Never Too Late to Learn: A report on older people and lifelong learning
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NSW Committee on Ageing

The NSW Committee on Ageing advises the Government on matters affecting the needs, interests and wellbeing of older people in NSW. The 14 members of the Committee come from diverse backgrounds and have skills and interests in many different areas of public policy. Each serves for up to three years.
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Foreword

It is often said that older people should be able to live productive and rewarding lives, maintain their independence and participate in the life of the community. Yet to make this a reality, older people must be able to access the same opportunities available to other members of society.

Currently, less than 2% of older people attend a formal educational institution such as TAFE or university. Yet at the same time, many older people take part in activities which promote learning in their local communities.

As our society changes more and more rapidly, it is vital that older people have access to learning activities which enable them to keep pace with change. Learning increases health and wellbeing, provides social contact and support and assists older people to access other opportunities, such as employment.

We all learn throughout life: work, family life, involvement with our community, and that ‘great teacher, experience’, contribute to this ‘lifelong learning’. It’s time to challenge the assumption made by many older people that learning is ‘not for me’, and promote older people’s participation in all kinds of learning activities.

This report is based on consultations conducted by the Committee in 1996. Members of the Health and Education Sub-committee held six consultations: four in and around Sydney and two in rural areas. These consultations focused on the benefits of lifelong learning and barriers to access and equity. Examples of programs for older people were documented, and some are summarised in the present report. In addition the report makes recommendations regarding policy issues and directions.

The report is designed for all those with an interest in issues affecting older people, and in creating and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for older people. On behalf of the Committee, I commend this report to you.

John Mountford
Chairperson
NSW Committee on Ageing
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<tr>
<td>AAACE</td>
<td>Australian Association of Adult and Community Education</td>
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<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<td>ACAT</td>
<td>Aged Care Assessment Team</td>
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<td>ADD</td>
<td>Ageing &amp; Disability Department</td>
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<td>AMES</td>
<td>Adult Migrant English Service</td>
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<td>Board of Adult and Community Education</td>
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<td>CES</td>
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<td>Council of Australian Governments</td>
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<td>COTA</td>
<td>Council on the Ageing</td>
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<td>CPSA</td>
<td>Combined Pensioners and Superannuants’ Association</td>
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<td>DTEC</td>
<td>Department of Training and Education Coordination</td>
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<td>EAC</td>
<td>Ethnic Affairs Commission</td>
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<td>EPAC</td>
<td>Economic Policy Advisory Commission</td>
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<td>HACC</td>
<td>Home and Community Care Program</td>
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<td>NESB</td>
<td>Non English Speaking Background</td>
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<td>OWN</td>
<td>Older Women’s Network</td>
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<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
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<td>U3A</td>
<td>University of the Third Age</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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Executive summary

Lifelong Learning is no longer a fringe issue or luxury. It is a necessity.¹

Older people’s participation in lifelong learning is a social justice issue. Involvement in learning opportunities is vital if older people are to be able to take up their rights and responsibilities as active citizens. Action to overcome barriers to participation in lifelong learning is therefore a key issue in policy formulation for older people into the next century.

There is an obvious connection between the opportunities offered by lifelong learning and older people’s need to live active and interesting lives. In an information rich, rapidly ageing society with a high rate of early retirement, older people have the time, and often the resources, to devote to self-improvement, gaining new skills, and developing new interests. Indeed, many adult education classes are dominated by older women, who are seizing the opportunity for a ‘second chance’ to learn.

Benefits of lifelong learning extend beyond the immediate advantages of improved skills, new opportunities and mental stimulation. They include greater social and physical wellbeing, better memory, greater self-esteem, and more social networks and friendships. For older people in particular, learning activities provide the opportunity to keep up with social and technological change. It is for these reasons that lifelong learning is considered to be integral to a ‘healthy ageing’ approach, that is one which focuses on maintaining older people’s health, independence and wellbeing.

Recognition that lifelong learning is of particular interest to older people is, perhaps surprisingly, relatively recent. Despite the benefits outlined, and the evident link between older people’s lifestyle and lifelong learning opportunities, older people as a group are not currently well represented in education. Attitudes and structural and institutional barriers, have kept older people’s involvement in learning activities as low as two to five per cent. Many providers of education have not caught up with demographic change, and do not successfully target older people, instead focusing their efforts on younger people and those still in the workplace. Older people themselves often perceive learning as ‘not for them’, and may have previous experiences of education which discourage their participation.

Addressing barriers and changing negative attitudes towards lifelong learning requires concerted effort from governments, educators, service providers, older people’s organisations and older people themselves. This report aims to provide a focus for these groups by outlining key policy issues and examples of good practice.

The NSW Committee on Ageing advises the New South Wales Government on matters affecting the needs, interests and wellbeing of older people in NSW. Since 1994 the Committee has undertaken a number of projects relating to lifelong learning, including publication of a discussion paper, participation in Adult and Community Education policy formulation in NSW and at the national level and consultation with older people and education providers in 1994 and 1996. This report documents the results of the 1996 consultation process, and outlines current key policy issues and examples of good practice in provision.
Key points made in the report include:

- As the population ages, strategies to increase the independence and wellbeing of older people will be essential in order to contain the costs of health care and community services.

- Lack of access to learning opportunities and other activities which promote healthy ageing is likely to result in increased demands on government by a less independent and self-sufficient older population.

- Small investments in healthy ageing programs, including support for lifelong learning, could potentially result in reductions in health and welfare expenditure.

- In a society where technology and information systems change rapidly, the ability to continue to learn and adapt is as vital for the old as it is for the young.

- Unnecessary intergenerational conflict is created when investment in older people’s learning is viewed as a waste of resources which could better be directed towards younger generations. Given the prevalence of these kinds of attitudes, it is hardly surprising that many older people believe that education is ‘for the young’.

- Those who have engaged in lifelong learning are much more likely to live well in later life.

- Lifelong learning is an important cultural right which in turn prepares older people to take up their other rights and responsibilities.

- There is a lack of appropriate programs for older people from socially and economically disadvantaged groups. Greater effort needs to be made to reach these groups, determine their needs and provide appropriate education and training.

- Governments and providers have yet to meet the challenge to assist older people to access a range of learning opportunities which will enable them to keep pace with change.

This report from the NSW Committee on Ageing argues for the immediate further development of a lifelong learning culture for older people.
Introduction

In 1989 Peter Laslett wrote that a new life stage was emerging in Western developed countries. He called it the ‘third age’, a period in later life when people have the time and the maturity to devote to self-realisation. According to Laslett the ‘third age’ is a period of ‘autonomy in self-fulfilment; of pursuit of aims freely chosen, either on one’s own or in collaboration with others in the third age; an age particularly of cultural activity and satisfaction...the Crown of Life’.

An important part of the ‘third age’ is the ability to access and participate in learning and education.

Adult education enjoys a distinguished history. For example, the first workers’ education associations and mechanics institutes were established in Australia in the mid 19th century. Nor is interest in lifelong learning new: the concept of lifelong education, or education permante has been discussed since the early 1970’s at international meetings and forums.

In the late 20th century lifelong learning, associated with ongoing, self-directed growth and development, is an extension of the work of the early adult education movement which aimed to make education available outside the walls of universities and schools, to workers and other disenfranchised groups.

This report is based on consultations undertaken in 1996 by the Health and Education Sub-committee of the NSW Committee on Ageing. The report argues that older people’s access to lifelong learning is a key issue for policy makers and education providers into the next century for the following reasons:

• Older people’s participation in lifelong learning is a social justice issue. It is vital that all older people can access learning activities which will enable them to keep pace with change and participate in the life of the community.

• Participation in lifelong learning is part of the process of self-development and social development. Benefits of lifelong learning for older people are considerable and include better health, increased wellbeing, and the potential to combat the onset of degenerative conditions such as dementia.

• Governments are faced with the likelihood of increased expenditure on health and welfare services as the population ages. Governments need to develop policy and programs which promote healthy ageing in order to contain these costs. Access to lifelong learning is critical to a healthy ageing approach.

• Older people do not currently participate in education provided by TAFE, universities and Adult and Community Education in great numbers. Although participation in community based activities is more extensive, the majority of older people are missing out, as a result of individual, attitudinal and structural barriers.

This report is designed to be read by all those with an interest in the education and training of older people, including providers of formal and informal education, policy makers at all three levels of Government, older people and their organisations.
The report outlines current policy issues in relation to lifelong learning for older people and documents examples of good practice in providing learning opportunities.

**Part One** discusses the current policy context and key issues in relation to lifelong learning.

**Part Two** documents case studies drawn from consultations held by the Committee, and identifies principles of good practice.

**Part Three** identifies policy issues to be addressed and **Part Four** makes recommendations regarding policy directions.

A list of individuals who made submissions or attended consultations is included at **Appendix A.**

**Background to the consultations**

In 1995 the NSW Committee on Ageing released a discussion paper *Lifelong Learning: Life Transitions and the Older Learner* which highlighted the need for a New South Wales government policy which would recognise and resource older people’s right to access learning opportunities. This paper was based on earlier work of the Committee, including a 1994 consultation, *Living Longer, Living Better, Learning Together.* Launched at the Adult Learners Week Conference in September 1995, the discussion paper was widely circulated and received a positive response. More than 40 individuals and organisations made detailed submissions to the Committee.

The Committee then designed a series of consultations to be held on key issues identified in these submissions. The purpose of the consultations was to document examples of good practice in providing learning opportunities for older people.

Four consultations were held in and around Sydney on the following issues:

- **Learning for Wellbeing** – Coast Centre for Seniors, Maroubra
- **Program Delivery** – Penrith U3A School of the Arts
- **Technology** – Gosford Leagues Club
- **Access & Equity** – Bankstown Library

In addition, two rural consultations, one in Armidale and the other in Wagga Wagga, were held at which all four issues were discussed. Organisations which could not send representatives made additional submissions, and some individuals gave their time in one on one interviews.

It is the hope of the Committee that this report will contribute to the development of a vital, thriving learning culture for older people which will promote their health, wellbeing, independence and participation in the community.
The concept of ‘lifelong learning’, introduced by UNESCO in 1979, emphasises the importance of learning for people of all ages. Evidence presented in the discussion that follows suggests that continued learning is vital to maintain older people’s health and wellbeing, improve their quality of life, and promote their freedom and independence. Just as importantly, learning also enables older people’s active participation in the workforce and the community, and gives them access to opportunities for self-development. As the population ages, demand for innovative programs and courses for older people is likely to increase.

The role that learning plays in developing the skills and increasing the career opportunities of young people has long made their needs a priority for educators and policy makers. However until recently, the interests of older people have been comparatively neglected.

This report argues that it is necessary to now start developing strategies, implement appropriate programs for, and increase the involvement of, the significant number of older people who do not currently participate in learning activities.
Between 1996 and 2051, the Australian population is projected to grow from 18.3 million to between 24.9 and 28.3 million (see figure 1.1). The number of people aged 65 and over will grow from 2.2 million in 1996 to 4 million in 2021 and 6 million in 2051. This represents an increase from 12% to 23% of the total population between 1996 and 2051. New South Wales can expect a population increase of people aged 65 and over from 770,900 in 1996 to 1.3 million in 2021 and 1.9 million in 2051. The so-called ‘young old’ aged 55-74 will increase from 990,000 in 1996 to 1,830,700 in 2051, while the ‘old old’ aged 75 and over will rise from 322,100 in 1996 to 1,087,200 in 2051.

### The ageing of the population

In Australia, on average, women can expect to live seven years longer than men. The ratio of men to women aged 65 and over is currently 76 men to every 100 women, for those over 85 it is 40 to 100. While it is predicted this ratio may become more balanced over the next 50 years, today there are still many more older women than older men, resulting in more demand for services, including learning opportunities, among older women. Notably, older women are far more likely to suffer from dementia, with rates of dementia among women aged 85 years and over increasing by 30% between 1993 and 1994 alone. Overall, approximately 14% of all people aged 65 and over were born in non-English speaking countries. At the 1991 census, 8.1% of those aged 65 and over spoke a language other than English. 35% of men and 48% of women aged 65 and over from non-English speaking backgrounds reported that they spoke English poorly. Rates of ageing are much higher in some ethnic communities, in particular those which saw heavy migration to Australia following the Second World War. These are primarily European communities: for example, in 1991 Estonian, Dutch, German, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Russian communities all had more than 40% of their population aged 55 and over.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have considerably higher mortality rates than other Australians. Average life expectancy for Aboriginal Australians is considerably less than the 82 years for women and 75 years for men average among other Australians. As a result, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are generally considered to be older if they are 45 years or more. At the 1991 census 2.3% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in NSW were over the age of 65. 12.3% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were aged 45 and over.

### Interpreting ageing

Over the past few years several major economic reports, including studies by the Economic Policy Advisory Commission (1994) and the National Commission of Audit (1996), have considered the question of how governments can best provide for an ageing population. Both EPAC and the National Commission of Audit conclude that a rapidly ageing population will have a negative impact on the capacity of Australian
governments to fund and deliver health and welfare services. These concerns have been widely echoed in the media and this tends to reinforce the popular perception that older people are a burden on younger generations.\textsuperscript{11}

The contribution older people make to society, and the social and economic benefits their contribution confers, is not sufficiently recognised. For example grandparents, in particular grandmothers, provide up to 50\% of all childcare. Older volunteers contribute 25\% of the $18 billion contribution made annually by volunteers in Australia. Many older people provide financial support to younger family members.\textsuperscript{12} Although these contributions are not measured in the national accounts or the GDP, they have a significant impact upon the Australian economy.

Rapid increases in the older population projected to occur over the next 50 years pose a challenge to governments and the community; namely to promote activity and productivity among older people and therefore contain escalating health and welfare costs. Other nations, such as Japan and the Scandinavian countries, where older people make up 20\% or more of the population have already prioritised planning for later life provision.

The potential impact of the ageing of the population on public monies is exacerbated by current labour market trends. Despite the removal of compulsory retirement requirements, retirement ages are continuing to fall as life expectancy increases. For men, in particular, this constitutes a significant lifestyle change. In the November 1996 labour market figures, unemployment rates for men aged 55-59 were second only to those for young people.\textsuperscript{13} Early retirement, redundancy and unemployment result in a higher dependency ratio, that is the ratio of tax payers to those receiving social security payments and allowances.

As the population ages, strategies to increase the independence and wellbeing of older
people will be essential in order to contain the costs of health care and community services. It is for this reason that Governments are increasingly turning their attention to promoting the concept of ‘healthy ageing’.

**Healthy ageing**

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), healthy ageing is the term used to describe policies and programs which aim to increase older people’s physical and mental wellbeing and promote their participation in the life of the community. Healthy ageing encompasses far more than health promotion, it includes the infrastructure necessary to facilitate and promote older people’s participation and independence, including access to transport, housing, employment, education and community services.

In April 1996 the First Joint Conference on Healthy Ageing was held by WHO and the United Nations Program on Ageing. While the majority of contributors focused on nutrition and health promotion, it was also reported that ‘people who are mentally more active, have higher IQs, a wider range of interests, a broader perspective and numerous social contacts reach old age with greater feelings of psycho-physical wellbeing’.

In Australia, Territory, State and Federal Governments have recently recognised the importance of a healthy ageing approach to developing policy and programs for older people.

- In the Social Justice Directions Statement released in October 1996 the NSW Government indicated its commitment to develop a Healthy Ageing Framework for release in late 1997. The Framework aims to reduce the level of institutionalisation of older people and assist them to live independently.

- The Federal Government has allocated funding for a Healthy Seniors Initiative, which will provide $15 million over three years for projects which promote the health and wellbeing of older people. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Health and Community Services Ministerial Council has established a Task Force on Healthy Ageing, with representatives from the Federal, State and Territory Governments. The Task Force is to consider ‘the various options to encourage greater individual responsibility for planning for ‘post retirement life’ and will develop ‘an Australian vision on future ageing for announcement in 1999’.

- The Victorian Family and Community Development Committee issued a briefing paper on Positive Ageing in September 1996. The paper calls for submissions from individuals and organisations to assist the Committee to ‘identify the key factors that contribute to individuals remaining confident, independent and in control of

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For mature males aged 55+ there is a new glass ceiling, although they may have 30 more years of ...life ahead of them. It is essential to put the ‘case for maturity’, to target employers to hire mature workers and to change negative attitudes in the community.

Beverley Hughes, Department of Training and Education Coordination, Armidale consultation
their lives’. Section Nine addresses opportunities for lifelong learning. The Victorian Committee views lifelong learning as not only the provision of leisure activity, but also as a means to provide vocational and unpaid work opportunities. It also recognises the importance of learning in developing a ‘more informed, tolerant and humane society’.16

Small investments in healthy ageing programs, including support for lifelong learning, could potentially result in reductions in health and welfare expenditure. Governments, policy makers and educators must act to ensure older people are able to access opportunities and services, and to ensure that the ‘third age’ is an age of versatility and creativity, not an age of depression, boredom and hopelessness.

**Defining lifelong learning**

In 1979 the UNESCO Institute of Education challenged accepted understandings of learning and education with the following definition, endorsed by the Committee in its discussion paper *Lifelong Learning: Life Transitions and the Older Learner*.

According to UNESCO, lifelong learning:

- lasts the whole life of each individual
- leads to the systematic acquisition, renewal, upgrading and completion of knowledge, skills and attitudes made necessary by the constantly changing conditions in which people now live
- has as its ultimate goal promotion of the self-fulfilment of each individual
- is dependent for its successful implementation on people’s increasing ability and motivation to engage in self-directed learning activities; and
- acknowledges the contribution of all available educational influences, including formal, non-formal and informal.17

The UNESCO definition, which has been widely adopted, recognises that learning is a continual process, which often occurs informally, through experience, on the job and in daily life. Learning includes, but is not limited to the opportunities offered by formal and informal education. Lifelong learning is self-directed, and voluntary: it is up to the individual to take responsibility for their own learning process.

However, characteristics of the lifelong learner (see below) do not occur spontaneously; they must be fostered and encouraged. They are learned through experience, in institutions and a range of environments which actively support creativity, independence and self-determination. Education, no matter where it occurs, should aim to develop and support these skills.

A number of submissions to the Committee and participants in the consultations expressed the view that terms such as ‘education’ and ‘lifelong learning’ may alienate older people due to past negative experiences of education and the belief that ‘learning
is not for me’. Many older people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds have first hand experience of an education which was oppressive and rewarded conformity. It is therefore hardly surprising that marginalised and disadvantaged groups do not tend to identify with the concept of ‘lifelong learning’.

The NSW Committee on Ageing has chosen to adopt the term lifelong learning in the spirit in which it is intended. The Committee acknowledges that the term is widely recognised and has been adopted in key policy documents and statements. Learning is understood by the Committee to include a spectrum of activity from formal education to informal information sharing, support and exchange. ‘Learning activities’ may include skills based learning, physical activity, discussion groups, study circles and other forms which are democratic and participatory in their approach. ‘Lifelong learning’ as it is used in the present report, refers to the spectrum of activities available to older people as well as to the process of gaining skills, experience, wisdom and perspective.

Education does not always need to be externally organised. With the wisdom of age many may continue their ‘Lifelong Learning’ in their local community or the bosom of their family – I find my grandchildren and I learn a lot from each other.

Diana Mitchell
Alzheimer’s Association of NSW – submission to Committee

The policy context

A number of government bodies have considered the question of older people’s access to learning opportunities:

- In 1990 the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Community Affairs released a report on retirement Is Retirement Working? The report pointed to a need to rethink retirement and what it might mean for older people. It identified access to education, retirement planning and counselling, support and training for
volunteer and paid work and promotion of self-help initiatives as key elements of a successful life after retirement. The Standing Committee emphasised the importance of learning opportunities to increase life satisfaction in retirement and concluded that despite the excellent work of community based organisations, ‘the social and activity needs of older people are not fully met’.\(^\text{19}\)

- 1991 saw the publication of a major report on adult and community education by the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training. *Come in Cinderella* identified adult and community education as the fourth education sector, the others being schools, universities and TAFE. The report criticised the assumption that educating young people should be prioritised at the expense of older adults and pointed out that it makes economic sense to continue to train those who already possess a wealth of expertise and experience. In addition, it recommended that governments take into account the benefits of learning for older people when developing ageing policy.

- *Expectations of Life: Increasing the Options for the 21st Century*, released by the House of Representatives Standing Committee for Long Term Strategies in 1992, suggested that we have yet to understand or provide for the full potential of human beings. The report asked whether ‘retirement in the traditional sense [is] the most desirable way for people to spend a quarter of their lives?’\(^\text{20}\) The Standing Committee was highly critical of the current economic system, arguing that one part of the population is caught up in often meaningless, soul destroying work while others are unable to obtain paid employment or have been ‘put out to pasture’. The report argued that the view that education is for the young is outdated and that greater attention needs to be given to developing educational opportunities for older people and preparing people for retirement.

- In 1995 the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education (AAACE) released the study *Lifelong Learning: The Third Age*. The report reviewed trends in provision in Australia and overseas and identified key issues, including barriers to participation, benefits of participation and policy development. The report recommended further mapping of provision to determine the extent of older people’s participation, that good practice models be documented and disseminated, and that further research be undertaken on the benefits of continued active learning.

- In April 1997 the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training released *Beyond Cinderella: Towards a learning society*, which reviews *Come in Cinderella* in order to assess whether recommendations have been implemented and to survey changes in the sector over the past six years. *Beyond Cinderella* includes a more comprehensive survey of issues affecting older people than the 1991 report. Key recommendations include that the Commonwealth government establish a dedicated research program to examine the relationship between intellectual activity and health, and implement a nationwide promotional campaign on the benefits of participation by older people in adult education.\(^\text{21}\)

- In 1997, a review of *The National Policy – Adult and Community Education* is being conducted to update and revise the policy in light of changes in the education and training environment since 1993.
Lifelong learning for all

The NSW Government’s Social Justice Directions Statement, released in October 1996, identified lifelong learning as a key strategy to ensure that the State Government’s goals of equity, participation, access and rights are achievable for all people in NSW.

As part of this commitment, in August 1996 the NSW Board of Adult and Community Education (NSW BACE) released the NSW Government Policy on Adult and Community Education. Recognising the Value of Lifelong Learning for All outlines the NSW Government’s commitment to the provision of adult and community education.

The policy identifies as a priority the development of strategies to encourage greater participation and maximise successful outcomes for seven equity groups, including older people. NSW BACE has developed equity profile kits to assist providers to effectively target these groups.

However specific strategies to facilitate the participation of older people in education and learning activities across the education sectors have yet to be developed by governments and providers alike.

1999 will be the International Year of Older Persons. The Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training has recommended that Commonwealth adopt ‘living and learning in the third age’ as its theme for the Year. It is therefore timely that governments recognise the importance of activities such as lifelong learning in assisting older people to live independently.

Why is lifelong learning important for older people?

Older people undertake learning activities for a variety of reasons: to improve their health and wellbeing, for leisure and social contact, training and retraining for paid and volunteer work, and for pleasure and self-development. In many cases older people’s motivations are the same as those of younger people. However, learning is especially important for older people because of the relationship between learning, mental and physical health, and social wellbeing and because older people’s right to the same opportunities as younger people is not always recognised. In a society where technology and information systems change rapidly, the ability to continue to learn and adapt is as vital for the old as it is for the young.

Health is not simply physical, emotional/mental and spiritual social wellbeing, it is also peace, social justice and sustainability, if we don’t look to the wider world, there is no real health.

Dr John Ward
Prince Henry Hospital
Learning for Wellbeing consultation

Health and wellbeing
There is substantial evidence that continued learning activity confers mental and physical benefits. Participation in learning is linked to higher levels of perceived wellbeing, improved memory, greater self-esteem and a sense of purpose. Indeed, there is some evidence that intellectual capacity actually improves with age.22

A study of participants in the University of the Third Age (U3A) in the Greater Sydney Metropolitan Region reported that members had better than average general, physical and mental health.23 Similarly, *Retirement: A Survey* by Professor Sol Encel and Helen Studencki, found that older people who continued to work after formal retirement from employment experienced greater wellbeing and satisfaction than those who did not.24 These findings were echoed in submissions made to the Committee.

The AAACE report Lifelong Learning: The Third Age concluded, on the basis of a comprehensive survey of research relating to memory in older age, that ‘learning may slow down but it does not cease’.25 Indeed, older people’s cognitive ability may improve: older people demonstrate a greater capacity for ‘crystallised intelligence...the acquired ability to make complex assessments of new situations through drawing on past experience’.26

Some of the most exciting findings relate to the role of learning in slowing down the onset of dementia. A number of studies have found that there is a link between educational attainment and rates of dementia, with higher rates of dementia among the less well educated. In addition, continued mental stimulation can, it is claimed, delay the symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease.27

Many older people report that they attend, and enjoy, learning activities for the social contact

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Socialising and mixing with others in a similar situation promotes confidence and helps to reduce blood pressure – while pursuing any course tried there is not time to dwell on aches and pains and problems of everyday life.

Tuggerah Lakes Community Leisure Learning and Training Centre Technology consultation
they provide. This motivation should not be denigrated. Studies have shown that social contact and effective social networks are an important factor in maintaining health and independence, conversely, isolated older people are more likely to suffer poor physical health and effects such as depression.

Training

Access to training and re-training opportunities enables older people to continue to participate in paid work and volunteer activity. Training programs specifically aimed at older unemployed workers, for example, have been successful in assisting older people to obtain and keep paid employment. For older volunteers, training is an important factor in obtaining enjoyment and satisfaction in unpaid work, as well as in gaining new skills which may in turn lead to paid employment. Education and training provides older people with the opportunity to develop new skills and new interests, investigate new areas of knowledge, and keep pace with social and technological change. Communication and interchange with younger generations is also cited as an important benefit of access to education and training.

Information technology

Many respondents to the Committee’s discussion paper *Lifelong Learning: Life Transitions and the Older Learner* stressed the importance of older people’s access to training to use new technologies. According to a submission made by the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association, ‘developing the technological skills of older people is crucial to reducing isolation, both social and political’. Unless older people are able to develop these skills, they will be condemned to technological illiteracy, or information poverty. The Communications Law Centre defines information poverty as follows:

Someone who is information poor lacks the equipment, channels, training or supply of the information resources on which an increasing proportion of life as a citizen and a consumer depends. He or she is a have not who is excluded from what makes a society cohere and a participatory democracy function.

Currently, less than 7% of older people own their own computer. New technologies such as automatic teller machines and phone banking are alienating for many older people who would prefer a more personalised service. Conversely, many older people are keen to learn about technology. Computer courses are extremely popular among older people, especially when they are involved in program design and delivery. The 55 plus age group is Internet’s fastest growing user sector. Older people learning about technology cite keeping up to date with contemporary society and being able to communicate with grandchildren as some of the benefits.

Learning for individual and social development

While socialisation was once thought to be a process which took place in early life, it is now understood to be ongoing. Human beings continue to learn and develop throughout the life cycle. American author Gail Sheehy has suggested that the second
half of life should be seen as a second adulthood, in which we have the opportunity to identify new goals and meet new challenges. Sheehy’s major study of generational cohorts among American and British middle classes argues that there has been a major shift in the life cycle brought on by increased longevity. Attention to health, and an active and creative lifestyle will enable older people to live a vital and dynamic existence. Sheehy points out that education is the great divide – those who have engaged in lifelong learning are much more likely to live well in later life.34

Contrary to the current perception that older people are a burden on future generations and the public purse, the reality is that older people have a great deal to contribute, for example as workers, volunteers, carers and mentors. A number of participants in the consultations stressed that older age is a time of giving back to others: to the community, family and society. Dr John Ward, gerontologist at Sydney’s Prince Henry Hospital summed up this view as follows, ‘we live the first part of our lives for ourselves and the second part of our lives for others’.35

Active citizenship

Older people’s participation in society benefits individuals and the community as a whole. It is a form of active or effective citizenship. According to Murdock, ‘third age’ citizenship is based on four rights: civil, political, social/economic and cultural. Cultural rights rest upon the fulfilment of the need to have access to information to make choices and decisions, to have the full range of one’s experience, beliefs and ideas accurately represented in public communication, and to contribute to the circulation of information as active providers of information, as well as its consumers.36 Lifelong learning is therefore an important cultural right which prepares older people to take up their other rights and responsibilities.

Currently, it is estimated that fewer than 5% of older people participate in formal education. Given the enormous benefits associated with learning, low rates of participation are cause for concern. Low rates of participation are particularly marked among older men, older people from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the ‘old old’ – those aged 75 and over.
Current rates of participation

According to a paper given by Veronica McGivney at the NSW 1996 Adult Learners Week Conference:

Those who engage in formal or informal learning programs tend to be from the younger age cohorts and the higher socio-economic groups – people who stayed in compulsory education longer and gained some qualifications. The length of initial education appears to be a particularly significant factor affecting participation. Participants tend to belong to groups where education is seen as a normal activity. They also tend to be involved in other forms of social participation – activities to do with voluntary organisations, clubs, politics, unions, church groups – and engage in a number of other cultural activities.37

Research has established that prior educational attainment is one of the determining factors in relation to continued learning. The more you have learned the more you are likely to learn again. It is therefore significant that older people’s educational attainment is generally lower than for the rest of the population. Of the generation currently aged 55-69, 75% were early school leavers. Women are less likely than men to have undertaken further education if they left school early. Very few Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders have completed secondary school. Eighty percent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 45 and over did not complete year 10 and only 11.5% have post-school qualifications.38

Many older people from non-English backgrounds are not literate in their own language, and are not able to speak English well. This particularly affects older women in some cultural groups where education is not highly valued for women. According to a BACE report on community education in Fairfield:

For many [ethnic] families the education needs of women, and in particular elderly women, is placed at the bottom of the scale, yet they are also the main conduit of information about health, nutrition and community services for the extended family.39

Many people from non-English speaking backgrounds are highly qualified, but have difficulty getting their qualifications recognised in Australia. In addition, as people from non-English speaking backgrounds age, they may lose their English language skills, unless efforts are made to maintain them.40

It is difficult to obtain accurate and up to date information on older people’s participation in education and training. Reports by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, for example, do not provide age breakdowns over the age of 24, and statistics for older people aged 65 and over, are often not available at all. This lack of data reflects the low priority that is given to older people’s learning needs. The following discussion is therefore exploratory.

In May 1996, 8093 people aged 50-64 were attending a higher education institution, 8228 were attending TAFE and 5570 were attending another educational institution.
in NSW (see figure 1.2). This constitutes less than 1% of all people aged 50-64 in NSW. The Australian Association of Adult and Community Education has estimated that less than one in ten older people over 55 attend ACE courses. In NSW participation rates vary from institution to institution, with some community colleges reporting that up to 25% of their students are over 50. However, participation rates fall as age rises, dropping dramatically after the age of 60. Across the board, older people’s rate of participation is much lower than that of the general population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational institution</th>
<th>45-49</th>
<th>50-54</th>
<th>55-60</th>
<th>60-64</th>
<th>Total 45-64</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>8,511</td>
<td>3,494</td>
<td>2,562</td>
<td>2,172</td>
<td>16,739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education</td>
<td>10,697</td>
<td>6,726</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>18,789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5,488</td>
<td>2,698</td>
<td>1,743</td>
<td>1,129</td>
<td>11,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>25,137</td>
<td>12,918</td>
<td>5,206</td>
<td>3,766</td>
<td>47,027</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of those aged 45-64 participating in education in May 1996, 54% were women. Indeed, it is often pointed out that middle class older women are the most likely group to participate in continuing education. This is explained by the fact that women live longer, and may be making up for lost time and opportunity. Figures for participation among older Aboriginal people, older NESB people and older men are generally low. However in May 1996, 26% of people aged 45-64 participating in education and training were from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Other activities which may have a learning outcome, such as listening to the radio or watching TV are much more actively taken up by older people. A 1992 ABS survey of time use found that people over the age of 65 spend more than 5 hours per day in passive leisure as opposed to one hour spent in active leisure. 81% of people over the age of 65 watch television regularly, 40% read newspapers, and 19% listen to the radio, compared to 70% watching television, 20% reading newspapers and 8% listening to radio among the general population. Radio is particularly important in rural areas. All of these activities potentially encourage informal learning, however the learning that may occur in such a situation depends on the active involvement of the learner.

Many older people are suspicious and fearful about returning to study, especially if they left school early. This is now changing as courses become known and meet the needs of older people, and as people with a longer educational experience begin to age.

Jenny de Mole
Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Association
Penrith consultation

Never Too Late to Learn
Educational attainment is generally higher among younger generations of Australians. As more educated people age, the demand for learning opportunities among older people is likely to increase. However unless steps are taken to address barriers to participation, Australia is in danger of developing what has been described in the UK as two nations, ‘one convinced of the value of learning, participating regularly and planning to do more; the other choosing not to join the learning society’. The possibility of whole generations of older people becoming ‘information poor’ must be taken seriously. Barriers to participation begin early, and as learning is a lifelong process, opportunities must be made available at every age.

## Barriers to participation

As participation rates demonstrate, older people are not turning to the formal education sector to meet their learning needs. Yet many older people indicate that they would be interested in learning if it were available.

### Attitudes

The most significant barriers are attitudinal. Despite the assertion that Australia is a ‘clever country’, the reality is that learning is assumed to be for the young, or for those who ‘really need it’, for example in the workplace. This attitude is reflected in institutional practices, for example when vocational training and the needs of school leavers are given priority over the needs of older learners. Governments and providers alike tend to separate vocational and recreational learning; one is seen as economically valuable, the other is not. Yet employers often state that the most useful skills are in fact transferable, such as communication skills. These abilities are often developed through learning for pleasure. In the same way, investment in older people’s learning is viewed by some as a waste of resources which could be directed towards younger generations, creating a generational conflict over resource use which does not need to exist. An extreme example of this attitude is the view that there is no point in providing learning activities to older people who are frail or in the last years of life.

Given the prevalence of these kinds of attitudes, it is hardly surprising that many older people have internalised the belief that learning is for the young. They may be fearful about attending a learning institution, especially if their previous experiences were negative. They may doubt their capacity to learn and to keep up with others. Some see older age as a time of well-earned rest and leisure, not a time to take up new tasks. Men in particular may resist exhortations to take up learning activities, as they feel that they have ‘done their time’.

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\[\text{Reg Mitchell, Submission to Committee}\]
Institutional barriers

The Committee heard that recent trends in education and vocational training have impacted on older people’s ability to access learning opportunities. As universities move increasingly towards the imposition of ‘fees for degrees’, many part time and mature students are squeezed out. Some universities are closing their continuing education programs in order to redirect funding to undergraduate provision.

TAFE NSW has removed many of its recreational courses and now primarily provides vocational training. While TAFE’s priorities have always been determined by industry requirements, the scope for TAFE to meet community needs is now greatly reduced. As a result, the Adult and Community Education sector (ACE) has taken up the demand for recreational courses. However, ACE providers are also being pushed to demonstrate relevance to industry standards and to ensure cost effectiveness. As the Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training points out in Beyond Cinderella the split between vocational and non-vocational learning ‘fails to accommodate the rich harvest of various kinds of educational experiences that make up a learning society’. In short, the imperatives of economic rationalism have resulted in a ‘lean, mean’ education and training system which is focused on outcomes rather than on people. In such a climate it is difficult to prioritise the learning needs and interests of older people or to convince governments to direct funding and resources to facilitate older people’s participation.

Since TAFE cut out the so-called ‘hobby’ courses in favour of more obviously vocational ones, older people find it difficult to get into TAFE courses and are generally referred to evening colleges, which aren’t generally vocational.

Gillian Morris
TAFE NSW Tourism and Hospitality Training
Submission to Committee
The way that learning is provided can also act as a barrier to participation. Some courses are not available during the day. Fees and associated costs may be prohibitive, especially for pensioners and discounts are not always offered. Venues may not be readily accessible and audio-visual aids are not always easy for older people to see or hear. It may be assumed that learners are familiar with new technologies when some older people are not. Older people’s learning styles and motivations are not taken into account. Some institutions do not recognise prior learning, and experience, which are an important aspect of older people’s approach to learning. Teaching methods are not always appropriate and may reinforce a culture of learning which is competitive. Nor are appropriate learning opportunities made available to older people: thought is not always given to what older people would like to learn and how best to provide it. Finally, there is a general lack of information about what is available to older people, and advice on where to go to access learning opportunities.

These barriers are exacerbated for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and for people from non-English speaking backgrounds. Cultural needs and expectations of these groups and low levels of English literacy often impede or prevent their involvement.

**Individual barriers**

Older people also experience individual barriers to accessing learning opportunities. These include lack of time and transport, cost of courses and responsibilities such as caring for a partner or grandchildren. However it is important to note that even if these barriers are addressed, negative attitudes may still prohibit involvement. As Roberta Sykes, founder of the Black Women’s Action in Education Foundation pointed out in her paper on Aboriginal education for the 1996 Adult Learners Week Conference:

> A common finding in centres of excellence, in model ghetto schools, and in educational institutions which are functioning successfully within extreme environments, including war zones and high drug and crime areas, is the expectation of success.49

Successful programs for older people demonstrate this expectation of success. They assume that older people can learn and want to learn, they expect that older people will benefit from learning, that they have something to contribute and that their participation is important.

**What is available to older people now?**

Older people currently access learning opportunities through a variety of institutions and organisations. These include formal institutions such as universities, TAFE, the Adult and Community Education sector, employers, unions and University continuing education centres, as well as community based organisations such as Schools for Seniors, University of the Third Age, Senior Citizens Centres, advocacy groups such as Council on the Ageing and the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association, and nursing homes and retirement villages.
Consultations conducted by the Committee indicate that the extent of provision for older people through informal, self-help groups and organisations is probably more extensive than is currently estimated. When activities such as walking for leisure, arts and crafts, and exercise are taken into account, it is clear that older people are participating in a range of learning opportunities. However it is apparent that older people are less likely to participate in formal education, and that there are a number of barriers which prevent or impede their involvement.

Significant providers of learning opportunities for older people include:

- Some older learners attend universities, in both undergraduate and postgraduate courses as well as through continuing education centres. Despite decreasing enrolments, universities continue to target younger learners.

- TAFE provides limited vocational training and retraining for older workers as well as offering a range of courses through TAFE Outreach, some of which specifically target older people.

- Adult and community education colleges, of which there are 55 in NSW, provide a range of courses for people of all ages in which older people take part. Some Community Colleges, for example in the Leichhardt, Riverina and St George areas, have trialed and evaluated courses for older people, with some success. However the cost of courses and their timing and location may be an obstacle to older learners. Participation among those aged 60+ is low.

- Distance programs such as those offered by the Open Training and Education Network, Open University and the Workers Education Association (WEA) may also provide accessible opportunities for older people.

- Clubs and societies such as Probus, Lions, the RSL and Legacy, while primarily social in nature, provide lectures, field trips and other activities which are locally based, thereby providing the opportunity for members to learn and share information.

- Senior Citizens Centres also provide a range of activities for older people. The standard varies from centre to centre with some providing stimulating learning activities while others focus on social contact.

- Adult Migrant Education Services (AMES) and literacy programs provided through community colleges can target older learners, although criteria for participation may exclude some older learners. AMES programs are only available to those migrants who have been in Australia for five years or less.

- Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACATS), Home and Community Care (HACC) workers, and other aged care and health professionals are engaged in providing learning through health promotion. For example, a local council community worker may sometimes receive some HACC funding to undertake recreational activities with frail older people. A number of services provide activities to slow down the onset of dementia. Health professionals are also piloting innovative ways of promoting healthy ageing among older people.
- Advocacy and lobby groups such as Council on the Ageing, Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association, the Older Women’s Network coordinate a range of groups and run seminars and other activities on issues of interest to their members.

- Learning organisations for older people such as the U3A and Schools for Seniors provide a range of academic and non-academic learning activities for older people.

### 1.3 Types of provision available to older people in NSW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Information and support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FORMAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>universities, institutes of technology</td>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>CES, Jobclubs etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>open university, continuing education centres</td>
<td>Vocational ACE</td>
<td>Legal aid services, consumer advice services, housing advice, tenancy advice etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult and Community Education providers</td>
<td>private/public employers</td>
<td>Government departments, State and Commonwealth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers Education Associations</td>
<td>Skillshare etc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE outreach</td>
<td>Adult Migrant English Programs/Service</td>
<td>Local Government – Age and Community Workers, Senior Citizen’s Centres etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of the Third Age (U3A)</td>
<td>trade unions</td>
<td>Boards of Adult and Community Education, ANTA, AAACE,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organisations providing learning activities for older people: eg, Schools for Seniors</td>
<td></td>
<td>Public libraries, museums, art galleries etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community centres, health centres, neighbourhood centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>media, advertisers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Internet discussion groups, websites etc, teleconferencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>employment agencies, careers advice, financial advisers, banks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aged care services, ACATs etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advocacy groups for older people, COTA, CSPF, OWN etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Older people’s organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary/community organisations, women’s organisations etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clubs and associations, including religious, sporting, interest groups etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hostels and retirement villages, nursing homes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| INFORMAL | | |
|----------|| |
| | | |
- Small organisations such as Adult Leisure Education Recreation and Tuition (ALERT) and the Coast Centre for Seniors run leisure and educational activities for members.

Other providers include unions, employers, professional organisations, nursing homes and retirement villages.

The 1993 UK Carnegie report identified three overlapping ‘sectors’ where learning takes place: education, training and information. Within each of these sectors a variety of formal and informal learning takes place. This model has been used to map the extent of provision available to older people in NSW. See figure 1.3)

Part One of this report has argued that continuing involvement in a variety of learning activities is essential for older people, and should be addressed as a priority by governments and providers alike. Learning conveys major benefits, which include increased health and wellbeing, access to contemporary developments such as new technologies, and the ability to keep up with change and participate as an active and informed citizen in the affairs of the community.

While governments have recognised the importance of lifelong learning, and the need to keep older people healthy and active, they have yet to adequately address barriers to participation, and to promote and facilitate older people’s involvement in lifelong learning. To fail to address these issues is to condemn older people to an effective twilight zone of second-class citizenship. Lack of access to learning opportunities and other activities which promote healthy ageing is likely to result in increased demands on government by a less independent and self-sufficient older population.
Living skills: case studies

Consultations conducted by the Committee revealed that a diverse range of learning activities are available to older people in NSW. However, the most appropriate opportunities are not always to be found in the formal education sector. Many programs are provided informally, or through community organisations, advocacy groups and the like. Governments and providers have a responsibility to ensure that all institutions cater effectively for older people, and to learn from innovative strategies developed in the community sector.

The good practice guidelines discussed below may act as an inspiration for organisations looking to establish courses, or seeking innovative strategies to empower older people as learners. However, they do not absolve governments and organisations of the responsibility to address structural and attitudinal barriers to older people’s participation in lifelong learning.

Defining good practice

The term good practice identifies key features of programs which effectively facilitate older people’s participation in lifelong learning. This section summarises case studies which provide examples of good practice in providing learning activities for older people and identifies key features of and challenges encountered by, each project. Given the range of learning opportunities available to older people, what follows is necessarily far from comprehensive. Rather, key examples which have come to the Committee’s notice are addressed. They include general activities for older people, partnerships between organisations and universities, and examples which address the following key issues identified in submissions to the Committee:

- learning for wellbeing – education’s contribution to health, fitness, diet and maintenance of memory and skills
- older people accessing technology – how to teach and learn about technology and its role in improving quality of life
- program delivery – delivering flexible, appropriate and relevant programs to older people, and
- ensuring access and equity – disseminating information, appropriate timing, cost, environment and marketing, with particular emphasis on the needs of the older ethnic population and people who may not have had the opportunity to complete a formal education.
Principles of good practice

Drawing upon materials gathered in the consultations as well as guidelines developed by organisations such as the NSW Board of Adult and Community Education and recorded by the Australian Association of ACE and the UK Carnegie Inquiry, a set of principles of good practice is listed below. A program or course can be considered as good practice when it is community run and community based. That is, it is run by older people, for and with older people. Such programs fulfil the broadest aims of lifelong learning, promote self-actualisation and active citizenship, and enable older people to develop the skills necessary to take up these important rights.

### 2.1 Principles of good practice

- Promote learning as a lifelong activity
- Recognise that access to education and training is a right, regardless of age
- Recognise that ageism is a barrier to participation
- Recognise that older people are capable of learning and that intellectual capacity does not automatically decrease with age
- Base teaching methods and strategies around building on previous knowledge and experience
- Older people should be involved in the design and delivery of programs
- Make every effort to find out what older people want and to give it to them
- Ensure that the course design is flexible and can be adapted to the needs of individual learners
- Use methods such as peer education and group learning which ensure active participation
- Ensure that the course expectations are clearly outlined and negotiated with participants
- Consider the reasons for participation, eg social contact, learning new skills, vocational training, keeping up, mental stimulation, interest, self-development and ensure the course is appropriate to meet participants’ needs
- Take the learning styles of older people into consideration – more time needed to take things in, better long term than short term memory, better situational learning etc
- Hold classes in familiar venues such as clubs, senior citizen’s centres, community centres, libraries, etc
- Hold classes during the day
- Ensure that venues are accessible to frail or disabled older people and that they are near public transport
Older people learning lifelong

University of the Third Age (U3A)

The philosophy of the U3A movement is based on the original idea of the medieval university, a community of scholars sharing knowledge for the sake of learning. All tutoring and administration is undertaken by members on a voluntary basis. Given its low cost, accessibility and relevance, the U3A is an ideal model. It is particularly appropriate for those older people who wish to pursue academic learning outside a formal academic institution.

Key features

- use of peer education model, older people as tutors and administrators
- national movement; available in rural and city areas
- low cost to members, around $25 per year
- classes available during the day
- close to public transport
- curriculum made accessible to older learners
- encourages formation of strong social networks
- individual U3A’s form partnerships with local councils, universities, community colleges, etc
- self-help, get up and go approach
- many participants go on to further education

Challenges

- gaining access to venues to run courses
- providing training for tutors
- mostly middle-class, female membership and participation

The empowerment is astonishing. Depressed and isolated people blossom, busy people make time, and poor or isolated people can take part in a range of activities that would otherwise be less accessible.

Bryan Clayton
U3A Parramatta

A lick of paint and you’ll have it looking like a University for the Third Age in no time.
Wesley School for Seniors

Located in the Central Business District of Sydney, Wesley School for Seniors aims to provide a wide range of learning activities for older people during appropriate hours and at a reasonable cost. Costs and overheads are kept down by the use of volunteer tutors and regular fundraising activities.

Key features

- has held courses for older people for 26 years
- central venue accessible to public transport
- lower cost than WEA and ACE courses, attracts ex WEA students
- wide range of courses offered, 106 in third term 1996
- 1400 students each term
- promotes social contact among participants

Challenges

- distance which participants from outer city and country areas have to travel
- insufficient classrooms for courses offered and demand
- shortage of volunteer tutors for all subjects of interest to students

Uniting Church Leichhardt Retirement Homes and Community Services

The Leichhardt Senior Citizens Centre at Martin Hall offers a range of courses and recreational activities for older people, including health programs, music, art and craft, computer training, languages and physical activity. The program is coordinated by one paid worker who is 50% HACC funded.

Key features

- low fees for participation; between $1 and $1.50 per activity, per person
- has held courses for more than 20 years
- participants come from western Sydney and rural areas
- 235 participants per week; one third male
- combines activity with social contact and self-exploration
- focus on self-development and personal growth, stress management and life reflection
- uses music and art therapy to develop ‘people skills’
- ad hoc counselling available
- focus on multicultural activities
- male leaders for male groups

Challenges

- classes with strong educational focus don’t last
- program relies on individual staff commitment and expertise
- lack of funding; the program runs at a loss subsidised by the Uniting Church
The Coast Centre for Seniors was established in 1994 at the Prince Henry Hospital, Little Bay, Maroubra. It provides more than 20 courses per week for people over 60. All courses are run by volunteer tutors and range from computer skills and sports to gardening and creative writing.

Key features
- low cost; $10 per year for membership
- over two years of operation 19,684 people have attended courses
- run on voluntary basis with small grants
- provides social contact for isolated older people
- provides health and physical activities as well as social and craft activity
- successful in involving men, not only in sports activities, but also in arts, cooking and craft
- involves people from non-English speaking backgrounds in ‘speakeasy’ courses

Challenges
- obtaining permanent premises at the Prince Henry Hospital
- obtaining ongoing funding; falls between health and education funding criteria
- relies on the work of committed individuals who may ‘burn out’

Southcare Wellness Centre
Southcare Wellness Centre, located at Southcare, Sutherland Hospital in Caringbah offers programs for people aged 45 years and over. The Wellness program, developed in 1996, aims to empower mature adults to take responsibility for their health and to improve their skills and quality of life. The long term goal of the Centre is to make the Wellness program available to people of all ages.

Key features:
- long term involvement, since 1984 in the Senior Australians for Growth and Exploration (SAGE) program for frail older people
- international research on healthy ageing programs funded by a Churchill scholarship
- survey of local Meals on Wheels volunteers to identify the interests of potential participants
- Wellness program explores the physical, mental spiritual, social and emotional aspects of health
• average age of participants is 66 years with around 5 females to every male
• an experiential, participatory approach is considered ‘best practice’
• 53 sessions run by mid 1996
• benefits for participants include increased appreciation of life, awareness, joy, breathing and sleeping better, and hearing about the experiences of others

Challenges
• securing ongoing funding
• extending the program to meet the demand

Older Women’s Wellness Centre
Located at Bankstown, in the Police Boys Club, the Older Women’s Wellness Centre has been operating for 18 months. The Wellness Centre was established by Older Women’s Network (OWN) using a peer education model. In 1995 OWN received a grant of $50,000 from the National Women’s Health Program to fund the Centre. Thirty percent of clients are born overseas, 90% live alone, 95% rely on the age pension as their sole support and 99% have secondary education as their highest educational level.

Key features:
• program is run by older women, for older women
• based on research into older women’s needs conducted by OWN
• local service based on maintaining health and wellbeing
• staffed by qualified older women and professionals
• creates a comfortable environment where women are able to speak frankly and learn from each other
• the program has expanded from one day a week in 1995 to four days in 1996
• offers a range of activities including exercise and health promotion and discussion groups
• courses are free

Challenges
• securing funding for future activities – the current funding ends in 1997
• access to premises – the Police Boys Club is not an entirely satisfactory venue due to lack of privacy.

Dementia Care Commitment
In 1993, the Eastern Suburbs Area Health Service established the Dementia Care Commitment program. The program involves workers, carers, health professionals, and volunteers from the Randwick Information and Community Centre. The program aims to improve the skills and understanding of all people who work with dementia sufferers, including their carers.
Key features
- multi disciplinary approach bringing together those with experience and knowledge of dementia
- training and education outreach undertaken with community organisations
- memory clinic with a multi disciplinary team goes out to community organisations to promote skills to improve memory retention
- workshops run as structured, interactive groups, with an emphasis on information sharing and problem solving
- both day and evening programs are offered

Challenges
- lack of funding
- difficulty in accessing venues; the program relies on being ‘given’ venues by Prince Henry and Prince of Wales hospitals.

Learning about technology

Computer Pals for Seniors

Computer Pals for Seniors is a self-help group in the Ku-ring-gai area for older people wanting to learn how to use computers. Membership of Computer Pals costs $60 a year for one hour of tuition per week and there is a $20 joining fee.

Key features
- self-help group run by older people for older people
- finding that there are no computer manuals written specifically for older people, the group has produced their own
- demonstrations run during Seniors Week for older people giving them the confidence to use new technologies
- ‘elders list’ on the Internet with more than 70 people communicating around the world on an inter and intra generational network linking with schools and colleges

Challenges
- difficulty in getting tutors to volunteer due to small size of the group
- obtaining technical assistance
- keeping up to date with technological change

Training sessions must be geared to older people, for example, using vacation time to run courses, ensuring older men and older women are involved as organisers so both sexes feel comfortable being involved. The mouse is difficult for some older people to use, and bigger screens are better.

Elaine Dabbs
Computer Pals for Seniors
Wontama Day Therapy Centre

Located in Orange, the Wontama Day Therapy Centre offers services for people with disabilities and frail older people. In 1991 the Centre ran a joint program with TAFE, funded by Orange Community College, to study the effects of computer education on a group of people who had suffered a stroke. Fourteen older people took part in the pilot, assisted by one-on-one volunteers recruited from the local U3A and the police service. Following the success of the pilot, the Centre purchased four additional computers and set about providing training.

**Key features**

- specially designed software which includes games, puzzles and CD-ROM.
- success in involving frail older people, older people with dementia and outside client groups such as the U3A
- benefits include increased self-confidence, social contact and improved hand/eye coordination
- adapting equipment and software so that older people with dementia, hearing impairment, stroke and arthritis have been able to use the computers

Tuggerah Lakes Community Leisure Learning and Training Centre

The Centre runs a Computers for Seniors course, based on a request from a Senior Citizens Centre.

**Key features**

- access to computers and the Internet offered at a 20% discount for older people, for 7 weeks; 21 hours and costs $112.
- program is community managed, flexible and responsive to community needs
- commitment and patience of tutors, creating a friendly atmosphere
- courses both physically and financially accessible
- back up support from the Centre
- pilot buddy system which provides disabled people with mentors to enable them to participate
- cooperation from local high school in providing access to computers
- when surveyed, participants are extremely positive about the course

**Challenges**

- lack of confidence, fear of the unknown among potential participants
- when older people do not own computers of their own, they cannot maintain their skills effectively
Sydney University and Leichhardt School for Seniors

The University of Sydney has considerable expertise in computer services. In collaboration with the Uniting Church, which runs outreach programs in Leichhardt for older people, the University offers low cost training in the use of computers.

Key features

- access to the Internet via World Wide Web for older people at no cost
- undergraduate and postgraduate students act as mentors in the program
- exposure assists older people in countering fear of technology and in communicating with younger generations and family

Challenges

- large companies are reluctant to donate hardware, Telstra and Optus are reluctant to provide new telephone connections
- fear of the unknown, and the attitude that computers are for the young
- the initial cost of the hardware and ongoing maintenance costs
Using technology for learning

Teleconferencing

A number of organisations are using teleconferencing as a way to overcome isolation and to provide contact for housebound older people and their carers. The Carer's Association of NSW uses teleconferencing to bring carers together to discuss problems and offer mutual support. In the Gosford region, teleconferencing is about to be trialed with frail older people living in isolated regions to provide social contact and mental stimulation. However teleconferencing is relatively expensive, and requires funding if such a service is to be widely maintained.

Radio programs

Radio is a popular medium among older people, 18% of older people to the radio on a regular basis compared to 8% of the general population. It is particularly vital for older people in rural areas. According to consultation participants in Wagga Wagga and Armidale, it is sometimes the only source of contact. The Mansfield report on the future of the ABC has recognised the role that radio plays in the lives of rural communities and has recommended that the ABC regional service be maintained.

Several radio programs are produced for older people. Blue Skies, broadcast on a Thursday morning, plays songs from the 1930’s, 40’s and 50’s, and is reportedly used by nursing homes to stimulate memory and discussion among residents. Top 20% on Radio 2Blue Katoomba provides news, updates on government initiatives and community activities in the Blue Mountains region.

Program Delivery

Pathways to Action

Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association (NSW) runs the Pathways to Action program for older pensioners. The aims of Pathways to Action are to reduce isolation, develop self-confidence, restore self-esteem, use and build on participants experience, and to promote appropriate learning strategies. The program focuses on empowering older people to act on their own behalf, learn how to express their views and how to deal with the bureaucracy and decision makers.

Key features

• the program has been running since 1984 and has received funding since 1995
• the program is available state wide, according to demand
• no cost to participants, although organisations sometimes make a donation or cover the cost of venue hire and catering
• invited by groups such as neighbourhood and seniors groups, consumer organisations with active older people and volunteers, to run courses for their members
• older people learn what they want to learn, as participants are surveyed to determine course structure and content
• experiential techniques are used and evaluation strategies include an assessment of techniques
• program adapts to older people’s fear of education for example, if participants are not literate there will be no writing in the course

**TAFE Outreach**

The Outreach program was developed in 1976 to increase access to TAFE for adults who are educationally disadvantaged. A range of groups have been identified as eligible for TAFE Outreach, including young people and mature adults, prisoners and other geographically and socially isolated groups. By taking education to these groups, the Outreach program enables access education, training and employment.

**Key features**

- available in both metropolitan and rural areas
- wide range of courses available, based on demand
- course content is negotiated with each group
- specialises in developing courses for community groups
- flexible delivery which is responsive and appropriate
- courses are free
- accredited courses as well as special purpose courses are provided
- accesses isolated and disadvantaged older people in rural areas
- literacy and numeracy courses for older NESB people in rural areas
- computer courses for older people
- partnerships with service providers and community groups

**Challenges**

- child care and respite care need to be provided
- current government policy directions in TAFE prioritises vocational training
- exclusion of older people from current courses
- older people’s attitude that they ‘can’t learn’
Activities for the Frail Aged

**Anglican Retirement Villages**

The Anglican Retirement Villages run a ‘Healthy Ageing Project’, funded by the Federal government. Health education and promotion in a retirement village is relatively unusual. Older people in retirement villages are sometimes quite dependent, these programs aim to assist them to be more self-reliant.

**Key features**
- research into major health problems of older people in retirement villages; depression found to be the major complaint
- treats depression using physical activity, such as exercise programs, assessing people for their level of physical ability and then providing the appropriate activity
- involves health workers and doctors from the Hornsby Health Service
- teaches staff in the villages how to run the program
- involves volunteer coordinator from day care to run a volunteer program to provide assisted care clients with physical exercise and social interaction
- strong supported from staff and management in the retirement villages

**Challenges**
- lack of ongoing funding
- difficult to evaluate the effects of the program on a short term basis

**Autumn Lodge**

Autumn Lodge is a hostel and retirement village in Armidale. There are two full time and two part time diversional therapists at the Lodge. An extensive program is provided, including arts, crafts, outings, reading, massage and discussion groups.

**Key features**
- covers the mental, social and physical aspects of health and wellbeing
- emphasises contact with the community, for example using the local pool for hydrotherapy and the Uniting Church for bowling
- different activities to choose from every day
- attitude, humour and dedication of the staff
- extensive community support

**Challenges**
- motivating residents to participate
Roseneath Nursing Home

Eighty-five percent of Roseneath residents have intellectual disabilities. The nursing home runs a dementia program which aims to enable older people to retain their independence, challenge participants and provide mental stimulation.

Key features:

- study and discussion group, a mixed gender cooking class, a gentlemen’s club and morning tea group
- luncheon club for isolated older people who are visually impaired to retrain them to improve their coordination
- residents' committee negotiates with the management
- other opportunities include an activity club, a weekly day centre, library with talking books and the option of attending activities at the nearby Garden Court Centre
- teamwork and commitment of staff and dedicated volunteers

Penrith City Library

Penrith Council Library runs a Home Library Service, which takes resources to isolated and housebound older people in the local government area. The service is staffed by volunteers.

Key features

- service visits 160 people per fortnight in eight runs
- information and assistance provided
- individual interviews conducted with each member to determine their needs and interests
- number of clients has doubled in six years
- educates people about available services such as the use of computer catalogues and conducts tours for community organisations

Rural communities

Age Concern Albury/Wodonga

Age Concern is an offshoot of the UK organisation of the same name. The Albury/Wodonga group is run by 250 volunteers, has five part time paid staff, and a membership of 2,500. Services offered include home visiting for frail older people and support groups for widows, carers and the visually impaired. Age Concern receives some funding from HACC and the Department of Community Services and conducts its own fundraising activities.

Key features

- six day clubs which include volunteer drivers and an ethnic home visiting scheme
• a School for Seniors, a manual activities centres and volunteer centre
• activities club and a healthy lifestyles group for the over 50’s, including bushwalking, aqua-aerobics, dancing, table tennis and swimming.
• companion animals visiting program, taking animals into nursing homes and on home visits
• walking for pleasure group, which takes an annual 5-day tour
• La Trobe and Charles Sturt Universities, and Wagga Wagga and Albury TAFE, assist by providing courses
• staff and volunteers work with neighbourhood centres to establish a sense of community ownership of the school

Challenges
• cost to participants of some activities; it costs $26 for an overnight trip
• lack of funding; Albury Council has abolished many community services, and local government restructuring impacts on the ability of the organisation to deliver services.

Glen Innes Community Health Service

Garden Court Centre was established in Glen Innes in 1988 to provide support services for frail older people and people with disabilities. It is a multi-purpose centre which offers day care, Meals on Wheels, educational programs, social support networks, home care, and houses the community worker for council services. The Centre is auspiced by Glen Innes Council.

Key features
• co-location of key services and cooperation between services
• committed community and staff
• computer course for people over 75; three participants went on to undertake full time training
• received BACE funding to get people to write their life stories; many of these people have not previously been involved with the Centre
• gentlemen’s club for retired men; visits properties, feedlots, private studs and farms
• women’s garden club and coffee tasting group
• the day care centre and dementia respite service are run side by side; when older people need dementia care, they are in familiar surroundings
• concerts, drama, ceramics, art, and quilt making; craft produced at the centre is sold to raise funds

Challenges
• age limits in insurance policies
• addressing the needs of Aboriginal elders
• unmet needs of local Japanese and Vietnamese families
• need for staff education about cultural differences, such as religious beliefs
Access & Equity

Mature workers

The Mature Workers Program

The Mature Workers Program was established in 1990. Assistance is provided to workers aged 40+ under two strands, Employment and Training. Funding is provided to community based organisations which can demonstrate an ability to assist mature age people through: job search skills; training; finding suitable vacancies and facilitating placement with employers. Funding is provided to either public or private organisations which have the capacity to set up vocational training courses to upgrade the skills of mature age people who are unemployed or facing unemployment and to retrain unemployed people in new skills in growth industries/occupations.54

Key features

• first labour market program in Australia to focus on the training and employment needs of older people
• projects are funded Statewide at a total cost of $3 million per year
• emphasises the wealth of knowledge older workers possess
• recognises the need to provide age specific training for older people, early in the period of unemployment when motivation is still high

Challenges

• changes to eligibility criteria for access to Skillshare programs impact negatively on ability of older workers to access training
• expenses associated with many TAFE and ACE courses may prevent older workers from gaining new skills

Older people have amazing skills and qualifications and should be in work, and mentoring others. If older people can stay involved, they are more likely to pass on what they have learned. Self-worth is increased through this participation. The costs of unemployment are high and include health costs, anxiety, depression and suicide.

Ted Cohen
Salvation Army
Mature Worker’s Program

Never Too Late to Learn
Older men

**COTA Men’s Network**

Council on the Ageing (NSW) runs an Older Men’s Network which is an outcome of a men’s lifestyle forum held in early 1996. Men are invited to come to the COTA premises in the city to ‘see what they want’; and then adjourn to ‘lunch at the bowling club’.

**Key features**
- recognising the need that exists in the community
- provided by older men for older men

**Challenges**
- reaching the target group and facilitating their participation

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**Sydney Woodturners Guild**

The Sydney Woodturners Guild runs a workshop for members in Oyster Bay.

**Key features**
- rebuilt and equipped Scout Hall at Oyster Bay, involved Skillshare clients
- low cost to members, $5 per month for use of workshop
- large membership, 1000 members aged 7 to 82, including women
- maintain traditional skills of older men
- cooperation with Sutherland Council
- offer training for retired people
- another workshop opened in another region

**Challenges**
- unable to set up as a Skillshare due to insurance requirements

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**Men are often unable to access each other and to form genuine friendships. A range of techniques can be used to address this and raise men’s awareness about their way of relating to others. Men need to be encouraged to explore their age related expectations, what they expected of themselves at each stage of life. Men relate that they feel that they have chosen so little for themselves and made decisions too early in life.**

Michael Flannery
War Memorial Hospital
Access and equity for Aboriginal and ethnic communities

The Committee heard of only a few initiatives for older Aboriginal people and older people from non-English speaking backgrounds. However, the Committee acknowledges that this is due to the limited involvement of these groups in the consultation process. As the following examples illustrate, older Aboriginal people and older people from non-English speaking backgrounds are not currently able to access mainstream learning opportunities.

Older people from non-English speaking backgrounds

**case study**

*Arabic Welfare Centre and Arabic Centre for the Aged*

The Arabic Welfare Centre at Bankstown auspices seven projects and has 25 employees. An ethnic liaison officer works with businesses to encourage them to employ Arabic speakers. The Arabic Centre for the Aged is a drop in Centre for older people located in Lakemba.

**Challenges**

- lack of transport and information, cost and timing of courses
- mainstream courses offered are not culturally appropriate for older participants
- older people are unlikely to participate in mainstream education; many look after grandchildren or are housebound
- the concept of learning is new to older Arabic speaking people – only the very well educated attend courses
- access to English language classes is essential, however the cost is prohibitive
- most education and information does not reach Arabic people because of the language barrier
- older people are not accessing available services
- older Arabic people are not well educated and 80-90% are illiterate in their own language

*We can offer you Friday afternoon surfing classes.*
Older Aboriginal people

Girra Girra Women’s Group

Girra Girra Women’s Group was set up for older Aboriginal women in the Wagga area.

Key features

- Girra Girra women’s group has run for four years on donations and raising funds from craft sales
- community based and organised

Challenges

- lack of funding
- need for more accessible services for frail older Aboriginal people
- providers and governments are not using resources which exist in the community, and are ignoring older people’s right to access resources

The Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service

The Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service runs health promotion programs for Aboriginal people of all ages. Major health issues for Aboriginal people include low life-expectancy, diabetes, heart conditions, ear problems, and additional problems for people with disabilities.

Key features

- coordinates arts and crafts activities for older people
- set up a shop to sell art and craft produced by participants
- nutritionist comes into the service to provide lunch
- one-on-one outreach into local communities

Challenges

- limited prior education of older Aboriginal people
- major health problems and low life expectancy as compared to non-Aboriginal Australians

Despite the proliferation of courses and programs available to older people in NSW, major barriers continue to impede the involvement of the majority of older people. These barriers, and the need for governments, policy makers and providers alike to develop strategies to facilitate participation, create significant policy implications which will be addressed in the following section.
Learning for life: policy issues and directions

In 1989 the Commission for the Future released a report on lifelong learning, Lifelong Education Revisited: Australia as a Learning Society. The report stated that:

economic, technological, social and organisational change are combining to bring about a situation in which it is becoming not just desirable but essential to involve people of all ages in a continuing process of education and training.55

Eight years later, governments and providers have yet to meet the challenge to assist older people to access a range of learning opportunities which will enable them to keep pace with change. This section discusses strategies to facilitate older people’s participation and to promote the development of appropriate learning activities.

Healthy ageing

According to the 1995 National Health Survey: First Results, while 59% of Australians over the age of 75 report that their health is good, very good, or excellent,56 the highest health risk factor for people over 65 is lack of exercise. Forty-five percent of people aged 65-74 and 53% of people aged 75 and over reported that they did no exercise.57

The NSW Health Department Physical Activity Taskforce has stated that gentle physical activity such as walking for thirty minutes per day considerably improves health and fitness levels. A number of courses and programs are currently available to older people to assist and encourage them to maintain a healthy lifestyle. However these are by no means as widespread as they could be. As demonstrated in Part Two of this report, learning about and for health is the greatest preventative measure. A number of agencies could take a more active role in funding and promoting activities which encourage older people to take gentle exercise. The Department for Sport and Recreation, for example could re-instate walking and activity programs for older people. However, learning activities are of benefit whether or not they are directly health related.

Exercise and good nutrition on their own are not enough to ensure a healthy older age.
It is important that governments develop strategies which adopt the broadest possible understanding of healthy ageing. Just as health is defined by bodies such as the World Health Organisation to include social and economic circumstances, so too does healthy ageing encompass access to employment, facilities and services such as transport, and opportunities for self-development. State, Territory and Federal governments face the likelihood of a substantial increase in expenditure on health and welfare services for an ageing population. Promotion of lifelong learning is one strategy with the potential to contain these costs. Additional research into the benefits of lifelong learning and the relationship between participation and use of health and welfare services should therefore be conducted by governments and providers. In addition, the relationship between learning and physical and mental wellbeing, discussed in Part One of this report, requires further research, recognition and promotion.

Living skills for retirement

Retirement ought to be a creative and self-expressive vocation in which the ‘calling’ is refurbishment through self-search supported by a career path that is planned in harmony with sound organising principles that help shape and form for the individual a meaningful life that has purposes, directions and choices.\(^{58}\)

The need to redefine retirement and to ensure that all people plan effectively for this time is likely to become more pressing. More and more people will spend longer periods of time in retirement from full time employment. Although women have been less likely to live the male pattern of a period of work followed by a period of retirement years, this experience will become more common in line with increased female participation in the workforce. Despite the removal of compulsory retirement requirements, retirement ages have been steadily falling. In 1994 only 8.4% of all men aged 65 and over and 2.3% of women aged 65 and over were still in full time employment.\(^{59}\)

Redefining retirement is closely aligned with redefining older age as a period of activity, reflection and contribution, and challenging assumptions which identify retirement with stagnation and withdrawal. The opportunity to participate in a range of lifelong learning activities is part of ensuring that retirement is a time of continued self-development. Retirement education and planning programs need to be developed and promoted widely. Providers of education as well as employers and unions should not only assist older workers to plan for a secure financial future through investment

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**Good nutrition for older people**

It is the cheapest way to ensure healthy ageing.

There is currently a lack of good nutritional education to counteract advertising and multinational corporations pushing vitamins etc. There is a need to think through ways of encouraging older people to eat well rather than simply prescribing vitamins.

Marlene Brell, CCOA member

Coast Centre consultation

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Marlene Brell, CCOA member

Coast Centre consultation
schemes such as superannuation but also to ensure a satisfying emotional, intellectual and personal life which keeps them healthy and independent.

All providers of learning activities can assist older people to plan a fulfilling later life, by providing information about available courses and by providing courses specifically focused on retirement and retirement planning.

**Training opportunities**

Early retirement, especially amongst men, is often a form of disguised unemployment. Mature unemployed people are likely to spend twice as long out of work as their younger counterparts. Some will never work again. A 1994 Australian Bureau of Statistics survey found that 64% of those aged 55 and over reported age as their main difficulty in finding work. It has been suggested to the Committee that high suicide rates amongst older men, for example in areas such as Wollongong and Newcastle, are related to higher levels of unemployment.

Participants in the NSW COA consultations expressed their concern that older people are likely to miss out on training and retraining opportunities. Federal government changes to eligibility criteria for training programs have, according to anecdotal information received by the Committee, resulted in direct disadvantage for older workers.

In order to receive Federal funding, vocational programs must be able to demonstrate that there will be a job for the trainee at the end of the training process. Discrimination against older workers, as in the case of people from non-English speaking backgrounds and indigenous groups means that these groups are less likely to be accepted into training programs, due to the perception that they are less likely to be able to gain work. The NSW Mature Workers Programs (MWAP) are no longer able to send their clients to Skillshare programs (many of which have now been closed) and are therefore forced to refer clients to TAFE and ACE training which is more expensive. As it is the only age based training program for mature workers, funding for the Mature Workers Program must be continued and indexed to inflation. This model should also be adopted by the Federal and other State governments.
Learning opportunities for those most in need

The Committee was advised repeatedly that there is a lack of appropriate programs for older people from socially and economically disadvantaged groups. Greater effort needs to be made to reach these groups, determine their needs and provide appropriate education and training. In particular, more attention to alternative ways of providing education, as well as to local and community based provision, is necessary to facilitate the involvement of these groups. Additional research to establish principles of good practice for these groups is also essential.

Older people from non-English speaking backgrounds

Older people from non-English speaking backgrounds require, as a priority, literacy programs and community development programs. The message of healthy ageing as well as the importance of exercise and good nutrition is unlikely to readily reach these communities through more conventional means. Older people from these communities often require information in interpersonal contexts and in non-written formats such as video and radio. Access to information about lifelong learning opportunities should also be made available in these formats. In addition, facilities provided by local government such as Seniors Citizens Centres should be made readily available to ethnic communities so that they can provide appropriate learning activities for older people.

Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Further discussion and consultation is required to identify key issues for older indigenous people in relation to accessing mainstream education and training. Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people suffer much greater disadvantage in accessing learning opportunities than other older Australians. The process of facilitating lifelong learning in indigenous communities is two fold. Firstly, it must be
recognised that indigenous cultures have their own learning systems, and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders are the custodians of this knowledge.

Secondly, support and self-determination is required to enable older indigenous people to access learning opportunities available in the mainstream. In a 1996 submission to the Senate Inquiry into developments since the release of Come in Cinderella, the Federation of Independent Aboriginal Education Providers emphasised that education for Aboriginal people must be community controlled if it is to be effective. As Flowers and McDaniel point out ‘adult education will be more meaningful built by a diversity of indigenous efforts’.62

Role of current providers

Current providers of education have a responsibility to ensure that older people can effectively access and participate in existing programs. Older people constitute a significant market which providers have yet to effectively target.

- As demand for university courses among younger people decreases, the higher education sector must target older learners. Scholarships and other benefits for mature learners can assist older people to access university courses. The way universities promote their courses, as well as teaching styles often adopted need to be modified for older people, with a greater focus on self-directed learning and alternative assessment methods. Universities can also engage in constructive partnerships with organisations such as U3A, thus enabling older learners to access resources such as libraries and computers, as well as allowing individuals to ‘sit in’ on courses where appropriate.

- TAFE is in a key position to better address the needs of older workers and older people in rural and isolated communities. The emphasis on vocational training in TAFE has limited older people’s access, in particular those who are no longer in the workforce or whose interests are non-vocational. Participants in the NSWCOA consultations also argued that the introduction of competency based education linked to national standards has limited the capacity of TAFE to cater for individual learning styles or differently paced learning. Therefore, TAFE should consider reinstituting so-called recreational courses. Given its flexibility, TAFE Outreach is ideally placed to undertake community development work with isolated and disadvantaged groups of older learners. TAFE Outreach should give priority to targeting older people’s organisations and workers in aged and community care. Examples of good practice in TAFE should be documented and promoted.

- The NSW Board of Adult and Community Education has funded several projects targeting older people in community colleges. The success of these projects

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In Aboriginal cultures there is a lot of respect for elders, and the extended family wants the best for its older people. Other cultures have a lot to learn from this approach.

Ruth Bell
Girra Girra Women’s Group
demonstrates that ACE is a viable mode of delivery, provided that resources are directed to targeting older people and providing relevant and appropriate programs. However, it is important that community colleges target older learners in their mainstream courses as well as in specific programs. As a priority, ACE providers should consider adopting a uniform system of concessions, based on the Seniors Card Scheme, to enable older people to participate. Further consideration should also be given to marketing, and to day time provision in those venues which are most easily accessible to transport. The impact of access and equity guidelines developed by BACE should be evaluated and any increase in participation documented.

**How involved should government be?**

Participants in the NSW COA consultations repeatedly stressed that the provision of lifelong learning for older people should be by older people, for older people. They emphasised that the role of governments, at local, state and federal levels should be to enable, rather than to direct or control provision of lifelong learning. While government regulation is required to develop common standards independence and flexibility must be preserved. Participants in the consultations indicated that governments are best placed to provide support and to ensure that infrastructure enables, rather than impedes participation.

**Funding**

Funding for learning activities for older people is scarce. Some organisations are unable to obtain

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*The sense of community is what is important in U3A. We don’t want government to run things. U3A is successful in using local contacts, including local government. These are the sort of contacts you don’t get with a large government department and there are always strings attached to government assistance.*

**Bill Gregory**

U3A Western Sydney
funding through health or education departments because their programs straddle the boundary between aged care, health promotion and education. BACE equity funding for older people is already allocated. Other organisations, such as the U3A, are fiercely independent and do not want government funds, but would welcome practical support. The NSW Healthy Ageing Framework, and other relevant NSW government initiatives, should allocate resources to promote older people’s participation in existing activities, to provide information about available opportunities and to develop new programs for groups not currently accessing education and training. In addition, courses should be regularly assessed to ensure they are achieving their objectives and are relevant.

**Transport**

When surveyed about barriers to accessing services and activities, older people consistently cite lack of access to transport as a major barrier to participation. For many older people, using public transport is not a choice, it is a necessity. While pensioner discounts in inner city areas have allowed older people unlimited travel for $1 a day, in rural and outer metropolitan areas, public transport is often limited, costly or non-existent. Without transport older people cannot access those learning opportunities which are available in their local area. Innovative use of existing resources including community transport and car pools, as well as concessions for both public and privately owned transport are required.

**Local Government**

Local Councils play a significant role in providing services to older people and in managing community resources. Access to premises, including Senior Citizens Centres, provision of community transport, library services and advice are among local government responsibilities.

**Senior Citizens Centres**

There are 157 Senior Citizens Centres in NSW run by Local Councils. They provide a range of activities and services, including Home and Community Care, which vary from area to area. Recently the use of many centres has been declining. This is partly due to the fact that some Centres have not adapted to the changing needs of older people, including increasing numbers of older people from non-English speaking backgrounds, earlier retirement, and increased longevity.

It is the policy of the Local Government and Shires Association that Local Councils should ensure that activities and services provided at Senior Citizens Centres reflect the diverse needs and interests of older people from all cultural backgrounds.
However the Committee has heard that in many cases older people from non-English speaking backgrounds, and older indigenous people, are unable to gain access to Senior Citizens Centres. In addition, some centres provide only social activities and are not interested in providing a wider range of learning opportunities. While some Centres are run by representative management committees, others are dominated by ‘in-groups’. Given that many organisations are actively seeking venues to run courses, better use of Senior Citizens Centres would include offering a range of learning activities, as well as aged and community care services. The involvement of a paid coordinator or Council Aged and Community Care worker to facilitate access to the Centres would also assist older people to use these facilities. Many successful Centres are those with a full or part time paid coordinator.

**Premises and Insurance**

Difficulties in accessing premises to conduct learning activities was consistently raised by participants in the Committee’s consultations. Most organisations, including clubs, schools and even Local Councils charge for the use of their venues. For example, U3A Hunter was unable to run computer courses because they had no permanent room in which to store the equipment. Partnerships and in kind exchange arrangements between providers and those who manage facilities are required. In addition, Local Councils should make available facilities such as council rooms, schools, libraries and so – on, for a low or nominal fee. Another associated issue is the need for standardised insurance schemes. Currently insurance schemes increase premiums on the basis of the age of volunteers and other users of the insured premises.

**Information**

Another major issue raised in the consultations was the lack of information available to older people interested in accessing learning activities. Growing use of the government funded Seniors Information Service, a statewide information service for older people established in 1996 indicates that older people’s need for information about a range of services is significant. While all providers actively engage in promoting their programs, the message is not reaching many older people. Better use of resources such as community radio and local newspapers to promote the benefits of participation in lifelong learning is required. Participants in the consultations stressed how useful it is to attend events where information about what is available in the community is shared. They suggested that local networks be set up to bring providers together to share information and strategies.

Local Councils could play a key role in facilitating the development of networks, by contacting appropriate agencies and providing venues for meetings. These networks could be coordinated, in the first instance, by Aged and Community Care workers, whose role will inevitably increase in importance as more people require older people’s services. A ‘Grey Pages’ or directory of services available to older people could be produced in local government areas to assist older people to access opportunities.

Libraries, community centres and Senior Citizens Centres should consider making available computer equipment and Internet access to older people. Training programs
in computer and Internet use could be offered in partnership with TAFE and ACE. These programs would enable older people to stay in touch with new information technologies.

**Partnerships**

Creative partnerships which facilitate the learning opportunities of older people are already common. The Garden Court Centre in Glen Innes is an example of the benefits offered by co-location of services; older people can access a range of services and activities at one central venue, which reduces the cost of transport, prevents confusion and saves time. Partnerships between organisations such as Wontama Day Care Therapy Centre, TAFE, and the Orange Community Centre increase the ability of older people to access mainstream education in an appropriate context.

Better coordination of services could be extended from provision of aged care to provision of healthy ageing activities. Linking aged care workers to community colleges and other providers would assist older people to access available opportunities and could lead to innovative program development. A one-stop shop offering counselling, information and guidance should be established to provide information and referral about lifelong learning opportunities across agencies and providers.

**The Learning City**

The concept of the ‘learning city’ was first developed internationally in the 1970s. In the 1990s the notion of promoting small local cities and towns as ‘learning cities’ has become more current. In late 1996 the UK National Institute of Adult and Community Education reported on the development of a number of learning city initiatives in England, Scotland and Wales. In each area education providers, local government
representatives, local businesses, government agencies, schools, and community organisations came together to discuss how best to promote lifelong learning in their area. While participants in each individual area went about setting up a learning city in different ways, common principles emerged:

- Coordination and cooperation between providers of adult learning institutions, at least to provide information, if not more proactively.
- Communities come together to identify areas where difficulty in accessing learning opportunities exist and target funds to these areas. For example employers might sponsor employees to attend two free ACE courses per year.
- Joint definition of, and strategy to address, key training needs depending on the economy of the city by private and public sectors.
- Linking learning to cultural facilities such as libraries, museums, art galleries, theatres and to cultural activities of other cultures in the community.
- Linking lifelong learning to community participation, using learning activities to increase awareness of decision making process and to train and empower individuals to take action and take part in political and local decision making etc.
- Promoting coordination between institutions which provide learning throughout the life-cycle, schools, universities, employers, TAFE, ACE, etc.

The learning city concept is particularly viable for small communities, and in some cases has been linked to economic regeneration. In NSW, local government areas are ideally situated to bring together providers, business, government, and community organisations to collaborate in fostering lifelong learning for people of all ages. Local Councils, together with regional councils of ACE, TAFE and schools, local businesses networks and community networks could take a coordinating role, identifying key players and facilitating the development of local networks.

**Research Projects**

Cooperative research projects on the benefits of lifelong learning have already been undertaken, for example by academics and the U3A. Further research on the benefits of engaging in learning activities could be undertaken to demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of directing small amounts of money to such activities. Much existing research on older people and healthy ageing does not include assessment of the effects of participation in learning. This 'blind spot' perpetuates the idea that learning is not a priority for older people. In addition, data on older peoples participation in learning activities needs to be collated and made available including for the 'old old' as well as by categories of gender, ethnicity and Aboriginality.
Lifelong learning for all

In a truly clever, visionary society all people, regardless of age and social status, would be engaged in a continuing process of development, of growth and reflection, of intellectual and emotional achievement. Active participation in the community, a sense of shared responsibility and ownership, the ‘social capital’ that Eva Cox has spoken of and increased mental and physical wellbeing would be the result. Such a society would require a range of innovative learning opportunities, as well as radically different social and economic structures in order to make this development possible for all people. As the House of Representatives Standing Committee for Long Term Strategies pointed out in 1992, we have yet to imagine what human beings are really capable of. A commitment to promoting lifelong learning, in the true spirit, requires all parties to develop such an imagination and to pursue the vision with energy and enthusiasm.

Start now and take a new lease on that precious gift, life. Find some interest you would very much like further to cultivate and go for all you’re worth towards a brand new future of many more fruitful and happy years.

Sydney Poppit, a ‘nonagenarian’
Submission to Committee
Recommendations

As this report has shown, there are currently significant barriers which impede older people's participation in learning activities. It is the Committee's view that a whole of government approach to facilitating older people's participation is essential. The NSW Government Social Justice Directions Statement identifies access to lifelong learning opportunities as a priority for people of all ages. Strategic action by providers and by community sector organisations is also required to facilitate older people's involvement. The Committee therefore recommends the following:

1. NSW State Government

1.1 That older people's participation in lifelong learning be addressed by whole of government approaches to ageing, health and education policy. These would include the Healthy Ageing Framework, and any future work by the Board of Adult and Community Education and by the Social Justice Reference Group.

1.2 That the Healthy Ageing Framework recognise and promote the importance of learning activities in promoting wellbeing and maintaining health and independence.

1.3 That the NSW Health Department and Ageing and Disability Department undertake a cost-benefit study to evaluate the relationship between participation in learning activities, perceived wellbeing and health care costs, particularly in relation to dementia.

1.4 That the Ageing and Disability Department fund lifelong learning demonstration projects for older people, specifically targeting older men, older people from non-English speaking backgrounds and older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and on the basis of these projects develop best practice principles for these groups.

1.5 That the Seniors Information Service collate information on lifelong learning activities and refer callers to providers.

1.6 That Seniors Card sponsor 10 annual scholarships for members to attend a term at ACE and promote their experiences.

1.7 That Seniors Card members receive a discount for travel with private providers of transport throughout NSW in order to enable them to access learning activities.

1.8 That the Department of Sport and Recreation provide activity courses for older people and promote these widely through older people's organisations, community centres, HACC, and other key agencies.

1.9 That the Department of Training and Education Coordination maintain funding for the Mature Workers Program, indexed to inflation and ensure that the program is widely promoted as an example of good practice.
2. Local Government

2.1 That Local Councils provide funding and support to Senior Citizens Centres on the condition that they ensure open availability of premises to all older people - including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and older people from ethnic groups – and provide a range of learning opportunities as well as social activities.

2.2 That all Local councils allocate staff to coordinate use of Senior Citizens Centres, provide information about learning opportunities available to older people, facilitate and resource a local network of providers, and establish a planning committee which includes older residents to ensure consumer input.

2.3 That all Local Councils make council rooms, schools, Senior Citizens Centres and other premises as well as community transport, available to older people to undertake learning activities at little or no cost.

2.4 That Council libraries provide free access to computers and the Internet and provide training in partnership with TAFE, local community colleges and private providers.

2.5 That three local government areas in NSW pilot the learning city model by establishing a network of education services to exchange information and resources, and promote lifelong learning to specific community groups, including older people.

3. Providers

3.1 That all providers develop courses specifically aimed at, and taught by, older people, with appropriate support and training made available.

3.2 That all providers develop retirement planning courses in conjunction with unions and employers and make these available, through appropriate programs such as university continuing education programs, Community Colleges, and TAFE Outreach.

3.3 That all providers actively seek to develop partnerships, exchange resources and information on lifelong learning for older people.

3.4 Universities

3.4.1 That university Continuing Education Centres provide concessions to older learners through the Seniors Card Scheme

3.4.2 That universities survey the educational needs of older people in their areas and provide appropriately for such needs.

3.4.3 That universities investigate the use of alternative teaching and learning strategies to facilitate involvement of a wider range of learners, including older people.
3.4.4 That universities redirect resources to target older people as enrolment among younger learners declines.

3.5 TAFE

3.5.1 That TAFE review the priority given to vocational training and ensure that older people are equally able to participate by for example, providing concessions and ensuring timing, and venues are appropriate.

3.5.2 That TAFE Outreach intensively market its product to older people via older people’s organisations and service providers such as HACC, especially in rural and isolated areas.

3.5.3 That TAFE reinstate recreational training and, where appropriate employ older people with relevant skills to provide training.

3.6 ACE

3.6.1 That the Board of Adult and Community Education, together with community colleges, develop a uniform and consistent system of concessions for older people.

3.6.2 That all community colleges and other BACE funded providers increase provision of courses for older people, ensure they are held at appropriate venues and times, and are accessible by public transport.

3.6.3 That BACE establish an advisory service for older adults seeking information about learning opportunities.

4. Other agencies

4.1 That additional research be undertaken into the needs of older people from non English speaking backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups.

4.2 That clubs and associations develop and provide appropriate learning activities for older people.

4.3 That all research on participation in education and training, including Australian Bureau of Statistics reports, include age specific data.
Endnotes

1 P. Nelson 1995 Lifelong Learning: Life Transitions and the Older Learner Consultative Committee on Ageing: Sydney p 3
2 cited in AAACE 1995 Lifelong Learning: The Third Age p 4
3 McLennan, W 1996 Projections of the Populations of Australia: States and Territories AGPS: Canberra, p 131 (These figures are taken from the series A projections.)
4 Ibid p 52
5 Ibid p 52
7 1991 Census special tables NSW
10 1991 Census Special Tables NSW Total NSW, Aboriginal, TSI Age Structure
13 ABS Labour Force Estimates November 1996 NSW Males
14 cited in Draft Healthy Ageing Policy, NSW Ageing & Disability Department 1996
15 Dr Lehr, University of Heidelberg, First Joint Conference on Healthy Ageing, WHO and United Nations Programme on Ageing
18 National Board of Employment, Education and Training 1994 Developing Lifelong Learners through Undergraduate Education AGPS: Canberra p 43-44
21 Ibid, ix
22 Dr Reg Mitchell, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Sydney, Submission to Committee
23 Mitchell, Legge and Sinclair 1995 ‘Membership of the University of the Third Age and Perceived Wellbeing’ unpublished paper, University of Sydney
25 AAACE 1995 Lifelong Learning: The Third Age ANTA: Canberra p 39
26 Ibid
27 Ibid p 42
28 Teshuva, K, Stanislavsky, Y & Kendig, H 1994 Towards Healthy Ageing: Literature review Victorian Health Promotion Foundation: Melbourne p 77-78
29 Encel and Nelson 1996 Volunteering and Older People CCOA: Sydney; Basic Work Skills Training Division TAFE 1995 Retraining Options: Guidelines and Research on Current TAFE NSW Provision of Retraining Programs and Initiatives TAFE NSW: Sydney
30 Communication Law Centre 1996 Information Poverty and Older People interim discussion paper, p 9
31 Irizarry, C and Downing , A 1996 Computers Enhancing the Lives of Older People unpublished paper Flinders University of South Australia p 7
32 1996 ‘Older, richer, surfers rush to the widening Web’ Australian Financial Review November 11, p 1
Life cycle theorist Erik Erikson suggested that there were seven developmental tasks that each person would face, each of us is challenged to develop:

- trust rather than distrust
- autonomy rather than fear of decision
- initiative and capacity for effort
- a sense of identity rather than confusion
- capacity for intimate relationships rather than isolation
- fruitfulness rather than stagnation
- a sense of integrity and wholeness rather than despair


Learning for Wellbeing Consultation, 1996


Learning for Wellbeing Consultation, 1996

Learning for Wellbeing Consultation, 1996


Building on Our Cultural Diversity, op cit p 14

Australian Association of Adult and Community Education 1995 Who are Australia’s Adult Learners?, AAACE: Canberra p 3

Australian Bureau of Statistics Transition from Education to Work May 1996 – Special Tables


Tuckett and Sargent 1996 NIACE Survey, cited in Veronica McGivney, op cit p 1

Commission on the Future, op cit, p 1

This attitude was prevalent among older men who participated in focus groups held by the Committee in 1996.
## Appendix A:

### Respondents to lifelong learning discussion paper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title and Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Dr Ronald K. Browne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Bernice Morrin</td>
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<td>Dr Alex Nelson</td>
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<td>Ms Nancy North</td>
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<td>Ms Pat Phillips</td>
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<td>Ms Doris L. Whiting</td>
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<td>Ms Lee Chin</td>
<td>Assistant Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Stepan Kerkyasharian</td>
<td>Chair of Ethnic Affairs Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father John A. Murphy</td>
<td>Chairman, CLRI (NSW)</td>
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<td>Mr S. John Rooth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Olwyn McKenzie</td>
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<td>Mr Phillip Blair</td>
<td>Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Celia Saw</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Jenny De Mole</td>
<td>Course Co-ordinator</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Charles Sturt University</td>
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*Never Too Late to Learn*
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<td>Ms Lena Bruselid</td>
<td>Policy Officer Kuringai Computer Pals for Seniors</td>
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<td>Ms Elaine Dabbs</td>
<td>President Council on the Ageing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Sylvia Hardy</td>
<td>President Senior Citizens Federation Manly/Pittwater</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Betty Heaton</td>
<td>President NSW Council of U3A Inc/Bathurst</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Rex Swinton</td>
<td>Principal Chatswood Evening College Inc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Joan Goldsmith</td>
<td>Probus Club of Bronte</td>
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<td>Mr Jim Ransom</td>
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<td>Ms Gillian Morris</td>
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<td>Ms Anne Burnett</td>
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## Appendix B:
### Participants in NSW COA consultations

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Organisation</th>
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<td>Mrs Margaret Teitzel</td>
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<td>Ms Debbie Hall</td>
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<td>Mr Harry Hapwood</td>
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<td>Mrs Leon Hapwood</td>
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<td>Mrs Joyce Hampton</td>
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<td>Ms Sandra King</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Malveena Welsh</td>
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<td>Ms Helen Barr</td>
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<td>Ms Jenny Fitzpatrick</td>
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<td>Ms Caroline Harris</td>
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<td>Ms Jenny Fitzpatrick</td>
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<td>Mrs Marilyn Seaman</td>
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<td>Ms Ann Henderson</td>
<td>Aged Concern Albury/Wodonga</td>
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<td>Mr Ron Jenkins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs Nell Fisher</td>
<td>Alzheimer's Association</td>
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<td>Ms Christine Norman</td>
<td>Anglican Retirement Villages</td>
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<td>Mr Ibrahim Mhajer</td>
<td>Arabic Aged Centre</td>
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<td>Mr Arch Nelson</td>
<td>Armidale Probus Club</td>
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<td>Mr Ray Esdaile</td>
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<td>Ms Lorraine Best</td>
<td>Armidale Tafe</td>
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<td>Ms Marial Sabry</td>
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<td>Mrs Edna Mcintosh</td>
<td>Autumn Lodge</td>
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<td>Mrs Molly Mullis</td>
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<td>Mrs Jean Rapp</td>
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<td>Ms Marion Taylor</td>
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<td>Ms Marianne Enoch</td>
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<td>Mrs Phonsie Edwards</td>
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<td>Ms Mira Jovanovska</td>
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<td>Mr Gary Smith</td>
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<td>Ms Helen Paget</td>
<td>Community Aged Care Packages</td>
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<td>Ms Gwyneth Trysant</td>
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<td>Ms Sonia Shea</td>
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<td>Ms Dorris Whiting</td>
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<td>Mrs Joan Summerville</td>
<td>Country Womens Association</td>
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<td>Mrs Anne Muller</td>
<td>Country Womens Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Paul Kelly</td>
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<td>Mr Scott White</td>
<td>Department Of Sport &amp; Recreation</td>
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<td>Ms Beverley Hughes</td>
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<td>Ms Dianne Whitton</td>
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<td>Ms Marlin Kristoffersson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Helena Engborg</td>
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<td>Dr Mary Nixon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs Ruth Bell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Mary Mewsome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Cathryn Jones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Lyn Alley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Peter Pex</td>
<td>Aged Co-ordinator</td>
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<td>Ms Marie Williamson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Barbara Curry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Pat Ellercamp</td>
<td>Hunter U3A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs Gladys Ellercamp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Jay Kulkarni</td>
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<td>Ms Barbara Smith</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>New England &amp; Northwest Regional Council of Adult Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Vicki Simpson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Pat Wallis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs Kae Ruprecht</td>
<td>North &amp; Northwest Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs Marie Rutter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr James Spink</td>
<td>NSW Sport and Recreation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Nooreen Hewett</td>
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<td>Mr Ted Cohen</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Kay Miller</td>
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<tr>
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