



# NSW AGEING STRATEGY

## 2016-2020



A whole-of-government strategy  
and a whole-of-community approach



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## Minister's foreword

Who we are as a people, as a community and as a state is changing. We are getting older. We are living longer than ever before. By 2031, one in three people in NSW will be aged 50 years or older.

The ageing population brings with it both challenges and opportunities. The task for all of us – government, academia, business and the community – is how to best manage the challenges and seize the opportunities.

The NSW Government is determined to ensure that people not only live longer than ever before; but live better than ever before. We want older people to live healthy, active and happy lives as they age.

To support this vision, the NSW Government developed the first NSW Ageing Strategy. Released in 2012, the whole-of-community, whole-of-government Strategy was designed as a 'living' document, which can be renewed over time.


The NSW Government has made strong progress in delivering the commitments made under the first Strategy, including the highly-successful Tech Savvy Seniors program, the Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit and the Liveable Communities Grants program.

The renewed Strategy was informed by extensive consultations and dialogue with the community, experts and stakeholders. As part of this in-depth consultation, as Minister for Ageing I travelled to communities right across NSW to speak directly with older people about their experiences.

The renewed Strategy aims to build on the significant success of the first Strategy. The priority areas are health and wellbeing, working and retiring, housing choices, getting around and inclusive communities.

Importantly, responding to the ageing population and delivering meaningful change for older people requires partnership. Government cannot do it alone. That is why the NSW Government, through the renewed Strategy, will continue to work closely with the government and non-government sectors.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the renewal of the Strategy, and to those who will work with the NSW Government to make it a reality.



The Hon John Ajaka MLC  
Minister for Ageing





## NSW and Australian policy context

Responses to the ageing population differ at local, state and national levels.

Nationally, the Australian Government controls some important areas that affect ageing policy. This includes income support, taxation and superannuation, workplace relations, higher education and aged care. From 1 July 2012, the Australian Government assumed primary responsibility for aged care services, including community-based services for people aged 65 and over.

Locally, councils and community organisations are well placed to develop and implement initiatives in local communities.

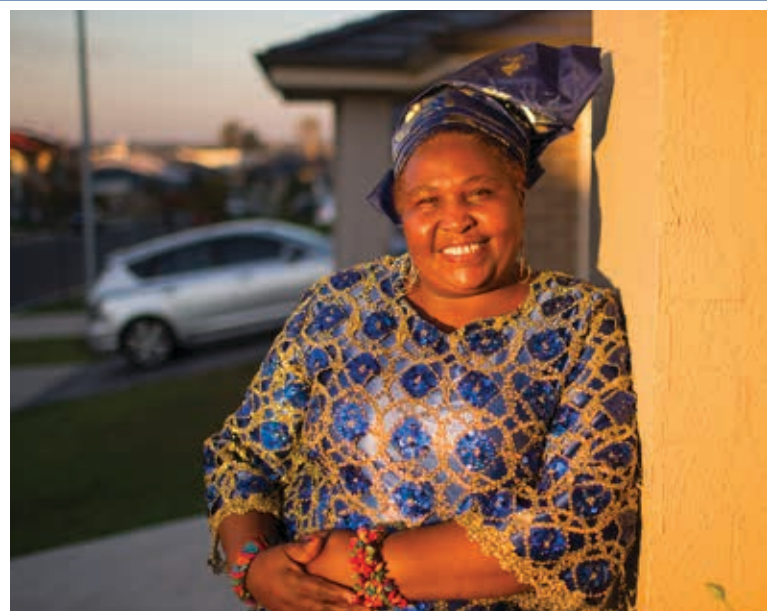
At the state level, the NSW Government is responsible for enhancing opportunities for older people across the state. This includes providing access to mainstream government services and facilities, like public spaces, transport, health care, social housing and justice.

We are also responsible for regularly reporting on the state's long-term fiscal sustainability. The *NSW Intergenerational Report 2016*, the third in a series of reports produced by the NSW Treasury, examines trends in population, workforce participation, living arrangements and productivity. Projections in the report will inform NSW Government agencies' planning and actions in response to the state-wide shifts brought about by an ageing population.

We also need to respond effectively to the changes in demand for government services that will occur over time as our state's population ages. Agencies across the NSW Government, such as NSW Health and Transport for NSW, are preparing by using existing planning processes to adapt services and infrastructure. Others, like the Department of Family and Community Services, NSW Fair Trading and Service NSW, are considering population ageing and the needs and benefits of older people in their planning, programs and service delivery. Agencies such as NSW Department of Industry are working with the private sector to help businesses respond to the growing demand for services catering to older people. The NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing continues to provide advice to the government on ageing policy and issues affecting older people in NSW.

In this context, it is essential that the NSW Government continues to actively engage with other levels of government to ensure we reflect the interests of older people in NSW and work together on reforms that achieve better outcomes for our ageing population. We are committed to working with the Australian Government to maintain a positive and coordinated approach to ageing policy. We will also partner with local councils, through the Ageing Strategy, to plan ahead and work strategically for the benefit of our ageing population.

The Ageing Strategy is our commitment to respond to the opportunities and challenges of our older population. It complements other efforts in NSW to address ageing issues – whether through the 2015 Premier’s and State Priorities, or through major government reforms in areas such as planning, transport, community participation and health, disability and community services, carers and volunteering.



## Current initiatives

Since the launch of the Ageing Strategy in 2012, we have delivered on our commitment to support older people through initiatives such as the highly successful Tech Savvy Seniors program, establishing the state-wide Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit, the growing Liveable Communities Grants program and the expansion of the NSW Seniors Card to include more deals for older people.

This Strategy seeks to build on these achievements, as well as introduce other initiatives that reflect the feedback received from older people across NSW.

### Highlights

- More than 30,000 training places taken up since the launch of Tech Savvy Seniors, with the courses offered in eight languages other than English
- The first Tech Savvy Seniors Road Show kicked-off on 31 March 2016 and toured nine regional communities to educate Aboriginal Elders in the use of technology
- Twenty-four projects have been funded through the Liveable Communities Grants program in 2015–16
- There are now more than 1.45 million Seniors Card holders in NSW
- Seniors Card members can access more than 4,500 participating business offers across 2,300 unique businesses
- Transport concessions for eligible older people have been maintained
- More than 1 million Gold Opal Cards have been issued to Seniors Card holders and pensioners
- Continued support for Grandparents Day, which is now an established event
- Introduced the Real Men Move initiative, encouraging older men to live active lifestyles
- Over 4,500 calls were made to the Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit
- Over 30,000 people are now more aware of the importance of preparing a will, making a Power of Attorney, appointing an Enduring Guardian and discussing advance care planning through the Getting it in Black and White Campaign.



## Our vision

People in NSW experience the benefits of living longer and enjoy opportunities to participate in, contribute to and be included in their communities

Getting older is a normal and natural phase of life and is something to be valued. People living longer is positive for individuals, and also presents social and economic benefits to the wider community of NSW. But to fully experience the benefits of living longer, NSW needs to better plan for ageing. This must happen at the individual and community levels, because we know that ageing affects everyone. Responding to the opportunities and challenges of an ageing population means that government, the private sector and the wider community must work together.

We recognise that the experience of ageing is different for everyone and happens at different times. For the NSW Ageing Strategy to be most effective, we are focused on people in NSW who are aged 50 years and over.<sup>1</sup>



# Our strategic approach

## Life stages

There is no specific age at which a person becomes 'old', and age categories do not define a person's lifestyle, aspirations or needs. A life stage approach recognises that people experience the ageing process in different ways and at different times.

## Recognising diversity

Older people are as diverse as the rest of the community and will have different experiences of, and views on, ageing. We will consider the needs of older people who are:

- Aboriginal
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Intersex (LGBTI)
- have caring responsibilities
- have a disability, dementia or chronic disease
- live in rural or remote areas.

We will also focus our efforts on disadvantaged and vulnerable communities.



## Person-centred

Older people should be supported to make their own decisions. By adopting a person-centred approach, we can support people's individual choices, and help them to take responsibility for their futures by empowering them to plan ahead for the lives they want to lead as they grow older.

## Whole-of-government and whole-of-community

Ageing impacts all areas of NSW. We will work to build a strong culture of shared responsibility across the NSW Government to ensure all agencies are committed to collaborating and planning ahead for the future needs of our ageing population. We will engage with the private sector (for-profit and not-for-profit), other levels of government, and the wider community to raise awareness of the benefits and needs of our ageing population.

## State-wide change and locally-driven responses

Some opportunities and challenges of an ageing population need consistent state-wide responses, while local decision-making can generate the best responses to local experiences. All NSW Government agencies need to plan for state-wide shifts in service demand to meet changing demographics, and engage with communities to identify opportunities and solutions that work for their local community.



# Setting the scene

## Ageing in NSW

The ageing population has changed life in NSW, as it has around Australia, and will continue to transform what NSW looks like in the future.

The number of older people in NSW is increasing and the proportion of older people within the total population is also growing.

In 1991, there were almost 700,000 people aged 65 and over in NSW, and more than 800,000 aged 50 to 64.<sup>2</sup> In 2011, more than one million people in NSW were aged 65 and over, and more than 1.3 million were aged between 50 to 64.<sup>3</sup> By 2031, around 20 per cent of NSW, or 1.8 million people, will be aged 65 and over, and more than 1.5 million will be aged 50 to 64.<sup>4</sup> Together, more than one in three NSW residents will be aged 50 or above by 2031.

At the same time, our life expectancy is improving. In 1972, the average life expectancy for the total NSW population at birth was 68 years for males and 74.8 years for females.<sup>5</sup> Life expectancy for male babies born in 2015 is 80.8 years, and 85 years for female babies.<sup>6</sup> Men and women born in 2056 are expected to live for 88.6 years and 91.4 years respectively.<sup>7</sup>

While our general life expectancy continues to climb, there is more work to do to close the gap between Aboriginal people and the rest of NSW, with life expectancy for Indigenous people in NSW at 70.5 years for men and 74.6 years for women.<sup>8</sup>

There are also changes to ‘healthy-life expectancy’ – that is, the number of years people live without a severe or profound core disability. For those born in 2012, males can expect an estimated 74.2 years of life without a severe or profound core limitation, while females can expect 76.5 years. This is an increase of around 3.5 years for males and 2.6 years for females since 1998. But while healthy-life expectancy has increased, there has also been a proportionate increase in the number of years spent with a core disability.<sup>9</sup>

As the population ages, the number of people with a severe or profound core disability, and the average time for which they will have that disability, is likely to increase.<sup>10</sup>

In the future, where older people choose to live in NSW will also change. About 67 per cent of people aged 60 and over now live in a city or metropolitan area of NSW, with around a quarter living in a regional city, and less than one in 10 living in a rural town or remote area.<sup>11</sup>

However, the proportion of older people who live in regional and rural areas of NSW will grow faster than in metropolitan Sydney,<sup>12</sup> though there will be major variations across regional NSW.<sup>13</sup>

And the characteristics of older people in the future will change as different economic, social and cultural environments influence people's attitudes and lifestyle choices.

Many Aboriginal communities in NSW continue to experience higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantage than the broader population, as well as limited access to services, especially in rural and remote areas. They may also face greater pressures from family, caring and community responsibilities.

Some CALD communities are ageing at a faster rate than non-CALD communities, particularly as a result of past migration patterns.

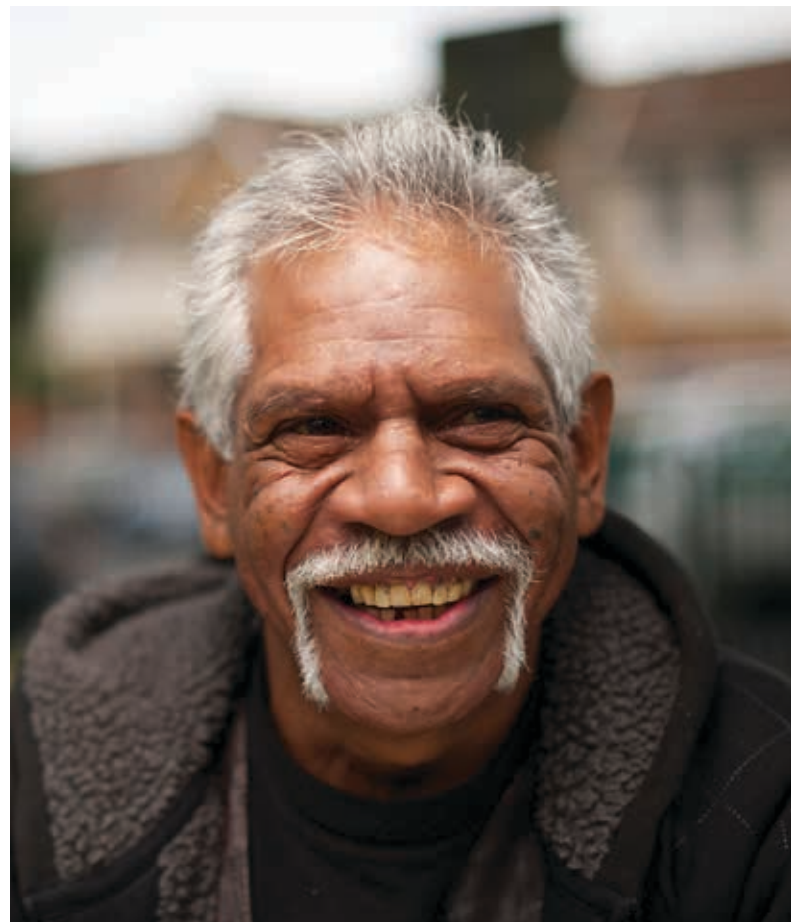


## What does this mean for NSW?

An ageing population underscores the health, social and economic progress across the state. However, the growing number of older people in NSW also changes our communities in new ways. Every community in NSW will evolve as the ageing population impacts our economy, labour market, healthcare and other essential services, as well as the fabric of our communities.

Responding to these changes is everyone's business – government, the private sector and not-for-profit organisations, communities and individuals. Together, we need to respond to and prepare for a wider range of life experiences as people grow older. We must also encourage people to plan for their own futures, as they may face many more years of later life than previous generations, including after retiring from the workforce.

The growing number of older people in NSW offers many benefits. Older people contribute to the economy and society as volunteers, as paid full- or part-time workers, and as students in further education. They also contribute through the support they provide to family members and others, including as carers. They influence the economy as consumers, as their demand for services creates new markets and expands existing ones. Older people contribute to a more inclusive, broader community.



But the needs of an ageing population also create a range of challenges for government, the private sector and not-for-profit organisations, communities and individuals. Older people need and want support and services that help maintain or improve their health, wellbeing and quality of life. People ageing today need employment opportunities that support their financial independence during later life, particularly in light of the decreasing rates of housing affordability and home ownership. As people age, changes in mobility and the availability of suitable transport options affect how they access recreation, shopping, medical care, social services and other social activities. Now and in the future more people in our communities will be older, and may face isolation, loneliness, a lack of respect and even abuse.

## Renewing the NSW Ageing Strategy

The NSW Ageing Strategy was first released in July 2012. Designed as a ‘living’ document, it underpins all NSW policy, projects and supports related to ageing.

The Strategy continues to be refined based on the themes and ideas brought forward by older people, the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing, led by Kathryn Greiner AO, and experiences from the first Strategy.

In 2016, after an independent evaluation found the majority of initiatives had been completed or were substantially underway, the NSW Government embarked on a renewal of the Strategy.

To ensure the renewed Strategy is evidence-based and informed by older people and key partners, the Minister for Ageing, the Hon. John Ajaka MLC, undertook a state-wide ‘Listening Tour’. Over 160 people participated in consultations across metropolitan, rural and regional locations, including Port Macquarie, Griffith, Bathurst, Goulburn, Nowra, Parramatta, Dubbo, Hawkesbury, Broken Hill and Tamworth.

Community members, older people and interested stakeholders were also invited to have their say via an online survey, which attracted over 700 responses.

The Minister for Ageing also hosted a roundtable with private sector representatives. The roundtable focused on how government can better work with the private sector, including harnessing their ideas and innovation to deliver the best outcomes for older people in NSW.

Advice was also sought from Multicultural NSW on the impacts of ageing on culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Building on the ongoing dialogue with older people and partners in government, the community and the private sector, further targeted consultations were undertaken to gain perspectives from the broadest range of people possible. Overall, the government has heard from more than 4,300 older people of varying ages, cultural backgrounds and locations in NSW, through local meetings, focus groups and online surveys.

The results of these consultations are reflected throughout the Strategy.

## Key findings from the consultation include:

Older people in NSW are generally optimistic, though realistic, about growing older. Being healthy and living longer is seen as a blessing, although it also causes some worry around planning for getting older.

Older people strongly believe:

- everyone can learn a lot from older people
- getting older is a great opportunity to pursue new interests and enjoy life
- growing older does not bother them.

Further, the older people we consulted with do not think of themselves as old. They also recognise that, as people get older, they are likely to face issues around loneliness, poorer health and changes to their lifestyles, and often do not get respect in society.

Some of the most important things for people in NSW as they get older are:

- staying independent and physically and mentally healthy for as long as possible
- being able to get around on a daily basis for as long as possible.

This is followed by:

- staying financially independent for as long as possible
- having easy access to a range of transport options
- maintaining solid social ties and staying in close contact with family, friends and the community
- remaining in their current home for as long as possible.







People aged 50 to 60 years have told us they are most looking forward to travelling, spending more time with family and friends, and relaxing in the next 10 to 20 years of their lives.

However, they also have some concerns about the future, as they begin to feel the effects of ageing. Declining health or illness is the most concerning aspect of later life, followed by concerns about future financial security.

While almost a quarter of people aged 50 to 60 years say they have considered their life as they get older to a 'great extent', and a further three in five have put some consideration into future planning, almost one in five have done little or no future planning.

'Ageing' starts earlier in Aboriginal communities, with many Aboriginal people experiencing age-related issues like chronic disease, financial hardship and forced retirement at 50 years or earlier. Some Aboriginal people are getting older at the busiest time of their lives, due to family and community responsibilities.

Older people from CALD backgrounds who migrated to Australia at later ages often face cultural or language barriers as they look for work or to participate in the wider community.

Altogether, this consultation has helped us to understand the needs of older people, and to adapt our Strategy and responses to new or emerging priorities. We remain committed to speaking with and hearing from older people and other partners in government, the community and the private sector across NSW over the life of the Strategy.

# Our priorities for an ageing community

One of the priorities of the NSW Government is to promote opportunities for older people to lead active and rewarding lives and ensure NSW responds effectively to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population.

Through this Strategy, we will focus on five priorities that older people across NSW have said are important to them:

1. Health and wellbeing
2. Working and retiring
3. Housing choices
4. Getting around
5. Inclusive communities.

These priorities strongly align with the World Health Organisation's recommendations for ageing well and creating an age-friendly world.<sup>14</sup>

These priority areas are interconnected, and we recognise that making changes in one area can improve experiences for older people in another. For instance, improvements in planning ahead and financial security may also enhance an older person's health and wellbeing, while improvements to transport options may improve an older person's ability to maintain connections with their community.

Projects and initiatives under each priority area will be outlined in the Strategy's implementation plans.



## Priority 1: Health and wellbeing

### Objective

Older people in NSW are encouraged to live active and healthy lives with improved physical and mental wellbeing.



I'm very proud of my fitness, and I love to show people my muscles. It's good to get up, get dressed, get out, and have a destination. *Margaret, 89*

Older people in NSW want to live healthy and independent lives for as long as possible. Although ideas of what good health and wellbeing looks like can vary across NSW, older people generally see this as one of the most important parts of retaining a good quality of life. They also know that this includes mental and emotional wellbeing.

A person's experience of wellbeing depends on factors like physical and mental health, disability, cultural background, feelings of loneliness and social isolation, socioeconomic status, living arrangements and location.

## What are older people telling us?

All people can struggle to maintain good health. People in NSW approaching later life say that some of their key concerns centre on their health and wellbeing. Greater reliance on medication, hospital waiting lists and access to health services, fear of dementia, and how to balance regular activity with increasing aches and pains are common challenges.<sup>15</sup>

In light of this, making sure that older people prepare for their future health and care needs is essential. But while some people are thinking about how they might manage their health as they age and are taking action to improve and maintain their health, others are more motivated at crisis points. Regardless of cultural background or location, less than two thirds of those we spoke with across NSW have actually prepared for their own or their partner or spouse's future health and care needs – such as planning where and how to live, thinking about who can provide support, having conversations with family members, or seeking advice from health or legal professionals.

Carers play a key role in supporting their families and friends as they age. They include both carers who are ageing and those who care for older people. Caring roles can require a lot of time and energy and are associated with poor physical and mental health. Many more informal carers will be needed in the future as our population ages, but only 35 carers are expected to be available for every 100 people needing informal care by 2031.<sup>16</sup>

Across NSW, we have heard how important it is to encourage older people to have fit and healthy lifestyles through activity and diet. Older people say that maintaining health can support independence and community engagement. They have told us that health services need to be more affordable and accessible for older people. These supports also need to be appropriate and inclusive for older people who are Aboriginal or from CALD backgrounds, for the ageing LGBTI community and HIV positive older people.



We have also heard that older people have divergent views on how they want to live at the end of their lives, including the role of palliative care. Older people with chronic disease or other complex health conditions often require assistance to coordinate their care so that they can navigate the primary, hospital and community care sectors. We also know that it is important to address older people's mental health needs and promote social inclusion.

## How will the NSW Ageing Strategy respond?

The NSW Government is already supporting the health and wellbeing of older people through initiatives like Make Healthy Normal, the Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service, the Get Healthy at Work program, and the Stepping On program.

Over the next four years, we will focus our efforts on working with partners across the NSW Government and in the community to increase the proportion of older people in NSW who live active and healthy lives with improved physical and mental wellbeing.

Under this Strategy, we will:

- plan our health services and infrastructure in light of our ageing population
- continue to explore greater integration across the health and community sectors, and support a partnership approach with primary care and other stakeholders to prevent and manage chronic disease
- investigate new approaches and technologies to reach older people and support their health and wellbeing
- continue to establish education and prevention strategies to minimise behaviours that risk health and wellbeing, to promote healthy living and a healthier ageing population over time
- encourage our partners in the private sector and community to provide services for older people
- focus our own efforts on people who are ageing in NSW who may need further or more targeted support – such as those on low incomes, carers, Aboriginal people, and people with mental health issues or dementia.

## Priority 2: Working and retiring

### Objective

Older people in NSW have opportunities to remain in the workforce, are financially secure and independent in retirement, and plan their finances based on their circumstances and needs.



Our mature aged workers inspire our customers with their experience and ideas, and play an important role as mentors for their younger colleagues. *Bunnings*

As many people in NSW face longer lives than in the past, the importance of maintaining paid work for longer increases. Older people in NSW know that being able to remain in or return to the workforce can improve their wellbeing, as well as their financial security and independence. Older people in the workforce also enhance our national and state economies. Equally, when older people are not able to access paid work, there is a financial cost to employers, government and the individuals themselves. However, barriers to paid work are significant and some older people are particularly vulnerable. Planning ahead to help people extend their working lives, if that is what they want, enjoy a high quality of life after retirement, and manage finances are very important.

## What are older people telling us?

Older people in NSW have said they face many challenges in finding and maintaining employment.

Declining physical health is a common issue that prevents people from working, particularly older men, people with lower education levels and incomes, or those in manual occupations. Caring responsibilities also mean that some older people have moved in and out of employment over their working lives.<sup>17</sup> Many workplace structures, including physical work environments, are not flexible and do not provide enough opportunities for older people. A lack of work-related insurance coverage after reaching pension age makes it hard to stay in work. Some older people from CALD communities say they find it harder to continue or return to employment if they moved to Australia at later ages due to language barriers.

Ageist attitudes among some employers can lead to discrimination. Ageist beliefs can include thinking that older workers have out-dated skills, are less committed and flexible, or are too slow to learn new things. Age discrimination is a common concern, and can discourage and prevent older people from staying in or re-entering the workforce.

A large proportion of older people are not re-thinking their careers and work opportunities as they age. They often do not have a clear idea of when and how they will retire. They also feel less confident than younger people that they can find another job if their employment situation changes. The shifting nature of industries and employment can mean that training is important for older people to gain or maintain work. Many workers aged 50 years and over believe training would help their employability, but this belief declines with age.

Older people say that they are concerned about their income and financial security leading up to and during retirement. Without this security, older people are more vulnerable to social isolation and declining independence. On average, people who are employed have realistic views about how long they need to financially support themselves, but few are very confident they can do so. Some doubt they have enough savings or other income, and this can make planning for life after work difficult.<sup>18</sup>

People in NSW have a low tendency to plan for their financial future, and relatively few consider retirement before reaching it. Those who do plan do so primarily through conversations with a financial professional or their partner or spouse, with fewer turning to legal supports like making a will or establishing a Power of Attorney. A person's decision to plan ahead can depend on their interest, knowledge and confidence in handling finances, as well as their income level and assets.



## How will the NSW Ageing Strategy respond?

The NSW Government is already improving working and retiring options, and planning outcomes, through initiatives like Smart and Skilled, the Get it in Black and White campaign, the Older Persons' Legal and Education Program and our support of the Global Access Partners taskforce.

Over the next four years, we will focus our efforts on more effectively engaging with employers in businesses and the not-for-profit sector. We will increase awareness of the benefits of employing and retaining older people.

Under this Strategy, we will work with employers to support older employees to retain their jobs or return to work. We will work with the private sector and other levels of government to address age discrimination and problematic insurance arrangements. We will look at how to initiate flexible working arrangements and options to support people as they transition to retirement, and share best practice examples with the private sector. We will also concentrate on better motivating people to plan ahead for their career in later life and provide access to retraining opportunities targeted at older people with lower qualifications or in manual occupations, and people who have been in and out of the workforce, including carers.



## Priority 3: Housing choices

### Objective

Older people in NSW live in affordable, accessible, adaptable and stable housing.



My wife and I downsized from our home of 28 years to a smaller townhouse. It suits our life stage, and is easier to take care of. *James, 61*

Older people know that one of the most important ways to ensure their quality of life as they age is access to housing that is affordable and appropriate to their physical needs, and allows them to stay connected to their community. In NSW, as elsewhere, older people increasingly prefer to ‘age in place’ and grow older in their own communities – close to friends, family and services. But they may require support to stay in or find a suitable home.

## What is ageing in place?

The World Health Organisation's *World Report on Ageing and Health 2015* describes ageing in place as:

'A common preference among older people for remaining in their local community and maintaining their social networks throughout the ageing process. There are many ways for older people to age in place. Sometimes it means staying in place: that is, continuing to live in the same home. For others, it means moving to a home that is safer or more adapted to their needs while maintaining vital connections with their community, friends and family. In all cases the focus should be on the older person ageing in a place that is right for them.'<sup>19</sup>

## What are older people telling us?

Some people aged 50 to 60 years are starting to think about their housing as they get older.

While many older people want to age in place and stay in their own home for as long as possible, they are less confident they will be able to do so. Older people are worried their homes will not meet their physical and mobility needs. Some make compromises on housing type or location when they move due to worsening health and mobility.

Current circumstances are not supporting some groups of older people to maintain stable housing. This includes those retiring with housing debt, the growing number of people in low-income rental households who may also have insecure employment, single women and those who are homeless.

Renting in older age has several negative impacts on health and quality of life, especially for those with dementia, disability or other health and mobility issues. The often precarious nature of private rental, restrictions on adaptation and costs can have negative impacts. Laws protecting people who rent do not specifically consider older renters or issues of age discrimination against older tenants. Older people in private rental can be at higher risk of homelessness. While most people over 60 we spoke with believe their tenancy is stable, a small but substantial number of renters believe it is not.

Some older people are willing and financially able to make housing decisions and changes. Some want and are able to keep living in their family home, while others want to move out of the family home but stay living in the same area. Others want to move out of their current area to somewhere with greater amenity.

However, older people tell us there are often not enough suitably-designed homes for those who want them; and there is not enough financial guidance or support for them to afford changes to housing arrangements.

Housing affordability is a growing concern, particularly for older people on lower incomes. People who live in rural areas of NSW feel less confident that they can afford to live in their current home as they get older. Research highlights that there are not enough affordable rental properties in NSW for older people on low or fixed incomes.<sup>20</sup>

## How will the NSW Ageing Strategy respond?

The NSW Government is already improving housing options through the Aged-Care Supported Accommodation Program and through Future Directions for Social Housing in NSW.

Over the next four years, we will focus our efforts on exploring the best options to widen the variety of affordable, accessible and stable housing within the private residential market.

Under this Strategy, we will work together with other levels of government, business and the not-for-profit sector to improve housing outcomes for older people. We will investigate potential changes to NSW Government planning and regulatory responses to provide more housing choices for older people as they age. We will work with the private sector to address issues around housing supply and design, and to improve support for tenants. We will also concentrate on people who may need further or more targeted support – such as those on low incomes and people at risk of homelessness.



## Priority 4: Getting around

### Objective

Older people in NSW travel safely and appropriately to participate in social and economic life and access services.



I'm using public transport. I never wait long, and it's so cost effective. I got my Gold Opal card, and I have an automatic top-up so I don't even think about it. *David, 68*

Getting around independently on a day-to-day basis is a very important part of maintaining a good quality of life as people age. Older people in NSW have told us this is a necessary part of an ideal community to grow older in. Ensuring older people have access to a variety of transport options – ones that are safe, appropriate, affordable and reduce reliance on cars as the only mode of transport – is essential to keep older people connected and empowered as they age. It also ensures they can participate in the social and economic life of their communities.

## What are older people telling us?

Older people say that not having transport options in their community is a major barrier to accessing services and participating in social and economic life.

Although older people in NSW use many forms of transport, they have told us they can often experience difficulties travelling. The most common issues are: trouble walking about (an issue that generally increases with age); living in an isolated area; or not being able to afford to pay for transport.<sup>21</sup> Physical barriers – in getting to transport, or onto the transport itself, and in the built environment – are also a worry. This is especially so for people who are less mobile or have a disability or chronic health condition. Scarce or poor-quality footpaths and lack of accessible parking make getting around challenging.

Whether older people think public or other transport is safe and comfortable, and whether they have enough information about it, affects whether they use transport options other than the car. Some older people who do not use public transport say it is relatively expensive, inconvenient and potentially unsafe, or that it is too far away from their home or destination.

Older people who live in rural and remote areas of NSW can face more challenges with transport and getting around, especially where public transport options are limited. Those in Aboriginal communities can also have problems accessing transport, with some Aboriginal elders saying car ownership by older people is low in their communities.



## How will the NSW Ageing Strategy respond?

The NSW Government is already supporting older people to get around through the Transport Access Program (a large-scale infrastructure program) and through initiatives like the Older Persons Transport and Mobility Plan, the Active Transport Program, and the Community Transport Program.

Over the next four years, we will focus our efforts on working with partners in the private sector, local communities and other levels of government to increase the transport options to help older people get around safely in the community.

Under this Strategy, we will improve current options so that they are more affordable, efficient and accessible for people with mobility issues. We will work across the transport sector to increase awareness of the needs of older passengers. We will explore new or emerging models of delivering transport services that could benefit older people who may need more support, including those living in regional, rural and remote areas of the state. We will continue working to make sure that older drivers can drive safely for as long as practical without putting themselves and others at risk. And we will work to improve pedestrian safety for older people and encourage them to walk and cycle to get around, particularly for short trips and to stay active and healthy.



## Priority 5: Inclusive communities

### Objective

Older people in NSW stay connected and contribute to their communities.



I do a lot of volunteer work – helping people. My phone is always ringing. There are always people to talk to. And help. *Nayef, 67*

Older people in NSW understand the importance of living in communities that are inclusive, prevent isolation and provide opportunities to stay connected and make positive contributions.

An inclusive community is one in which older people are included, respected and recognised. It encourages and enables people to participate in social or other activities and to access services, regardless of age or mobility. It has built environments, services and facilities that support older people to stay active and participate, and it values their participation. It provides access to information and technological communications to help older people connect to the digital community. It helps protect older people from abuse. And it promotes acceptance and inclusion of diverse or more vulnerable older people, such as those from CALD backgrounds, Aboriginal people and people with dementia.



## What are older people telling us?

Many communities in NSW have not been designed with older people in mind. They can often lack opportunities for older people to be included and access age-friendly facilities and amenities.

Loneliness is a growing concern among our ageing population. Some older people also experience social isolation, especially older men, some people from CALD backgrounds, LGBTI people, carers, older people living in rural areas, and people in residential care.<sup>22</sup> Some older people who have lost a partner and live alone can go days without any human contact. Others can no longer drive or have mobility issues, and may have lost the confidence to go out.

Ageing carers often struggle with isolation, which can be exacerbated in rural and remote communities. As families become more mobile and time-poor, a growing number of older people no longer have someone nearby who can provide assistance or care for them. Others in the community may not be aware that an older person is isolated and needs support.

NSW is culturally diverse, and some older people from CALD backgrounds say that, while they want to stay connected to their culture as they age, they often feel isolated in their local neighbourhood and the broader community because of language and cultural barriers.

Older people also worry that younger people do not value or respect them. Ageism is experienced by many people in NSW.

Some older Aboriginal people worry there are not enough opportunities for older and younger people to interact, which would foster respect for the experiences and life knowledge of Aboriginal elders and older people generally.

Older people highly value safe communities as they age and safety from abuse is a key concern. 'Elder abuse' is abuse of an older person that occurs within a relationship of trust – such as a family member, friend or paid worker. It can include physical, psychological, financial or sexual abuse, or intentional or unintentional neglect.

## How will the NSW Ageing Strategy respond?

The NSW Government is already making our communities more inclusive through initiatives like the Liveable Communities Grants program, Tech Savvy Seniors, Grandparents Day, the Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit and the NSW Seniors Card.

Over the next four years, we will engage with our partners and the public to encourage older people's participation and inclusion in their local and wider communities. Regional and local responses will be an essential part of this process.

Through this Strategy, we will work with other levels of government to ensure NSW responses are coordinated and far-reaching. We will build on our existing work with local communities, businesses, services and older people themselves to grow opportunities for older people to participate in and connect with their communities, local activities and events. We will continue our work to foster connection, communication and information-sharing with older people, including through digital technology and community facilities and services. We will investigate ways to overcome social isolation and loneliness for those who may need more support – such as the LGBTI community.

We will also support initiatives that improve respect for and social inclusion of older people – particularly those that consult with older people to better meet their needs, promote positive images of older people in the media, educate younger generations, provide opportunities for intergenerational connection and recognise older people's contributions to their communities. We will concentrate on raising awareness about elder abuse, as well as prevention and response strategies. We will continue to acknowledge that older people are diverse and that we must respond in ways that meet their varied needs.





# Implementation and ongoing conversation

Achieving our vision for ageing in NSW, and the outcomes for each priority, requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach. This means all partners must work together.

## Implementation

In its first year, the NSW Ageing Strategy 2016 to 2020 will be put into practice through the Year One Implementation Plan. This plan describes initiatives to be launched during the first year of the Strategy and identifies existing programs which seek to positively influence outcomes for older people. It also recognises NSW Government agencies' key role in preparing for population ageing. Agencies will use their existing planning processes to adapt services and infrastructure for the future, and will enhance their focus on our ageing population in relevant large-scale population-based programs.

Our efforts will shift and evolve over the next four years as we assess outcomes and integrate learnings from our plan. Trying initiatives, undertaking more research, developing our evidence base, and speaking with older people and our partners will support this process.

New or expanded initiatives will be further developed and detailed in an implementation plan for the following three years of the Strategy.

Our implementation plans will strongly focus on partnership projects that engage the most appropriate partners across NSW Government, the private and not-for-profit sectors, local government and the broader community.

Key activities over all four years will explore a range of new initiatives that will be co-designed with older people across NSW.

## Review, monitoring and evaluation

The NSW Government will develop an evaluation plan and outcomes framework to measure and report on progress against the higher-level outcomes and reform directions in the Strategy, and against the projects and initiatives in our implementation plans.

We aim to improve the evidence base and our understanding of older people and an ageing population in NSW. Ongoing engagement with research and data collection will support this.

## Governance and reporting

The Minister for Ageing has responsibility for ageing policy in NSW. The NSW Government will continue to convene a NSW Ageing Strategy Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) to oversee and support implementation, monitoring and reporting on the Strategy and implementation plans. Members of the IDC will be drawn from NSW Government agencies, representatives from peak ageing bodies, the NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing, local government and the private sector.

Partners with lead responsibilities under the Strategy will provide annual progress reports to the IDC, and the IDC will compile an annual progress report on implementation plan initiatives for review by the Minister for Ageing.

## Continuing consultation

Ongoing engagement with older people is an essential part of the Strategy's implementation, and will also help test the Strategy's impact and relevance.

This will occur by continuing our consultation with older people and providing opportunities for them to share feedback on the Strategy, as well as gaining advice from the NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing.

## More information

An electronic version of the NSW Ageing Strategy and further information can be found at [www.facs.nsw.gov.au/ageingstrategy](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/ageingstrategy). It includes the following resources:

- An accessible version of the NSW Ageing Strategy
- The NSW Ageing Strategy renewal 2015 consultation and research reports
- Year One Implementation Plan
- Implementation plan 2017-2020 (when released).



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- NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing
- Council on the Ageing NSW
- Chris Johnson, Urban Taskforce NSW
- Local Government NSW and local government ageing and disability workers
- NSW Carers Advisory Council
- Aboriginal Carers Working Group
- Ministerial Roundtable participants
- All the older people in NSW who shared their stories, experiences and knowledge through consultations and focus groups.



# Endnotes

- 1 Some data collections and programs for older people require a specified age at which collection or eligibility starts. As such, defining the age at which someone is considered 'older' can vary significantly. Information presented in this document on older people comes from a range of data sources, which means there may be some discrepancy in the time periods of reporting and methods of measurement (including age brackets) used in relation to specific aspects of ageing.
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- 3 Australian Bureau of Statistics 2014, *National Regional Profile: New South Wales*, viewed 2 February 2016, <<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@npr.nsf/Previousproducts/1Population/People12007-2011?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=1&issue=2007-2011>>.
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- 6 NSW Treasury, June 2016, *NSW Intergenerational Report 2016*, Sydney.
- 7 NSW Treasury, June 2016, *NSW Intergenerational Report 2016*, Sydney.
- 8 NSW Department of Planning and Environment's 2014 final NSW population, household and dwelling projections report and population data, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.
- 9 A 'severe or profound core disability' is defined as needing help or assistance in one or more of the areas of self-care, mobility or communication because of a disability, long-term health condition or old age. See Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Australia's Welfare*, 2013.
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- 15 Ipsos 2014, *The Mind & Mood Report, Where are the boomers now?*, No. 166, December 2014, Ipsos, Sydney.
- 16 National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling 2004, *Who's going to care? Informal care and an ageing population*, Carers Australia, Canberra.
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- 20 Anglicare Australia 2015, *Anglicare Rental Affordability Snapshot 2015*, Anglicare, Canberra.
- 21 COTA NSW 2015, *COTA NSW Consumer Survey 2015: 50+ Report with a focus on how people get around and access information*, Sydney.
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For more information visit  
[www.facs.nsw.gov.au/ageingstrategy](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/ageingstrategy)

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