



*Living as a senior in Launceston*

# Living as a Senior in Launceston Framework and Action Plan: 2013-2015

## The Framework

In early 2013 the Launceston City Council consulted with individuals, groups and service providers on what 'living as a senior in Launceston' means. We asked how people participate in their community, what makes it easier and what presents challenges to them as they grow older. We also asked for feedback on how people use Council services and facilities and what we could do differently to ensure that people continue to enjoy a great quality of life in their senior years. The *Living as a Senior in Launceston Framework and Action Plan* is the outcome of our findings.

### 1. *Living Healthy Lifestyles*

#### **What we heard:**

People told us that staying mentally and physically active and maintaining health and wellbeing are the most important elements of 'living as a senior'. Things such as interaction with family and friends, being physically active through recreation, leisure and cultural activities, and participating in community events, are all important ways that people maintain their health and wellbeing. However, we also heard that for many people maintaining health and fitness presents a challenge.

#### **What we are already doing:**

A number of the services and facilities that respondents told us we are doing well facilitate health and wellbeing. These include:

- Museum and Art Gallery
- Major Parks (ie City Park, Cataract Gorge, etc)
- Launceston Aquatic Centre
- Neighbourhood Parks
- Walking Tracks and Bicycle Paths
- Adult exercise equipment and Active Launceston programs.

#### **What we need to do now:**

- 1.1 Continue to ask seniors about their health and wellbeing needs.
- 1.2 Identify opportunities to partner with service providers to deliver programs focussed on the mental and physical wellbeing of people living as seniors in our community.
- 1.3 Make information available about opportunities and how to access programs that support the mental and physical wellbeing of people living as a senior in Launceston.



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## **2. Participating in the Community**

### **What we heard**

People told us that community participation, quality of life and living life to the full are all important characteristics of living positively as a senior. The lifestyle advantages of northern Tasmania, volunteering, participating in community events, clubs and interest groups, and interaction with family and friends are all ways in which people participate within their community. However, some people find that living alone, lack of transport options, safety concerns and community attitudes about seniors were challenges that can make it more difficult for seniors to participate in community life.

### **What we are already doing:**

People told us that Launceston City Council is doing well at providing spaces and facilities for people to gather and enjoy the lifestyle benefits of living in the region. The following activities also provide opportunities for participation:

- Volunteer programs
- Active Launceston
- Launceston Aquatic Activities program
- Free community events
- Sponsorship of a diverse events calendar
- Launceston Safer Communities Partnership
- Connected Communities program (new initiative)

### **What we need to do now:**

- 2.1 Provide opportunities for seniors to meet informally and interact with others.
- 2.2 Provide information about interest groups, programs and events that enable seniors to actively engage within the community.
- 2.3 Promote the Tiger Bus service and timetable information through seniors and community service providers.

## **3. Accessing Services and Information**

### **What we heard:**

Access to services and to information about those services is one of the key factors that people told us had an impact on how they enjoy life as they grow older. Many comments on this topic related to access to health and welfare services. Some comments related to trying to work out what is available, quality of delivery and accessing (or getting to) services. Although many respondents told us that they enjoyed good access to the services they needed, there were also a high percentage of people who experience difficulty accessing the services they need and want.



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## What we are already doing:

Local Government does not have primary responsibility for delivering most health or welfare services. However, it does have a role to play in advocacy at the political level, distribution of information, and partnering with service providers where there are perceived gaps in service delivery that are not otherwise feasible to deliver. Some of the things we are doing to facilitate access to support services for seniors include:

- Access Advisory Committee
- Tiger Bus free city transport service
- Access to free parking vouchers for pensioners (Elizabeth Street, Paterson West and Paterson East car parks)
- Accessible parking bays at key locations in the CBD
- Free parking after 3.30pm in the Paterson Street multi-storey carparks

## What we need to do now:

- 3.1 Continue to ask seniors what information they want and how they want to receive it.
- 3.2 Provide opportunities for seniors to learn about the range of services and facilities provided by the Council.
- 3.3 Provide opportunities for service providers to distribute information about their services to seniors living in Launceston.

## 4. *Planning for Financial Security*

### What we heard:

Lifestyle and living independently are important to people as they grow older, rating highly on our surveys and facilitated discussions. However, there were a number of challenges identified that restricted the ability to enjoy those things, many of which related to financial security. Affordability and Financial and Economic Security were the second and third most highly rated challenges after maintaining health and fitness. Concerns included the challenge faced by independent retirees who, although on limited incomes, were ineligible for many concessions. Some people felt that they didn't have sufficient information to be able to plan for financial security as they exited the workforce. Others found it difficult to participate fully in community events and programs because of the cost of participation, which is sometimes not subsidised for Seniors Card holders, or is still beyond their financial capacity.



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## What we are already doing:

- Free Tiger Bus service in the city
- Parking vouchers for pensioners (Elizabeth Street, Paterson West and Paterson East car parks)
- Rates remissions for pensioners
- Tip vouchers for pensioners
- Free Music in the Park concert series in City Park in January
- Free organ recital in Albert Hall annually
- Free exhibitions at QVMAG Museum and Art Gallery

## What we need to do now:

- 4.1 Review the Council's concessions programs to consider whether concessions could feasibly be extended to all seniors.
- 4.2 Investigate existing programs and potential to partner on the delivery of free information to help seniors to plan for financial security.

## The Action Plan

Action	Link to Framework	Timeframe
Host morning tea events for seniors three times per year.	Participating in the Community - 2.1 Accessing Services and Information - 3.2, 3.3	Commencing October 2013
Conduct regular surveys to ask Seniors what information they seek.	Living Healthy Lifestyles - 1.1 Participating in the Community - 2.2 Accessing Services and Information - 3.1	Commencing October 2013
Develop a 'Living as a Senior' Newsletter for distribution three times per year.	Participating in the Community - 2.2, 2.3 Living Healthy Lifestyles - 1.3 Accessing Services and Information - 3.3 Planning for Financial Security - 4.2	Commencing March 2014
Review Council's concessions programs.	Planning for Financial Security - 4.1	March 2015
Investigate options to partner with service providers and source funding to deliver programs that meet the needs of Seniors.	Living Healthy Lifestyles - 1.2 Planning for Financial Security - 4.2	June 2015