

POSITIVE AGEING STRATEGY 2016-2020



GANNAWARRA
SHIRE COUNCIL

➤ ...recognising and respecting the significant contribution older people play in creating vibrant and viable communities.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gannawarra Shire Positive Ageing Strategy 2016-2020 highlights Council's commitment to recognising and respecting the significant contribution older people play in creating vibrant and viable communities.

A strong commitment to continue to strengthen partnerships between Council, service providers and the community puts the Gannawarra Shire in good stead to engage a holistic approach to active and positive ageing.

Planning for the projected change in demographics expected over the next decade enables existing strengths to be recognised, provides a vital platform for seeking assistance to address the challenges, and ensures that Gannawarra is in a position to embrace the opportunities that an ageing population presents.

WHAT IS POSITIVE AGEING?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has defined "active ageing" as "the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age".

Positive and active ageing requires an environment that is age-friendly and where older people have access to programs and services that fulfil their needs and interests. An age friendly environment has eight key domains of community living that enable older people with varying needs and capacities to feel safe, have good health and to participate fully in the community.

- › transport
- › housing
- › social participation
- › respect and social inclusion
- › civic participation and employment
- › communication and information
- › community support and health services
- › outdoor spaces and buildings

Age-friendly communities provide opportunities for the whole community.

COMMUNITY GROUPS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The Gannawarra Shire has a number of groups and organisations that cater for the needs and interests of older people. The Gannawarra Shire Council website includes contacts for Senior's Community Groups including:

- › Men's Sheds – in Barham/Koondrook, Cohuna, Kerang, Murrabit, Quambatook and Leitchville
- › Neighbourhood Houses – in Kerang, Quambatook and Cohuna
- › U3As - Kerang & District, Cohuna U3A
- › Probus Clubs – in Kerang and Cohuna
- › Senior Citizen Clubs - in Koondrook, Cohuna, Kerang, Lake Charm/Mystic Park, Leitchville, Murrabit, Quambatook and Lalbert
- › RSL Clubs – shire wide
- › Historical Societies
- › Country Women's Association
- › Carer Support Groups – in Cohuna (Cohuna Neighbourhood House) and Kerang (Kerang District Health and Gannawarra Shire)

The Seniors Advisory Group meets quarterly and is made up of representatives from the above Community Groups. It advocates for older people, supports facilities and co-designs the Seniors Festival annually.

OUR VISION & PRINCIPLES

OUR VISION:

Gannawarra Shire will be an age friendly community that enables our older people to enjoy connected, engaged and active lifestyles and maintain independence for as long as possible while building confidence and resilience to make choices to transition to higher level care within their communities at a time that is right for them.

PRINCIPALS:

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➤ **INCLUSION:** older people are supported, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

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➤ **RESPECT:** we respect decisions and lifestyle choice of older adults.

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➤ **INDEPENDENCE:** older people have greater control over their lives through independence and active participation.

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➤ **ENGAGEMENT:** older people are highly engaged in community decision-making processes and influence issues relevant to them.

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➤ **RESILIENCE:** older people are supported to build confidence and resilience to make choices to transition to higher level care within their communities at a time that is right for them.

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➤ **RECOGNITION:** older people are recognised for their valuable contribution to the community.

OUR COMMUNITY PROFILE

➤ Gannawarra Shire is home to 2,494 older people.



➤ 24% aged 65 and over at the last census in 2011 compared to the Victorian average of 14%.

➤ By 2031 it is estimated that this will increase to 39.2%, compared to 24.2% by 2031.*

(*Victoria in Future 2015, Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning based on the 2011 Bureau of Statistics Census Data)

➤ 89.54% of residents were born in Australia and 94.1% speak only English in the home.

➤ 1.6% of the population identify as aboriginal (165 people). This is higher than the state average of 1.3%.

➤ 23.9% of employment is in agriculture, 14.6% manufacturing and construction and 10.5% in health care and social assistance.

➤ Gannawarra residents were more disadvantaged than the state average as at 2011, with an index of relative socio-economic disadvantage of 959, compared to the Victorian score of 1009.6 – based on income, education, unemployment, skill levels (SEIFA Index of Disadvantage).

➤ Levels of social housing are higher than other areas, 14.1% compared to 11.4% for Victoria.

➤ 13.9% of adults are at risk of short term harm from alcohol 2012 compared to 10.2% for Victoria.

➤ There is a much lower percentage of people living in the Gannawarra Shire who have completed year 12 or an equivalent (24.3%) compared to averages of Victoria (51.7%) and Australia (49.2%). Given the ageing population, this may suggest that many of the older residents left school at a younger age.

➤ There is a higher proportion of lone person households 31.9% compared to the Victorian average of 24.5% placing them at increased risk of social isolation and negatively impacting on health and wellbeing.

➤ 60% of older people live in some form of partnership.

➤ In 2010-11, Gannawarra had a higher proportion of population that were aged mental health clients 0.16% compared to Victoria 0.14%

➤ A higher proportion of the population aged 70 years and over were living in low level residential aged care (54.7 per 1000 people) compared to the Victorian average (46.3 per 1000 people). This figure reflects the age structure of the population as well as the availability of aged care places at various levels.

➤ In 2010, Gannawarra Shire had a significantly higher rate per 1000 people aged 70 years and over that were receiving Home and Community Care services, 723.3 per 1000 people compared to 368.3 for Victoria.



➤ 58.7% of older people earn less than \$400 per week.

➤ 2011 Census information indicates that 34% of households across the Shire have no internet connection.

➤ 800 older people or 32% currently receive a form of community care.

➤ By 2031 it is estimated that around 1,150 older persons will be in need of some form of community care.

➤ 7% of older people in the Gannawarra Shire are using some form of residential aged care.



➤ There are currently 169 places at four local aged care provider services.

➤ By 2031 more than 250 residential aged care places will be required to meet demand.

The significant growth in the population of older people will place a greater demand for activities and services that meet their needs.

COUNCIL'S ROLE IN POSITIVE AGEING

Developing an age friendly community requires support from Council, the community, community groups and local industry as well as from a range of service providers in areas such as health and transport.

Council supports an age friendly environment and positive ageing through a range of means including encouraging the appropriate development of:

- Housing and accommodation
- Public and open spaces
- Recreational facilities and services
- Access to technology, the internet and associated information portals and social media
- A local economy including investment in relevant services and the development of a workforce that can deliver such services

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Council is directly involved in the provision of services for older people. Many older people require support in the home or through other services in order to remain living at home - this support and services include:

- Assessment
 - Domestic assistance (home care)
 - Personal care
 - Nursing (community nursing, home nursing)
 - Allied health services (occupational therapy, physiotherapy, podiatry, dietetics, etc.)
 - Food services (meals on wheels)
 - Planned activity groups
 - Property maintenance
 - Respite services
 - Library Services
 - Community Grants
 - Arts opportunities and support
 - Volunteering
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Many of these services are provided through Commonwealth and State Government Programs – which are administered in the Gannawarra Shire by the Gannawarra Shire Council, Kerang District Health, Cohuna District Hospital, Mallee District Aboriginal Services and Northern District Community Health.

Older people may also be eligible for Commonwealth Home Care Packages – these are administered on behalf of the Commonwealth Government by a number of providers, including Gannawarra Shire Council.

Many older people receive services through the Department of Veterans Affairs, which include the provision of in-home support.

In addition to direct service provision, collaboration and coordination amongst services providers and support organisations is facilitated by Council to foster a coordinated approach to achieving an age friendly environment.

The promotion of the benefits of positive ageing to older people and the community is also a key priority along with advocating to other levels of government on the needs and interests of older people.

Other Council strategies and plans relevant to the needs of older people include Gannawarra 2025, Council Plan (which incorporates the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan), Community Safety Plan and the Economic Development Strategy.

AGED CARE REFORMS

The Australian Government is committed to providing a sustainable system that supports older people who need care. Australia's population is ageing rapidly and the current aged care system needs to change to keep up with future demand.

To address the limitations of the current aged care system and to ensure it's the best possible system for Australians, now and into the future, the Australian Government are reforming the aged care system.

Reforms are being implemented progressively, to give older people more choice, easier access and better care. It is hoped that these reforms will also build a better and more sustainable aged care system.

As the reforms are implemented Council will need to work closely with clients to ensure a smooth and informed transition and to maintain client care whilst services adjust to any consequent impacts.



FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

The **Five Ways to Wellbeing** underpin the health and wellbeing directive of the Gannawarra Shire, they provide a foundation for considering how to support, engage and develop children and young people living in the Shire. The five philosophies are: **Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give**. These five ways to wellbeing also underpin the Youth Strategy objectives and activities.

CONNECT... Connect with the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

BE ACTIVE... Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

TAKE NOTICE... Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

KEEP LEARNING... Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.

GIVE... Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

Seven focus areas within the strategy reflect the themes highlighted through extensive consultation with the community and service providers. The focus areas support the rights of individuals to make choices about the way they live while providing quality services to support those who need them. Creating Dementia-Friendly Communities: The Toolkit for Local Government is a toolkit that is threaded through the key focus areas.

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The seven key focus areas are:

1. Connectivity
 2. Supporting Services
 3. Active Participation and Engagement
 4. Housing and Accommodation
 5. Community Connectedness
 6. Information and Communication
 7. Partnerships and Collaboration
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1. CONNECTIVITY

Help older people to be able to reliably and safely access activities, services and employment through access to technology and transport options that reflect their needs, circumstances and abilities.

Older people require good access to necessary infrastructure, facilities and services to enable them to lead independent lives. Access to various transport options is one of the key determinants in a person's ability to maintain their independence, stay connected and participate fully in community life.

Transport should go to key destinations such as hospitals and health centres. The transport vehicles themselves need to be accessible, and transport stops should be easy to access and conveniently located. Point-to-point local transport is especially important for older people who are not readily able to access fixed route public transport. Safety and personal security measures are also a priority for older passengers.

CAPABILITY OF EXISTING TRANSPORT

A number of responses from the stakeholder consultation identified a lack of transport options as being a barrier to accessing services including health services and shopping, and/or participating in activities. There was acknowledgement of the benefits of having existing rail and bus connections particularly with respect to accessing health services in Bendigo. There is a need to support improvements to the frequency and timing of these services.

However, many noted that it was difficult for older people, who do not have access to a car, to get about in the major towns and there were added challenges for people in more rural locations in the Gannawarra Shire.

Looking for alternative transport options to assist older people to get around is another approach to increasing their community participation. This can include programs such as community buses, or active transport such as walking or cycling, which have many health benefits for all community members.

WALKING AND CYCLING

There is a need to review the walkability of towns in the Shire and the access for bicycles including bicycle storage and security. Council is undertaking an upgrade of its tracks and trails networks which will support improved walkability and bicycle access.

DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORT OPTIONS

There is a need to identify opportunities for the development of transport services – particularly within the Gannawarra Shire. This would include collaboration from a number of providers whose services are needed by older people as well as identifying how current transport resources can be leveraged for maximum effect. Although Council is not primarily responsible for funding or providing public transport, Council can advocate for more and improved services to State Government agencies.

MOTORISED SCOOTERS

Many older people rely on other forms of transport to get around including motorised scooters and wheelchairs. Travelling around the community in these ways raise many other issues associated with the condition and width of footpaths, number of places to rest and shelters, and feelings of safety.

Stakeholder feedback indicated an increased use of motorised scooters and related safety issues for their users and for other community members. There is a need to encourage safer use of scooters and to make more provision for their use including paths and crossings.

INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

The Internet facilitates connectivity to opportunities and services for the entire community, including older people. It is important that efforts to improve internet connectivity are continued including advocating for timely access to the National Broadband Network (NBN) as well as facilitating access to the internet for those older people who do not have internet connectivity at home.

Many older people in the community consultation session indicated that their lack of knowledge and skills relating to the use of the internet was a significant hurdle to this form of connectivity.

Support for people to gain knowledge through partnerships with Libraries, Neighbourhood Houses and Learn Local is a focus of this Strategy.

2. SUPPORTING SERVICES

Develop and deliver a range of services relevant to the needs of older people and support their ability to live where they choose and to be active and independent.

It is important that older people have good access to various services as they age and potentially require more support. A range of agencies that provide services relevant to the needs of older people operate in the Gannawarra Shire – these agencies, including the Gannawarra Shire Council, have long established partnerships and protocols in place with respect to service development and delivery.

HEALTH SERVICES

Access to health services is extremely important for older people, as health issues often increase for people as they age and older people make up the greater percentage of hospital admissions. Many older people in the Gannawarra Shire need to travel to Bendigo, and beyond, to access health services.

As the number of older people in the Gannawarra Shire increases there will be more demand for health services both in quantity and range. This will include an increasing demand for psychological and neurological health services as well as for a range of allied health services including podiatry, physiotherapy and related hydrotherapy.

Council has a primary role in aged care and health care, and can advocate to State and Federal Government agencies for improved and coordinated health care services in the region.

DIVERSITY OF NEEDS

It is vital to take the diversity of older people into account when developing services, programs and facilities to ensure their needs are met. Council's Diversity statement respects diversity: Gannawarra Shire Council believes in the inherent strength of a vibrant, diverse and inclusive community where the backgrounds, perspectives and life experiences of our people help us to forge strong, respectful connections.

HEALTH PROMOTION

Older people are highly represented in a number of chronic diseases including heart disease and diabetes. The Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership (SMPCP) is active in promoting behaviours and services that can reduce the risk profile of people and their susceptibility to chronic disease.

HOME SUPPORT SERVICES

One of the biggest challenges facing the aged care services sector will be the changing expectations of 'baby boomers' as they move into retirement. Baby boomers are living longer than previous generations and generally have higher expectations of service provision and lifestyle than current retirees. This will have important implications for all key stakeholders, particularly Council and service providers.

There is also a growing trend towards ageing in the home for longer – this has implications for the range home and community services required.

SUPPORT FOR CARERS

The role of carers is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of older people. In turn caring for carers is critical. Supporting them in their role will ensure their sustainability.

SERVICE WORKFORCE, FUNDING AND FUTURE PLANNING

The existing partnerships will need to continue their efforts to advocate for more support and funding and the development of relevant services and facilities as well as workforce development.

There is also a role for economic development with respect to attracting private sector investment in the development of facilities relevant to the needs of older people. This includes health and residential aged care developments and supporting future workforce development needs.

VOLUNTEERING in the Gannawarra Shire



3. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The Gannawarra Local Agency Meeting (GLAM) of which Gannawarra Shire Council is an active member, uses the 5 Way to Wellbeing as an evidence based framework for improving wellbeing and living happy and healthy lives. The 5 Ways to Wellbeing were developed by the New Economics Foundation in the UK.

TAKE NOTICE

Participation in activities with others is central to positive ageing. The wellbeing of older people is supported when they are actively engaged in their interests, including recreation, the arts, community service, learning and employment.

CONNECT

Many older people want the choice to engage in meaningful pursuits such as community leadership roles or further education. They are often very active citizens and contribute much of their time to various groups, often through volunteering roles.

As the population of older people in Gannawarra Shire grows it will become increasingly important for a wide range of community groups including special interest, sport and social clubs to facilitate the involvement of older people – both as participants and in leadership roles. This may include support for older people to develop a better understanding of the expectations of governance in such groups and providing effective leadership to a range of people.

GIVE

Volunteering is good for everyone. The community benefits as well as individuals, groups and businesses. Council offers a large range of opportunities to volunteer: Meals on Wheels, Books on Wheels, L2P, GNETS and Gateway to Gannawarra. The Gannawarra community prides itself on having a strong volunteer culture.

KEEP LEARNING

Keeping mentally active is another key factor of positive ageing. This includes continuing to learn new skills and knowledge. Many older people are keen to pursue meaningful educational opportunities and continue learning and growing.

Other informal educational groups, such as the University of the Third Age, have large numbers of older participants who are gaining new skills and knowledge.

Learning about new communication and information technologies is another way older people can participate in community life and connect with others, particularly younger people. More and more information is communicated to the public through online media and there is an increasing use of texting and social media.

Older people in general are keen to learn how to use these technologies or improve their skills so they can communicate better with their friends and families, as well as keep up with the latest in news and information. At the same time there are older people who are anxious about engaging with online communication tools.

BE ACTIVE

For many older people, maintaining their independence is an important part of living their chosen lifestyle. Maintaining independence can become an important issue as older people move into their later years and they find their health or mobility has decreased.

Ensuring that as many older people as possible take responsibility for their personal health and wellbeing and live active lifestyles can reduce potential strains on the health system caused by an ageing population.

As the number of older people in the Gannawarra Shire increases it will become even more important to promote the benefits of positive ageing and healthy lifestyles through a range of means including health promotion. Focusing on healthy lifestyles from a young age is important to ensure that everyone builds and maintains healthy habits into later stages of life.

Being physically active has many known benefits for all people and these benefits go beyond physical health. Also physical activity keeps the mind active and healthy, and maintains social and community connections.

Working collaboratively with key stakeholders to provide initiatives and programs that encourage active and healthy lifestyles for older people is important to enable them to remain independent and live their chosen lifestyle for as long as possible. It will also be important for a range of community facilities and open spaces to support a range of activities relevant to the needs and interests of older people.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Socially inclusive rural communities are those in which every individual is able to feel welcome in their community and have the opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of rural community life. (SMPCP Social Inclusion Framework). Engage, Empower, Unite, Accept and Change are the five principles which will have the greatest impact in ensuring strong socially inclusive rural communities. Older people are especially at risk of social isolation.

HEALTHY BY DESIGN

As the population of older people in the Gannawarra Shire grows there is a need to review a range of community facilities with respect to their capacity to cater for the needs and interests of older people. It will become increasingly important to ensure that the design and amenity of public areas facilitates high levels of community engagement. It is also important that the programs on offer through such facilities are relevant to the interests and needs of older people.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Perceptions of safety can obstruct people's ability to participate in all aspects of community life. If someone feels unsafe in their neighbourhood, it can often stop them from leaving their home for even basic tasks like shopping.

Council has developed a Community Safety Plan where the needs of older people were considered a high priority. The Community Safety Plan can be found on Council's website.

WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

Participation in the workforce is for many people one of the key ways they interact and stay connected to their communities. Like the general population, the Gannawarra workforce is ageing, which not only means that there will eventually be more older workers to younger workers, but that workplaces are at risk of losing valuable skills and knowledge as people move into retirement. In order to deal with these issues, workplaces need to become age-friendly, and implement strategies to retain and recruit older workers. Flexible working hours will be particularly important for people who may also have caring responsibilities.

PROMOTION OF OPPORTUNITIES

As the number of older people in the Gannawarra Shire increases there will be more demand for access to information to identify opportunities for participation, employment and services. While information will still be available in its traditional forms, it would be of benefit to older people, and providers, to be able access information online.

4. HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION

Support older people to have choices about where they live and to remain in their neighbourhoods and communities.

Older people want to have real choice in where and how they live. Independent living and ageing in place enables people to remain connected to their social networks and communities as their care needs change.

AGEING IN THE HOME

The choice of many older people is to age in the home – this is also a key direction in aged care policy. Successful ageing in place relies on coordinated and effective service provision in home and support services as well as integrated care facilities. An adequate provision of a full range of aged care services is critical to enable people to access the level of care they require without relocating as their need for care increases.

As the population of older people in the Gannawarra Shire increases, there will be more people ageing in the home who need coordinated and effective service provision. If more people are going to age in the home for longer than has been the experience to date then there will likely be an increase in the complexity of support with respect to individual health and mobility issues.

In Gannawarra, some 60% of older people are living in partnership and around 30% live alone. Many older people are living in the family home – often this means that they are living in a multi-bedroom house with a garden space. This requires a level of maintenance that can be challenging for many older people.

DIVERSITY OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Often older people continue to live in the family home because there are no other options – either due to their financial circumstances or due to a lack of alternate options with respect to housing stock. There is a need to encourage the development of affordable housing options that incorporate adaptable design that enables ready modification when required. This need for such options is widely felt throughout regional Victoria, including in the Gannawarra Shire.

The relative affordability of existing housing stock in the Gannawarra Shire is attractive to new entrants, including older people who may be seeking to capitalise on the ability to realise a higher price for their current property.

HOME MAINTENANCE AND MODIFICATION

There is also a need to support older people's efforts to maintain their housing – including key essentials such as lighting and smoke alarms. There is also a need for many houses to be modified to be more suitable to the abilities of older people – this including the installation of ramps, handrails and the modification of bathrooms.

As the population of older people in Gannawarra increases there will be more people living in houses that need maintenance and/or modification.

RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE

An adequate provision and equal distribution of a full range of residential and community aged care services is critical to enable people to access the level of care they require without relocating as their need for care increases. Successful ageing in place relies on coordinated and effective service provision in the home by a range of support services, as well as integrated care facilities.

At present there are a number of residential aged care providers in the Gannawarra Shire offering 169 places for low care, high care, dementia and carer respite. Some older people from the Gannawarra Shire are living in residential care outside of the Shire. This is often due to a suitable residential aged care place not being available or that they are in a facility that is more accessible to their family members and/or carers.

As the population of older people in the Gannawarra Shire increases there will be a need for more residential care places – this includes more dementia places. The forecast is that one in four people aged 85 years or older will experience some form of dementia. As this particular population of older people increases there will be an increased demand for dementia places in residential and community aged care settings.

It is anticipated that by 2021 more than 215 residential aged care places will be required. This will require additional investment by either current or new providers.

The need for alternate housing options and more residential aged care facilities will need support through Council's land planning frameworks to ensure that appropriate space is available in suitable locations.



5. RECOGNITION AND COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS

Facilitate the connectedness of older people to the wider community and being respected for their contribution to the community.

Older people make many significant contributions to our communities. Billions of dollars have been contributed to the national economy through older people working in full-time employment and their work as carers and volunteers.

CONTRIBUTION AS CARERS

Older people often take on diverse roles in their families and communities. There are many older people who have significant responsibilities as carers – for their spouses or partners, older family members, people with a disability, or grandchildren. Caring for others is demanding and often unrecognised as fulltime work in the broader community. Taking on a caring role for an older person can also be isolating as they may lose touch with their friends who might be retired or semi-retired.

RESPECT FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Despite the significant and positive contributions older people make to our communities, there are instances where older people are not afforded the respect and dignity they deserve.

There are many negative stereotypes in our society associated with ageing – loss of memory, frailty, loneliness and powerlessness. As the population of older people in Gannawarra grows it will become increasingly important to promote a more accurate understanding of the role older people play in our communities.

CONNECTEDNESS WITH OTHER GENERATIONS

It will become increasingly important to encourage opportunities for younger and older people to connect and value each other. This in turn will support a growing level of social connectedness where older people are less likely to become socially isolated and more engaged in the broader community.

It will also become increasingly important that the broader community understands how older people feel when sharing public space with others and become more aware of behaviours that might make older people feel anxious. It is important to offer opportunities for older people to remain socially connected and active within their communities.

MENTORING

The wealth of knowledge, experience and wisdom older people hold should be valued and cherished by younger generations. Older people often have much to teach young people, and mentoring opportunities should be encouraged and explored as a way of passing on this wisdom and knowledge.

At the same time older people can learn more of what younger generations are doing including being exposed to current technologies and appliances and how these can support their lifestyles.



6. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Facilitate the connectedness of older people to the wider community and being respected for their contribution to the community.

A key factor in positive ageing relates to older people having ready access to necessary information so that they can stay socially connected and participate in community events and activities. Access to information is also vital to empower older people to make their own decisions about their futures.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION

It is important that older people in the Gannawarra Shire have ready access to information. This will include having information in locations that are relevant to the lifestyle events and activities of older people including public locations such as activity centres, at health service provider locations and at facilities that older people attend such as Senior Clubs. Given the potential diversity of locations in which information is provided it becomes important to identify how comprehensive and contemporary such information is.

NAVIGATING THE AGED CARE SERVICE SYSTEM

The aged care service system can be difficult to navigate especially for people who are in need of information and support for the first time. It is a reality that many older people and their families remain unaware of the requirements and opportunities inherent in the “system” until they require assistance. Feedback from many service providers in Gannawarra is that only a small percentage of people in the community are proactive in their attempts to understand the “system” ahead of when they have an actual need for use.

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USE OF ONLINE TECHNOLOGIES

The trend towards information being provided online means that older people who do not have online access and/or related skills are not able to engage with this information. Census data for the Gannawarra Shire indicates that there remains a high percentage of older people in the community do not have an internet connection in their homes.

It can be expected that the number of older people who are online will increase as today’s “younger people” – who are more familiar with online technology through their work – become older people.

Recent technologies such as “e-readers” are becoming more prevalent – statistics from the US indicate that 28% of people aged over 67 are using this technology. Such trends will extend the reach of online access for many older people and this familiarity will extend to the use of social media as a means of providing information and connecting with others

Older people in Gannawarra need access to the internet and programs that build their capacity and confidence to use such technologies. It is also likely that older people will remain indifferent with respect to the use of online technology.



FOR EXTINGUISHING
DRY CHEMICAL
ABC CLASS
TO BE USED FOR PAPER,
WOOL, COTTON, OIL,
LIQUID AND ELECTRICAL
FIRES

FIRE BLANKET

BLANKET

Working
Billy

Healthy Eating
Longer Living

7. COMMUNITY PROVIDERS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Continue to develop and operate a range of partnerships and collaborative arrangements between providers whose services are relevant to the needs and interests of older people.

Supporting the needs and interests of older people in the Gannawarra Shire is a shared responsibility across the community, local business, service providers and older people themselves – no one group can deliver all of the diversity of support and services that older people require. A whole-of-community, integrated and collaborative approach will ensure the delivery of timely and appropriate responses to older people's needs, helping to build resilient, strong and connected communities.

Older people form a significant component of the Gannawarra population and that this will increase into the future. The community can play a significant role in encouraging connectedness with older people and supporting the participation of older people in a range of community activities.

Local business plays a role in encouraging the workplace flexibility often required to foster employment opportunities for older people and by also providing support to community activities that are relevant to the needs and interests of older people. Business will also play a key role through its investment in the aged care industry and related workforce.

FOSTER EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS

The service agencies in Gannawarra, including the Gannawarra Shire Council, have long established effective partnerships and collaborative arrangements with agreed protocols around service planning, development and delivery with respect to the needs and interests of older people. These partnerships and collaborative forums include: -

- Gannawarra Local Agency Meeting – includes the Gannawarra Shire Council, Northern District Community Health, Cohuna District Hospital (CDH), Kerang District Health (KDH), Victoria Police, the Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership and Mallee District Aboriginal Services. This partnership has developed agreed protocols with respect to Service Coordination, Communication, Shared Planning and Projects
- Gannawarra Health and Wellbeing Network - the network has a large membership, representing agencies across aged, disability and mental health and consumer groups
- Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership (SMPCP) – includes agencies that operate in Gannawarra and other municipalities and has chronic disease prevention as one of its key areas of strategic focus
- Seniors Advisory Group – a discussion forum for all matters of interest to older people that is facilitated by the Gannawarra Shire Council

While Council is a key player in all of the above partnerships it is also important that there is a “partnership within Council” that drives a cross-Council attitude to supporting the needs and interests of older people. It is important that all council services foster an understanding of how the delivery of programs and infrastructure that they facilitate supports the needs and interests of older people.

Council is committed to deliver integrated services to its communities, and to older people. This Positive Ageing Strategy takes a holistic approach, taking into account the many services offered to older residents from across the organisation.



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