

PYRENEES

— S H I R E —



Pyrenees Shire Council
Positive Ageing Strategy

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Pyrenees Positive Ageing Strategy

Introduction

In 2008 Council prepared its first Positive Ageing Strategy. This Strategy reviews and updates the 2008 Strategy and draws on community priorities identified during the community consultation about positive ageing which was undertaken as part of the Recreation Strategy in 2010.

The Pyrenees Shire Council's Positive Ageing Strategy has been developed to enable effective future planning for facilities and services for our aging population. It will provide direction to council to ensure that it can respond to the growing and changing needs of older residents by acknowledging that positive ageing requires an integrated and supportive environment and that these can be improved by developing effective partnerships between older people, Council and other organisations.

Pyrenees Shire Council has a role to play along with other tiers of Government, community agencies and the general community in supporting residents to remain active and fully involved in their community as long as possible.

The key objective of this Strategy is to promote ageing positively and provide an environment where adults can move in to older age in a healthy, independent, and productive way.

Background

Research indicates that the development of active, connected, healthy and productive older people is the way to deal with the ageing phenomenon. The Victorian State Government has recognised the role played by Local Government in creating an age friendly community. Pyrenees Shire Council (PSC) has developed this Positive Ageing Strategy (PAS) through a funding arrangement with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV).

Strategy Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to:

- Plan for and prepare Council and the broader community for the changes happening within the population demographics
- Capture the perceived challenges regarding the ageing population and suggestions from the community about how to overcome these challenges
- Create strategies for a healthy, vibrant and independent older community by creating a healthy, vibrant and independent wider community
- Identify what older people value about living in Pyrenees Shire, and the services Council and others provide so there can be a continuous improvement and responsiveness of services to meet increasing need.

Positive Ageing Strategy Broad Policy Context

Worldwide, people are living longer and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing. As a result Governments and other organisations across the globe are preparing to meet the challenges faced by this demographic trend. The Policy Framework of the World Health Organisation and the set of principles developed in 1996 (year of the Older Person) by the United Nations are outlined below.

World Health Organisation Active Ageing Policy Framework

The World Health Organisation (WHO) supports and recommends an holistic approach to what they term “active ageing”, defined as “the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance the quality of life as people age¹”. This holistic approach is detailed in the WHO document *Active Ageing: A Policy Framework*, and outlines three basic pillars of active ageing which are:

- Participation
- Health, and
- Security

These three pillars fit within the UN Principles for Older People as demonstrated in the following figure²:

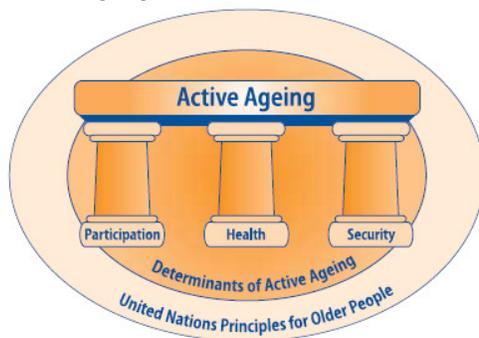


Figure 1: WHO Pillars of Active Ageing

The WHO provides some key definitions regarding active ageing:

Autonomy is the perceived ability to control, cope with and make personal decisions about how one lives on a day to day basis, according to one’s own rules and preferences.

Independence is commonly understood as the ability to perform functions related to daily living – i.e. the capacity of living independently in the community with no and/or little help from others.

Quality of life is “an individual’s perception of his or her position in life in the context of the culture and value system where they live, and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept, incorporating in a

¹ WHO Active Ageing: A Policy Framework 2002

² WHO Active Ageing: A Policy Framework 2002

complex way a person's physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs and relationship to salient features in the environment.”(WHO, 1994).

As people age, their quality of life is largely determined by their ability to maintain autonomy and independence.

Healthy life expectancy is commonly used as a synonym for “disability-free life expectancy”. While life expectancy at birth remains an important measure of population ageing, how long people can expect to live without disabilities is especially important to an ageing population.

With the exception of autonomy which is notoriously difficult to measure, all of the above concepts have been elaborated by attempts to measure the degree of difficulty an older person has in performing activities related to daily living (ADLs) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs). ADLs include, for example, bathing, eating, using the toilet and walking across the room. IADLs include activities such as shopping, housework and meal preparation. Recently, a number of validated, more holistic measures of health-related quality of life have been developed. These indices need to be shared and adapted for use in a variety of cultures and settings.

United Nations Principles for Older Persons

The United Nations (UN) principles for Older Persons³ were developed for the International Year of the Older Person (1999). The principles are:

Independence

- 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.
- Older persons should have the opportunity to work or to have access to other income-generating opportunities.
- Older persons should be able to participate in determining when and at what pace withdrawal from the labour force takes place.
- Older persons should have access to appropriate educational and training programmes.
- Older persons should be able to live in environments that are safe and adaptable to personal preferences and changing capacities.
- Older persons should be able to reside at home for as long as possible.

Participation

- 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.
- 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.
- Older persons should be able to form movements or associations of older persons.

³ Taken from the UN website for the International Year of Older Persons, <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/iyop/iyoppop.htm>

Care

- Older persons should benefit from family and community care and protection in accordance with each society's system of cultural values.
- 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.
- Older persons should have access to social and legal services to enhance their autonomy, protection and care.
- 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.
- 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-Fulfillment

- Older persons should be able to pursue opportunities for the full development of their potential.
- Older persons should have access to the educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources of society.

Dignity

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

Federal

Although the UN and WHO principles and policy on ageing are an international framework they can successfully be applied in an Australian context. The Federal government policy for ageing builds directly on the UN principles, including:

- Recognising the rights of older people
- Encouraging a shared responsibility approach including the use of public programs as a supporting not supplanting role of individuals, families and communities (often evidenced through a shift toward user pay principles), and
- Encouraging and supporting people of all ages to enjoy a high quality of life and to make a social and economic contribution to society

The introduction of compulsory superannuation is one of the ways the Federal government is attempting to deal with the ageing population, as well as changing laws regarding age discrimination in the workplace. A plethora of research has been undertaken in order to better understand the implications of an ageing population, including, for example:

- The National Strategy for an Ageing Australia and
- The Economic Implications of an Ageing Australia, and
- A Community for all Ages: An Age Friendly Built Environment

These Federal policies and strategies are vital for creating a framework within which local responses to the issues and opportunities that have been identified can operate.

State

The Victorian government has placed a strong emphasis on positive ageing which is broadly defined as 'supporting people to be valued by, and contribute to, the community as they age to benefit both the individual and society'. Particular areas of focus include:

- Employment: encouraging employers to recruit and retain older workers;
- Media: working with all types of media to encourage more realistic images of older people to be portrayed and discourage stereotypes and negative perceptions;
- Community: working with local communities (through local councils) to create age-friendly communities;
- Technology: encouraging greater use of technology by older people, particularly those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
- Active: promoting, supporting and providing activities that support an active lifestyle for older people that in turn will promote good health through social interaction and the health benefits of an active lifestyle.

Local

The level of awareness and planning in Local Government for an ageing population is high. Local government is able to play an important role in planning for an ageing population through:

- An intimate knowledge of the local community;
- Provision of infrastructure and the facilitation of developments that enhance the physical, social and economic environment of the local community;
- Planning and provision of services and programs;
- Community participation and development; and
- Advocacy on behalf of the local community⁴.

Over 95% of local councils believe they must plan for an ageing population and around 1 in 4 have developed an ageing strategy⁵. Every strategy is different; some adopt a holistic approach, others focus on more specific issues such as aged care services. Some issues and opportunities common to many of these strategies include:

- Ageing-in-place including factors such as urban design, housing design and social isolation;
- Council delivered aged care services including specific issues such as increasing complexity of care, meeting the needs of diverse communities and cost shifting;
- Inter-generational relationships;
- Housing: the need for diverse options that support ageing-in-place
- Community facilities (including age specific facilities such as Senior Citizens Centres); and
- Public and community transport.

⁴Australian Local Government Population Ageing Action Plan 2004-2008

⁵Australian Local Government Association (2005) *Ageing Awareness and Action Survey Report*

The major demands are anticipated to be health and aged care, in-home support services, community transport, subsidy of medical services and a range of cultural and recreation services. At the same time, local government faces potentially significant demands on revenue. The Productivity Commission report found that:

- There is likely to be an emerging fiscal deficit at the local government level under current policy settings;
- Local government rate revenue will come under pressure from the increasing proportion of pensioner households; and
- Local government revenue is unlikely to increase at a greater rate than the growth in GDP, and some components such as financial assistance grants will grow at slower rates.

The Productivity Commission also found that many local government areas will face increasing pressure relating to the suitability of infrastructure, much of which was constructed without particular consideration for ageing communities.⁶

The Role of Council

The Australian Local Government Association articulates the various roles for Local Government in relation to the growing older population in the *Population Ageing Action Plan 2004-2008*. Pyrenees Shire Council can use these roles to have a positive and crucial impact on the growing older population by developing and maintaining its own services and advocating and partnering with other organizations to increase the capacity of older residents.

The Pyrenees Shire Council Plan outlines the overall strategic direction for the development of the Shire, whose vision is “We want the Pyrenees area to be a healthy, vibrant, prosperous and connected community”⁷ Aged Care Services is listed under Commitment 3, *Community Wellbeing*. The most relevant strategies of Council relating to older adults are to:

“Provide responsive and sustainable community services in aged care, family day care and maternal and child health.”

“Update Safe and Healthy Living in the Pyrenees”

Preparing to meet the increased needs of a growing older population will form part of this strategy. In order to sustain current services at potentially increasing levels, however, it is important to encourage good health within the community in general in order for ageing community members to sustain health and vitality for as long as possible. Holistic health promotion must become a high priority in order to encourage healthy, independent older people, and to reduce both the number of people who require assistance and the length of time for which they require them.

The dual approach of preparing for the potential increase in demand for services and the promotion and support for good physical and mental health and community connection will position Council to respond to future demand.

⁶ Productivity Commission, 2005

⁷ Pyrenees Shire Council Plan 2009-2013, page 2.

Links to Other Pyrenees Shire Council Plans and Strategies

The Pyrenees Shire Council Positive Ageing Strategy sits under the Council Plan 2009 – 2013, and relates to the following plans and/or strategies within Council's strategic structure.

- Council Plan
- Municipal Health and Wellbeing Action Plan
- Disability Access Plan
- Recreation Strategy
- Residential Strategy
- Cultural Action Plan
- Asset Management Strategy
- Economic Development Strategy

An important requirement of Pyrenees Shire Council's Positive Ageing Strategy is that any strategic direction identified links back to current Council mechanisms for strategic planning and development. That is, the project outcomes must influence current planning and policy across a wide range of Council areas instead of being a stand alone positive ageing strategy.

Pyrenees Shire Council Aged Services Department is dedicated to endorsing and encouraging health promotion and preventative measures within the entire community, with a focus on those in the over 40 age bracket. This strategic direction is in keeping with research based policy from all organisations from the UN to the Victorian State Government.

Pyrenees Shire Council Demographics

Age Profile

Over the next 10 years, the population of the Pyrenees Shire is expected to follow the Australian trend. Projections indicate that the percentage of the population aged 55 years and over will increase from 33.1% (2004 actual data) to 47.9% (projected data)⁸.

The Shire of Pyrenees area age profile is summarised in Table 1 for residents of the total municipality. The following table provides an overview of the changes in population between 2001 and 2006 and includes a comparison to the population profile of regional Victoria.

⁸ Taken from DSE, *Victoria in Future 2004*.

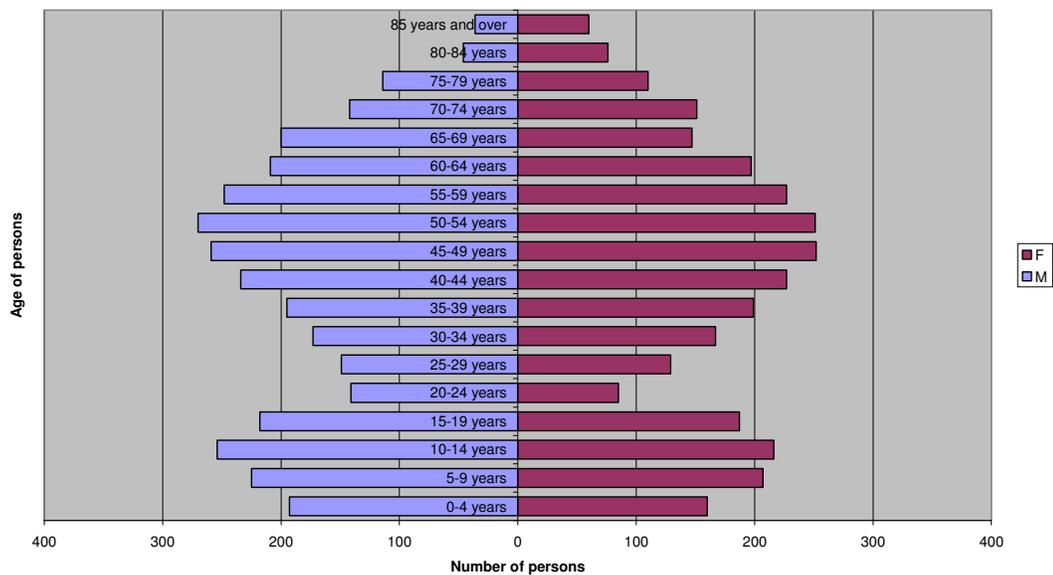
**Table
Pyrenees Shire Area Resident Age Profile (2006 ABS)**

AGE GROUP TOTAL PERSONS	2006			2001		
	No	%	Regional Vic %	No	%	Regional Vic %
0-4	302	4.7	6.2	349	5.5	6.7
5-11	576	9.0	10.0	625	9.8	10.8
12-17	555	8.7	9.2	590	9.3	9.4
18-24	344	5.4	8.0	338	5.3	7.9
25-34	536	8.4	10.9	626	9.8	12.2
35-49	1,295	20.3	21.5	1,380	21.7	22.1
50-59	1,113	17.5	13.7	991	15.6	12.0
60-69	862	13.5	9.4	734	11.6	8.3
70-84	669	10.5	9.2	628	9.9	8.8
85+	125	2.0	1.9	92	1.4	1.7
Total	6,377	100	100	6,352	100	100

(Note: Based on ABS 2006 Total Population that does not include overseas visitors)

The ‘population pyramids’ below and shown on the following page provide a snapshot of the age range of people in Pyrenees Shire Council, and the increasing disparity of the population between older and younger groups. The difference in shape of the ‘pyramids’ can clearly be seen, with roughly the same number of persons under 35, but an increase in those over 50.

Pyrenees Population 2001



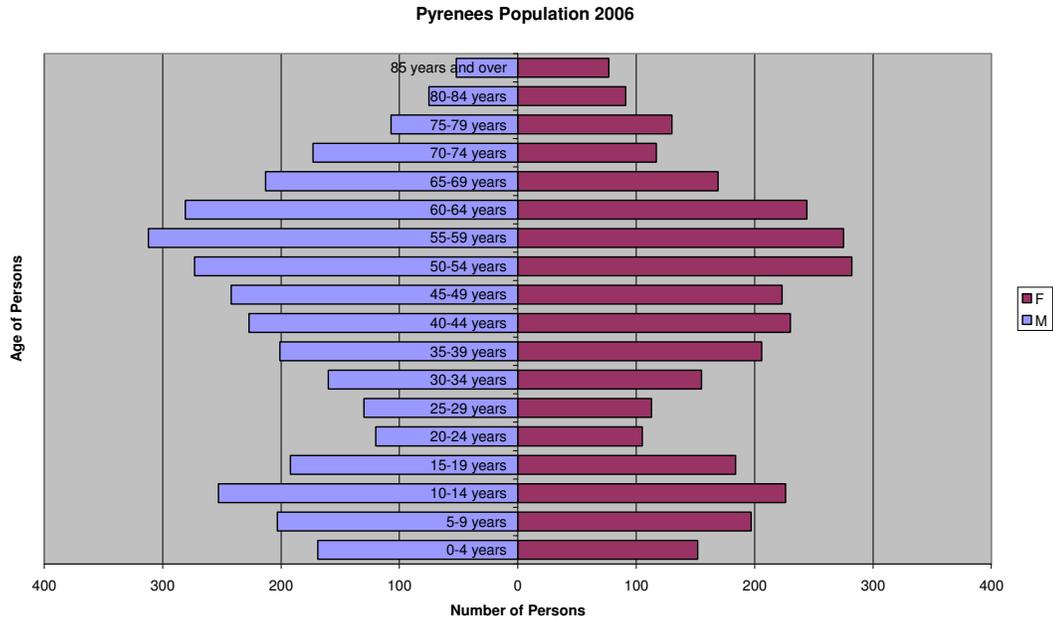


Figure 2: Snapshot of the age distribution of Pyrenees Shire Council 1996 – 2006

Analysis of the age structure of Pyrenees in 2006 26% were aged 60 years and over compared with 25.4% and 20.5% respectively for Regional Victoria.

The major differences between the age structures of Pyrenees Shire when compared against Regional Victoria for those aged 60+ were:

- A larger percentage of 60 to 69 year olds (13.5% compared to 9.4%);
- A larger percentage of 75+ year olds (8.1% compared to 6.3%); and
- A smaller percentage of 18 to 24 year olds (5.4% compared to 8.0%).

Though this trend is to be expected, given the ageing nature of our society, statistics show that Pyrenees can expect more growth in the over 55 age group. The 2006 census has provided the following information about the time between 2001 and 2006:

- Pyrenees maintained a balance in net population movement, that is to say that as many people moved in to the Shire as moved out; however,
- Pyrenees experienced a net *gain* of people moving in to the Shire who were over 55;
- Of those moving in to the Shire, over 35% reported an income of less than \$250 per week, and less than 10% of those moving in reported an income of over \$1000 per week;
- Over 45% of those moving in to the Shire are classified as not participating in the labour force (over 55 retired, long term unemployed no longer seeking employment, etc).

These numbers, if seen as a trend over time will require forward planning to cope with the increasing age of larger numbers of those already residing within the Shire, but comparatively cheap housing means older Victorians with low incomes are more likely to be attracted to the area.

Accurately forecasting what these ‘influx’ numbers might be is a task made difficult by the fluctuations that occur between each census, the different methods of data collection from one census to another, and changes to economic factors such as house pricing and petrol costs. It is enough at the moment to note and observe the influx of older people moving in and respond to changes as appropriate for the Shire’s needs.

These demographic changes will continue to increase pressure on the demand for aged care services and services for people with disabilities into the future. In economic terms, this means that local governments are more likely to face budgetary pressures from supporting an ageing population than from traditional activities such as road and infrastructure provision and maintenance.

Existing Services in the Pyrenees Shire

The table below provides a representation of the services offered throughout the Pyrenees Shire by Council and other community service agencies, and the protective and risk factors that services should be trying to promote and reduce respectively.

The table indicates the broad range of services offered to Pyrenees Shire Council residents, while at the same time highlighting the gaps that exist.

	Health Planning (holistic preventative method)	Connectedness to community (participation)	Safety and security (personal, social, financial etc)
General Home Care (GHC)(HACC, PSC)			
Personal Care (PC)(HACC, PSC)			
Planned Activity Groups (PAG)(HACC, PSC)			
Meals On Wheels (MOW)(HACC, PSC)			
Transport for food shopping and medical appointments (PSC, BSHS, MDHS)			
"Eat and Greet" (BSHS)			
"On the Move" (BSHS)			
Carer's Group (BSHS)			
'Do Care' visiting volunteers (BSHS)			
Nursing Home (BSHS, MDHS)			
Hostel/Respite Care (BSHS, MDHS)			
Home Visiting Library Books (CHRLC)			
Strength Training (BSHS)			
Tai Chi (BSHS)			
Allied Health (HACC, PSC)			
District Nursing (BSHS, MDHS)			
RITCH (MDHS)			

Figure 3: Services Provided in Pyrenees Shire and the WHO Three Pillars of Active Ageing.

Consultation and Process for the Pyrenees Shire Council Positive Ageing Strategy

Consultation was conducted throughout the Shire using a variety of methods including survey, interview, online and open ended discussion. A list of groups that participated in the consultation can be found in Appendix 1

The consultation findings have been used to inform and develop strategic directions which will form the Pyrenees Shire Council's Positive Ageing Strategy.

Future consultation will be improved by the establishment of a reference group to guide the future review and development of not only the Positive Ageing Strategy but other decisions made within the Shire that impact on older people. It is planned that there will be an annual review process for the Positive Ageing Strategy and update of the Action Plan, allowing Council to maintain and renew information in relation to community feedback.

Key Issues and Challenges for Pyrenees Shire

A number of key issues and challenges have emerged from the research findings, literature review and feedback from the consultations.

During consultation, older members of the Pyrenees Shire Council community highlighted a range of issues.

In order to ensure Council's strategic direction reflects current frameworks, these issues have been clustered under the headings used by the World Health Organisation who have developed a check list of "Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities". These categories are:

- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Social participation
- Respect and inclusion
- Civic participation and employment
- Communication and information
- Community and health services

Outdoor spaces and buildings

Maintaining footpaths and infrastructure to enable ease of movement and entry for scooters, wheel chairs, walkers and people with ambulatory difficulties is crucial to ensuring the security and prolonged independence of ageing and frail members of the Shire community. The increasing age of the population means that prolonging the independence of older community members is integral to the financial future and continued quality of services provided by Pyrenees Shire Council.

The built environment needs to maximise the independence and mobility of older people. Older people need to live in communities and settings that are sensitive to their needs for access to shops, facilities such as medical services, recreational facilities and other services. As people become older and less mobile, often their lives become focused on their immediate surroundings.

Provision of safe pathways and seating was regularly mentioned in community consultations as being important to not only older adults but the whole community. The need to develop footpaths and pathways has been identified in many of the local township community action plans.

Provision of seating that supports older people such as seats with back support and arm rests should be considered when Council or community groups are installing seating in outdoor spaces.

The provision of accessible public toilets and community buildings is also important if older people are to feel secure when they are outside their homes. This issue was also raised in consultation sessions.

Transportation

Access to affordable public and community transport is one of the key supports to active and healthy ageing. Transport to regional centres and between townships provides opportunities for socialisation, community participation, and access to support services, learning opportunities, entertainment and shopping.

Transport was highlighted as an issue during consultation. Older members of the community recognised that there will come a time when they can no longer drive, and expressed concern about the impact that loss of licence and lack of any other means of transport will have on them. Many admitted to driving even though they really know they should not due to an absence of any other option. Those consulted wanted a service to get groceries, go to the chemist etcetera, to travel from Beaufort and Avoca and outlying districts and back again.

Housing

Consultation revealed a wide-spread need for a retirement village within Beaufort. This was the case in 2008 with increasing interest expressed in 2010. A number of people would like to move out of their family homes, but are not ready to be placed in a nursing home, and do not want to leave Beaufort or other towns within the Pyrenees. A retirement village would enable people to 'down-size' housing while retaining independence. A retirement home would enable people in this situation to move with their pets and be close enough to access services without relying on others when they can no longer drive. Council has a role in exploring the viability and feasibility of a locally based retirement village.

Social participation

“Beautiful town, community is good, great people.”

“It is a country town and have good neighbours are helpful when things go wrong.”

“Everyone works like community”

Comments taken from consultation, people were asked ‘what do you like about your town/Shire?’

Community participation covers a spectrum of activities involving people in their communities, from passive involvement in community life (attendance at a community event) to intensive action oriented participation in community development (including political initiatives and strategies) as well as lifelong learning.

Participation leads to a sense of community connectedness. Community connectedness refers to the level of engagement and trust that an individual has with others in their community as a whole. People can feel part of and valued by their community through assuming specific roles, through friendships and through participation in activities⁹.

Community connectedness is an indicator of the overall health of any given community. Positive healthy conditions and psychosocial factors are crucial for overall health and well being as well as decreasing instances of mortality, morbidity and disability and conversely when negative they become risk factors to maintaining quality of life, functional independence and wellbeing.

Levels of community connectedness are indicators of the overall physical and mental health of the people in the area. The Department of Planning and Community Development annually publish a report called *Indicators of Community Strength at the Local Government Area Level in Victoria*. A summary of the data from the report is included below, with comparisons between Pyrenees Shire, the Grampians region, and the Victorian regional average (see figure 4 on the following page).

These figures show that the Pyrenees Shire community as a whole has a higher than average feeling of safety and community connection compared to state regional figures. These results are despite the low socioeconomic status of the Shire. It is important to engender further participation in community activities, rather than simply maintaining the status quo, and to encourage community groups in the use of existing private and public infrastructure in order to expand opportunities for participation.

⁹ *Women and social connectedness*. (2006) Women’s Health Victoria, Melbourne.

Appendix D Pyrenees LGA, 2006 – data table

Indicator	Pyrenees	Grampians Region	Victorian Regional average
Can get help from friends family or neighbours when needed	92.6	94.5	94.2
Could raise \$2000 in two days in an emergency	71.2	70.4	70.8
Volunteers	63.3	54.3	52.5
Member of organised groups	53.6	52.4	51.4
Member of group that has taken local action	66.3	55.6	51.5
Parental participation in schools	67.8	65.6	66.7
Is on decision making board or committee	27.9	22.1	22.5
Attendance at community events	65.1	54.3	53.1
Feels safe on the street alone after dark	79.3	70.2	67.2
Feels multiculturalism makes life in the area better	71.1	79.8	78.5
Feels valued by society	69.0	70.5	69.3
Feels there are opportunities to have a real say on issues that are important	63.8	61.5	59.1
The area has easy access to recreational and leisure facilities	72.3	75.2	78.2
The area has good facilities and services like shops, childcare, schools, libraries	68.0	72.8	74.5
The area has opportunities to volunteer	84.1	81.2	81.3
The area has a wide range of community and support groups	73.4	70.5	73.4
It's an active community	77.2	70.2	72.2
Organised sport	-	-	45.0

Source: Department for Victorian Communities (2007) *Indicators of Community Strength at the Local Government Area Level in Victoria 2006*. The report includes a description of the rationale and method for the creation of these data and can be found at www.dvc.vic.gov.au

Figure 4: Indicators of community strength for Pyrenees Shire Council

Traditional opportunities that exist for older residents in Pyrenees Shire include:

- Senior Citizens
 - Avoca
 - Beaufort
- Planned Activity Group
 - Avoca
 - Beaufort
 - Lexton
- Clubs (various locations)
 - Country Women's Auxiliary
 - Craft Groups
 - Gardening Groups
 - Country Fire Authority
 - Landcare
 - Bowling Club
 - Golf Clubs
 - Croquet

As well as within these more traditional community groups, opportunities exist for less formal modes of community connectedness and participation such as the Beaufort and Avoca Community markets.

Public and informal spaces within the community provide other outlets for socialising and fostering feelings of community connectedness. Both hotels in Beaufort and one in Lexton provide 'senior friendly' environments, with reasonably priced home-style meals for lunch as well as dinner, and a deliberate reduction in bands and loud music.

Beaufort, Avoca and to a lesser extent Lexton cater for senior residents in a variety of ways, and as a result enjoy tourism benefits from Markets and other events through the year. Smaller towns in the Shire (Amphitheatre, Moonambel, Landsborough and Snake Valley), would benefit from an increase in such activities, as would their community.

A number of older residents expressed the need for greater opportunities to connect with each other and other members of the community and expressed interest in establishing a community centre or neighbourhood house in Avoca. The current facilities at the Tourism Information Centre are too small for this purpose.

Key to the maintenance of the positive figures from *Indicators of Community Strength* is engaging those moving in to Pyrenees Shire. The 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census revealed that the socioeconomic status of those moving in to Pyrenees Shire is much lower than those moving out. People leaving Pyrenees Shire are also predominantly younger than those moving in (as discussed in the Demographics section of this strategy). Pyrenees Shire Council needs to play an active part in integrating new comers into community life, to ensure they become active in community life.

Respect and inclusion

Implementing and maintaining an age-friendly environment within the Shire will include the development of a culture where different age groups interact with each other and are integrated, rather than separate. Many of the Community Action Plans for each town recognise the importance of maintaining and increasing links between the generations.

Opportunities exist within the services provided by the Shire for the development of projects between Planned Activity Group (PAG) coordinators, Maternal and Child Health workers and other community service staff. Specific activities or projects might include:

- Young people becoming involved in some PAG activities, or presenting a PAG activity;
- Older members of the community integrating with different demographics, for example:
 - Single or young mothers learning to cook/sew/garden etc from older members of the community
 - Older members of the community organising working bee type projects (small jobs) either voluntarily or for a small price to help young families – teaching members of the family to fix/maintain things themselves. This might take the form of a ‘help your neighbour’ campaign where it would not have to be older helping younger, but might be younger helping older.
 - Older female members of the community participating in one or two mothers’ group sessions per period of time – sharing experience and knowledge and stories.

Civic participation and employment

A criticism that was noted during consultation was the way simple changes made by the Shire can adversely affect older members of the community. One example given was the change to larger sized road-side collection rubbish bins; the change was made without consultation or notice to the community, and older or frail community members are struggling to move the new bins. Although in most cases people were able to call on neighbours, relatives or friends for assistance, they felt disempowered by the fact that they could not safely take the rubbish out themselves. This situation highlights the importance for Pyrenees Shire Council to implement a system of checks before changes are implemented, throughout all levels and departments, in order to provide an environment where ageing people can feel secure and continue to contribute in all aspects of community life.

Leadership within communities is crucial to the maintenance of a socially cohesive and connected community. Young people of Pyrenees Shire should be encouraged to have strong relationships with older members of the community thus ensuring cross generational communication and learning. Community leadership promotes community ownership of services; communities who feel connection with and ownership of services tend to utilise them more than communities who feel disenfranchised.

Life Long Learning

Lifelong learning will be important both in terms of employment aspirations as well as the lifestyle aspirations of those who no longer wish to remain in the workforce.

A culture of lifelong learning will assist with the labour force issues that may become apparent with labour force needs emerging from a smaller pool of younger people from which to recruit. The skills of mature age workers will need to be fostered and enhanced to meet future workforce requirements. Formal and informal lifelong learning can equip people with the necessary skills to cope with economic and technological change, as well as open up opportunities for social and community participation.

Volunteers

The lack of volunteers within communities is a big issue across Australia, and Pyrenees Shire Council is no exception. The ageing population leads to volunteers, who have previously been active volunteers providing many services, now accessing services themselves. Lack of succession planning for volunteer positions and situations means that volunteers who 'retire' are not being replaced. To ensure the existing level of service is maintained across the community, the Pyrenees Shire Council is currently employing people to carry out traditional volunteer work in the Meals on Wheels (MOW) program.

Improvements to the information provided in the new resident's kit, and development of the capacity of Beaufort and Avoca Community Resource Centres with regard to volunteering opportunities could make a large difference to volunteering within the Pyrenees Shire.

Recruitment and management of volunteers is a difficult and time consuming task, which cannot be assimilated in to the roles of the Aged Care Services Manager or Direct Care Coordinator positions currently supported by Pyrenees Shire Council. Other opportunities need to be explored to support, promote and facilitate the strengthening of volunteerism across the Shire.

Possibilities for external agencies to assist Pyrenees Shire Council in the recruitment, retention and management of volunteers are:

- The Missing Link partnership, involving Pyrenees, Hepburn, Golden Plains and Moorabool Shire Councils with the City of Ballarat and the Rural city of Ararat.
- Ballarat Cares, a corporate volunteering initiative that Snake Valley and Beaufort, at least, may be able to source for assistance.
- A program developed 'in-house' with unidentified funding, perhaps something along the lines of Pyrenees Shire Council Angels – volunteers who agree to be contactable if an older person needs help with something that is in that 'angel's' area of expertise (programming VCR, numbers in mobile phone etc).

Communication and information

A serious lack of knowledge about where to access information on a variety of services from transport to health has been identified as an issue by older people.

Increased and consistent communication could be improved by developing a recognised 'one-stop-shop' information service at the Beaufort and Avoca Community Resource Centres, which are frequented by older people.

A regular newsletter from the Aged Care Services Department and regular articles in the Pyrenees Advocate are other ways to increase communication with this older cohort of the community.

Council's newly introduced monthly newsletter can also be used to provide information relevant to older members of the community.

Advocacy

Taking on an advocacy role and having a reputation for advocacy within the community will generate a two-fold result for Pyrenees Shire Council. One aspect is that people requiring an advocate will come to the Shire offices, meaning staff can inform them of services they might access, leading to an increased catchment of otherwise unidentified members of the community. The second aspect is improving the relationship we have with the community, particularly the older members of the community. The Customer Action Request System is one avenue where the members of the public might request Council to act in an advocacy role for various issues. A reputation for providing friendly assistance for a number of issues will help to promote a feeling of security for all members of the community, but particularly older people.

Community and health services

Health

The loss of health services for Pyrenees Shire is a particular issue in the Avoca area, where Maryborough District Health Services have withdrawn services from the community and relocated them in Maryborough – the problem is not so much the physical distance as the psychological issue of abandonment and resentment at a perceived loss of services. Pyrenees Shire Council needs to support and encourage the community surrounding Avoca to access services and stem the negative feeling associated with their health service (or perceived lack thereof).

Health promotion and preventative measures are important factors in creating a healthy, able and participating ageing community. As the increasingly older community places more strain on the health system, health promotion and preventative measures are becoming even more important. Maintaining a community of healthy, active community members able to remain in their homes for the longest possible time, is the best result for everybody. As discussed in the previous section, participation, community connectedness and social cohesion are crucial elements of a

healthy community. Pyrenees Shire has specific issues due to the lack of a major township or centre in the Shire, and the large area covered. Negative 'small town' issues that exist within Pyrenees Shire include lack of availability of service, lack of transport and geographic and perceived isolation. Positive elements of 'small town' living include increased feelings of security, community networks alerting services to potential clients and community networks to provide support and care to those with no family who are engaged in the community and deemed 'locals'.

Community Services

Pyrenees Shire Council operates an Aged Care Services Department providing a range of services that aim to enable residents that may be frail, aged or have a disability to remain in their home and actively participate within their communities. Among these services, Council provides Home and Community Care services, adult day activity programs, recreational and social support programs, assisted transport and carer support.

Service gaps exist particularly in areas of socially related transport designed to further community connectedness, basic home maintenance and limits on HACC services to clients in order to offer other current services such as PAG and MOW.

Direct Care Workers (DCWs) are the front-line of services provided for older, disabled or ill residents of Pyrenees Shire and are an important link in the provision of health services. These workers see clients in their home environment on a regular basis and are therefore able to pass on crucial and otherwise unavailable information to appropriate staff at Council, or other service providers who can deliver assistance where required. This flow of information can also work in reverse; making sure that DCWs are knowledgeable about services for which clients are eligible, and can access, will ensure that clients obtain accurate and relevant information. This in turn enables Pyrenees Shire Council to provide an accurate and useful service to clients.

With increasing demands on other health services, like District Nurses (DN), more emphasis is placed on DCWs to provide an invaluable insight into the lives of their clients. DCWs are more than just cleaners; it is important that Pyrenees Shire Council encourages this recognition in both clients and the workers.

It is imperative to ongoing and continued provision of quality services that Pyrenees Shire Council implements and maintains appropriate communication, training and development of staff. Confidentiality; the creation and maintenance of a culture where DCWs understand their importance to the overall wellbeing of clients; and the importance of DCWs as a resource for disseminating information about services are all issues that were raised during consultation as needing continuous reinforcement.

Basic Home Maintenance is offered by many other Shire Councils as part of the HACC program; Pyrenees Shire Council unfortunately does not receive funding to support such a service. Lawn mowing, tree trimming, light bulb changing, smoke detector battery changing and basic repairs are just a sample of the 'odd-jobs' that clients find difficult to complete by themselves, but also find difficult to arrange and pay for at normal tradesperson rates. Volunteers could possibly take on some home maintenance jobs, but volunteering is an issue in itself, as has been discussed in this

document. Affordable home maintenance and repair would enable older community members to remain securely in their homes for longer – a key goal for Pyrenees Shire Council, as well as State and Federal governments.

Carers

Carers have been identified through consultation and policy to be a group in need of particular attention. Unpaid care from spouses and extended family is crucial to the functioning of the health system and society in general. It is recognised that Pyrenees Shire Council needs to participate in improving the connection between carers and support services.

Consultation also revealed an awareness of the increase in older carers of children; for example the number of grandparents having sole custody of their grandchildren. A similar issue arises with intellectually or otherwise disabled dependent children who are growing older and still being cared for by parents who are also growing older. Increasing support of these carers and their families will be achieved through linking of services and increased client awareness of service potential.

Relationships with Other Service Providers

Increasing the catchment of clients will be best achieved by having providers that service the Pyrenees area working together to increase the awareness of as many clients or potential clients as possible. Developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with organisations or service providers with whom Council currently has informal working arrangements is one way to ensure regular and ongoing formalised communication and information sharing. MOUs with fellow service providers will soon be compulsory for continued DHS funding; the new DHS funding ‘Active Choices’ will be about centralising assessment tools, so beginning to formalise before it becomes mandatory will put the Pyrenees area service providers ahead of the deadline. The MOU should include regular meetings of stakeholders to discuss clients, funding, staffing issues and levels of care. Meeting in this manner will lead to better opportunities where staff who might otherwise be isolated will be given access to networking and peer feedback situations.

Organisations or service providers who could potentially be involved in an MOU with Pyrenees Shire Council include:

- Beaufort and Skipton Health Service (BSHS)
- Maryborough and District Health Service (MDHS)
- Other service providers or organisations as deemed appropriate

An understanding between service providers will need to include the fact that the Active Choices model is now the policy direction for all service providers. The HACC Active Choices Service Model, developed by DHS, aims to maximise client independence through person-centred and capacity building approaches. Reorientation of the service delivery model enhances the care relationship through improving independence, wellbeing and quality of life of the care recipient.

The Active Choices model is one catalyst that will initiate change towards promoting independence and staying in home longer for the ageing members of our community.

The idea is that the service provider either encourages the care recipient to do as much as they are physically able, or teaches them how to better care for themselves, lessening a culture of dependence and helplessness which can stem from care provision with no input from the recipient.

The forthcoming cohort of older residents in the Pyrenees Shire will be of the Baby Boomer generation, and are generally expected to bring generationally specific changes as clients. Baby Boomers are going to have different life experiences to the generations that have gone before, and are going to have different expectations towards aged care and ageing in general. Whilst it is possible that Baby Boomers may become disempowered due to being aged or becoming frail, it is more likely that they will be well aware of their rights and the services available, and be quite able to understand and partake in 'the system' of health care.

Baby Boomers are likely to be considered 'aged' and likely to become frail later in life than previous generations, having been more aware of how to look after their health than previous generations. The flip side to this increase in health is that there is a steadily increasing gap between 'haves' and 'have-nots' in the Baby Boomer generation. The 'haves' will have private health insurance, satisfactory or generous pensions and Superannuation pay outs, increased health and mobility and planning for their old age. The 'have-nots' will be relying on government support for pensions and health care, have more health problems, and lack planning and possibly family support as they age. It is the latter group of people who may require services and support on a regular and long term basis.

Strategic Direction

The tables on the following pages outlines the strategic direction and action plan for Council that have been developed based on the research findings, literature review and community consultation.

Pyrenees Shire Council Positive Ageing Action Plan

Strategic Area	Strategic Objective	Action	Key Performance Indicator	Timeline	Responsibility
Outdoor Spaces & Buildings	To ensure community buildings are physically accessible to all and that pathways and support infrastructure meets the needs of older adults	Review community facilities for physical accessibility and develop a program to address accessibility issues within current facilities Improve links between footpath networks and key facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All community facilities are fully accessible Training provided Ongoing 	2020	Building and Assets & Planning
	Provision of age friendly environments	Provide training for council staff in design, building and planning departments on the issues and benefits associated with age friendly environment Ensure signage for streets and businesses takes into account the needs of older people e.g. is legible for both drivers and pedestrians.		2012	
	Create safe and secure pedestrian	Increase the provision of adequate park and street seating			

Strategic Area	Strategic Objective	Action	Key Performance Indicator	Timeline	Responsibility
	environments	furniture: benches, resting places, handrails, and shelters			
Transportation	Provision of a range of transport options suitable for older adults	<p>Ensure the continued use of the HACC bus to support older adults access to shopping, support services and community activities</p> <p>Advocate on behalf of the community about the transport needs of older people living in rural areas</p> <p>Explore transport options the better co-ordinate public, private and community transport</p> <p>Enhance older people's driving skills by encouraging driver education programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Bus Service operating 	Ongoing	Aged Services Manager
Housing	To provide a range of housing choices for older people.	Ensure planning processes encourage the development of housing options for older people through a review of Council's Planning Scheme to encourage the development of small scale housing development for older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Processes Reviewed 	2011	Planning and Building Services

Strategic Area	Strategic Objective	Action	Key Performance Indicator	Timeline	Responsibility
		<p>people</p> <p>Commence discussions with private developers and government agencies to ascertain the feasibility of an independent living unit in the Shire.</p> <p>Involve older people in planning processes and continue to consult around emerging older person's accommodation issues</p> <p>Promote "Ageing in Place" housing design</p> <p>Provide information about relevant advisory services and resources to assist older people make their homes more age-friendly</p> <p>Encourage community groups and service clubs to consider providing minor maintenance services for older people still living in their own homes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions held and feasibility determined. • Older people consulted • Information provided 	<p>2012</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Chief Executive & Senior Officers</p> <p>Manager Community Wellbeing</p> <p>Aged Services Manager & Planning and Building Services</p> <p>Aged Services Manager</p>

Strategic Area	Strategic Objective	Action	Key Performance Indicator	Timeline	Responsibility
Social Participation	Encourage a range of recreational, cultural and leisure choices for older people	<p>Increase opportunities for involving older people in a wide range of activities</p> <p>Promote and support organisations that cater to the needs of the entire population through reviewing the criteria for Community Grant Programs to encourage programs and activities that are available for all ages.</p> <p>Develop and strengthen regional partnerships to increase opportunities for residents to participate in diverse arts and cultural programs</p> <p>Use existing older person's networks to promote recreational and leisure activities</p> <p>Ensure older people are involved in the planning of community events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities provided (linkage to volunteering objective) • Grant Criteria Reviewed 	Ongoing 2012	Aged Services Manager Manager Community Wellbeing

Strategic Area	Strategic Objective	Action	Key Performance Indicator	Timeline	Responsibility
Respect and Social Inclusion	Organisational awareness of positive ageing and effects on the community	To integrate positive ageing into a whole of Council strategic planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive ageing to become a regular agenda item at manager's meetings • Policies developed to ensure positive ageing integrated into all future planning, infrastructure development and Council strategic planning 	August 2008 June 2009	Aged Services Manager/Director & Corporate Community Services/Manager Integrated Management System
Civic Participation and Employment	<p>Increased opportunities for older people to guide and direct services and programs which affect them.</p> <p>Increased opportunities for life long learning</p>	<p>Establish as Older Adults Reference Group to provide input into future Positive Ageing Strategies and into other areas of community decision making that affect them.</p> <p>Work with the community resource centres and other organisations to increase the opportunities for life long learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older Adults Reference Group established • U3A established in Avoca 	June 2011 2012	Manager Community Health and Wellbeing

Strategic Area	Strategic Objective	Action	Key Performance Indicator	Timeline	Responsibility
Community and health services	Increase the provision of health and support services	Initiate, participate and support strategic health planning partnerships and networks and remain an active member of the primary care partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Council's service role within partnership and formalise accordingly Number of new initiatives developed through partnerships 	September 2008 December 2008 December 2008	Aged Services Manager
	Increase support for carers in the Shire	Identify carers, promote services and provide referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More carers identified and supported 		
	Support and provide programs that encourage participation in healthy lifestyles	Encourage, promote and support physical activity programs and special events for seniors Support programs that encourage walking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical activity programs available Walking groups operating across the Shire 		
	Increase support for carers in the Shire	Identify carers, promote services and provide referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More carers identified and supported 	June 2009	Aged Services Manager

APPENDIX 1

Consultation took place with the following participants:

- Beaufort, Avoca and Lexton Planned Activity Groups
- Staff from Lexton, Avoca, Beaufort, Landsborough and Moonambel
- Avoca & District Historical Society
- Avoca Branch CWA
- Avoca Breast Cancer Support Group
- Avoca Health Care Service Auxiliary
- Avoca Business & Tourism Inc.
- Avoca Carers Support Group
- Avoca Festivals & Events
- Avoca Guides & Avoca Scouts
- Avoca Senior Citizens
- Avoca Urban Fire Brigade
- Beaufort Community House & Learning Centre
- Crowlands Film Society
- Landsborough Historical Group
- Lexton CWA
- Lions Club of Avoca
- Moonambel Mechanics Inst. (Hall)
- Natte Yallock Primary School
- Pyrenees Petanque Club
- Avoca Primary School
- Moonambel Events Inc.
- Avoca Craft Group
- Beaufort & District Adult Riders Club Inc.
- Beaufort Angling Club
- Beaufort Apex Club
- Beaufort Arts & Theatre Society
- Beaufort Business Association
- Beaufort Cloth Art Group
- Beaufort Community House & Learning
- Beaufort Croquet Association
- Beaufort Cub Scouts
- Beaufort Embroidery Club
- Beaufort Gardening Club
- Beaufort Girl Guides
- Beaufort Golf Associates
- Beaufort Historical Society
- Beaufort Municipal Band
- Beaufort Primary & Secondary School's
- Friends of the Pool
- Lake Goldsmith Steam Preservation Association
- Mt Bolton & District Lions Club
- Pyrenees Shire Council community members