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Background

The City of Tea Tree Gully endorsed its first Ageing Strategy in September 2001. As anticipated the proportion and numbers of older people in the City have continued to increase over the last decade.

Council continues to have an important role to play in the lives of its older residents as an organisation that provides services to them, acts as an advocate or as a policy maker and partner organisation to other government and non-government services. In the past Council has acknowledged the importance of this role by developing effective strategies in partnership with the community to ensure the needs of older people, where possible, are met well into the future.

The City of Tea Tree Gully Ageing Strategy 2001 – 2011 was the product of an extensive consultation process with older people, their families and advocates and with all those involved in maximising the well being and quality of life of older people. This process reflected Council’s belief that older people’s quality of life is not only dependent upon their health, but also on their housing options, income, transport, a feeling of security and their links and sense of belonging to the broader community.

Approximately sixty percent of the actions identified in this first strategy were achieved and many changes have taken place within the service system presenting new opportunities to bring about further change.

This made it timely to review and update the Ageing Strategy ahead of time, bringing it into the current context and underpinning an Action Plan which will be subsequently developed by staff as a ‘living document’ able to be adapted in response to changing community needs and opportunities over the life of the City of Tea Tree Gully Ageing Strategy 2010 – 2015, which will provide the basis for these activities.
Aims of the Strategy

The City of Tea Tree Gully Ageing Strategy has three primary aims:

• To assist Council and the local community to more clearly understand the contemporary issues and challenges facing older people, their carers and the aged care industry in the City of Tea Tree Gully

• To clarify Council’s role in addressing these issues and challenges

• To develop strategies that will enable Council to respond strategically to these issues and challenges
Active Ageing Philosophy

The consultation for Council’s second Ageing Strategy was informed by the philosophy of Active Ageing - “the process of optimizing opportunities for physical, social and mental well-being throughout the life course, in order to extend healthy life expectancy, productivity and quality of life in older age” (WHO, 2002, p.12). The three key elements of Participation, Health and Security are the critical enablers that underpin active ageing.

The Active Ageing approach, “shifts strategic planning away from a “needs-based” approach (which assumes that older people are passive targets) to a “rights-based” approach that recognizes the rights of people to equality of opportunity and treatment in all aspects of life as they grow older. It supports their responsibility to exercise their participation in the political process and other aspects of community life.”(WHO, 2002, p.13).


Active Ageing promotes:

• Ageing as a natural, positive part of life
• The diversity of older people in their needs, interests and backgrounds
• Active participation in community life regardless of age
• Breaking down myths and stereotypes about ageing and older people
• Interdependence of generations
• Support for independence
• Good quality of life for Australians as they age
• Fairness and equity
• Recognition of Australia’s growing diversity, and
• Personal responsibility while providing support for those most in need.
The Vision

The vision and values that underpin the *City of Tea Tree Gully Ageing Strategy 2001 – 2011* remain relevant today. With minor changes they have been included in this *City of Tea Tree Gully Ageing Strategy 2010 - 2015*.

The vision is for:

“A community that values the diversity and individuality of older people, that encourages and facilitates older people’s participation in community life and supports and cares for older people through the ageing process.”

This vision is based on the following values:

- Full citizenship and the right of all citizens to have access to and benefit from the opportunities presented within the City of Tea Tree Gully
- Participatory planning and encouraging older people to be actively engaged in decision making
- Facilitating active ageing and wellbeing
- Recognising and responding to the needs and interests of people from diverse cultures and backgrounds, including Indigenous people.
Population Projections

With the exception of higher numbers of 0-17 year olds, population projections in the City of Tea Tree Gully show a marked ageing of the population over the next thirty years that is broadly consistent with national trends. Population ageing in Australia is a result of both a sizeable decline in fertility rates since the 1960’s and an increase in longevity through advances in medical technology and public health initiatives.

This trend towards an ageing population will grow over the coming decades to such an extent that in Australia the:

- Number of people aged over 65 years will increase from the current 2.5 million to around 7.2 million by 2051
- Proportion of people aged over 65 years will grow from the current 13%, to 25% of the population by 2051
- Proportion of people over 85 years will grow from the current 1.4% to approximately 6% by 2051
- Proportion of the population aged between 15 - 64 years (labour force age) will fall from the current 67%, to around 59% by 2051.

In the decades to come, older Australians are expected to become more diverse in terms of their care needs, preferences, incomes and wealth. This will have important implications for the qualitative aspects of aged care services (such as the range of services needed and the flexibility of service delivery) and the cost of these services.

Need for Services

The range of services provided will also need to respond to the changing health status of the aged. Much of the increased longevity over the past 30 years has arisen from decreases in mortality from some diseases, such as heart disease and stroke.

However, as more people live to older ages, the prevalence of chronic diseases increases markedly. For example, the number of Australians with dementia is expected to increase from around 220,000 to over 730,000 between 2007 and 2050. There will also be a growing prevalence of co-morbidity (people living with two or more diseases at the same time).

This changing pattern of disease will create greater diversity in the care needs of older people, especially among the ‘old old’ where it will present new challenges in caring for the very frail.

Impact of Migration

Older age cohorts will progressively reflect greater ethnic diversity as Australia’s post war migrants age. As a result, the demand for culturally appropriate, flexible and consumer centred age care services is expected to increase.
Income

A large number of baby boomers will also have higher levels of income and wealth to purchase the aged care services they want. They represent the wealthiest households in Australia, having a net worth of around $381,000 on average compared to about $292,500 on average for all Australians. Even so, considerable diversity in the incomes and wealth of older Australians will drive sharp differences in the demand profile for aged care services.

The aged care sector will increasingly face the dual challenge of providing improved services for people with high incomes or wealth, while continuing to provide quality aged care services to those reliant, to varying degrees, on government income support.

Projections of the number of people receiving full, part or no age or service pensions over the next 40 years provide a useful guide to the proportion of older Australians who are likely to be reliant on publicly subsidised aged care. These changes reflect the increasing value of individuals’ superannuation and other private assets and income.

In South Australia, the population is ageing at a faster rate than the rest of mainland Australia. Over the next twenty years the state will witness four major trends:

- The number of people over the age of 65 will almost double
- The ratio of those over the age of 65 to those between the ages of 15-64 will increase from 1:4 to 1:2
- There will be a dramatic shift in the values and attitudes of the new ageing cohorts as baby boomers enter retirement
- The geographical focus of ageing will shift from inner to outer Adelaide.
What is happening in the City of Tea Tree Gully?

Profile of the older population

Over the next 20 years as the baby boomers age, the age profile of the City of Tea Tree Gully will more closely resemble that of the rest of metropolitan Adelaide. Between 2006 and 2031, it is predicted that the number of residents over the age of 70 will almost double - jumping from 7,812 to 14,382 people.

An Affluent Community

With a high Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA Index) score of 1036, the City of Tea Tree Gully is among the most affluent communities in metropolitan Adelaide. However, despite this, current weekly income levels for older residents of retirement age indicate they are largely reliant on the age pension.

While this is currently the case, in the future it is likely that less will rely on a full pension and more on a combination of their superannuation, other private assets and income and a part pension.

Impact of Migration

The profile of older migrants in the City of Tea Tree Gully highlights the impact of migration from the United Kingdom in the 1960s and 1970s. In addition to high numbers of migrants from the United Kingdom, Tea Tree Gully has the second highest number of migrants from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities of all the Eastern Region Alliance Councils.

Indigenous Community

The City has a relatively small Indigenous community that is just below the average for the Adelaide Statistical Division (ASD).

Older Residents Requiring Assistance

The City currently has a lower proportion of residents needing assistance in their daily lives because of a disability, long-term health condition, or old age than the ASD.
Ageing and Housing

Despite having the highest number of retirement village units of any metropolitan Council, the City of Tea Tree Gully is still a traditional residential community, comprised overwhelmingly of separate houses on large blocks.

It is anticipated there will be a significant increase in the number of people living alone in the future which is largely attributed to the numbers of older widows living in the City.

Housing growth in the City of Tea Tree Gully over the next twenty years will largely result from infill rather than greenfield development.
What has been achieved since 2001?

In 2006 an internal review of the implementation of initiatives identified in the *City of Tea Tree Gully Ageing Strategy 2001-2011* was undertaken. The review found that in the five years the Strategy had been in action approximately sixty percent of the proposed initiatives had been successfully implemented. The review highlighted achievements in the following key areas:

- Strategic alliances and partnerships
- Home and Community Care (HACC) Program
- Regional human services planning
- Active participation in a range of northern metropolitan region planning networks and programs
- The endorsed Community Transport and Accessibility Strategy 2002-2008
- Review of the Council’s community transport services – ongoing as part of implementation phase of the Community Transport and Accessibility Strategy
- Urban design and development.

The review identified that many of the proposals in the initial strategy were now out of date and that a comprehensive overhaul of the strategy was required.
How we managed the project and talked to people in 2009

Project Management
The project was overseen by a **Steering Group** comprised of Council staff. The Steering Group met monthly and served as the primary management structure for the project. All major decisions concerning the project were made by this group.

The Steering Group was assisted by the **Community Reference Group**. This group was comprised of one staff member, members of the Co-researchers team and stakeholders from three agencies working in the Council area.

Community Based Participatory Research model
The consultation adopted a Community Based Participatory Research model; a collaborative approach to research that equitably involves Council, the community, stakeholder organisations and the researcher in all aspects of the research process. As a result five local volunteer Community Co-Researchers were involved in the process.

Consultation with community and service providers
- Agency workshop attended by 34 service providers
- Community workshop attended by 70 older residents (with 20 on a waiting list) including some elected members
- Community Survey (approximately 1000 distributed with 486 responses received)
- Four focus groups (including a housing forum) attended by a total of 36 participants
How the information we received has been used

As a result of the information received during the consultation process the framework of the City of Tea Tree Gully Ageing Strategy 2010 - 2015 has been based around the following themes:

- Leadership and Advocacy
- Housing and Urban Planning
- Safety and Security
- Communication and Access to Information
- Social and Civic Participation
- Social Inclusion and Social Isolation
- Exercise and Physical Activity
- Community and Support Services.
Policy Framework
The Ageing Strategy builds on Council’s existing policies, programs and services and complements initiatives of the Australian and State Governments and South Australian and Australian Local Government Associations:

Australian Government
- National Strategy for an Ageing Australia 2005

South Australian Government
- SA Strategic Plan 2007
- Improving with Age: South Australian Ageing Plan 2006
- Healthy Ageing for All Framework 2007 (CNAHS)

Local Government

City of Tea Tree Gully
- City of Tea Tree Gully Strategic Plan 2007 – 2011
- Community Houses/Centres Policy 2008 – 2011
Key Strategic Areas of Focus for Council

1. Leadership and Advocacy

Rationale

Council is engaged in regional planning in the northern and eastern metropolitan areas and plays a lead role in planning in collaboration with, and for older people in the local community. It has developed critical links with government and non-government agencies and the surrounding local government areas.

Council is best placed to demonstrate that the needs of its older residents from low socio-economic groups are often masked by the City’s relatively high socio-economic status.

Council is well positioned to work collaboratively with older people and their carers, neighbouring local government areas, non-government agencies and local business to find solutions to issues of concern for older people and their carers. It must use these critical relationships to advocate for resident’s needs and interests to state and federal agencies and to seek additional government funding to support initiatives where appropriate.

Objective

To maintain and expand Council’s existing leadership role in developing responses to meet the needs and interests of older people and their carers in partnership with them and advocating on their behalf.
2. Housing and Urban Planning

Rationale

Older residents love the green open spaces within the City and while they generally do not want to move out of the area, many want to move from their large, high maintenance family homes into affordable and accessible housing alternatives.

They believe the City is a friendly and relatively safe community with good community spirit. They need access to a range of housing options so they can remain living independently in the community they enjoy and maintain their social networks.

Historically the City developed and grew as a series of sub-divisions for families and planning policies facilitated the services needed by them including schools and child care. The community is now looking to Council to play a role in supporting the development of new housing options and providing access to information about these.

Council needs to ensure the necessary frameworks are in place to support the development of the flexible medium density housing required so older residents can remain living in the community they love. Universal Design is an inclusive design philosophy spanning the requirements of age, gender and ability which could be used in new and infill developments to meet the needs of all ages.

Objective

To actively encourage and demonstrate support for the development of a diverse range of flexible and affordable housing styles and models to meet the needs of residents as they age.
3. Safety and Security

Rationale

Community safety and personal security are important to older people and they generally feel safe and confident within the City. A sense of personal safety is clearly linked to self-confidence and can help older people to remain actively involved in community life.

Access to accurate and relevant information can help residents to improve their personal security and that of their property with the potential to increase their self-confidence as a result.

Opportunities exist through Council’s planning and development processes, and information and advocacy roles to identify short and long term strategies for action to address some of the identified needs of older people which would also benefit the wider community.

Objective

To identify measures to help older people to remain actively involved and feeling safe and secure in their community.
4. Communication and Access to Information

Rationale

Easy access to information is particularly important to older residents. Council is viewed as a trustworthy and accessible source of local information. There is however a broad understanding that Council cannot and should not compete with agencies whose specific role is aged care information provision. Older people often see Council as their first port of call when seeking information about services.

The provision of information needs to be considered in the context of the full range of sources available and in a manner which is inclusive of older people, their carers and their information needs.

Information needs to be available in a broad range of formats designed in response to residents stated needs, and made available via their preferred means.

Council’s role includes:

- Internal integration of information within Council to ensure accuracy and full knowledge of programs and services
- Operation as a first port of call for residents providing comprehensive responses to enquiries
- Linking and connecting with other information services to ensure comprehensive information is available and accurate referrals are made to other agencies.

Objective

To provide current information to residents in a manner which is accessible and user friendly and referring or connecting residents to other appropriate information providers.
5. Social and Civic Participation

Rationale

Older people are a diverse population group varying in age, capability and interests. Evidence suggests there is a declining level of interest in the traditional senior citizens groups and service clubs with a corresponding growth of interest in community activities including hobby and personal interest groups.

These trends add weight to the belief that we are witnessing a transition period in community activities with the ‘young’ old moving away from traditional community associations and expressing a greater desire to follow their own interests and passions in smaller, more flexible and less regimented groups. It is highly likely this trend will continue in the future with some existing groups continuing to struggle until they fold, reinvent themselves or possibly amalgamate with others.

While older people are increasingly interested in volunteering, many are engaging in activities that enable them to pursue their own passions and interests and help others at the same time.

Objective

To ensure that older people influence and benefit from the range of opportunities to engage in intellectual and social activities in their community.
6. Social Inclusion and Social Isolation

Rationale

Active involvement in personal hobbies and community activities (including volunteering and paid work) foster a sense of purpose and personal confidence.

Residents who actively pursue their own interests and hobbies maximise the benefits of the socially valued roles and mental stimulation that accompany community participation. This in turn increases the likelihood that they will remain involved.

Access to transport is a critical factor to continued involvement in activities and the prevention of social isolation, particularly for those over 80 years of age.

Objective

To support the development of a diverse range of community based social activities and transport options to enable older people to become involved in meaningful activities and productive social roles in the community.
7. Exercise and Physical Activity

Rationale

Staying active through physical exercise is highly valued by older people within the City. Older people who exercise regularly are not only healthier and more likely to participate in other social activities, they are also less likely to become reliant on services or socially isolated.

The number of older residents participating in regular physical activity compares favourably with national data.

While many participate in structured exercise groups, there is a strong preference for unstructured exercise which takes place within the home and local neighbourhood.

Objective

To ensure older residents have access to a range of options both structured and unstructured through which they can remain actively engaged in physical exercise.

Rationale

Older residents really value the services they receive from Council. The Library service is highly valued. In addition to traditional library functions and information it provides opportunities to improve computer skills and Scribes Café is a place where older residents like to meet their friends and relax. This social space and learning hub is an important feature likely to become increasingly popular with baby boomers as they age.

Despite the overall increasing patronage of Council’s community centres it is unclear whether they will be able to meet the diverse and growing needs of older residents in the not so distant future.

Home and Community Care services which help older residents to remain living independently at home are highly regarded as is community transport which is particularly important for isolated widows who relied on their husbands for transport.

In addition, access to local shopping precincts remains important, not only as shopping destinations, but as sites for community activities and social contact. Maintaining a broad range of quality state government services including health, transport and police within the City is also important to older residents.

While Council can and does work in partnership with other levels of government, and government and non-government agencies it does not necessarily need to be a service provider to ensure a broad range of services and opportunities are available to residents. In many cases it is more appropriate for Council to act as a facilitator to attract and support agencies which provide services matching local need and to advocate on behalf of residents.

Objective

To ensure older residents have access to a range of community and support services to enable them to remain engaged and living independently within the community.
Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring

The Council officer responsible for the Ageing Strategy will monitor the implementation with support from an Internal Monitoring Group of staff from key areas across the various Council portfolios.

Reporting

Reporting mechanisms will include:

- An annual Information Report to Council
- An annual Community Forum
- Community updates through the Gully Grapevine, Gully Views and Council’s website
Review & Evaluation

An Ageing Strategy Reference Group will be established. Members will include older residents and local service providers who will meet at least twice a year to monitor and support the implementation of the Ageing Strategy.

The Ageing Strategy will be reviewed next in 2015
Abbreviations / Definitions of Terms

ASD  Adelaide Statistical Division which covers the Adelaide metropolitan area

CNAHS  Central Northern Adelaide Health Service

Cohort  A group of people of a similar age

ERA  Eastern Region Alliance
    Includes the Local Government Areas of:
    City of Tea Tree Gully
    City of Burnside
    City of Campbelltown
    City of Unley
    City of Norwood, Payneham & St Peters
    City of Prospect
    Town of Walkerville

HACC  Home and Community Care programs