Between February and May 2017 we asked people 65 and over, and Aboriginal people aged 50 and over, about ageing in Wollongong. Here’s a snapshot of what they had to say.

Involved  Connected  Valued
How did people have their say?

561 people had their say:
- 389 completed surveys
- 93 participated in 1 community conversation
- 45 participated in 5 targeted focus groups
- 34 participated in 2 workshops

Survey Results

Who were the survey respondents?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>over 95 years</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-94 years</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-84 years</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74 years</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64 years</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54 years and under</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 31% Men
- 68% Women
- 1% Another gender
1% live outside the Wollongong Local Government Area

13% spoke a language other than English

25% were carers. Of these carers;

- 33% cared for grandchildren
- 37% cared for a spouse/partner

79% have lived in Wollongong for more than 20 years
82% said “Wollongong is a good place for older people to live”

Why:
• Close to the beach, mountains and Sydney
• Access to many services
• Lots of opportunities to meet with family and friends

What would make it better?
• Better public transport
• Better footpaths
• More public toilets
• More accessible buildings
• Older people to be valued and respected

76% said they “feel part of their local community”

Why:
• They give back to the community by volunteering
• There are lots of places to meet and talk to people

What would make it better?
• More accessible and cheaper events
• More information about activities and events
• Transport to get to activities and events

“I would like more publicity about volunteering opportunities and activities for older people to get more involved in the local community” Female, 65-74
93% said they “feel safe in their neighbourhood during the day”

71% said they “feel safe in their neighbourhood at night”

**Why:**
- They know their neighbours
- They connect with other people out and about
- They choose not to go out at night

**What would make it better?**
- More police
- More street lights
Physical Activity

85% were physically active either daily or more than once a week

34% of women found it hard to access age-friendly health and fitness programs compared to 6% of men

Top activities:
- Walking
- Swimming and aquaerobics
- Gardening
- Cycling

Many people do more than one of these activities weekly.

They would be more active if:
- There were better walking tracks
- More even footpaths
- It was cheaper to go to the pool
- More affordable programs
- More outdoor exercise equipment

Employment

85% were retired

“I am very happy being retired” Male, 65-74

Top 5 challenges for people wanting or needing to work:
- Age discrimination
- Poor health, injury or disability
- Cannot afford to retire
- Computer technology challenges
- Demands of physical work are too challenging
69% face challenges when accessing or using services

Top 3 services that were hard to access:
- Public transport
- Government services e.g. Centrelink, Australian Tax Office, Service NSW etc.
- Health and fitness programs

Top 3 challenges people faced when accessing services:
- Cost
- Lack of transport options
- Computer and technology challenges

Government services were hard to access because:
- No offices in northern and southern Wollongong close to where people live
- They have to be accessed online
- Long queues when calling these services

"Waiting times can be lengthy when accessing some agencies by phone"
Female, 65-74

Find it hard to access aged care services:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>74 years &amp; under</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-84 years</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 years &amp; over</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Find it hard to access services because of computer technology challenges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>74 years &amp; under</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-84 years</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 years &amp; over</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not aware of where to get information about services:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>74 years &amp; under</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-84 years</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 years &amp; over</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Technology

73% would like to learn more about using technology

They would like to learn more about:
- Mobile phones
- Tablets
- Computers
- The internet
- Skype, Facebook, Twitter

They would like access to a variety of free courses:
- One on one to develop the skills they want to learn
- Group sessions targeted at developing beginner, intermediate and advanced skills

“One on one face to face computer courses work best”
Male, 65-74

Use the internet daily to find information:

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<th>Age Group</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>74 years &amp; under</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-84 years</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 years &amp; over</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use the internet daily to stay in touch with family and friends:

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<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>74 years &amp; under</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-84 years</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 years &amp; over</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use the internet daily to book services, shop online and pay bills:

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>74 years &amp; under</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-84 years</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 years &amp; over</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Information

81% said “more accessible, user friendly information” was a priority

Challenges getting information:
• The internet is confusing
• Having a computer is expensive
• Having to go online to get information or services

What would make it better:
• Information in plain English
• Information printed on paper – in the newspaper or as a flyer/poster

Housing

78% said “more age friendly, affordable housing options” was a priority

25% of people aged 74 and under found it hard to get housing that is age friendly and affordable

What would make it better:
• More affordable housing
• More over 55’s living
• More independent living close to transport
• Public housing to feel safer
Built Environment

78% said “upgraded community facilities and spaces that are more accessible and age friendly” was a priority

What would make it better:

• Parking spaces for seniors
• More monitoring of Mobility Parking Permits
• Better footpaths for people with mobility aids such as walking frames and wheelchairs
• More ramps and less steps
• Regular seating along footpaths

“Having a disability walker is not easy. Need more easy paths”
Female, 85-94

Community Attitudes

84% said “positive community attitudes towards older people” was a priority

We ran a community conversation around the topic of ageism. When asked to share local examples of ageism, people told us that as they get older they

• Feel invisible
• Feel less valued
• Become vulnerable to elder abuse

When asked what would make it better they said:

• Being noticed and treated with respect
• More opportunities to share skills and knowledge with younger people
• Their diversity celebrated and respected

“Age is only a number” Female, 75-84
Transport

77% said “better public transport” was a priority

What would make it better:

• Faster trains to Sydney
• More frequent trains and buses, especially in southern Wollongong
• Printed timetables
• Buses and trains that accommodate people with mobility aids such as walking frames and wheelchairs
• More seats at bus stops and train stations
• Free green shuttle bus in southern Wollongong
• Taxi and Uber discounts for seniors
• More community transport to get to shopping, appointments and events

“There is so much to do socially if you can get there
- we need better public transport”
Female, 64-74

“The free shuttle is a star” Female, 75-84
Social Activities

64% said “more social activities” was a priority

What would make it better:
- More social activities in central and northern Wollongong
- Free movie screenings
- Places where groups can meet for free
- More community gardens
- More opportunities to volunteer

“I like to go to a small group with people I trust - we need to have a place to meet”
Female, 65-74

Find it hard to access social activities:

- 20% 74 years & under
- 8% 75-84 years
- 22% 85 years & over

Community Decision Making

77% said “more involvement by older people in community decision making” was a priority

“Involve us in decisions about services we want” Female, 75-84
Focus Groups

We held five targeted focus groups with older people we don’t often hear from. Below is a summary of what they told us:

Aboriginal Women

• More information about affordable community transport options
• Better footpaths and more accessible parking close to services and the hospital
• More information about services that can support with caring for grandchildren
• Someone to come to their group to teach them how to use mobile phones, internet and Facebook
• Council to report back to the group about the progress of the Ageing Plan

Aboriginal Men

• Better public and community transport to get to community events and services
• More support with accessing My Aged Care and more affordable services
• More toilets across Wollongong that are wheelchair friendly
• To acknowledge the history of racism towards Aboriginal people and promote positive community attitudes towards older Aboriginal people
Lesbians and Women who Identify with the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex (LGBTI) Community

- More services that are LGBTI friendly and sensitive to their identity and needs
- To be recognised and respected as both a woman and a lesbian
- Women only housing that is affordable and age friendly
- Creation of a social support group that connects older lesbians

Men who Identify with the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex (LGBTI) Community

- To improve community attitudes so they can feel more connected to the wider community
- Development of an information directory of general practitioners and allied health professionals that are LGBTI friendly
- Council facilities to become LGBTI ‘Safe Place’, so they feel acknowledged, welcome and safe

Older Men

- More affordable internet packages so they can use the internet and find information
- More flexible work arrangements
- Services to be located in one place and connected to transport
- Better promotion of volunteering opportunities
Workshops

We held two workshops with local aged care service providers and Council Officers.

Dementia-Friendly Communities Workshop

Council Officers participated in a workshop about ‘Dementia-Friendly Communities’ to look at how the principles could be included in their work. Some ideas included:

- Raising community awareness about dementia
- Creating spaces that are dementia-friendly
- Include dementia-friendly principles in the design of public spaces and facilities
- Provide dementia awareness training to Council Officers

Wollongong Home and Community Support Network Workshop

Local service providers and Council Officers participated in a workshop to discuss how their services could better support older people. Some ideas included:

- Provide more information to older people and their carers seeking aged care services
- Training in how to deliver service to older people from diverse backgrounds
- Assist and support clients wanting to learn more about information technology
What next?
We will use this information to develop the Draft Ageing Plan.

Thank you
Wollongong City Council would like to thank everyone who shared their thoughts and experiences about ageing in Wollongong.