



Creating Age Friendly Environments

A resource for developers, designers, engineers, project managers, planners and architects.

Background

There is growing recognition across all spheres of government that the ageing of Australia's population will necessitate many policy and planning shifts. Creating age friendly environments is about future proofing our infrastructure and it has to be done now to support the anticipated demographic changes as we approach 2030 when twenty-five percent of the population will be aged 65 and over.

Age friendly design supports active living, good health and social connectedness for all ages. For example, well lit and maintained public spaces are welcoming, promote safety and encourage more active lifestyles; transport that is accessible allows all people, young and old, to remain linked to social networks, services and employment; and something as basic as a well maintained footpath can promote prolonged mobility for older people (*Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities: World Health Organisation*).

"One of the determinants of active ageing is the physical environment."

World Health Organisation

A holistic approach to planning for an ageing population through good urban planning and design, housing design and transport will contribute to the mobility, participation, social inclusion and well being of people of all ages and abilities.

When buying or building a new home consumers are starting to think about age friendly design- Will my parents be able to visit and stay? Will I be able to stay here as I age? According to the ABS 41% of 65-69 year olds and 92% of those aged 90 years and over reported some kind of disability¹. That is why it is becoming increasingly important to design homes and public spaces that are accessible or can easily be adapted if and when the need arises.

Three key areas that need to be addressed in bringing about Age Friendly Environments are **Transport, Urban Planning and Design** and **Housing**. COTA NSW and our partners² have assembled this fact sheet to pull together the available resources in these three key areas to bring this scenario into sharper focus.

Please contact us if you need help in accessing age friendly resources or to share your insights on creating age friendly environments.

A Call to Action for developers, designers, engineers, project managers, planners and architects to utilise existing resources and consider the merits of creating age friendly environments now.

TRANSPORT

Transport that is accessible allows all people to remain linked in with social networks, services and employment. Transport is the linchpin of holistic planning, an essential ingredient of social inclusion and an enabler connecting communities to housing, health, social activities and employment. This is

¹ 4430.0 - Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2003

² COTA NSW's Age Friendly Environments Working Group has representatives from Faculty of the Built Environment, UNSW, NRMA, Local Government and Shires Associations, Alzheimer's Australia NSW, Benevolent Society Apartments for Life, Independent Living Centre NSW, Housing NSW, Waverly Council, Marrickville Council, Sydney City Council, Wyong Shire Council, People with Disabilities, the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse and consumers.

acknowledged in the inclusion of Disability Standards for Access to Public Transport in the Australian Government's Disability Discrimination Act, which provides time frames for progressive improvement in accessibility of public transport conveyances, infrastructure and premises. These are currently under review.

Integrating reliable, safe and accessible public, private and community transport is essential to developing liveable and sustainable communities.

The challenges in transport planning in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas including considering space for mobility scooters, accessible transport and safety standards, and the integration of public, community and private transport.

Links

Western Sydney Community Forum Transport Development Project

www.wscf.org.au/index.php/home/western_sydney_regional_transport_development_project

Community Transport Organisation www.cto.org.au/

Planning Institute of Australia Transport Planning Chapter

www.planning.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=218&Itemid=209

Transport planning in NSW www.transport.nsw.gov.au/abouttrans/planners.html

Active Transport Planners Toolkit www.transport.nsw.gov.au/abouttrans/planners-toolkit.html

Planning guidelines for walking and cycling

www.planning.nsw.gov.au/plansforaction/pdf/guide_pages.pdf

How to prepare a pedestrian access and mobility plan

www.rta.nsw.gov.au/doingbusinesswithus/downloads/technicalmanuals/mobility-plan_how-to.pdf

Promoting Active Transport www.nphp.gov.au/publications/sigpah/active.pdf

Transport Data Centre www.transport.nsw.gov.au/tdc/

Austroads www.austroads.com.au/

Country Transport Resources Link www.transport.nsw.gov.au/countryresource/

Local and Community Transport www.transport.nsw.gov.au/lact/

URBAN PLANNING & DESIGN

The World Health Organisation has developed excellent resources; they include the Global Age Friendly Cities Guide and the Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities.

The World Health Organisation's *Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities* states that footpaths should be 'well maintained, free of obstructions and reserved for pedestrians' as well as 'non-slip and wide enough for wheel chairs'³. Whether in a large city or a small country town these standards promote prolonged mobility for older people. Well lit and maintained public spaces are welcoming and promote safety and opportunities for active lifestyles

Missed Business is a guide developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission and Marrickville Council. It aims to provide small businesses with information on how they can make their businesses more accessible to all their customers, particularly people with disabilities.

³ World Health Organisation, 2007, *Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities*.

The Draft Access to Premises Standard has elevated the bar around accessible buildings as a result of the recent *Access all Areas* report.

The Premier's Council for Active Living (PCAL) aims to build and strengthen the physical and social environments in which communities engage in active living. The PCAL website offers a range of useful resources including evidence papers, planning and design guidelines.

The Australian Government's *Healthy Spaces and Places* planning principles, in partnership with Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) has great potential to deliver social, economic and health returns through better planning of our built environments

Links

Age Friendly Cities Guide

www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf

Age Friendly Cities Checklist www.who.int/ageing/publications/Age_friendly_cities_checklist.pdf

Designing an Age Friendly Public Domain www.ifa-fiv.org/attachments/192_John%20Evernden%20-%20Age%20Friendly%20Domain.pdf

Missed Business

www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/buildings/missed_business/downloads/missedbusiness_generic.pdf

Draft Access to premises Standard www.ag.gov.au/premisesstandards

Access All Areas Report

www.aph.gov.au/House/committee/laca/disabilitystandards/report/Full_Report.pdf

PCAL resources www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/resources

PCAL Evidence papers www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/resources/evidence_papers

Planning and design guidelines www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/planning_and_design_guidelines

Healthy Spaces www.healthyplaces.org.au/site/index.php

Age Friendly Built Environments

www.alga.asn.au/policy/healthAgeing/ageing/resources/publications/Agfriendly_built_environment_paper.pdf

Street Design Guidelines www.landcom.com/downloads/file/forpartners/StreetDesignGuidelines.pdf

Built Form Design Guidelines

[www.landcom.com.au/downloads/uploaded/FINAL_Built_Form_Design_Guidelines_Fact_Sheet\(2\)_1342_796c.pdf](http://www.landcom.com.au/downloads/uploaded/FINAL_Built_Form_Design_Guidelines_Fact_Sheet(2)_1342_796c.pdf)

Open Space Design Guidelines

www.landcom.com.au/downloads/uploaded/FINAL_Open%20Space%20Design%20Guidelines%20Fact%20Sheet_c5db_267d.pdf

HOUSING

Older people value housing that allows them to age in place and remain in familiar environments. Applying accessible design principles to the design of buildings and public spaces at the start will be far more cost effective than retrofitting.

Cambridge University (UK) Engineering Design Centre has developed the 'Inclusive Design Toolkit'. The web version includes a section on user capabilities which shows how the population data and design guidance for each capability should be interpreted. The Australian Local Government

Association (ALGA) has also produced a suite of resources for local councils in age friendly planning and design.

Links

Inclusive Design Toolkit www.inclusivedesigntoolkit.com/betterdesign/usercap/

Inclusive Design www-edc.eng.cam.ac.uk/research/inclusivedesign/

Ageing in Place – Implications for Local Government

www.alga.asn.au/policy/healthAgeing/ageing/resources/publications/AgeingInPlace.pdf

NSW Housing Code

www.planning.nsw.gov.au/PlanningSystem/ImprovingthePlanningSystem/NSWHousingCode/tabid/102/Default.aspx

Home Modifications

Ageing in place has implications for accessibility in the home, at some point people need to consider whether modifying their home is better than moving to a more accessible space. A good starting point for home modification and downsizing is the Home Modifications Clearinghouse with a central repository and range of resources and publications.

Links

Modify or Move www.homemods.info/files/2008_Modify%20or%20Move_Final.pdf

Home Modifications Fact Sheet www.homemods.info/files/HACChomemodsfactsheet.pdf

Home Modifications Library Resource www.homemods.info/resource/bibliography

Home Modifications and Maintenance

www.agedcareaustralia.gov.au/internet/agedcare/Publishing.nsf/Content/Home%20modifications%20and%20maintenance-1

Universal Design

The principles embodied in the Landcom Universal Design Guidelines for new land release packages are paramount. They include 12 Design Guidelines (spatial and structural) that should be utilised. The Housing NSW **Design Requirements** ensure the integration of universal design aspects to meet the needs of older people.

The NSW State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) for housing for seniors or people with a disability has been enhanced with SEPP 65 aiming to improve the design quality of residential flat development.

Links

Landcom Universal Design Guidelines

www.landcom.com.au/downloads/uploaded/FINAL_Universal%20Housing%20Design%20Guidelines%20Fact%20Sheet_6507_740d.pdf

Housing NSW Design Requirements www.housing.nsw.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/8F0943B7-7DE4-4518-BE40-972CB8C2924C/0/DesignRequirementsV6x2x5ipJul09.pdf

SEPP 65 www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Programsservices/DesignQualityProgram/tabid/123/Default.aspx

Case studies in residential flat buildings www.patternbook.nsw.gov.au/

Acknowledgements

COTA NSW wishes to acknowledge Assoc. Prof. Bruce Judd, Visiting Senior Research fellow, City Futures Research Centre, Faculty of the Built Environment, University of NSW; and members of COTA NSW's the Age Friendly Environments Working Group (Faculty of the Built Environment, UNSW, NRMA, Local Government and Shires Associations, Alzheimer's Australia NSW, Benevolent Society Apartments for Life, Independent Living Centre NSW, Housing NSW, Waverly Council, Marrickville Council, Sydney City Council, Wyong Shire Council, People with Disabilities, the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse and consumers.)