



Department for Communities

→ Age Friendly Communities

Collective Examination of Western Australian

Local Government Research Reports



Government of Western Australia
Department for Communities
Seniors and Volunteering

Minister's Message

Seniors are an important part of Western Australian communities. As workers, carers, volunteers or mentors they continue to play a vital role in keeping their communities strong. Helping seniors to stay healthy, independent and connected benefits everyone.

With baby boomers starting to retire, planning for an age-friendly community has never been so important. That's why the State Government has supported a number of local governments to adopt an age-friendly planning approach.

Nearly 33 per cent of seniors in Western Australia now live in a local government area that has adopted an age-friendly planning approach. This paper outlines the key findings from the age-friendly consultations the Department for Communities has supported.

I encourage all local governments and service agencies to use this information to support seniors to continue to fully participate in their community.

Hon Robyn McSweeney MLC

**MINISTER FOR CHILD PROTECTION; COMMUNITY SERVICES;
SENIORS AND VOLUNTEERING; WOMEN'S INTERESTS; YOUTH**

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Introduction

This paper summarises the methodology, outcomes and key findings from the Age-Friendly Communities funding program delivered by the Department for Communities that underwrote research projects in 27 local government areas between 2006 and 2011. The paper is presented as a 'collective examination' of the most recent reports provided by 23 of these local governments.

Readers are referred to the local governments themselves for detail of the reports at a local level. Each of the Age-friendly research reports records the positive features of their community in terms of age-friendliness and those aspects that are in need of improvement. This paper examines the recurring and significant trends identified across all of these reports.

It is intended that these matters should be considered by service agencies and planners in the development of state government policies and programs at all levels. Non-government planners and service providers, state government agencies, the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors and the community at large all have a role to play.

What is an Age-friendly Community?

In an age-friendly community, there is a culture of inclusion shared by people of all ages and abilities. Policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to support and enable people to age actively - that is, to live in security, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in society.

The methodology for the Age-friendly Communities research projects was based on the World Health Organisation's *Age-friendly Cities framework*¹, an internationally tested framework which can be used to investigate and enhance the age-friendliness of a community. It acknowledges that older people are best placed to identify what they need to engage fully in their community and thereby achieve a better quality of life. The first-hand experience and input of older people is the key to the framework.

¹ Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide World Health Organisation 2007

Consultation with seniors benefits not only the planners and service deliverers, but the seniors themselves. A key determinant of ageing well is involvement in the planning and delivery of services.

By using the needs of older people as a lens through which to assess the friendliness of a community and its infrastructure, improvements can be effected for all. What is good for older people is also good for people of any age. For example, a well-constructed and well-lit footpath is good for an older person who has mobility problems as well as for the mother with a pram.

The Department for Communities remains focussed on strengthening communities and supports an age-friendly approach as the most effective way to encourage seniors to stay connected and to participate in their community. Strong communities where people are involved and look out for each other can help to support those who are, or who are at risk of becoming, isolated.

Background

As local governments are well suited to explore the issues faced by seniors as they age, the Department for Communities provided funding support to assist Western Australian local governments incorporate an age-friendly approach into their strategic planning processes.

Between 2006 and 2011, 27 local governments in Western Australia received this funding.

The first four local governments were funded in 2006 – 2007. They were the City of Melville, the Shire of Augusta/Margaret River, the City of Rockingham, and the City of Mandurah. These local governments have incorporated their research findings into their planning processes and continue to develop seniors' specific strategies. In 2010 – 2011, a further 23 local governments in Western Australia were funded by the Department for Communities and committed to adopting an age-friendly approach to their planning.

These were:

Metropolitan local governments (11)	Non-metropolitan local governments (12)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Bayswater • City of Cockburn • City of Fremantle • Town of Mosman Park (partnering with Town of Claremont; Shire of Peppermint Grove; Town of Cottesloe) • City of Perth • City of Subiaco • City of Swan • Town of Kwinana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shire of Busselton • Shire of Carnarvon • Shire of Denmark • Shire of Moora • Shire of Nannup • Shire of West Arthur (partnering with Shire of Wagin; Shire of Woodanilling; Shire of Williams; Shire of Dumbleyung; Shire of Lake Grace) • Shire of Capel

This translates to 32.89% of the total seniors population in Western Australia living in a local government area which has adopted an age-friendly approach to its planning.²

- Of the total number of seniors living in the metropolitan area, 42.02% reside in local governments which have adopted an age-friendly approach to their planning.
- Conversely, of the total number of seniors living in the non-metropolitan area 7.5% of Western Australian seniors reside in rural or regional local governments which have adopted an age-friendly approach to their planning.

² ABS Census data 2006

Key findings

The older people who participated in the research reported that they enjoyed living in their local area and were keen to assist in making improvements to their environment. They have also thought of some solutions to the issues they raised and their suggestions are included in the reports.

This paper provides an examination of each of the local government reports and summarises those features which have been noted as having a higher priority.

It is very clear that the issues and concerns of most significance to Western Australian seniors are associated with transport, health and housing. Concerns about communication and information were also highlighted in many of the reports.

1. Transport

- The need for greater access to reliable and affordable transport was highlighted in most of the reports.
- In the metropolitan areas the infrequency of buses and the need for more parking were cited as major frustrations.
- In non-metropolitan areas, it was the lack of public transport that rated highest concern.
- A positive finding was participants' appreciation for the provision of free public transport and the introduction of the fuel card for regional residents.

2. Health services

- Older people in metropolitan areas expressed greater concerns with accessing information about what support was available.
- Non-metropolitan seniors cited concerns about the availability of Home and Community Care services in their local community.
- Those who were in receipt of support services indicated how much they valued and relied on those services.

3. Housing

- Older people reported that they enjoyed living where they were.
- They also reported they were concerned that they may not be able to remain in their own homes or in their locality as they age.

4. Communication and information

- Seniors wanted better dissemination of information about civic events and impending natural disasters.

The areas that were noted as receiving the most favourable responses were in outdoor spaces, respect and inclusion, social participation and civic participation, notably volunteering.

1. Outdoor spaces

- Most reports noted participants were satisfied with the quality of their local environment, particularly the natural and manmade assets.

2. Respect and Inclusion

- Most reports noted participants felt respected by others in their community.

3. Social participation

- Most reports noted that participants felt there were a good variety of civic events.

4. Civic participation

- Participants welcomed volunteering opportunities and felt valued when they volunteered.

Age-friendly Framework Methodology

To undertake the research, the local governments were asked to follow as closely as possible the Department for Communities' *Western Australian Age-friendly Communities* approach, which was built upon the Vancouver Protocol developed for the Age-Friendly Cities Project. This approach uses the checklist of Essential Features of Age-Friendly Cities.³ The checklist covers the features of the local area's structures, environment, services and policies that reflect the determinants of active ageing. Active Ageing depends on a variety of influences or *determinants* that surround individuals, families and nations. Active Ageing is the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.

As previously noted, the age-friendly methodology requires a 'bottom up' process where seniors themselves are consulted in the research. It is preferable that this consultation takes the form of focus group discussions and/or a survey. Also included in the consultation are service providers and carers. Where it is difficult to engage with any of these groups, local governments were encouraged to use a variety of means to collect the data, such as one-on-one interviews.

The recommended methodology requires investigation of the eight essential features of an age-friendly community:

- Outdoor spaces and Buildings
- Transport
- Housing
- Social Participation
- Respect and Inclusion
- Civic Participation and Employment
- Communication and Information
- Community support and health services

³ Age-Friendly Communities: A Western Australian Approach: July 2010

The focus areas are not mutually exclusive. For example, both 'Transport', and 'Communication and Information' relate to all other topics - without transport and communication it is not possible to attend social activities, get to health services, or to remain living safely at home.

Each project used a Reference Group to:

1. oversee the coordination of the project
2. oversee the information gathering process
3. review the draft reports.

Members of the Reference Group were drawn from the local government and the broader community.

Each local government was responsible for:

1. promoting the project within the region
2. recruiting all participants as determined by the Reference Group
3. bearing any additional costs and co-ordinating venues, facilities and refreshments
4. providing general administrative support required for the workshops
5. meeting the cost of publication of the report/s if necessary.

Upon completion of the project, local governments were also required to disseminate the results within their community, and to consider how to respond to any measures identified as needed to assist their community to be more age-friendly.

All of the 15 research reports from the 2010-2011 Age-Friendly Communities program are available on the participating local governments' websites, or by contacting the local government directly. A full list of the reports is at Appendix 1.

The research process does not require older people to consider and discuss broad overarching concepts. Rather it provides the opportunity for seniors themselves to talk about the detail of their lives in a non-confrontational way, and reassures them that their comments will be considered in the planning of their local community.

Research limitations

This research is not without its limitations. The most often reported limiting factors were the low representation of:

- carers (7 reports)
- Aboriginal and Indigenous people (5 reports)
- those from the CaLD community (4 reports).

Other limitations about participants include:

- over-representation of women
- lack of visitor and / or worker profile
- low representation of service providers
- low representation of marginalised people.

The reports reflect those who participated, rather than the views of the whole population of each local government. In this regard, all reports mentioned some kind of difficulty in attracting participants in one or many groups. However, in acknowledging there was a deficit many have recognised the gaps relevant to their own research and are acting to include the future representation of these groups.

There were also a number of concerns about the process including:

- that the methodology favours those who were already connected with the community
- it favours those with good communication skills
- some of the questions were too broad and some were considered to lack relevance.

There was also some concerns that the age specified in the research methodology of people aged 60 years and over prevents information from being gathered from the 'soon to be seniors' category which some have identified would have been useful for identifying possible solutions.

However, as the City of Cockburn has noted, it is possible that as the residents see the results of the consultation process are implemented, there is a greater likelihood of greater participation in future consultations.⁴

Issues arising from the methodology

As older people themselves have made the commitment to be involved in the process, so there is an expectation that the findings will be included in future planning and improvements made. The Age-friendly Communities framework provides for constant incremental improvements and can be successful if there exists a commitment for all parties to continue to address overarching concerns, and to respond at the local level.

A number of workshops were held with participating local governments during the research process to discuss any difficulties and to share strategies and ideas about how to address these issues. These included:

- how to manage the expectations of participants
- how to ensure the local government community profile is represented in the data gathering process
- how to attract or engage with those sectors of the community that are less visible, such as carers and the socially isolated.

The strategies used to address these issues are included in each of the reports.

Participation

The significant advantage with an age-friendly approach to planning is that older people are included at the local level by their local government. This gives them a real sense of belonging and ownership of the research, as this quote captures:

“I am impressed with this project. Seniors have a wealth of life experiences and abilities. With this project we can feel useful, feel required and feel we are not lost or forgotten.”⁵

⁴ City of Cockburn report, page 27

⁵ City of Swan report, page 28

Significant Findings

Each of the local government reports contains a summary highlighting specific factors identified as being priority areas for action to improve the age-friendliness of the local area. These factors were extracted and tallied, noting the number for local government reports in which they were mentioned to give a general indication of how many local governments reported identical or similar issues.

The age-friendly methodology asked participants about both the positive features of their community and those that needed attention. Often there were contradictory results, with the reports showing very positive responses but also a great deal of concern around the same issue.

For example, the City of Bayswater report under the domain of Outdoor Spaces and Buildings noted as an age-friendly aspect that “Older People strongly articulated how much they enjoyed the City’s Parks, gardens, play areas and walking paths and the seating and shade provided to help them and their friends and family enjoy these areas.”⁶ Conversely, the City’s report noted as an un-friendly aspect in the Outdoor Spaces and Buildings that “Aspects of parks and green spaces that caused concerns for older people were mostly specific to certain locations and included lack of seating, difficulty accessing some areas, spaces not being watered and local safety hazards.”⁷

As noted earlier, of all the domains the three that most frequently received attention were Transport, Housing and Health. However, within each domain there are findings, both favourable and unfavourable, which need consideration to provide a complete overview.

- **Outdoor Spaces and Buildings**

Residents who can access and feel safe in their surroundings enjoy a higher quality of life than those who cannot. For those who rely on pedestrian access to shops or to public transport, safe routes are critical to their independence. A community where individuals can walk safely promotes greater interaction among neighbours.

⁶ City of Bayswater, page 24

⁷ City of Bayswater, page 28

This also promotes a greater sense of individual security and leads to enhanced community cohesiveness.

Positives:

There were many positive comments relating to the quality of outdoor spaces with most reports noting participants were generally satisfied (9 of 15 reports). Also often reported was the value of the natural and the man-made assets of particular localities (8 reports).

Barriers / Concerns:

In both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas those features which rated of highest concern were lack of seating, inadequate footpaths and a lack of public toilets. A lack of lighting was noted in some reports. This impacted on a willingness to go out in the evening.

Transport issues were also raised in these discussions and included the identification of particular intersections where crossing the road could be hazardous. A suggestion for installing a median strip was a common solution.

Similarly, some reports noted that residents were unhappy with dual use pathways, where cyclists or skateboarders were not considerate of an older person's capacity to move aside quickly. For example, "The...group felt strongly that cycle paths would be beneficial ...in order to reduce the likelihood of collisions between cyclists (generally children) and pedestrians." ⁸

• **Transportation**

The availability of private and public transport and the cost, reliability and frequency of transport has a great impact on how well individuals age. Accessible transport is vital in supporting older people to participate and remain active in their community. A community grows stronger and more cohesive when all ages can access a range of transport options that will enable them to participate in local activities. The transport domain crosses into all other features.

⁸ Shire of Moora report, page 12

Positives

Reports indicated that seniors were appreciative of the introduction of free public transport afforded to older people travelling outside of peak periods in the metropolitan area. Also mentioned was the value of the fuel card for those in non-metropolitan areas.

In some cases public transport was acknowledged as reliable, affordable and frequent. These comments were more likely to be recorded by those who resided close to public transport. The introduction of reduced speed limits in school zones was also noted as a very positive initiative.⁹

Barriers / Concerns

Lack of accessible and affordable public or private transport is identified as a major issue for older people, not only to get to and from their health care providers, but also to remain socially active in their community. This is particularly important for older people who no longer drive.

In the metropolitan area, the infrequency of buses, difficulties in finding parking at train stations, a need for more seats and shelters at bus stops and the unreliability and high cost of taxis were the major issues cited as needing attention. Individuals who had relinquished their Driver's Licence had a heightened awareness of these issues.

In the non-metropolitan area, where public transport often does not exist outside regional centres, the call was for public transport and transport options between towns. In non-metropolitan areas, getting from one place to another, either within the local area, or to Perth for specialist medical care becomes more acute with no or limited public transport. Loss of a Driver's licence is again a significant problem for those in non-metropolitan areas.

⁹ Town of Mosman and partners report, page 7

A number of reports noted the concerns of participants in relation to the safety of gophers on roads and footpaths, the need for gopher rider training and community awareness.¹⁰

- **Housing**

Affordable accommodation, in an accessible location and close to services, is an essential factor in the level of independence and quality of life enjoyed by older people. The design of individual homes, access to and affordability of maintenance services, and modifications to dwellings, are equally vital components in enabling older people to remain in their own homes and in their community for as long as possible.

Positives

Without exception, all the reports showed that residents taking part in the research enjoyed living in their own neighbourhood, although citing a variety of reasons. One participant residing in Guildford in the City of Swan commented: *“It is just wonderful living in Guildford – there’s the library, baker, book exchange, recycling dress shop...”*¹¹ The Shire of Busselton reported that “They (the majority of project participants) appreciated the lifestyle, the environment and the services available.”¹²

Barriers / Concerns

Also consistent in the findings was the concern that there may not be options for seniors to remain in their own home, and/or in their neighbourhood, in the future.

These concerns fell into two categories:

- limited access to support services, such as meals on wheels, help with cleaning and assistance to effect minor repairs to their homes; and
- that affordable alternative accommodation, including aged-care accommodation, retirement villages and nursing homes might not be available when they needed it.

¹⁰ City of Swan report pages 6, 34, and Shire of Busselton report, page 17

¹¹ City of Swan report, page 32

¹² Shire of Busselton report, page 4

The problem of access to appropriate and affordable housing is a greater concern to older residents in non-metropolitan Western Australia. For example: “*We love Carnarvon, we want to stay. The thought of having to move for health reasons is traumatic*” (Member of Senior Citizens’ Club)¹³

Although specific housing needs differ in every local government area, these issues rated highly in all of the 15 reports.

A number of reports also noted participants’ reluctance to plan for their future housing needs. For example, one report noted: “They didn’t really want to think about it and ... they hoped more services would be available by the time they need them, with almost all respondents saying they wanted to remain in the area”.¹⁴ This points towards the almost overwhelming nature of this matter, to the extent that participants felt they had little control over their future accommodation options. This was evident in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. For example, as noted in one report: “Our elderly residents, particularly those aged 70 years and over, are adopting a ‘wait and see’ attitude to what facilities are available when we are no longer able to live in our own home. We choose not to plan ahead”.¹⁵

There was a common unifying call for a collaborative approach to better manage the long term planning needed to meet the housing needs of older people in order to help them to remain in their local community.

In many reports it was noted that carers were also concerned about the availability of accommodation for those they were caring for. For example: “Housing availability and lack of in-home support for their loved ones was a major concern for these carers, especially as they were ageing.”¹⁶

- **Social participation**

To be able to interact at formal occasions, such as community consultations to address specific issues, and on informal occasions, such as festival events or

¹³ Shire of Carnarvon report, page 9

¹⁴ City of Subiaco report, page 12

¹⁵ Shire of Nannup report, page 6

¹⁶ City of Bayswater report, page 31

activities, fosters community integration.¹⁷ Social participation can become more difficult if the infrastructure supporting participation, such as transport and information dissemination is lacking.

Actively encouraging participation contributes to a person's sense of belonging and value to the community and can prevent isolation. The range of events, facilities, the timing and cost of events and availability of transport options can all support or hinder the participation of individuals.

Positives

Many of the reports showed that participants thought that there were a good variety of events (12 reports): "It's very easy to socialise in this community...I'm never home" said one 89 year old Wagin resident.¹⁸ Also noted as a positive age-friendly aspect were the dedicated seniors' centres (3 reports) and how the participants valued the opportunity to get together through the age-friendly consultation process.

These positive reports are tempered by a 'self-selection' limitation of the methodology as described earlier. This was succinctly described in the Kwinana report: "It is important to consider that while the feedback we received relating to social participation was fantastic, it is likely that those older people who did participate are not likely to be those most at risk of, or suffering from social isolation."¹⁹

Barriers / Concerns

The barriers to social participation also fell within other age-friendly domains. Lack of transport options were cited as the major obstacle in accessing activities in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas (8 reports). Lack of or difficulty in accessing information about events was also highlighted as an area for action (6 reports). Other factors seen as a barrier are the cost of attending events (3 reports) and a lack of confidence in socialising (3 reports).

¹⁷ WHO Global Age Friendly Cities: A Guide, page 44

¹⁸ Wheatbelt shires report, page 14

¹⁹ Town of Kwinana report, page 9

Specific to the non-metropolitan area was a call for a more personal approach to involving older people in community activities.²⁰

- **Respect and Inclusion**

For older people, feeling respected and included are crucial components to enjoying their lives. Incidents where an older person is ignored or treated without respect can have a serious flow-on effect. An example may be when shopping for computing equipment - the person may have wanted to enhance their computing skills so they can interact with their grandchildren, but after having a negative experience with a retailer, feel reluctant to pursue that learning goal. Subsequent to this that person may be at risk of becoming isolated from family and become increasingly wary of engaging with other people for fear of a similar negative experience.

Positives

This domain received the highest positive rating, where those participating in the project felt that they were respected and had plenty of opportunities to be included. Many of the comments were related to the possibility that others who were not involved in the research may not feel as positively about the level of respect for older people in their community.

Barriers / Concerns

The need for more multi-generational opportunities was cited. These were seen to be important in building tolerance and understanding between the generations and creating a more cohesive community (10 reports). For example, the City of Perth noted: “Suggested initiatives to encourage respect and inclusion were intergenerational meeting places and community centres (as opposed to the traditional senior citizens centres) as well as more affordable activities that can be enjoyed by everyone.”²¹

Interestingly, in some reports, there was a perceived link between infrastructure and the respect of the local authority towards older people. For example: *“I think that the people show a great deal of respect and tolerance but it is the little things that let the*

²⁰ Shire of Denmark report , page 22, and Shire of Moora report, page 18

²¹ City of Perth report, Page 8

*community and shire down – such as not enough seating, no chairs in shops, inadequate signage on ACROD bays, uneven footpaths etc.*²²

- **Civic participation and employment**

As noted in the WHO Global Age-friendly Guide “...Older people are interested in and willing to participate in civic functions.”²³

Older people wish to have employment opportunities and volunteering opportunities. Without options to remain in paid or unpaid work, older people can become disconnected from their community and lose a sense of purpose in their lives. It is important for all sectors of the community to be vigilant in ensuring that older people are not discriminated against when seeking work or remaining in work.

Positives

Many local governments reported that older people were pleased to have the opportunity to be consulted by their local government on matters that affected them.

Repeatedly noted was the sense of feeling valued when volunteering (14 reports). Research participants generally welcomed the opportunities to volunteer in their community to ‘give something back’.

There was one local government that reported a perceived lack of opportunities to volunteer, with most local government reports (14 reports) recording that participants felt valued when they volunteered and welcomed opportunities to volunteer.

The responses to questions regarding employment varied greatly between local governments and between the various age groups. Those in the older age bracket often indicated that they were retired and not seeking employment.

Barriers / Concerns

The cost of parking and other associated costs, such as transport and fuel costs, are believed to be a major factor in reducing volunteering rates. This aspect was also

²² Shire of Denmark report, page 69

²³ WHO Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, page 55

noted by service providers.²⁴ Other issues identified included the age of volunteers and that there seemed to be a lack of others ready to step up to take their place.

With regard to employment, some concern was expressed that employment opportunities were reduced due to an ageist employment market. For example: “It was noted that opportunities for older people to engage in paid work was limited and often an area of age discrimination.”²⁵ Respondents also indicated a reluctance to find employment due to a loss of pension when engaged in paid employment. It was also stated by some participants that as they aged, they found their physical ability declined, so undertaking some work related tasks became limited.

- **Communication and information**

Communication and information impact on all other aspects of creating an age-friendly community. Without access to timely and accurate information older people can quickly lose those vital connections to community activities. Implementing a variety of strategies to ensure that people who are, or who are at risk of becoming, socially isolated, is important.

When residents have difficulty accessing information a community can struggle to create a sense of cohesion, vibrancy and well-being. The impacts of inaccessible information can range from individuals becoming more easily isolated if they are unaware of community services and events, to businesses not getting the turnover required to prosper and in turn support the community. For a community where information is not easily accessed, the consequences can be inconvenient such as missing a bus for a volunteering commitment or job interview, or extremely serious, such as not receiving vital information in the event of an emergency such as an impending storm or fire.

Positives

Local libraries and local newspapers were identified as a valued source of information, as was the internet.

²⁴ City of Bayswater report, p 32

²⁵ City of Fremantle report, page v

In the non-metropolitan areas 'word-of-mouth' was cited as being a good transmitter of information and particularly effective where there is greater social cohesion.

Barriers/Concerns

Calls for improvements in communication and information were noted in the majority of the reports (11 reports). These covered a variety of types of information, including information about civic events and importantly for non-metropolitan residents, better dissemination of information about impending natural disasters and during emergency situations such as fire and flood.

Of highest concern was access to information about housing options and the availability of health and community services. Better access to information about social participation and volunteering opportunities was noted in a number of reports.

Many of the reports included recommendations that the local government itself improve their communication strategies. For example, *"There is a need to improve the level of information available about activities, events and services and the Shire can take a lead in addressing this."*²⁶

- **Community support and health services**

Access to health care and support services can determine the level of independence of an individual and their capacity to be active and enjoy life. Better provision and coordination of services will be needed to meet the growing needs of an ageing population. The research reports have confirmed this call for better management of existing services, and creation and authority to allow implementation of more flexible approaches in meeting individuals' needs.

Positives

The reports showed that those who were in receipt of services were very appreciative of that support and many were generally happy with the level of service

²⁶ Shire of Capel report , page 31

being provided to them (7 reports). Those in rural and regional areas highly valued the Home and Community Care services available to them.

Barriers/Concerns

Access to health services was raised as a major concern across the Age-Friendly projects. The following issues were reported most often:

- gaps in the provision of medical services and the location of specialist services. For many residents in regional areas these concerns were more keenly felt due to the distances required to travel for medical services, often requiring overnight accommodation in the metropolitan area. In addition there was a concern that Home and Community Care Services are already stretched and with increasing numbers of older people requiring services, this problem may become more acute;
- information about what is available was reported as being difficult to locate;
- accessing services due to either ineligibility or high costs was a significant concern; and
- increasing support for carers in regional where respite services are lacking was also identified as an issue needing attention.

Suggested solutions

The reports also contain a number of suggestions that agencies may wish to consider in during the design or delivery stages of specific programs or projects.

Many of the reports included suggestions that were specific to their concerns, such as a suggestion that 'public meeting be held during the day rather than at night which may result in more participation by older people', or that the 'traffic light timers at specific intersections, be modified to allow sufficient time for older people to cross safely', etc.

Similarly, there were suggestions that would require involvement and action by state government agencies. Such changes may require reconsideration of a government led scheme or project, or cooperation between many agencies at a number of levels.

Conclusions

There were no new issues identified in the research reports that were not revealed in the WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide. This was not unexpected. The reports, however, provide a valuable tool to inform future directions for local government and can be used to support their planning and decision making processes.

Undertaking the research has achieved many positive outcomes:

- a heightened sense of being valued by participants
- greater connections between residents and local government staff
- opportunities to hear directly from residents about their solutions to the barriers they have identified
- current information with which to inform future priorities for planning
- validation of the current work undertaken by local governments
- greater connections within and between agency staff due to the networking opportunities
- opportunities to develop strategies through a collaborative approach
- opportunities to extend the age-friendly concept and practice throughout WA local governments and into business and
- an increased knowledge base for development of each local government's Strategic Community Plan.

Appendix 1:

List of Age-friendly Local Government Research Reports

Local Government	Report title
Bayswater	City of Bayswater Age Friendly Communities Project Final Report June 2011
Busselton	Shire of Busselton Age-friendly Community Project , July 2011
Capel	Shire of Capel Age-Friendly Communities November 2010
Carnarvon	Shire of Carnarvon, Age-Friendly Communities Project Report June 2011
Cockburn	City of Cockburn Age-Friendly Communities Consultation Report
Denmark	Shire of Denmark Age Friendly Community Study Final Report June 2011
Fremantle	City of Fremantle Age-friendly Consultation Project Report - May 2011
Kwinana	Town of Kwinana Age-friendly Communities Project 2011
Moora	Shire of Moora Age-friendly Communities Study Final Report June 2011
Mosman Park, Peppermint Grove, Claremont and Cottesloe	Age-Friendly Communities Project 2010/2011 Final Report June 2011 A joint project by the Towns of Mosman Park, Claremont and Cottesloe, and the Shire of Peppermint Grove
Nannup	Shire of Nannup Age Friendly Communities Plan, 1 July 2010 - 30 June 2015
Perth	City of Perth Age-Friendly City - Consultation Report Final Draft August 2011
Subiaco	City of Subiaco Age Friendly Report 2011
Swan	City of Swan Age-Friendly Communities Project Final Report 2011
Wheatbelt Shires: Dumbleyung, Lake Grace, Wagin, West Arthur, Williams, Woodanilling	Age-Friendly Communities A joint project across six wheat-belt shires of Western Australia Project Report Dumbleyung, Lake Grace, Wagin, West Arthur, Williams, Woodanilling