

Seniors Count!

2014–2019

Victoria's Seniors Participation Action Plan

Fact Sheet – A focus on Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) seniors

Our ageing population is a community asset, not a community burden. Our enjoyment of longer, healthier lives is one of the great triumphs of modern society and health care. The global phenomenon of an ageing population is rewarding seniors with unprecedented opportunities to enjoy better health and to participate in and contribute to their communities. The Victorian Government is committed to empowering seniors to do all this and more.

Priority goals

Seniors Count! Victoria's Seniors Participation Action Plan 2014–2019 heralds a shift in how we think about ageing and sets a new course for ageing well in Victoria.

In light of the changing nature of ageing, many seniors are already adapting to the new potential of healthier, longer, creative and more diverse lives. The Victorian Government has set five goals to age well and make Victoria a more age-friendly community. These goals give new direction to current activities and partnerships between the Victorian Government and seniors organisations.

1. Respecting the voices of seniors

Government planning and actions must respect and celebrate the voices of seniors, their rights and contributions as paid workers, volunteers, parents, carers, mentors, learners and elders. Seniors also need to be respected in the context of their diversity. This includes:

- recognising outstanding community service to multicultural Victoria from seniors' organisations via the Multicultural Awards for Excellence, and
- celebrating seniors' culture, traditions and national days through the Multicultural Festivals and Events grants program.

The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria has been funded to raise awareness of elder abuse across ethnic communities and has produced a range of materials and a video.

2. Keeping healthy and well

A quality, accessible, affordable health system is vital for seniors. Improving the patient experience of care in hospitals and health services improves seniors' lives and can even save lives.

The Victorian Government will deliver health promotion programs that respond to seniors' diversity and target the health issues of most concern to them. These programs include interpreting and translation services for seniors in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Seniors information on the *Better Health Channel*, Australia's leading consumer health website, will be strengthened to provide timely, quality assured, reliable and targeted information allowing seniors to remain in control of their health and wellbeing.

The *Health Translations Online Directory* provides Better Health Channel information in other languages. The Directory will be actively promoted to multicultural services.

In addition, the Home and Community Care program gives consideration to special needs groups, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse and Aboriginal backgrounds, people with dementia and people experiencing financial disadvantage.

3. Promoting age-friendly communities

The World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities and Communities policy approach and checklist provide a context for planning age-friendly communities in Victoria. These create accessible, safe, supportive and interesting places for older people to live in.

4. Promoting economic participation, learning and life planning

Fundamental to workforce, economic participation and participation more broadly is access to ongoing education and the opportunities it provides for sustainable, alternative employment.

5. Volunteering and community engagement

Seniors make an ongoing and tireless contribution to many Victorian community groups that serve both seniors and the wider community.

The Victorian Government is currently fostering CALD seniors' community participation through the Victorian Multicultural Commission's Multicultural Senior Citizens Organisational Support grant program, which supports seniors to maintain and strengthen the viability of their community organisations.

Priority focus areas

The Victorian Government will focus on a small number of high priority areas which relate to the goals of *Seniors Count!* and, in addition to existing resources, has allocated a further \$5 million over the life of the plan to support

delivery of the initiatives. These activities will make a practical difference towards achieving the goals over the next five years, to ensure that seniors count in Victoria.

The Victorian Multicultural Commission is committed to active advocacy on behalf of culturally and linguistically diverse seniors and assisting with delivery of actions outlined in this plan, where they impact on the lives CALD seniors.

1. Cyber savvy seniors: Bridging the digital and generational divide

Cyber Savvy Seniors will create new opportunities for older and young Victorians to work and learn together. It will offer seniors one-on-one information technology skills training provided by young, skilled volunteers in local settings.

2. Healthy and active ageing for life

Healthy and active ageing for life will increase the recognition of seniors as health clients, create health-focused data analysis of ageing and refocus programs on the needs of seniors.

3. An age-friendly Victoria

Creating an age-friendly Victoria involves building on existing age-friendly work by state and local government. We will develop, lead and coordinate an *Age-friendly Victoria* policy to continue the good work of public sector agencies, local government and services, peak bodies, industry and business.

4. Supporting the mature-age workforce

Support for mature-age workers skills development, and provision of tools and advice to employers will assist mature workers who want to continue working.

5. Life planning for seniors

Life planning for seniors will offer online life-planning tools, how-to guides, rights information, and links to support and information agencies to help seniors to plan for critical issues in later life.

To receive this document in an accessible format phone the Ageing & Aged Care Branch on 9096 7389.

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