



Central  
Coast  
Council

**CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL  
DRAFT POSITIVE AGEING STRATEGY  
2021-2026**

# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we live and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We acknowledge the authority, wisdom and knowledge of Elders within the Aboriginal community.



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# MAYOR'S MESSAGE

I am proud to present the Central Coast Positive Ageing Strategy.

With our beautiful natural environments and traditionally relaxed lifestyle, the Central Coast is home to many older residents who are vibrant, active and valued members of our local community. This has contributed positively to our identity and is something to be celebrated and appreciated.

Our older residents make a significant contribution to our community as workers, volunteers, neighbours, friends, parents and grandparents. They are a rich resource of knowledge, ideas and wisdom providing the advice, experience and support to our daily lives. They are valued as important community and cultural leaders.

We are all ageing and with much longer life expectancies now than previous generations, we have more opportunities to lead active and involved lives as we age.

As a Council we want to support our residents to positively age.

Central Coast Council has a key role to play in supporting our residents to live longer, healthier and fulfilled lives. We need to ensure our region is age-friendly; provides opportunities for social connections, inclusion and participation; promotes health and wellbeing; residents have access to information and services; they can get around easily and safely; have access to appropriate and affordable housing options



enabling them to age in place; and we continue to recognise and celebrate their valued contributions and achievements.

It is evident that those residents' who are well connected, participate in community life and have support networks have greater capacity to enjoy their older years.

This Strategy represents our commitment to our older residents over the next 5 years, guiding us to plan, develop and implement programs, activities, services and infrastructure that respond to the changing needs and aspirations of our growing older population.

It is an important step in achieving our community's vision where belonging and liveable communities sit at the heart of our Community Strategic Plan.

I would like to acknowledge and thank all the wonderful residents, service providers and community groups that have contributed to the development of the Positive Ageing Strategy.

**Cr Lisa Matthews**  
**Mayor Central Coast Council**



# INTRODUCTION

## Ageing on the Central Coast

The Central Coast has long been an attractive place for older people to live and retire. Many have grown and raised their families here, while others have settled from elsewhere, attracted by the sense of community and quality of life. People of all ages are connected by a shared appreciation of the natural environment, laid back lifestyle and friendly communities.

The area continues to see a growth in the number of older people within our community. This can be attributed to factors including increased migration, life expectancy, improved living standards, advances in health and medical technology, and the “baby boomer” population transitioning into the older age groups.

On the Central Coast 27% of the region’s population (88,887 people) are aged 60 years and above (ABS Census 2016). This compares with 22% for NSW and just 19% in Greater Sydney. By 2036 the number of people aged over 60 is expected to increase by almost 39% to 122,730 people.

The ageing population creates unique opportunities and challenges. An age friendly community must support people through all life stages, and whilst there are residents who are frail and require additional support from family, friends or services, a large majority of our older residents lead active lives and continue to play a vital role within our

community through their shared interests, work and volunteering. The myth that retirement is a time to stop and slowdown is also increasing being diffused, with many embracing a new-found freedom away from the responsibilities of work. This gift of time is being channelled into personal interests, spending quality time with their families, life-long learning and ticking off some bucket list goals.

This has however been challenged in recent times, with the impacts of bushfires, storms and the Coronavirus pandemic being unwelcome visitors within many homes. This has shown that older people are a part of the population that are most at risk to such occurrences and changing circumstances. Our community has been required to dig deep and face adversities unmatched since the war-time era, emphasising the necessity for resilience, community connections and collegial support.

These challenges have been amplified for some of our older residents who have been required to quickly adapt to new technologies and navigate new ways of communicating in a digitally connected world.

It is with a sense of pride that we have seen the Central Coast reignite traditional neighbourhood principles and stand together in solidarity to support those who are more vulnerable. It has highlighted the

importance of social connection, the value of freedom and choice, and the simple joy of being able to pop down to the local café for a quality cup of coffee and catch up with friends.

To address these changing needs, it is clear we need to rethink and refresh our approach to ensure a great quality of life for our community as they age.



## What is Positive Ageing?

Positive Ageing is about maximising the quality of life and wellbeing of older people recognising that ageing is not just about physically getting older but the context in which people get older.

Positive ageing focuses on maintaining health, independence and wellbeing across the lifespan. Key factors identified by our older residents as being associated with ‘positive ageing’ include:

- Maintaining a positive attitude
- Maintaining a healthy lifestyle
- Feeling good about yourself
- Being healthy and well
- Being active
- Engaging and enjoying quality social connections
- Recognition of positively contributing to the community
- Social interaction and connections with family and friends
- Being respected and valued as a community member
- Financial security
- Learning new things and passing on wisdom
- A safe and supportive living environment
- Access and availability to a range of support services and care as required
- Volunteering or participating in the workforce
- Having choice, freedom and time to do what you like
- A good quality of life
- Having access to information and services



### Why a Positive Ageing Strategy?

The Positive Ageing Strategy provides the strategic direction for how Council can best deliver services that support our older residents to age healthily, feel connected and enjoy an age-friendly community.

We continue to build on the inaugural Central Coast Positive Ageing Strategy (2014) and renew Council’s commitment to how we can better meet the needs and aspirations of our growing older population.

The Positive Ageing Strategy has been informed by what our older residents have told us, their aspirations and expectations, as well as research and consultation with relevant service providers.

Four key themes have emerged providing the focus for where Council can make a positive difference:

- Social Connections and Participation
- Being Better Informed and Tech Savvy
- Staying Healthy and Active
- Age-friendly Places and Spaces

These themes encompass the key domains of the World Health Organisation’s Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Guide.

### Our aim

Our aim is to create an age-friendly community on the Central Coast which values, supports, and empowers older people to live active and fulfilling lives.

Our older residents are well connected, have opportunities to participate in, contribute to and be included in community life. They are well informed and well-resourced as they age. Our region is age-friendly, with residents having the ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle, get around easily and live as independently as possible.

### Vision

Our residents are “Growing Older and Loving Life”.

Positive ageing is celebrated and supported on the Central Coast – our older residents love living here, they live fulfilled lives and feel like they never want to leave.

### Guiding Principles

The following principles have guided the development of this Strategy.

#### 1. CELEBRATE AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTRIBUTION OF OLDER RESIDENTS

We honour the experience of ageing and value wisdom gained through life experience. We acknowledge the life-stories of those in their later years, and we value and celebrate the contributions of older residents.

#### 2. A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

The rights of older people are acknowledged and respected. We strive for a community that includes and values older people in all aspects of life. We want a society in which dignity, choice and freedom are achievable across our lives. We recognise the impacts of ageism and promote the benefits of positive ageing.

#### 3. A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

The community is engaged in community life and decision-making processes, with the Positive Ageing Strategy shaped by the diverse voices of older people, stakeholders and community leaders.

#### 4. LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

We seek to develop places and spaces that are accessible and inclusive for all. We work to ensure that people can continue to participate and remain independent as they advance in years within age-friendly communities.

#### 5. QUALITY OF LIFE

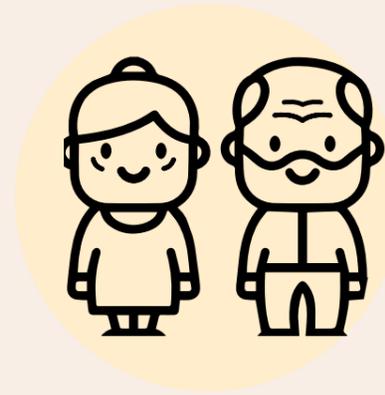
We are committed to supporting the pursuit of a better quality of life across the life stages. We encourage older people to remain socially connected and maintain their physical and mental wellbeing through opportunities to participate in a diverse range of programs and activities. They can access services and infrastructure that enhance their quality of life.

# OLDER PEOPLE ON THE COAST

## Defining 'older people'

"There is no specific age at which a person becomes 'old', and age categories do not define a person's lifestyle, aspirations or needs. A life stage approach recognises that people experience the ageing process in different ways and at different times."

(NSW Ageing Strategy)



## In the swing of retirement – "Seniors"

- No longer working so have more time
- May be doing some volunteering
- Looking for opportunities to connect socially, creative outlets, fitness classes
- Still independent and active, but more likely to prefer 'senior-specific' activities
- Most likely to attend 50+ Centres
- Some people benefit from meal services to maintain their nutrition
- May be looking for information about:
  - o staying fit and healthy
  - o what's on in the community
  - o getting assistance to stay independent

## Entering Retirement – "Empty nesters and early retirees"

- Working towards retirement or newly retired
- Likely to be independent and active
- May be working or looking for volunteering opportunities
- May still have children/grandchildren at home and/or may be caring for aged parents
- More likely to be interested in intergenerational activities, than 'seniors-specific'
- May be looking for information about:
  - o staying fit and healthy
  - o what's on in the community
  - o retirement related financial information
  - o aged care for their parents



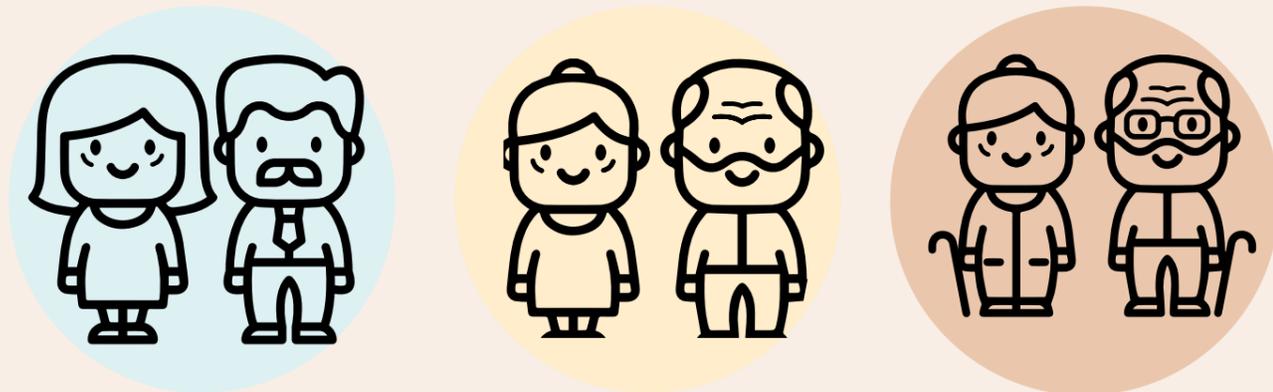
## Needing higher levels of care – "Elderly"

- Needing increased assistance with day-to-day activities
- Accessing in-home or residential care
- Supported through My Aged Care (Commonwealth Government, NGOs and private sector aged care)
- May be looking for information about:
  - o Getting assistance to stay independent
  - o Community transport
  - o Residential aged care options
  - o Financial advice about moving into residential aged care

# A demographic snapshot

The Central Coast has a high proportion of older people

- In 2016, 27.1% of the regions' population was aged 60 years and over in comparison to 21.9% for NSW. This equates to 88,887 people



## Empty Nesters

(60-69)  
**40,357**  
 12.3%  
 of population  
 10.8%  
 NSW

## Seniors

(70-84)  
**38,252**  
 11.7%  
 of population  
 8.9%  
 NSW

## Elderly

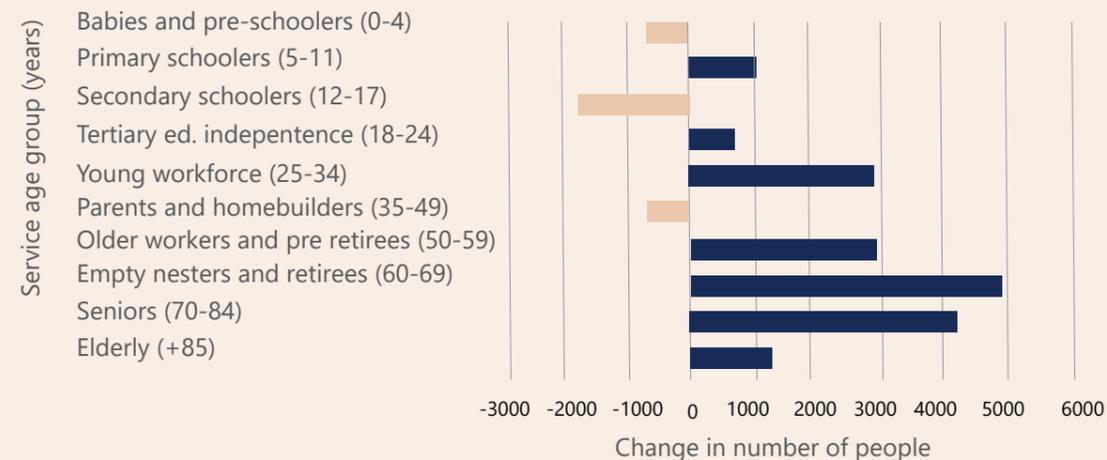
(85+)  
**10,278**  
 3.1%  
 of population  
 2.2%  
 NSW



Change since 2011

## Change in age structure - 2011 to 2016

Central Coast Council area – Total persons



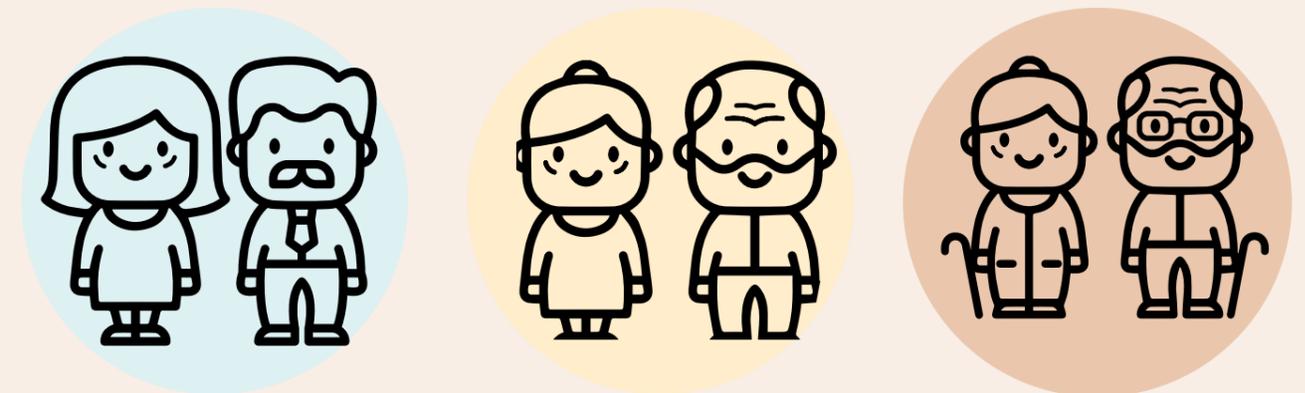
The older population is increasing, and this is forecast to continue

**107,913**  
 2026

**122,730**  
 2036

By 2036, it is forecast that there will be an additional **35,000** people aged 60+ on the Central Coast

Between 2016 and 2036 these increases will be in:



## Empty Nesters

(60-69)  
**+7,575**

## Seniors

(70-84)  
**+20,466**

## Elderly

(85+)  
**+7,072**

# Where our older people live

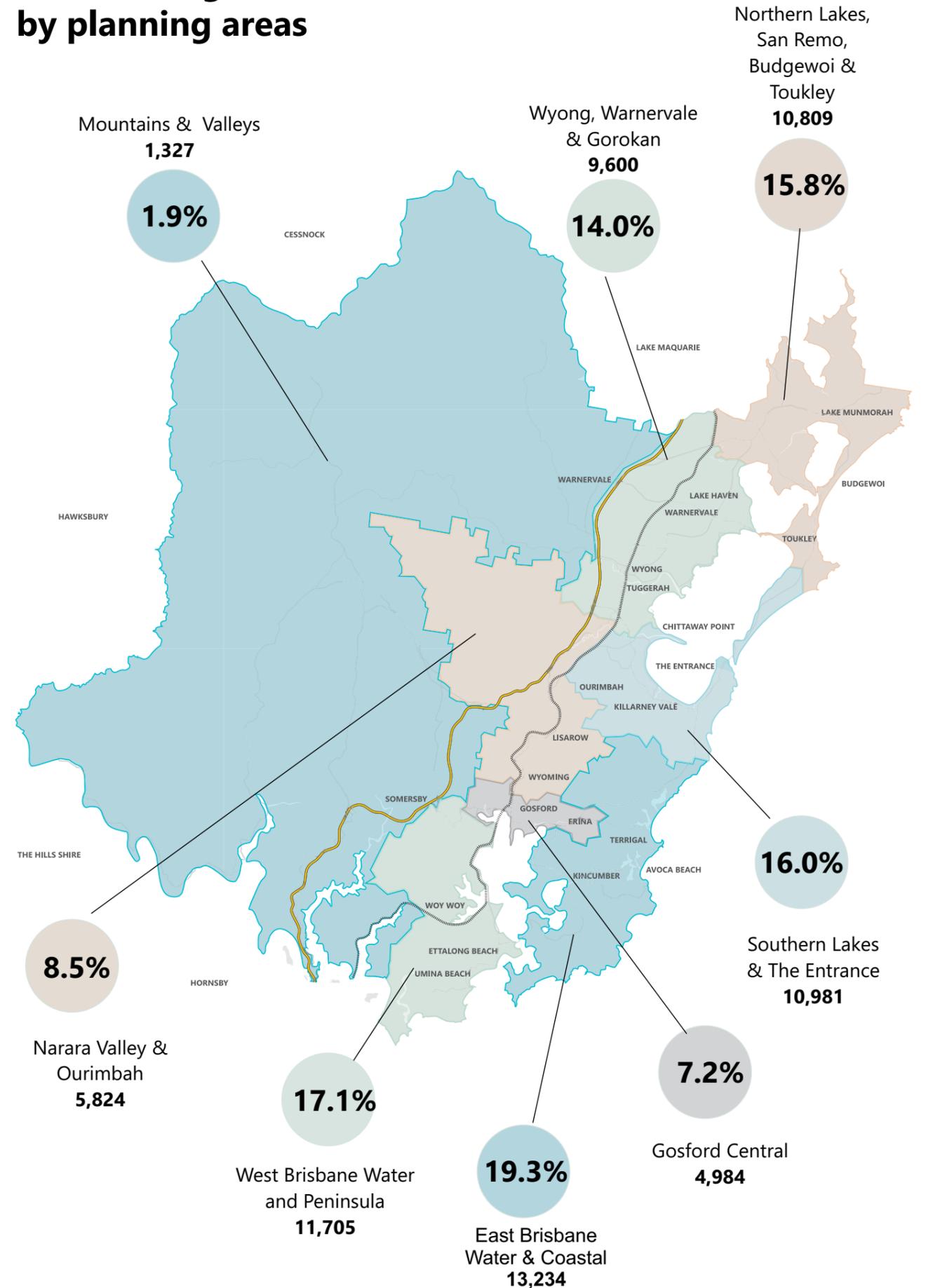
## Top 12 areas with largest number of people aged 65+

1.	Umina- Pearl Beach-Patonga	4,065
2.	Woy Woy-Blackwell	3,466
3.	North Gosford-Wyoming	2,973
4.	Bateau Bay	2,964
5.	Lake Munmorah-Chain Valley Bay	2,700
6.	Terrigal-North Avoca	2,481
7.	Killarney Vale – Tumbi Umbi	2,411
8.	Kincumber South-Bensville-Empire Bay-Killcare	2,300
9.	Budgewoi-Halekulani-Buff Point	2,287
10.	Long Jetty-Shelly Beach-Toowoon-Blue Bay	2,216
11.	Kincumber	2,080
12.	Erina	2,075

## Top 6 areas with the greatest proportion of people aged 65+

1.	Erina	43.9%
2.	Ettalong Beach-Booker Bay	33.2%
3.	Lake Munmorah-Chain Valley Way	32.8%
4.	Toukley-Canton Beach	32.6%
5.	Kincumber	29.2%
6.	Woy Woy-Blackwall	27.6%

# Residents aged 65+ by planning areas



# Key facts for population aged 65+

(Source: ABS Census 2016, id profile)



- In 2016, males aged 65 were expected to live to an average of 84.1 years (compared to 85.1 years for NSW)
- In 2016, females aged 65 were expected to live to an average of 86.8 years (compared to 87.7 years for NSW)



- 5.2% are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- 5.0% were new arrivals to Australia in the 5 years prior to 2016
- 23.4% were born overseas compared with 33.4% for NSW
- The largest group came from the UK, followed by New Zealand, then Germany, Netherlands, Italy and Malta
- 5.4% speak a language other than English at home compared with 19.3% for NSW



- 53.6% of all people needing assistance are aged 65+, with 20% aged 85+
- 11.4% provided unpaid care to family members with a disability or long-term illness, or old age which is similar to NSW
- 11.0% provided unpaid child care, compared with 12.6% for NSW



- 8.9% have a Bachelor or higher degree
- 6.7% have a diploma or advanced diploma
- 18.6% have a vocational qualification
- 48.2% hold no qualification which is similar to NSW
- 233 people aged 65+ were attending an educational institution in 2016 – 57 high school, 82 TAFE, 81 University



- 8.8% are still in the labour force (that means people who are employed or actively looking for work) compared to 12.4% for NSW
- Of these, 2,088 were employed full time and 3,547 are employed part time. 199 are unemployed, looking for full or part time work



- 6.2% were in households that earned a high income (more than \$2500 per week) compared to 10.8% for NSW
- 27.5% were in low income households (less than \$650 per week) compared to 25.4% for NSW



- 48.9% live in couple only households compared to 46.7% for NSW
- 28% live in lone person households compared to 24.5% for NSW
- 8.8% were part of couple families with child(ren) compared to 13% for NSW
- 6.3% were in one parent families compared to 6.9% for NSW



- 66.7% fully own their own home and 10.4% were purchasing; similar in comparison to NSW
- 11.9% were renting which is lower than for NSW 13.2% however, there has been an increase in private renters which is concerning as renting is a less secure form of housing
- 73.4% live in separate houses and 23% live in medium density housing (compared to 73.4% and 16.6 % for NSW)
- Over 66% of seniors live in houses with 3 or more bedrooms



- In 2016 there were over 41,500 residents or 66.4% with a home internet connection which is similar to NSW. However, this rate is much lower than for the general Central Coast population 84.1%
- 26% had no internet connection



# STRATEGIC CONTEXT

## Policies

Different levels of government impact on different aspects of our lives as we age. The following international, national and state policies and plans aim to create environments that support older people to live their best lives and provide an important context for this Strategy.

## International

### United Nations - Principles for Older Persons (1991) <sup>1</sup>

The United Nations Principles for Older Persons advocate for the creation of opportunities for older people to participate and contribute fully within society, whilst ensuring that basic human rights such as shelter, safety and care are provided for. The principles encourage governments to support older people to have independence, participation, care, dignity and self-fulfillment.

1. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/olderpersons.aspx>
2. <https://www.who.int/ageing/events/world-report-2015-launch/en/>
3. [https://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global\\_age\\_friendly\\_cities\\_Guide\\_English.pdf](https://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf)

### World Health Organization - Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health (2015 - 2030) <sup>2</sup>

states:

“Healthy Ageing is about creating the environments and opportunities that enable people to be and do what they value throughout their lives. Everybody can experience Healthy Ageing. Being free of disease or infirmity is not a requirement for Healthy Ageing as many older adults have one or more health conditions that, when well controlled, have little influence on their wellbeing.”

The World Health Organization (WHO) has committed to five strategic objectives to promote a long and healthy life for all people:

1. Action on Healthy Ageing in every country
2. Developing age-friendly environments
3. Aligning health systems to the needs of older populations
4. Developing sustainable and equitable systems for providing long-term care
5. Improving measurement, monitoring and research on Healthy Ageing

### World Health Organization - Age Friendly Cities Guide <sup>3</sup>

“An age-friendly city encourages active ageing by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. In practical terms, an age-friendly city adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities.”

This guide sets out age friendly principals for each of the following domains:

1. Social Participation
2. Respect and social inclusion
3. Civic participation and employment
4. Communication and employment
5. Community support and health service
6. Outdoor spaces and buildings
7. Transportation
8. Housing

## National

### Aged Care Reform (2012) Living Longer Living Better <sup>4</sup>

On 1 July 2012 responsibility for aged care services and community-based services for people aged 65+ transitioned from State to Commonwealth Government under the Living Longer, Living Better aged care reform (2012). The aim was to build a nationally consistent and sustainable aged care system that promotes greater choice and control for older people in determining their individual care needs.

My Aged Care was launched on 1 July 2013 to provide a single access point for all older Australian's to access government funded aged care support. The Commonwealth Housing Services Program (CHSP) provides funding for service provision and some Council's access this to provide in home care. Central Coast Council accesses only a small amount of CHSP funding for sector support. This funding has a focus on 'wellness and reablement'.

### The Commonwealth Government also has responsibility for:

- the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission - which aims to protect and enhance the safety, health, well-being and quality of life for people receiving aged care.
- Aged Care Quality Standards 2019 - organisations providing Commonwealth subsidised aged care services are required to comply with these from 1 July 2019.
- National Ageing and Age Care Strategy for people from Culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (2015)

4. <https://apo.org.au/node/29086>

5. <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/inclusion/seniors/overview>

6. <https://future.transport.nsw.gov.au/plans/older-persons-transport-and-mobility-plan-2018-2022>

## New South Wales

### NSW Ageing Strategy 2016-2020 <sup>5</sup>

The NSW Ageing Strategy 2016-2020 aims to enhance opportunities and quality of life for older people across the state through five key priority areas:

1. Health and Wellbeing
2. Working and retiring
3. Housing choices
4. Getting around
5. Inclusive communities

### Older Persons Transport and Mobility Plan 2018 – 2022 <sup>6</sup>

"The NSW Government recognizes that access to appropriate transport is the key to older people's independence, social inclusion and overall wellbeing."

There are 4 broad outcomes:

1. Keeping active and connected with my community
2. Staying Safe
3. Being informed
4. Maintaining independence

### Did you know - MY AGED CARE

The Commonwealth Government provides services to help older people to remain living independently at home or to transition into supported residential accommodation through My Aged Care.

My Aged Care is the starting point to access Government-funded aged care services. It provides:

- information on the different types of aged care services available (home help or residential)
- an assessment of what you need and what you are eligible for
- referrals and support to find service providers that can meet your needs
- information on what you might need to pay towards the cost of your care

An age care assessor looks at the needs of each person to ensure that a package of support is tailored to their unique needs. Carers can also request respite to support the care recipient during a short break.

To be assessed for aged care services contact My Aged Care by phone 1800 200 422 or at [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au)

## Councils' Role

This Strategy is part of Council's broader planning framework called *One Central Coast* (Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028) which sets the direction for our community over the next 10 years. The Positive Ageing Strategy aligns with the broad themes of *One Central Coast*: Belonging, Smart, Green, Responsible and Liveable.

Key objectives in the Community Strategic Plan that relate to older people include:

- Work within our communities to connect people, build capacity and create local solutions and initiatives
- Celebrate and continue to create opportunities for inclusion where all people feel welcome and participate in community life
- Work together to solve a range of social and health issues that may impact community wellbeing and vulnerable people
- Promote and provide a more sporting, community and cultural events and festivals
- Serve the community by providing great customer experience, value for money and quality services
- Engage with the community in meaningful dialogue and demonstrate how community participation is being used to inform decisions
- Educate the community on the value and importance of natural areas, biodiversity and encourage community involvement in caring for our natural environment
- Design and deliver pathways, walking trails and other pedestrian movement infrastructure to maximise access, inclusion and mobility to meet the needs of all community members
- Provide a range of housing options to meet the diverse and changing needs of the community including adequate affordable housing.
- Promote healthy living and ensure sport, leisure, recreation and aquatic facilities

and open spaces are well maintained and activated

- Invest in health care solutions including infrastructure, services and preventative programs to keep people well for longer
- Cultivate a love of learning and knowledge by providing facilities to support lifelong learning opportunities
- Provide equitable affordable, flexible and co-located community facilities based on community needs

There are many areas where Council can play a key role in positive ageing. These include:

- providing options for older people to connect, learn, exercise and have fun
- ensuring that older people are included, respected and celebrated as an important part of our community, and that the voices of older people are heard
- making Council services and facilities more accessible, such as libraries, parks, pools and leisure facilities, art galleries and theatres, and providing access to user friendly customer service options
- providing information to older people about what is on in their community, how they can get involved and how to get support
- providing or supporting activities and programs that promote positive ageing, physical activity and mental wellbeing
- making towns and communities more age-friendly so it is easier to get around, stay independent and age in place





There are some aspects of life, impacting older people, that Council does not control. For example, residential aged care and home care is managed by the Commonwealth Government, public transport and health both sit with the NSW Government. However, where appropriate, Council will partner with others and/or advocate on behalf of the community in relation to these areas.

To achieve our aim and vision we require an understanding and commitment from all members of the community. We recognise that there are many agencies and community groups across the Central Coast that deliver great services to our older residents. Through this Strategy we can share information which can assist in identifying opportunities for collaboration and new partnerships. We invite you to actively work with us.

Links to Other Council Plans:

The Positive Ageing Strategy is also linked to the following Council Plans:

- Disability Inclusion and Access Plan 2017-2021
- Central Coast Cultural Plan 2020-2025
- Central Coast Affordable and Alternative Housing Strategy
- Central Coast Youth Strategy 2019-2024
- Central Coast Pedestrian and Mobility Plan 2019-2020
- Central Coast Bike Plan 2019-2029



# LET'S TALK POSITIVE AGEING

## How we engaged

This Positive Ageing Strategy has been developed with our older community. It is a direct response to what older people living on the Central Coast have highlighted as important to them. For the purposes of developing the Strategy residents aged 50 years and over were also invited to participate as we were keen to capture the aspirations and needs of pre-retirees who will be part of our ageing population in the future.

Community consultation has been an ongoing and evolving process since the development of the first Central Coast Positive Ageing Strategy in 2014, when over 2,500 residents, service providers and stakeholders were consulted to share their opinion on what Positive Ageing meant to them, what factors were important to live a happy and healthy life and challenges faced.

An extensive engagement process was also conducted in 2017 and 2018 as part of the Community Strategic Plan. Over 6,500 residents told us what they valued about their local area and the Central Coast, their aspirations for the future, local challenges and priorities and ideas for what could make living on the Coast better. We were able to draw on data from our older residents who participated in this engagement.

In 2019, we undertook further research and targeted community and stakeholder engagement to gain a fresh perspective on the priorities, needs and hopes of our older community as we move into the next stage of planning for older residents. This has resulted in an updated Positive Ageing Strategy, a revision of strategic themes and a targeted action plan.

## How we undertook our latest engagement

Between September and November in 2019 we sought community and stakeholder feedback on how Council could best support older people on the Central Coast to age positively.

- Hard copy surveys were distributed through libraries, our 50+ Centres, neighbourhood centres and Council's administration buildings
- The surveys were advertised through local and seniors' newspapers, Council's Your Voice Our Coast website and through social media
- Service providers were asked to complete an online survey
- Face to face focus groups and interviews were held with members of Seniors' groups and service providers
- An interactive Age Board was displayed at 50+ Centres and shopping centres asking residents to share their thoughts "As I age I can....." and "As I age I would like...."



**12,146**

social media users reached, generating 70 likes, comments and shares



**626**

visits to Your Voice Our Coast website



**352**

community members completed online or hard copy surveys



**38**

service providers responded to online surveys



**54**

face to face focus groups and interviews

Responses were received from the following age groups:



**50-65 YEARS**

**152**



**66-75 YEARS**

**116**



**75-85 YEARS**

**74**



**85 YEARS+**

**7**



## AN OVERVIEW OF WHAT OUR OLDER RESIDENTS TOLD US

From the Community Strategic Plan our older residents told us they loved:

- The natural environment – beaches, bush and waterways
- Our relaxed, quiet and laid-back lifestyle
- Cafes, restaurants and shops
- The friendliness of people and sense of community
- Parks, trees and open spaces

### We could improve:

- Roads, kerb and guttering
- Public and community transport
- Footpaths and bike paths
- The maintenance of our natural areas including waterways and bush
- Open space, parks and green space

From our recent consultations older people on the Central Coast value health and fitness activities, opportunities for social connection and outdoor experiences. They want to be better informed about what is happening in the community including the myriad of free or low-cost activities, programs and events they can participate in and how they can access information about services and support when they need them. They want to be able to get around the community with improvements needed to the public domain, footpaths and bike paths, ensuring our places and space are accessible and access to better transport options.

Whilst some older residents want to participate in seniors-specific activities in dedicated seniors' centres, others preferred to be outside and/or participate in intergenerational activities as valued members of the community. Social connection, a low-cost nutritious meal service, a place to meet friends, fitness and educational activities are the main benefits of the 50+ Centres.

A snap shot of some of the key findings from our latest survey are highlighted below:

### What activities are most important to you?

1. Fitness (in general or classes like yoga, dancing, tai chi, zumba)
2. Social activities and events
3. Walking and running (including bush walking and walking groups)
4. Swimming (beaches and pools, water aerobics)
5. Bike riding (including mountain biking)
6. Library
7. Arts, craft and music (including theatre and entertainment)
8. Organised sports

### What would you like to access that doesn't exist in your community?

1. Bike paths and mountain bike trails
2. Footpaths, bush walking trails and walking groups
3. More pools (accessible, hydrotherapy, water aerobics)
4. Exercise classes, including balance and strength
5. Art, craft, literary activities

### What else should Council do to make the community more liveable?

1. Improve and increase footpaths and cycleways
2. Provide information on what services and activities exist, including an information officer/aged care navigator
3. Make all Council facilities accessible and provide accessible parking
4. Transport assistance
5. Outdoor facilities e.g. seating, trails, fitness equipment

### What actions could Council do better to support older people?

1. Improve transport
2. Promote services and activities/information provision
3. Improve footpaths to make it easier to get around

4. Access to low cost positive ageing and wellbeing programs, activities and events
5. More places for older people to come together

### What sort of information do you want to get?

1. What's on in the community – including Council and other activities
2. Information on classes and activities for seniors
3. Information on community and other transport options
4. How to access part-time work or volunteering opportunities
5. How to get help to stay living independently
6. Information of healthy living
7. Financial advice for retirees

### How could the 50+ Centres be improved?

1. Promote what's on – provide a schedule of activities
2. Provide a greater range of activities
3. Provide 'younger' type activities/cater for both younger and older people
4. Provide intergenerational activities
5. Provide outdoor activities such as walking groups
6. Provide after-hours activities

### How can Council support older people where there are no 50+ Centres?

1. Provide transport linked to centres, activities, shops, GP
2. Run programs from other venues, like community centres, libraries, scout halls, pools
3. Promotion of what's on – not just Council activities
4. Encourage others to set up groups/activities or link with existing local groups to deliver activities

Further insights are included under each of the key themes.



# KEY THEMES

We listened to what our older residents and service providers had to say, and four key themes emerged.

## Theme 1: Social Connections and Participation

**Our older residents are connected and have opportunities to participate in, contribute to and be included in community life.**

This theme is about:

- Connections with family, friends and neighbours
- Feeling welcome and valued
- Reducing social isolation and loneliness
- Encouraging participation in social activities:
  - community events and activities
  - positive ageing programs
  - creative ageing programs
  - continued learning
  - civic activities
- Intergenerational interactions
- Working and volunteering options
- Celebrating ageing
- Valuing and recognising contributions
- Resilience and strength against adversity (natural disasters, pandemics, personal safety, elder abuse)

## Theme 2: Being Better Informed and Tech Savvy

**Our older residents are well informed and well-resourced as they age**

This theme is about:

- Promotion of social activities - knowing what's on
- Awareness of events, activities, services and facilities
- Access to information to assist positive ageing (such as healthy living, retiring well, financial planning, transport options, living independently)
- Access to information about available services and support options (including My Aged Care, in-home support, home modifications, residential care, retirement living options, NDIS, transport options)
  - The right information at the right time
  - Age friendly formats
  - Age friendly services
  - Using digital technology

## Theme 3: Staying Healthy and Active

**Our older residents are encouraged to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle and can access health services**

This theme is about:

- Being physically active
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Encouraging participation in fitness, recreation, leisure and sporting activities
- Access to open spaces and the natural environment for a range of outdoor and active lifestyle experiences
- Preventative health and healthy ageing (such as healthy eating and nutrition, falls prevention)
- Prevention and support for people living with chronic illness (such as dementia)
- Access to health and other support services

## Theme 4: Age-friendly Places and Spaces

**Our older residents feel welcome and can access public places and spaces, they can move easily and safely around the community and are supported to age in place**

This theme is about:

- Age-friendly public places and spaces (including facilities, parks, open space, town centres, outdoor seating, lighting, signage, public toilets)
- Accessibility
- Universal design
- Footpaths and shared pathways
- Walkability and cycling
- Parking
- Public transport (affordability, accessibility, availability)
- Community transport and flexible transport options
- Community safety (including pedestrian and road safety)
- Somewhere to call home (including housing options, affordability, ageing in place)





# Theme 1:

Social Connections and Participation



# Theme 1:

## Social Connections and Participation

Our older residents are connected and have opportunities to participate in, contribute to and be included in community life

This theme focuses on the importance of social connections and participation and the key role that older people play within our community. It acknowledges the valuable contribution that older people make within families, the community and workplaces. It aims to ensure that equitable opportunities are provided for people to connect, grow and provide support to one another.

### Belonging

By nature, people are social beings. Social connection is a fundamental human need and we naturally seek out the companionship of others. This need does not change as we advance in years and being socially connected in today's world is now more important than ever.

Community participation whether through participating in sport, social, cultural and leisure activities, volunteering or attending community events, builds friendships, connections and networks within the community. This involvement in turn creates feelings of inclusion and a sense of belonging.

As people move into retirement, they tend to have more time to take part in social activities and enjoy quality time with friends and family which can be a source of joy, fun and happiness.

The positive benefits of social connection have been widely documented, with strong

#### Goal 1.1

Increase opportunities for older residents to build connections and relationships

relationships and family ties being shown to:

- improve physical health and psychological well-being
- create a positive sense of self and belonging
- protect from functional decline
- lower rates of anxiety and depression
- increase self-esteem
- increase levels of empathy, trust and cooperation
- generate a positive loop of social, emotional and physical wellbeing

It is evident that those residents' who are well connected, participate in community life and have support networks have greater capacity to enjoy their older years.

#### As I age, I would like to...

- make new friends
- be respected
- pass on my knowledge
- help the younger generation grow
- say yes to new experiences
- not take life too seriously
- give back to the world
- get on with my bucket list

Older people are also great contributors to our local community. Opportunities exist through intergenerational programs to improve the recognition and respect of older people, embrace these connections and share knowledge between generations. Through programs that encourage mentoring and interactions, younger and older people can connect with and value each other.

Cultural factors are also significant and impact on the ageing experience. Older people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are upheld as leaders, including those with cultural authority as Elders. Older people are key to family and community cohesion and have the role within community to teach and pass traditional knowledge, culture, history and language.

Older people from culturally diverse backgrounds are also often responsible for teaching their family members and communities about culture and heritage.

On the other hand, increased life expectancy and population ageing can also potentially place more individuals at risk of social isolation, marginalisation and social exclusion. It is concerning that levels of loneliness and disconnection are growing

in our communities, with older people being one of the most impacted groups. Relationships Australia state that Australia is currently experiencing a loneliness epidemic<sup>7</sup>, with lack of social connection damaging our health to the same degree as obesity, smoking and high blood pressure.

There are many reasons why social isolation and loneliness become more common as we age, with contributing factors including retiring from the workforce, living alone (28% of our older residents aged over 65 live alone), loss of friends, a partner or close family ties. It requires confidence to make new friends and, for some, this can become more challenging with age. Factors such as transport, access to information, use of technology, health and levels of mobility or disability may also impact people's ability to participate. These issues may be made worse by low income, discrimination or social exclusion.

“When connecting people, it needs to be an embrace, not just an invitation.”

NSW Ageing Strategy consultation, 2020

It is therefore important to identify and remove barriers to social participation and inclusion, as well as create opportunities for people to connect and belong.

7. Relationships Australia (2018) *Is Australia experiencing an epidemic of loneliness?*





## Continued learning

Continued or lifelong learning is key to a 'positive ageing' approach. Many people share a desire to continue to learn, develop skills and share knowledge across the lifespan.

“I want to remain creative and curious”

Age board comment

The benefit of continued learning extends beyond improved skills and mental stimulation. Benefits include greater social and physical wellbeing, better memory, greater self-esteem and individual identity. Continued learning helps people adapt, be resilient and creative, and remain active participants in an ever-changing society and economy.

There are many opportunities for continued learning across the Central Coast, with community colleges, the U3A and classes at local community centres being well attended. Some older people attend more formal educational institution such as TAFE or University, even into their 80s.

As we move forward, we will work in partnership with the older community to ensure that the range of courses and skills development opportunities offered, within 50+ Centres, libraries and other community locations, meet the diverse range of interests of older people. There is also a need to address barriers such as high costs, poor

### Goal 1.2

Provide enriching learning opportunities

transport, and make continued learning opportunities available to everyone.

Service providers and individuals have advocated for the importance of sharing knowledge, skills and experience through cross-generational programs and activities. The potential for younger people to teach about new technology and for older people to mentor from their base of experience in all aspects of business, creativity, community activity and recreation was reiterated.

Creative learning and participation at all levels, from amateur to professional, in areas such as singing, performing, painting, writing and dancing provides opportunity for mental well-being as well as sharing and learning about diverse cultures and traditions. This is also supported in the *Central Coast Cultural Plan 2020-2025* where creativity is supported as a form of continued learning at all ages, as well as an expression of self and culture.

## Being Involved

People are living longer and healthier lives than ever before. This means that people have an increased need to be involved in community life and to make important contributions to society well into older age. This can be done through work, volunteering, gaining and sharing knowledge, and through community participation and leadership.

Australians are spending longer in the workforce than ever before. From 2011 to 2016 there was a 1.7% increase in labour force participation for people aged 65 and above on the Central Coast, and this trend is reiterated across Australia (ABS, 2016).

Continued employment in meaningful work can provide great rewards to older workers, society and the economy. Mature age workers contribute skills, experience, communication skills and a strong work ethic. They often support less experienced workers through mentorship and transfer of skills.

Despite this, age discrimination in the workplace is still prevalent. Research commissioned by the Australian Human Rights Commission (2018) found that almost a third (30%) of organisations indicate a reluctant to recruit workers above a certain age. Many respondents indicated an unwillingness to hire or invest in training workers over the age of 50. This highlights a need to address age discrimination in the workplace, create age-friendly work environments, support and incentivise employers to employ, retain and train mature aged staff and provide options for phased retirement planning.

### Goal 1.3

Promote and support volunteering and options to remain in the workforce

We have a strong and growing culture of volunteering in the region with many wishing to assist others within their community as their amount of spare time increases in retirement. Almost a fifth of residents give their time to volunteering programs.

Volunteering provides an essential service and is instrumental in ensuring that many community and environmental organisations remain sustainable and continue to service the community. There are a wide range of volunteering opportunities to choose from, and it is important to match volunteers with roles that provide fulfillment and a sense of purpose. When the right match is made, volunteering provides a range of benefits for older people.

There is also a need to provide a diversity of ways for older people to be involved in volunteering or mentoring programs, to tap into their skills and knowledge, as well as flexible options so older residents can combine travel or work with volunteering. Council provides several volunteering opportunities within our environmental programs (land care, bush care, dune care), 50+ Centres, Art Gallery, Theatres, Libraries and Friends of the Cemetery program.



### Did you know:

There are over 600 volunteers in our Environmental Volunteer Program, with almost half (47%) aged between 60-69 years and a further 33% aged over 70. These volunteers undertake valuable work including ecological restoration and land conservation in bushland and coastal natural reserves, recreation area maintenance in open space parks, garden and road verge maintenance, rubbish and graffiti removal. Volunteers are also involved with native plant seed collection and plant propagation through Council's nursery, take part in citizen science activities such as flora and fauna monitoring, and participate in one-off events such as annual National Tree Day plantings and floating Landcare.

### Benefits of volunteering

- Socialising, meeting other people, developing new friendships
- Helps you stay physically and mentally healthy and active
- Enables you to share knowledge, experience and mentor others
- Provides opportunities to give back to others, help those in need or protect and nurture the environment
- Increases the production of happy hormones, which help to alleviate depression, stress and anxiety
- Personal satisfaction

## Celebrating, respecting and valuing older people as leaders

Older people are leaders and sources of knowledge and experience in the community, business and family. But this is not always understood, celebrated or valued as much as it should be.

It is important that we acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of older people and continue to recognise and support their contribution and role as leaders, volunteers, mentors and people with community authority.

Older people have a wealth of knowledge, experience and wisdom that can be passed on to younger generations.

Older residents can also provide valuable information about their local communities. It is important to provide meaningful opportunities for them to be able to participate in decision-making about proposed local projects and initiatives and fulfil local community leadership roles.

There are often negative stereotypes associated with ageing such as frailty, illness, memory loss, being a burden and these can lead to a loss of older people's sense of self and impact on their physical health.

### Goal 1.4

Celebrate and recognise the leadership and contributions of older residents

The WHO strategic objective for commitment to action on health and ageing states that:

“some of the most important barriers to action and effective public health policy on Healthy Ageing are pervasive misconceptions, negative attitudes and assumptions about ageing and older people”

It is important to challenge these stereotypes by adopting positive attitudes to ageing and promoting positive images of older residents emphasising the roles they play in our community. Our older residents should be respected and looked after by all community members.

## Strengthening resilience

Resilience may be defined in terms of processes that influence how well individuals cope with adversity. Older age is often associated with transitions and challenges such as declining physical and cognitive health, loss of partner and loved ones, financial issues and in some cases increased social isolation.

The increasing frequency and intensity of weather events, such as recent floods and bushfires, combined with the Coronavirus pandemic presents new challenges for older residents as they can be vulnerable during these times. Some older residents can also draw on their experience and resources to assist others during an emergency.

Social networks and relationships are an important buffer in times of adversity and have the potential to contribute to coping and bolstering the capacity for resilience. These may be provided by close family members and friends or from wider social networks of friends, neighbours and the community.

When we think about the needs of older residents and provide timely and accessible information during emergency events, our disaster preparedness and disaster recovery efforts are strengthened.

### Goal 1.5

Support and assist older residents to be more resilient

It is also important that older residents have the skills needed to remain safely living at home as they age. Common accidents involving older people include trips and falls, burns, poisonings, poor lighting, unsafe electrical appliances, fire and home security. Older residents are also viewed as easy targets by unscrupulous 'tradesmen', scammers, nuisance callers and cybercrime.

With an ageing population, elder abuse has emerged as an issue. This may include financial abuse, psychological abuse (including social isolation, neglect, physical or sexual abuse). Research suggests that most abuse of older people is intra-family and intergenerational making it challenging and complex to address. It is important that older people, families and carers are equipped with information to assist in identifying and addressing situations of elder abuse including knowledge of where they can seek help.

## What our older residents told us

- A sense of belonging, of feeling part of a community and maintaining links with friends and family was a major feature of retaining a positive attitude to ageing.
- While there appears to be abundant opportunities for social interaction with a plethora of sporting, cultural, creative and social organisations to participate in across the Central Coast, many older residents requested more information about what's on including both Council and non-Council activities.
- Social activities and events were rated as the second most important category, followed by cultural activities such as visiting a library, arts, craft and music.
- 27% of older residents, however, said they never participate in social activities which highlights the potential risk of social isolation.
- While 92% of service providers saw 'social connection' as the greatest benefit of 50+ Centres, a further 82% thought that Council should also focus on programs, activities and events to support positive ageing across the Central Coast.
- 64% of survey respondents wanted to participate in activities that are intergenerational. Baby boomers told us they are more likely to participate in intergenerational or general community activities than older aged groups who are more likely to want to participate in senior-specific activities.
- 50+ Centres are greatly valued as a place for older people to meet friends. 74% of survey respondents valued the services offered. 29% of people like activities being held in the 50+ Centres because the members share common interests, because they find it less intimidating or because they feel like they can be themselves. 34.5% would prefer activities not to be in 50+ Centres as they don't see themselves as old, do not want to be segregated or just see age as a number.
- When asked what activities should be offered for people entering or in early retirement, the most common response from service providers was volunteering opportunities. Volunteering was rated 5th for people in the swing of retirement. Older residents told us they get a great deal of benefits and pleasure from being involved in the community. Some people in the community are unsure as to where to start looking to find volunteer work.
- Community members placed great importance on education and learning, to continue developing and sharing skills and knowledge to enable the continuation of meaningful work, leadership, self-worth and resilience.



### Ways you can stay connected

- Actively seek out information about what is happening in your local community
- Say yes to new opportunities
- Participate in community events
- Get involved in cultural and recreational activities
- Take up a new sport or hobby
- Take an interest in others. Be inclusive, compassionate and kind
- Introduce yourself to your neighbours and help-out when they need a hand
- Be open to offers of friendship, support or assistance
- Undertake meaningful work in an age-friendly work environment
- Seek out volunteering opportunities or join a community group
- Attend a course, learn a new skill or think about what skills you could teach others
- Make people feel welcome
- 'Talk up' the great things happening in your local community

## Theme 1: Social Connections and Participation

Our older residents are connected and have opportunities to participate in, contribute to and be included in community life

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
1.1 Increase opportunities for older residents to build social connections and relationships	Facilitate and support vibrant and welcoming community meeting places that provide opportunities for older people to build social connections and relationships, such as the 50 + Centres and libraries	50 + Centres are well attended by older people who make new friendships, meet people with shared interests and build social networks that provide companionship and support. There are opportunities available at libraries and community spaces for older people to connect and build social networks	ONGOING	Senior Services Team Library Strategy and Connection Section Library Operations	50+ Centres (community managed) Community and Cultural Programs Team
	Continue to provide and extend the range of affordable, fun and friendly programs, activities or events where older residents can meet and connect explore options to expand outreach opportunities, run from places that older people can easily attend in town centres and more isolated locations	Older people from all over the Central Coast are provided with a range of interesting and appealing programs, activities or events that facilitate social connection and opportunities to meet new people	ONGOING	Senior Services Team Community and Cultural Programs Team	Enterprise and Activation Team Events Team Library Strategy and Connection Section Leisure and Pools Section 50+ Centres (community managed)
	Continue to facilitate and encourage opportunities to reduce social isolation and loneliness, build informal social networks and intergenerational relationships through activities, such as Paddock to Plate, intergenerational playgroups, reading buddies program and projects that link youth and senior services	Community relationships are strengthened across all age groups, and people of all generations connect building community resilience and mutual respect Barriers to social participation are addressed, resulting a strong and connected community that promotes acceptance, belonging and inclusion	ONGOING	Community and Cultural Programs Team Seniors Services Team Youth Services Team Education and Care Team Library Strategy and Connection Section	Playgroups NSW Coast Community Connections Pre-schools and schools 50+ Centres (community managed)
	Continue to work alongside the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to facilitate cultural connections and opportunities for Aboriginal Elders to share knowledge, history and traditions	Older people from all cultural backgrounds connect with the wisdom, strength, culture and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and communities. The role of Elders becomes better understood, respected and acknowledged by the wider community	ONGOING	Community and Cultural Programs Team	Aboriginal community leaders Library Strategy and Connection Section

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
	Increase programming and participation of older people in culturally diverse events and arts and culture activities	Better understanding and respect of different cultures is developed through creativity	ONGOING	Community and Cultural Programs Team Art and Culture Section	Senior Services Team Events Team
	Continue to develop, co-ordinate and promote an annual Seniors Festival, with a minimum of two events such as a senior's concert or senior's expo. Promotion will include information on free or discounted Senior Festival activities, workshops and programs hosted by Council, community and commercial organisations	Older people are fully informed and come together to celebrate the NSW Seniors Festival	ONGOING	Senior Services Team	NSW Seniors Festival Community and Cultural Programs Team Communication Team Arts and Culture Section Library Strategy and Connection Section Community partners Aged service providers
	Develop new and enhance existing programming that supports creative ageing	Older people have opportunities to participate in arts and sharing of skills and talents	<b>NEW</b> Year 3 onwards	Community and Cultural Programs Team Senior Services Team	Arts and Culture Section Youth Services Team Events Team
	Mitigate or remove barriers to attending community activities and events by continuing to promote and implement the <i>Planning Accessible Events Guide and Checklist</i>	Inclusion and access to community activities and events is optimised. Opportunities for entertainment and social connection can be enjoyed by the whole family, including older people	ONGOING	Events Team	All sections of Council that run community events
	Consider the access and social inclusion needs of older people with a disability within the revised <i>Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021 – 2025</i>	Older people with disability can fully participate in the social and cultural life of our community	<b>NEW</b> Year 1 onwards	Community Planning and Funding Team Community and Cultural Programs Team	

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
1.2 Provide enriching learning opportunities	Continue to provide affordable, interest and skills-based learning and enrichment activities, programs and events, with the aim to increase outreach community-based learning opportunities	Rewarding learning programs enable older people to expand wisdom, feed curiosities and build further skills and knowledge	ONGOING	Senior Services Team Library Strategy and Connection Section Arts and Culture Section	TAFE U3A Skilled trainers Community leaders
1.3 Promote and support volunteering and options to remain in the workforce	Continue to offer a range of volunteer opportunities that enable community members of all ages to fulfil the desire to give back to community and support the local environment	Council and the community are strengthened by a network of older volunteers that are engaged in meaningful work and activities that provides pride, purpose and connection	ONGOING	Relevant Council Units: Senior Services Team Environmental Management Unit Arts and Culture Section Cemeteries Library Strategy and Connection	Volunteering Central Coast
	Explore viable cross-Council management models, coordination and resourcing of volunteers	Volunteers feel valued, supported and recognised within well-structured and resourced volunteer programs. Clear pathways for skills development are provided. Volunteer Supervisors are supported and risk is well managed by Council	<b>NEW</b> Year 2 onwards	People and Culture Unit	All sections of Council that manage volunteers
	Maintain an age friendly work environment and continue to support the professional development and wellbeing of mature aged Council staff guided Council policies and implementation of the Ageing Workforce Strategy	Council benefits from an age-diverse workforce, with skills and experience shared across the generations. Mature age staff are provided with support and flexibility as they move towards retirement	<b>NEW</b> Year 2 onwards	People and Culture Unit	
	Explore potential for work experience opportunities involving older people in the community to increase their skill base to seek part time work	Older people can learn new vocational skills via hands on experience at places	<b>NEW</b> Year 2 onwards	People and Culture Unit	Senior Services Team All of Council

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
1.4 Celebrate and recognise the leadership and contributions of older residents	Continue to support community leadership with older people leading their own services or co-designing future activities, programs, learning opportunities and events	The wide range of experience, capabilities and resources is realised via leadership opportunities for older people	ONGOING	Senior Services Team	Community partners Community and Council 50+ Centres
	Establish a 50+ Centres network group	Cross promotion and sharing of information and knowledge to strengthen networks and build leadership	<b>NEW</b> Year 1 onwards	Senior Services Team	
	Increase opportunities for participation for older people to share their knowledge, skills and experience with others through activities such as oral histories and 'living library' talks	Skills, knowledge, culture and creativity held by older community members is shared and celebrated across the wider community, across different cultures and between different generations	ONGOING	Library Strategy and Connection Section	Art and Culture
	Continue to provide opportunities for older residents to actively engage with Council's decision-making processes and committees, such as representation of older people on the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Advisory Committee, Social Inclusion Advisory Committee and Access and Inclusion Reference Group	All older people have an opportunity to have their voice heard	ONGOING	Communication and Engagement Section Governance Services Section Community and Cultural Programs Team	Community, Planning and Services Section Roads Business Development and Technical Services Unit
	Create positive attitudes towards ageing and celebrate the role and achievements of older people, carers and volunteers through the Central Coast Seniors Festival, Volunteers Weeks, Australia Day and International Day of the Older Person	Wisdom, experience and citizenship is valued and celebrated, with public recognition inspiring younger generations	ONGOING	Senior Services Team	Events Team Communication Team Community and Cultural Programs Team Relevant business unit with volunteer programs

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
1.5 Support and assist older residents to be more resilient	Represent older people in Council publications in a positive and equitable way, using appropriate language and imagery	The wisdom, achievements and diversity of older people are respectfully represented within Council's digital and print publications	ONGOING	Communication Team	Whole of Council
	Develop and implement a visual digital storytelling project to showcase and promote positive stories and images of older people highlighting their contributions and what they love about where they live	The diverse roles, strengths, achievements and personalities of our older people are publicly displayed, promoted and celebrated	<b>NEW</b> Year 2 onwards	Senior Services Team Community and Cultural Programs Team	Senior Services Team
	Raise awareness of ageism by developing and coordinating an information campaign for Council staff to identify and address behaviours that negatively impact older people including the signing of the EveryAGE Counts campaign declaration	Council staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to prevent and respond to ageism in the workplace and wider community	<b>NEW</b> Year 4 onwards	Senior Services Team	Communication Team Whole of Council EveryAGE Counts People and Culture Unit
	Continue to inform older members of the community regarding resilience, preparedness and awareness for emergency occurrences planning via such means as outreach workshops and information sessions in community facilities	Council is well prepared and provides the necessary guidance and information to older people in preparation and during a range of disaster and crisis situations. Older people are prepared and guided for times of adversity and know where to seek local support in times of crisis	ONGOING	Environmental Education Team	Lead Emergency Response Agencies such SES, RFS, police, fire and ambulance Sustainable Environments Section Senior Services Team
	Build community resilience via education and awareness programs that support older people to prepare for, and respond to, a range of emergency events and disaster recovery situations such as the <i>Build Resilience for Extreme Weather Events workshops for seniors</i>	Older people are resourceful and empowered to respond to storms, floods, bushfires and community health crises	<b>NEW</b> Year 1 onwards	Learning Communities Section	Senior Services Team

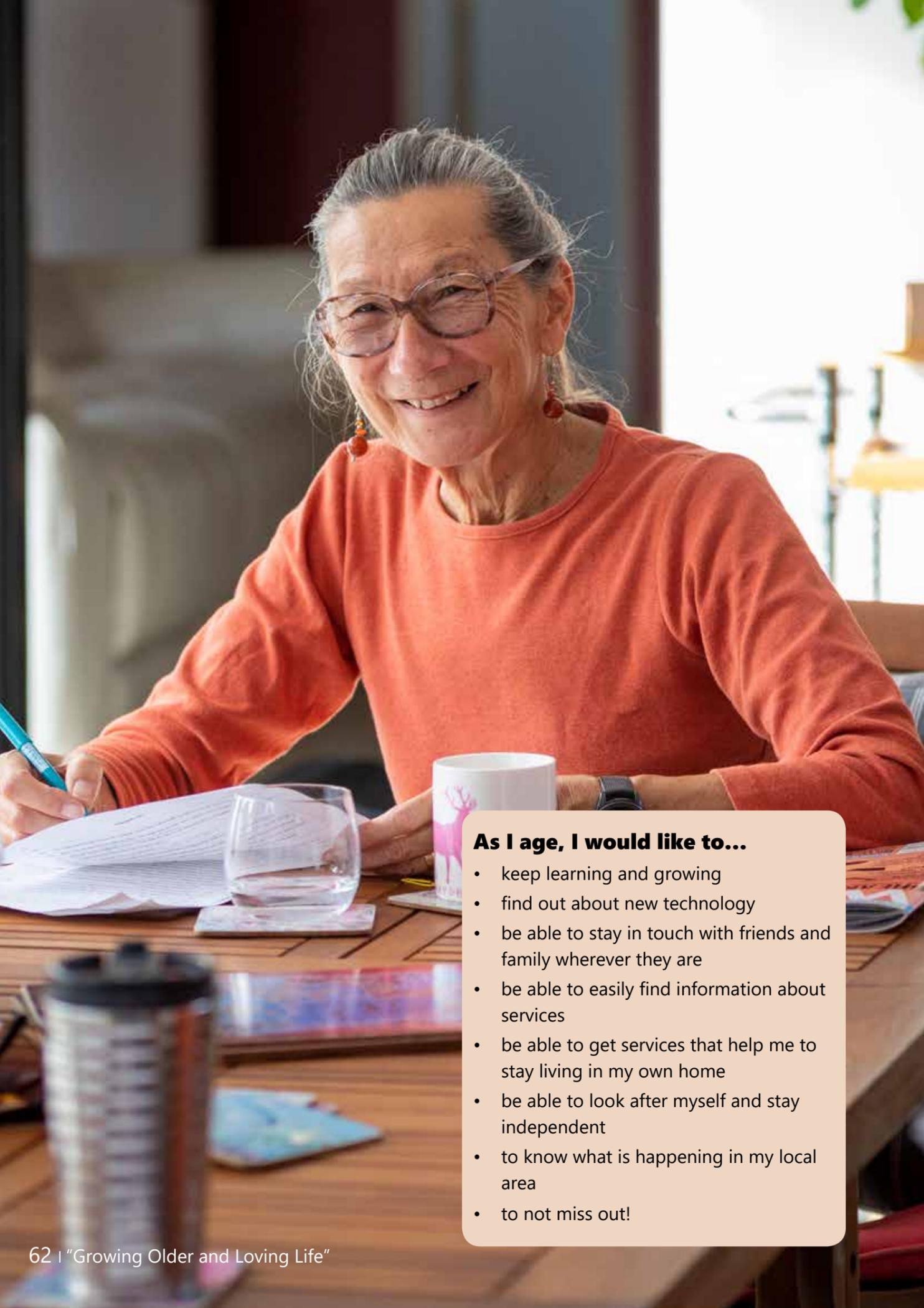
Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
	Undertake projects to build the resilience of older people and their connection to each other and the place they live	A strong and resilient community can identify and support those who are more vulnerable in times of need	<b>NEW</b> Year 1 onwards	Community and Cultural Programs Team	Senior Services Team
	Continue to provide and distribute to older people timely and accessible information in easy read formats during emergency events and disaster recovery situations	Older people have access to accurate and up to date information and guidance that supports and prepares for, respond to and recover from crisis and emergency situations	ONGOING	Environmental Education Team	Communication Team Senior Services Team Community and Cultural Programs Team Sustainable Environments Section
	Build the skills and capacity of older people to be less vulnerable to criminal activities and less exposed to predatory criminal behaviours, such as cybercrime, scammers and nuisance calls as well as minimise personal safety risks in the home and within the community spaces	Older people feel safe in their homes and within the community and can confidently identify and respond to criminal activity and cybercrime	<b>NEW</b> Year 2 onwards	Community Education Team	NSW Police Senior Services Team
	Continue to work with partners to raise awareness and improve responses to elder abuse and neglect, such as promotion of World Elder Abuse Day, provision of information in GOALL magazine, educating staff in identifying and supporting older people at risk	Older people, families and carers concerned about elder abuse or neglect can access appropriate services and support	ONGOING	Senior Services Team	Central Coast Elder Abuse Service Legal Aid NSW



BEYOND  
THIS POINT  
YOU MAY  
ENCOUNTER  
NUDE  
SUNBATHER

# Theme 2:

Being Better Informed and Tech Savvy



**As I age, I would like to...**

- keep learning and growing
- find out about new technology
- be able to stay in touch with friends and family wherever they are
- be able to easily find information about services
- be able to get services that help me to stay living in my own home
- be able to look after myself and stay independent
- to know what is happening in my local area
- to not miss out!

# Theme 2:

## Being Better Informed and Tech Savvy

Our older residents are well informed and well-resourced as they age

This theme focuses on the role of information and technology in ensuring people remain informed and connected as they grow older, with a focus on Council services, community services and supports, and local activities and events. It acknowledges that rapid changes in the way we communicate can create inequity for some older people who find it more difficult to use digital technologies. It aims to support older people who wish to digitally upskill and learn new technologies, while respecting the preferences of people who also prefer face to face and print communications.

### Being Informed

Communication and information shape our lives. They are at the core of everything we do and influence every decision we make. The ability to communicate and access information impacts our quality of life, our sense of belonging and empowers people to make decisions that will positively impact their situation and wellbeing.

Information enables people to fully participate in their local community, find out what's on, engage with activities and events, and access support in times of need. Being better informed is linked to keeping connected and engaged, and older people who can easily access information about services and programs are more likely to have their social and psychological needs met.

#### Goal 2.1

Improve promotion of events, activities and programs for older residents

#### Goal 2.2

Enhance access to information about services and support

Making sure that information is easy to find, at the times when people need it most, is a challenge for both government and the community sector. To meet this challenge, there has been a shift towards using digital platforms such as webpages, apps and social media to communicate with, and provide information to, the community. Within the age care sector this has resulted in services such as My Age Care, the NDIS and Carers Gateway moving service access to 'online portals'.

## The digital age and becoming more tech savvy

As we move into the 2020's, more and more information is primarily available online. There is an expectation that people will gain further information through electronic means rather than through personal contact. For some, the use of technology to communicate is a preferred method, but there are many people who did not learn or use digital technology within their early life and are now required to quickly adapt to a new way of communicating.

“Only 15% of Australians over 65 years accessed government services, or health and medical information via the internet (Roy Morgan, 2015). 54% of people over 65 years stated they were “somewhat” or “very dissatisfied” with the concept of interacting with government primarily by digital methods according to the Australian Government’s digital transformation office”

COTA, 2019

This has been particularly evident with the recent bushfire crisis and Coronavirus pandemic. Older people who were digitally connected were significantly advantaged, with access to emergency information, communication with family and friends, and

### Goal 2.3

Develop skills and confidence to use technology

contact with essential services all continuing online, while retaining physical distance, safe at home. But for those without access to the Internet, these crises highlighted the ‘digital divide’ – those who have access to technology and the means to use it, and those who do not.

For the younger generation, born into this digital world, new skills are easily learnt. Many children have mastered the art of downloading Apps on their parent’s smartphone even before starting school. By the teenage years, many young people are more tech savvy than their parents or carers.

However, learning new technologies later in life isn’t always child’s play and comes with a unique set of challenges. The right type of learning environment is required, with teachers who can adapt to the learning needs of individuals, building knowledge and confidence at a suitable pace.



### Benefits of becoming digitally savvy

- Connecting with friends, family and community, near and far through Skype, Zoom and social media
- Better access to information about events and activities via online events calendars and advertising via social media
- Access to information and services from the comfort of your own home through online portals operated by My Aged Care, NDIS, Carers Gateway and other age care providers
- Easier access to information and services for those with mobility challenges, or those whose live in rural or remote communities
- New ways of accessing and navigating that support people to remain independent in their own home
- Access to the most up to date information in times of crisis such as bushfires or storms
- Increased access to information about health and wellbeing

## Age-friendly information and services

Whilst there are many benefits to the use of technology, this is not the only way to communicate. Many people prefer person-centred forms of communication that create opportunities for human interaction and conversation. There are also people who simply do not want to, or find it particularly challenging, to learn new technology later in life.

We need to ensure that everyone in the community has easy access to information. This requires not only working towards digital inclusion and supporting our older residents to digitally upskill if they desire, but also moving beyond the digital and providing information in a variety of forms

## What our older residents told us

- Strong communities always have a myriad of strong internal networks – places people turn for help, support and information which are often never formalised or structured. Our ageing community is no different, and improved access to information and knowing “what’s on” was a repeated topic throughout the engagement phase.
- Types of information sought include details about community events and what’s on, 50+ centre program and schedule, libraries and learning opportunities, staying fit and healthy, how to volunteer, transport and housing options, and how to access age care and independent living services and supports.

### Goal 2.4

Provide age-friendly information and services

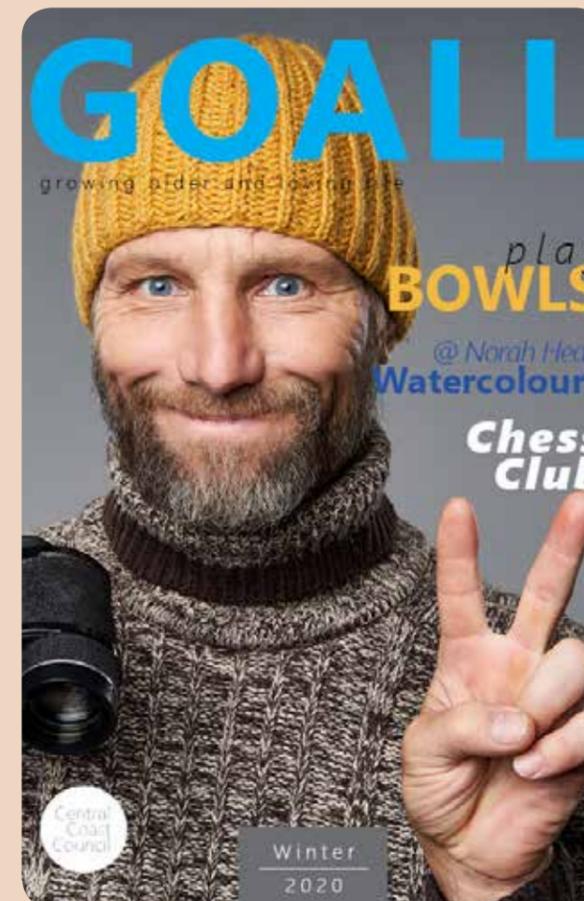
that meet the preferences and needs of our local community and having this available in places frequented in older people’s daily life. This includes adopting an age-friendly approach so all materials are easy to read and understand, assisting those with visual or hearing disabilities, for example, hearing loops, large-print and e-readers and audio formats; our services continue to be adapted and provided to support older people, for example continued provision a home library service; and our staff are skilled to assist older people, those with disabilities and/or dementia in accessing Council services.

- The types of information that people require changes across different life stages. People entering retirement need information about what’s on, retiring well and financial advice. People ‘in the swing of retirement’ are seeking information on what’s on and forward planning. Those who require a higher level of support need information on age care services, financial advice, supported accommodation or residential aged care.
- Many people are confused by the aged care system. They are unaware of the types of support that can be provided and how to access services that can support them to remain independent and age in place within their own home and community. 47% of survey respondents were not aware of My Aged Care or how to access it. Another 10% were not sure.

- People rarely begin to navigate the age care system before help is required. This creates the challenge of finding the right services at a time when people are feeling vulnerable and experiencing the stress of losing independence. We heard that more support is required to guide people through this transitional life stage and help people retain their independence.
- Many older people want to learn about the Internet. They want to be able to connect with family using social media, book a holiday online, order shopping or access services such as My Age Care, or even renew a passport.
- There is a growing number of older people using mobile technology such as smartphones and tablets. There are very limited opportunities to learn about how to use and get the most out of these devices. Older people would like support to learn how to use devices for

both social connection and accessing the services they may require.

- Older people want free wi-fi and Internet access at community locations such as libraries and shopping centres to support older people who do not have the Internet at home.
- Research shows that a preference for hard copy or face to face information remains for many older people, with information available in a range of places that older people frequent in their daily lives. Meeting service providers in a face to face environment provides opportunities for older people to ask questions, build stronger relationships and better understanding. 39% of survey respondents wanted to receive information in non-digital formats.



### Ways you can be better informed and digitally savvy

- Request a digital or print copy of GOALL magazine
- Request a digital or print copy of the Central Coast Senior’s Directory
- Stay informed about Council and community events by signing up to Council’s Facebook, Twitter or Instagram page
- Visit your local 50+ centre or library and find out about the extensive range of services, programs and workshops provided to the community
- Challenge yourself to be more digitally savvy - sign up to computer course
- Learn about mobile technologies and devices such as smartphone, tablets and apps
- Build your skills online by completing a free course on the Australian Government’s BeConnected website

## Theme 2: Being Better Informed and Tech Savvy

Our older residents are well informed and well-resourced as they age

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
2.1 Improve promotion of events, activities and programs for older residents	Continue to produce and promote a dedicated communication channel and material in print and digital such as GOALL (Growing Older and Loving Life) quarterly magazine	Older people have a go-to platform to promote activities and events, highlight and discuss topics relevant to positive ageing, and celebrate the contributions and achievements of local older people within our community	ONGOING	Senior Services Team	Communication Team
	Undertake a promotional campaign with the 50+ Centres, with the aim of reaching new members and increasing participation in centre activities	More older people know about and attend the 50+ Centres	<b>NEW</b> Year 1 onwards	Senior Services Team	50+ Centres (community managed)  Communication Team
	Promote links to volunteer opportunities and information available within Council and within external groups and organisations	Older people are aware of what volunteering opportunities are available within the community	ONGOING	Senior Services Team	Communication Team Community and Cultural Programs Team Environmental Management Unit Art and Culture Section Library Strategy and Connection Section Other community groups and organisations such as Volunteering Central Coast

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
2.2 Enhance access to information about services and support	Develop, promote and distribute a Central Coast Seniors Directory that provides information and contact details for Council venues and facilities, social groups and activities, volunteering opportunities, local support and health services, future and financial planning, and housing	Older people have access to a directory of local activities, programs, essential and community services. Information is available in hard copy and online formats	<b>NEW</b> Year 1 Updated every 2 years	Senior Services Team	Communication Team
	Advocate for and promote awareness of local health and support services, such as community or peer support groups for people living with chronic illness	GOALL, the Senior's Directory and community expos inform older people about local services and supports	ONGOING	Senior Services Team	Communication Team Local aged service providers and community groups
	Co-ordinate delivery of a "Talking with Seniors" public program that invites local aged service providers and community groups to meet, greet and connect with local older residents over coffee and cake	Community members engage with local aged services providers in an informal environment. Participants meet representative, ask questions and plan pathways to ongoing support as well as have the opportunity to join and participate in ongoing activities	ONGOING	Senior Services Team	My Aged Care Carers Gateway Home modifications NSW Police Local aged service providers and community groups
	Work with partners to deliver seminars and community information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>financial and legal planning, including topics such as superannuation, wills, power of attorney and enduring guardianship</li> <li>housing options for older people, including staying in your own home, alternative housing options, and the management of companion animals during transition</li> <li>getting around the community and information for older people seeking alternatives to driving including community and public transport and using transport apps</li> </ul>	Community members are empowered to navigate through legal, financial and future planning systems, providing increased security and peace of mind People are equipped with the knowledge to make informed housing choices Older people can retain independence and freedom by accessing a range of public and community transport options when driving is no longer possible	ONGOING	Senior Services Team	Library Strategy and Connection Section Community and Cultural Programs Relevant Government and community partners

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
2.3 Provide age-friendly information and services	Continue to ensure Council communications are accessible and suitable for communicating with older people such as age-friendly formats and promotion	Council effectively connects and communicates with older people, using a range of age-friendly communication methods that respond to the communication preferences of older people. The guidelines are informed by actions within the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) that address accessible information	ONGOING	Communication and Engagement Section	Senior Services Team Customer Relationships Section
	Continue to offer library services that meet the needs of people as they age, including large print, audio and electronic resources (e-Resources) such as e-Books, e-Audiobooks, e-Magazines, e-Music and a streaming service for films and TV	Older people can access reading and learning materials in a range of accessible formats	ONGOING	Library Strategy and Connection Section	
	Continue and extend both the free library services for people unable to visit their local library in person, either temporarily or permanently, through reasons including disability, chronic illness and limited mobility	People who are homebound can continue the joy of reading through accessing the Home Library Service. The service is provided to customers at home or in care facilities. Regular bulk deliveries to care facilities are arranged upon request	ONGOING	Library Strategy and Connection Section	
	Investigate the expansion of Bookmobile services to new locations to broaden geographic access	The mobile library service visits rural communities, nursing homes and retirement villages. Older people who find it difficult to attend a library building have increases access to the full library collection	<b>NEW</b> YEAR 2-5	Library Strategy and Connection Section	
	Identify gaps and provide equipment in civic and community facilities to assist hearing or visually impaired, such as hearing loops, similar assistance devices and audio formats	Older people with hearing or visual impairments can access information in easy to understand formats	<b>NEW</b> Year 2 onwards	Relevant asset owners	Senior Services Team Community and Cultural Programs Team

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
	Ensure hard copy age-friendly information is available at places older people frequent	Older people have hard-copy information readily available in their daily life on a broad range of topics such as socialising, entertainment, activities, events, safety, health and housing	ONGOING	Senior Services Team	Arts and Culture Section Community Infrastructure Section Customer Relationships Library Strategy and Connection Section Events Team Shopping centres Medical centres Community Education Team Communication Team
	Promote accessible destinations across the Central Coast	Older residents know where and how to access popular destinations	ONGOING	Enterprise and Activation Team	Communication Team Senior Services Team Community and Cultural Programs Team Marketing and Tourism Section Roads Business Development and Technical Services Unit
	Ensure customer service and other relevant frontline staff have awareness of and are responsive to the needs of older people with skills to assist older people in accessing Council services	Older people's needs are understood, and they experience excellent customer service	<b>NEW</b> Year 2 onwards	Customer Relations Section	People and Culture Unit Senior Services Team
	Identify gaps and provide equipment in civic and community facilities to assist hearing or visually impaired, such as hearing loops, similar assistance devices and audio formats	Older people with hearing or visual impairments can access information in easy to understand formats	<b>NEW</b> Year 2 onwards	Relevant asset owners	Senior Services Team Community and Cultural Programs Team

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
2.4 Develop skills and confidence to use technology	Continue and expand opportunities for older people to learn about computers, navigate online information (including My Aged Care), access online services and connect via social media, through courses and workshops such as Tech Savvy Seniors and Digital Connect	Older people learn to use range of digital hardware, platforms and devices and become digitally connected. Skills are learnt in a comfortable environment at a pace that meets the learners needs	ONGOING	Senior Services Team Library Strategy and Connection Section	Central Coast Community College and other community and education partners
	Free access to computers and Wi-Fi is provided within libraries and 50+ Centres	Older people who do not have a computer or the Internet at home are able to access this technology free of charge	ONGOING	Library Strategy and Connection Section Senior Services Team	50+ Centres (community managed)
	Investigate opportunities to deliver library e-Resource training to older people within their own home	Older people learn about e-Resources at their own pace, in the comfort of their own home	<b>NEW</b> Year 3	Library Strategy and Connection Section	





# Theme 3:

Staying Healthy and Active

### As I age, I would like to...

- keep dancing, singing and moving
- stay happy and healthy
- enhance my wellbeing
- be more adventurous
- have outdoor exercise equipment that suites my fitness level
- have bush tracks and trail networks for walking and riding
- enjoy life to the fullest
- be kind to myself
- appreciate the little things
- always play with the grandkids
- for the wrinkles to be on the soles of my feet!



# Theme 3:

## Staying Healthy and Active

Our older residents are encouraged to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle and can access health services

This theme focuses on the role of information and technology in ensuring people remain informed and connected as they grow older, with a focus on Council services, community services and supports, and local activities and events. It acknowledges that rapid changes in the way we communicate can create inequity for some older people who find it more difficult to use digital technologies. It aims to support older people who wish to digitally upskill and learn new technologies, while respecting the preferences of people who also prefer face to face and print communications.

### Healthy and Active Ageing

Healthy and active ageing is about maintaining physical and mental wellbeing, a good quality of life, and a positive attitude towards ageing. Staying healthy and active into later life also helps to maintain independence and mobility, prevent disease and slow or reverse chronic illness. This empowers people to remain active participants in all aspects of community life, through all life stages.

The Central Coast provides many opportunities to participate in an active lifestyle, with the natural environment, open space and recreation facilities offering plentiful opportunities to get active and enjoy nature. Popular activities for older people locally include walking, golf, bowls, swimming, boating, tennis, cycling, mountain biking, gardening, dancing, singing and the arts.

Accessible green space provides an incentive

#### Goal 3.1

Provide programs, activities and facilities that promote physical activity and mental wellbeing

#### Goal 3.2

Improve access to preventative health programs

for walking and cycling. There is evidence that contact with nature is valued very highly by older people, including fresh air and sensory experience: sight, smell, touch and hearing. The most sought-after experiences are mainly enjoying the natural scenery, peace and quiet.

Natural spaces offering opportunities for relaxation and have also been shown to facilitate higher levels of social contact and social integration amongst different age groups. Community gardens, for example, provide opportunities for socialising with and learning from fellow gardeners and residents that may normally be unavailable.

Volunteering in natural environments, such as land care, dune care tidy towns groups, may be another example of enhanced health and well-being made possible not only through contact with nature, but through the social connection that arises from working on a common community task in a local natural area.

There is also a strong relationship between good physical and mental health with older residents reporting that remaining physically active also kept the mind engaged, and an interest or hobby that requires mental input usually had a physical component.

There is also a strong association between the importance of remaining connected with community, friends and family and the maintenance of good health and wellbeing. Many older residents indicated that their involvement in community and sporting groups and volunteering activities provided them with opportunities for physical activity, social interaction and engagement, and these activities assisted them in maintaining their mental health.

Keeping mentally active was also identified as a key factor in maintaining health and wellbeing. Mental stimulation in the form of activities such as sudoku, crosswords, continuing to learn new skills and knowledge were considered important.

A focus on early intervention, prevention and health promotion is also key to support people to remain healthy and active into later life. Policies and programmes that promote mental health and social wellbeing are equally as important as programmes to improve physical activity and diet.

Lifestyle and diet play a large part in determining our level of health and wellbeing as we age. While our location and level of recreational opportunities assist in creating a positive environment in which to maintain an active lifestyle, diet is a more problematic issue somewhat dependent on the individual socio-economic circumstance.

Older residents are mindful of the need to monitor their diet, with affordable nutritious food being important for residents to age well. Those that had maintained a focus on their diet/lifestyle throughout their life were far better placed to continue with these good habits as they aged. Whilst others did encounter difficulty in attempting to counter bad habits that had accumulated through their working life and often the motivation to do something was only linked to an adverse health outcome.

For many, living alone or on a fixed or low income, the temptation to save on food costs, reluctance to prepare fresh meals or reliance on cheap take away or packaged foods can lead to health problems regardless of exercise levels. There was an identified need for healthy nutrition information including cooking on a budget and cooking for one.

High risk factors for chronic disease at an older age include smoking, high blood pressure, high body mass, physical inactivity, high cholesterol, alcohol, low fruit and vegetable consumption and illicit drugs. Did you know - 51% of Australians aged 50+ do less than 2 hours a week of exercise and just over a third (36%) do less than one hour of exercise per week. This is significantly under the recommended 30 mins of exercise per day. 72% of Australians aged 50+ rate their diets as healthy or very healthy<sup>9</sup>.

9. State of the Older Nation (2018) COTA



“Investment in healthy ageing activities reduces the demand on health services and increase the independence, dignity and participation of older Australians in society”

COTA, 2019

#### Benefits of exercise and fitness in later life

- Improved balance, strength, co-ordination, flexibility and endurance
- Positive impacts on mental health and cognitive function
- Increased levels of independence for longer
- Increased wellbeing and participation
- Quicker recovery from illness
- Reduced risk of chronic disease
- Reduced risk of falls

## Living with chronic illness

People may experience a range of health challenges as they age. However, with the right support and health management, this should not wholly define the person or their quality of life.

“Healthy Ageing is about creating the environments and opportunities that enable people to be and do what they value throughout their lives. Everybody can experience Healthy Ageing. Being free of disease or infirmity is not a requirement for Healthy Ageing as many older adults have one or more health conditions that, when well controlled, have little influence on their wellbeing.”

World Health Organisation, 2019

Some of the chronic conditions that become more common as people age include diabetes, cardiovascular disease, degenerative eyesight conditions, Parkinson’s disease, osteoporosis and arthritis. Mental illness and mental health disorders such as schizophrenia, anxiety disorders and clinical depression are also prevalent in older people. However, it is the rising incidence of Dementia that is

### Goal 3.3

Support older residents living with a chronic illness

causing most concern. 132,100 Australians were living with dementia in 2020<sup>10</sup>. Gosford, Terrigal and The Entrance are within the top 10 NSW communities with the highest estimated prevalence of dementia<sup>11</sup>. The number of people living with dementia on the Central Coast is projected to increase by 300% from 4,735 people in 2011 to 14,310 people in 2050<sup>12</sup>.

There are many ways in which family, friends, the community, Council and service providers can support people living with chronic illness and help to safeguard quality of life and limit the impact of the disease. Early diagnosis and intervention help people to better plan and make informed decisions about treatment and management. Supporting people to continue to lead healthy and active lifestyles, within an age and dementia friendly community can also improve the quality of life and wellbeing for those experiencing chronic illness.



### The key to good mental health and cognition in older age

“Studies show that for treating mild-moderate depression, exercise can be as effective as talking therapy and medication.”

Beyond Blue (2020)

- Keep active and eat well
- Relax and enjoy your hobbies
- Develop new skills and challenge your capabilities
- Volunteer or become active within your community
- Spend time with friends, loved ones and people you trust
- Reduce alcohol consumption and avoid illicit drug use
- Stop smoking
- Ask for help should you need it

10. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-data/health-conditions-disability-deaths/dementia/data>

11. <https://hneccphn.com.au/media/14550/hnecc-older-persons-health-profile-2018.pdf>

12. Central Coast Primary Dementia Care Network (2011)

## Access to health and other support services

Health is the number one concern for older Australians<sup>13</sup> and the top reason people gave for poor quality of life was health problems<sup>14</sup>. There will be increased pressure on the local health system as our population continues to age.

Access to affordable health and support services is important to assist older residents as they age. This includes better access to GPs, more doctors who bulk bill and access to local hospital, specialist and allied health services, home care and aged care assessments.

Whilst some residents stated that the Central Coast was a great place to live because of the proximity to and availability of hospital and medical services, some residents were

### Goal 3.4

Advocate for and promote awareness of local health and support services

not sure where to source correct information on what services are available. Many found it difficult to navigate the health care system with issues raised around complicated referral systems for hospital, aged care assessments, accessing allied health services, long waiting lists and discharge planning. These issues were also identified by service providers as current challenges.

Mobility and transport options did impact the ability of some older residents to access health care services and some older residents expressed a need for more diverse transport options to get to health services.

## What our older residents told us

- Health and fitness activities are extremely important for older residents. Over 50% participate in sports like golf, tennis, lawn bowls, swimming or cycling at least once a week. Over 40% participate in fitness classes, like yoga, dancing or strength classes. Walking groups are also very popular with over 20% participating at least once a week.
- When asked what they would like to access that doesn't already exist in their community, the top 3 responses were fitness-related:

1. bike paths and mountain bike trails
  2. footpaths, bush walking trails and walking groups
  3. more pools - ocean or indoor that are accessible and offer hydrotherapy
- Access to our natural areas was of key importance to many people. Physical barriers such as stairs without handrails, uneven pathways or no pathways, and steep inclines are a barrier to accessing and enjoying the natural environment for people as they age. Areas that were mentioned included beaches and waterways, lookouts and bush trails. Additionally, access to services such as toilets, seats and shade were raised as important infrastructure to experience and enjoy the natural environment.

- Baby boomers requested that more outdoor and sporting activities be offered within Council programs. Service providers also suggested that more 'Coastie' type activities could be offered, including activities such as fishing, boating and visiting the beach.
- Service providers noted the cost of health and fitness activities can be prohibitive and prevent people from participating. Low cost exercise and wellbeing activities were rated as the fourth most important action that 'Council could do better to support older people'.
- Lack of transport also prevented some people from attending health and fitness activities. When transport was an issue, people requested programs to be run from community locations closer to home.
- There is a need for access to information on how to stay healthy, illness prevention and nutrition.
- There is a need to better support older people's mental health, including during bereavement, with fitness, social connection and nutrition all recognised as factors that can contribute to better mental health.
- Nutritious, low costs meals in the social context of a 50+ Centres are highly valued by customers and service providers. As is the NSW Health falls prevention program.
- Aboriginal Medical Service are interested in early intervention programs that empower people to manage their own health before reaching a health crisis.
- There is a need to provide healthy and active ageing advice and programs that support the needs and preferences of older Aboriginal people and older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.



### Ways you can remain healthy and active

- Get moving and exercise for 30 minutes a day
- Search for activities that you enjoy and match your fitness level
- Walk your dog every day
- Join a sporting group, exercise class or 50+ Centre fitness program
- Eat a balanced diet, low in saturated fats and sugar
- Enjoy the great outdoors and explore your own backyard
- Join a community environment group or a community garden
- Take family outings to natural areas
- Stop smoking and drink less alcohol
- Talk to your GP and have regular preventative health checks
- Instead of telling yourself you can't, tell yourself you can
- Think positively and have fun!

13. State of the Older Nation (2018) COTA

14. State of the Older Nation (2018) COTA

### Theme 3: Staying Healthy and Active

Our older residents are encouraged to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle and can access health services

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
3.1 Provide programs, activities and facilities that promote physical activity and mental wellbeing	Continue to provide and promote programs and activities within the 50+ Centres that get people active and moving, such as Tai Chi, indoor bowls, table tennis, line dancing, and over 50's fitness	50+ Centres provide a range of programs and activities that support health and fitness	ONGOING	Senior Services Team	50+ Centres (community managed) Community and commercial partners Communication Team
	Continue to provide and promote Active Over 50s programs and activities within leisure centres and swimming pools that help to maintain and improve the health and fitness of older people, such as Seniors Strength Training, Gentle Exercise to Music and Aqua Aerobics	Council's leisure and fitness facilities are well attended and offer a range of programs and facilities that adapt to changing physical capabilities associated with ageing	ONGOING	Leisure and Pools Section	Communication Team
	Explore opportunities to pilot and expand new health and fitness programs at suitable indoor and outdoor sports and community-based venues both within town centres and isolated communities, such as the Healthy and Active for Life program and Active in the Park programs, walking groups	The range and reach of health and fitness programs continues to expand in response to community interest and need, providing new opportunities for older people to participate leisure and fitness activities	ONGOING and <b>NEW</b> Year 2 onwards	Leisure and Pools Section Senior Services Team	Enterprise and Activation Team Central Coast Local Health District
	Continue to offer 'Come and Try' fitness programs during the Central Coast Seniors Festival	Older people trial new ways of keeping fit and are motivated to take up new programs on an ongoing basis	ONGOING	Leisure and Pools Section	Senior Services Team
	Encourage exploration and appreciation of the natural environment by promoting bushland and coastal walking trails, mountain bike tracks, parks, reserves, beaches and shared pathway network, including information on accessibility and grade of activities where appropriate	Older people stay healthy and active by enjoying nature and the natural environment. Information supports older residents to select, access and safely enjoy outdoor fitness options that meet a range of ability levels	ONGOING	Open Space and Recreation Unit Natural Assets and Biodiversity Section Catchments to Coast Section Roads Assets Planning and Design Unit	Roads Business Development and Technical Services Unit Communication Team Senior Services

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
	Continue to provide opportunities for older people to participate in the Environmental Volunteer Program, such as Landcare, Bushcare and Coast Care activities	Older people stay healthy and active while contributing to the conservation and protection of our rich environmental heritage	ONGOING	Environmental Management Program Team	
	Increase the number of outdoor exercise points suitable for older people in parks and investigate permanent installation of games, such as outdoor chess	Older people stay healthy and active by utilising parks and equipment	<b>NEW</b> Year 2 and 3	Open Space and Recreation Place Management Team	Enterprise and Activation Team
	Continue to implement the Central Coast Bike Plan to provide improved shared path network connectivity, the construction of new and missing link shared paths and prioritisation of accessible recreational loops	Older people stay healthy and active by utilising recreational pathways for leisure and lifestyle activities	ONGOING	Roads Assets Planning and Design Unit	Transport for NSW

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
3.2 Improve access to preventative health programs and services	Work in partnership with health and other community services to deliver programs that support older people to retain good physical health and address regional health priorities, including programs such as Stepping-On and Falls Prevention	Older people are supported to maintain wellness, health, fitness, nutrition, functional ability and self-care as they age through a range of community programs and activities	ONGOING	Seniors Services Team	Leisure and Pools Section Library Strategy and Connection Section Central Coast Local Health District and other community partners
	Explore options to continue the provision of online or digitally recorded gentle exercise programs provided for people with low mobility or who are homebound	Older people who find it difficult to leave the house to attend community facilities can participate in gentle exercise in the comfort of their own home	<b>NEW</b> Year 1 onwards	Leisure and Pools Section	
	Work in partnership with health and other community services to deliver programs that support older people retain good mental health, such as preventive Dementia awareness programs and the Active Healthy Group	Older people are supported to retain positive mental wellbeing and address issues such as social isolation, loneliness, bereavement, illness, depression and anxiety	ONGOING	Senior Services Team	Central Coast Local Health District
	Support access to good nutrition and healthy eating by offering affordable meals services at suitable venues, such as the 50+ Centres and interactive cooking workshops	Older people have access to nutritious and affordable meals through cafes at 50+ Centres and elsewhere and through improving their own cooking skills and knowledge	ONGOING	Senior Services Team	50+ Centres (community managed) Central Coast Health Promotion Unit
	Support older people in multicultural communities to increase their participation in healthy lifestyles	Older people from different cultural backgrounds have full access and information to community and recreational activities	<b>NEW</b> Year 2 onwards	Community and Cultural Programs Team	Leisure and Pools Section
	Support older Aboriginal people to increase their participation in healthy lifestyles	Older Aboriginal people feel welcomed to attend, and regularly participate in, recreational activities	<b>NEW</b> Year 2 onwards	Community and Cultural Programs Team	Leisure and Pools Section Yerin Aboriginal Health Services

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
3.3 Support older residents living with a chronic illness	Provide a range of healthy ageing programs and activities that continue to be adaptable and inclusive for the needs of people living with chronic illness, reduced mobility or disability	People with chronic illness continue to participate in a healthy and active activities	ONGOING	Senior Services Team	
	Gosford, Toukley and the Peninsular Leisure and Aquatic Centres continue to offer and maintain accessible hydrotherapy pools for rehabilitation programs	Older people experience the benefits of hydrotherapy rehabilitation, which can include pain relief, increased movement and low improved muscle strength	ONGOING	Leisure and Pools Section	
	Explore options to improve Council and community awareness of people living with dementia and other age-related illnesses, their families and carers, through the delivery of training and seminars	Central Coast is a dementia friendly community where Council staff and community members can recognise and respond to the signs of dementia and can provide support and referral to appropriate services when required	<b>NEW</b> Year 3 onwards	Senior Services Team People and Culture Unit	Customer Relationships Section Central Coast Local Health District Dementia Australia NSW Central Coast Dementia Alliance
	Encourage and support local cafes to implement the Community Café Toolkit developed by Dementia Australia NSW, with a target to establish two new Community Cafes per annum	People with dementia and their carers are provided with a safe and welcoming social environment where they can connect with others and learn about local support services. Intergenerational connections and understanding are strengthened	<b>NEW</b> Year 3 onwards	Senior Services Team	Youth Services Team Dementia Australia NSW Central Coast Dementia Alliance

3.4 Advocate for and promote awareness of local health and support services	Work with key partners to advocate for improvements to and increased provision of local health and support services to meet the needs of a growing aged population as required	Older people can access local health and support services	ONGOING	Community Planning & Funding Team	Central Coast Local Health District Central Coast Primary Health Care Network Yerin Aboriginal Health Services Senior Services Team
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# Theme 4:

Age-friendly Place and Spaces



# Theme 4:

## Age-friendly Place and Spaces

Our older residents feel welcome and can access public places and spaces, they can move easily and safely around the community and are supported to age in place

This theme focuses on accessible, well designed and safe public spaces usable by people of all ages, the availability of a range of transport options to ensure people can be mobile and remain connected and involved and that suitable housing is available for older people as they move through life stages.

### Out and about in the public domain

The way in which towns, neighbourhoods and public places and spaces are designed and built can play a major role in enabling older people to age in place and remain active – both physically active and in their local communities. For example, being able to safely and easily go for a walk, having easy access to shops, civic, community and recreation facilities and health services and feeling safe all contribute to higher levels of wellbeing.

Age-friendly and well linked built environments can make neighbourhoods more liveable for all ages, reduce costs associated with health and aged care and yield a range of social and economic benefits by extending and expanding older residents' contributions to community life.

It is important that public places are clean, accessible and have appropriate lighting, green spaces are well maintained and safe, outdoor seating and resting points are available, there are pedestrian friendly walkways, pavements are non-slip, public toilets are sufficient in number, roads are well designed with appropriate physical structures in place (such as lights, crossing, traffic islands) to ensure pedestrian safety and civic, community and leisure facilities are accessible.

Studies indicate that that older people are more likely than young people to be more fearful of crime and to consider some public spaces as unsafe or unwelcoming, even though they are in a lower

#### Goal 4.1

Create an age-friendly and universally designed public domain which is welcoming, safe and accessible

risk category than other age groups. Research has also suggested that there is a relationship between anxiety about crime, community involvement and self-confidence. Those older people who are active and involved in their communities are least likely to be anxious about crime. Conversely, the more socially and physically isolated older people are from others, the more likely they are to lose confidence and trust and to withdraw further. Perceptions of safety can inhibit people's ability to participate in all aspects of community life.

Older people need to feel safe in their neighbourhoods and public spaces so they can continue to engage in community life. By adopting Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles we can ensure safer spaces are created when providing new/upgraded public spaces and places. Good street lighting, well maintained public spaces, parks and gardens and the condition of footpaths, bus stops and road conditions can contribute to older residents feeling safer in moving around their local areas.

#### As I age, I would like to...

- be able to visit and join my family and friends in different places around the Coast
- obtain information on how to get around in the times I need to
- travel on buses and trains that I can afford regularly
- be able to travel to sporting and entertainment centres during the evening as well as the day
- go to town centres, walkways and parks and feel safe
- to be able to visit the natural reserves and coastal and bush walks to the same level as everyone else
- be able to park my car near the places I need to go

## Getting around

Access to adequate, appropriate and affordable transport as well as supporting infrastructure is an important factor influencing positive ageing. Transport includes personal transport, public transport, community transport, taxis, walking, cycling and mobility aids.

Being able to get around is key to ensuring older people can maintain their daily independence, stay connected and be involved in the community. It enables people to maintain social contacts and participate in community life and access services and facilities that they require.

The World Health Organisation states that “age friendly” transport must be accessible, affordable, available, safe, comfortable, and with specialised support options provided for those that are frail and/or disabled. These same expectations are raised by older people on the Central Coast and reflected in local community-based transport solutions.

A large percentage of our local ageing population rely heavily on private motor vehicles to get around. Older residents expressed a need for increased available and accessible parking and drop off points at key locations as well as education to improve road safety awareness and skills, to retain confidence in driving and to using public transport along with cars. A primary concern of aged residents is retaining their driver’s license, the loss which has a negative effect on independence and can contribute to a decline in overall health and wellbeing. For more isolated areas or where services

### Goal 4.2

Enhance pedestrian and road safety and make it easier to get around

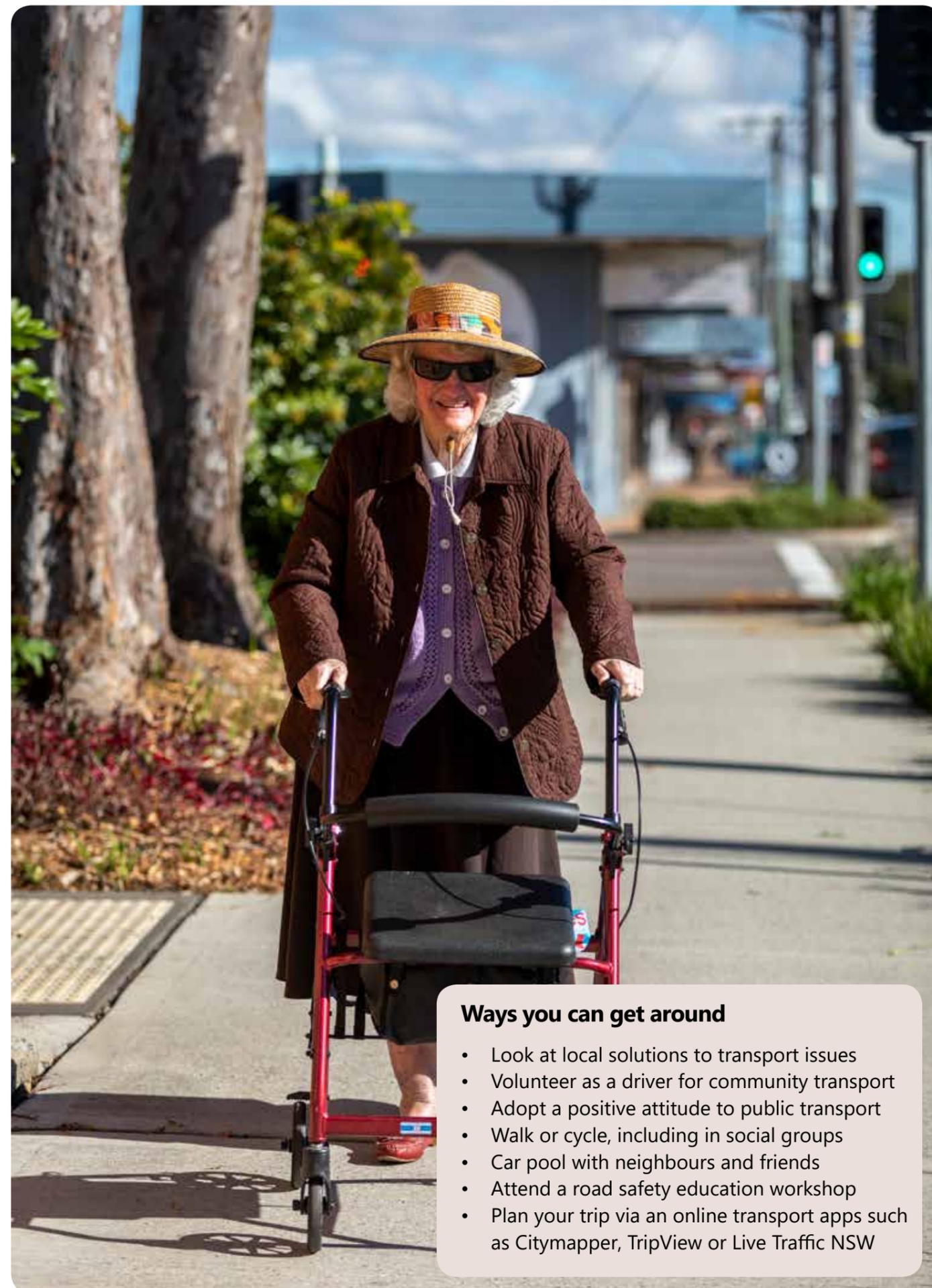
### Goal 4.3

Improve access to accessible, safe and convenient transport and mobility options for older residents

are limited older residents faced choices between limited transport, relying on other services or contemplating moving and leaving behind networks and community connections.

Older residents have stated that they need access to this infrastructure so that they can walk and ride safely, not only for exercise but also to move about in the community. Shared pathways and footpaths provide important links between transport, shops, services and activities and enable older residents to maintain social connections in their neighbourhood.

The increased use of mobility scooters allows people who are ageing or have chronic illness, injury or surgery to maintain their independence, shop independently, access services and social activities and visit family and friends. Such transport has provided a need for awareness and information regarding appropriate use and safety for riders and pedestrians as well as the provision of suitable infrastructure.



### Ways you can get around

- Look at local solutions to transport issues
- Volunteer as a driver for community transport
- Adopt a positive attitude to public transport
- Walk or cycle, including in social groups
- Car pool with neighbours and friends
- Attend a road safety education workshop
- Plan your trip via an online transport apps such as Citymapper, TripView or Live Traffic NSW

## Somewhere to live

For people in their older years, having a place to call home is as important as for any other age group, yet the options to live as desired can become increasingly difficult for many people as they age. This is due to any number of factors including changing lifestyle, financial situations, changes in relationships, family arrangements and vocation and changing health support and carer needs. The living arrangements of older people have a significant impact on their general health and wellbeing.

Despite a common belief nationally that older people live in retirement villages, most older people live in a private dwelling with their partner and the rates of home ownership amongst older people tend to be high. This is based on a need for long-term, stable housing, a need shared by diverse cultures where older people can play a critical role in keeping families together and providing care to grandchildren.

Overwhelmingly Central Coast older residents have expressed a preference to live in their own home and in familiar community surroundings for as long as possible, with location, amenity and sense of community considered of high importance.

Staying in their own home or “ageing-in-place” is a priority for many people as they age. Access to support in the home was identified as the preferred model of care for older residents to assist them to continue to live independently. Ageing-in-place can be complemented and extended by accessing a range of community support options and implementing universal design practices. Many retirement villages and residential aged care facilities also provide the opportunity to age-in-place.

### Goal 4.4

Facilitate and advocate for a range of appropriate and affordable housing options for older residents

The increase in the number of older residents ageing in place in their own homes has several implications for Council in terms of the planning and regulation of land use and development in relation to facilitating a mix of housing choices, seniors living development and affordable housing. An ageing population requires access to a diversity of housing types for people to have a choice of housing that meets their housing needs.

Ageing in place also requires the provision of simpler and clearer information on the potential housing options of granny flats and secondary dwellings together with advice on how to adapt existing housing. The whole area of residential/retirement/serviced living options is considered complex and there is an ongoing need for older people and their families to access objective advice or information.

Whilst aged care is primarily the responsibility of Federal Government (such as via My Aged Care) Council still plays a role via strategic planning and development consent, advocating in this area for close to home options as well as ensuring that aged care housing is well designed and well located – either close to services and facilities and/or accessible via public transport. The integration of aged care housing into the local area both physically and socially is also important to support older people to remain active and connected and to avoid being socially isolated.



Housing affordability has been identified as a priority concern by residents. Central Coast service providers identified a lack of accessible and affordable housing choices as a current challenge for some residents ageing well and highlighted the need for appropriate options for accommodation.

Council’s response to the growing lack of affordable housing in the region, the *Central Coast Affordable and Alternative Housing Strategy (2019)*, aims to build a vision for a ‘fair and inclusive region, where everyone has access to affordable and sustainable housing’. The Strategy makes the case for the provision of affordable housing via a wide range of housing products, tenure types and price point suitable to the different demographics of the community, including older residents.

### Ways you can manage your housing needs

- Plan well in advance
- Consider downsizing
- Consider home modifications
- Consider a location that is close to services and facilities
- Plan for a low maintenance garden
- Research options and discuss with your family
- Seek financial advice before making a decision



## What our older residents told us

- 63% of service providers thought Council should focus on an 'Age Friendly Community' to support positive ageing on the Central Coast
- The top 4 priorities for age friendly communities according to older people are:
  1. Safer and joined up pathways in places that older people go
  2. More frequent and flexible transport
  3. Outdoor facilities like seats to rest on and more public toilets
  4. Accessible council facilities and parking
- There were many comments received about footpaths, and mobility/disability access issues. The lack of footpaths and pathways as well as discontinuous pathways were a barrier to older people being out and about in their local community, as there was a perception that it was not safe to walk. Linked with the issue of pathways is fear of falling on uneven surfaces, lack of adequate street lighting, not enough seating to enable older residents to rest along the way and a lack of directional signage. Other issues raised related to pedestrian safety including being able to safely cross the road.
- Access and adequacy of public transport varied across the region, with some areas being well serviced and other areas having limited services and long travel times. Local consultation has also specifically identified bus and train timetabling, convenience, ability to easily access information, provision of bus shelters, lighting, lifts and parking at train stations and accessible buses as important.
- For those with walking and mobility difficulties parking can be an issue. There is an increased demand for both disabled parking spaces, "seniors" parking spaces and drop-off points.
- A desire for public spaces to be well maintained was strong as well as improvements to amenity, lighting, associated infrastructure and access.
- Older residents expressed a preference to live in their own home and in familiar community surroundings for as long as possible. There is a need to access support to assist with home and garden maintenance.
- Service providers identified a lack of accessible and affordable housing choices.
- Older residents asked for access to simpler and clearer information to explain different housing options.

#### Theme 4: Age-friendly Places and Spaces

Our older residents feel welcome and can access public places and spaces, they can move easily and safely around the community and are supported to age in place

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
4.1 Create an age-friendly and universally designed public domain which is welcoming, safe and accessible	Continue to ensure plans for design or retrofit of open space and the built environment are underpinned by legislative and planning scheme requirements, including the Australian Standards, Disability (Access to Premises - Buildings) Standards 2010, Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan and Universal Design Guidelines	Public spaces and places promote independence, participation and inclusion within an age-friendly community	ONGOING	All of Council	
	Undertake access audits and other studies in town centres to inform and prioritise access improvements	Older people and people with a disability can access and move around easily within our town centres	ONGOING	Community Partnerships Unit	Roads Asset Planning and Design Unit
	Provide accessible and universally designed facilities and amenities within town centres and new open space, pathways and road upgrade projects, including easy-to-read way finding signage, outdoor benches and seating, lighting, drink stations, ramps, handrails, tactile markers and accessible amenities	Older people are encouraged to access our town centres, shopping precincts, open space and recreational pathways through the provision of supporting facilities and amenities	ONGOING	Project Management Environment and Planning Unit Roads Assets Planning and Design Unit Roads Business Development and Technical Services Place Management Team	Transport for NSW. Community and Cultural Programs Team
	Continue to ensure all community and civic facilities are accessible for people of all ages and abilities	Older people can access all community and civic facilities	ONGOING	Facilities and Asset Management Unit	Relevant asset owners
	Implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles in the planning, design and upgrade of facilities and public places	Older people feel confident and secure to use public places	ONGOING	Relevant asset owners	

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
4.2 Enhance pedestrian and road safety and make it easier to get around	Implement the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan, including construction of new or missing link footpaths, prioritisation of pathways and consideration of linking retirement villages to activity centres that are safe and well lit	Older people can access town centres, shopping precincts and public transport hubs by utilising accessible public pathways	ONGOING	Roads Assets Planning and Design Unit	Transport for NSW
	Repair existing pathways in line with adopted Maintenance Intervention Levels Routine Inspection of Pathways, to include early identification of trip hazards and other pathway defects, and replacement of existing pathways based on condition and hierarchy	Older people can safely access and use Council's existing pathway network	ONGOING	Roads Assets Planning and Design Unit	Transport for NSW
	Continue to review and schedule upgrades of accessible car parking spaces in accordance with Australian Standards and other relevant legislation	People with disability or low mobility are provided with accessible car parking spaces.	ONGOING	Roads Business Development and Technical Services	Transport for NSW
	Explore opportunities to expand and promote accessible parking options at popular beaches, around shopping centre locations and at community events including utilising 'No Parking' restrictions to provide 'kiss and drop' facilities and increasing the availability of designated accessible car parking spaces	Older people have access to convenient parking and drop off facilities at popular beaches, around shopping centre locations and at community events	ONGOING and <b>NEW</b> Year 1 onwards	Roads Business Development and Technical Services	Transport for NSW Events Team
	Continue to provide the Road Safety for Seniors Program through Council's Road Safety Officer, based on the NSW Government program <i>On the Road 65 Plus</i> , and other safety initiatives such as Operation Bounce Back	Older people can be mobile and travel with reduced risk of harm due to greater knowledge about age and health related changes to do with road safety - as a driver, passenger, pedestrian or mobility scooter rider	ONGOING	Community Education Team	Senior Services Team

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
4.3 Improve access to accessible, safe and convenient transport and mobility options for older residents	Partner with local transport providers to co-ordinate and develop a community transport needs analysis	Greater understanding of gaps in community transport for older people	<b>NEW</b> Year 3 - 5	Community Planning and Funding Team	Senior Services Team NSW Transport Community Transport Neighbourhood shuttle services Gosford shuttle CHSP transport service
	Continue to implement the bus stop improvement program, including provision of the <i>Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002</i> compliant infrastructure and consideration of priority bus stop seating with arm/back rests and shelter	Older people are encouraged to utilise public transport through the provision of supporting infrastructure and facilities	ONGOING	Roads Business Development and Technical Services Unit  Roads Assets Planning and Design Unit	Transport for NSW
	Prioritise public wharf upgrades to improve amenity and access, including the provision of accessible wharf infrastructure (ramps, floating pontoons, handrails etc), and incorporation of outdoor benches, seating and shade into wharf upgrade projects where warranted	Older people can safely access our waterways by utilising public wharves and using commercial water transport services linking different areas	ONGOING	Roads Assets Planning and Design Unit	Transport for NSW Commercial ferry operators Open Space and Recreation Unit
	Continue to advocate for transport access improvements outside of Council's remit, including lifts at train stations, state owned shared pathways, pedestrian access, and State Government development	Older people can safely travel around our local government area utilising facilities, infrastructure and networks with a consistent level of accessibility as provided by others	ONGOING	Roads Business Development and Technical Services Unit	Transport for NSW NSW Department of Planning

Goal	Actions	What success looks like	New or ongoing & when	Lead	Partners/ Stakeholders
4.4 Facilitate and advocate for a range of appropriate and affordable housing options for older residents	Continue to implement the <i>Central Coast Affordable Housing Strategy</i>	A range of housing options are available to meet the diverse and changing needs of people as they age, including affordable, accessible and liveable housing	ONGOING	Community and Cultural Programs Team	Community Planning and Funding Team Local Planning and Policy Team
	Complete <i>the Central Coast Housing Strategy</i> and consider how the specific housing needs for older people may be met.	A range of housing options are available to meet the diverse and changing needs of people as they age, including affordable, accessible and liveable housing	<b>NEW</b> Year 2	Local Planning and Policy Team	Community and Cultural Programs Team



## MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

The Positive Ageing Strategy Action Plan details the actions that Council will undertake in relation to the four themes and achieving our goals.

The Action Plan is aligned with Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting framework including the Community Strategic Plan, the Delivery Program and annual Operational Plans.

The Community Partnerships Unit are responsible for monitoring and reporting on implementation of the Action Plan. As part of this process, resources will be reviewed to ensure that actions can be successfully accomplished within allocated timeframes. For many of the actions, Council will also seek to develop partnerships with key agencies, service providers and the community.



## DRAFT Positive Ageing Strategy

Central Coast Council

2 Hely St / PO Box 20 Wyong NSW 2259

49 Mann St / PO Box 21 Gosford NSW 2250

P 1300 463 954

E [ask@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ask@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au)

[centralcoast.nsw.gov.au](http://centralcoast.nsw.gov.au)

ABN 73 149 644 003

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