



## Premier of Western Australia

Our ref: 24-510556

Mr Peter McHugh  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly  
Parliament House  
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr McHugh

### **GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 7 AGE-FRIENDLY WA? A CHALLENGE FOR GOVERNMENT**

I refer to Report No. 7 of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee entitled *Age-Friendly WA? A challenge for government* which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 20 November 2014.

In accordance with Standing Order 277 of the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, I report to the Assembly the Government's response to the recommendations of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Colin Barnett MLA  
**PREMIER**

18 FEB 2015

**RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT  
NO. 7 AGE-FRIENDLY WA? A CHALLENGE FOR GOVERNMENT**

**Introduction**

The State Government's *An Age-friendly WA: The Seniors Strategic Planning Framework 2012 – 2017* is intended to be used in an ongoing process of engagement with seniors to assess, plan for, and chart progress towards age-friendliness. Quoting the United Nations, the purpose of an age-friendly framework "... is to help cities see themselves from the perspective of older people, in order to identify where and how they can become more age friendly".

Ageing and age-friendliness are situational, changeable and subjective. Because of this, planning frameworks are intentionally non-prescriptive and monitoring focuses on examining progress at the local level rather than measuring and comparing compliance at the state or national level.

The Western Australian seniors and seniors' stakeholders who participated in local governments' age-friendly research said that while they felt that they were respected and included in their communities, their health, housing and transport needs were not being fully met. The State Government's work has focused largely on these domains.

**Recommendation 1**

***The State Government should increase funding to Alzheimer's Australia WA to promote dementia awareness, research and provide services in Aboriginal communities.***

WA Health agrees that there is a need to focus on the needs of different population groups and that for Aboriginal people and their carers developing service awareness and capacity in respect of Aboriginal people and their specific needs requires attention.

In 2014/15 WA Health commissioned Alzheimer's Australia WA (AAWA) to develop and implement a community sector dementia awareness and capacity building project. The project is underpinned by acknowledgement of dementia as core business for community services across WA and is inclusive of service providers who deliver service to Aboriginal people.

Concurrently the Australian Government has funded the Alzheimer's Association to provide Service Access Liaison Officers whose role is to address barriers to access for specific needs groups, with access by Aboriginal and Torres Islander people highlighted.



## **Recommendation 2**

***Given that the number of people suffering dementia is expected to increase significantly, the Department of Health should invest in gathering robust data on the nature of dementia in Western Australia so that services can be targeted effectively.***

The Department of Health recognises the need to develop services that target identified need based on robust data and to date there has been a reliance on published prevalence data. In WA the Health system has moved to an Activity Based Funding (ABF) environment which will in part facilitate meaningful data collection, particularly in data collection via acute and sub-acute care. There are identified broader challenges that affect gathering reliable data that are being addressed in WA. These include:

- broader community and health workforce awareness of dementia; and
- improving data gathering via assessment processes in health and community.

Reliable data on dementia is a challenge nationally and will rely largely on improvements in how primary care, acute care and residential aged care data gathering and data linkage processes are improved.

In respect of targeting service effectively WA Health supports a view that all acute, subacute, and community services should adopt dementia friendly processes and environments, which includes embedding person centred care into all practice. This is reflected in the WA Health models of care for dementia and delirium.

## **Recommendation 3**

***The Minister for Community Services should introduce amendments to the Carers Recognition Act (2004) to ensure that the role of carers in home care settings is given due recognition and respect.***

In 2014-15 the Department of Local Government and Communities will provide Carers WA with \$822,741 in funding to provide support counselling, respite and social support to an estimated 310,000 Western Australian carers.

Prescribed State Government and government funded service providers are required to comply with the *Carers Recognition Act 2004* (the Act); this includes compliance with the Western Australian Carers Charter which provides clear direction on how carers are to be treated and involved in the delivery of services. Home care services, including those provided through the Home and Community Care (HACC) program must also comply with the charter and are required to report on compliance to the Department of Health. There is evidence that service providers are achieving these obligations.

It is recognised that the Act does not apply to other providers of in home care services, such as private sector providers or providers funded by the Commonwealth.

While the Department for Local Government and Communities (DLGC) agrees that the role of carers in home settings should be duly recognised and respected it does, however, have reservations over the effectiveness of a legislative response.

Recognition of carers in home care settings could be better achieved through a range of non-legislative mechanisms. The Minister for Community Services has asked DLGC to develop a state-wide Carers Strategy in partnership with the Carers Advisory Council, Carers WA and other stakeholders. Strategies that enhance carer recognition and respect will be explored in this process.

#### **Recommendation 4**

***Given the success of programs such as Exergaming in motivating sedentary seniors, the Department of Sport and Recreation should ensure seniors in all communities can benefit by expanding funding for training to community groups, enabling them to run the programs locally.***

In 2015 the Department of Sport and Recreation is working with the Seniors Recreation Council of WA to secure funding to continue the Exergaming program; and to increase training and development for volunteers and staff from retirement homes, community centres and rehabilitation organisations.

#### **Recommendation 5**

***The success of the Living Longer Living Stronger program warrants an increase in resources and funding from the Department of Health to ensure that it remains a stand-alone program.***

The Injury Control Council WA (ICCWA) is contracted to provide a state-wide community falls prevention program. Award of the contract followed a comprehensive review, extensive stakeholder consultations and a competitive public open tender for delivery of select state-wide injury prevention health promotion programs.

#### **Recommendation 6**

***The Department of Health to ensure that the Stay on Your Feet program is retained as a stand-alone program and properly resourced into the future.***

The Department of Health remains firm in its commitment to falls prevention programs. Community-based falls prevention programs, utilising the Stay On Your Feet® brand, are delivered in the community under a service agreement between the Department of Health and ICCWA (refer to above response to recommendation 5). Further falls prevention programs and activities conducted in hospitals and other healthcare settings utilise the Stay On Your Feet® brand with input from the Falls Prevention Executive Advisory Group of the Health Strategy and Networks Branch, Department of Health.



### **Recommendation 7**

***Given its serious impact on the health of older people, the State Government should investigate initiatives to address excessive alcohol and drug consumption in older age.***

The Drug and Alcohol Office is working with key stakeholders to investigate the nature and extent of the problems posed by alcohol use by older people, including the interaction with other drugs. This will include identifying existing initiatives, available data and literature about the issue, exploring effective actions to prevent and reduce problems experienced by older people and subsequent consultation with key stakeholders and older people.

### **Recommendation 8**

***Further research is conducted to gain a greater understanding of the palliative care needs of Aboriginal people and the delivery of those services to Aboriginal communities.***

The 2015 workplan for the Palliative Care Network includes planning a model of care for Aboriginal people. This will include conducting research to gain a great understanding of the palliative care needs of Aboriginal people and delivery of services to Aboriginal communities. The project is due to commence in October 2015.

Currently, all rural regions have Regional Palliative Care Coordinators who have developed plans for accessing Aboriginal health worker support as required from existing regional staff positions and through liaison with Aboriginal Medical Services. The potential to strengthen these links is being explored.

### **Recommendation 9**

***The State Government needs to actively plan for the increasing demand for aged care professionals.***

The development of a ten year strategic workforce plan for WA Health is currently underway. An extensive consultation process is currently in progress. A strategic workforce planning consultation paper has been developed to obtain feedback from key stakeholders on various issues including workforce strategies to be put into place.

A priority key workforce strategy is the need to identify and plan for critical workforce occupational groups such as an increase in aged care professionals. Areas of workforce shortages are identified early with the assistance of robust data and business intelligence, and organisation wide strategies developed to target these groups, including increase of training places, scholarships and targeted recruitment campaigns nationally and internationally.

### **Recommendation 10**

***The Department of Transport should ensure that public transport is viable alternative to driving to Perth for country aged pensioners by reinstating bus services which connect to the Australind train service in the Bunbury region.***

The rationalisation of the road coach service that connected with the Australind train service was the Boyup Brook to Bunbury (via Collie) service and was simplified due to the low patronage and therefore low fare revenue relative to the subsidy being paid by taxpayers.

In that regard, Transwa has provided the local communities of Collie and Boyup Brook with a road coach service that travels directly to the East Perth Terminal and relieves passengers of the requirement to change from the road coach service to the Australind train which is considered an attractive option for senior passengers.

The Department of Regional Development (DRD) is committed to regional bus services and has demonstrated this by:

- Investing \$15.1 million Royalties for Regions Funds on 23 new road coaches – eight new coaches for the 2014-15 financial year, another eight during 2015-16, and another seven in 2016-17.
- This investment by the DRD ensures regular transport services to people in the 250 regional communities the Transwa fleet travels between and provides a vital link for tourists exploring WA.

Additionally, DRD provides assistance to eligible pensioners living in regional areas, including Bunbury via the Country Age Pension Fuel Card Scheme, which is designed to assist people who rely on fixed income means tested age pension in accessing services and recreation activities where there is limited to no public transport.

### **Recommendation 11**

***In order to ensure that services are perceived as safe by seniors, the Public Transport Authority should undertake a detailed study of the public transport use and needs of the seniors and their perceptions of safety.***

For the past 23 years, Transperth has undertaken an annual Passenger Satisfaction Monitor (PSM) survey which assesses the level of passenger satisfaction with various aspects of the Transperth network. The survey conducts detailed face-to-face interviews with over 4,000 regular public transport users covering all the main demographics, including seniors. In addition to a range of service criteria, the survey also specifically seeks customer's views on how safe they feel on board Transperth services and at the various facilities (bus ports, stations) provided around the network. The PSM results provide the Public Transport Authority with a good understanding of how customers view the public transport system and their perceptions of safety across the network. On this basis, a further study is not considered necessary.



### **Recommendation 12**

***The Department of Transport should investigate ways to make train stations car bays available for use by seniors after 9am.***

Transperth recognises that seniors may access the transport system once their free travel entitlement commences at 9.00am. There are a number of train station car parks with parking specifically designed to meet this need. In that regard, some short-term car bays (i.e. 15 minutes or less) are converted to longer term parking between the hours of 9.00am and 3.30pm which is the period of the free travel entitlement for seniors and aged/disability pensioners. This affords seniors with the opportunity to park their vehicle, as the morning peak commuters are unable to use these bays as they are typically travelling before 9.00am.

Seniors, aged and disability pensioners who are in possession of an ACROD permit are entitled to park their vehicle for free at any of the ACROD parking bays provided at all Transperth car parks.

Transperth also runs a comprehensive network of feeder buses to train stations as an alternative for patrons to park their vehicles at stations. The majority of buses are accessible and seniors, aged and disability pensioners are able to travel for free during the period of free entitlement.

### **Recommendation 13**

***The Department of Regional Development should adjust the monetary value of the Country Age Pension Fuel Card to align with the geographic location of the person to whom it is issued. Pensioners who need to travel long distances should receive a greater contribution towards fuel costs than those who only need to travel short distances.***

The Country Age Pension Fuel Card Scheme has been established to provide eligible Pensioners living in a regional area (outside the Perth metropolitan boundary) who rely on a fixed income means tested age pension with \$550 Fuel Card annually (indexed annually to WA CPI) to assist them in accessing services and recreation activities where there is limited to no public transport. The Fuel Card Scheme is administered by the Department of Transport and the Scheme Terms and Conditions are reviewed annually.

### **Recommendation 14**

***The Department of Transport should publish the number of successful prosecutions of Taxi Users' Subsidy Scheme fraud in its annual report.***

Under the *Taxi Act 1994*, the Department of Transport (DoT) can infringe or prosecute Perth metropolitan drivers for misusing the Taxi User Subsidy Scheme (TUSS), although the number of infringements/prosecutions is relatively low. There are no similar provisions for country taxi drivers misusing TUSS. Significant misuse of TUSS (e.g. major fraud) is generally handled by WA Police.

DoT is currently developing new systems to manage complaints and infringements for taxi drivers as part of the *Taxi Driver Licensing Act 2014* implementation. Statistics on TUSS misuse by taxi drivers can be made more accessible when these

systems come online during 2015. However, it is considered that this information would be more appropriate for regular operational reports (e.g. published monthly statistics) than DoT's annual report.

Although DoT works closely with WA Police on TUSS investigations, DoT may not be the most appropriate agency to publish statistics on WA Police prosecutions.

#### **Recommendation 15**

***Given that transition from driving is identified in the Framework as something that will help create an age-friendly community, the State Government should establish a driving cessation program similar to the UQDRIVE model.***

There are existing schemes to support seniors in using the public transport system which support those who decide to stop or reduce driving.

The Office of Road Safety website contains useful resources aimed at seniors including sources of support, accessing alternative means of transport, motorised scooters and licence renewal ([www.ors.wa.gov.au/Road-Safety-Topics/Road-Users/Seniors](http://www.ors.wa.gov.au/Road-Safety-Topics/Road-Users/Seniors)).

DoT is responsible for administering driver and vehicle licensing laws. It is not actively considering running a program such as UQDRIVE at this stage. However, DoT will continue to offer practical resources for individuals, community organisations and government agencies regarding driver licensing.

#### **Recommendation 16**

***The Department of Transport should review the criteria needed to obtain a Photo Card to make it more accessible for seniors.***

DoT is committed to the National Identity Security System (NISS) which seeks to combat the misuse of stolen or assumed identities for the enrolment in, and access to government services. The NISS focuses on ensuring that driver's licences and other proof of identity documents issued by government agencies are subject to a rigorous identity and verification process that is standard across all Australian Government agencies.

The WA Photo Card was introduced in 2014 to provide a reliable form of identification for people without driver's licences, which will include some older people. It provides an equivalent level of proof of identity to a WA driver's licence.

For somebody who holds a WA driver's licence, it may be used as proof of identity in applying for a photo card. As most older people transitioning from driving will have a driver's licence, it is not considered necessary to change the existing criteria.



### **Recommendation 17**

***As a matter of urgency, the Department of Housing and Department of Commerce considers the recommendations of the report “Security of tenure for the ageing population in Western Australia”.***

The Government has introduced a number of important reforms regarding housing and tenure in Western Australia in recent years. In 2013, the Government commenced significant amendments to the *Residential Tenancies Act 1987* and on 1 April 2014 amendments to the *Retirement Villages Act 1992* were commenced. A second round of reforms is planned for the *Retirement Villages Act* and a review of the *Residential Parks (Long-stay Tenants) Act 2006* is currently being conducted. Consideration of issues relating to the regulation of the boarding and lodging sector is also planned.

The recommendations of the report *Security of tenure for the ageing population in Western Australia* are, and will be, taken into consideration by the Departments of Commerce and Housing in the development of any reform recommendations for Government.

### **Recommendation 18**

***The Department of Housing should urgently address the lack of affordable housing for seniors on low incomes by increasing the supply of social housing.***

Currently one third of public housing tenants are seniors. The Department of Housing continues to seek opportunities to deliver more social housing. The Department's 2014-2015 Annual Plan aims to deliver an additional 200 social houses and commence another 400.

The Department is investigating initiatives to partner with industry and utilise targeted Government investment to stimulate supply and diversity of housing for seniors. In this way, Government will unlock greater value and support services for seniors than would be realised from its own stand-alone investment.

### **Recommendation 19**

***The State Government should implement a stamp duty concession or exemption for seniors who wish to purchase a smaller home.***

The State Government understands seniors' concerns regarding the difficulties that transfer duty costs can pose for them when seeking to purchase a home that is better suited to their changing needs and has considered transfer duty relief options for pensioners and seniors 'downsizing' their homes in recent State Budget processes. However, a greater consideration for seniors may be the impact that a release of equity in their existing home would have on their eligibility for the Age Pension. This is supported by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute's report, *Downsizing amongst older Australians*.

Transfer duty also affects others buying a home to meet changing life circumstances, such as growing families needing to purchase a larger home, people who need to move for employment and those on low to moderate incomes hoping to move from rental tenancy or the parental home.

Accordingly, the State Government is committed to keeping overall transfer duty rates as low as possible subject to responsible financial management.

### **Recommendation 20**

***Government tenders for new buildings, including social housing, should specify compliance with universal design principles.***

Universal design principles are included in design briefs for social housing and other new builds where appropriate. Of the 4,475 new social housing dwellings delivered since 2010, nearly half incorporated universal design elements.

The Department of Housing will continue to incorporate universal design principles in many of their building and construction programmes, where possible, considering the cost implications

Designs produced for non-residential building projects managed by the Department of Finance's Building Management and Works are required to meet the requirements and standards relating to accessibility in the National Construction Code.

Elements of accessible buildings required to meet the relevant Australian Standard (AS1428: *Design for Access and Mobility*), in the National Construction Code, include lifts, ramps, stair railings, low grade stairs, non-slip floors, public toilets and adequate signage.

Reviews of universal design are included as part of the Department of Finance's design and documentation review process where drawings and specifications submitted by consultants are checked before being publicly tendered for construction.

### **Recommendation 21**

***The Department of Transport should increase the time allowed to cross the road for seniors at signalled crossings in areas where there is a higher density of seniors.***

Main Roads Western Australia (Main Roads) provides the Australian and UK standard of 1.2 metres per second for the full crossing distance time which is considered to be adequate for the majority of pedestrians to cross the road. For example, if the road crossing distance is 16 metres then the crossing time allocated is a total of 18 seconds as follows:

- 4 seconds green man introduction.
- 13 seconds flashing red man [calculated at 1.2 metres/sec for the full crossing distance].
- 1 second static red man.



It is apparent from Main Roads' customer feedback that the flashing red man is not well understood and causes some seniors concern by thinking the time has run out. To address this, Main Roads has introduced pedestrian count down timers as an alternative to the flashing red man as a trial which has been well received by the public in general. Main Roads is happy to consider treatments at traffic signals to increase safety where there are higher densities of vulnerable road users.

### **Recommendation 22**

#### ***Main roads should:***

- ***develop a system for identifying the most unsafe street crossings for seniors; and***
- ***trial the Singapore model of activating extra crossing time with a seniors' card.***

Main Roads monitors and reports on all pedestrian crash locations. Specific sites can be treated under nominations for the Black Spot Program. Should certain demographics be identified for concern, appropriate treatments will be considered accordingly.

It is understood that the Singapore's standard pedestrian crossing time may be less than the Australian standard and therefore it needed to introduce the card system to minimise impacts on traffic.

While Main Roads has used a card system in the past to assist people with mobility issues at certain crossing points, this system was not taken up on a wider scale as it was inconvenient for those that forgot to carry their cards at all times and therefore rarely used. It has since been removed.

Where the situation is warranted either for the elderly or for people with mobility problems, Main Roads is willing to look at appropriate technologies to resolve any safety issues. There are a number of technologies that could be applied in extending green times. One of these which is more cost effective and convenient than issuing cards are 'Puffin' pedestrian crossings which have been installed successfully on Beaufort Street and Vincent Street at traffic signals where there are concentrations of seniors to automatically detect and extend the crossing times. This technology uses infrared beams or microwave detection.

### **Recommendation 23**

***Under its new policing model, WA Police should make local teams available to perform an audit of security concerns, needs and vulnerabilities in their local areas with a view to working closely with seniors to address the issues.***

Local Policing Teams (LPT) have been established to take ownership of all policing activities and responsibilities within their allocated suburbs, including services to the elderly.

Each of the Metropolitan suburbs have been assessed against a demand matrix covering seven broad criteria. One of these criteria is community demographics. LPT are encouraged to meet their community, engage with them and address their concerns. Initiatives such as "Coffee with A Cop" and regular attendance at Public

Libraries are a couple of examples of how LPT are engaging with their communities and providing an environment where the elderly can discuss their issues with a Police Officer.

LPT are encouraged to engage with the elderly to discuss personal safety and property crime that may impact them, such as anti-social behaviour, illegal and anti-social road use and youth at risk, which have the potential to influence the elderly's perception of crime and their safety within their community.

In addition to normal LPT engagement with the elderly, WA Police produce a "Safety Advice for Seniors" booklet that is available for distribution by LPT. This booklet provides the elderly with practical safety advice.

Additionally LPT can direct the elderly to the Security Agents Institute of Western Australia who produce, and distribute free of charge, a Listing and Services brochure with details of all licensed security companies covering all facets of the security industry, including security audits.

#### **Recommendation 24**

***The Department of Local Government and Communities should include information on the link between life transitions and social isolation in the Stay connected and be involved booklet, and ensure there are programs available to address this issue.***

The *Stay connected and be involved booklet* was informed by research conducted by Professor Simone Pettigrew and Melanie Pescud<sup>1</sup> at the University of Western Australia, and endorsed by the Seniors Ministerial Advisory Council.

Pettigrew and Pescud examined the primary life transitions and changes that contribute to social isolation in older people. Life changes are primarily situational, i.e. moving house, whereas transition is psychological – the decisions made to incorporate those changes.

Older people face many changes such as reduced mobility, poor health, taking on a caring role or the death of a spouse, which may cause them to withdraw from society. They found that the best way to overcome social isolation caused by change and transition is through participation in social, cultural and sporting activities.

The *Stay connected and be involved booklet* clearly identifies these key changes and transitions and explains how this can lead to social isolation. It provides information and advice, ways to manage these changes and the risk of isolation through social participation, as well as contact details for organisations that provide activities to enable this.

In addition, DLGC provides, funds and supports a number of organisations and initiatives that enable greater seniors participation, including the WA Seniors Card, Senior's Recreation Council, Volunteering WA and Community Resource Centres.

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<sup>1</sup> Pettigrew, S and Pescud, M (2013), *A Review of Recent Social Isolation Literature*, Report for the Department of Local Government and Communities, Government of Western Australia, Perth, Western Australia.



DLGC considers this recommendation is already fulfilled. The booklet contains information on the link between life transitions and social isolation, and funds a range of programs to enable participation.

#### **Recommendation 25**

***The Department of Local Government and Communities should provide training programs or develop a training toolkit to assist public and private sector organisations to treat older people with respect and understanding. In addition, an advertising campaign promoting the capabilities of older people should be developed.***

Respect and inclusion is one of the eight Age-friendly Communities domains. The Department for Communities' *Age-friendly Communities Collective Examination of Western Australian Local Government Research Reports* – which summarises the key findings from the 2010 Age-friendly Communities funding program – found that most of the seniors who participated in the research felt that they were well respected in and by their community. It was not considered a priority by those seniors.

DLGC will consider the need for training or a toolkit. The need for an advertising campaign is questioned.

#### **Recommendation 26**

***The Department of Local Government and Communities establishes a Seniors Report Card to measure changes in attitudes towards seniors.***

In 2009, the Department for Communities conducted the Seniors' Community Participation Survey to explore community attitudes towards older people and ageing. The evidence is presented in the *Western Australian Seniors' Wellbeing Indicators 2012* report. This research found that more seniors felt valued and respected by their communities than did not, and that this perception was largely unchanged since 2004.

The utility of further research needs to be critically examined. Key to this is determining whether such research will result in better outcomes for seniors.

In 2013, DLGC established the Planning for an Ageing WA Senior Officers Group (SOG). The group comprises senior representatives from agencies whose work covers health, housing and transport; the domains WA seniors identified as priorities. The current members are the Departments of Commerce; Finance; Health; Housing; Regional Development; Planning; the Premier and Cabinet and Treasury; and the Office of Multicultural Interests.

DLGC and the Senior Officers Group will consider this proposal further in their respective 2014-2015 action plans.

### **Recommendation 27**

***Older people with disability must be considered in policies and programs which target inclusion.***

The *Disability Services Act 1993* requires all local government and state government agencies to develop a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP). The plan must demonstrate how the agency identifies and removes barriers for people with disability to its services, events, information, buildings, facilities, employment and consultation processes.

The purpose of a DAIP is to ensure that all people with disability, regardless of age, can access services provided by public authorities in Western Australia and that these services facilitate increased independence, opportunities and inclusion.

This process does not target specific age groups. However, older people with disability also benefit from it. For example, the City of Subiaco has recently introduced a 'Recharge Scheme' to allow community members to recharge their motorised mobility devices, such as scooters and mobility devices, at four local businesses and city owned buildings identified as recharge points.

The Committee's recommendation is supported and can be implemented via the DAIPs that all local and state government agencies have in place.

### **Recommendation 28**

***The guide and assessment tool developed to help State Government agencies become more age-inclusive should be extended to the local government and private sectors.***

The Public Sector Commission's (PSC) *A Guide to Managing an Ageing Workforce: Maximising the experience of mature-age workers through modern employment practices* is already available to the local government sector. In addition, the PSC's Director of Equal Employment Opportunity (DEOPE) has developed the *Local Government Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan – Creating a workplace that is equitable and diverse*.

As public authorities, local governments are able to access PSC support to develop, implement and monitor workforce development strategies and initiatives. Section 146 of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* requires local government authorities to submit information on diversity groups within their workforce to the DEOPE.

PSC advises that because its resources are publically available, there is no impediment to access by the private sector, but it cannot provide support. However, an exception is made for private companies contracted by the State Government. It is expected that a contractor's work practices will align with those of the public sector and PSC will support contractors to achieve this.

DLGC will work with the PSC to explore appropriate options for promoting this resource to the local government and private sector.



### **Recommendation 29**

***An employment agency dedicated to the specific needs of older workers should be established.***

In so far as the policy intent of Government may be to support the needs of older workers, this would appear to be within the remit of the Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD). There does not appear to be any demonstrated need for a new government entity to be created to provide the employment agency recommended in the report.

### **Recommendation 30**

***The Department of Training and Workforce Development should establish an annual award to recognise age-friendly employers.***

The WA Training Awards currently have 14 categories recognising outstanding achievement in a training context and are closely aligned to the Australian Training Awards. The Employer of the Year award included criteria to support the training and employment of older workers.

### **Recommendation 31**

***The Department of Training and Workforce Development should ensure that older workers have access to subsidised training in all industries – not priority industries, as is the requirement subsidies under the Future Skills program.***

Under Future Skills WA, older workers have the same access as all Western Australians to subsidised accredited training in Western Australia. This includes subsidised training in State priority courses, general industry training courses and foundation skills training.

The focus of subsidised accredited training is on employment outcomes rather than on training for personal interest.

### **Recommendation 32**

***The State Government needs to design a concessions policy and framework that will ensure concessions for seniors target the people most in need.***

The State Government has commenced a review to better target concessions to seniors in need.

### **Recommendation 33**

***The State Government must support the Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse WA (APEA:WA) to work more intensely with community and government bodies to establish reliable statistics on the extent of elder abuse.***

DLGC and the Department of Health have provided \$80,000 in co-funding to Advocare to manage the elder abuse helpline.

The launch of the Help Stop Elder Abuse campaign and Helpline has created an opportunity to collect data on elder abuse trends in WA. Advocare has reported an

increase in demand for information and education programs following the launch of the Helpline in September 2014. Advocare records the number of elder abuse related calls it receives through the Helpline as well as its office number, as well as other information about the calls such as the type of abuse being experienced and outcomes of each call such as triage or referral to services such as the DLGC funded Older People's Rights Service (OPRS). OPRS also records call data.

The development of a policy for interagency data collection is a key action of APEA:WA's Strategic Plan 2012-2015, which is currently being progressed. A key challenge in collecting data about the extent of elder abuse is that it relies on older people reporting that they are experiencing it. However, because many people are reluctant to accept that they are being abused or seek help, they are unlikely to be included on existing health or crime surveillance systems.

Seniors officers will explore whether it is possible to gather reliable elder abuse data.

#### **Recommendation 34**

***WA Police should train officers in ways to recognise signs of elder abuse and ways to successfully prosecute perpetrators.***

As a component of Diversity Training delivery, WA Police teach awareness of elder abuse, highlighting the vulnerability of elders and the potential for increase due to an aging population. Diversity Training is delivered to Police Recruits, Transitional Officers and Police Auxiliary Officers.

As a component of legal training delivery, WA Police highlight the recognition and application of appropriate charges relating to assaults upon elders. This legal training is delivered to Police Recruits, Transitional Officers and reinforced in Detective Investigation Training.

The WA Police Academy is currently undergoing a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and a copy of Report No. 7 *Age-Friendly WA? A challenge for government* has been provided to the working group undertaking the TNA for consideration.

#### **Recommendation 35**

***The State Government should develop guidelines on appropriate language for use in government publications aimed at seniors.***

The *Western Australian Language Services Policy 2014* aims to ensure that all Western Australians have equitable access to information and services. It requires State Government agencies to take into account the particular profile and needs of current and potential clients when providing information.

The policy encourages State Government agencies to:

- engage with stakeholder to identify the most effective communication tools;
- seek assistance with testing the effectiveness of the communication tools and appropriateness of the messages for the target audience;
- use plain English in verbal and written communications; and
- consider using audio-visual communication tools.



The policy is underpinned by a range of policies and legislation including the *Accessible Government Services For All (2006)* the performance management framework for the Australian Government's access and equity strategy. One of its four principles is that stakeholder communication should be undertaken through open and effective channels.

### **Recommendation 36**

***The State Government needs to ensure ongoing access to free one-on-one computer and internet training for seniors.***

An evaluation was conducted by the Department of Training and Workforce Development in early 2013 of computer training available to support individuals to develop skills to use the technology. The evaluation found that there were several sources of assistance available in the community, such as government subsidised accredited training via a range of programs through State and Private Training Providers. Introductory computing courses through Local Government Libraries and through local community centres. Concessional course fees are available to eligible students undertaking subsidised accredited training.

The Department of Local Government and Communities also notes that the provision of training opportunities for seniors will be given consideration in future planning activities.

### **Recommendation 37**

***Support for grandcarers from different government agencies should be better coordinated.***

The DLGC funded Grandcare Service operated by Wanslea provides a range of information, assistance and support to individual grandcarers to help them identify social support networks and other relevant community resources. Wanslea collaborates with a range of stakeholders to ensure that grandcarers are linked to appropriate supports and community resources.

DLGC will explore options to collaborate with key government and non-government stakeholders.

### **Recommendation 38**

***Given the diverse needs of the ageing Aboriginal population, the Minister for Seniors formulates a mechanism to consult directly with Aboriginal elders to hear concerns firsthand and determine needs.***

The Minister for Seniors welcomes opportunities to consult directly with seniors from all backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Minister is mindful that engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must be conducted in culturally appropriate ways, and will work in partnership with key stakeholders – including cultural advisers – to develop appropriate consultation mechanisms. The Minister also recognises that elder status is defined

by community respect and recognition, not by age. Some elders may be less than 60 years of age.

Direct and indirect consultation mechanisms, could include:

- Aboriginal representation on the Seniors Ministerial Advisory Council;
- meetings with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people during regional Cabinet; and
- inviting the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to join the Planning for an Ageing WA Senior Officers Group and Community Development Roundtable.

DLGC will explore the viability of these mechanisms.

### **Recommendation 39**

#### ***The State Government conducts an audit of the methods used in consulting older people in Aboriginal communities.***

The availability of government services that are culturally equipped to provide services to Aboriginal people is one of the key factors that will contribute to improved social, economic and wellbeing outcomes. A significant number of state government agencies have implemented Aboriginal engagement strategies and/or contract providers to deliver face-to-face Aboriginal cultural competency training.

The Aboriginal Cultural Competency Framework (the Framework) is an initiative of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs that seeks to provide the principles and key elements that can assist in the development of a culturally competent public sector agency. The Framework has been developed in consultation with key personnel, including some members of the Western Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council (WAAAC). The desired outcomes of the Framework include, but are not limited to:

- more culturally appropriate programs and services;
- consideration of the dynamic, complex environment Aboriginal people are positioned;
- assisting in resolving cross-cultural misunderstanding;
- improved equity of access to services and more efficient effective services; and
- awareness of Aboriginal culture in the development of relationships.

The Public Sector Commission has also produced Sharing Culture; a free online training module for state and local government employees. The training is designed to enable public sector employees to develop their awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and experiences as the basis for developing better ways of working and engaging with people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. Sharing Culture complements the Diverse WA online cultural competency training. By embracing the Framework and training currently available, agencies will make positive and practical contributions to reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Western Australians and improve the engagement between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people of all ages.

It should also be noted that the WAAAC which is the statutory council convened under the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972*, held the inaugural WAAAC Summit in August 2014 to inform an engagement mechanism between Aboriginal



people and the Government agencies, service providers, stakeholders and corporate entities that have an interest in improving outcomes for Aboriginal people. The Summit provided a unique opportunity for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to discuss ideas that might improve the effectiveness of investment and engagement of Aboriginal people in Aboriginal affairs. The State Government will be better placed to address Aboriginal disadvantage by acting on the advice and direction of the WAAAC and working collaboratively to achieve positive outcomes.

The State Government questions whether an audit of methods would deliver better outcomes to older Aboriginal people.

#### **Recommendation 40**

***The Department of Local Government and Communities provides an incentive for local governments to implement age-friendly practices by linking funding to implementation.***

The Department already provides funding to local governments to implement age-friendly practices.

#### **Recommendation 41**

***To demonstrate that it takes seniors seriously, the State Government should allocate more financial and human resources to the Department of Local Government and Communities and reinstate a dedicated unit for seniors' interests.***

DLGC's structure is designed to be flexible and mobile to allow agency staff to work on projects which respond to community need as required and appropriate.

Broader allocation of financial and human resources to DLGC is a matter to be considered by Government.

#### **Recommendation 42**

***The State Government should investigate models for a formal collaborative agreement between key government departments to ensure that they have a co-ordinated approach to ageing policy, planning and implementation.***

Planning for and meeting the needs of an ageing population is a shared responsibility that requires collaboration and strong partnerships across all levels of government and with the non-government sectors. DLGC manages or is involved in a number of partnerships that could be considered as models for formal collaboration.

The Planning for an Ageing WA Senior Officers Group could consider expanding its membership to include other key government agencies such as the Departments of Aboriginal Affairs, the Attorney General, Sport and Recreation and Training and Workforce Development, Disability Services Commission, Drug and Alcohol Office, Equal Opportunity Commission, Mental Health Commission and Public Sector Commission.

DLGC partnered with the Local Government Managers Association (LGMA), Council of the Ageing (COTA) WA, City of Melville and the WA Local Government Association (WALGA) to establish the WA Age-friendly Communities Network. The network invites cross-sector and cross-jurisdictional membership to share information on, and provide support for, age-friendly projects, programs and initiatives. DLGC provided \$50,000 funding to the LGMA to establish and manage a virtual network and host an age-friendly forum. The forum held on 20 November 2014 attracted participants from local governments and the community/not-for-profit, private and academic sectors. Most of these participants asked to join the network.

DLGC chairs the Community Development Roundtable which comprises the department's Director General and the Chief Executive Officers of LGMA, WALGA and WA Council of Social Service (WACOSS). The roundtable connects State Government, local government and the community sector to identify opportunities to identify priorities and develop and implement innovative strategies to achieve place-based outcomes.

Cross-government and -sector collaboration and coordination could be achieved by connecting these groups through:

- meetings and forums;
- information sharing; and
- regular and ongoing communication.

DLGC will consider leveraging its relationships with these groups to determine whether other stakeholders would welcome greater collaboration and how this could be best achieved.

#### **Recommendation 43**

***The State Government should appoint a separate Minister for Ageing who would be responsible for issues affecting both the well-aged (currently the responsibility of the Minister for Seniors and Volunteering) and the frail aged (currently the responsibility of the Minister for Health).***

This recommendation is not supported. Issues impacting the ageing are already adequately addressed and coordinated within the existing Ministerial portfolios.

#### **Recommendation 44**

***The Department of Local Government and Communities should investigate opportunities and provide support for collaborative research with the university sector.***

The Department for Local Government and Communities is currently involved in and/or supporting a number of collaborative research projects with the university sector across its portfolio areas, in addition to working with research consultants. The Age-Friendly Communities Framework was informed by research undertaken by Painted Dog Research<sup>2</sup>. Likewise, the department's social isolation initiatives are

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<sup>2</sup> Amonini, C and Braidwood, S (2011), *2011 Profile of WA Seniors: Current Issues and Projected Trends*, Report for the Department for Communities, Government of Western Australia, Perth, Western Australia.



underpinned by research undertaken by a team from the University of Western Australia.

The DLGC funded Age-friendly Communities Network provides an opportunity for members to initiate cross-sector research collaboration.

DLGC will continue to explore options for collaborating with the university sector and other research organisations.

#### **Recommendation 45**

***The Department of Local Government and Communities should adopt the World Health Organisation effectiveness indicators or a similar system as soon as possible, to enable local governments to monitor implementation of age-friendly initiatives.***

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has published draft guidelines for *Measuring the Age-friendliness of Cities: A Guide to Using Core Indicators*. The guide is being piloted in 12 selected sites, and the WHO intends to finalise it in 2015.

The guide states that it is not meant to supersede other locally or nationally developed guides and indicators, rather it forms part of the broader guidance the WHO provides to all levels of government and community groups who want guidance on age-friendliness and are interested using comparative global indicators in their evaluations.

Further, it cautions that the guide and indicators have limitations due to the complex and highly context-dependent nature of age-friendliness. The WHO advocates periodic reviews and revisions to ensure that the guide and indicators remain current and useful.

The WA Age-friendly Communities (AFC) Network Working group has considered options for collaboration with the university sector to develop outcomes-based indicators that could be used by all sectors and levels of government to monitor the effectiveness of age-friendly projects and initiatives. It is anticipated that this will become possible with the growth and further development of the network.

Local governments can develop their own or adopt existing monitoring frameworks independent of DLGC. In WA, the City of Melville has implemented a seniors' wellbeing report card to monitor the progress and outcomes of its Age-friendly Melville Directions from Seniors 2013-2017 framework, which was informed by their AFC research.

DLGC will review and assess the suitability of the finalised guidelines.