Government of South Australia

Improving with Age

Our Ageing Plan for South Australia

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IMPROVING WITH AGE

OUR AGEING PLAN FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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FOREWORD

We want our Ageing Plan to be a wake up call. We must stop thinking old. The ageing of many countries like Australia is one of the most significant social trends of our time.

In South Australia we are ageing faster than other states. We don't see that this counts against us—rather it gives us a unique opportunity to position the State to respond well to what now, and in the next half of the century, can only be described as a social revolution.

We have to turn on its head the notion that an ageing community means a burden on the young. The reality is that as older people continue to become an ever growing proportion of the population, society will increasingly depend upon the contribution they make. As a State, we can only improve as we age.

For most people in Western countries the advantages of relative wealth, medical advances and access to services mean that today, more than a third of life is lived after age 50. We need to take this on board in the way we plan and build our shared futures as individuals, communities and governments. More than ever this means universal services that are tailored to individuals as we age and approaches that are flexible and inclusive. We rely on the very real economic and social contribution of older people to our community and we also need to ensure we meet their needs.

South Australia's Strategic Plan sets our objectives for enhancing the well being and prosperity of all South Australians. Our work to improve health services, expand housing choices, build a more accessible transport system and make communities safer is delivering on these goals and is a foundation for our Ageing Plan.

If we are to sustain South Australia's success for the longer term, governments, business, the community sector and individuals must stop thinking old, listen well to the voices of our changing world and continue to find new ways to foster choice, independence and opportunity for all our citizens.

Jay Weatherill
Minister for Ageing

INTRODUCING OUR PLAN

That most of us are living longer is a marker of progress. It is a cause for celebration and a testament to the good fortune we all share. It is also transforming our society and requires new thinking and new responses from us all.

In South Australia, with our population ageing faster than elsewhere in Australia, we have a singular opportunity to draw on the skills, wisdom and energy of older people who are already contributing to our success and to tap these resources further. It is an opportunity for South Australia, where we have a long history of social policy leadership, to lead the nation in policy making that tackles the real issues not just for older people but for our whole community. We must have policies that put people at the centre; that enshrine the principles of choice and independence in our services and programs; and that consider the diversity of needs and the continuum of capacities as they change over time.

Our Ageing Plan goes further than simply acknowledging the contribution of older people as workers, grandparents, volunteers, artists, thinkers and more. The Plan is clear that in the context of a rapidly ageing Australia, our society cannot continue to prosper without the contribution of our older citizens upon whom we depend.

The facts

In the 1950s and 1960s South Australia's population was younger than that of the nation. There are a number of historical reasons why South Australia now has the oldest population of all the States and Territories. The ageing of our population will continue. By 2051 almost 31% of the State's population will be over 65 and the over 85 population will have increased four fold.[1] The rest of Australia can also expect by about 2051 that for the first time in our history the number of people over 65 will outnumber children under 15. There are more recent projections that suggest this point could now be reached as early as 2012 in South Australia and 2019 in Australia as a whole. Trends also indicate that Australia's working age population will grow by just 190,000 for the entire decade of the 2020s, a tenth of the current pace.

Our natural advantage

These are the facts that require a fundamental re-examination of many of our attitudes to ageing. We must stop thinking old in the way we sometimes perceive the ageing population and start thinking new in implementing innovative responses that tackle head on the frequent misconceptions about older people. Challenging the myth that older age means inactivity and a burden on society is crucial to capitalising on the natural advantage of South Australia's ageing population. This is a central message of our Plan.

Our natural advantage positions us to set the pace in identifying issues and solutions for an ageing community. We want our Plan to be the catalyst that

[1] *Population Projections, Australia 2002 – 2101,* Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2005

will encourage lively dialogue between government, business and community leaders and with individual South Australians.

We have an opportunity to lead the thinking on how best to maximise the significant resource that is our older population, not just for the benefit of our State, but also for individuals and for other jurisdictions.

We will conduct research, test ideas, develop models and share the results with others. The scope is wide ranging. We need models for a successful work/volunteering mix, for adaptable housing, for urban and infrastructure planning, for services that support growing old in our own homes and transition strategies for when we are no longer able to drive a car, live at home or go to work. We are already dedicating effort and resources to these areas, developing innovative solutions and making progress.

On the front foot

In preparing for the future we do not avoid the hard issues. We know as the number of people over 85 increases significantly, there will be equally significant demands on services and on health services in particular. We may be living longer, but this does not always mean we are in good health. A consequence of longer lives may be ill health or disability in old age. Another consequence is the need to build a well trained care workforce on a scale not previously envisaged: not just health professionals, but also carers.

There are economic imperatives in our ageing profile. As a nation we need to consider the range of impacts on the labour market and on health care expenditure for example but "these potential impacts do not constitute a crisis…The ageing of the population is a gradual phenomenon and its economic and fiscal impacts will also gradually build over time."[2] These are consequences that are primarily within the ambit of the Commonwealth Government's responsibility. Nevertheless, our Plan signals South Australia's intention to pursue these issues vigorously over the coming years so that we are on the front foot.

This is demonstrated in our commitment to staying in front through research and information gathering. South Australia already has an international reputation as a leader in research on ageing populations and impacts. Our kick start research grants build on this capacity and will ensure we have robust information to support our decision making.

Difference

Age itself is not the complete measure of us. Ageing is part of the life process, not just a particular stage in life. Ageing well in the latter years, something we all have an interest in, depends on recognising earlier in life that being active, eating well and being connected to the community are essential to achieving a long, healthy life.

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[2] *Economic implications of an Ageing Australia*, Productivity Commission Research Report, Australian Government, 2005.

Not all older people have the same aspirations or the same life choices. No one size fits all when it comes to delivery of services. We must tailor our responses to the active, articulate baby boomers who, at one end of the spectrum are now entering their sixties, and also to those frail, elderly who may be suffering ill health and social isolation.

Despite these differences, we do know that older people want to continue to contribute fully and actively in society, including to keep working while they can. They need an adequate income, appropriate, affordable housing and easy access to community services. Older people need to feel safe and connected to our community with independence and control over their lives. Most of us want to grow older in our homes even if we need help to do so from time to time. "For many of us, affordable, adaptable homesteads rank level with sufficient superannuation as conditions of fruitful old age."[3]

Platform in place

Our Plan recognises that the issues of old age must not be marginalised but integrated within the broader context of our policies and programs to build a vibrant and prosperous State for all South Australians. Already we have the foundation in place. South Australia's Strategic Plan charts the way forward for a prosperous and sustainable future. A better quality of life and an inclusive society for all South Australians are core objectives. Our Strategic Infrastructure and Housing Plans are clear about what needs to be in place to meet the needs of an ageing community and we are working to meet these requirements. South Australia, through its *Prosperity through People* policy, is doing what it can to influence population growth and structure so that we continue to revitalise our State with new people and new skills as we age.

Focus for action

In preparing our Ageing Plan we listened to seniors, to community groups who represent the views of older South Australians and to many service providers in government and the community sector. The advice of our Ministerial Advisory Board on Ageing and the Council on the Ageing has been particularly valuable in shaping our response.

We know what needs to be done and our Ageing Plan for South Australia sets the direction. It focuses on:

- **Enabling choice and independence**—in where we live, in getting around, connecting to our community and staying healthy.
- **Valuing and recognising contribution**—in our work, as grandparents, carers and as volunteers.
- **Providing safety, security and protection**—in our homes, communities and as consumers.
- **Delivering the right services and the right information**—timely, responsive and tailored to the needs of individuals.
- **Staying in front**—through research, innovative practices and collaboration with others.

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[3] *Comments for the Ageing Plan,* Professor Hugh Stretton, University of Adelaide, 2005.

Working with others

The Government's Ageing Plan puts the spotlight on the areas for action. Success means working with others. Local government has a particularly important role to play in providing information, resources and specific services for older people. The local level response that helps people stay at home and remain connected to their communities is essential to our Plan.

We will work actively with the Commonwealth Government to influence those areas for which the Commonwealth has lead responsibilities, for example superannuation, residential aged care and home and community care funding.

Business, government agencies and the community sector need to recognise and respond to the opportunities and challenges of an ageing workforce. Valuing our mature age workforce and recognising their contribution to our community is essential to a high performing economy. Employers must understand the special needs of older people as workers, learners, partners, parents, grandparents, carers and volunteers. This means putting in place flexible work practices that support a work/life balance.

Responsive planning

We need government agencies to work with our partners in the community services sector to provide better coordinated and integrated responses to the needs of older citizens. We also need government agencies to work together. Our Ageing Plan is a whole of government plan. It expects all government agencies to consider the needs of older South Australians in their services and programs and to identify opportunities for joined up action. It also requires agencies to take on board the consequences of our ageing population in their planning processes.

It is only by promoting "an older person consciousness" in local, State and Commonwealth planning, and in the thinking of our business community, that we will be able to create more elder friendly environments, transport systems and workplaces.[4] As well as responding to the current needs of older people we must also focus on South Australians in their middle years and earlier, in preparing for the changes we are facing.

Choice and opportunity

Many older people are already enjoying life to the full, making the most of opportunities and making a huge contribution to their families and communities. The primary responsibility for keeping active, taking sensible steps to look after their health and participating in communities lies with older people themselves. We will continue to support and encourage older South Australians to seize opportunities.

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[4] *Commentary on our Ageing Plan for South Australia,* by Professor Graeme Hugo, Federation Fellow, The University of Adelaide, February 2006.

For individuals and communities, choice and opportunity are the pathways to independence, achievement and satisfaction. Although our choices may sometimes be limited by circumstance, our capacity to choose keeps us moving forward. Our right to choose defines our dignity. This is the philosophy that guides our Ageing Plan for South Australia.

What happens now?

Many initiatives under our Ageing Plan are already in train and work will continue on existing and new priorities. The Plan has a long term outlook but it also delivers some immediate gains. It includes over $2 million worth of projects in key areas to kick start implementation of the Plan. A summary is provided on page 10.

Over the next forty years major population changes will evolve, some very quickly and others will pick up pace over time. Our Plan allows us to be responsive to these developments and guides us in preparing carefully for the future. Getting our kick start projects up and running will be a focus for the next twelve months.

The Office for the Ageing (OFTA) in the Department for Families and Communities will oversee implementation of the Plan. Government agencies are expected to report annually against the five key areas of the Plan and OFTA will collect this information to review progress and recommend next actions to the Minister for Ageing.

Key themes

Work

As our population ages, we are seeing a reduction in the number of working age people and this is leading to skills shortages. We need to tap into the experience of our mature age workers, value their contribution, challenge the concept of early retirement and remove discrimination and other barriers to ongoing involvement in working life. The right incentives, such as adequate choices and flexibility in work, life and learning opportunities, are key to encouraging mature age workers to stay on in the workforce.

Already we have lifted the lid on encouraging employers to introduce work/life balance opportunities and are working towards reducing discrimination in the workplace. We are undertaking significant work in the area of workforce planning to deal with the reduction in the working age population.

Safety

Older South Australians, like all citizens, must feel safe and protected from harm, abuse and neglect. We share community concern about the financial abuse of older people. We are developing an Elder Abuse Prevention Action Plan for South Australia that will guide our directions in this area and outline the most effective responses to tackle abuse. We are committed to ensuring that older South Australians are better protected. We will not tolerate exploitation of vulnerable citizens.

Housing

Affordable, appropriate and well located housing is important to all South Australians. The Housing Plan for South Australia responds to these aspirations now, and over the next five to ten years. Our housing needs change with our changing life circumstances. Many of us want a greater degree of flexibility and adaptability as well as the support which allows us to age in our own homes. We are considering introducing a new Accommodation Act that will provide better protection for people in supported accommodation, including supported residential facilities and boarding houses.

Contribution

Being involved, and giving our time and support to people in need, such as community service or to family members, is an important part of our culture. Our volunteer participation rate is enviably higher than any other State or Territory.[5] Increased volunteer participation is a target of South Australia's Strategic Plan. Our Ageing Plan includes a number of commitments to develop and increase volunteering opportunities and support through the partnership between the volunteer sector and the South Australian Government.

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[5] *Valuing Volunteering – The Economic Value of Volunteering in SA*, Dr Duncan Ironmonger, Oct 2002.

Grandparents

Our Plan recognises the significant contribution older people make to our community, economy, to our children and grandchildren. Grandparents are critical in family life. They help nurture children, pass on wisdom and share stories from our past. For the majority of grandparents, their role in caring for their grandchildren is rewarding and valued. Through necessity some grandparents look after their grandchildren on a full time basis. We will continue supporting grandparents in this role and encourage the Commonwealth Government to recognise and meet its responsibilities for providing assistance. We will make more information available and produce a guide that outlines the services available in health, law, education and finance. We will also continue to work with the Council for Aboriginal Elders and Indigenous community groups, including the Grannies Group, to address the needs of Aboriginal grandparents caring for grandchildren. One of our kick start initiatives provides funding for respite and support for Aboriginal grandparents who care for their grandchildren on a full time basis.

Diverse needs

Within the broad picture of the ageing population some groups have particular issues that require our special attention. There are also gender dimensions which cannot be ignored in planning and delivering service responses to our ageing population.

We know that entrenched disadvantage and social exclusion have profoundly affected the life expectancy of Indigenous people across Australia which is about 20 years lower than the national average. As a community we cannot let this continue and we must tackle these issues to ensure Indigenous Australians can benefit from increased life expectancy. It is not just a case of additional resources. It is also about providing services that are culturally appropriate, consultative and inclusive. We are responding and will continue to do more.

Cultural diversity is one of the strengths of our South Australian community. Currently about 1 in 5 South Australians aged 65 years and over were born in predominately non-English speaking countries.[6] Of all the states, South Australia has the oldest population group with a language other than English. It is essential that access to culturally appropriate services and information continues to be provided. People from multicultural backgrounds need individualised services that encourage choice and independence and ensure people maintain links with their communities. The Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia has provided advice on these issues in the preparation of our Plan and will continue to be involved in the implementation of initiatives.

Accessibility and inclusion are key issues for all South Australians, particularly for those with a disability. The ageing of people with long term disabilities is

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[6] *Strategic Directions for Older People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds*, Department of Human Services, 2002.

an emerging trend. Significant advances in general health and medical treatments have meant that a relatively large number of people with both physical and intellectual disabilities are living to older ages. Working with the Commonwealth Government, we will adapt policy, practice and services to meet the individual needs of people with a disability who are ageing and the needs of their ageing carers.

We are responding to the diverse needs of our community with a number of kick start initiatives as outlined in this Plan.

Active and healthy

Being active, independent and connected to community is part of healthy ageing and a positive goal for all South Australians. Adequate housing, income, health care, transport and supportive urban environments will help achieve this.

As we are living longer, staying healthy is a critical factor in being able to stay independent and participate in the community. We are committed to the ongoing reform of the South Australian health system ensuring it is easier to use and that there is a greater focus on health promotion and illness prevention. We know that people generally prefer to stay in their own homes as they get older and we are making services in the home more flexible to support this.

Transition strategies relating to work, to getting around, to where we live and other lifestyle questions are integral to effective planning for older age for individuals and for service providers.

OUR AGEING PLAN

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- **Enabling choice and independence**—in where we live, in getting around, connecting to our community and staying healthy.
- **Valuing and recognising contribution**—in our work, as grandparents, carers and as volunteers.
- **Providing safety, security and protection**—in our homes, communities and as consumers.
- **Delivering the right services and the right information**—timely, responsive and tailored to the needs of individuals.
- **Staying in front**—through research, innovative practices and collaboration with others.

KICK START INITIATIVES IN SUMMARY

1. ENABLING CHOICE AND INDEPENDENCE

Helping people stay in their homes

- $550,000 to provide care services to older people who are isolated and need support to live independently, including social housing tenants.

Understanding and responding to dementia

- $40,000 to develop, implement and promote the State Dementia Action Plan.
- $120,000 to ensure guidelines and protocols are in place in acute and community care systems for effective diagnosis, treatment and care of people with dementia.
- $60,000 to identify the most appropriate memory loss services for people with dementia, their carers and families in metropolitan and rural areas.

2. VALUING AND RECOGNISING CONTRIBUTION

Recognising volunteers

- $30,000 to produce the *Eighty Not Out* book to challenge stereotypes by documenting stories of the lives and contribution of older people.

Grandparents

- $125,000 to provide respite and support for Indigenous grandparents who care for their grandchildren on a full time basis.

3. PROVIDING SAFETY, SECURITY AND PROTECTION

Protecting against elder abuse

- $130,000 to develop and implement an elder abuse prevention program that includes information provision and awareness raising.

4. DELIVERING THE RIGHT SERVICES AND THE RIGHT INFORMATION

Keeping us informed

- $200,000 to implement a series of information sessions to assist in better planning towards retirement.
- $120,000 to develop a booklet on consumer and law issues for seniors, including rights and responsibilities.

Having a say

- $165,000 to build on the West Adelaide Elder Friendly Communities Project to assist local government to develop strategies to encourage the participation of older people in their communities and in shaping service responses.
- $60,000 to develop, with the ageing and community care sector, community and citizen consultation strategies and mechanisms to assist the Office for the Ageing in its policy and planning roles.

Improving care services

- $75,000 to develop better support for older Indigenous people in remote communities who may move, for weather or cultural reasons, to other regional centres.
- $140,000 to assist Home and Community Care (HACC) services to improve access for multicultural communities.
- $80,000 to work with local government to improve access to home assist and community care for older people, particularly in regional communities.

Community care reform

- $126,000 to simplify service delivery, improve access to services and enhance service management as part of the reform agenda for community care.

Community care workforce

- $70,000 towards workforce planning to respond to the impact on community services of the ageing of the volunteer workforce, including a focus on the multicultural services sector.

5. STAYING IN FRONT

Staying in front

- $100,000 to establish a State of Ageing Report for South Australia that highlights issues and opportunities to support policy, planning and services.
- $70,000 to undertake further analysis of the Australian (Adelaide) Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ALSA) to provide information for policy makers, service providers and care professionals on population ageing and its consequences.
- $50,000 to examine needs, issues and opportunities in relation to the use of motorised wheelchairs by older people.
- $40,000 to undertake an analysis of the impacts of gambling on older people.
- $40,000 to develop an Ageing Services Atlas and other graphic technology tools to improve service planning for population needs.

1. ENABLING CHOICE AND INDEPENDENCE

Our priority is to create communities that work for older South Australians. This means having adaptable housing, quality health services, accessible and affordable transport systems and safe communities. Living in neighbourhoods that are safe and close to services and family gives us opportunities to be connected to the community and to maintain our independence.

Painting the picture

Housing

Different accommodation options are required to meet our changing needs over time. Our Housing Plan for South Australia responds to these needs now and for the next five to ten years with the aim of:

- making affordable housing available to more people;
- providing quality housing for those in greatest need in our community; and
- renewing and reinvigorating neighbourhoods.

Our Planning Strategy for South Australia encourages adaptable and diverse housing choices, with housing and land release close to services.

Generally we have a strong connection to where we live with the desire to grow older in our own home. This is helped by housing that is adaptable to our changing requirements as we age. We are encouraging the use of adaptable design features within new housing. The South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) has been a leading contributor to the development of adaptable housing standards and we will continue to promote these for use by the building industry.

Regional centres often do not have the right choices in accommodation types to meet the needs of older people and we are working with local government in particular, to find ways of improving these choices. Our Housing Plan incorporates strategies that deliver appropriate and affordable housing responses in regional communities experiencing economic and social change.

Transport

In addition to housing, transport is critical for older people. We are committed to ensuring that transport systems are easy to use, efficient, affordable, accessible and safe.

Income

An adequate income is important to choice and independence. Older people who are no longer working are often on fixed and limited incomes. Pension incomes are set by the Commonwealth Government. However, the South Australian Government has initiated improvements to concession arrangements that have benefited older people. For example, a new energy concession has been introduced for both pension card holders and self-funded retirees. We will continue to work across government to streamline the administration of concessions to deliver greater consistency and speedier services. Our work with local government on property based concessions is important to helping older people stay in their own homes.

Health

As a community we are generally healthier than previous generations and living longer. Information about healthy lifestyles, improved public health and medical technology has all had a positive impact. The trend to more active retirement is likely to extend the lifespan of future generations although these benefits are not experienced equally across the community.

We are reforming the health system in South Australia. Our aim is to have a system that is easy for people to use and to focus on health promotion, illness prevention and early intervention to improve the health and well being of older people. This is consistent with our internationally recognised Healthy Ageing approach.

We want to challenge the assumption that always associates ageing with poor health and the view that there is a progression from independent living to high levels of care. Many people in their eighties and older live independently in their homes with little or no assistance.

Physical activity

Physical activity is an important part of healthy ageing. About 70% of South Australians age 55 and over participate in some form of physical activity. [7] The Physical Activity Strategy for South Australia recognises the importance of safe, pleasant and accessible physical environments in motivating people to be active. The Office of Recreation and Sport's Mature Age Physical Activity Network is working with the community to provide practical advice about the benefits of physical activity.

[7] *Targeting Mature Age Participants*, Office for Recreation and Sport, 2004.

Making it happen

Housing

Our priority is to encourage the provision of affordable, appropriate and well located housing that works for South Australians as we grow older.

Action 1 Helping people stay in their homes

We will continue to build on and improve initiatives in place by:

- maintaining services that provide older home owners with advice and assistance on renovation and repairs.
- maintaining HACC funding to the *Home Assist* program (generally administered through local councils) to provide a wide range of home support services, including home maintenance.
- continuing to fund a range of housing related concessions for older people, including concessions on water and sewerage rates, electricity and the Emergency Services Levy.
- working with local government to:
  - review the administration of property based concessions and make recommendations for future processes; and
  - as a result of amendments to the Local Government Act 1999, ensure provisions are made to enable Seniors Card holders to postpone payment of council rates until the sale or transfer of property.
- continuing our early intervention and falls prevention programs that provide advice and encourage independent living.
- further promoting the *Seniors Loan* which can help older people to gain access to some of the capital in their house to add to their disposable income, but still keep their home.
- funding modifications to social housing properties to enable older tenants to stay in their homes.

We will continue:

- to collaborate with the Commonwealth Government and non-government sectors to identify ways to reduce the need for institutional care and investigate and develop options for ageing at home, rehabilitation and transition care.

Kick start initiatives
$550,000 to support independent living

- $550,000 to provide care services to older people who are isolated and need support to live independently, including social housing tenants.

Action 2
Income and independence

We are working with the Commonwealth Government to:

- establish clear, consistent and transferable national arrangements for current and future concession programs.
- develop more consistent approaches nationally to use of the Seniors Card.

We are:

- identifying opportunities for older people to benefit further from the Seniors Card in South Australia.
- reviewing the administration of concessions program across government to improve ease of access.

Action 3
Housing to meet our changing needs

We are promoting adaptable housing design by:

- collaborating with the housing industry to promote SAHT Design Guidelines for Sustainable Housing and Liveable Neighbourhoods to ensure that new SAHT housing has improved accessibility, affordability and sustainability features.
- providing improved consumer information about design features of housing for older people.
- working at the national level to incorporate adaptable housing design elements into the Building Code of Australia.

Action 4
Innovative partnerships

We are investigating:

- partnerships to facilitate the development of aged care accommodation and support services in collaboration with aged care providers.
- proposals from not-for-profit aged care providers wishing to develop new affordable rental housing for older people, possibly involving integration with nearby SAHT sites.

Action 5 Regional communities

We are:

- continuing to provide funding through the HACC Program to encourage and assist local government to provide locally based home and support services.
- in partnership with local government, undertaking further research into changing populations and housing needs in regional communities to determine appropriate services and infrastructure.

Action 6 Indigenous housing

We will:

- continue to consult with the Council of Aboriginal elders of South Australia to ensure the housing needs and services provided to Aboriginal Elders are appropriate, timely and respect personal dignity.
- continue to ensure that suitable accommodation is provided to Aboriginal South Australians through the Aboriginal Housing Authority, including aged care in the Aboriginal Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands.

Action 7 Reducing homelessness

We will deliver on our Strategic Plan targets through:

- intervening early with those at immediate risk of becoming homeless, including older people.
- support people who are homeless through our high needs housing program.

Action 8 Good neighbourhoods

We will:

- promote good urban design through our Urban Design Charter to create good public spaces.
- work with local government, community services and private developers to provide environments with amenity for older people.
- promote design guides to professionals and communities to improve public space design and improvements for older people.

Transport

Our priority is to maintain a transport system that is accessible, safe and convenient. This promotes independence and social interaction. We will make sure that our transport system takes older people into account. We will make roads and footpaths safer, ensure that signs and markings are adequate and improve mobility and access for walkers, cyclists, public transport users and motor vehicle users. Local government has a key role to play.

Action 1
Better access to services

We will:

- through the Planning Strategy for South Australia and the State Infrastructure Plan, ensure well located and accessible public transport within the Adelaide metropolitan and outer metropolitan areas, and in regions, to improve access to services for older people and their carers.
- develop and implement regional transport plans and approaches that integrate passenger transport options to improve access to services and social networks for older people in regional South Australia.

Action 2
Mobility and safety

We will:

- improve the safety of older pedestrians within the arterial road network and facilitate similar improvements at the local government level through modification programs and planning advice.
- continue to support our Fitness to Drive Taskforce on issues such as safety, independence, mobility, improved customer information and with strategies to assist people when they stop driving to maintain ongoing independence.

Health

Our priority is to have a greater focus on health promotion, illness prevention and early intervention to improve the well being of older people.

Action 1
Active ageing

We will continue to promote healthy, active living through:

- implementing and promoting with older people the State's Physical Activity Strategy 2004-08, *be active.*
- working closely with the Mature Age Physical Activity Network to provide advice to community organisations to increase community awareness of active ageing.
- developing and implementing a physical activity awareness raising campaign with particular consideration of women and targeting baby boomers, as part of the *be active* communication strategy.

Action 2
Promoting good health

We will:

- continue to support a range of strategies and information dissemination to prevent serious injury caused by falls, including physical activity, strength and balance programs, safe environments, information and assessment services.
- continue to support the statewide Quality Use of Medicine Program that is successfully reducing overuse and inappropriate use of medicines.
- continue to demonstrate the benefits of activity on good mental health, disease prevention and social connection.

Action 3
Home care and staying out of hospital

We will:

- continue to provide and extend non-acute services such as 'hospital in the home'.
- continue to work with the Commonwealth Government, community care services and aged care providers to assist older people make the transition from hospital to home or appropriate care.
- in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government consider innovative ways of refocusing care and support from residential to community based care.
- promote rehabilitation programs for people leaving hospital to avoid premature institutional care or readmission to hospital.
- continue to deliver chronic disease management programs that link treatment, rehabilitation and disease specific self care to help prevent unplanned hospital admissions.

Action 4

Making health services accessible

We will ensure:

- health services are accessible and sensitive to people from multicultural backgrounds and Indigenous communities.
- effort continues to be directed to the complex health needs of Indigenous South Australians.
- more flexible and integrated health services for older people in rural areas through measures that include support for multi-purpose services by pooling funds with Commonwealth programs.
- high quality palliative care services are available to meet the individual needs of older people within hospitals, the community and at home.

Action 5

Better dental health

We will:

- continue to support dental health care programs specifically for older people that improve overall health and well being.
- implement findings from the Southern Adelaide pilot projects on the oral health of older people and assess the feasibility of expanding these projects statewide.

Action 6

Understanding and responding to dementia

We will:

- formulate a State Dementia Action Plan, consistent with the guidelines in the draft National Framework for Action on Dementia, to provide a coordinated approach to diagnosis, early intervention, treatment, care and respite services.
- continue to raise awareness of dementia and the benefits of early diagnosis and appropriate community care.
- plan to meet projected increasing demand for services and improve access to the current available supports for people with dementia and their carers.

Kick start initiatives
$220,000 for our Tackling Dementia Program

- $40,000 to develop, implement and promote the State Dementia Action Plan.
- $120,000 to ensure guidelines and protocols are in place in acute and community care systems for effective diagnosis, treatment and care of people with dementia.
- $60,000 to identify the most appropriate memory loss services for people with dementia, their carers and families in metropolitan and rural areas.

Action 7 Understanding mental health

We will:

- strengthen partnerships between mental health and community services to ensure early intervention, timely diagnosis and appropriate care.
- work with the Commonwealth Government to implement enhanced mental health primary care initiatives through general practice.
- ensure that hospital avoidance programs include a focus on mental illness in treating other acute or chronic conditions experienced by older people and on preventing mental health issues emerging due to extended hospitalisations.
- work with community services to support initiatives consistent with the national mental health initiative, *beyond blue*, in relation to the needs of older people with depression.

Action 8 Residential aged care

We will:

- assist country health services that have Commonwealth Government funded residential aged care facilities to meet the standard required to attract recurrent Commonwealth funding by 2008.
- work with the Commonwealth Government to:
  - facilitate the implementation of relevant recommendations from the Hogan Review of Aged Care, aimed at providing easier access to services and assessments for eligibility to both residential aged care and community care; and
  - develop a range of community and residential options that are responsive to needs of regional populations and enable choice.
- work with service providers to improve coordination and integration of consumer focused community services, residential options and hospital care.

2. VALUING AND RECOGNISING CONTRIBUTION

Our priority is to make sure the contribution of older people in paid and unpaid work endeavours is recognised and valued. We will challenge discriminatory policies and practices and provide support for job searching, training, return to work programs, childcare and elder care. We will advocate for better and more adaptable superannuation arrangements. We will promote an environment where ongoing learning enhances our personal choices in paid or unpaid work.

Painting the picture

As our population ages, so will our workers, resulting in a decline in the working age population. The most significant impact is projected to occur over the next five years as the baby boomers reach retirement age. A shrinking labour force is a matter of global concern and we can expect international competition in attracting suitable numbers of appropriately skilled and experienced workers. This means we face labour and skill shortages now and into the future.

South Australia has the highest proportion in Australia of 50 to 64 year olds retired from full time work.[8] Our community therefore has untapped reserves of skills and abilities that can be utilised in paid and unpaid opportunities. For business sustainability, we need to encourage older workers to either re-enter the workforce or stay in the workforce longer. We need to develop the right incentives for this to happen. We will continue to raise employer awareness of the value of mature age employees and to counter many myths about their capacity and abilities.

Older people can now generally expect to live healthy and active retirement once they have decided to leave paid work. This provides for South Australia a resource of energy and capability that can contribute to our community and cultural life in a range of ways. We need to harness this talent and ensure that individuals can find satisfying and enriching ways to continue to contribute. Flexibility is the key to achieving mutual advantage for individuals and for the State. We need approaches and structures that enable older people, if they choose, to stay at work longer or to find a satisfying mix of part-time work, volunteering, leisure activities, being grandparents and spending time with family and friends. Our society can only be enriched by an environment that allows older people choice in the many ways they make a contribution.

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[8] *Opening the Window of Existing Opportunities: Identify barriers to the workforce participation of people over 45 years* , Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology, September 2005.

Making it happen

Action 1

Workforce Development Strategy

We will:

- continue to implement and promote *Better Skills. Better Work. Better State*, South Australia's Workforce Development Strategy and our Action Plan to increase the workforce participation of older people.

Action 2

Reducing the barriers

We will collaborate across agencies and with the Commonwealth Government to:

- identify aged related barriers to ongoing employment, training and skill development and develop strategies to enable people to continue working beyond 65 years if they choose to do so.
- through SA Works assist older jobseekers, (including those in receipt of disability support) to gain improved access to mature age employment and training initiatives.
- examine legislative frameworks to remove age related barriers to workforce participation for paid and non-paid work such as access to superannuation or income support, taxation policy, concessions, insurance and Workcover contributions.

We will collaborate with business to:

- work with employers and business associations to identify incentives and initiatives that assist in recruiting and retaining mature workers and demonstrate successful practices.
- encourage employers to review recruitment practices, including advertising and selection, to facilitate recruitment of older workers.

Action 3

Leading the way in the public sector

We will:

- continue to implement our Workforce Development Plan for the public sector, particularly initiatives that target older workers.
- conduct a pilot Retirement Intention Survey across public sector agencies involving the Department of Further, Education, Employment, Science and Technology and the Office for Women, for possible adoption by other government agencies.
- implement mentoring and coaching programs and focus on cross-generational skills transfers in the public sector.

We will recognise and retain experienced workers by:

- pursuing gradual and flexible ways of transition to retirement.
- introducing flexible work practices that recognise workers' responsibility for caring for partners, parents and grandchildren.
- promoting user friendly technology, safe work practices and an ergonomically sound working environment for all employees, especially those with disabilities and older workers.

Action 4 Recognising volunteers and providing opportunities

We will:

- implement marketing strategies to increase awareness of volunteering opportunities among older people, including those approaching retirement from full time paid employment.
- ensure training is available to volunteers in metropolitan and rural communities.
- ensure there is improved consistency in information and approaches across State and Commonwealth grant programs for services that draw on older volunteers.
- work with local government, community organisations and others to improve governance arrangements that support ongoing sustainability within the volunteer sector and provide protection to volunteers.
- create a website within the Department for Families and Communities (DFC) as an information hub for people seeking volunteering opportunities in DFC and for organisations seeking volunteers.

Kick start initiative
$30,000 to recognise our volunteers

- $30,000 to produce the *Eighty Not Out* book to challenge stereotypes by documenting stories of the lives and contribution of older people.

Action 5
Grandparents

We will work with the Commonwealth Government:

- on models for a grandparent liaison function as a point of contact for access to financial and other assistance and links to community organisations.
- to provide better information on services available in health, law, education and finance for grandparents raising children.
- to improve understanding of the requirements of Centrelink and Family Assistance Office documentation.

We will act on:

- the findings of the *Supporting families better* research project which is examining care provided by relatives for children at risk.

We will:

- continue to work with the Council for Aboriginal Elders and Indigenous community groups, including the Grannies Group, to address the needs of Aboriginal grandparents caring for grandchildren.

Kick start initiative
$125,000 for respite and support for Indigenous grandparents

- $125,000 to provide respite and support for Indigenous grandparents who care for their grandchildren on a full time basis.

3. PROVIDING SAFETY, SECURITY AND PROTECTION

Our priority is to protect older people from harm and abuse and keep them safe in their homes and in their communities**.** The South Australian Government's agenda to make communities safer, benefits older South Australians. Strategies to prevent elder abuse are central to our Plan. This includes information and awareness of consumer protection rights to assist older people to deal with those who may attempt to de-fraud them.

Painting the picture

All of us like to feel safe and secure in the location where we live and this is particularly important to older people. The fear amongst the elderly of being a victim of crime is real and pervasive. The increased sense of vulnerability for some older people impinges on feeling safe.

Crime prevention is a whole of community issue. We are actively working to address personal safety. We have introduced tougher penalties for offenders.

Protecting the rights of people in all forms of accommodation is at the heart of keeping people safe and secure in their home. We have recently completed reviews of the *Retirement Villages Act 1987, Supported Residential Facilities Act 1992* and the *Residential Tenancies Act 1995,* resulting in appropriate legislative frameworks for these sectors.

People with mental health issues need access to appropriate and supportive housing. We will provide better protection for people in supported residential facilities and ensure decent standards of accommodation. Options for a new Accommodation Act will be explored because of the current lack of effective regulation regarding boarding houses and supported residential facilities. This includes some accommodation which targets older South Australians. We are aiming for better protection from harm and abuse for people in supported housing.

Older people may be victims of fraud such as insurance, home repair and telephone "scams" from unscrupulous vendors. Sometimes the exploitation is by trusted friends or family members. Research indicates that between 3 and 5 in every 100 people over the age of 65 years are at risk of, or are experiencing abuse by family or friends. [9] This is most commonly psychological or financial abuse. Our Plan includes measures to reduce the incidence of elder abuse through information provision and awareness raising.

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[9] *Seniors Interests*, Curtin University of Technology Elder Abuse in Western Australia, Survey Conducted for the Department for Community Development, 2002, and *Position Statement No 1 Elder Abuse,* Australian Society for Geriatric Medicine.

Making it happen

Action 1 Legislative protection for housing options

We will:

- consider the scope and merits of developing an Accommodation Act to provide greater protection for people living in boarding houses and other supported accommodation.

Action 2 Safety in our homes

We will:

- help to keep people safer in their homes by continuing to develop initiatives to provide safety and security audits in the homes of older people to assist in falls prevention and other home safety issues through housing modifications.

Action 3 Protecting against elder abuse

We will:

- continue to take a zero tolerance approach to violence towards older people and elder abuse.
- continue funding the current responses to elder abuse through HACC and the Elder Protection Program.
- develop an Elder Abuse Prevention Action Plan for South Australia that includes:
  - a comprehensive elder abuse awareness program targeting service providers and the general community;
  - increased collaboration across the service and business sectors in relation to elder abuse;
  - a review of relevant legislation with the aim of strengthening older people's rights and maximising protective measures where appropriate;
  - developing resources and distribution strategies to provide information about elder abuse to the community; and
  - initiating research on the prevalence of elder abuse, that draws on interstate and international studies to develop good practice models for prevention and service responses.

Kick start initiatives
$130,000 to prevent elder abuse

- $130,000 to develop and implement an elder abuse prevention program that includes information provision and awareness raising.

4. DELIVERING THE RIGHT SERVICES AND THE RIGHT INFORMATION

Our priority is to ensure that the customer is at the centre of our service planning and delivery, that services are tailored to the individual and that people have the information they need to make choices. We must also listen to our customers and give older people the opportunity to have a say about what they need.

Painting the picture

Customer service ethos

South Australia's strategic plan sets objectives for a more responsive and high performing public service. This means developing a strong customer service ethos across all our functions.

We expect our government agencies to work together, and with other sectors, particularly the non-government sector, to provide better integrated services. People should only have to tell their story once. We need to share information better between agencies and streamline our assessment and referral processes. Local government has a pivotal role to play in the provision of services that support people to live independently in their own homes and remain connected to their neighbourhood and local community.

Our social inclusion agenda is tackling the issues for those who are missing out, those who do not always have the same choices and opportunities as other South Australians.

Promoting well being, independence, choice and accessibility underpin our strategic approach to services used by older people. We want our increasingly diverse older people to be active consumers of public services, exercising control and choice, not passive recipients of them. This requires a culture change, both by individuals and providers.

Tapping information technology

We need to develop services further, join them up, simplify access to them and increasingly offer a range of choices to put individuals in control of their lives. Information technology is a great enabler of improved access. It crosses functional boundaries and allows us to present information from the perspective of the customer enquirer, rather than the provider. We must continue to match government information to the life stages of our citizens and take people seamlessly to the points where they can get the answers to what they want to know.

Technology provides many new opportunities and can be critical in preventing isolation, particularly in rural and remote areas, but 71% of people aged 60 and over do not use a computer at home.[10] Communication infrastructure is an issue, particularly in rural and remote communities.

Libraries are information hubs and gateways to the world. They support lifelong learning and we must ensure this resource is accessible to older people. Libraries are also sources of local information about local services and activities; provide direction on where further assistance and information can be found; and help their users develop technology skills.

The right information goes a long way in our ability to provide the right services to our community. We will listen to our community partners and our older people to ensure that we are providing the services that are needed.

Community care

We need to match our service responses to need. Most older South Australians prefer to live independently in their home of choice. The need for assistance varies for individuals. Some people require assistance for short periods, while others may need ongoing support or care. It is essential that older people have access to flexible supports when and where they are needed.

A range of community care services are provided to older South Australians living at home. The HACC Program is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and State Governments. HACC Services are provided to about 61 300 people aged 65 and over who live independently in South Australia.[11] These services include assistance with house cleaning, personal care and delivered meals.

In 2002 the Commonwealth Government, in partnership with the States and Territories, launched a nationwide review of community care programs. *A New Strategy for Community Care: The Way Forward* sets directions for a high quality care system that is affordable, accessible and responsive.

The South Australian Government supports the choice of many older South Australians to remain living in their homes through providing community care services that are flexible, affordable and easy to access at the time of need.

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[10] *Disability, Ageing and Carers*, ABS.,2003.

[11] *HACC Minimum Data Set Official Data* (Extract 2) 2004-05.

Making it happen

Action 1
Keeping us informed

We will:

- work with the Commonwealth Government to provide quality, easy to access integrated services that mean people only have to tell their story once when seeking information and assistance.
- continue to support the Seniors Information Service to provide information, particularly on accommodation choices, for older South Australians.
- continue to develop Service SA as a one stop electronic information resource on South Australian government services, as well as Service SA outlets.

Kick start initiatives
$320,000 to help keep us informed

- $200,000 to implement a series of information sessions to assist in better planning towards retirement.
- $120,000 to develop a booklet on consumer and law issues for seniors, including rights and responsibilities.

Action 2
Better co-ordination of housing services

We will:

- continue to develop the new Housing Services SA model to coordinate access to State housing services and give specific attention to the issues faced by older people.

Action 3
Having a say

We will:

- work closely with advisory peak bodies to develop and implement consumer participation and consultation mechanisms.

Kick start initiatives
$225,000 for community participation

- $165,000 to build on the West Adelaide Elder Friendly Communities Project to assist local government to develop strategies to encourage the participation of older people in their communities and in shaping service responses.
- $60,000 to develop, with the ageing and community care sector, community and citizen consultation strategies and mechanisms to assist the Office for the Ageing in its policy and planning roles.

Action 4
Keeping up with technology

We will:

- in partnership with the community sector and local government, provide suitable access to technology for older people.
- work with local government to provide more opportunities for older people to learn how to use new technologies.

Community care services

Our priority is to ensure that services are readily available and provided in a way that does not compromise individual wishes. We will make improvements to our programs to assist people to remain in their own homes as they age, if they choose to do so, and to receive support when they need it.

The South Australian Government is committed to reforming the community care system so that the State is a leader in care and support for older South Australians. South Australia is already testing new ways of providing services.

Action 1
Improving care services

We will:

- in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, continue to promote ageing at home through HACC home support programs, funded at $118 million in 2005-06.
- develop flexible, timely, person centred service models for community care.
- ensure community services for older people are accessible to Indigenous people and responsive to their needs.
- build the capacity of HACC funded agencies to improve services to older Indigenous people, especially in regional and remote places.
- work with communities on the Aboriginal Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands to improve services to older Indigenous people.

Kick start initiatives
$295,000 to improve our care services

- $75,000 to develop better supports for older Indigenous people in remote communities who may move, for weather or cultural reasons, to other regional centres.
- $140,000 to assist HACC services to improve access for multicultural communities.
- $80,000 to work with local government to improve access to home assist and community care for older people, particularly in regional communities.

Action 2 Improving participation

We will:

- provide funding through the Grants for Seniors and Positive Ageing Development Grants to encourage the participation of older people in their community and improve community attitudes towards ageing and older people.
- continue to advocate for older South Australians to choose how and where they receive care and support to maintain their independence and quality of life.
- implement a training and development program for HACC service providers, focusing on:
  - quality improvement;
  - access and equity; and
  - consumer involvement and participation.

Action 3 Community care reform

We will:

- work with the Commonwealth Government to improve community care services in line with the directions of the National Community Care Review, *The Way Forward,* to reduce complexity and increase flexibility of HACC funded services by:
  - promoting clear and consistent referral processes;
  - encouraging strengthened customer service models and flexible packages of care;
  - working across all levels of government to explore innovative ways to integrate services for older people to continue living in their homes;
  - ensuring that customer service information and assessment and intake processes are accessible across South Australia;
  - promoting customer centred eligibility, intake and assessment processes; and
  - improving delivery of services to Indigenous and multicultural members of our community.
- in partnership with the Commonwealth Government, implement reforms in our administration of HACC programs to improve funding and planning processes.
- implement health and community care reforms in accordance with the Council of Australian Government initiatives.

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Kick start initiative
$126,000 for community care reforms

- $126,000 to simplify service delivery, improve access to services and enhance service management as part of the reform agenda for community care.

Action 4 Older people and disability

We will:

- ensure that older people with disabilities are able to have ready access to a system of support that is customer focused, integrated, flexible and offers choice.
- work to ensure that people with a disability and their carers are consulted and included in the planning and implementation of services relevant to their changing needs as they age.
- work with the Commonwealth Government towards coordinating a more collaborative approach to planning and service delivery between the disability and ageing sectors to ensure that there is a more integrated approach to funding for older people with long term disabilities.
- continue to support HACC programs designed to assist people with disabilities who are ageing to live independently in their own homes.
- expand the benefits of the Plus 1 Companion Card to improve access for people with disabilities to attend sporting, recreation and entertainment facilities.

Action 5 Carers

We will:

- develop a consistent statewide response to the needs of carers through HACC funded services.
- develop a strategy to inform and assist relevant organisations to meet the requirements of the *Carers Recognition Act 2005.*
- streamline HACC funded carer services to support the implementation of the *Carers Recognition Act 2005*.

Action 6 Community care workforce

We will:

- work with the community care sector and union representatives to develop strategies that tackle the impact of reducing numbers in the aged and community care workforce.

Kick start initiative
$70,000 for a responsive community care workforce

- $70,000 towards workforce planning to respond to the impact on community services of the ageing of the volunteer workforce, including a focus on the multicultural service sector.

5. STAYING IN FRONT

Our priority is to ensure that the lives of older South Australians are the best they can be and we need first class research to inform and guide the development of innovative policy and practice. Such research, in keeping with the themes of this Plan should focus on changing negative perceptions and stereotypes about older people. Good data, quality information and evidence based research will help us stay in front.

Painting the picture

Governments, community organisations and individuals rely on accurate information in making wise decisions for the future. There is a large body of existing data to guide our understanding of trends and future needs. Additional research is also required if we are to be well prepared to respond to the impacts of our ageing society as they escalate in the next decades. To encourage this research we will establish stronger research partnerships between government, universities and the private sector.

Research partnerships with industries, such as the aged care industry, pharmaceutical companies, the private rental industry, and ordinary South Australians, both older people and people significant in their lives, are also crucial.

South Australia is home to a number of nationally and internationally recognised research centres and researchers investigating many issues relevant to older South Australians. This environment has made significant contributions to the body of knowledge and we want it to continue.

Research that influences policy, practice and education to optimise and enhance the lives of older South Australians will include:

- services
- workforce issues
- health-related conditions that affect older people (ensuring that this does not become the defining feature of these older people)
- useful equipment for older people
- transport, safety and access
- transitions, informal care, psychological health and longevity
- rural housing needs
- the impact of gambling in later life
- retirement income.

Rigorous economic analysis and economic modelling is critical to provide the information we need for ongoing dialogue with the Commonwealth about the resource implications of ageing trends.

Making it happen

Action 1 Staying in front

We will:

- support research to investigate rural housing and its impact on ageing in place.
- continue to support relevant research that informs our policies and programs.
- continue to work collaboratively across sectors and with educational institutions.
- work collaboratively with the university and research sector to examine the implications of population ageing on the workforce and develop tools and advice to assist businesses to plan for an ageing workforce.

Kick start initiatives
$300,000 to support South Australian research

- $100,000 to establish a *State of Ageing Report* for South Australia that highlights issues and opportunities to support policy, planning and services.
- $70,000 to undertake further analysis of the Australian (Adelaide) Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ALSA) to provide information for policy makers, service providers and care professionals on population ageing and its consequences.
- $50,000 to examine the needs, issues and opportunities in relation to the use of motorised wheelchairs by older people.
- $40,000 to undertake an analysis of the impacts of gambling on older people.
- $40,000 to develop an Ageing Services Atlas and other graphic technology tools to improve service planning for population needs.

APPENDIX

A SNAPSHOT: AGEING IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Our population

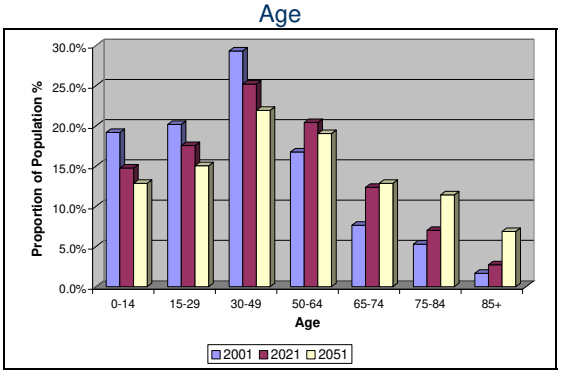
"…in the businesses of ageing …there remain great challenges yet and at the same time GREAT OPPORTUNTIES – the only limitations are those we create, the only boundaries those we draw and the only future is that we make for ourselves!"[12]

South Australia has the highest proportion of people aged 65 and over in the nation. Now, 1 in 7 South Australians are aged 65 and over. By 2021 it will be 1 in 5 and by 2051 it will be about 1 in 3. At the same time, people aged 85 and over will quadruple from 1 in 57 South Australians aged 85 plus to 1 in 15 by 2051.

As well dramatic changes will be expected in other age groups. Two thirds of the South Australian population is aged between 15 and 64; by 2051 this age group will make up one half of the State's population. The numbers of children aged 15 and under will also decline from approximately 1 in 5 today to 1 in 8 by 2051.

As a result of these population changes the average age of people in South Australia will increase from 37.4 today to 49.2 in 2051.[13]

Projected Population for SA by Age

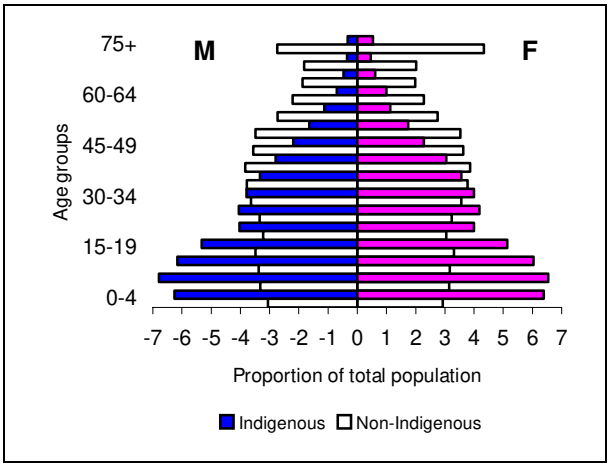


Source: ABS Population Projections, 2005

Indigenous communities

The entrenched disadvantage of indigenous people across Australia has resulted in a 20 years lower life expectancy than the national average. Indigenous men live an average of 56.4 years compared to 77 years for the general population. Indigenous women live an average of 66.4 years compared to 82.5 years for the general population. [14]

Age Sex Pyramid, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Population, SA, 1996



Source: Preliminary ERP based on the 2001 Census of Population and Housing, ABS

[12] "*Looking Back, Looking Around and Looking Forward*" Keynote Address at 40th Anniversary Meeting of the Australian Association of Gerontology, Canberra 16 June 2005.

[13] *Population Projections*, ABS, 2005.

[14] *Census of Population and Housing: Ageing in Australia*, ABS 2001.

Multicultural communities

The percentage of older South Australians from a culturally and linguistically diverse background is increasing substantially. By 2011 they will make up 20% of older South Australians. This is significant for services catering for the needs of people from a non-English speaking background.

Regional and remote communities

South Australians who live in rural and remote areas may experience difficulty in accessing services, programs and technology. In 2001, 1 in 7 (14.6%) of the State's population aged 65 or older lived outside Adelaide.[15] While the ageing population will grow in all country areas, levels of growth will vary within and across regions.

Women

Women are living longer than men, with the number of women reaching 80 years or older is almost double that of men. The number of women over 85 will rise from 17,400 in 2001 to 35,100 in 2031. The number of men of the same age will increase by 183% from 7,700 to 21,800.[16]

Although women have increased their presence in the workforce since 1970, it has generally been in part-time and casual employment, less skilled and lower paid jobs and in a limited range of occupations and industries. Women made up nearly two-thirds (65.9%) of South Australia's part-time workforce in 2001.

Over two-thirds (69%) of the State's primary carers are women. This has an impact on job security, promotions and retirement income.

[15] *Population Projections*. 1999- 2101, 3222.0, ABS, South Australia.

[16] *Population Projections* 3222.0 ABS, South Australia.

Enabling choice and independence

Housing choices

Most older people want to live independently for as long as they can, even if they need assistance to do this. In South Australia the majority of older South Australians (78%) own their own home.[17]

"*Half or more of all productive work is done, mostly unpaid, by household members for themselves, one another, friends and needy neighbours. The Aussie house and garden shed are wonderfully adaptable to life's changing stages and activities. Retired people have space for arts and hobbies and home workshops. They can grow food as well as flowers. They have room to look after grandchildren or other dependents. For many of us, affordable, adaptable homesteads rank level with sufficient superannuation as conditions of fruitful old age" (Professor Hugh Stretton, University of Adelaide).*

Income

"Retirement came as a real shock. I wish I'd put more effort into planning for it" (Jim Giles, 74, COTA).

An adequate level of income is essential for an active and fulfilling old age. In 2003, there were about 1.2 million pensioners and half a million self-funded retirees in Australia.[18] About 67.8% of Australian persons of pension age received the aged pension. [19]

The wealth of older Australians has increased considerably in the past few decades and this is expected to continue. Despite this, it is projected that 40% of Australian baby boomers are unlikely to inherit significant

[17] *Census of Population and Housing*, ABS 2001.

[18] ABC, *Radio National*, 24 June 2003.

[19] *Australian Social Trends*, ABS, 4102.0, 2002.

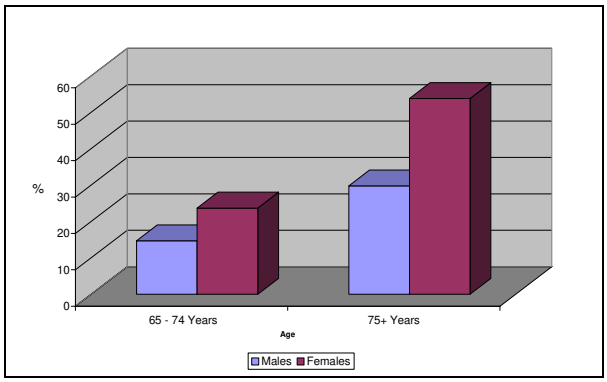
amounts. At least 20% will inherit very little or nothing at all.[20]

Ageing at home

The Government's focus on home-based care and programs to assist independent living all contribute to increased numbers of people over 85 years living at home.

As we age we are more likely to live alone. Statistics show that of people living alone, 14.8% are aged between 55 and 64, 22.6% are between 65 and 74 and 41.6% are over 75.[21] At the 2001 census, 31.2 % of people aged 65 and older were living alone, with older women twice as likely to be living alone than men.[22]

Lone Persons SA



Source: Census of Population and Housing- Ageing in Australia, ABS, 2001

Homeless older people

Although only a small number of older people are homeless, their issues are significant and complex. A study identified homeless people as being predominantly single with limited family support. A high proportion are men aged between 50 and 75.[23]

Transport

Effective transport systems contribute significantly to independence, access to services and ability to connect socially. They also have a positive impact on our well being. Of Australian lone person households aged 65 years and over, 4 in 10 do not own a car. [24]

Generally older people are safe drivers and choose voluntarily to minimise risk by avoiding driving at night, in the rain or during peak traffic if they no longer feel comfortable driving in these conditions.[25]

Health

> *"I would like to keep my present lifestyle, keeping both my mind and body fit" (Beryl Fenwick, 76 years COTA).*

As a community we are healthier than previous generations. Information about healthy lifestyles, better public health and improved medical technology has made a difference here. The trend to more active retirement is likely to extend the lifespan of future generations. Unfortunately, these benefits are not experienced equally across the community.

We need to challenge the connections often made between ageing and poor health and the view that there is a progression from independent living to high levels of care. Many people in their eighties and older live independently in their homes with little or no assistance.

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[20] You *can't rely on the old folks' money*, NATSEM Income and Wealth Report, Issue 5, June 2003.
[21] *Census of Population and Housing*, ABS 2001.
[22] *Census of Population and Housing,* ABS 2001.
[23] *Supported Independent Living*: DHS Strategic Directions for Housing Older People, August 2003.
[24] *National Strategy for an Ageing Australia*, 2001.
[25] *'Ageing and Transport;' Draft Discussion Paper,* Policy Analysis and Research Unit, 2005.

Health Issues

For many people access to health care is needed intermittently. Others need ongoing assistance.

In Australia the five most common health issues for people aged over 60 years are: Arthritis; Sensory Disorders (eg eyes & ears); Hypertension; Diabetes and Mental Health. [26]

Dementia

Dementia covers a specific group of diseases that affect the brain. It is not a normal part of ageing. Currently about 1 in every 100 Australians aged 65 has symptoms of dementia, increasing to 1 in 4 for people over 85.[27] As the population ages, the number of people with dementia will increase proportionally.

Mental health

"Active ageing involves every dimension of one's life: physical, mental, social and spiritual."[28]

Older people, like many other members of the community, may experience mental health problems.

It is estimated that 1 in 7 Australians aged 65 and over have a mental health or behavioural issue.[29] Common mental health conditions include depression, anxiety, dementia, mood disorders and substance abuse.[30]

[26] *National Health Survey* 4364.0, ABS, 2002.
[27] *National Framework for Action on Dementia Consultation Paper*, , 2005.
[28] World Health Organization website. www.who.int
[29] *National Health Survey: Mental Health*, 4811.0, ABS, 2001.
[30] *The impact of Ageing: A Literature Review*, Department of Human Services, 2003.

"As we all get older the state of Peace of Mind is very important. To me this means looking to the future with hope and trust. It is also about coping with the challenges that getting older can bring" (Archbishop Leonard Faulkner, Chair Ministerial Advisory Board on Ageing).

Physical activity

"Ageing, it could be said, is the ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME."[31]

Physical activity is important to older South Australians. About 70% of South Australians 65 and over participate in some form of physical activity. This is higher than the national rate of 65%. South Australian men aged 65 and over participate at a rate of 76% compared to 64% nationally. Only 56% of South Australian women of the same age participated in physical activity, while the national rate is 60%.[32]

Valuing and recognising contribution

"My advice to older people is to take advantage of the opportunity to get involved. Age is no barrier to being part of life" (Joan Stone, 78, COTA).

A changing labour market

As South Australia's population ages, so will its workers. The number of people of working age (16-64) is projected to decline by over 10% by 2051.

The labour force participation rate for South Australia, which decreases as the population ages, has until recently been well below the national average.

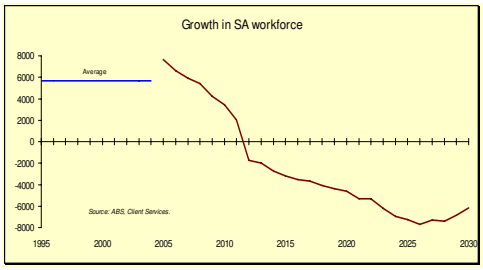
[31] *Diversity and the Baby boomers* – Findings of the compass Consultation on Australia's Ageing Population – Foreword Letter, October 2005.

[32] *Targeting Mature Age Participants*, Office for Recreation and Sport, 2004.

In October 2005, South Australia's workforce participation rate was 62%, 2% lower than the national average of 64.5%.[33]

The working age population will grow by just 190,000 for the entire decade of the 2020s – a tenth of the current pace.[34]

Growth in SA workforce



Source: ABS, Client Services

South Australia has the highest proportion of 50 to 64 year olds retired from full time work in Australia.[35] So we are already facing the possibility of future labour and skill shortages. It is imperative that South Australian employers are prepared to meet this challenge and put initiatives in place to retain mature age workers.

Family commitments

Research suggests that combining work and family care responsibility is a challenge, particularly for women. This is highlighted in the disproportionate number of women in part-time and casual work.

Mature age unemployment

The length of time people over 45 years remain unemployed averages 82 weeks compared with 47 weeks for all ages.[36] We need to challenge negative stereotypes and recognise that "*mature workers combine experience and wisdom, above average quality of work, loyalty to the organisation and good work ethic*."[37]

Age discrimination

"Sporting teams strive for a mix of experienced and younger players for all the obvious reasons. The team as a whole benefits. It's no different in business. Older employees are revitalised by working with younger people. Younger employees will soon pick up on 'hands on' tricks of the trade from older employees. The business gets the best of both worlds. It's a good reason why businesses should re-examine their staffing practices and look at their staff as a team – does their team have a good balance of youth and experience? There's a lot to consider." [38]

Evidence suggests that age discrimination in the workplace is the principal barrier to the employment of older workers. It is both persistent and pervasive, characterised by age stereotypes and a general bias towards the employment of younger people.

Lifelong learning

"*'I might be an older person, but learning something new everyday has kept me from ageing" (Margaret Gleeson, 87, COTA).*

We need to raise employer awareness of the value of mature age employees and counter many corporate myths about their capacity to be trained. Employers who make a commitment to

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[33] ABS 3222 and *Productivity Commission labour force projections*

[34] *Australia's Shrinking Workforce, Coming Ready Or Not*,

[35] '*Implications of the future ageing of Australia's population*', Submission by the SA Government, Productivity Commission Research Study, 2004.

[36] '*Opening the window on existing opportunities: identifying barriers to the workforce participation of people of 45 years*', DFEEST, 2005.

[37] '*Population Ageing and the Economy*', Department of Health and Aged Care, 2001.

[38] *Coming Ready or Not!: Australia's Shrinking Workforce*. P4 Australian National Training Authority, 2004.

training their workers will enjoy the benefits of a skilled and stable workforce.

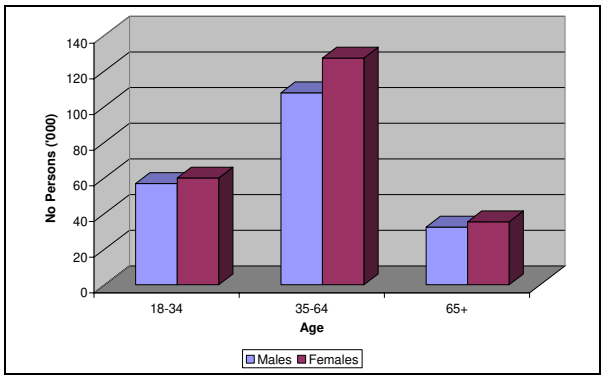
"Some training organisations will rise to the challenge and see the opportunities presented by this change, others will miss the boat." [39]

Volunteerism

"Since retiring, I've found that volunteer work keeps me interested, active and is a great way to meet new and interesting people" (Ian Raggatt, 69, COTA).

The research is clear, there are significant benefits to the community and the individual when volunteering. In South Australia we have a total of 419,300 volunteers. About 1 in 6 volunteers are aged 65 years and over.[40]

Volunteer rate in SA



Source: Voluntary Work Survey, State Tables, South Australia, 2000

Grandparents

Grandparents are critical in family life. Depending on their background, they can provide children with cultural, language and spiritual teaching. Approximately 1 in 100 South Australian children aged under 18 years is in the full time care of relatives or kin. Approximately 8 in 10 of these children are being raised solely by grandparents.[41] This is higher for indigenous groups.

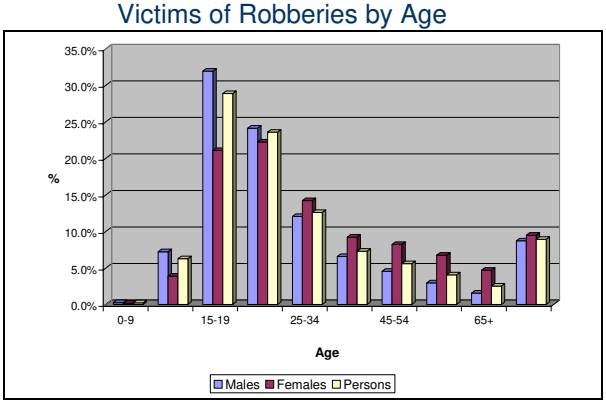
Providing safety, security and protection

Safety and security

All of us like to live in an area where we feel safe and secure and this is of particular importance to older people. Research indicates that older people are much less likely to be victims of crime: the victimisation rate for people over 65 years in South Australia is 0.8%.[42]

The most important aspect of crime prevention and fear of crime for older people is the older person's perception. Connection to the community empowers them and increases their awareness of safety issues.

Victims of Robberies by Age



Source: ABS Recorded Crime – Victims, 2004

Elder abuse

Various studies have been conducted in Australia to determine the extent of elder abuse: estimates vary from below 1% to 5% depending on the method or definitions used. Abuse can be sexual,

[39] *Opportunity Knocks!: Australia's Ageing Workforce*. P5 Australian National Training Authority, 2004.

[40] *Voluntary Work, State Summary Table*, ABS, 2000

[41] *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) longitudinal data survey* and *ABS Census 2001*.

[42] Office of Crime Statistics.

psychological, financial or neglect. The most common types are psychological and financial.[43]

Delivering the right services and the right information

"Diversity is the catchword of the day, in every respect of the issues of ageing. However, there's still a case to be made that ageing populations (populations not people) don't always know what is best for them (us). Importantly, this isn't to say that experts should be making the decisions for them. The need is for education to enable older people in ageing populations to make their own informed choices".[44]

Community care and support

Most people continue to be active and independent in their community as they age: 70% of people over 85 still live independently. Some may need assistance for short periods of time, and for some, ongoing support or care is necessary.[45]

Carers

Many people are informally supported by carers who may be close family members, relatives, friends or neighbours. Carers make an invaluable contribution to their family and the community, far greater than can be calculated in monetary terms.

In 2003, approximately 223,000 people in South Australia provided regular ongoing assistance to someone who needed help because of disability or age.[46]

Information and support for carers varies between regions. This combined with limited respite services leaves many carers isolated and at risk of health problems.

Technology

Technology provides many new opportunities and can be critical in preventing isolation, particularly in rural and remote areas. 71% of people aged 60 and over do not use a computer at home.[47]

Communication infrastructure is an issue, particularly in rural and remote communities.

Everybody can be part of the new technology era even if they have not learnt these new skills at school. South Australia's Strategic Plan recognises the importance of technology and has set a target to increase internet usage by 20% in the next ten years.

"I intend to embrace my older years. Staying informed through educational opportunities, staying active through lifestyle, enjoying life and meeting challenges as they arise" (Jennie Clayton, 59, COTA).

[43] *Seniors Interests*, Curtin University of Technology Elder Abuse in Western Australia, Survey Conducted for the Department for Community Development, 2002, and *Position Statement No 1 Elder Abuse,* Australian Society for Geriatric Medicine.

[44] *Diversity and the Baby boomers* – Findings of the Compass Consultation on Australia's Ageing Population – Foreword Letter, October 2005.

[45] *Census of Population and Housing*, ABS 2001.

[46] *Disability, Ageing and Carers*, 4430.0, ABS 2003.

[47] *Disability, Ageing and Carers*, 4430.0, ABS 2003.

DEVELOPING OUR AGEING PLAN

Consultation

The Office for the Ageing consulted broadly in developing our Ageing Plan. We would like to thank the many people who provided input into the development of this document. We spoke with older South Australians who gave their valuable time to let us know what is important to them. Representatives from a large number of organisations attended consultation sessions from both regional and metropolitan areas and shared their expertise. Peak bodies, including the Ministerial Advisory Board on Ageing, the Council on the Ageing (COTA) and the Multicultural Communities Council of SA, provided extensive advice and assistance. Others involved were community members from metropolitan and regional areas, all levels of government and representatives from the community services sector.

Preliminary discussions identified priority areas from which four key themes emerged:

- education, employment and training;
- housing, transport and neighbourhoods;
- health and care; and
- lifestyle, income and retirement.

Structured workshops around these themes were held in the metropolitan area, Renmark and Whyalla. A broad range of interested groups was invited, including people with different cultural backgrounds. The focus was on the 'big picture' to assist in producing a policy framework, rather than a specific operational guide. A consolidation workshop identified common issues around the four themes and produced a number of strategies for action.

In addition, an across-government working group was established with key government representatives. Their role was to identify existing and future strategies relating to people as they age. Individual meetings were also held with government, community and private sector groups.

Organisations represented in the consultation process are listed below. In addition to this, many individuals also provided their assistance and made a contribution and we offer them our sincere thanks.

Ministerial Advisory Board on Ageing

His Grace Emeritus Archbishop Leonard Faulkner
Ms Sue Balde
Mrs Laurie Barter
Mr (William) Brian Butler
Mrs Jan Cass
Professor Julianne Cheek
Mr James (Jim) Giles AM
Ms Theadora Papadopoulos
Mrs Joan Stone
Mr Neil Wallman

Council on the Ageing SA (COTA)

Mr Ian Yates AM
Ms Lindsay Simmons
Council on the Ageing Policy Council
Mrs Barbara Garrett MBE

Multicultural Communities Council of SA
Mr Ron Tan
Ms Vivien Hope

Agencies and services
Aboriginal Elders Village
Aboriginal Home Care Program
ACH Group
Active Ageing SA
Adoption, Refugee and Volunteer Services
Aged & Community Services SA and NT
Aged Care Association of Australia
Aged Rights Advocacy Service
Aged Rights Advocacy Service – Indigenous Advocacy Project
Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
Alzheimers Association
Asian Women's Consultative Council
Association of Independent Retirees
Association of Independent Retirees, Whyalla
Asthma SA
Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations
Australian Red Cross (SA Division)
BankSA
Baptist Community Services – Karpandi Elder Women's Program
BASMA Arabic Speaking Association, Multicultural Aged Care
Business SA
Berri Senior Citizens Club
Carers Association of SA
City of Salisbury
Community Care, Ethnic Link Services, Renmark
Community Centre of Serbia and Montenegro SA
Council of Aboriginal Elders of SA
Country Home Advocacy Project
Croatian Care for the Aged
DOME (Don't Overlook Mature Expertise) SA
Dutch Aged Care – Netherlands Australian Aged Services Association
Ethnic Link Services
Federation of Polish Organisations in SA
Filipino Cultural Association
Filipino Home and Community Care Service
Flinders University
Fran Whittingham Consulting
German Club - Aged Care
Goodwood Community Services - Filipino Home and Community Care Service
Goodwood Community Services - Greek Home Visiting Program
Grannies Group
Greek Orthodox Community of SA
Greek Pensioners Society of SA
Helping Hand Aged Care
HomeStart Finance
Independent Living Centre
Italian Benevolent Foundation
Kate Barnett & Associates

Latvian Aged Care ‘Laima'
Life Care
Lifeplan Funds Management
Local Government Association
Lovell HCS, Port Augusta
Metropolitan Domiciliary Care
Minda
Multicultural Aged Care
Natalie Fuller and Associates
Nepal-Australia Friendship Association
Orana Respite Service, Whyalla
Regional Manager, Riverland TAFESA
Renmark Paringa Community Centre
Renmark Turkish-Islamic Community
Respresentative/ Elder of Kaurna Community
Retirement Villages Association
Resthaven
Riverland Multicultural Communities Forum
Riverland Sikh Society , Glossop
Royal District Nursing Service
Seniors Information Service
Shelter SA
Sikh Society of SA
South Australian Council of Social Service
Southern Fleurieu Positive Ageing Team
St Vincent De Paul - Frederic Ozanam Housing Association
Turkish Association
Ukrainian Social Services
Uniting Care Wesley, Commonwealth Carelink, Port Augusta
University of Adelaide
University of South Australia
Urban and Regional Planning Solutions
Victor Harbour Council
Voice of Serbia
Volunteering SA
Whyalla Aged Care
Whyalla Multicultural Communities Centre

Commonwealth Government agencies

Centrelink
Department of Employment & Workplace Relations
Department of Health and Ageing
Department of Veterans Affairs

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