

AGEING WELL IN EAST GIPPSLAND

Age-friendly Communities Strategy 2017-2030

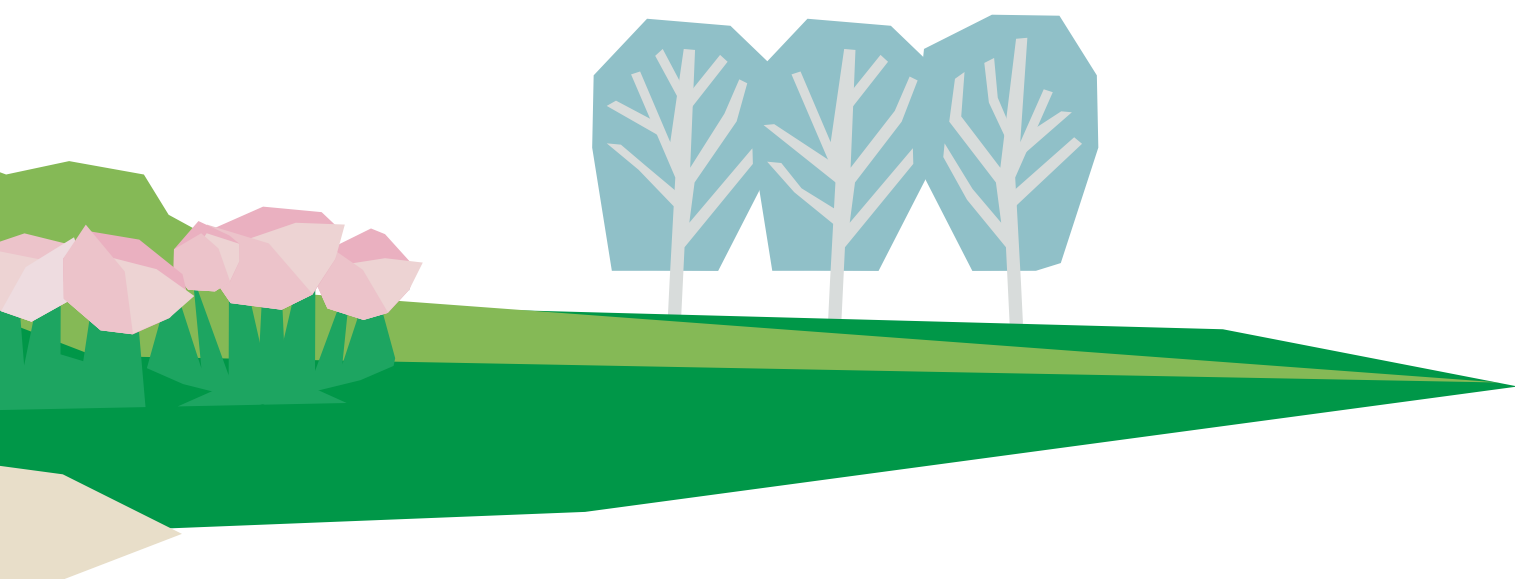
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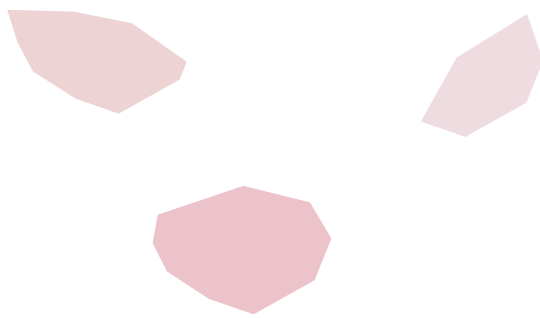
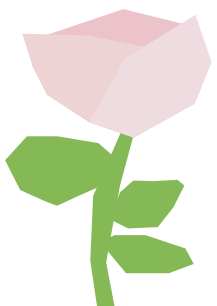




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Age-friendly Communities Strategy 2017-2030





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BACKGROUND TO THE AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES STRATEGY 2017-2030

STRATEGY PURPOSE

There is an increasing emphasis on planning towards 'age-friendly' communities that are designed to value the contribution of older people and ensure their access to all aspects of community life.

The World Health Organization developed an age-friendly cities model in 2007 and more recently an age-friendly world model. These models are based on eight domains that assess a community's age-friendliness, which are:

- 1 Transportation**
- 2 Housing**
- 3 Social participation**
- 4 Respect and social inclusion**
- 5 Civic participation and employment opportunities**
- 6 Communication and information**
- 7 Community support and health services**
- 8 Outdoor spaces and buildings**

These domains are the focus areas of this strategy and as such we have learnt that they are interconnected and are seen to overlap and interact with each other. If planned for appropriately, they will ensure older people are given the support they need to remain an active and contributing member of society. The age-friendly approach is recognised globally as a useful and effective way to improve the lives of older people. However, it also benefits people of all ages. In addition to the eight domains recognised by the World Health Organization, a ninth element has been included into the focus areas of the strategy.

This area is:

9 Economic opportunities

Perceptions are gradually shifting towards the emergence of new business opportunities, as much as the service demand managing an ageing community. As much a challenge as an opportunity, population ageing will be the basis for new businesses in East Gippsland.

COUNCIL'S ROLE

By 2026 almost 1 in 4 Australians will be aged 60 or over (ABS, 2011). This demographic shift will have implications for health, aged and income support services.

Within Australia, regional and coastal populations are generally older and, in many cases, ageing at a faster rate. The literature on ageing largely emphasises the same issues: the rate of ageing is accelerating; and the latest generation of retirees is richer and more active than ever. The need for government action is vital, both to address growing service demand and productivity issues, but also to help identify the benefits of this trend.

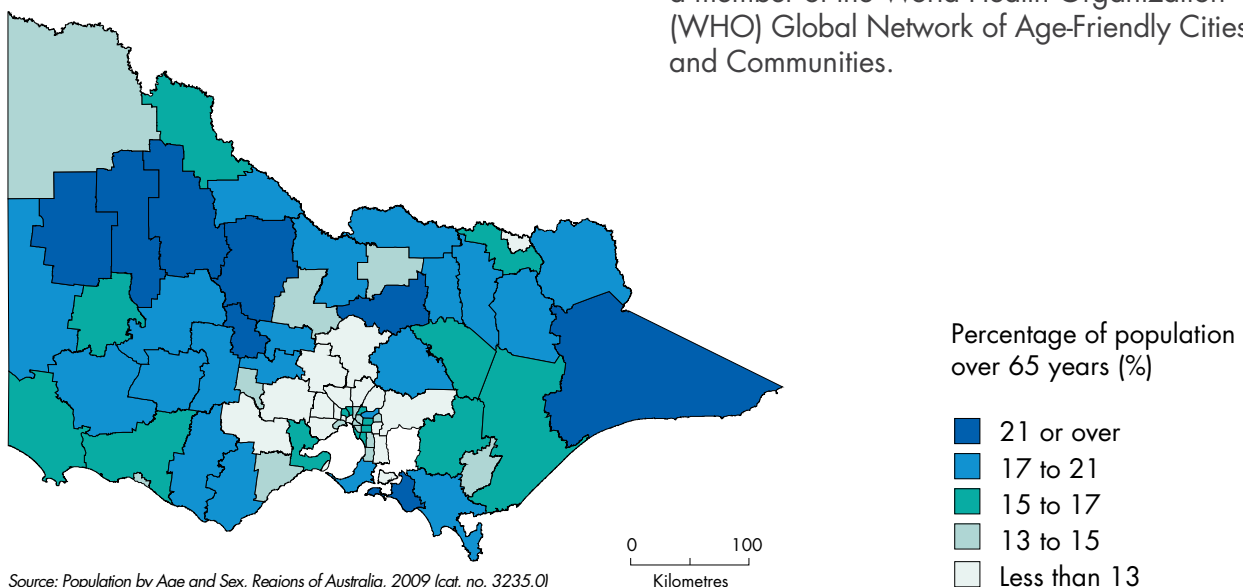
East Gippsland is one of Victoria's highest per capita populations of ageing people, with almost 40 per cent of the population being over 60 years by 2020 and is one of 19 municipalities within Victoria already super aged. Its age profile is typical of rural Australia, with a high proportion of 55-69 year old Baby Boomers. By 2014 East Gippsland (25.4%) and West Wimmera (24%) were the highest percentage populations of residents aged 65 and older, in Victoria (14.7%). For this reason, we have adopted the age-friendly approach as a basis for this new strategy for older East Gippsland residents.

In November 2016, East Gippsland Shire Council signed the Victorian Government and Municipal Association of Victoria Age-Friendly Victoria Declaration. The vision of the Declaration is for better state and local planning for the creation of age-friendly communities.

East Gippsland Shire Council is supporting its Age-friendly Declaration by:

- » Leading a state government funded project for developing East Gippsland as an Age-friendly community, through visionary planning and community engagement;
- » Investing in infrastructure upgrades that support the economic and social benefits of East Gippsland towns adopting an age-friendly approach to future growth; and
- » Developing an East Gippsland Age-friendly Network that supports, promotes and celebrates ageing as a positive outcome of our wellbeing and as a catalyst for intergenerational engagement and respect.

Council is also embracing the potential to become a leading age-friendly community by becoming a member of the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.



Source: Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, 2009 (cat. no. 3235.0)

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES FRAMEWORK

The East Gippsland Age-friendly Communities Strategy proposes a wide ranging and diverse set of strategic directions that need to be addressed to make the region an age-friendly community. It addresses the World Health Organization's (WHO) eight identified domains within a local context.

These eight domains offer a practical resource to support towns and communities develop the long-term vision and strategy needed to create those kinds of spaces, conditions and structures that will make a positive difference in the quality of life of older people.

PROJECT REFERENCE GROUP ESTABLISHMENT

In December 2016, nominations were sought for an East Gippsland Age-Friendly Communities Strategy Reference Group. In February 2017 a reference group was formed comprising:

- » organisations who provide programs for older residents;
- » interested community members;
- » the business community;
- » health services;
- » Department of Health and Human Services;
- » education providers; and
- » community services.

Reference group members were invited to attend monthly meetings and contribute towards the development of the strategy and the identification of projects that demonstrate the approaches developed in the strategy.

As part of membership of the Reference Group, members were asked to be ambassadors for the process of developing the strategy, for its final presentation to Council and the ongoing discussions within our community.

PARTNERSHIPS

Collaborative partnerships will be developed with a broad set of key stakeholders within the health, business, aged care, public and community service sectors across the region once the actions that support the implementation of the strategic directions have been developed.

DEMONSTRATE PROJECTS

Strategy implementation will commence with four demonstration projects. These projects strongly respond to the local needs identified during the strategy's preparation and will make a positive difference to the quality of life, and health and well-being of older people living in East Gippsland.

The projects are:

- 1) Empowerment – Establish an Age-friendly Network
- 2) Housing Planning – develop sound policy around age-friendly housing to guide location and format of aged housing
- 3) Raising Retail and Business Service Awareness – working with local businesses to assist in scoping out local opportunities
- 4) Transport – investigating and propose innovative alternative transport opportunities for older people.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY – GENERALLY

The Strategy is not seen as being ‘owned’ or implemented by any single organisation. Instead it is a resource that will be used by many agencies and groups in East Gippsland to shape their own agency responses to; and embrace the concept of an Age Friendly East Gippsland.

RESEARCH

A community profile was prepared to identify the composition of the older population in East Gippsland. This information was sourced through data sources such as ‘id profile’, the Health Atlas, Council reports and the work done previously for Council by Geografia. 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 from which potential barriers, priorities and solutions for the age-friendly communities strategy has been developed.

CONSULTATION

The aim of the consultations was to gather the perception of the age-friendly community concept, its challenges and opportunities. Consultation was held across the region to gain a variety of perspectives and potential solutions and actions.

A survey conducted in May 2017 was used to gain a baseline assessment from the older community in East Gippsland about existing age-friendly features and the opportunity to express their positive experiences, negative experiences and ideas for improvement. A short postcard questionnaire was also distributed through our reference group members to venues and organisations where older people gather. These questionnaires were also circulated at a number of the free seminars for seniors that Council was involved in. Focus groups with older people and caregivers were held at local senior citizens, U3A and aged care services across the shire.





STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS, COMMUNITY EVIDENCE AND ACTION STATEMENTS



1 TRANSPORTATION

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE BY 2030

+ Increased opportunities for older residents to be connected to the services they need

EVIDENCE

What we know

Public transport is restrictive in East Gippsland. Transport services should take into account people with a range of mobility needs. Information on safe, age-friendly and affordable transport services must be made available to older people to facilitate their usage. As people stay in their communities as they age, transport options will need to be increased to allow for greater connectivity.

Link to Council Plan

"Maintain and extend built infrastructure that meets community needs and supports their work, leisure, lifestyle and connectedness"
– A liveable region. p.29

What you told us

- "Responsive flexible public transport"
- "Better provision community transport, not just for medical reasons, but for exercise, activity and social occasions"
- "Regular circulatory bus/minibus routes covering main centres with interconnecting capability of both timetable and service"
- "A single access point that arranges transport for all medical appointments"

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

- » Increased advocacy for improved public transport frequency and reliability supports older members of the community
- » Development of a model for facilitated transport across the shire increases access and connection for older members of the community
- » A range of public transport models for East Gippsland are examined to improve the affordability, accessibility, social and cultural engagement for older members of the community
- » Transport options support older members of the community to age in place
- » Improved coordination and links between existing public and private transportation services increase access and lessen interchange wait times

2 HOUSING

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE BY 2030

+ An understanding of affordable, adaptable housing development that suits the needs of older residents

+ Housing stock availability increased to meet the housing needs for older residents

EVIDENCE

What we know

There are currently 200 people on a waiting list for public housing in East Gippsland. More downsizing and accessible housing options are needed. Many older East Gippsland residents would like to continue to live in their communities as they get older and therefore age in place. The capacity to age in place relies on many factors such as: accessibility to appropriate housing options, transport, services, facilities and connection to family, friends and the local community. There is a link between appropriate housing and access to community and social services influencing the independence and quality of life of older people.

Link to Council Plan

“Ensure land use growth respects the unique characteristics, environment and priorities of our towns”
– A liveable region. p.30

What you told us

“More downsizing and accessible housing options needed”

“Adaptable housing”

“Housing development areas need to consider the needs of an older person”

“Areas to semi-retire to, that allow an older person to retain privacy and is close to amenities”

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

- » The needs of older people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are addressed
- » Assistance is available to older people to support their changing housing needs such as downsizing and preparation / advice about selling property
- » Planning approval processes support appropriate housing options for older community members
- » Improved identification of land opportunities to support more appropriate development for an ageing community
- » Greater promotion of the benefits of multi-generational housing options that allow older community members to live with family or friends

3 SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE BY 2030

+ Increased opportunities to attend affordable, inclusive and accessible social activities

EVIDENCE

What we know

Older East Gippsland residents are very active in their community and participate in local events and /or are members of community groups. It is important that older people are given opportunities to be active and engaged in their community, participating in a range of affordable and accessible events and activities. Social participation is integral in preventing isolation and older people need to be informed of opportunities available.

Link to Council Plan

"Increase people's skills and capabilities to participate in their community and make a difference"
– Strong communities. p.20

What you told us

- "Cost of attending events to be adjusted for an older person's financial constraints"
- "More daytime events"
- "Mobility issues and inadequate transport limit my community participation"
- "The need for a cultural hub in addition to The Forge, that is age friendly"

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

- » Increased participation of older members of culturally diverse communities in public activities
- » Engage with a 'creative culture' that capitalises on skills and talents of older people
- » More affordable local events increase participation by older people in their local communities

4 RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE BY 2030

- + Positive community attitudes that build respectful relationships and opportunities for older people to actively participate in the community
- + Welcoming and inclusive communities

EVIDENCE

What we know

Geographic isolation can lead to lack of social inclusion; especially in the remote regions.

An inclusive society encourages older people to participate more in their community's social, civic and economic life what in turn promotes active ageing.

Socially inclusive societies allow older people to make valuable contributions to their community, neighbourhood and family, provided their needs are met with dignity, their differences are respected and their involvement is recognised.

Education of the community to raise awareness of ageing and associated issues is important to encourage respect and eliminate any preconceptions.

Link to Council Plan

"Increase community participation in engagement activities to plan for their future by 10 per cent by 2019"

– Strong communities. p.21

What you told us

"Valuing older people as being able to contribute positively to, and with the wider community"

"To provide an integrated community, not to isolate the aged and make them feel like they have been 'put away' or pushed into aged communities"

"Resources that do not rely on computer/internet/screen-based access"

"More education around respect for the elderly. This should start in schools"

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

- » Increased opportunities in the school system for older people to participate
- » Mentoring activities increase involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders
- » Increased opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of older community members, past and present

5 CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE BY 2030

- + Skills and knowledge of older people promoted to businesses to adapt to older employees
- + Skills and knowledge of older people promoted in mentoring opportunities
- + A greater range of opportunities for people to volunteer

EVIDENCE

What we know

Providing opportunities to volunteer and participate in civic life is important for both older residents and the greater community. Factors that facilitate the ability to engage in volunteering and civic opportunities include having available time and aligned interests, being physically capable of participating, knowing where to access opportunities, and having a support network to initiate involvement.

Link to Council Plan

“Support an increase in the workforce participation rate from current rate of 54.3 per cent”
 – A growing regional area with opportunities. p.35

What you told us

- “Recognition that older people have much knowledge and many skills to contribute”
- “Do not treat older people as ‘past it’ ”
- “I look after grandchildren, so have limited hours left to volunteer”
- “Lack of transport around town limits my choice to select the best way to help the community”

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

- » Easier access to volunteering opportunities and improved volunteer processes and support structures increases participation by older people
- » Increased opportunities / structures to engage older, highly skilled entrepreneurs to develop innovative business opportunities
- » Improved opportunities for pre-retirement and early retirement people to become more involved in the community promotes greater connection and increases alternatives for active older members of the community
- » Businesses recognise the skills of older people and create opportunities for employment that are mutually beneficial

6 COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE BY 2030

- + Improved face-to-face communication on important information for older people
- + Greater online connection that helps older people source their own information
- + Make new technology relevant to older people

EVIDENCE

What we know

Communication and information is key to maintain independence and choice. It is important to build the capability of older people to use online communication, as well as provide information in a range of accessible and user-friendly formats.

Link to Council Plan

"Increase people's skills and capabilities to participate in their community and make a difference"
– Strong communities. p.20

What you told us

- "We need to think innovatively in linking clever young people with us oldies"
- "Use video links and Skype more for medical consultations"
- "Improved communication of availability of services and existence of clubs and groups"
- "IT support and tutorials at a variety of levels to help with using phones, iPads and setting up smart TVs"

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

- » Improved connectivity supports computer-based service delivery to all communities
- » Detailed information is marketed to older community members to increase access to more diverse and inclusive activities
- » Improved awareness in the broader community provides increased accessibility and inclusiveness for older community members
- » Improved capacity of key community organisations to deliver support services / access to technology and information for older community members

7 COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE BY 2030

+ *Informed, healthier and independent aged communities*

+ *Technology that increases access to health and community services*

+ *Improve transport to increase access to health services for remote communities*

+ *Increase provision of training to aged service agency staff to identify the needs of older participants*

EVIDENCE

What we know

Good mental and physical health contributes to the quality of life and age-friendliness. Older people want to be able to make an informed choice about their services based on information about options and service quality; along with the support provided to make the best choices. Fostering the ability for older people to choose and self-manage is particularly important. Older people also want services to support and work in partnership with their carers.

Link to Council Plan

“Use evidence to drive future work across agencies that delivers better health and wellbeing outcomes for the community”
– Strong Communities. p.22

What you told us

“Gaining access to medical professions in a timely manner”
“We should be allowed to spend our remaining years with spouses and among friends and relatives”
“More community aged care for the remote areas”
“The establishment of an Multi-Purpose Centre in Mallacoota would improve medical facilities and remove the fear of future fate in aged care outside of the community”

EVIDENCE

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

- » Advocacy for increased access to Telehealth, which will improve the range of services
- » Identifying networking opportunities that connect all communities within East Gippsland to improve health outcomes for older people
- » Improved understanding and information on carer rights and entitlements provides greater support for those providing essential care for older members of their families
- » Community service workforce development provides upskilling, mentoring and monitoring of staff in the key activities and behaviours that support older members of the community
- » All communities have age appropriate options that improve physical activity participation levels
- » Promote the development of multi-purpose outreach centres that increases service delivery to older residents across the shire
- » Health literacy programs are developed that improve older peoples understanding of their health and wellbeing choices
- » Improved planning to mitigate the effects of an ageing workforce ensures the viability of the service delivery system



8 OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE BY 2030

+ Public spaces and buildings are designed and maintained to promote safe, engaged and connected communities

EVIDENCE

What we know

Public open spaces and buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life of older people as they go about their daily lives. Well maintained recreational areas, ample rest stations, well planned and developed built infrastructure, and a secure environment provides ideal living for older people to age in place.

Link to Council Plan

"Maintain and extend built infrastructure that meets community needs and supports their work, leisure, lifestyle and connectedness"
– A liveable region. p.29

What you told us

- "Increase in age sensitive facilities and planning"
- "With the expected increase in the number of older people expected to have dementia we need to make this our focus in the design of our public spaces"
- "More bike paths and walking tracks that link up"
- "More footpaths and seating at regular intervals"

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

- » The design, construction and maintenance of footpaths, shared pathways and outdoor exercise equipment increases accessibility for and usage by older community members
- » Best practice is applied in the provision of recharge points for scooters and electric cars, to achieve greater accessibility and safety of mobility supports for older community members
- » The design of public space, facilities and furniture ensures accessibility for older people and encourages effective interaction and inclusion for all age and cultural groups
- » Outdoor space design acknowledges and engages with the heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- » Increased provision of information to building designers, planners and developers on age-friendly / dementia friendly building design principles provides greater understanding of the needs of an ageing community

9 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE BY 2030

+ Retailers that meet the demand for goods and services of older people at all stages

+ More financial and legal services that assist older people to make informed decisions as they age

EVIDENCE

What we know

Age-friendly communities foster the provision of sound legal and financial management support and economic opportunities for residents. The business community are also able to supply many goods and services locally which are requested by an older population, thereby keeping the money in the local community.

Link to Council Plan

"Increase the number of new and emerging businesses in the region by 2021"
– A growing regional area with opportunities. p.35

What you told us

"Frequency of travel outside the region due to unavailable services"

"Cheaper food, less road mile food, more organic food locally produced, less packaged and initiatives to promote this"

"The local business centre provides everything I may need (but not always everything I may want)"

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

- » Increased education in financial / legal rights provides opportunities for older members of the community to maintain financial control as they age
- » New retail market opportunities that support an ageing community are promoted to business organisations to increase supply and product diversity
- » Housing markets are identified that support upscaling / down-scaling systems for better housing options
- » Existing government service models for delivery of financial services are identified to ensure greater access to information and support for older members of the community
- » Establish markets for integrated housing for ageing / retiring developments that support greater inclusion and engagement for older members of the community

ACTIONING THE STRATEGY

This strategy doesn't have a long and comprehensive action plan that accompanies it. Rather the required actions will be built into the Health and Wellbeing Plan for East Gippsland – Well Placed for Well Being - Partnering for Healthier and More Connected Communities in East Gippsland (2017-2021).

Well Placed for Well Being is guided by a partnership group represented by over 20 of the region's agencies and groups with an interest in health and wellbeing. Many of these agencies also have an interest in the health and wellbeing of older East Gippslanders.

Therefore, rather than duplicate the process, the actions will be embedded in the broader Well Placed for Well Being action plan.

Additionally the strategy's four demonstration projects will also guide the strategy's implementation – especially the first project that aims to foster a strong Age Friendly Network. In time, it is anticipated that this network will drive the continued implementation of the strategy.



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