

Positive Ageing

A strategy for
current and future
Senior Victorians



Positive Ageing matters to us all



Victorians today are living longer and healthier lives than previous generations. There are real opportunities for current and future seniors to enjoy an improved quality of life. However there are some challenges.

Community attitudes to ageing all too often focus on loss of abilities rather than maximising older people's capacities. *Positive Ageing* aims to change those attitudes.

We all need to be better prepared for ageing. Our communities need to be more age-friendly.

The Victorian Government believes that senior Victorians have the right to participate fully in our society. Senior Victorians should be welcomed to participate in cultural activities and community life and be supported to remain in the workforce, if that is their choice.

Positive Ageing contributes to the Victorian Government's new social action plan, *A Fairer Victoria*. *Positive Ageing* reaffirms our practical commitment to a better quality of life in all its aspects for our seniors.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gavin Jennings". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Gavin Jennings MLC
Minister for Aged Care

What is *Positive Ageing*?


Positive Ageing is a strategy to maximise the quality of life and social recognition of senior Victorians. Seniors play many vital roles in our community, as family members, carers, volunteers, neighbours, workers and consumers. *Positive Ageing* will strengthen recognition of these roles.

In 2004/05 the Victorian Government provided \$5.1 Million over four years for *Positive Ageing* initiatives to support current and future seniors.

Positive Ageing is underpinned by five principles. Senior Victorians should have:

1. Confidence that their rights will be upheld, their autonomy accepted and their dignity respected.
2. Certainty that they are valued and listened to for their past, current and future contributions.
3. Opportunities to fully participate in their communities.
4. Access to information, support and services to maximise their independence and maintain their health and wellbeing.
5. Government services and communities which are responsive to their particular needs and interests and which recognise the increasing diversity of our community.

Positive Ageing applies these principles in practical ways to provide a better quality of life for senior Victorians.



Towards a more age-inclusive society

Positive Ageing provides opportunities for the whole community, not just for older people. There are many stereotypes and misconceptions about ageing. These need to be addressed through information and education and recognition of the diversity of our seniors.

We are developing innovative ways to better communicate with senior Victorians and to give them a stronger voice in community life.

Current *Positive Ageing* Initiatives

- Partnership projects with local government and the community to develop more age-friendly communities, to promote volunteering and accessible public open space (\$1.3M over three years)
- *Images of Age* grants to foster more inclusive images of older people in film, TV and theatre (\$0.1M)
- Forums for older people to express their views on significant issues affecting them (for example elder abuse and housing)
- Development of intergenerational projects (such as seniors mentoring school students)
- Elder Abuse Prevention Project to develop a community education and awareness strategy
- Providing additional support to the University of the Third Age Network (\$0.1M)



Opportunities for participation

Senior Victorians have the right to participate in all aspects of economic, social and community life.

Support and assistance will be provided to promote the benefits to employers of retaining mature-age workers. Advisory services will be developed for those who have retired or are contemplating leaving the workforce. The Victorian Government will also encourage more opportunities for lifelong learning.

Current *Positive Ageing* Initiatives

- Employer education to improve retention and retraining of older workers (\$0.4M over two years)
- Research into the labour market experience of older women
- Research into risks and benefits of financial products available for low-income older people

Access to information

Accurate information is important for all of us, whether it is about our health, finances or lifestyle. It is vital for senior Victorians to have access to relevant information so they can make informed decisions.

The take-up rate of information technology by senior Victorians is significantly less than for other members of the community. Improving seniors' access to information technology training and support is a major priority.

Positive Ageing Initiatives in 2005

- Enhancement of the *Seniors Information Victoria* provided by the Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria
- Campaign to encourage take up rates of information technology
- In partnership with the State Library (VICNET), improving internet access for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities (\$0.1M)

Better understanding the challenges of Positive Ageing

Positive Ageing will promote better understanding of the benefits and challenges of population ageing.

Research will contribute to a stronger evidence base, enabling well informed public debate, policy development and community education. This is important not only for decisions we make today, but also for planning for the future.

Positive Ageing Initiatives in 2005

- Seminars and publications on key ageing issues
- Research on financial and social issues
- Research on the diverse range of interests within Victoria's ageing population

Key partners

Positive Ageing involves working with key stakeholders, including:

- seniors advocacy and community organisations
- local government and other government agencies
- health services and financial institutions
- Universities of the Third Age, and
- the media

Further information

Further information about *Positive Ageing* and other activities of the Office of Senior Victorians within the Department for Victorian Communities can be found at www.seniors.vic.gov.au or phone 1300 366 356.

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for
your
life™

