

# Positive Ageing and Inclusion in Hindmarsh Shire



**Dorothy McLaren Consulting**

an integrated framework that can be used to plan, respond and set realistic priorities for future needs of the ageing population and people with a disability in the Hindmarsh Shire

**2013 to 2018**

## Table of Contents

PAIP in context .....	2
Introduction.....	2
History.....	3
Rationale.....	3
Community profiles .....	4
Geography.....	4
Demography .....	4
Services .....	4
Links to other Hindmarsh Shire Council Plans.....	5
Themes .....	6
Consultation.....	7
Developing the PAIP.....	7
Keeping the PAIP relevant .....	8
Action Areas.....	9
Appendix I Consultation template .....	16
Appendix II PAIP Data Summary template .....	17
Appendix III Summary of initial community consultation responses.....	18
Appendix IV PAIP Consultation Plan 2013 - 2018 .....	21
Appendix V Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 population by age .....	22

## PAIP in context

# A caring, active community enhanced by its 'liveability, environment and economy' Vision statement, Council Plan 2013-17

**Hindmarsh Shire Council believes that the communities within its boundaries should be environments for positive and fulfilling lives for all citizens, regardless of age or ability. These communities should be:**

- Accessible for all
- Supported by appropriate services
- Informed of, and informing, Council activities

**Hindmarsh Shire Council will undertake to ensure that these statements are fulfilled through**

- Delivery of its services and programs in a manner that supports positive ageing and inclusion
- Advocating for its communities to enhance funding and service delivery in areas that affect positive ageing and inclusion, but remain outside of Council's direct responsibility.

**The Positive Ageing and Inclusion Plan (PAIP) will guide activities in support of these objectives. The PAIP sits within the broader mission of the Hindmarsh Shire Council:**

- **To provide accessible services to enable the community to be healthy, active and engaged.**
- **To provide infrastructure essential to support the community.**
- **To protect and enhance our natural environment**
- **To foster a thriving and diversifies local economy where economic growth is encouraged and supported**
- **To realise the excellence in our people, processes and systems.**

Mission statement, Council Plan 2013-17

## Introduction

### History

The Hindmarsh Shire Council has been strongly proactive in recognising, embracing and addressing, positive ageing and inclusion principles.

Hindmarsh, with its' partner Councils Horsham Rural City, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack, developed Access Plans (focussing on the needs of people with a disability), well before such plans were required. The joint process used by the four local governments to develop and monitor the plans, through the shared resource of the Wimmera Disability Access Forum, was both unique and highly regarded.

Similarly, the initial Hindmarsh Positive Ageing Strategy and Plan were highly innovative and set the standard for what has now become a common and valued practice.

**Hindmarsh Shires seeks to continue to serve its citizens with forward-looking, innovative and relevant planning.**

### Rationale

The PAIP represents a further innovation in addressing quality of life and imperative issues for those who are ageing or living with a disability in the Hindmarsh Shire Council. Integrating planning for positive ageing and inclusion for all in community life will:

- reduce duplication
- enhance the practical application of actions identified
- simplify monitoring and evaluation of progress

In many cases, most notably physical access and communication, the keystones for community engagement and involvement, the needs of those who are ageing and those living with a disability are identical. Addressing access and best practice in those areas also addresses the needs of other sectors of society. Good, accessible information is useful for those from a non-English speaking background or with low literacy. Community spaces that can be accessed by those losing mobility due to age or disability are also accessible to parents with prams and those with temporary injuries. Focussing on the needs of those who are most at risk of isolation will provide a strong basis for planning for the whole of the community.

**The PAIP addresses slow-moving community trends**

**A five year PAIP cycle will allow time for projects to become embedded in community culture.**

**Associated plans are on different cycles, so each planning cycle can create incremental change**

## Community profiles

### Geography

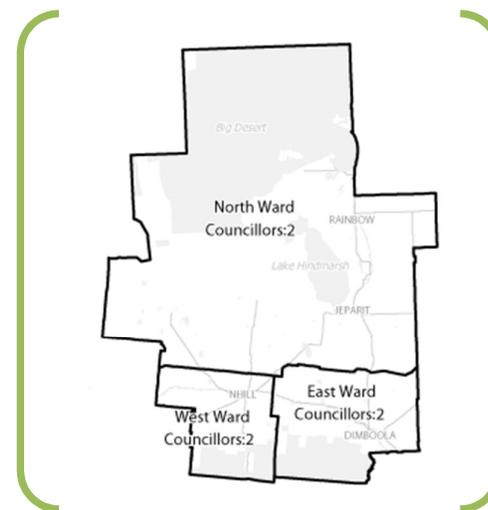
The four larger centres in Hindmarsh Shire sit in reasonably distinct socio-geographic locations. Population distribution thins from south to north across the Shire. The landscape changes subtly, as do the characters of the communities. In the consultations undertaken to guide the development of the PAIP, it became clear the citizens of each centre were strongly connected to their landscapes – natural and manmade. People in Dimboola talked about the Wimmera River as a determinant of community well-being. In Nhill, it was the Western Highway, and the opportunities that it brings, that dominated discussions. Jeparit's citizens spoke about the drought and the return of water to Lake Hindmarsh as a central factor in their lives. For those in Rainbow, a liveable climate dominated the conversations, though there the human 'landscape' – a tightly-knit and very supportive community – often took over from discussions of the physical landscape.

### Demography

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census, there were 5,798 people in Hindmarsh. Of these, 49.7% were male and 50.3% were female. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 1.5% of the population. People aged 65 years and over made up 24.6% of the population. People aged 85 and over made up 4.7% of the total population. The portion of the population living with a disability can be assumed to comply with the national population norm of 19%. **Importantly, the percentage of population is still trending towards a decrease in people of working age to service a growing population base of people of retirement age.**

### Services

Discussion of medical services dominated in each town. Access to general practitioners (GPs) and pharmacy services were deemed most significant. In each centre, the local health service was held in high regard. Nursing home facilities were also valued both as employers and as a source of high-quality, local care in later life. The Nhill Community Taxi program continues to be an important source of transport and, therefore, independence for people who are not able to drive themselves. Shire Home and Community Care (HACC) programs were seen as critical to quality of life for older people and people with a disability. Adult and continuing education opportunities were seen as very important. The specialist disability services available were seen as important. In addition to formal services, many people spoke of the importance of communities caring for each other. Some called it the 'human safety link'. Volunteering was mentioned over and over as both a source of pride for individuals and a community support resource. In general, those consulted felt that their communities were relatively well serviced across the spectrum of community life.

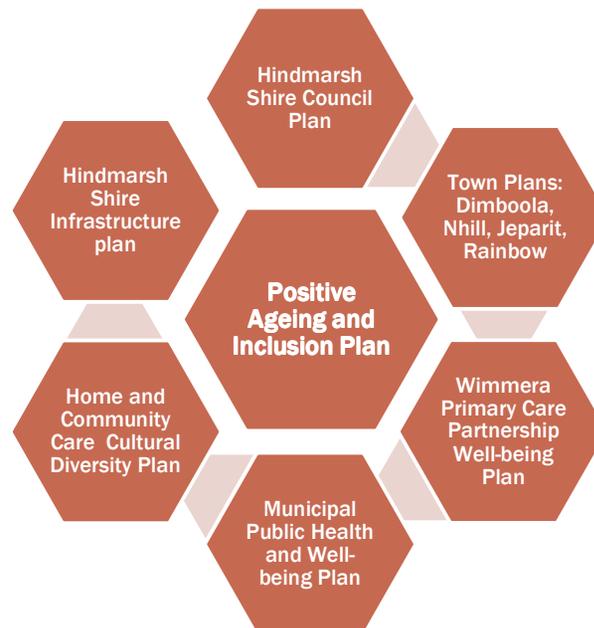


## Links to other Hindmarsh Shire Council Plans

The PAIP is the central document outlining activities and responsibilities in relation to positive ageing and inclusion.

**Those things that support positive ageing and inclusion for all citizens, regardless of age or ability, are shared responsibilities across the whole range of Council services and activities. What is good for older people and people with a disability is generally good for all the people who live in the Shire. The PAIP should integrate and prioritise a holistic approach to planning to enhance quality of life and liveability in the Hindmarsh Shire.**

Therefore, several other Council Plans have areas of responsibility in common with the PAIP. These include:



## Themes

Three themes emerged from the initial community consultations held in February and March 2013. They are:



These themes will be applied as a lens to the activities identified for action in the PAIP.

Many of the factors identified by community members during the consultation phase of the PAIP development are outside of direct Council control. However, each of the themes contains elements that are within Council's purview for direct action and/or advocacy support.

Using the thematic lens to identify the potential influence of identified activities under the PAIP will help to ensure that the scope of activities covers off on the issues that matter to citizens of the Hindmarsh Shire. An on-going consultation plan, formulated to reflect the thematic areas of concern, is included here as Appendix I. A discussion of the rationale for on-going consultation follows in the next section of this report.

## Consultation

### Developing the PAIP

The initial public consults for this project utilised direct contact, 'vox pop' street interviews. This method allowed access to voices that may not otherwise be heard in community planning processes. In each centre, on-the-spot semi-structured interviews were continued until saturation of data occurred. The questions and method are flexible enough to initiate and follow spontaneous or unique responses, while allowing a general coverage of the larger questions. Questions focussed on concepts of ageing and ageing in place in Hindmarsh to reflect that ILOP funding goals as identified by the Hindmarsh Shire Council.

#### Questions for the semi-structured interviews were as follows:

What makes you want to live here now, and in the future?

What sorts of things are you planning for when you retire?

What do you think your life will be like in ten years? Twenty years?

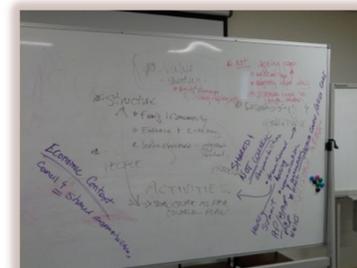
Will you be doing the same things your parents did or do you have a different idea about what 'ageing' means for you?

The responses showed marked similarities in terms of quality of life issues and planning for ageing in place. Each of the four centres also displayed a local flavour. Three themes emerged from the data collected:

- Family – both a pull to leave and a reason to stay into retirement
- Finance – cost of living and cost of housing bring some people to Hindmarsh and anchor others here and business as lifestyle
- Infrastructure (physical and social) – good access is a determinant of quality of life, cohesive, connected communities are equally so

In consultation with HSC senior staff, these three themes were refined to better align with existing strategic objectives, becoming:

- Family and Community Life
- Economy and Finance
- Community Infrastructure



## Keeping the PAIP relevant

**The PAIP should be a living document<sup>1</sup>.** While core needs for the people who live in the Shire are unlikely to change significantly in the short term, new opportunities and influences should be woven into the activities undertaken during the life of the PAIP.

**The PAIP, with its inherently complex relationship to Council activities and community life, may require a different method for consultation that will:**

- Give voices to those who do not necessarily attend standard consultations
- Create a dialogue with community members that supports understanding of the limitations and variety of roles that Council has in planning for positive ageing and inclusion
- Serve as a continual evaluation tool, facilitating timely and appropriate review of the PAIP
- Support community understanding of, and confidence in, planning for positive ageing and inclusion

The Wimmera sub-region is currently experiencing significant population changes related primarily to people with diverse cultural backgrounds entering the workforce (particularly health and manufacturing). Over time, the PAIP will need to be sufficiently flexible and responsive to encompass the alternate concepts of ageing and disability that will be held by newer community members. Continual review of the PAIP themes, will assist with this task.

Continual review, through a simple process of annual, targeted, informal interviews conducted by Council staff or the Councillors themselves (or a mix thereof), will be a simple, effective method to ensure that the PAIP remains relevant and responsive to community needs.<sup>2</sup>

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Actions identified in the PAIP should share an evidence base with Community Plans, Health and Well-being Plans, integrated health promotion strategies and public health plans. A five year planning cycle for the PAIP will interact well with these planning cycles. Working together, this nexus of consultation processes will produce nearly annual data on similar trends, making each planning process more manageable and producing a more comprehensive long-term view of Hindmarsh Shire's communities and citizens.

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<sup>1</sup> The 5 year PAIP cycle reflects the fairly stable nature of the issues affecting the PAIP delivery. Future and changes to community fabric and demographic profile will be more obvious in 5 years' time. This period will also encompass the transition of HACC services from state to federal government.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix IV outlines an ongoing consultation plan for the PAIP, while Appendices I and II provide templates for collecting and assessing the data.

Rankings 1 (highest) through 3 (lowest) indicate the relative impact of an activity on the three PAIP themes. In some cases, the impact will be fairly similar in two areas. These are then ranked as '='.

F = Family and Community  
E = Economy and Finance  
C= Community Infrastructure

## Action Areas

### Family and Community Life<sup>3</sup>

What we will achieve	How we will achieve this	Links to other plans	Partner organisations	timeframe	Other notes	F	E	C
1.1 Establish a PAIP reference group	<p>Direct recruitment of a core group</p> <p>Advertise for other members</p> <p>Ensure diversity of group</p> <p>Membership 50% or more community members</p>		<p>Service clubs</p> <p>Senior Citizens groups</p> <p>West Wimmera Health Service - Cooyinda</p>	<p>3 months to establish</p> <p>Meet every 3 months</p>	<p>Reference group will ensure that PAIP directions and actions are relevant and practical for local communities and the people who live there</p> <p>Reference group members could participate in annual monitoring data collection activities</p>	=1	3	=1
1.2 Hype for Skype – virtual connection	<p>Demonstration centre to be established</p> <p>Come and try events</p> <p>Assist residents in their homes</p> <p>Link up geographically distanced families and friends</p>	2.1.4 Nhill Community Plan 2013-2015	<p>Volunteering Western Victoria</p> <p>Local people/business</p> <p>West Wimmera Health Service</p> <p>Nhill schools</p> <p>Wimmera Regional Library Corporation</p> <p>Wimmera Primary Care Partnership</p>	Oct 2013 and then on-going	<p>Improve skills to assist with online services eg. Medical consultations.</p> <p>Utilise and train Nhill residents to make full use of National Broadband Network (NBN) technology</p> <p>Use vacant shops, library as demonstration sites</p> <p>Intergenerational project.</p>	1	3	2

<sup>3</sup> Please note that brown text refer to activities/projects that are primarily PAIP activities, while black text indicates activities also identified in other plans.

What we will achieve	How we will achieve this	Links to other plans	Partner organisations	timeframe	Other notes	F	E	C
1.3 "Prime Timers" Over 45s club	<p>Establish a committee</p> <p>Organise social events</p> <p>Promote events to the whole Nhill community</p> <p>Hold events</p> <p>Encourage 'membership'</p>	2.1.1 Nhill Community Plan 2013-2015	<p>Nhill Clubs and Organisations</p> <p>Nhill Town Committee</p> <p>West Wimmera Health Services</p>	<p>6 months to establish</p> <p>Meet every two months</p>	<p>Informal gathering to reconnect people within the Nhill community.</p> <p>Establish a group from which volunteers could be recruited / encouraged.</p> <p>Social connectedness.</p>	2	3	1
1.4 Ensure special events are accessible to all	<p>Use accessible events guides for Council activities/events</p> <p>Encourage other groups holding events to do same</p>	le 1.1.2 Rainbow Town Plan 2013-2015	<p>Rural Access Wimmera</p> <p>Town committees and appropriate community groups</p>	On-going	<p>Equitable access for people with disabilities to community events benefits individuals and the whole of the community</p>	1	3	2
1.5 Advocate for investigation of private/community sector investment in independent living units	<p>Encourage investigation of need for options for housing between own home and nursing home</p>		<p>Private or Community sector housing</p> <p>West Wimmera Health Service</p> <p>Wimmera Uniting Care</p>	On-going	<p>Long-standing issue</p> <p>Need exists, but may not be possible to meet due to limited population/demand</p> <p>Discussed by several interviewees in consultation phase</p>	1	2	3
1.6 Seek funding for study on ageing and disability in other cultures	<p>Government or philanthropic funding</p>		<p>Social science researchers (such as RMIT University Rural and Regional Futures Research Group)</p>	<p>Up to 1 year to establish funding</p> <p>6 months to undertake research and produce recommendations</p>	<p>Influx of international work force is likely to continue and expand.</p> <p>Understanding ageing and disability in other cultural contexts will help with future PAIP planning and planning for sustainable workforces</p>	1	=2	=2

## Finance and Economy

What we will achieve	How we will achieve this	Links to other plans	Partner organisations	timeframe	Other notes	F	E	C
2.1 Sustainable HACC and aged care facility workforce	<p>Work with training providers</p> <p>Investigate incentives to relocate to rural areas</p> <p>Consider implications of importing suitably skilled workforce from Australia and/or overseas.</p>	Hindmarsh Shire Council Risk Register	<p>Hindmarsh Shire Council – internal</p> <p>Investigate partnerships with training and recruitment organisations</p>	On-going	Population anomalies (see Appendix V below) will exacerbate the generational slump in available workforce that will be experienced nationally. This will be most critical for a period of approximately 20 years, starting from five to ten years from now.	3	1	2
2.2 Retaining health services	<p>Continue to monitor situation</p> <p>Support health services and GPs in private practice to ensure continuity of service</p>		<p>Health services, including GP clinics/practices</p> <p>Wimmera Primary care Partnership</p>	On-going	Though all four centres currently have GP services and good health and aged care services, lack of staff and GPs will be a perpetual issue	2	1	3
2.3 Skilling up for telehealth and other video service delivery	Investigate purchasing capacity from the existing ATRA (Accessing Telehealth in Rural Australia) project	<p>2.1.4 Nhill Community Plan 2013-2015</p> <p>And ties to 1.2 2.1, 2.2</p>	<p>Volunteering Western Victoria</p> <p>RMIT University</p> <p>Royal Flying Doctors Service, VIC</p> <p>Appropriate Health services</p> <p>Wimmera Primary Care Partnership</p>	<p>Up to 3 months to establish</p> <p>6 – 12 months of targeted activities</p> <p>1 month to write report with recommendations for further, sustainable activities and events</p>	<p>Extends the effect of ‘Hype for Skype’</p> <p>Will serve to immediately support the highest users of health services – those who are ageing or living with a disability.</p> <p>Supporting better ways to maintain health and well-being for more vulnerable members of our communities will help to contain the need for more support services and staff</p>	2	1	3

What we will achieve	How we will achieve this	Links to other plans	Partner organisations	timeframe	Other notes	F	E	C
2.4 Encourage new businesses that meet needs of ageing population	<p>Monitor changes to HACC re independent service providers</p> <p>Encourage investigation of new types of housing to meet growing need for part-time employment, part-time travel</p> <p>Work with private and community transport providers to investigate options for sustainable transport</p>	1.5 and 2.1 above	Private and/or community sector providers	On-going	<p>There may be growing opportunities for privately contracted assistance services. This will have an impact on HACC service delivery.</p> <p>The Transport Connections project has been wound up, but transport will continue to be a primary enabler and barrier to access community life</p>	2	1	3
2.5 Investigate opportunities for people to semi-retire in Hindmarsh	<p>Monitor the impact of part-time retirees</p> <p>Add to community consultation and PAIP monitoring activities</p> <p>Seek funding for a formal study</p>	Council Plan 2013-2017	<p>Philanthropic funding bodies for a formal study</p> <p>Volunteering Western Victoria</p>	On-going	<p>Lowanna shop a source of great community pride and model for joint activity based on highway/town location</p> <p>Great opportunity for business people to move/stay for lifestyle of Nhill but access to larger markets is possible via highway</p>	2	1	3
2.6 Accessible caravan parks	<p>Wherever practicable, ensure accessible facilities for people of all abilities are available</p> <p>Audit toilets, laundry, footpaths and cabins</p> <p>Plan for increased access</p>	<p>Caravan parks improvements are identified in town plans 2013-15 for each centre</p> <p>Hindmarsh Shire Tourism Strategy</p>	Hindmarsh Shire Council - internal	Over next year – audit existing facilities	<p>Audit model exists in-house</p> <p>Older people with limited mobility and people with a disability seek out accommodation with good access. The Horsham Rural City Council accessible cabin is an excellent model</p>	3	1	2

## Community Infrastructure

What we will achieve	How we will achieve this	Links to other plans	Partner organisations	timeframe	Other notes	F	E	C
3.1 Update community Access maps	<p>Review and update existing maps as necessary</p> <p>Print copies for distribution via libraries and visitor information centres, caravan parks, etc</p> <p>Promote link to maps to Council home page</p>		<p>Hindmarsh Shire Council – internal</p> <p>Health services</p> <p>Other organisations to advertise to support printing costs?</p>	2013-14 financial year	<p>These were mentioned as a valuable resource in each community</p> <p>Print copies are needed</p> <p>Map links to the website home page, rather than having to navigate through the site is preferable</p>	2	3	1
3.2 Encourage local stories re positive ageing and inclusion in the public domain	<p>Local press</p> <p>Stories to ABC regional radio</p> <p>Rainbow community radio</p>	2.1.1 Rainbow Community Plan 2013-2015	<p>Health services</p> <p>Volunteering Western Victoria</p> <p>Community groups</p>	Senior's Week and ad hoc	Link to Senior's Week Activities	1	3	2
3.3 Community information/liasing with community	<p>Monitor success of community information provision</p> <p>Increase opportunities for one-on-one interaction with citizens, especially ion Nhill and Dimboola</p> <p>PAIP annual `vox pop' interviews</p>	<p>Council Plan 2013 – 17</p> <p>Community Plans 2013-2015: Rainbow Jeparit Nhill Dimboola</p>	Hindmarsh Shire Council – internal	<p>On-going</p> <p>At least annual `vox pop' street interviews</p>	<p>Perceived lack of access to Council staff and Councillors was a noticeable theme, especially in Nhill and Dimboola.</p> <p>Existing community liaison activities can be augmented with informal interviews or simple street chats. Indications are that these would be well received.</p>	2	3	1

What we will achieve	How we will achieve this	Links to other plans	Partner organisations	timeframe	Other notes	F	E	C
3.4 Museums and historic buildings to be as accessible as possible	Yurunga Homestead and Pella Gaol  including easy English information	Rainbow Community Plan 2013-2015	Yurunga Homestead  Pella Gaol Committee  Wimemra Mallee Pioneer Museum  Historical Societies	On-going				
3.6 Mobility scooter / wheel chair access in Dimboola	Review  Provide easier access around town and from one side of the street to existing pathways  Continue to plan / map for improved access  Develop a budget  Funding applications  Construction  Completion	3.1.6 Dimboola Town Plan 2013-2015	Wimmera Health Care Group  Dimboola Traders Association  Dimboola Town Committee	1 - 2 years	Provide easier access around town and from one side of the street to the other  Also need to continue to investigate better access across the railway line to Dimboola Centre	3	2	1
3.7 Accessible public spaces	Continue to ensure that new developments/projects meet access standards	le 3.1.5 Dimboola Town Plan 2013-15	Hindmarsh Shire Council – internal	On-going		2	3	1
3.8 Interactive TVs for Senior's Centres or other centres in each town	Purchase TVs with ILOP funds  Install as appropriate in communities	1.2 and 2.3 above	As appropriate to venue	3 months	Can be used to support 'Hype for Skype' and remote access to medical services	2	3	1

What we will achieve	How we will achieve this	Links to other plans	Partner organisations	timeframe	Other notes	F	E	C
3.9 Accessible Sport and recreation opportunities	Continue to ensure that all sporting venues are as accessible as possible for all citizens.	le 1.2.3 and 3.1.1 Jeparit Town Plan 2013-2015	Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly  Sporting groups	On-going		2	3	1
3.10 Clear signage in our communities	Continue to ensure that signage is clear, legible and well-placed		Hindmarsh Shire Council – internal	On-going	The PAIP Reference Group and the Wimmera Disability Access Forum could be asked to assist with auditing and monitoring	3	2	1
3.11 Information that meets accessibility standards	Continue to ensure that all community information is provided in clear language  Use sans serif fonts  Make larger print or audio information available  Ensure accessibility standards are met in website design		Hindmarsh Shire Council – internal	On-going		3	2	1

## Appendix I Consultation template

**These questions guided the initial PAIP consults. These questions should also form the basis of on-going consults over the life of the PAIP.**

What makes you want to live here now, and in the future?

- Climate?
- Family?
- Local or moved here? When?
- Cost of living?
- Lifestyle?

What sorts of things are you planning for when you retire?

- Are you planning to retire at all?
- Travel?
- Recreation? Sports? Clubs? Activities? Do you already do these things now?
- Family?
- Friends?

What do you think your life will be like in ten years? Twenty years?

- Staying here or moving?
- Working? Full-time/part-time
- Interests? Hobbies? 'Bucket list'?
- How will you communicate, travel, interact socially? (ie Skype, Facebook, etc)

Will you be doing the same things your parents did or will 'ageing' mean something else?

- When will you be 'older'?
- Is 'ageing' different now to in the 50s, 60s, 70s?
- What makes a person 'older' now? (ie, might be 40 for a person with a disability...)

The initial PAIP survey focussed primarily on positive ageing (in response to the funding received from the Increased Liveability for Older Persons program.

Diversity, and inclusion for people with a disability, can be addressed more specifically over the life of the PAIP.

Suggested additional questions include:

### What helps you to be included in community life?

- Accessible streetscapes?
- Information you can understand?
- Transport?
- Being accepted at community/sporting events?

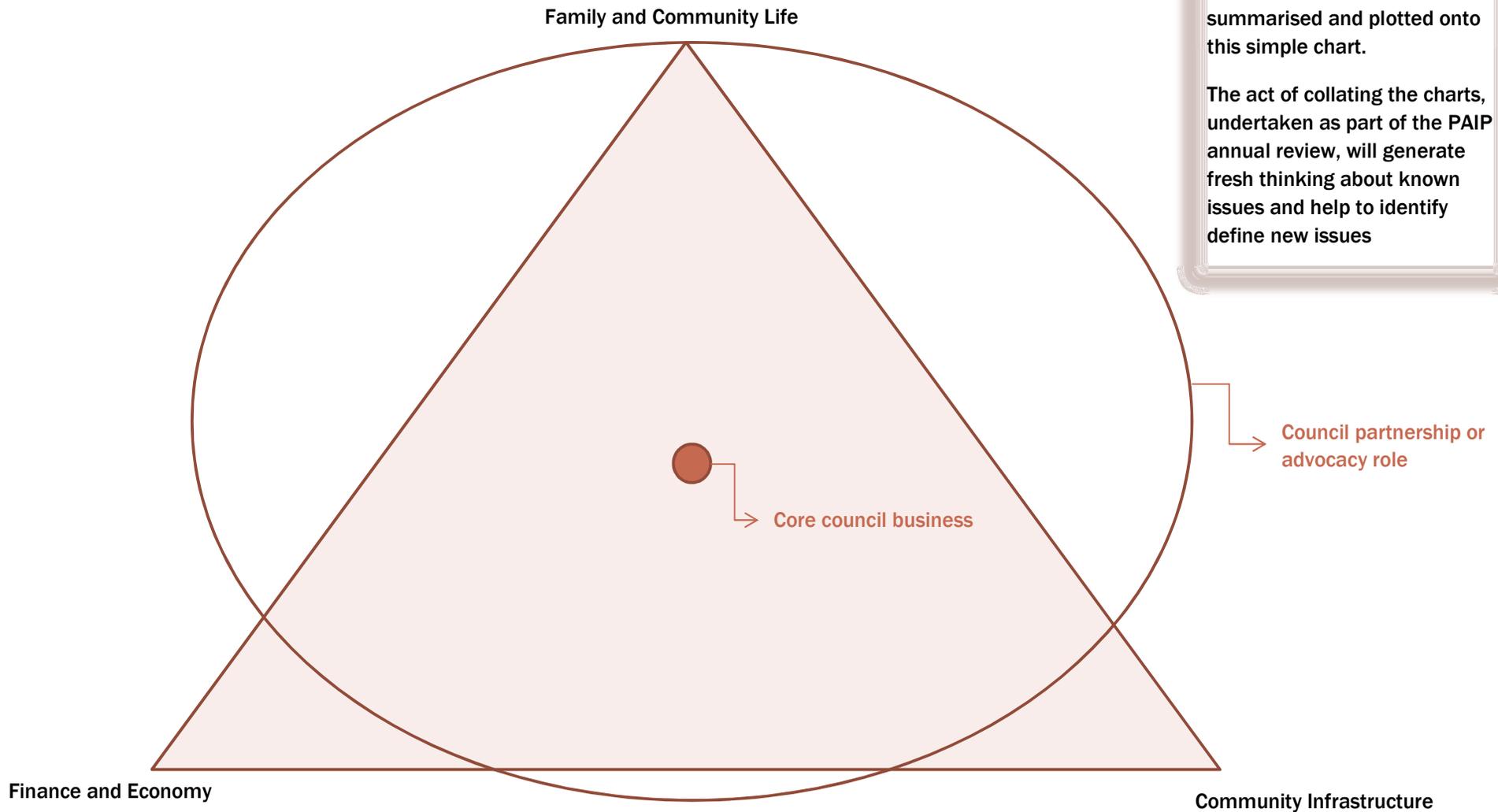
### What are the barriers to community life for you?

- Physical infrastructure?
- Attitudes of other people?
- Lack of appropriate support?
- Financial considerations?

**Appendix II PAIP Data Summary template**

Once collected, data from the short interviews can be summarised and plotted onto this simple chart.

The act of collating the charts, undertaken as part of the PAIP annual review, will generate fresh thinking about known issues and help to identify define new issues



### Appendix III Summary of initial community consultation responses

#### Emergent themes

**Family – a reason to leave and a reason to stay.** The only reason given by respondents for wanting to move elsewhere in retirement was to be closer to family. Several stories about people who moved away to be near children and grand-children were told. Connection to community was indicated by the fact that some of these people were returned to be buried in Hindmarsh cemeteries. Other respondents said they would not move to be nearer family as their children were spread out or likely to remain mobile themselves. Several respondents said that their adult children wanted them to stay in Hindmarsh so the grandchildren could visit and get to know the **lifestyle and natural environment** of these communities. Both were seen universally as tremendous assets, especially water in the lake and river.

Some communities had younger families moving back to raise their children. Only three people said they were certainly planning to retire elsewhere. Two respondents had moved to Hindmarsh towns following their children and grandchildren.

It should be noted that some newcomers find the expectations of community involvement a little confronting at first. Even those who have moved to be near family may need time to find their comfortable role in the community. This needs to be carefully managed as it can cause resentment in longer-term citizens.

Reportedly, more farmers are still working into later age than would have been normal in previous generations. **Fewer people are retiring from the farm and going to live in the nearest town.** Some are moving to Horsham or Ballarat, or further afield but staying on-farm, with younger family members building homes on the property is not abnormal.

Several respondees referred to **the increasing popularity of semi-retirement for farmers**, though this **is less an option for those employed in other sectors.**

The **increasing agglomeration of farms**, and attendant de-population of the region, as machinery improves and increases in capacity was a strong theme, especially in Rainbow and Jeparit. In these two communities there were also reports of 'spare' houses left on farms but no longer needed being rented out to people who wished to semi-retire and willing to exchange cheaper rent for shared farm duties. This is an interesting (though unsubstantiated) model as it allows freedom for quality of life activities for existing farmers as they age while maintaining productivity and extending the working life.

**Housing prices** were a common theme through all the interviews. Low-cost housing is bringing new people to the towns. It is also a barrier to leaving for some people who might otherwise move to be closer to family or other lifestyle opportunities. Some concerns were raised regarding newcomers being unprepared for the community they are entering, including lack of public transport, choice in health care and other issues. These are significant issues, but not new ones.

In Nhill there was some discussion about the effect on the housing market (especially rental) of the Karen people who are coming to work at Luv-a-duck. There were two threads to this concern. One was about the lack of appropriate accommodation for the Karen people. The other was about resentment in the community that the Karen people were flooding an already saturated rental market.

Also fairly specific to Nhill was a discussion of **the impact of passing traffic on the Western Highway to business** in the town. Both established and new businesses attract significant out-of-town and interstate trade. The significance of this passing trade was discussed in relation to planning small businesses that could sustain local citizens in on-going employment or semi-retirement well past current retirement ages.

In other areas, **digital communications and the NBN** were seen as good opportunities to be able to carry on small businesses from small towns or remote settings. Small business operators were more likely to be planning to work on into later years.

Current retirees are adamant about remaining at home as long as possible. Nursing homes are seen as the place you go to die. Some form of **transitional housing** more likely to be accepted by the next generation of retirees. Four people talked about and had inspected the shared/supported accommodation available in Horsham. None took it up as it was still geared towards those requiring more assistance with cooking, etc. Respondents said it needed full kitchen and shed option to be attractive.

**Transport** was discussed by most respondents. The Nhill Community Taxi is proudly supported by volunteers and provides a vital service. Most residents seemed well informed about public and community transport options. Where respondents seemed unfamiliar with transport services available, this seemed to be attributable to their relative new-comer status. Most citizens felt amply served but **promotion of existing services needs to be on-going**.

Several respondents talked about the need to **remain independent** with the use of electric scooters and other mobility aids. The Hindmarsh Shire **mobility maps** were fondly remembered and several people asked if they were to be updated and reprinted.

When asked to identify where they would choose to live if retiring to one of the four towns, all respondents discussed being within a few blocks of the shops, with good footpaths and (where appropriate) no rail crossings.<sup>4</sup>

The issue of **decaying buildings** was a deeply felt issue in Jeparit. This was also raised repeatedly with regard to the hotel in Dimboola. While most seemed philosophical about this – realising that it is not economically viable to revitalise large buildings in towns with contracting small business economies (especially Jeparit), some felt that the Council should be taking action. Some direct information provision about the role of council funding and responsibilities would be advisable. Notably, there was a strong negative response to the new office building in Nhill.

In addition to the natural and built environments, the **social infrastructure** of the communities was deemed highly significant.

**Physical activity** options were seen as growing in popularity for the ageing and aged. This was especially pronounced in Rainbow. In the two smaller communities, respondents were quick to point out that all community sporting activities were cross-generational, even if it was a viewing opportunity only for older people. Sports and activities are seen as whole-of-community events. When asked, residents of the two smaller towns felt strongly that in ten to twenty years time, older and aged people would still want to play bowls, golf and cards as these are not 'old people's sports' now.

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<sup>4</sup> The Dimboola rail crossings were a particular concern.

The power of innovative individuals, when accepted by community, to enhance the fabric of the community was raised several times, most notably in reference to the Rainbow Learning Centre and the new Dimboola coffee shop.

Volunteering **`we volunteer** now because we know we will need help eventually'. It is clear that volunteering is the heart and soul of community life in all four communities. This cannot be overstated. Nearly every respondent was involved in at least 5 community service volunteer roles. There was a concern that the traditional clubs were failing to recruit new member and that **there is a need for new models of voluntarism and community activity** for those now middle-aged.

**Home help** is a greatly appreciated service and is seen as a life line by many.

There was an appreciable interest in **learning new ways of communicating** (skype, etc.). Access to health service and family communication were significant drivers.

Interestingly, Nhill and Dimboola showed trends **towards dissatisfaction with the Hindmarsh Shire Council** while no such response was registered in Rainbow or Jeparit. Complaints centred around funds management and an expressed need for more formal and informal opportunities to voice concerns. While this is in some senses an outlying issue for this consultation, these feelings should be addressed in the communication and consultation plans developed in relation to the Positive Ageing and Inclusion Plan.

**In general, respondents of all ages (middle, senior and advanced ages) indicated that they lived in their communities because they liked living in rural communities and were fairly content with the available services and opportunities.**

When asked what would encourage them to stay and retire in one of the Hindmarsh towns, almost every respondee indicated little or no change to the fabric of rural society would be ideal. **One relative newcomer to their small town said `I was meant to live here –I love it!'**

The **tight-knit nature of communities** was seen as very beneficial by most residents. Citizens caring for each other, or the `human safety link necklace', was highly valued by almost all respondents. The activity of that safety net was blatantly obvious to the researcher, with many incidents seen and heard supporting its central role in these communities

In summary the emergent themes from the data collected so far are, broadly:

- **Family,**
- **Finance** and,
- **Infrastructure (physical and social)**

## **Appendix IV PAIP Consultation Plan 2013 - 2018**

### **Developing**

During the development of the plan, casual, 'vox pop' semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect information about how issues affecting ageing and inclusion resemble or differ from each other across the geographic and demographic context of the Hindmarsh Shire Council. The template for those interviews can be found in Appendix I. A summary of significant findings is made in Appendix III.

### **Consulting**

The consultation phase for the draft Plan included a standard public call for comment, with the PAIP being made available for review at usual public venues (shire offices, libraries, etc) or via email on request. In addition, responses were sought from specific groups. A letter inviting comment and a copy of the PAIP were sent to a representative sampling of service clubs, church groups, and seniors groups across the Shire.

### **Monitoring**

The PAIP includes, and encourages, the potential for on-going, active monitoring of the issues that the plan addresses. This monitoring should support and enhance normal reviews of actions and progress under the plan.

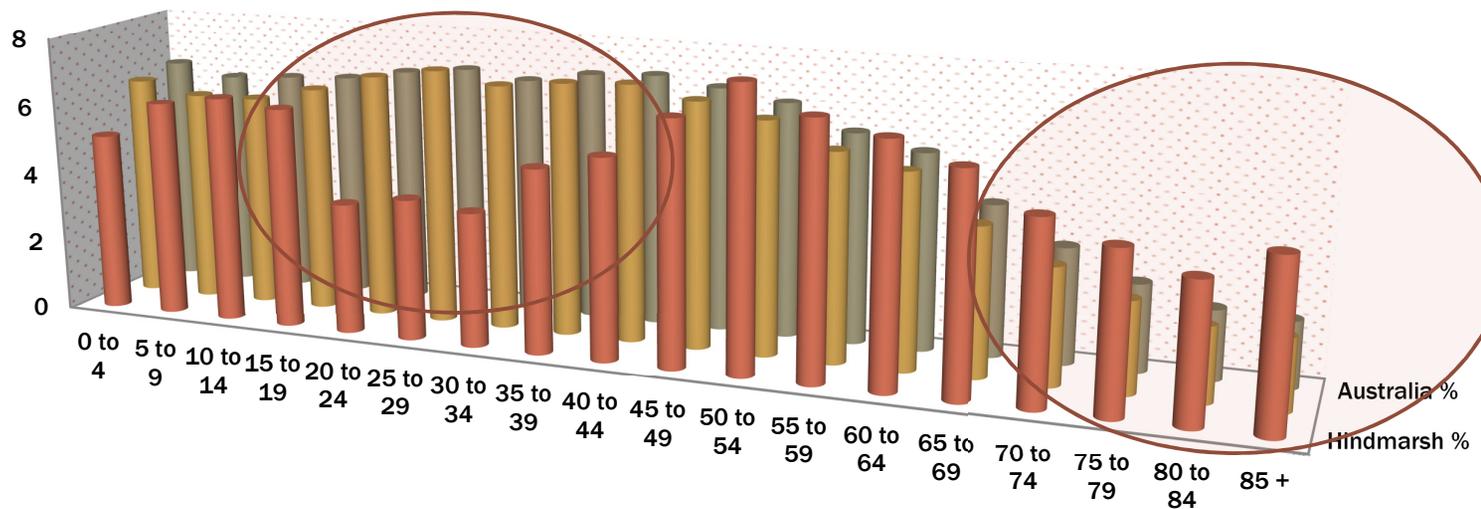
In the one to two months preceding the scheduled annual review of the PAIP, using the consultation template found in Appendix 1, with the addition of further questions if/as required, representatives of Council will conduct short interviews and record the results. When compared to the initial consult data, this information will provide the opportunity to track on-going themes and identify new issues as they arise. Additionally, when compared to findings from other local planning and consultation processes (ie community plans, health and well-being consultations, public health plan development, etc) the interaction of these various plans will allow for incremental responses to 'leap frog' on each other. At the end of the five year PAIP cycle, the Hindmarsh Shire Council will be well-positioned to undertake the development of the next PAIP cycle.

### **Summarising**

Summarising the data from the monitoring surveys and plotting that data onto the template provided in Appendix II will facilitate the development of a comprehensive view of issues affecting positive ageing and inclusion over the lifetime of the PAIP. Collating the templates over the five years of the plan will feed timely evidence into other, related planning processes. It will also provide a clear picture of the efficacy of the PAIP actions over time. Areas of deviance (for example, perhaps, an increase in international citizens settling in the Shire, or shifts in usage and acceptance of digital communication to enhance service delivery) will be visible and ready for inclusion in the next PAIP planning cycle.

Appendix V Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census: population by age cohort

**Hindmarsh Shire ABS 2011 Census: population by age cohort**



The two statistically significant central population anomalies are clearly demonstrated in this graph.

	0 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 29	30 to 34	35 to 39	40 to 44	45 to 49	50 to 54	55 to 59	60 to 64	65 to 69	70 to 74	75 to 79	80 to 84	85 +
■ Hindmarsh %	5.1	6.2	6.5	6.3	3.7	4	3.8	5.2	5.7	6.9	8	7.2	6.8	6.2	5.1	4.5	3.9	4.7
■ Victoria %	6.4	6.1	6.1	6.5	7	7.3	7	7.2	7.3	7	6.6	5.9	5.5	4.2	3.3	2.6	2.1	2
■ Australia %	6.6	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.8	7	6.8	7.1	7.2	7	6.7	6	5.6	4.3	3.3	2.5	2	1.9

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**Consulting for rural communities**