

Age-Friendly Communities in East Gippsland Shire



Project overview

The East Gippsland Shire Council sought to create an age-friendly community through visionary planning and community engagement.

The project involved the development of an age-friendly strategy to identify the challenges and opportunities associated with an ageing population.

Project description

The *Age-friendly strategy 2017–2030* outlines how the council will ensure an age-friendly community. Its actions have been built into the *Municipal health and wellbeing plan for East Gippsland: well-placed for wellbeing*.

It is also a resource agencies and groups in East Gippsland can use to shape their own responses and embrace the concept of an age-friendly East Gippsland.

The development and implementation of the strategy allows all stakeholders to share a vision, agree on the priorities for action, and plan and resource how the community will tackle these challenges.

Two demonstration projects showcased ways the strategy was implemented:

Housing Planning – to develop sound policy around age-friendly housing to guide location and format of aged housing in East Gippsland;

Empowerment – an Age-Friendly Ambassadors program comprising a group of senior volunteers from the community who aim to ensure that Shire projects are age-friendly. Ambassadors advocate for change and encourage connections between community, government and business to promote confident ageing.

Project model

- A project reference group was established.
- The reference group completed a community profile of East Gippsland and reviewed the community's age-friendliness.
- A community consultation was undertaken and results were analysed.
- A draft strategy was developed for comment.
- Demonstration projects were developed, including targets and funding process.
- The final draft strategy was made available for public comment.
- The final strategy was adopted by the council.

Budget

Total project cost	\$100,000
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Project challenges

While consulting with the community was an essential component of establishing an age-friendly strategy, the council also reviewed its internal policies and procedures through an age-friendly lens.

Results from this internal exploration were incorporated into the analysis of the community consultations, and helped identify the priority demonstration projects.

Project outcomes

The community profile included an analysis of current and projected population demographics, household composition and income, service provision and local facilities. This information formed the baseline of potential barriers, priorities and solutions for the age-friendly communities strategy.

Community consultation was undertaken across East Gippsland to gain a variety of perspectives and potential solutions and actions.

A survey assessed how the older community in East Gippsland saw existing age-friendly features.

A short postcard questionnaire was distributed through the reference group members to venues and organisations where older people gather.

Focus groups with older people and caregivers were held at local senior citizens, U3A and aged care services across the shire.

Results of surveys, questionnaires and focus groups were compiled and key themes identified.

Key findings and recommendations for action were presented in a draft strategy. Following months of community consultation and careful review of feedback, the draft strategy was made available for viewing and public comment.

The council unanimously endorsed the final strategy.

The [Age-friendly strategy 2017–2030](#) has very strong links to the *Municipal health and wellbeing plan*.

Project sustainability

Collaboration with other council departments at the start of the project has ensured the smooth and seamless transition of projects. It has also allowed for joint input from all relevant stakeholders and greater buy-in from staff.

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