary carer for older parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles. For many older and ageing people, the presence of family provides a major social and psychological support system.

Neighbours and friends are also critical in maintaining the physical and mental health of older residents including increased feeling of safety and security. Neighbourhood interactions, spaces and activities all contribute to a feeling of belonging, connectedness and place for older people.

“I am lucky to have great friends and walking the dogs each day is a bonus ... chatting with others and feeling connected.”

13 International Journal of Business and Social Science Vol. 1 No. 3; December 2010
Service providers

As well as those who are personally close to older residents, service providers (particularly in the health sector) play a vital role in an older person’s life.

Service providers can play a leadership role by working with the council to identify key issues for older people that can then be used as a lobbying and advocacy platform to inform and influence other levels of government.

Preventative health and health promotion is key in placing a greater emphasis on long term health outcomes for older people in the city. A key opportunity that presents itself through health promotion and preventative health is in keeping older people healthy longer and as a result delaying or avoiding disability and dependence.

In providing choice, flexibility and linkages across the care system, service providers are able to work towards meeting the increasingly diverse care needs and preferences of our older and ageing people. A key role of service providers in our community is to deliver their services within a system of care that enables older people to live to their fullest in the home and community of their choice.

“Gentle exercise for pensioners (strength and flexibility program)” is a service that is required.
Developers and investors

Developers and investors can influence the accessibility and design of housing, housing estates, community facilities and shopping precincts. They play an important role in the planning and delivery of neighbourhoods that are age friendly, sustainable, affordable, and enhances intergenerational social engagement for residents. Such developments contribute towards improving quality of life outcomes for older people and consequently significance to the whole of community.
The following is a summary of the key priority areas identified in the development of the previous strategy and how the council has worked to address each area over the past five years. In addition, the council has lobbied all levels of government regarding some specific issues listed below that affect our older citizens:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority area</th>
<th>Action to date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved CBD and shopping precincts</td>
<td>There has been planning and development undertaken in the CBD that has worked to improve pedestrian access and movement, and to encourage a diverse shopping experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ageing community buildings</td>
<td>Works have been undertaken to improve the aesthetics and functionality of community buildings across the city.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing/accommodation (diversity, affordability and independence)</td>
<td>Work with a range of developers and aged care providers to attract various housing options, including independent living units. Respite care facility at Uniting Care established.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independence (HACC, education/social programs)</td>
<td>A range of programs conducted through community centres, libraries and a range of providers. HACC continues to be delivered, increasing older people's ability to stay at home longer. Senior Celebrations and other intergenerational events are strongly supported by the council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information (readability, access to)</td>
<td>Website payments are occurring and information in more reader-friendly print.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical services (preventative health initiatives and improved access to GPs)</td>
<td>There has been an increase in GPs across the city. Public dental chairs have been implemented at Gateway Community Health. Healthy Together Wodonga has introduced a number of healthy initiatives relating to preventative health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety, health and wellbeing</td>
<td>The council works with a number of organisations, for example, Gateway Community Health, and uses the Healthy Together Wodonga initiative to promote and make accessible physical activity programs. The council has continued to work with a number of key stakeholder groups to focus on safety, such as VicPol, Neighbourhood Watch and the community safety committee. Planning of the city considers safety by design elements to increase safety and surveillance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental leadership</td>
<td>Several strategies developed that focus on sustainability. The council has worked with businesses and community groups to enhance parks and reserves. Tree planting programs have been undertaken annually. Water saving practices have been implemented by the council's parks and gardens team.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active transport</td>
<td>Active transport forms part of the Wodonga Integrated Transport Strategy and is a key outcome of Healthy Together Wodonga. CityLife is used to promote active travel. A range of initiatives are being delivered that promote active travel. There is a good network of walking/cycling paths across the city. Connectivity is planned for and is being implemented over time.</td>
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What did our community tell us?

A community survey was conducted in early 2015, with over 108 Wodonga residents aged 55 years and over participating in the survey. More females (76 per cent) than males (24 per cent) responded to the survey and the majority of respondents (82 per cent) live in their own home. Pensioners made up 44 per cent of respondents, with 26 per cent working either full or part-time. 36 service providers participated.

The feedback provided through a variety of sources has been used to identify the pillars for success that the council will work towards to ensure Wodonga is an age friendly city.

Key findings from consultation, research, policy review, and data analysis

Active and healthy, creative and vibrant, engaged and valued

- One of the most important considerations when respondents think about getting older is remaining healthy and active;
- The top services or facilities that respondents think Wodonga most needs are health services and aged care facilities;
- The top services that are important to respondents now and as they get older are health/medical and home care;
- The top three things that council does well for older people are Senior Celebrations (October each year), library services (including classes and outreach) and the Wodonga Senior Citizens’ Centre;
- One of the most important improvements needed for older people are classes and activities for health and socialisation;
- One of the top three suggestions for what could make their neighbourhood a better place is more neighbourhood activities and events; and
- Many people in the 55 year age group did not identify with the definition of being aged, an older person, or senior.
Accessible, safe, well-designed, green and sustainable

- The top service that is important to respondents now and as they get older is viable and reliable transport options, while pedestrian and cycle friendly aspirations were also evident;

- The most important improvements needed for older people are footpaths (including maintenance of paths and overhanging trees), public transport and classes and activities;

- One of the top three suggestions for what could make their neighbourhood a better place is more police presence;

- One of the top three concerns of respondents is crime and community safety, including speeding traffic;

- Development and planning that considers accessibility issues so that people can easily move around the city, particularly in the CBA, was of importance, ie. footpaths, kerbs and busy roads;

- Living in a sustainability city was a key value and aspiration for older people;

- The top community places that are important to respondents now and as they get older are open spaces and parks; and,

- One of the top three suggestions for what could make their neighbourhood a better place is more maintenance of local parks and gardens.

“I can contribute (to be a better city) by positivity and by assisting in keeping my neighbourhood safe. Do unto others as you would have them do to you!”
Planning for growth, smart and prosperous, advocacy and partnerships

- The most important consideration when respondents think about getting older is having enough disposable income to enjoy retirement and permanent and diverse and sustainable housing options;

- Technology is playing an increasing important role in the lives of older people, particularly the baby boomers; and,

- One of the top concerns of respondents is understanding council spending.

Other related data

- 50% of respondents rate their health as being very good or excellent.
- 42% of respondents feel either quite or extremely socially connected.
- 68% of respondents feel either quite or extremely safe in their community.
- 41% of respondents do more than five hours of physical activity per week.
What are our pillars for success?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our people</th>
<th>Our city</th>
<th>Our future</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active and healthy</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>Planning for growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative and vibrant</td>
<td>Safe</td>
<td>Smart and prosperous</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engaged and valued</td>
<td>Well-designed</td>
<td>Advocacy and partnerships</td>
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<td>Green and</td>
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<td>sustainable</td>
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“Our Age Friendly City Strategy

“Safety as in well maintained footpaths, roads, parks. Transport as in reliable safe buses, taxis and rail services” are services that are important now and as our community gets older.
Our people

What do we know?

Despite the well-known benefits of maintaining a healthy, active and engaged lifestyle, many older people live relatively sedentary and solitary lives. This occurs for a number of reasons, including access to and availability of physical activity programs, low income, transport issues and disability. The WHO notes that “Active living improves mental health and often promotes social contacts. Being active can help older people remain as independent as possible for the longest period of time”\(^{15}\).

This is recognised by our older community members, who have told us that they would like more opportunities to be active, creative and engaged. They recognise that physical activity leads to social connections, and that social connections make them feel valued in the community. Developing relationships with younger community members is also critical in sharing learning and making older people feel valued, with the WHO noting “Intergenerational learning bridges age differences, enhances the transmission of cultural values and promotes the worth of all ages”\(^{16}\).

16 World Health Organisation, Active Ageing: A Policy Framework, page 29

“By staying actively connected to people and groups who share my interests and values” our older community members could contribute to making Wodonga a better city.
Common definition

‘Seniors,’ ‘older adults’ or the ‘aged’ population is commonly defined as being 55 years of age or older, however, as our strategy has identified, many people in the age bracket of 55 years do not identify with these terms. Many younger seniors do not relate with those who are older or who are facing more barriers to participation 17.

Public perceptions of ageing and what defines ‘seniors’, influences the community’s thinking and in return, decisions that are made. It is important to acknowledge that there is great diversity among the population that is referred to as ‘seniors’, be it in age, ability, culture, health and financial means.

Age itself is not the only influential factor in determining the needs, expectations and aspirations of our older people. As a result seniors need to be seen as a broad and unique group with very different needs, from being physically active to potentially isolated individuals with limited mobility to access services.

Many people in the early stages of ageing such as 55 year olds, are still employed in the workforce, independent, in good health and actively participating in community life. Many seniors now have more economic wealth, higher education levels and have had more varied experiences, both work and personal, than generations before. Many seniors, including tomorrow’s seniors, will have a better knowledge and understanding of levels of governments, community, programs and services and be more open to receiving health promotion messages. Furthermore, they will be more inclined to participate in educational, political and voluntary activities and be more likely to demand their rights17.

It is important to consider that the experience of ageing affects people in many different ways and while there is an element of generalisation about the aged person’s ability, health and needs, other approaches may need to be quite targeted. However, there is a risk with overgeneralisation in that it can result in alienating people from an experience or not providing that experience at all.

This strategy has tried to broaden the definition of a senior by focusing on liveability and functionality issues rather than assuming issues that are dependent on age. As a result, many of the actions can be attributed to the age range of 55 years onwards.

17 Saanich, 2004
How will we address this?

**Strategic objective**
To advocate for, and provide access to a range of opportunities that promote healthy and active living by older people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active and healthy</strong></td>
<td>• Promote services, programs and events that encourage our older community members to be physically active.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Encourage preventative health, leisure and recreation facilities for our older community members to access.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Lobby for continued government funding for health programs and services for older people.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Creative and vibrant</strong></td>
<td>• Work with education providers to encourage educational opportunities for our older community members so they can be active and engaged members of the community.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Encourage a vibrant street life that encourages older people, residents and visitors to engage and participate.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Encourage opportunities for our older community members to express their creativity.</td>
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<td>• Continue council support for community events and groups which promote positive ageing and the contributions of older people to the community such as Senior Celebrations, Volunteers Week, Senior Citizens’ Club, Men’s Shed and Wodonga Historical Society.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Engaged and valued</strong></td>
<td>• Facilitate events and activities that celebrate and engage older people and provide opportunities for social contact and participation in community.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Work with existing groups to seek their contributions and to support them in securing their future sustainability and relevance, eg. Senior Celebration Advisory Group, Men’s Shed, Senior Citizens’ Club.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourage and plan for intergenerational connections to build appreciation of our older community members by our younger community members.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Seek appropriate ways to ensure older people’s contributions are sought, well-considered and valued in informing council decision-making processes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Promote and encourage integrated neighbourhoods and community spaces that support intergenerational engagement and allow for the sharing and development of skills as well as individual pursuits.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promote council grants and funding opportunities that encourage and support neighbourhoods and events for the older people in the city.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Promote and support community inclusion through policy, services and programs.</td>
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Our city

What do we know?

Being able to maintain an independent lifestyle is a large contributor to the physical and mental health of older people. The way that cities are designed and the levels of actual and perceived safety in the community significantly impact on an older persons ability to independently go about their daily life. As the WHO notes, “older people who live in an unsafe environment or areas with multiple physical barriers are less likely to get out and therefore more prone to isolation, depression, reduced fitness and increased mobility problems.”

Our older community has told us that improved levels of public and community transport and better maintenance of walking and cycling paths will enable them to be more active. Feeling safe in their home and their community is also a key concern for older people. One of the most important items of feedback from our older community is that the city needs to be designed in such a way that it is easy for older people to access. This is particularly important for those community members using mobility devices.

Our older residents have told us that they are concerned about the environment, and want to see more work undertaken to make our community sustainable. Being able to participate in looking after our city and in particular our green spaces was also important.

“More wheelchair friendly access and council needs to ask people in wheelchairs and their carers how to best design and implement plans” is a service that Wodonga needs.

“It’s not safe enough to be walking alone after dark particularly through parks and dark streets”.

18 World Health Organisation, Active Ageing: A Policy Framework, page 27
How will we address this?

**Strategic objective**

To work towards the creation of a sustainable built and natural environment that enhances and supports accessibility, safety and mobility for our older people across the city.

**Strategies**

**Accessible**

- Ensure walking and cycling paths are designed to optimise accessibility for older people.
- Lobby for improved public and community transport that addresses improved frequency, reliability and accessibility.

**Safe**

- Promote initiatives that enhance neighbourhood connections and improve social support for older people.
- Continue to support existing community safety initiatives that are relevant to older and ageing people, ie. elder abuse, accidents in the home, emergency planning.

**Well-designed**

- Work with a range of stakeholders to advocate for a diversity of housing options, both public and private for older people that encourage social connections and physical accessibility to services and facilities.
- Ensure Universal Design principles are considered in all of the council’s strategic planning initiatives and projects.
- Promote improved urban planning to create improved access, slower traffic movement around key areas, walkability and liveable neighbourhoods.
- Work with a range of stakeholders to enhance the design of public spaces and facilities to enable the easiest and most appropriate access for older people, particularly those using mobility devices.
- Work with developers to promote the benefits of housing, amenity, recreational and community facilities to be connected, accessible and co-located in new developments.
Green and sustainable

- Encourage and advocate for sustainable housing options for older people.
- Provide opportunities for older people to contribute to the improvement of Wodonga’s green spaces.
- Ensure planning, design and development, particularly within the city’s open spaces, takes into consideration older people’s aspirations and need to access and interact with the natural environment.
- Plan for a balanced development of clean industry in the city that minimises noise, smell and other pollutants to secure quality of life opportunities for our older residents.

“More large scale solar power, eg. on community buildings such as the hospital or The Cube, in order to reduce the city’s carbon emissions.”

“To grow into a vibrant city with good access for bikes and pedestrian with community art to enhance it. More community/edible gardens in prominent locations. Working towards becoming a city powered by 100 per cent renewable energy.”

“Lack of vision for a long term sustainable future. Badly thought out housing developments with poor solar orientation and no information to purchasers as to better options” is a concern.
Our future

What do we know?

Contributing to the community through work and volunteering is important to our older residents, as they recognise the personal and community benefit from these activities. The WHO identifies that “In all parts of the world, there is an increasing recognition of the need to support the active and productive contribution that older people can and do make in formal work, informal work, unpaid activities in the home and in voluntary occupations”\(^\text{19}\).

As Wodonga continues to grow at a fast rate, its population of older people will also continue to grow. This provides challenges at all levels of government to ensure the needs are met of our older citizens. Council will continue to play a key role in lobbying for services, programs and opportunities for older people to age actively within their own community. As the city grows, older people need to have access to a range of services, programs and lifestyle choices to enable active, healthy and independent lives.

\(^\text{19}\) World Health Organisation, *Active Ageing: A Policy Framework*, page 31
Baby Boomers, in particular, are more comfortable using technology with research suggesting that there is a growing number of people over 55 years using technology. Like younger people, older people are using technology at work, to stay active, informed, entertained, for their banking and buying needs, and to stay in touch with family and friends. However, unlike a lot of younger people, older people have more discretionary spending to afford the expanding and diverse range of technologies available. Older people who are familiar with technologies expect that it will be accessible, safe, easy to use and be flexible to adapt to individual needs.

As technology continues to advance, it is predicted that its use will continue to grow and become embedded further into the lives of older people helping them with health needs, in the home and making banking and spending more technologically driven. While many older people are becoming more technologically literate and wanting to experience the various aspects that it brings, the ability to use technology and the extent to which it is used, may vary with age and the ability of a person as they age. However, it is important for a community to be cognisant that the more digitalised a society becomes, the unintended consequences can be that it impacts on the ability of older people (non-internet users), to maintain social networks and affects their quality of life.

How the council responds to new technologies in meeting customer need will be critical as we move forward. Access to fast and reliable internet connections as well as the ability for older people to access a range of the council services through the use of technologies will be an ongoing challenge and opportunity.
How will we address this?

### Strategic objective

As Wodonga continues to grow as a regional city, encourage and support opportunities for older people to realise employment, participate in a vibrant and economic central business area and participatory and lifelong learning opportunities that meet their needs and interests.

### Strategies

#### Planning for growth

- Ensure a ‘whole of council’ approach in the current and future growth planning, design and development of the city.

- Use projected data and demographic trends to monitor and plan for the city's growth to ensure development caters for the inclusion of older people across the city.

- Work with developers, investors and aged care providers to realise the development of diverse housing options, particularly in the CBD, that provides older people easy and walkable access to services, facilities and social participation.

- Work to encourage night time and weekend economies and entertainment that meet the needs of older people.

#### Smart and prosperous

- Enhance opportunities for older people to contribute to their community through paid employment, the sharing of knowledge and skills, volunteerism and civic participation.

- Ensure council information is presented in a co-ordinated manner that encourages access to information and knowledge through various technologies that supports civic participation and engagement.

- Ensure that the council stays abreast of changing technologies and develops ways that technology can be used to improve access for older people to a range of the council services.

- Provide for opportunities whereby older people have access to free knowledge, information, literacy, programs and activities that promote ongoing learning opportunities.
Advocacy and partnerships

- Build partnerships and facilitate informed involvement with key stakeholders within the community that support the community’s needs and aspirations of older people.

- Take a leading role in advocating and lobbying to all levels of government for the current and future needs of older people in the community, in particular:
  - Improved health services to benefit our older residents and the wider community;
  - Appropriate locally based aged care services and packages;
  - Residential aged care facilities that allow for ‘ageing in place’; and,
  - Improved access to fast and reliable internet coverage.

- Monitor and respond to changing Australian and Victorian government directions in policy and service delivery that impact on our older people.

- Maintain regular liaison with key agencies in the community and work to progress a collective and coordinated approach to ageing in the city.

- Continue to plan for and seek funding opportunities for resources and programs that address the needs and priorities of Wodonga’s ageing population.
Implementation and evaluation

This strategy will be implemented over a five year period. The successful implementation and evaluation of this strategy relies on appropriate levels of resourcing, relevant measures and reporting mechanisms and a commitment to work in partnership with a range of stakeholders to advance the needs, expectations and aspirations of ageing and older people in the city.

To determine relevant resources needed to achieve the strategic objectives outlined, a detailed operational action plan has been developed. This operational action plan clearly sets out the activities that will be undertaken to achieve each of the strategic objectives, the timelines for the actions to be undertaken and any budgetary considerations or impacts of these actions. The implementation of this plan will take a ‘whole of council’ approach in its delivery of each priority area.

The council will use a number of key indicators and evaluation methods to track and measure the success of the strategic objectives and actions. These will monitor the progress, evidence of change and levels of outcomes achieved.
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