



# Seniors Participation and Care Plan 2008-2012



Adopted by Council on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2008

# Northern Grampians Shire Council SENIORS PARTICIPATION AND CARE PLAN 2008-2012

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## **Foreword:**

For many of our older residents the prospect of retirement has quite some appeal, with its prospects of time to enjoy family and grandchildren, the chance to travel, the time to devote to long-neglected interests and the chance to catch up with old friends. It is also a time of some apprehension at the contemplation of the frailty, ill health and financial insecurity which often accompany the concluding years of life's journey.

In this plan we have identified the extent to which our population is aging, and the task which lies ahead for both the Council and other agencies in providing opportunities for an active and well serviced ageing population, and the care and welfare of those who are frail, unwell or disabled.

You will see in the plan that the current health status in our region is not good, with cardiovascular disease, dementia, cancer, diabetes and other diseases at unacceptably high levels. Many of these problems can be avoided by lifestyle changes and the plan offers alternatives by which older people can enjoy a healthier, more active and ultimately fulfilling life.

But whilst it is important that Council plan for the upsurge in the number of older people, it is crucially important that in so doing the aged remain as valued members of the wider community and are not relegated to secondary status. The wisdom and serenity of our older residents combined with the energy and enthusiasm of our younger people must remain the keystone of our diverse communities.

Bryan Small,  
Mayor.



## **Acknowledgments**

The Northern Grampians Shire Council Aged Care Plan was developed by Council Officers based on research, consultation with key service providers Stawell Regional Health, Grampians Community Health Centre, Villa-Maria, East Wimmera Health, Benetas, Eventide and the community.

## **1. WHY HAVE A COUNCIL SENIORS PARTICIPATION & CARE PLAN?**

The Northern Grampians Shire Council takes a receptive approach to the provision and development of quality aged care services. Council and the community must continue to respond to the changing demands through innovative programs that promote active, positive ageing and community participation. The concept of active ageing recognises that seniors have a great deal to contribute and much to gain by participating fully in recreational pursuits, cultural activities and broader community life.

There is a well defined change in the demographics of the Australian population. The Northern Grampians Shire has a low median age compared to neighbouring Shires, however the impact of an ageing population and of baby boomers who will demand more from services must be considered in planning to support the Shire's ageing population.

Can existing service delivery models and approaches to aged care adapt to the demands of an increasingly active, informed and sophisticated generation of an aged community? The Federal and State governments have defined that the delivery of aged care services will involve a greater emphasis on active living programs; other outcomes could include placing a greater emphasis on assisting people through better assessment and practical home alterations. Programs such as community meal groups and organised intergenerational and volunteering activities can play a crucial role in supporting and engaging seniors. A focus on neighbourhood activities and fostering a sense of strong local community can provide a sense of belonging.

This plan is informed by Council's research, discussion and comprehensive engagement with service providers, the community and staff from across Council.

### **1.1 Council Plan 2008 - 2012**

The Council Plan is the key document that guides Council's strategic direction over a four year cycle. It outlines the strategies that will be undertaken to ensure Northern Grampians Shire Council achieves the visions outlined in the plan.

#### **Our Core Values**

#### **Northern Grampians Shire Council is committed to:**

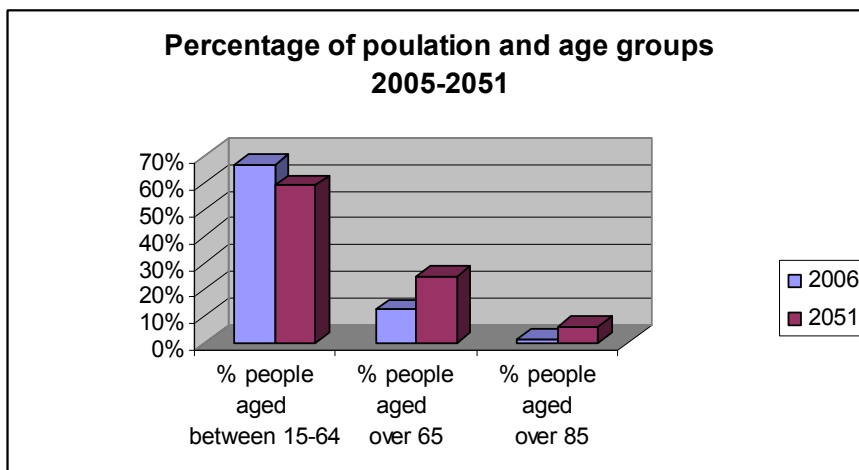
- Delivery of services that support our community now and into the future
- Accountability to our community and stakeholders underpinned by ethics and integrity
- Engagement of community members and involvement in key decisions
- Encouragement of leadership, innovation and initiative
- Communicating and reporting on our achievements and services
- Reviewing our performance and continually seeking to improve our service delivery

The Council plan identifies that a key opportunity is in planning for growing, safe, and vibrant communities ensuring the engagement of communities to give long term sustainability by ensuring that we plan with the community for a sustainable future, and to assist the communities achieve their aspirations and priorities. An outcome of this is to support the needs of an aging population

The Council Plan commits the Northern Grampians Shire Council to undertake and action the appropriate planning for aged services in the Northern Grampians Shire

## 1.2 Demographics

Australia's population is ageing and the evidence for this demographic change is undeniable. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the aging population change is as a result of falling fertility, increasing life expectancy and the effect of the 'baby boomer' generation moving through older age groups. This has contributed to an increase in the number and proportion of people aged over 65 years. It is expected that this trend will grow over the coming decades:



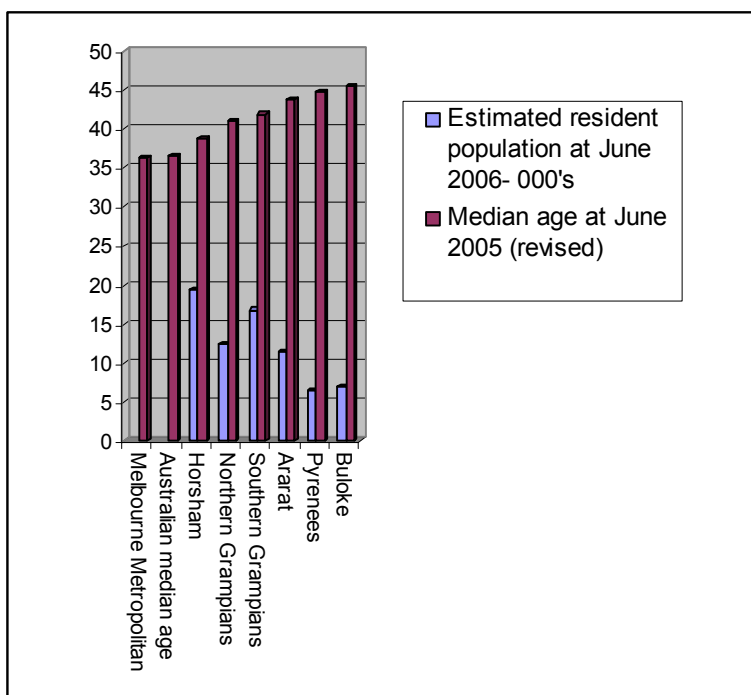
The consequence is that the worldwide trend towards population ageing will dominate the political landscape over the next 50 years, affecting the health and socioeconomic development of all regions, and impact on Community services ability to implement appropriate services<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Inland non-metropolitan areas***

The ABS<sup>2</sup> identifies that non-metropolitan regions in Australia have older populations than metropolitan regions overall. Many of the 'older' inland areas (those areas with at least 16% of their population aged 65 years and over) were located in the wheat-sheep belt to the west of the Great Dividing Range, extending from west of Spencer Gulf in South Australia, across to western Victoria (particularly surrounding Horsham), and along the Murray River into New South Wales.

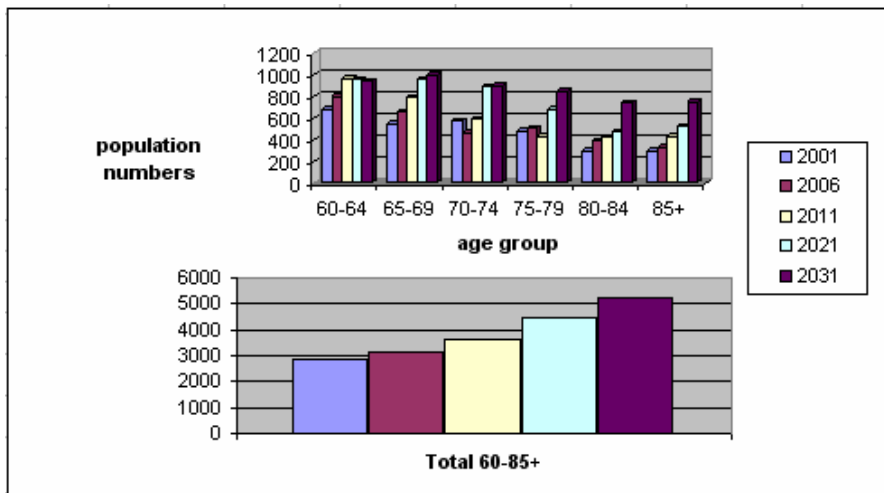
### ***Comparison with neighbouring LGA's on Population Estimate and Median Age<sup>3</sup>***

The median age is the age at which half the population is older and half is younger. The change in the age structure of Australia's population over time is illustrated by the change in the median age. To demonstrate this, in 1971 the median age was 27.6; 30.8 years in 1985; and 36.6 years in 2005. In 2021, the median age of Australia's population is projected to increase to between 39.9 and 41.7 years.



Predictions for the Northern Grampians Shire population, from 2001-2031 are a demonstration not only of the trend to the Northern Grampians population becoming older, but also the life expectancy improvements. The number of people expected to be over the current retirement age in 2031 will have risen by around 45% since 2006, although

the total population for the shire is predicted to rise by only 0.5%.<sup>8</sup>

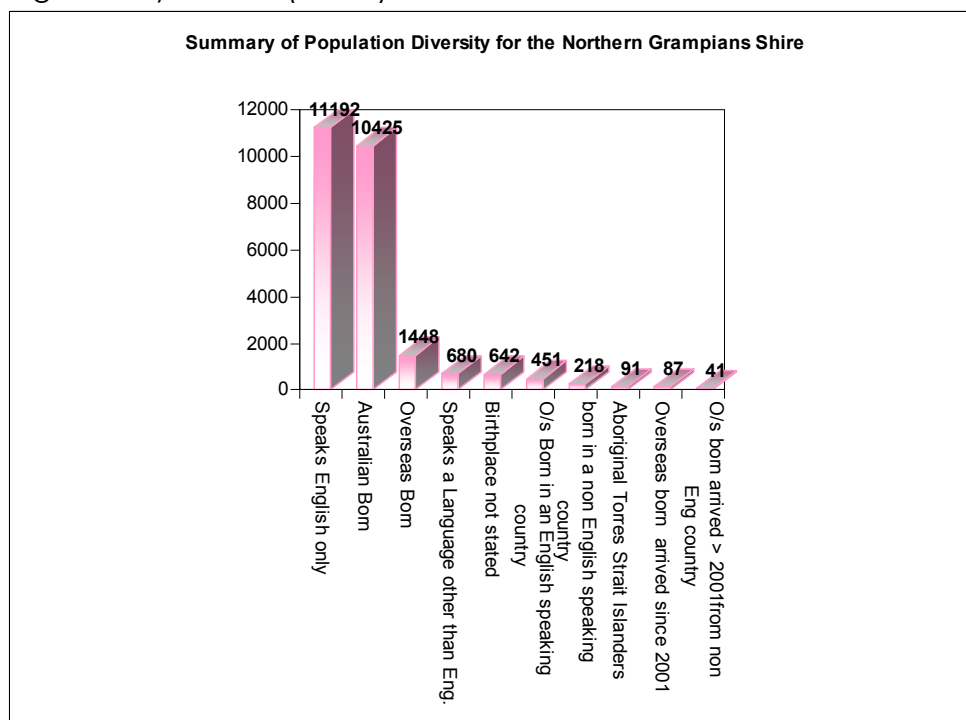


Life expectancy of 65 year olds increased from 14 years for males and 18 years for females in 1983, to 18 years for males and 21 years for females in 2002-04.<sup>4</sup> The increase in life expectancy for older persons has implications for retirement planning and income policies.

### Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities

Australia is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse countries in the world with around 22% of the population born overseas. Northern Grampians Shire in comparison has a relatively low ethnic background, around 6%. Despite this, Council recognises the importance of equal access to services and information for all people, regardless of their cultural and ethnic background.

In developing strategies for the future of aged care for the Shire it is important to cater for all potential demographics to ensure that the Shire remains an attractive and supportive community. This includes implementing strategies to meet the needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census Community Profile Series : Northern Grampians (S) (Local Government Area) Place of Enumeration Profile - Northern Grampians

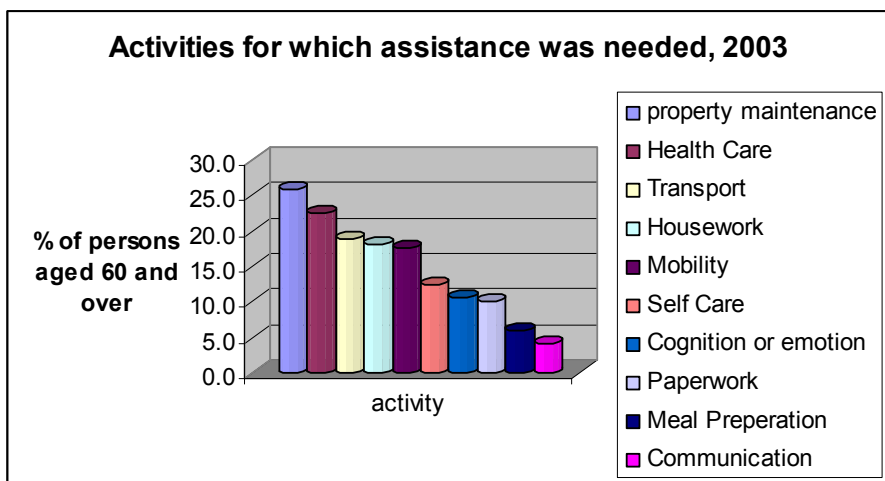
## Health Status

Life expectancy for men and women in the Grampians Pyrenees catchment is markedly lower than the rest of Victoria, with men lowest. Burden of disease data for the Grampians region as a whole shows poorer health than other parts of the state, and suggests specific health inequalities in the Grampians Pyrenees region. The major causes of death in the Grampians Pyrenees sub-region are cardiovascular disease, cancer and injuries, reflecting both state and national patterns. The top ranked diseases contributing to the disability burden are *heart disease, dementia, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cancers, diabetes and depression*. The disease profile is consistent with an ageing population, but rates of Cardio Vascular Disease for men and women, and cancer rates for women, are of particular concern. Physical inactivity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and low dietary intake of fruit and vegetables are significant risk factors for ill health in the Grampians region for both men and women. Male smoking rates in the region are high. Aboriginal health status in the Grampians Pyrenees area is reported by service providers to be lower than that of non-indigenous residents, again consistent with state and national profiles.<sup>6</sup>

### 1.3 Service Needs

#### **Types of service required.**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2003<sup>9</sup> identified that older people living in households most commonly reported needing assistance with property maintenance and health care because of disability or age. Other common areas of need were transport, housework, mobility and self care. Each of these key activities identified are currently obtainable from services available within the Northern Grampians Shire.



**Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2003**

#### **Government Funded HACC program**

HACC services, funded approximately equally by the Commonwealth and State Governments with contributions by local government, are provided primarily to help people who would otherwise be prematurely or inappropriately admitted to residential care, enabling them to live independently in their own home and the community. People can self refer to HACC services, or are referred by family and health professionals, making it easy for people to be assessed for a service.

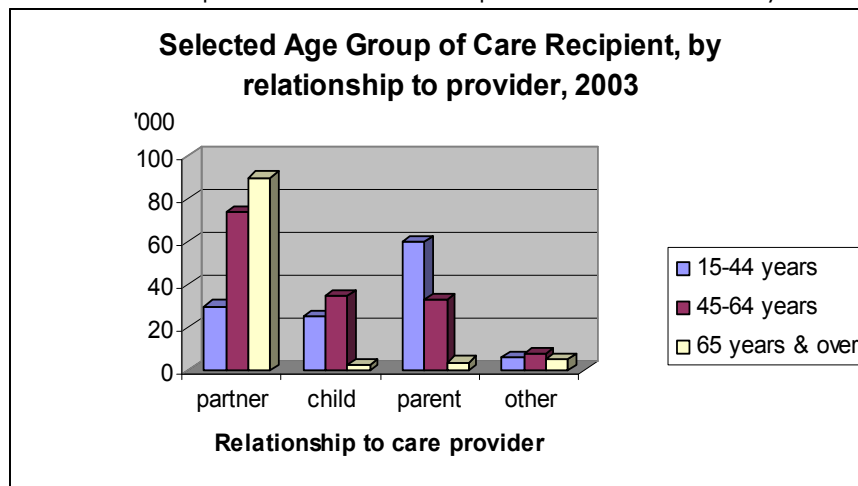


## Caring for people in the Community

*"In 1998, three-quarters of carers lived in the same household as the person for whom they provided care".<sup>5</sup>*

The shift to caring for older people and people with a disability in the community depends on the availability of informal carers to take on a caring role. With the trend away from residential care and the consequent increased emphasis on community care, informal carers such as family members, friends and neighbours are becoming an increasingly important source of assistance for older people to remain living in their own home.

Caring for family and friends can affect carers financially, physically and emotionally, and may impact on their capacity



Source: Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2003 ABS cat. No.4430.0

to pursue education, employment, social and leisure opportunities. The majority of carers are the partners of the care recipients or the person's parents, themselves in the older age bracket.

The role of family and friends in providing informal care needs to be appropriately supported and resourced to make caring for an older person in the community sustainable. Caring responsibilities may affect their ability to cope at work, and work responsibilities may affect their ability to provide care. Recognition and support from employers, governments, service providers, and family and community members is important.

Financial support can be provided by Centrelink, an Australian Government agency with the Human Services Portfolio. Centrelink's stated purpose is to improve the opportunities of people who are of working age while providing constant care for someone who is frail aged, ill or who has a disability. For carers, this is primarily met by a Carer Payment which provides income support to people who, because of the demands of their caring role, are unable to support themselves through substantial workforce participation. To encourage support of people while working, a Carer Allowance is a supplementary payment available to parents or carers who provide daily care and attention for adults or children with a severe disability, medical condition or who are frail aged. Carer Allowance is not income and asset tested and may be paid on top of wages, Carer Payment or other payments, such as Age Pension.

HACC continues to play an important role in supporting carers. Providing domestic services in a carers home as well as in-home respite provides tangible support for the carer.

A number of other resources are available to carers. Facility based respite is funded by the federal government for up to 63 nights per year. Carer associations and support groups are available to provide peer support and information. The state and commonwealth government also provide a number of information services such as Carelink and telephone information hotlines.



1. ABS Website <http://www.abs.gov.au/Websitedbs/c311215.nsf/20564c23f3183fdaca25672100813ef1/66b71e8a3afcb529ca257126000ab2df!OpenDocument>
- 2 <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts/851DECE969D9182CCA2570EC000A2501?opendocument>
- 3 ABS: 3218.0 - Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2005-06  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/3218.0Main%20Features72005-06?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=3218.0&issue=2005-06&num=&view=>
4. 2007 YEAR BOOK AUSTRALIA Dennis Trewin Australian Statistician NUMBER 89 AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS CANBERRA
5. 4102.0 - Australian Social Trends, 2001t  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts/E676FF515F40F662CA2570EC000C1C62?opendocument>
- 6 <http://www.grampianspyreneespcp.org.au/>
- 7 DSE, Victoria in Future 2004
- 8 [http://www.doi.vic.gov.au/Doi/knowyour.nsf/webPageSummaries/LGA-Northern+Grampians+\(S\)-ProjectionsPopulationandHouseholdlga#3000viflqapersons](http://www.doi.vic.gov.au/Doi/knowyour.nsf/webPageSummaries/LGA-Northern+Grampians+(S)-ProjectionsPopulationandHouseholdlga#3000viflqapersons)
- 9 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2003

## 2.1 HOME & COMMUNITY BASED CARE.

### Service delivery

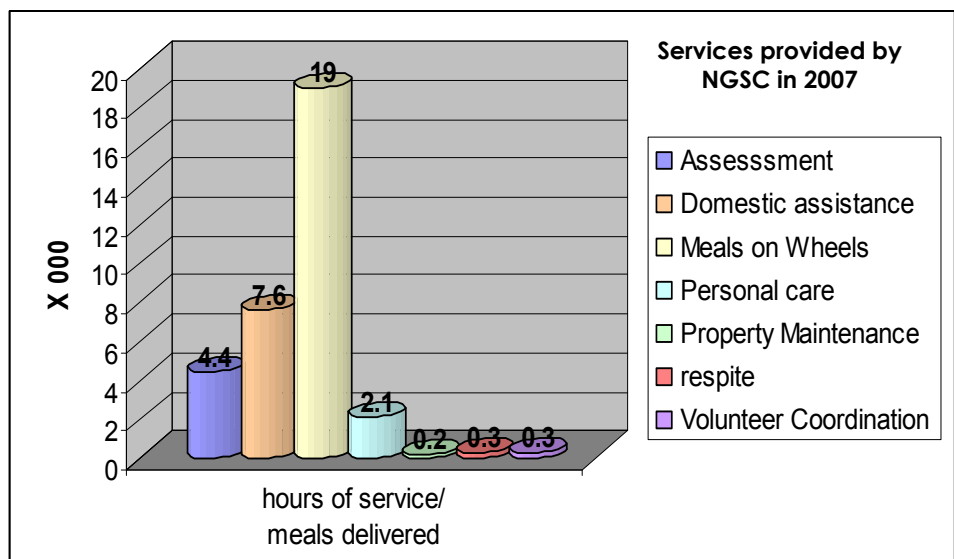
For older people, the Northern Grampians Shire has a comprehensive range of home and community based services available. These services include:

- Assessment;
- case management;
- home care;
- personal care;
- respite care;
- planned activity groups;
- community transport;
- community meals;
- delivered meals;
- Home maintenance:
- Senior Citizens;
- Volunteer Social support; and
- Allied Health.

Aged Care Service delivery in these areas are provided by a mix of service providers including the Northern Grampians Shire Council and other community organisations- Stawell Regional Health, Grampians Community Health, East Wimmera Health, Villa Maria, Benetas, Australian Home Care and Wimmera Uniting Care.

Demand for home care services has increased between 2000 and 2007, with rises and falls for individual services determined by client requirements.

For services provided by the Northern Grampians Shire Council, Council manages the demand, provision and overall coordination of home and community services for older people. The Northern Grampians Shire Council provided 11117 hours of HACC services and 19173 delivered meals in the 2007 calendar year. There are currently no waiting lists for essential services, and following assessment of a person's needs a client can obtain immediate support.



Community satisfaction surveys continue to rank NGSC health and human services in the highest quadrant. The 2007 Community Satisfaction survey, commissioned by the Dept of Victorian Communities identified a satisfaction rate in the Northern Grampians Shire Council of 95% for its health and human services programs. This is consistent with internal surveys of HACC client's satisfaction and an independent accreditation survey undertaken in 2007. Identified areas of potential improvement for services within the shire include: more facilities/resources for aged care/better nursing homes, more or better centres and facilities generally in remote areas, more funds and resources allocated to reducing waiting lists for services, improve quality/variety of food in meals on wheels program, improve quality of home help, increase resources for/availability of home help /meals on wheels.

Since 2006 there has been no waiting list for HACC services from the Northern Grampians Shire Council, and within current funding there is capacity for around 10% growth. With models predicting a 45% growth in the age of our population there is a real possibility that unless an increase in funded service targets is provided, a priority waiting list for some services may need to be reintroduced in the future.

### **2.1.1 Residential Care**

The Northern Grampians Shire has four distinct residential aged care facilities to meet the needs of the elderly members of the community, who due to medical, physical, social or psychological problems, can no longer manage in the community. Both Stawell Regional Health Service and East Wimmera Health Service provide high care nursing home beds. Independently managed facilities, Eventide Homes, and H.B. and B.Coates Hostel provide both high level care, secure dementia beds and low care beds. In 2007 a total 169 residential aged care beds are available in the community within the shire. These services typically offer Registered Nurses, Overnight staff, specialist Mental Health Nurses, Diversional therapists, Physiotherapists, Occupational therapists, Speech pathologists, Dieticians, Podiatrists, consultant Medical practitioners, optometrists and palliative care teams.

### **2.1.2 Planned Activity Groups (Day Centre)**

Planned activity groups (PAG), traditionally known as adult day activity centres, provide centre based activities for older people and people with disabilities, and respite for their carers, in a friendly family based atmosphere. PAG's are accessible to all eligible people in the Northern Grampians Shire, regardless of location and generally provides transport to and from the Centre if required. PAG's offer social and recreational centre-based activities for frail older people and people with disabilities who may be socially isolated. A range of activities include group meals, entertainment, music, trips and gentle exercise including Tai Chi & chair based exercises.

In the Northern Grampians Shire, PAG's are facilitated by the local Health Services in Stawell and St Arnaud. East Wimmera Health Services are funded by the Dept Human Services to provide a PAG in St Arnaud to aged people with low care needs. This group is conducted at the St Arnaud Senior Citizen's centre. In Stawell, the PAG is conducted by Stawell Regional Health in its stand alone building "The Bennett Centre for Community Activities in Sloane Street.

### 2.1.3 Senior Groups.

There are two senior citizens clubs, four Probus clubs, a combined pensioners association, and a U3A within the Northern Grampians Shire, as well as a number of locally organised seniors groups.

Senior Citizens Clubs, Probus Clubs, University of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Age, Men's sheds and Pensioner associations provide a friendly, welcoming place for social activities, meals and educational opportunities for older citizens over 55. They promote wellbeing, a better lifestyle and a positive approach to ageing.

**Senior Citizens Clubs** in Stawell and St Arnaud provide a range of recreational and social activities designed for older people. Activities and services include bus tours and day trips, guest speakers, luncheons, musical bands and choirs, dances, cards and sports such as carpet bowls and snooker. Senior Citizens Clubs were established in the 1950's. Both Stawell and St Arnaud Senior Citizens Club have a purpose building for the use of the clubs as a meeting place, and to conduct their activities. Stawell's centre located in Victoria St Stawell was built in 1961. St Arnaud's Senior Citizens club in Golden Street St Arnaud was completed in 1977. Northern Grampians Shire Council owns the buildings and works closely with the individual clubs on tenancy and use by other groups. The Council further supports the Stawell and St Arnaud Senior Citizens' Centres through the maintenance, cleaning and upgrades to the facilities at the Senior citizens halls, and provides administrative support to the committees.

**Probus** is an association of retired and semi-retired people who join together in clubs, the basic purpose of which is to provide regular opportunities for them to keep their minds active, expand their interests and to enjoy the fellowship of new friends. Probus is independent of Council involvement.

**U3A**, the University of the Third Age, is an international movement designed to provide low cost educational opportunities for retired people in a relaxed and informal environment. Its main purpose is to promote and practise lifelong learning. No prior educational qualifications are required and no degrees are awarded. The Stawell & District U3A meet each week in Stawell to learn in an interesting and stimulating environment about such diverse subjects as Oil painting & drawing, Creative Writing, Philosophy, History, Current Affairs. Stawell and District U3A has around 50 members and all members are welcome to attend all sessions of their choice without enrolment. The Coordinators try to involve members in the presentation of subjects using the expertise of fellow members and the help of a small committee<sup>10</sup>.

### 2.1.4 Senior Citizens Festival

The Victorian Seniors Festival (previously known as 'seniors week') is a week-long celebration for seniors held each year. It includes hundreds of free or low cost events, forums and activities, across Victoria. A range of events for seniors occurs across the Northern Grampians Shire during the Seniors Festival, including concerts and tours by the Senior Citizens clubs, and a community activity facilitated by the Northern Grampians Shire Council.

The Festival aims to recognise the valuable contribution older people have made and continue to make to our community, and to promote a positive attitude to ageing amongst the whole community.

<sup>10</sup>: Stawell and District U3A website <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~stau3a/>

### **2.1.5 Mobility Scooter**

Wimmera Volunteers, a HACC Volunteer Agency, based in Horsham donated a motorised scooter (gopher) to the Northern Grampians Shire Council for the use of aged and disabled people around the Central Business District (CBD) in St Arnaud.

The scooter has proven beneficial for people who already use a scooter but are unable to transport it to the St Arnaud CBD, and also in enabling local people to have the independence to do their own shopping and networking. There is a token fee for the use of the gopher to contribute towards its ongoing maintenance. This hire also includes a training session if required in the safe use of a scooter.

### **2.1.6 Volunteering**

Volunteering is vital to creating healthy and caring communities. In the delivery of services to older people and people with disabilities, agencies in the Northern Grampians Shire are reliant on volunteers. Agencies tend to utilise volunteers for the delivery of meals, assisting in running activities in PAG Programs, participating on committees of management for seniors clubs, visiting people who are isolated at home, attending to the needs of people with disabilities and as drivers for community transport services. Volunteers are regarded as valuable members of the program and team and need to be nurtured and supported by organisations. Without volunteers assisting in the provision of services, the cost of providing the services to older people and people with disabilities would increase significantly.

Generally, current volunteers are themselves an ageing group. As they cease volunteering, their rate of replacement by younger volunteers seems to be reducing.

To maintain the level of volunteer support required, service providers including the Northern Grampians Shire Council need to continually review their strategies for volunteer recruitment and retention and that volunteering is sustained by internal policies and procedures. This includes identifying the cost benefit analysis and making adequate funds available, reviewing their induction, orientation and training program, involving volunteers in decision making, providing mentoring with paid staff, and measures to promote, reward and recognise the volunteer's contribution.

### **2.1.7 Health Promotion:**

An integrated approach to health promotion is essential to support active and healthy living for seniors in the Northern Grampians Shire. The Grampians Pyrenees Primary Care Partnership (GPPCP), through funding by the Dept of Human Services, aims to improve the overall health and wellbeing of Victorians by improving the experience and outcomes for people who use primary care services through a coordinated approach to identifying community members health and care needs, and reducing the preventable use of hospital, medical and residential services through a greater emphasis on health promotion programs.

The GPPCP has representation from agencies servicing the Northern Grampians Shire, including the Northern Grampians Shire Council, Stawell Regional Health, Grampians Community Health Centre, East Wimmera Health Service, Budja Budja Aboriginal

Cooperative, Stawell Neighbourhood House, Wimmera Uniting Care, Eventide Homes (Stawell) Inc and the West Vic Division of General Practice.

Health promotion in the region for older residents is targeted towards increasing the number of older people who are socially and physically active, raising their awareness of the benefits to their health and wellbeing, raising their awareness of what opportunities are available to them, and supporting their participation in a range of activity opportunities.

**GPPCP Physical Activity Subcommittee (PASC)** – A subgroup of the Grampians Pyrenees Primary Care Partnership, the PASC provides a strategic approach to integration of increased physical activity in all integrated health promotion planning across the catchments.

**NGSC Leisure Services**, the Stawell Leisure Centre established an aqua exercise group in the late 1990's to assist people with arthritis. This group continues now as an older adults gentle aqua exercise group, conducted on a Tuesday and Wednesday each week, attended regularly by between 12-20 people over 50 years of age from throughout the Shire. While not designed for rehabilitation, physiotherapists have been supportive of the program and often refer people to the program. The Leisure centre has equipment such as a lifting hoist to facilitate access to the pool for people with weight bearing issues. Also catering for an older age group, Grampians Community Health Centre conducts 'active for life' dry pool programs at the leisure centre.

### **2.1.8 Transport**

Where possible, services such as home care and personal care attend a person's home, no matter where they live in the Shire. Arrangements are also made for delivered meals to be provided to people who live remotely. The cost of travel to Council in 2006/07 financial year is estimated at \$110000. This is offset in the budget by fees, charges and grants however does impact on the availability of staff to attend and the service times available to a person.

To allow people access to medical and related services outside of their local area, Grampians Community Health and East Wimmera Health service operate a Community Car Program. This service is aimed at providing support frail aged people with their carers who have difficulty in accessing transport. The Community Car is driven by Volunteers.

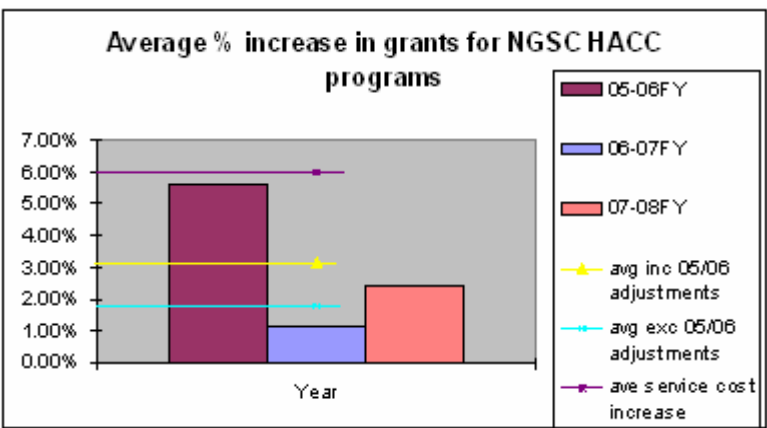
The Northern Grampians Shire Council has facilitated older driver courses to provide education and information to older drivers who may be approaching 'driving retirement' and also on the safe use of alternate vehicles such as mobility scooters on roads and footpaths.

## **2.2 FUNDING**

The Northern Grampians Shire Council Aged and Disability Services, as well as non government organisations are funded through a diversified funding stream that includes all levels of government, service purchasers as well as user contributions. Council is a major financial contributor for aged care services to its residents. Services are offered through a variety of specialised programs including Community Aged Care Packages, Linkages, and Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH) packages, the Home and Community Care program, the Department of Veterans Affairs Home Care and the National Respite for Carers Program.

The available information would indicate that Council is increasing its proportion of total funding for services, while federal government efforts have reduced in comparison, as has income from service fees. This highlights the need for Council to advocate with federal and state governments to increase their funding contributions for aged care services.

Community care funding has been indexed at a rate below the increasing costs of providing the service, in particular wages growth, and has grown at a slower rate than increases in service demand. The graph shows Government grant funding growth for the Northern Grampians Shire Council HACC services at best averaging half of what the service cost is



conservatively growing at over the last three years. Take out of the equation a higher than average increase in 2005 and the growth in service cost is three times. Providing a quality service to the community and stabilising and securing a qualified care workforce will potentially be severely impacted upon if HACC program grants don't recognise true costs, and therefore escalate annually by an appropriate indexation factor.



### **3. FUTURE DIRECTIONS:**

The current increase in the median age of the population is attributed to the generation of people born in the increased birth-rate period following World War 2 – the baby boomers. As the baby boomer generation ages, the Northern Grampians Shire Council will increasingly be faced with different demands and expectations in relation to aged care services and support that Council provides. This emerging generation of seniors does not necessarily see themselves as having entered old age, but prefers to see retirement as a time to reinvent themselves and explore new aspects of life.

#### **3.1.1 Offering choice rather than one size fits all**

The baby boomer generation has higher expectations of service systems. It is likely that these expectations will expose shortcomings of the existing Home and Community Care model and general aged care service provision. A constant review of Council's service provision and the interactions with complementary services provided in the shire is needed to address these implications.

A 'no wrong door' intake system and a streamlined single assessment framework is being proposed by the Dept of Human Services as the model for future service access. This model will streamline access to service users and enable coordination of the whole package of services that may be available to meet an individuals needs.

#### **3.1.2 Fostering independence and self care**

Reshaping the delivery of Council's services will entail a greater emphasis on active living programs, a tighter monitoring of low level in home care and an extension to medium and higher end care. To complement these initiatives, emphasis will be placed on assisting people through an assessment of their homes and activities. There will also likely be a greater focus on aids, equipment and home modifications that can provide assistance to older people in managing tasks that might otherwise put the person at risk.

#### **3.1.3 Providing older residents with information and services**

There is a wealth of information and a variety of support services available to people who are frail aged or caring for someone, with people generally seeking advice from their GP, or coming into contact through a period of hospitalisation. The emerging generation of older people will demand more immediate modes of access to health and information services, and be more in control of their own pathways into the service system. Each service provider has information packages available for people, accessing this for people has it's own Current Services can achieve this through improvements in technology, greater emphasis on service coordination across Council and generic services and planned access to mainstream services. The services and information will need to be provided flexibly to ensure equal access and benefit for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

#### **3.1.4 Promoting active and supportive neighbourhoods**

The community will likely demand a greater requirement for neighbourhood based models of care to respond to community desire for choice and flexibility in service delivery. The aim of these models is to increase community connections and provide a broader range of choices for residents. Options are likely to include a greater demand for village neighbourhood living which provides people with a sense of independence, the benefits of living in smaller homes that is grouped together with similar properties to form a community that provides the support needed and a 24-hour emergency call system installed in each property. In the broader community, there may also be a greater

demand for establishing neighbourhood meal groups and investigate partnering with existing volunteer organisations to create intergenerational programs.

### 3.1.5 Minimising isolation from services

Declining population in the smaller townships and rural locations makes it unfeasible for many services to be provided directly in a local community, however these residents have the same right to access services as the urban communities. Services in the Northern Grampians Shire will need to incorporate planning for how to support participation by the rural communities. This includes better use of transport infrastructure and resource sharing with other organisations towards making an affordable and available transport service.

The Grampians Pyrenees Regional Development Board 'Transport Connections' project, funded by the Dept of Planning and Community Development, is about communities working together to improve local transport. The three year project commencing in 2007 includes mapping and data collection of all the public and community transport in the region and is also a tool to investigating any gaps in public and community transport that are existing, and ways to better connect our transport disadvantaged in rural communities. Through local partnerships and the use of existing assets and services such as taxis, school buses, community buses and volunteers, the aim is for communities to be able to develop innovative approaches that can make participation in community life easier for people with limited access to transport.

The Victorian Government in its report "*Maintaining Mobility: the Transition from Driver to Non-driver*" identifies the importance of better understanding the mobility needs of older Victorians particularly as the ageing population continues to grow. It notes that there will be many older drivers on our roads in the future, however giving up driving is likely to be an issue that will need to be faced at some stage in a persons life. Identifying alternatives, ensuring the infrastructure is supportive of other forms of transport and providing the information to people is a key to reducing the stress of drivers transitioning to other forms of transport.

### 3.1.6 Building on our strengths

This plan builds on the Northern Grampians Shire Council's rich history of leadership and innovation in aged care. Community Meals, Senior Citizens programs and the Gopher hire are examples of Council's lead in innovation. It is inclusive of all people within our Shire.

## 3.2 PROPOSED KEY DIRECTIONS

The following table details a range of key directions for the Northern Grampians Shire Council and recommendations for community service providers.

Issue	Proposed Response	Responsibility	By When
More choice	• Review current service and identify future service developments.	• All service agencies	June 2009
	• Provide residents with more options in home care and meals services.	• Council	Jan 2010
	• Optimise community members knowledge, preference and choice of available services through community education and information strategies	• All service agencies	Jan 2010

Issue	Proposed Response	Responsibility	By When
Increased demand for home care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delay need for using home care program through increased use of, social support, home modifications and recreation programs.</li> <li>• Continue to enhance a streamlined assessment process, under the HACC Assessment Framework guidelines.</li> <li>• Implement effective service coordination across the continuum of care.</li> <li>• Support and encourage MAV to lobby state and federal governments for increases in funded targets and indexation rates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All service agencies</li> <li>• Council</li> </ul>	ongoing
Contain demand for aged care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt homes to encourage independence.</li> <li>• Establish and expand social support programs in neighbourhood communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council,</li> <li>• All service agencies</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Limited use of home care services by the Indigenous community and culturally and linguistically diverse groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate increased access to service models through partnerships with the Indigenous community organisations, and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse organisations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All service agencies</li> </ul>	ongoing
Increased isolation of frail older residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop gender specific social support programs, for example, men's shed, women's network.</li> <li>• Improved community transport across the municipality.</li> <li>• Advocate to State and Federal government dept's for increased funding to provide services to remote communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council</li> <li>• Community capacity agencies</li> </ul>	June 2011
targeted information is required for emerging older groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide aged care and support in combination with mainstream services such as libraries and community centres</li> <li>• Develop effective and innovative information technology strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All service agencies</li> </ul>	Mar 2011
Ensure older people are valued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage positive community attitudes to older people by promoting and participating in community education.</li> <li>• Encourage social and political recognition of the older person's experiences and expectations.</li> <li>• Actively engage communities and stakeholders in policy development and planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council</li> </ul>	June 2009

Issue	Proposed Response	Responsibility	By When
Supporting the number of people aged 65 plus living in the Northern Grampians Shire Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support agencies to apply individualised care packages from the Commonwealth Government.</li> <li>• Provide responsive flexible respite care options</li> <li>• Encourage and support age friendly housing and local community environments.</li> <li>• Continue to provide funding and support to Senior citizens Centres, community meals and Seniors Festival Week</li> <li>• Continue to advocate for funding for Planned Activity Group, Volunteer visiting District Nursing, Allied Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council</li> <li>• All Service agencies</li>   <li>• Council</li>   <li>• Council,</li> <li>• All Service agencies</li> </ul>	annually
Formally recognise carers and volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include carers as partners in the assessment process and in developing clients' individual care plans.</li> <li>• Take into account the carer's own needs, health and well-being</li> <li>• Enable carers and volunteers to participate in planning and policy development.</li> <li>• Develop a strategic plan to coordinate and comprehensively support volunteers.</li> <li>• Develop and implement training options for carers and volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All service agencies</li> </ul>	December 2009
Sustain a workforce sufficient to meet demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote aged care as an attractive and rewarding career option.</li> <li>• Foster links with registered training bodies to ensure appropriate course modules are provided to meet industries needs.</li> <li>• Support initiatives to redress the current lack of wage parity in the aged care sector.</li> <li>• Develop flexible employment options.</li> <li>• Promote the benefits of age-balance in the workforce</li> <li>• Work with volunteer organisations and community groups using volunteers to develop recruitment strategies, provide induction and training programs and consider resource sharing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All service agencies</li> </ul>	Coordinate d report developed by June 2010
Transport and mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing specific and individualised information to older people on alternative transport options, support services and programs, concessions, motorised scooters, and public and community transport.</li> <li>• Providing Supportive Infrastructure and Mobility Services to ensure they meet the needs and expectations of older Victorians in terms of their safety and functionality.</li> <li>• Actively support the 'GPRDB transport connections' project towards achieving it's stated outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council</li> </ul>	Report on transport provided to Council Feb 2011