The development of Ageing Well in Bayside – an age friendly strategy is an important project undertaken by Council to better understand the needs of older residents and the needs of the whole community in adapting to changing demographics.

Mayor’s Forward

I am pleased to present the Ageing Well in Bayside Strategy 2008-2018. This document will guide Council in developing and facilitating an age friendly community that values and supports older people. It reflects a commitment to planning for the future.

The strategy has been drawn from the policy context, research and community consultation. It will underpin the development of an age friendly community that provides people the opportunity to make real choices about the way they live and to realise their full potential.

I am confident that through partnership with you, family and friends and local service providers, we will promote positive ageing in Bayside, actively harnessing the skills, knowledge and contributions of older people. Together we can challenge the stereotypes of ageing. I commend the Ageing Well in Bayside Strategy to you.

Bayside Mayor
Cr Andrew McLorinan
2008
The outcome of the project is a ten year strategy that will provide direction for Council in responding to the needs and opportunities created by an ageing population.

Through consultation and research, the issues and opportunities affecting the community as the population in Bayside ages have been identified and have contributed to establishing the priorities or strategic objectives to be included in the strategy.

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Our population is ageing, in Bayside as it is in the broader Australian community, indeed just as it is across the world, in developed and developing countries alike.
Our population is ageing, in Bayside as it is in the broader Australian community, indeed just as it is across the world, in developed and developing countries alike. Good government requires planning well for the future. The commonwealth and state governments are planning for an ageing community, and so too are local governments preparing for a significant change in community demographics. Local government plays a critical role in the life of communities in Australia. Local government provides much of the infrastructure such as roads, footpaths, parks and buildings and many of the services, including some specially targeted to older people.

Bayside Council is considering now what adaptations will be needed as the community ages over the next ten years. Council has therefore commenced a project with the goal of ensuring that this community is well prepared for a different future.

In recent years the ageing of the population has been the focus of research, analysis and political and media attention. The ageing of the population is often viewed as a cause for alarm – ‘a difficult and costly problem’ – but the debate usually loses sight of the opportunity offered by our ageing population. The diversity that exists within our older population – in terms of life experience, skills, education, knowledge and capacity to contribute – is often overlooked.

In 2006, based on our population projections, nearly 27,000 persons 55+ lived in Bayside and by 2016, nearly 32,000 residents will fall within this age group, representing a 16% increase over the ten year period. Australia, Victoria and greater Melbourne all have an ageing population but Bayside has a greater proportion of persons age 55+ (29%) compared to greater Melbourne (23%) and will continue to have a greater percentage of 55+ residents than greater Melbourne over the ten year period.

2 The term greater Melbourne used in this document refers to the Melbourne Statistical Division.
What is an age friendly community?

Research, together with principles established nationally and by the United Nations suggests that an age friendly community, at a minimum:

- Seeks and values the opinions and contributions of all residents regardless of age.
- Encourages participation in a wide range of life opportunities and removes or minimises barriers to participation, be they physical, social or economic.
- Supports the rights of individuals to make choices about the way they live.
- Provides quality services to support those who need them.

Ageing Well in Bayside: an age friendly strategy

The outcome of this project is a strategy to guide Council in leading and facilitating the development of an age friendly community within Bayside.

The strategy is about catering for the very wide range of people aged 55+, building a community that values and includes older people, benefits from their contributions and supports them in their frailer years. The strategy is about changing community attitudes to ensure older people are perceived as fully capable, economically significant citizens in charge of their own lives and not universally perceived as people who must be cared for by society and hence are a drain on societal resources. The strategy will be as much about realising opportunities as it is about addressing issues.
The strategy is the third in a series of four documents:

- A detailed demographic analysis of Bayside’s 55+ population based on the 2001 Australian Bureau of Census and Statistics Census of Population and Housing (ABS Census) and other data sources with population projections up to 2016. This document was produced in early 2007 prior to release of the 2006 census data and was used to inform the discussion paper, also developed in 2007. Demographic information from this earlier work has then been used to inform the development of the strategy. With the release of more recent demographic information from the 2006 ABS census some population figures have been included.

- A discussion paper developed after consultation with key service providers and with the community, to encourage feedback on the key areas of focus in the strategy.

- A three year action plan that identifies the actions that Council will complete to address the strategy.
International
Since the late 1990s concern about the implications of an ageing population has been recognised internationally. The international focus on ageing has been partly driven by demographic shifts. The twentieth century has brought great changes in longevity. Average life expectancy at birth has increased by 20 years since 1950 to 66 years and is expected to extend a further 10 years by 2050. In the developed world, the very old (age 80+) is the fastest growing population group.

The term “active ageing” was adopted by the World Health Organisation in the late 1990s and is defined as ‘the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.’ It suggests that in all countries, measures to help older people remain healthy and active are a necessity, not a luxury.

A Society for all Ages, which was the theme for the 1999 International Year of Older Persons, contained four dimensions: individual lifelong development; multigenerational relationships; the interrelationship between population ageing and development; and the situation of older persons.

The United Nations’ Principles for Older Persons are important at an international level but also provide a relevant framework at the local level. These principles are grouped around four headings: Independence, Care and Support, Participation and Self-fulfilment.

Federal and State Government Policy directions
Federal policy directions that build on the United Nations’ themes include:

- Recognising the rights of older people.
- Encouraging a shared responsibility approach.
- Supporting healthy lifestyles and encouraging older people to continue participation in the social and economic fabric of society.
The National Strategy for an Ageing Australia (2001) details the expectation that all levels of government, business, communities and individuals, are required to respond to issues facing an ageing population, including:

- Independence and self provision.
- Attitude, lifestyle and community support.
- Healthy ageing.
- World class care.

At a service level an emphasis on moving towards more community care, on planning, funding and regulating the residential aged care industry (Aged Care Act 1997) and on a more integrated aged care system with greater continuity of care and ageing in place (Aged Care Act 1997) are key policy directions.

The **Victorian Government’s** Positive Ageing – A Strategy for Current and Future Senior Victorians articulates five principles that underpin this strategy:

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

A Positive Ageing Statement was released in May 2005. The five program areas include positive ageing and older workers, the media and positive ageing, positive ageing in local communities, information technology and seniors, and elder abuse prevention.

The state government is also a major funder and provider of support services for older people through the health system and through the Home and Community Care program.
Local Government
Local government has a critical role in responding to the opportunities and challenges created by an ageing population and a particularly important role in creating age friendly communities.


The Plan provides a flexible and dynamic framework that complements other national strategies, such as the National Strategy for an Ageing Australia.

Bayside City Council
The Council Plan 2008-2012 is Council’s key corporate document detailing the goals, objectives and commitments Council makes for the coming four years to manage and deliver services and facilities for the Bayside community. The Council Plan sets out our vision for the future under five goal areas. These are:

- **Economic and cultural development;** facilitating the growth of our community in terms of its economic development and cultural expression.

- **The environment;** meeting the challenges of environmental sustainability while preserving our natural beauty and managing development pressures.

- **Connected, healthy communities;** ensuring the current and future needs of our diverse and evolving community are met.

- **Safety and physical infrastructure;** continuing to plan, manage and maintain our assets, and ensuring members of our community feel safe.

- **Community leadership and governance;** providing open and transparent governance in an effective and efficient manner.
Along with the vision and goals Council has also identified a number of key strategic challenges. The key strategic challenges are:

- **Great neighbourhoods;**
  aspiring to have a planning scheme that reflects community expectations and results in a safe, healthy and valued environment where people are connected.

- **Environmental sustainability;**
  facing the challenge of climate change and the need to demonstrate leadership on green house gas emissions, water conservation and resource utilisation.

- **Infrastructure gap;**
  meeting and managing the needs of the community in terms of our buildings, facilities, roads and drainage over time.

- **Effectiveness, efficiency and financial sustainability;**
  responding to skills shortages, infrastructure gaps, rising power costs and new sustainability challenges, and continue to improve organisational performance and be a leader in the sector.

Other key strategic documents include the Municipal Public Health Plan and Municipal Strategic Statement. Several other strategies including the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan and the Cultural Diversity Strategy inform the Ageing Well in Bayside Strategy. A Housing Strategy is also under development and will be considered by Council during 2008. A Leisure Plan outlining the leisure opportunities sought by the community is also under development and due to be completed during 2008.
The Bayside community is really a series of communities – linked by geography, commerce, social networks, interests and needs.
The Bayside community is really a series of communities – linked by geography, commerce, social networks, interests and needs. In 2006, it was estimated that around 91,000 people lived in the nine suburbs of Bayside. Over the next ten years, Bayside will enjoy slow and steady population growth with a projected population of around 96,000 by 2016.

The Bayside community is:

**Ageing:**

In 2006, based on our population projections, nearly 27,000 persons 55+ lived in Bayside and by 2016, nearly 32,000 residents will fall within this age group, representing a 16% increase over the ten year period, with almost 1 in 3 residents 55+.

**Figure 1:** Comparison of Persons Under and Over 55 Years for Bayside and Melbourne Statistical division (MSD)

Australia, Victoria and greater Melbourne all have an ageing population but Bayside has a greater proportion of persons age 55 and over (29%) compared to greater Melbourne (23%).

Figure 2: Persons aged 55+ in Bayside and the Melbourne Statistical Division, 2006

Bayside has a higher percentage of residents in each of the ten year age groups 55+. In 2006 Bayside’s 75+ population included over 8,500 residents\(^7\), 10% of the total population, whereas greater Melbourne’s 75+ population represented 7% of the total population. The 85+ age group is significantly more than greater Melbourne. Over the next ten years, the 55-74 in Bayside is predicted to grow significantly, while the 75+ age group is expected to remain stable in numbers.

\(^7\) ABS Census 2006.
All suburbs in Bayside will experience growth in their 55+ population with Brighton East experiencing the highest percentage increase (36%), followed by Hampton (32%) and Sandringham (30%).

Over 5,000 (24%) residents 55+ live alone\(^8\). The percentage of older adults living alone varies across the different 55+ age groups, increasing to 35% in the 75+ age group, accounting for almost 3,000 residents 75+ who live alone. This has important implications for activities and programs that support community participation, for carers and for home support services that help maintain residents’ independence at home.

\(^8\) ABS Census 2001.
The Bayside Community is: (continued)

• Healthy: Bayside is a healthy community, with residents enjoying one of the highest life expectancies in Victoria. While reflecting the city as a whole, this statement masks the differences within particular communities where health inequalities exist.

• Educated: Bayside residents enjoy a high level of education with almost 1 in 4 residents having a bachelor or higher degree. Twenty per cent of males and 9% of females 55+ have a bachelor or higher degree. Within the ageing population, interest in lifelong learning is evidenced through increasing demand for activities such as continuing education, U3A and membership of groups like Probus.

• Affluent: Household income indicates that income levels are increasing within Bayside, with more households in the highest income brackets and fewer in the lower brackets than 10 years ago. High proportions of residents own their own home (50.3%) or are in the process of purchasing their home (24.4%). Levels of home ownership for persons 55+ are even higher with 78% owning their own home and 8% purchasing their home.

Although Bayside is an affluent area of suburban Melbourne, inequalities exist with significant pockets of residents on low incomes, generally associated with public housing. Over eight thousand people, or 30% of Bayside’s 55+ population, are in receipt of a part or full Centrelink pension. Around twelve hundred residents 55+ are renting in the private market, many on fixed incomes and vulnerable to increasing rents. There are more than eleven hundred public housing properties in Bayside; over 99% of the primary tenants are on government pensions or benefits and over 40% of public housing residents living in Bayside are over 50 years.

• **Diverse**: Over 10,000 residents (13% of Bayside’s population) were born in a non-English speaking country. Residents come from 32 countries and speak more than 35 languages. Approximately 12% speak a language other than English at home. The non-English speaking countries that have the greatest number of persons 55+ in rank order are Italy, Greece, Germany and Poland.

• **Online**: A significantly greater proportion of people living in Bayside use the internet compared to the Melbourne average (51% compared to 41%). 22% of persons aged 55+ are internet users.14.
Community and stakeholder consultations are critical if this strategy is to genuinely reflect community desire, community need and community opportunity. Consultation has been a key element in the development of this strategy to create an age friendly community. The consultation techniques used also provided an important first step in engaging the community in an ongoing way about the potential inherent in an ageing population.

The range of complementary approaches included consultation with:

**Bayside Older Adults Advisory Group (BOAAG)**
At various stages of the project Council’s representative advisory group were invited to contribute. Members of BOAAG were also provided with an opportunity to collectively comment on the discussion paper.

**Community Leaders Forum**
Councillors together with key community representatives attended a working session to generate a conversation about the future amongst the City's leaders. Representatives from schools, churches, business associations, service and sporting clubs considered the challenges and opportunities facing Bayside.

**Council staff**
Several workshops were held with selected staff across the organisation. This included staff working in Council’s Aged and Disability team and managers responsible for the full range of planning and services across the Council.

**Health and Welfare Providers and Leisure Providers**
Workshops were held with staff representing the major organisations providing health and welfare services to older residents. A range of leisure service providers, from local interest groups to larger leisure service providers in Bayside also contributed their experiences and ideas for the future.
Interviews with Older residents
A number of older adults were consulted individually, including some club members representing older residents from one of Bayside’s larger culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Survey
A short survey was available online and in hard copy through the library service inviting comment about Bayside from an ‘age friendly’ perspective. This survey invited residents of all ages to comment.

Discussion Paper
A discussion paper was prepared to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to respond to the issues and opportunities identified through the consultation process. The paper reflected an iterative process, with the discussion paper informing consultation questions as well as being informed by the consultation findings.

The discussion paper was made available on the Council website, at libraries, and was mailed to all who participated in the consultation program.
Five strategic objectives have been identified. These have been drawn from the policy context, research and consultation findings.
Five strategic objectives have been identified. These have been drawn from the policy context, research and consultation findings. The five strategic objectives are:

- **Harness the opportunities that result from an ageing community.**
- **Promote good urban design, well-maintained infrastructure and transport systems to enable older people to participate fully in community life.**
- **Facilitate active community participation and lifelong learning to maintain health and wellbeing.**
- **Facilitate increased housing choices to support older residents to remain living in Bayside.**
- **Ensure affordable, client focussed and co-ordinated services support independence and allow older residents to remain living in their preferred home setting.**

Cutting across the strategic objectives are several key themes. The first is that of understanding our ageing community and how it is changing. Ongoing research, monitoring changes in the demographic profile and consultation will be critical to developing actions that deliver on the strategies identified.

The importance of access to accurate and timely information is another key theme. Successful older living is greatly enhanced by good information and good planning. Promoting the importance of personal planning, not just financial planning but planning in every respect – housing, health, leisure and relationships - will potentially make a significant difference to the lives of Bayside’s older residents. It is here that Council can make a difference. People need good information to plan well and Council is also well placed to communicate with older residents and assist them in sourcing the information they need to prepare for successful older living in Bayside.
Safety and perceptions of safety is the third theme that intersects the strategic objectives identified. To enable active participation in community life, whether for shopping or leisure pursuits, particularly after dark, people must feel safe to access public transport, go to a movie, dine out or visit a friend. Bayside is one of the safest municipalities in Victoria according to crime statistics, but older residents constantly say that safety is a priority.
5.1 Harnessing the opportunities that result from an ageing community

To me, old age is always 15 years older than I am
Bernard M Baruch\(^\text{15}\)

**Issues and opportunities**

What would an age friendly municipality look like?

For older individuals, the test of an age friendly community is whether that community provides the opportunity to make real choices about the way they live as well as the opportunity to realise their full potential. Older people want to have real choices about where they live, whether they work, what they do for leisure, how they contribute and the services they need. They do not want their choices constrained by family and societal perceptions of what older people should be doing.

They also want the opportunity to pursue a meaningful life, not just a life of leisure in retirement. They are interested in further education, in leadership positions; and they are interested in contributing to voluntary activities, not just on menial tasks but in areas where they have real abilities.

The broader community needs to reject negative images of older people and benefit from the skills, knowledge and contributions of its older population. A community that invites, encourages and values their involvement and contribution is important. There is a need for both older people and the general community to challenge the stereotypes and myths about ageing.

Council is a large employer within the municipality. Twenty seven per cent of the current workforce is 55+ and with shortages in selected professions across the local government sector, Council will consider recruitment and retention practices that support older employees.

15 Bernard M Baruch 1940 US businessman & politician (1870 - 1965)
Business in Bayside stands to benefit enormously from a positive stance on ageing. Many older people in Bayside will have good disposable incomes and will tend to shop locally but they will also vote with their feet and move to those businesses that meet their needs and value them as customers. The retail and services sectors in Bayside stand to benefit from the development of age friendly values and practices and Council is well placed to provide real leadership that supports the local economy.

**Strategies**

- Value and celebrate the contribution that older people make to our local community.
- Develop opportunities for programs that connect generations.
- Develop a work environment at Council that seeks to support continued workforce participation and retirement planning that can serve as a model for other organisations.
- Encourage businesses to embrace the opportunities created by an ageing population.
5.2 Promoting good urban design, well maintained infrastructure and transport systems to enable older people to participate fully in community life

Design for the young and you exclude the old; design for the old and you include the young.
B Isaacs

Issues and opportunities

Good urban design contributes enormously to the wellbeing of communities. It provides an environment that is aesthetically pleasing, functionally superior, safer and is more likely to support community engagement and connection. Similarly, well maintained infrastructure such as roads, footpaths and parklands make it easier and safer for everyone to move about the community. While the whole community benefits from good urban design and infrastructure, it is particularly important for older people and can make a difference to their participation in community life.

Council plays a major role in both urban design and infrastructure, with responsibility for land use planning, design of most public spaces and provision of much of the community’s public infrastructure.

It is not just public infrastructure that is important. Private and commercial spaces are important too, particularly in heavily used areas such as shopping centres and places of entertainment. Council can play a role in encouraging developers, large and small, to ensure they are designing in a way that facilitates access for all.

Good design, safety and sustainability are key goal areas identified in the Council Plan. Council aims to “facilitate a safe and secure environment through provision of appropriate and well maintained infrastructure.”

The beach and the foreshore are wonderful assets for the Bayside community. Older people have the same right to access these areas as do younger people but may have additional infrastructure needs such as railings and suitable gradients to ensure their safety. The increase of motorised scooters in shopping streets may necessitate consideration of wider footpaths, and areas well used by those walking may require additional seating at a height that suits older people. These are some of the infrastructure considerations when planning for an ageing community.

Regardless of age, getting around the local neighbourhood is the key to staying connected with friends and family and retaining a sense of independence. For older people this means the ability to move around the local neighbourhood but also to travel farther afield to the City, to shopping centres, to children, grandchildren and friends.

Access to safe and affordable transport is a critical issue for older people. The Council Plan highlights the importance of connected communities and the importance of mobility for residents so they have “the freedom to do things and go places and feel safe.”

These days, car ownership levels remain high among older people and many are continuing to drive well into their eighties and even into their nineties. This is not surprising as older people find personal transport more convenient, more accessible and more comfortable than public transport. In fact, many people find public transport more difficult as they age and, generally speaking, will give up using the bus before they give up driving their own vehicle. But for older people with limited mobility, parking can become an issue. The ability to park close to one’s destination becomes more important and demand for disability - designated parking spaces is likely to grow.

Despite the reliance of older people on private transport, public transport remains important, particularly for access to the city and major venues where parking is limited. Older people are more likely to use public transport when access is easy so good design (e.g. shelter at bus stops) is important. So too is education about public transport for people who have rarely used it in their younger years.

There is good access to the city via the train line but bus connections to the line are inadequate for many residents. Limited evening and weekend bus services also impact on those reliant on public transport.

A targeted community transport service is offered by Council and some local agencies providing programs and services for older residents and is an important service for those with limited mobility and potentially isolated residents. More recently Council has introduced a resident transport service utilising volunteer drivers to assist residents to and from medical appointments.

**Strategies**

- Encourage design of commercial and public spaces that facilitates access for all.
- Maintain and improve the quality of public infrastructure.
- Facilitate initiatives and programs that maintain mobility for older residents.
No matter how much physical dependency people experienced, they did not see themselves as dependent if they remained engaged in the social fabric [of the community] and could still make choices.

Survey Finding, Office for Seniors Interests, WA
5.3 Facilitating active community participation and lifelong learning to maintain health and wellbeing

Issues and opportunities

Older people today are engaged in a wide range of activities, including travelling and further education, as well as the more traditional pursuits of sport and membership of local interest groups and community organisations. Opportunities for community involvement and contribution are also welcomed with older people strongly represented in statistics that measure voluntary activity.

Older people still have many responsibilities including employment, care of their partner, grandchildren, their home and garden, and possibly civic and other commitments. They face the same challenges as younger people in choosing how they might spend their leisure time be it in educational, cultural, spiritual or recreational pursuits.

The diversity of leisure interests among older people presents particular planning challenges, particularly for local government as key local providers of leisure facilities and services. Facilities provided in the past, such as senior citizens’ centres, may still have relevance for some, but increasingly, active educated older people will expect more choice.

Active leisure choices are an important means of maintaining health and well-being. Activities such as walking and more active sports have well known physical health benefits but they can also contribute to social and emotional well-being if the activities are shared with others and help build social networks. The importance of social connections and physical activity to health has been highlighted in recent studies. VicHealth, the peak body for health promotion in Victoria, ranks physical activity, second after tobacco control, as the most important factor in health promotion and disease prevention in Australia. Further their research into social isolation attests to the importance of a network of social relationships and sources of emotional support to health and wellbeing. A local study of emotional wellbeing in

19 VicHealth: ‘How to create active communities’
older people in the Kingston/Bayside area found that most elderly people with depression simply wanted to participate in more social activities and to have ‘someone to talk to’.21

Bayside residents have access to an outstanding range of leisure opportunities – the sea and foreshore, and the parks provide a wonderful natural and outdoor environment, sporting facilities are numerous, libraries and community centres provide for educational, leisure, social and cultural pursuits, there are a range of local interest groups and it is a reasonable distance to reach the city to pursue other interests.

There are also areas of socio-economic disadvantage where health and community participation are reduced. Small, but significant communities of culturally and linguistically diverse residents are also under represented in participation in programs and activities. The government policies that support older people to remain in their own homes as they age can lead to social isolation. Council has an important role in facilitating leisure participation for frailer residents and for those who are socially isolated. The needs of those isolated in their own homes came through strongly during the consultations. Whilst opportunities to get out to activities are important for some, the potential of new communication technologies in the home that can link people were also highlighted.

21 RDNS Institute of Community Health, 2003 ‘Depression and Emotional Wellbeing in Older Persons in the Kingston/Bayside area’.
**Strategies**

- Develop and promote better access to information to encourage active healthy lifestyles.

- Support the role of community centres and libraries as key sites for community participation and lifelong learning.

- Facilitate local neighbourhood opportunities for social connections and active leisure activities.

- Increase opportunities for greater participation by residents from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, older residents with a disability, low income older residents and those at risk of social isolation.
5.4 Facilitate increased housing options to support older residents to remain living in Bayside

Indeed, housing has been identified as the single most critical determinant of an older person’s independence aside from health.
The 40+ Project, Victoria University of Wellington

Issues and opportunities

Most older people will spend their lives in their own home. Indeed, as people live longer and more care is provided in the community the role of home in the lives of all older people – the healthy older person and the frail older person alike – will be increasingly important. For frailer people, home modifications may mean the ability to remain at home longer or live more safely and comfortably.

Some people consider moving house as they age. The reasons are many including a desire to ‘downsize’, life changes, such as the death of a partner, health needs or financial circumstances. People have a strong connection to their local area and research reveals that, if people do downsize, most wish to remain in the local area. Providing choice in housing locally is therefore important to suit the diverse needs of older people: independent housing including medium density housing, retirement housing and specialised care facilities.

The role of retirement villages in providing housing for the aged is an issue that attracts diverse opinion. Around 4% of the Australian population currently lives in retirement villages and, for these people, it is an important housing option that they have chosen for a range of social, economic and support reasons.22 The natural environment, central location and good services mean that Bayside is an attractive community in which to retire, and for many years has been a popular location for retirement village developers.

Wesley HomeShare, a program that “matches older householders and householders with a disability, who are looking for help and companionship around the home, with people of integrity who are able to provide this assistance in return for affordable accommodation” is an innovative concept built upon the meeting of mutual need. A frail elderly person provides live-in accommodation for a younger person, often an international student, in exchange for a presence overnight in the house, social support and some assistance in daily living tasks. Bayside is one of several councils in the Southern Region where this service, delivered by an experienced aged services provider, is available and provides an important option to residents seeking to remain living at home despite increasing frailty.

Bayside residents enjoy a high rate of home ownership and many have benefited from rising property values experienced throughout Melbourne and particularly in the bayside suburbs. Whilst most Bayside residents have significant asset wealth tied up in their own home, 9% of older people live in rented accommodation including public housing. Older people living in private rental accommodation may be more vulnerable to rental increases if they are living on a fixed income with limited financial assets and to displacement from the community where they may have lived for many years.

**Strategies**

- **Enable housing developments that seek to increase housing diversity and promote universal housing design.**

- **Promote access to information to allow older residents to plan for their housing requirements and to age in their preferred home setting.**

- **Advocate for, and work with housing providers to retain and expand low cost housing options for older people.**


The first imperative for those wishing to be a healthy hundred is to be informed, to stay in command, and to be thoroughly obstreperous in refusing to be fobbed off with second rate care.

J Grimely Evans, British Geriatrics Society
The majority of older people remain relatively well and active until the last year or two of their lives. The great majority also continue to reside at home with only 6% of people 65+ and 26% 85+ across Australia living in residential aged care. Nevertheless, the services that support people at home or in residential care when needed are critically important in the lives of frailer members of the community. As the number of older people increases then so too does demand for these services.

Government policy is focused on helping frailier people to remain at home as long as possible and local government is a major provider of services designed to achieve this end. Services provided by Council include assessment and review, domestic assistance, delivered meals, personal care, respite care, home maintenance and social support including a targeted community transport service. The challenges for Council, as with all local governments, as the population ages will include continuing to fund the needed expansion of services and ensuring those services are sufficiently flexible to cater for individual need rather than a one-size fits all approach. Promoting and improving independence is also receiving an increased focus in the way services are provided. In particular, there will be increasing demand as the number of people with dementia grows and carers at home will rightly expect to be given adequate respite. Funding under the Home and Community Care Program has not kept pace with increasing costs to deliver the service and increased demands for service as the number of frail older residents increases.
In the 2006/07 financial year Council spent $4.76 million\textsuperscript{25} delivering aged and disability services to 2,843 residents to support them to remain living at home. So these services represent a very significant commitment on the part of Council. Council is already experiencing considerable demand for these types of services. Eighty seven per cent of service users are 70+. Bayside’s 70+ population is already well above the Melbourne average suggesting a proportionately higher demand for services. Service demand has also increased as people remain living at home for longer and their care needs become increasingly complex. Those people 85+ are the most prolific users of services and tend to require a range of Council and other services to support them to remain at home. Bayside’s 85+ population is twice that of greater Melbourne, acknowledging that a number of these residents would be in residential aged care services.

Community and church based organisations also provide a wide range of allied health, community and residential care services. Increasingly the private sector is also providing home support services on a fee for service basis.

There is a good range of health, welfare and support services for older Bayside residents and these services do work together (e.g. through the Kingston Bayside Primary Care Partnership), but there are always benefits in strengthening relationships between providers as a pathway to more integrated service provision for residents. Generally there are eligibility criteria that require service applicants to be assessed. This can be confusing and can lead to multiple assessments of the one person and multiple service providers coming to the one home. The state government is introducing a designated assessment agency per local government area and Council has submitted an expression of interest to carry out this function.

\textsuperscript{25} This is the gross cost of delivering services. Council receives government grants and service fees that supplement Council’s contribution to the cost of delivering aged and disability services.
While aged and disability care services are important to those residents that receive them, all older people are users of primary health care such as general practitioner services, dentistry, podiatry and physiotherapy so it is important that service planning ensures adequate access to these services as the number of older people increases. The challenge for Council, as the key social planning organisation in the local community, is to plan for our community and to ensure strong coordination of services within the area and collaboration between service providers.

Carers are a diverse group of people who provide care and support to family members and friends who have a chronic or acute condition, mental illness, disability, or who are frail aged. At least one in five households in Australia is providing support to a family member or friend. Twenty three percent of all people providing assistance are primary carers; that is they can live with or be a non-resident carer, but they provide the main source of unpaid informal support. Carers need assistance that enables them to sustain their caring responsibilities, maintain their health and wellbeing and participate in family, social and community life, employment and education26.

The cost of services to individuals, particularly those in receipt of multiple services, requiring pharmaceuticals for health conditions and aids to remain at home, where they must pay for taxis to get out and about, can impact on older residents, requiring them to make difficult choices. Whilst there is some individual fee capping, and subsidised services or safety nets in place, the cumulative impact can be significant, particularly for those in receipt of the pension only.

26 Carers’ Victoria website
Notwithstanding the policy emphasis on supporting frailer people in their own homes, there will still be a need for additional residential care places. There are twenty residential aged care facilities in Bayside providing a total of 1240 residential aged care places. The federal government has a planning formula that guides the number of residential care places in the community. Based on this formula, Bayside has about the right number of residential care places, although feedback through the consultation process indicated insufficient high care beds, particularly concessional beds for local residents. The most recent commonwealth funding round has allocated additional residential aged care beds to services operating within Bayside, but the number of residential aged care beds within our area needs to be monitored to ensure there are sufficient places to meet the demands of our local frail older residents.

**Strategies**

- **Strengthen Council’s role in service planning, coordination and support for partnership developments to ensure services are matched to the diversity of community need.**
- **Create connections that strengthen local residential aged care services as a part of the service continuum.**
- **Provide leadership to advocate for adequate commonwealth/state levels for home support, allied health and residential aged care services.**