
A HEALTHY AGEING STRATEGY FOR SHELLHARBOUR 2015 - 2017

EVALUATION REPORT



LIFE
BEGINS
@ 50



INTRODUCTION

The [Shellharbour Healthy Ageing Strategy 2015-2017](#) was developed in response to the growing proportion of people 50 years of age and over living in Shellharbour City. As the older population has diverse needs, wants, strengths and inspirations, we have to ensure our programs, services and planning meet the demands of this group. The Strategy committed to supporting an age-friendly community where the opportunities, choices and supports exist for older people to live life to the fullest.

As the Strategy was a whole-of-community strategy, Council needed to develop, maintain and leverage partnerships to optimise results. The strategies and 'big ideas' identified in the Strategy required the involvement of other parties to assist in implementation in order to ensure Council was able to exercise its core functions and other organisations could do the same. Therefore, a Think Tank was established, made up of representatives from government, non-government and community groups. The Think Tank was integral in the planning, development and evaluation of the Healthy Ageing Strategy. The evaluation of the Strategy has, therefore, required input from internal and external stakeholders, including the Think Tank.

This evaluation is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements over the life of the Strategy as well as identify challenges and future opportunities for enhancing the health and wellbeing of the Shellharbour community.



HIGHLIGHTS

The Healthy Ageing Strategy built upon all the work that already takes place in the Shellharbour area to support people 50 years of age and over. Through a partnership approach, a range of initiatives and actions were developed to support healthy and active ageing and to improve peoples' experience of ageing.

Outlined in this report are some of the actions that took place against the strategies identified in the Healthy Ageing Strategy. It is recognised that there were many more fantastic initiatives that were implemented during this time period, targeting this age group in the Shellharbour area.



LIVE



LEARN



PLAY





MY NEIGHBOURHOOD IS DESIGNED TO BE MORE AGE FRIENDLY

- Resources to encourage healthy built environments, including the [Dementia-Friendly Assessment Tool](#) were promoted internally to Council staff.
- New outdoor exercise equipment installed at Strong Reserve, Warilla and Barrack Reserve, Barrack Point and come and try programs took place at both sites. A total of 15 people participated in the come and try programs and continue to meet on a weekly basis, using the equipment as part of their wellbeing program.
- The Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee involves older people with disability providing comments on development applications in relation to access and inclusion. This ensures that neighbourhoods are designed to meet the needs of older people.



“I GAINED
MOTIVATION
AND NEW
FRIENDS FROM
PARTICIPATING
IN THIS
PROGRAM. WE
CONTINUE TO
MEET AT THE
EQUIPMENT
WEEKLY AND
I WALK WITH
SOME OF THESE
NEW FRIENDS
EACH WEEK
NOW TOO.”

LYN, 62

OUTDOOR EXERCISE EQUIPMENT

Shellharbour's outdoor exercise equipment stations are located at popular recreation spots around the City and are a part of Council's commitment to promote healthy lifestyles for all members of the community. Installation of two new stations took place during the life of the Strategy, including Strong Reserve, Warilla and Barrack Reserve, Barrack Point. The equipment promotes better posture, improved balance and greater flexibility.

Come and try programs were delivered for people over the age of 50 years at each of the new equipment stations by a trained exercise physiologist. The come and try programs ran for six weeks at each location, with eight participants at Strong Reserve and seven participants at Barrack Reserve. Evaluations conducted at the end of the programs showed that participants had increased their confidence in using the equipment correctly, gained motivation, increased their weekly physical activity, built social connections and improved their mental health.



“I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO GO IT ALONE
AND THE GROUP IS A GREAT INCENTIVE
TO GET OUT AND TRY. ALSO, THE INSTRUCTOR
AND OTHER PARTICIPANTS MADE IT FUN
INSTEAD OF A CHORE.” PETER, 57

Footpath signage was also installed to encourage people to walk between the stations of the outdoor exercise equipment trail, providing information on distance travelled and kilojoules burned.



DISCOVER NEW WAYS TO COMMUNICATE AND FIND MY WAY AROUND SHELLHARBOUR

- In order to provide accessible information to the community, Council updated their website and is working towards a Level AA rating of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) version 2.0.
- 'Tread Shellharbour' history app was developed. This app allows people to visit Shellharbour Village, Albion Park, Killalea State Park, the Lake Illawarra Art Trail or take a virtual tour of Shellharbour City Museum through scanning Quick Reader (QR) codes throughout the City.
- QR codes were displayed on the outdoor exercise equipment signage throughout the City, providing a direct link to instructional videos.



IT IS EASY FOR ME TO GET AROUND

- Council coordinated one motor scooter workshop with 13 participants and two [On the Road 65Plus](#) workshops, with a total of 81 participants. This program provides advice and safety tips for people in our community aged 65 or over to help make safer choices when driving, riding, walking, using a mobility scooter or catching public transport.
- The Illawarra Road Safety Group received grant funding to hold the Illawarra Seniors Road Safety Expo, which attracted 109 attendees.
- Council became an affiliated member of the [Recharge Scheme](#). This scheme enhances the ability for older people to get around by providing power points for emergency charging of mobility scooters and electric wheelchairs.
- Investment was made by Council to improve accessibility across the City through the Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee. Between the 2014/2015 financial year and the 2016/2017 financial year, \$113,396.83 was invested by Council to provide new or upgrade access or pram ramps, bus stops, seating and footpaths.
- The [Shellharbour Bike Map](#) was developed and promoted.



SUPPORT INITIATIVES THAT MAKE ME FEEL SAFE

- Council organised and coordinated a range of events aiming to share skills and experiences between the City's young people and older population, which had a high attendance rate, including Reconciliation Day walk activities, Australia Day and Grandparent's picnic. Research shows that intergenerational activities and events improve the perception of safety for older residents within a community.
- The [Our Time Our Place intergenerational project](#) involved sharing stories about places in Shellharbour to inspire and create chalk art works. Over 40 older people and 30 young people were involved in the project.
- Various information talks and workshops were held in a number of locations across the City for older people around safety and law.
- Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra ran their annual [Multicultural Intergenerational Cook-Off events](#), enabling generations from different cultural backgrounds to share stories and their passion for food. Between 2015-2017, a total of 21 seniors and 15 students from diverse backgrounds were engaged.
- Council's annual Good Neighbour program took place, aimed at increasing the perception of safety through building connections between residents within neighbourhoods.



SATISFY MY GRUMBLING STOMACH WITH FRESH AND HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS

- Water stations continued to be available to use at events, providing easy access to high quality drinking water.
- A range of food and produce markets were run in Shellharbour City, including Sunset Markets at Lake Illawarra, The Farm Markets in Shell Cove and Shellharbour Village Rotary Markets.
- Council's nursery offered a huge range of plants, trees, vegetables and bagged products and various workshops.



ENABLE ME TO AGE IN PLACE BY STAYING HEALTHY AND INDEPENDENT

- Council promoted information on domestic and gardening services, home modification, community transport, respite and social support services through our libraries, the Healthy Ageing Newsletter and the online community directory, Shellharbour Connect.
- Council continued to coordinate Seniors Festival events annually and promoted all events taking place in the City as part of the Seniors Festival. Over 900 seniors and carers and 75 service providers were involved in the Seniors Luncheon and Expo during 2015-2017.
- A range of programs empowering older people to stay healthy and independent were delivered and promoted, including The Lake 5x5 community walking event, stepping on and gentle exercise classes.
- Men's cooking classes and Cook Chill Chat programs were established and continue to run, enhancing social inclusion and healthy cooking skills. The programs resulted in increases in confidence in cooking, intake of vegetables and fruit and social connections.



SUPPORT MY CHANGING HEALTH NEEDS

- Council ran a free health screening for Council staff as part of a Health and Wellbeing expo.
- Council coordinated a health and wellbeing event for International Women's Day.

COOK CHILL CHAT

Cook Chill Chat aimed to increase social connectedness amongst the Shellharbour community through community cooking groups and ultimately improve physical and mental wellbeing. Healthy Cities Illawarra partnered with a number of different organisations within the Shellharbour Local Government Area to run this program in various locations. Training was provided by Healthy Cities Illawarra to the volunteer facilitator at each location covering nutrition, budget cooking, food safety and the basics of running a cooking program. This allowed the community organisation's staff or volunteer to gain the skills required to support the program.

The 12-week programs were a combination of cooking and social sessions, which provided the enabling environment for participants to meet new people, link in with community services and increase their nutrition knowledge and cooking skills.

The cooking sessions covered topics like food safety, label reading, healthy eating on a budget and food storage. The topics were combined each week with cooking and meal sharing.

The social sessions were participant-led, and the group chose an activity that was happening in the community to be involved in. The participants of the programs embraced the ongoing Cook Chill Chat element with a bi-weekly catch up, alternating cooking sessions with other community activities, for example visiting the nursery, weaving workshop, library tour. The ongoing programs built on the skills and connection gained during the Cook Chill Chat workshops. To stimulate social connection and encourage skill sharing amongst participants, the ongoing programs were open for other members of the community to join.

The programs resulted in participants feeling more connected to the community, an increased confidence in cooking skills, enhanced nutrition knowledge and improved fruit and vegetable consumption.





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

- A Healthy Ageing Newsletter was established and sent out quarterly via email or post to over 350 residents. This newsletter provides information on upcoming events, healthy recipes and information on current health and wellbeing initiatives and programs.
- Information and initiatives have been promoted in various ways including through Council's website, Facebook page, walk and talks, libraries, museum and community centres.
- Seniors Week Photo Competition was organised and run by Council over two consecutive years, promoting positive images and stories of older people.



TEACH ME SKILLS TO KEEP MY MIND ACTIVE

- A range of free programs were run through Shellharbour City Libraries, including tech savvy seniors, computer courses and art and craft, which were extremely popular and led to the development of a range of skills.
- Seniors Festival programs run through the library focused on increasing digital literacy skills such as workshops in e-library and how to use the computer and internet.
- [Shellharbour City University of the Third Age](#) ran a range of programs, including computer, mobile phone, internet, music, photography and writing.

LIBRARY PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Shellharbour City Libraries provided a range of programs and activities for seniors. These programs included workshops in technology, such as using the computer and navigating the internet; creative workshops including adult colouring in, painting and textiles; informative based sessions incorporating legal talks, wellbeing and health; and other leisure workshops such as cooking, knitting, craft and author talks.

The need for such programs was identified through feedback forms and other informal methods of feedback. Interest in such programs became apparent through attendance and positive feedback, confirming that this target group valued the opportunity to attend public programs that were free, or at a minimal charge. Evaluation forms with library program participants demonstrated that seniors felt more connected with their community and library and also with one another. Another benefit was that the workshops provided an opportunity for seniors to meet new people and feel less isolated or alone.

Library customers were able to associate the library as a safe place to learn new things. Friendships and social connectedness was also cultivated, in particular through leisure programs. In addition, the benefit of lifelong learning was also identified, as seniors valued the opportunity to update their skills, in the use of technologies for example, regardless of their age. In regards to library wellbeing and health programs, this was also a means of being able to meet the information needs of the community.





HELP ME PLAN MY RETIREMENT

- Shellharbour City Council have a range of policies for older workers, including phased retirement and purchased leave, which were promoted to staff.
- Retirement planning seminars were also held across the City by a range of superannuation funds, providing information on how to enjoy a comfortable retirement when the time comes.



KEEP MY MIND, BODY AND SOUL HEALTHY

- Shellharbour City Libraries regularly ran a range of programs and activities such as mindfulness colouring, cooking, drawing and painting activities, health brain, osteoporosis and healthy body workshops, art after hours and make it and take it programs. Many activities also took place within the libraries as part of the annual Seniors Festival.
- Regular health and wellbeing programs also took place at Warilla Neighbourhood Centre, Albion Park Community Centre, Albion Park Rail Community Centre, Oak Flats Senior Citizens Centre and the Shellharbour City University of the Third Age.
- Yarning Minds, a collaborative project about mind and brain health, took place at Shellharbour City Libraries as a result of a Health and the Arts Grant from Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District. Over 200 local knitters and crafters and 30 local young people were involved in this project. Increased knowledge of mental health issues, prevention methods and referral avenues were gained as a result of this project.





ALLOW ME TO STAY YOUNG AT HEART

- Council provided free entry to pools and free trials of aqua aerobics during the Seniors Festival period from 2016 onwards. In 2016, 160 people utilised the pools during this time and in 2017, 482 people accessed this opportunity.
- The [Grey Medallion Program](#), a water safety and lifesaving skills initiative for older adults, was funded by Royal Life Saving. Twelve people completed the program.



HELP ME BE A FUN GRANDPARENT

- Annual library programs such as Grandparents Day, Seniors Festival and Families Week encouraged grandparents into the library to participate with their grandchildren.
- Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra's annual [Intergenerational Multicultural Cook-off](#) was a successful program, providing opportunities to learn about different cultures and recipes.
- The [Heart Foundation Koori Cook-Off](#) took place annually.





PROMOTE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE FOR ME

- A range of programs empowering older people to stay healthy and active were delivered and promoted, including The Lake 5x5 community walking event, Shellharbour Bike About, Heart Foundation walking groups, gentle exercise classes and Stepping On, a program designed to prevent falls in older people.
- [100 before 100](#), a bucket list of things to do and see within the Shellharbour Local Government Area was developed in hard copy and electronic form and promoted widely.



SHARE MY SKILLS AND OFFER A HELPING HAND

- Various community members continued to volunteer at community gardens within the Shellharbour Local Government Area.
- Council works with and supports a range of volunteer groups, including the Rotary Club, Lions Club and volunteer representatives on Council committees.



FREE ACCESS TO POOLS

As a result of this Strategy, Shellharbour City Council implemented free visitation to pool and pool programs such as aqua aerobics for seniors during the Seniors Festival. This was piloted in 2016 and has continued each year following this due to its success.

**DURING 2015-2017,
642 SENIORS GAINED
FREE ACCESS TO
SHELLHARBOUR CITY
POOLS, WHICH INCLUDED
SENIORS PARTICIPATING
IN AQUA AEROBICS AT NO
COST.**

By providing free access to Shellharbour City pools, this introduced Shellharbour's older residents to some of Shellharbour's community recreation facilities and encouraged future visitation. This also enhanced the opportunity for this population group to create social connections and develop and maintain healthy lifestyle behaviours.



COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

Community outcomes were used to help track progress over the life of the Strategy. These outcomes assist in determining whether Shellharbour City Council is fostering a “connected community working together to create a safe, sustainable future that provides opportunities for all to achieve their potential” (Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028).



On Track



Not on Track



Similar result



No data - No post data available at this stage



Control - Policy areas that are in direct control of Shellharbour City Council.



Influence - Issues that Shellharbour City Council does not control but can influence.



Concern - Those areas that Shellharbour City Council neither controls nor is likely to influence but that are of concern to the community and impact on its wellbeing.

Outcome	Source	Change between pre and post result	Council Influence
Connection to community	IRIS Community Survey		
Health-related outcomes - Overweight and obesity - Hospitalisations	NSW Health Statistics		
Satisfaction and attendance at community events and activities	IRIS Community Survey		
People receiving information	Mail list subscribers		
Perception of safety	PHIDU		
Volunteer rates	Census		
Social isolation	Census		

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Through the development, implementation and evaluation of the Healthy Ageing Strategy, a number of challenges and opportunities have become apparent, including:

- The measurement of outcomes can be challenging if data is not collected by stakeholders. The development of an outcomes-based framework is important in providing data on outcomes, in order to show the impact the Strategy has had and track trends over time.
- As the Strategy is a whole of community strategy, it requires Council to develop, maintain and leverage partnerships to obtain results. Strong partnerships and regular communication is required between parties to ensure sharing of information to track progress and results.
- A number of the strategies and 'big ideas' require work at a regional level and buy in from state government agencies in order to progress. Council is in a good position to advocate for changes to improve the lives of our older population, however, cannot control whether these changes actually take place. It is imperative that all agencies, including Council, play to its strengths and implement initiatives that they have direct control over.
- The Healthy Ageing Strategy has influenced the development of other strategies and plans that consider all members of the community, including residents 50 years of age and older. It has leveraged a change in that our older residents are further considered in our planning of programs and activities, enhancing social connections and quality of life.

MOVING FORWARD

The Healthy Ageing Strategy led to the development of a range of effective partnerships and sustainable initiatives. Through the development, implementation and evaluation of this strategy, the future direction of Council in enhancing the health and wellbeing of our community has become clearer. Some of these key learnings include:

- Recognising that Council plays a key role in supporting health and wellbeing outcomes across the whole community. Many of the ways we achieve this is through infrastructure, programs and services.
- Developing a whole of community approach in which we aim to enhance the health and wellbeing of all members of our community collectively. This will allow Council to understand the needs of the community and determine the best ways to strengthen assets, capacities, and interests.
- Place-based approaches recognise the central role location plays in health and wellbeing.
- The importance of playing to Council's strengths and focusing on Council control areas. This will ensure the effective utilisation of Council resources, skills and experience in order to have a direct and long lasting impact within the community.



FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information about this evaluation or health and wellbeing initiatives, please contact Shellharbour City Council's Community Connections team via phone (02) 4221 6007 or email ccadmin@shellharbour.nsw.gov.au

www.shellharbour.nsw.gov.au