

APPENDIX 5: ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION REPORT

Background

Council's strong commitment to consultation is expressed in the Council Plan:

"Goal 5. We will lead on equity and recognise our diverse community as our greatest asset for solving future challenges...

5.2 We bring the ideas of our diverse community into our decision-making."⁶⁹

The public consultation comprised two rounds and formed a significant component of the overarching Communications and Engagement Strategy of the Age Friendly Darebin Review. The review was also informed by evidence from research literature, and information about community needs, aged care services data and programs, federal funding reforms, innovative or best practice initiatives locally and internationally.

This report details how the consultation was implemented and summarises the community response that formed a vital source of data available for analysis by the Panel.

Federal Government funding extension of block funding for aged care home support services

The expected transition to a full competitive market for home support services in 2020 played a significant role in the community's engagement during the first phase of the Age Friendly Darebin consultation process. This consultation was undertaken before the Federal Government committed to extend block funding until 2022. The community's engagement was strongly focused on council continuing Home Support services provision. An Aged Care Services Petition was raised by a group of City of Darebin residents which called on Council to commit to maintaining its role as a provider of aged care services into the future. Publication of the Panel's Draft Report in April 2019 coincided with the funding extension announcement. The level of community engagement and the number of feedback submissions was significantly less for the second round of consultation.

⁶⁹ Darebin Council Plan 2017-2021

Aged Care Services Petition

A petition was raised by a group of City of Darebin residents at a Council meeting on 30 April 2018. The petition called on Council to commit to maintaining its role as a provider of aged care services into the future.⁷⁰ The tabling of this petition coincided with Council's announcement that a decision about the process on how to consult with the community, and not about Council's role in the future, would be made at the Council Meeting on 21 May 2018. The petition was tabled at four subsequent Council meetings throughout 2018 and culminated in a final tally of 1850 signatures received by Council on 15 October 2018. This petition is a data source that was considered by the Panel, however the numbers of signatories are not aggregated with data collected during the Age Friendly Darebin Review and consultation as it was a separate process.

Similarly, results from the 2017 Aged & Disability community consultation "A Review of the needs of older people in Darebin" was considered by the Panel but not aggregated with the Age Friendly Darebin review data.⁷¹

Consultation Method

The consultation method was guided by the Terms of Reference of the Age Friendly Darebin Review and the intentions of the Panel.

It was therefore designed to offer:

- sufficient time for individuals, groups, organisations, staff and other stakeholders to consider, respond and provide ideas;
- a broad range of locations, formats, languages and possible means for clients and community members to understand the purpose of the review and to contribute their thoughts.

The reach and methods of the consultation enabled broad community participation and therefore met the requirements of the terms of reference in this regard. In particular, substantial efforts were made to reach residents whose first language is not English and those who need support to be heard. In general the conversation was lively and people responded positively to the opportunity to have a say.

70 Full wording of the Petition:

"We the undersigned residents and ratepayers of Darebin, petition Council to publically commit to maintaining its current role as a provider of aged care services including transport, cleaning, personal care, meals, home maintenance and respite care, into the future.

We urge Council not to abandon its role in providing the above aged care services in view of the Federal Government's privatisation agenda of aged care services.

We are proud that Darebin Council is a long-standing provider of high quality aged care services and has built a strong and trusted reputation as a preferred provider with elderly residents and their families in the community.

In Darebin 25,534 people (18.8% of the total population) are aged over 60 and many are receiving, or will soon require, support services to enable them to remain in their home. We firmly believe that current and future aged community members should continue to have the choice to receive home care service directly from trusted and committed Darebin Council staff."

71 Pope, J, 2018, *Review of the needs of older people in Darebin*

Timing of activities

Date	Activity
9 th October 2018	Release of Discussion Paper
Throughout October and November	Community meetings and focus groups – See table below for the list of meetings and events. These were held in community and council locations
23 rd November 2018	Closing date for submissions
6 th December 2018	Panel hearing
9 April 2019	Release of Draft Report and Draft Report Summary in English and 12 community languages
April and May 2019	Call for feedback submissions, Senior Citizen Clubs and other stakeholder meetings, Darebin staff workshops – see table for list of activities below
15 May 2019	Closing date for submissions
30 July 2019	Release of final report

Description of activities

Pop-up: A small team of (two to four) staff attended the scheduled location for a specified time (usually two hours), and set up a temporary "stand" with copies of the Discussion Paper and a range of other relevant information to hand out and Council banners. Usually with a table and chairs. Staff, actively engage with community members to inform and encourage their discussion and comment.

Drop in session: A larger scale (longer duration, more staff, larger set-up, refreshments provided) event held at Council venue, where community members were invited to attend. Panel members and senior management attended.

Focus Groups: Up to eight to ten representatives of stakeholders of similar cohorts invited to a meeting facilitated by the Panel and/or staff to discuss issues in more depth. Notes were taken by staff and added to the consultation material available for the Panel's consideration.

Panel meetings: Ranged in size, some very large (e.g. 100 staff) where Panel encouraged comment, questions and discussion. Some singular and by specific appointment, e.g. with Commissioner for Senior Victorians.

Department meeting: Regular (quarterly) meeting of the Aged & Disability Department. Specific theme regarding the Review on this occasion.

Consultation Session: Some similarity to a Pop-up but attending an existing group/club/program/meeting by invitation/arrangement.

Workshops: Held with Darebin Council experts from various departments.

Panel Hearing: Formal, scheduled, public session held in Council Chambers, chaired by Panel. Written submissions were required prior, and presenters had a specified time to speak to their submission. Session was recorded.

First round consultation

List of consultation events

Event Attendees	Event Type
Australian Services Union	1x Panel Meeting, 1x Meeting with Council Staff
Italian Seniors Clubs	Panel Meeting
U3A, Matrix, Probus	Panel Meeting
AHAAB Active and Healthy Ageing Advisory Board	Panel Meeting
Progress Association	Panel Meeting
Aboriginal Stakeholders	Panel Meeting
Greek Seniors Clubs	Panel Meeting
Macedonian Seniors Clubs	Panel Meeting
Organisations that work with hard to reach communities	Panel Meeting
Aged & Disability staff	Department Meetings
Aged & Disability staff	3 x Panel Focus Groups
General Public: Preston Library	Pop Up session with Council staff
General Public: Reservoir Senior Citizen Centre	Pop Up session with Council staff
Council Staff	Council Meeting
Council Staff	Workshops with Council staff
General Public: Your Community Health, Men's Shed	Pop Up session with Council staff
General Public: Preston Market	2 x Pop Up session with Council staff
General Public: Preston Shire Hall	Drop In session with Council staff
General Public: Kingsbury Bowls Club	Pop Up session with Council staff
General Public: Holmes Street public housing residents	Pop Up session with Council staff
General Public: Reservoir Library	Pop Up session with Council staff
General Public: Preston Church of Christ Community Lunch	Pop Up session with Council staff
General Public: Summerhill Retirement Village residents	Pop Up session with Council staff
Arabic Seniors Groups	Consultation session with Council staff
Maltese Seniors Groups	Pop Up session with Council staff
General Public: Agg Street public housing residents	Pop Up session with Council staff
Chinese Seniors Groups	Consultation session with Council staff

Kingsbury Probus	Consultation session with Council staff
General Public: Northcote Library	Pop Up session with Council staff
Aged Care Services Clients	Panel Focus Group
Carers	Panel Focus Group
Active and engaged seniors	Panel Focus Group
Italian and English Seniors Clubs	Consultation sessions with Council staff and interpreters
General Public: Fairfield Library	Pop Up session with Council staff
Greek Seniors Clubs	Consultations with Council staff and interpreters
Carers	Consultation session with Council staff
Vietnamese Seniors Groups	Consultation session with Council staff
Aged Care Services Clients	Focus Group with Council Staff
Macedonian Seniors Groups	Consultation sessions with Council staff and interpreters
General Public – Community Sunday Lunch Reservoir Senior Citizen Centre	Pop Up session with Council staff
Aboriginal Elders	Panel Meetings
Peak Bodies: COTA, Seniors Rights Victoria, Merri Health	Panel Meeting
General Public: Northland Shopping Centre	Pop Up session with Council staff
Gerard Mansour, Commissioner for Senior Victorians	Panel Meeting
Council Staff	Ideas Hack with Council staff
Women's Advisory Committee	Consultation session with Council staff
General Public	Public Panel Hearing

Discussion Paper

Structure

The Discussion Paper was comprised of five main sections:

- introduction;
- themes and questions;
- how to have a say;
- glossary and appendices;
- feedback form (response sheet). A reply-paid fold-up sheet that provided a blank page for open comment.

The Discussion Paper introduced the concept of an Age Friendly City, the various issues and challenges of ageing, Darebin demographics, aged care services generally, and the role of Council historically and currently in service provision.

People were welcome to respond to the consultation and Discussion Paper in any way they chose (phone, in person, written), however most respondents made use of the response sheet. The response sheet included a section asking for (voluntary and anonymous) basic demographic information to enable an evaluation of reach to, and diversity of, respondents.

Key themes and questions

The Discussion Paper presented five main themes, each with a list of questions intended to elicit discussion and response:

- **Living in your home.** Questions included whether Council should continue to provide all of its existing aged care services, or expand, reduce or adapt them? Questions also explored what role Council should have in contributing to service quality generally, to the support of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, and older residents from culturally diverse backgrounds, LGBTI communities, and the vulnerable.
- **Quality information, navigation and brokerage.** What are the best ways for people to get the information they need? How can older people be assisted to exercise choice and be in control? Who should advocate for the needs of the most vulnerable, socially isolated older people?
- **Beyond the home.** What can Council do to enable older people to be able to get out and about and enjoy Darebin's public spaces, streets, shopping centres and parks easily and safely, to have access to affordable housing, and access to mobility equipment?
- **Connection to contribute.** How should Council enable an expansion of opportunities to draw on the skills, experience and expertise of older people?
- **In the community.** What can Council do to assist residents to connect to community, including groups? Are there enough venues? How should Council structure its grants program to assist older people's needs?

Promotion

The consultation schedule and review were publicised widely in traditional (press conference, paid advertisements, radio interviews) and social media (Facebook, Twitter) and via Council's internal municipal promotional mechanisms (Website, Darebin Community News) and Aged & Disability's networks (clients, newsletter subscribers, clubs and groups). There were also numerous by-invitation meetings and focus groups with a range of stakeholders (see table above for full list).

Some stakeholder groups met more than once with the Panel (e.g. staff, AHAAB). Some individuals contributed as an individual and also as a member of a stakeholder group.

In all there were 50 separate events during the consultation period encompassing meetings, pop-ups, and focus groups, located across the municipality. These included 44 Community events with 60 community organisations/groups and eight staff events (224 staff members participated).

Seventeen of these events were chaired by the Panel, the remainder were conducted by Council staff on the Panel's behalf.

Where indicated, interpreters were arranged to encourage and enable participation of community members whose first language is not English.

Participation and response

Reach

4500 copies of the Discussion Paper were distributed in hardcopy via mail out and from various locations across the municipality. It was translated into six community languages: Italian, Greek, Macedonian, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Arabic. Verbal participation in languages other than English was enabled via language-specific meetings and focus groups and on an individual basis as required via provision of interpreters or bilingual staff.

The Discussion Paper was also available on line via the Darebin YourSay platform and website, and via email on request.

Response

Community and stakeholder participation in the Age Friendly Darebin Review consultation was diverse and substantial:

- 1,130 people in total participated in engagement events;
- 773 people provided feedback in some form (366 of these in person- meetings, focus groups, pop-up and drop-in sessions or panel hearing)
- 407 written items of feedback were received, of these
 - 75% (307) were on the hardcopy version of the response sheet that came with the Discussion Paper;
 - 15% (65) were on the electronic online version of the response sheet;
 - 10% (35) were separate submissions (letters, emails, papers);
- twenty-three respondents chose to speak to their submission at the public hearing;
- some people who gave written feedback, also gave verbal feedback.

Review respondent demographics compared to client and broader Darebin community demographics

Demographics	Respondents	Council clients (2017-18 data)	Darebin (2016 Census)
Geography			(all ages)
Reservoir	49%	47%	30%
Northcote	20%	13%	15%
Preston	14%	22%	20%
Thornbury	10%	10%	11%
Fairfield/ Kingsbury/ Bundoora/ Alphington/ Other	7%	18%	24%
Language			(all ages)
English	52%	57%	56%
Other	48%	43%	44%
Age			
20-50	4%	3%	50%
51-65	17%	7%	15%
65-79	49%	31%	9%
80+	30%	59%	5%
Clients/ non-clients	48% Council clients 47% no services 5% Other services	Not applicable 100% (of council clients are council clients)	14% of over 65s are Council clients
Carers/ non-carers	29% carers/ 71% non-carers	Not available. (We only collect if clients have a carer = 32%)	(all ages) 9% Darebin residents all ages identify as carer

*N.B. The figures in this table do not include data received from the Darebin aged care services petition referred to above, this data is taken from the demographic data included on submitted Feedback Forms

The following observations were made regarding the reach and response of the consultation, on the basis of demographics:

- geographically, a broad representation of the older person target group was achieved, with some over representation of people from Reservoir and Northcote;
- regarding language – respondents were skewed to CALD compared to the client and Darebin cohorts;

- age – a broad representation was achieved.;
- client-non-client split – nearly 50% of respondents are current clients;
- carer-non-carer split – the respondent sample was skewed toward carers, which was considered desirable for the purposes of the consultation.

Results

The below sections present themes, ideas and recommendations that were shared by the community with the Panel and Council staff during the Age Friendly Darebin consultation period on the Discussion Paper.

Section 1 is a summary of the feedback received via completed feedback forms.

Section 2 summarises material presented at consultation meetings and focus groups (listed above).

A full list of all submissions including those made at the Panel's hearing is available on the Council website.

Section 1

Feedback received from individuals via feedback form

The feedback form was an insert provided with the Discussion Paper, it was a free text form with the following prompt

"Use this page after reading the Discussion Paper to provide your feedback about the key issues for older people. How can Darebin become a truly Age Friendly City?"

The form collected basic de-identified data about the respondent including:

- language spoken
- age bracket
- postcode
- provides support to an older person – Yes/No
- receiving an aged care service – Yes from Darebin – Yes through other provider – No

Data collation and coding method

Most feedback forms were completed in hardcopy and posted to Council via reply-paid. Some forms were completed via web form or submitted to the Aged Friendly Darebin email address. All verbal feedback received, by phone, or at Pop-up events, was recorded in written form by staff and included in the data pool for coding.

Verbal feedback spoken in languages other than English was verbally interpreted and then notes taken in English. Written responses in languages other than English were professionally translated to enable coding.

The analysis of the material or coding was conducted by council officers based on judgement in reading all submissions (i.e. was not algorithmic based on word frequency).

Therefore it was possible to record multiple themes for individual submissions as expressed by the respondent, rather than officers determining a primary/priority theme for individual submissions, see table below for the results of the coding.

Limitations

Numeric or quantitative data resulting from the feedback should be treated with caution because:

- it is possible for one person to submit multiple times
- submissions may not be free of influence
- several staff were involved in recording verbal feedback so recording may not have been consistent
- it is an open text submission format, not a statistically- validated instrument
- weighting of responses is unavoidably subjective e.g. an idea submitted by 20 people is not necessarily superior to an idea put forward by only one person.

The consultation process was not designed or intended to be a quantitative. Research process and therefore no statistical significance can be concluded from numbers or proportions of respondents or responses. The results are best interpreted as illustrative only of some of the views of those who chose to and were able to participate.

The feedback form did not allow for clients who are dual service recipients to indicate that they are service recipients of both Council and another service provider

Respondent categories

169 = Council clients

164 = Not a service user

19 = Did not indicate if client or not

17 = Clients of other aged services

Total response items = 369

Response themes in rank order of frequency

N.B Most responses included more than one theme (average = 3.7)

Theme	Rank
Council should stay in aged care services	1
Council's aged care service standards are good	2
Increase flexibility of Council aged services	3
Council aged care services should expand/offer additional types of services	4
Council's aged care service staff are valued and trusted	5
Affordability: Council should provide more low cost or free activities	6
Council's aged care services should include gardening support e.g. lawn mowing	7
Challenges experienced navigating the aged care system and choosing aged care services	8
Council should provide additional, accessible and flexible community transport options	9
Challenges experienced with Council's information and communication about services	10
Public transport system and physical access is not Age Friendly (e.g. Myki/ accessible stops)	11
Housing challenges - feel safe and secure in affordable housing	12
Concerns about health issues and access to health services (including mental health)	13
Concerns about unsafe footpaths - risk of falls	14
More opportunities needed for social interactions with others	15
Concerns about loneliness and isolation (about others or self)	16
Challenges with limited finances and cost of living	17
Concerns about vulnerable residents - Council should have a monitoring role	18
Culturally appropriate services are important	18
Council should provide improved places and spaces for physical activity of seniors	18
Council to offer more opportunities for older people to go on social outings/trips	19
Concerns about access to (wait times) and quality of Home Care Packages	20
Council's aged care service standards are not good/not good enough	21

Council's focus should be on core business: rubbish, signs, assets, graffiti management	21
Seniors clubs and groups are valued	21
Informal support through family and neighbours is valued	22
My Aged Care System is confusing and complicated	23
Council should provide more advocacy to Government on behalf of older people e.g. housing, transport etc.	24
Don't privatise aged care	25
Concerns about safety & personal security (crime)	25
Facilities, centres and parks don't meet the needs of older people	25
My independence is important to me	26
Council should provide community connector service (connecting people to services and supports that they need)	26
Council should provide transport to medical appointments	26
Not enough public seating	27
Improve parking options for older people (accessibility, availability, timeframes)	28
Not enough safe and accessible public toilets	28
Improve pedestrian crossings with older people in mind	29
Council Facilities, centres and parks are valued	29
Council should support skill development of older people, e.g. computer literacy education	29
I don't like change	30
Increase opportunities for intergenerational activities	30
More opportunities to contribute to community, e.g. volunteering	30
Concerns about access and affordability to mobility equipment e.g. scooters etc.	31
Improve lighting across the community	31
Increase funding for aged care services	32
Darebin is a good place to live	32
Council should stop providing aged care services	33
Council should employ more aged care services staff	33
Age friendly planning is important	33
Public transport should be subsidised for older people	34

Most frequent response themes sorted by client-non-client respondents

Non-Client top themes	Rank	Client top themes	Rank
Council should stay in aged services	1	Council should stay in aged services	1
Increase flexibility of Council aged services	2	Council's aged care service standards are good	2
Council aged care services should expand/offer additional types of services	3	Council's aged care service staff are valued and trusted	3
Challenges experienced navigating the aged care system and choosing aged care services	4	Council aged care services should expand/offer additional types of services	4
Public transport system and physical access is not Age Friendly(e.g. Myki/ accessible stops)	5	Increase flexibility of Council aged services	
Housing challenges - feel safe and secure in affordable housing	6	Council's aged care services should include gardening support e.g. lawn mowing	5
Council's aged care service standards are good		Issues with community bus access, additional community transport options	6
Challenges experienced with Council's information and communication about services		Challenges experienced navigating the aged care system and choosing aged care services	7
Council's aged care service standards are good		Challenges experienced with Council's information and communication about services	8
Concerns about unsafe footpaths - risk of falls	7	Concerns about health issues and access to health services (including mental health)	9
Council's aged care service staff are valued and trusted		Challenges with limited finances and cost of living	10
Council's aged care services should include gardening support e.g. lawn mowing			
Council should provide additional, accessible and flexible community transport options			

Section 2

Summary of stakeholder Feedback provided at meetings and focus groups

Council staff worked with the Panel to offer the community a range of opportunities to share their opinions and ideas throughout the Age Friendly Darebin consultation period. See table above for a full outline of the consultation schedule. The consultation officially commenced with the release of the Age Friendly Darebin Discussion Paper on October 9 2018. The Panel met with some stakeholder groups prior to October 9. The purpose of these pre-consultation meetings was to enable the Panel to tune in to the local issues affecting older people in Darebin and to ensure that the proposed consultation methods would allow as much reach as possible.

Notes were recorded from all meetings and focus groups that occurred during the pre-consultation and consultation stages. Each event is considered to be a source of data that informed the Panel's Report to Council. Summaries of each stakeholder's responses are represented below. Some summaries are grouped together where the cohort were consulted more than once.

A few key representative and advisory groups were consulted before the Age Friendly Review Consultation period. These included the Active and Healthy Aging Advisory Board (AHAAB), The Darebin Ethnic Communities Council and The Darebin Progress Association. Members of these groups provided firm and consistent messages to the Panel and Council staff. Table 4 below outlines some of this feedback. The Panel also consulted the Australian Services Union throughout key stages during the review.

1. Feedback from key advisory and advocacy groups

1. 27 August 2018 – Darebin Ethnic Communities Council
Including Panel Members and Council Staff
2. 20 September 2018 – Darebin Progress Association
Including Panel Members and Council Staff
3. 10 August & 19 September 2018 – Active and Health Aging Advisory Board
Including Panel Members and Council Staff

Some Viewpoints

Valued Council aged services should be retained

- Council's workforce is trusted, well trained and highly skilled. This workforce will be negatively impacted if Council withdraws from services.
- Firm recommendation that Darebin Council commits to remain in aged care service provision (with reference to strong community will as per petition to Council).

Avoid privatisation of aged care services

- Strong concern that the Commonwealth's privatisation of Aged Care Services will result in poor service outcomes for older people in Darebin, and particularly people who may be vulnerable or for people that have cultural barriers to service access.
- Privatisation creates transient workforce with low minimum standards, this in turn will lead to poor quality service outcomes for older people.

Concerns about consultation

- Costs relating to hiring an external Panel of experts was unnecessary and the review could have been achieved by Council Officers.

2. Darebin Women's Advisory Group

29 November 2018

Members of Darebin women's advisory committee, including Council staff, Panel members not present

Some Viewpoints

- Opportunities need to be available for older people to be included and valued in community life.
- It is important for older people to have intergenerational experiences.
- Council to consider how it can support volunteering options for older people, such as through libraries or community events.

3. Aged Services Service Delivery Unit staff with Panel Members

2 meetings on 18 October 2018

Including Panel members

Some Viewpoints

Strengths of Services

- Trusted and skilled workforce, provides good monitoring and support of older clients that may be vulnerable.

Limitations of current practices and My Aged Care

- Most service complaints are due to windows of time for service; lack of service flexibility; not providing routinely consistent CSW.
- My Aged Care is confusing for older people - more could be done to provide information and navigation assistance.

Future options for Council

- Review Occupational Health & Safety guidelines to allow flexibility.
- Expand to include - social contact or welfare checks with vulnerable, isolated clients; more transport to appointments/social activities; help with filling out forms; tailored support based on client goals; Home Care Packages, gardening.
- Some office functions and roles could be structured more efficiently.

4. Council's Regional Assessment Service staff

1 October 2018

Including Panel Members

Some Viewpoints

Challenges with My Aged Care Access and Pathways

- Registration and access is challenging for vulnerable groups.
- Service navigation and informed choice about service options after an assessment is difficult for clients.
- Support that assessors can provide is constrained by referral rules and conflict of interest rules (this means Council Assessors cannot show bias, or influence a decision of a client in choosing a Council service as opposed to another local service organisation).

Services

- Lack of local transport options, gardening and social isolation are issues that are identified often by clients.
- The quality and reputation of Darebin services is perceived to be higher than other services. Other CHSP providers are not always accountable (e.g. not offering a timely service, not picking up the referred client).

Future Options

- Council to consider:
- Home Care Packages
- Navigation and support service
- Support for vulnerable older people, including Short term case management

5. Council Staff "Ideas Hack"

22 November 2018

Including 21 staff from across Council departments

(Panel members not present)

Staff from each Council Division shared broad strategies and ideas about how their areas can promote an Age Friendly municipality and Age Friendly Council organisation. The ideas reflected a shared commitment to think about how liveable communities are communities for all people across the lifespan. Many ideas were generated for each theme – some examples are below.

Theme 1 – Good Quality Information

- Use of Libraries and Community Spaces as knowledge hubs for Aged Friendly Information.
- Technology assistance and education for seniors.
- Technology platforms for Information and education/free wifi.
- Staff trained to have awareness of Age Friendly customer responses.
- Location based information.
- Education programs for carers.
- Peer/volunteer programs.
- Good accessible information/including diversity – use of interpreters and translations.
- Navigation support for older people re: services (not just aged services).

Theme 2 – Beyond the home

- Planning precincts to be age friendly.
- Built environment safe, accessible, pedestrian friendly and connected by transport.
- Important services and amenity should be well connected by age friendly transport.
- Mobility equipment – recharge stations.
- Social inclusion built into the design of our spaces.
- Advocacy around age friendly developments and housing solutions.

Theme 3 – Connection to contribute

- Employment and transition to retirement options for older people.
- Volunteering options for and with older people – Intergenerational.
- Representation of older people – challenge stereotypes – promote capacity and skills of older people.
- Arts – positive participation of and depictions of older people.

Theme 4 – In the Community.

- Re-think or improve spaces and places to invite social inclusion, exercise and participation in arts and cultural events.
- Partnerships with community organisations that have relationships with older people at local level.
- Promote intergenerational infrastructure.
- Welcome older people visually – physical signs promoting age friendly.
- Comfortable spaces that cater language, culture, and welcoming spaces that are linked by public transport and walkability.

6. Clients of Darebin Aged Care Services

1. 7th November 2018 including Panel members and Council staff
2. 14th November 2018 with Council Staff

Some Viewpoints

- High level of satisfaction with Darebin services, although would like more flexibility with hours of service.
- Important for workers to have local knowledge of supports.
- Like to have more resources that list services available in the community.
- Support in home also has benefit of socialisation which is an important component.
- Personal security is a concern – trust in services.
- More out and about activities.
- Accessibility to community is challenging – uneven footpaths, overhanging branches, access to trams and trains.
- Difficult to access services using My Aged Care, not user friendly.
- Important to stay active and be supported to do this.
- No cost effective gardening available.
- Intergenerational options, want to be part of the community and offer skills and knowledge to younger people.
- Support for people from non English speaking background to navigate the service system and be informed of what is available.

7. Carers of older people/people with dementia

1. 7th November 2018 including Panel members and Council staff
2. 8th November 2018 including Council staff

Some Viewpoints

- Transport to social groups and to appointments is limited.
- There is need for respite for carers as their caring role leaves no time for socialisation, impacting on their informal relationships.
- Socialisation with others is important to client wellbeing.
- There is trust in council provided services that is a priority for some people.
- Fear of loss of services to support people with dementia.
- Specialised services for people with dementia needs to be a priority.
- Other community members are not skilled in working with people with dementia eg: taxi drivers, hospital staff.
- Difficult navigating aged care system (Home Care packages, residential care).
- Access to community is compromised by unsafe footpaths (using a frame), limited transport options and public transport accessibility (platforms at tram stops).
- My Aged Care contact centre has long wait times and is difficult to navigate for older people.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Seniors and Elders and workers who provide support to Aboriginal elders

8. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, seniors and carers

19 November 2018

Aboriginal Seniors and Elders with Panel members and staff from Council. Other community organisations present (including Banyule Community Health, Banyule Council staff)

Some Viewpoints

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander seniors need information and support to access health and aged services.
- Culturally safe aged services and health services are important, ideally with members of staff that are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Aboriginal Elders take large burden of responsibility within immediate and extended family, including direct care of grandkids, where family members are suffering from trauma and mental health issues. These issues often lead to Elders neglecting their own needs to help others.
- Cost of living issues are challenging for older Aboriginal people, especially at important times of year, E.g. Christmas.
- Council could help with transport – consider trips for Elders back to country.
- Council to advocate for better, linked up services for younger Aboriginal people – youth workers that can support young people and reduce impact of drugs and violence – so that Elders do not have to bear the brunt of these issues, including elder abuse.
- Community safety and safety at home is important, including the condition of public housing, having access to duress buttons.
- Council could put on afternoon tea for Elders.
- Council could promote and recognise the contribution of Elders in community.

9. Community organisations that work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Seniors

Focus Group

26th September 2019

Participants from organisations including – Aboriginal Advancement League, Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (VACCHO), Banyule Community Health (Counsellor and legal service), Aboriginal Housing Victoria.

Panel Members

Council Staff

Some Viewpoints

- Darebin Council are doing well respecting and acknowledging Aboriginal people, however could improve by training and employing more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Council needs to understand that Elders are busy, they have Sorry business, family and community responsibility and they must travel– to involve Elders you need to give many opportunities and keep trying.
- Council can help older Aboriginal people and Aboriginal organisations to understand the Aged Care reforms and how to navigate My Aged Care. Information should be over multiple mediums – in person, through Aboriginal media such as the Koori Mail or 3knd radio. Provide a My Aged Care information session for Elders.
- Aboriginal community organisations will struggle if/when block funding is removed. These organisation will need support to continue to provide the kinds of support older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need. It is difficult for Aboriginal people to navigate the NDIS and My Aged Care supports.
- Darebin needs a gathering place, like in Banyule or the one being built in Whittlesea. A space where a whole family can access support – E.g. where grandkids can have a playgroup and the older person can have a health check, or legal support in a safe space.
- Fundamental supports such as housing, access to health services and legal services are most important, assist Elders by making these supports readily available without confusing bureaucratic processes.

Members of senior's clubs and groups – Culturally specific

10. Greek Seniors who are members of clubs that meet in Darebin

Focus Groups

1. 20th September 2018 – including Panel members and Council staff
2. 8th November 2018 – including Panel members and Council staff

Some Viewpoints

- Concerned about bureaucratic matters such as club funding, rules and processes.
- Council should offer expanded assistance around garden and home maintenance and home care should offer greater flexibility.
- Council's transport service should offer outings further afield.
- Council should enhance its role providing information in language.
- Seniors would benefit from Council rate and pet registration concessions; and public transport should be subsidised.
- Parking availability near senior's centres – parking timeframes not adequate for older people.
- Improve upkeep of the City – E.g. waste and litter management and mowing nature strips.
- Some concerns about elder abuse in families (by children or partners).

11. Italian Seniors who are members of clubs that meet in Darebin

1. 21st September 2018 – Italian Seniors group members, Panel members and Council staff
2. 7th November 2018 – Italian Seniors group members, Panel members and Council staff

Some Viewpoints

- Concerned about club funding rules – incorporation requirements and Council's stance not to fund clubs that attend venues with pokie machines.
- Appreciate that Council provides good support to members of Italian senior citizens clubs.
- Would like more transport support for members to get to clubs and to have outings further afield; public transport is not easy to use for older people.
- Council's Aged Services should be more flexible with less restrictions.
- Community safety and safety at home (from crime) is an issue for older people, especially older women.
- Parking availability near senior's centres and parking timeframes are not adequate for older people. Members risk parking fines, which are too high for seniors.
- Concern expressed for disengaged or vulnerable older community members, such as people who might be hoarders.

12. Macedonian Seniors who are members of clubs that meet in Darebin

1. 26th September 2018 – Macedonian Seniors' group members, Panel members and Council staff
2. 14th November 2018 – Macedonian Seniors' group members, 1 worker from Macedonian Community Welfare Association (MCWA), Panel members and Council staff

Some Viewpoints

- Council Aged Services are appreciated by those older people that receive them, although many families try to provide care and support to older people instead of calling on services.
- Council to consider gardening support to older people.
- Some are concerned for isolated older community members, especially those that are vulnerable to elder abuse from adult children. Council and/or MCWA could perform a role checking on those at risk of isolation.

A range of views about the supports that Council offers seniors clubs including that:

- Council offers good support to clubs in terms of funding and through support provided to groups by Council staff.
- Some participants welcomed Council's stance on pokies others were frustrated by this.
- Some additional transport would be welcome, including trips further afield, although one club reports that they are managing to charter their own transport.
- Some groups manage to provide their members with some light catering others would like support from Council to do more in this area.
- Upkeep of Council facilities that host the clubs could be improved E.g. kitchen and toilet facilities.
- Incorporation paper work and applications are challenging, MCWA tries to assist but more assistance from Council would be welcome.

13. Indo-Chinese Seniors group

Friday 9th November 2018

Participants from Preston Reservoir Indo Chinese Seniors' Group and Council Staff

Some Viewpoints

- Older people in the group have limited awareness about what services and supports are available to them.
- Translated information about Council services would be welcome.
- Use of interpreters at events is important.
- Having translated material about events such as elections is important as older community members often struggle to know what they need to do.
- Families try to support each other for care of older people in the home.

Quotes

'We would like the Council to provide us with information in Vietnamese'

14. Chinese Seniors group

2nd November 2018

Reservoir Chinese Seniors' Group and Council Staff

Some Viewpoints

- Council should continue to provide aged services.
- Mandarin speakers employed by Council would be welcome.
- Council should advocate on behalf of older people – for low cost public transport , lower bank fees and to Centrelink.
- Council to install Age Friendly exercise equipment in parks.
- Council to improve availability and accessibility of toilets.
- Medication costs are high for older people.
- Community safety is a concern (crime) for older people.

15. Arabic Seniors group

Friday 9th November 2018

participants Arabic Speaking Women's Group and Council Staff

(The Islamic Elderly Group (men from this community) meet regularly in Merrilands Community Centre, however, the hall is being redeveloped so they are having a break.)

Some Viewpoints

- Information provision is important for older people.
- Transport to get to social support is important for older people.
- Support with garden and home maintenance would be welcome.

16. Peak Bodies and Organisations that support older people and carers

19th November 2018 including Panel members and Council staff

Representatives from COTA-Vic, Seniors Rights Victoria, Merri Health (Carer Links)

Some Viewpoints

- There is a need for an intergenerational focus.
- Liveable communities rather than Age Friendly communities provide an age friendly lens.
- Need to measure outcomes, possible use existing systems to capture data.
- Role definition of State and Local Government unclear.
- Difficult for carers and consumers to navigate systems - Doubts in the sector about under-funded/narrow commonwealth navigation service.
- The My Aged Care system is predicated on consumers being able to exercise choice in a complex system and market.
- Lack of transparency re providers - administrative costs passed onto consumers.
- Co-design plans for re-engaging, working with people to increase capacity and build on strengths.
- Connection for people in residential care and retirement villages.
- Public health and wellness plan. Social connectedness/preventing isolation.

17. Meeting with Commissioner for Senior Victorians

21st November 2018

Gerard Mansour Commissioner for senior Victorians

including Panel members and Council staff

Some Viewpoints

- Access to navigation support is a gap.
- Focus on positive ageing and carers needs are important for local government regardless if a provider of CHSP services.
- Local government is seen in a positive light by consumers – brand is associated with service quality.
- Focus on long term planning, vulnerability and isolation of older people as a result of current system issues.
- Importance of intergenerational approach and sustainability of senior citizen programs.
- Role for capacity building of individuals, access support and community information provision.

18. Staff from local community based organisations that work with older people in Darebin who are undergoing hardship

26th September 2018

Organisations represented:

Haven Home Safe, Merri Outreach Support Services, Your Community Health, Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre (Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged program), SPAN Neighbourhood House, PRACE Community Centre, Jika Jika Neighbourhood House

Meeting with Panel Members and Council staff

Some Viewpoints

- Older public housing tenants can face a range of challenges to varying degrees including, but not limited to: cost of living; social isolation; exposure to crime, noise and abuse; food insecurity; lack of information about or support to access health care or aged services; disrepair of property; transport issues; lack of affordable recreation options (other than gambling venues).
- People over 65 living in private rental face regular rent hikes, significant housing related poverty and can be at risk of homelessness.
- There is a lack of affordable or social housing options in Darebin and the public housing waitlist is prohibitive. Council should continue or increase advocacy for more social housing.
- Darebin Council's Public Housing sponsorship program is a valued service that is often a last resort for people who require urgent housing access.
- Homelessness for older people is a growing problem in Darebin and the Northern Metro Region. Older people are sleeping rough, sleeping in cars and are vulnerable to exploitative rooming house operators.
- Many Supported Residential Services do not provide enough support to residents. Exposing sub-standard housing services is a catch 22 as closing a service can increase homelessness.
- Some older people are caring for grandchildren where child protection issues are present in the family. These older people's own needs are often put second.
- Services are struggling to keep up with demand, the Tennant's Union has had its funding cut, DIVRS has had to stop emergency relief and they now are focused on food parcels.
- Neighbourhood houses and community centres provide 'wrap-around' supports which enable older people to maintain their connection to community and derive wellbeing outcomes. Council might consider supporting these organisations with rental costs so they can maintain and expand their reach.

19. Seniors interest groups

1. Focus group on 19th September including participants from Matrix Guild (support and advocacy for older lesbians), Darebin U3A (University of 3rd Age), Kingsbury Probus, Preston Probus, Darebin Life Activities Club. Panel members and Council Staff
2. 24 November 2018 presentation by Council staff to Kingsbury Probus

Some Viewpoints

Matrix:

- Older lesbians need non-discriminatory service delivery – Council aged services are a trusted service.
- Council's domestic assistance is inflexible.
- Social isolation and loneliness is an issue in the community – social inclusion strategies are important.
- Council should promote accessible housing developments.
- Provide sheltered bus stops and street seating.

U3A:

- U3A offers opportunities for social inclusion.
- Sourcing funding is challenging, Council provides some rent assistance, however more funding (approx. 4,000 dollars annually) is needed.
- Older people have the capacity to 'co-produce' rather than have things done for them.
- Safe accessible transport is needed by older people, and accessible parking close to amenity.
- Council run exercise programs need to be more mindful of the limitations and needs of older participants.

Probus:

- Securing funding and recruiting new members can be difficult, Council grant processes and applications are onerous.
- Transport support to social activities is important for older people.

20. Focus Group with Darebin Seniors that do not access aged care services

11th November 2018 with Panel Members and Council Staff

Some Viewpoints

- Council has a good reputation for aged services, but could do more to support older people with information and navigation – about services, but also to use technology – navigate Centrelink, provide a retirement consultant.
- Better and timely services are needed for people toward the end of their lives such as palliative care or high level packages.
- Council Recreation services and exercise could be more age friendly – e.g. promote social inclusion and be safe to use.
- More Bus trips and expand to Gardening and Home maintenance.
- Elder Abuse is an issue in the community and needs more broad responses from community and Council.
- Council could check in more with Seniors before designing things for them. Involve Seniors to audit Council communications and plans.
- More to be done to address loneliness and social isolation.

21. Meetings with Your Community Health social support

1. Tuesday 24th October 2018 – Men's Group with Council Staff

2. Tuesday 24th October 2018 – Women's Group With Council Staff

Some Viewpoints

- Social isolation and loneliness is an issue for many, social support group and services are the only contacts for some.
- More information about services and social options.
- Transport access is a challenge, however the Community bus support provided by Council and Your Community Health is valued.
- Poor paths and pedestrian crossings make mobility with walking aids/wheel chairs challenging. Lighting is poor in some areas.
- More support to know who older people can trust – e.g. with accessing trades.
- Neighbours – some are supportive and friendly, others make us feel unsafe.

Second round consultation– Draft Report

Full Draft Report structure

The Draft Report was comprised of five main sections:

- executive summary;
- summary of the 98 recommendations;
- themes and recommendations;
- next steps;
- glossary and appendices;

The full Draft Report comprised 171 pages and included detailed discussion of the Panel's research, considerations and rationale. To enhance community accessibility of the content, a "Snapshot" version was produced, comprised of 23 pages.

Snapshot version structure

The Snapshot was comprised of three main sections:

- Introduction to the Panel
- Summary of the 98 recommendations
- How to provide feedback

The Panel had reviewed all community feedback on the Discussion Paper and other information to prepare the Draft Report. The report was presented to Councillors on 1 April and made available to the public from 9 April. 4,500 Snapshot brochures were distributed and translated versions in Darebin's 12 main community languages were passed on to members of CALD communities. The Draft Report was publicised widely via (hardcopy and electronic) mail-out to aged care services clients, newsletter subscribers, seniors clubs and other stakeholders. The call out for feedback was promoted through the Darebin website, social media, radio interview with the Mayor and during a variety of community events. English and translated versions of the executive summary were presented to various seniors groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, supporting stakeholders to provide feedback. Second round feedback submissions closed on 15 May 2019.

Feedback on the Draft Report

The community was asked to provide feedback via posted letter, email or to leave a comment on the Darebin Website. People were offered support to provide feedback via phone and/or in their spoken language. Twenty-one submissions were received, including feedback from eight individuals, five community organisations and eight seniors groups.

The small number, and diversity, of submissions means it is not feasible to derive themes from the content. The clearest common thread is from the concerns expressed by seniors groups' about being adequately funded.

The Draft Report was also discussed with council officers with relevant expertise from across Council to elicit comment on the Panel's recommendations and to inform the Panel in preparing their Final Report.