Towards an Age Friendly Darebin

DRAFT REPORT – SNAPSHOT APRIL 2019

This Snapshot is a summary of the Age Friendly Darebin draft report, which was developed and submitted to Darebin Council by an independent expert Panel. Panel members and authors of this report are Dr Rhonda Galbally and Peter Allen.

Darebin Council commissioned the Panel to conduct this review as a result of proposed Federal Government reforms to Home Support services.

Rhonda Galbally

Rhonda is well known for her leadership across the public health and community sectors, and as an advocate for people with disability. The many distinguished positions she has held include CEO of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth), the cofounder and CEO of Our Community Pty Ltd, the Chair of the Royal Women's Hospital, the Chair of the National People with Disability and Carers Council, and Principal Board Member (chair) of the Independent Advisory Council for the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). Dr Galbally was inducted to the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2005 and in 2012 received the Prime Minister's Outstanding Achievement Award at the National Disability Awards. In 2019 Rhonda was appointed a Companion (AC) of the Order of Australia for eminent service to the advancement of social equity, particularly to the health and welfare of people with a disability, and to the community.

Peter Allen

Peter is currently based at the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG), where he was Deputy Dean between 2009 and 2015. Previously he had more than 20 years in the Victorian Public Service, with senior positions including Secretary of the Department of Education and Training, Secretary of the Department of Tourism, Sport and the Commonwealth Games, Under Secretary in the Department of Human Services, and Deputy Secretary, Community Services. Previously he was Director of Social Policy and Research at the Brotherhood of St Laurence. Mr Allen has also served as Founding Chair of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority and as a distinguished member of a number of councils and boards.

The Panel acknowledges Paul Robertson from INCITE information for his high quality support in developing this draft report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Darebin: Becoming an Age Friendly City

> *"No matter what age - we want to be included and recognised in 'community'." (Consultation feedback)*

In February 2017, Darebin City Council (DCC) signed the Age Friendly Victoria declaration, confirming its commitment to creating an Age Friendly city by empowering older people, and addressing issues of:

- social inclusion and respect;
- community support and health services;
- social participation and employment;
- housing; and
- transport and the built environment.

More than a sixth of Darebin's population is aged over sixty. This age group faces sweeping changes to community based aged care due to the Australian Government's reform to the aged care sector. Apart from the implications of the changes to home care services, local government continues to remain responsible for much of the community infrastructure and services that should support safe and fulfilling lives for all older residents.

DCC has commissioned this review to inform its decision on how to best support older residents to live in an Age Friendly city which values, supports and empowers older people so that they can live well, be healthy, be socially connected, and live as independently as possible within their community.

> *"Local and State governments cannot abdicate their responsibilities to older citizens just because there is now a national aged care system." (Consultation feedback)*

Public consultation formed a significant component of the review. Consultation was guided by the review's Terms of Reference and the intentions of the Panel, and was designed to offer:

- sufficient time for individuals, groups, organisations, staff and other stakeholders to consider respond and provide ideas; and
- a broad range of locations, formats, languages and possible means for clients and community members to understand the purpose of the review and to contribute their thoughts.

The recommendations of this review are framed from the perspective that DCC is well placed to support older residents to lead good, quality lives, including older people from Indigenous, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and other vulnerable groups at risk of being socially isolated. (Recommendations 4-8)

DCC delivery of aged care services

Currently DCC, like the rest of the aged care sector, is facing fundamental changes due to the Australian Government's Living Longer, Living Better reforms. For more than 30 years, DCC, with assistance of funding from the Australian and State governments has provided services to older residents to support them to continue living independently in their own homes, however, in 2016 responsibility for all aged care services transferred to the Australian Government.

Australian Government reforms include the introduction of a single-entry point: My Aged Care (MAC), the discontinuation of the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program and the introduction of the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).

As part of CHSP, DCC has received a grant to provide an agreed level of aged care services. This arrangement, known as block funding, will continue until July 2020 As part of the 2019 Australian Government Budget package announced on 2nd of April 2019, funding for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) will be extended from **1 July 2020 to 30 June 2022**. At the time of writing providers including DCC, are waiting for details to be confirmed.

Options for service delivery

DCC's decision about its future role in the delivery of aged care is complicated by uncertainty about future Commonwealth and State funding models. In response to community opinion and taking into account of different variables, this review supports DCC continuing to deliver home support services to older residents while the Australian Government maintains its current financial arrangements. (Recommendations 1-3 and Recommendations 9 - 19)

> *"It would be a sad day if we did not have Darebin Council. The services supplied to the aged are fantastic." (Consultation feedback)*

That said, the review identifies a range of opportunities to improve the effectiveness and impact of the services that DCC currently provides and particularly recommends involving older people in redesign to promote greater flexibility to respond to client needs and the maintenance of independent living skills.

> *"We need Council to continue with the services, but they can still adapt for the better, like updating or replacing services and employ more older people and train them or have them volunteer to do these services." (Consultation feedback)*

If block funding continues, the review also recommends that DCC considers the feasibility of expanding its role by entering the market as a provider of Home Care Packages (HCPs) for all levels of packages to provide continuity of care for older people as their care needs increase and to maximise the value for residents eligible for HCPs. (Recommendation 20)

> *"I was on a level 2 Home Care Package... Council is like a level 6 compared to the Home Care Package" (Consultation feedback)*

If block funding is discontinued this review recommends that DCC redirects its resources, including the home care and assessment workforce, to actively support residents at risk of isolation within their community. It is also recommended that DCC commits resources to actively support clients in the transition to alternative, carefully selected, vetted and monitored provider/s. (Recommendations 21 – 24)

> *"I don't think Council needs to be a service provider if there are others that can do it instead. Council could use their money on other things. I don't mind if the service is from Council, or if it is from another organisation." (Consultation feedback)*

DCC's new role would ensure that all older residents, including the most vulnerable, receive MAC services to which they are entitled at a high quality. This would include DCC redeploying its current workforce to provide active MAC navigation, monitoring, brokering, casework and outreach services.

> *"Assessment is providing good quality service but we can't do both - navigator and assessment" (Consultation feedback)*

In addition, DCC would continue delivering particular services where clients will be unlikely to receive appropriate services from other providers. This would include home modifications, home maintenance, access to nutritious meals and day services for residents with dementia.

> *"The Council structure could be vital in catching people who fall through the cracks. There needs to be a local safety net." (Consultation feedback)*

Age Friendly Darebin: more than aged care services

In addition to considering its role in the delivery of community-based age care, the review heard about a range of issues identified from Darebin residents. In response to the community's voices, the review identifies a range of initiatives that DCC can undertake towards the goal of becoming an Age Friendly City: enhancing the quality of life at home and in the community for older citizens.

Somewhere to call home

We heard from the community that central to an Age Friendly Darebin is the need for safe, affordable housing for older residents. Unfortunately, such housing is not available to some older people, and the review provides recommendations to improve public housing and affordability. (Recommendations 25 - 27)

> *"Lack of affordable housing is a huge issue for people on low incomes in an area of gentrification such as Darebin." (Consultation feedback)*

In addition, the community told us that access to their home, and the homes of neighbours and friends, is an additional challenge for a growing number of older residents. As the community ages, accessibility is likely to become an even more significant issue, best addressed through revised building codes and regulations. Enhancing DCC's own building and development requirements combined with advocacy to both State and Federal Government for changes to regulation and building code reviews are actions that are recommended.
(Recommendations 28 – 29)

> *"Council needs more of an emphasis on ensuring aged persons homes are safe, secure and equipped with appropriate railing, safe footpaths and security." (Consultation feedback)*

For ageing residents to continue to live safely at home, mobility aids and appliances can be a key to proactive injury prevention. The review recommends that DCC explores several initiatives, including establishing a mobility equipment loans scheme and a home modification social enterprise connected to a Men's Shed and/or Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and supported by local businesses.
(Recommendations 30 – 32)

We heard from the community that safety was an issue for older people.

> *"Safety is an issue for me, what do you do for people (especially women) living alone..." (Consultation feedback)*

To enhance safety from crime at home the review recommends DCC establish a program with local police to improve older people's awareness of common at-home risks, as well as re-invigorating neighbourhood watch with a specific focus on older residents.
(Recommendations 35 - 36)

In response to community opinions, other recommendations to support older people at home include: addressing squalor and hoarding; monitoring heat and cold risk; Darebin Home Share and Co-housing programs; and a 'home phone contact scheme'.
(Recommendations 33 - 34 and Recommendations 37 - 39)

Age Friendly outdoors

We heard from the community about the value and importance for older people to be able to participate safely outside the home. This can include walking for exercise and enjoyment or walking to a specific destination, such as parks, shopping centres, and business, health and recreation appointments.

> *"Walking is the most popular physical activity and is essential to the mobility for many residents to get out and about. Concerns over road safety, falls in the street, footpath cycling and access to good walking facilities are important issues that should be addressed." (Consultation feedback)*

In response to community opinion, many of these recommendations pay particular attention to footpaths, toilets, street seats, water fountains, street lighting and parks and gardens. Whether in transit or at their destination, all the infrastructure should be designed and/or upgraded with older people in mind: recognising that Age Friendly is friendly for everyone.
(Recommendations 40 – 58)

When walking is not possible the review proposes ways to make it easier for older people to drive, park, use community transport and use free public transport in off peak times.
(Recommendations 59 - 65)

Importantly, a fundamental principle for Age Friendliness is that older people should be actively involved in the development, monitoring and improvement of services and infrastructure that affects them. Throughout the report there are specific recommendations for opportunities for older people to become the auditors, designers and informers to make Darebin Age Friendly.
(Recommendations 41, 53, 67, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 88, 94, 96)

> *"When council does follow up work, gather us together, I need to say, look – this does or does not make sense. Invite us back when you are designing the follow up – ask us - does this meet the needs you've expressed." (Consultation feedback)*

Information and digital empowerment

We were told clearly that high quality, relevant information is highlighted by the review as vitally important for older people to be able to age in place and engage in their community. However, we also heard from the community that information must be up-to-date and about areas and issues that older people identify as important. The review therefore recommends that DCC establish an ongoing older peoples' participatory information project where older people are the information decision makers on the What, the How, and the When of their information needs. (Recommendations 66 - 67)

> *"Technology can be very daunting. Managing pin numbers, keeping information secure. It is embarrassing to have to ask for help. But it is amazing what you can learn." (Consultation feedback)*

As far as the digital world goes, the review highlights the valuable support that can be gained by older people if they are able to access and use digital equipment. In response to community opinion, the review therefore recommends ways to make equipment and training available to older people in the use of digital equipment and apps, with an emphasis on the most vulnerable and isolated who are most likely to be excluded from the digital age and all of its particular benefits for older people. (Recommendations 68 - 69)

Social participation

In response to community opinion, health and wellbeing benefits of social participation are emphasised throughout the review and recommendations. Local government is in a particularly strong position to provide opportunities for older people to join in with groups and activities that not only add to their lives, but also contribute to the local community. DCC in particular, with its strong commitment to social justice is able to make sure that vulnerable, isolated older people are included with monitoring and outreach as a top priority.

The review heard from members of senior citizens clubs and therefore analyses the clubs from the perspective of fairness, outreach to vulnerable members of communities, inclusion, stability and support for their voluntary effort.

The review proposes a number of ways to support and strengthen the rich and diverse network of older peoples' groups. Recommendations are made to encourage stronger seniors' community organisations, such as co-location and targeted grants to improve weaker areas like governance, promoting outreach to vulnerable older people, refreshing and expanding membership and enhancing responsiveness to new needs and under-represented communities. (Recommendations 71 - 74)

> *"How can you still feel useful in our current society? How do we take advantage of experience and skills of retired people? We want to be included and recognised." (Consultation feedback)*

In response to community opinion, the review also makes recommendations to ensure that older people are included and welcomed in the widest range of activities, including recommending targeted grants to encourage inclusion. For example, there is a recommendation to partner with Neighbourhood Houses to establish an Older Persons Neighbourhood House Inclusion Steering Committee to advise, monitor and ensure that older people are able to fully participate in all of the rich range of activities offered by Neighbourhood Houses.
(Recommendation 70 and Recommendations 75 - 91)

We heard that libraries also offer a wealth of opportunities for Darebin's older residents, and the review makes numbers of recommendations for libraries to enhance their services, particularly for isolated, vulnerable older people. (Recommendations 92 - 93)

The review highlights the value of volunteers, most particularly drawing on skills, experience and capacity of older people as volunteers. We heard from older people that they want their skills and knowledge to continue to be used and in retirement they want the opportunity to give back to others. It is therefore recommended that a significant volunteer program be developed to expand opportunities for older people and people of all ages to contribute to others in the community. The review makes it absolutely clear that volunteers are not to replace paid workers, rather to enhance, deepen with time and peer support and utilise the skills from the Darebin community. (Recommendations 94 - 95)

> *"I found out through chatting to a neighbour that their son was struggling with English subject at school – I help him with English and it is great – this contact with him does me good. It gives them a different view of older people." (Consultation feedback)*

Next steps towards an Age Friendly Darebin

> *"Good governance, for me, includes the provision of best quality services which even the poorest citizens can access with confidence. This is part of what it means to me to live in a Democracy." (Consultation feedback)*

In many ways the development of an Age Friendly Darebin builds on DCC's commitment to a bolder, more connected city, and DCC's mission to preserve and improve the physical, social, cultural and economic health of all neighbourhoods while ensuring quality of life for current and future generations.

Following Council's and the community's consideration of this first draft of the report and then after further consideration, the final report, it is expected Council will respond to the final report's recommendations and set a direction for the development of an Age Friendly Darebin.

It is expected that implementation of agreed recommendations of this report will require Council to make decisions in regard to prioritising activities and allocating resources, including redirecting existing resources or allocating new or additional resources.

The review recommends that a Cross Organisational Project Control Group, chaired by a DCC General Manager, should support and closely monitor the implementation of agreed recommendations. The Project Control Group would seek regular consultation and advice from DCC's Active and Healthy Ageing Advisory Board and the other older people's advisory groups recommended by the review. (Recommendation 96). The Project Control Group would report twice a year to Council on the progress and any challenges in delivering agreed recommendations from the review. (Recommendation 97)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that...

Local intelligence for monitoring and advocacy about My Aged Care (MAC)

1. While the Australian Government continues to provide block funding for CHSP services to DCC, and until the full extent of new arrangements for Assessment Services is made clear, DCC should continue to provide Regional Assessment Services (RAS).

2. Until, and possibly beyond, the time when the full extent of new arrangements under the Australian Government reforms are made clear, DCC should gather intelligence and case studies highlighting both strengths and weakness of existing practice to inform baseline performance requirements of the new arrangements.

3. DCC monitors:
   a. demand and supply trends for MAC across the broader catchment area than just the Darebin LGA;
   b. the impact of the functional separation ('Chinese walls') between assessment and provision of CHSP; and
   c. the impact of MAC processes on clients, for example, time from referral to response by a provider, or if clients are left without a response.

Older CALD residents

4. DCC works closely with CALD community groups to build their capacity to effectively support older people from their communities.

5. DCC sets performance targets for the number of people from specific CALD communities participating in programs, including MAC, for older people.

Older, Indigenous residents

6. DCC maintains its active support for advocacy by local Indigenous groups to the Australian Government to ensure MAC improves its engagement with and utility for Indigenous people.

7. DCC identifies both good and bad practice in responding to the needs of older Indigenous people and communicate this to the Australian Government to improve practice guidelines for MAC, specifically in delivering services to Indigenous residents of Darebin.

8. DCC conducts targeted work aimed at improving the current rates at which eligible Indigenous residents are engaged in assessment and connected to recommended aged care services.

OPTIONS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

OPTION 1: DCC to continue and optimise delivery of CHSP services

9. While the Australian Government continues to provide DCC with the block grant for CHSP, DCC continues to deliver CHSP services.

10. DCC commits to continual improvement of service effectiveness and impact including maximising independence, socialisation and inclusion, through consultation and co-design with older people.

Domestic Assistance

11. DCC focuses domestic assistance on building the older person's confidence and capability to perform everyday tasks, with workers undertaking tasks that are beyond the capacity of clients.

Personal Care

12. DCC considers providing personal support services on weekends.

Flexible Respite

13. DCC closely monitors demand for respite with a view to phasing out delivery of respite funded through the CHSP while either (i) offering respite through HCPs (option 2); or (ii) confirming that other providers are available to respond in a quality and timely way.

Delivered Meals

14. DCC's meals service is re-designed to:

a. further emphasise assisting older residents to prepare their own meals and to share meals;
b. provide meals that better match the dietary and cultural preferences of residents;
c. consider the addition of alternative providers, including the recent growth of home delivery services from a wide range of culturally appropriate local food retailers; and
d. increase the numbers of residents attending meals outside their home, possibly with expanded use of volunteers supplied by the proposed volunteer service.

Social Support

15. DCC promotes Yanada House as an outstanding and unique social support program for older people with dementia and tries to build up numbers to ensure viability.

Failing this, DCC ascertains the interest of other providers of social support groups in establishing a dementia group for the Yanada House clients.

Community Transport

16. DCC focuses on ensuring community bus availability is more fully utilised by:

a. building up demand;
b. increasing flexibility in routes;
c. exploring the possibility of using newly available digital network tools to enhance door to door responsiveness and availability; and
d. encouraging the use of community transport by older people living in boarding and rooming houses, public housing and from other vulnerable groups, and in more disadvantaged parts of Darebin, to broaden the group of older people who know of its availability and how to access it.

It is recommended that...

Home Maintenance

17. In addition to its own provision of home maintenance services, DCC investigates establishing a panel of local trades people who would be willing to undertake more extensive work than DCC provides.

Gardening

18. DCC provides a gardening service which includes mowing plus a focus on DCC staff working alongside older people to garden.

19. DCC provides nature strip mowing and a trimming service for overhanging trees and bushes as these can be risk hazards for older people walking and wheeling on footpaths.

OPTION 2: DCC to continue CHSP and examine the feasibility of expanding into the delivery of Home Care Packages (HCP) to enhance service spectrum and continuity of care of clients

20. While the block funding continues from the Australian Government for CHSP, DCC positively investigates the feasibility of providing HCP Levels 1-4 by DCC developing a detailed business case and operating model for a HCP service. Reputational risk associated with DCC applying high client fees and service costs should be explicitly addressed in the business case.

OPTION 3: DCC to enter the market as a competitive provider of CHSP and/or HCPs

21. If block funding by the Australian Government for CHSP is discontinued, DCC discontinues CHSP service delivery, does not provide HCPs and implements Option 4, including supporting current clients through their transition to an alternative provider.

OPTION 4: DCC to deliver a social inclusion service while also addressing vulnerable older peoples' MAC risks

22. If the Commonwealth Government ceases funding DCC with a block grant for the delivery of CHSP, DCC should provide a Social Inclusion Service as outlined in Option 4, by:

- redirecting its own source revenue;
- discontinuing delivery of Regional Assessment Services; and
- providing new roles for assessment officers and home support workers in delivering a monitoring and social inclusion service.

23. DCC provides a volunteer service to support the social inclusion service with more intense engagement where needed:

- the volunteers would not replace paid workers, rather social inclusion workers call in volunteers as needed to provide more intense and informal contact;
- the volunteer service would include older people as volunteers for isolated older people.

24. Alongside the Social Inclusion Service, DCC continues to provide its own directly funded services where there is a risk that vulnerable CHSP clients may not be able to access necessary services for ageing in place due to 'service holes' or 'thin markets' for example: delivered meals and home maintenance (including gardening).

SOMEWHERE TO CALL HOME

Home affordability

25. DCC examines schemes that give private landlords rate concessions for charging moderate rents to low income older people.

26. DCC considers purchase of additional land or alternative use of its own land to partner with potential social housing providers or with the Office of Housing to expand the volume of fully accessible public and community housing stock to be offered to older people who are homeless and/or older people living in Supported Residential Services (SRS) or rooming houses.

27. DCC renews its efforts to advocate hard for a minimum regulation for private dwelling accessibility so that there is more accessible rental stock for frail older people.

Home accessibility

28. DCC updates its approach to access in its planning requirements by:

a. reviewing existing tools/levers in the planning scheme that could be used to encourage/require accessible features in housing;
b. developing additional tools and resources to support developers; and
c. implementing liveable housing guidelines similar to Banyule City Council.

Advocacy for affordability and access

29. DCC adopts a policy position and advocacy commitments similar to the City of Whittlesea:

- "That every person has a right to affordable, adequate and appropriate housing to enable their participation and sense of belonging in community life."
- **Commitment 1**: State-wide planning measures should be adopted that mandate and incentivise Social and Affordable Housing (Victorian Government).
- **Commitment 2:** All new social housing dwellings should be required to comply with the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines Housing (Victorian Government).
- **Commitment 3:** Take action to break the cycle of homelessness by adequately investing in the housing and homelessness sector to assist people across all life-stages (Victorian and Australian Government).
- **Commitment 4:** The National Rental Affordability Scheme should be reinstated (Australian Government).

Mobility aids and appliances

30. DCC establishes a Mobility Equipment Loans Scheme (similar to a Toy Library), in partnership with a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) expert in disability equipment.

31. DCC examines the feasibility of donated and recovered mobility equipment being restored by using a volunteer program established with a Men's Shed, also including older people.

Home modifications

32. DCC examines the opportunity for facilitation of a start-up home modification social enterprise, connected to a Men's Shed and/or TAFE and supported by local businesses in a community business partnership.

Squalor and hoarding services

33. DCC considers the extent of services for people living in squalor, particularly considering older people living in rentals and boarding and rooming houses, as well as home-owners, and develops an appropriate response with existing providers.

It is recommended that...

Cold and heat

34. DCC adds to its monitoring of CHSP clients during heatwaves by also monitoring those at risk on extreme cold days, especially focusing on homeless older people.

Safe from crime at home

35. DCC formalises a program to collaborate with local police to improve older peoples' awareness of common at-home risks.

36. DCC partners with Victoria Police to reinvigorate Neighbourhood Watch to have a particular focus on older people.

Home Share

37. DCC facilitates the establishment of a Darebin Home Share and co-housing program in partnership with an NGO with established home share systems and processes.

38. DCC markets and promotes Home Share and co-housing to older people via social inclusion workers and community organisations.

Home Phone Engagement Scheme

39. DCC explores establishing a Home Phone Engagement Scheme with a NGO partner for social engagement on the phone for isolated and/or housebound residents.

AGE FRIENDLY OUTDOORS

A local network for walking and wheeling

40. DCC develops a walking (and wheeling) group program to facilitate groups of older people, including older people in public housing, boarding and rooming houses as well as those using walking frames and wheelchairs.

Older Peoples' Open Space Audit Advisory Team

41. DCC establishes the **Older Peoples' Open Space Audit Advisory Team** made up of older volunteers who would be willing to participate in regular audits with DCC staff to consider footpaths, seating, toilets, bus and tram shelters and lighting.

Walking definition includes older people

42. DCC adds the word 'wheeling' and the disability symbol into all of its walking policies, strategies and projects in order to normalise 'walking' with a walking frame, in a wheelchair or on a mobility scooter, and ensure that people who use mobility equipment are included in walking strategies.

Footpaths and kerbs

43. DCC introduces an additional footpath category into the Principal Pedestrian Network (PPN) that addresses access for older people. This additional category should:

a. be based on the location of older people's homes and their daily needs including access activity and recreation centres, health and community services, parks, clubs, public transport and shopping;
b. have a higher inspection frequency than the current 'Other' category (i.e. 12 months);
c. provide a mechanism to allocate targeted funding to address priority renewals (i.e. additional to the footpath renewal budget); and
d. identify footpaths and roads to be prioritised for renewal in order to construct appropriate ramps across curbs and gutters (i.e. pram crossings).

Public toilets

44. DCC ensures that the location of new toilet facilities (which should all be fully accessible to people in wheelchairs) is informed by the location of older people's homes and their daily needs including access activity and recreation centres, health and community services, parks, clubs, public transport and shopping. In particular, the location of new toilets should be integrated with the proposed new Older Person category of PPN discussed above.

45. DCC ensures that public toilets, including accessible toilets be open, at a minimum, for use during daytime.

Pedestrian crossings

46. DCC ensures that pedestrian crossings be well signed, clearly marked, plentiful and well positioned to prevent older people from taking risks crossing roads, most particularly in more disadvantaged pockets of Darebin.

47. DCC ensures that traffic lights be positioned in high traffic areas and have mechanisms to slow them down so that older people can walk across the street safely.

48. DCC ensures that pedestrian crossings are brought into alignment with the new Older Person category of PPN to create a seamless safe walking network.

Water fountains

49. DCC ensures that water fountains be available and easy to use in all open spaces and along walking paths.

Street and open space seats

50. DCC ensures that street seats are sufficient in number and are well- positioned on walking routes for older people to be required to walk for no more than 0.5 km before being able to have a seat.

51. DCC ensures that in parks and gardens and other recreation spaces, seats are plentiful and grouped to encourage conversation and exchange.

52. Street seats have backs rather than benches.

Street lighting

53. DCC refers street lighting, particularly in relation to risk of falls and personal injury, to an Older Person Open Space Audit Advisory Team.

It is recommended that...

Outdoor plazas, parks, gardens and nature reserves

54. A specific section of Darebin's Open Space Strategy be developed with the aim of increasing older peoples' usage. The development of this strategy should involve older people as the lead advisors.

55. DCC explores the possibility of permanent games and exercise equipment for older people as part of this targeted strategy aimed at older people.

56. Open space planning is informed by the location of older people's homes and their daily needs including access to activity and recreation centres, health & community services, parks, clubs, public transport and shopping.

Dogs in parks

57. DCC takes into account risks and benefits to older people in any future reviews about the rules relating to dogs in open spaces.

Accessible community facilities

58. DCC's next infrastructure audit:

- undertakes a comprehensive access audit of all Council facilities;
- develops a priority list to address the access issues as identified above;
- allocates adequate recurrent funding for annual minor works that should not be less than $50,000; and
- considers an appropriate and feasible timeframe to ensure that all DCC facilities are accessible for the current generation of older people.

Public transport

59. DCC undertakes a strategic piece of advocacy in conjunction with other Councils, targeting the State Government's unrealistic timelines for making public transport fully accessible for the current generation of older people.

60. DCC provides public transport familiarity training opportunities for older people.

Bus and tram shelters

61. DCC consults with the State Government on the development of an implementation plan to ensure adequate provision of bus and tram shelters.

62. DCC ensures that seating at bus and tram stops is consistent with recommendations in relation to a seamless, safe and accessible walking network for older people.

Cars

63. DCC arranges for regular 'driving brush up' courses for older people to be provided with driving instructors as a way of lowering risk.

Car parking

64. DCC expands the number of non-regulated parking places close to senior citizens centres, considering a range of more innovative approaches to meet older people's need for parking, for example:

- Creates drop-off/pick-up parking zones for older people in front of services older people frequently use; e.g. health services, shopping centres, seniors' clubs, sport and community groups;
- Allocates parking for older people at designated times:
  - designated parking for older people could be based on identifying times that older people are likely to need parking in conjunction with lower use times for other residents;
  - this may be used to support DCC's economic development activities: encouraging older people to participate in economic/social activities in the 'down-time' for general business activities;
  - this could be used in conjunction with programs to encourage businesses to offer 'senior discounts' to coincide with these designated times;
- Works with business owners/traders' associations to allocate parking for older people at the rear entrance of shops (i.e. where staff park or for non-delivery times) This may also improve disability access at rear entrances to permit clients to go through some shops to access main thoroughfare; (e.g. access to High St Northcote, from car park off Arthurton Rd);
- Links with volunteer driver or develop 'Uber local' for pick-up and drop-off (this could also be considered as possible economic development activity);
- Advocates for free public transport for older people in off-peak periods; and
- Includes drop-off/pick-up drive throughs as a requirement in the design of new developments or re-developments.

Community transport

65. DCC encourages the use of community transport by older people living in boarding and rooming houses, public housing and from other vulnerable groups and also in more disadvantaged parts of Darebin, to broaden the group of older people who know of its availability and how to access it.

INFORMATION AND DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT

Participatory approach to information

66. DCC establishes an ongoing Older Peoples' Participatory Information Project.

Information Advisory Group

67. DCC establishes an Information Advisory Group of older people, including representatives from all vulnerable groups.

Help and support to access information

68. DCC considers using volunteers from the proposed volunteer service at libraries to assist older people to fill in online and paper forms and applications – regular weekly sessions could be trialled.

It is recommended that...

69. DCC takes a systematic approach to ensuring that digital opportunities are extended to vulnerable older citizens who are currently excluded. This includes:

- supply of basic equipment such as iPads;
- supporting Neighbourhood Houses to develop mobile training and equipment for house-bound older people;
- developing robust outreach programs to encourage those who are able to attend to come into a wide range of community groups for flexibly timetabled digital learning opportunities; and
- courses to be provided in more disadvantaged parts of Darebin and tailored for diverse needs that may include social media, communication such as Skype or email or for those who want to find information online.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Locational disadvantage

70. DCC pilots a model in more disadvantaged pockets of Darebin that enables a council worker to run social activity programs for older people, with the aim of developing local ownership and governance, so that ultimately the program turns into a senior's group with its own local ownership, control and governance rather than remaining as a service offering.

A network of local community and seniors' groups

71. DCC develops and facilitates an Older Persons Community Group Network of all older peoples' community groups for learning and knowledge exchange, with participation by all Presidents of older peoples' community groups.

72. DCC considers adding to the space available for older peoples' groups that would benefit from a permanent venue by:

- identifying one larger DCC owned space that is little or unused and two smaller DCC owned spaces - with at least one of these being located in a more disadvantaged part of Darebin;
- refurbishing the three spaces into numbers of offices/desks (sharing photocopiers etc.) and numbers of large meeting and activity spaces - enough so that groups can schedule many more activities;
- some of the larger community organisations such as University of the Third Age (U3A) could have branches in the co-shared spaces;
- a lead organisation such as U3A or a Neighbourhood House should be identified and funded to manage the space as well as support the other co-tenant groups.

Grant to include older people in general community groups and activities

73. DCC provides targeted grants for general community groups who are planning to include more older people by providing grants for:

- adapted equipment for sports and recreation;
- outreach to attract older people;
- development of creative works with older people as lead participants.

74. DCC makes small grants available to support new groups and activities, as well as to assist generic community groups to adapt and include older people. These grants should focus particularly on assisting community activities and groups in geographically disadvantaged areas of Darebin.

Older Peoples' one-off events and festivals

75. DCC supports older peoples' events that encourage older people to lead festivals and event initiatives.

76. DCC develops a robust outreach strategy for festivals and events focused on including disadvantaged older people and ensuring that participation in the event is not limited to those 'in the know'.

77. DCC provides certainty for multiyear funding for events to increase participation rates.

Senior citizen's clubs

78. DCC develops a new model for funding senior citizens clubs, which should include consideration of:

- ceasing funding based on per capita membership;
- providing a base amount to all groups for the running cost for the group - meetings, governance;
- continuing to provide in-kind financial auditing and public liability insurance for all groups;
- providing in-kind venues (and where requested office/desk);
- directly subsidising bus trips, including procuring a bus charter;
- ensuring that older people from vulnerable groups are included in club activities with targeted funding for specific activities;
- separately funding (through an application process) specific outreach activities and Darebin area focused membership drives;
- separately funding (through an application process) activities in more disadvantaged pockets of Darebin;
- looking for three locations to establish co-location spaces for interested senior citizens groups to be able to have office/desk space to establish as headquarters;
- funding a lead organisation to undertake venue management, support, facilitation, mediation;
- establishing clear expectations and outcome measures regarding outreach and inclusion of older people who are vulnerable and/or currently excluded.

U3A

79. DCC supports U3A with an annual DCC grant of a minimum of $4,000.

80. DCC provides targeted funding to U3A to reach out to older people in the community who do not know about U3A and/or may feel intimidated attending and to offer buddying and support for participation.

81. DCC considers U3A as a possible lead organisation in the recommended co-located space for older peoples' community groups.

It is recommended that...

Men's Shed

82. DCC provides community transport assistance to allow more men to attend a Darebin Men's Shed.

83. DCC considers establishing a new Men's Shed in Darebin, to promote geographic access, either co-located with a Neighbourhood House or at the proposed new co-located community hub (refer to Recommendation 72).

Probus

84. DCC considers offering targeted funding to Probus Clubs to reach out to older people in the community who do not know about Probus and/or may feel intimidated attending and to offer buddying and support for participation.

Carers' groups

85. DCC considers commissioning Carers Victoria to partner with DCC in supporting the development of new Carers' groups for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTQI), CALD and in other locations and communities that do not have carers groups.

Grief Groups

86. DCC considers commissioning Compassionate Friends to partner with DCC to explore the benefits of trialling grief groups for older people experiencing grief from loss.

Neighbourhood Houses

87. It is recommended that DCC works with Neighbourhood Houses to undertake an audit and survey of older participants with a view to developing a specific Neighbourhood House Older Peoples' Inclusion Strategy.

88. It is recommended that DCC partners with the Neighbourhood Houses Network to establish an Older Persons' Neighbourhood House Inclusion Strategy Advisory Committee with membership comprising older people and representatives from Neighbourhood Houses and DCC.

89. It is recommended that DCC receives annual reports from the Neighbourhood Houses on activities undertaken to target support for older people and/or increasing the numbers of older people participants in Neighbourhood House activities.

Online community groups and activities

90. DCC adopts the goal of enabling and encouraging older people from all income levels and backgrounds to bridge the digital divide and join online community groups and activities.

91. DCC develops an online community strategy, including an implementation timeline.

Libraries

92. DCC funds the visiting library service to expand its support of homebound residents.

93. DCC's new Libraries Strategy strongly considers the needs of older people particularly in terms of their residential location and geographical access.

Volunteers

94. DCC establishes a Volunteer Program to provide the opportunity for older people and people of all ages to contribute to others in the community.

95. DCC's Volunteer Program undertakes identifying, recruiting, informing, as well as training and support for volunteers, including older volunteers.

NEXT STEPS

Implementation, Monitoring and reporting

96. DCC establishes a Cross-Organisational Project Control Group, to be charged with responsibility for implementation. The Project Control Group to:

- be chaired by a General Manager from DCC's Executive Leadership Team and comprised of officers from across DCC with appropriate experience, information and authority to oversee the development of an Age Friendly Darebin;
- consider and provide advice for Council regarding prioritisation, resourcing and implementation of Age Friendly Darebin initiatives and activities; and
- conduct regular consultation and seek advice from DCC's:
  - Active and Healthy Ageing Advisory Board
  - Older Persons Community Group Network
  - Information Advisory Group
  - Older Person Open Space Audit Advisory Team
  - Older Persons' Neighbourhood House Inclusion Strategy Advisory Committee.

97. The Cross-Organisational Project Control Group reports to Council on progress towards agreed commitments to develop an Age Friendly Darebin annually as part of the monitoring achievement towards Council's 2017- 2021 Goals, particularly:

- **Goal 2:** improving the wellbeing of people in our community by providing opportunities for them to live their lives well;
- **Goal 3:** ensuring our planning system facilitates high-quality and sustainable development that extracts social, environmental and economic benefits for our community; and
- **Goal 5:** leading on equity and recognizing our diverse community as our greatest asset for solving future challenges.

98. When reporting against these goals the Cross-Organisational Project Control Group should provide advice to Council on:

- progress and challenges in ensuring an Age Friendly Darebin; and
- appropriate action to address emerging issues that may impact on DCC's ability to deliver its Age Friendly Darebin commitments.

Community members can provide feedback on the draft report from 10 April until 15 May 2019.

Have your say and make a written submission to Council via:

- **Email –** to AgeFriendly@Darebin.vic.gov.au
- **Letter -** to City of Darebin,
  Aged and Disability Department,
  PO Box 91, Preston VIC 3072

Following the consultation on the draft report, the Panel will review community feedback and prepare a final report.

The final report will then be formally presented to Darebin Councillors at a Council meeting in July 2019.