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Department of Ageing, Disability & Home  
Care (DADHC)

Project

Ageing 2030: Creating the Future  
Pre-Roundtable Consultations

Final Report

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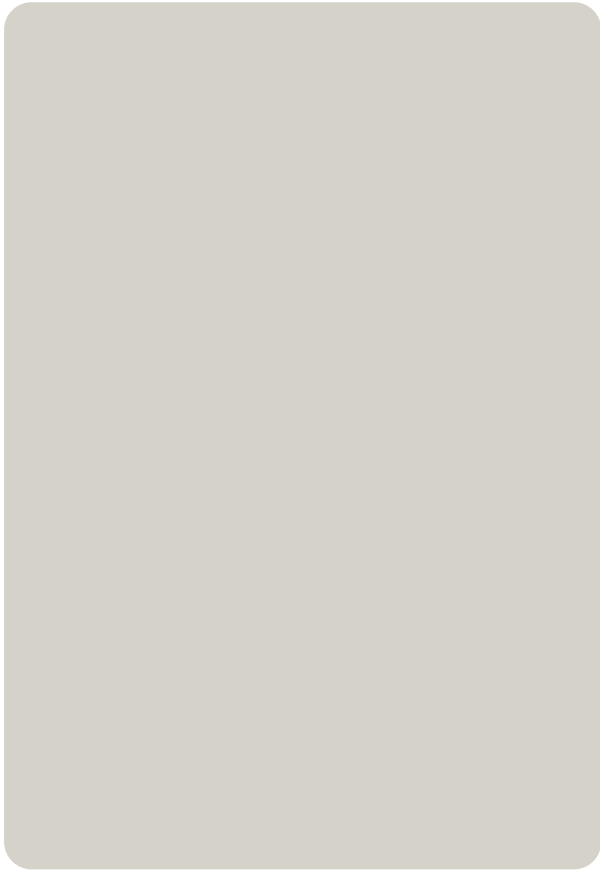
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# 1 Executive Summary

## 1.1 Introduction

This report outlines community and stakeholder views expressed in a series of consultations hosted by the Ministerial Committee on Ageing on behalf of the NSW Minister for Ageing. The consultations were a precursor to the NSW Government's *Ageing 2030: Creating the future* Roundtable, to be held in October 2007. The purpose of this report is to identify the main issues of importance to the community and stakeholders, in order to inform preparations for the Roundtable.

This report documents feedback from eight consultations with the community and stakeholders in the lead up to the Roundtable.

Discussion at the consultations focused on the three key themes of *Ageing 2030: Creating the future*. These are:

- Prevention and early intervention
- Liveable homes and communities
- Economic and social engagement.

Much of the discussion at the community consultations centred on the current context of services, needs and challenges faced by older people today, and the lessons of this experience for the future. The various structural changes associated with population ageing were not a major focus of the discussions, as is reflected in the consultation outcomes.

## 1.2 Process

The pre-Roundtable consultations were held across metropolitan and rural New South Wales (NSW) in Coffs Harbour, Gosford, Parramatta and Queanbeyan during August and September 2007.

There were two consultation sessions held in each of the four locations – the first with members of the local community, and the second with representatives of service providers and industry. The consultations were well attended with participation by over 400 community members and other stakeholders.

## 1.3 Community views

The main outcomes of the consultations are grouped under the three themes:

## 1.4 Prevention and early intervention

### 1.4.1 Informed decision making

- Many participants in the consultations identified the need for early provision of information and education to people of all ages to assist them in: understanding the implications of population ageing; planning and decision making regarding the needs of an ageing friend or relative; and planning and decision making regarding their own needs for the future.
- Education was identified as playing an important role in encouraging young people to plan for the future. Issues to be addressed in education materials include: the range of services available to individuals and their families and how to access these; information on healthy lifestyles, preventative measures and healthy ageing; and information on financial planning to maintain financial security.
- These issues were raised across the board in both metropolitan and rural locations.

### 1.4.2 Active and healthy lifestyles

- Encouraging people to maintain a healthy, active lifestyle was discussed as one of the most appropriate prevention and early intervention strategies for population ageing. A range of options for active and healthy lifestyles were discussed at each of the consultation sessions.
- Participants shared a vision for an active, healthy and engaged older community.
- Promoting healthy food choices throughout life and providing opportunities to participate in appropriate, affordable physical activities such as yoga and pilates were identified by a number of participants.
- Some individuals believed that people's psychological and spiritual needs should also be addressed, through access to a range of appropriate opportunities.
- Many participants commented that older people need to maintain active minds as they grow older, through participation in courses, lectures and continuing education opportunities.
- Participants identified the need for people to acquire healthy and active habits earlier on in life, to prevent some of the physical and psychological problems experienced in older age. A positive approach was seen to be needed to achieve this,

rather than one which focuses on people's illnesses and disabilities.

- There was recognition of the need for urban design and infrastructure that facilitates healthy lifestyles. Suggestions included the provision of centrally located community facilities where people can socialise and exercise, and 'village style' urban design which encourages walking.
- Some participants advocated for increased investment in research to prevent disease, reduce disability and encourage healthy ageing.

#### 1.4.3 Enabling appropriate services

- Participants identified the need for equitable access to appropriate and affordable health and aged care services for all. Feedback focused on the importance of a range of flexible, quality services to support individuals to live independently in their homes. The types of services identified by participants included specialist services (such as dementia day services), respite services, and specific services for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) communities, and people with a disability.
- The need for increased support for carers – including improved carer remuneration, support services and conditions was identified at all consultations.
- There was a focus on the development of flexible health service models and innovative approaches to the training and accreditation of the health and care workforce, to ensure quality health services into the future. Some participants emphasised the need to value care work given its increasing importance into the future.
- Suggestions for new models for service delivery included a community network based approach, a 'one stop shop' approach enabling access to services from home, and electronic access to services.
- Service related issues were raised across the board in both metropolitan and rural locations. However, a number of participants specifically identified the need for equitable access to appropriate services in rural and regional areas.

### 1.5 Liveable homes and communities

#### 1.5.1 Housing options

- This issue was discussed in terms of the need for choice in housing and accommodation options for an ageing population with a broad range of needs and lifestyle preferences. For example, it was

suggested that housing options for older people should include independent living in the community with social supports if required, cluster housing or group living for older people, retirement villages, cooperative housing ventures owned and managed by small groups, and aged care facilities.

- Continuing support for 'ageing in place' into the future through development of a diversity of housing stock within geographical communities, was endorsed by participants. This would allow people to downsize or shift to more appropriate housing while remaining in their communities. Diverse housing stock was also seen as one factor in the strengthening of intergenerational connections.
- There was strong consensus that housing developments into the future should be relevant to diverse communities and facilitate social connections among neighbours. For example, public spaces and facilities (eg community centres, parks and commercial zones) which provide culturally appropriate opportunities for socialising were suggested.
- Housing adaptability and modification was identified as an important element of housing options for an ageing population into the future. One suggestion was the development of housing which can be modified and retrofitted to cater to the changing household types and health and access needs of older people. Strategies included implementation of universal design principles, and modifying building codes to ensure all houses are adaptable to the needs of older people, people with disabilities and their carers.
- The challenges of affordability of housing for older people into the future, and the provision of information and education about housing choices were also identified as key issues. A variety of affordable housing options was suggested, including preserving available forms of low cost housing for older people such as residential parks.
- There was recognition that residential aged care in the future would focus on the oldest older people, and thus there would need to be a greater focus on housing which facilitates independent living and community care. Options included independent living units with accommodation for carers, and retirement villages with the capacity to deliver different levels of care.
- The desire for housing options that incorporate environmental sustainability initiatives and provide access to the natural environment was also raised by participants.

- Housing options and related issues were a prominent theme raised in both metropolitan and rural areas.

### 1.5.2 Secure and independent living

- Security and independence were described as two very important characteristics in the vision for older communities in 2030. People described this independence allowing people to live how they choose to do so, if they are physically capable, rather than isolating older people from their local communities.
- Most participants agreed that it was important for older people to feel part of the communities in which they live as they grow older. Many also identified the importance for older people to maintain their independence in terms of lifestyle choice. This involves providing a diversity of opportunities for economic and social participation, housing and care options, provision of a wide range of services to both metropolitan and rural communities, and providing financial security for people in later years.
- Much lively discussion occurred regarding the myriad of different methods to provide a sense of financial security in later years, to encourage independent living. There was some concern about current rates of personal debt and that some people, for instance those currently in their 40's, would not be able to afford to sustain their current lifestyles as they grow older. Much of the focus of these discussions was directed towards providing older people with appropriate advice on the best options for financial stability.
- One of the issues regarding financial security was to do with the shifting values and attitudes likely to be present in an ageing population. Participants believed the expectations of the 'baby-boomer' population are very different to those of earlier generations in their later years. As a result, pressure may be placed on services to continue to provide a higher standard of living as people grow older, into the future. Some participants also identified the need for greater choice for individuals to work longer if they wish to do so, as a factor in maintaining people's independence as they grow older.

### 1.5.3 Public space and urban design

- These issues were discussed in terms of the need to promote social connections and health and wellbeing through urban design and to ensure accessibility for all, including those with limited mobility, to all aspects of the public domain.
- Participants identified a number of issues in relation to urban planning, focusing primarily on

the importance of planning for communities that is based on sound social planning principles.

- Issues relating to the public domain and urban planning were identified across both metropolitan and rural areas, with participants in rural areas placing greater emphasis on the need for well considered community planning.

### 1.5.4 Getting around

- Transport was a priority issue, raised at every consultation. Discussion focused on the need for a range of transport options that were accessible for all including those with limited mobility. Public transport as a means of supporting economic and social participation, particularly as the population ages.
- Accessibility was discussed in both metropolitan and rural areas, as was the need for improved public transport provision. Social isolation linked to limited access to public transport was identified as a particular issue in rural NSW. Whereas current service levels, route locations and affordability were identified as issues to be resolved in metropolitan and rural areas. Existing local transport coordination groups were seen as one effective strategy for addressing local transport challenges. These groups were seen to have an ongoing role in transport planning within the context of population ageing.
- Demand for transport outside existing peak times is likely to increase in line with population ageing. As such there is a need to understand and accommodate the needs of commuters who are outside the workforce in a review of our transport systems.

## 1.6 Economic and social engagement

### 1.6.1 Planning for the future

- Many participants identified the need for a more integrated and long term approach to planning for population ageing. This approach was described as involving improved coordination and resource sharing by state, federal and local governments, and increased collaboration between government and the private and community sectors, to encourage greater coordination across programs and initiatives. Some participants identified the need for more creative partnerships and networks including multi-service organisations.
- Many participants believed that the government should undertake 'big picture' forward planning now, to identify key challenges and future infrastructure needs in 2030. There was also some recognition of planning for population ageing as a 'whole of community' responsibility.

There was support for some existing government programs that provide assistance to older people, while other participants believed additional resources were required to improve programs. These issues were identified by many participants in both metropolitan and rural areas.

- Participants recognised that employers, government and training organisations need to plan strategically for the impacts of an ageing workforce, and a range of changes in education, training and employment practices were suggested. Some participants identified the need to restructure industry to respond to the changing demands of an ageing population, and, as local demand changes, to facilitate a move towards knowledge and export-based industries.
- Several participants acknowledged the potential value and impact of technological change into the future.
- There was a high level of consensus that the principles of 'choice' and self-determination are important for people as they grow older, and that preparations for population ageing should aim to promote autonomy and choice.
- Several participants commented on the need for a sustainable approach to population ageing that balances social change and community needs with environmental and economic issues. A key aspect of social sustainability identified by many participants was the need for careful consideration of the policy implications of demographic change, such as increasing demand on ageing services and products, the decline in the size of the workforce and changes in the labour market.
- These issues were identified across the board in both metropolitan and rural areas.

### 1.6.2 Volunteering

- Volunteering was described as one of the most important methods through which older people are currently able to participate actively in the wider community. Existing volunteering arrangements were seen as a key success story, in that they offer older people opportunities for social interaction and enable them to make a valuable contribution to society in their later years.
- Concerns were raised in relation to the current decline in volunteering. The point was made in both rural and metropolitan areas that this trend would need to be reversed through increased awareness of the benefits of volunteering among younger age groups. Many people commented that younger generations should be encouraged to become more involved in volunteer

organisations to help bolster the size of the volunteer workforce.

- There was recognition that informal assistance may be more common than formal volunteering in some ethnic and Aboriginal communities. Promoting volunteering to members of culturally diverse communities was suggested as one strategy to support a culture of volunteering into the future.
- Many people identified the major rewards of volunteering as a feeling of social inclusion and a sense of contributing to society. These were regarded as being important values for older generations to maintain into the future.
- In order to encourage greater participation in volunteer organisations, people discussed the need to reduce disincentives to volunteering. Suggestions included: communicating the inherent benefits of volunteering to a wider audience, addressing regulatory barriers that volunteer organisations face and reducing the costs (such as memberships) and the amount of 'red tape' associated with volunteering.

### 1.6.3 Future of work

- The future of work was discussed in terms of the need for changes to workplace cultures in the face of a diminishing workforce, and changing employment and industry opportunities in line with population ageing.
- A number of obstacles to older people remaining in the workforce as they grow older were identified. These included a culture of negativity towards older people in the workplace, and working environments inconsistent with the health and lifestyle needs of both older people and carers.
- One suggestion for addressing these obstacles was through cultural change. For example, public campaigns to promote the value of mature employees and more flexible working environments allowing older people and carers to work part time. Other suggestions made by participants included programs of training and retraining to enable people greater ability to work in changing roles as they grow older, education of human resources professionals about the impacts of population ageing on the workforce, and promoting healthy lifestyles and work practices to ensure the ability of older people to remain in work as they age.
- There were a number of opportunities for growth in employment markets identified. These included the 'Grey Nomad' tourism industry and the aged care industry.

- Issues relating to the future of work were identified across both metropolitan and rural areas, with participants in rural areas specifically emphasising the need for education and retraining opportunities in those locations.

#### **1.6.4 Connected communities and social inclusion**

- This was a common theme raised throughout all the consultations and was discussed from a range of perspectives.
- Building sustainable communities and social networks, based on social diversity and tolerance, was identified as an important way of addressing social isolation and enhancing quality of life for all, including older people.
- Connected communities were characterised by a diversity of cultures and age groups (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds), thriving intergenerational relationships based on mutual respect (for instance in the workplace, at home, through social programs and activities), a safe environment, a supportive environment (in which carers receive appropriate levels of support), a high level of community engagement and participation (for instance in social and cultural activities, education and training opportunities), strong linkages with other communities, and a sense of belonging for all.
- A major theme throughout all the consultations was the need to value older people and to challenge widely held negative perceptions of ageing, to enable people to maintain a sense of self worth and to be recognised by others as valuable contributors in the community, as they grow older.
- There was a high level of consensus around the need for a range of strategies (such as community education) to encourage tolerance and greater valuing of the contributions of older people and to provide opportunities for the growth of intergenerational connections (for instance, through social history projects and a diversity housing forms within geographical communities).
- A number of participants also identified age based discrimination in the workplace as an issue to be addressed.



## 2 Introduction

This report outlines community and stakeholder views expressed in a series of consultations hosted by the Ministerial Committee on Ageing on behalf of the NSW Minister for Ageing. The consultations were a precursor to the NSW Government's *Ageing 2030: Creating the future* Roundtable, to be held in October 2007. The purpose of this report is to identify the main issues of importance to the community and stakeholders, in order to inform preparations for the Roundtable.

This report documents feedback from eight consultations with the community and stakeholders in the lead up to the Roundtable.

Discussion at the consultations focused on the three key themes of *Ageing 2030: Creating the future*. These are:

- Prevention and early intervention
- Liveable homes and communities
- Economic and social engagement.

The next phase of the engagement process will be the *Ageing 2030: Creating the future* Roundtable. The Roundtable will involve key decision makers and experts from government, business and the wider community, and will focus on the three key themes.

This document reflects community and stakeholder input from the eight consultation sessions. It does not attempt to present a strategic analysis of the issues within the policy planning framework.

### 2.1 Process

The pre-Roundtable consultations were held across metropolitan and rural New South Wales (NSW) in Coffs Harbour, Gosford, Parramatta and Queanbeyan during August and September 2007.

There were two consultation sessions held in each of the four locations – the first with members of the local community, and the second with representatives of service providers and industry.

Participants were invited to attend the workshop by the Department. The community consultations were advertised in local papers in the consultation locations and surrounding areas. Invitations to the afternoon session were sent to local organisations who were likely to be impacted by population ageing including non-government service providers and organisations, local government, business and industry.

The consultations were well attended with participation by approximately 480 community members and other stakeholders.

Table 1. Number of participants in each consultation

	Parramatta	Queanbeyan	Gosford	Coffs Harbour
Community	110	25	50	25
Service providers & industry	115	35	60	60
Total	225	60	110	85

Please note, all figures are approximate.

#### 2.1.1 Session 1

Participants at each of the community consultations were divided into small groups, and feedback was sought from each group on the following questions:

- Vision for the future: Imagine someone you love is an older person in 2030. What are your best hopes for them and the society they live in?
- Creating the future: Each group was asked to identify one of the main hopes for the future, and to discuss:
  - What works and why?
  - What else could be done?

#### 2.1.2 Session 2

Participants at each of the consultations with service providers and industry representatives were divided into small groups, and feedback was sought from each group on the following questions:

- Vision for the future: Imagine our society in 2030. What are your best hopes for a future society where more than one in five people will be aged over 65?
- What will a future with an ageing population mean for your organisation or sector?
- Creating the future: Each group was asked to identify one of the main hopes for the future, and to discuss:
  - What works and why?
  - What else could be done?

The main outcomes of the consultations are summarised in the next session of this report.

## 3 Community views

The main outcomes of the consultations are grouped under the three themes and following issue areas:

- Prevention and early intervention
  - Informed decision making (for individuals)
  - Active and healthy lifestyles
  - Enabling appropriate services
- Liveable homes and communities
  - Housing options
  - Secure and independent living
  - Public space and urban design
  - Getting around
- Economic and social engagement.
  - Planning for the future
  - Volunteering
  - Future of work
  - Connected communities and social inclusion.

Each item identifies issues of consensus as well as points of difference arising in the discussions. Differences in feedback from metropolitan and rural areas are also identified.

## 3.1 Prevention and early intervention

### 3.1.1 Informed decision making (for individuals)

#### Overview and context

Many participants in the consultations identified the need for early provision of information and education to people of all ages to assist them in:

- Understanding the implications of population ageing
- Planning and decision making regarding the needs of an ageing friend or relative
- Planning and decision making regarding their own needs for the future.

Education was identified as playing an important role in encouraging young people to plan for the future. Issues to be addressed in education materials include: the range of services available to individuals and their families and how to access these; information on healthy lifestyles, preventative measures and healthy ageing; and information on financial planning to maintain financial security.

A number of participants believed a single point of contact or 'one stop shop' approach was needed to effectively disseminate the information, including written materials, as well as verbal advice and services. Some others suggested that the information be disseminated through the internet/other technologies. These issues were raised across the board in both metropolitan and rural locations.

#### Vision

- A community that understands the implications of an ageing population and is well equipped to make informed decisions regarding their health, financial security and future housing preferences.

#### Creating the future

Develop and conduct widespread awareness and education strategies using a range of media including one stop shops.

Educate the wider community to plan early for ageing.

Improve and increase communication channels to educate the wider community about the services that exist for older people.

### 3.1.2 Active and healthy lifestyles

#### Overview and context

'Active and healthy lifestyles' was discussed as one of the most appropriate methods to address prevention and early intervention strategies for population ageing. A range of options were discussed at each of the consultation sessions. Participants connected individual health and well being with engagement in the community and independence. Strategies to promote activity often had the benefit of enhancing community connections and mental wellbeing.

An active, healthy engaged older community was a shared vision among workshop participants. This vision acknowledged that retaining health into older age required the adoption of healthy eating and exercise habits early in life.

Many participants discussed the value of physical activity in preventing some of the physical and psychological problems experienced in older age. A positive approach was seen to be needed to achieve this, rather than one which focuses on people's illnesses and disabilities. Encouraging healthy food choices and enabling participation in affordable activities such as yoga and pilates were important prevention and early intervention strategies.

There was recognition of the need for urban design and infrastructure that facilitates healthy lifestyles. Suggestions included the provision of centrally located community facilities where people can socialise and exercise, and 'village style' urban design which encourages walking.

Some participants advocated for increased investment in research to prevent disease, reduce disability and encourage healthy ageing.

Vision	Creating the future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage healthy lifestyles and diets.</li> </ul>	Focus on abilities, not disabilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase opportunities for staying active and involved.</li> </ul>	Promoting healthy lifestyles for under 65 year olds.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People maintaining active minds throughout their whole lives.</li> </ul>	Need to provide accessible and affordable opportunities for further education and lifelong learning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wellbeing needs to include factors such as: people's passions, spirituality, psychological needs, meaningful activities and respect in society.</li> </ul>	Education about lifestyle choices that prevent illness.

### 3.1.3 Enabling appropriate services

#### Overview and context

This issue was primarily discussed in terms of the need for equitable access to appropriate and affordable health and aged care services for all. Feedback focused on the importance of a range of flexible, quality services that support individuals to live independently in their homes. The types of services identified by participants included specialist services (such as dementia services), respite services, and specific services for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) communities, and people with a disability.

The need to provide for increased support for carers – including improved carer remuneration, support services and conditions was identified at all consultations. Participants identified the need to acknowledge and value the role of carers. Important support services included respite care and access to assistance in the home.

There was a focus on the development of flexible health service models and innovative approaches to the training and accreditation of the health and care workforce, to ensure quality health services into the future. Some participants emphasised the need to value care work given its increasing importance into the future.

There were some concerns that existing models of service delivery would not accommodate the increase in older people seeking service access. Suggestions for new models for service delivery included a community network based approach, a 'one stop shop' approach enabling access to services from home, and electronic access to services.

A small number of participants also identified the need for responsive emergency services (such as an emergency evacuation register in case of bushfire), as well as legal services as the population ages. Other services such as education and training and transport services are discussed in other sections of this report.

Service related issues were raised across the board in both metropolitan and rural locations. However, a number of participants specifically identified the need for equitable access to appropriate services in rural and regional areas.

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## Vision

- Equitable access to appropriate and affordable health and aged care services for all.

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## Creating the future

Develop and implement appropriate options to address individual preferences.

Policy making informed by a more integrated and long term approach to planning for population ageing (see 'Planning for the future' section of this report). Individuals supported in planning and decision making of their own (see 'Informed decision making (for individuals)' section of this report).

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## 3.2 Liveable homes and communities

### 3.2.1 Housing options

#### Overview and context

'Housing Options' was discussed in terms of the need for choice in housing and accommodation options for an ageing population with a broad range of needs and lifestyle preferences. For example, it was suggested that housing options for older people should include independent living in the community with social supports if required, cluster housing or group living for older people, retirement villages, cooperative housing ventures owned and managed by small groups, and aged care facilities.

Continuing support for 'ageing in place' into the future, through development of a diversity of housing stock within geographical communities, was endorsed by participants. This would allow people to downsize or shift to more appropriate housing while remaining in their communities. Diverse housing stock was also seen as one factor in the strengthening of intergenerational connections.

There was strong consensus that housing developments into the future should be relevant to diverse communities and facilitate social connections among neighbours. For example, public spaces and facilities (eg community centres, parks and commercial zones) which provide culturally appropriate opportunities for socialising were suggested.

Housing adaptability was identified as an important element of housing options for an ageing population into the future. One suggestion was the development of housing which can be modified and retrofitted to cater to the changing household types and health and access needs of older people. Strategies included implementation of universal design principles, and modifying building codes to ensure all houses are adaptable to the needs of older people, people with disabilities and their carers.

The challenges of affordability of housing for older people into the future, and the provision of information and education about housing choices were also identified as key issues. A variety of affordable housing options was suggested, including preserving available forms of low cost housing for older people such as residential parks.

There was recognition that residential aged care in the future would focus on the oldest older people, and thus there would need to be a greater focus on community care models and housing which facilitates independent living. Options included independent living units with accommodation for carers, and retirement villages with the capacity to deliver different levels of care.

The desire for housing options that incorporate environmental sustainability initiatives and provide access to the natural environment was also raised by participants.

Housing options and related issues were a prominent theme raised in both metropolitan and rural areas.

## Vision

- A range of housing and accommodation options catering to diverse needs, preferences and financial capacity. Choices for those wishing to live independently in the community, those wanting to live within communities of older people, and those in need of varying degrees of support and care.

## Creating the future

Appropriate housing and accommodation options for changing and diverse preferences. Encouraging a variety of new housing and accommodation models that enable links to community based care and support.

Availability of a wide range of housing and accommodation options for varying levels of financial capacity.

- All housing adaptable to universal needs.

Accessible design guidelines and adaptable housing building codes, including wide doorways, hallways and bathrooms, to ensure new dwellings are universally adaptable to the needs of older people and people with disabilities.

### 3.2.2 Secure and independent living

#### Overview and context

Security and independence were described as two very important characteristics in the vision for older communities in 2030. People described this independence allowing people to live how they choose to do so, if they are physically capable, rather than isolating older people from their local communities.

Most participants agreed that it was important for older people to feel part of the communities in which they live as they grow older. Many also identified the importance for older people to maintain their independence in terms of lifestyle choice. This involves providing a diversity of opportunities for economic and social participation, housing and care options, provision of a wide range of services to both metropolitan and rural communities, and providing financial security for people in later years.

Much lively discussion occurred regarding the myriad of different methods to provide a sense of financial security in later years, to encourage independent living. There was some concern about current rates of personal debt and that some people, for instance those currently in their 40's, would not be able to afford to sustain their current lifestyles as they grow older. Much of the focus of these discussions was directed towards providing older people with appropriate advice on the best options for financial stability.

One of the issues regarding financial security was to do with the shifting values and attitudes likely to be present in an ageing population. Participants believed the expectations of the 'baby-boomer' population are very different to those of earlier generations in their later years. As a result, pressure may be placed on services to continue to provide a higher standard of living as people grow older, into the future. Some participants also identified the need for greater choice for individuals to work longer if they wish to do so, as a factor in maintaining people's independence as they grow older.

## Vision

- Socially connected communities that allow people the choice to remain independent as they grow older.

## Creating the future

In order to allow independence, people should be given a choice of living options. Adequate service provision options need to be addressed, including the option of bringing care into homes rather than moving people into older communities.

- Need for financial security.

Financial planning for retirement needs to begin much earlier in life, in order to raise awareness of the many options.

- Increased financial planning skills for both older and younger generations.

Older people need improved access to a reliable service that explains the various options for maintaining financial security and managing personal debt.

- Independent people will be given greater choice to work longer into the future if they wish.

Increased opportunities for encouraging longer workforce participation are required.

### 3.2.3 Public space and urban design

#### Overview and context

'Public space and urban planning' were discussed in terms of the need to promote social connections and health and wellbeing through urban design. Urban design should promote accessibility for all, including those with limited mobility, to all aspects of the public domain. For instance, through appropriately designed and well maintained pedestrian paths, public buildings and amenities, and multipurpose community facilities that provide for families, younger people and older people. Other suggestions for improving access to the public domain included providing more public seating, amenities and rest points.

Participants identified a number of issues in relation to urban planning, focusing primarily on the importance of sound social planning principles informing community infrastructure planning. For instance, locating community facilities and services including transport and shopping within close proximity to residential areas, and creating a range of community spaces that provide opportunities for social interaction.

Other benefits relating to good urban design and planning that were identified in the consultations included enhanced community safety, greater social diversity and increased social participation.

Issues relating to the public domain and urban planning were identified across both metropolitan and rural areas, with participants in rural areas placing greater emphasis on the need for well considered community planning.

#### Vision

- Accessibility for all throughout the public domain.

#### Creating the future

Ensure accessibility in the design of streetscapes and other aspects of the public domain.

- Residential areas located near essential services, such as major transport hubs and shopping centres.

- Multipurpose accessible community facilities and services for families, young people and older people.

Social planning principles applied in urban design and planning projects.

- Increased social participation.

- Communities to incorporate shared communal spaces.

- Feeling safe to walk the streets.

Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles applied in urban design and planning projects.

### 3.2.4 Getting around

#### Overview and context

'Getting around' was discussed primarily in terms of the need to ensure accessibility for all including those with limited mobility to transport, and to provide a range of transport options, with a focus on public transport, as a means of supporting economic and social participation, particularly as the population ages.

Accessibility was discussed in both metropolitan and rural areas, as was the need for improved public transport provision. Social isolation linked to limited access to public transport was identified as a particular issue in rural NSW. Whereas current service levels, route locations and affordability were identified as issues to be resolved in metropolitan and rural areas.

Existing local transport coordination groups were seen as one effective strategy for addressing local transport challenges. These groups were seen to have an ongoing role in transport planning within the context of population ageing.

Particular issues identified in the Coffs Harbour session were the complex nature of transport planning (considering existing urban sprawl), a need for improved transport options that link with health services, and limited emergency vehicle access in some residential areas.

Demand for transport outside existing peak times is likely to increase in line with population ageing. As such there is a need to understand and accommodate the needs of commuters who are outside the workforce in a review of our transport systems.

Vision	Creating the future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport options are accessible for all.</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure the design of and planning for public transport considers the needs of all and the changing needs and preferences arising from population ageing. For instance, ensure public transport is located within close proximity to residential areas and key destinations including commercial centres, medical appointments.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic and social participation is supported and social isolation is minimised by an effective transport system, including public, private and community options.</li> </ul>	<p>Provide transport options that are accessible for all. Expand and improve public transport networks and timetabling in metropolitan and rural areas. Provide affordable public transport.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The independence of older drivers is supported to permit ongoing vehicle use where appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>Expand and improve the community transport network and timetabling in metropolitan and rural areas. Ensure the driver's licences renewal system is based on standard criteria.</p>

### 3.3 Economic and social engagement

#### 3.3.1 Planning for the future

##### Overview and context

'Planning for the future' was discussed from a broad range of perspectives.

Many participants identified the need for a more integrated and long term approach to planning for population ageing. This approach was described as involving improved coordination and resource sharing by state, federal and local governments, and increased collaboration between government and the private and community sectors, to encourage greater coordination across programs and initiatives. Some participants identified the need for more creative partnerships and networks including multi-service organisations.

Many participants believed that the government should undertake 'big picture' forward planning now, to identify key challenges and future infrastructure needs in 2030. There was also some recognition of planning for population ageing as a 'whole of community' responsibility. There was support for some existing government programs that provide assistance to older people, while other participants believed additional resources were required to improve programs. One participant commented on the need to change the existing distinction between funding for 'aged services' and 'young people's services'. Other initiatives identified included more flexible funding and partnership arrangements to support prevention and early intervention initiatives and regulatory and financial incentives. These issues were identified by many participants in both metropolitan and rural areas.

Participants recognised that employers, government and training organisations need to plan strategically for the impacts of an ageing workforce, and a range of changes in education, training and employment practices were suggested. Some participants identified the need to restructure industry to respond to the changing demands of an ageing population, and to facilitate a move towards knowledge and export-based industries into the future as local demand changes with population ageing.

There was a high level of consensus that the principles 'choice' and self-determination are important for people as they grow older, and that preparations for population ageing should aim to promote autonomy and choice

for older people rather than a one-size-fits all approach. For instance, many participants commented on the need for: a wide range of housing and care options to reflect individual needs and stages of ageing, and more flexible services and funding arrangements to meet individual preferences. Having the choice to decide 'where' to live (for instance choosing to remain in the suburb where they presently live), and being able to choose when and how you end one's life (euthanasia) were also identified as important choices by several participants. This issue underpinned much of the feedback obtained in metropolitan and rural areas.

Several participants commented on the need for a sustainable approach to population ageing that balances social change and community needs with environmental and economic issues. A key aspect of social sustainability identified by many participants was the need for careful consideration of the policy implications of demographic change, such as increasing demand on ageing services and products, the decline in the size of the workforce and changes in the labour market. From an economic growth and employment perspective, one participant suggested that the growing 'Grey Nomad' phenomenon should be assessed in terms of its viability as an emerging market segment.

Several participants acknowledge the potential value and impact of technological change into the future.

A number of participants in all sessions highly valued the opportunity to participate in a consultation on the future of ageing, and believed future policy development should be underpinned by further community engagement.

These issues were identified across the board in both metropolitan and rural areas.

Vision	Creating the future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demographic change is addressed appropriately and effectively as a key component of creating an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable future.</li> </ul>	<p>Address social, environmental and economic impacts of population ageing, including increased demand for services and infrastructure, decline in the size of the workforce. Also, identify the opportunities that will emerge through population ageing.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated policies and programs through whole of government approach and collaboration with private and community sectors.</li> </ul>	<p>Develop new partnerships and organisations to achieve improved outcomes into the future.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater valuing of the contributions of people as they grow older and a shift in values regarding ageing – in the workplace and in a broader social context.</li> </ul>	<p>Provide education for all including young people and older people.</p> <p>Increase opportunities for intergenerational connections.</p> <p>Develop new skills and changes in attitude required in the workplace among young and old.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A greater sense of choice and self determination for all.</li> </ul>	<p>Explore increased housing and care options to suit individual needs and stages of ageing. Consider the different preferences and choices that people may have as they grow older.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The opportunity to be involved in community engagement around population ageing issues was highly valued.</li> </ul>	<p>Engage people and communities in the development of future policy as well as market based initiatives and solutions.</p>

### 3.3.2 Volunteering

#### Overview and context

'Volunteering' was described as one of the most important methods through which older people are currently able to participate actively in the wider community. Existing volunteering arrangements were seen as a key success story, in that they offer older people opportunities for social interaction and enable them to make a valuable contribution to society in their later years.

Concerns were raised in relation to the current decline in volunteering. The point was made in both rural and metropolitan areas that this trend would need to be reversed through increased awareness of the benefits of volunteering among younger age groups. Many people commented that younger generations should be encouraged to become more involved in volunteer organisations to help bolster the size of the volunteer workforce.

There was recognition that informal assistance may be more common than formal volunteering in some ethnic and Aboriginal communities. Promoting volunteering to members of culturally diverse communities was suggested as one strategy to support a culture of volunteering into the future.

Many people identified the major rewards of volunteering as a feeling of social inclusion and a sense of contributing to society. These were regarded as being important values for older generations to maintain into the future.

In order to encourage greater participation in volunteer organisations, people discussed the need to reduce disincentives to volunteering. Suggestions included: communicating the inherent benefits of volunteering to a wider audience, addressing regulatory barriers that volunteer organisations face and reducing the costs (such as memberships) and the amount of 'red tape' associated with volunteering.

Vision	Creating the future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A wide range of individuals who are actively engaged in the various volunteer organisations.</li> </ul>	Reduce the disincentives to volunteering (such as membership costs). Increase awareness in the community of the wide range of volunteering options that exist.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater social awareness of the contributions of volunteers to society.</li> </ul>	Communicate the value of volunteering to a younger and wider audience.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable intergenerational communication through various volunteering options.</li> </ul>	Assess the major areas in which older and younger generations feel they would like to make a contribution and provide opportunities for a range of age groups to be involved in activities.

### 3.3.3 The future of work

#### Overview and context

'The future of work' was discussed in terms of the need for changes to workplace cultures in the face of a diminishing workforce, and changing employment and industry opportunities occurring with population ageing.

A number of obstacles to older people remaining in the workforce as they grow older were identified. These included a culture of negativity towards older people in the workplace, and working environments inconsistent with the health and lifestyle needs of both older people and carers.

One suggestion for addressing these obstacles was through cultural change. For example, public campaigns to promote the value of mature employees and more flexible working environments allowing older people and carers to work part time. Other suggestions made by participants included programs of training and retraining to enable people greater ability to work in changing roles as they grow older, education of human resources professionals about the impacts of population ageing on the workforce, and promoting healthy lifestyles and work practices to ensure the ability of older people to remain in work as they age.

There were a number of opportunities for growth in employment markets identified. These included the 'Grey Nomad' tourism industry and the aged care industry.

Issues relating to the future of work were identified across both metropolitan and rural areas, with participants in rural areas specifically emphasising the need for education and retraining opportunities in those locations.

Vision	Creating the future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older people being valued for the skill and experience they contribute to workplaces.</li> </ul>	Education of the public and employers about the value older people bring to the workforce and equal employment opportunity principles.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthy and sustainable places of work that enable older people as they grow older and carers to participate in the workforce.</li> </ul>	Flexible work practices that encourage work-life balance, early in peoples careers e.g. job sharing, part time work and the use of technology for flexible working options.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New employment markets generated by population ageing.</li> </ul>	Attracting more people into the aged care industry through University and training programs and improved remuneration. Exploring new industries such as the 'Grey Nomad' tourism industry.

### 3.3.4 Connected communities and social inclusion

#### Overview and context

'Connected communities and social inclusion' was a common theme throughout all the consultations and was discussed from a range of perspectives.

Building sustainable communities and social networks, based on social diversity and tolerance, was identified as an important way of addressing social isolation and enhancing quality of life for all, including older people.

Connected communities were characterised by a diversity of cultures and age groups (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds), thriving intergenerational relationships based on mutual respect (for instance in the workplace, at home, through social programs and activities), a safe environment, a supportive environment (in which carers receive appropriate levels of support), a high level of community engagement and participation (for instance in social and cultural activities, education and training opportunities), strong linkages with other communities, and a sense of belonging for all.

A major theme throughout all the consultations was the need to value older people and to challenge widely held negative perceptions of ageing, to enable people to maintain a sense of self worth and to be recognised by others as valuable contributors in the community, as they grow older. There was a high level of consensus around the need for a range of strategies (such as community education) to encourage greater valuing of the contributions of older people and to provide opportunities for the growth of intergenerational connections (for instance, through social history projects and a diversity housing forms within geographical communities).

A number of participants also identified age based discrimination in the workplace as an issue to be addressed.

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## Vision

- There is widespread community acceptance of ageing.
- People as they grow older live with dignity and are valued and respected in their communities and in the workplace.
- There is a strengthened sense of community for all and social isolation is minimised.

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## Creating the future

Challenge negative perceptions of ageing through communications strategy targeting community attitudes.

Develop housing models and urban environments that facilitate support, social interaction and intergenerational contact (not just retirement village style developments and gated communities).

Promote programs and activities that support intergenerational interaction at a community level.

Investigate initiatives to address age based discrimination in the workplace and support people to continue working as long as they wish to, such as workplace support for flexible work arrangements as people age, and for carers of older people, and application of EEO principles to selection panels.

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Expand the existing and effective U3A training model.

## 4 Facilitator's observations

This report contains the findings of the consultations hosted by the Ministerial Committee on Ageing on behalf of the NSW Minister for Ageing, as a precursor to its *Ageing 2030: Creating the future* Roundtable.

Consideration of the complex future challenges and opportunities that will emerge as our

population ages over the coming decades is a demanding task. It is noted that there was limited discussion regarding the various structural changes associated with population ageing that are likely to occur in the future. Rather, much of the discussion during the community consultations focused on the current context of services, needs and challenges faced by older people.

A number of participants in all sessions expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the consultation process.

We would like to thank all those who took part for their valuable contributions.

