

FINAL IMPACT REVIEW **SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S** **PLAN FOR AGEING WELL** **2020 – 2025**

Prepared for Office for Ageing Well by
Clear Horizon Consulting

April 2025

Clear Horizon

Office for Ageing Well supports South Australians to age well through the Seniors Card Program, Retirement Villages Unit, Adult Safeguarding Unit, State Ageing Well Policy and Ageing Well Community and Research Grants. It includes the voices of older people as it works to safeguard their rights, create age friendly communities, challenge ageism and respect diversity.

What is the Plan for Ageing Well?

The Plan for Ageing Well 2020-2025 was created to help older South Australians live well. It was built around three priorities:

- 1 Home and Community** – Homes and communities enable flexibility and choice, and support us to live how we choose, no matter our age, needs wants and desires.
- 2 Meaningful Connections** – A future where everyone has the opportunity, support and encouragement to maintain and develop meaningful connections.
- 3 Navigating Change** – A future where we all have the capabilities and supports for remaining active participants throughout all life's transitions.

These priorities were supported by key **enablers**:

- Tackling ageism to create inclusive communities
- Improving accessibility so people can participate fully
- Embracing diversity to meet the needs of all older people

How was the review conducted?

The review was guided by an evaluation framework and co-designed with a group of diverse older South Australians and other stakeholders to reflect real-life experiences.

This review provides insights into what is working well and areas needing improvement, forming the basis for the next stage of Statewide Consultations to inform the next state ageing well plan.

We collected information through:



A Community Survey with **2,819 responses**



14 Interviews 4 Focus Groups

with priority groups (i.e., older regional residents, older LGBTI+ community members, older Aboriginal women, older culturally and linguistically diverse people)



A survey of organisations delivering ageing well programs



Government policy and media analysis to examine age inclusivity

1 Home and Community: Supporting people to live where they choose

Everyone should have the option to live in a home and neighbourhood that suits their needs as they get older. This means having safe, affordable, and adaptable housing, as well as access to local shops, transport, and services. People want to stay connected to their communities, but not everyone has the same opportunities—renters, people with disabilities, and those in regional areas often face more challenges. Creating age friendly communities helps ensure that all older South Australians are valued and can stay independent.

What's working well?



- Most older South Australians love where they live (**9 out of 10**)
- Many feel they can stay in their homes as they age (almost **9 out of 10**)
- Retirement village residents report strong community support

What are the challenges?



- Renters feel less secure about ageing in place – only **2 in 3** private renters feel confident they can stay in their homes long-term
- Housing diversity is decreasing – fewer apartment and downsizing options available compared to 10 years ago
- The need to strengthen the visibility of age friendly planning at both the state and local level

Key takeaway:



People want to stay in their communities as they age, but affordable and adaptable housing options are limited, especially for renters. Local councils play an important role in making communities more age friendly.



2

Meaningful Connections: Staying socially active and valued

Feeling connected to others is just as important as having good housing or healthcare. Staying socially active - whether through friendships, volunteering, employment, local activities, or community groups - helps older people feel valued and included. While many older South Australians have strong support networks, some experience loneliness or barriers to participation, particularly if they live alone or face transport difficulties. Creating opportunities for connection, tackling ageism, and improving transport access are key to ensuring no one is left out.

What's working well?



- Most older people (**4 in 5**) have someone they can rely on
- South Australia has higher volunteering rates than the national average
- Participation in community programs/ services supports people to stay socially engaged

What are the challenges?



- Social isolation remains a concern - only **6 in 10** older people feel connected to their community
- Transport is a major barrier in regional areas - only **1 in 3** regional residents have access to transport that meets their needs
- Ageism remains a key concern with many older people feeling undervalued

Key takeaway:



Strong social networks help people age well, but transport gaps and ageism make it harder for some to stay connected.



3 Navigating Change: Making Life Transitions Easier

A future where we all have the capabilities and supports for remaining active participants throughout life's transitions. There is a need for accessible support systems and resources that empower older people to adapt to challenges, or changes whether they be related to health, mobility, retirement, finances or social circumstances. By fostering a proactive approach to change, older South Australians can be equipped with the skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to remain active participants in their communities and society.

What's working well?



- When services are tailored to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, they report better cultural safety
- Community organisations help Culturally and Linguistically Diverse groups navigate services by providing trusted, accessible support and information

What are the challenges?



- Less than half of older people feel that services focus on their individual needs
- Many struggle to navigate services – **6 out of 10** older people feel confident in handling major life changes (e.g., retirement, aged care) and this is declining
- Older people want personalised services that focus on their needs and priorities, but digital barriers and complex systems affect accessibility and visibility

Key takeaway:

Older people want services that focus on their individual needs, but digital barriers and system complexity make access difficult.



Next Steps

This review highlights both progress and challenges in supporting older South Australians to live well. The next stage of the process is Statewide Conversations, where communities will help shape the next state ageing well plan

The Statewide Conversations will be guided by four key themes:

- **Wellbeing** - Support to maintain health and wellbeing across the lifespan and into our older years.
- **Stronger Connections** - Being able to make social connections, participate in employment, volunteering and local/community networks, social and digital inclusion.
- **Life Transitions** - Planning early for later life, preparing for key transitions before challenges arise, improving service navigation, meaning and purpose, financial security, working lives.
- **Home and Community** - Strengthening affordable, adaptable housing options, and supporting age-friendly communities that enable people to age well across different life stages and circumstances.

Why is this important?

The Final Impact Review, and information gathered from a scan of national and international ageing well plans identified some persistent challenges that need further investigation. This next stage will engage further with a range of priority groups to ensure their voices are heard in shaping the state ageing well plan 2026-2036. While we have heard from thousands of people so far, we need further exploration with key groups to ensure no one is left behind.

Have your say!

Scan the QR code to stay updated about the Statewide Conversations.

