



Positive Ageing Strategy 2018–2021

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Acknowledgements

Council would like to thank the service providers, clubs, traders, clients, residents, members of Council committees, Councillors and Council officers who provided valuable input to discussions about services, gaps and priorities. Approximately 140 people took part in discussions, interviews and surveys.



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Mayor's message

In Stonnington we value residents of all ages and recognise the important contributions that people over 65 make to the vibrancy of our community.

This **Positive Ageing Strategy 2018–2021** will lay the pathway for a strong and inclusive community that values diversity and ageing, adding to the health and wellbeing of Stonnington's older community.

Cr Steve Stefanopoulos

Mayor, City of Stonnington
Councillor for South Ward



Introduction

The City of Stonnington's Positive Ageing Strategy 2018–2021 sets out the strategic direction for Council in meeting the needs of older residents. The strategy has been developed based on feedback from older residents, their families, community groups and services, and provides clear direction to guide future services and priorities for Council.

The strategy aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the Stonnington community by:

- > facilitating responsive and inclusive services and programs
- > delivering quality accessible infrastructure and public spaces
- > pursuing strong partnerships and collaboration with other service providers and community groups
- > reducing barriers to participation in community life, and
- > providing public spaces that support community wellbeing and liveability.

For the purposes of this strategy, an older person is considered to be 65 years of age or older. This is in line with the World Health Organisation, which states that "most developed world countries have accepted the chronological age of 65 years as a definition of elderly or older person". The Commonwealth and Victorian governments have also used the chronological age of 65 to determine funding and services for older Australians in the short term. It should be noted that for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, the term older person is defined as 50 years or older, reflecting the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The following have been identified as priority areas and objectives based on the needs, concerns and aspirations of the older residents of Stonnington.

PRIORITY AREA	KEY STRATEGY
1	Determine Council's future role
	1.1 Council will determine its role in delivering aged care services in light of aged care reforms. This will include developing guiding principles such as cost and affordability, competition, service gaps and capacity of other service providers.
	1.2 Council will use the principles to help define its role as a community planner and a provider of information, access and advocacy for residents.
2	Define Council's role as a funder
	2.1 In defining its role as a funder of other organisations, Council will ensure equity and transparency in applications for funding.
3	Health and wellbeing
	3.1 Council will encourage the use of its parks, reserves and other community and recreation facilities to improve health and wellbeing and reduce social isolation.
	3.2 Council will inform older people about ways to encourage their participation and engagement in leisure and recreation activities.
	3.3 Council will explore innovative ways to address the need for intergenerational connections.
	3.4 Council will strengthen networks with agencies that support people at risk, including those experiencing homelessness and mental health issues.
	3.5 Council will continue to support carers and advocate for their health and wellbeing.
4	Community accessibility
	4.1 Council will explore ways to improve community transport services to ensure flexibility and affordability.
	4.2 Council will explore opportunities to provide accessible and equitable recreation, leisure, transport and health services to the community.
5	Community groups
	5.1 Council will consider ways to support clubs to be more self-sustainable.
	5.2 Council will work with groups to ensure supportive programs and to maintain sustainability across its diverse community including culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex (LGBTI), ¹ recreation and leisure and other special interest groups.
	5.3 Council will explore ways of using existing facilities to encourage social connectedness and accessibility to reduce isolation.

PRIORITY AREA	KEY STRATEGY
6	Community amenity
6.1	Council will continue to examine pedestrian safety and road and footpath maintenance to ensure that older pedestrians are safe.
6.2	Council will aim to attract older consumers to strip shopping centres.
7	Volunteering
7.1	Council will explore ways to promote and facilitate a more active engagement in civic life among people over the age of 65 by promoting the advantages of volunteering to the community.
8	Council as a community leader
8.1	Council will explore ways to further enhance connections with service providers and key stakeholders to better inform priorities. This will include discussing boundaries and roles and responsibilities.
9	Stonnington as an age-friendly city
9.1	Council will investigate ways to become an age-friendly city.
10	Community consultation
10.1	Council will continue to seek out the perspectives of people over the age of 65 and will invite their participation in a variety of ways.
11	Accountability
11.1	Council officers will evaluate the activities and programs developed and implemented under the strategy and report to Council annually.

Background

Throughout Australia, aged care services are in transition with the implementation of the Commonwealth Aged Care Reforms and the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Local and state governments are considering their roles in the future strategic development of policy and services for older people in the community.

The City of Stonnington's Positive Ageing Strategy 2018–2021 responds to the changing environment and links with other Council plans and strategies aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of the Stonnington community. The recently adopted Council Plan 2017–2021 recognises Stonnington as a vibrant community and a desirable place to live, work and visit. Council's vision will be implemented through four pillars: community, liveability, environment and economy. This plan provides the foundation of any policy related to older people in Stonnington. Other important and connected documents are the Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, the Access and Inclusion Plan, and the Cultural Diversity Policy.

Council values residents of all ages and recognises the important contribution that people over the age of 65 make to the vibrant social, cultural and economic fabric of Stonnington. They participate, or have participated, in the paid workforce, support others as unpaid carers, take active roles in the community and step up as volunteers. A positive approach to providing support for older people means many things, including a focus on improving health and welfare, promoting and encouraging wider use of facilities, and facilitating a broader engagement in civic life.

Addressing isolation and social connection as people age is being discussed in Victoria at the state and local government levels, and the literature underscores its importance. Ageing is Everyone's Business: A Report on Isolation and Loneliness Among Senior Victorians by the Commissioner for Senior Victorians (January 2016) quotes international evidence that loneliness makes people sick and increases the chances of premature death.² Council is keenly aware of the benefits of social connection and its contribution to health and wellbeing, particularly as people age.

Council currently provides a range of services for older people in the community – to keep people healthy and active, to support people to stay in their homes and to keep people connected. Community health centres, private residential and accommodation services, home care and maintenance services, medical services, community groups and social activity groups play an important role in the fabric of services delivered to older people in Stonnington. In addition, there are a number of private providers, such as gyms, yoga and pilates studios, and dance groups, which offer activities that may be accessed by or offered to older people at a fee.

In the changing aged care environment, and many new service providers, Council needs to consider new approaches and may adopt new roles in supporting older people. Whatever the future holds, Council will endeavour to ensure that the quality of aged care and support for people over the age of 65 in Stonnington is not diminished, regardless of who provides the services.

The targeted consultation undertaken to develop this strategy confirmed that local government has particular advantages and strengths. For Stonnington these strengths go well beyond deep local connections, an understanding of trends in the community, emerging needs and a clear picture of what services are available across the municipality. Stonnington's strengths include high levels of trust in information and service delivery among older clients, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups and among many other community stakeholders. Considering these strengths will help Council plan for the future.

This strategy includes issues for Council's consideration about advocacy, communication, service delivery, service gaps and relationships with other service providers.

Policy context

The Positive Ageing Strategy supports the directions of the Council Plan 2017–2021 and the Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017–2021. Council has a clear focus on improving the health and wellbeing of the Stonnington community through facilitating responsive and inclusive services and programs, delivering quality accessible infrastructure and public spaces that support community wellbeing and liveability, pursuing strong partnerships and collaboration with other service providers and community groups, and reducing barriers to participation in community life.

The strategy is also influenced by international, state and Commonwealth policies. Internationally, the World Health Organisation states that “most developed countries have accepted the chronological age of 65 years as a definition of elderly or older person”. For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, the term ‘older person’ is defined as 50 years or older, reflecting the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The United Nations General Assembly endorsed the Public Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in 2002. Priorities identified in their recommendations included older persons and their development, advanced health and wellbeing into old age and ensuring that older people benefit from enabling and supportive environments. These still remain relevant today and are reiterated by the World Health Organisation.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare produced the publication ‘Older Australians at a Glance’ in April 2017, which provides insights into the targeted demographic, including how healthy they are and the services they are using.

In 2012, the Australian Government announced a range of major changes to Australia’s aged care system known as the Living Long, Living Better reforms. This created the **Aged Care (Living Longer Living Better) Act 2013**.

In Victoria, the Commissioner for Senior Victorians produced the Ageing is Everyone’s Business report in 2016 for the state government to promote and encourage an age-friendly society and to enhance community participation for all senior Victorians.

Figure 1: How the Positive Ageing Strategy links with other council plans and strategies and local, state and Commonwealth frameworks



Residents aged over 65 years in Stonnington

Population size, age profile and gender

The City of Stonnington will experience consistent population growth over the next 10 years, with the population projected to increase by 17.5 per cent by 2026 to reach 131,144. The age cohort that will experience the highest growth during this time will be those aged between 35 and 49 years. This age cohort will grow by 40.4 per cent (8,302 people) and by 2026 will account for 22 per cent of the population (28,868 people). By comparison, the population of people aged 65 years or older will increase by 31.3 per cent during the same period. This means that by 2026 there will be more than 20,000 people aged 65 years or older in the City of Stonnington, accounting for 15.8 per cent of the population (at the 2016 Census, this age cohort accounted for 14.1 per cent of the population). This growth will drive increased demand for programs, services and supports for older adults right across Stonnington, but particularly in the western parts (Prahran, South Yarra and Windsor) where higher levels of growth are projected compared with the central and eastern parts of Stonnington. Notably, the high level of growth projected in those aged 85 years or older will see an increase of 1,440 people between 2016 and 2026 (58.3 per cent rise). The increase will be particularly seen in the western area. This suggests that demand for supports for frail aged members of the community is likely to increase.³

While growth in the western part of Stonnington will be notable, it is important to understand the central part of Stonnington (Toorak, Armadale, Kooyong and Malvern) currently accounts for the highest number and proportion of older adults (44 per cent) and is projected to continue to do so over the next 10 years.⁴

Also of note is the gender profile of older adults. Overall there are more females than males aged 65 years or older living in the City of Stonnington (56 per cent female and only 44 per cent male), but this difference is even more notable in those aged 85 years or older, with females accounting for 62 per cent of all residents in this age cohort.⁵

Household type

In 2011, just under half of all people aged 65 years or older in the City of Stonnington lived in couple households without children, and one-third lived in lone-person households (2016 Census household data by age cohort was not available at the time of writing this report). This changes quite significantly, however, as people become older, with over 50 per cent of people aged 85 years plus living in a lone-person household and one-third living in a couple household without children.⁶

The 'Ageing is Everyone's Business' report identifies that the risk of isolation and loneliness increases when a person lives alone and that loneliness and isolation can have significant detrimental health and wellbeing impacts. This is important to understand for the City of Stonnington given the increasing number of people living alone (this is projected to rise from 15,000 in 2016 to more than 22,000 by 2026), particularly older adults as they become frail aged. In addition, the gender profile of the community must be considered. With much higher proportions of females aged 65 years or older compared with males, it is more likely older females will be living in lone-person households and consequently are more likely to experience loneliness and isolation, particularly as they become frail aged.

Diversity

The cultural diversity of the Stonnington community and the proportion of residents from a non-English-speaking background has steadily increased over the past decade. At the 2016 Census the top six countries of birth were China, the United Kingdom, India, New Zealand, Greece and Malaysia. The most notable change between 2011 and 2016 was the increase in the proportion of residents from China and the decrease in those from Greece.⁷ Population forecasts for residents aged 65 years or older suggest that these trends will continue, with the number of older adults from China projected to more than double and those from Greece projected to more than halve by 2033. Other notable changes projected are the increasing number of older adults from India, Malaysia and South Africa and the declining number from Italy and Russia.⁸ These changes suggest Council will need to review how it provides support to culturally diverse older adult groups.

Of note also is the variability in cultural diversity across different parts of Stonnington. For example, there is more likely to be higher levels of cultural diversity among older adults living in the western and eastern parts of Stonnington compared with the central area. Of particular note is the high number and proportion of residents born overseas living in South Yarra compared with wider City of Stonnington and the concentrated pockets of cultural diversity associated with the public housing estates in Prahran, South Yarra and Windsor. There is also more likely to be higher numbers of older adults identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the western part of Stonnington, with nearly half of all residents who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander living in Prahran, South Yarra or Windsor.⁹

Current data on the health and wellbeing of Stonnington's LGBTI+ community was not available at the time of developing this plan; however, the 2011 Census indicates that there is a higher ratio of same-sex couples within Stonnington compared with Victorian averages.¹⁰

This is important to understand because, compared with the general population, LGBTI+ people are more likely to attempt suicide, self-harm and have a mental health issue.¹¹ Ageing is Everyone's Business also identified that LGBTI+ populations are specifically at risk of isolation and loneliness.

Income levels and housing tenure

Stonnington is a community that is generally considered to have high levels of affluence and low levels of disadvantage compared with other local government areas. Data about household income levels for older adults in the City of Stonnington supports this, with just over one-quarter of older adults living in low-income households compared with over one-third for Greater Melbourne and nearly 40 per cent for Victoria. Even more notable is the high proportion of older adults living in high-income households in Stonnington (20.2 per cent) compared with Greater Melbourne (7 per cent) and Victoria (5.8 per cent).¹²

Further evidence of relatively high levels of affluence among older adults in Stonnington can be found by examining housing tenure data. While 2016 data is not yet available by age cohort, historical data shows that home ownership among older adults in Stonnington is much higher than the wider population and that it has been increasing. Along with this, the proportion of older adults living in rental accommodation has decreased.¹³

Combined, this information indicates that older adults living in Stonnington will generally have good capacity to pay to access services and supports. However, it is important to understand that the income-generating capacity of older adults changes as they age and that, compared with the wider Stonnington community, older adults are much more likely to live in low-income households.¹⁴ In addition, there are some distinct pockets of disadvantage associated with public housing in Windsor, Prahran and South Yarra.

There is also significant variation in the proportion of people who either own their own home or are a mortgage holder across different parts of Stonnington, with those living in the central and eastern parts of Stonnington much more likely to own their own home or have a mortgage compared with the western parts of Stonnington.¹⁵

In Stonnington, 37.2 per cent of people over the age of 65 receive the Age Pension.¹⁶ While this is much lower than other parts of Victoria, Ageing is Everyone's Business identifies that there is a longstanding correlation between old age and poverty in many developed nations around the world, including Australia. In later life, people on a fixed income are particularly vulnerable to changes to their income situation. Many individuals receiving income support do not have substantial savings or other assets. The impact of this lack of discretionary spending is that a significant proportion of older people are excluded from fully participating in a social life due to limited financial resources, which can in turn lead to isolation and loneliness.

Carers and disability

People aged 65 years or older are more likely to be providing unpaid care for a person with a disability, long-term illness or old age, and they are more likely to be providing unpaid childcare compared with the wider Stonnington population. Conversely, they are much more likely to require assistance because of a disability, particularly those aged 75 years or older. Projection data suggests that the number of people aged 65 years or older with a disability will increase by more than 1,100 people by 2031, with those aged 80 years or older accounting for over 75 per cent of this increase.¹⁷

These factors suggest that Council will need to consider its role in supporting older adults both as carers and as people experiencing a disability.



How we developed this strategy

Targeted consultation in developing this strategy included discussions with individuals and groups, and written questionnaires.

Discussions occurred with:

- > accommodation service providers – aged care homes, retirement homes, supported residential services, community housing, public housing
- > home care and maintenance service providers operating in Stonnington
- > community health care organisations operating in Stonnington
- > Council committees and networks – the Ethnic Services Committee, the Access Stonnington Committee and the Supported Residential Services Workers Network
- > clients at community centres – the Chris Gahan Centre, Grattan Gardens Community Centre and Will Sampson Centre
- > Stonnington Aged Services clients who receive home care and maintenance services
- > individual CALD groups – members of Greek, Chinese and Russian clubs
- > trader associations
- > internal stakeholders – including several Councillors and staff from Council services and facilities.

Council sought views about:

- > the quality of Council services and whether it matters who provides a service
- > Council's role in active and passive recreation and leisure programs – for example, social support, libraries, aquatics and healthy living
- > Council's future role in the health and wellbeing of people as they move through different life stages
- > communication about services and Council's knowledge of other services
- > the strength and depth of relationships with other service providers who cater for older people
- > Council's role as a funder of services provided by others
- > particular strengths of Council and opportunities for improvements
- > Council's role as a community planner and a provider of information, access and advocacy for residents
- > service gaps in the municipality
- > age cohorts and life stages, and different needs.

Four themes emerged:

1. Trust and reliability are paramount.
2. Social interaction is vital.
3. More and better communication is required – advocacy for residents and information about what's available in the community.
4. Council's relationships and networks with service providers will be even more important in the future

What people said

Trust and reliability

The City of Stonnington is trusted by its clients and by many service providers and stakeholders. Council has developed this trust by treating clients with respect and by being consistent, reliable and courteous in service delivery and contact with clients. Many service providers identified trust as a strength of Council in its dealings with clients and also implied it in discussions about the importance of relationships between service providers and Council. High levels of trust came through very strongly throughout the consultation.

“I feel very well looked after. There’s usually someone you know at the centre – the staff are very good with people who drop in, and the kitchen staff are charming.”

– *Client*

“Stonnington Council is reliable, safe and trusted. We’d like advice from Council about who provides quality services. We want to know who to trust.”

– *Chinese Association of Stonnington*

“I like continuity and people who get on with the job. I’m on the pension and a fee for service wouldn’t work unless it was very cheap.”

– *Client*

“Stonnington is trusted by CALD groups – it would be a bad thing to lose this trust.”

– *Service provider*

“The community transport staff are very helpful and courteous. Bus drivers are reliable and courteous.”

– *Client*

“Stonnington is well-known, with a good reputation and identity and [is] trusted.”

– *Supported residential services worker*



The strength of local government

Local government by definition has a natural strength – it's local, it's embedded in the community and it's easier to access than other levels of government. There is a high expectation from clients and other service providers that the City of Stonnington knows what is going on in the community, what people need and what services are available.

“People see Council as a local hub of information. They instinctively go to Council to ask questions about what's available.”

– Accommodation provider

“People ring Council because they know someone will answer the phone ... and they can hold Council to account – it's close and immediate.”

– Councillor

Social connection

Local government, with its closeness to community, has a natural role to play in responding to social isolation and loneliness that may increase as people age. Research cited earlier in this document shows the impact of the premature decline in individual wellbeing and capacity caused by social isolation and loneliness. Addressing the causes and risk factors will benefit the community.

Older people are more likely than young people to live alone in Victoria. According to the 2016 Census, approximately 27 per cent of residents aged 65–74 live by themselves, as well as 34 per cent of residents aged 75–84 and 52 per cent of residents aged 85 years or older. People who live alone, people with limited English and people who provide unpaid care for others have a higher risk of isolation and loneliness. The data shows that increasing numbers of older women will face a higher risk of isolation and loneliness.

Risk factors include poor health and disability, financial hardship, decreased access to transport and services, becoming a carer, loss of a partner and the 'digital divide'. Stonnington clients and service providers expressed concern about the difficulty of accessing information on the internet.

The high value placed on social connection was a consistent theme in the consultation.

"The biggest thing is that people get lonely."

– *Accommodation provider*

"It's such a nice feeling when the bus comes – it's like a friend arriving."

– *Client*

"Clubs keep our members active and relieve isolation."

– *Russian club members*

"Family contact, outings and going to the club keeps my 90+ year-old father going. He loves the club and he's been coming for years."

– *Daughter of Greek club member*

"Transport is a big thing. The Stonnington bus service is excellent; women feel safe and the drivers are courteous."

– *Probus club*

"There is a great social connection through Council activities – the shopping trips, the outings, the concerts."

– *Client*

"As you get older, you go to shop locally because you want social connection – strip shopping is a strong base in the community."

– *Trader*

"How do you facilitate connection to community for people who are house-bound?"

– *Aged care worker*

"The need for social engagement can't be underestimated. It's compelling."

– *Council officer*



“We are old and the clubs are really important, and the Council helps the clubs. Clubs keep our members active and relieve isolation.”

- Russian club members

“We’re finding it harder to get volunteers because grand-parenting is taking up a lot of time for people in their 60s.”

- U3A



Communication – advocacy and information

One of the ways that local government can promote health and wellbeing and respond to social isolation and loneliness is to enhance its advocacy role for residents and improve its communication. The community, service providers and other stakeholders want Stonnington to become a strong voice for older people concerning the need for engagement, services and facilities, and particularly with the state and Commonwealth governments.

The community also wants more information about what is available. The common refrain from both clients and service providers during the consultation was that people who are not already clients do not know what is available. At the same time, there was agreement that older people often will not focus on information that has been provided until they really need it – for example, when they're sick or in crisis. This is a challenge for Council and service providers.

"Please inform the community about services that are out there because a lot of people don't know what's available."

– *Probus men's club member*

.....
"We don't know what's available."

– *Greek club member*

.....
"Council has a role as an information provider – people need to know where to get assistance, and Council should know who needs assistance."

– *Probus women's club member*

.....
"Council needs to know what's happening on the ground and where risk areas or gaps might be."

– *Accommodation provider*

.....
"It would be good to know what's available and what services could be developed."

– *Community health service*

.....
"People have a bit of anxiety about how services will work out for them in the future."

– *Access Committee member*

Relationships and networks

Council already has multi-layered relationships and networks with service providers and community stakeholders. To varying degrees, service providers want to participate in networks facilitated by Council and look to Council to share information through these networks. Most service providers appreciate Council's existing networks and see opportunities for further engagement.

Strong networks and relationships based on mutual respect and sharing information about community needs help avoid duplication of effort. In the changing aged care environment, these relationships and networks arguably become even more important.

“Council is a connector.”

– *Councillor*

“We need to avoid duplication.”

– *Accommodation provider*

“Stonnington needs to work collaboratively with other agencies. Things are becoming competitive and not working together will be a problem.”

– *Service provider*

“If we all join together, this can work. It happens a bit already.”

– *Service provider*

“Council could play a linking role with nursing homes”bringing us together.”

– *Nursing home*

“It is important that Stonnington continues to network and communicate with service providers at various network meetings ... so the best service offerings can be provided.”

– *Service and accommodation provider*





A snapshot of service gaps and emerging issues from the community consultation

“Councils have good information about trends in the community, for example, aged homelessness.”

– *Service provider*

.....

“There is not enough funding for personalised engagement for CALD citizens.”

– *Service provider*

.....

“There are complex clients with mental health needs who’ve always been on the periphery who need to be supported and connected.”

– *Council officer*

.....

“Looking after carers; taking people and their carers on outings.”

– *Service provider*

.....

“There’s a paucity of exercise services for the disadvantaged. Targeted exercise programs would be really good.”

– *Community health service*

.....

“Obesity is a time-bomb. Could Council do something about this?”

– *Accommodation provider*

.....



Homelessness, mental health, bilingual professionals, flexible transport options, looking after carers and falls-prevention exercises were identified as service gaps.

Priority areas for Council

1. Determine Council's future role

Local government is seen by many in the community as a natural hub for information about what is going on, community trends and changes, services, facilities, activities and events. Local government is expected to be close to the community. Stonnington's closeness to the community, responsiveness and accessibility, and knowledge about what is happening across the municipality, are all strengths. These strengths are underpinned by high levels of trust in Council. Residents have high expectations based on a view of Council's role and responsibilities.

Council's strengths and reputation will help it deal with the questions about future roles for local government in light of the Commonwealth Aged Care Reforms.

Stonnington Aged Services has provided much needed support for the frail and elderly in their homes for many years. The response from clients indicates that these services are valued. The Commonwealth Aged Care Reforms have opened the way for many more service providers, which has already had an impact on Council services. Council will aim to support clients and will manage any transitions between services provided as required.

Key strategies:

- 1.1 Council will determine its role in delivering aged care services in light of aged care reforms. This will include developing guiding principles such as cost and affordability, competition, service gaps and capacity of other service providers.
- 1.2 Council will use the principles to help define its role as a community planner and a provider of information, access and advocacy for residents.

2. Define Council's role as a funder

Council funds other organisations to provide services through service agreements. Some organisations will change from local community organisations to larger competitive statewide not-for-profit organisations.

These organisations may be in competition with other organisations in our community. Council must ensure equity and transparency in its provision of funding.

Key strategies:

- 2.1 In defining its role as a funder of other organisations, Council will ensure equity and transparency in applications for funding.

3. Health and wellbeing

Council recognises the importance of older people remaining active and engaged in community life for as long as possible. Council's approach to providing support for older people includes a focus on improving health and wellbeing, improving social connection and reducing social isolation. These, coupled with information on health and wellbeing, work to reduce mental health issues and homelessness across the community.

Council-operated seniors centres aim to improve social connection for residents aged over 65 who visit them. Council's community centres are highly valued by their clients as places where they will be greeted warmly and treated with respect. The centres host a range of activities and provide nutritious meals. Other Council facilities include gardens, sports facilities, theatre spaces, pools, libraries and halls. Council organises a wide range of community events that are inclusive to people of all ages, such as concerts and festivals. Council also facilitates a wide range of passive and active leisure activities. In addition, there are a number of private providers, such as gyms, yoga and pilates studios, and dance groups, which offer activities that may be accessed by or offered to older people at a fee.

For the many residents aged over 65 who access services and facilities, there are many more who do not. Information on accessing services and health and wellbeing is paramount in maintaining a community with older people who are engaged, healthy and connected.

Key strategies:

- 3.1** Council will encourage the use of its parks, reserves and other community and recreation facilities to improve health and wellbeing and reduce social isolation.
- 3.2** Council will inform older people about ways to encourage their participation and engagement in leisure and recreation activities.
- 3.3** Council will explore innovative ways to address the need for intergenerational connections.
- 3.4** Council will strengthen networks with agencies that support people at risk, including those experiencing homelessness and mental health issues.
- 3.5** Council will continue to support carers and advocate for their health and wellbeing.

4. Community accessibility

Affordability is an issue for people on fixed incomes, including people over the age of 65. Affordability is a risk factor for isolation and loneliness. This was confirmed in the feedback from Stonnington clients and residents about the value of subsidised services and why people use them. Among services identified were the range of support services for older people within their homes, as well as access to recreation and leisure programs and activities to increase and maintain the health and wellbeing of older people.

Community transport services make a difference to the lives of those who use them by contributing to social connection, among other benefits. Council provides a subsidised community transport service that is well used. Feedback indicates that it is highly valued by clients for its reliability, efficiency and price. Other service providers note that the market is unlikely to take up this role for the price charged. Both clients and service providers have recommended a more flexible service, citing the needs of people who have great difficulty getting to medical appointments.

Key strategies:

- 4.1** Council will explore ways to improve community transport services to ensure flexibility and affordability.
- 4.2** Council will explore opportunities to provide accessible and equitable recreation, leisure, transport and health services to the community.

5. Community groups

Seniors groups and clubs, such as University of the Third Age (U3A), Probus and CALD groups, create and enhance social connection. They value Council's support through monetary and in-kind grants. With ageing and, in some cases, dwindling memberships and the struggle to get volunteers and office-bearers, clubs face a challenge to continue providing supports and activities for their communities.

Key strategies:

- 5.1** Council will consider ways to support clubs to be more self-sustainable.
- 5.2** Council will work with groups to ensure supportive programs and to maintain sustainability across its diverse community including culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex (LGBTI+), recreation and leisure and other special interest groups.
- 5.3** Council will explore ways of using existing facilities to encourage social connectedness and accessibility to reduce isolation.

6. Community amenity

Feedback from clients and traders keen to attract people over the age of 65 confirmed the value of safe streets and good footpaths and the value of having the same kind of facilities available at large shopping centres – for example, public toilets and seating – in strip shopping precincts.

Key strategies:

- 6.1** Council will continue to examine pedestrian safety and road and footpath maintenance to ensure that older pedestrians are safe.
- 6.2** Council will aim to attract older consumers to strip shopping centres.

7. Volunteering

Volunteering is under pressure. Historically many people over the age of 65 were volunteers; however, childcare fees and/or availability, family break-up and other issues have led to many grandparents taking on childcare roles. An Australian study has shown that in 2011 grandparents provided 34 per cent of childcare and that grandparent care was the predominant form of childcare for two-parent families.¹⁸

Key strategies:

- 7.1** Council will explore ways to promote and facilitate a more active engagement in civic life among people over the age of 65 by promoting the advantages of volunteering to the community.

8. Council as a community leader

Council regularly speaks with other service providers, accommodation providers and community groups. Council officers and Councillors actively facilitate various forums and committees. Examples include the Access Stonnington Committee, the Ethnic Services Committee and the Supported Residential Services Workers Network. Clients and other service providers expect Council to know what is going on in the municipality and to keep on top of changes.

Key strategies:

- 8.1** Council will explore ways to further enhance connections with service providers and key stakeholders to better inform priorities. This will include discussing boundaries and roles and responsibilities.



9. Stonnington as an age-friendly city

Council is aware of the importance of age-friendly policies to support an age-friendly community. The Municipal Association of Victoria is encouraging councils to endorse the age-friendly Victoria Declaration, which commits the state and local governments to working together on creating age-friendly communities. The age-friendly city concept stems from a global project by the World Health Organization, which provides a useful checklist of the essential features of age-friendly cities. Many of the issues raised in this checklist are included in Council policies.

Key strategies:

- 9.1 Council will investigate the possibility of becoming an age-friendly city.

10. Community consultation

Council appreciates the value of different perspectives. Research undertaken to develop this strategy has shown that older people value the opportunity to discuss ideas about their health and wellbeing with Council. Given the changing aged care environment, it is imperative that Council continues to seek the views of older people across the community.

Key strategies:

- 10.1 Council will continue to seek out the perspectives of people over the age of 65 and will invite their participation in a variety of ways.

11. Accountability

The Positive Ageing Strategy is a whole-of-Council strategy. Council officers will develop an action plan identifying activities under the Positive Ageing Strategy priorities. The actions of the strategy will be integrated and implemented by a range of Council departments. A progress report will be presented to Council annually. The action plan will be updated as required to continue to respond to community needs.

Key strategies:

- 11.1 Council officers will evaluate the activities and programs developed and implemented under the strategy and report to Council annually.

Reference notes

- 1 Commonwealth and state governments, and Australian Human Rights Commission terminology.
- 2 Ageing is Everyone's Business, Commissioner for Senior Victorians, January 2016, seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/services-information/commissioner-for-senior-victorians/government-response-to-ageing-is-everyones-business
- 3 Profile.id, City of Stonnington Community Profile and Population Forecast. Accessed February 2018: profile.id.com.au/stonnington/
- 4 Profile.id, City of Stonnington Community Profile and Population Forecast. Accessed December 2017: profile.id.com.au/stonnington/
- 5 *ibid.*
- 6 *ibid.*
- 7 Profile.id, City of Stonnington Community Profile. Accessed December 2017: profile.id.com.au/stonnington/
- 8 Greater Dandenong, 2017, Social Characteristics of Victorian Communities: measures for suburbs and segments of the community. Accessed December 2017: greaterdandenong.com/document/18464/statistical-data-for-victorian-communities
- 9 Profile.id, City of Stonnington Community Profile. Accessed December 2017: profile.id.com.au/stonnington/
- 10 *ibid.*
- 11 City of Stonnington, 2017, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017–2021.
- 12 Profile.id, City of Stonnington Community Profile. Accessed December 2017: profile.id.com.au/stonnington/
- 13 *ibid.*
- 14 *ibid.*
- 15 *ibid.*
- 16 Centrelink, 2017.
- 17 Profile.id, City of Stonnington Community Profile. Accessed December 2017: profile.id.com.au/stonnington/
- 18 Ageing is Everyone's Business, Commissioner for Senior Victorians, January 2016, seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/services-information/commissioner-for-senior-victorians/government-response-to-ageing-is-everyones-business



Community languages

Call the Stonnington Community Link, a multilingual telephone information service.

Mandarin	普通話	9280 0730	Polish	Polski	9280 0734
Cantonese	廣東話	9280 0731	Russian	Русский	9280 0735
Greek	Ελληνικά	9280 0732	Indonesian	Bahasa Indonesia	9280 0737
Italian	Italiano	9280 0733	All other languages		9280 0736

Service centres

Stonnington City Centre

311 Glenferrie Road, Malvern

Prahran Town Hall

180 Greville Street, Prahran

Depot

293 Tooronga Road, Malvern

Open

Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm

T 8290 1333 F 9521 2255

PO Box 58, Malvern Victoria 3144

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