



a fairer victoria achievements so far

Strategy Four Helping older Victorians stay independent

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Aim

Our population, in company with other OECD countries, is ageing. And the nature of ageing is changing, with people remaining healthy and independent well beyond their retirement. A Fairer Victoria is providing Senior Victorians with the tools and opportunities to stay active and healthy, remain in the workforce, keep learning and continue to contribute to the life of their community.

Helping older Victorians stay in their own homes

Some of the ways we have assisted senior Victorians to improve their physical wellbeing and maintain their independence include:

- delivering an additional 478,000 hours of Home and Community Care services (jointly funded with the Commonwealth), to provide frail older people and younger people with disabilities with nursing, allied health, domestic assistance, personal care, and delivered meals
- providing 20,000 personal alert units to older Victorians and people with a disability, with over 40,000 people using the service since 2000. An additional 1,000 alert units are being distributed in 2007/08
- helping over 6,000 aged Victorians through 114 *Well for Life* projects, which improve the level of physical activity and nutrition of frail older people and lead to greater independence in daily activities such as eating, personal care, and movement, and
- building on the principles of *Well for Life* to help over 240 older Victorians with personalised assistance so they can manage day-to-day activities in their homes such as house cleaning, strength and mobility training, information on physical activity, cooking and nutrition classes, and assistance in the development of low maintenance and water efficient gardens.

Helping older Victorians stay active

Under A Fairer Victoria, some of the ways we have supported the active, healthy lives of senior Victorians include:

- providing travel savings for seniors and free public transport to seniors during the annual *Victorian Seniors Festival*
- supplying over 350,000 seniors with a *Seniors Sunday Pass*, which provides free travel on Sundays for Seniors Card holders in Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Mildura, Warrnambool, and the Melbourne metropolitan area. Around 20,000 trips are taken each Sunday with the pass
- ensuring Seniors Card holders receive the same concession rates on Victorian public transport as other concession card holders
- continuing our *Older Driver Safety* program, including publishing the *Victorian Older Drivers' Handbook* in seven languages
- developing alternative ways of getting around for older Victorians no longer able to drive, and
- providing advice on promoting age-friendly workplaces to 900 metropolitan and 180 regional employers through a program of *Grey Matters* briefings.

Lifelong learning

We have:

- expanded and provided additional support for existing Universities of the Third Age (U3As). U3As have over 21,000 members state-wide and are key sites of learning and activity for older Victorians
- established nine additional U3As in Altona, Grantville, Hamilton, Hastings, Healesville, Kinglake, Kyneton, Box Hill North and Upper Ferntree Gully
- delivered 51 introductory internet training sessions to 689 culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) seniors from 27 language groups as part of the *Multilingual Senior Surfers* pilot project, and

- improved access to U3A activities for older people from CALD backgrounds, with 66 Chinese, Vietnamese and East Timorese seniors participating in activities including internet training and exploring Melbourne by tram at the City of Yarra.

Creating age-friendly communities

Since 2005 we have funded the *Victorian Local Government Positive Ageing Project*, supporting councils to promote 'age-friendly' communities. This project is linking socially isolated senior Victorians with existing community activities, increasing their confidence in using IT, boosting their use of senior citizen centres and increasing learning opportunities for older Victorians who were missing out. The project is also dispelling ageism and addressing attitudinal barriers to employing older Victorians.

Early results have been very encouraging. For example, in Warrnambool:

- the *Wealthy & Wise Warrnambool* project has involved over 3,300 older people in initiatives such as *Financial Literacy* and *Demystifying Technology* training, a *Business Mentor Program* (incorporating a *Community Skills Bank*), the development of a *Mature Aged Workers Strategy*, and communication events designed to promote positive ageing
- over 1,000 older people have been involved in workshops over 12 months covering topics such as share trading, household budgeting, art and antique investment, and computer and digital equipment training, and
- the local council has reported a significant cultural shift within the council as a result of the project, with a positive impact on the way other council programs have developed.

Other projects to date include:

- the identification of positive ageing indicators and the development of an *Older Persons Consultation Guide* at the City of Maribyrnong, in association with Brimbank and Melton, and

- mapping accessible pathways for gophers (electronic scooters) and development of an improvement works plan in the Shire of Hindmarsh.

Better support for veterans

Ex-service organisations work tirelessly to support veterans, their dependants and the wider community. They hold invaluable information about our war and service past, and actively run education programs to ensure that the realities and sacrifices of war are not forgotten.

Since we established the Victorian Veterans Council on 21 August 2006, we have provided it with a regular source of funds to distribute to ex-service organisations. In addition to the existing *ANZAC Day Proceeds Fund*, which is used for welfare purposes, the Council now distributes a new *Veterans Fund* for education and commemoration purposes. It has distributed over \$720,000 to support more than 50 projects such as:

- a \$12,500 grant to the Vietnam Veterans Federation for the continuing operation of the Bowder House respite centre at Geelong, and
- a \$8,550 grant for educational touch screen monitors at the Vietnam Veterans Museum at San Remo.

“I never really thought of what I do as volunteering! I simply like to be involved with things that I enjoy. I retired from the workforce fairly early and thought that these activities would be helpful within the community and also to ‘keep my hand in’ with retaining some of my skills and experience.”

*Senior Volunteer with the Volunteering and Mentoring program,
Warrnambool Positive Ageing Project.*

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