

Shire of Irwin



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Local Government and Communities**

Age Friendly Communities Plan



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¹Definition: Seniors, Older, Elderly, Aged: Most developed world countries have accepted the chronological age of 65 years or older as a definition of 'elderly' or older person. World Health Organisation (WHO), Health Statistics and Health Information Systems. June 2010.

WHAT IS AN AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?

An age-friendly community is one which:

- recognises the great diversity among older people;
- promotes their inclusion and contribution in all areas of community life;
- respects their decisions and lifestyle choices; and
- anticipates and responds flexibly to ageing-related needs and preferences¹.

An age-friendly community promotes active ageing which is the process of "optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age".¹

In an age-friendly community, there is a culture of inclusion shared by people of all ages and ability levels. Policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to support and enable older people to "age actively", that is, to live in security, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in society.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An Age-Friendly Study

The Shire of Irwin (the Shire) is located in the Mid-West region of Western Australia, and includes the towns of Dongara and Port Denison. It covers an area of 2,374 square kilometres and has a population of approximately 3,647 people, most of who live in the twin towns of Dongara and Port Denison.¹ Census data shows that the Shire of Irwin, like the rest of the world, is seeing an increase of older residents as the overall population continues to age and people remain healthy and active for longer.

In response to the changes, Council secured funding from Department of Local Government and Communities to carry out research using the World Health Organisation (WHO) framework for “Age-Friendly Cities”. This is a global framework that has been designed as a comprehensive approach covering all needs of older residents through eight essential features of an Age-Friendly community. This report outlines the main findings of the research and provides recommendations for Council to consider in tandem with its other planning processes to ensure that the perspectives of older residents are taken into account.

Study Methods

The methodology followed is provided in the *Age-Friendly Communities – A Western Australian Approach* document. SDF Global Pty Ltd, who are experienced in the research methodology, were contracted to conduct the research to assess how well the Shire of Irwin addresses the needs and aspirations of older people. The process involved holding a range of consultations with:

- residents aged 55-74 years;
- residents aged 75 years and older;
- carers of older people, or older people who are carers for others; and
- service providers that support older people.

Focus Group participants were contacted through individual mail outs, the local media, through existing community networks and by word-of-mouth. In addition, a Shire-wide survey was conducted through Survey Monkey, mail drop into post office boxes, and through key public outlets around the Shire. Interviews were conducted with key people with relevant knowledge and experience of the needs of older people in the Shire. This report provides an analysis of the feedback received, sorted by the eight specific aspects outlined in the WHO framework.

Summary of Study Findings: An Age-Friendly Shire

The findings showed that overall, older people in the Shire are very satisfied or mostly satisfied with the majority of the Age Friendly Communities aspects within the Shire. People have chosen to live in the Shire because of the lifestyle offered, sense of community, and beauty of the environment. Older people are appreciative of the facilities and services that are available to them including parks and open spaces, public buildings, home and community care health services.

Older people feel safe in their homes and walking around the towns within the Shire and appreciate the high level of customer service they receive from businesses and services. They enjoy the country town feel of locations within the Shire and find the vast majority of community members respectful, friendly and helpful. The opportunities to become involved in the community through volunteering, joining social or sporting groups or attending events and organised activities are diverse and appreciated; and social connections within the community are very positive.

¹ Other locations within the Shire include: Bookara, Allanooka, Bonniefield, Mount Horner, Yardarino, Milo, Springfield, Irwin, Mount Adams and Arrowsmith

Priorities for Improvement

There are, however, a few barriers to the Shire being considered completely 'Age Friendly' by older people. There were two aspects that were raised as priority concerns across almost all consultation:

- i) limited availability of affordable and appropriate housing for older people, including both retirement village accommodation and high care bed availability; and
- ii) lack of public transport.

The current level of suitable housing is not adequate, with waiting lists for the retirement village and for the high care beds within the Shire. Although older people are now remaining in their own homes for longer, they would also like the opportunity to be able to remain in the Shire should they no longer be able to live independently. They would also like the option of being able to move closer to services if they have a spouse in supported accommodation. The demand from older people to be able to easily access services and facilities within the neighbouring City of Greater Geraldton was high. Concerns raised related to difficulty in getting to specialist appointments, shopping for specialist items, visiting friends in hospital, or attend facilities such as the swimming pool.

Other Concerns

There were a number of other concerns that were raised that would contribute to enhancing the "livability" of the Shire for older people. Many of the older people in the Shire are very active and have concerns relating to the maintenance or provision of footpaths, the lack of shaded seating along walkways and in public open spaces, insufficient pedestrian crossings in particularly busy areas, and the height and condition of some of the road kerbing in the towns. The availability of parking in the central shopping area was a concern for those who were still driving, particularly during peak tourist seasons.

The availability of information on events and other community news was considered adequate through the Local Rag, the Shire of Irwin website, radio and community newspapers. However, there were several concerns raised around radio and television reception, and that those who do not have access to computers or do not purchase the Local Rag are at risk of social isolation. Some older people also had concerns relating to the availability of a general practitioner after business hours.

An Active Council

The Shire Council has already identified the need for additional footpaths within its Access and Inclusion Plan² and will add information from this study to its list as well as continue to actively seek funding opportunities and budget allocation for implementation of these paths. Council continues to work with partners towards identifying and attracting developers of aged care facilities. Council is also investigating ways to improve radio, television and telephone reception.

The detailed findings of this report will assist in focusing attention on the specific interests of older people within the Shire.

² Shire of Irwin Access and Inclusion Plan 2012, 2017.

Recommendations

Overall, older people within the Shire of Irwin were satisfied with many aspects they were consulted on with the exception of availability of suitable housing, transport options and health care options. Based on the evidence gathered through the project below is a summary of recommendations spread across the eight WHO Aged Friendly Community aspects.

1. **Outdoor Spaces & Buildings:** Improve access and walkability for older people through increased and better maintained pathways and footpaths.
2. **Transportation:** Explore regular transport options between the Shire and the City of Greater Geraldton and improve parking within the Shire.
3. **Housing:** Continue consultation with government and housing providers to facilitate the development of affordable and appropriate housing that will allow older people to 'age in place' within the Shire.
4. **Respect & Social Inclusion:** Continue to support events and activities for older people and foster the current culture of respect and inclusion towards older people within the Shire.
5. **Social Participation:** Actively monitor older people's attendance and feedback at events and activities to identify barriers and challenges to participation to decrease the potential of social isolation.
6. **Communication & Information:** Investigate ways to improve television, radio and mobile reception throughout the Shire and increase diversity of communication pathways to all community members.
7. **Civic Participation & Employment:** Promote the qualities of older workers, promote self employment opportunities and employment innovation and investigate mechanisms to increase the availability of appropriate part time and flexible employment opportunities for older people within the Shire.
8. **Community Support & Health Services:** Lobby to attract additional general practitioner/s to reside and operate within the Dongara or Port Denison. Increase promotion and knowledge of existing services that are available for older people within the Shire.

1. Introduction

An Ageing Population

Many communities across the world have a larger proportion of older people than ever before. The combination of a sustained period of low birth rates and the fact that people are living longer is resulting in rapid growth in both the proportion and number of older people. It is expected that by the year 2050, 22% of the world's population will be aged over 60 - outnumbering the proportion of children aged between 0 – 14 years for the first time in human history.³

The implications of an older population and rapid urbanisation will be profound if they are not planned for. Without structures, facilities and services to support the wellbeing of an ageing population, the wellbeing and productivity of communities could be severely compromised. The long term, future needs of older people need to be considered in planning for urban developments, policies, and services.

Age-Friendly Communities

With this in mind, in 2007 the World Health Organisation (WHO) published *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide*, to encourage governments to assess how 'age friendly' their communities are, and to promote the concept of 'active ageing'. The Guide acknowledges that active ageing is a lifelong process and that an 'age friendly' city should promote the wellbeing and security of everyone, not just the elderly.⁴ If the needs of older people are catered for, the whole community can benefit as a result. For example, if good quality, affordable aged care accommodation is available, other family members will feel happier in the knowledge that their older relative is being well cared for. In addition, as older people remain active for longer a different work–life balance is emerging.

At the grass roots level, local governments in Australia are recognising that they have some role to play in planning for the implications of an ageing population. By assessing how 'age friendly' a local community is, local governments are then better positioned to prioritise projects and plans that will cater for the needs of its ageing population and increasingly urbanized communities.

Shire of Irwin's Commitment to an Age-Friendly Community

Like other communities around the world, the Shire of Irwin is forecast to experience a significant increase in population and increased urbanisation to accommodate an influx of new residents. In particular, there are a large proportion of retirees moving to the Shire. Based on the fact that considerable demographic changes are likely to occur in the Shire over the next twenty years, Council is committed to planning for the future needs and expectations of its ageing communities.

The Shire of Irwin Council has already developed a Strategic Community Plan and a Community Development Plan that give a clear direction in relation to working with the local community. Council decided that the trends in ageing and the need to provide an age friendly environment within the Shire were important and decided to undertake an Age Friendly Communities Plan.

³; *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide*, World Health Organisation 2007, France, p. 3.

⁴ *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide*, World Health Organisation 2007, France, p.6.

The Age-Friendly Study

SDF Global Pty Ltd was contracted by the Shire to facilitate the process of undertaking the study. The methodology for the Study was based on the *Age-Friendly Communities – A Western Australian Approach* publication as adapted by the WA Department of Local Government and Communities in 2012 from the original *WHO Age-Friendly Cities Framework*. The process involved two main stages. Stage 1 comprised of a research and stakeholder identification and recruitment component, while Stage 2 has involved a community survey, stakeholder interviews and two workshops with seniors to audit and then identify opportunities and priorities to make the Shire of Irwin more age friendly across the following eight areas:

- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings;
- Transportation;
- Housing;
- Respect and Social Inclusion;
- Social Participation;
- Communication and Information;
- Civic Participation and Employment; and,
- Community Support and Health Services.

Participants for focus groups were recruited through an expression of interest process advertised using a variety of mechanisms including:

- Information Flyer and Expression of Interest to attend workshop to each Post Office box within the Shire;
- Article about the study in local community newspaper, the “The Rag”;
- Advertisement regarding Expression of Interest to attend workshop in “The Rag”;
- Presentation at seniors week celebrations in the Shire;
- Posters around the town; and
- Contact with key Service Providers and community groups.

The detailed methodology is included in Appendix 1.

Actions from the Study

This Age Friendly Communities Plan provides Council with recommendations that will meet the needs of its ageing community and ensure that older people’s needs are not ignored as urban development expands and population growth continues. It is expected that the implementation of the Age Friendly Communities Plan will improve the life choices, health and wellbeing of all its residents as they age over the next five years.

A plan needs to be implemented and the day to day implementation of the recommendations that have emerged as a result of the study will be managed by the Shire’s Manager Community Services. A Community Reference Group has been established through the study consultation process. This group will contribute technical input and support to guide the implementation of recommendations. The group will meet where necessary to ensure broad understanding and that the recommendations are implemented appropriately to maximise potential benefit to the community. Review of implementation performance will be incorporated with the Shire’s annual planning and budget processes.

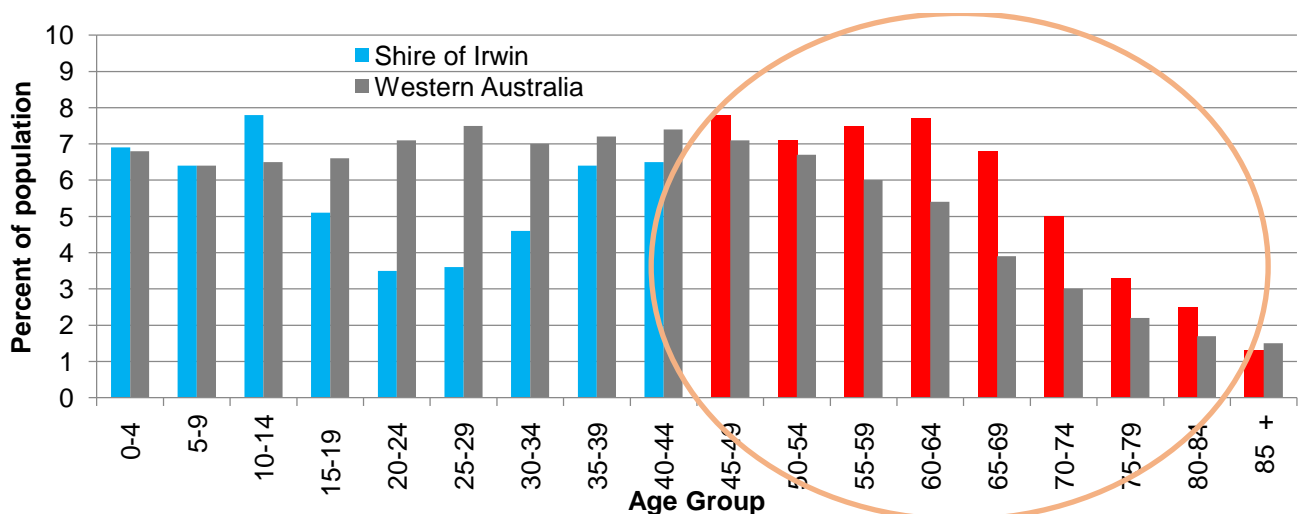
2. Community Profile

The Shire of Irwin is located in the Mid-West region of Western Australia, and includes the towns of Dongara and Port Denison. Dongara and Port Denison are located approximately 365 kilometres north of Perth and 65 kilometers south of Geraldton. The Shire has a population of approximately 3,647 people. The median age of residents in the Shire is 44 years, showing an older population compared with median ages of 36 in WA and 37 Australia wide.⁵

The Shire has been experiencing strong population growth for more than a decade, with a growth of 19.2% in the resident population in the decade from 2001 to 2011. This trend is predicted to continue with population forecast to increase by 1,000 people over the next ten years. With both Dongara and Port Denison being popular retirement destinations, population growth at the higher end of the age scale is also likely to continue into the foreseeable future.

The demographic structure of the Shire of Irwin is similar to that of most regional areas in that there is a loss of young adults. The maximum population is within the 45-49 age group. According to the 2011 Census the Shire had an over-55 year's population of 1,216 people. In comparison to all of WA, the Shire has a larger proportion of residents in all age cohorts from 45-84 years of age (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Shire of Irwin Population Demographics compared with Western Australia.



Data from the 2011 Australian Census indicates that, on average, people in the Shire of Irwin earn slightly less than people across Western Australia. However, people in the Shire of Irwin also have lower rent and mortgage repayments compared to people in the rest of Western Australia, indicating that disposable income levels are not less than Western Australia as a whole. Table 1 provides a snapshot of the Shire of Irwin profile.

Table 1. Shire of Irwin Profile compared to WA profile.

Indicator	Shire of Irwin 2011 census data	Western Australia 2011
Number of private dwellings	1,878 dwellings	960,701
Average people per household	2.4 persons	2.53
Median weekly household income	\$995	1,017
Median monthly mortgage repayments	\$1,700	\$1950
Median weekly rent	\$195	\$300

(Source: ABS 2011 Census data and 2011 Shire of Irwin profile)

⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011.

3. Findings




This section presents the responses and detailed findings of the research. It presents the general findings related to the level of satisfaction that older residents, carers and service providers expressed in regard to the eight World Health Organisation criteria. It draws together this information to assess how “Age Friendly” the Shire of Irwin is – and what is required to enhance the experience of being an older person in the community.

The analysis of feedback is divided into the eight aspects of the WHO Age-Friendly Framework:

- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings;
- Transportation;
- Housing;
- Respect and Social Inclusion;
- Social Participation;
- Communication and Information;
- Civic Participation and Employment; and,
- Community Support and Health Services.

Each of the eight criteria and their ‘sub criteria’ has been addressed. The tables show findings from the focus groups by age group and also separate comments from the carers, service providers and survey respondents

It is important to note that in the comments recorded in the following sections acknowledge the range of both negative and positive feedback from workshop attendees. However, in applying a single rating in the summary sections, stronger weight has been given to the number of people who made positive/negative comments and the intensity and emphasis of the points that they were raising. Often for issues of major concerns, attendees returned to the same point several times, whereas for minor concerns, they were mentioned briefly and not repeated. Each criterion is given a rating as follows:

	Highly Satisfactory (minor concerns, expressed by only a few people)
	Satisfactory (some concerns – not major, expressed by more than a few people)
	Unsatisfactory (major concerns expressed by a majority of people)
N/A	Not Applicable

In all workshops there were a few cases where groups felt that the WHO questions were not relevant to the regional situation, compared to a city context for which the study questions were designed. For example, specific questions relating to the condition of public transport buses and reliability and frequency of such, as there is no internal or regional public transport system within the Shire. As a result several groups considered the questions related to public transport as not applicable.

However, others chose to discuss the bus connection that links the Shire of Irwin to Geraldton. Other groups discussed the community bus services and the availability of taxis. As such, the detailed questions relating to the regularity and affordability of public transport services were not answered by the groups in the same way as would be expected in an urban setting.

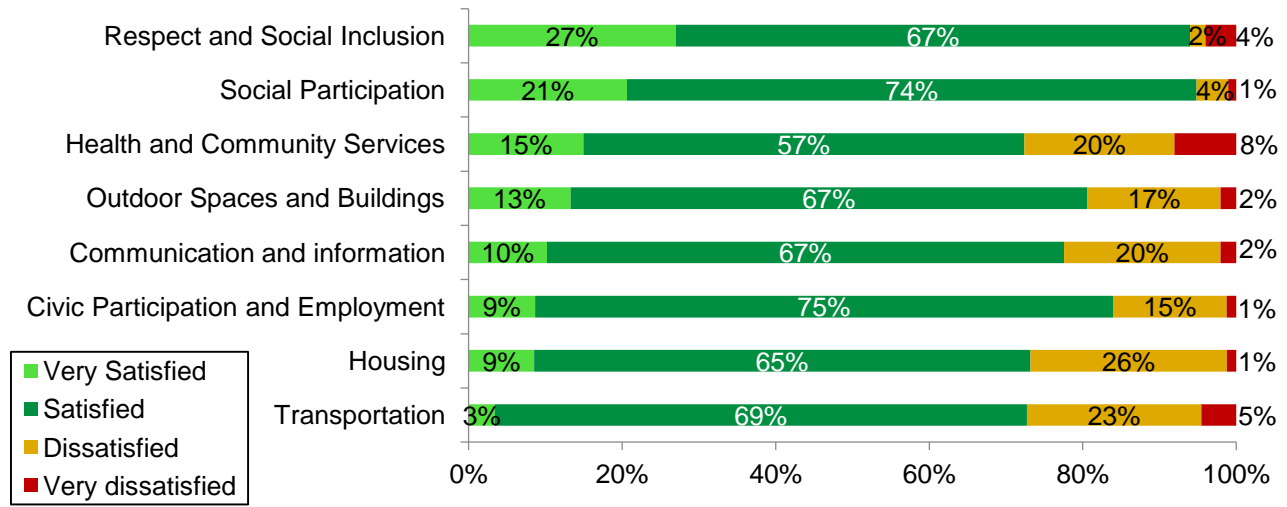
A summary of the aspects that older people were most satisfied and dissatisfied with are listed in the below table. It was difficult to determine the most significant age friendly aspect within the Shire as there were so many positive aspects that were appreciated by focus group attendees and survey respondents. There were two aspects that were clearly considered most age unfriendly: provision of public transport and housing options. There were also aspects that raised some minor concerns with study participants. There are a variety of other aspects that were tested under the focus areas and the levels of satisfaction with these are explored further throughout this report.

Table 2. Summary of Satisfaction

Aspects that older people believed are most age friendly in the Shire were:	Aspects that older people believed were most age unfriendly in the Shire were:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety; • Buildings: location of services, customer service arrangements; • Taxis; • Services and products available; • Service staff; • Visibility and depiction of older people in the media; • Recognition for contribution; • Respect for older people; • Community events; • Schools; • Accessibility of activities and events; • Frequency of activities and events; • Convenience of activities and events; • Variation of activities and events; • Promotion of activities and events; • Centralised information sources; • Automated telephone answering services; • Electronic equipment; • Person to person service; • Options for voluntary work; • Information on volunteer opportunities, training and guidance in volunteer positions; • Recognition of volunteers; • Compensation for personal costs of volunteers; • Suitability of workplaces; • Membership in community associates and local government councils; • Consultation of older people in decision-making; • Affordability of services, retirement villages and residential care facilities. 	VERY DISSATISFIED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of public transport; • Housing options. <p>SOME CONCERNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footpaths; • Affordability of housing; • Community transport services; • Condition of roads; • Parking; • Driving competence (driver's license renewal process for older people); • Social Isolation; • Qualities of older workers in paid work; • Discrimination against older workers; • Self employment opportunities and promotion; • Range of community support and health services; • Provision of information on community support and health services.

As shown in Figure 2 (following page), most survey respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with each of the 8 WHO Age Friendly aspects. The two aspects that the greatest proportion of respondents was 'very satisfied' were respect and social inclusion (27%) and social participation (21%). On the other hand, the aspects that the greatest proportion of respondents were 'very dissatisfied' were health and community services (8%) and transportation (5%). Combining both dissatisfied and very dissatisfied, there were four aspects with which at least 20% of respondents were not satisfied. These were health and community services (28%), housing and transportation (27% each), and communication and information (22%).

Figure 2. Survey Respondents Satisfaction Level with 8 WHO Aspects



In the opening sentences at the beginning of each findings table on the following pages, a comment has been made relating to previous consultation undertaken with the broader community through the development of the Shire's other key guiding documents, such as the Strategic Community Plan 2012-2022 and the Community Development Plan 2014-2019. These documents are relatively current and the comments are made to assess if past concerns are still current and if they are as important or less important for older people within the Shire.

3.1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Consultation during the development of the Shire of Irwin Strategic Community Plan 2012-2022 found that verges and footpaths, aged and disabled services, aged person homes, road works, street lighting and asset and infrastructure maintenance are all very important to the whole community; however, the broader community had a low satisfaction level of these aspects. In comparison, in development of the same Strategy, foreshore management, general waste services, parks, playgrounds and public toilets were also rated as very important by the broader community and these aspects were rated as highly satisfactory.

During the development of the Community Development Plan 2014-2019, broader community consultation resulted in the following two objectives that relate to this aspect of the Age Friendly Communities: 1) A range of multi-use facilities which meet future community needs, and 2) Community facilities that welcome and support family life. This indicates that these aspects were still important at that time of Plan development.

The above broader community satisfaction ratings are mostly supported by the findings of this consultation with older people in the community and are reflected in the below table. Please see Appendix A for more detailed findings and feedback from older people.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Green Spaces The focus group participants felt there were enough green spaces and that parks were mostly well maintained, with some exceptions. In particular, suggestions were made that O'Brien Park, which is situated close to retirement homes, is in need of beautification, Ocean Drive Park is in need of weed removal, and a park in Port Denison adjacent to Reeves Terrace and Canny Place is in need of improvement.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Outdoor Seating Focus group participants were generally satisfied with the provision of outdoor seating, however they did identify several areas along walkways as not having sufficient seating for older people walking to stop and rest at appropriate intervals. These included along Point Leander Drive, North Shore Drive, Ocean Drive, Brennand Road, Tulloch Drive, and along the route to the Medical Centre.</p> <p>Focus Group participants appreciated the existing street trees but also felt that in some areas there was a lack of street trees and shaded areas to sit, both in parks and along walkways throughout the Shire. Participants acknowledged that any new street trees should be chosen with appropriate root structures that will not cause bumps to develop in footpaths, which would</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>be problematic for gopher drivers and cyclists. There was particular importance placed on the fact that any new seating installed should be shaded.</p> <p>Service providers felt that one area where more seating was required was around the foreshore and beach areas. Older people also highlighted the lack of seating on Ocean Drive across from the retirement village as a concern for residents.</p>						
<p>Public Spaces Focus group participants indicated that public spaces are generally sufficient, clean and pleasant. There are few water fountains however, and some said that the provision of these would be appreciated in parks and public open spaces. It was also suggested that the children's park close to the Obelisk is not currently reticulated and could do with regular watering. Survey respondents were generally happy with this aspect but acknowledged that some areas could do with some tidying up.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Footpaths Footpath provision and maintenance is a concern for many older people in the Shire of Irwin.</p> <p>All footpaths within the Shire are shared for pedestrians and cyclists. Most focus group participants said that the paths were sufficient and well maintained, though consistently raised concerns around the gap between footpaths and the road on crossings. Other concerns raised were the maintenance of the boardwalk along Ocean Drive and its linkages to the Surf Beach; lack of footpaths in the Racecourse residential area where many people walk. High verges combined with vehicles occasionally parking on footpaths and cyclists not ringing their bells raised safety concerns for some older people. Service providers thought the Shire was doing a great job installing more footpaths around the town, but they needed regular checking for cracks and bulges due to tree and root growth. Also, participants raised concerns around the gravel paths leading up to the Health Services in Blenheim Road, which wash away in the rain and become steep, uneven and dangerous. A footpath on the south side up to the health service off Money Street and the Golf Course Road would be appreciated. Nearly 30% of survey respondents made comments in relation to some level of dissatisfaction with this aspect.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Pedestrian Crossings There are currently no pedestrian crossings in the Shire. Focus group participants suggested several areas where crossings would be useful. Most focus group participants supported that a crossing on Moreton Terrace between the most used shops and banks would be useful, as well as a crossing on Point Leander Drive across from Foodworks. There was support for a pedestrian crossing 'somewhere' in these two areas from all groups.</p>	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Traffic Most focus group participants had few concerns around traffic. Some commented on hooning behaviour of drivers on long weekends and holiday periods, particularly on Ocean Drive. Concerns were raised around traffic on Hunts Road and turning on to Point Leander Drive which can be dangerous for pedestrians crossing. The majority of survey respondents were happy with traffic within the Shire although acknowledged that there were some dangerous drivers.</p>						
<p>Cycle Paths There are no separate cycle paths in the Shire of Irwin. While shared paths were acknowledged to be suitable within the Shire, some older people reported conflicts of use and felt that there is a need to educate cyclists and skateboarders on the importance of warning pedestrians and gopher drivers before overtaking on the paths. Focus group participants also said that it was important that paths are wide enough to be suitable for shared use. Survey respondents made few comments relating to this aspect although there was a comment relating to bicycle users not using bells as a warning when approaching pedestrians.</p>						
<p>Safety All focus group participants said that they feel safe while out and about around the Shire. No survey respondents raised concerns around safety.</p>						
<p>Buildings: Location of Services In relation to public buildings in the Shire such as government offices, services, and shops, residents in this group were mostly satisfied with the suitability and location of buildings. They felt that most were suitable and well located, with the exception of accessibility to some buildings particularly at busy times. These concerns also related to availability of parking in the town centre at busy times.</p>						
<p>Buildings: Signage, Seating and Access Focus group participants were generally satisfied with the signage, seating and access of buildings in the Shire. The main concern raised was around the steep ramp access to the current IGA, though participants noted they expected that this would be improved in the planned rebuild of the supermarket. There are no ramps to access the hairdresser and the vet, making access difficult for some older people. Some survey respondents were not happy with the kerbing around some areas of the town or the high speed humps leading up to the medical centre. Some parking areas were considered run down and participants suggested that continued maintenance was needed to maintain safety for older people in the community.</p>						

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Customer Service Arrangements Focus group participants were satisfied with the suitability of customer service arrangements for older people, and commented that service and shop staff are very helpful, and supermarket delivery services are appreciated.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Public Toilets Focus group participants were mostly satisfied with the public toilets provided and maintained by the Shire, however with some suggestions for improvement. In particular, they agreed that the disabled toilets on Point Leander Drive (near Hunt Street) need clearer and more direct disabled access. They also mentioned that there are no toilets at the public library, or close to the shopping on Moreton Terrace. A suggestion was also made that public toilets should have soap and hand dryers.</p> <p>Focus group participants also commented on the poor quality and maintenance of the IGA toilets, though acknowledged that these are not Council's responsibility and likely to be upgraded when the IGA is rebuilt. It was noted that Council had responded promptly to past concerns of older people around accessibility of some public toilets.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

3.2. Transportation

The Shire of Irwin Strategic Community Plan 2012-2022 does not specifically mention transport within the Shire, neither does the Community Development Plan 2014-2019. However the provision of some form of public transport between the Shire and the City of Greater Geraldton is an important topic for older people in the community. Please see Appendix B for more detailed findings and feedback from older people.

Transportation	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Public Transport</p> <p>The provision of public transport between the Shire and the City of Greater Geraldton is a frequently and passionately raised topic among many older people in the Shire. Currently, the Shire of Irwin has no internal public transport service. Focus group members felt that most community members would be able to find a friend or family member to assist them get around the Shire when required. However they acknowledged that for isolated community members this was a problem.</p> <p>Focus group participants and survey respondents consistently reported demand for a bus service for day trips from Dongara to Geraldton, approximately once or twice a week. Most participants supported that this should not be for shopping for basic items such as groceries that are available in Dongara, but noted that there are many specialist goods and services not available in the town. Other activities that they suggested could be undertaken on bus trips to Geraldton could include visiting the public pool, specialist medical appointments, art gallery, and specialist shops. Participants supported the suggestion of a small community bus service on a cost recovery basis. Survey respondents also made strong comment on the need for public transport between Dongara and Geraldton.</p>	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
<p>Community Transport Service</p> <p>Focus group participants were aware of the community transport service for eligible older people through HACC, and generally viewed this very positively. Some commented that there are people who are not eligible but need transport and access to services, and indicated that there is some confusion around eligibility criteria for the services.</p> <p>Participants were also aware of the Shire’s bus that community groups can hire, though some said it is not affordable for older people. Participants were aware that this bus is being mostly used by the local high school and that this use limits more broad community use.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Transportation	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Service providers believed that the HACC transport service was adequate for those that asked for assessment for eligibility and that the \$200 taxi voucher provided by Council was adequate to fill in gaps for reaching appointments within the Shire however is not sufficient to travel to Geraldton. Service providers acknowledged that if older people were not eligible for the HACC service then it could be difficult without a license or friends to assist with transport and access to other areas. Survey respondents were happy if they still had their own transport but acknowledged the difficulties in getting to appointments and even social events without your own vehicle or a license.</p>						
<p>Taxis Focus group participants generally said that taxis were available when needed; though there are few taxis and they are not very affordable for older people. Those on pensions are able to use their fuel vouchers for taxi services. However, participants agreed that this was not a viable way for older people without their own transport to get to and from Geraldton. They also said that it is not possible to book a taxi in advance, which makes it difficult to use as a reliable way to get to appointments in town and in Geraldton, and that taxis are not suitable for older people with disabilities. Not being able to book a taxi at busy times was not convenient.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Roads Focus group participants were generally satisfied with the roads around the Shire, though with some concerns around lighting in particular areas. In particular, there were concerns around the lack of lighting near the Police Station on Point Leander Drive and Hunt Road, and on Richardson Road towards Ocean Drive.</p> <p>They were generally satisfied with the traffic signs and intersections, again with some particular concerns and suggestions. These were that in tourist season visitors often enter the wrong way through the one way car park into Foodworks on Point Leander Drive. They suggested that large white arrows be painted on the bitumen of the entry and exit points. In addition, suggestions were made for signage to point to 'long and large' vehicle parking. The participants commended the set up for long and large parking at the pub but said that the new installation of a road island on Moreton Terrace prevents this parking from being useable. Kerbing was mentioned by several survey respondents as being an issue with maintenance required in several areas and some kerbing being much too high.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Transportation	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Driving Competence There are no driver education and refresher courses available in the Shire. Participants reported that many people have a lack of understanding around the eligibility requirements for driver's license renewal for older people, and said that there is a need for clearer information around that. Survey respondents raised no concerns with drivers or competency.</p>	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓
<p>Parking Focus group participants in the 60-74 age group said that there was not enough parking in the main part of town that allows older people a suitable walking distance to shops and services, while participants in the 75+ were mostly satisfied with parking availability. A suggestion was made that the Post Office parking should be rationalized to exclude parking for long periods of time, and a comment made that the Chemist parking is too narrow. There was also agreement from all participants that ACROD bays are often not respected in town and at the beach. They suggested that reserved, wider bays for use by seniors and mothers with prams could help to ensure that ACROD bays are respected and that older people have access to parking. Some survey respondents felt that parking was insufficient and became worse during peak tourist periods.</p>	✓	✗	N/A	✓	✓	✓
<p>Drop Off Points There was discussion amongst participants in the 60-74 focus group that there is not enough suitable drop off points in the center of town (Moreton Terrace). They suggested that 2-3 bays be reserved near the Post Office and other areas on the main street. Those in the 75+ group were satisfied with the existing drop off points.</p>	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓

3.3. Housing

Broad community consultation during the development of the Shire of Irwin Strategic Community Plan 2012-2022 found that the provision of aged person homes was very important to the whole community; however, this aspect received a low satisfaction level from community members at that time. The provision of affordable housing was also rated as a high priority with low satisfaction in the community.

The Community Development Plan 2014-2019 outlines an objective: ‘to provide a choice of accommodation for seniors to allow aging in place’, indicating that this aspect was still a high priority during the development of that Plan.

The above broader community consultation and Plan objectives are supported by the findings of this consultation with older people in the community and are reflected in the below table. Please see Appendix C for more detailed findings and feedback from older people

Approximately three quarters of survey respondents (74.75% of 99 respondents) indicated that they would be “interested in living in an independent living community that offers medium and high care services within the Shire of Irwin in the future”. Many comments were received from respondents relating to this question, many expressing that they would like to remain in their homes for as long as possible, and would eventually require such a facility. Others expressed the importance of the facility being affordable for older people, and having a suitable location close to services.

Housing:	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Affordability Most focus group participants were satisfied that housing in the Shire is affordable, and noted increasing affordability in recent years. However, those who support themselves solely on the pension said that they spend around 70% of their allowance on housing, which leaves them vulnerable to financial stress. They also noted a long waiting list for the Council's retirement housing, but that those who are eligible and on the waiting list receive a rent subsidy in the meantime. Housing affordability was mentioned by approximately 10% of survey respondents as being an issue.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Construction In general, focus group participants were satisfied with private housing stock but most people said they would need to move when they become frail and have higher care needs. Concerns were raised around some of Council's housing units, which are not suitable for older people as they have narrow doorways, unsuitable bathrooms, high kerbs and stairs. They said that the newer units in the Council housing supply are better suited for ageing in place, and that Council had been helpful in improving accessibility for individual requirements.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Housing:	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Home Maintenance and Support Services The HACC service provides home maintenance and support services to eligible clients. For those not eligible (who do not have an ongoing disability) they are required to engage private support services, which are available in town though not always affordable for older people. Some people had concerns around quality control in relation to private home maintenance and support services. A suggestion was made that HACC could provide home maintenance and support services to self funded retirees who could pay privately for the services.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Modifications Some focus group participants were aware that they could be referred to services to modify their homes. Outpatients from hospitals and HACC eligible clients are sometimes eligible to have the costs of their modifications covered, though others are required to pay privately. A suggestion was made that Council could have a directory of services and operators available for older people to complete modifications to their homes to support ageing in place.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Proximity Focus Group participants were generally satisfied with the location of housing in relation to services and the community. However, some participants noted that some residential areas are not close to services and the community for those older people who are unable to drive due to the lack of public transport.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Safety All focus group attendees, carers, service providers and survey respondents indicated that they felt safe in their homes and were able to move about and were mostly safe from crime.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Housing Options The lack of suitable housing options in the community is considered a highly important topic for older people in the community. All focus group participants agreed that there are not enough housing options in the Shire for older people and particularly nursing homes for older people with high care needs. They were not satisfied that older people need to leave the Shire when they move to a nursing home, which is isolating and fractures their community connection. It is also difficult for remaining family and friends who then need to travel far to visit their loved ones. The need for additional housing such as a retirement village or nursing home was of concern to approximately a quarter of survey respondents.</p>	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

3.4. Respect and Social Inclusion

The Shire of Irwin Community Development Plan 2014-2019 outlines three objectives which are relevant to this Age Friendly study aspect: 1) Regularly inform the community of Council decision and activities, 2) A healthy and active community which is engaged in active ageing programs and activities, and 3) A strong base of volunteers who are recognised and supported. These three objectives are the result of broader community consultation during the development of that Plan.

The older people in the community have indicated that Council has been successful within achieving the above stated objectives. More details in relation to the findings of this current consultation with older people in the community can be found in the below table. Please see Appendix D for more detailed findings and feedback from older people

Respect and Social Inclusion	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Consultation Most focus group participants agreed that older people are regularly consulted by public, voluntary and commercial service providers on how to serve them better. However, several felt that they were sometimes not consulted on things happening around town and changes that would be likely to affect them.</p>						
<p>Services and Products All focus group participants agreed that there are services and products available in the town to suit the varying needs and preferences of older people in the community.</p>						
<p>Service Staff All focus group participants agreed that in Dongara and Port Denison, service staff are courteous and helpful. Some gave examples, including staff of supermarkets offering to carry older people's shopping to their car, and calling the health service to check on people if they hadn't seen regular customers for some time.</p> <p>Some focus group participants commented that services that need to be accessed in Geraldton or Perth such as Medicare and Centrelink, can be more difficult and often have long lines and waiting times.</p>						
<p>Visibility And Depiction In The Media All focus group participants agreed that older people are visible and portrayed positively in the media, and particularly in the local media. No specific comments relating to this aspect were received from survey respondents.</p>						

Respect and Social Inclusion	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Recognition For Contributions There was unanimous agreement that older people, and particularly those who volunteer, are well recognized for their contributions to the community, and particularly by the Council. They gave several examples of organisations and services giving annual celebrations to acknowledge the work of their volunteers.</p>	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓
<p>Respect All focus group participants agreed that older people are generally respected by younger people and by other community members in general. They commented that those who are involved in providing community services are especially well respected.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Community Events Focus group participants agreed that community events generally attract attendance by all generations, include older people, and their needs and preferences are accommodated.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Schools Some focus group participants were aware of some engagement and involvement of older people in school activities. Examples were older people helping with reading classes through the Lions Club, RSL and schools involvement to hold ANZAC Day celebrations, and the Historical Society working with schools to attract junior members. Participants were unsure whether the local school specifically provides opportunities to learn about ageing and older people. A suggestion was made for an 'Adopt a Grandie' program to be held within the school.</p>	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓
<p>Financial Disadvantage Most focus group participants felt that older people who experience financial disadvantage have good access to public, voluntary and private services, and to free community events such as the Larry Lobster festival. However, a comment was made that some more isolated older people experience fear and feel unwanted, and barriers to their inclusion arise from them feeling fearful and suspicious of services and community involvement.</p>	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓

3.5. Social Participation

Consultation during the development of the Shire of Irwin Strategic Community Plan 2012-2022 found that community engagement is very important to the whole community; however this aspect received low satisfaction levels when developing that Strategy. However, in comparison, in development of the same Strategy, festival and event support and recreation services were rated as very important by the broader community and these aspects received a highly satisfactory rating at that time. During this Age Friendly consultation, older people felt that community engagement was satisfactory; however there was still a chance that some older people could become socially isolated.

Broader community consultation during the development of the Shire of Irwin Community Development Plan 2014-2019 resulted in one of the Plans' objectives being: A healthy and active community which is engaged in active ageing programs and activities. Two other listed objectives are to 'have a vibrant community events calendar which celebrates the Shire of Irwin lifestyle; and 'local community groups that have an active role in running community events'. These objectives relate to older people being able to participate socially in the community and this Age Friendly consultation found that older people were most satisfied with this aspect. Please see Appendix E for more detailed findings and feedback from older people.

Social Participation:	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
Accessibility of Activities and Events All focus group participants agreed that activities and events are affordable and with no hidden or extra costs. They also felt that there was a wide variety of activities and events to participate in and that those who did not participate actively chose not to. Most had no concerns around the location and accessibility of activities and events, though some had concerns that they were not accessible to those that are not able to drive due to the lack of public transport. Some survey respondents felt that affordability was an issue that sometimes prevented them from participating in activities.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Frequency of Activities and Events All focus group participants agreed that events and activities are held often enough and said that there is always lots going on, and for some it even becomes too busy. Survey respondents commented favourably on the activities and events available.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Convenience of Activities and Events There were no concerns raised around the convenience of events in relation to times and locations. A carer commented that a local hydro therapy pool would increase the social participation of the older person they cared for.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Social Participation:	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Variety of Activities and Events Most focus group participants were satisfied that the activities and events available are interesting and varied to appeal to a range of people. A gap identified was around education and cultural activities including musical performances, with the Shire being too small to attract art, theatre and music events.</p> <p>Suggestions were made for short, 'fun' courses, more computer training and provision of a computer for public use in the library. Several survey respondents indicated that they would like a hydrotherapy pool in town.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Promotion of Activities and Events Most focus group participants agreed that activities and events are well publicized with good information available. However, some commented that those residents who live outside of the towns are not always able to come to town to get a copy of 'The Rag' and sometimes do not receive information about activities and events.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Social Isolation Some focus group participants commented that ABC radio is a possible way to include older people at risk of social isolation. Participants noted that there is an increasing proportion of community members in the Shire who experience social isolation, particularly those who are frail and do not have access to transportation.</p> <p>Some were aware of attempts of organisations to reach out to those at risk of social isolation, though these had not been successful. Survey respondents were generally very positive about the social participation in the Shire. There was a survey respondent comment related to social isolation due to lack of transport and another related to the provision of more activities for the aged.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

3.6. Communication and Information

Consultation during the development of the Shire of Irwin Strategic Community Plan 2012-2022 found that community engagement was very important and also that the broader community had a low level of satisfaction of this aspect at that time. Engagement includes forms of communication so it relates to this aspect of the Age Friendly Communities Study. Older people consulted during the development of this Age Friendly Communities Plan were mostly satisfied with this aspect, however encouraged ongoing and diverse communication methods.

During development of the following Community Development Plan 2014-2019 several objectives were developed that related to communication and engagement. In particular: 1) Regularly inform the community of Council decision and activities, 2) The community has the opportunity to be engaged on decisions that affect them, and, 3) Local community groups are connected and regularly share information. The below table indicates that the Shire has been mostly successful in achieving these objectives in relation to older people in the community. Please see Appendix F for more detailed findings and feedback from older people.

Communication and Information:	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Provision of Information Focus group participants agreed that information is provided regularly, distributed widely, and easy to understand. Examples of information sources were local paper 'the Local Rag' and the free community newspaper (Midwest Times). Some felt that the Local Rag was due for a revamp. Participants commented that the Midwest Times is no longer delivered directly to houses. Most felt that information is generally easy to understand, though some in the 75+ age group said they find the Shire of Irwin's website difficult to navigate.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Centralised Information Source Most focus group participants in the 60-74 age group said that there is not a centralised information source, though agreed that word of mouth communication is important for older people. Most in the 75+ group said they feel the Local Rag is the centralised information source for the community. Many across both focus groups commented that Visitors Centre, Shire Administration, and CRC staff are able to respond to a range of questions and refer people to other information sources. They also said that people often contact 'The Rag' or local groups to find particular information, and that the staff at the Pharmacy and library is also helpful at referring people to health related services.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Communication and Information:	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Automated Telephone Answering Services No concerns were raised around the clarity of automated telephone services, and some people said they appreciated that now some telephone services have an option to leave your number and be phoned back. Others said that these processes are typically lengthy and time consuming but not problematic.</p>	✓	✓	N/A	✓	N/A	✓
<p>Electronic Equipment Focus group participants were satisfied that electronic equipment has large enough buttons and big letters, with the exception of some older mobile phones. Carers and survey respondents did not raise any concerns in relation to this aspect.</p>	✓	✓	N/A	✓	N/A	✓
<p>Computers and Internet Most focus group participants were satisfied that older people have access to computers and the internet where desired. They acknowledge that some older people do not want to use computers or internet, or to communicate via email, particularly those in the 75+ group. However, survey respondents in particular were not satisfied with the internet, radio and TV reception and reliability.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Person to Person Service Focus group participants agreed that person to person services are available on request when required. A carer of an older person specifically mentioned that the older person they cared for preferred this form of communication.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Verbal Communication No concerns were raised around the promotion of verbal communication to older people. A carer or an older person specifically mentioned that the older person they cared for preferred verbal communication. Some survey respondents were not happy with the mobile telephone reception and said it often cut out and was not reliable and often nonexistent, thus affecting their ability to communicate verbally.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Social Isolation Some focus group participants commented that socially isolated people do not receive information because they are not willing to receive it, while others said that those at risk of social isolation rely on their neighbours for information.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Communication and Information:	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Concerns were raised around the poor radio signal in town and around the Shire, and particularly around the Irwin town site where there is no mobile signal and when extended power outages occur, the residents are left without mobile or landline contact. This was identified as a risk for residents in relation to accessing information and communication on emergency services.</p> <p>Other comments were that Council information often does not reach renters as letters are addressed to landowners. Survey respondents were also not satisfied with mobile phone, radio and TV reception.</p>						

3.7. Civic Participation and Employment

Consultation during the development of the Shire of Irwin Strategic Community Plan 2012-2022 found that community engagement, support for volunteers and economic development were very important to the broader community; however, these aspects all received a low satisfaction level from community members at that time. During this Age Friendly Communities Study, older people were also not satisfied with the level of economic development within the Shire. However, older people were happy with the support for volunteers and mostly satisfied with community engagement.

During the development of The Community Development Plan 2014-2019, broader consultation with community members resulted in several objectives in relation to civic participation and employment including a strong base of volunteers who are recognised and supported. This suggests that these aspects were still important at that time.

The findings of this Age Friendly Communities consultation with older people in the community and are reflected in the below table. Please see Appendix G for more detailed findings and feedback from older people.

Civic Participation and Employment:	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Options for Voluntary Work All focus group participants agreed that there are flexible options for voluntary work and a range of opportunities to suit different interests. Some participants across both focus groups felt that 'red tape' such as insurance and police check requirements often deter some prospective volunteers. Survey respondents indicated they were happy with opportunity and options to volunteer.</p>	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓
<p>Information on Volunteer Opportunities Focus group participants said that information on opportunities to volunteer is provided by word of mouth, circulated through networks, and regularly advertised in the local newspaper 'The Rag' and on community notice boards. Some suggested that organisations should more clearly communicate on the requirements for volunteers such as police checks and insurance, to avoid these requirements deterring potential volunteers.</p>	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓
<p>Training and Guidance in Volunteer Positions Most focus group participants agreed that organisations provide sufficient training and guidance to their volunteers. However it could involve some form filling which was not overly welcome for older people.</p>	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓

Civic Participation and Employment:	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Recognition of Volunteers Focus group participants in both groups agreed that volunteers are well recognised for their contribution both by Council and the wider community.</p>	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓
<p>Compensation for Personal Costs of Volunteers Some focus group participants said that volunteers are compensated for personal costs, and that requirements such as police clearances are usually paid for by organisations. Others said that costs are not covered and volunteers are usually required to pay a membership fee to organisations, but that all costs are made known to volunteers and that personal costs were not expected to be reimbursed.</p>	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓
<p>Qualities of Older Workers in Paid Work Most focus group participants in the 60-74 group agreed that the qualities of older workers are promoted in paid work. However, they said that paid employment opportunities are generally limited and depends on the industry, with little professional work available. Some also said that there was a lack of understanding from employers of the appropriate pace for older people to work. Most focus group participants in the 75+ age group felt that the qualities of older workers are not promoted in paid work.</p> <p>Service providers and carers had little comment on the availability of paid work for older people. However, survey respondents were not happy with the availability for paid work for older people if they were actively seeking such and commented that little opportunity existed.</p>	✗	✓	N/A	✓	✗	✓
<p>Discrimination Most focus group participants in the 60-74 group said that older workers are not discriminated against on the basis of their age, and commented that particularly in the health industry there are many older workers. However, one participant did feel that older workers are generally discriminated against. Most participants in the 75+ focus group indicated they felt older workers are discriminated against on the basis of their age and are not valued or appreciated in the workforce. Survey respondents who were seeking work felt there was none available for their age group.</p>	✗	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓

Civic Participation and Employment:	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Suitability of Workplaces The focus group participants agreed that most work places are not adapted to meet the needs of disabled people but that this is not usually required in the Shire. However, they said that some volunteer workplaces such as 'The Rag' office have been adapted to meet the needs of older people, and that most newer workplaces are suitable for the needs of people with disabilities.</p>	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓
<p>Self-employment Participants of the focus groups agreed that older people are not actively encouraged to take up self-employment opportunities and that they are not aware of training provided on post-retirement options. However, survey respondents noted that it was difficult for employment anywhere at present.</p>	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓
<p>Membership in Community Associates and Local Government Councils Focus group participants were generally satisfied that membership of older people in community associations and local government councils are encouraged across organisations.</p>	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓
<p>Consultation of Older People Focus group participants believed that older people are consulted in public community affairs where possible. Some examples were given of a recent walkability audit where older people joined in the study. A comment was made that the community needs to learn how to be consulted in order for consultation processes to be effective.</p>	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓

3.8. Community Support And Health Services

Consultation during the development of the Shire of Irwin Strategic Community Plan 2012-2022 found that aged and disabled services and health and medical services as being very important to, but receiving a low satisfaction level from the broader community. These findings are supported by the findings of this Age Friendly Communities Plan consultation.

During the development of The Community Development Plan 2014-2019, wider consultation with community members resulted in several objectives in relation to community support and health services, including: to provide an increased level of resourcing to delivery after hours medical services. This topic was also found to be a high priority in the consultation with older people undertaken during this Age Friendly Communities study and more detailed findings and feedback can be found in the table below and in Appendix H.

Community Support and Health Services:	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Range of Services All focus group participants agreed that there is an adequate range of services available in the Shire of Irwin. However, they had concerns around continuity of care due to the frequent changeover of Doctors at the local medical practice, and the lack of resident Doctors in the town; as well as no Doctor available to attend the Accident and Emergency clinic at the Health Centre. Older people expressed appreciation for the HACC services; however they expressed concern that there was a gap in the provision of high care for older people who often need to leave the community when they need high care due to the lack of nursing homes and high care bed allocations. Focus group attendees expressed the importance of planning for 'dying in place' in addition to ageing in place. The low availability of high care beds for older people within the Shire was cited as the most important issue for older people in the community by most of the focus group participants in the 75+ group. Survey respondents were also not satisfied with the current GP situation stating that the wait times were often too long and that having no access to a GP outside of normal business hours or on weekends was not acceptable to them.</p> <p>Service providers believed that many older people were unaware of the services that were available to them within the community including visiting specialists. A suggestion was made by several survey respondents for a hydrotherapy pool in the recreation centre.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
<p>Home Care Services All focus group participants were aware that home care services available in the Shire include health, personal care, and housekeeping services for individuals who are eligible for the services. Service providers expressed the need for only required services to be provided and for older people to remain as independent as possible for as long as possible.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Community Support and Health Services:	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Affordability of Services Focus group participants agreed that services are affordable, including for financially disadvantaged older people. It was noted by a carer that it was fortunate that the older person they cared for could afford to pay for any extra services they required.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Location and Accessibility of Services There were no major concerns relating to the convenience of service location, though the lack of public transport to access services was raised as an issue. Those in the 75+ focus group were satisfied that those who need transport and are eligible can be transported to the services. Some focus group participants commented that providing for ageing and dying in place could be challenging for service provision in the future due to resource constraints. Most of the participants in the 75+ focus group had concerns around the speed bumps at the medical centre. Service providers believed that most services were available in the town or could be provided through visiting specialists or where eligible, transport to services or access to specialists through Telehealth could meet needs.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Retirement Villages and Residential Care Facilities Most focus group participants agreed that they are close to services and the community, though lack of public transport was again mentioned as an issue by the 60-74 age group.</p> <p>The participants in the 75+ focus group indicated that not all retirement villages and residential care facilities are close to services and the community, and in particular that it is difficult for residents to access multiple appointments in Geraldton. However, some services such as 'Telehealth' to specialists via the Health Centre and visiting services are more easily accessed, though have low awareness among the public.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Provision of Information on Services The focus group participants felt that appropriate information is generally provided on services, though with some gaps. There were comments that some older people are not aware of what services they can access and perceived that they could not afford to access these services. While service providers believe that there is sufficient information on service provision available, they acknowledge that not all older people have accessed this information and there is uncertainty about what is available and what the eligibility is to receive the services.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Community Support and Health Services:	Older People 75+	Older People 60 to 74 years	Carers	Service Providers	Survey Respondents	Overall Rating
<p>Coordination and Administration of Service Delivery Focus group participants agreed that service delivery is coordinated and that the administration is simple.</p> <p>One gap identified is the administration of driver's license renewal for older people, around which there was some confusion among participants of both groups.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Service Staff Focus group participants, service providers and survey respondents generally agreed that service staff respect older people, but some felt there were some knowledge gaps around how to care for and serve older people.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Emergency Planning Most focus group participants had no concerns in relation to emergency planning considering older people. A suggestion was made that managers of Council's retirement housing should be more aware of the residents' needs and mobility levels in case of emergency; however it was acknowledged that HACC staff are aware of which residents have disabilities and would need assistance to evacuate.</p> <p>Many focus group participants were concerned that areas within the Shire that have poor access to wireless radio and television are problematic in terms of being able to reach people with emergency announcements and updates including those provided by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services.</p>	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓

4. Recommendations

Overall, older people within the Shire of Irwin were satisfied with many aspects they were consulted on with the exception of availability of suitable housing, transport options and health care options. Based on the evidence gathered through the project period and given the limitations to the study, below is a summary of recommendations spread across the 8 essential features of the WHO Aged Friendly Community aspects. In addition, the recommendations have been categorised as a High Priority or Priority actions. High Priority recommendations require immediate or short term action and consideration. Priority recommendations are still very important for older people in the community and action and consideration is required.

It is recommended that Council adopts the Age Friendly Communities Plan and the following recommendations and makes all effort to fund or attract funding to implement the recommendations.

Table 3. Recommendations

Aspect	Recommendation	High Priority	Priority
Outdoor Spaces & Buildings	1. Prioritise budget allocation to implement the installation and maintenance of footpaths as identified in the Access & Inclusion Plan 2012-2017.	✓	
	2. Put medium term actions in place to improve the access to pathways where high kerbs create difficulty for older people.		✓
	3. Additional footpath installation was proposed by approximately 10% of respondents for specific locations (section 3.2). Council to investigate these locations and if valid, add to the Access and Inclusion Plan for implementation.		✓
	4. Town planners to identify the most suitable location for a pedestrian crossing along Moreton Terrace and/or Point Leander Drive adjacent Foodworks and prepare for implementation.		✓
Transportation	5. Consider a community bus service to Geraldton twice a week: undertake a Business Case to investigate the demand and required use for Council to achieve cost recovery of such a service using the Shire's community bus.	✓	
	6. Promote the need for, and encourage expansion of, the existing network of volunteers who assist older people with transport to attend appointments and undertake tasks such as shopping and attending events and activities.	✓	
	7. Increase the availability of existing parking spaces in the main street for older people by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the long and large vehicle parking bays to ensure they are being used effectively since installation of the traffic islands adjacent to the designated bays; Increase signage for visitors to short and long term car parking areas to relieve pressure on the main street; 		✓

Aspect	Recommendation	High Priority	Priority
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate potential overflow parking areas to accommodate increased traffic during peak tourist times. 		
Housing	8. Local Rangers to increase monitoring of use of ACROD bays, particularly over peak tourist times.		✓
	9. Liaise with local Members of Parliament to ensure continued discussion with government agencies and providers to encourage development of affordable 'ageing in place' and high care accommodation within the Shire that is appropriate to the needs of the community and close to existing services.	✓	
	10. Promote greater diversity of housing for older people, close to services (using best practice housing designs: smaller blocks, apartment development etc).	✓	
	11. Review the current zonings and ensure they allow for higher density, smaller lot developments within the central town precinct for greater diversity of housing and aged accommodation.	✓	
Respect & Social Inclusion	12. Encourage the groups that support older people to work with local trades people/businesses to offer seniors discounts and offer service standard guarantees to build confidence with older people and promote value for money in local service delivery.		✓
	13. Continue fostering the current culture of respect and inclusion towards older people within the Shire through regular articles in local media recognising the contribution that older people make in the community.		
	14. Continue regular consultation with older people on all important topics using a variety of avenues including surveys, face to face, Shire website, written media and radio.		✓
	15. Support events and activities that attract all generations, but enhance inclusion of older people in such events through arranging transport, seating areas, shade, amongst others.		✓
	16. Instigate a weekly event for those older people in the community who may be infirm or incapacitated. The events could include games, afternoon/morning teas, book readings, knitting or just sitting and chatting. The events to be held in the various blocks of units where these older people live to enable these older people to achieve an outing without having to move more than a unit or two to participate.		✓

Aspect	Recommendation	High Priority	Priority
Social Participation	17. Ensure events and activities are accessible and affordable for older people within the Shire, by undertaking satisfaction surveys of older people while they are attending these events; and making contact with those not attending events to check reasons for non-attendance.		✓
	18. Actively seek feedback from older people in the community via local media directly following events to capture barriers or difficulties they experienced in their participation or inability to participate in order to continue to improve community events.		✓
	19. Pay particular attention to older people who are frail and do not have access to transportation so they can attend existing activities and events.		✓
Communication & Information	20. Investigate ways to improve television, radio and mobile reception throughout the Shire.	✓	
	21. Council to communicate the results and findings of the AFC Study to all stakeholders.	✓	
	22. Work with service providers to increase communication and community knowledge on the range of available services and activities for older people.	✓	
	23. Council to schedule a review of the Age Friendly Community Study in five years.	✓	
	24. Increase the regularity and diversity of communication methods targeting older people in the Shire, including ABC radio and local television stations.		✓
	25. Design and implement a 'get to know your neighbour' program to encourage opportunity for word of mouth communication to older people in the community to reduce potential for social isolation.		✓
Civic Participation & Employment	26. Continue to support small business growth through a 'buy local' campaign.		✓
	27. Promote the qualities of older workers through local media.	✓	
	28. Promote successful self employment businesses that older people have implemented in other places across Australia with similar demographics. For example, identify and invite guest speaker/s to town to discuss the options available to older people in relation to self employment.		✓
	29. Investigate attraction of a visiting affordable financial counseling service for all community members and publicise well with a focus on the benefits for older people.		✓

	30. Encourage programs that lead to increased financial security later in life such as increased savings or asset generation during working life, improved income generation skills and improved financial management services.		✓
	31. Investigate mechanisms to increase the availability of appropriate part time and flexible employment opportunities for older people.	✓	
Community Support & Health Services	32. Investigate ways to attract an additional General Practitioner to operate and take up residence in Dongara or Port Denison.	✓	
	33. Work with Dongara Eneabba Mingenew Health Service (DEMHS) and the Home and Community Care (HACC) staff to provide information on the eligibility criteria and services provided through the existing HACC services; and increase promotion of the service through a series of articles in the Local Rag and through radio.	✓	
	34. Work with the WA Country Health Service (WACHS) Midwest, Medical Centre and local General Practitioners to provide information on the services that are available through the existing Telehealth system; and increase promotion of the service through a series of articles in the Local Rag and through radio.	✓	

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Methodology

The methodology for this project has been based on the *Age-Friendly Communities – A Western Australian Approach* publication as adapted by the WA Department of Local Government and Communities in 2012 from the original *WHO Age-Friendly Cities Framework*. The process has involved two main stages. Stage 1 comprised of a research and stakeholder identification and recruitment component, while Stage 2 has involved a community survey and two workshops with seniors to audit and then identify opportunities and priorities to make the Shire of Irwin more age friendly across the following eight areas:

- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings;
- Transportation;
- Housing;
- Respect And Social Inclusion;
- Social Participation;
- Communication and Information;
- Civic Participation and Employment; and,
- Community Support and Health Services.

Participants for focus groups were recruited through an expression of interest process advertised using a variety of mechanisms including:

- Information Flyer and Expression of Interest to attend workshop to each Post Office box within the Shire;
- Article about the study in local community newspaper, the “The Rag”;
- Advertisement regarding Expression of Interest to attend workshop in “The Rag”;
- Presentation at seniors week celebrations in the Shire;
- Posters around the town; and
- Contact with key Service Providers and community groups.

In total two focus groups were held in the Shire as outlined below:

- Residents aged 60-74 years (8 attendees);
- Residents aged 75 years and older (6 attendees).

Three participants of the 60-74 years focus group were from Port Denison, three from Dongara, one from Bonniefield and one from Irwin Town site. Most were aged in their 60’s and all were retired apart from one. Only one male attended as the other two pulled out at the last moment due to personal issues. Most were in either excellent or good health with two indicating their health status was fair (these two were the oldest of the group). Five of the attendees had attended college or university and three attended secondary school. Six were home owners, two were currently renting and three lived by themselves, four with their spouse/partner and one with other relatives.

Four of the 75 and over age group focus group participants were from Port Denison and two from Dongara. Four were aged in their 80’s and two were in their 70’s. Participants were all retired and all but one were in good to excellent health, the other being in fair health. Secondary school was the highest level of schooling they completed except one who only attended primary school. Four were home owners while two rented. Three lived with their spouse and three lived by themselves.

A community survey was conducted concurrently with the recruitment of workshop participants. Three surveys were developed based on the WHO guidelines, one each for individuals over the age of 55, carers of people over the age of 55, and service providers.

The surveys were distributed as follows:

- By direct mail to all post office boxes in the Shire;
- Available in the public library, Community Resource Centre, Irwin Recreation Centre and Shire Administration building;
- Available at Seniors Day activities;
- Available in online format via the SurveyMonkey platform, with a link to the survey on the Shire of Irwin's website;
- Initial and follow up telephone calls to various private, public, not for profit and seniors based service providers;
- Telephone calls to community groups; and
- Contact through existing community networks and by word-of-mouth.

Council offered an incentive of going in a draw to win a \$50 voucher to survey participants.

A target of 80 surveys was exceeded and additional surveys were analysed in lieu of carer and service provider workshops. A total of 102 surveys were received from older people, 14.7% from those aged 55 to 59, 50.98% from those aged 60-74 years and 34.31% from those aged 75 years and older. Nearly two thirds of respondents were female 64.65% with 35.35% being male. The vast majority were retired (73.47%) with a further 11.22% working full time, 12.24% working part time and 3.06% indicating that they were unemployed. Most respondents indicated that their health was good (62.38%) or fair (24.75%), with a further 11.88% indicating excellent health and only .99% indicating poor health. Over 80% of respondents were home owners and a further 17% rented while one each lived with family or in a park home. The majority of respondents came from the two main population centres: Port Denison (47.06%) and Dongara (39.22%). Responses were also received from Bookara (5.88%), Springfield (3.92%), Irwin (2.94%) and Bonniefield (.98%).

A focus group was not held specifically for service providers or carers due to the limited number of service providers available within the area and the fact that many provide services across the whole Shire. Telephone or face to face interviews were conducted with service providers to ensure these cohorts were included and that major issues and successes were captured. Surveys were emailed directly to Service Providers and an email version was also circulated throughout the network.

Nine service providers were identified and personally contacted and advised of the study and survey and asked if they would like to meet with SDF staff. Meetings were held with two service providers and a total of six service providers responded to the online survey, including private service providers, public service providers and voluntary (not for profit) service providers. The HACC service and medical centre were used as a conduit to reach service providers as well as direct telephone contact and email contact with information on the study and survey. A SWOT was developed as a result of initial interviews and research (See Appendix 2).

After discussion with the HACC service it was agreed that the best way to contact carers was for surveys to be handed to them as they collected clients from the Day Care Centre. Approximately 20 surveys with reply paid envelopes were distributed. Only four carers responded to the hard copy and on line survey.

In addition to the above consultation, SDF met with Shane Love MLA, Member for Moore and also visited the local Community Resource Centre, Library, and Recreation Centre to ask staff to encourage community members to complete the surveys that were available at these points. Over a dozen community groups were contacted by telephone and asked to talk to their members and help spread the word about the study and survey.

Limitations of the Methodology

It is noted that this Study was conducted over a relatively short period of time. Nevertheless, there was broad representation from both age groups. Limitations of this study arise from the difficulty in contacting carers and service providers. Many people live with an older person who needs care but do not consider themselves as carers. For this reason, self-identification as a carer does not always occur. Carers often have limited 'down time' and could be resentful in taking this time to complete a comprehensive survey. Both carers and service providers also find it difficult to attend workshops because of heavy workloads. The strategy of using phone contact, individual interviews and surveys was more appropriate for service providers within the Shire of Irwin.

Additional limitations arise from a relatively poor survey response rate, (8%⁶) with a total of 102 responses in the survey for older people. This could be attributed to survey fatigue as there was another survey circulated from Council at the same time as the age friendly communities survey relating to the Planning Strategy. The age friendly survey was also quite comprehensive and took approximately 20 minutes to half an hour to complete, which may have discouraged participation. There is also a difficulty in reaching those members of the community who are isolated and disengaged from local media and networks.

A balanced gender representation was not achieved in the survey responses and focus group participants with a bias towards female participants. For survey respondents, 65% were female while 35% were male. Similarly, most of the focus group participants in both age groups were female. This can be accounted for by greater willingness of females to participate in the process. Due to the small population of the Shire and low levels of participation overall this was not possible to avoid. No gender biased impacts on the results were identified in the process; however there is a chance that the gender representation may have had some impact on the findings that is not possible to isolate.

Although the mail and online survey response rate was low considering the over 55 population of the area, it was supported by the additional methods of focus groups, individual interviews and telephone interviews. There were consistent themes identified through all methods. The contacts made with all the people involved were sufficient to gain an insight into the key issues for older people in the Shire of Irwin. All care has been taken to present and discuss the results of the consultation with these limitations in mind so that no unreasonable claims are made.

The focus group participants felt that the WHO key questions were very comprehensive but not always relevant to the situation in the Shire. They are also very time consuming and participants are quite happy when the workshop is complete as it is an intensive process. Participants were also provided time at the end of the workshops to raise any other issues.

There is a need to continue the consultation and involvement of older people in the implementation of the Study findings. The workshops participants generally appreciated the opportunity to be involved and make their points of view known. Council should consider how contact can be continued, and in particular how those more isolated and disengaged members of the community can best be reached.

There is much information that has been generated by this Study. As a growing Shire, there is high competition for available resources. This means that not all of the concerns will be able to be addressed in the short-term. Consequently, Council should review the priorities put forward through the study and develop a plan of action within the practical confines of available resources and within a realistic time frame.

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Shire of Irwin population over the age of 55 was 1216. Divided by 102 returned surveys results in 8%. This is fewer than the 293 that would be required to be representative of the estimated population of 1,216 people over the age of 55 in the Shire of Irwin.

Appendix 2 SWOT Analysis

A SWOT was developed through the initial consultation with key service providers and stakeholders and was tested during the focus groups and during all further consultation and analysis of survey results throughout the study.

Strengths

- Small community, with a friendly atmosphere;
- Availability of diverse volunteer opportunities, and high levels of volunteerism among older people;
- HACC services are highly appreciated by older people;
- Community organisations that organise activities and provide social opportunities for older people;
- Recurring community events that are attractive to and attended by people of all ages;
- Existing community infrastructure: e.g. public library, CRC;
- Proximity to Geraldton and associated services and products;
- Natural assets including beach, river, etc that attract tourism and make the Shire an attractive retirement destination.

Opportunities

- Attract private sector investment to increase the availability of housing for older people;
- Increase availability of medical services e.g. through associated improvement in high care facility or attraction of 24-hour surgery to operate in Dongara-Port Denison, attract a resident Doctor to operate in the medical practice;
- Operate a (cost-recovery) community bus service between Dongara-Port Denison and Geraldton (visit hospital/shop);
- Continue to provide affordable activities and social opportunities for older people.

Weaknesses

- Limited access to medical services, particularly a regular, after hours medical service and no resident Doctors;
- Some services that are available in Geraldton will not locate in Dongara-Port Denison due to close proximity;
- Very limited public transport between Dongara-Port Denison and Geraldton;
- Low availability of affordable housing with linked service provision for older people;
- Degradation of roads and pathways;
- Low accessibility of some older buildings and shops in Dongara and Port-Denison;
- Low availability of affordable recreation facilities and classes for older people;
- Lack of a pool that can be accessed for older people for hydrotherapy;
- Poor telephone and radio reception;
- Lack of paid work opportunities for older people.

Threats

- Possible loss of existing services and facilities e.g. due to loss of external funding;
- Fragmentation of community due to lack of appropriate housing for older people, often requiring those with high care needs to relocate to Geraldton or Perth;
- Potential loss of revenue to local business if bus service takes community members to Geraldton to do their shopping;
- Heavy reliance of community groups, events and services on volunteers who are ageing without younger volunteers to support them e.g. HACC volunteer drivers;
- Isolation of older people due to lack of transport options;
- Poor telephone and radio reception results in feelings of isolation and in some cases inadequate access to disaster notifications and updates.

Appendix 3. Detailed Feedback

A. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
<p>This group acknowledged that the outdoor spaces and buildings within the Shire were appreciated and were mostly well maintained, however there were a few concerns relating to maintenance of particular areas.</p> <p>The group felt there were enough green spaces and that they were mostly well maintained, with some exceptions. In particular, they agreed that O’Brien Park, which is situated close to retirement homes, is in need of beautification. Particular suggestions were to water the lawn, provide shaded seating, a bin and rubbish bags for dogs, and pathways to improve access in an out of the park. Some workshop participants also noted that there are few water fountains, and that these could be useful in parks and open spaces. This group also agreed that the children’s park close to the Obelisk is not currently reticulated and could do with regular watering.</p> <p>Several focus group participants were also concerned about weeds along the path and in gardens at Ocean Drive Park, which they felt were unsafe as provided good habitat for snakes.</p> <p>A concern of all participants from this age group was a lack of street trees and shaded areas to sit, both in parks and along walkways. Participants acknowledged that any new street trees should be chosen with appropriate root structures that will not cause bumps to develop in footpaths.</p> <p>Participants from this age group were mostly satisfied with the paths provided in the Shire, which are shared between pedestrians, cyclists, and skateboarders. However they identified some gaps, particularly in the lack of footpaths in the Racecourse residential area where many people walk; the safety and linkage of the boardwalk along Ocean Drive; and the lack of a footpath linking the surf beach to Point Leander, and that it is</p>	<p>This group agreed that there are enough green spaces around the towns of Dongara and Port Denison, though not all felt that they were well maintained. Some particularly appreciated the cricket oval which they considered to be well maintained. Suggestions for improvement of other areas were that the park bordering Reeve Terrace and Canny Place be updated to increase use – including provision of pavements and pathways (to improve access and prevent four wheel drive vehicles from driving on the park), trimming of trees including the fig tree so that residents of the adjacent retirement village can access the figs, and maintenance to remove burrs and address sandy areas.</p> <p>The participants in this age group felt that there is not enough outdoor seating, particularly along walkways. They suggested installation of a seat along Point Leander Drive where many older people walk from the Marina to the main part of town. Suggestions were also made for a seat along the sea front on Ocean Drive near the retirement village, and along walkways on Ocean Drive so that there is somewhere for pedestrians to rest before reaching the Harbour. They stressed the importance of seating along the pathways being shaded.</p> <p>This group raised no concerns with the provision of public spaces and said that what is available is well maintained, clean and pleasant.</p> <p>Most of the participants in this group said that footpaths were well provided around the Shire, however they identified some gaps and problems in particular areas. The main concern raised was the bumpiness of some paths and gaps where footpaths join roads for crossings, which are uncomfortable for cyclists and gopher drivers. Another main concern was high kerbs in some areas; several examples were given of older people falling from high kerbs onto the road, which was a cause of fear. These concerns were added to by areas where cars park on pavements and too close to the park around IGA, and cyclists not ringing their bells. Other concerns shared by most participants in this group were the paths on Blenheim Road with high</p>

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
<p>necessary to walk through the Big 4 caravan park. Some participants raised concerns around the gravel paths leading up to the Health Centre, which they said washes away when it rains and become dangerous for older people. Participants also said that it was important for planning that paths are wide enough to be suitable for shared use.</p> <p>Participants noted there are no pedestrian crossings in the Shire and all agreed that one to cross Moreton Terrace in line with the newsagent and one to cross Waldeck Street across from the Shire administration building and library would be useful.</p> <p>Most participants in this group felt that traffic is not problematic and that drivers usually give way to pedestrians. Some suggestions were made such as: the speed limit in the town centre (Moreton Terrace) could be dropped to 40kms/hour and that there needs to be somewhere safe to cross at the roundabout near the Big 4 Caravan Park (Point Leander Drive). Concerns were raised around traffic on Hunts Road turning on to Point Leander Drive which participants said can be dangerous for pedestrians crossing. There were mixed comments in relation to the newly installed one way street system on Hepburn Street. Some participants said they had heard good things, but others felt that it is dangerous and difficult to see vehicles turning. Several participants commented on the hooning behavior of drivers on long weekends and holiday periods, particularly along Ocean Drive. Most felt that a traffic control device recently installed has made the situation worse.</p> <p>All focus group participants in this age group said that they feel safe while out and about around the Shire.</p> <p>In relation to public buildings in the Shire such as government offices, services, and shops, residents in this group were mostly satisfied with the accessibility, suitability and location of buildings, and the customer service arrangements. They felt that most buildings were suitable and well located, with the exception of accessibility to some buildings, particularly at busy times. In</p>	<p>verges and gravel that washes away in the rain and becomes dangerous for older people, as well as the steep ramp at IGA. Some participants also commented on the kerbing around the front door of some of the Council managed retirement units, which they said is steep and not suitable for older people.</p> <p>Participants said that there are no pedestrian crossings in the Shire, though mentioned a raised area in the road near the Post Office that is sometimes treated as a crossing. Most agreed that a pedestrian crossing in Moreton Terrace opposite the IGA, and one on Point Leander Drive opposite Foodworks would be helpful for older people. They also commented that they felt the 60 kms/hr speed limit around Foodworks on Point Leander Drive is too fast and at times makes it difficult for older people to cross the road to reach the shops.</p> <p>Participants in this group said that drivers usually give way to pedestrians and gopher drivers. They commented that crossing the road on Ocean Drive and Point Leander can be difficult especially at busy times, due to traffic with few gaps. Comments were also made that some drivers are not careful to look for pedestrians and gopher drivers when reversing out of their driveways.</p> <p>There are no separate cycle paths in the Shire of Irwin, and participants in this group raised no concerns about this.</p> <p>All focus group participants in this age group said that they feel safe while out and about around the Shire.</p> <p>Participants in this group were mostly satisfied with the location and accessibility of services, with the exception that the location of the health and medical centres in Port Denison is not suitable for access by walking or cycling.</p> <p>Participants were satisfied that customer service arrangements available in the Shire are suitable for older people, and also commented that people are generally very helpful and delivery services of the supermarkets and bottle shops are appreciated.</p>

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
<p>particular, there were concerns around the accessibility of the current IGA with a steep ramp, though participants commented that the planned new IGA is expected to be better. Some also commented that there are no ramps to access the hairdresser and the vet. They were satisfied with the suitability of customer service arrangements for older people, and some commented that the staff at the banks, library and the post office are very helpful.</p> <p>Participants in this group suggested that the Shire Administration Building needs signage to direct visitors from Waldeck Street to the parking at the rear of the building, and that this is also applicable to the old police station museum. A suggestion was also made that signage on main roads to the health centre should refer to “Health Centre” and “Accident and Emergency” rather than to “Medical Centre”. Concerns were also raised around the access to the Health Service and some people being unclear that it is accessed via Golf Course Road rather than Blenheim Road as per the address.</p> <p>Participants were mostly satisfied with the public toilets provided by Council, however with some suggestions for improvement. In particular, they agreed that the disabled toilets on Point Leander Drive (near Hunt Street) need clearer and more direct disabled access, as currently the access is behind the toilets. They also mentioned that there are no toilets at the public library, or close to the shopping on Moreton Terrace (as it is required to cross two roads to get from the shops to the toilet). A suggestion was also made that public toilets should have soap and hand dryers. Participants also commented on the poor quality and maintenance of the IGA toilets, though acknowledged that these are not Council’s responsibility and likely to be upgraded when the IGA is rebuilt.</p>	<p>Participants agreed that most buildings around the Shire have adequate signage, seating and access. They said that while banks and the Post Office do not have seating, the service is typically fast so seating is generally not required. The main concern around access to buildings was the steep ramp at IGA which participants agreed was dangerous for older people, and expected that access would be improved in the planned new building.</p> <p>Most participants in this group said that there were sufficient public toilets in the town, with rails and access suitable for older people. They commented that toilet blocks at the beach are particularly well cared for. A comment was also made that the toilet near Memorial Park had a rough mat installed that was not suitable for access for older people, which was reported to the Shire and removed promptly.</p>

Carers

Carers that responded were generally satisfied with outdoor spaces and buildings within the Shire. However, they did mention that the older footpaths can be difficult to manage with a walker and that moving between the footpath and roads can be daunting for frail people. Another comment referred to a busy road with a blind spot near where they live and also the need for a footpath on the south side up to the health service off Money Street and the Golf Course Road.

Service Providers

Service Providers commended the shire of the provision and condition of outdoor spaces and buildings with only a few comments related to footpath maintenance. In particular monitoring the damage that tree roots and trunks do and sweeping the pathway along Blenhaime road on the way up to the Health Service facility. The provision of additional seats along the foreshore and beaches was also mentioned, to allow older people plenty of opportunity to rest while outside their homes. Quote: "cyclists and other people should take care when walking or riding past older people to reduce the risk of falls."

Older People Survey Comments – Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Over 80% of survey respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with outdoor spaces and buildings. However there were 17.35% of respondents who were dissatisfied with this aspect and a further 2.04% where indicated that they were very dissatisfied.

General Comments

Accessible and well maintained
Congratulations to Council for constant cleaning of footpaths and roads.
I am not a moaner. It all seems nice.
Well maintained x six comments
Sufficient
Sufficient
Parks are well maintained
Ok
We live 10km North of Dongara on 18 hectares. Love it.
Safe
Springfield fine quiet
Roadside verges are well maintained in our locality. Buildings (public ones) generally good access.
Personally I am fortunate to live in the retirement village and have plenty of walking space available to me.

Footpaths/Boardwalk/Crossings

Boardwalk could do with some maintenance.
Can be improved by providing more footpaths and cycle ways. Tulloch Drive and Philbey Road
Could use wheelchair access from Town Park and some footpaths are hard to maneuver from road onto footpath. Overall most areas are good.
Foot paths in some areas need attention
Footpaths are a nightmare - crudely kept. Dangerous in places to walk on. River board walk - idea great. Condition terrible - needs repairs - people have tripped on it.
Footpaths are often uneven around the main town area. Generally the park areas are kept green and the gardener does an excellent job.
Footpaths are rough on bikes. Bumps were built in and they are still being done.
Footpaths need to be seen to, they are very uneven and dangerous for the elderly, rather than putting up electric sign to let us know the temperature. All the work that was done at the Oblisk a waste of money and no one was consulted before it was done.
Hope to see continued monitoring/maintenance of board walk at river mouth, south.
I think the brick footpaths in Moreton Tce need to be upgraded as they are dangerous
I would like to see a walking pathway along Tulloch Drive. 2. Roundabouts OR speed humps Tulloch Drive - many people speed along that road.
Footpaths are uneven.
Lots of holes and bumps in roads and footpaths
More attention could be paid to footpath condition, cleanliness e.g. Dirt and rubble on Pt Leander Drive footpath, kerbing condition and also green space.
Pathways have greatly improved. Verges a letdown to appearance of town. Walking bridge over Irwin River near river mouth look out (Church St)
Some older footpaths could be replaced.
Some of the footpaths are uneven in Moreton Tce caused by tree roots and can be dangerous. So need to be checked more often.
Some footpath and roadsides in town could be neater, more safe.
No footpath/cycle way heading East from town
Dongara is not gopher friendly
The foot/cycle. Wheelchair path system needs attention to some of the on/off ramps and the surfaces in a few areas. We need to create more marked out walks to encourage this activity, and tidy up the existing.
There are too many sealed footpaths and sealed parking lots, too many arrows
Very unsafe, unlevel foot paths
We live in the 'racecourse estate' 2kms from town centre – no footpaths, no sewerage, often bad radio connection.
Would like pavement on other side to Church St to town.
Perhaps a designated pedestrian crossing (or 2) in the main street of town would be handy. Some drivers do speed a little along there.
Footpaths and street crossings need attention and very rough for gopher riders concrete paths are not good for gophers.
A footpath over the river in line with the existing access steps at Church street would link both sides of the river existing walks, & provide a shortcut to town which would encourage people to walk for health, and if attending social events to walk for their safety rather than drink and drive.

Tracks are well provided by bumps remain when crossing roads; could be smoothed out. Board walk along ocean drive is very loose and rough, and road use for gophers too dangerous on bend.
Footpaths are not continuous and in some places rough or non existent
A cycle path between Dongara and 7 mile beach, even to Greenough would be a great tourist draw card.

Outdoor Spaces

More attention could be given to green space areas. Requires tidying up - e.g. Canny Place (park)
Reserve at the end of Pickering Drive could do with an upgrade.
Not enough greenery outside space of Shire buildings don't display a vision of sustainability. No solar panels on Rec Centre or anywhere.
When walking in other areas of town (not Racecourse estate), parks, seating, tree shelter, grassed areas, cafés etc. Are great. Boardwalks are excellent.
Would like to see more trees along our road verges and paths, for shade and coolness
Dead tree removed please at 11 Flanagan Way.
Sufficient though park area at SW corner of road bridge needs to be turned into a family picnic area to complement river walk
I live near the skate park and find the whole appearance of the area an embarrassment to our mainly beautiful town.

Seating

Could be more outside seating
Insufficient seating and shade.
Rest benches along Point Leander/Ocean Drive useful in all weather. Shade - summer/shelter - winter.
Not enough seating

Buildings & Access

Automatic or sliding doors are easier for people on walkers/crutches etc. Some doors are very stiff and one often needs a kindly passerby to help.
The new shops idea e.g. IGA, is very sound, because access to older shops can be a very daunting issue.
Some shops access not so easy for some.
Would love an access way from top of northshore (Poole Ave) to the beach. Yes I know there is one at the swings but another access would be great
Restricted access to Port Denison oval, while it is desirable not to have dogs on the oval, it would be advantageous to have thoroughfare between Richardson and Point Leander Drive.
Need to maintain corner of Hunt Road and Port Leander Drive the clay soil is very slippery when wet after rain
New housing developments need these included in planning, as beaches are not always easily accessible for those who use mobility support.
Dangerous speed humps leading to medical centre. Don't need to be so severe.
Car parking in town is limited and surfaces are rough and uneven.
The main road Dongara/Denison requires resurfacing, this is a show piece to the visitor & would create a better impression.
Curbing around the obilisk

Curbing at obilisk not enough room when you are leaving and someone coming in.
In line w/o funds available some public buildings i.e. council offices are above what this community can readily expect when other council priority need maintaining ahead of (taj mahal)
The service lane behind the Dongara post office is a visual disgrace of neglect and also dangerous should any one walking slip or fall. The vacant land behind the pharmacy, disgracefully deep potholes. The toilet which is not a toilet, behind the yellow shed. Who is responsible for all these "eye sores"?
Suggestion: Alter the entry and exit for the day care centre - the exit has a culvert drain blocking an un-obstructive exit. A pull around area near the entry would help traffic at peak times.

B. Transportation

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
<p>As the Shire currently has no public transport service, specific questions relating to the affordability, convenience, and quality of public transport were not applicable. Focus group participants consistently reported demand for a bus service for day trips from Dongara to Geraldton, approximately once a week. They acknowledged that there had been previous attempts to run a bus service that had failed due to lack of demand. Most participants supported that such a service should not be for shopping for basic items such as groceries that are available in Dongara, but that there are many specialist goods and services not available in the town. This includes the public pool, specialist medical appointments, and specialist shops. A suggestion was made that small, fast buses would be suitable. Participants supported the suggestion of a small community bus service on a cost recovery basis.</p> <p>Participants were aware of the community transport service for eligible older people through HACC, and generally viewed this very positively. Some commented that there are people who are not eligible but need transport and access to services.</p> <p>Participants were also aware of the Shire’s bus which community groups could hire, and that this is currently used by the local school as well as community groups.</p> <p>Participants said that taxis were generally available when needed; though there are few taxis and they are not very affordable for</p>	<p>As the Shire currently has no public transport service, specific questions relating to the affordability, convenience, and quality of public transport were not applicable. Participants in this group commented that the TransWA service between Dongara and Geraldton does not arrive and depart at suitable times to be useful for people to take day trips to Geraldton. Participants supported the suggestion of a small community bus service on a cost recovery basis.</p> <p>Participants were aware of the community transport service for eligible older people through HACC which is staffed by volunteers, and a once monthly outing for the HACC Day Centre patients to Geraldton. They were also aware of the Shire bus available for community groups to hire but several people commented that the hire fee is usually not affordable for most older people.</p> <p>Participants were generally satisfied with the accessibility and affordability of taxi services, though several had not used the services. Those who had appreciated that taxis could be accessed using the government provided fuel card for pensioners.</p> <p>Participants in this group were satisfied with the road in the Shire with no major concerns around maintenance, lighting, traffic, signage or intersections. Once concern shared by most participants in this group was the speed bump going into the Medical Centre from Golf Course Road, which they said was too big and steep.</p>

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
<p>older people, particularly as a way to travel to Geraldton. Those on pensions are able to use their fuel vouchers for taxi services. However, participants agreed that this was not a viable way for older people without their own transport to get to and from Geraldton. They also said that it is not possible to book a taxi in advance, which makes it difficult to use as a reliable way to get to appointments in town and in Geraldton, and that taxis are not suitable for older people with disabilities.</p> <p>Participants were generally satisfied with the roads around the Shire, though with some concerns around lighting in particular areas. In particular, there were concerns around the lack of lighting near the Police Station on Point Leander Drive and Hunt Road, and on Richardson Road towards Ocean Drive. There were also concerns around the kerbing near the exit of the Ocean Drive retirement units which require going over the kerb in order to turn out of the units, and where the rubbish truck has broken the kerb due to it being too tight. There were also comments that the road is too tight and there is no directional signage at Granny's Beach.</p> <p>Participants in this group were generally satisfied with the traffic signs and intersections, again with some particular concerns and suggestions. These were that in tourist season visitors often enter the wrong way through the one way car park into Foodworks on Point Leander Drive. They suggested that large white arrows be painted on the bitumen of the entry and exit points. In addition, suggestions were made for signage to point to 'long and large' vehicle parking in town. The participants commended the set up for long and large parking at the pub but said that the new installation of a road island on Moreton Terrace prevents this parking from being useable by long and large vehicles.</p> <p>Participants in this group said that there are no driver education and refresher courses available in the Shire. Participants reported that many people have a lack of understanding around the eligibility requirements for driver's license renewal for older people, and said that there is a need for clearer information around that.</p>	<p>Participants in this group said that there are no driver education and refresher courses available in the Shire. Some participants were unsure of the eligibility requirements and process for driver's license renewal for older people. In particular, after undergoing compulsory medicals to re-qualify for their license, they were unsure of the next steps and whether they had successfully re-qualified. They said that clear information to explain this process would be useful.</p> <p>Participants in this group were satisfied that there was enough parking around the Shire, and that it is safe and conveniently located. The exception was the IGA car park because of the current rebuilding process which has closed off some parking areas.</p> <p>Participants in this group were also satisfied with the availability and location of drop off spots, and agreed that the indented areas on Moreton terrace were convenient for drop offs, as well as at the Medical Centre and School. They also said that priority parking and drop off spots are available for people with special needs (ACROD parking), however that they are not always respected by other drivers. In particular, they said that mothers with prams use them, which may be because there are no special parking bays for parents with prams.</p>

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
<p>Participants agreed that there was not enough parking in the main part of town that allows older people to park within a suitable walking distance to shops and services. A suggestion was made that the Post Office parking should be rationalised to exclude parking for long periods of time, and a comment made that the Chemist parking is too narrow. There was also agreement that ACROD bays are often not respected in town and at the beach. They suggested that reserved, wider bays for use by seniors and mothers with prams could help to ensure that ACROD bays are respected and that older people have access to parking.</p> <p>There was agreement among participants that there are not enough suitable drop off points in the center of town (Moreton Terrace). They suggested that 2-3 bays be reserved near the Post Office and other areas on the main street.</p>	

Carers
<p>Carers indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with transportation in the Shire. However one carer said that it would be nice to have some public transport to Geraldton available so they could use it to attend Doctors and Specialists appointments.</p>

Service Providers
<p>Service providers provided mixed responses to the satisfaction level of transportation opportunity and services for older people within the Shire. Fifty percent of respondents (3) felt that transportation was satisfactory, while one respondent each rated very satisfied, very dissatisfied and dissatisfied. Deeper discussion with service providers revealed that transportation to appointments both within and outside of the Shire was available to those that needed it after an assessment had been conducted. For transport outside of required treatments transport options were low. There is a Health Centre bus available if older people are assessed as requiring the use of this service. The major town of Geraldton is 40 minutes away and the tourism bus that passes through once a day is at unsuitable times which do not allow sufficient time in Geraldton before returning. If older people are unable to drive and cannot rely upon friends for transport then a taxi service is the only other option. Maybe the Shire could run a bus into Geraldton a couple of times a week for older people with a time frame of maybe two hours before it returns to Dongara Port Denison. Council has a community bus but it is felt that the bus is narrow and difficult for older people to get on and off and that the leg space is not adequate for older people who have had hip/knee replacements.</p>

Older People Survey Comments - Transport

The majority of survey respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with transport within the Shire (72.73%). However, 22.73% of respondents were dissatisfied and 4.55% were very dissatisfied with aspects of transport, including affordability, reliability, access to it, safety and maintenance.

General Comments

At this stage we are still able to drive ourselves
Driving and parking in Dongara is safe, reliable and well suited to ageing people. The cycle paths accommodate pedestrians and 'gopher' traffic. Well done to our Council.
Accessible
Use own vehicle.
Affordable - all good now
Accessible
Accessible and safe
As we have no buses, it is dependent on having a private car. Taxi is good, but less affordable.
I don't use public transport, except occasional Westrail bus to Perth
I am lucky I can drive around town and out of town. For those who can't HACCC provides some transport or Autumn Centre for outings.
In the future my eyesight will deteriorate and I will not be able to drive. This could mean relocation or the necessity for a carer.
I do not know about public transport as I have a car.
I have gopher. HACCC bus appreciated for Senior Day Care.
Satisfied
One problem when walking occurs when a cyclist comes up behind you. Most of them don't have a clear bell!
The question of cycling is a problem as some drivers pass so close it is frightening and the constant fear of being hit from behind resulting in injury. Should a m/v hit me from behind the resulting injury may make dependent on society.
We could do with a more comfortable and better maintained community bus because the old one has seen better days!!

Public Transport

Believe that in future a bus service from Pt Denison to town centre will be needed.
No bus to Bookarra or Walkaway
public transport is limited,
More transport needed
What transport!!
Is there transportation? Where and what
More buses, transport

Bus Service to Geraldton

Need a bus service to Geraldton. Maybe Tuesday/Thursday - people could make appointments.
No public transport - question not relevant for this. Fuel cost is too expensive to encourage travel. Just for in town visitation.
The biggest issue we see is that the volunteer drivers from Dongara Eneabba Mingenew Health Service (DEMHS) who take clients to Geraldton for medical/dental from DEMHS who take clients to Geraldton for medical/dental etc, are ageing themselves and it is unlikely this service will meet growing demand (because of health issues, we are now ex-volunteer driver). Without some form of affordable and attainable public type transport, we will shift to either Geraldton or Perth (hopefully not Perth) if that time comes.
We have vehicles and also are very active so we have no problem with transport but, for those who use gophers, wheelchairs, walking frames, apart from one taxi service (expensive) there is no other bus or vehicle transport. There is a 'community bus' for those who are registered at the Day Care Centre at the Medical Centre, but for others, transport is non-existent. To get to Geraldton for Doctors, Dentist or just a day out there is no transport. People have to rely on friends. You can, for a fee, have someone drive you in a vehicle from the Health Centre but that does not allow for shopping etc.
Dongara needs regular public transport to Geraldton - again - sustainability!
Weekly bus to Geraldton for non drivers should be available.
Nonexistent for individuals: a) attending medical/dental appointments in Geraldton. B) business/leisure pursuits in Geraldton i.e. Aquarena, cinema, art gallery etc.
Currently I am able to drive for medical, shopping, and social activities. However in the future this will diminish public transport for such does not exist. I am currently happy with the private aspects of all.
Local transport is very limited. No regular day buses to and from Geraldton.
Public transport to Geraldton would be good. Say am to and then pm back.
Public bus service to Geraldton is needed. We have an older population in Dongara who need to travel to Geraldton often for specialist appointments or perhaps would like to catch a movie.
Provision of additional transport to Geraldton would be a consideration.
Transport needed from Dongara to Geraldton.
Only provided by HACC (day centre clients only) or taxi to Geraldton shopping. Local transport for non-drivers is usually gopher. HACC provides volunteer driven transport for medic appointments to Geraldton - a very good service.
Could do with public transport upgrade. Such as bus trips for all types of citizens e.g. Shopping.
Not enough public transport.
Would love to see more buses on a regular timetable to Geraldton maybe to take partners non retired worker to and from there.

Parking

Parking in the shopping areas could be better.
Excessive kerbing makes it more difficult than it needs to be getting in and out of car parks.
Some roads and kerbing require repair, car parking needs improvement i.e. insufficient spaces and undersize parking bays i.e. too small for 4WD.
Could do with more car parking up town.
Parking in town is limited,

Parking at post office - pick up mail - why is it allowed for vehicles to be parked there for very long periods of time.
Parking at this time is becoming a challenge in the town centre. Visitors and caravaners must be put off, when there is a lack of defined areas for them. Some even refer to it as a dirty, dirty place: Don't stop! Keep going.
You are battling to provide enough parking - influx of tourists/vans etc. People just have to be patient and courteous (we hope!).
Parking is not sufficient at Sea Rescue Hall - as many functions are held there.
If bus bays outside of Shire/Library buildings had time zones written, it would create more parking for such essential public buildings.
Needs more public parking in main street off the road.

Roads & Curbing

Roads are generally in a poor state with repair required.
Not very well maintained.
It could be better as some kerbing has deteriorated over the years.
Any facilities I use are very accessible only complaint I would have are the speed humps at the medical centre - they are too severe.
The 1 way movement at Hoskin St is excellent well done!
Remove islands. Light poles in centre of main road.
Over the top kerbing.
If riding a scooter you take your life in your hands with ruts in the road and potholes please consider this as when they fix them they are not done properly.
Roads we use are safe and well maintained.
There are also too many traffic signs in Dongara and the new one way street in town is unnecessary.

C. Housing

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
<p>Most focus group participants said that housing in the Shire was affordable, and noted increasing affordability in recent years due to market changes. However, those who support themselves solely on the pension said that they spend around 70% of their allowance on housing, which leaves them vulnerable to financial stress. They also noted a long waiting list for Council housing, but that those who are eligible and on the waiting list receive a rent subsidy in the meantime.</p> <p>In general, participants were satisfied with private housing stock but most people said they would need to move when they become frail and have higher care needs. Concerns were raised around some of the Council housing units, which are not suitable for older people as they have narrow doorways, unsuitable bathrooms, high kerbs and stairs. They said that the newer units in the Council’s retirement village are better suited for ageing in place.</p> <p>The HACC service provides home maintenance and support services to eligible clients. For those not eligible (who do not have an ongoing disability) they are required to engage private support services, which are not always affordable for older people and some people had concerns around quality control. A suggestion was made that HACC could provide home maintenance and support services to self funded retirees who could pay privately for the services.</p> <p>Some participants were aware that they could be referred to services to modify their homes, and that HACC eligible clients can sometimes have the costs of their modifications covered. Others are required to pay privately. A suggestion was made that Council could have a directory of services and operators available for older people to complete modifications to their homes to support ageing in place.</p> <p>Some participants said that residential areas are not close to services and the community for those older people who are unable to drive.</p>	<p>Most participants were satisfied with the affordability of housing in the Shire, including the Council managed retirement housing. However, there were concerns around the design of Council’s retirement housing, which is not suitable for elderly people. It was acknowledged that Shire of Irwin staff have been helpful for residents in the village in terms of addressing particular concerns and making changes for individuals around accessibility as far as possible.</p> <p>Participants in this group were concerned about the lack of a nursing home in Dongara or Port Denison, and reported that it is common for older people needing nursing home care to go wherever they can be accommodated, usually to Geraldton, Three Springs, or as far as York. All participants felt that this was a concern because it is difficult for people to relocate at an old age; they then become isolated from their community. They agreed it is especially difficult in cases where older people are required to move too far away for their family and friends to easily and regularly visit them. The participants acknowledged that HACC services are helpful and appreciated, but that once older people have higher care needs they are usually required to leave town.</p> <p>In relation to home maintenance and support services, focus groups were aware of HACC services for eligible patients. However, there was a lack of understanding around the eligibility requirements for particular services and some comments that HACC needs to better advertise their available services. A suggestion was also made for HACC to provide Occupational Therapists to assess clients’ needs to improve the safety of their home for ageing in place. For those who are not eligible for HACC services, most participants said that private tradesmen and handymen are not always affordable for older people. This group also mentioned that volunteer groups who may be able to help older people with home maintenance and support are typically older people themselves.</p> <p>There were no concerns among this group around options and supplies to modify homes if needed. A comment was made that</p>

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
<p>All participants in this group agreed that they feel safe in their homes, able to move about and safe from crime.</p> <p>All participants agreed that there are not enough housing options in the Shire for older people, and particularly for older people who are frail or experience disabilities.</p>	<p>outpatients from Geraldton Regional Hospital who require modifications to their home are sometimes eligible to have the assessment and costs of modifications covered.</p> <p>Most participants in this group said they live close to services and the community, and those that do not lived outside of town by choice. Those that do not live close to services acknowledged that they would need to move to town if they developed high care needs.</p> <p>All participants in this group agreed that they feel safe in their homes, able to move about and safe from crime.</p> <p>All participants agreed that there are not enough housing options in the Shire for older people, and were particularly concerned about the lack of a nursing home in town and shortage of high care beds.</p>

Carers
<p>Carers who responded indicated that they were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the provision of housing in the Shire of Irwin in relation to availability, affordability, suitability for the current and future needs of the older person they cared for. They said that more aged care housing similar to Blake House would be of assistance and that more aged care hostel beds were required. The majority of them indicated that they believed that the older person they cared for would be interested in living in an independent living community that offered medium and high care services within the Shire in the future. The carer who was very dissatisfied is caring for a 75 year old who is hearing impaired, has difficulty moving or walking and is physically disabled. The carer commented that more beds at Blake house are required. A further comment from another carer was that the most important priority for the person they cared for was for the provision of health care in Dongara without the need to be transported to Geraldton.</p>

Service Providers
<p>Service providers were again mixed with the provision of suitable housing affordability for older people in the Shire. Fifty percent of respondents were satisfied while fifty percent were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. The comments related to creating or attracting more independent housing and providing some incentives to developers to increase the stock of this. The need to an additional retirement village/more independent type living units was seen as important for the aging community. One service provider believed that ongoing secure care for aged clients was poor.</p> <p>There was great appreciation for the Council provided accommodation for the seniors but there was a sense that it sometimes takes too long in between a tenant leaving and another moving in and that maybe this process could be streamlined and shortened. All service provider respondents believed that here was a demand for an independent living community that offers medium and high care services within the Shire of Irwin in the future.</p>

Older People Survey Comments - Housing

Nearly two thirds of survey respondents were either satisfied (64.63%) or very satisfied (8.54%) with housing options within the Shire. This included aspects such as affordability, availability and, suitability for their current and future needs. However, over one quarter of respondents were dissatisfied (25.61%) with these aspects and a further 1.22% were very dissatisfied.

Respondents were asked if they would be interested in living in an independent living community that offers medium and high care services within the Shire of Irwin in the future, and 74 out of the 99 respondents (75%) who answered said that they would. This can be taken as a strong indication of need amongst survey respondents. Specific comments in response to this question were:

In the future
Definitely
I would be very interested in this type of community living.
A good idea
This would be a far more desirable option than having to go to either Geraldton or Perth and be away from family.
Many people will in future need this. Many people need it now.
SOI has had 3 attempts by others to provide this and all have failed to proceed to stated outcomes at time and explore to SOI rate programs.
As above
At some future stage we will possibly need care services.
We came to Dongara in 1990 and live in Springfield on a semi rural property, though in the future we'll have to look at a place in town that offers medium to high care.
Need more care as provided at Blake House
not necessarily now but in the future
We purchased land in Dongara in 1990 for long term retirement. Currently we like living semi rural and happy to remain as such. However in the future we will be unable to live as such and will need to move to what question 13 refers.
If I stayed here.
That would be good but please consider a better site than the last proposed plan. Social life and shopping access is still quite important even if we are old!!
Eventually that will be required and I would prefer to stay within the community I know.
As long as it is affordable
We love the area and one day will need the above.
As Irwin is the home of many retirees and elderly care services and homes. Becomes extremely important.
As long as there was onsite care available 24 hours.
Do not want to leave the town.
No people should not be herded into community living.
Still independent at present

Hopefully not in the next 10-15 years.
If I become too frail to be cared for in my own home.
Definitely a future need for higher care support services as we age.
HACC do a great job but needs extension.
If that ever becomes a necessity I am in my eightieth year now, but believe that I will be able to stay in my home for a long time yet.
Dongara needs to extend medical services.
The future is a bit hard to predict.
From independent living, to hostel, to nursing home. There is nothing suitable at the moment
More Doctors
This is fine for people like me; others like to live independently with effective support such as home help, carer, access to transport. Essential to continue such services.
I already rent one of your units on Ocean Drive. And love it!
This type of facility is essential for the shire, given that our population aged 55+ is higher than the state average. We know it is hard work for the Shire, but you have a huge number of residents who fully support that you "soldier on".
Not enough available
When the time was right I would be very interested

Other comments relating to respondents' satisfaction are included below.

General Comments

As I own my home it suits my needs, access wise all floors one level and there are no steps.
We may need help at a future date.
People have had a life. Downsizing into a smaller diminished space - unkind.
Future needs may require better wheelchair access and modification of doorway steps.

Affordability

Will require more affordable housing for seniors in the future. At the moment there is very little suitable.
Rents are far too high these days.
I have no problem with my situation though if expansion is to proceed more Government housing is needed.
Future housing needs will be a retirement village type of living which question 13 refers to providing our finances permit.
Some housing in Dongara can be expensive.
Not enough State housing.
Too expensive, poor resale
Now is OK but future looks grim because of lack of aged accommodation and affordable, assured access to medical, only available in Geraldton or Perth.
Affordability and availability

Those who have Homeswest/Council aged housing are lucky. I don't know how hard it is to get such accommodation. One friend couldn't get it until she sold her house in another town and had to buy privately.
More public housing is needed
More cheap housing should be made available for the elderly, without having to rely on family to intervene.
We will be in need of private or public housing. Maybe some homes could be bought for public use - or assistance with rent.

Retirement Village/Nursing Home

Limited availability of affordable retirement housing.
Very limited availability of nursing home housing.
A need for more aged care facilities.
Future housing needs will be a retirement village type of living which question 13 refers to providing our finances permit.
Aged care facilities - accommodation - with care on call. Living here all your life then have to leave district is NOT a good or healthy way.
Aged care housing is badly needed with only 6 units available in Dongara and I believe only 1 respite bed.
Currently satisfied - will probably down size in the future. There is definitely a shortage of aged living facilities.
Need for more developments for retirees.
Definitely need a high care facility.
No aged care facility available in the community apart from at the medical centre which is always full
Not a worry or ours at the moment but in the future (5 – 7 years) there is no 'lifestyle accommodation' available, the odd unit here and there but nothing I would move house for.
Considering future needs - availability of a flat, retirement villa or cottage will be significant in 8-10 years time.
Would like to see more availability for special care groups or high care.
Now is OK but future looks grim because of lack of aged accommodation and affordable, assured access to medical, only available in Geraldton or Perth.
Needs more housing units for over 60s.
Seniors housing need updating safety wise.
Not nearly enough for future needs.
Future - aged care housing.
Now satisfied, future dissatisfied. We are OK at present in our own home, but for the future, we would have no choice other than to move, to access aged care and housing facility. We are independent retirees.
Happy with current housing but in the future I will need support to stay at home or move into other options to provide care.
Make Acacia finish project or take over as a Council run retirement village.
We badly need a retirement village here. The land Dongara side of the bridge on the corner of Hunts Rd is large and would be a great place for one, with easy access to shops and Doctors over the road, if that goes ahead.
Prevision for aging persons planning downsizing in the independent, semi with assistance, and in house 24 hour care, now all need to progress urgently, these plans at the moment seen to have ground to a halt.
We are satisfied living in our own home until circumstances change and we are unable to look after ourselves.
Very limited options.

D. Respect & Social Inclusion

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
<p>Most focus group participants agreed that older people are regularly consulted by public, voluntary and commercial service providers on how to serve them better. However, some felt that they were sometimes not consulted on things happening around town and changes that would be likely to affect them.</p> <p>All participants agreed that there are services and products available in the town to suit the varying needs and preferences of older people in the community.</p> <p>All participants agreed that in Dongara and Port Denison, service staff are courteous and helpful. Some gave examples of staff of supermarkets being very helpful to older people, such as calling the health service to check on people if they hadn't seen regular customers for some time. Some participants commented that services that need to be accessed in Geraldton or Perth such as Medicare and Centrelink can be more difficult and often have long lines and waiting times.</p> <p>All participants agreed that older people are visible and portrayed positively in the media, and particularly in the local media. There was unanimous agreement that older people, and particularly those who volunteer, are well recognized for their contributions to the community. Participants said that most of the volunteers in the community are retired. They gave several examples of organisations and services such as the Health Centre, Lions Club, and Historical Society giving annual celebrations to acknowledge the work of their volunteers. Some also mentioned an audio history project in which Council records stories from older people, which they felt is a form of recognition of their role in the community.</p> <p>All participants agreed that older people are respected by younger people in the community. They commented that those who are involved in providing community services are especially well respected. Participants agreed that community events generally attract attendance by all generations, include older people, and accommodate their needs and preferences. A suggestion was made</p>	<p>Participants in this group were satisfied that older people are regularly consulted by public, voluntary and commercial service providers on how to serve them better. They spoke of a 'village' type environment where people are always helpful, for example supermarket staff offering to carry their shopping to their car. They also commented that 'The Rag' is an important forum for consultation of older people.</p> <p>All participants agreed that there are services and products available in the town to suit the varying needs and preferences of older people in the community. Some mentioned that there are certain products including underwear and shoes, and variety of grocery products that are not available in the town.</p> <p>They all agreed that service staff are courteous and helpful, and a comment was made that local Police are also courteous and helpful.</p> <p>All participants agreed that older people are visible and portrayed positively in the media. They commented that this was particularly the case in the local media 'The Rag', which is run entirely by older volunteers in the community.</p> <p>The participants in this group all agreed that older people are well recognized for their contributions to the community. Several said that the Shire Council in particular recognises the contribution of older members of the community. Most agreed that younger people less strongly recognize the contributions of older people. A suggestion was made that this may be because they've not had the opportunity to live elsewhere to compare with other places and enable them to appreciate their community and the contributions made by older people and volunteers.</p> <p>Participants in this group were mostly satisfied that older people are generally respected by younger people. Comments were made that there is always a small element of the community that is not respectful, but that this is not limited to a particular age group.</p>

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
<p>to include a 'best dressed gopher' contest at the Larry Lobster festival.</p> <p>Some participants were aware of some engagement and involvement of older people in school activities. Examples were older people helping with reading classes, and the Historical Society working with schools to attract junior members. Participants were unsure whether the local school specifically provides opportunities to learn about ageing and older people. A suggestion was made for an 'adopt a Grandie' program within the school.</p> <p>Most participants said that older people who experience financial disadvantage have good access to public, voluntary and private services, and to free community events such as the Larry Lobster festival. However, a comment was made that some more isolated older people experience fear and feel unwanted, and barriers to their inclusion arise from them feeling fearful and suspicious of services and community involvement.</p>	<p>This group was satisfied that community events accommodate older people's needs and preferences, generally attract attendance from all generations, and include older people. An example of the yearly carols event was given. They commented that if people do not attend events it is because they do not want to, and not because they are excluded.</p> <p>Participants were satisfied that schools provide opportunities that older people can be involved in, including assisting with reading through the Lions Club, activities with the Historical Society, and involvement at events such as Anzac Day through the RSL.</p> <p>All participants in this group were satisfied that financially disadvantaged older people have good access to public, voluntary, and private services.</p>

Carers
<p>Carers were very satisfied with the respect and social inclusion provided to the older person they cared for.</p>

Service Providers
<p>Service providers were either satisfied or very satisfied with the degree to which older people are respected and included in the community and believed that the town incorporated and integrates retired people very well. They believe that the majority of residents in the Shire have respect for older people and are willing to assist them in any way they can. Service providers also believe that most community members acknowledge that the Shires volunteers are predominantly the older people and appreciate their contribution. There are also many different groups for older people to join, however it is acknowledged that some older people are unaware of some opportunities for social inclusion or simply choose not to participate. Quote: "What I love about this town is that most people know everyone and there is always a helping hand around."</p>

Older People Survey Comments – Respect & Inclusion

As supported by the comments below, almost all respondents (94%) felt respected and included in the community as an older person. However 4% of respondents were very dissatisfied and another 2% were dissatisfied with this aspect.

General Comments

Very happy with all the effort the Council and clubs are making.
I find Dongara compared to Geraldton/Perth extremely good in this area.
The service to older people in this town is superb. Both the service industry and fellow residents are all welcoming, helpful and interested in your future well being.
I have no complaints, but if I were not mobile (on my gopher) I could feel isolated and dependent.
Very friendly.
We don't socialise a lot but have a few good friends locally.
No disappointments so far. Only if my appointments coincide with an entertainment or activity I would enjoy.
The community is generally safe and respectful considering the era we live in and other areas that have all sorts of respect issues.
Very please with Autumn Centre members, also library girls.
I am not a great mixer, but love Dongara and am very happy here. I LOVE IT HERE.
We are very pleased with the girls at library/visitors centre as they are so obliging also staff at IGA and HACCC.
No problem here. Up to all of us to say "good morning" to anyone. x and I find the staff of every shop in Dongara (and business) are great.
I think the oldies are treated very well. Assistance is always available. Shop staff everywhere are obliging, helpful and courteous.
The staff that attend to clients in the community from the medical centre are extremely helpful and caring just sometimes pushed to the limit
Inclusion is often a choice... Whether one misses, is involved in a group, and relates to others well. For shift-ins (if we have any) or disabled folk, inclusion can be a challenge. Service staff have always been courteous and helpful as are business people.
I love the fact that there are so many social activities e.g. The Irwin Autumn Centre.
We chose to live here 10 yrs ago, in "retirement", being impressed with what we felt as "community feeling" and safety. This idea of the quiz for senior's week is a good start to Dongara developing its own seniors week program. As a general idea, thinking of programs we see at the Queens Park theatre, maybe our library could have a weekly seniors day, to invite seniors in and have a self make coffee/tea service on hand. We notice the number who go to this room at QE2 to read the newspapers and meet others.
Most people show respect.
Sadly you will never please all seniors. Overall I feel seniors are well thought of - maybe in senior's week - a little more could be done to celebrate senior's week. Suggestions - musical afternoon and high tea, BBQ at recreation centre, volunteers to help.
Active with the local churches and Christian centre but will like to be more involved.
Dongara community has excellent facilities. Staff are brilliant, caring and have genuine concern for elderly. My concern is: will the facilities and care of this excellence be available in the future considering the increase population of aged people living here and shortage of government funds.
Recreation centre over 50 circuit excellent. Staff great, best coffee in town and socialising as well as exercise. Lions do a great job looking after the community and providing seniors picnic etc.

I've always felt included and respected with anything I've joined.
We have been here 2 years passed and find it easy to be included.
People are friendly, helpful and wonderful.

Other Considerations

Only a small number of businesses in town provide good customer service. On the whole, business customer service leaves a lot to be desired.
Children's attitude and lack of respect for other people's and community property?? Needs to improve
Assumptions exist that everyone has a car. Not so. HACC services for transport - unfair. Independence hard to maintain without transport.
Promoting being from developments has of no value to elderly (i.e. surveys for future) at our expense. I don't believe in providing for future generations i.e. 20-30 years ahead.

E. Social Participation

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
<p>All participants agreed that activities and events are affordable and with no hidden or extra costs. Most had no concerns around the location and accessibility of activities and events, though some had concerns that they were not accessible to those that are not able to drive due to the lack of public transport. They all agreed that events and activities are held often enough and said that there is always lots going on, and for some it even becomes too busy. There were no concerns raised around the convenience of events in relation to times and locations.</p> <p>Most participants agreed that activities and events are well publicized with good information available. However, some commented that those residents of the Shire who live outside of the towns are not always able to come to town to get a copy of 'The Rag' and sometimes do not receive information about activities and events.</p> <p>Most participants were satisfied that the activities and events available are interesting and varied to appeal to a range of people. A gap identified was around education and cultural activities. Suggestions were made for short, 'fun' courses, more computer training and provision of a computer for public use in the library.</p>	<p>All participants in this group agreed that activities and events are affordable and with no hidden or extra costs. Some commented that it is mainly time availability that prevents people attending activities and events.</p> <p>The participants agreed that most activities are conveniently located and easily accessible though the lack of public transport is sometimes a limiting factor for some residents. Others said that neighbours and friends usually pick people up to take them to activities and events, though some members of the community are isolated by choice.</p> <p>Most participants felt that activities are held often enough, and said that there is sometimes too much on. Some participants said that opportunities were more limited for people who don't belong to a club, as many events such as those at the Autumn Centre are for members only. They suggested that there could be more whole of community events.</p> <p>The participants in this group agreed that events and activities are generally held at convenient times, and said that publicising them centrally in The Rag allows them to plan their schedules around activities and events. Most participants agreed that events and activities available are sufficiently varied to appeal to a range of</p>

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
<p>Some participants commented that ABC radio is a possible way to communicate with older people at risk of social isolation. Participants noted that there are an increasing proportion of community members in the Shire experience social isolation, particularly those who are frail.</p>	<p>people, though some said that varied musical performances are lacking.</p> <p>Some participants were aware of examples of organizations providing outreach to include older people at risk of social isolation in community events and activities. An example given was the Lions Club offering to provide a pick up service to attend their annual picnic for those people without access to transport, though there was no take up of the offers. Some participants said that churches attempt to include people who are socially isolated, though are not able to do so to the extent that they could in the past as many people do not attend any Church.</p>

Carers
<p>Carers were very satisfied with social participation opportunities for the older person they cared for. In particular they noted that the local health service organise great social activities for assessed clients. However, one believed that they person they cared for would benefit from a therapy pool as at present they have to travel to Geraldton for the therapy and it costs time and travel arrangements.</p>

Service Providers
<p>Service providers were satisfied or very satisfied with the opportunity for social participation for older people in the Shire of Irwin. They indicated that they believed that older people get rapidly engaged and involved in social activities compared to their peers in larger regional centres. Currently the day centre provides two days a week for our older people and they have social outings frequently, it is very well organized. They believe that many events are inclusive and there are a variety of groups available to join if older people with to do so. A regular bus to get to the pool in Geraldton would be good for older people, particular access to a hydro pool.</p>

Older People Survey Comments – Social Participation

Almost all respondents (94.85%) were satisfied with social participation opportunities in the Shire of Irwin (including events, activities, volunteering). However, 4.12% of respondents were dissatisfied with this aspect and a further 1.03% indicated that they were very dissatisfied with this aspect.

Opportunities to Participate

Recreation centre over 55 class very good and staff at Recreation Centre do a great job.
Seems to be ample venues/organisations for social participation.
My wife is involved with the "Local Rag" myself involved the grandchildren sports - I believe that it is first a case of putting yourself out there.
Quilting club - lovely bunch of ladies.
This town thrives on volunteers which all help to promote a warmth and supportive friendship which is also a huge saving to Government services.
I belong to the Autumn centre which I believe provides great benefit to senior members of the district with a great variety of activities for all of us. The venue, being centrally located is in a great position.
I enjoy volunteering - would like not to have to do so much for fundraising at bowling club.
Socialise - Seventh Day Adventist - made to feel welcome intend to get involved with other churches as well.
I'm a volunteer at "Rag" Office, also play indoor bowls and go to church and a member (social) of lawn bowls.
There is always something going on but are usually through private not Council organised activities.
There are a good range of activities if you are willing to look for them. All types of sport. Cards, Board Games, indoor/outdoor bowls, day care activities at the Medical Centre. Craft, Patch working, Painting, Writing, if you are able to get yourself to the venues.
I volunteer at the "rag" and play indoor bowls.
I had a wonderful time when our ladies' overtones choir was full on. Proof reading at The Rag. Also several years of bird and plant surveys in our Shire for Kings Park/Birds Australia. Husband xx was the helper.
There's plenty of action from purely social, to support, to fitness, to academic extension. Endless opportunity to be a volunteer.
This town very inclusive and caters for elderly retirees which is where I'm heading.
Socialising events are fine.
Love the Autumn Centre.
Good whilst senior's week is on.
N/a to me, but my mother in law is very satisfied with the service from Dongara Eneabba Mingenew Health Service (DEMHS) and the day like Lions pension day at the foreshore.
There are groups for arts and writing and sewing and a social club for seniors as well as the HAAC Day Centre which provides pick ups and shopping trips. A drama group would be good.
We are fortunate to have so many volunteers available in our community. We have a very active over 55 seniors club, the Irwin Autumn Social Club, where we are able to play Bingo, Bowls, Games i.e. gards, mah-jongg etc with an outing every month.

Affordability

Many activities exist. The cost of these are prohibitive - especially activities at the Recreation Centre.
Too expensive to go out, food prices excessive, alcohol prices excessive.
Would like access to gym at a cheaper rate and classes specifically for needs of the ageing. Perth has free buses. We don't have buses. Our first class recreational centre could be well used by seniors.
I love yoga, feel \$16 is expensive week after week.

We do feel that affordable access to a “senior’s gym” would be a good physical and social activity – yoga, movement to music, meditation. A heated senior’s exercise pool, with perhaps a weekly class (e.g. run by our physiotherapists from Geraldton) as well as general access would be very useful one day!

General Comments

It is up to the individual to participate. Many different aspects in Dongara.
Would love to further my volunteering but it is hard to know where to look to get info. Possibly the shire staff/office could offer that. I would like to be part of community representation on some of the Shire committees such as road wise and safer communities etc.
Maybe getting the oldies that have lost their motivation to get out and about could be looked at.
I am still a loner.
We had a Progress Association for about 60 members this was effectively shut down by Council - Every activity we suggested (voluntary) was refused.
We like the look of the Seniors Action Group in Geraldton, where they engage guest speakers, but this is the advantage of a bigger population. In our time here, we have done a lot of volunteering for the community (Lions, meals on wheels, sea rescue, charities, DEMS drivers) but are now having to give quite a lot up as health declines. Down the line, we will look at the HACC bus, when driving is not possible. We tried the Autumn Centre, but found it non welcoming to new people (at our first and only Xmas function, walked around every table, to find all seats were reserved for friends and only one table had room for us! Have not been back since!).
Community bus used to ferry group members only. Individuals overlooked, not catered for.
Distance from town precludes us.
The Council should assist the Autumn club for the elderly more than currently. The Council should also assist Dongara charities more as the money generated by volunteers is returned to Dongara community. The Council likes to waste money in other areas e.g. Electric sign in park at river, obelisk, overnight waste facility for caravans passing through free.
It would be great if the Shire had a swimming pool and we really need a warm hydrotherapy pool at the medical centre.
There are activities if one wants to participate but if new to community hard to get to know new people.
I would like to see more activities for the aged
With your own transport access is fine, otherwise isolation is highly possible.

F. Communication and Information

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
Participants agreed that information is provided regularly, distributed widely, and easy to understand. Examples of information sources were local paper ‘The Rag’ and the free community newspaper (Midwest Times). Participants commented that the Midwest Times is no longer delivered directly to houses.	Participants in this group were satisfied that information is generally provided regularly and distributed widely, though commented that many people in their age group do not use email as a mode of communication. They indicated that their main sources of information were the Local Rag, word of mouth through groups, and for some the Shire of Irwin website.

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
<p>Most participants said that there is not a centralized information service, though agreed that word of mouth communication is important for older people. They commented that Visitors Centre and Shire Administration staff are great and are able to respond to a range of questions and refer people to other information sources. They also said that people often contact 'The Rag' to find particular information, and that the staff at the Pharmacy is helpful by referring people to health related services.</p> <p>No concerns were raised around the clarity of automated telephone services, and some people said they appreciated that now some telephone services have an option to leave your number and be phoned back. Most participants were satisfied that older people have access to computers and the internet where desired. They acknowledge that some older people do not want to use computers or internet. Most participants were satisfied that electronic equipment has large enough buttons and big letters, with the exception of older mobile phones.</p> <p>Participants agreed that person to person services are available on request when required, and there were no concerns around the promotion of verbal communication to older people.</p> <p>Some participants commented that socially isolated people do not receive information because they are not willing to receive it. Concerns were raised around the Irwin town site, where there is no mobile signal and when power outages occur for more than 14 hours, the residents are left without mobile or landline contact.</p> <p>Of this group, one of the seven participants said they experience problems with mobile reception where they live, three experience problems with their satellite TV reception (after the switch from analog to digital), and all seven said that they have problems with their radio reception. They said that this raises safety concerns, particularly in relation to receiving up to date fire and cyclone alerts which they would usually receive via radio.</p>	<p>Most felt that the Local Rag was easy to understand, "down to earth and common sense" and generally appropriate in relation to wording, font size and layout as it is produced by older people. Most of the participants in this group said they found the Shire of Irwin website very difficult to navigate and that there were too many buttons on the website. They also said that printed telephone directories can be difficult to use as they have very small font sizes.</p> <p>Most of the participants in this group said that they view the Local Rag as the centralized information source for the community. Other sources mentioned included the Shire Administration Office, Community Resource Centre, RSL and Lions club whose staff or representatives are able to direct people to appropriate information on particular queries.</p> <p>No concerns were raised around the clarity of automated telephone services, though the participants in this group agreed that most services are lengthy and take a lot of time to navigate.</p> <p>Participants in this group had no concerns around the use of electronic equipment in terms of having sufficiently large buttons and lettering. They agreed that most people in the community are able to access the internet if they want to, including via the Community Resource Centre. Some said that in certain areas of the Shire it is necessary for residents to have a satellite dish to access the internet.</p> <p>No concerns were raised around access to person to person services for older people; however some acknowledge that those who do not live in town need to travel to town to access most services. They also agreed that verbal communication to older people is generally promoted, and that most notices in the Local Rag have phone numbers rather than email addresses, which promotes verbal communication.</p> <p>Participants said that many isolated people who are not involved in the community rely on their neighbours to receive information. A comment was made that Council distribution of information via mail</p>

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
	<p>does not reach some people, particularly renters, as letters are addressed to landowners rather than tenants.</p> <p>Participants in this group said that most people in the Shire experience problems with their radio and television reception. They commented that there was previously a tower in the Shire, but that Council has said that it is cost prohibitive to maintain. Some participants were aware that it was possible to install a satellite dish during the transition from analog to digital television with households contributing \$200, but acknowledged that not everyone received the necessary information or was able to install their own satellite.</p>

Carers
<p>Carers were satisfied with information and communication available but noted that information received by word of mouth and in person is preferred for the older person they care for.</p>

Service Providers
<p>The majority of service providers were satisfied with the information and communication to older people in the community. They believed that a good variety of media were used to promote activities including the notice boards and the electronic notice board as well as a very effective local weekly magazine (The Rag) and other essential services to pass information around via networks and word of mouth. The Shire administration office can be phoned for assistance and there is always someone there or at the Health Service or Community Resource Service who is willing to help with information or referrals to where information can be found.</p>

Older People Survey Comments – Communication & Information

Over two thirds of respondents were satisfied (67.35%) or very satisfied (10.20%) with communication and information for older people in the community. This related to how they received information for example about services and events. However 20.41% of respondents were not happy with this aspect and a further 2.04% were very dissatisfied with this aspect.

Print Media

<p>The Local Rag needs a revamp.</p>
<p>The Local Rag needs an overhaul. Too much unwanted information. If it became simply a newsletter of communication it would be worth reading. As one who does not enjoy the 'Local Rag', I often miss out on information hidden amongst the advertisements.</p>
<p>The Rag is biased and controlled.</p>

The Local Rag - great.
The "Local Rag" - speaking to people in the street etc seems to us to be able to keep up with local happenings.
Some of the communication leaves a lot to be desired, The Rag is OK.
I consider the Local Rag as appropriate provided the required information is submitted for publication on time for printing.
The Local Rag provides a very good coverage of events.
I am satisfied. The Rag provides notices of events but not everyone reads it, nor does everyone have email.
Local Rag is a good source of information. Find the bulletin signage near the bridge a bit confusing sometimes.
The Local Rag has everything required in it
The "Local Rag" is a very good source of info, now handsomely supplemented by the electronic signboard.
You can always look at "Back page" in local paper for any information.
Communication is OK, with the Local Rag, Midwest Times, Geraldton Guardian all available, I think people, if they want to, can be well informed
We rely on "back page" in "Rag"

Radio & Television

TV reception not reliable.
Radio reception at home is non-existent. TV reception is poor and unreliable.
TV often can't be watched because of the pixilation we get so a tower to help with that would be great for the town, instead of stupid electric signs which no one looks at. I've yet to hear one good comment about.
ABC radio has a lot of the time nothing but sport.
TV is unreliable all stations seem to be affected at times.
Information via the TV at times is not reliable. Especially GWN as at times no signal can be received so no local information via TV will be received e.g. Fires, storms etc. When the TV reception was via the Council TV aerial we never lost signal or picture. What we are now provided with leaves a lot of room for improvement.
Cannot get ABC radio reception in our house or around it. Would be good if Council provided/contributed to a repeater station. Also TV reception in some areas not good. People need a satellite dish.
TV reception in Dongara needs a lot to be desired.
TV reception on digital is inconsistent and broadband could be better.
More TV comments and service
TV reception needs to improve.
TV reception could be better!!
I am a very big TV watcher and the reception in Dongara is appalling despite spending lots of money upgrading my aerial and having boosters put on.
Radio reception and TV not good.
TV is a poor option in this town.
With TV and radio reception
TV service pixilation regularly in spite of dish, is frustrating.
Except for TV Radio reception i.e. 100.1 FM, 720AM PERTH.

Need decent radio transmission.
TV - no good images (pixels) at certain times on Channel 7, 9, WIN. ABC, SBS ok.
Lack of reception of TV signal. Loss of signal of communication poor for mainstream society.

General Comments

Shire staff at either office or tourist centre are well mannered and helpful.
Sometimes notices are passed by word of mouth.
Information seems readily available.
Well informed.
Shire usually mails out its important information.

Mobile Phone/ Internet

Mobile phone reception is virtually non-existent more than 5kms from Dongara.
But better use of mobile/FB.
Dissatisfied with Telstra prepaid credit doesn't carry over till next month. Don't have a land line as not always at home.
Internet reception is hopeless.
Internet access spasmodic.
I have the shire of Irwin on my favourites on the internet and get bulletin boards all the time. Great service.
The Shire website is useful for those with computers.

Gaps in Communication

Unless you get the local 'rag' no information.
Not enough info provided on any of the above (services, activities, events) or clarity.
Would be good if the Shire let the public know what they are doing.
There is confusion in some people still about bush fires and prohibited times.
Sometimes some events are time wise a little short on notice in the Local Rag.
Some events are well communicated and others are not.

G. Civic Participation and Employment

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
All participants agreed that there are flexible options for voluntary work and a range of opportunities to suit different interests. Some mentioned some challenges for participating in volunteer work associated with stringent insurance requirements. They also said that some people are deterred by such requirements and requirements to have a police check for some volunteer positions (which is a requirement for Department of Fire and Emergency Services volunteers for example).	All participants agreed that there are flexible options for voluntary work and a range of opportunities to suit different interests. Some highlighted that most volunteers are aged over 65, and that there is a shortage of volunteers in the 'middle age' group, including parents with young children.

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
<p>A suggestion was made that volunteer organisations clarify to prospective volunteers what police checks are screening for and communicate clearly on the process involved to reduce the likelihood that they will be deterred from volunteering.</p> <p>Participants said that information on opportunities to volunteer is provided by word of mouth, circulated through networks, and regularly advertised in the local newspaper 'The Rag'.</p> <p>They said that training and guidance is often provided for volunteers, and that compensation for personal costs such as paying for police clearances usually occurs.</p> <p>Most participants in this group agreed that the qualities of older workers are promoted in paid work. However, they said that paid employment opportunities are generally limited and depend on the industry, with little professional work available. Some also said that there was a lack of understanding from employers of the appropriate pace for older people to work.</p> <p>Most participants in this group said that older workers are not discriminated against on the basis of their age, and commented that particularly in the health industry there are many older workers. However, one of the seven participants said they felt older workers are generally discriminated against.</p> <p>The participants agreed that most workers are not adapted to meet the needs of disabled people but that this is not usually required in the Shire. However, they said that some volunteer workplaces such as 'The Rag' office have been adapted to meet the needs of older people.</p> <p>Participants agreed that older people are not actively encouraged to take up self-employment opportunities and that they are not aware of training provided on post-retirement options.</p>	<p>Participants said that the main sources of information on volunteer opportunities are the Local Rag and community notice boards. Sometimes the requirements to become a volunteer are arduous with training required and forms to be completed.</p> <p>Participants in this group agreed that volunteers are recognised for their contribution both by Council and the wider community.</p> <p>Most participants said that compensation is generally not provided for personal costs, but that any costs are made known to prospective volunteers. They said that most volunteer organizations or positions require payment of a membership fee. Some mentioned that 'red tape' due to insurance requirements of organizations is a barrier for some people to volunteer. A comment was made that organizations are not always able to clearly communicate requirements to their members or prospective volunteers.</p> <p>Most participants in this group said that they do not think that the qualities of older workers are promoted in paid work or that there are flexible and appropriately paid opportunities for older workers in the Shire. Most also indicated they felt older workers are discriminated against on the basis of their age and are not valued or appreciated in the workforce. They agreed that the experience and common sense of older people is not valued. One mentioned skills such as teaching young people to drive where they saw opportunities for older people to make greater contributions. Some also commented that there is a dilemma in terms of promoting the qualities and employment of older workers as it is also important to find occupations for younger people in order to retain a greater proportion of young people in the Shire.</p> <p>Most participants said that adaptation of workplaces to meet the needs of people with disability was not applicable. Some said that the Council and some new businesses are better suited to people with disabilities.</p>

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
<p>Participants agreed that membership of older people in community associations and local government councils is encouraged across organisations. They said that older people are consulted in public community affairs where possible. Some examples were given of a recent walkability audit where older people joined in the study. A comment was made that the community needs to learn how to be consulted in order for consultation processes to be effective.</p>	<p>Participants were not aware of any encouragement for older people to take up self-employment opportunities. They said that training was not provided in Dongara on post-retirement options, though classes in the use of computers are available at the CRC.</p> <p>Participants were generally satisfied that membership of older people in community associations or the local council is encouraged, however some indicated that there is a perception that it is necessary to have 'connections' to successfully apply for Council positions or Shire of Irwin jobs.</p>

Carers
<p>No carers believed that that the topic of civic participation was relevant to the older person they cared for.</p>

Service Providers
<p>All service providers who responded were either satisfied or very satisfied with opportunities for older people to participate in volunteer or paid work and their involvement in public affairs. They believe that there are opportunities for skilled older people and also unskilled and this is testament to the diversified economy, however they acknowledge that often people need to seek employment in Geraldton which is the nearest regional centre and is 65km away.</p> <p>Many organisations within the Shire offer opportunities for volunteering for a variety of tasks. Service providers believe that with the provision of a larger/new aged care facility there would be increased opportunity for paid and volunteer work. There are a lot of older volunteers in the community who frequently take people to Geraldton for appointments and services and that able people within the community assist in whatever way they can.</p>

Older People Survey Comments – Civic Participation & Employment

The majority of respondents were satisfied (75.31%) or very satisfied (8.64%) with opportunities for civic participation and employment. However, 14.81% were dissatisfied with this aspect and a further 1.23% were very dissatisfied with this aspect.

Employment

Limited employment opportunities.
Not enough paid work e.g. Health.
There are limited employment opportunities in town. A bold vision is required to change this.
Need to generate more employment for younger people as all the people left here will be us oldies.
I can't comment on paid work but two supermarkets seem to provide part-time etc jobs and caravan parks are full in holiday times Not much for older people unless well qualified to work from home.
A healthy community is an inclusive community. Personally, I would like a part time paid job.
Paid employment opportunities are very limited - no new business opening.
I am satisfied because I have job but realise employment is limited.
Looking for work locally and unable to find any.
Poor work ops, have to travel away. Promised industry no go, e.g. Tiwest mine, Oakagee.
There is very little paid employment available in Irwin. Plenty of volunteer work available but living on a pension is hard and paid work is vital to maintain an acceptable living.
What employment?
Although we are a medium sized country town, paid work is at a premium. Most businesses are family owned and staffed. Periodical/seasonal work is available i.e. Farming, fishing.
Paid work, like everywhere, is a problem. At least 50% of Australia's 23 million people are all wondering where the jobs will be when we need to work; even part time, to draw the pension at 70yrs. Automation and technology have taken away so much work.
Goes without saying that older people are the forgotten silent unemployed.

Volunteering

I am still involved with the "Mingenew Expo" 33 years however will be standing down so will most probably join the "Men's Shed" or similar to do voluntary work.
Good volunteer opportunities.
Opportunities for voluntary work are good i.e. Historical Society, op shop, Rag, Sea Rescue.
Plenty of scope for volunteering. Some organisation such as The Rag are a 'closed' shop.
Our Progress Association considered there was a need in the Shire for a voluntary body to help older people move house, change a light globe etc - all rejected by Council.
I retired here to this community, am enjoying the voluntary work I am involved in.
There is any amount of volunteer work for those who are reliable and able-bodied.
Plenty of opportunity to volunteer, participate in civic events. Can't comment on employment.
I do voluntary work as often as needed either Blake House, Day Centre and transport and I must say it is very enjoyable and the staff are

very friendly and helpful.
We seem to have a large group of volunteers.
The ability for people to volunteer has been good.
Working as a volunteer at the op shop one afternoon a week is very pleasant and fulfilling.

General Comments

Civic participation is good.
Motivating people to get involved is always difficult any way to improve participation has my support.
Could be more quiz days. Very grateful for neighbours' assistance.
Should be more social events such as quiz days.

H. Community Support and Health Services

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
<p>All participants in this group agreed that there is an adequate range of services available in the Shire of Irwin. However, they had concerns around continuity of care due to the frequent changeover of Doctors at the local medical practice. They recalled that previously there were permanent Doctors who resided in the town and said that this was important for the community. They also expressed appreciation for the HACC services, however said that there was a gap in the provision of high care for older people, who often need to leave the community when they become high care. They agreed that this fractures the community, and has a negative impact both on the older person that is required to leave the community and on their family and friends who may not be able to travel to visit them. They expressed the importance of planning for 'dying in place' in addition to ageing in place. A suggestion was made for a hydrotherapy pool in the recreation centre.</p> <p>They were all aware that home care services available in the Shire include health, personal care, and housekeeping services for individuals who are eligible for the services. They also agreed that services are affordable, including for financially disadvantaged older people. However, some commented that some older people are not aware of what services they can have access to and perceive that they could not afford. The participants highlighted the importance of communication in these instances.</p>	<p>All participants in this group agreed that there is an adequate range of services available in the Shire of Irwin, including visiting specialists. However, they were concerned that the General Practitioners at the Medical Centre will not attend emergencies at the accident and emergency clinic in the adjacent Health Centre.</p> <p>They were aware that home care services delivered via HACC include health, personal care, and housekeeping services for individuals who are eligible for the services.</p> <p>They agreed that services are generally affordable and that provisions are made to ensure that financially disadvantaged older people can access services. There were no concerns around the accessibility of buildings to access health services, though most of the participants in this group had concerns around the speed bumps at the medical centre. Most were satisfied that health and community services are accessible and that those who need transport and are eligible can be transported to the services.</p> <p>The participants in this group indicated that not all retirement villages and residential care facilities are close to services and the community, and in particular that it is difficult for residents to access multiple appointments in Geraldton. However, some services such as 'Telehealth' to specialists via the Health Centre and visiting</p>

Older People 60 – 74 Focus Group	Older People 75+ Focus Group
<p>There were no major concerns around the convenience of service location, though the lack of public transport to access services was raised as an issue. Some participants commented that providing for ageing and dying in place could be challenging for service provision in the future due to resource constraints, as HACC is already servicing a wide area with limited resources.</p> <p>In relation to the location of retirement villages and residential care facilities, most agreed that they are close to services and the community, though public transport was again mentioned as an issue.</p> <p>The participants said that generally appropriate information is provided on services, though said that there are some gaps. For examples, that some people are not aware of what services are available or eligibility requirements. They agreed that service delivery is coordinated and that the administration is simple. They agreed that service staff respect older people, but some felt there were some knowledge gaps around how to care for and serve older people.</p> <p>Most participants had no concerns in relation to emergency planning considering older people. A suggestion was made that managers of the Council retirement housing should be more aware of the residents' needs and mobility levels in case of emergency; however it was acknowledged that HACC staff are aware of which residents have disabilities and would need assistance to evacuate.</p>	<p>services are more easily accessed.</p> <p>Most participants in this group indicated there is a communication gap around the provision of information on services. They said that people need to actively seek out and ask for information on services, and suggested that the Health Centre advertise their services more thoroughly. Another suggestion was for a notice board to advertise available services.</p> <p>There were no major concerns around the coordination and administration of service delivery. One gap identified is the administration of driver's license renewal for older people, around which there was some confusion among participants. One participant commented that they find the HACC administration and assessment process simple.</p> <p>Most participants were satisfied that emergency planning considers older people. Those who live in the Shire owned retirement village were aware of the village's muster point for emergencies. Many members of the group were concerned that areas within the Shire that have poor access to wireless radio and television are problematic in terms of being able to reach people with emergency announcements and updates including those provided by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services.</p> <p>The low availability of high care beds for older people within the Shire was cited as the most important issue for older people in the community by most of the participants in this group.</p>

Carers
<p>Two thirds of carer respondents were very satisfied with the community support and health care services provided for the older person they cared for and one was very dissatisfied. One of the carers who rated high satisfaction levels mentioned that it was fortunate that the older person they cared for is a self funded retiree and can afford to pay for extra services that are needed. The carer who was very dissatisfied is caring for a 75 year old who is hearing impaired, has difficulty moving or walking and is physically disabled. The carer commented that more beds at Blake house are required.</p>

Service Providers

The majority of service provider respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with community support and health care services provided for older people in the Shire of Irwin. However one respondent was dissatisfied.

A private sector service provider responded “There are current plans to build a new medical centre which would greatly increase appointment availability in the town. The current facilities allow no expansion and do not allow for the current medical practice to reach critical mass and sustainability and the support services are limited particularly in keeping people in their own home with a satisfactory quality of life.” There was a general consensus that the community support and health services should expand to meet the needs of the current and growing number of older people in the community.

As with the focus groups, the service providers mentioned the discussion relating to provision of a 24 hour GP service. The Health Service currently provides emergency Telehealth with GP’s and specialists in Perth being contacted for advice and treatment options. The nurses feel better supported because of this. In addition to this study, a recent survey of HACC clients indicated that 85% of their clients were very happy and the other 15% were happy with services provided to them within the Shire.

Many older people in the community do not appear to understand the assessment system for receiving HACC services. The system is fair and equitable and directed by the Commonwealth Government and is the same in all states. It seems some older people believe once they are assessed for a service that they no longer believe they will have to undertake that task. However independence is encouraged and therefore not all clients receive what they desire as the services are very need driven and not directed by want. Transport is one of these issues.

With many retiring farmers and older people settling in town the Medical Centre is in urgent need of expansion to house the activities of residents on a daily basis. The need for additional aged care beds was seen as a high priority as it would reduce the need for older people to leave the area when aged care needs increased. In fact there is a high demand for nursing home places for people in Dongara, Port Denison and there is a large hinterland with an aging population from these areas that will wish to settle in the area because of the town’s amenity and proximity to previous homes.

Further comment from service providers relating to community and support and health were: A nursing home with associated centre supporting independent living in the home with structured age care centre activities is required. A general expansion of health services including more Doctors, palliative care facilities and dementia services is required. An assisted facility with more than six beds is required. Purpose build aged care facility for high care is required. Finances are an issue for some older people on a pension.

Older People Survey Comments – Community Support & Health Services

Nearly one third of survey respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied (19.54%) or very dissatisfied (8.05%) with community support and health services. However just over half were satisfied (57.47%) and a further 14.94% were very satisfied with this aspect.

Medical Centre

There is a lot of discontent in the community about the medical centre, lack of appointments etc.
Quite satisfied but would like to see more access to medical appointments if necessary.
I can only comment on the inconsistency of HACC services - regarding transport cars for medical/dental appointments - Geraldton. Exclusion of the monthly shopping bus, yet often has empty seats.
Local home care services are excellent. All staff in our medical and aged care facility should be highly commended for their work!
Not able to get Doctor appointments straight away. Have to go to A&E then the Doctor you talk to doesn't have knowledge of illness.
Home help is good. Those involved are cheerful, happy and obliging.
Very satisfied with HACC services.
Very please with Home Care and Home help services.
Medical services work well, with affordable consultations and appropriate referrals...
I feel we are very lucky to have the medical services we have been given.
I haven't any need of home services yet. Our family was very satisfied with ambulance help a year ago.

General Practitioner

The provision of a health service being provided by a business from a neighbouring city is grossly inadequate. The length of queuing for Doctors appointments is unacceptable. It is obvious we need council to provide sufficient attraction for an independent Doctor to set up a practice within this town in competition with the existing remote external practice. To this end Council would have to provide a first class home, land, and financial support as required to enable he or she to build such a practice.
No Doctors available after hours or on weekends. No Doctor available at A+E.
We require a better health service. More Doctors for emergency situations.
Dissatisfied with the length of time a GP remains in Dongara.
EMERGENCY Centre at Medical Centre should have Doctors available - it is an ageing population.
No Doctor on call 24/7 as it used to be, only Mon-Fri Doctors here for days only.
Do not bulk bill.
A permanent local Doctor would be nice. Too many come and go and no consistency. All other areas OK except "give us a hydro pool".
Medical care at a price if not on pension - medical services should be available 24 hours (a Doctor) possibly paid for by Council.
Accessibility to Doctors, especially for older people is still difficult. Not everybody wants to be sent to Geraldton before being consulted by a local Doctor.
Could use a full time Doctor please.
Too long waiting list for Doctor appointment.
Why are we left over Xmas and Easter with NO Doctors available for several weeks? No Doctor available for emergencies at night time.

A/E do a wonderful job of caring - but they are not Doctors.
Not able to get Doctor appointments straight away. Have to go to A&E then the Doctor you talk to doesn't have knowledge of illness.
The need for continuity of care from Doctors is not satisfied. Out GPs are rotated too regularly, you may attend one GP for about 12 months, then new ones arrive. I also feel that there is a need for weekend coverage by a Doctor, as Geraldton is too far for some of us oldies to travel.
We do not have a resident Doctor 24/7 and going to Geraldton when a Doctor is not in town is unsatisfactory. Extra funding if this is the answer and not the spending of resources on the lines of the electronic notice board on Point Leander Drive.
A Doctor on call 24/7 is a must - seniors, accidents at work, home or road. Create a lot of pressure on volunteers when called out.
Need more Doctor services especially on weekends and public holidays Xmas etc.
Medical Doctor's have improved.
No fulltime Doctor in town. The medical centre is pushed to maximum capacity and they work very hard but need more support to provide the Aged in the community the services they need.
Except for the necessity to travel to Geraldton for most medical services! When I need to see a Doctor xxxx etc I want an appt in the next 2-3 days.
Not having 24/7 medical practitioners in our community is a major negative and needs to be urgently addressed.
We could do with another Doctor. Very satisfied with HACC services.
"Weekend" services poor for "medical attention" no Doctor on site.
Too long to wait for Doctor appointments.
Should be able to get medical treatment here and not have to go to Geraldton 24hrs Doctor as we had before. Especially looking at average age of population.
Need 24/7 Doctor and one who attends emergency dept.
No access to medical facilities outside normal hours.
Need a Doctor on hand 24hrs.
Could be more Doctors as it is at least a two week wait.

Aged Care Facility

HACC do a great job. Blake House needs to be extended. Future increase in pop needs to be considered.
There is an urgent need for more aged care units in the town.
Desperately need aged care facilities for the palliative.

General Comments

HAAC and the Health Centre do all they can to keep the elderly in their homes. In my experience it is never enough! Unless you are active, have a wide range of friends willing to visit and help out, you can be very lonely in your home. Meals are provided, showers, health care, home cleaning can be provided but for those who can't get out, there is nothing else, you can get very sick of TV.
Community support services are excellent - however further facilities or community services to help mental problem community members would be beneficial.
Would like to have medic specialist services available, especially pre-hospital services. Can be difficult if multiple trips to Geraldton required.

With affordable public transport access to all kinds of services would be vastly improved.
My experience in reference to question (satisfaction with support services – 22) is nil for the Shire of Irwin. At present I don't require such however my cousin a former registered nurse over east is employed by the council to call on local people living at home and check on their wellbeing and make sure they are coping and assist on keeping them living at home. It seems like a good idea.
Planning for the future as our population ages, will we have sufficient services available?
More transport available to travel to hospital etc.
Work for the future. We do need that Batavia Health facility planned.
We have had good help recently with bathroom furniture from Dongara Eneabba Mingenew Health Service (DEMHS). It was a great help to have this on a loan system, as we will need some now until death. We have not yet joined in anything else to know much about costs. We do feel that affordable access to a “senior’s gym” would be a good physical and social activity – yoga, movement to music, meditation. A heated senior’s exercise pool, with perhaps a weekly class (e.g. run by our physiotherapists from Geraldton) as well as general access would be very useful one day!
We have been asking for years for a hydro or small pool so elderly can get therapy. They cannot safely go to beach. (Listen to us!)
It would be great if the Shire had a swimming pool and we really need a warm hydrotherapy pool at the medical centre.

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