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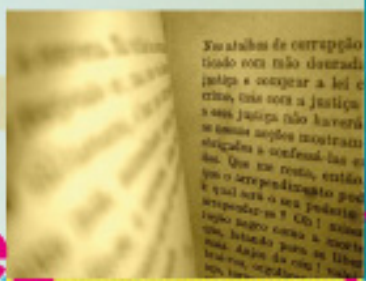
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# Active Engaged Valued

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## Older People and NSW Public Libraries



by Mylee Joseph



# **Active Engaged Valued**

## **Older People and NSW Public Libraries**

by  
Mylee Joseph

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Public Library Services  
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May you live all the days of your life.  
Jonathan Swift (1667 – 1745)

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## 1.0 Executive Summary

Libraries throughout NSW face an imminent 'age wave' as the baby boomer generation reaches retirement age. Retirees and older people have traditionally been an important target market for public libraries. The impact of a greatly increased proportion of older people in local communities will be an important consideration in library planning, facility design, resourcing, marketing strategies, the development of strategic partnerships and staffing. This paper seeks to identify trends, current research, stakeholders and to make recommendations to support strategic planning within the NSW public library network.

As libraries begin to plan for the shift in the proportions of older clients they serve there are a variety of key issues to be considered:

- the legislative and policy framework
- key stakeholders and strategic partnerships
- community development
- research and development of services and facilities
- marketing
- staffing and staff training.

In order to assist NSW public libraries in assessing their current capacity to meet the needs of the ageing community the State Library has prepared a capacity audit tool to assist in strategic planning. The publication of this paper introduces a process of reviewing and developing library services for older people in NSW. It is anticipated that the public library network will engage in the development of industry benchmarks for services to older people.

## 2.0 Introduction

Libraries provide an integral part of the infrastructure in local communities. In cities and towns around New South Wales there is a growing awareness of the need to prepare for rapidly increasing numbers of older people. Australia faces an 'age wave'<sup>1</sup> as the baby boomers (born between 1946 – 1965) move through their life cycle. The clock is ticking rapidly as in 2006 the leading edge baby boomers turn 60 and in 2011 they turn 65.

What will this mean for public libraries? Traditionally, library services to the aged have included large print, talking books and home library services. However, the ageing of the baby boomers may herald much higher expectations and demands of library services. To quote Allan Kleiman in his 1997 address to the IFLA congress:

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<sup>1</sup> Kennedy, D. (2003) *Ageing and Retirement in NSW* Research Centre on Ageing and Retirement (Powerpoint presentation)

The profession did not view library services to older adults as sexy or exciting or even controversial. But now librarians are beginning to discover that the ageing revolution is upon us!<sup>2</sup>

This paper identifies a variety of issues in providing effective public library services to an increasing proportion of older people, documents research, and provides strategies to assist in planning and developing library and information services to meet the needs of older people in NSW. The paper also identifies a number of key stakeholders in government and the community.

## 2.1 What is old?

The United Nations defines older people as those over 50 years of age. The NSW Department of Local Government identifies the target group "older people" in their Social and Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines as community members aged over 55 years. The Guidelines also state that in relation to older Aboriginal people it is more appropriate to look at ageing issues from the age of 45 years.<sup>3</sup>

However, many people over 50 do not identify themselves with the term 'older' and this highlights the risk of stereotyping 'older people'. Older people are a very diverse sector of the community including retirees, employees, business owners, carers, pensioners, frail aged and housebound, students, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities, people living in rural and remote locations and those living in coastal and urban areas.

There are, however, a set of physical characteristics which are generally associated with ageing including deteriorating vision, deteriorating hearing, reduced mobility, lessening physical strength and an increasing incidence of disease (eg stroke, dementia, arthritis). While none of these disabilities or diseases are the preserve of older people alone, the increasing numbers of older people will increase the likelihood of larger proportions of library clients with special needs. This will increase the demand for library services to be flexible and well designed to ensure that they are accessible and inclusive and cater to the needs of ageing community members.

Australia faces a pronounced ageing of its population over the next forty years. One-quarter of Australians will be aged 65 years or more by 2044/45, roughly double the present proportion. The proportion of the 'oldest old' will increase even more.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Kleiman, A. M. *Global Greying: Successful Strategies for Bridging Information Gaps with the Elderly Population. 63rd IFLA General Conference - Conference Programme and Proceedings - August 31- September 5, 1997*

<sup>3</sup> NSW Department of Local Government (2002) *Social and Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines*

<sup>4</sup> Productivity Commission (2005), *Economic Implications of an Ageing Australia, Research Report*, Canberra.

As libraries begin to plan for this shift in the proportions of older clients they serve there are a variety of key issues to be considered:

- the legislative and policy framework
- key stakeholders and strategic partnerships
- community development
- research and development of services and facilities
- marketing
- staffing and staff training.

## 2.2 A snapshot of ageing in NSW

Like the rest of Australia, the population of NSW is ageing both numerically (numbers of older people) and structurally (proportion of older people). New South Wales rates as the third or fourth fastest ageing state behind Tasmania and South Australia and on a par with Victoria. The following table drawn from the work of Dr Natalie Jackson indicates the percentage change anticipated in the number of people aged 65 and over in New South Wales.<sup>5</sup>

### Percentage of the population aged 65 years +

	Greater Sydney	NSW Balance	Total NSW	Australia
<b>2004</b>	12.0	15.8	13.4	13.0
<b>2022</b>	17.1	23.6	19.4	19.0
<b>2051</b>	24.3	32.2	26.9	27.1
<b>% change</b>	102.5	103.8	100.7	108.5

Source: Natalie Jackson (2004), *Population Ageing in New South Wales and its Local Government Areas*

The impact of ageing will be even greater in the NSW communities outside the Greater Sydney area with an average of 32.2% of the population in these areas aged over 65 years by 2051. Dr Jackson also stresses that Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a considerably younger age structure than the total population due to higher fertility rates and a lower life expectancy on average due to a variety of factors.

It is important to note that the great variation between the ageing profiles of communities is driven by many factors, some of which include the 'sea change / tree change' phenomenon and the internal migration of younger people seeking employment. Dr Jackson's work for the Local Government and Shires Association provides a unique ageing profile for each LGA in NSW.<sup>6</sup>

## 2.3 The NSW public library network serving older people

The NSW public library network includes 60 country library services with 174 branches and 37 metropolitan Sydney services with 92 branches. In NSW

<sup>5</sup> Natalie Jackson (2004), *Population Ageing in New South Wales and its Local Government Areas* <http://www.lgsa.org.au/www/html/233-the-impact-of-population-ageing-on-nsw-local-government.asp>

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

there are 363 library service points and in terms of market visibility and community awareness public libraries have a high level of recognition in many local communities.<sup>7</sup> 48% of people living in NSW are members of a public library.<sup>8</sup>

Any snapshot of the current service provision for older people across the public library network in NSW must begin with an acknowledgment of the variation in library services across the State. Libraries are a key Council service provided for local communities and tailored to the local environment and the needs of the community.

Despite the variation between local government areas there is a great deal that public libraries have in common. Across the network, libraries typically deliver the following services of particular interest to older clients:

- Recreational reading - fiction, hobbies and interests
- Information - including Council information, health and legal information in plain English
- Community information - directories and databases highlighting services available in the local community, many of these are available online
- Genealogy / family history resources
- Local history information
- Housebound library services - 90 library services in NSW provide targeted services to housebound residents<sup>9</sup>
- Large print
- Spoken word books
- Community language materials
- Newspapers and magazines
- Reader assistance - personalised assistance in locating information and resources, providing support to community members.

In dealing with the changing ageing population an increased demand for public library facilities, collections, technologies and programs is anticipated. NSW public library statistics indicate that libraries are already experiencing pressure in key areas of service delivery to older clients:

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<sup>7</sup> SLNSW *Public Libraries in New South Wales Directory 2005*

<sup>8</sup> *Public Library Statistics 2003/04*

<sup>9</sup> MPLA Home Library Service Working Group (2001) *NSW Home Library Service Network Survey* [http://www.mplansw.asn.au/hlsn/Results\\_survey/survey\\_results.htm](http://www.mplansw.asn.au/hlsn/Results_survey/survey_results.htm)

	Stock	Circulation	Turnover rate
Large print	720,630	3,405,610	4.72
Spoken word	254,182	1,113,041	4.37

Source: Public Library Statistics 2003/04

These high turnover rates are already higher in contrast to an average turnover rate of 3.38% for library materials generally. The significant increases in the number of older clients will have a substantial impact on libraries in New South Wales and their capacity to meet the needs of this client group.

Specialised areas of library service delivery in NSW have developed recognised industry benchmarks, including:

- *People Places – A guide for public library buildings in New South Wales*
- *Culturally diverse communities and the public library: a review of NSW public library multicultural services and*
- *Digital practice : guidelines for digitising images in NSW public libraries.*

The publication of this issues paper introduces a process of reviewing and developing library services for older people in NSW. It is anticipated that the public library network will engage in the development of industry benchmarks in this area of service. In order to assist libraries in assessing their current capacity to meet the needs of the ageing community the State Library of NSW has prepared a capacity audit tool to assist in strategic planning. See *Appendix 2*.

### 3. Legislative and policy framework

NSW public libraries provide services to communities within a multi-layered legislative and policy framework. Currently, the primary responsibility for funding public libraries is borne by local government with a mixture of recurrent and project based funding through the NSW State Government's funding strategy administered by the State Library of NSW. Some project based Commonwealth funding has also benefited libraries via programs like "Networking the Nation".

In order to adequately address the needs of the ageing population cooperation and coordination between all levels of government will be required. It is clear that governments will face many challenges in meeting the service delivery requirements of the ageing community, not the least of which will be the increasing demand for public library services and facilities.

#### 3.1 International

##### United Nations Principles for Older Persons

These five key principles provide a framework for identifying the needs of older people in the community generally and also as library users:

- **Independence**  
eg information and communications technology (ICT) training; book delivery services; access to relevant community information; formats and facilities that allow independence eg large print / audio books; wheelchair / walking frame friendly aisles; access for scooters
- **Participation**  
eg focus groups; input into library planning; participation in local government; volunteering; oral histories; friends of libraries; family history; local studies and friendship groups
- **Care**  
eg needs of older people a priority in planning; information on legal issues in plain English; health information that is up-to-date and in plain English
- **Self-fulfilment**  
eg home library services for the housebound; large print; audio books; programs; older workers on the staff
- **Dignity**  
eg equal employment opportunity; appropriately trained staff; access to services; adaptive technologies<sup>10</sup>

The five UN principles for Older Persons could be applied as an internal planning tool by libraries to assess proposed strategies and initiatives and how appropriately they address the needs of older people using the library.

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<sup>10</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *United Nations Principles for Older Persons*. <http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/olderpersons.pdf>.

### **3.2 National**

Public library services are delivered from at least 1,716 library locations throughout Australia and are operated by 532 local government library organisations.<sup>11</sup> Within the wider community public libraries enjoy a high level of recognition as a 'safe place to go'.<sup>12</sup>

The vital contribution of public libraries to social capital and to the educational and economic development of communities is recognised across the developed world. Support for this role has underpinned the commitment of local and state governments in New South Wales to high quality public library services. Libraries can be fully effective for their communities only if they have the right combination of proficient staff, up-to-date information resources, reliable equipment and telecommunications, and well-planned buildings.<sup>13</sup>

There are many opportunities for Commonwealth government agencies to develop strategic partnerships with the public library network. In many cases, the public library can be a sustainable local link for projects where adequate funding is provided.

#### **Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)**

HREOC administers legislation addressing issues of discrimination, including discrimination based on age and disability. The rights of ageing members of our community are enshrined in the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the NSW Disability Services Act 1993. The legislation protects older people from being the targets of discrimination.<sup>14</sup>

Design of library facilities and services, equal employment opportunity policies and the provision of staff training can all be important strategies for libraries in minimising passive and active discrimination against older people.

#### **National Strategy for an Ageing Australia**

The National Strategy for an Ageing Australia identifies key issues for the ageing population, specifically: retirement incomes, housing, transport, technology (health and communication), older people in the workforce, access to health services, lifelong learning, and formal and informal care services.

With people living longer, the period after retirement from paid work is becoming longer, and for many people, more active. They have more time for education, recreation, cultural pursuits and voluntary work.

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<sup>11</sup> ABS (2005) 8561.0 *Public Libraries, Australia*

<sup>12</sup> Cox, Eva (2000) "A safe place to go" *Libraries and Social Capital*

<sup>13</sup> Nesbitt, H. and Bligh Voller Nield (2005) *People Places – A guide for public library buildings in New South Wales*

<sup>14</sup> Australian Legal Information Institute <http://www.austlii.edu.au/>

People will expect more from retirement and will be looking to have quality lifestyles wherever possible.<sup>15</sup>

There is an obvious link between public libraries and the effective provision of equitable access to technology, lifelong learning, recreation, cultural pursuits and voluntary work. In addition, there is a large proportion of older people in the library workforce. There are many opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships between Commonwealth government agencies and public libraries to meet the needs of the ageing community.

In recognition of the need for research into the age wave and associated impacts the Federal government has established the Ageing Research Online portal and convened *The National Symposium on Ageing Research: building evidence, policy and practice* 23 - 25 September 2005.<sup>16</sup> Research into the needs of older adults as library users could also be contributed to this clearing house, benefiting libraries around the country and also raising the profile of libraries as a vital part of the infrastructure serving older adults.

### **Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA)**

FECCA has developed a policy focussing on the issues of ageing as they affect migrants and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD). The difficulty for members of the community who do not speak English fluently in accessing appropriate services and information is considered, particularly as spoken English skills can deteriorate as people age.

The older population from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is not only increasing more quickly than the Australian born in terms of size but it is also ageing more rapidly such that by 2026 it is projected that one in four people aged 80 and over will be from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.<sup>17</sup>

Most public libraries identify the needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in the community. In planning library services to meet the needs of the ageing cohort this research into the demographic profile of communities and consultation regarding their needs will continue to be a priority.

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<sup>15</sup> Commonwealth of Australia (2001) *National Strategy for an Ageing Australia: An Older Australia, Challenges and Opportunities for all.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ageing Research Online* <http://www.aro.gov.au> Accessed 9/8/2005

<sup>17</sup> FECCA *Ageing and Aged Services* <http://www.fecca.org.au/Policy/ageing.html>

## **Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)**

In partnership with the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) has developed a website *Planning for an ageing community* to act as a clearing house for resources which will assist local government in planning for an ageing population.<sup>18</sup> This website is part of the *Local government population and ageing project*. ALGA has also prepared the *Australian Local Government Population Ageing Action Plan 2004 – 2008*.<sup>19</sup>

There may be opportunities for public libraries and library associations to contribute policy statements and examples of best practice to the *Planning for an ageing community* website and also to ALGA's *Ageing in Place* research journal focussing on local government and ageing issues in local communities.

### **3.3 New South Wales**

#### **NSW Healthy Ageing Framework**

In NSW the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing is the official advisory body to the NSW Government on matters of interest to older people. The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, through the Office for Ageing, leads the whole of government approach to the Ageing Framework.

In September 2004 the NSW government held a Forum on Ageing which drew together key stakeholders to facilitate a review of ageing issues, updating the Healthy Ageing Framework 2003 and identifying emerging trends. Information from the Forum and consultations is instrumental in updating the *Healthy Ageing Framework 2004 - 2009*. As key stakeholders public libraries can make significant contributions to future forums on ageing.<sup>20</sup>

The NSW Healthy Ageing Framework principles set broad guidelines for services to seniors. These principles are complemented at the local government level by the Local Government and Shires Associations' *Aged Services policy statement*.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> ALGA *Planning for an ageing community* [www.alga.asn.au/policy/healthAgeing/ageing.php](http://www.alga.asn.au/policy/healthAgeing/ageing.php)

<sup>19</sup> ALGA *Australian Local Government Population Ageing Action Plan 2004 - 2008*  
<http://www.alga.asn.au/policy/healthAgeing/ageing/plan/>

<sup>20</sup> NSW Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care, *NSW Healthy ageing framework 1998-2003*, p4. See <http://www.add.nsw.gov.au/PDF/hafwork.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Local Government Association and Shires Associations of NSW, *Policy statements*, as amended by the 2001 Annual Conference, p6

## **Local Government Association of NSW and Shires Associations of NSW (LGSA)**

Ageing and disability is one of the key portfolio areas for the Local Government Association of NSW and the Shires Association of NSW. In 2004 a major strategic project on ageing was initiated. The research outcomes included *Planning the local government response to ageing and place* a key document intended to offer a framework to assist councils begin to plan for the population ageing unique to their area and *The impact of population ageing on NSW Local Government* in which University of Tasmania demographer Dr Natalie Jackson provides comprehensive population ageing profiles for each local government area. In each profile Dr Jackson indicates the current (2004) and projected (2022) age-sex structures for each local government area in NSW.<sup>22</sup>

These profiles reveal that the population ageing will affect each NSW local government areas in different ways.<sup>23</sup> Regional areas, particularly more remote ones, experience a number of additional disadvantages with the ageing population. These include proportionately higher numbers of older persons, long distances to specialist medical care, higher telecommunications costs, limited infrastructure and the difficulty in attracting professionals to provide essential services.

### **Local government – Library provision**

Having adopted the *Library Act 1939* councils in New South Wales are required to meet certain conditions to be eligible for State subsidies. Councils must provide a free public library service including free membership, free loans, free Internet access for information and cannot charge for deliveries to sick or disabled residents.<sup>24</sup>

### **Local government – Social, community and cultural plans**

Under section 200 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*, councils are required to produce a social or community plan at least once every five years. The Cultural Planning Guidelines for local government recommend that where councils choose to develop a cultural plan they also consider developing the plan in conjunction with their social/community plan.<sup>25</sup>

Public libraries represent one of the most accessible and highly used community and cultural services provided by local government for their

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<sup>22</sup> Jackson, N. (2004) *Population Ageing in New South Wales and its Local Government Areas* <http://www.lgsa.org.au>

<sup>23</sup> Local Government Association and Shire Associations of NSW (2004) *Planning the local government response to ageing and place*.

<sup>24</sup> Government of New South Wales Legislation home page Library Act 1939 s10 <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/>

<sup>25</sup> NSW Ministry for the Arts and the NSW Department of Local Government *Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government* <http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/dlg/dlghome/documents/Information/CPG-final.pdf>

communities. In the consultation and development of council social and cultural plans public libraries are key stakeholders and provide many services which address the needs of all of the identified mandatory target groups which include older people.<sup>26</sup>

#### **4.0 Key stakeholders and strategic partnerships**

Public libraries in NSW are an integral part of the wider community and their ability to effectively meet the needs of the age wave will be enhanced by cooperation and communication with stakeholders and in developing mutually beneficial strategic partnerships.

Community collaboration implies a strong connection to the external environment and a community-based approach to service delivery. This means that a library must commit to work together with its partner(s) to identify the issues, develop the strategy and pursue a resolution. Community collaborations should avoid duplication of service and focus on a cost-effective method to deliver service.<sup>27</sup>

While there are some common stakeholders and partners for libraries across New South Wales, there will also be many opportunities at a local level to develop relationships that best fit the needs of local communities. Several of the stakeholders that public libraries will have in common include: local government authorities, community groups, COTA National Seniors, University of the Third Age and the Vision Australia Foundation.

#### **4.1 Local Government**

Public libraries form a vital part of local government service delivery in New South Wales. They represent a substantial investment in infrastructure and staffing and yield a considerable return on this investment to the community. Some of the most important strategic partnerships for libraries to develop networks within the local community include council community development officers and other colleagues within council, for example community safety and Meals on Wheels<sup>28</sup> coordinators.

Public libraries need to actively link in with ... council initiatives eg lifelong learning, e-government, safety initiatives, independent living and supporting people. By using such initiatives as a platform, there is potential to improve services for older people.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> NSW Department of Local Government (2002) *Social and Community Planning and Reporting guidelines* p.15 <http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/>

<sup>27</sup> Herrera, L. *Transforming Libraries into Community-Based Partnerships Perspective Paper* No. 5 <http://www.library.ca.gov/LDS/convo/convoc09.html> Accessed 3 Jan 2006

<sup>28</sup> Meals on Wheels <http://www.nswmealsonwheels.org.au/100124.php>

<sup>29</sup> Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) *Library and Information Services for Older People* <http://www.cilip.org.uk/professionalguidance/equalopportunities/briefings/olderpeople.htm>

## **4.2 Community groups**

There are a variety of agencies in the community grappling with the impacts of serving an ageing population, which offers many opportunities for strategic partnerships. The social planning process identifies members of the community as key stakeholders in the planning and delivery of council services, including community health workers and other service providers in the sector including Senior Citizens groups and Meals on Wheels volunteers who have regular contact with older clients.

There is also the potential for key industry groups [eg Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), Public Libraries Australia (PLA), Country Public Libraries Association (CPLA) and Metropolitan Public Libraries Association (MPLA)] to engage with peak bodies, including COTA National Seniors, in discussions on their advocacy initiatives and research programs and seeking opportunities for cooperation.

## **4.3 COTA National Seniors**

In November 2002, the Council on the Ageing (COTA) and National Seniors entered into a partnership arrangement. COTA National Seniors is now the largest seniors organisation in Australia with more than 280,000 individual members and over 1500 seniors organisations under its umbrella.<sup>30</sup> COTA National Seniors have a National Policy document which outlines their key areas of advocacy and research, this policy includes statements and strategies which directly affect public libraries in information provision and information and communication technologies.<sup>31</sup>

Other consumer driven seniors agencies in the community are important advocates and partners for public libraries. Some of these potential partners include the University of the Third Age (U3A), Computer Pals, religious organisations and Senior Citizens organisations.

## **4.4 University of the Third Age (U3A)**

The University of the Third Age is an international movement that encourages retired people to take part in lifelong learning activities for pleasure. U3As allow people to study in a relaxed environment at low cost. There are no prior qualifications, no exams and no degrees awarded.<sup>32</sup> In recent years U3A has also offered online learning opportunities via U3A Online, expanding to meet the needs of older members of the community who are isolated either geographically, through physical or social circumstances, or constrained by responsibilities as a carer.

The impacts of increased U3A participation may be felt in a variety of ways in the public library: libraries may find online services are in demand for U3A

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<sup>30</sup> COTA National Seniors <http://www.nationalseniors.com.au/cota%20partnership.htm>

<sup>31</sup> COTA National Seniors *National Policy Document 2005*  
<http://www.cota.org.au/Policy2005.pdf> Accessed 10 August 2005

<sup>32</sup> U3A Online *U3A Movement* <http://www3.griffith.edu.au/03/u3a/>

clients who are undertaking online learning opportunities; library meeting rooms may be sought as venues for classes; information and resources on specific topics may be in demand due to course curricula; and information about U3A courses may be included in community information resources.

#### **4.5 Vision Australia Foundation**

It is estimated there are currently approximately 380,000 people living in Australia with legal blindness or low vision. By 2030 this number is expected to double, as the baby boomer generation ages coupled with the fact that people are living longer. Vision Australia Foundation services are designed to help people make the most of their remaining sight, to continue living independently and to lead fulfilling lives.<sup>33</sup>

Vision Australia provides library services through the National Information and Library Service (NILS) to clients and public library clients may also access these resources. Vision Australia can also provide expert information on adaptive technology for visual impairment.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Vision Australia Foundation <http://www.visionaustralia.org.au/>

<sup>34</sup> National Information Library Service <http://www.nils.org.au/>

## 5.0 Developing Communities

With a focus on accessible, equitable services, free public libraries are ideally positioned to contribute to the development of social capital in local communities. For many older people, particularly those left single after the death of a partner, through divorce or by choice, the library staff may be vital points of human contact in an otherwise lonely week. For people on low incomes libraries provide access to information and resources which significantly improve their quality of life.

In his paper to the IFLA conference Allan Kleiman provided a manifesto for public library services meeting the needs of the age wave.

Libraries serve their communities by:

1. Contributing to a positive attitude toward ageing and the aged;
2. Providing information and education on ageing and its problems for older adults as well as professionals and laypersons who work with this group;
3. Facilitating the use of libraries by the aged through improved library design and access to transportation;
4. Providing library service appropriate to the special needs of all the aged, including the minority who may be homebound and institutionalized.
5. Utilizing the potential of older adults as liaisons to reach their peers and as a resource in inter-generational programming;
6. Employing older adults in the provision of library services;
7. Involving older adults in the planning process when designing services and programs for the entire community;
8. Developing working relationships with other agencies and groups concerned with these needs and problems;
9. Providing programs, services and information for those preparing for retirement;
10. Continually exploring ways of making these services more effective, aggressively seeking sources of funding, and assigning a portion of the regular budget to meet the needs of older adults.<sup>35</sup>

The age wave presents both challenges and opportunities for libraries in their communities. Libraries cannot afford to avoid the challenges of addressing social exclusion issues, the development of appropriate aged focussed services and eliminating age-based discrimination. Conversely, libraries have great opportunities with skilled volunteers and advocates, a high demand for

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<sup>35</sup> Kleiman, A. M. *Global Greying: Successful Strategies for Bridging Information Gaps with the Elderly Population. 63rd IFLA General Conference - Conference Programme and Proceedings - August 31- September 5, 1997*

library services and in some communities the impact of skilled baby boomers choosing to move to the area to make lifestyle changes.

### 5.1 Culturally And Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities

The findings of the Australian Immigration Research project *Independence in ageing: the social and financial circumstances of older overseas-born Australians* identifies key areas of disadvantage affecting members of the CALD community:

Overall, people from non-English-speaking countries were less likely to have superannuation coverage, and those that were covered had fewer years of benefit contribution. They were likely to retire earlier (at ages 45 to 54), and more likely to have done so involuntarily as a result of retrenchment. Once retired, people from non-English-speaking countries were more likely to be dependent on government pensions or benefits.

In general, the overseas-born aged 55 and over were not found to be healthier than the Australian-born, despite the expected findings concerning the better health status of the overseas-born. The overseas-born made less use of residential aged care facilities, and this trend cannot be entirely explained by the younger age structure of older overseas-born people in comparison to the Australian-born.<sup>36</sup>

Members of the community who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds will have particular needs which libraries may struggle to address. For example, large print and audio books are available in some community languages, however they can be more difficult to source. Providing home library services to a variety of language groups may place particular strain on staffing skill sets while low literacy levels in their first language may also place CALD community members at a greater disadvantage.

Serving one of Sydney's most multiculturally diverse communities, Fairfield Council's library service conducted a survey in 2005 of seniors in three foreign language communities. They surveyed older library users and non-users to explore their experiences and degree of satisfaction with library services available. The survey was conducted in English, Arabic, Vietnamese and Spanish. The findings indicated that reading newspapers and photocopying were by far the most popular services followed by access to computers and English conversation classes. One less surprising outcome of the survey was the importance placed on easy access to parking.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Australian Immigration Research (2002) *Independence in Ageing: The social and financial circumstances of older overseas-born Australians*

[www.immi.gov.au/research/publications/ia/ia3.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/research/publications/ia/ia3.htm) Accessed 3 Jan 2006

<sup>37</sup> Hoegh-Guldberg, H. (2005) *Aged services survey for Fairfield City Library Service*.

## 5.2 Sea change / tree change

In February 2004, the National Sea Change Taskforce was established as a national body to represent the interests of coastal councils and communities experiencing the effects of rapid population and tourism growth.

Coastal councils have ... been unprepared for the large inflow of new residents, which has been largely unexpected. They do not have the resources to meet the continuing increase in demand for infrastructure, such as roads, mains water supply, sewerage, and power. High growth coastal communities also experience a lack of essential services, such as public transport, health care, emergency services and education facilities.

The movement to the coast is expected to continue for the next 10 to 15 years, driven in part by the retirement of the 'baby boomer' generation and by factors such as the rapid increase in house prices in capital cities and a desire by many people to seek a better lifestyle, away from the congestion of the cities. Given the acceleration of growth in these areas, and the scale of projected growth in the future, local councils face a significant challenge in dealing with the social, environmental and economic issues related to rapid growth.<sup>38</sup>

Some communities already experiencing a sea change induced ageing wave include the "large influx of retired people to coastal areas of NSW such as Port Stephens and Bega".<sup>39</sup> This greatly exacerbates the anticipated ageing of the affected communities and will place particular pressure on public library services, a key part of the infrastructure supported by local government.<sup>40</sup>

Other regional cities have cooperated in the development of a "regional cities campaign" to "develop a positive marketing strategy that promotes the virtues of living in a regional centre to city dwellers that might be considering a 'tree change'... The 10 councils involved include, Griffith, Wagga Wagga, Bathurst, Orange, Albury, Dubbo and Tamworth."<sup>41</sup> If the tree changers are also largely weighted with baby boomers they will impact on the ageing of these regional cities and surrounding communities and consequently the libraries that serve them.

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<sup>38</sup> National Sea change Task Force *The Challenge of Coastal Growth*  
<http://www.seachangetaskforce.org.au/Publications/The%20Challenge.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> Lgov NSW (2002) *Draft Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Ageing. Inquiry into the Long Term Strategies to Address the Ageing of the Australian Population over the next 40 years.*

<sup>40</sup> 2005 Colin Mills Scholarship winner and manager of Bega Valley Shire Library, Janice Biggin, focussed on the impact of sea change / tree change on communities in her library study tour.

<sup>41</sup> Bathurst Regional Council Meeting news <http://www.bathurst.nsw.gov.au>

### 5.3 Grey nomads

Some regional areas, particularly those on popular routes for travelling around Australia, may find increasing numbers of grey nomads visiting libraries. The lure of free Internet access may appeal as grey nomads seek to keep in touch with families and friends at home. Lending library materials to itinerant members may require substantial revision of lending policies. Some library services have paperback collections specifically set up for this purpose and grey nomads may also utilise their reciprocal borrowing rights within New South Wales if they are NSW residents.

### 5.4 Community consultation

Knowing who users are is essential for improving and developing services. Older people should be automatically included in consultation and it should be in such a way and in such formats as are accessible to them.<sup>42</sup>

Community consultation is an integral aspect of all community development work and plays a vital role in the regular development of Council social plans. Exploring the needs of older clients via focus groups and customer satisfaction surveys is the key to developing a library service which meets the needs of older people in the community. For example the Fairfield City Libraries user / non-user survey of aged people in their community from three language communities.<sup>43</sup>

In the Australian Capital Territory community consultation formed a key part of the development of *Are you over 50? A longer-term strategy for older people's use of Canberra's Library Services and Facilities*. With 33.7% of the ACT's population expected to be over 50 by 2013 the need to address the age wave is a very high priority. *Are you over 50?* identified products and services that older people in the community need now and in the future.

Key factors that the ACT research addressed included: mobility, physical health, mental health, economic status, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and social networks and supports. One of the outcomes of this consultation process and subsequent planning in the ACT was a redesign of the home library services to include two new mobile libraries serving retirement communities.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) *Library and Information Services for Older People*

<http://www.cilip.org.uk/professionalguidance/equalopportunities/briefings/olderpeople.htm>

<sup>43</sup> Hans Hoegh-Guldberg (2005) *Aged services survey for Fairfield City Library Service*. Economic Strategies.

<sup>44</sup> ACT Urban Services (2002) *Future Strategy for Library Services to Older People*.

## 6.0 Challenging impacts of ageing

While the baby boomer age wave heralds a much greater emphasis on active ageing and providing appropriate services, it should not be overlooked that the portion of the 'old old' in Australia is likely to increase even more.

Of all people aged 60 years and over, less than half (41%) reported needing assistance, because of disability or old age, to manage health conditions or cope with everyday activities. However, people aged 85 years and over reported a much higher need for assistance than those aged 60-69 years (84% compared with 26%).<sup>45</sup>

As people age they may move into supported living arrangements and aged care facilities, while other will remain in their own homes with support services like home care and Meals on Wheels supporting their independence. Frail age is characterised by higher dependency, increased disability and a greater need for support services to maintain independence and quality of life. The impact on libraries will be an increased demand for many of the services currently provided for seniors and clients with disabilities; including home library services, book delivery, large print, technology for low vision, hearing aid loops in meeting rooms and talking books.

The potential for newer technologies to revolutionise the types of resources available can already be seen in the introduction of compressed MP3 file formats to talking books on CD and listening devices. Because of their small size and good fidelity, MP3 files have become a popular way to store music files on both computers and portable devices.

Library services suitable for the active aged are quite diverse, while more dependent frail aged clients will place greater demands almost exclusively on home library services. The great challenge facing many libraries will be developing sustainable models of home library services. As a very labour intensive, personalised service it will need to be adequately resourced to meet a demand that has the potential to multiply existing client bases several times over.

## 6.1 Dementia

It is expected that as the population aged 65 and over increases, so too will the number of people with dementia.

In 2002 there were approximately 162,000 people in Australia with dementia... In Australia, dementia is the second largest cause of disability burden for all people but for older people causes the highest levels of severe or profound disability. By 2016 it will be the largest disability burden, surpassing depression and all other chronic illness.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> ABS (2003) 4430.0 *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings*

<sup>46</sup> Access Economics (March 2003) *The Dementia Epidemic: economic impact and positive solutions fro Australia*. Prepared for Alzheimer's Australia, March 2003 p.iv.

People with dementia have particular needs caused by the illness which may affect the types of library services that are appropriate for this user group, for example in the earlier stages of dementia a shortening attention span may make lengthy talking books inappropriate. It may be necessary to research in more detail the types of services and resources which are appropriate for a client affected by dementia. Some examples of appropriate resources may include music recordings and reminiscence therapy kits with material from local history collections. Those caring for people with dementia at home may also have particular needs as will many other carers in the community.

## 6.2 Carers

In 2003, there were 2.6 million carers who provided some assistance to those who needed help because of disability or age. About one fifth of these (19%) were primary carers, that is people who provided the majority of the informal help needed by a person with a disability. Just over half (54%) of all carers were women. Women were also more likely (71%) to be primary carers. Of those providing care, 1.0 million (39%) were in the 35-54 year age range. This age group's caring responsibilities involved children, partners and/or ageing parents.

Those who provided care to people with a disability were more likely to be older and/or have a disability than those who did not provide care. Twenty-four per cent of primary carers were aged 65 years and over, compared to 13% of the total population. Of those living in households, the disability rates were 40% for primary carers, 35% for all carers and 20% for non-carers.<sup>47</sup>

The number of people actively engaged in caring for a family member with some type of disability is likely to increase in proportion to the ageing community. Many carers will also be part of the ageing cohort themselves and this may place some increased demands on libraries, for example:

- disseminating community information about support groups and services
- providing information resources to support carers
- libraries may be well situated to provide venues for support group meetings
- housebound library services may need to be expanded to include carers
- online access to library services may be of great benefit to carers who are confined to their homes for much of the time

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<sup>47</sup> ABS (2003) 4430.0 *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings*

### 6.3 Grandparents as carers

A number of older people in our communities are primary carers raising their grand children. This family situation can arise for a variety of reasons including: parental disability, death, imprisonment, substance abuse and child neglect, abuse or abandonment.<sup>48</sup>

Grandparents are the guardians in around 1% of all families with children aged 0-17 (22,500 families). This represents a total of 31,100 children; in two thirds of these families the natural parent(s) are living elsewhere.<sup>49</sup>

While many services are offered by public libraries for families it may be appropriate to consider marketing existing children's services to grandparents in the community.

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<sup>48</sup> Centrelink: *Grandparents and carers who raise and care for children*  
[http://www.centrelink.gov.au/Internet/Internet.nsf/individuals/pg\\_grandparents.htm](http://www.centrelink.gov.au/Internet/Internet.nsf/individuals/pg_grandparents.htm)

<sup>49</sup> Scott, J. (2004) *Mythbuster – Grandparents as carers*. COTA National Seniors  
<http://www.cota.org.au/gparmyth.htm>

## 7.0 Positioning libraries for the age wave

Older people read more and are more frequent visitors to public libraries, with people over 65 visiting libraries five times more a year than younger people.<sup>50</sup>

In order to embrace the age wave libraries need to plan and prioritise services for older people. This priority will be reflected in ongoing research into the needs of older members of the community, (both library users and non users), policy statements, strategic plans and marketing plans which target older clients. A number of library services have already begun to develop strategic plans for delivering services to older people, including the ACT Library and Information Services (ACTLIS) *Future Strategy for Library Services to Older People* and the Yarra Plenty Regional Library's *Aged Persons Strategic Framework*.

Some of the key roles that libraries will fill in the life of older community members require particular attention. These include being centres of lifelong learning, providing the technology required to “maintain a place in the wired world”, providing resources to support well ageing, opportunities for volunteering and home library services for the housebound.<sup>51</sup>

### 7.1 Libraries as life long learning agencies

Lifelong learning makes a key contribution to the capacity to remain active and independent. Individuals need to be able and motivated to learn throughout life so that they are equipped with up-to-date skills and competencies and have the choice to work in later life or remain actively involved in the community.<sup>52</sup>

It is incongruous to suggest that the baby boomers will not wish to continue to develop their interests and skills as they age. “The national success of the University of the Third Age, through which members exchange skills without seeking formal qualifications, demonstrates the extent to which older adults may be interested in using their increased leisure time for educational, intellectual and creative self-development. Public libraries can provide premises and resources to facilitate the development of such groups.” U3A has expanded their reach to older members of the community who are

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<sup>50</sup> Evans, HDR and Kelly J Analytical report for the National Strategy for an Ageing Australia: Time use in later life: Employment, Family Leisure, Adult Education, Charity and Arts among Older Australians. Melbourne 1999

<sup>51</sup> Williamson, K. et al (2006) ‘Wanting it now’: baby boomers and the public library of the future *Australian Library Journal* 55 no 1 pp.54-71

<sup>52</sup> The National Strategy for an Ageing Australia (1999) *Employment for Mature Age Workers Issues Paper* <http://www.health.gov.au/Internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/ageing-foa-wlplan-emppaper.htm> Accessed 10 June 2005

isolated either geographically, or through physical or social circumstances (including carers) via the U3A Online program.<sup>53</sup>

Libraries offer access to materials and resources to support independent studies, older people returning to study via open university courses and members of other interest groups. Library programming includes book clubs, author talks, inter-generational programs and other presentations of interest to older people. As the trend for older people to enjoy better health and longer life expectancy continues, opportunities to engage in life long learning will be in great demand and consequently increase demand on library services and programs.

Some examples of successful inter-generational programming include:

- SMS / text message workshops with youth as tutors for seniors<sup>54</sup>
- Internet tutorials with youth trained to assist older people in a one-on-one session
- Grandparent story times for children and their family members

One remarkable example from the Los Angeles Public Library has been running successfully since 1989. *Grandparents and Books* is a program in which older adult volunteers "Library Grandparents" are trained to read to children and have children read to them in the library after school. The program brings children and older adults together from diverse cultural, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds to share in the love of reading.<sup>55</sup>

## 7.2 Technology and maintaining a place in the wired world

The ability to access library information and services online will be a priority for busy seniors who are technologically savvy. A recent study considering the impact of the retirement of the baby boomers on public libraries indicated that:

...amongst other roles for the public library, baby boomers would like it to be a vibrant 'social hub', to assist them to maintain their place in the wired world, and to provide them with continuing education as well as a range of culturally-related activities.<sup>56</sup>

The same study stresses that public libraries will need to provide "state-of-the-art computer access especially because, as the years pass after retirement, home equipment will become obsolescent. Economy rather than speed and capacity will become the basis for choosing a home Internet service provider."

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<sup>53</sup> Kendall, M. (1996) Public library services for older adults. *Library Review* vol.45, no.1 pp 16-29.

<sup>54</sup> "Short Message Service." SMS is used to send text messages to mobile phones.

<sup>55</sup> LAPL Grandparents and books <http://www.lapl.org/about/gab.html>

<sup>56</sup> Williamson, K. et al (2006) 'Wanting it now': baby boomers and the public library of the future *Australian Library Journal* 55 no 1 pp.54-71

## Silver surfers

Business is also going to have to recognise that if they wish to be successful in the growing 'silver' market they will need to make sure that their technology is understood by and can be used by older consumers.<sup>57</sup>

Internet tutorials for seniors are a popular service offered by many libraries on a regular or occasional basis. Existing computer clubs and other training opportunities are likely to continue to be in demand. Despite large numbers of baby boomers being very technologically savvy, the tendency of computer interfaces, operating systems and communications technology to evolve rapidly will ensure a constant need for 'update' opportunities for those who are out of the workforce and may lose touch with newer generation computers. Library staff are likely to have an on-going role as tutors in the use of computer facilities and Internet searching using the facilities provided in the libraries.

Older people will have the time and the ability to learn the new technologies and they are already doing this in greater numbers. But we will need to make sure that older people are not excluded from the use of new technology through lack of access, lack of understanding of how to use the technology, or fear of using it. The design and delivery of new technology, including online information and services, will need to consider the functional and cognitive abilities of many more older users.<sup>58</sup>

## Access and equity

The high proportion of seniors who will have access to the Internet at home or at work will ensure an ongoing demand for remote access to library services, information and products, eg electronic databases. Web based access to resources may also blur the geographic boundaries defining client groups, particularly as people can email libraries anywhere in the world while researching family history, memoirs and local historical information. On the other hand, public libraries will continue to be the most accessible point for low income earners seeking to use the Internet.

Many well designed websites already offer options for increasing the font size as required. However, a surprising number of websites are still not following best practice Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. The Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) works with organizations around the world to develop strategies, guidelines, and resources to help make the Web accessible to people with disabilities.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Commonwealth of Australia (2001) *National Strategy for an Ageing Australia: An Older Australia, Challenges and Opportunities for all*. p. 43

<sup>58</sup> Commonwealth of Australia (2001) *National Strategy for an Ageing Australia: An Older Australia, Challenges and Opportunities for all*. p.43

<sup>59</sup> W3 Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) <http://www.w3.org/WAI/>

It is essential that the Web be accessible in order to provide equal access and equal opportunity to people with disabilities. An accessible Web can also help people with disabilities more actively participate in society.<sup>60</sup>

Certainly not all older people will be affected by disabilities, however the design of web based library services could easily be improved by adopting a universal design approach – as what works well for people with disabilities will also work well for older people and the wider community.

New technologies are constantly being developed and there are already some possibilities that clearly have applications for libraries, including providing information about services in electronic files that can be downloaded for conversion to large print or read using MP3<sup>61</sup> or DAISY<sup>62</sup> format readers.

### **Designing websites for seniors**

Library websites are often designed to include a number of portals targeting client groups, for example children, teenagers and family history researchers. There are a couple of good examples of library portals targeting seniors:

- Phoenix Public Library offers a ‘Senior living’ section of their library website which features: computers and the Internet, community resources, fun and learning, health and wellness, money and volunteering. There is also an easy to find link for increasing the font size on the screen.<sup>63</sup>
- Clients of the Brooklyn Public Library can search the library events calendar and limit the search results to activities for ‘older adults’.<sup>64</sup>

### **Multilingual senior surfers**

VICNET and the Office of Senior Victorians formed a partnership to provide awareness raising and training opportunities targeting seniors from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.<sup>65</sup> The development of the pilot national MyLanguage portal will also provide a valuable resource for libraries addressing the needs of CALD community members.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> W3C Web accessibility initiative (2005) *Introduction to Web Accessibility*  
<http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/accessibility.php>

<sup>61</sup> Due to their small size and good fidelity, MP3 files have become a popular way to store music files on both computers and portable devices.  
<http://www.sharpened.net/glossary/definition.php?mp3>

<sup>62</sup> DAISY/NISO is a set of hardware and software to record, store, transfer and read digital audio books. <http://ulc.cast.org:8088/ulc2/jsp/user/Formats.jsp>

<sup>63</sup> Phoenix Public Library <http://www.phoenixpubliclibrary.org/seniorliving.jsp> Accessed 27 January 2006.

<sup>64</sup> Brooklyn Public Library <http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/seniors/> Accessed 27 January 2006.

<sup>65</sup> Through Vicnet, the State Library of Victoria delivers information and communication technologies, and support services which aim to strengthen Victorian communities.

<sup>66</sup> MyLanguage <http://www.mylanguage.gov.au/cgi-bin/index.cgi> Accessed 27 January 2006.

## **Adaptive technologies**

Increasing vision impairment is often a characteristic of ageing and the demand for various adaptive technologies in libraries will increase. While this may be driven by a need to meet the needs of greater numbers of older clients, younger clients with vision impairment will also benefit from the services. Clients who experience reduced mobility due to strokes and other disabilities will also require adaptive technology. Adaptive technologies may include:

- voice output (eg JAWS software, speech synthesisers)
- screen enlargement software (eg Zoomtext)
- document reading software (eg Poet reader / Kurzweil)
- equipment to assist clients with a physical disability (eg Modified keyboards for stroke victims)

Public libraries may choose to consult with Vision Australia Foundation experts in planning adaptive technologies and services for clients with vision impairments.

## **7.3 Ageing well**

The need for information, community engagement and purposeful activity does not decline with age.<sup>67</sup>

Seniors will have many varied information needs in the years ahead and will look to public libraries for support. Information will influence their quality of life and capacity to engage actively with their local community. The role of the library as the source of community, health, plain language legal information and other vital information for ageing well will make a substantial contribution to the quality of life of seniors in our communities.

### **Community information**

Many libraries produce community information directories with some publishing directories specifically targeting local services for seniors. While seniors need access to a full range of community information resources, they also have some priority needs which include:

- social security benefits and entitlement
- health
- housing
- residential and nursing home care and how to pay for it
- support services for people at home and carers

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<sup>67</sup> Middleton, S. (2005) Prescription for a healthy partnership *Public Library Journal*, Autumn 2005 p.13

## Health information

There are some examples of successful and innovative partnerships and programs currently in operation to ensure quality health information is available to seniors and the wider community:

- The Health Information Service (HIS) developed as a joint initiative of the State Library of New South Wales, NSW Health and the NSW Nurses Association to provide free up-to-date, quality information about health and wellbeing in easy to understand language. The Health Information Service provides information not advice.
- Libraries in Gloucestershire and Wales have participated in a “Books on Prescription” project. Targeting patients with mild to moderate mental health problems, the program allows a patient’s doctor to give them a prescription for a book on how to manage their condition. The books, from a booklist chosen by mental health professionals, include titles on dealing with anxiety or stress, anger management, depression and a range of other mental health issues.<sup>68</sup>
- The National Prescribing Service Limited (NPS) runs a program addressing Community Quality Use of Medicines. Seniors are one of the key target audiences for the program and NPS has begun working with the NSW Home Library Service Network to provide materials from the program for Home Library Service. They also provide information in a number of community languages.<sup>69</sup>

## Legal information

The legal information needs of seniors are very broad, however there are key aspects of ageing well that require plain language legal information. These include wills, enduring guardianship, power of attorney, nursing home accreditation, buying and selling property, and moving into a retirement village.

For NSW public libraries the best source of legal information, rather than advice, is the Legal Information Access Centre (LIAC) program. LIAC is an initiative of the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW and the State Library of NSW. LIAC provides legal information, from simple plain language pamphlets and books to more complex legal materials.

## 7.4 Volunteering

In semi or full retirement, older people may have the time, energy and skills to participate in volunteering and recreational pursuits. Others may choose to continue to work full time. However, it is anticipated that baby boomers will seek to contribute to their communities through volunteering in some way.

In complementary roles volunteers provide a valuable resource for library advocacy and add value to library services. Volunteer roles in a library

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<sup>68</sup> Middleton, S. (2005) Prescription for a healthy partnership *Public Library Journal*, Autumn 2005 p.13

<sup>69</sup> National Prescribing Service <http://www.nps.org.au/>

service should be clearly defined and complementary to the roles of staff. Volunteers cannot be asked to take on roles which place at risk their safety, Council assets, customer safety, or roles which represent Council to the community. The importance of developing policies, position descriptions and ensuring that all areas of risk management are considered in line with Council policies should be addressed to ensure volunteering at the library is a positive and mutually beneficial experience.

There are several key resources for organisations wishing to maximise the effectiveness of volunteering, these include:

- Volunteering Australia which provides a national volunteers skills centre offering training to build the knowledge and skills of managers of volunteers to enhance the volunteer contribution to the Australian community and to build the capacity of not for profit organisations to involve volunteers effectively.<sup>70</sup>
- Volunteering NSW which provides training as well as other resources for organisations through their School of Volunteer Management.<sup>71</sup>

## **7.5 Home library services**

Housebound or home library services, where offered by a public library, apply to:

- People who have illnesses or disabilities which prevent them from accessing a library. These conditions may be temporary, recurring or permanent.
- People who are able to visit a library, but because of frailty or disability are unable to carry items home.
- People who live in residential establishments, such as nursing homes, hostels, supported-accommodation houses, hospitals or prisons.
- People who are engaged in full-time care for people.
- Young children who are in the care of any of the above groups.<sup>72</sup>

Under the New South Wales Library Act 1939 no charges can be levied for delivery to a member of the library who due to reasons of ill-health or disability cannot reasonably be expected to attend the library in person.<sup>73</sup> As the number of people in the community who are eligible for home library services increases with the age wave the resourcing of home library services will become a pressing challenge for many libraries.

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<sup>70</sup> Volunteering Australia <http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/>

<sup>71</sup> The Centre for volunteering <http://www.volunteering.com.au/>

<sup>72</sup> Australian Library and Information Association *Guidelines for Australian Home Library Services* <http://alia.org.au/policies/home.library.service.html>

<sup>73</sup> NSW Library Act 1939 Section 10

The Friends Of Libraries Australia survey of library services for seniors identified “Few libraries strongly promote their home library service because, as a number of respondents indicated, of a lack of resources to cope with more users. An unknown, but probably considerable, number of older adults are thus not benefiting from a library service which supports wellbeing, mental processes, social contact and independent living.”<sup>74</sup>

### **Innovation and best practice**

Gayle Rowden winner of the 2004 Barrett Reid Scholarship completed a study tour seeking examples of best practice in library services to the aged and housebound. Some of the innovative service delivery options she identified include:

- E-book collections for loan
- user guides in a larger font
- large print format book lists
- Chinese language deposit collections at a Chinese nursing home
- audio books in community languages
- staff with language expertise interviewing new CALD clients and selecting material for them
- wheelchair accessible book mobiles servicing nursing homes and community centres
- reminiscence kits [handling objects, listening to poetry and prose and viewing photographs in a relaxed and familiar environment to encourage aged care residents to interact and share their memories]

Other examples of innovative programs include:

- Readers on wheels, a project in country NSW between the Gunnedah Shire Library, Community Transport and Home and Community Care. This alternative to home library service transports the frail and those with disabilities, or their carers, to the library where they select their own materials and socialize over morning tea.<sup>75</sup>
- In the metropolitan area Willoughby City Library offers a Self Select Home Delivery service for frail but independent readers who visit the library to select material that is delivered with the other home library deliveries.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Alan Bundy (2005) *Community Critical: Australian Public Libraries Serving Seniors*  
[http://www.foia.org.au/pdfs/FOLA\\_Seniors.pdf](http://www.foia.org.au/pdfs/FOLA_Seniors.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Willoughby City Library <http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/> Accessed 9 January 2006.

## **8.0 Fifty is the new thirty-five - marketing to seniors**

The intrinsic appeal of free public library services has attracted seniors with available leisure time and fixed incomes for decades. Many seniors come in search of recreational reading, activities and materials in special formats without any major marketing efforts on the part of libraries.

The baby boomers, however, present new challenges as they are an advertising aware client group and many will have sufficient disposable income to allow them a wider variety of choices for their recreational activities and leisure time. In addition, if baby boomers have not been active library users in recent years they may have a very outdated view of what their local public library has on offer.

### **8.1 Avoiding stereotypes**

Studies in the United States indicate that the “sense of age-consciousness is primarily one of age denial and rejection of identification with being old .... on the one hand there is an increasingly affirmative attitude to positive ageing, improved fitness and general well-being, while at the same time billions of dollars are being spent on products to ward off the signs of ageing ... The old are changing, they do not fit the stereotypes the media so readily ascribe to them, they are more innovative than previous generations and they are becoming a lot more discriminating.”<sup>77</sup>

Library marketing efforts targeting seniors or older people may well miss the target market if they don't identify themselves as older people. Meanwhile the ageing demographic of the library workforce in many areas may in fact make it much easier for library marketers to be well 'in tune' with this target market.

There are many innovative angles adopted by organisations branding services for seniors in positive and light hearted ways, for example the award winning GOLD Fitness program offered by the City of Joondalup in Western Australia – GOLD is an acronym for “Growing Old Living Dangerously”.

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<sup>77</sup> Szmigin, I. And Carrigan, M. (2001) *Learning to love the older consumer*. Journal of Consumer Behaviour vol. 1, 1 pp. 22-34

## 8.2 Developing marketing plans

There is a strong case for developing a library marketing plan that identifies active seniors and the frail aged as key target audiences. Older people are not a homogenous group, however there are many common issues and needs that can be addressed in a library marketing plan. Some examples include:

- the effective promotion of community information resources for older people to health and community workers engaged in working with older people
- the effective marketing of home library services to housebound members of the community
- raising awareness in the wider community of the services offered by the library in order to develop community advocates for the library
- ensuring that the library style guide gives consideration to the 'readability' of fonts, colours and styles with reference to the international standard for large print in publications and promotional material targeting seniors<sup>78</sup>

## 8.3 Advocates and library friends

Baby boomers will form a well educated, well connected lobby group with a high level of awareness of their rights and how to effectively access the political system to ensure their needs are met. With time at leisure from full time employment it is very likely many baby boomers will wish to engage in a variety of learning opportunities and advocacy activities.

Developing library advocates in the community often leads to the establishment of Friends of Libraries groups. These groups operate under a charter which identifies their aims:

- to encourage the use of library and information services by the community
- to support and assist library management in the promotion and development of excellent library services
- to represent library users
- to undertake other activities appropriate to the interests of particular groups<sup>79</sup>

There are many opportunities for active, community minded older people to join or establish Friends groups to advocate at a local and national level for their library services.

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<sup>78</sup> NILS *Large Print Guidelines* <http://www.nils.org.au/ais/print/resources/LPguidelines.pdf>

<sup>79</sup> FOLA *About Friends of Libraries Australia* – Charter <http://www.fola.org.au/about.htm>

## 9.0 Transgenerational design in library buildings

It is forecast that 25% of the Australian population will be aged 65 years or more by the years 2044/45. This means that community spaces and the built environment will be under great pressure to meet the needs of older people.

The Australian Local Government Association promotes key principles of designing 'age-friendly environments' to local government, including: promoting age-friendly built environments, creating a safe and secure pedestrian environment, fostering age-friendly community planning and design, and supporting recreation facilities, parks and tracks.<sup>80</sup>

The way communities are designed and built can have a significant impact on the health and well-being of seniors and their quality of life. Many seniors spend a great deal of time in their local neighbourhood. They tend to shop locally, regularly use public facilities such as libraries and parks and participate in local social and recreation activities. Consideration in planning, designing and building environments that are safe and accessible to seniors is vital in supporting their desire to live in their own homes and local communities.<sup>81</sup>

### Definitions

There are two complementary terms which are applied to the design of facilities:

- *Transgenerational design* is the practice of making environments and products compatible with those physical and sensory impairments associated with human ageing and which limit major activities of daily living.<sup>82</sup>
- *Universal design* refers to environments designed to be used by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialisation and has a particular emphasis on people with diverse abilities.<sup>83</sup>

Some architects have even described designs which take into consideration the priority needs of older people as "third age architecture".<sup>84</sup>

### 9.1 Best practice design guidelines

*People Places: a guide for Public Library Buildings in NSW* provides best practice guidelines for library design including specific strategies to cater for

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<sup>80</sup> ALGA (2005) Age friendly built environments: Opportunities for Local Government <http://www.alga.asn.au/policy/healthAgeing/ageing/resources/publications/builtEnv.php#a1>

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Transgenerational design matters [www.transgenerational.org/](http://www.transgenerational.org/)

<sup>83</sup> Center for Universal Design <http://www.design.ncsu.edu:8120/cud/>

<sup>84</sup> Sharovsky, N. and Frank, E. (2004) *From Seniors' Habitat to Universal Design* Designing for the 21st Century III Conference proceedings [http://www.designfor21st.org/proceedings/proceedings/plenary\\_frank.html](http://www.designfor21st.org/proceedings/proceedings/plenary_frank.html)

the ageing of the NSW community.<sup>85</sup> The *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, the *NSW Disability Services Act 1993* and the *Building Code of Australia* also have a significant impact on the design and delivery of services.

Building design features which should be considered in catering for an ageing clientele include:

- perceptions of safety (eg exterior lighting and natural surveillance)
- accessible parking
- access to public transport
- ramped access
- automatic opening doors
- easy-to-read signage (contrast and font)
- accessible toilets
- accessible shelving (aisle width and shelf height)
- seating with appropriate heights and armrests
- hearing aid loops
- non-slip floor surfaces

## **9.2 Design influencing community attitudes**

The goal of transgenerational design is to provide "products and environments that extend the critical support point further into the future, thereby lengthening the period of independence of people of all ages and abilities, without penalty to any group."<sup>86</sup> Designs which enhance independence, self respect and quality of life through sympathetic features avoid stigmatising older and disabled people as different.

By reducing the tendency to treat older and disabled people differently and allowing them to participate actively in the life of the community transgenerational design may help to foster positive attitudes toward ageing and the aged in our community.

## **9.3 Stakeholders in local built environment initiatives**

In each local government area there several key opportunities to engage in the development of the built environment, with particular reference to meeting the needs of older people. These can include working closely with local council access committees, participating in the development of council disability action plans (including complying with their recommendations) and

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<sup>85</sup> Nesbitt, H. and Bligh Voller Nield (2005) *People Places – A guide for public library buildings in New South Wales*

<sup>86</sup> Pirkl, J. J. (1995) *Age design* [www.zuper.com/portfolio/real\\_ndi/publications/3d/pirkl.html](http://www.zuper.com/portfolio/real_ndi/publications/3d/pirkl.html)

using the *People Places* guidelines in the design of new and renovated library spaces.

#### 9.4 Transgenerational design vs dedicated spaces for older people

There are some examples of libraries which have designed dedicated spaces to meet the needs of older people, for example the Older Adults Lounge in the Vancouver Public Library. This contains the large print collection, magazines for older adults, two Internet workstations (one with ZoomText) and is situated beside the talking book collection.<sup>87</sup> However, assuming libraries have limited space and resources, it seems more effective to design library services bearing in mind the advice of Bernard Isaacs "design for the young and you exclude the old; design for the old and you include the young."<sup>88</sup>

Baby boomers, in particular, are likely to reject any design features that appear to be overtly targeted at the 'aged'.

Ageing baby boomers have spurned large-buttoned telephones and other appliances obtrusively designed for their limitations. Instead, they want products that convey a sleek, modern aura, while remaining easy-to-use and straightforward. Appliance designers are left with one solution: Design products for universal use.<sup>89</sup>

On the other hand, retail merchandising research indicates that there is one group that appreciates areas designed to cater for their particular needs,

Most men are hunters and prefer little interaction when coming to the library or shop. They like to be able to find what they need easily through clear sightlines and signage, they like their 'men's shed' with coffee, magazines, sitting by themselves and watching the news.<sup>90</sup>

Reconciling the needs of older men within the bustling library environment by providing quiet reading areas will address the needs of many men of all ages.

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<sup>87</sup> Vancouver Public Library Older Adults Lounge

<http://www.vpl.vancouver.bc.ca/branches/LibrarySquare/prl/oallocation.html>

<sup>88</sup> Bernard Isaacs founding Director of the Birmingham Centre for Applied Gerontology

<sup>89</sup> Jones, C. (2001) Designing for Baby Boomers and Beyond *Appliance Design*  
[www.ammagazine.com/CDA/ArticleInformation/features/BNP\\_\\_Features\\_\\_Item/0,2606,66123,00.html](http://www.ammagazine.com/CDA/ArticleInformation/features/BNP__Features__Item/0,2606,66123,00.html)

<sup>90</sup> Emberton, F. (2005) *Are You Making the Most of Your Transition Zone and Foyer?* John Stanley Associates <http://www.johnstanley.cc/newsitem.phtml?NewsID=90>

## 10.0 Inclusive and age aware staffing

The working age population (15-64 years) currently grows by 170,000 people a year. But trends already in place will see the working age population grow by just 125,000 for the entire decade of the 2020s.<sup>91</sup>

In their research into ageing in NSW, Baum and Jackson identify two key impacts for Council employment:

- an increased need to retain more mature staff
- an increased need to create opportunities for ageing staff to work part-time.<sup>92</sup>

Public libraries will be in the frontline of the battle to retain older workers and attract new recruits to the profession. Phil Teece, advisor in industrial relations and employment for the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) provides some pertinent statistics:

Collectively, librarians are close to being the oldest of any major occupational group in Australia. Bureau of Statistics and Department of Employment data show that currently 52.1 per cent of librarians are over 45, compared to 34.2 per cent among the Australian workforce as a whole. Only 19.1 per cent are younger than 35 against 41.9 per cent in the total workforce. It is difficult to imagine clearer evidence of a need for action.<sup>93</sup>

This indicates an ageing workforce and more importantly a shortage in supply of younger professionals entering the profession. It is to be hoped that many mature library professionals will continue to seek opportunities for workforce participation beyond traditional retirement age, possibly even moving from full time administrative roles back into professional and front line roles in preference to taking an earlier retirement. The sea change / tree change phenomenon may also work in favour for some regional areas, drawing skilled professionals into communities where their experience and expertise can be utilised.

As a matter of urgency public libraries, as employers, need to consider a variety of strategies to recruit and retain skilled staff. Traineeships, mentoring programs, study support programs and job sharing are only a few of the opportunities that could be considered. Innovative approaches to job design, allowing for job share and attractive part time options will also be a vital strategy to attract and retain professional staff. Ensuring that older staff continue to access training to maintain current skills and making adjustments

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<sup>91</sup> National Strategy for an Ageing Australia *Employment for Mature Age Workers Issues Paper*.

<sup>92</sup> Baum, N. and Jackson, N. (2004) *Planning the local government response to ageing and place*. Local Government Association of NSW and Shires Association of NSW. p.8

<sup>93</sup> Teece, P. (2005) Workforce planning is a long-haul challenge *Incite*, June 2005  
<http://www.alia.org.au/publishing/incite/2005/06/workwatch.html> Accessed 9 August 2005

for any physical constraints such as manual handling will also be critical to maintaining a vital older workforce.

### **10.1 Ageing awareness training**

In some organisations there may be a need for 'sensitivity training' for library staff dealing with seniors. For example, the Multilingual Senior Surfers project in Victoria includes "an emphasis on raising awareness of the special needs of CALD seniors for training and mentoring amongst local training and Internet providers to encourage creative and inclusive approaches to engaging this group."<sup>94</sup>

Age awareness training might include training in the specialised information needs of older people, anti-discrimination training and cross training with aged care workers. In high demand areas it may be necessary to identify senior-advocate positions amongst the library staff. The Canadian Library Association offers the W. Kaye Lamb Award for Service to Seniors to recognise service excellence to this sector of the community.

### **10.2 Customer service frameworks**

A number of library associations around the world have developed policy statements on serving ageing clients and several library services have adopted frameworks for services to older people. Some of these examples may be useful in the development or expansion of customer service charters or staff awareness training programs in NSW public libraries:

#### **American Library Association**

Library Services to Older Adults Guidelines

[www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotocols/referenceguide/libraryservices.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotocols/referenceguide/libraryservices.htm)

#### **Saskatchewan Libraries (Canada)**

Best practices Library Services to Seniors

[www.lib.sk.ca/staff/bestpractices/seniors.html](http://www.lib.sk.ca/staff/bestpractices/seniors.html)

#### **Canadian Library Association**

Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for Older Adults

2004 [www.cla.ca/about/olderadults.htm](http://www.cla.ca/about/olderadults.htm)

#### **Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals (UK)**

Library and Information Services for Older People

[www.cilip.org.uk/professionalguidance/equalopportunities/briefings/olderpeople.htm](http://www.cilip.org.uk/professionalguidance/equalopportunities/briefings/olderpeople.htm)

#### **Yarra Plenty Regional Library (Vic)**

Aged Persons Strategic Framework 2005 - 2009

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<sup>94</sup> VICNET (2005) *Multilingual Senior Surfers Fact Sheet*

## Conclusion

Older people have traditionally formed a substantial user group for public libraries. Their ability to access library services is affected by access to transport, familiarity with technology, computer skills and awareness of available services. The NSW public library network operates within the policy framework set down by State and Local Government. Local and State Governments in NSW have adopted policies that acknowledge older people as a group with distinct needs.

Rather than wait for the inevitable age wave to reach communities throughout NSW, public libraries have the opportunity to position themselves as focal points for older people providing;

- a community meeting place
- information for life matters and leisure
- recreational reading
- Internet access and skill development
- stimulating and appealing programs

Libraries also fulfil a vital role in building social capital in communities by providing meaningful volunteer roles, opportunities to engage in community consultation and breaking down some of the barriers of social exclusion. As a vital link enabling people to maintain their place in the wired world and a social hub, the future holds many opportunities for local government authorities to develop public libraries as avenues for meeting the needs of the age wave in their communities.

The publication of this paper introduces a process of reviewing and developing library services for older people in NSW. It is anticipated that the public library network will engage in the development of industry benchmarks for services to older people. In order to assist NSW public libraries in assessing their current capacity to meet the needs of the ageing community the State Library has prepared a capacity audit tool to assist in strategic planning. *See Appendix 2.*

NSW public libraries and the profession as a whole face numerous challenges as the library workforce ages. Creative and flexible solutions to job design and work practices may be needed in the immediate future to stem the 'brain drain' and ensure that libraries have staff with the skills, enthusiasm and experience to meet the challenges of the age wave.

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## **Appendix 1: United Nations Principles for Older Persons**

The General Assembly ,  
Appreciating the contribution that older persons make to their societies,

Recognizing that, in the Charter of the United Nations, the peoples of the United Nations declare, inter alia , their determination to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Noting the elaboration of those rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other declarations to ensure the application of universal standards to particular groups,

In pursuance of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, adopted by the World Assembly on Ageing and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 37/51 of 3 December 1982,

Appreciating the tremendous diversity in the situation of older persons, not only between countries but within countries and between individuals, which requires a variety of policy responses,

Aware that in all countries, individuals are reaching an advanced age in greater numbers and in better health than ever before,

Aware of the scientific research disproving many stereotypes about inevitable and irreversible declines with age,

Convinced that in a world characterized by an increasing number and proportion of older persons, opportunities must be provided for willing and capable older persons to participate in and contribute to the ongoing activities of society,

Mindful that the strains on family life in both developed and developing countries require support for those providing care to frail older persons,

Bearing in mind the standards already set by the International Plan of Action on Ageing and the conventions, recommendations and resolutions of the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization and other United Nations entities,

Encourages Governments to incorporate the following principles into their national programmes whenever possible:

## Independence

1. Older persons should have access to adequate food, water, shelter, clothing and health care through the provision of income, family and community support and self-help.
2. Older persons should have the opportunity to work or to have access to other income generating opportunities.
3. Older persons should be able to participate in determining when and at what pace withdrawal from the labour force takes place.
4. Older persons should have access to appropriate educational and training programmes.
5. Older persons should be able to live in environments that are safe and adaptable to personal preferences and changing capacities.
6. Older persons should be able to reside at home for as long as possible.

## Participation

7. Older persons should remain integrated in society, participate actively in the formulation and implementation of policies that directly affect their well-being and share their knowledge and skills with younger generations.
8. Older persons should be able to seek and develop opportunities for service to the community and to serve as volunteers in positions appropriate to their interests and capabilities.
9. Older persons should be able to form movements or associations of older persons.

## Care

10. Older persons should benefit from family and community care and protection in accordance with each society's system of cultural values.
11. Older persons should have access to health care to help them to maintain or regain the optimum level of physical, mental and emotional well-being and to prevent or delay the onset of illness.
12. Older persons should have access to social and legal services to enhance their autonomy, protection and care.
13. Older persons should be able to utilize appropriate levels of institutional care providing protection, rehabilitation and social and mental stimulation in a humane and secure environment.
14. Older persons should be able to enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms when residing in any shelter, care or treatment facility, including full respect for their dignity, beliefs, needs and privacy and for the right to make decisions about their care and the quality of their lives.

## Self-fulfilment

15. Older persons should be able to pursue opportunities for the full development of their potential.

16. Older persons should have access to the educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources of society.

#### Dignity

17. Older persons should be able to live in dignity and security and be free of exploitation and physical or mental abuse.

18. Older persons should be treated fairly regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, disability or other status, and be valued independently of their economic contribution.

Adopted by General Assembly resolution 46/91 of 16 December 1991

### Planning – ensuring library services to older people are identified:

- Council's management plan
  - Library focussed strategies addressing needs of older people
  - Library working with other areas of Council on initiatives addressing needs of older people
- Council's social plan
  - Library focussed strategies addressing needs of older people
  - Older library clients represented in focus groups, library as venue for some focus groups
- Council's cultural plan
  - Library focussed strategies addressing needs of older people
- Council's disability action plan
  - Library facilities meeting requirements
- Library development / strategic plan
  - Older adults identified as a key target group
  - Budget allocations for resources reflect priorities
- Collection development policy
  - Reviews linked to the cycle of Council's social planning [consultations, strategies and demographic changes]
  - Older adults identified as a key target group
  - Budget allocations for resources reflect priorities
- Marketing plan
  - Older adults identified as a key target group
  - Needs of active aged and frail aged identified
- Customer service framework
  - Policy statements on services to older people
  - Staff training needs identified

## Strategic partnerships / alliances

- Council's Access Committee
- COTA national seniors
- Senior citizens
- Meals on Wheels
- University of the third age
- Computer pals
- Vision Australia Foundation
- Friends of the library groups
- Other...

## Community development / consultation

- Community consultation with older people
  - Focus groups
  - Social planning process
- Review of collection development policies includes input from key community groups, including active and housebound older people.

## Building design

- Transgenerational / universal design principles used in addressing needs of older people
- People Places used as guide to best practice
- Exterior
  - Library well signposted
  - Perceptions of safety (eg exterior lighting and natural surveillance)
  - Accessible parking
  - Access to public transport
  - Ramped access
  - Automatic opening doors
- Interior
  - Easy-to-read signage (contrast and font)
  - Accessible toilets
  - Accessible shelving (aisle width and shelf height)
  - Seating with appropriate heights and armrests
  - Hearing aid loops (meeting rooms and customer service areas)
  - Non-slip floor surfaces

- “Male friendly” spaces (ie. quiet reading areas)
- Local built environment
  - Library aware of any issues being raised by council Access Committee
  - Library complies with requirements of disability action plans

### **Collections addressing the needs of older people:**

- Recreational reading - fiction, hobbies and interests
- Information - including Council information, health and legal information in plain English
- Resources to support life long learning
- Travel
- Genealogy / family history resources
- Local history information
- Large print
- Spoken word books
- Community language materials (including large print and spoken word formats where available)
- Newspapers
- Magazines (including seniors issues and large print format)
- Well ageing issues addressed in the collection:
  - Carers issues and information
  - Grief and depression
  - Health information [eg illnesses affecting older people, health and fitness for older people, mental health resources]
  - Financial information

### **Services**

- Well ageing information available:
  - Community information - directories and databases highlighting services available in the local community, available online
  - Legal information
  - Health information
- Technology addressing needs of older people
  - Internet access for grey nomads
  - Internet tutorials for older people
  - Free Internet access for older people

- Website design meets disability standards
- Assistive/adaptive technologies available
- Voice output
- Screen enlargement software
- Document reading software
- Modified keyboards
- Carers
  - Targeted community information
  - Access to Home library services
  - Opportunities for support groups to network
  - Grandparents as carers a target market
- Home library services
  - Widely promoted to community and agencies serving aged
  - No waiting list
  - Full access to library services [eg online catalogue for self selection]
  - Available to carers who are housebound
- Inter-generational programming
 

Examples:

  - Youth teaching older adults SMS skills,
  - Youth as Internet skills mentors,
  - Older people working with youth on local history and oral history projects
- Dementia support collections
 

Examples:

  - Information for carers,
  - Reminiscence therapy kits,
  - "Activity" resources for loan

## **Volunteering**

- Volunteering policy in place
- Position descriptions for roles
- Recognition of volunteer contributions
- Volunteer roles advertised in appropriate media

## Marketing / Promotion

- Avoid stereotypes in nomenclature and images
- Marketing plan – older adults identified as a key target group
- Promote services to other service providers dealing with older people [eg community health, GPs, community workers]
- Library style guide addresses “readability” of fonts
  - Colours,
  - Contrasts
  - International large print standard

## Staffing

- Age aware / cultural awareness training
  - Staff aware of ageing issues/topics of interest
  - Additional communication skills
- Staff trained in the use of customer aides
  - Examples:
    - Assistive technology
    - TTY phone
    - Hearing aid loops

## Staff retention and recruitment

- Job design addressing needs of older people
  - Job sizing appropriate
  - Allowing for attractive part time options
- OH + S addresses issues of manual handling appropriately for older staff
- Staff training
  - Older staff have equal access to training
  - Staff are encouraged to continue to develop their skills regardless of age
- Succession planning strategies in place
  - Mentoring and buddy programs
  - Knowledge management
- Graduate program in place to train new staff
- Study policies in place to encourage existing staff to gain qualifications