

Living and Ageing Well

SUMMARY REPORT

Living and Ageing Well Action Plan Summary Report
2023-24

August 2024



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Executive Summary

The [Living and Ageing Well Action Plan](#) (the Plan or L+AW) outlines the strategic direction for creating a more age-friendly Casey, to support the community to live and age well. A key feature of the Plan's implementation involves regular monitoring and evaluation to measure the progress of actions and identify areas for improvement, learning opportunities and successes. This report outlines the progress of the Plan after one year of implementation, along with key achievements and evaluation results.

Overall, the delivery of the Action Plan is progressing well, with 58% of actions underway and 14% completed. Some of the achievements in the 2023/24 financial year include:

- Establishment of a Living and Ageing Well team and the development of an evaluation framework for the Plan.
- The delivery of the Warm, Safe Home project, to educate the community on elder abuse.
- The [Open Space Strategy](#) review which included provisions to make open spaces safer, and more accessible, foster cultural connection, and provide opportunities for passive and active recreation for older people.
- The delivery of ageism training to 48 Casey staff members and ageism pop-up stalls at Bunjil Place, the Casey Kids Carnival and the Federation University Carnivale, to raise awareness of ageism within Council and the community.

The action owner (those directly delivering actions within the Plan) and the Council Reference Group (internal body advising on the Plan as a whole) evaluation results showed positive sentiment towards the progress of actions and the Plan overall, particularly in areas such as support from the Living and Ageing Well staff, progress on the delivery of actions, cross-council collaboration and monitoring and evaluation. Additional support or enhancement that action owners identified included areas such as internal and external promotion, advocacy, resourcing and staffing capacity.

In the Community Reference Group (external advisory group) evaluation, members stated Council should prioritise areas such as safety, information on services, health and wellbeing support and providing opportunities to 'have a say'. Members stated Council need to enhance work to increase communications but provided positive feedback on efforts to involve the community in decisions.

Going forward, based on the feedback received and the identified priority areas, Council will be focusing on:





- Reviewing the scope of actions that have barriers to delivery and prioritising actions that have maximum community benefit.
- Building capacity by developing the knowledge and ability of staff to integrate age-friendly practices into their work.
- Enhancing external communications and promotion to increase community awareness of the Plan, its goals, and achievements and promote available services and programs.
- Developing and piloting community programs to improve the health and wellbeing of older people, with a particular focus on groups with poorer health outcomes.
- Increasing opportunities for sharing knowledge internally and externally, to enhance project outcomes, and identify and respond to support needs, gaps and opportunities.

Background

In response to the Commonwealth Aged and Disability reforms, which were expected to impact the funding and regulation of Aged Care services, Casey City Council endorsed a recommendation to proactively exit traditional aged and disability services (except thin market services such as Delivered Meals and Community Transport). Alongside this decision Council committed to reinvesting in creating a more age-friendly Casey where people of all ages are supported to live and age well.

It was determined that an action plan would be developed to realise the vision of an age-friendly Casey. The *Living and Ageing Well Action Plan* (the Plan) would guide all work in the age-friendly space. Throughout 2022 extensive engagement took place to shape the development of the Plan.

Findings illustrated that older residents in Casey want to feel safe, respected, connected, supported and have more opportunities to engage with Council, as well as be able to travel throughout the community safely and independently, with access to paths and public transport. 49 actions were identified through this process, across four focus areas:

-  Natural and Built Environment (17 actions)
-  Social Environment (12 actions)
-  Service Environment (10 actions)
-  Council Environment (10 actions)

Process and Capacity Development Evaluation

Community Reference Group Evaluation

The Living and Ageing Well Community Reference Group is a diverse group of Casey residents over the age of 55. As part of the process and capacity development evaluation the Living and Ageing Well Community Reference Group were asked to complete a survey to determine community priorities, emerging barriers to living and ageing well that are not currently being addressed by the Plan and to explore whether there are areas that need to be enhanced or prioritised to meet emerging needs. Out of the 16 members, 11 completed the evaluation.

The four most frequently selected priority areas were ‘opportunities to have a say’, ‘feeling safe’, ‘healthy lifestyle support’, and ‘information on services’.

Council Reference Group Evaluation

The Living and Ageing Well Council Reference Group is a group of staff from across the organisation who support the implementation and evaluation of the Living and Ageing Well Action Plan. The group were asked to complete an evaluation, considering the Plan as a whole to understand the general sentiment on the delivery, structure, and resourcing of the Plan. Overall, people felt that the delivery of the Plan was going well with a few key areas for improvement, further monitoring or evaluation identified. Of the 17 reference group members, 10 completed the evaluation form which posed the following key questions:

Overall, people rated the delivery of the Plan well, with a mean score of 8 out of 10 and cited areas such as collaboration, delivery and growing awareness of the work as strengths. While areas such as communications campaigns, additional resourcing and the need to revisit actions where teams had little capacity to deliver were identified as areas for improvement.

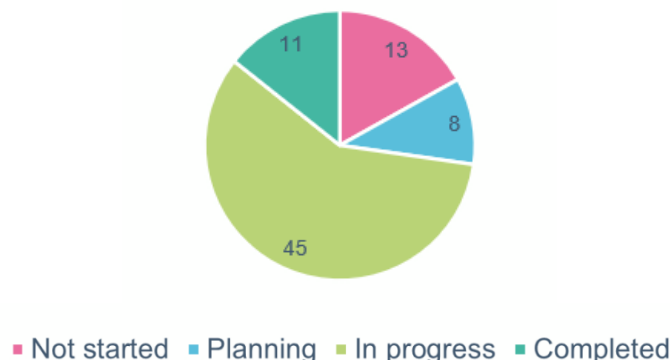
Action Owner Evaluation

For the action owner process and capacity development evaluation, action owners were asked to provide an update on the progress of their action in the first 12 months of the Plan, what is planned for the next six months, how the action is tracking against key criteria and where support is required to progress the action. Feedback varied across action owners, but the majority were positive about their progress and capacity to deliver the action, with areas such as communications and capacity as areas for improvement.

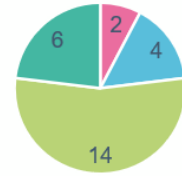
Action progress

In total, there are 77 actions (49 actions and an additional 28 sub-actions) spread across approximately 30 action owners. In total, 58% or 45 actions are ‘in progress’ and 14% or 11 actions are already completed. Progress varies by action area.

Overall action progress



Outcome Evaluation



The Natural and Built Environment

Recent achievements in the natural and built environment domain include:

- The review and endorsement of the Open Space Strategy progressing seven actions. The review took an age-friendly lens and included provisions to make open spaces more accessible, reduce crime, provide more opportunities for active and passive recreation, and a dedicated section regarding Traditional Owners,
- Development of the Ready, Set, Connect toolkit in partnership with Swinburn Uni to support the community to start new social groups
- Provision of wheelchair-accessible and raised garden beds in Community Gardens, and a mobility scooter at Wilson Botanic Park Berwick to meet diverse access requirements,
- Delivery of a heatwave focus group with 25 older adults, to understand community awareness of heatwaves and explore ideas to increase community resilience,
- Purchase of a home energy efficiency kit that will be used by Casey's Link Workers to support older people to assess their homes and access a reimbursement to make minor modifications to improve energy efficiency.

■ Not started ■ Planning
■ In progress ■ Completed

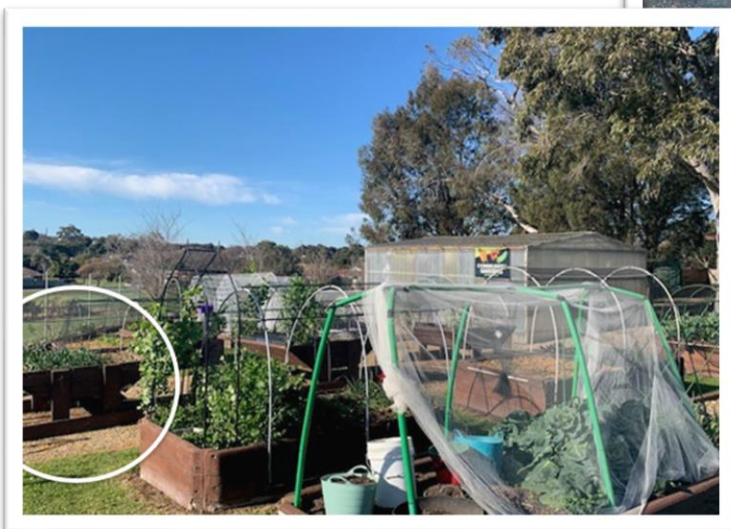


Image: Wheelchair-accessible community garden bed (bottom left)



Image: Mobility Scooter at Wilson Botanic Park

Ray Bastin Reserve Case Study

Public open spaces are an important feature of the built environment that supports the communities' physical, social and mental health, through increased opportunities for exercise and social connection. Open Spaces that integrate age-friendly principles, ensure that spaces are accessible for older people, supporting healthy ageing in the community and improved health outcomes later in life.

The City of Casey's Open Space Strategy provides a framework to guide the planning, design, development and management of open space in Casey. In 2023 a new Open Space Strategy was endorsed, which took an age-friendly lens and included provisions to make open spaces more accessible and safer, provide more opportunities for active and passive recreation, and help to foster social and cultural connection. This was a major piece of work that progressed seven L+AW actions.

The new Open Space Strategy was used to inform the redevelopment plans for the Ray Bastin Reserve in Narre Warren. The following case study demonstrates how these principles were integrated into the design of the reserve. In addition, the L+AW Community Reference Group was consulted on the proposed plans and provided feedback that led to key changes to make the space more accessible for older people.

The reserve will be the first site in Casey to have a dedicated senior's exercise park, supporting older people to remain active. The design and placement of the equipment have taken into consideration the needs of people with poor mobility such as proximity to parking, toilets, drinking fountains, rest areas and shade.

The site features several multi-use, intergenerational spaces, including several exercise nodes, social gathering spaces and lawns. The integrated path network ensures all spaces are easily accessible, ample rest areas, shade sails and trees help people stay cool on warmer days. Additional signs have also been added to the reserve to support wayfinding.

To deter crime and increase the feeling of safety, the site plans incorporated Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, such as clear visibility of all areas from within and from outside the park. This will allow users of the park to form natural surveillance of the area. The team are also advocating for additional funding for lighting to improve safety at night and the Community Safety team will be completing a CPTED audit in the near future to provide additional recommendations.

The park celebrates Australia's rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Traditional owners provided advice on the project, such as the use of Indigenous plants throughout the space, the social area being shaped to reflect a yarnning circle and named the 'Weaving Space' after plants traditionally used for weaving and the use of Aboriginal star mapping in the park line with its space theme.

Once the redevelopment of the park is complete the use of key areas will be monitored to evaluate the impact of the redevelopment on the community.

The Social Environment

Recent achievements in the social environment domain include:

- Delivery of the Ageing Positively Festival, which hosted 107 low and no-cost events with an estimated 2,700 attendances,
- The initiation of aged care tours at Wilson Botanic Park,
- The development and ongoing delivery of the community reference group as a feedback mechanism for the Plan,
- Promotion of ‘hiring outside the box’ through newsletters and educational sessions for local employers, to encourage employment of older people and other disadvantaged jobseekers,
- Ageism pop-ups held at the Casey Kids Carnival, Federation University and Bunjil Place to raise awareness of unconscious bias towards older people,
- Educational sessions on elder abuse held for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, focusing on the theme of a ‘warm, safe home’.
- Promotion of community grants to senior’s groups through the Ageing Positively newsletter and delivery of grant writing workshops, with 16% of applicants in the 2024 grant round being senior’s groups (the largest organisation type to apply) and 20% of projects being targeted towards over 55’s, and
- Completed a two-week community facilities data collection blitz, of people attending programs. The data showed older people in Casey are participating in a range of social activities and programs. In total, 45% of attendees were over 55, with exercise programs, cultural groups, social groups and games being the most popular activities for this age group.

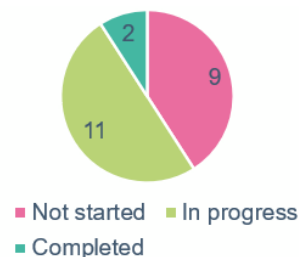


Image: Ageism Pop-up at the Federation University Carnivale in Berwick

Elder Abuse Case Study

Elder abuse is any act that causes harm to an older person and is carried out by someone they know and trust. Elder abuse can take many forms, including psychological, financial and physical abuse. It is estimated one in six older Australians experience elder abuse and over 60% of cases go unreported (AIHW 2024).

To raise awareness about elder abuse Council delivered educational sessions to community groups, for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. This year's theme was *Warm, Safe Home* and aimed to improve awareness and promote the rights of older people to live safely within the community, through consideration of what makes a warm, safe home for an older person.

Six community education sessions were delivered to over 200 community members in Dari, Hindi and English. The community education sessions included information about the types of elder abuse and risk factors. During discussions, participants opened up and shared personal examples and some acknowledged experiencing or witnessing abuse within their circles. Many stated that they were initially unaware of available support services.

58%

Rated their knowledge of elder abuse as low prior to the session

83%

Rated their knowledge of elder abuse as high after the session

As part of the sessions participants constructed and decorated their own model homes. In addition, 14 playgroups and early education centres participated in the awareness-raising initiative, creating their own warm safe home – with an estimated reach of over 1,000 people – and helping to foster respect and awareness between generations.

Using the houses created by the community and playgroups, the Warm Safe Village was launched in Bunjil Place Library with a presentation by Elder Rights Advocacy. The village was featured as an art installation in the library for over a month.



ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) (2024) [Family, domestic and sexual violence - Older people](#), ABS website, accessed 1 July 2024.

The Service Environment

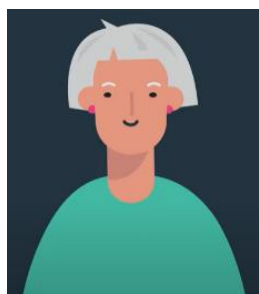
Recent achievements in the service environment domain include:

- Delivery of LGBTIQ+ training for aged care services with 12 attendees representing five providers,
- Development of an emergency food relief mapping tool to support those experiencing food insecurity,
- Promotion of elder abuse support services and referral pathways to community groups,
- Establishment of an Ageing Well Network to increase knowledge sharing and collaboration between local councils, not-for-profits and peak bodies in the Healthy Ageing sector,
- Delivery of small group digital literacy classes and one-on-one tech support sessions by Connected Libraries, to support older people to remain digitally connected. 81% of participants rated the classes as a 4 or 5/5 for improving their confidence with technology, and,
- Development of a strategic communications plan with a focus on raising awareness of healthy ageing and improving social participation by engaging with seniors groups and networks to spread information through appropriate communication methods.



Social Prescribing Case Study

Social prescribing is a new concept where social activities and services, as opposed to clinical pathways, are suggested or 'prescribed' to clients or patients to improve their wellbeing. Casey's Link Worker program does this by prescribing local services and activities, such as aged and disability services, community support organisations health and social and health programs. The following case study provides a common example of the support the Link Workers provide to older residents.



Edna* a 65+ woman living in Casey, experiencing loneliness.



Susan* one of the City of Casey's Link Workers.

**All names have been changed to maintain privacy*

The Casey Link Worker team received a referral from a local GP clinic for Edna* to support her with accessing social groups as she reported feeling lonely.

Link Worker Susan* contacted Edna to talk about her circumstances and discuss what support she may need. Edna explained she lost her husband recently and that she is feeling lonely. Her husband John* used to make all the plans to go out and assist with paying the bills and doing the shopping and gardening. Edna explained that since he had passed away, she had been struggling to keep up with it all and finds she doesn't have anyone to talk to.

Susan suggested to Edna that she could help by providing her with suggestions of social groups operating at her local community centre and, if Edna wanted, she could arrange a review through My Aged Care to discuss gaps in her daily supports and assess what services may help her with day-to-day tasks such as home maintenance and shopping. Edna agreed with this suggested approach.

Susan made a referral to My Aged Care, as well as to Services Australia to discuss finances and arrange direct debits, and sourced local social groups and events that Edna could attend to meet people and have more social interaction. Susan, after speaking with Edna, also made a referral for grief counselling as Edna identified this would help her with the grief of losing her husband, John.

Susan checked in on Edna after 6 weeks and was glad to hear she had an appointment for an aged care assessment soon and her grief counselling was going well. She had also met with Services Australia who helped arrange her finances so that her bills are deducted automatically from her account. As a result, Edna was feeling much more confident. Edna had also joined the local cuppa and chat group and meets weekly with the other participants, Edna said she is very pleased with how she is feeling now.

The Link Workers are an important resource to help connect people with the support they need. This year the team spent over 2,200 hours helping people like Edna to access services and activities.

The Council Environment

Recent achievements in the Council environment include:

- Recruitment and commencement of the four Living and Ageing Well staff,
- Formation of the Council Reference Group,
- Delivery of two Age Perspectives workshops to educate staff on ageism and how it impacts older people,
- Provided advice to a variety of internal and external stakeholder on age-friendly approaches and,
- Development of a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the success of the L+AW Action Plan and guide future policy and program development.



Age Perspectives Training Case Study

Ageism is stereotyping, discrimination and mistreatment based solely on a person's age. Ageism towards older people is especially detrimental and is a result of negative attitudes and beliefs about what it means to be older.

Ageism may include assumptions about what a person is like, what they can do or what they are good at. It may also include negative attitudes and assumptions about what it means to be older. It affects people's self-confidence, quality of life, job prospects and health. More broadly, ageism contributes to elder abuse.

In February, the Australian Human Rights Commission delivered two Age Perspectives workshops to Casey staff, to raise awareness about ageism and how it impacts older people. Providing training to staff will support Council to combat ageism in the community, through community engagement, respectful and empowering communications including language and imagery and the delivery of age-friendly programs.

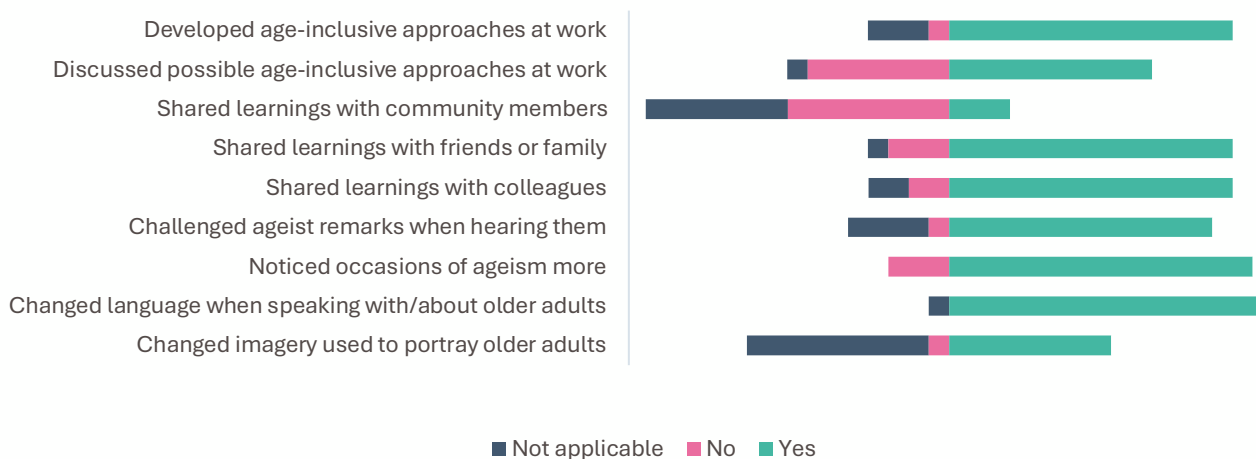
In total, 48 staff members participated, representing 11 departments across Council. Of the participants who completed the post-session evaluation (n=26), 100% agreed they benefitted from attending the session and there were large increases in attendee’s understanding of ageism, its impacts and how to combat it. When asked how they would integrate the learnings from the workshop into their work, survey respondents reported they would be more conscious of the language and imagery they use when representing older adults (n=16), they would challenge ageist remarks when they hear them (4) and they would share the learnings with colleagues (n=2).

3-month follow-up evaluation

Post-training, participants were asked to complete a 3-month follow-up survey to evaluate how they had integrated the learnings into their work. In total 20 participants completed the evaluation. Results from the survey showed 95% of people agreed that they viewed ageing and older people more positively since attending the training.

Participants said they had implemented a variety of changes to their daily work or conversations with colleagues. The most common change reported was the language used when talking with, or about, older adults (94%), sharing the learnings with colleagues, friends and family (78%), developing age-inclusive approaches at work (78%) and challenging ageist remarks (72%).

Change in practices since attending the workshop



Conclusion

The first year of delivery of the Living and Ageing Well Action Plan progressed well, with 11 actions completed and a further 45 actions in progress. Various programs and initiatives have been delivered across the four focus areas of the Plan, with a large amount of work planned for the 24/25 financial year.

Overall, both action owners and the Council Reference Group were positive about the delivery of the Plan particularly in areas such as the progress being made, internal collaboration and buy-in and partnerships with external stakeholders, while additional resourcing, external promotion and community engagement/input were viewed as areas for improvement. Some Council Reference Group members also emphasised the need to revisit actions where the teams have little capacity to deliver, to explore other options to progress the work in those areas.

The Community Reference Group evaluation showed members were positive about some aspects of delivery, providing positive feedback on some of the programs and services that had recently been discussed in the meetings, but indicated there were areas where the work could be enhanced. The group stated that the areas they wanted to be prioritised within the Plan were ‘opportunities to have a say’, ‘feeling safe’, ‘healthy lifestyle support’, and ‘information on services’.