A HEALTHY AGEING STRATEGY FOR SHELLHARBOUR 2015 - 2017

"Age is just a word and number and in no way defines who I am or what I can do."
- Shellharbour Resident
MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Shellharbour City Council is proud of its diverse community and values the contribution that older people make to our city.

This strategy will help us provide an accessible and positive environment that encourages and supports the participation of older people.

We want our city to continue to be a great place to age, where older adults can stay healthy, active and engaged. Having an age-friendly city will benefit our families, our economy and the wider community.

We are well positioned to make the most of the opportunities that this presents as well as meet the challenges that may arise and we realise that business, reference groups, community organisations and individuals must all play their part.

The choices we all make regarding health, employment, retirement planning, attitudes, lifestyles and participation will all help mould the future shape of our community.

This strategy is the result of an extensive consultation and I would like to thank everyone involved. We have sought and considered the opinions and experiences of many people across Shellharbour City, residents and professionals, older and younger adults.

This collective reflection has led to what we believe is a solid framework for the whole of our community to continue to offer an inclusive society that appreciates and fosters older people’s involvement.

Cr Marianne Saliba - Mayor Shellharbour City

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THE WHAT:  
The World Health Organization defines active ageing as the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.

THE WHEN:  
The Healthy Ageing Strategy provides Shellharbour City with an opportunity to plan, provide and advocate for improved health and well-being of older people in the community. This Strategy will align with Council’s Delivery Program and will, therefore, be implemented during 2015-2017. It is intended that the ‘big ideas’ outlined in this Strategy will be incorporated in Shellharbour City Council’s Operational Plan each year, based on funding and resourcing capacity.

THE WHY:  
Research shows there is an increasing number of lifestyle conditions and illnesses that affect health and well-being as people age. These lifestyle conditions include isolation, lack of physical and mental activity and stimulation and poor nutrition.

Population ageing is creating social and economic opportunities and challenges. The growing number of healthy, active seniors is a powerful economic force. Older people are a source of knowledge and expertise that can assist social and economic development and there will be significant opportunities for business with increases in demand for new products. At the same time, Shellharbour City will need to respond to increased demand on government services, particularly in the health system. The future success of Shellharbour City will in part depend on how well it takes up the opportunities and responds to the challenges of an ageing population.

Shellharbour City Council commits to supporting an age-friendly community where the opportunities, choices and supports exist for older people to live life to the fullest. As the older population has diverse needs, wants, strengths and aspirations, we have to ensure our programs, services and planning meet the demands of this group.

THE WHO:  
This Healthy Ageing Strategy builds upon all the work that already takes place in the Shellharbour area to support people 50 years of age and older. This Strategy anticipates continuous improvement in the lives of the vibrant and culturally diverse population of older people who live in Shellharbour City. The aim of the Strategy is to target those residents 50 years of age and older by creating a supportive environment which encourages the establishment of healthy behaviours into the later stages of life.

This Healthy Ageing Strategy provides a strategic direction and actions for Council to support healthy and active ageing and to improve people’s experience of ageing. It reflects a partnership approach between Council, the community and community service providers. These goals provide an opportunity for a whole-of-community approach to ageing well in Shellharbour City.
The importance of planning for a community that will have an increasing percentage of people aged 50 and over has been of concern to all levels of government for a number of years. The Australian Government and NSW State Government have developed ageing strategies that have been influenced by international policy responses. This commitment by governments to explore the opportunities and challenges that will arise from this demographic shift will ensure that appropriate strategies are established to address the needs of older Australians both now and in the future. This Strategy is guided by the following policies and checklists.

Around the world
- The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2008

Across Australia
- National Strategy for an Ageing Australia 2001

Across NSW
- NSW Ageing Strategy 2012
- Alzheimer’s Australia NSW Dementia and Age-Friendly Outdoor Design Checklist 2011
- NSW Government’s State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with Disability) 2004
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009

It is essential that Council continues to develop, maintain and leverage partnerships to optimise results. By pursuing a collaborative approach, a broader array of resources can be drawn upon to achieve desired outcomes for Shellharbour. Opportunities identified will require the involvement of other parties to assist in implementation such as other government agencies, non-government organisations, not-for-profit organisations and community groups.

To date, the ‘Life Begins @ 50’ Think Tank has been integral in the planning and development of the Strategy. This Think Tank is made up of representatives from government and non-government organisations and community groups servicing the Shellharbour Local Government Area. This group will continue to meet and work together throughout the implementation of this Strategy.
Organisations and Community Groups

Opportunities exist for employers to benefit from and contribute to active social outcomes in an ageing population. A happy and healthy ageing population can contribute knowledge, experience and skills to the community and to the workforce. There is a good range of health and support services and community and cultural activities for Shellharbour residents and there are always benefits in strengthening relationships between providers. This Strategy reflects a partnership approach between Council, the community and community service providers. It also provides an opportunity for a whole-of-community approach to ageing well in Shellharbour City.

People 50+

This Strategy aims to enhance physical and social well-being, increase self-esteem and establish strong social networks within the community. Physical, mental and social activity helps people remain independent and enjoy life in their later years. Equally important is empowering people to plan ahead for the future they envisage in their later years.

Community

There are many benefits of the Strategy to the community, including a strategic local direction, potential for beneficial partnerships, a fairer service system, identification of local issues and the potential to integrate specific programs.

This Strategy aims to enhance participation within the community by older people through: volunteering; mentoring; education; recreational activities; and social activities. It also hopes to better educate the whole community regarding the needs of older people and celebrate the skills and experiences of this diverse group. Encouraging greater self-reliance and independence among this age group will also help reduce the fiscal impact of population ageing.

Organisations and Community Groups

WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME?

There are clear benefits for individuals, the community, organisations and community groups in having people spend as much of their lives as possible in good health.
The population worldwide is ageing. Due to falling fertility rates, increased life expectancy and falling mortality rates, the number and proportion of older people in the population is increasing faster than any other age group. 

In 2031, Shellharbour will have 33.8% of its population aged 50 and over, making it one of the suburbs with the highest proportion of older residents. 

By 2031, Suburbs with Highest 50 Plus Population: 
- Shellharbour 33.8% 
- Lake Illawarra 40.4% 
- Mount Warrigal 39.5% 
- Oak Flats 38.2% 
- Barrack Point 37.9% 
- Warilla 40.6% 

Healthy Ageing Revealed: What We Already Know

The population worldwide is ageing. Due to falling fertility rates, increased life expectancy and falling mortality rates, the number and proportion of older people in the population is increasing faster than any other age group.
The Strategy has been shaped through collecting and analysing information from many people including residents, service providers, Councillors and Council staff. This Strategy has been developed in response to what the community, stakeholders and Council said.

355 surveys and 150 short feedback forms and coffee collar forms completed

1190 community members were engaged in the consultations

2 stakeholder workshops

2 staff workshops

2 pop-up kiosks

2 coffee & chats

1 councillor workshop

1 walk & talk

Please refer to Appendix A for a full copy of consultation results.
“I LIVE BY THE MOTTO THAT OLD AGE IS ALWAYS 10 YEARS OLDER THAN I AM.”
Shellharbour resident
Older people’s participation in social, economic, cultural, spiritual and civic affairs is essential for their health and well-being. There is a direct link between social connectedness and mental and physical health outcomes. Participating in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities in the community, as well as with the family, allows older people to continue to exercise their competence, to enjoy respect and esteem, and to maintain or establish supportive and caring relationships. It fosters social integration and is the key to staying informed. Volunteering has also been shown to have a positive health and well-being impact on older people with improvement in functional health indices, self-reported health and life satisfaction and social integration.

The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life of older people and affect their ability to ‘age in place’. Transport, including accessible and affordable public transport, is a key factor influencing healthy ageing. Adequate and safe supply of food is required throughout the different life stages to maintain functional capacity and enable healthy ageing as each life stage affects the next in a cumulative manner. The major nutrition-related threat to healthy ageing in Australia and worldwide is the increasing percentage of the population who are overweight. Increased weight is linked with chronic conditions of cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome and cognitive decline. Housing is essential to safety and well-being. There is a link between appropriate housing and access to community and social services influencing the independence and quality of life of older people.

The extent to which older people participate in the social, civic and economic life of the city is also closely linked to their experience of inclusion. Ageism is the ‘process of stereotyping of and discrimination against people because of their age’. Ageism can negatively impact older people’s health by limiting access to health care due to beliefs that health problems are just a normal part of ageing, reducing opportunities for participation in the workforce due to negative beliefs about older workers and limiting access to social activities. The World Health Organization states that many cities report that older people are eager and willing to work and have the experience and qualifications for work. Participation in work, social and community life promotes well-being by improving mental and physical health, increasing self-esteem and building a sense of belonging. Lifelong learning is also an essential component of healthy ageing and an avenue for participation and connectedness. Lifelong learning has a positive and lasting impact on cognition, with the capacity to improve brain health and brain function. Health and support services are vital to maintaining health and independence in the community. Many of the concerns raised by older people, caregivers and service providers focus on the availability of sufficient good quality, appropriate and accessible care.

Three priority areas have been identified to underpin the Healthy Ageing Strategy.
BIG IDEAS!

Make Shellharbour City more age-friendly by developing a tool that will assist in identifying characteristics that make Shellharbour a place where people want to live now and in the future.

Promote and encourage essential features of Age-Friendly Cities\(^1\), Dementia-Friendly Design\(^5\), Healthy Spaces and Places\(^26\), and Livable Housing Guidelines\(^27\) in land use planning, development and asset renewal.

Provide professional development to engineers, traffic, town planning, parks and property staff about essential features of Age-Friendly Cities\(^1\).

Continue to explore grant funding opportunities for the installation of further outdoor exercise equipment that can be utilised by all ages and abilities.

Engage older people in the development of neighbourhood/community planning including strategies to improve safety, amenity, access and connection.

WHAT YOU COULD DO:

- Participate in road and pedestrian safety education for older drivers, including mobility scooter education.
- Find out if you are eligible for Community Transport.
- Report incidents using Shellharbour City Council’s Safer Roads Shellharbour app.
- Join the Women’s Health Centre or Men’s Shed.
- Ask the Men’s Shed if you can utilise their tradesman trailer to access handyman services.
- Determine if you are eligible for the home modifications scheme.
- Attend the next Community Safety Pop-Up meeting.

MY NEIGHBOURHOOD IS DESIGNED TO BE MORE AGE FRIENDLY.

SHORT TERM

MEDIUM TERM

LONG TERM

“I LOVE WHERE I LIVE AND ALL THE FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO ME.”

Shellharbour resident
Support motor scooter users by encouraging parking and promoting where you can hire scooters.

Investigate the establishment of a bicycle hire scheme in Shellharbour City.

Advocate for improvements to the flexibility and accessibility of public transport including extending the free circulating bus service across the Illawarra.

Investigate the introduction of a car share scheme in Shellharbour City to gain many benefits including reduction of private vehicle use.

Implement a pilot travel training program for older drivers to increase their confidence with using public transport, offer bicycle skills training and encourage walking.

Investigate the need for and benefits of developing a transport access guide for key facilities in Shellharbour City.
BIG IDEAS!

- Investigate the development of intergenerational programs or activities that enable the exchange of skills and knowledge.
- Extend Community Safety Pop-Up meetings to include information talks for seniors at the library.
- Shellharbour City Council’s Aged Services and Youth Services collaborate on an intergenerational activity and share their skills and experience with one another.
- Investigate mentoring opportunities between older people and young people.
- Investigate digital storytelling and public art projects to improve the perception of safety.
- Implement projects that encourage us to know our friends over the fence e.g. adopt a neighbour/friend.

BIG IDEAS!

- Explore healthier food options at Council events and within Council facilities.
- Investigate the feasibility of running food and produce markets (including multicultural food festivals) and establishing and promoting community gardens.

SUPPORT INITIATIVES THAT MAKE ME FEEL SAFE.

“I WANT A PLACE THAT IS GOOD TO LIVE IN AND WHERE I CAN AFFORD TO LIVE IN.”
Shellharbour resident

SATISFY MY GRUMBLING STOMACH WITH FRESH AND HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS.
ENABLE ME TO AGE IN PLACE BY STAYING HEALTHY AND INDEPENDENT.

BIG IDEAS!

- Promote domestic and gardening services, home modification, community transport, respite and social support services.
- Advocate for information and workshops on downsizing and relocating.
- Investigate a lifestyle skills project which empowers 50+ people to stay healthy and independent in their own homes.
- Explore free courses for seniors e.g. cooking for men or cooking for one courses.

SUPPORT MY CHANGING HEALTH NEEDS.

BIG IDEAS!

- Advocate for more outreach services such as free health screenings at workplaces and mobile doctors.
- Link all health and community services to Shellharbour Connect.
- Create a booklet that lists all the health services covering the Shellharbour area.
**BIG IDEAS!**

- Develop a Shellharbour Seniors Connect Communication Strategy that includes providing information in a number of different ways including a new webpage, e-newsletters, newsletters, walk and talks and social media.
- Run a “seniors proud” campaign in which Shellharbour is promoted as a great place to be for residents and tourists.
- Promote positive images of older people and positive ageing stories.
- Support community groups and local organisations who already do awesome stuff in the community.
- Provide and support professional development opportunities for community groups and organisations including grant writing skills to access funds to support projects for older people.

**TEACH ME SKILLS TO KEEP MY MIND ACTIVE.**

- Improve access to digital information, communications and assistive technologies for seniors, such as computer training, e-books and audio books in public places such as libraries and community centres.
- Offer professional development opportunities for seniors groups to promote their service or activity.
- Support education programs that enable older people to utilise information technology to assist them to stay connected and empowered e.g. smart phones, tablets and computers.

**TELL ME ABOUT ALL THE GREAT STUFF GOING ON FOR THIS GROUP.**

- Improve access to digital information, communications and assistive technologies for seniors, such as computer training, e-books and audio books in public places such as libraries and community centres.
- Offer professional development opportunities for seniors groups to promote their service or activity.
- Support education programs that enable older people to utilise information technology to assist them to stay connected and empowered e.g. smart phones, tablets and computers.
HELP ME PLAN MY RETIREMENT.

KEEP MY MIND, BODY AND SOUL HEALTHY.

BIG IDEAS!

Advocate for more health resources and talks at libraries and online and partner with other organisations to run “seniors seminars” based on community needs.

Investigate the opportunity for health and art programs to take place in Shellharbour.

Investigate the opportunity for a men’s health centre.

BIG IDEAS!

Continue to support Council’s older workers through our existing human resource policy and procedures and encourage other organisations to do the same.

Explore and promote workshops focusing on moving from a full-time income to pension and superannuation.

Encourage local businesses to offer senior’s days and provide discounts.
WHAT YOU COULD DO:

- Represent your organisation or community group at the next Illawarra Interagency meeting.
- List your activity or community group on Shellharbour Connect.
- Send your media stories to Lake Times.
- Access the language translation services available at Council.
- Visit the Aboriginal Medical Service.
- Sign-up to be coached through the Get Healthy Information Line.
- Attend one of the Department of Human Services’ talks on financial security and superannuation.
- Enrol in a course at TAFE, WEA Illawarra or our libraries to allow for lifelong learning.

“COUNCIL NEEDS TO BE THE LEADER IN FOSTERING PRIDE AND POSITIVE MESSAGES ABOUT LIVING IN SHELLHARBOUR.” Shellharbour resident
HELP ME BE A FUN GRANDPARENT.

BIG IDEAS!

💡 Explore opportunities for this target group to be considered in a future play strategy for Shellharbour.

⏰ Provide free entry to pools and Council facilities during Seniors Week.

📅 Develop a passport/incentive program for visitation of facilities.

❗ Work with ‘Seniors Card’ to increase the number of discounts available to seniors living in Shellharbour City and promote these opportunities to the community.

PLAY

ALLOW ME TO STAY YOUNG AT HEART.

BIG IDEAS!

💡 Promote family history opportunities for grandparents and grandchildren to get involved in.

📅 Investigate a multicultural cooking competition for grandparents and grandchildren.

⏰ SHORT TERM

📅 MEDIUM TERM

📅 LONG TERM
WHAT YOU COULD DO:

- Get active at one of our 4 swimming pools, 2 outdoor exercise equipment facilities, 4 libraries and in our beautiful natural environments.
- Familiarise yourself with the Shared Pathway Policy.
- Take part in the Bass Point Indigenous Cultural Walk.
- Participate in one of the many walking groups or falls prevention programs.
- Search Shellharbour Connect and find local community groups to join.
- Get creative! Exhibit your artworks at the Shellharbour Village Exhibition Space or see the next show at the Roo Theatre.
- Participate in one of our many fantastic community groups such as U3A, Probus, Rotary or multicultural groups.
- Get creative by joining an art and cultural group such as the Woodcarvers group, Art Society, Writers Groups or Older Musician Club.
- Volunteer your time at Shellharbour Visitor Information Centre, Community Transport, Shellharbour Village Exhibition Space or the Museum.
- Visit Shellharbour Tourism to find out about all the great community events and activities.
- Take part in any of the great activities taking place during Seniors or Carers Week each year.

PROMOTE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE FOR ME.

- Promote a range of walking and cycling routes and recreational opportunities available in Shellharbour City.
- Create a bucket list of things to do and places to see in Shellharbour.

SHARE MY SKILLS AND OFFER A HELPING HAND.

- Create a directory for volunteers and inform businesses about their options for becoming a volunteer organisation.
The Healthy Ageing Strategy provides Shellharbour City with an opportunity to plan, provide and advocate for improved health and well-being of older people in the community. This Strategy will align with Council’s Delivery Program and will therefore be implemented during 2015-2017. ‘Big ideas’ from this Strategy will be incorporated into Council’s Operational Plan each year and will be dependent on partnerships and funding.

These indicators will help to track whether Shellharbour City Council is achieving the vision for an active, healthy, connected, safe and inclusive community in Shellharbour over the life of the Strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>HOW WILL IT BE MEASURED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connection to the community</td>
<td>Community Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships between Council and other organisations that result in facilitating opportunities for people 50 years of age and over</td>
<td>Number of partnership projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight and obesity</td>
<td>NSW Health Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction and attendance at community events and activities</td>
<td>Community Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitalisations</td>
<td>NSW Health Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People receiving information</td>
<td>Mailing list subscribers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of safety</td>
<td>Community Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in information sessions</td>
<td>Library users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer rates</td>
<td>Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social isolation</td>
<td>Census</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
We would like to thank members of the Shellharbour community, community groups and organisations for providing their input as part of the community consultations. We have also valued the integral support and advice we have received from the organisations who make up the Healthy Ageing Think Tank including Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, Illawarra Shoalhaven Medicare Local, Access Community Group, IRT, University of Wollongong, Department of Human Services, Illawarra Forum, University of the Third Age (U3A), Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra and Warrigal Care.

References and Further Reading

## Appendix A
### Results of Community Engagement

### Identified Priorities
- Availability of services
- Independent living
- Access to services
- Financial security
- Safety
- Public facilities and infrastructure
- Knowledge of services and activities
- Transport and mobility options
- Sense of belonging
- Leisure/recreational programs and activities
- Attitudes towards 50+
- Housing
- Lifelong learning
- Food choices
- Media
- Volunteering
- Digital information & community technology
- Cultural services
- Workforce participation

### Age Range
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 50 years</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 years</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>60-69 years</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-84 years</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>85 years and older</td>
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### Suburb
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albion Park</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albion Park Rail</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barrack Heights</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blackbutt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flinders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lake Illawarra</td>
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<td>Mount Warragul</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oak Flats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shell Cove</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shellharbour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Warilla</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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### How I Get Around
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Transport Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Train</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
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<td>Bike</td>
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<td>Friend/Family</td>
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<td>Community Transport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobility Scooter</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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### Workforce Participation

### Best Way to Receive Information
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mail</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>My local GP</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Centre</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders
- Yes: 2.5%

### Speak a Language Other than English at Home
- Yes: 12.2%