10. Ageing

Ageing in Australia

Over the next several decades, population ageing is projected to have implications for Australia, including; health, size of the working-age population, housing and demand for skilled labour.[1] Like most developed countries, Australia's population is ageing as a result of sustained low fertility and increasing life expectancy. [2] This has resulted in proportionally fewer children (under 15 years of age) in the population and a proportionally larger increase in those aged 65 and over. [3]

Between 1995 and 2015, the proportion of Australia's population aged 15-64 years remained fairly stable, decreasing from 66.6% to 66.2% of the total population. [4] During the same period, the proportion of people aged 65 years and over increased from 11.9% to 15.0% and the proportion of people aged 85 years and over almost doubled from 1.1% of the total population in 1995 to 2% in 2015.[5]

These groups are projected to increase more rapidly over the next decade, as further cohorts of baby boomers (those born between the years 1946 and 1964) turn 65.[6] Over the past two decades, the number of persons aged 85 years and over increased by 148%, compared with a total population growth of 32.1% and the number of centenarians increased by 254%, reflecting an increase in life expectancy for both males and females during the same period. [7]

In the year ending 30 June 2015, the number of people aged 85 years and over increased by 17,900 people (3.9%) to reach 472,100. There were almost twice as many females (299,100) as males (173,000) in this age group which reflects the higher life expectancy for females. [8]

Ageing in Monash

Monash continues to have an ageing population, with 22.5% of the Monash population being over 60 years of age. This is higher than the greater Melbourne average of 18.2%.[9] Monash has a large percentage of seniors aged 70 - 84 (10.3%) compared to greater Melbourne (7.4%).[10] Monash residents have higher life expectancy than the state average: females (85.8 years) males (81.5 years) compared to 80.3 years and 84.4 years respectively.[11]

In 2013, the City of Monash one of the highest projected growths in absolute dementia numbers, ranking 3 out of 79 Local Government Areas in Victoria for dementia prevalence from 2013 - 2050.[12] Today, providing adequate and cost-effective care for the growing number of older persons, their families and community involves and requires multisectoral and interdisciplinary integration and cooperation. [13]

The World Health Organisation defines *active ageing* as the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. [14] Council has developed the Age Friendly Monash, a Positive Ageing Plan 2015 - 2019 based on the World Health Organisation's (WHO), 'Age Friendly Cities' framework.[15] The WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities seek to improve the living experience of its senior residents and the Age Friendly Cities supports their older adults in the following eight domains:

1. Outdoor spaces and buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Social Participation
5. Respect and Social Inclusion
6. Civic Participation and Employment

7. Communication and Information
8. Community Support and Health Services. [16]

Monash Council values the importance of maximising opportunities for older residents to participate in healthy activities and develop and maintain healthy lifestyles and the development of Council's *Age Friendly Monash 2015 - 2019* Plan outlines a wide range of social, cultural, health promotion and intergenerational actions and initiatives that Council will undertake over the five years from 2015-2019. This plan aims to strengthen our community where older people's skills and experiences are valued and opportunities to participate in all aspects of social, community and public life is available and enhanced. [17]

Extensive consultation was undertaken with older residents to inform the development of the *Age Friendly Monash 2015 - 2019* Plan to identify issues, barriers and potential opportunities and solutions to creating an aged friendly city. The process included 36 focus groups held across Monash, with existing community groups and an on line and paper based survey which was sent to older adults who receive services in Monash, and was completed by 738 older adults. Findings from this consultation identified that respondents define 'aged friendly' as:

- Happiness, security and good neighbours
- Being treated with respect and offered help when needed
- A community where the older population, regardless of ability, race or creed, is able to connect to whatever services, social activities or communities they choose. [18]

Respondents also ranked Community and Health Services as the most important of the eight domains, followed by Transportation and Respect and Social Participation. [19] The two themes that were consistent throughout the consultations and across the eight domains were:

Information and finding out what services, activities and opportunities were available was considered to be important in all areas. Accessing information was not always easy or consistent. Improving information was considered key to many of the respondents. [20]

Accessibility, which included access to public transport, suitable parking and taxi's along with the quality of footpaths and physical access to buildings, was an area of concern for many people across a number of domains. [21]

10. Ageing – Reference List

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