



AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT POPULATION AGEING ACTION PLAN



2004-2008

building awareness
encouraging action
fostering partnerships
improving information access



→ AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

© Australian Local Government Association 2004
Australian Local Government Population Ageing Action Plan
Published by : Australian Local Government Association
8 Geils Court DEAKIN ACT 2600
Phone (02) 6122 9400
Fax (02) 6122 9401
Email alga@alga.asn.au



Foreword

Older people are a significant and growing part of local communities.

This trend presents both daunting challenges and real opportunities for local government. Older people offer rich life experience, well-honed skills, knowledge and wisdom. These qualities significantly contribute to the social fabric of local communities. But our ageing population will also impact on planning and service delivery, spelling real and growing challenges for Australia's 700 local government authorities.

This change in demographics requires proactive and innovative, but also compassionate, sensitive and inclusive policy responses from local government.

Throughout Australia, local government has begun to respond to the opportunities and challenges of population ageing in a diverse and multi-faceted way. Some local councils have developed, or are considering developing, local strategies to support an ageing community.

To help build the capacity of local government to meet the specific opportunities and challenges of an ageing population, Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) has developed the *Australian Local Government Population Ageing Action Plan 2004–2008*. The action plan provides a flexible and dynamic framework that builds awareness, encourages action, fosters partnerships and improves access to information.

This four-year action plan complements other, related national ageing strategies, such as the Australian Government *National Strategy for an Ageing Australia* and intersects with the considerable work already undertaken in individual jurisdictions.

I commend this action plan to you, and look forward to the tangible advantage which will result for local government.



Cr Mike Montgomery

P R E S I D E N T
Australian Local Government Association
30 June 2004

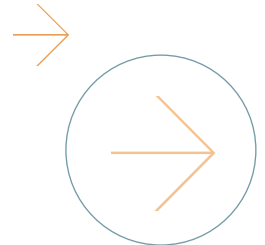




TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Introduction	5
Responding to demographic change	6
Action plan: strategies to build capacity	7
Purpose	7
Principles	7
Key areas and objectives	7
Building awareness	8
Encouraging local government action	8
Fostering partnerships	9
Improving information access	9
Monitoring and evaluation	10



INTRODUCTION

Australia's population is ageing and the evidence for this demographic change is undeniable.

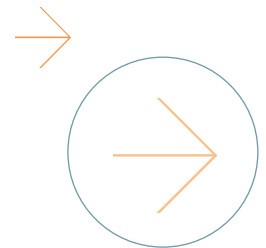
The result of falling fertility, increasing life expectancy and the effect of the 'baby boomer' generation moving through older age groups, has contributed to an increase in the number and proportion of people aged over 65 years. This trend will grow over the coming decades, to such an extent, that the:

- number of people aged over 65 years will increase from the current 2.5 million to around 7.2 million by 2051;
- proportion of people aged over 65 years will grow from the current 13%, to one quarter of the population by 2051;
- proportion of people over 85 years will grow from the current 1.4% to approximately 6% by 2051; and
- proportion of the population aged between 15–64 years (labour force age) will fall from the current 67%, to around 59% by 2051¹.

Population ageing varies considerably among Australia's states and territories, reflecting differences in fertility, mortality and migration trends. Nonetheless, all state and territory populations will continue to age over the coming decades. Tasmania's population is expected to age most rapidly, overtaking South Australia as the 'oldest state' by 2021. In contrast, the Northern Territory, which has the youngest population, is expected to keep the lowest proportion of the population over 65 years².

Although Tasmania is expected to be the state with the oldest population, it is projected that older populations will continue to be situated in local government areas along the east coast of Australia, particularly in Queensland. In 2019, the local government area with the oldest population in Australia is expected to be Bribie Island, with approximately 37% of its residents aged 65 years and over. In total, it is expected that by 2019, 170 (out of 1331) local government areas will have one-quarter or more of the population aged 65 years and over³.

An important dimension of the growing older population is the diversity of needs, interests and backgrounds. Older people are individuals and their experience of ageing will be influenced by a range of inter-related factors such as gender, lifestyle, location, socio-economic circumstances, cultural background, education level and general health.



¹ Population Projections, Australia, 2002 to 2101 (ABS Cat. No. 3222.0).

² ibid

³ Population Projections, Statistical Local Areas, 1999 to 2019 (ABS Cat. No. 3220.0).



RESPONDING TO DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

Population ageing represents important opportunities for all spheres of government, as older people make an enormous contribution to the Australian community. But population ageing also has a range of impacts, which will present real challenges for all governments.

The implications of population ageing are increasingly being recognised. The Australian Government has provided leadership by developing the *National Strategy for an Ageing Australia* which provides a framework for responding to the opportunities and challenges of population ageing. The *National Strategy* concluded that the implications of population ageing affect more than just aged care services and that an effective response to population ageing requires a whole-of-government approach, including leadership by local government.

Local government, in partnership with the Australian Government, is well positioned to have a positive and crucial impact on the growing older population through its:

- intimate knowledge of the local community and identification of the diversity of older people;
- provision of infrastructure and facilitation of developments which ensure the physical, social and economic environment of the local community is conducive to the overall wellbeing of older people;
- planning and provision of services and programs that are flexible and locally appropriate to the needs of older people;
- community participation in local decision-making and development of community networks; and
- advocacy on behalf of the local community with other government and non-government organisations.

These community-focused roles clearly entrench local government's relationship with older people in the community and place it in a unique position to recognise, understand and respond to the growing older population.

Throughout Australia, local government has begun to respond to the opportunities and challenges of population ageing in a diverse and multi-faceted way.

The Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW are planning to undertake a research study into the impact of the ageing population on local infrastructure in an effort to help formulate strategies for councils to address the problem. The aim of the study is to highlight the main areas where local government will be affected by the ageing trend and how councils can strategically plan for the changing demand on infrastructure and services.

The Municipal Association of Victoria is to develop a *Community Care for the Ageing Strategy*. The aim of the strategy is to create awareness about the importance of community care and the need for increased care provision for a growing number of people and to call for a simpler community care system. The Association is also developing a proposal to progress positive ageing strategies in partnership with the Victorian Government and Council on the Ageing (Victoria).

The Local Government Association of Queensland is working with the Queensland Department of Communities on the *Queensland 2020: A State for All Ages* project. In particular, LGAQ held a forum that provided an opportunity for local government representatives to participate in the project.

The Local Government Association of South Australia has been invited to join a new officer-level bi-lateral Commonwealth-State Committee to look at attracting more migrants to South Australia.

The Western Australian Local Government Association is working with the Office for Seniors Interest and Volunteering to facilitate research and funding for local government to allow them to plan for the implications of population ageing. The Association is also involved with Future Directions International on a collaborative intergenerational project to identify future needs and expectations to the year 2029, for a broad range of social services.

The Local Government Association of Tasmania has agreed to develop a Partnership Agreement for Positive Ageing with the Australian Government and Tasmanian Government. Some of the outcomes being sought from the Partnership Agreement include better planning and delivery of services for older people; improved access to and sharing of information for planning purposes; increased community awareness of ageing issues; an improved planning process that supports the development of aged care homes; and improved capacity of service providers to identify areas for development. Following consultation it is anticipated that the Partnership Agreement will be signed by the three parties in 2004–05. Once signed, the Agreement will be the first of its kind in Australia.

Some local councils have also developed, or are considering developing, local strategies to support an ageing community. For example, Hobart City Council released a *Positive Ageing Strategy* in December 2002 based on priorities reflected in the City of Hobart 2001–2005 Strategic Plan and suggestions for activities identified in the *Tasmanian Plan for Positive Ageing 2000–2005*.

The next step for local government is to build on these initiatives.



ACTION PLAN: STRATEGIES TO BUILD CAPACITY

ALGA acknowledges that there are many emerging issues associated with the economic and social implications of an ageing population and that it is important for local government to identify the key issues that require its attention.

ALGA is committed to building the capacity of local government to plan for an ageing population and in November 2003 entered into a partnership with the Australian Government. The key element of the partnership was the development of a four year national action plan to help local government meet the opportunities and challenges of an ageing population.

To guide the development of the action plan, ALGA released a discussion paper—*An Older Australia: Identifying Areas for Local Government Action*. The paper provided information and data on issues of importance to local government in relation to population ageing. To stimulate discussion, key questions were put forward about how local government might: respond to demographic change; identify opportunities and challenges; and deliver results.

ALGA also convened a national workshop to provide an opportunity for state and territory local government associations to help set priorities for the development of the action plan. The workshop explored strategies to move the agenda forward and provided an opportunity for participants to share information about activities and projects now underway in each jurisdiction.

Purpose

The purpose of the *Australian Local Government Population Ageing Action Plan 2004–2008* is to build the capacity of local government to plan for an ageing population. To achieve this objective, the plan provides a flexible and dynamic framework that builds awareness, encourages action, fosters partnerships and improves access to information.

The action plan complements other related national ageing strategies, such as the Australian Government *National Strategy for an Ageing Australia* and intersects with the considerable work already undertaken in individual jurisdictions.

Principles

To guide the implementation of the action plan, the following principles will be applied:

Commitment and sharing responsibilities

It is vital that ALGA work in close association with state and territory local government associations and through them local councils, to build the capacity of local government to plan for an ageing population. It is important to build upon the initiatives and programs of local government authorities that complement the objectives of the action plan. ALGA and state and territory local government associations, have an important role in promoting and enabling collaboration, particularly at the local level.

Building on local government strengths

The development of strategic capacity-building initiatives will support local government in planning for an ageing population. Emphasis will be placed on the importance of conducting planning at the local level and assessing capacity-building opportunities that assist local councils to meet the needs of the growing older population.

It is recognised that not all local government associations and local councils will be interested in achieving the same outcomes or progressing at the same pace, and this action plan acknowledges the importance and relevance of competing priorities and continuing revenue constraints.

Adopting an integrated holistic approach

The development of an holistic, integrated approach within local government, between spheres of government and across sectors, as espoused through Integrated Local Area Planning (ILAP), can encourage better integration and co-ordination of planning efforts, both within and between governments and maximise available resources and expertise through partnerships and improved cooperation. It is recognised that the development of an integrated holistic approach will be a long-term and complex process.

Committing to an agreed accountability framework

ALGA recognises the need to establish and report on agreed measures to ensure improved outcomes for local government.

Consultation and inclusion

When engaging with stakeholders: meaningful and ongoing consultations and negotiations should be an integral part of decision-making processes; all major stakeholders should be identified and their involvement in the consultation processes encouraged; and stakeholders should be provided with opportunities to develop an understanding of the issues sufficient to enable effective involvement in the consultative process. Local government is only one of the many key stakeholders. ALGA will need to encourage an integrated and co-operative approach by all stakeholders in the implementation of the action plan.

Key areas and objectives

The *Australian Local Government Population Ageing Action Plan* features four key areas for action, each of which has an associated objective. Within each of these priority areas, proposed initiatives have been identified and will provide the basis for the development of an annual work program (see page 14).



BUILDING AWARENESS

Education and awareness will provide the basis for continued responsiveness to population ageing. The objective of this action area is to **build the awareness of population ageing within local government.**

Proposed initiatives:

- Undertake surveys to gauge awareness of population ageing within local government.
- Establish a website that promotes the Local Government Ageing Project and provides relevant information resources for local government authorities.
- Facilitate the development of a 'local government ageing network' with the creation of a discussion list that allows subscribers to share experiences, questions and comments about population ageing issues.
- Develop and disseminate an information kit about population ageing for use by elected representatives, managers and personnel.
- Contribute to the planning and presentation of population ageing issues at the National General Assembly of Local Government, together with appropriate follow up with local government and support local government involvement in other conferences, workshops and forums.
- Develop and disseminate a series of checklists that detail the impact of population ageing issues on the different disciplines/positions within local government.
- Promote issues raised in the Australian Government *National Strategy for an Ageing Australia* of particular relevance to local government.



ENCOURAGING LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTION

Addressing population ageing issues is a complex task that involves understanding the linkages between a wide range of activities, organisations and interests. The objective of this action area is to **encourage local government action to plan for an ageing population.**

Proposed initiatives:

- Establish a roundtable discussion with the Australian, State and Territory Governments to examine the impediments in existing local planning and building processes to ensure the timely completion and certification of aged care homes.
- Facilitate closer examination of the impact of an ageing population on local government finances (revenue and expenditure) and service provision (infrastructure, community support, health promotion and aged care services).
- Undertake surveys to determine the level of local government action on population ageing.
- Publicise new local government ageing strategies via established local government association communication networks.
- Promote local government ageing strategies by establishing an online register allowing councils developing strategies to benefit from other councils' work and experience.
- Disseminate existing resources, tool kits and templates that assist local government to plan for an ageing population through the Local Government Ageing Project Website.
- Facilitate the development of a toolbox that provides local government with the tools, resources and contacts to integrate population ageing into all aspects of local government operations.
- Develop and disseminate a series of case studies about the diversity of older people (including Indigenous Australians and culturally and linguistically diverse groups) to assist local government to respond to the different range of older people's circumstances and needs.



FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS

The actions of an individual council will only make a long term contribution if they are integrated with the work of other organisations and governments. The objective of this action area is to **identify and foster partnerships to support a more collaborative approach to population ageing.**

Proposed initiatives:

- Undertake a review of strategic partnership opportunities and identify specific areas for joint action.
- Publicise new partnership agreements via established local government association communication networks.
- Promote innovative partnership approaches by establishing an online partnership register.
- Stimulate the development of local level partnerships through the dissemination of best practice information.
- Facilitate effective engagement of older people in local government decision-making processes by fostering relationships with seniors' organisations (in particular organisations that represent the diversity of older people's needs and circumstances, including those of Indigenous Australians and culturally and linguistically diverse groups).
- Support the development of the healthy ageing agenda by fostering relationships with health promotion advocates.
- Promote understanding of population ageing and its relationship to different local government occupational roles by building links with professional associations.
- Foster a closer relationship with relevant government departments and agencies.
- Explore opportunities for action with Ministerial Councils and other intergovernmental bodies.
- Facilitate the development of better outcomes for the care of older Australians by building links with the aged care sector.
- Improve the evidence base available to inform local government policy development by establishing relationships with researchers and research organisations.
- Encourage the development of timely and relevant information to local government by building links with information service providers.



IMPROVING INFORMATION ACCESS

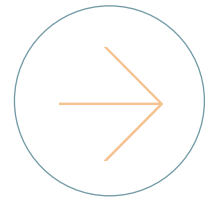
Access to research, information, data and innovative practice will be important in guiding local government's response to population ageing. The objective of this action area is to **improve access to regional information on population ageing and future demographic shifts**, thus creating a stronger evidence base to inform local government policy development.

Proposed initiatives:

- Provide information on new government initiatives, policies and programs.
- Publicise new ageing research, information, data and innovative practice through established local government association communication networks.
- Develop and disseminate an innovative practice guide that showcases current local government innovation in the area of population ageing.
- Establish a web-based central clearinghouse on information related to ageing and relevant to local government.
- Develop and disseminate a research paper series that showcases current local government research in the field of population ageing.
- Investigate opportunities to improve information and data sharing within local government through the 'Connecting local government project'.
- Utilise local government conferences (in particular the National General Assembly of Local Government), workshops, forums and other events to inform delegates about current innovative practice.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION



The implementation of this action plan is coordinated through the ALGA, which reports to the Australian Government as represented by the Office for an Ageing Australia.

Progress towards achieving the actions identified in the plan will be monitored by a Steering Committee. ALGA will report six monthly to the Steering Committee on the progress of implementation. To support the implementation of the action plan, a reference group will be established of local government representatives and other relevant agencies.

The following preliminary indicators are proposed as tangible measures of progress for the four priority areas:

- Increased awareness of population ageing within local government.
- Increased local government action to plan for an ageing population;
- Increased partnerships that support a collaborative effort to population ageing; and
- Increased access to regional information on population ageing and future demographic shifts.

However, the Steering Committee will need to approve further outcome and performance measures as the action plan is implemented.

Detailed project timelines and responsibilities for implementation will be set out in an annual work program, which will be approved by the Steering Committee.



AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION



The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) represents the interests of local government nationally. ALGA is constituted as a federation of the peak Local Government Associations in the six States and the Northern Territory, together with the Government of the ACT. ALGA provides a range of services to its member associations and, through them, local councils throughout Australia. These include:

- information on national issues, policies and trends affecting local government via the Internet, newsletters, special reports and conferences;
- representation on national bodies including the Council of Australian Governments, Ministerial Councils, intergovernment committees and specialist bodies;
- liaison and negotiation with a wide range of Australian Government ministers and departments, shadow ministers and political parties, as well as other national organisations related to local government;
- policy development to provide a local government perspective on national affairs;
- special projects aimed at enhancing local government's capacity and status in key areas of national concern; and
- lobbying the Australian Government and Parliament on specific issues and running campaigns.



ALGA gratefully acknowledges the generous financial support of the Australian Government in the development of this action plan.



building awareness
encouraging action
fostering partnerships
improving information access



→ AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION