



I'm 73 years old
- I don't want to
stop living!
Community
participant

HEALTHY, ENGAGED and RESILIENT

CONSULTATION OUTCOME REPORT



SUPPORTED BY



ABOUT COTA TASMANIA

COTA Tasmania (Council on the Ageing [Tas] Inc) is a not-for-profit organisation, operating as a peak body for a wide range of organisations and individuals who are committed to encouraging our community to think positively about ageing. This involves promoting and encouraging social inclusion and championing the rights and interests of Tasmanians as they age.

The vision of COTA Tas is that ageing in Australia is a time of possibility, opportunity, and influence.

For further information or advice regarding the content of this document please contact:

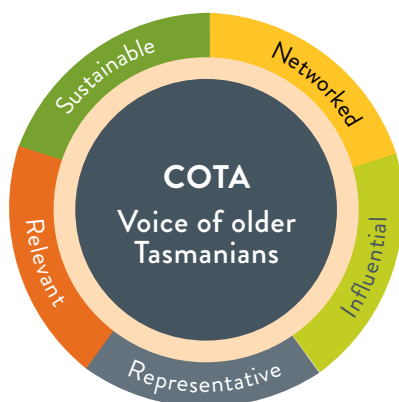
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

COTA Tasmania acknowledges the traditional owners of the land in which our offices are located, as well as the land we travelled and visited across lutruwita, Tasmania to listen and learn from the lived experiences of older people in our communities. We acknowledge with deep respect the wisdom, resilience and knowledge of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and we stand for a future that profoundly respects and acknowledges Aboriginal perspectives, culture, language and history.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND THANK YOU



To the community organisations and their staff who helped to organise and welcome us during our visits, generously chatting through their lived experiences and ideas around ageing well.

For sharing so openly your areas of concern as well as the ideas and examples of existing strengths and things that are working well within your communities.

We appreciate your openness to contribute and feel privileged to showcase this feedback on your behalf.

WELCOME FROM COTA CEO SUE LEITCH



It gives me great pleasure to introduce the report on our recent consultation for the Tasmanian Government to inform the next Active Ageing Strategy for the State. It will be the third consultation we have done for the State Government to inform their Ageing Strategies over a number of years since I have been in the role of CEO of COTA Tasmania.

It gives me an opportunity to talk about the journey of ageing. We are all ageing, and the journey can be as individual as unique, and this reflects the huge diversity of older people in Tasmania. The experience will have different aspects and influences, but we are all ageing – and this can be a wonderful time of growth, contribution and living. Data from the recent census shows a 45% growth in the over 65 age group in Tasmania compared to the rest of the Australian population. This is an incredible position of influence and at COTA Tasmania we will be watching closely as further data from the 2021 census becomes available.

We are proud to be the voice of older Tasmanians and it was a wonderful opportunity to spend time with people across Tasmania during the consultation. We will use this information to continue to represent older Tasmanians and to continue to advocate for equity and recognition.

We listened and learnt a lot from you all and we have included many of your words of wisdom throughout this report. Your words speak volumes and of course they came from your hearts.

We look forward to continuing to contribute to a Tasmania that is working towards safe and liveable communities where age is celebrated. My thanks to the hard-working team on the consultation in particular, to the lead project officer, Brigid Wilkinson and I salute her enthusiasm and tenacity.

Sue Leitch

CEO COTA Tasmania

August 2022



Quotes throughout this report are from our survey tools and community conversations, participants have been quoted verbatim to accurately reflect individuals' voices.

TASMANIAN DEMOGRAPHICS – A SNAPSHOT

lutruwita, Tasmania is the oldest, and its population structure is ageing the fastest, of all Australian states or territories. In lutruwita, Tasmania, the median age was 42 years in both 2016 and 2021. The Australian median age was 38 years in 2021¹.

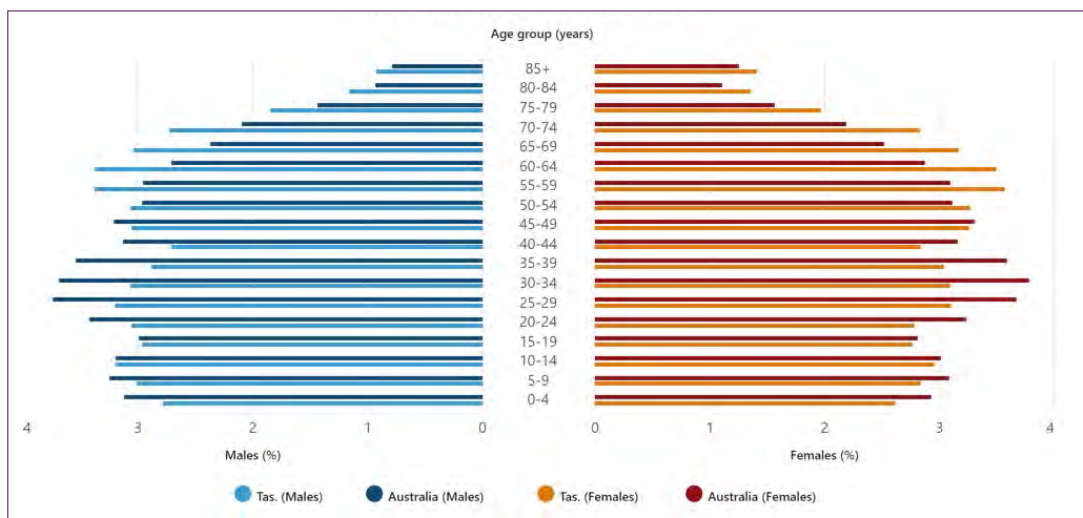
It is projected that more than one in four Tasmanians will be aged 65 or older by 2050, based on current trends². As a result, there will be more older people living, working in, and visiting Tasmania than ever before. This is an exciting time for our state, our communities and our population as a whole.

We are now healthier and more active for longer, spending less years at the end of life living with disability or illness³. Greater life expectancy is good reason for celebration, but it also requires thoughtful planning to ensure that as we age there are proactive supports and services available within a prevention framework, so that Tasmanians are empowered and supported to age well across their adult lifespan.

Older Tasmanians already make substantial contributions to their families, organisations, industry and the broader community, and with healthy longevity even more will do so in the future. Despite the value that older people bring to society, however, governments and the news media characterise global aging as a tsunami that will overwhelm governments and consume resources needed for younger people to thrive⁴. Moreover, for younger people to have optimism about their futures, they need to see that their later years can be characterised by well-being, engagement, meaning, and purpose⁴.

The 2021 Census counted 25,422,788 people living in Australia. Of that, 557,571 people currently reside in lutruwita, Tasmania, with 116,642 aged 65 years or over (20.92%). 30,186 people identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin making up 5.4% of the population.

Age and sex distribution, Tasmania and Australia



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional population by age and sex 2020



The 2016 Census counted 522,152 people living in lutruwita, Tasmania and of these 100,688 (19.3%) were over 65 years of age. This is a 45% growth in the over 65yr age cohort proportionate to the increased population (15,954 of the 35,419 overall increase).

The implications of an ageing population are an increasing demand for publicly funded services and a diminishing number, and proportion, of working age people to provide those services⁵. lutruwita, Tasmania, has a higher proportion of people aged 50 years and over (41%) than Australia (34%). This partly reflects a trend of adults in this age group moving into the state. In 2021, almost two-thirds of Tasmania's population (309,000) lived outside of the capital city area of Greater Hobart¹.

For a more thorough analysis of demographic data, please refer to Embracing the Future: Tasmania's Ageing Profile⁶.

It should be noted that the next release of Regional Population by Age and Sex is released 30/08/2022 and should be considered for the purposes of the next Strategy

With an ageing population comes an increased need of home and aged care support to assist in declining functional ability that for some comes with the ageing process.

Home Care Packages

As at December 2021, there were 198,109 Australians in receipt of a Home Care Package (HCP) with 4,596 (2.3%) of these being Tasmanian residents. In addition to this, there were 44,650 people who were seeking a HCP at their approved level, who had not yet been offered a HCP⁷.

Tasmanians still waiting for HCP at 31 December 2021 totalled 1,267 (2.8%).

Number of people in a HCP at 31 December 2021

TAS					
North Western	137	447	317	230	1,131
Northern	72	524	362	287	1,245
Southern	109	834	823	454	2,220
Total	318	1,805	1,502	971	4,596

Source: [Australian Government Department of Health](#)

These figures show that compared to the total number of people over 65 years, a small percentage of Tasmanians are requiring and receiving formal care to assist them to live at home. However, these statistics must be viewed alongside the increasing number of people not knowing how to engage and access supports as well those that arrange privately or have lengthy delays. It therefore does not accurately reflect the potential need for services.

Residential care

In 2020–21, lutruwita, Tasmania had the highest number of admissions to permanent residential aged care, with 1,850 residents moving into residential care (23.5 per 1,000 of the target population)⁸.

This reflects the demographic reality that people are living longer and the potential need for greater support involving a change in accommodation and support as they age.

Admissions to aged care per 1,000 of the target population (total admissions) by care type (permanent residential care) and state and territory, 2020–21

Admissions per 1,000 target population



Notes

1. A target population of all people aged 70 and over was used for these calculations to align with Australian Government planning ratios.
2. Due to differences in methods, counts may differ slightly to those published in the Aged Care Data Snapshot.

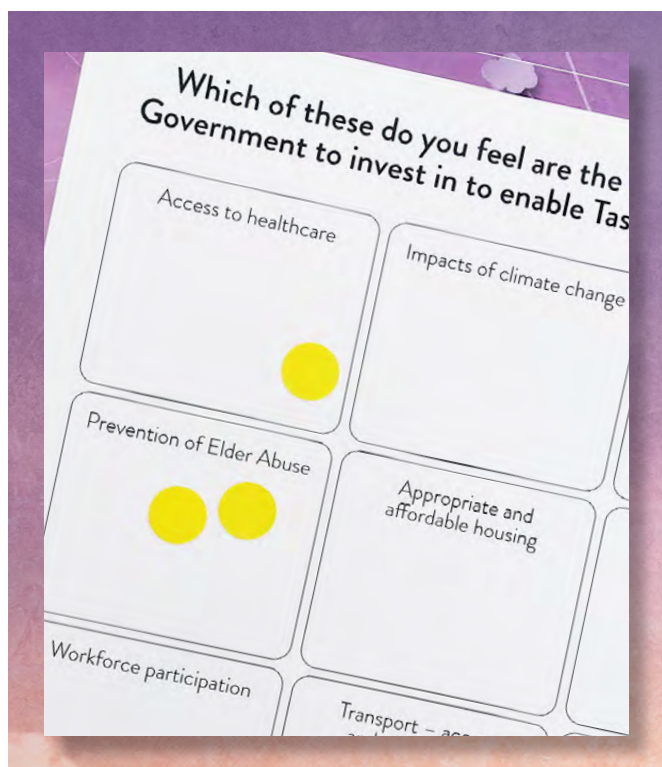
[GEN-agedcaredata.gov.au](https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au)

Source: [GEN Aged Care Data](#)

The Royal Commission into Aged Care

The Royal Commission into Aged Care was tabled on 1 March 2021 following extensive hearings and submissions across Australia. It brought to the public's attention the grossly underfunded aged care system and inherent lack of resourcing and development the sector has been facing.

The final report recommended overhaul of the current aged care system, identifying it as complex and hard to navigate, with substandard services and a worrying prevalence of abuse within aged care facilities. Person-centred care that is co-designed with communities and individuals, built on respect and engagement needs to be at the forefront to these changes, one which values and supports the ageing process, with a focus on healthy longevity.



It is vitally important, especially given our ageing demographic, to get these reforms right. Tasmanians requiring support as they age need to feel confident that this will be available in their area, within their homes, taking into consideration who they are as a person and how they would like to receive this care. Through this and other consultations we have undertaken, people have repeatedly told us how important this is for them to feel respected and positive about their futures.

The Royal Commission challenged us to do better and be better. The Royal Commission said this:

“Every aged care provider should be thinking about and talking to every older person in their care, and their workforce about what they need to do to improve their care and make a genuine difference to the lives of older people. The rewards will be immeasurable.”

The same challenge applies to Government and to Parliament. The results can truly be immeasurable. If we do more, if we listen more, if we take hold of the challenges and strive – then we can truly call ourselves good ancestors⁹.”

CURRENT PLAN

Strong Liveable Communities 2017-2022

Strong, Liveable Communities Tasmania's Active Ageing Plan 2017-2022 (Active Ageing Plan)

is the Tasmanian Government's commitment to support older Tasmanians to maintain their health, increase their participation, continue to learn, and feel secure as they age. The current plan was released on 23 May 2017.

COTA undertook consultation activities to support the development of this Plan between September 2016 - February 2017. The output from this work can be found in the two reports below, outlining the key concerns, achievements, and thoughts from older people about what was needed in order to help them age and live well in lutruwita, Tasmania.

- Active Ageing Plan Background Document: what older Tasmanians told COTA
- Active Ageing Plan Strategic Directions Paper: recommendations for Government

The Active Ageing Plan and accompanying Implementation Strategies contain four priority action areas identified through consultations with older Tasmanians:

- Health;
- Life-long learning;
- Participation; and
- Security

The four pillars rest on the following foundation points:

- Taking a strong stand against ageism and age discrimination
- Creating and reinforcing intergenerational connections
- Affordability for people as they age
- Accessibility for people as they age
- Collection and use of data disaggregated over the age of 65 years and older to reflect the diversity of older people in this state.
- Planning for all ages to actively participate in community activities

The above points remain as important in 2022 and were clearly voiced during our H.E.A.R community consultation activities. They are contingent on a cultural change in how we view, talk about and plan for the ageing lifespan journey.

The most current Progress reports and Implementation Strategies against the Plan show the services, programs and supports from a whole of Government perspective.

OUR AREAS FOR ACTION

The Tasmanian Government will act in areas that make it easier for older Tasmanians to live full and active lives. The four key areas are:



ONE: HEALTH

1. Support people to be active in managing their own health
2. Facilitate access to physical activity to improve strength, resilience and participation
3. Provide information and programs about affordable, healthy eating
4. Improve access to mental and physical health care in rural communities



TWO: LIFELONG LEARNING

5. Work collaboratively to increase confidence and skills to use digital technology
6. Provide opportunities for diverse groups to share skills and knowledge
7. Work to lift literacy and numeracy levels of older adults
8. Provide targeted information about education, training and learning opportunities



THREE: PARTICIPATION

9. Strengthen the liveability of local communities
10. Maximise opportunities for older workers to re-enter, reskill or remain in the workforce
11. Work with local businesses to respond to the needs of an ageing community
12. Implement whole-of-community strategies to overcome transport barriers
13. Support a skilled, sustainable volunteering workforce
14. Address ageism and combat age-related stereotypes



FOUR: SECURITY

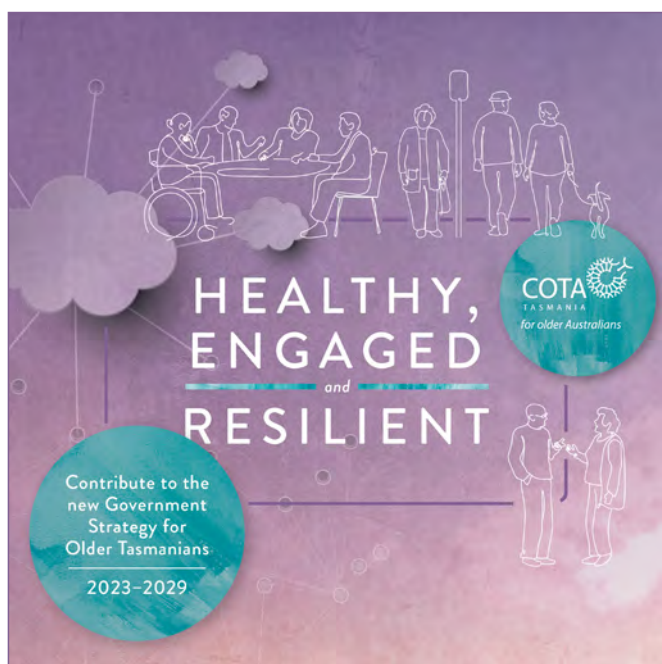
15. Support awareness and improve our response to elder abuse
16. Assist people to access appropriate cost of living support
17. Strengthen our efforts to provide appropriate and affordable housing
18. Facilitate education and support for older people to be safe online
19. Support older people to maintain independence as they age

INTRODUCTION TO THE CONSULTATION

The Tasmanian Government's current Active Ageing Plan, [Strong Liveable Communities](#), concludes in 2022. COTA Tasmania was invited to travel across Tasmanian communities to listen and hear from individuals, groups and organisations about what was important to them in staying safe, healthy and connected as they age.

This lived experience will shape the development of a new six-year strategy 2023-2029.

We wanted the consultation to be accessible, trusted and easy to participate in. Design for the consultation played on the acronym **H.E.A.R** to reflect what COTA wanted to do – **listen, hear** and **respect** Tasmanians experiences and views. We hoped to understand what factors help people to age well and maintain their *Health*, ability to *Engage* with others in their local community and through this, building *Resilience*.



We undertook the consultation at a time where COVID-19 was active in our communities, and our state borders had recently re-opened after a prolonged time. Many community organisations were continuing to work under increased pressure of staff shortages and in some case reduced activities within the community. With this in mind, we chose to wait and not commence face-to-face community conversations until mid-March, given the hesitancy from community organisations and individuals earlier in the year. This staged approach also enabled us to take learnings from survey responses received and 'test' these within the community conversations.

Our H.E.A.R consultation aimed to:

1. Improve the opportunity for a diverse range of older Tasmanians at different stages of the ageing process to have their voice heard and participate in policy development.
2. Increase the evidence base the Tasmanian Government can draw on to support older Tasmanians.
3. Value the lived experience of Tasmanians as an important voice and consideration when planning future health and social policies.

Governance: Community Reference Group (CRG)

A CRG was established to provide advice and support to COTA in the planning and implementation of the consultation, acting as a critical friend throughout the process. Members' views have been valuable and respected as a means of ensuring we responded to community needs, reach and scope throughout the consultation.

H.E.A.R CRG members:

- [TasCOSS](#)
- [Volunteering Tasmania](#)
- [Local Government Association of Tasmania](#)
- [Mental Health Council of Tasmania](#)
- [Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania](#)

Thank you to our CRG members for their time and guidance throughout the consultation.

Consultation period

The H.E.A.R Active Ageing consultation was launched by the then Minister Jeremy Rockliff on Monday 24th January 2022 with a visit to the COTA office and release of a video piece on COTA's website and social media on 30th January.

In collaboration with [Department of Communities](#) (now Department of Premier and Cabinet) and in liaison with the community and volunteer sectors, we developed a clear Consultation Plan, enabling us to organise consultation methodologies around the support and interest garnered, taking into consideration the pressures and stressors within the community sector.

Consultation activities were promoted via a wide variety of communication and media channels including paid advertising with a target audience of Tasmanian's aged over 40 years. It was important to us that the next wave of older Tasmanian's contributed to the design of the Plan that will apply to them whilst also generating broader community discussion around ageing within different age cohorts.

COTA Tasmania is undertaking community consultation activities to support the development of the next Strategy for Older Tasmanians. We want to H.E.A.R how you stay **Healthy, Engaged and Resilient** as you age. As part of this we have developed a short survey to reach as many Tasmanian's as possible, alongside holding in person events with community partners across the state.

Whether you are 40, 75 or 105 years of age (or any age in between!) what are your experiences of ageing in Tasmania?

- What does ageing mean to you?
- Can you access the services and supports you need?
- What do you think Tasmanian's need to age well?

You can complete our survey using this QR code or head to: www.cotatas.org.au/information/consultation (if you'd prefer a hard copy to be posted, please call us on 62 313 265).

All face-to-face activities will be planned in a Covid-safe way, in small groups.

Consultation activities were undertaken between 30 January – 1 July 2022. The project was designed and coordinated by Active Ageing Project Worker, Brigid Wilkinson (.6FTE).

Reaching Tasmania's culturally diverse groups

Throughout our consultation we engaged with and strengthen our relationship with diversity groups to ensure awareness and representation. Community conversation sessions were held at several CALD day groups as well as delivery of postcards directly to the Italian, Polish, Croatian and Greek day centres and Karadi Corporation.

We also promoted our consultation methods by working with [Migrant Resource Centre](#), [Multicultural Council of Tasmania](#), [Culturally Diverse Alliance Tasmania](#), [Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre](#), [Flinders Island Aboriginal Association](#), [Working it Out](#), [Women's Health Tasmania](#), [Men's Resource Tasmania](#), [Tasmanian Men's Sheds Association](#), [Expressions Australia](#), [Mental Health Family and Friends Speakout Advocacy](#) as well as advertising in two editions of the *Diverse Tassie Newspaper*.

Our CEO Sue Leitch also completed a radio interview with [Print Radio Tasmania](#) and through a COTA volunteer we created a short video for the [Chinese Community Association of Tasmania](#) to support them in asking their members to provide input to the consultation.

Considerations for future consultations:

- Local diversity groups to be supported to run consultation activities in collaboration with COTA and DPAC to leverage the trust and relationships that exist within their communities
- Greater use of interpreted resources for diversity groups

"Due to language barriers, we need more visual information to support access to information."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

CONSULTATION ENGAGEMENT at a glance

1,163
responses



586

short surveys

577

long surveys

41

community
consultations



= 449
people



4

exercise
classes

5

Eating With
Friends meals

1

residential
home

1

Mental
Health Day
program

1

Carer
support
group

1

retirement
village

2

CALD day
programs

3

Men's
Sheds

Thank you to the community organisations and their staff for organising and welcoming us during our visits, generously chatting through their lived experiences and sharing ideas around ageing well.

5



direct outreach
calls, including two
home visits

6,230

postcards distributed
across the State



3,995 km
travelled

6

submissions
from community
organisations

6

community
sector presentations



7

collaborations with
organisations

3

online
sessions



3

text message
submissions

- UTAS
- Tasmanian Men's Sheds Association
- Libraries Tasmania
- Population Screening
- Chinese Community Association
- Meals on Wheels
- Clubs Tasmania

Overall themes:

I am still me
– no matter
my age

Home is
where I want
to be



Things that are working well in Tasmania:



Beautiful
environment and
surroundings

Good
opportunities for
volunteering

Sense of
community
– people look
out for you

Quieter
pace of
life

Challenges that impact us ageing well in Tasmania:

Rising
cost of
living

Access to
healthcare
when I need it,
close by

Accessible
housing that
meets my
needs

Aged care
support is too
complex

Social
isolation -
connection
is important

WHO DID WE REACH?

- H.E.A.R postcards and poster location
- H.E.A.R Community Conversation location



Values underpinning the consultation

Interaction and connection with communities was shaped by the desire to work closely with grassroots organisations, clubs, and activity groups. We wanted people to feel safe and included in the process, visiting their spaces and places rather than traditional public forums. This was especially important given the continued uncertainty with COVID-19 and its ongoing impacts across the state.

- **Inclusion and equity** – we provided a broad variety of opportunities for people to engage in conversations about their experiences, ensuring a wide range of Tasmanians were able to be involved in ways that met their diverse needs.
- **Holistic** – we collected both qualitative and quantitative evidence to support analysis in a variety of creative ways.
- **Transparent** – we committed to keeping the Tasmanian community aware and informed of the consultation project and provided clear feedback loops to participants of community conversation groups.
- **Collaboration** – liaison with grass roots community organisations was key to ensuring we reached all regions in ways that worked best for them.

What guided our planning?

It was important to meet with local organisations, talk through ideas and gain an insight into their experiences of current consultation activity requests. We also attended several community expo and conferences in late 2021 to raise awareness of the upcoming consultation project and secure partnerships with local groups and organisations.

Upon talking with the community sector, it became clear that ‘consultation fatigue’ was high, especially in traditional surveys. People wanted to be involved, they had good ideas to share, but were time and resource poor on top of additional workloads that came with COVID 19 pressures. Additionally, some community groups and activities had not recommenced, or were reluctant to hold additional sessions with members due to concerns over COVID 19 exposure.

Making our consultation available to “go to where people were” was a key success factor for high engagement. Starting from a value base of meeting people in their environment, within their existing groups and at their local activities created an element of trust, respect and collaboration.

"It was a pleasure to meet and speak with you on the ongoing concerns that [our] Elders are feeling. I have shared the feedback to the group, and they expressed their gratitude to you for giving a platform to share their concerns."

DAY PROGRAM STAFF MEMBER

"My experience with your consultation was a very personable one and I really liked that you endeavoured to hear as many voices as possible."

NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE MANAGER

Alongside our own liaison, [3P Advisory](#) were asked to complete a scoping piece seeking independent feedback and thoughts from key stakeholders to ensure the voices of older Tasmanians were heard and included in the formal consultation, as well as considering the current environment and appetite for consultation activities.

The initial survey results from 3P Advisory were used to guide engagement processes and inform next steps in the development of the consultation project.

Key factors raised from initial scoping

- The need to collaborate and leverage other consultations and activities already occurring – joint sessions between organisations to minimise the overload of consultation and requests for feedback.
- Utilising methods that older Tasmanians can access and feel comfortable with – digital access and literacy was a common issue people felt might limit older Tasmanians' ability to fully participate.
- Strong consensus to not discard face-to-face sessions but do these within current public health recommendations.
- Importance of clear communication strategies and methods to share information and provide feedback loops.

"There is a strong encouragement in the feedback to, wherever possible, use existing groups and scheduled events to integrate the consultation into as opposed to multiple individualised consultation events¹⁰."

Engaging within a strength's framework

A selection of consultation methodologies were used at a variety of engagement points, to maintain interest and momentum and respect the feedback received from community groups.

We took a strength-based community development approach, focusing on:

- what assisted people over time to develop resilience;
- what being actively engaged in life meant to people;
- what groups and activities in your area help people age well and how

Through our programs and advocacy work, we are aware of many examples of community support services and programs (both funded and voluntary), which provide social connection, emergency relief support, physical activity and a way for older people to contribute to their local communities.

Whilst travelling around lutruwita, Tasmania, we continued to hear many examples of such groups and activities. People spoke of how these provided meaning and purpose, building a sense of cohesion, companionship and support and this was echoed in survey respondents' comments. It is important to provide an opportunity to reflect on these strengths alongside the challenges and barriers that were expressed.

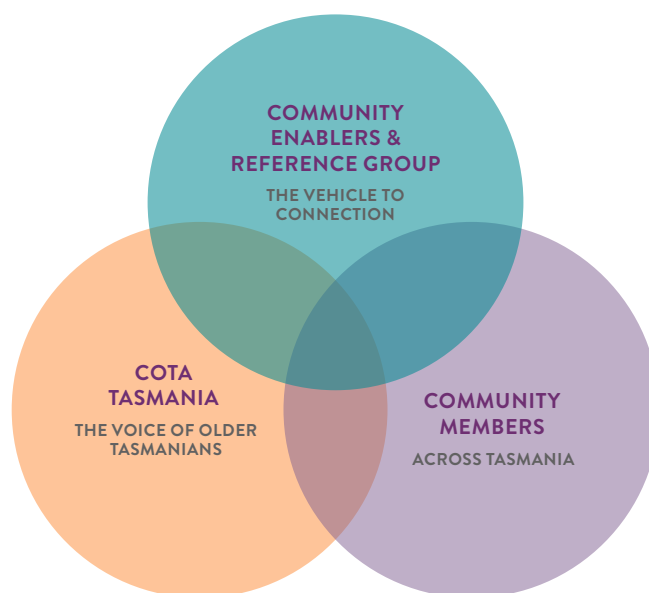


The importance of community enablers and collaboration

Community Enablers are groups, organisations and individuals within the community that have regular contact with Tasmanians and were keen to support and promote our consultation activities. They are well recognised and connected and have the means to distribute and share information and helped to advertise the work of COTA.

With a strong focus on connecting with harder to reach and regional groups, we enlisted the support of Community Enablers to co-host our Community Conversation groups as well as promote our other methodology. Key consultation information was emailed to Community Enablers with a call to action for those interested in co-hosting a face-to-face session to connect with us.

When engaging in person with communities and organisations, we sought to take an Appreciative Enquiry focus. This model utilises questions and dialogue to help participants uncover existing assets, strengths, advantages, or opportunities in their communities¹¹. Each community conversation started by drawing on the wisdom in the room and in some instances, this provided community members with new information and ideas of supports to connect with.



Council on the Ageing Tasmania wants to H.E.A.R from you!

Every person – in every country in the world – should have the opportunity to live a long and healthy life. Healthy ageing is about creating the environments and opportunities that enable people to be and do what they value throughout their lives.

World Health Organisation

Whether you are 40, 75 or 105 years of age (or anything in between!) we want to hear about your experiences of ageing in Tasmania.

- What does ageing mean to you?
- Have your views on ageing changed over time?
- What do you think Tasmanians need in order to age well?

Your experiences, thoughts and wishes will help shape the next *Strategy for Older Tasmanians's 2023–2029*.

- What has helped you as you've aged?
- What has been challenging?
- What local services and initiatives have supported you and kept you connected to your community?

HOW CAN I SHARE MY VIEWS?

COTA Tasmania will be partnering with local organisations and councils to visit various locations across Tasmania from March–June 2022. Alongside this you can contribute in the following ways:

- Complete our survey – whether you have 2 minutes or 10 minutes to spare, please complete and share survey links as widely as you can



- Phone or email COTA to have a hard copy of the survey posted to you – **62 313 265 / admin@cotatas.org.au**

- Order some postcards to distribute in your workplace, local community group or local business
- Text your thoughts of what healthy ageing means to you to **0477 011 112**
- Head online to COTA's website to access links and further information (and pass onto to any friends or community newsletters!) **www.cotatas.org.au/information/consultation/**
- Join an online conversation (see COTAs website for details: **www.cotatas.org.au/information/consultation**)

If you'd like to see when a community conversation will be held in your area, or offer to host one, please contact Brigid on **62 313 265** or **brigidw@cotatas.org.au**.

All face to face activities will be planned in a Covid-safe way, in small groups.

CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY

How did we engage with Tasmanians?

Survey and postcard tools

The survey tools opened 30th January and closed early June 2022. Two surveys were open during this time on the Survey Monkey platform:

1. A longer survey with greater qualitative questions allowing more in-depth feedback and responses (37 questions, approx. 18 minutes to complete)
2. A shorter survey for those not wanting to spend length of time on above, with quick response questions (seven questions, four minutes to complete). This survey was identical to the hard copy postcards distributed, allowing for easy inputting once received.

Survey participants were provided a clear choice between the two surveys according to the time and effort they had, as well as links to the current [Active Ageing Plan](#) which they could review before taking the survey questions.

Survey questions covered:

- Age, gender, location of residence, income, cultural background
- Approach to later years
- Housing
- Transport
- Health
- Workforce participation
- Experiences of ageism
- Digital literacy and access
- Connection to community activities
- Impacts of COVID 19
- Choice of key priority areas for Government focus

A hard copy postcard was designed for accessibility and ease, posing two demographic questions alongside five taken from the larger survey tool. We collaborated with the following community sector organisations to distribute the postcards throughout lutruwita, Tasmania, greatly enhancing our reach:

- Meals on Wheels (1,280)
- Libraries Tasmania (1,400)
- Population Health – Breast Screening Buses (200)

Through our survey engagement, we reached a total of **1,163 Tasmanians**. Themes and ideas expressed from the responses are explored in more detail in [Consultation Outcomes](#).

*For the full list of Survey questions and key Figures, please read the accompanying Supplementary Data Appendix Report.



Age: _____	Postcode: _____	How do you feel when you think about your later years in life? <input type="checkbox"/> Positive / confident <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral (neither positive or negative) <input type="checkbox"/> Negative / anxious	
What does being actively engaged in life mean to you?	Thinking about the past 2 years, which of these aspects of COVID-19 has had the biggest impact on you? <input type="checkbox"/> Social isolation <input type="checkbox"/> Increased caring responsibilities <input type="checkbox"/> Reducing a volunteering role <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced access to health services <input type="checkbox"/> Learning new IT skills <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of paid work <input type="checkbox"/> Fear and concern over catching the virus <input type="checkbox"/> Confidence using Check in TAS App <input type="checkbox"/> Continual uncertainty <input type="checkbox"/> Access to accurate information <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to be with family to grieve Other _____		Which of these do you feel are the most important for Government to invest in to enable Tasmanians to age well (max 3)? <input type="checkbox"/> Access to healthcare <input type="checkbox"/> Impacts of climate change <input type="checkbox"/> Cost of living expenses <input type="checkbox"/> Prevention of Elder Abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate and affordable housing <input type="checkbox"/> Social connection <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce participation <input type="checkbox"/> Transport – access and affordability <input type="checkbox"/> Green spaces <input type="checkbox"/> Education of ageism and its impacts <input type="checkbox"/> Knowing how to access aged care support Other _____

Presentations and expos – community sector organisations

As part of our awareness raising for the consultation as well as creating space for community organisations to provide ideas and feedback, we completed seven presentations to the following organisations

- [CWA Online Branch](#)
- [ACSA](#) Providers Forum
- HACC State-wide Forum
- National [Palliative Care](#) Week
- [Local Government](#) Professionals
- [King Island Council](#) meeting
- [Penguin Lions](#) – International Women's Day Breakfast

These sessions covered:

- Who is COTA Tasmania?
- Tasmania's ageing population
- Advocacy & Ageism
- H.E.A.R Consultation – ways to get involved

We also attended an Island Project Dementia Awareness Expo in Hobart and a Wellbeing Festival in Kempton to meet community members and distribute consultation materials, with several other planned community events cancelled due to COVID 19 restrictions.

Through our engagement in presentations, we reached approximately **130 Tasmanians**.

Text message and online sessions

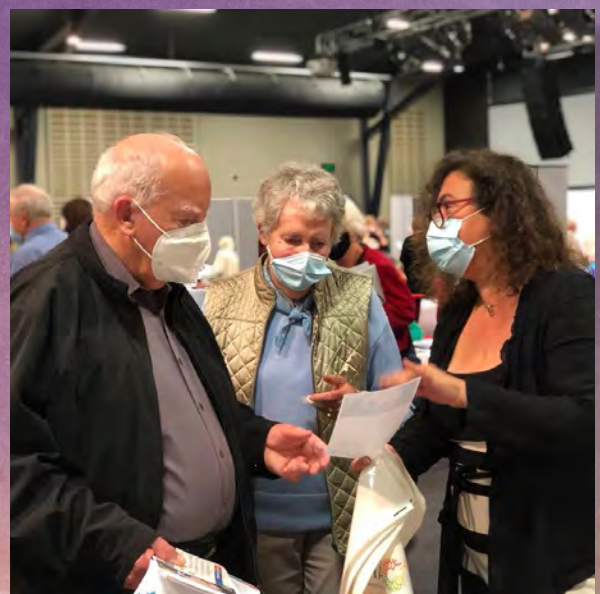
An option for community members to text their views on ageing was advertised alongside other methodology. Three online sessions via MS Teams were advertised via website, e-news, and social media across March – June.

Tasmanians were encouraged to text their answer to the following question:

What does healthy ageing mean to you?
Text us your thoughts – 0477 011 112

Through our online and text engagement, we reached a total of six Tasmanians.

**Alongside this, we also had five community members reach out directly to have further phone conversations about their views and experiences which COTA staff followed up, including two home visits.*



Community Conversation groups

Community Conversation groups took place from mid-March with our last groups held on 1st July 2022.

We worked alongside existing service clubs, neighbourhood houses, men's sheds, and community sector organisations to co-host community conversation sessions. We also held a few public forums jointly with Councils, however these had low uptake.

Based on interest from community sector, dates were confirmed and a travel plan across the regions made. We participated in the regular activities, meetings and meals occurring on the day which assisted to create a relaxed atmosphere. Sessions started with brief information about the consultation and COTA and then community members directed the session based on prompt questions around three main themes.

In both survey tools and face to face interaction people were asked to rate key areas of focus to support Older Tasmanians to age well. A breakdown of the top five areas can be found in

Consultation Outcomes: Tasmanians Key Priority areas.

All groups visited received a feedback template alongside pictures of their groups voting poster. This was a key value base for our collaboration with communities, assisting to build trust and connection. To view individual feedback sheets please read the accompanying Supplementary Data Appendix Report.

Organisation Submissions

Community sector and volunteer organisations were invited to complete a short submission outlining their experiences and views on key areas of focus to support Older Tasmanians. Direct email, e-news and social media advertising were employed to promote the opportunity and call for input.

Organisations were asked to write a brief 1–2-page letter format outlining the key areas and issues they felt needed to be considered when Government prepares its next Strategy for Older Tasmanians 2023-2029.

Submissions opened mid-February and closed 29 April 2022. COTA received six submissions by the following organisations:

- Carers Tasmania
- Hobart City Council
- Longford Cultural Society
- Mental Health Council of Tasmania
- West Coast Council
- Wynyard-Waratah Council

*Full details in the accompanying Supplementary Report for individual Organisation Submissions.



Areas to explore – Community Conversations

Strengths – questions to guide

1. When you think about your experiences and journey into later years, what do you feel is working well in your community to support you to age well?
2. What helps you to stay healthy?
3. What do you think of when you hear the word ageing?
4. What services / groups / initiatives do you access that make a difference to your wellbeing?
5. How do you stay connected with others and with your community?
6. What helps you get through stressors and hard times?

Challenges – questions to guide

1. Are there challenges you experience, (or know that others do), in the experience of growing older in your community?
2. What is missing?
3. Can you access the services you need (health, transport, housing social activities etc) easily, without barriers?
4. What additional services or changes to existing supports do you feel are needed?
5. Where do you find information about local services or new things you may like to do / need to access?

COVID 19 – questions to guide

1. Reflecting on your experiences since early 2020, what has been the biggest impact for you due to COVID 19
2. What things have you missed? Given up? Not been able to engage with? Positives?
3. How have you accessed information about COVID?
4. In terms of safety, how safe do you feel in terms of acquiring COVID and its impacts?

Closing (5 minutes)

Feedback loops – COTA will send printed feedback capturing your comments and ideas today. This will then be added as appendices to our report to the Department.

HEALTHY, ENGAGED and RESILIENT

Which of these do you feel are the most important for Government to invest in to enable Tasmanians to age well?

Access to healthcare

Impacts of climate change

Cost of living expenses

Prevention of Elder Abuse

Appropriate and
affordable housing

Social connection
programs

Workforce participation

Transport – access
and affordability

Good walkability of
my community with
green spaces

Feeling safe in my
community

Knowing how to access
aged care support

Community awareness
and education of ageism
and its impacts

Partnerships

Alongside our consultation methods above, we also strengthened existing relationships with the following organisations as a way of diversifying our methodology and reach:

University of Tasmania – Applied Health & Community Support Unit

COTA approached the University to offer an opportunity to raise students' awareness of the issues experienced by older Tasmanians, include them directly in the consultation by way of completing a H.E.A.R survey with a community member and in doing so provide a practical assessment task students could relate to current experiences.

What was involved?

Students listened to a 15min recorded video recorded by COTA ahead of their assessment task. Some did the survey face to face and others via phone or electronically, engaging in a conversation around the key questions and discussing experiences. Students were then asked to identify three different areas of health and wellbeing they could develop a program for, writing a project plan as part of their main assessment task. A reflection of their experiences and how insights gained might contribute to their professional practice in the sector was then sought.

"They [students] learned that being physically healthy is highly significant factor affecting ageing population – beyond physical health, it creates sense of belonging, positive attitude, reduces stress and anxiety."

UTAS STAFF

"It takes a community to maintain a healthy individual."

STUDENT

"[Realisation] that the issues related to ageing are vast."

STUDENT

36 students were enrolled in this unit. We look forward to continuing our relationship with the University with further collaborations and talks planned that assist to build the capacity and insight of the future community and aged care sector.

Most used words in UTAS students' assessment task reflection



Men's' Shed – Active Ageing Sculpture Competition

Early into our planning we knew we wanted a creative way of reaching men in the community, who traditionally have been less represented in previous survey and face to face consultation activities. Together with the [Tasmanian Men's Shed Association](#) (TMSA) we created a competition asking shed members to make a sculpture from recycled materials and start a conversation about ageing.

What was involved?

Shed's creations were to resemble the themes for our consultation – Healthy, Engaged and Resilient. It could be an object previously created or crafted just for this competition and could be any size or shape. Entries were accepted from individuals or as a group of members representing their shed with the winner received a \$500 [Carbatec](#) voucher.

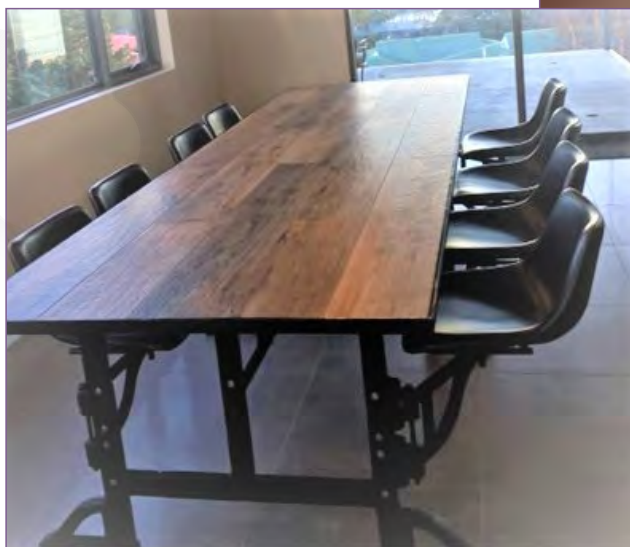
Sculpture creations

We received 10 entries, representing six sheds.

The top three finalists were:

Channel Men's Shed – Table, overall winner

"The table has eight swinging chairs, making it all ability friendly and because of the easy access and functionality – those seated and enjoying a Sunday roast or even enjoying a regular game of cards, often find themselves swaying back and forth – the gentle momentum generated by this configuration seemingly bringing back many happy childhood memories with family and friends."



Penguin Men's Shed – Lectern, 2nd place

"In thinking about the lectern, I come to the conclusion that it can also be compared to an organisation. First you have to have a strong base with which to stabilise the organisation (or structure), the vertical components can be compared to the committee members for without their support the organisation (or the lectern) will not get off the ground. When it comes to the top this can be compared to a table that the committee meet at to consider the purpose and destination of their organisation. In using the various timbers, it also highlighted the way in which various timbers can be blended together to form a total piece, this too can be compared to members of committees that come from various cultures to form a united organisation."



Veterans and Community Wood Centre, Kings Meadows Shed – Man's Best Friend, 3rd place

Sometimes the least we say the more the meaning comes through. In this instance, the object says it all. No words spoken. The member who created the entry takes pride in all his work. This item was produced from using off cuts of Black wood and Huon Pine, the combination of both woods complement each other. The cutting out was done on a scroll saw. Definitely good for the mind and very time consuming.



The winning entry by the Channel Men's Shed was announced at the [Tasmanian Men's Shed Association](#) Annual Gathering on the 25th August at Woolmers Estate.

The competition enabled us to reach a far wider group of men, (who were also encouraged to complete a postcard or survey), hold community conversations at several sheds and forge a stronger connection with the organisation. TMSA provides social connection, skills sharing and an inclusive place for people to meet in their local area – all important aspects to healthy ageing.

HEALTHY,
ENGAGED
and
RESILIENT

COTA Tasmania and Tasmanian Men's Shed Association invite
all the sheds across Tasmania to get involved in our

ACTIVE AGEING SCULPTURE COMPETITION!

COTA Tasmania is undertaking community consultation activities to support the development of the next Strategy for Older Tasmanians and we want to H.E.A.R how you stay Healthy, Engaged and Resilient as you age.

Get involved for your chance to win a \$500 Carbatec voucher!

Guidelines:

To enter, sheds need to create something out of recycled materials that depicts healthy, active ageing. This can be out of any material and be of any size or shape you imagine.

Competition opens:

Wednesday 16th March 2022

Competition closes:

Friday 3rd June 2022

Prize: \$500 Carbatec voucher

Entries will be judged by COTA Tasmania and Carbatec staff and we are excited to see your designs and showcase them with Tasmania.

To enter, please email photos of your creation with a short summary of what inspired your sculpture and how it relates to the theme – *Healthy, Engaged and Resilient* to brigidw@cotatas.org.au

We would also love you to share progress shots via social media and tag #cotatasmania!



Finalists of the COTA Active Ageing Sculpture Competition with Brigid Wilkinson at the presentation announcement, Woolmers Estate 25th August 2022



Clubs Tasmania

Clubs Tasmania is a not-for-profit organisation representing the needs of the clubs and RSL sectors in lutruwita, Tasmania, ensuring the interests of community clubs are well represented in dealings with Government, media, peak bodies and the broader community. They believe that maintaining the strength and vibrancy of the community club industry helps to promote healthy communities and assist Tasmanians to age well.

What was involved?

In November 2021 we attended the inaugural Clubs Tasmania Conference, participating in a panel event and expo stall. This enabled us to connect to the sector and raise awareness of active ageing concepts.

Clubs Tasmania then supported COTA to reach out to local sporting clubs as part of our survey and Community Conversations process. We held sessions at Emus Rugby Club and Turners Beach Football Club, with a further session at Devonport Country Club needing to be cancelled. These sessions enabled us to broaden the diversity and scope of participants within the consultation, reaching those in the younger middle-aged cohorts, many who commented on concerns for their ageing parents and club members. Succession planning for volunteer roles within clubs was a key issue as was the potential for intergenerational connection and programs within the sector to combat ageism.

As previously mentioned, we also had significant support and distribution of postcards through the following organisations:

- **Libraries Tasmania** locations and mobile library service
- **Population Screening (Tasmanian Health Service)** – Breast Screening Bus
- **Meals on Wheels**
- Local Council Community Development teams
- Neighbourhood Houses



What does being actively engaged in life as you age mean to you?

Having supportive friends, including younger people; being physically active; participating in community, having at least one passionate interest.

A sense of purpose, a reason for living.

Choice – available options and respect for these choices

Social interaction

Sense of meaning and purpose

Mixing with people of different ages.

Independence – physical health and mobility and mentally in decision making

Participation – in community, with family and friends, in work / learning / volunteering

Getting out and about, meeting friends, staying positive, playing bowls, exercise classes, BEING KIND!

The ability to do things for myself.

Waking up
each morning
wondering what
exciting thing will
happen that day

Doing what I can to keep
fit enough to continue
doing the activities I
enjoy. Keeping in contact
with family and friends.
Having a sense of purpose.
Maintaining my own home.

Maintaining
autonomy,
continuing to
learn, health
and fitness.

Legs that work..
and a brain
that works...no
pain.

Being able to
make my own
choices.

Feeling useful and
included. That the
physical landscape is
designed to include
all and there are lots
of low cost, no cost
social, art activities.

Being able to do what
I do now. Getting
around easily, being
part of community
groups, meaningful
employment, no
discrimination.

Being able to do what
I do now. Getting
around easily, being
part of community
groups, meaningful
employment, no
discrimination.

Continuing my identity
as an Aboriginal
woman connected to
land, collecting foods
that I grow, keeping
healthy in body and
mind.

Being able to go from
A to B. Good covered
/ weather protected
public transport.
Choices - social
activities.

Being able to
exercise, able to
undertake hobbies,
able to move about
the community safely
and independently.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ACTIVE AGEING?

Active Ageing provides people with opportunities to grow older in the way they wish, to be engaged in their communities and to enable them to age in-place. It means both our own physical health and psychological wellbeing as much as the accessibility and ability to move around communities safely, feeling respected and connected to others.

Services, infrastructure and policies can support Tasmanians to actively age. Attitudes held by individuals, groups, organisations, and systems within our communities also support people to actively age.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines Active Ageing as the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age¹², recognising that if ageing is to be a positive experience, longer life must be accompanied by continuing opportunities for health, participation and security.

"Active aging promotes the vision of all individuals—regardless of age, socioeconomic status or health—fully engaging in life within all seven dimensions of wellness: emotional, environmental, intellectual/cognitive, physical, professional/vocational, social and spiritual¹³."

Older people are diverse, with different expectations of how they work and live into their later years. They are active in their communities, maintain and take up caring roles, work longer with more flexible plans around retirement and are looking for opportunities to share their knowledge and skills with others.

It is important to note that individuals experience of the ageing journey differently due to a number of intersecting factors. The [World Health Organisations \(WHO\) Active Ageing framework](#)¹⁴ provides an understanding how the social, personal and behavioural determinants interplay with physical and economic factors, alongside access to health and social care that support the ageing process.

Determinants of active ageing



Source: [World Health Organisations \(WHO\) Active Ageing framework](#)

These determinants have to be understood from a life course perspective that recognises that older people are not a homogeneous group, and that individual diversity increases with age¹⁵.

Healthy ageing depends on genetic, environmental and behavioural factors, as well as broader environmental and socioeconomic determinants. Some of these factors are within the control of the individual, usually referred to as lifestyle factors, and others are outside the individual's control¹⁶.

Australia has the ability to enact policies and programs that will assist our populations to age well across these domains and lutruwita, Tasmania, could be leading the country in this important policy area. In order to do this effectively, we need a whole of Government approach to the intersecting issues that impact on inequalities experienced by Tasmanians, noting that these do not cease to exist as people age, indeed in some cases they increase.

"There are still very large divides between the 'have's' and 'have nots' and these impacts ageing well."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Programs should embrace a life course perspective that recognises the important influence of earlier life experiences on the way individuals age¹⁷. Incorporating intergenerational approaches will support this alongside providing an opportunity to challenge age-based stereotypes whilst encouraging two-way skill sharing and mentoring.

Liveable, age friendly communities

A Liveable Community, (also known as an Age-Friendly Community), is a place where people of all ages, backgrounds, and circumstances can live safe, respected, and healthy lives in their community. Liveable Communities support everyone at any life stage and ensures that every part of community is safe, affordable, high quality, and easy to access or find information about.

COTA Tasmania's [Liveable Communities Toolkit](#)¹⁸ draws on evidence based research and policy design and points to a collaborative commitment between all levels of Government, individuals and organisations within community. Local Councils take the lead to create and promote a Liveable Community with input from community members and can use the Toolkit and associated resources to guide this process. Greater collaboration between state and local government with shared strategy and representation would enhance our ability to create more inclusive liveable communities across the state which reflect the need of our ageing demographic, in turn benefiting other individuals and the community as a whole.

Councils committed to Liveable Communities principles can apply to the [World Health Organisation's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities](#)¹⁹. Membership to the Network reflects a cities' commitment to listen to the needs of their ageing population, assess and monitor their age-friendliness and work collaboratively with older people and across sectors to create age-friendly physical and social environments. In lutruwita, Tasmania, Burnie City Council and Clarence City Council are both members of this Network.



Outdoor spaces and buildings

Older people live in an environment that includes open spaces, buildings, shaded areas and walkways that are safe and easy to navigate.

Transport

Older people can get out and about using a range of affordable and user-friendly transport, and associated services.

Housing

Housing options for older people are affordable, accessible and close to transport and community services.

Social participation

There are social community activities accessible to older people where they can continue life-long learning, and sharing knowledge with others.

Respect and social inclusion

The wisdom, knowledge and experience of all older people is valued and older people are included at all levels.

Civic participation and employment

Older people participate in employment, training and volunteering opportunities, and inform government policies.

Communication and information

Older people access information they need in a variety of formats to stay informed and connected with their communities, families and friends.

Community support and health services

Older people are helped to stay healthy, active and independent through community support and health services, including services responding to elder abuse, fraud or exploitation.

Encouraging Councils in lutruwita, Tasmania, to work towards this important recognition should be a priority for the State Government under its commitment to the new Active Ageing Plan 2023-2029, to ensure that all Tasmanians have access to the safety and support a Liveable community provides.

Each of these domains were raised within the survey tools and community conversations as having barriers for older Tasmanians to access whereby they feel respected and included. As with the determinants of active ageing, these eight aspects of city life overlap and interact under the following philosophies:

- recognise the wide range of capacities and resources among older people;
- anticipate and respond flexibly to ageing-related needs and preferences;
- respect older people's decisions and lifestyle choices;
- reduce inequities;
- protect those who are most vulnerable; and
- promote older people's inclusion in and contribute to all areas of community life²⁰.

George Bernard Shaw once commented "We don't stop playing because we grow old. We grow old because we stop playing". Liveable communities can support people to keep playing, to be active contributors and to make positive lifestyle choices that assist them to continue to live fulfilling lives.

"The operative word in age-friendly social and physical urban settings is enablement²¹."

Source: [WHO 8 Domains of Age Friendly Cities](#)

Picture: [Tablelands Regional Council](#)

Active Ageing policy frameworks – best practice

"When people are supported to age actively, they are empowered to make choices about how to live their life and ways they can reach their potential for physical, mental and social wellbeing²²."

To foster healthy ageing and improve the lives of older people and their families and communities, fundamental shifts will be required not only in the actions we take but in how we think about age and ageing.

The United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030) is a global collaboration, aligned with the last ten years of the Sustainable Development Goals, that brings together governments, civil society, international agencies, professionals, academia, the media, and the private sector to improve the lives of older people, their families, and the communities in which they live.

It addresses four areas for action that promote health, prevent disease, maintain intrinsic capacity and enable functional ability.



Source: [UN Decade of Healthy Ageing](#)

Combatting ageism

Ageism affects how we think, feel and act towards others and ourselves based on age. It imposes powerful barriers to the development of good policies and programmes for older and younger people and has profound negative consequences on older adults' health and well-being. The associated WHO Global Campaign to combat Ageism aims²³ to change the narrative around age and ageing and help create a world for all ages (#World4AllAges) and follows their research into the causes and impacts of ageism.

Age friendly environments

Environments play an important role in determining our physical and mental capacity across a person's life course and into older age and also how well we adjust to loss of function and other forms of adversity that we may experience at different stages of life, and in particular in later years. Both older people and the environments in which they live are diverse, dynamic and changing. In interaction with each other they hold incredible potential for enabling or constraining Healthy Ageing.

Integrated care

Older people require non-discriminatory access to good quality essential health services that include prevention; promotion; curative; rehabilitative; palliative and end of life care; safe, affordable, effective, good quality essential medicines and vaccines; dental care and health and assistive technologies, while ensuring that use of these services does not cause the user financial hardship.

Long term care

Long-term-care systems enable older people, who experience significant declines in capacity, to receive the care and support that allow them to live a life consistent with their basic rights, fundamental freedoms and human dignity. These services can also help reduce the inappropriate use of acute health-care services, help families avoid catastrophic care expenditures and free women – usually the main caregivers – to have broader social roles.



Ageism and it's impacts

"Age isn't the problem. Ageism is"²⁴.

Ageism refers to the **stereotypes** (how we think), **prejudice** (how we feel) and **discrimination** (how we act) towards others or oneself based on age²⁵.

It can be institutional, interpersonal or self-directed. **Ageism affects everyone.**

Among older people, ageism is associated with poorer physical and mental health, increased social isolation and loneliness, greater financial insecurity, decreased quality of life and premature death²⁶.

For Tasmanians to have opportunities to age well, we must work towards a society that views older people equally – not differently. For ageing to be seen as part of the lifespan journey to be embraced, not feared. Participants in our consultation often spoke about how they felt treated differently due to their age, ignored or overlooked because of their visible ageing appearance.

"As you age, people don't see you, treating you differently once you have grey hair."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"I don't think of my age, but people look at me like I'm stupid." COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"The older you get the more you are labelled into a category." SURVEY RESPONDENT

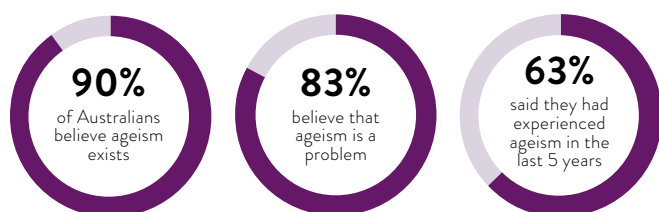
Increasingly, we need to tackle the prevalent issue of ageism and its impact on communities and individuals to ensure an equitable future for all, no matter the age, where people feel included, respected and involved.

Dr Kay Patterson, Age Discrimination Commissioner for Australia, conducted research into the prevalence of ageism in Australia, with 63% respondents having experienced ageism in the past five years. Over half the survey respondents agreed that making jokes about age is more socially acceptable than making jokes about things like race or gender and two-thirds said it affected people across the lifespan.

This study reflects what Tasmanians told us as we visited their communities and spoke to community organisations. Survey responses relating to ageism showed that 35.98% of people felt they sometimes experienced ageism, with a further 8.33% often feeling stereotyped due to their age.

"I envy the elders in the world who are honoured and cared for in their older age rather than generally seen as a liability."

SURVEY RESPONDENT



Source: *What's Age Got to do with It?*²⁷



WHO Global Report on Ageing – three areas to support

Alongside the [UN Decade of Healthy Ageing](#), the WHO released its [Global Report on Ageism](#) in 2021 which outlines a framework for action to reduce ageism including specific recommendations to be implemented.

Their research found that globally, one in two people are ageist against older people. Ageism impacts all aspects of older people's health. For instance, it shortens their lifespan, worsens their physical and mental health, hinders recovery from disability, and accelerates cognitive decline²⁸. Ageism also exacerbates social isolation and loneliness and reduces access to employment, education, and health care – all key proponents to having a good life in lutruwita, Tasmania.

Key messages about ageism

Ageism is harmful:

- It has **far-reaching impacts on all aspects of our health.**
- It takes a **heavy economic toll** on individuals and society.

The report highlighted three strategies to reduce ageism have been shown to work:

- **Policy and law** can address discrimination and inequality based on age and protect the human rights of everyone, everywhere.
- **Educational activities** can transmit knowledge and skills and enhance empathy.
- **Intergenerational interventions** can contribute to the mutual understanding and cooperation of different generations.

Source: [Global Report on Ageism: Toolkit](#)

In considering the next Active Ageing Plan 2023-2029, we recommend the Tasmanian Government consider the evidence base drawn from both the UN Decade of Ageing and WHO Global Report on Ageism when devising future policy initiatives, training employees and volunteers, communicating with the public and in prioritising resources for initiatives and programs to support healthy ageing.

"We cannot expect to provide health services fairly or to treat people of all ages with respect as workers, voters, citizens, volunteer and community members until we recognise that ageism has run amok and must be stopped."

JANE MUSSARED, COTA SA²⁹



CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

What is important to Tasmanians?

Demographic snapshot – survey and postcards

Surveys (n577)

- The largest age group of respondents at 37.33% (215) were aged 60-69yrs, with 31.77% (183) aged 70-79yrs and 18.75% (108) being 50-59yrs.
- Three respondents were 90-99yrs (0.52%) with 33 80-89yrs old's (5.73%) completing the survey.
- The smallest cohort was 40-49yrs (4.69%) with 27 responses.
- 77.22% of respondents identified as woman or female, with 22.09% man or male; two respondents identified as non-binary and two chose not to answer this question.
- Six respondents to the survey identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage
- 64.81% of respondents lived with a partner / spouse; with 28.40% living alone
- 37.5% of respondents were self-funded retirees; 24.83% were receiving an aged or disability support pension, carers or veterans' payment with a further 15.63% in full time work and 13.37% in casual / part time work.
- 78.09% of respondents manage their finances comfortably, reflective of the primary source of income data.
- 26 respondents stated they had experienced difficulties in recent years maintaining secure housing. Rising rental fees, domestic violence, family breakdowns and limited suitable housing were cited as the main reasons.

- Postcode analysis showed the highest proportion of survey respondents were from
 - 7250 (51)
 - 7000 (32)
 - 7018 (29)
 - 7050 (24)
 - 7310 (23)

Postcards / short survey (n586)

- 32.51% of respondents were 70-79years; 31.18% between 60-69 years and 18.06% 80-89years of age.
- 3 respondents 100years + completed the postcard
- Postcode analysis showed the highest return rate of postcards were from
 - 7310 (33)
 - 7307 (28)
 - 7250 (27)
 - 7018 (24)
 - 7008 (23)

With a good spread across the other regions of lutruwita, Tasmania.

For a full breakdown of responses by postcode, please see the accompanying Supplementary Data Appendix Report.

COTA Tasmania has H.E.A.R.D your views!

Date / name of the group:

Date: 1st July 2022

Location: Beaconsfield - Living
Longer Living Stronger group

Attendees: x6

Strengths: what is working well in your community

Beaconsfield House - great variety of groups and programs,
valued in community

Climate is good here and we have all the services we need close
by

Social connection through the Living Longer Living Stronger
program, feel very supported & encouraged to stay active & well

Local library is a great service

Challenges: barriers that make things harder for you

Housing is a big issue and support to
adapt your house as you age to enable
you to remain their safely

Long wait periods to see GP, continuity
of care is also an issue

The area is not 'walkable' - we have no
walking tracks which would help people
stay active and connect with community

Older people should be allowed to take
risks. just as every other age group does

Main concerns we heard from you ...

Ageing impacts how people see you - "
you don't feel needed" "it feels like
ageing takes [alot] away, nothing is
given back"

Aged care facilities need to be planned
differently - more reflective of
community with intergeneratioanl
connection

Loneliness is an increasing issue in
society

Self-beliefs about ageing

When asked how they feel about their later years, 51.48% of those completing postcards felt positive, with 33.15% neutral and 15.37% of respondents feeling anxious or worried about their older age. Survey respondents also scored high on positivity at 46.96% with 34.78% neutral and 18.26% of respondents feeling anxious and worried about their older age.

This was also reflected in our face-to-face conversations with community members, who commented on how perspective and mindset assisted them to be resilient as they age, as well as supporting their ability to manage the pressure of COVID 19. The importance of keeping up hobbies and interests as you retire, something to give you a sense of accomplishment and a regular time in your week to connect with others was frequently talked about as influencing your mindset and beliefs. Wellbeing was spoken about in terms of social connection more than as a health issue specifically.

"Got to be pleased with what you can do."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"It's up to you to get involved in things [as you age]."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"I just take a positive attitude."

94 YEAR OLD COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Ageing is a mindset – if you have a good attitude about it, it doesn't need to limit you."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

These experiences were similar to those in our [2021 Attitudes to Ageing Survey](#), where the majority of respondents expressed positive views about getting older.

Negative or mixed responses were often centred around declining capabilities, isolation, experiences of ageism or loss of independence – things that are out of our control.

Positive aspects of ageing centred on having greater freedom outside of work constraints, having time to pursue interests, less concerns about conforming to societal expectations and enjoying time with family.



What's working well?

A strong sense of community

Trust and knowledge of neighbours and the community were strong influences on one's ability to age well, especially the older participants of group discussions that linked having lived in a certain area for a long time to a sense of safety.

"If it wasn't for community, we wouldn't be here."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Our community looks out for one another."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"We know and trust each other."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"People always happy to lend a hand, support their community, band together."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Local groups and fundraising projects were often cited as examples of how community members had supported one another and continued to provide a sense of companionship and support. Finding creative ways to support one another during COVID 19 lockdowns showcased the sense of support and community spirit alive across the state.

In several regions we visited, people spoke of moving to the area to retire without knowing anyone but doing so for the 'feel' they had about the community and of reaping the rewards of this with a sense of connection and inclusion.

"We have moved here without knowing anyone – for the climate, location and sense of community."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"People are friendly, stop and say hi – you don't get that in bigger cities."

REGIONAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Small communities enable social connection."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

Family was central to this sense of familiarity and support, with respondents commenting that having family close by greatly added to their ability to age well to enhance their mental wellbeing.

Localised services, accessibility and climate

Having the essential services and shops close to your home and being able to safely walk around was core to a sense of ease and staying independent. Some people spoke of the fear of losing this as a higher level of services and supports move to the online space and their wish to keep face to face interaction.

"Environment – seaside, climate, walkability – close to everything you need, shops are very helpful." COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Family and friends live nearby; we can walk or get bus easily in the local community." COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Climate is good here and we have all the services we need close by." COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

When asked about things that make lutruwita, Tasmania a great place to live and age a high proportion of people commented on the fresh, clean air, beautiful landscape and national parks and a slower pace of life with a good climate. Having a smaller population was attributed to making life easier to get around and a greater quality of life overall.

"Beautiful surrounds provide many options to stay fit and healthy – walking, bike riding, hiking."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"A serene place to live climate wise and with access to the outdoors." SURVEY RESPONDENT

Climate change was a regular topic of conversation at community conversations and considered the 5th top priority area for investment. People often spoke of their concern for their children and grandchildren and the impacts climate change will have on them in the years to come.



Volunteering provides a sense of purpose

Older Tasmanians continue to contribute to their local communities through volunteering, with approximately 34.2% of our total population engaging in volunteering activities, higher than the median Australian contribution of 29.5%³⁰. Older people are more likely to volunteer in welfare, community, and health settings with the proportion of volunteers over 65 years of age 17% (16.6%)³¹.

In the communities we visited volunteering was often spoken about in terms of the social connection and sense of purpose it provided. Services run by volunteers were highly regarded but many commenting on concerns around sustainability and what would happen if the service was unable to keep going. 33.8% of our survey respondents indicated they currently volunteered within their communities, including boards and committees alongside Landcare, library, and community associations.

"We all contribute, it's about service, a sense of supporting others."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Volunteering ... is good for health, you feel like you've achieved something."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

In recent years we have seen a decline in volunteering and concerns about what impacts this may have within communities. In lutruwita, Tasmania, we are seeing a shift in the way people want to volunteer and an increase in the need for volunteers. By 2030, it is predicted that there will be a shortfall of 40% for volunteers³².

Intergenerational volunteering programs that support succession planning and skills sharing can be seen as a strategy to safeguard volunteering within our communities, whilst simultaneously creating a space to challenge ageism and forge greater understanding.

Volunteering by its nature provides the volunteer with a deeper connection to their community, as was often expressed in the consultation data, and the benefits to those who volunteer can therefore be seen then as a preventative health measure. A recent USA study found that volunteering approximately two hours/week was associated with reduced risk of mortality and physical functioning limitations, higher physical activity, and several beneficial psychosocial outcomes³³. The growing older adult population possesses a vast array of skills and experiences that can be leveraged for the greater good of society via volunteering³⁴ with volunteering activities also having the potential for being prescribed to support healthy longevity.

"There are lots of volunteering opportunities to contribute to the community."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Hospital staff, local pharmacies and GPs are well regarded

Survey respondents rated the level of health information provided to them by health professionals as accessible and in ways they could understand (92.4%) but also commented that this can vary dependent on the professional or how busy they are. In all locations we visited people regarded hospital staff highly, valuing the care and support provided at times of need and discussed the evident pressure both the acute and primary care sectors are under.

The importance of local pharmacies for health advice and support was appreciated, with many delivering medications and taking the time to explain things to their customers.

"My GP explains things in simple terms and ensures I understand everything before leaving."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

However, some respondents continued to have poor experiences in this area.

"I have the distinct feeling that at my age (84) doctors and specialists don't really care that much!"

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"Sometimes I don't understand all the fancy words."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

Health literacy and support to understand and navigate health systems are therefore still an important factor and needed to empower Tasmanians to be in control of their health issues.

Community transport and subsidised taxi are highly regarded

The loss of independence that occurs when you can no longer drive was clearly expressed in both survey responses and conversations. Having to rely on others added to this feeling of loss and the additional burden of mental load to arrange alternatives, if they were available.

"When you can no longer drive, it has a big impact on your independence and reliance on others."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Community transport was highly valued and in community discussions the availability of this was varied. For rural areas there was a deep concern about sustainability of community transport due to reliance on volunteers. People valued subsidies for taxi and would like to see this extended to bus services across lutruwita, Tasmania.

"Taxi at reduced rate is a very good service."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Community car provides an excellent service to the community."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Free metro bus month was great!"

SURVEY RESPONDENT

Filling the gaps: the importance of Service Clubs, Men's Sheds, Neighbourhood houses, local clubs and Libraries – placed based legends

Having inclusive spaces to meet each week and connect with like-minded people was extremely important in every region we visited. The sense of being part of something bigger than yourself or your immediate family provided a greater sense of wellbeing and was considered even more important in later years.

People spoke of neighbourhood houses, men's sheds, dining with friends, service clubs, local craft and bushwalking groups and sporting clubs as key groups within community that enabled them to age well by providing new skills, socialisation and a place of inclusion.

"Local sports clubs – wonderful spirit and camaraderie, and helps keep people active."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"Having a sense of accomplishment from designing and making things at the shed whilst also making friends has a positive impact – create spaces like this in every town, so all Tasmanians can be afforded this opportunity as they age."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Local centres like this that offer low-cost activities, food and friendly support – a place that is welcoming."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Libraries were not only a place to borrow books or join in a group activity, but they were also increasingly discussed in relation to the support provided for technology and in running community engagement activities. However, COTA is aware through its IT Mentor Program that not everyone feels comfortable to receive this support through the library network.

COVID 19 raised the profile of place based locally run groups and programs and showed them to be agile, adapting their support and turning to much needed outreach and delivery at a time of crisis. People in rural areas spoke of local groups going above and beyond, supporting the installation of minor adaptations as a solution to the increased wait lists for OT assessments. Whilst this adaptability is to be commended, the need should be addressed within existing health service provision, not provided by a community group due to a service gap.

"Support from staff at our neighbourhood house is excellent – if you don't know where to go, you just ask the team, and they point you in the right direction."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"A great place which does so much for the community and is adaptable (eg starting a grocery store when the other one closed!)."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

In order to ensure these organisations can continue their valuable contribution, the next Active Ageing Plan should ensure sustainable funding models with long term commitments, as expressed in the Premiers Economic and Social Recovery (PESRAC) [findings](#).

Continued energy support and infrastructure grants to support sporting clubs, men's sheds and other local groups to install solar and other upgrades to building infrastructure will ensure they can provide a safe and comfortable environment whilst also assisting with the impact of increasing costs.

A note on language

Language matters. How we choose to talk about ourselves as well as others within our community has a direct impact to how inclusive and supportive we are as a society. Language and images convey meaning, which feed assumptions and judgements that can lead to ageism³⁵.

Inclusive language is important not only for the Active Ageing Plan itself but in all communications and interactions with Government agencies and departments. This extends also to visual representation, ensuring that older Tasmanians are seen as individuals with diverse backgrounds and circumstances.

The following organisations have developed evidence-based guidance on age friendly communication.

- [Changing the Narrative](#)
- [National Ageing Research Institute](#)
- [World Health Organisation](#)
- [EveryAge Counts](#)

Recommendation:

The Active Ageing Plan 2023-2029 is accompanied by an Age Friendly Language guide for use beyond Government agencies to community organisations, businesses, media, volunteer organisations and the wider community to ensure inclusive best practice, contributing to a cultural change in how Tasmanians view the ageing process.



Barriers to healthy ageing

The following themes and issues reflect what Tasmanians told us across all methodologies about the challenges they experience as they age. These align closely with previous work by the TASCOS' Good Life Framework³⁶, which takes a holistic approach across nine key elements which Tasmanians have identified support their access to a good life.

Social isolation and loneliness are hard as you age

Social isolation and loneliness are harmful. They shorten older people's lives and damage their mental and physical health and quality of life³⁷. Tasmanians we met spoke highly of the impact of connection, social friendships and safe accessible places locally to meet with like-minded people. Subsidised shared meals were especially valued as cost-of-living pressures impact the ability to eat out.

"You've got to keep going, interaction makes you feel good to mix with others!" COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Social isolation and loneliness are widespread, with some countries reporting that up to one in three older people feel lonely³⁸. Connecting with new people and groups as you get older was expressed as harder due to mobility and health issues impacting confidence, lack of suitable transport options, life transitions, limited family networks nearby and difficulties knowing where to find out about local activities and groups.

Many spoke of isolation being the biggest factor impacting their wellbeing during 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and this was also reflected in survey responses.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, social isolation and loneliness were becoming major public health and policy concerns, largely due to their serious impact on longevity, mental and physical health, and well-being³⁹.

"Having regular activities is important, especially so since COVID 19." COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Loneliness is an increasing issue in society."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"We need more intergenerational activity for sharing of skills and knowledge." SURVEY RESPONDENT

Social isolation can lead to low mood and depression and a higher risk of self-harm ideation. Men over 85 yrs now have the highest age rates of suicide in Australia.

Low help-seeking behaviours for mental health concerns can impact on these rates, with older adults less likely to seek professional help due to stigma, knowledge of services and available and accessibility. Suicide prevention in older adults should aim improve help-seeking behaviours and reduce stigma⁴⁰.

What we need:

Opportunities to connect, participate and establish stronger connections within our communities and help to know about these opportunities.

How:

1. Expand the current [Community Activities](#) webpage to enable greater promotion, collaboration and uptake, alongside increased functionality of the platform. This resource also has the potential to link to initiatives around social prescribing.
2. Establish a yearly grants program to support community led creative events and initiatives that provide ways to reduce social isolation for older Tasmanians, with a focus on intergenerational connection and community capacity building.
3. Trial Social Prescribing initiatives across the state, providing place-based link workers that enable people to access information, advice and connection to non-clinical services which assist to mitigate social isolation. Social prescribing is being trialled across Australia and has been implemented in the United Kingdom with success under the [Universal Personalised Care](#) action plan.
4. Ensure that both the [Tasmanian Mental Health Reform Program](#) and the [Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy Project](#) consider the needs of older Tasmanians specifically and intentionally, drawing insight from the lived experiences of Tasmanians in the older age cohorts.
5. Continue to support and fund Seniors Week activities and provide security of this funding for five years with at a rate of indexation determined by the State Government in line with other community sector grants.
6. Encourage and promote the existing [Community Visitors Scheme program](#) to Tasmanians whilst advocating to extend the existing eligibility and introduce a focus on intergenerational volunteering and within aged care settings.



Ageism exists – and it shouldn't

Being treated differently due to age was a common conversation at our group sessions, with many commenting that this was from both family, services, and community businesses alike. Invisible was a term often used in explaining how the impact of ageism makes older Tasmanians feel, echoing previously discussed research outcomes in this space.

"I don't like being called 'old' or 'aged' or treated differently purely on my D.O.B."

RESIDENT OF AGED CARE FACILITY

"We get left behind [as we age]."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

36.98% of survey respondents stated they sometimes feel judged by others based on their age with a further 8.33% feeling they were often judged and two people feeling they were always treated differently due to their age (0.35%).

"Occasionally [mostly in shops] people refer to me as 'dear' or 'darling' which is patronising, or health professionals will say 'at your age...' which again is making a judgement."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"Older people should be allowed to take risks, just as every other age group does."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Many businesses are not 'age friendly.'"

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Ageism in its worst form can lead to Elder Abuse, which we have seen from the recent [National Prevalence Study](#), is increasing in Australia with almost one in six Australians experiencing some form of abuse in the past 12 months. Elder Abuse was raised often at community discussion groups, with people providing examples and concerns of situations within their communities and a lack of awareness of who could assist when such abuse occurs.

What we need:

Community awareness programs about ageism and its impacts.

How:

1. As one of the largest employers in lutruwita, Tasmania, a targeted education program across all agencies and departments would ensure that Government is indeed leading the way in creating age-friendly inclusive spaces and workplaces. This will have a direct impact on both employees and community members and is vitally important for those working in customer facing roles.
2. A public awareness campaign with inclusive age friendly language co-designed with Older Tasmanians to combat ageist stereotypes and provide a stronger positive narrative around ageing.
3. Develop an Age Friendly Language guide for use by Government, community organisations, businesses, media, volunteer organisations and the wider community, contributing to a cultural change in how we view the ageing process.
4. Ensure any new policies and legislation developed address discrimination and inequality based on age and ensure the human rights of older Tasmanians are protected.

Workforce participation and ageism

The survey results in this area shows that people have and continue to experience ageism in the workplace. Over 100 people commented that this included not being given a promotion; being overlooked in job application process; assumptions about skill based on age; higher rates of redundancies and less experienced younger workers favoured for roles.

People spoke of not feeling valued and “*stuck in a limbo land being too young to retire and too old to be gainfully employed.*”

“Ageism – harder to get employed as you get older, people view you differently and therefore less opportunities.”

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

“There are barriers around getting work as you get older or have health issues.”

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

“When I applied for a job at 58, one of the employees told the rest of the staff that I was too old for the position.”

SURVEY RESPONDENT

These experiences reflect current research in the recruitment space, which showed that a troubling 30% of employers in Australia admit there is reluctance to hire older workers within their organisation⁴¹. Our nation cannot afford to have older generations’ skills wasted, or their participation minimised – often due to employer concerns about older workers’ skills and contribution at work⁴².

“People are overlooked as overqualified and not provided opportunities because of their age.”

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

“There is definitely ageism when applying for jobs.”

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

“More workers would like to continue working in later years, but skills and experience are not appreciated.”

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

What we need:

Assist me to build confidence in job seeking, to forge a new career in my later years or to plan for retirement.

How:

1. Fund COTA Tasmania to develop and implement resources that support workplaces to have specific anti-ageism policies and procedures, to promote strategies for businesses to appropriately attract, retain and manage older workers as they near retirement and to develop intergenerational mentoring within workplaces.
2. Continue to fund local place based [Jobs Hubs](#) across the state and ensure security of funding so these become embedded trusted spaces for employment support in each community, including an increased focus on older workers.
3. Consider a social enterprise model to support older job seekers build experience, explore employment and training options, and receive career coaching to support this in a similar way as is provided to young adults ([Troublesmiths](#)).

Workers compensation

Workers' compensation is payable under the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 to a worker who suffers an injury or disease arising out of or in the course of their employment.

This Act has two main purposes:

- to return an injured or sick worker to work as quickly and safely as possible
- to ensure an injured or sick worker is compensated for lost wages, medical and other expenses while they are unable to work, and that the dependants of a deceased worker are compensated⁴³.

Workers Compensation cover in Tasmania currently supports workers until the age of 65 years. Whilst section 87 (2) & (3) of the Act provide a safeguard for the worker to receive payments beyond the pension age, the worker bears the onus of satisfying the Tribunal of the statutory test. Therefore, this safeguard has also been labelled as age-discriminatory⁴⁴

What we need:

Government to work with key stakeholders including COTA Tasmania to ensure that the workers compensation system does not unfairly impact older workers.

"I think the workers compensation system is unfair to older workers. If injured at work older people should have the same entitlements as young people."

SURVEY RESPONDENT



Appropriate housing is core to our wellbeing

Overwhelming concern in all communities was the impact of the current housing crisis, and the lack of appropriate housing stock to suit Tasmanians as they age. People commented on community members living in caravan parks or motels for lack of suitable housing and organisations citing a large increase in emergency food relief requests with rising rental costs in recent years.

"Housing affordability for our younger generation means they have to leave the state as it is too expensive. This has a flow on effect to the parents and grandparents as they are not nearby to provide support or remain as connected."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

In 2019 women over 55 were the fastest growing group of homeless people in Australia⁴⁵. With increasing competition for rentals and limited superannuation to draw on, this age cohort who have cared and supported others are now needing the greatest support. Linked to this is a lack of appropriate housing for Tasmanians as they age, with housing stock not fit for purpose with the appropriate equipment supports to enable people to live independently and stay in their homes.

In rural communities, people commented on the lack of available nursing home beds in their area and a real fear they will have to move should they need this higher support. Communities on the West Coast and King Island particularly raised these concerns, given there has been no significant investment in aged care beds for some time in those regions.

"Our friend, she is 94 years old and had to move from Queenstown to Ulverstone due to there being no nursing home beds here. It is too hard for us to travel that distance and so now she has no way of staying in touch with her friends and community. I'm dreading that happening to me."

REGIONAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"What will happen if there are no [nursing home] beds when I need it?"

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Houses are not large enough [for migrant families] and not appropriate for our needs."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"How to find a rental on single pension?"

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

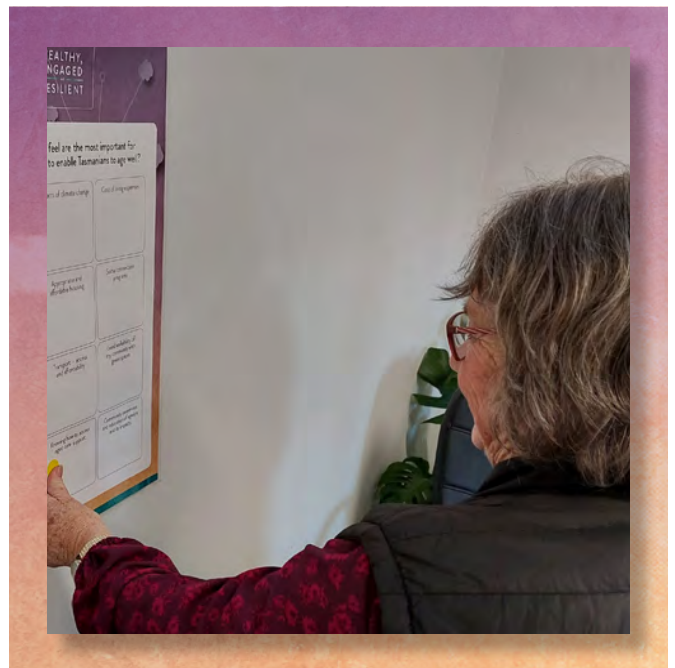
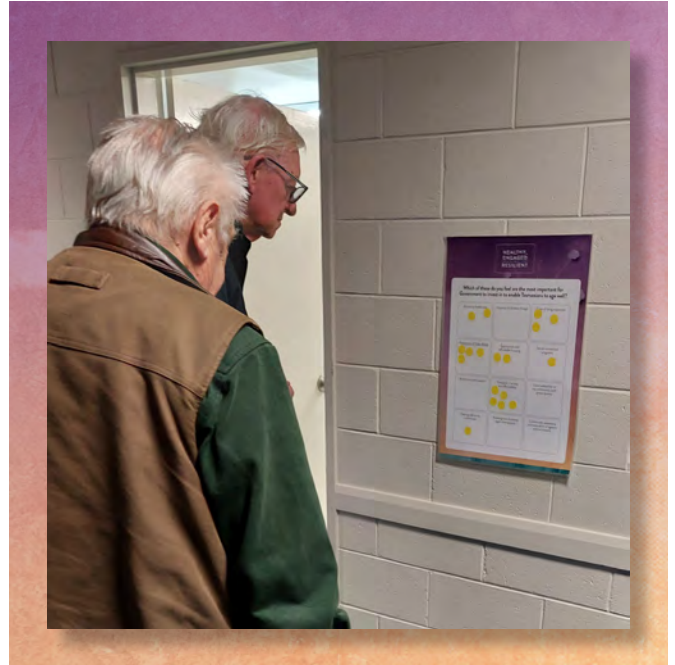
We continue to be concerned about the vulnerability of older Tasmanians living in private rental arrangements and the availability of age-appropriate housing, both in key centres and in regional areas.

What we need:

Greater accessible housing options as I age that I can afford.

How:

1. Adopt innovative approaches to address the needs of older Tasmanians in the private rental market, introducing incentives for landlords to modify properties to support ageing in place.
2. Increase targeted accommodation options for Tasmanians over 50yrs with further funding for [Wintringham](#) models developed across the state.
3. Progress the commitment to extend social housing stock by a further 10,000 homes by 2032 as outlined in the Draft Housing Tasmania Bill 2022.
4. Explore intergenerational shared accommodation models as a way of supporting both older and younger Tasmanians to maintain suitable housing alongside reducing social isolation.
5. Commit to mandatory accessibility standards within the National Building Code, bringing accessible design standards ([Liveable Housing Standards Gold](#)) into state legislation where applicable.
6. Develop an appropriate housing solution for Tasmanians escaping from elder abuse.



Affordable, preventative healthcare

services help us to age well

Access to consistent GP services was highly valued but rarely experienced by the communities we visited. Many commented that they no longer have a strong relationship with local GP and nursing services, so do not feel confident to explore their health concerns more fully. Continuity of health care providers as you age is important to older Tasmanians, so *"I am not having to repeat my story"*. We heard numerous examples of long wait times for ambulances and in some areas, people encouraged to drive themselves to hospital due to ambulance shortages. This impacted confidence that the support they needed would be provided in a timely fashion, in both acute and primary care.

"Government doesn't get preventative health."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"GP's fly in and out, there is a lack of consistency."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Government are always saying they do a lot to help older Tasmanians stay at home - but it is not a priority."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

OT and Physiotherapy were highly valued as supporting age related needs, but extensive wait lists for assessment and provision of equipment or therapeutic support meant needs increased before receiving the care.

"Consistent health support is needed - there are long wait lists for allied healthcare, inconsistent GPs and appointments are too short."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"OT's are gold - and the pathway to getting services and support."

ONLINE PARTICIPANT

"Allied health - long wait lists for simple adaptations can create bigger issues in longer term."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Additionally, those in rural and remote areas commented on the additional stress travel to appointments placed on them, their carers and families. Having specialists visit or provide telehealth was appreciated, with the support of local GP practices to access but was dependent on individual practices or clinicians, creating inequity across the state.

For a genuine shift to community-based care, as well as to build a modern and future-oriented healthcare system, the Tasmanian health care system needs to focus its attentions towards keeping Tasmanians from becoming severely ill in the first place⁴⁶.

What we need:

Preventative holistic health care that is efficient, in my local area as much as possible, and supports me to maintain my own health and choices.

How:

1. Expand availability of rural GPs in all regions
2. Increase the level of investment in preventative and rehabilitative health infrastructure and services that will target the needs of Tasmanians at various life stages and contribute to healthy ageing, with a focus on decreasing wait lists for OT and Physiotherapy.
3. Continue to offer telehealth options to those that wish to use them (where clinically appropriate), extending this as first option provided for pre-elective surgical and specialist appointments for people living in remote rural areas.
4. Advocate for a Seniors Dental Benefits Scheme to enable older Tasmanians to access affordable and subsidised dental care.
5. Continue with the increased rate of funding to patient transport and the new Community Paramedic program.

* Please read in conjunction with health recommendations in our submission to the [Our Healthcare Our Futures.](#)



Reliance on technology and online mediums is frustrating – impacting our ability to access information and be involved

The [Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2021](#) shows Tasmania is still the most digitally disadvantaged state in Australia with a score of 66 (National average 71.1)⁴⁷.

The biggest concern alongside preventative health care supports when speaking to community members was the impacts of technology and the lack of understanding and support to ensure older Tasmanians were able to both access, understand and use technology platforms to support their wellbeing and inclusion. This is especially important given 48% of Tasmanians do not have the literacy and numeracy skills they need for life in a technologically-rich world ⁴⁸

"Pushing too much to have all services online and cashless. Everything is becoming too reliant on IT – people like face to face."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Support programs for older people need to recognise the massive knowledge gap to be breached and the challenges of later-life learning⁴⁹. People commented on not knowing where to go for support with IT, or that current groups run in community libraries did not meet their needs. Instead, people expressed wanting simple personalised support to explain their individual questions, at their pace.

"[I] can get a bit confused with it and feel embarrassed to ask for help, so don't ask."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"I can use the basics but get confused with some of the language and directions."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

Much information continues to be shared by word of mouth but follow up was at times hard if no access to or confidence using online means or when socially isolated.

"Everyone wants an email and mobile details."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Phone numbers are needed there is too much reliance on the online world."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Whilst survey respondents rated their confidence and ability to access computers and smartphones (35.24% Excellent; 33.51% Very good; 22.22% Good) this also reflects that the survey was online in nature and a high proportion of respondents were in age cohorts that have potentially experienced technology in their professional and relational lives (50-79yrs = 56.08% of total respondents).

We had 177 additional comments to this question, with many stating they were confident with smartphones and basic navigation of web-based apps, but less so with computers. Reliable internet access and the ever-changing world of programs and ways of using IT were also cited as barriers to managing the online world.

"Hard to keep up with technical changes and frequency of changes."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"Telstra and NBN services are absolutely woeful outside larger cities."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

Family members, neighbours and paying an IT professional were all commented on in the survey as helpful ways to get support with technology issues, alongside Google searches.

What we need:

Help to understand, access and use technologies with increased confidence that will improve our connection to services, enhancing our wellbeing.

How:

1. Work with COTA to increase digital ability among older Tasmanians who are currently excluded through expanding the IT Mentor program for older Tasmanians and provide more resources at the basic level of digital literacy.
2. Ensure phone contacts are provided on all Government communication alongside online options to ensure all Tasmanians are able to receive the information and support in ways accessible to them. Tasmanians have the right to access information offline. Information and resources need to be available to people who will never be digitally included, in order to minimise digital discrimination.

3. Expand the downloadable "How To" Resources available through the COTA website to increase the library of digital mentor resources that assist family and friends to respectfully support older people in their circle to be better equipped to be online.



It's hard to know about what is happening in my community

Finding local information was frequently cited as a barrier to participation and connection in community sessions, many believing this has become harder with information moving online and reduced budgets for print advertising.

Local gazettes and newspapers were highly valued, but many run by volunteers or not always delivered to those socially isolated. Community Radio and the ABC were frequently cited by older age cohorts when at community conversation groups as preferred methods of receiving information.

People had a desire to be out in community, participating in activities and connecting with others, but cost, confidence and knowing where to look were all cited in the survey as factors impacting the ability to learn or do something new.

"Information empowers you – but what if you cannot get to that information?"

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Word of mouth is strong in finding out about local initiatives and activities, as are local papers."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"I never know when things are happening, only ever find out about things after they have occurred."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"How do you know what groups you can join and be encouraged to do so? Many people don't have access or knowledge to find information online."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"I don't see much information, it's hard to know where to look for activities in my area."

SURVEY RESPONDENT



What do we need:

Equal access to community life to enhance our wellbeing and social connection.

How:

1. Trial Social Prescribing initiatives across the state, providing place-based support networks that enable people to access information, advice and connection to non-clinical services which address the wider social economic factors that impact on a person's health and wellbeing. Social prescribing is being trialled across Australia and has been implemented in the United Kingdom with success under the [Universal Personalised Care](#) action plan.
2. Ensure that all style and types of communication mediums are used by Government to provide information to communities and ensure these met diverse language needs of our population.
3. Expand the current [Community Activities](#) webpage to enable greater promotion, collaboration and uptake, alongside increased functionality of the platform. This resource also has the potential to link to initiatives around social prescribing.
4. Investigate compiling a directory of localised community print and online publications that draw on local knowledge from Local Councils and groups. Such a resource will ensure a streamlined process of disseminating information and also prove valuable for future consultations and community development initiatives.

By recognising the trusted relationship between the patient and their health professional and taking the opportunity to address the socioeconomic determinants as part of these interactions, primary health services can facilitate engagement with community services to help address the underlying causes of poor health⁵⁰.



Cost of living pressure is impacting all

Pressure to manage expenses on limited or fixed incomes was an experience of all groups we visited and echoed strongly by the Neighbourhood Houses networks we collaborated with.

With many older Tasmanians retired or finished their caring roles and living on pensions or other fixed means, the increases in daily living expenses is forcing many to make more conscious decisions about their finances and was seen in some areas to impact their interactions in community activities and exercise options.

"There is not enough left each fortnight."

"Petrol, groceries, bills – are all going up, many are struggling."

"Cost of living is adding to already stressful situations for many in the community."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Allow pensioners to earn some extra income without severe penalties."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Cost of living pressures was also echoed by community organisations, many finding the increases in costs of products and wages impacting their ability to deliver services under existing funding streams.

The community sector has been impacted by increases in food, petrol and consumable costs but more significantly in much-needed wage increases brought on by the recent national Wage Case.

Organisations may or may not receive indexation but those that do (at 2.25%) are still falling far behind the recent increases announced by both the NSW and Victorian Governments. Grants that do not attract indexation need to contain costs and inevitably this has consequences for the communities they are there to serve, leading to reduced staff hours impacting work outputs, positions being filled at lower levels when positions changeover personnel, deficit budgets, or not filling positions when they are vacated. This is not sustainable and puts communities at risk of not receiving the supports needed.

What we need:

More support to pay our weekly costs.

How:

1. Continue to fund and expand the support from [NILS Tasmania](#)
2. Provide greater funding to Emergency Relief providers in the state to ensure that the level of demand for food relief support can be met without delays.
3. Support initiatives to improve energy literacy, including areas of energy efficiency to increase understanding of how to make the most of time-of-use pricing. Consider mechanisms to subsidise more efficient purchases/upgrades to household energy systems.
4. Greater support for the community sector and for purpose organisations to meet the increased costs of doing the business of supporting their communities in times of increasing cost pressures.

Transport impacts my ability to stay connected and increases my dependency on others

Lack of trusted, affordable and reliable means of public transport was again highlighted as one of the key challenges to growing older in Tasmania, with a substantial number of comments within survey responses highlighting the impacts this has on overall wellbeing.

"Public transport is woeful and much too expensive and traffic congestion is becoming a serious factor."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"Fairly good bus regularity, but better shelters needed."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"I would use public transport if it were more available and convenient."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

Bus regularity and appropriate shelters that people felt safe waiting at were raised at both community conversations and through the surveys. Linked to this, the higher costs of living pressures, effect of recent petrol prices and reduced mobility were also cited as factors impacting people's ability to access appropriate transport options.

75% of respondents in the survey drive, with a further 11.81% walking to access their local communities. Issues around accessible transport, cost and frequency were commented on, especially by the more regional respondents. 48.88% of respondents commented that suitable parking at their destination is a large factor impacting their ability to access or use transport

to meet their needs, with 46.04% citing the range of options is not adequate and 29.61% felt that public transport schedules prevent their usage.

Community members on the West Coast and King Island also commented on having no available wheelchair accessible transport options.

"Free metro bus month was great!"

POSTCARD RESPONDENT

"Life can be harder when you no longer drive."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

What we need:

Reliable affordable public and community transport options that support me to get from A to B.

How:

1. Increased funding and support to community transport providers to ensure this service is available and sustainable in all regions of Tasmania.
2. Work with older Tasmanians, local Councils and bus operators to identify service gaps in public transport routes and safety concerns.
3. Commit to working with Metro and other Tasmania bus operators to confirm an ongoing commitment to free bus travel during Seniors Week each year.
4. Investigate the potential for free bus travel for older Tasmanians, as is currently offered in several other Australian States (Western Australia, South Australia)
5. Work with local Councils to ensure bus shelters are more prevalent, accessible, age friendly and fit for purpose in all regions across Tasmania.

Navigating Age Care systems

- it's so complex!

Community groups we visited had limited knowledge about where to go to for information around navigating formal aged care supports, and those that had experienced the system found it complex and confusing and an overall negative experience at a time when stress and transition are already high. Alongside system issues, the long waits to receive a service and to feel you have choices was often seen as a barrier with people not feeling valued to receive the care they are entitled to.

"I paid my taxes but it feels now I'm forgotten."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"There is a lack of transparency and communication [about aged care services]."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

People trying to access aged care have reported the experience as time-consuming, overwhelming, frightening and intimidating. There were also concerns raised about the lack of aged care providers in the more regional areas to meet the increasing need of the community.

"Navigating [aged care] - you go around in circles."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"People don't know about services or how to navigate them."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"The Aged Care system is a nightmare to negotiate, and the separate parts don't seem to communicate well with each other."

SURVEY PARTICIPANT

"People cannot get the support they need at home. Long wait lists and you don't get what you are assessed for."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

The availability of helpful and comprehensive information is critical to ensuring older people get timely access to the care they need and to empowering them to make choices about their care⁵¹.

It is positive to see the roll out of face to face support for aged care navigation via Services Australia with their new [Aged Care Specialist Officers \(ACSO\)](#) roles, currently located in Rosny, Burnie and Launceston. With Tasmania's ageing demographic, it would be beneficial for this service to be located in several other regions, to work alongside our own [Aged Care Systems Navigator service](#), and a public awareness campaign across the health and community sector and in visible community places and spaces to ensure people are aware of these options.

With the change to the new streamlined Support at Home program and continued navigation support confirmed by the Australian Government Care Finder roles coming into effect in 2023, we need to ensure that people continue to have access to clear advice and information sources in a variety of mediums.

What we need:

Information about my aged care options that is easy to find and navigate.

How:

1. Continue to advocate Federal counterparts for improvements in the provision of information and advice for aged care services.
2. Work with Tasmanian aged care providers and peak bodies on workforce development issues to ensure we have capacity to meet the needs of our population in a person-centred way.
3. Ensure phone numbers are provided on all resources provided to the Tasmanian public and ensure that phone will be answered within a reasonable amount of time.



Planning ahead is important, but rarely talked about

When discussing the experiences of getting older, several community groups spoke of the lack of information or discussion about planning for the next stages of life post work and caring roles. Thinking ahead about how to spend their time, remain active and connected and getting affairs in order was something most groups felt was not openly discussed, but was needed and could assist to view ageing as a positive stage in life.

51.83% of survey respondents had made proactive choices and plans to support their ageing, with 33.86% feeling they need to do more planning. The recent [State of the Older Nation](#) outcomes for Tasmania also reflect people's desire to receive support to plan ahead for our later years.

"Increase services [in particular financial and health] and support. More information on choices as people become older and near retirement."

SOTON SURVEY RESPONDENT

"Start early, [planning for retirement] knowledge is helpful." ONLINE PARTICIPANT

"Retirement can lead to a loss of your identity. You need assistance to move through this transition period."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"End of Life and retirement planning is important - but no one talks about it." COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Need more information and guidance on planning for later years." SURVEY RESPONDENT

What we need:

More discussion and information resources about planning ahead for retirement and transitioning to our later years.

How

1. Consideration of a support service for those nearing retirement and wanting support and coaching to proactively plan for this (along a similar line to Transition to Work programs for youth).
2. An accessible resource available online as well as print that has information for older Tasmanians in relation to retirement that is co-designed with older workers, retirees and industry representatives, coordinated by COTA Tasmania.
3. Extend the current [Peer Education program](#) delivered by COTA Tasmania to include sessions on the resource above.

Staying active – affordable exercise programs in my area

Tasmanians valued the opportunity to keep fit and healthy in their local areas but commented that many such opportunities were not financially accessible or available. Programs that run for set timeframes were often appreciated, but people wanted longer term options too.

"There needs to be more opportunities for free/low-cost exercise and wellbeing programs."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"In order to stay active physical wellbeing programs need to be long term and affordable."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Getting into healthy activity habits earlier in life was also seen as a good way to maintaining fitness in later years.

"You need to stay active – move your body!"

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"Use it or lose it" [your body – keep physically active]

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

"Costs of staying healthy – not many low-cost options for health classes in the area."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Participating in exercise programs also impacted on people's wellbeing, many commenting on the social connection and support it provides beyond the obvious health benefits.

All ages playgrounds and exercise parks provide excellent no cost options for physical activity.

What we need:

Low-cost strength and exercise options in my area.

How:

1. Continue to fund [COTA Tasmania's Living Longer Living Stronger program](#) to provide strength and balance training program tailored to individual needs within existing gym and exercise facilities in all regions.
2. Work with local Councils to invest in age friendly infrastructure that enables older Tasmanians to exercise safely in their local communities. Infrastructure includes walking and cycling tracks, warm water pools and appropriate heating.
3. Investigate extending the successful [Ticket to Play scheme](#) to adults and older adults in Tasmania, to assist more to access health and exercise programs and sporting club membership in their communities. Consider within this an additional value for those on pension or carers payment.
4. Consider working alongside local Councils to investigate the use of all age playgrounds, adapting to local needs that respond to economic and social environments.

Tasmanians' key priority areas

When asked to choose the key area of focus for Government in supporting Older Tasmanians to remain active and connected, the largest areas of concern were:

Postcards respondents

- Access to Healthcare
- Cost of Living
- Aged Care Navigation
- Appropriate and Affordable Housing
- Social Connection programs to reduce isolation

Survey respondents

- Access to Healthcare
- Cost of Living
- Appropriate and Affordable Housing
- Social Connection programs to reduce isolation
- Aged Care Navigation

This is also reflected in survey responses about the most valued aspects of living a good life, with good health, having enough money, having good relationships and maintaining independence being the most cited things that both positively and negatively impact on our quality of life and wellbeing.

Community conversation Groups:

A total of 449 people were reached as part of our face-to-face activities and each participant had the opportunity to vote for key priority area (not all chose to vote). The priority areas identified in group settings were:

- Access to Healthcare
- Aged Care Navigation
- Social Connection programs
- Housing / Transport / Cost of Living (equal and intersecting)
- Climate Change

Actions that address the key issues raised above will improve the capacity of individuals and provides timely support that prevents ill health, creating a community that supports and respects the wellbeing of older Tasmanians.

Priority deep dive – Health

Across all consultation methodologies, access to healthcare was the top priority for Tasmanians. When asked what is most important in relation to accessing support for health needs, 52.9% stated being able to access the service in their local area, followed by 39.37% choosing quality of service as essential and 34.17% deciding affordability had the biggest impact on accessing healthcare. Lack of available specialists and wait times were frequently cited in the comments by survey respondent as additional concerns.

As our community continues to age, the focus of preventative care must include quality of life and a capacity to maintain independence – for all Tasmanians. The healthcare experience of older Tasmanians is not equal⁵².

Over eight million people reported they had been diagnosed with a long-term health condition in the 2021 Census. The most commonly reported long-term health condition in Tasmania was arthritis⁵³. This is reflected in our survey responses, with arthritis alongside reduced mobility cited as conditions impacting most on the ability to do what is important.

Healthy longevity is the state in which years in good health approach the biological life span, with physical, cognitive, and social functioning, enabling well-being across populations. By increasing healthy longevity, societies can minimise societal and individual burdens while increasing human and social capital. Promoting healthy longevity for individuals and societies through policies and actions can unleash the potential of older people in the near and long terms, benefiting people of all ages and societies around the globe⁵⁴.

Investing in efficient, timely and preventative healthcare services was the number one priority from consultation participants across the state. To help Tasmanians age well a trusted integrated health service is needed where people can establish relationships with their local health professionals over time, building a holistic picture of their needs which is supported with responsive, enabling services.

"Who do you see when you look at me? Just an old lady who limps when she walks because of a failing Health System or do you see the well-educated, multi-skilled, intelligent individual? I am still me."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Considerations: Rural and regional Tasmania

We were particularly concerned about access to health and aged care services in regional, rural and remote areas. Communities we visited spoke of inflexible services, additional stress and cost of travelling to see health care providers and poor experiences of joined up services across acute and primary care.

"The OT comes over for one day – to see nine patients. They fly in early and leave on the last afternoon plane and have no time to get to know you or do home visits, and the last one came from Broken Hill!"

REGIONAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Having to repeat your story had a direct impact on negative experiences of health care.

Access to post care for elective surgery was voiced as a concern by healthcare professionals on both King Island and the West Coast. Patients returning from hip or knee surgery had limited options for ongoing physiotherapy and rehabilitation and travel requirements post operatively was considered a safety issue for many, with no alternatives. With a large ageing population on the islands as well as remote areas of Tasmania, effective planning is urgently required to ensure that older people are supported and receive equal access to health care that meets both their needs and location.

Many living in rural or remote locations and in residential aged care simply do not have access to the healthcare that others take for granted⁵⁵. Older people make up a greater share of the population in these areas than in major cities. Furthermore, people in regional, rural and remote areas experience multiple disadvantages, which can magnify the need for support in older age⁵⁶.

Intergenerational connection

- we want more!

"We need more opportunities for older people and younger people to come together so we can better understand one another. We all have a story."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Increased age segregation over the human life course has led to more entrenched ageist stereotyping and reduced opportunities for different generations to learn from one another, and may contribute to social isolation, poorer health and a lower quality of life for some older people.⁵⁷ In our discussions when travelling lutruwita, Tasmania, it was clear that people felt explicit intergenerational programs were worthwhile, providing opportunities that benefited both ends of the age spectrum. We know from our experiences running our creative street art projects, [Piecing it Together](#), just how valuable it is to spend time with a broad range of people from different age ranges, both in an immediate sense but also over time as it challenges negative stereotypes and encourages community connection. [Lively](#) and the [Centenarian Project](#) as well as the popular [Old Peoples Home for 4 year old's](#) on the ABC are further examples of programs designed to support intergenerational friendships and connection with wonderful outcomes.

Assisting communities to organise intergenerational activities, events and programs aligns well with the [WHO recommendations to combat ageism](#) and ideally would cross education, employment, leisure, volunteering, creative arts and sporting areas. Bringing local committees together intergenerationally at a Council and state Government level to learn and share from one another would assist to co-design and collaborate more holistically on community issues across the generations, with respect and inclusion driving the process.

"Intergenerational mixing...is GREAT. Older mixing with younger. How about a meet an Elder day, meet a younger person day?"

SURVEY PARTICIPANT



IMPACTS OF COVID ON TASMANIAN COMMUNITIES

Undoubtedly for all communities we visited, managing the uncertainty and the increased isolation that came with COVID-19 were the greatest challenges that impacted on mental wellbeing and physical access and inclusion within their local areas. Knowing where and who to turn to for accurate information was frequently mentioned, with many stating they *'ended up tuning out'* or *'stopped listening to the radio'* due to overwhelm and to preserve their mental wellbeing.

Equally the impact of not be able to see family and close friends during COVID 19 lockdowns was reported as a major influence on levels of experienced isolation in survey responses.

"There was a lot of confusion when COVID hit - it was stressful to get help navigating all the requirements."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

People spoke of the increased social isolation from not seeing close friends and family members; of not accessing their local shops and attending exercise activities; missing out on milestone celebrations; irregular health services, poorer mental health and being unable to travel.

This reflected similar discussions we had with regional communities as part of our [COVID Conversations](#) project in 2021.

Older people we heard from clearly had a high level of resilience and in the communities we visited appeared to have managed well during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their no-fuss approach to needing to alter routines, accept lockdown measures, and find ways to stay connected assisted them to remain optimistic and adjust to the confusion and rapid change.

Across both survey tools, the biggest impacts from COVID 19 were:

- Continual uncertainty
- Fear and concern over catching virus
- Rapidly changing information and advice
- Social isolation
- Access to accurate information

Access to Healthcare was spoken of in terms of inability to access their GP, longer wait lists for Allied Health care services and difficulty transitioning to telehealth / digital pathways.

The Tasmanian Government Public Health resources were overwhelmingly the place survey respondents went to for trusted advice about COVID-19 (52.18%) with many commenting that the ABC (specific mention of [Coronacast](#) with Dr Norman Swan) and other radio channels as well as their GP were places to access accurate information.

Mask wearing was an additional burden, both from how it made people feel claustrophobic and the impacts on people's ability to communicate with others, especially where people had hearing difficulties. Organisations also echoed this impact.

Overwhelmingly, there was a strong theme of resilience, of 'getting on with it' and enjoying the slower pace of life the restrictions brought.

"I quite enjoyed having quiet times as it gave me more time to read, play my piano, knit, work on my garden."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

"Back to basics and simpler way of life - it has had many positive outcomes."

SURVEY RESPONDENT

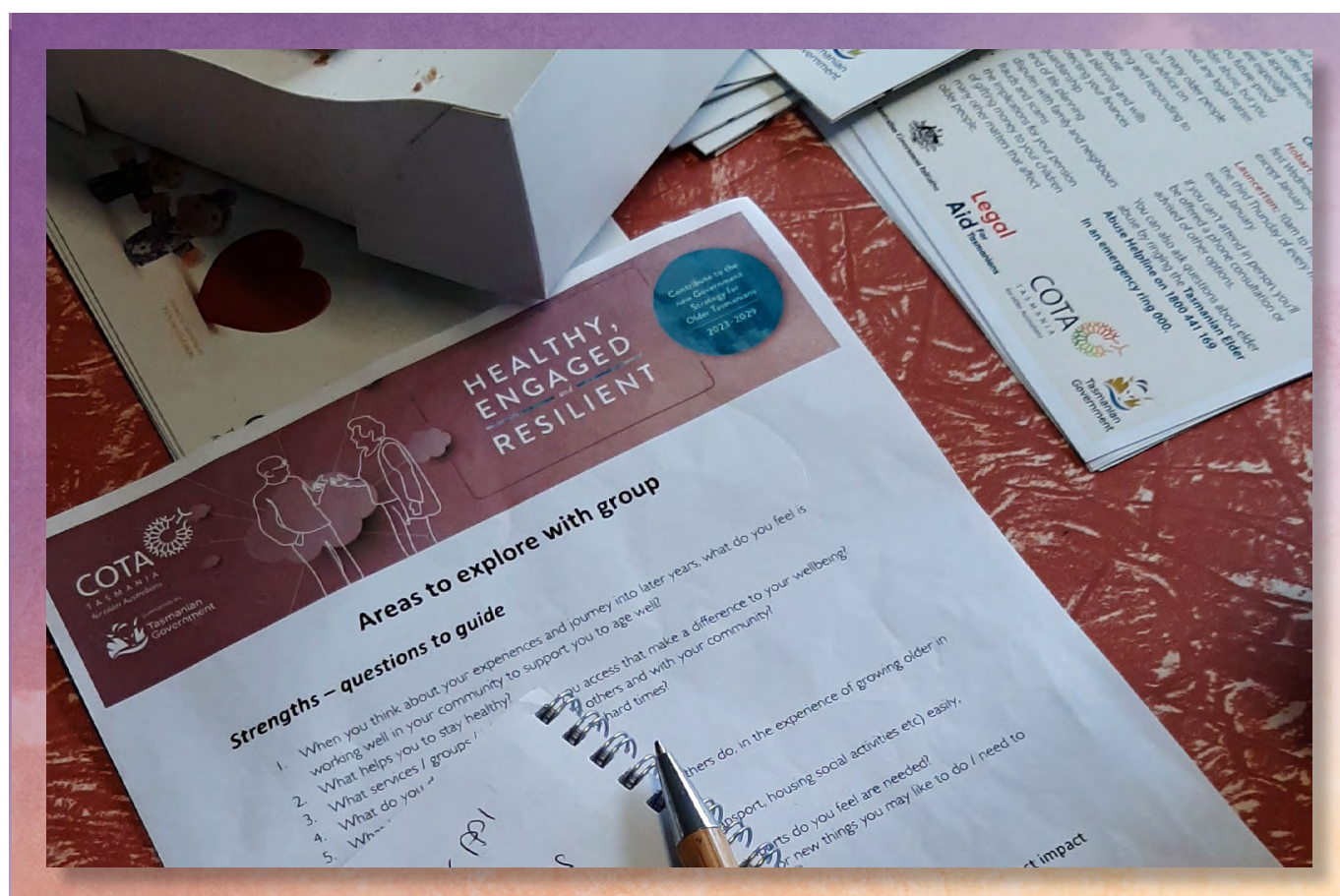
"COVID - town virtually shut down, no traffic, just locals - it was great!" COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Working from home, less traffic and tourists and people coming together were also mentioned as positive impacts of the restrictions placed on communities during the pandemic.

"During COVID lockdown people found ways to support - phone calls, deliveries, meals, our supermarket started delivery service." COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

One survey respondent commented on the opportunity COVID provided to reflect on and change careers:

"Covid gave me the opportunity to volunteer with Ambulance Tasmania which led me to undertaking a full time, accelerated degree in paramedics with VTAS. I will have completed half of that degree within the next few weeks and will graduate in February 2023 at the age of 63. I love my life!"



FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Alongside the issues raised from the lived experiences of Tasmanians, COTA suggests investment in the following areas:

1. Lived experience – Active Ageing Advisory Committee
2. Place based responses and solutions with secure funding commitments
3. Collaboration with Local Councils for action on Liveable Communities

1. Lived experience – Active Ageing Advisory Committee

It is important not to forget that older adults have considerable lived experience of navigating change over their lifetime and want to be involved in forming ideas and plans that impact them. Older people are individuals living within complex systems and structures and should not be labelled as vulnerable or less valuable due simply to their age. Involving younger adult cohorts in this discussion also greatly enhances their ability to be aware of and contribute to issues that may impact their future selves.

The high level of engagement with this consultation shows that people want to share their experiences, views and ideas for improvement. Place based initiatives for local community members to contribute to future strategies and plans which impact them is key to a democratic and inclusive society. Ensuring clear, accessible communication and using Community Enablers will assist in reaching more Tasmanians to allow their voices to be heard.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Under the new Active Ageing Plan 2023-2029 Plan, establish an Active Ageing Advisory Committee, providing a formal avenue for Older Tasmanians and groups to contribute to an enhanced understanding of the lived experiences of older people, with representation across all regional locations. To function best, a committee of members drawn from local Council areas and run in collaboration with Councils would strengthen the conversation and commitment to a Liveable Communities aim for our state.
2. In addition this new committee could meet twice yearly with existing [Premiers Youth Advisory Council](#) to encourage intergenerational connection and sharing of experiences.



2. Place based responses and solutions with secure funding commitments

The Premiers Economic and Social Recovery (PESRAC) [findings](#) clearly recommend a future approach that is place based and draws on the existing strengths and experiences of the local community. This, alongside more flexible funding models that provide longer term certainty are vital if we are to support Tasmanians to age well within their own communities.

The communities we visited were clear that knowing and trusting the local organisations and providers of support was a key element of feeling confident and positive about their futures.

People appreciate what the community and volunteer sectors provide and want reassurance that the supports they value will continue to be available. This is especially true in the areas of social connection, exercise options and food relief support.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Funding provisions to enable place-based initiatives are supported with a minimum 3-year funding cycles and flexible KPIs to ensure organisations can adapt to local needs.

3. Collaboration with Local Councils for action on Liveable Communities

The importance of fostering age friendly and liveable communities across the state is a key vision if we are to support Tasmanians to age well in their local areas and assist people to stay healthy, engaged and resilient.

Tasmanians want to feel valued, included and respected for their views and contributions whilst having opportunities to safely access the things that enable them to have a good life, free from discrimination or exclusion based on inequalities. This includes ensuring that information is accessible, inclusive and a range of communication methods are used.

Liveability is also a core vision of Tasmania's [Population Growth Strategy](#).



Source: [COTA Tasmania Liveable Communities](#)

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Enhance the uptake of Liveable Communities principles and [COTA Tasmania's Toolkit](#) in developing explicit strategies and frameworks within the 29 Council municipalities across lutruwita, Tasmania.
2. Promote an age friendly approach to community, government and business sectors via a suite of resources and education programs. Customer facing Government agencies (such as Libraries Tasmania, Seniors Card Tasmania and Service Tasmania) could assist to co-design training and tools that best reflect their needs and knowledge of older Tasmanians.



FINAL REFLECTIONS

"We want to feel included as we age – to be connected, contributing and be heard."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Healthy Ageing is the process of developing and maintain the **functional ability** that enables wellbeing in older age. With an ever-growing ageing demographic, we need to shift our thinking (and indeed policies and funding) towards this preventative, proactive approach based on a healthy longevity lens. This is echoed by the World Demographic and Ageing Forum 2022:

As the major public cost of ageing is health and social care, Australia could benefit from promoting healthy lifestyles through health education and facilitating healthy lifestyles through other policies⁵⁸.

This will support all Tasmanians to age well, empowered to look after their health and wellbeing and to reach out for support, information and services when needed knowing that this will be provided in a responsive and personalised way.

Experts predict that longer lives will contribute to financial growth across many sectors. An explicit focus on reimagining and empowering an aging workforce, support for education and training across the life span, and broadening options for formal and informal volunteering will ensure that as people live longer, they continue to contribute to both society and the economy⁵⁹.

We must ensure that within this digital literacy and accessibility is supported alongside increased health promotion and health literacy initiatives so that no Tasmanian is left behind.

This will require us to revisit our current life stages, and instead of compartmentalisation into phases of learning, working, and then retirement, consider a blended journey, where the elements of learning, working, and leisure are intertwined from early adulthood to as long as these are valued⁶⁰.

"Community attitude towards ageing process needs to change – it should be celebrated not feared."

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

	2020	2035	Total change (%)	Change per year (%)
Population (millions)	25.5	29.4	15.3	0.96
Age group 15–64 years (%)	64.5	62.2	-3.6	-0.25
Age group 65+ years (%)	16.2	20.4	25.7	1.54
Age group 65–79 years (%)	12.1	13.9	15.4	0.96
Age group 80+ years (%)	4.1	6.4	55.7	3.00
Life expectancy at age of 65 (years)	21.9	23.1	5.8	0.38
Life expectancy at age of 80 (years)	10.1	10.8	7.1	0.46
Old-age dependency ratio (65+/20–64)	27.7	36.6	32.1	1.87
Total fertility rate (TFR)	1.8	1.7	-2.8	-0.19

Source: [WDA Global Longevity Council Positions for Policy Makers and Strategy Planners April 2022](#)

Intersection with other social policy areas

In order to plan holistically we recommend that the next Active Ageing Plan 2023-2029 is considered alongside policies and reports that intersect with issues impacting older Tasmanians.

Of note:

- [Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council \(PESRAC\) interim and final report recommendations](#)
- [Tasmanian Women's Strategy \(Draft\)](#)
- [Healthy Tasmania Strategic Plan 2022-2026](#)
- [Our Healthcare Future](#)
- [Supporting Tasmanian Carers: Action plan 2021-2024](#)
- [Rethink 2020: A state plan for Mental Health in Tasmania 2020-2025](#)
- [Tasmanian Sport & Active Recreation Strategy \(Draft paper\)](#)
- [Tasmanian Community, Sport and Active Recreation Infrastructure Strategy – Draft \(the Strategy\)](#)
- [Transport Access Strategy](#)
- [Tasmania's Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-2025 and Action Plan 2019-2023](#)
- [The Future of Local Government Review](#)
- [Job Tasmania Strategic Plan 2021-2024](#)
- [Food Relief to Food Resilience: Tasmanian Food Security Strategy 2021-2024](#)
- [Respect and Protect Older Tasmanians – Tasmania's Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy 2019-2022](#)
- [Our Digital Future Tasmanian Government strategy for digital transformation 2020](#)
- [Our Multicultural Island: Tasmania's Multicultural Policy and Action Plan 2019-2022](#)
- [Tasmania's Whole of Government LGBTQI Framework and Action Plan](#)
- [26TEN Adult Literacy Program](#)
- [Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy Project](#)

We would encourage the Government to provide the Tasmanian community an ability to comment and contribute further to the draft Plan once developed in a variety of accessible ways.

"In all countries, and in developing countries in particular, measures to help older people remain healthy and active are a necessity, not a luxury!"

Thank you

Finally, thank you to all the Tasmanian communities that welcomed us into their spaces and places over the course of this consultation, as well as those that completed our surveys. You spoke passionately about what is important to you, what you value and your hopes for the future.

This lived experience is vitally important in guiding social policy we thank you for your honesty and time in providing your views.

A big thank you to our volunteers who supported the inputting of hard copy postcards, Marcia and Carmel. You were an immense help, and we are forever grateful.

Thanks to our COTA staff and board members, who supported the promotion of this consultation and assisted throughout. We have a great team who is dedicated to advocating to ensure that older Tasmanians are treated equally – not differently. Thank you for all you continue to do in the pursuit of this vision.



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