



NSW AGEING STRATEGY FIRST PROGRESS REPORT

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1 The NSW Ageing Strategy

1.1 Background

The growing number of healthy, active seniors is a powerful economic force. Older people are a source of knowledge and expertise who 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, NSW will need to respond to increased demand on government services.

The NSW Government's vision for ageing is that people in NSW experience the benefits of living longer. More people will enjoy later life if:

- seniors lead active and rewarding lives and are valued members of the community
- adults make decisions that support their independence and wellbeing later in life
- NSW responds effectively to the challenges and opportunities of population ageing.

The NSW Ageing Strategy is a whole of government and whole of community strategy which supports individuals to take responsibility for their futures and commits the government to recognising and removing barriers to continued participation. It takes a life course approach to ageing, describing how the government intends to work with people throughout their lives to age well.

1.2 Implementation

Final accountability for the strategy is with the Premier, consistent with arrangements for the *NSW 2021* plan. The Minister for Ageing will sponsor reporting, briefing and Cabinet advice on behalf of the Premier.

The NSW Ageing Strategy Interdepartmental Committee has been established to oversee the implementation of the strategy. This is a committee of senior NSW departmental representatives and a representative each from the private sector, the non-government sector, local government and the NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing (MACA). The Committee, which meets twice a year, also provides broader advice on population ageing challenges and opportunities.

1.3 About this report

This is the first formal progress report on the NSW Ageing Strategy and covers activity from the release of the strategy in July 2012 to December 2013. It tracks progress against the important reform agenda set by the NSW Ageing Strategy. As the Strategy's main focus was on its highlights, which were new or expanded initiatives often requiring work across different departments and agencies, this report will primarily focus on how these are being implemented. Progress against supporting actions undertaken by specific NSW Government agencies is also being monitored through the NSW Ageing Strategy Implementation Plan.



2 What we've achieved

2.1 Seniors

2.1.1 Tackling abuse

The government will establish a helpline and resource centre to reduce the abuse of older people, for example, financial and psychological abuse experienced by older people living in their own homes. This new service will provide practical assistance to older people, family members and frontline workers, on ways to reduce abuse. The service will also conduct community education and collect data. Responses to the abuse of older people in NSW will be overseen by a government committee.

Elder abuse is an unacceptable issue in our community that needs greater attention. As older people become frail they can be vulnerable to people who wish to take advantage of them.

Concerned older people, friends, family and support workers now have access to the NSW Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit (EAHRU) which provides a range of services, including the provision of information, guidance, and referral to support agencies or service providers as and when appropriate.

At December 2013, the EAHRU has received 746 calls since the service commenced in March 2013, with 82 per cent of those calls relating directly to situations of abuse. Abuse is primarily occurring to older women 75 to 84 years with the alleged abuser being adult children 45 to 54 years old. The three most common types of abuse being experienced by older people are financial, psychological and neglect.

Over time, data collected by the EAHRU will be used to design prevention and awareness activities and improve services.

The EAHRU can be contacted on 1800 628 221, a state-wide free-call number.

2.1.2 Tech savvy seniors

The government will provide low-cost training for older people so they can learn to use smartphones, tablets and computers. The training will help older people access information and make contact with family and friends, and will target people in their sixties who have not had the opportunity to develop these skills in the workforce. This program will be developed in partnership with existing providers of low-cost training such as community colleges and libraries, and will reach across NSW. Partnership with philanthropic and industry bodies will also be explored.

The Tech Savvy Seniors program provides low-cost training for older people so they can learn to use smart phones, tablets and computers. This program is a partnership between the NSW Government and Telstra.

The program commenced in September 2012 and as at December 2013 a total of 57 community colleges and libraries across NSW had provided training to around 9,000 participants. The program also provided special events such as a large scale training event held during NSW Seniors Week which attracted over 400 participants, and the Tech Savvy Elders workshops held as part of Adult Learners Week which attracted over 100 Aboriginal Elders.

Tech savvy elders (an extension of Tech savvy seniors) was established for Aboriginal Elders to undertake technology training. Other training sessions were held at Condell Park, Dubbo and Tamworth. The program has the potential to connect Elders across the state with Elders around the country, creating opportunities for greater social and economic participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

2.1.3 Linking seniors to information

The government will expand the NSW Seniors Card program to provide access to government and local community information, and involve seniors in developing policy and programs. These measures will respond to the growing number of Seniors Card members who have access to and are able to use the internet. Online communication will be complemented by telephone services. Specific initiatives may include a Seniors Card app for mobile devices, an improved Seniors Card website incorporating local social activities, and targeted consultation with seniors in specific locations.

The Seniors Card program began in 1992 as a way of encouraging older people to enjoy a more active and healthy retirement and feel valued as a senior member of the community. Seniors Card members who are aged 60 or over and work no more than

20 hours a week in paid employment and are a permanent NSW resident, are able to enjoy discounts from participating businesses, special concession rates on NSW government transport, as well as participating in competitions, giveaways and events.

NSW Seniors Card promotes participation by seniors in their local community through their engagement with government and other services. As at 31 December 2013, Seniors Card had over 1.3 million members, which included almost 70,000 new members in 2013.

Seniors Card currently has more than 3,200 participating businesses or advertisers. However, Seniors Card is seeking to substantially expand business participation and advertising in the next few years. Seniors Card directories are distributed to all members annually and the Seniors Card e-newsletter is sent to approximately 260,000 members monthly. Seniors Card, and particularly the directory, is a trusted go to guide for information on consumer rights, financial and legal issues and an array of discounts. It has a high level of loyalty as a government program.

The Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) has also launched a mobile app for the NSW Seniors Card program. By using real-time location data, the app aims to help seniors seek out discounts and special offers that are available from nearby retailers, tradespeople, and other service providers.

In addition to the app, FACS is currently gathering quotes for a new Seniors Card web portal that will have search functionality for the directory and forums to encourage members to interact and post events.

2.1.4 Living active lives

The government will target people aged 65 and over as part of its commitment to increase participation in sport and recreation by 10 per cent. Partnerships with peak organisations, health promotion agencies and government will provide opportunities for joint planning to address the physical and recreational needs of older people. Local communities will be able to improve and develop sporting and recreational facilities and projects through an existing grants program administered by the Department of Sport and Recreation.

Participation in physical activities is a key way of improving everyone's wellbeing, including older people. By increasing their participation in sport and recreational activities, older people are able to maintain a healthy and active life and remain in the community for longer, rather than needing acute residential or hospital services.

The Department of Education and Communities (Sport and Recreation), along with the Department of Family and Community Services (Carers, Ageing and Disability Inclusion), are administering a number of initiatives to boost the activity levels of older people:

- The NSW Sport and Recreation Give It a Go program has provided older people with the opportunity to try a range of activities in sport and recreation facilities across NSW;
- Funding for senior-specific programs is available under the Sport and Recreation Participation and Facility Grants and Sport and Recreation Events programs.
- The Aquatic and Recreation Institute (ARI) active ageing program will provide funding to aquatic facilities throughout regional and metropolitan NSW to run aqua fitness and gentle exercise classes for people aged over 50.
- A number of expos and symposiums are planned to discuss barriers to active living and encourage older people to try new activities.

Keeping older people healthy and out of hospital is a priority for NSW Health. Some initiatives aimed at preventing unnecessary hospital admissions and enabling older people to remain living in their communities include:

- The NSW Chronic Disease Management Program, to be evaluated in 2014, targets individuals with diabetes, congestive heart failure, coronary heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and hypertension, recognising that people with these diseases often have multi co-morbidities such as depression, arthritis and dementia.
- The *NSW Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy 2013-2018* and Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service continue to help people, including older people, reduce unhealthy behaviours and increase their physical activity.
- For older people who are frail, programs such as Stepping On – a free group program covering vision, medicines and practical exercises to improve strength and balance – aim to reduce the number of avoidable falls.

2.1.5 Travelling safely

The government will promote the independence and safety of older drivers, and the safety of passengers and pedestrians, by investigating programs that encourage older drivers to drive safer vehicles; supporting local councils to deliver pedestrian access and mobility plans; reviewing the NSW Older Driver Licensing Scheme; and developing programs to help older people transition from driving to using other forms of transport.

In September 2013, Transport for NSW announced the recommendations of the Older Driver Taskforce, which was set up by the NSW Government to review the current licensing arrangements for older drivers. The findings of the taskforce have confirmed

that the current licensing system for older drivers is the best available model to manage the competing concerns of mobility and independence for older drivers and road safety for all road users. Other recommendations included the development of a cross-agency information and communication strategy to cover licensing and medical assessments, safer vehicles, local transport options and planning for retirement.

Information and education about safe car selection and improving older pedestrian safety will be incorporated into the communication strategy being developed in response to the Older Driver Taskforce recommendations.

Through the Community Transport Agreements branch, coordination is occurring with the Older Drivers Taskforce to standardise and implement both a travel training scheme (giving people who can no longer drive the confidence to use public transport) and a resource for primary health care providers to help inform older of their options beyond driving (to encourage people to gradually transition from driving to public and community transport options).

‘Seniors’ case study: Tech Savvy Seniors

On 30 January 2013, the Tech Savvy Seniors program was expanded through a partnership with Telstra. This partnership allows the program to reach more older people, particularly in regional and rural NSW.

Telstra has matched the NSW Government’s financial commitment of \$500,000. Under the partnership:

- further funding will be available to libraries to run courses with details to be announced in the coming months
- a program of large scale training events will occur across NSW including during NSW Seniors Week
- self-teach training DVDs are available for loan through libraries across NSW.

2.2 Middle years

2.2.1 Work skills, workplace value

The government will target people in their forties and early fifties who do not have formal qualifications, to give them access to subsidised training programs. This will give people an opportunity to improve their long-term position in the labour market and exercise greater choice over where and how long they work. The government will also review the impact of current laws and insurance regimes, including workers compensation, on workforce participation by older people.

The strategy identifies a number of actions to support mature age workers, including strengthening the skills base of people aged 45 and over and removing barriers that hinder full workforce participation. These actions will support mature age workers to improve their long term position in the labour market and provide them with greater choice.

Global Access Partners (GAP) and the Australian Centre for Health Research partnered with the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing (MACA) to conduct a two day event in May 2013 called A Future Without Age. A workshop for mature aged workers focused on refining the skills needed to succeed in a job search. Areas included: networking, both online and face-to-face contact; confident and successful interviews, including behavioural interviews; using social media to expand job searches; and how to work with recruiters. A conference was also held to bring together a select audience of government executives and policy makers, industry and business leaders, academics and social commentators for constructive, cross-sectoral and cross-life stage debate with a view to generating enlightened and innovative solutions.

The Work Ability Research Project will be completed by Monash University in 2014. The research has endeavoured to measure work ability of employees in six workplaces across NSW. This involved the assessment of the workers' health, skills, education, attitudes, motivation, job satisfaction and the demands of the jobs and working environments before and after workplace interventions. The promotion of work ability has been found to reduce the incidence of work disability, early retirement and absenteeism and increase productivity among the workforce. It is anticipated that the work ability approach will help to support the development of new government and employer policy relating to the ageing workforce.

In addition, the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services is working with employers to promote age-friendly employment practices such as flexible work practices, employer awards, corporate champions and best-practice guidelines. On 2 December 2013, the department launched an expression of interest process to establish Smart Work Hub pilots in Western Sydney and on the Central Coast to provide opportunities for flexible work practices.

2.2.2 My life, my decisions

The government will fund community education activities to increase the number of people completing wills, powers of attorney, enduring guardianships and advance care directives. This will build on the successful Planning Ahead Tools website, www.planningaheadtools.com.au. Education activities may focus on major transition points such the birth of a child, marriage and buying a home. Activities will target people in the middle of their lives and will include strategies to specifically target groups with very low rates of completing these documents.

The Get it in Black and White campaign was launched by the Minister for Ageing on 24 October 2013. The campaign highlights the need for pre-planning for incapacity later in life. Only five per cent of adults clearly understand the three essential documents – Wills, Powers of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship – that are available to plan ahead in case they can no longer manage their financial affairs or make decisions about their health and lifestyle.

People now live longer and illnesses like dementia, including Alzheimer’s disease, and stroke are rising. Research shows Australians are not prepared for the possibility that something adverse could happen to them. Legal capacity is required to prepare legal documents, such as a Power of Attorney, Enduring Guardian or a Will and these documents cannot be formalised once incapacity has occurred. For this reason it is often left to the courts and tribunal to decide who will make decisions about a person’s life.

The development of information for Aboriginal people is underway. For example, Legal Aid NSW has produced a brochure on wills for Aboriginal people titled *Who gets my stuff after I die?* and provides community legal education sessions for Aboriginal communities on planning ahead and paying for funerals. Key opinion leaders have been chosen for grassroots opportunities to promote the campaign to culturally and linguistically diverse communities in 2014.

All relevant information can be found on the website www.planningaheadtools.com.au. Importantly, there is a section for health professionals and legal professionals to discuss these issues with and provide assistance to individuals about these decisions. Fact sheets are also available for download in 13 languages.

2.2.3 Securing your future

The government will develop a community education strategy targeted at people in the middle of their lives regarding the critical decisions they may make that will affect their wellbeing later in life. This will include decisions about work, housing, finance, social connections, health and lifestyle. Key decisions will be mapped against each stage of people's lives. The community education strategy will identify opportunities to influence these decisions, including the best ways to reach people at each point in their lives. The underlying message of the strategy will be that 'ageing well' starts with better planning in the middle of your life.

This highlight aims to assist people in their middle years (aged 45-64) to plan ahead for their later life: for their health, their employment options, their finances and their future accommodation needs.

The Department of Family and Community Services has commissioned a literature review on the decision making processes individuals take in their middle years that impact on the ageing process, which has now been completed by National Seniors Australia. This information will inform the development of a community engagement strategy.

'Middle years' case study: Planning ahead

Legal documents are the best way to make sure that people's wishes are respected if they become ill or die unexpectedly. Approximately 62 per cent of people in NSW have a will in place, although rates are much higher for people over the age of 65. Current completion rates for powers of attorney are approximately 45 per cent and enduring guardianships 32 per cent for people in NSW.

The *Get it in Black and White* social marketing campaign focuses on the emotional reasons that motivate people to complete legal documents. Over 11,000 people visited the planning ahead tools website in November 2013, with 85% of these visitors being new visitors in response to the online advertising campaign. People are clicking online advertisements for this campaign at 3 times the industry standard.

2.3 Population ageing

2.3.1 Public-private partnerships for population ageing

The government will establish an open dialogue with the private sector to maximise the commercial opportunities resulting from an ageing population. The work will commence with a private sector and social investment partnership forum to identify areas of action in key industry segments, which will in turn inform the development of specific industry action plans. This initiative will also explore opportunities for social investment, using the expertise of the private and non-government sectors to improve social outcomes.

The strategy commits the NSW Government to creating an open dialogue with the private sector in order to maximise the commercial opportunities arising from population ageing and improve social outcomes.

In September 2012, the NSW Treasurer invited a range of key stakeholders to a forum in order to open dialogue with industry to maximise the commercial opportunities resulting from an ageing population. The forum called Business Boomers and Beyond has identified potential further work in key areas of:

- information technology
- financial products and services
- tourism
- fitness and leisure
- housing.

Outcomes of the forum were used in the development of the government's Industry Action Plans (IAPs), which aim to position key sectors of the state's economy for strong growth, resilience, improved innovation and productivity over the next decade.

In particular, various IAP Taskforces considered issues such as the workforce of the future and digital inclusion, where forum outcomes were particularly relevant. These were considered as part of the broad range of input to the IAPs, resulting in targeted recommendations for each of the priority IAP sectors.

In addition, the NSW Seniors Card team is targeting and forming partnerships with numerous companies to cover the cost of running the program while also delivering products and services that benefits its members.

2.3.2 Age-friendly local communities

The government will establish a grants program to help councils meet the needs of an ageing population. These grants will help councils identify local solutions to issues such as the accessibility of town centres, meeting rooms and facilities, and maintaining social connectedness. Councils will be required to do this work in partnership with local seniors, businesses and community organisations, and will be encouraged to incorporate this work into their requirements under the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

The Age Friendly Communities Local Government Grants scheme provided \$600,000 to councils across the state to fund a range of projects, including development of local ageing strategies, access improvements, pedestrian access, mobility plans and age-friendly exercise equipment.

Following an application process, a total of 26 grants were awarded to 29 councils (three grants were awarded to joint projects between councils). At July 2013, four projects had been completed:

- fitness and exercise equipment in Maroubra (Randwick Council)
- fitness and exercise equipment in Ingleburn (Campbelltown Council)
- street furniture for Tumbarumba's main street, The Parade (Tumbarumba Council)
- dignified access to a waterway, bushland reserve and associated facilities at Quipolly Dam (Liverpool Plains Shire Council).

Following the completion of the remaining projects, a workshop will be held to disseminate the findings of the scheme.

The Department of Planning and Environment (Office of Local Government) is assisting councils in creating age-friendly local communities by providing information and setting out steps to take in planning for an ageing population and by providing links to key sources of information on their website.

For more information, contact the Office at ipr@dlg.nsw.gov.au.

2.3.3 Housing choices

The government will support greater housing choices for the next generation of older people by improving information sharing on the future housing needs of an ageing population, and monitoring the impact of existing planning schemes. This will include monitoring the supply of specific housing options such as retirement villages and other living options for seniors; affordable housing; well-located housing close to town centres and transport; and the uptake of a universal housing design that improves the safety of housing for older people.

The draft Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney, released in March 2013, sets out the NSW Government's vision for the city. It is a blueprint for balanced and sustainable growth for Sydney, for both renewal in established suburbs and undeveloped land. The Department of Planning and Environment received 1,120 submissions and 123 forum comments in response to the draft strategy. Community forums were held across Sydney and included a specific forum for older people from across metropolitan Sydney. The finalisation of the Metropolitan Strategy has been delayed to address population projections based on new demographic information.

In 2012–13, the Government continued the comprehensive review of the State's planning system commenced in 2011. The proposed planning reforms are to deliver a system that is simpler, more certain, more transparent and which drives new housing, investment and the creation of jobs in NSW. The Planning Bill remains in the NSW Parliament and discussions with stakeholders are continuing. The Government remains committed to planning reform and is currently considering options on the best means to implement its reform program.

During this process, the Department of Planning and Environment and the Department of Family and Community Services will continue to meet with industry bodies to discuss perspectives on the development of housing options for seniors in NSW.

Furthermore, the NSW Government continues to investigate strategies to increase affordable rental housing and seniors' housing. NSW has recently approved 633 additional 'shovel ready' units under the National Rental Affordability Scheme with 188 total boarding house rooms and 144 dwellings targeting older persons.

2.3.4 Population ageing in the NSW Government

The government will incorporate into its Cabinet processes consideration of the impact of these new policy decisions on the long-term fiscal position of NSW. The Government will develop a population ageing report card incorporating key indicators of the state's progress in responding to population ageing to inform the development of future actions as the NSW Ageing Strategy is refreshed.

NSW Treasury uses medium to long-term fiscal modelling on an as-needs basis to assess significant ageing effects and fiscal constraints when the NSW Government is considering major and longer term policy options.

The PARC will be an overarching set of indicators used to monitor the impact of population ageing on NSW, and the impact of NSW Government policy interventions. The first PARC is intended to be published as a baseline report and will be updated periodically to measure progress.

'Population ageing' case study: Regional ageing strategies

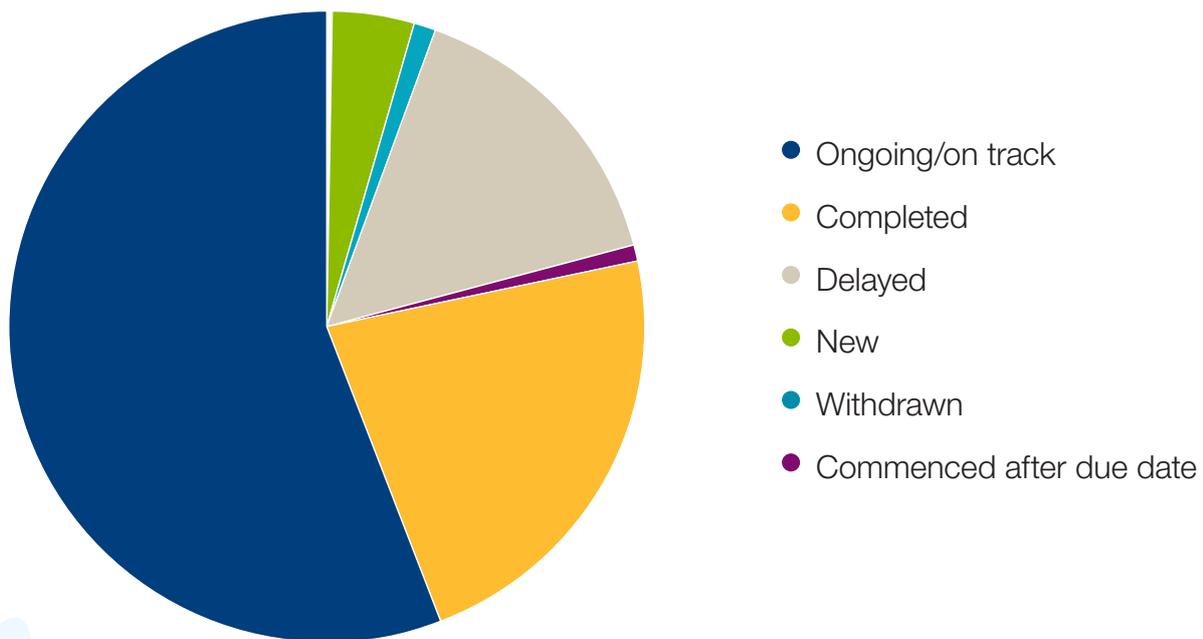
The Department of Family and Community Services is facilitating the development of two regional ageing strategies – one for Northern Sydney and one for the North Coast of NSW. The impetus for the strategies came from the NSW Government Regional Action Plans (RAPs) which were released in December 2012. They are two year plans aligned with *NSW 2021* and focus on immediate actions that the NSW Government will take to improve outcomes in each region.

A stakeholder workshop was held for the Northern Sydney Ageing Strategy on 1 August 2013, which was attended by over 80 stakeholders. A scoping exercise into the key population ageing issues for the North Coast was completed in September 2013. Two workshops were held in October 2013 for the North Coast Ageing Strategy – one in Coffs Harbour and one in Ballina. Issues discussed included workforce participation, affordable housing and housing for older people, access to services, and leading healthy and active lives.

3 Overall progress

As at December 2013, over 78 per cent of actions (both under the highlights and supporting actions) were either completed or progressing well. Approximately 15 per cent of the actions had been delayed, which include initiatives stemming from the Planning Bill before the NSW Parliament, policies like the *NSW State Health Plan 2013-2023*, and a review of the Community Transport Program. However, NSW Government departments are continuing work in these areas and we expect good progress to be made in the year ahead.

NSW Ageing Strategy actions – July 2012 to Dec 2013



Source: Responses from agencies responsible for actions under the strategy

Following the release of the strategy, the work of the NSW Government has placed increasing emphasis on helping the people of NSW age well and enjoy their later years. Ongoing, high level conversations around population ageing are taking place between departments and agencies following the release of the strategy. For example, Legal Aid NSW has submitted a number of new actions for inclusion in the supporting actions. These actions reflect Legal Aid NSW's ongoing legal work for older people including:

- providing ongoing legal education to community workers on planning ahead documents, and how to identify and address elder financial abuse
- developing the Aboriginal Wills Project with the Northern Rivers Legal Centre to provide education and advice about advance planning to Aboriginal people in the Northern Rivers area
- a brochure on wills for Aboriginal people titled *Who gets my stuff after I die?*
- providing community legal education sessions for Aboriginal communities on planning ahead and paying for funerals
- partnering with the Council on the Ageing NSW and the Law Society of NSW to provide pro bono wills, enduring powers of attorney and enduring guardianship appointments to eligible older people.



4 The year ahead

4.1 Our goals for 2014–15

Elements from the strategy that to be addressed in the year ahead include:

- the development and distribution of community awareness strategies and resources for frontline services on elder abuse
- improved website, social media platform, and searchable online Discount Directory for NSW Seniors Card
- discussions between representatives of the NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing, Business Council Australia and Sydney Business Chamber to identify employment innovations to increase workforce participation of people aged over 60
- developing of a campaign to encourage people in the middle of their lives to make the critical decisions that will affect their wellbeing later in life, such as work, housing, finance, health, and lifestyle
- continuing to meet with industry bodies to discuss perspectives on the development of housing options for seniors in NSW
- development and publication of the NSW population ageing report card.

Noting that the Australian Government has primary responsibility for aged care services, including community-based services for people aged 65 years and over, the NSW Government will continue to work collaboratively with the Australian Government in pursuing a positive approach to ageing policy.

4.2 A living document

Population ageing will affect NSW for many years to come. The average age of the NSW population is projected to increase substantially over the coming thirty years. The number of people over the age of 65 in NSW is expected to increase from just over 1 million people in 2012 (14 per cent of the population) to 2.5 million people in 2050 (24 per cent of the population).

In recognition of this, the NSW Ageing Strategy was released without timeframes. It is intended that this will allow the NSW Government's vision for ageing – that people in NSW experience the benefits of living longer – to be embedded in the core work of all departments.

When the strategy was released in 2012, it was estimated that most of its actions would be implemented within three years. Through the development of this progress report, it is clear that the NSW Government is largely on track to achieving this. As the strategy is a living document, it will be refreshed to include additional measures, as well as removing actions as they are completed.

The Department of Family and Community Services will discuss with the NSW Ageing Strategy Interdepartmental Committee how best to refresh the strategy to ensure the NSW Government is able to continue to effectively respond to the opportunities and challenges of an ageing population.



Department of Family and Community Services
Office for Ageing

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