



# Older Persons Strategy 2018-2022



March 2019



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## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

By 2036, it's predicted the number of residents in North Sydney aged 65 and over will have increased to 17%. This number is only expected to grow over time because of the high quality of healthcare, living standards and lower birth rates.

As a Council, it's important we cater for everyone in our community – from small children and teenagers to workers, families and retirees. As the demographics in our community shift over time, it's vital we change our strategies to address the changing needs of our residents.

Our Older Persons Strategy 2018-2022 identifies key services and initiatives we plan to provide for older people living in North Sydney over the next four years in order to help people remain connected, age in place, and live healthy and meaningful lives.

Following community feedback, a key aspect of the Strategy is the provision of transport options to and from Council events, as many older residents told us they struggle to get around on public transport. People can start to feel disconnected when they are no longer working, so it's important our events and programs are accessible and inclusive.

Another aspect of the Strategy is a new volunteer expo to launch our Seniors Festival celebrations. Volunteering has so many benefits, particularly for the volunteer. It's been shown to help counteract depression and stress, increase self-confidence and provide a sense of purpose. The first volunteer expo will be held in 2019 and will hopefully become a calendar highlight.

Other priorities identified include improving accessibility in Council spaces, looking for opportunities to provide fitness facilities for older people, working with local organisations to increase affordable housing, supporting our community centres and other initiatives aimed at older people. These priorities are expanded upon in the Older Persons Strategy 2018-2022 below which also details how we will deliver them.

Jilly Gibson  
MAYOR



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Australian population is ageing. The proportion of older people, those aged 65 years and over, has been steadily increasing since 2000 for both men and women, and this trend is expected to continue. Improvements in the life expectancy of both men and women, higher standards of healthcare, and the birth rate falling below the replacement rate are all contributing to this trend. Between 2011 and 2016, the number of people aged 65 years and over Australia wide increased by 664,500 .

The number of older people living in North Sydney is likewise increasing, with seniors aged between 70 – 84 years old seeing the second largest growth area by age. The number of people aged over 65 will represent 17% of the population by 2036.

The purpose of North Sydney Council's Older Persons Strategy 2018-2022 is to set the direction for Council over the next four years. It outlines priorities and helps guide the services we provide to the community, and it sets the policy platform for Council.

This strategy builds upon Council's existing Older Persons Plan 2013-2017, incorporating elements of the existing plan alongside new actions that have emerged through the consultation process. Some of the new elements include; the implementation of a positive

ageing communications and media strategy, delivery of a Seniors Festival program, coordination of a local volunteer expo and making provision for transport options at Council events.

The Action Plan outlines specific actions that Council will take to create opportunities for older people in North Sydney to remain connected, age in place, and live healthy and meaningful lives. The plan has been divided into the following categories:

- 1.** Community Support and Health Services
- 2.** Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- 3.** Transportation
- 4.** Housing
- 5.** Social Inclusion and Participation
- 6.** Civic Participation and Employment
- 7.** Communication and Information

The Action Plan will be reviewed annually as part of the Council's annual budget process and will identify new and innovative actions to remain current and meaningful.

## PRIORITY ACTIONS IDENTIFIED:

- Make provisions for transport options to major Council run events
- Work to make transport links accessible; reduce access barriers (where practicable)
- Provide support, information and advocacy to older people who are at risk of homelessness
- Maintain partnerships with local services and organisations to address homelessness in North Sydney
- Maintain supply of Council supported social housing for our most vulnerable residents (local residents on low and very low incomes)
- Explore opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing in North Sydney
- Continue to support our local community centres and groups in the delivery of healthy ageing and social programs to older people
- Deliver an Annual Seniors Festival program
- Encourage the participation of older people from CALD backgrounds to engage in community programs and events
- Subsidise Internet access for older people via local community centres and groups
- Recognise the valuable contributions volunteers and carers make to our community
- Create opportunities for lifelong learning
- Promote the volunteering opportunities available within North Sydney
- Manage Council's workforce in an age-friendly manner
- Implement a positive ageing communications and media strategy
- Utilise Council's community noticeboards to communicate information on events, programs and activities
- Promote events, programs and activities for older people in local media, i.e. The Mosman Daily

A detailed explanation of all actions identified have been tabled in the Action Plan contained within this document.

This strategy should be read in conjunction with:

- North Sydney Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2016 - 2019.
- North Sydney Council Family and Children's Strategy 2018 - 2024
- North Sydney Council Arts and Cultural Plan 2015 - 2017
- Crows Nest Centre Plan of Management 2017 - 2020



## PURPOSE OF THE OLDER PERSONS STRATEGY

The purpose of North Sydney Council’s Older Persons Strategy 2018-2022 is to set the direction for Council over the next four years. It outlines priorities and helps guide the services we provide to the community, and it sets the policy platform for Council.

Many sources of information have helped shape the development of this Older Persons Strategy. This includes information gathered through an extensive community engagement and planning process, research and data, and relevant legislation and policy context.

North Sydney Council has a long-standing commitment to understanding community needs, and doing what it can with available resources to fill identified gaps for children and families, youth, people with disability and older people. This commitment is reflected in North Sydney Council’s Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028 outlining the community’s priorities and aspirations for the future of the North Sydney local government area (LGA).

The CSP set down a number of goals relevant to our ageing population.

GSP STRATEGY	GOAL
2.3.1	Facilitate, advocate and provide opportunities for improved public transport use, alternative modes of transport and end of trip facilities
2.3.5	Improve safety for pedestrians, motorists and bus and bike riders
3.4.7	Advocate for affordable housing
4.1.1	Increase mobility and accessibility throughout North Sydney
4.1.2	Provide services, facilities and information to meet the needs of North Sydney’s diverse communities (including children, young people, older people, residents and workers)
4.1.4	Enable the provision of aged care support facilities
4.1.5	Provide support and funding to not-for-profit community groups and charities
4.1.9	Plan for future social infrastructure and health services to support healthy communities
4.1.10	Promote physical activity, healthy eating and preventative health care
4.1.11	Improve the safety of North Sydney’s public environment
4.3.5	Promote volunteering and community involvement and draw on community skills and expertise

The CSP broadly describes the direction Council will take as it relates to older people, whilst the Older Persons Strategy (2018-2022) provides specific and detailed actions and goals.



## DEFINING OLDER PEOPLE BY AGE

The definition of “older people” varies widely and impacts on what services are made available.

- The Local Government Regulation identifies the age of 55 as a point at which people are considered as a senior or an older person and is the earliest point where they can retire, take up their superannuation and access Seniors Living accommodation.
- Individuals can apply for a Seniors Card in NSW at the age of 60.
- The age of 65 is the common benchmark where people are entitled to aged pensions and certain aged-care packages (age of 50 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander).
- NSW Roads and Maritime Services (formerly NSW Roads and Traffic Authority) assess the driving skills of older people at 80 years and over.

For the purpose of this strategy the term older person is considered anyone aged 65 years and older.



## PREVIOUS PLANS

Council's existing Older Persons Plan 2013-2017 identified 8 focus areas;

The following key achievements were made under the old plan.

### ACCESS AND MOBILITY

- Major facilities such as the Coal Loader were created meeting access standards
- Kerb ramps and footpath maintenance programmes funded
- Access issues at Barry Street Playground, Primrose Park Art and Craft Centre and Forsyth Park Community Centre evaluated and design improvements costed
- Advocacy for lifts to Sydney Harbour Bridge Northern approaches
- Development of a Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) outlining the steps needed to create a more inclusive and welcoming community for both staff and the community at large. Training opportunities have been provided to staff and the senior leadership team regarding access and how we can create and promote a more inclusive and welcoming environment.

### COMMUNITY SAFETY

- Production and distribution of an annual Road Safety calendar provided free to local residents.
- Cycleway upgrades were implemented throughout the LGA, improving cycle paths and footpaths for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Participation in the North Shore Police Area Command Community Safety Committee

### EMPLOYMENT AND VOLUNTEERS

- Provision of volunteering opportunities available for older people who have retired and have the time available to contribute to their local community. Within Council most volunteers are engaged in our sustainability programs, providing bush care, however a stream of volunteers also assists with the delivery of Council's home library service and Justice of the Peace services offered by Stanton Library.
- Multiple volunteering opportunities also exist within our community centres, including the Crows Nest Centre, North Sydney Men's Shed, The Kirribilli Centre and Neutral Bay Seniors Centre.
- Council volunteers are recognised and celebrated both at Departmental level at Christmas and annually on International Volunteers' Day.

### INCLUSION AND INFORMATION PROVISION

- Flyers and brochures promoting programs and services offered, including information on aged and disability services, community centres and volunteering opportunities.
- Guiding and other volunteer opportunities at Council's Museums (Nutcote and Don Bank) and Library

### HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Significant subsidies and grants for the Crows Nest Centre as the primary direct service provider for aged-care services in North Sydney, supported financially by Council, offering social support programs and activities, as well as services that allow older people to age in place.
- Support for the Waverton Hub, an active ageing initiative seeking to make the community more age-friendly. It is a member-driven organisation being set up by local residents of Waverton, Wollstonecraft and nearby suburbs.
- Subsidies and grants to other community centres, such as the Kirribilli Centre and North Sydney Community, offering a range of healthy ageing activities available to the community at low or reduced costs.
- Lobbying for Community Health Centre at Greenway Housing Estate
- Subsidies via long lease at peppercorn rent for James Milson Village, North Sydney's principal Residential Aged Care facility

## HOUSING

- Support for low-income earners, in particular older people, through provision of affordable and secure housing tenancies (131 units at 23 addresses), managed by our local not-for-profit community Housing provider, Link Housing.
- Point of referral for those at risk of becoming homeless, needing information, advice, referral and advocacy.
- Participation in the Northern Sydney Homeless Network Interagency, a multi-disciplinary network led by the Superintendent from North Shore Police, held bi-monthly at Council Chambers.

## TRANSPORT

- Provision of buses and funding for the local community transport provider, Community Connect.
- Provision of Council Cab operating two days a week, providing low-cost transport options shopping, medical appointments and social interaction

## CELEBRATING CULTURAL DIVERSITY WITH OLDER PEOPLE

- Bollywood Morning Tea at the Crows Nest Centre, providing an opportunity for older people from Indian and other culturally diverse background to meet on a regular basis.
- Participation in the Gai-mariagal Festival, Harmony Day and Diwali; generally supporting local initiatives celebrating and valuing diversity and inclusion through a range of events.





## POLICY CONTEXT

North Sydney Council's Older Persons Strategy is influenced on international, national, state and local levels.



A common theme within these documents is the role of local government in supporting environmental, social and economic factors that influence the health and wellbeing of older people.

## WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

The World Health Organisation's age-friendly approach is an inclusive and accessible strategy to improve the lives of all people, regardless of age. In particular, an age-friendly community ensures older people are free from age-related barriers that prevent participation and engagement in their communities.

Age-friendly communities value the contribution of older people and help ensure their access to all aspects of life.





## MY AGED CARE

Australia's population is ageing. The number of people aged 65 and over in Australia is projected to more than double, to 8.8 million, over the next 40 years .

The Australian Government has embarked on a 10-year process to reform the aged care system. The reform aims to build an integrated system of supports that offers more choice and control to older people, has a greater emphasis on restorative and preventative care, and addresses the needs of the ageing population.

My Aged Care was introduced on 1 July 2013 and consists of the My Aged Care website and the My Aged Care contact centre.

My Aged Care was developed based on extensive consultation across Australia, with individuals, services, peak bodies, consumers, and government departments.

My Aged Care has created a clear entry point to the aged care system and currently provides:

- Information about aged care to consumers, family members and carers
- Information for service providers
- Online service finders that provide information about aged care service providers and assessors
- Online fee estimators for pricing on home care packages and residential care.

## NSW AGEING STRATEGY 2016-2020

The NSW Ageing Strategy 2016-2020 is the NSW Government's commitment to respond to the opportunities and challenges of our ageing population.

The Strategy focuses on five priorities that older people across NSW have said are important to them: health and wellbeing; working and retiring; housing choices; getting around; inclusive communities

## NORTHERN SYDNEY AGEING STRATEGY

The Northern Sydney Ageing Strategy takes the same approach to ageing as the NSW Ageing Strategy, describing how government, non-government and private sectors will work with people at different life stages to help them remain healthy and independent for as long as possible. The strategy identifies what can be done at the regional and local levels to support population ageing, and how regional issues and solutions can inform and support state-wide strategies.

Seven key priorities were identified for inclusion in the Northern Sydney Ageing Strategy:

- Provide community information and make referrals
- Collaborate across sectors on planning for population ageing
- Support people to plan for their older age
- Increase the supply of housing for older people and essential workers
- Improve the accessibility of transport for older people

- Support the community to be healthy and active
- Provide opportunities for older people to connect with their communities.

## ROLE OF COUNCIL

North Sydney Council is not a direct service provider of aged-care services. We do, however, support our community partners in their delivery of aged-care services and work to see that they are responsive to community need.

Council's Access and Inclusion Coordinator provides support to the local ageing sector. This role is responsible for coordinating community development initiatives, working collaboratively with other Departments across Council to create socially inclusive communities, while also providing support and advocacy to aged care stakeholders within the LGA.

The Access and Inclusion Coordinator also acts as a conduit between the community and Federal and State government programs focused on older Australians, their carers and service providers.

The Access and Inclusion Coordinator is also available as an alternative first point of contact for individuals, family members and friends trying to navigate services or obtain information on aged care services.

## SNAPSHOT OF NORTH SYDNEY

The North Sydney Local Government Area is located on the northern side of Sydney Harbour, and covers 10 square kilometres. It is both urban and green in character, comprising two Central Business Districts (CBDs), smaller suburban centres, residential areas, parks and open spaces. Its harbourside border winds through 20 kilometres in length marking tranquil bays, sheltered parks, the Olympic Pool and bushland at Balls Head.

The Central Business District is in North Sydney, with an increasingly high rise, largely residential, precinct at Crows Nest/St Leonards. Low rise residential areas are prominent, and suburbs are marked by village centres. North Sydney's parks support organised sport and passive recreation and are provided with well-maintained children's playgrounds and a skate facility. Major community facilities include North Sydney Oval, North Sydney Olympic Pool, Stanton Library, the Coal Loader, Community Centres and museums.

North Sydney has several community centres within the LGA, which play a vital role in the lives of our older residents. They

are established spaces where community members can access services, support, information and recreational activities.

- Crows Nest Centre
- The Kirribilli Centre
- North Sydney Community Centre
- Neutral Bay Senior Citizens Centre

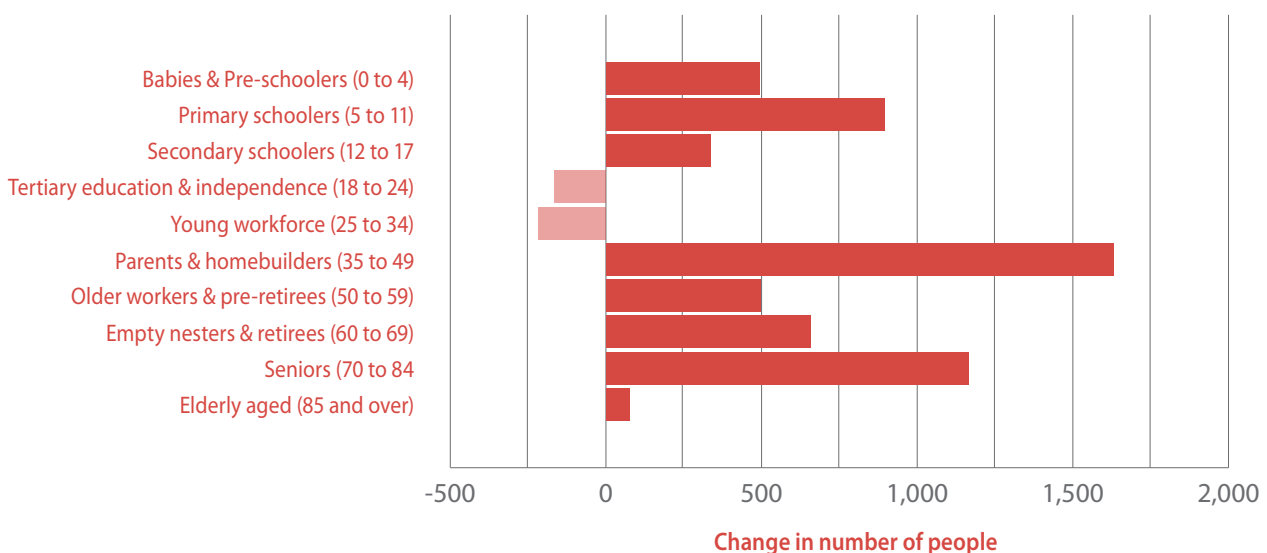
North Sydney also features a dedicated creative arts space, Primrose Park Art and Craft Centre, which is independently run as an incorporated organisation, supported by Council. The Centre comprises of community based art and craft member groups, including; paper making, calligraphy, artists, basketry and photography.

North Sydney is well served by public transport, with three heavy rail stations, all accessible, two metro stations under construction, buses, ferries and Council's community transport program for those who need it.

## PROFILE OF OLDER PEOPLE IN NORTH SYDNEY

The number of older people living in North Sydney is increasing, with older people aged between 70 – 84 years old seeing the second largest growth area by age. The number of people aged over 65 will represent 17% of the population by 2036. Presently, people aged 55 and over account for 25% of all North Sydney residents<sup>3</sup>.

### CHANGE IN AGE STRUCTURE - SERVICE AGE GROUPS, 2011 TO 2016 North Sydney Council area - Total persons





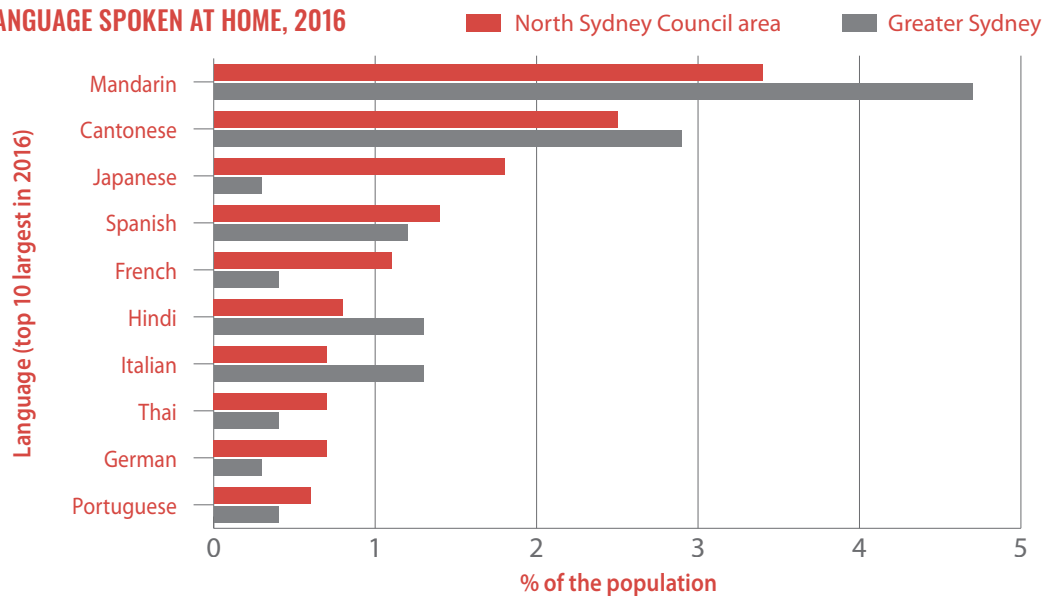
The most recent census highlighted the proportion of older people in North Sydney aged 65 and over living alone. In total, 3,115 people older people were living alone, representing 9.5% of all residents living alone in the LGA. There is an increasing trend for this demographic, noted in the change since the 2011 census whereby there were 2,597 older people living alone. This is noteworthy when considering the risk factors associated with living alone, in particular the increased likelihood of older people experiencing social isolation.

In North Sydney there are 5,011 (8.5%) carers providing unpaid assistance to an older person, person with disability or long term illness. Although this is slightly lower than the average for Greater Sydney as a whole (11.1%), it is identified as an area of need due to the complex and demanding nature associated with the caring role.

North Sydney is generally considered a relatively affluent municipality; however, there are pockets of disadvantage. As older adults move out of the workforce, income also reduces. A lower income has implications for health and wellbeing: for example, the ability to pay for utilities, purchase fresh local produce or the ability to participate in leisure and recreational activities diminishes.

The cultural and linguistic diversity of North Sydney has been increasing. According to the 2016 Census 22% of North Sydney residents speak a language other than English at home, with Mandarin and Cantonese speaking residents being most prominent. Between 2011-2016 North Sydney saw a significant increase in the number of Mandarin speaking residents, from 1,494 in 2011 to 2,276 in 2016.

### LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME, 2016



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Developing a strategy that reflects the needs of the community requires recognition of the wealth of skills, knowledge and expertise in the community and uses these to improve and inform decision making. To this end, Council invited local residents, businesses and community organisations to engage in the process of developing the Older Persons Strategy.

Information regarding the community engagement process was made available on Council's website, social media platforms, Council e-News, via key stakeholders and notices at Council Chambers and Stanton Library. Opportunities to contribute were provided through focus groups, surveys and written submissions over a six-week period, utilising Engagement HQ, an online community engagement portal.

89 surveys were completed

38 people participated in the focus groups

3 written submissions were received

## WHAT YOU TOLD US...

The findings highlighted common themes, both in terms of what people enjoy about living in North Sydney and aspects people find more challenging.

People described North Sydney as being a convenient location, providing easy access to shops, cafes and restaurants, local amenities, transport links, as well as the CBD. The local area was considered attractive because of the green space, local bushland and Wendy Whitley's garden received specific mention.

*"I like the peace and quiet and the small reserves that one can go to and sit and enjoy the view".*

A common theme that emerged was a sense of safety that people experience living in North Sydney, which is

particularly important for people as they age, becoming more frail and, at times, experiencing a diminished sense of self-confidence and independence.

*"I can walk to everything I need. I always bump into someone I know when I am out doing errands. Although I live in a big city this makes me feel like I am living in a friendly small town".*

The support and services provided by Council was well-regarded, as well as the features of Stanton Library. Our local community centres were commonly referenced as a place where people go to access information, as well as a place they can engage with others and participate in programs and activities.

Conversely, people described the topography of North Sydney as a hurdle they have to overcome, sometimes on a daily basis, having to navigate the hills to access the above-mentioned services and facilities. While we cannot change the landscape that exists this strategy identifies ways this challenge can be overcome.

Difficulties with traffic and parking was also a common theme that emerged in the consultation, and is a challenge experienced by most residents, visitors and business owners. This is identified in Council's CSP and is included as a key theme within this strategy.



## GENERAL

This strategy should be read in conjunction with:

- North Sydney Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2016-2019.
- North Sydney Council Family and Children's Strategy 2018 -2024
- North Sydney Council Arts and Cultural Plan 2015-17

Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan was adopted in 2017. The plan spans all domains of the Old Persons Strategy. Its starting points have been:

- Auditing of ten of Council's most commonly used parks and eight of Council's frequently used buildings to determine compliance with access standards. A copy of the DIAP can be found on Council's website, along with the 2017/18 Annual report on its outcomes.
- Training opportunities provided to staff and the senior leadership team regarding access and how we can create and promote a more inclusive and welcoming environment.

North Sydney Council Family and Children's Strategy was adopted by Council in October 2018. It describes current Council programmes and future proposals that are important to older people, particular grandparents providing informal childcare.

North Sydney Council Arts and Cultural Plan 2015-17 is currently under review.



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES

Council recognises the importance of health and wellbeing for older residents. The World Health Organisation has identified the need to consider 'Active Ageing' as we become a nation that is living longer and healthier lives. Active ageing is the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age .

Older age can be associated with a greater need for assistance with everyday activities. In the 2016 Census, 3.1% of people aged under 65 years reported a need for assistance with a core activity such as mobility, communication or self-care. This proportion increased with age from one in ten (9.7%) people aged 65 to 74 years to one in two people aged 85 years and over (53%). In North Sydney, 72% of people between the ages of 60 and 85 years and over reported a need for assistance.

Carers play a significant role in supporting their families and friends as they age. They include both carers who are ageing and those who care for older people. Caring roles can require a lot of time and energy and are associated with poor physical and mental health .

Our local community centres play a pivotal role in supporting older people in our community. They provide services that enable older people to age in place, create social and recreational opportunities, are a source of information and learning, whilst delivering programs that promote healthy and active ageing.

### WHAT WE WILL DO?

- Support local not-for-profit residential care providers to improve accommodation options for older people
- Continue to support our local community centres in their delivery of services to older people
- Facilitate information sessions and workshops to keep older people informed of changes and updates in Aged Care
- Look for opportunities to work with James Milson Village to improve the standard of the facility and the number of affordable beds



“ I ENJOY THE LOCATION AND ITS SCENERY AND SURROUNDINGS. I ENJOY BEING SO CLOSE TO THE HARBOUR WHICH RELAXES ME WHERE I CAN WATCH THE SHIPPING, WHICH IS AN INTEREST OF MINE ”

## OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

Consideration of the built environment is particularly pertinent for older people: as they age, they are likely to spend more time in their home and community environments, and declining health and functional status can make them more susceptible to barriers in their community .

The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on mobility, independence and quality of life of older people and affect their ability to comfortably and safely “age in place”.

There are a broad-range of characteristics within the urban landscape that contribute to its age-friendliness, including: a

pleasant and clean environment, well-maintained green spaces that provide outdoor seating for rest, well-maintained pathways, pedestrian crossings and cycle ways, and buildings with adequate ramps, lifts, signage and accessible toilets. Council’s DIAP has been developed with a focus on addressing the above-mentioned features.

During the consultation phase people frequently spoke of North Sydney’s outdoor and green spaces as one of the aspects they most enjoyed about this area. It was described as a “green leafy suburb” that is “peaceful and quiet around the harbour foreshore” with “beautiful parks”.

“ I LIKE THE PEACE AND QUIET AND ALSO THE SMALL RESERVES THAT ONE CAN GO TO AND SIT AND ENJOY THE VIEW. I ALSO LIKE THE BIRDS AND FLORA AND SMALL BOATS THAT SAIL BY ”

### WHAT WE WILL DO?

- Identify and remove access barriers and features within Council buildings and facilities
- Improve footpaths and paths of travel, removing trip hazards and barriers
- Explore opportunities to develop fitness areas for older people, indoor and outdoor
- Publish walking guides and walking apps for the North Sydney municipality



## TRANSPORTATION

The ability of older people to move around their communities using different modes of transport is fundamental to their quality of life and wellbeing, including: accessing services, shopping, connecting with their family and friends, and participating in community activities and events. The use of cars, public transport, community transport and other transport services is an important part of daily life for older people.

Compared to many parts of Sydney, North Sydney is well serviced by public transport. The area is serviced by train stations at North Sydney, Milsons Point, Wollstonecraft and Waverton, as well as major bus routes to the CBD, Chatswood and the Northern Beaches. Additionally, there are ferry wharves at Neutral Bay, Cremorne Point, Milsons Point, Jeffrey Street and Kurraba Point, providing direct access to Circular Quay.

The construction of the Sydney Metro will also create additional travel links for North Sydney residents, particularly with the proposed station at Crows Nest, improving access to Royal North Shore Hospital and the Crows Nest shopping precinct.

Transport emerged as a common theme during the consultation phase with many commenting on the effectiveness of public transport in North Sydney LGA, particularly with access to the CBD.

Despite the transport services available, limitations were identified navigating between transport links or where these services were unavailable. For example, being able to access the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability, which is a ten-minute walk from Waverton train station.

### WHAT WE WILL DO?

- Maintain contract with a community transport provider to serve North Sydney needs
- Make provisions for transport options to major Council run events
- Work to make transport links accessible; reduce access barriers (where practicable)





## HOUSING

Population ageing will have an impact on housing issues. Housing is essential to health and wellbeing. Research has shown that housing must allow older people to age comfortably and safely as it influences their independence and their quality of life. Specifically, it is important housing is affordable, has an accessible design, is flexible to meet the cultural needs and can be easily maintained and modified as the person ages.

Many older people will age in their family homes and will need strategies to help make their homes safer. Over the coming years it is expected that more people will reach 65 not owning their own home and more people will be long-term renters. Older people wanting to move house will be looking for a mix of retirement living and smaller housing in their own community that is located close to transport and services<sup>7</sup>.

### WHAT WE WILL DO?

- Provide support, information and advocacy to older people who are at risk of homeless
- Maintain partnerships with local services and organisations to address homelessness in North Sydney
- Maintain supply of Council supported social housing for our most vulnerable residents (local residents on low and very low incomes)
- Explore opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing in North Sydney



## SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION

A vital part of ageing well is to be active and connected to others. It is important that older people have opportunities to be active and engaged in their community, participating in a range of affordable and accessible events and activities.

One of the key challenges for older people is overcoming social isolation and loneliness to improve wellbeing and quality of life. There are strong links between wellbeing, social connection and transport options; older people are not able to access opportunities for participation and connection to other people if they are not able to travel to them.

### WHAT WE WILL DO?

- Continue to support our local community centres and groups in the delivery of healthy ageing and social programs to older people
- Deliver Annual Seniors Festival program
- Encourage participation of older people from CALD backgrounds to engage in community programs and events
- Subsidise internet access for older people via local community centres and groups



## CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

As people are living longer the importance of maintaining paid work for longer increases. Older people know that being able to remain in or return to the workforce can improve their wellbeing, as well as their financial security and independence<sup>8</sup>.

Council has developed its own Age Management Plan in order to better integrate the differing age ranges of its workforce. Residents whose ability to remain in the workforce is impacted by caring duties are supported through a range information and referral services.

Older people are a vital part of the economy through continued engagement in the workforce and, post-retirement, through their incomes and assets. They also contribute valuably to society by participating in family and community life: volunteering, community work and caring for family. This ongoing social and economic engagement has many benefits for older people (in promoting healthy ageing) and the wider community<sup>9</sup>.

Older people make a considerable economic and social contribution to the community through unpaid work. In 2016, compared to Greater Sydney, there was a higher proportion of

people who volunteered for an organisation or group: overall, 21.5% of the North Sydney population reported performing voluntary work, compared with 16.7% for Greater Sydney.

North Sydney Council provides opportunities for older people to contribute, through various volunteer programs in our Home Library Service offered by Stanton Library, as well as our Bush Care and Streets Alive programs. Outside of Council (but supported by Council) volunteering opportunities available within North Sydney include being a Meals on Wheels driver and working with the State Emergency Service. Services like these would not be viable or sustainable without this support.

Older people also play an important role in providing unpaid childcare. The proportion of older people providing care for a child (aged under 15 years) who was not their own has increased since 2006 (10% compared with 13% in 2016). People aged 65 to 74 years were most likely (19%) to have provided care for a child (aged under 15 years) who was not their own. This accounted for nearly one in five people in this age group. The greatest increase between 2006 and 2016 was for women in the 65 to 74-year age group (18 % compared to 22%)<sup>10</sup>.

### WHAT WE WILL DO?

- Recognise the valuable contributions volunteers and carers make to our community
- Create opportunities for lifelong learning
- Promote the volunteering opportunities available within North Sydney
- Manage Council's workforce in an age-friendly manner





## COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Access to good information helps people manage major changes in their lives. Information about services, lifestyle issues and community activities can assist people as they age, particularly if they choose to retire.

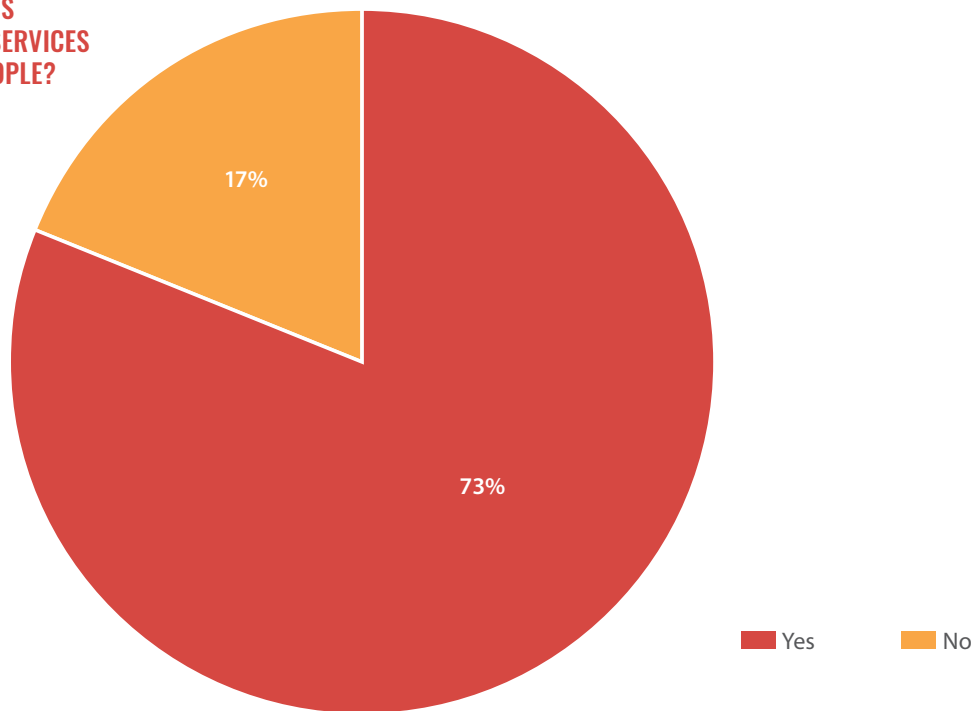
One of the key themes raised during the consultation process was the challenge of being kept informed. Whilst people said they generally know where to go if they are seeking specific information they also told us they are not always aware of activities, events and special concessions for older people.

The results of our quick survey indicated most older people sought information on services and programs from Council's

website, the Crows Nest Centre or on Government websites. Stanton library, along with other community centres in North Sydney acts as an information point for some residents.

Older Australians are embracing the digital life. While their level of online engagement is lower when compared to other age groups, the vast majority of older Australians are participating online, and the proportions have grown over the past five years. 79% of older people accessed the internet at some point in their lives, with 7 in 10 (71 per cent) going online on at least one occasion in the past three months<sup>11</sup>. In North Sydney, 85.1% of homes had an internet connection, however this decreases with age.

### DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO ACCESS INFORMATION ON RESOURCES, SERVICES AND PROGRAMS FOR OLDER PEOPLE?



### WHAT WE WILL DO?

- Implement a positive ageing communications and media strategy
- Utilise Council's community noticeboards to communicate information on events, programs and activities
- Promote events, programs and activities for older people through various online and print media channels



## ACTION PLAN

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES

AIM	ACTION	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>Socially and economically disadvantaged older people have access to low cost aged care facilities in their local area</b>	Support James Milson Village in improving accommodation options and providing community health facilities	•	•	•	•
<b>Contribute to the health and wellbeing needs of vulnerable community members</b>	Representation on the Steering Committee of Greenway's Wellbeing Centre	•	•	•	•
	Explore funding opportunities to increase low-cost healthy ageing activities to disadvantaged community groups	•	•	•	•
	Provide support to our community centres	•	•	•	•
	Participate in the Northern Sydney Region Social Isolation working group	•	•	•	•
	Deliver Creative Wellbeing (community arts based) program	•	•	•	•
	Conduct walks and tours led by Council's Historical Services team	•	•	•	•
<b>Information on aged care reforms is made available</b>	Facilitate information sessions and workshops on changes in the aged care sector	•	•	•	•
	Update information on Council's website and disseminate information through networks and databases as required	•	•	•	•

### OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

AIM	ACTION	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>Council facilities and venues are accessible and inclusive</b>	Identify and remove access barriers and features within Council buildings and facilities	•	•	•	•
	Provide information on access features and barriers of facilities and venues on Council's website and promotional material	•			

AIM	ACTION	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	Provide guidance on reporting access concerns on Council's website	•			
<b>Outdoor fitness facilities are available</b>	In partnership with Council's Open Space team, review feasibility of creating an outdoor fitness facility at Brennan Park. Explore opportunities to establish other indoor and outdoor fitness facilities for older people	•			
<b>Pedestrian pathways are improved</b>	Identify trip hazards and advocate for these to be improved as part of Council's overall works plan	•	•	•	•

## TRANSPORTATION

AIM	ACTION	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>Older people have access to accessible and low-cost transport services</b>	Enter into contract with local community transport provider Review the Council Cab service and identify areas of improved service delivery	•	•	•	•
<b>Barriers for older people to access services and amenities are reduced</b>	Community Development team to work in partnership with Parking and Transport department to identify gaps in accessible parking spaces across the LGA	•			
<b>Safety and mobility on major roads and intersections is improved</b>	Identify locations where crossings do not allow pedestrians to safely cross roads and advocate for longer crossing times	•	•	•	•
<b>Bus shelters are accessible</b>	Undertake audit of bus stops and develop implementation strategy to eliminate barriers to safely access transport services	•	•	•	•

## HOUSING

AIM	ACTION	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are supported</b>	Provide housing assistance, support and referral as requested Participate in Northern Sydney Homeless Network Interagency	•	•	•	•

AIM	ACTION	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>Affordable housing is available in the LGA</b>	Explore opportunities to increase supply of affordable housing	•	•	•	•
	Maintain supply of Council supported social housing for our most vulnerable residents (local residents on low and very low incomes)	•	•	•	•

## SOCIAL INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION

AIM	ACTION	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>Older people are provided with opportunities to engage in activities and programs to promote wellness and healthy ageing</b>	Deliver Seniors Festival program to North Sydney residents	•	•	•	•
	Facilitate Falls Prevention and Healthy Ageing activities within local community centres and groups	•	•	•	•
	Provision of funding opportunities to individuals and community organisations through grants program	•	•	•	•
	Deliver Home Library Service to people who are housebound	•	•	•	•
	Provide accommodation and ongoing support to the North Sydney Men's Shed	•	•	•	•
	Provide accommodation and ongoing support to Neutral Bay Senior Citizens Centre	•	•	•	•
	Subsidise Internet access for older people via local community centres and groups	•	•	•	•
<b>Contributions older people make to our community are recognised</b>	Promote Council's Australia Day Awards to individuals and groups who support and work with older people	•	•	•	•

AIM	ACTION	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>The culturally diversity of our community is promoted and celebrated</b>	Encourage CALD community groups to participate in networks and inter-agencies	•	•	•	•
	Information on Council events, programs and activities is made available in three different languages	•	•	•	•
	Information on how to access translation and interpreting services is made publicly available	•	•	•	•
<b>Older people have the opportunity to participate in community events and programs</b>	Create process to promote events, programs and activities for older people utilising a range of methods (i.e. Council noticeboards, rates notices, website, social media, local newspaper)	•	•	•	•
<b>Community is informed on emerging health and other needs of older people</b>	Deliver information sessions and workshops as required	•	•	•	•

## CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

AIM	ACTION	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>Older people participate in the workforce</b>	Create opportunities for lifelong learning	•	•	•	•
	Identify and promote training opportunities for older people who wish to remain in the workforce	•	•	•	•
	Support older people to juggle work and carer responsibilities	•	•	•	•
	Manage Council's workforce in an age-friendly manner	•	•	•	•
<b>Volunteering opportunities for older people are made available</b>	Host annual volunteer expo with representatives from community organisations and Departments within Council	•	•	•	•
	Provide detailed information of volunteering opportunities on Council's website, printed publications and social media channels	•	•	•	•

AIM	ACTION	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>Volunteers are recognised for the contribution they make to our community</b>	Council to host annual volunteer Christmas function Explore other opportunities to recognise and acknowledge the work of volunteers	•	•	•	•

## COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

AIM	ACTION	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>Cohesiveness and collaboration exists across aged-care services</b>	Facilitate the North Sydney Aged and Disability network	•	•	•	•
<b>Positive images of older people are promoted</b>	Implement a positive ageing communications and media strategy	•	•	•	•
<b>Information on services and community organisations is up-to-date and readily available</b>	Ensure community information database is maintained and information on how to access this is made available to older people sponibilities	•	•	•	•
<b>Barriers to accessing information are reduced</b>	Information is made available to customers in alternate formats Access to hearing loops are available in Council facilities	•	•	•	•

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