

Working together to support healthy ageing

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

Every person should have the opportunity to live a long and healthy life. The Healthy Ageing project is about creating environments and opportunities that enable people to be and do what they value throughout their lives. *Everybody* can experience healthy ageing.

A number of strategies can contribute to achieving this, including:

- providing opportunities for older people to stay engaged, continue to learn and contribute to their community
- maintaining and growing friendships
- minimising the disability threshold so people can access community resources
- encouraging healthy behaviours like regular exercise and good food
- supporting older people to exercise choice.

The number of older people in our community is growing larger. Fostering relationships in later life is an important protective factor against loneliness.

OUR APPROACH

“With the right policies and services in place, population ageing can be viewed as a rich new opportunity for both individuals and societies.” (World Health Organisation)

IN PARTNERSHIP

Given the multifaceted nature of this issue, strategies to promote healthy ageing are most effective when they are undertaken in partnerships as part of a strategic approach to the wider issues facing older people.

The Healthy Ageing partnership is formed from health and human service organisations from across the local government areas of Banyule, Darebin and Nillumbik committed to reducing preventable illness and harm.

Three broad priority areas have been identified by our partner organisations:

- social connectivity and isolation
- transport
- older carers.

Further thinking by our partners revealed:

- a need for further exploration of the concept of social isolation and loneliness
- an interest in having support to strengthen capacity within organisations to co design a project
- the need to continue to explore the older carers theme, including gathering better data and developing a better understanding of the issues.

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SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

THOSE AT RISK

The risk of social isolation increases with age:

- 10% of older people in Victoria experience significant detrimental impacts from isolation and loneliness.
- Poor health is a risk for social isolation and social isolation is a risk for poorer health.
- Loneliness is as bad for health as smoking fifteen cigarettes a day, is worse than obesity and is likely to increase the risk of death by 29%.
- Lonely people are more likely to suffer from dementia, heart disease and depression.
- There is a clear link between transport options, social connection, community connectedness and psychological wellbeing.

Older people who are disadvantaged, vulnerable and face inequity are more likely to experience poor health and are also less likely to access appropriate support (World Health Organisation, 2017).

Examples of older people at particular risk of social isolation and loneliness include those:

- on low incomes
- living with disability, in low socioeconomic and/or rural areas
- living with housing stress or homelessness
- who are single, childless or living alone
- who are vulnerable and at risk of elder abuse
- with low levels of literacy where this reduces their access to information and services
- with limited or no information and communication technology skills.



BANYULE
Community Health



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