

**8.1 AGE FRIENDLY DAREBIN REVIEW**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In response to Commonwealth Government planned reforms of the funding of home support services, Council commissioned the Age Friendly Darebin Review in May 2018. An Independent Panel was appointed of Dr Rhonda Galbally and Peter Allen to conduct the review.

Since the review was commenced, the Panel has:

- Prepared and issued a preliminary discussion paper;
- Conducted a first round of consultation and considered the feedback received;
- Prepared and issued a draft report with recommendations;
- Conducted a second round of consultation and considered the feedback received;
- Finalised the report and recommendations for consideration by Council.

Soon after the Independent Panel completed the text of the draft report, the Federal Government announced that planned changes to Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) funding would be delayed. Instead, Commonwealth block funding for CHSP services was extended until 30 June 2022.

Darebin Council has previously committed to continue providing its existing home support services while federal block funding is in place. Council will therefore certainly continue to provide its existing home support services for at least three further years, and hopefully longer. Council continues to advocate for further extension and continuation of CHSP block funding beyond 2022.

The Age Friendly Darebin review's 98 recommendations would see many new initiatives, new and improved services, increased advocacy, and changes in strategic direction for Darebin Council.

Some of the major new services and initiatives proposed are:

- An innovative new service with expert staff to assist and support older people to navigate the challenging national My Aged Care system (Navigation Support Service), combined with a new volunteer program to address social isolation (Social Inclusion Program).
- A new gardening service to assist older people to maintain their gardens or lawns, via a volunteer program or another service model, subject to a future report for consideration by Council.
- A Service Improvement Plan to make additions and improvements to existing Council aged care services to better address social isolation and promote independence and inclusion. This would also include trialling the provision of services to people receiving Home Care Packages.
- A Senior Citizens Groups Action Plan to consider future funding and infrastructure needs for Senior Citizens Groups.

- A participatory Information Project for older people to redesign Council communications to better align with their needs and preferences.

This report to the 22 July Council meeting includes:

- The final report from the Independent Panel (**Appendix B**); and
- Council officer advice on the Independent Panel's revised recommendations (**Appendix A**).

<b>Recommendation</b>
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**That Council:**

- (1) Thanks all participants for their contribution to the Age Friendly Darebin review, and thanks the Independent Panel for their work.
- (2) Accepts or takes other action for each of the recommendations, as set out in the final column of **Appendix A**.
- (3) Allocates the \$500,000 set aside in the 2019/20 budget for implementation of the Age Friendly Darebin recommendations as follows:
  - (a) Trial implementation of the new Social inclusion Volunteering Program and Aged Care Navigation Support Service - \$200,000
  - (b) Trial implementation of a lawn mowing and/or gardening service or volunteer program, subject to future Council decision - \$120,000
  - (c) Implement service improvement plan to address improvements and expansion of Council's existing aged care services - \$50,000
  - (d) Implement Senior Citizens Groups Action Plan - \$60,000
  - (e) Implement new grants for community groups - \$15,000
  - (f) Funding for Your Community Health Men's Shed - \$32,000
  - (g) Miscellaneous programs, informations and workshops as recommended - \$23,000.
- (4) Notes that a report on options for the lawn mowing and/or gardening service or volunteer gardening program will be considered by Council in September 2019.
- (5) Notes that Council will receive an Age Friendly Darebin implementation progress report in February 2020, and annual implementation reports from August 2020.
- (6) Reaffirms commitment to the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities, noting that the WHO requirements for a cycle of planning, implementation, progress evaluation and continual improvement will be met by the Age Friendly Darebin implementation and governance.
- (7) Continues to advocate to other levels of government for improvements to systems, resourcing and infrastructure that support equity, wellbeing and quality of life outcomes for older people, including the extension of block funding for Commonwealth Home Support Program services beyond June 2022.

**BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION****Age Friendly Darebin Review Process to date**

In May 2018 Council commissioned the Age Friendly Darebin Review, as a result of forthcoming federal government reforms to Commonwealth Home Support Program funding.

Dr Rhonda Galbally AC and Peter Allen were appointed as the Independent Panel to conduct the review. They were supported by staff and research assistance.

The Panel released a discussion paper *Towards an Age Friendly Darebin: Opportunities, Constraints and Opportunities* in October 2018. A consultation period (the first round of consultation) took place over October – December 2018. This consultation included meetings with key stakeholder groups including senior citizens groups, Aboriginal community service agencies and Darebin community groups. A range of information sessions, workshops and focus groups also took place. A public hearing was held where anyone who wished to address the panel could do so.

Over 1,100 people participated in the first round consultation, with 773 people providing feedback in some form.

The Panel considered the results from the first round of consultation, as well as research. In April 2019 they released a draft report including 98 recommendations, *Towards an Age Friendly Darebin*. The text of this was finalised in late March and, following layout and printing, was published and released on 11 April 2019.

In the meantime, the Federal Government announced on 2 April 2019 that the Commonwealth Home Support Program funding would be extended until 30 June 2022. This was positive news and reflected Council's advocacy for an extension to block funding.

Due to Council's previous resolutions on this topic, this meant that Council would certainly continue to provide Commonwealth Home Support Program services until 30 June 2022. An explanatory note was added to the draft report to explain this and Council wrote to all people using Council aged care services to advise them of this positive news.

The Independent Panel conducted a second round of consultation from 11 April – 15 May 2019, inviting submissions on the draft report. The Panel received 22 submissions from individuals and community groups that provided feedback on the draft report.

The Panel has now completed the final report. A number of recommendations have been amended in response to feedback; these amended recommendations are marked up in **Appendix A**.

Council officers have been considering the Panel's recommendations to prepare advice to Council and develop an implementation plan. Staff considered the recommendations in three themes for ease of discussion:

- Theme 1: Existing Aged Care services, improvements and modifications to existing aged services and some new services
- Theme 2: Community services and programs including library, digital strategy, neighbourhood houses, community safety
- Theme 3: Public realm, open space, housing, accessibility, transport, parking.

The report contains 98 recommendations that have a broad range of intended outcomes.

The potential implications for organisational investment and resource commitments could be significant, therefore it has become very important that officer's recommendations to Council prioritise implementation activities and efforts within the constraints of available resources.

To support the implementation, Council has allocated \$500,000 in its budget for 2019/20 financial year. This amount is non recurrent and had been taken into account in the year one (2019/20) implementation plan.

Of the 98 recommendations in the review, Council staff are recommending:

- Fully accepting: 73 recommendations;
- Further investigating 21 recommendations, in many cases by running a pilot or a trial;
- Not accepting 3 recommendations, and deferring 1 recommendation.

### **System context**

The original aged care system context for the Age Friendly Darebin Review in 2018 was significantly changed by the federal budget announcement in April 2019 of extension of block funding for CHSP services until at least 2022.

Council's Assessment services, however, may still be facing significant changes due to Commonwealth reform. The most recent advice from the Commonwealth is that they intend that a new unified national assessment service will be in place in July 2020. There are still many unknowns as to what may happen in practice and what it means for Council's assessment service and for local residents accessing the My Aged Care system.

### **Previous Council Resolution**

At its meeting held on 8 April 2019, Council resolved:

*'That Council:*

- (1) *Notes previous resolutions of Council to:*
  - a) *Advocate for the federal government to extend block funding of Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) services beyond June 2020;*
  - b) *Continue to provide existing Council-run aged care services while Commonwealth block funding is in place;*
  - c) *Advocate for the state government to exempt local council CHSP services from National Competition Policy; and*
  - d) *Commission the Age Friendly Darebin to review Darebin's services to older people, as a result of the federal government intention to remove block funding for Commonwealth Home Support Program services.*
- (2) *Welcomes the Commonwealth Government's 2 April 2019 budget commitment to extend CHSP block funding until 30 June 2022*
- (3) *Notes that the ALP's national platform refers to an extension of CHSP funding beyond 2020 although the length of extension is not specified*
- (4) *Notes that the draft Age Friendly Darebin report will be released during April 2019 and will include recommendations about Council's future aged care services, and that Council will receive the final report in June or July 2019.*
- (5) *Reaffirms its commitment to continue CHSP-funded services while CHSP block funding is in place.*

- (6) *Writes to the State Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, Robin Scott, MP for Preston, seeking an exemption for local Council-run CHSP services from the National Competition Policy so that it can continue to provide quality subsidised home care packages to residents should bulk funding cease in the future.'*

At its meeting held on 7 November 2018, Council resolved (in two parts):

*'That Council:*

- (1) *Notes the legal advice provided as a confidential attachment.*  
(2) *Releases the legal advice to the public.'*

*'That Council*

- (3) *Immediately writes to Premier, Opposition Leader, Leaders of Minor Parties and Cross benchers in the State Parliament, local Federal and state members of parliament seeking a commitment to modify the application of The National Competition Policy in Victoria, to formally exempt Council run Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) Services from the requirement to comply with National Competition Policy.*  
(4) *Immediately writes to all Victorian Mayors and requesting that they join Darebin Council in making firm representation to the above federal and state members of parliament including their respective local members seeking a commitment to modify the application of The National Competition Policy in Victoria, to formally exempt Council run Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) Services from the requirement to comply with National Competition Policy.*  
(5) *Writes to other Councils Inviting them to establish a task force to lobby relevant government ministers and parliamentarian to seek a commitment to modify the application of The National Competition Policy in Victoria, to formally exempt Council run Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) Services from the requirement to comply with National Competition Policy.*  
(6) *Immediately informs state and local media outlets of the actions Council will take as a result of this motion.*  
(7) *If indicated by the findings of the current Aged friendly Darebin review, Council commits to conducting a Public Interest test process at the appropriate time.'*

At its meeting held on 3 September 2018, Council resolved:

*'That Council:*

- (1) *Acknowledges that if the Commonwealth ceases block funding for aged care services as currently planned, this will inevitably affect how Council will provide services to older people.*  
(2) *Notes that because of the Commonwealth's plan to cease block funding, Council has commissioned an independent 'Creating an Age Friendly Darebin' review for the express purpose of ensuring our older people continue to receive quality services they need.*  
(3) *Calls on the federal government to extend block funding for the Commonwealth Home Support Program to provide certainty for community and staff, and writes to relevant ministers, shadow ministers and members of parliament requesting that a moratorium be put in place till such time the government conducts a comprehensive review of block funding to Councils.*  
(4) *Encourages community members to participate in the independent panel review commissioned by Council, to help plan our services in the longer term.*  
(5) *Notes that this Council commits to continue its annual \$6 million investment into the longer term in facilities, programs and services promoting the health and wellbeing of older people.*

- (6) *Notes that the independent review terms of reference will investigate expansion of Council's services including the potential for Darebin Council to provide home care packages.*
- (7) *Continues to provide commonwealth home support program services while in receipt of any block funding from the Commonwealth Government.'*

At its meeting held on 21 May 2018, Council resolved:

*'That Council:*

- (1) *Establish the Review Panel on Creating an Age Friendly Darebin, with terms of reference as attached as Appendix B.*
- (2) *Appoint Rhonda Galbally AO and Peter Allen as members of the Review Panel.*
- (3) *Add a point 10 to the principles of the Terms of Reference to read "Is committed to open and transparent decision making processes and will therefore bring any recommendations emanating from the review process back to an open Council meeting for a decision by Councillors.'*

## COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

### Consultation

The Age Friendly Darebin Review engaged with the community through two periods of consultation. Over 1,100 community members and stakeholders engaged with the first consultation period through 50 different events and activities.

Council also received a petition organised by community members, in support of ongoing delivery of CHSP services by Darebin Council, including over 1,800 signatures.

In the second round of consultation, the Panel received 22 submissions from individuals and community groups that provided feedback on the draft report. For further details, see the Consultation report in Towards an Age Friendly Darebin Final Report.

### Communications

A communication plan was developed to promote participation in the process, and to update stakeholders on progress of the Age Friendly Darebin review. Communication activities to inform community and stakeholders are planned for Council's resolution following this meeting. The extension of block funding for CHSP services until June 2022, announced in the federal budget in April, was incorporated into the communications plan because of its obvious implications for some of the outcomes and implementation of the Review. The Panel adjusted several recommendations in their final report as a result.

The Age Friendly Darebin implementation plan will include a number of new initiatives that, if adopted by Council, will be promoted as Age Friendly flagship projects. These present an opportunity to generate and reinforce positive community attitudes about ageing and Council's role in supporting older residents. They also provide Council with opportunities to demonstrate, in positive and practical ways, how it has listened and responded to community feedback.

## ANALYSIS

### Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy

Goal 2 - Opportunities to live well

The purpose of the Age Friendly Darebin review was to explore how Council *can best create an Age Friendly Darebin where older people are valued, supported and empowered to live*

well. Research and consultation activities as well as the recommendations, have been guided by that purpose. The evaluation of pilots and activities in the implementation plan will provide data to inform future activities that also contribute towards this goal.

### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

A number of the recommendations have indirect implications for environmental sustainability. For example, discussions around improved access to public transport for older people, whilst balancing use of private cars and access to parking, have been guided by environmental sustainability principles. Independent Panel members met with members of Council's environment and sustainable transport team.

### **Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations**

Equity, inclusion and wellbeing for Darebin's older people was one of the main drivers for the Age Friendly Darebin Review with many specific recommendations aimed at reducing disadvantage for older people.

The second round of consultation resulted in modifications to the original recommendations based on cultural considerations. These included feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders suggesting more emphasis on culturally appropriate system navigation assistance, and consideration of a culturally appropriate meeting space and respite options. There was strong representation from CALD seniors groups and individuals in both rounds of the consultation.

### **Cultural Considerations**

There are specific recommendations in the Final Report that look at older people's active contribution to and inclusion in Darebin's diverse cultural life. The implementation plan explores opportunities to enhance existing activities and develop greater synergies internally that will ultimately improve cultural outcomes for older people.

### **Economic Development Considerations**

The review recommendations explore several ways to increase participation of older residents in the community and this would potentially have a positive economic impact. The Independent Panel met with members of the economic development team.

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

The adopted 2019/20 budget includes a one-off allocation of \$500,000 for the implementation of Age Friendly Darebin recommendations during this financial year.

This report recommends allocating the implementation funds for 2019/20 as follows:

<i>Initiative for 2019/20</i>	<i>Allocation</i>
Trial implementation of the new Social inclusion Volunteering Program and Aged Care Navigation Support Service	\$200,000
Trial implementation of a lawn mowing and/or gardening service or volunteer program, subject to future Council decision	\$120,000
Implement service improvement plan to address improvements and expansion of Council's existing aged care services	\$50,000
Implement Senior Citizens Groups Action Plan	\$60,000

Implement new grants for community groups	\$15,000
Funding for Your Community Health Men's Shed	\$32,000
Miscellaneous programs, informations and workshops as recommended	\$23,000
Total	\$500,000

Future funding after 2019/20 of new services and initiatives arising from the Age Friendly Darebin Review will be subject to Council's annual budget processes.

## Legal and Risk Implications

A small number of recommendations potentially have legal issues. Many of the recommendations have risks that need to be managed and controlled including proposals for a volunteer program and a gardening service.

There are risk considerations for all new trials including a more flexible approach to delivery of existing services.

## DISCUSSION

### Overview

The Panel's draft report contained 98 recommendations and was released for consultation from 10 April to 15 May 2019.

The Panel's final report has been completed for presentation to Council for this meeting on 22 July 2019. The final report also contains 98 recommendations, some of them amended from the draft report.

### Implementation and funding

The Age Friendly Darebin report recommends a range of new service initiatives, many with financial implications. There are also a range of recommendations about advocacy or new directions that require no direct additional resources.

Staff advice about each of the Independent Panel's recommendations is attached at **Appendix A**.

Key new services and initiatives arising from the recommendations include:

- An innovative new service with expert staff to assist and support older people to navigate the challenging national My Aged Care system (Navigation Support Service), combined with a new volunteer program to address social isolation (Social Inclusion Program).
- A new gardening service to assist older people to maintain their gardens or lawns, via a volunteer program or another service model, subject to a future report for consideration by Council.
- A Service Improvement Plan to make additions and improvements to existing Council aged care services to better address social isolation and promote independence and inclusion. This would also include trialling the provision of services to people receiving Home Care Packages.
- A Senior Citizens Groups Action Plan to consider future funding and facility needs for Senior Citizens Groups.



- A participatory Information Project for older people to redesign Council communications to better align with their needs and preferences.
- An expansion of existing community grants program.
- Various programs and activities to improve older people's health and wellbeing.
- Advocacy around accessibility, transport and housing and their critical role in older people's wellbeing and social inclusion.
- Many other initiatives and recommendations.

As discussed in the Finance section above, in the first year, 2019/20, the \$500,000 one off allocation would fund the implementation and trial programs of new service initiatives. New infrastructure would be subject to future budget processes.

#### **Other comments**

- The Age Friendly Darebin Review offers an opportunity for Darebin City Council to reorient itself internally and externally toward a more age friendly, liveable, connected city. Internally, this means more integrated, inclusive and transformational approaches to planning, communications and operations. Externally this means that Darebin's older people are more visible and visibly included, experience improved quality of life and that this in turn makes Darebin a better place for everyone.
- In considering the many recommendations, consideration was given to:
  - feedback from the community
  - interrelationships/ dependencies between projects and aspects of projects;
  - a range of uncertainties about implementation and future context.
- All Council departments implicated in the recommendations, have significant business as usual outputs and responsibilities. Appropriate resourcing and realistic timeframes to support the achievement of endorsed, prioritised projects are important considerations.
- Therefore, specific costing and implementation planning has been undertaken primarily for the first year, 2019/20. Second year implementation will be substantially determined by the results of year 1, and by the availability of funds.
- Staff recommend at least a five year view, as per World Health Organisation Age Friendly City continuous improvement cycle.

Furthermore, the Age Friendly Darebin Review now provides a vehicle to renew Darebin's Active and Healthy Ageing Strategy which expires in 2021. A revised Strategy will be brought to Council in 2020.

## Governance and Reporting

An overall Age Friendly Darebin governance structure is needed to maximise outcomes of the implementation plan and achieve an integrated, whole of council approach. It will also enable well-informed reporting to council and community and integrated, evidence-based planning.

Staff recommend that council follow up its current in-principle association with the WHO Age Friendly Cities framework by committing fully to application for membership into the WHO Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities.

The Age Friendly Darebin work already undertaken provides a solid foundation and would place Council at the 1-2 year mark of the five year Age Friendly Cities implementation framework. Membership to the Network reflects cities' commitment to work collaboratively with older people, assess and monitor age-friendliness and create accessible spaces and opportunities for social inclusion. Membership is also a commitment to share age friendly initiatives as demonstration projects with other cities and communities.

## OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Staff have provided advice on every recommendation of the Independent Panel. Council could accept staff advice, or alternatively make a different determination for some or all of the recommendations.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

### Details

- 22 July 2019: Council meeting to consider final report and officer advice, and adopt implementation plan
- Late July 2019: implementation commences.
- February 2020: Interim progress report to Council to report against the Implementation Plan. This report will include a Service Improvement Plan addressing existing Council services.
- August 2020: Annual implementation report to Council.

### Communication

Council's decision on the recommendations will be publicised to the community, clients and to participants in recent consultations via the usual multiple channels and accessible formats.

As each new service or improvement to service is trialled or implemented, there will be a specific communications plan for each service.

### Timeline

Key decision-making timelines are above.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

- WHO Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities

### Attachments

- Age Friendly Darebin Final Recommendations and Officer Advice (**Appendix A**)
- Towards An Age Friendly Darebin, Final Report July 2019 (**Appendix B**)

**DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.