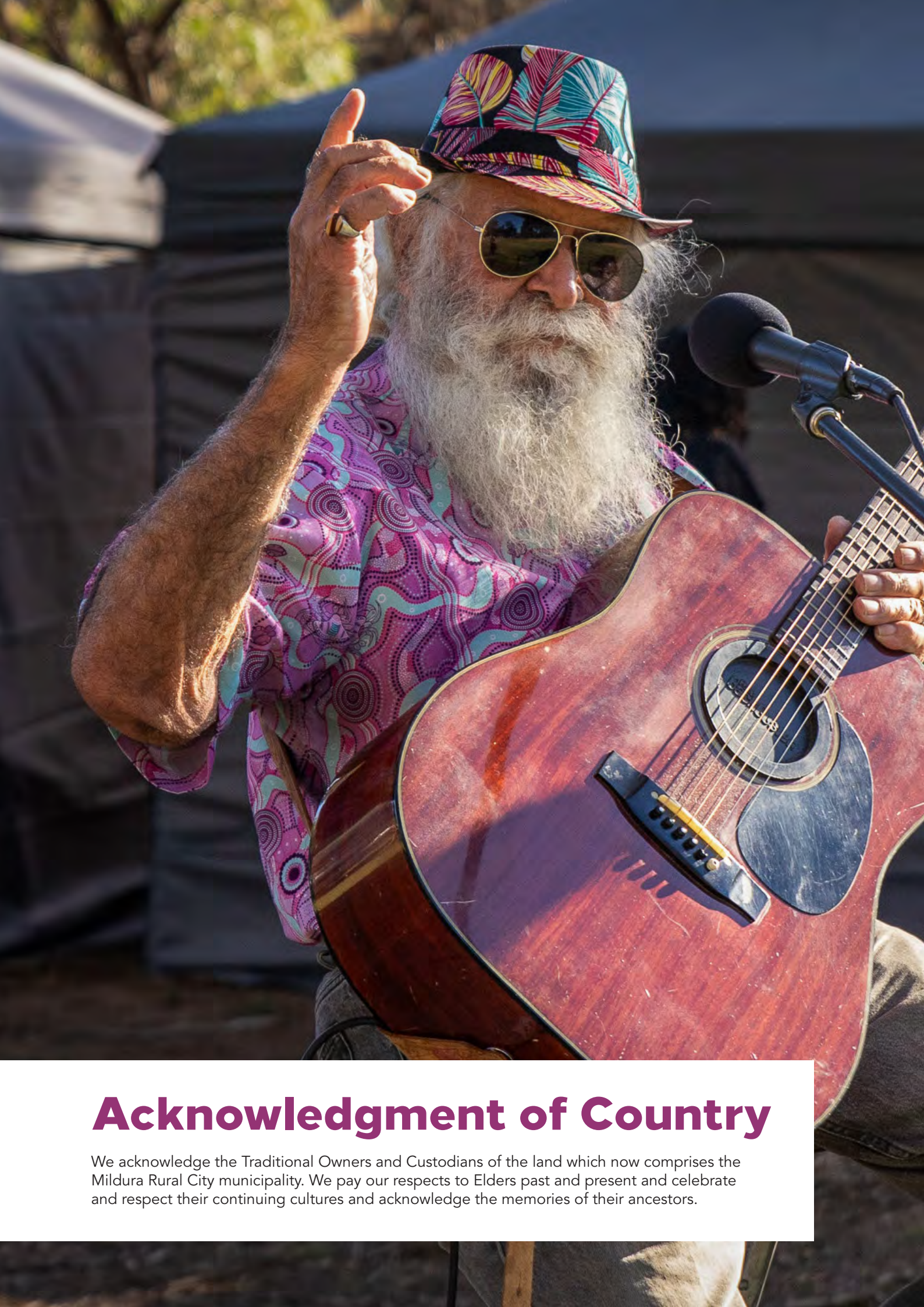
Healthy Ageing Action Plan

2026-2029

Mildura Rural City Council



Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land which now comprises the Mildura Rural City municipality. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate and respect their continuing cultures and acknowledge the memories of their ancestors.

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Alternative Formats:
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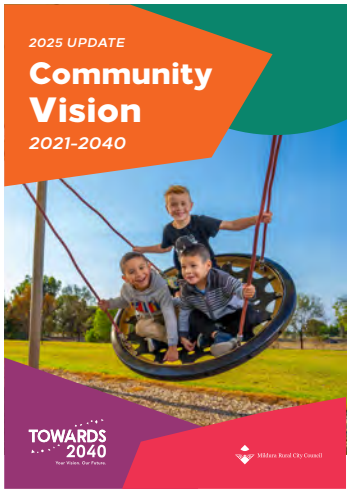
Introduction

It's no secret that our nation has an ageing population, and while the process of ageing can look and feel different to every individual one thing remains the same – we cannot slow down time. Ensuring that our ageing residents live in a community that not only celebrates ageing but strives to create and develop environments that consider our ageing community needs as a priority, is essential.

Mildura Rural City Council is committed to ensuring that our wonderfully diverse ageing residents are highly respected for their capabilities and knowledge, and recognised as valuable contributors to our municipality's past, present and future.

The Healthy Ageing Action Plan is Councils' commitment to strive for positive outcomes that nurture the diversity, desires and needs of our ageing residents and to deliver on Council's strategic priorities as identified in the Community Vision, Council Plan and Community Health and Wellbeing Plan.



Mildura Rural City Council's Community Vision 2021-2024 reflects the community's values and aspiration for diversity equity and inclusion as part of a livable, people-friendly community:

"We value our community's range of identities, lifestyles and experiences, regardless of age, ability, cultural and linguistic background, gender, political perspective or beliefs.

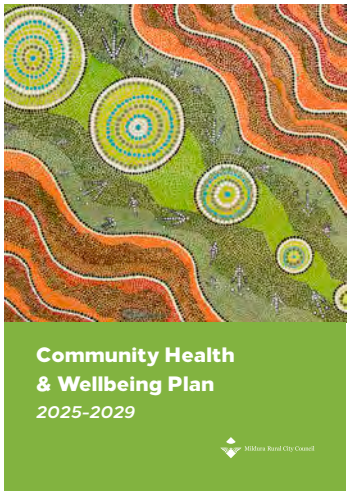
Inclusion and participation remain the key to building a strong community.

We value the need to preserve a person's dignity, while ensuring our community remains open, inviting and accessible to all."

In alignment with the Community Vision, the Council Plan 2025-2029, outlines key outcomes under the theme of Community: We will be a healthy, respectful and connected community. This means:

- Everyone has access to opportunities to participate in the community
- Everyone belongs
- We have diverse community and recreation services

The development of this action plan is identified in the Council plan to contribute to the delivery of these outcomes.



The Healthy Ageing Action Plan also aligns with Council's Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029, particularly:

'Domain 3 – Our community members have the capabilities to participate'. This priority recognises that meaningful participation in community life is essential for health, wellbeing and a sense of belonging in the Mildura municipality.

The Community Health and Wellbeing Plan highlights the importance of ensuring that people of all abilities have equitable opportunities to engage and connect socially, environmentally and intergenerationally.

GOLD IGA LIQUOR
DRIVE THRU

What is Healthy Ageing?

Every person has the right to feel appreciated, respected and enabled to live well later in life.

While this can mean different things to different people, a high quality of living, financial stability, the opportunity to explore hobbies and interests, the ability to spend time with loved ones and community support are the key to ageing well.

As we grow older, our experience of healthy ageing is shaped not only by our personal choices but also by the environments in which we live, the relationships we maintain, and the opportunities available to us. Accessible public spaces, inclusive services, safe and connected neighbourhoods, and opportunities for lifelong learning all play a role in enabling people to live according to their highest values.

In discussions about later life, terms such as positive ageing and ageing well are often used. While these concepts are valuable, this Action Plan adopts the term healthy ageing, reflecting a more holistic focus on overall wellbeing — encompassing physical health, mental and emotional resilience, social connection, and a sense of purpose.

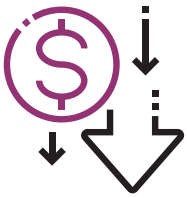
Healthy ageing recognises that ageing is a natural part of life and that with the right supports, environments, and attitudes, people can continue to thrive at every stage.

Older residents in our community

57,169
people residing in the Mildura municipality

18,602
are aged 55+ (32.6%) compared to Victoria 28.3%

Of those



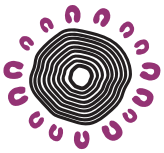
16.6%
provide unpaid caring assistance

16.3%
of people require assistance with activities of daily living compared to 14.8% of the Victorian population aged 55+

9.2%
of people speak a language other than English

32.56%
of people aged 55+ are living with long term health conditions

Over **4,000**
people aged 55+ are living alone



0.5%
of people identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

People over the age of 55 expected to increase from
31.9% in 2021 to **34.18%** in 2046

Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2021

The Mildura municipality has higher rates of older community members compared to the State of Victoria.

With an increasing aging population expected over the next 20 years, the highest rate of growth is expected for residents over 70, with particularly strong growth expected in the 80+ age group.

In 2021, 58 per cent of the Victorian 80+ population were women. As the gap between women's and men's life expectancy narrows, by 2046 the population aged 80 or older is expected to be about 56 per cent female and 44 per cent male.

Women with disabilities experience multiple, intersecting layers of disadvantage such as social exclusion, economic insecurity and high levels of violence and discrimination. Women with disabilities have reduced access to health information, screening, prevention, and care services.

People with low English proficiency, along with experiencing social isolation, can face particular challenges in accessing information and services, including healthcare. For example, language barriers and lack of female interpreters can restrict women's ability to discuss sensitive reproductive health and other personal issues.

Mildura Rural City Council is a vibrant multicultural community, with 79 officially recognised nationalities. Older residents from migrant and refugee backgrounds can face extra challenges in keeping social connections and taking part in community life. This is often the case where there are language and communication barriers. This further reinforces the need for inclusive and culturally responsive approaches to supporting older residents.

Older residents are more likely to live alone, experience chronic health conditions, and require support to remain socially connected and active in community life.

These trends highlight the importance of planning for age-friendly environments, accessible services, and inclusive opportunities that support healthy ageing across the municipality.

Inclusive Ageing for LGBTIQA+ People

Over the past decade our understanding of LGBTIQA+ communities and diversity has grown. This includes greater recognition of how factors such as sexuality, gender identity, intersex status, culture, disability and geography can intersect across a lifespan. Despite this progress, data about LGBTIQA+ people remains limited—particularly in relation to older Australians. There is a notable lack of consistent, localised information about the experiences, health outcomes and service needs of older LGBTIQA+ people, which makes it challenging to fully understand and respond to issues relevant to healthy ageing.

This data gap is more pronounced in regional and rural areas, where smaller populations and reduced visibility can further mask the needs of older LGBTIQA+ residents. Older LGBTIQA+ people often face distinct challenges when engaging with aged care and related services, including concerns about discrimination, a lack of inclusive practices, fear of having to conceal identity, and limited access to culturally safe services. Recognising these challenges, the Healthy Ageing Action Plan 2026-2029 includes older LGBTIQA+ people as a priority population, supporting inclusive and respectful pathways to healthy ageing as we look at addressing data gaps by embedding equity, visibility and inclusion into healthy ageing planning.

Pride in Our Future Victorias LGBTIQA+ Strategy 2022-32.

Aged and Disability Services - Service Review

The Mildura Rural City Council Aged & Disability Services team finalised its transition out of delivering home support services on 30 June 2023 along with 11 other Victorian Councils. The Council decision to exit service delivery was passed at the May 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting following a three-month consultation period with staff, clients and the wider community in the wake of significant aged care industry reforms.

The Mildura Rural City Council commitment to healthy ageing means that Council will continue to work with local partners on areas such as workforce development and supporting healthy ageing through suitable and accessible infrastructure, supporting opportunities for active participation, and engaging with older people to ensure views are considered in all Council decision making.
The Healthy Ageing Action Plan outlines these activities and reflects Council's dedication to supporting our ageing community. A key part of this commitment is the Positive Ageing Facilitator role, which helps bring the plan's vision to life.

Guiding Frameworks for this Plan

The Healthy Ageing Action Plan 2026-2029 is informed by two key frameworks: the World Health Organisation's approach to healthy ageing and the Victorian Government's Ageing Well in Victoria 2022–2026 Action Plan. Both provide evidence-based principles and priorities that guide our local response.

World Health Organization (WHO) Global Age-friendly Communities and Cities: A Guide

The World Health Organization regards active ageing as 'a life-long process shaped by several factors that, alone and acting together, favour health, participation and security in older adult life'. The WHO *Global Age Friendly Cities: A Guide* outlines that a city that is age-friendly encourages active ageing through optimising opportunity for health, participation and security to enhance quality of life as people age.

The guide specifies eight domains of action that were thoroughly explored to indicate a city's age-friendliness:

Through using this WHO framework along with the Ageing Well in Victoria Action Plan, Mildura Rural City Council has formed the structure of the Healthy Ageing Action Plan 2026-2029.

Ageing Well in Victoria

The Ageing Well in Victoria 2022- 2026 Action Plan was developed following the Victorian State Government consultations with older Australians.

Before the coronavirus pandemic, the Commissioner for Seniors Victorians surveyed approximately 5,000 older Victorians. These Victorians were asked what it means to age well, what are the barriers to ageing well and the opportunities to better support ageing well. The outcomes of these questions were released in the 2020 report 'Ageing well in a changing world'. This report details the issues of concern to seniors and opportunities to improve their quality of life, with key challenges identified as:

- financial constraints
- being unprepared for life-changing events
- isolation and loneliness, and
- the impacts of the digital divide on access to information and services.

The Ageing Well in Victoria 2022-2026 Action Plan includes actions to support older Victorians to achieve and live with the following eight attributes of ageing well.

1. A positive attitude
2. Life has purpose and meaning
3. Respected and respectful
4. Connected to family, friends and society
5. In touch with a changing world
6. Safe and secure at home and financially
7. Able to manage health issues including mental health
8. Able to get around

Mildura Rural City Council has adopted these attributes within the Positive Ageing Healthy Ageing Action Plan 2026-2029 to achieve our purpose of enabling an age-friendly community to keep healthy, connected and safe whilst celebrating their diversity.

Our Action Plan

1. A positive attitude

A positive attitude towards life and ageing can provide the ability to better cope and garner enjoyment. Having realistic expectations about abilities and limitations can assist in realigning priorities and promoting an overall optimistic attitude towards daily living.

Outcome	Action	Measure	Time frame	Action owner • Partner
Older residents experience strong social connections and a sense of belonging within the community	Facilitate regular opportunities for social connection through community-based events for older residents including meals and entertainment opportunities	Event evaluations Attendance numbers	Ongoing	Community Partnerships*
Older residents are better informed and supported to navigate the physical, emotional, and practical aspects of ageing	Coordinate and promote free local forums delivered by subject-matter experts on topics relevant to ageing, including road safety, advance care planning, allied health, grief and loss, and hearing health.	Event evaluations Number of forums delivered Topic diversity	Annual	Community Partnerships*
Older residents report positive attitudes towards ageing, with access and opportunity to enjoyable and meaningful community experiences	Deliver an inclusive Seniors Festival program offering a diverse range of free or low-cost activities with a focus on health, wellbeing, and enjoyment	Program Diversity Program evaluation Number of events Number of attendees	Annual	Community Partnerships*

* Mildura Rural City Council team

2. Life has purpose and meaning

The wealth of knowledge, skills, and lived experience held by older community members is a valued community asset and should be recognised, respected, and actively supported. Opportunities to contribute to society, participate in meaningful social roles, and have capabilities acknowledged are essential to ensuring life continues to have purpose and meaning as people age.

Ageing should not result in a reduction of opportunity. Access to employment, volunteering, and lifelong learning should remain available throughout later life, enabling older people to continue contributing in ways that align with their interests, abilities, and aspirations. The ability to exercise choice, participate in decision-making, and shape individual aspirations for living well must be understood and respected.

Outcome	Action	Measure	Time frame	Action owner • Partner
Older residents have access to lifelong learning opportunities that support personal growth, connection, and purpose	Seek and promote collaborative opportunities with education providers and community organisations to support older people's participation in lifelong learning	Number of learning opportunities promoted Number of older people engaged in learning opportunities	Ongoing	Community Partnerships*
Volunteering is recognised and supported as a key contributor to positive ageing, community connection, and wellbeing	Implement MRCC Volunteer Action Plan, including a focus on increasing and supporting positive ageing	Volunteer participation data Volunteer satisfaction measures	Year 1	Community Partnerships*
MRCC demonstrates leadership as an inclusive and age-supportive employer that values the skills, experience, and contribution of older workers	HR Policies are reviewed with respect to the needs of older employees.	Number of HR Policies reviewed	Ongoing	Community Partnerships*

* Mildura Rural City Council team

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3. Respected and respectful

Regardless of personal identity, gender, culture and diversity, every member of the community deserves to feel valued and respected. The opportunity to be heard should not be affected by one's age. Older people should experience tolerance, dignity, and inclusion in all aspects of community life. Intergenerational understanding and collaboration support harmonious communities that value, celebrate, and respect older residents.

Outcome	Action	Measure	Time frame	Action owner • Partner
MRCC community events and initiatives are inclusive of the interests and priorities of older residents	Develop intersectional, inclusive and accessible Event Guidelines to support event organisers to consider and plan events that meet the needs of our diverse communities, including older people.	Guidelines developed	Year 1-2	Community Partnerships* • Economic Development & Tourism*
MRCC fosters an age-friendly and dementia-aware workplace	Support the delivery of training and resources that build staff understanding of age-related needs, including dementia awareness, and promote inclusive workplace practices	Training provided Resources shared Increased awareness of age-friendly and dementia friendly practices	Year 1-3	Community Partnerships* • Dementia Australia
Older community members feel respected and included regardless of personal identity, culture, gender, or diversity	Support MRCC Community Wellbeing initiatives and events that apply an inclusive ageing lens and reflect the diversity of older residents, including LGBTIQA+ seniors	Participation of diverse older community members Inclusive practice adopted within program delivery	Annual	Community Partnerships* • Val's LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care

* Mildura Rural City Council team

4. Connected to family, friends and society

Having meaningful connections in one's life (particularly social and personal) promotes fulfillment, purpose and longevity. Being able to partake in activities of interest, having places to meet and connect with others as well as having access to support provides the foundation for feeling safe and meaningfully connected to family, friends and society.

Outcome	Action	Measure	Time frame	Action owner • Partner
Local Senior Citizen Clubs feel supported and provide valuable social community connections	Regular liaison between MRCC and Seniors Clubs across the municipality, providing guidance, advice, and support as required, including attendance at AGMs upon request and coordination of facility-related matters	Senior Citizen Clubs level of satisfaction with Council support	Ongoing	Community Partnerships* • Facilities & Assets* • Parks and Recreation*
Older residents and the wider community have increased awareness of supports available to address elder abuse, family violence, and related risks	Facilitate professional and community education sessions - with resources - on seniors' rights, elder abuse, and family violence, in collaboration with specialist services, and promote sessions through Council communication channels and community events	Number of sessions delivered Evaluation of sessions Number of attendees	Annual	Community Partnerships* • Mallee Family Care Community Legal Centre • Seniors Rights Vic

* Mildura Rural City Council team

5. In touch with a changing world

Having meaningful connections in one's life particularly social and personal provides fulfillment, purpose and longevity. Staying informed, connected, and confident navigating change supports independence, inclusion, and wellbeing as people age. Being able to partake in activities of interest, having places to meet and connect with others as well as having access to support provides the foundation for feeling safe and meaningfully connected to family, friends and society. Access to clear, age-friendly communication, and opportunities to build digital skills enables older people to remain engaged and make informed decisions as their needs evolve.

Outcome	Action	Measure	Time frame	Action owner • Partner
Older residents are aware of services, supports, and planning options available as their needs change.	Coordinate the sharing of healthy ageing, aged care, and dementia-related information through relevant networks in collaboration with state and peak organisations	Information shared through networks	Ongoing	Community Partnerships*
Older residents can access information through both digital and non-digital channels that are age-friendly and inclusive.	Support the provision of digital, hard-copy and face-to-face information sharing for forums, events, and services with distribution through community locations and partners.	Availability of printed materials	Ongoing	Community Partnerships* • Communications*
Older residents have access to a clear, inclusive local information resource focused on wellbeing and community connection.	Develop a collaborative Community Wellbeing Positive Ageing A3 size calendar that promotes services, events and supports for older residents and the broader community Content has a focus on key stakeholders, agencies, customers and the wider community	Calendar produced and distributed , and annually reviewed	Annual	Community Partnerships*
Older residents have opportunities to build confidence and skills using technology.	Explore opportunities to collaborate with MRCC Libraries & Knowledge Hubs to promote and support digital literacy initiatives for older residents.	Programs promoted	Ongoing	Community Partnerships* • Libraries & Knowledge Hubs*

* Mildura Rural City Council team

6. Safe and secure at home and financially

Every person deserves the right to feel safe and secure as they age. Having appropriate housing, the ability to manage the cost of living and feeling safe within one's home and community are key components of positive ageing. Older people should feel empowered to undertake life planning and have their decisions respected. Access to affordable housing, utilities, financial guidance, life planning resources, and safety initiatives strengthens independence, confidence, and positive ageing. Pathways to free and low-cost activities including staying safe initiatives should be available.

Outcome	Action	Measure	Time frame	Action owner • Partner
Older residents have support and access to housing, affordable accommodation, and utility cost assistance	Collaborate with local housing providers and include them in ACPAN to share housing information and opportunities with older residents	Local housing provider participation in ACPAN meetings and information sharing Number of housing resources shared	Ongoing	Community Partnerships*
Older residents can access information and support for life planning and long-term decision-making	Partner with Community Legal Services to deliver forums and information sessions on life planning, financial support, powers of attorney, wills, and legal rights	Number of sessions delivered Evaluation of sessions	Annual	Community Partnerships* • Mallee Family Care Community Legal Centre
Older residents feel safe at home and in their communities, including protection from scams and personal safety risks	Explore collaboration with local law enforcement and other specialist networks to deliver safety initiatives, including scams awareness and personal safety forums, and provide supporting hard-copy information	Number of initiatives delivered	Annual	Community Partnerships* • Victorian Police • Mallee Family Care Community Legal Centre

* Mildura Rural City Council team

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7. Able to manage health issues including mental health

The ability to access services and support to better manage health concerns is crucial in having a positive outlook towards life. It is empowering to be able to actively manage one's health concerns, including mental health, while having those needs recognised and supported. Maintaining good nutrition and regular physical activity provides the foundation for healthy ageing. Keeping active supports muscle strength, mobility, and independence, which can decline with age, while eating well helps protect against a range of health issues and can also improve brain function. Social engagement and mental health support further contribute to overall wellbeing and positive ageing outcomes.

Outcome	Action	Measure	Time frame	Action owner • Partner
Older residents are informed and supported to access aged care services and are kept up to date with aged care reforms	Facilitate Aged Care Navigation forums in collaboration with key network stakeholders, covering pathways to aged care including allied health services, dietitians, falls prevention, hydrotherapy and mental health support	Number of forums delivered Attendance numbers Forum evaluations	Annual	Community Partnerships* • ACPAN
Older residents have access to affordable health and fitness facilities and programs	Explore opportunities with stakeholders to provide dedicated senior community health and fitness spaces and programs, at low/no cost	No of affordable health and fitness initiatives identified or implemented	Ongoing	Community Partnerships*
Local community mental health services have a lens on healthy ageing and are included in future age-related planning and development initiatives	Key network stakeholders in local mental health and support services and organisations are invited to ACPAN, forums, and other initiatives to encourage inclusion of ageing-focused planning and collaboration	Number of stakeholders engaged	Ongoing	Community Partnerships* • Local mental health organisations

* Mildura Rural City Council team

8. Able to get around

It is important for people to grow older in an environment that has been built age-friendly. This includes considerations given to infrastructure such as footpaths and pedestrian crossings being suitable for mobility aids, that parking access is safe and inclusive of older residents, carers and those with disabilities, and that cost effective community transport services are available. The ability to get around and navigate one's community environment regardless of age and ability is a fundamental to maintaining independence and healthy ageing.

Outcome	Action	Measure	Time frame	Action owner • Partner
Older residents have access to cost-effective local transport services	Engage with local transport services and include them in ACPAN with a focus on information sharing and including wider senior community in transport initiatives and support	Transport services attending ACPAN Transport resources shared	Ongoing	Community Partnerships* • Sunassist
Local spaces and places are designed and maintained to support safe mobility for older residents	Review current processes to consider if there are further ways to embed age-friendly principles in the design of new or upgraded facilities, parks and public spaces.	Review completed – opportunities for improvement implemented or identified for future action.	Year 1	Community Partnerships* • Engineering Development and Delivery* • Parks and Recreation* • Facilities and Assets*
Older residents are kept informed about road safety, local laws, driver education and alternative modes of transport	Collaborate with RoadSafe Mildura and other stakeholders to deliver forums that address road rules, driver education, parking, occupational therapy guidance and alternative modes of transport	Number of forums delivered Attendance numbers Forum evaluations	Annual	Community Partnerships* • RoadSafe Mildura • Victoria Police • Sunraysia Community Health Service • Vision Australia • Dementia Australia • Country Care Group

* Mildura Rural City Council team

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Monitoring and Evaluation of our Progress

To ensure successful implementation of the Healthy Ageing Action Plan we must monitor and evaluate its progress. To do this objectively we will rely on post event evaluations and reflections, lean on relevant data sources as well as direct feedback from participants and community members.

Our progress with this plan will be reported on within the Community Partnerships Branch Plan and Council Annual Plan. These reporting foundations will ensure the actions within this plan are held accountable and progress to achievement.

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