

Positive Ageing Strategy 2023 to 2028



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1. Introduction

Across Co-operative and Direct Managed tenancies, CENSW has a significant number of older residents. The proportion of older to younger residents will increase over the coming years. The *Positive Ageing Action Plan* (the Plan) is intended to consider CENSW's and Co-operative's role in making the experience of Ageing in our properties and communities, positive, safe, and sustainable. Utilising Sector and interdisciplinary staff input, along with reference to industry resources and best practice principles the aims of the Plan are to:

- Understand the broader context of ageing in Australia, including challenges, opportunities, and trends
- Understand the CENSW context including statistics for older residents across the Sector and in Direct Managed tenancies.
- Establish CENSW's formal duty of care in supporting older residents
- Consider what additional support pathways older residents might need (referral partnerships etc), and how we best make these connections
- Identify the role Co-operatives can play in supporting older residents
- Develop an action list and corresponding resourcing plan to holistically support positive ageing outcomes for all residents.

2. Context

Older Australians

Ageing and Health

Rapidly changing social contexts have seen the process of 'ageing in Australia' become increasingly complex. Australian are living longer and ageing further than in previous generations. While at the last Census 16% of NSW residents were over 65 by 2040 it is anticipated that approximately 25% of NSW will be over 65 and 10% will be over 80.

Older age and longer retirement has triggered a three stage definition of ageing *Active, Passive and Frail Aged* – each with varying needs. 'Active aging' is changing the way that people are spending their early years of retirement with many wanting to pursue engagement in workplace and community activities – continuing to share and utilise their skills and experience.

The 'passive' and 'frail' stages of aging (in later years) initiate an increased complexity of care needs. Most Australians will experience some level of disability or limitation (with associated care needs) from their mid-seventies and more significant disability and limitation from their early to mid-eighties (with increasing care needs). Increased longevity means that older people are now more likely to develop neurodegenerative diseases and/or severe disabilities. More complex care will be required into the future than in previous generations.

While care needs are increasing, available informal care is declining. Social trends of greater divorce rates and changing family practices and geographies means that informal care arrangements (such as provided by a spouse or child) are no longer able to be counted on as 'the norm'. In response, Government has increased support for community care services – Though, most people accessing this service receive only 2 hrs of care per week.

Cultural demographics for older Australians reflect the diversity within the broader Australian population. Age care services and programs need consider flexible, culturally sensitive solutions.

Ageing and Housing

Older Australians demonstrate a clear preference for living independently and at home as they age - remaining in close to their social networks and in an intergenerational community. However, this is an ideal that is becoming harder to maintain for many Australians.

In addition to health care considerations, financial obstacles play a significant role in sustaining ageing at home. Escalating market costs, reliance solely on an age pension income, and an increase in divorce rates and single person households, all contribute to a decline in housing security for older Australians.

Only around 11% of seniors aged 65 and over live in age specific accommodation, the remainder live in private homes. 13% of Seniors over 60 live in rental accommodation. Older Australians are overrepresented as long-term private renters and social housing tenants.

Older people become increasingly vulnerable as they age at home. Dependency on accommodation features (such as mobility aids and modifications) increases as aging progresses from active to passive and then frail aged. Housing related vulnerability increases as people age, with older private renters particularly vulnerable. Life events such as loss of partner trigger additional financial pressures and an increased risk of homelessness.

Within the last 10 years homelessness amongst older people in Australia has doubled and, without intervention will continue to grow. Now and increasingly into the future, affordable rental accommodation, which offers choice and security will be in critical demand for this demographic.

Older Residents (CENSW)

With a large and growing number of older tenants CENSW are seeing an increased demand for service provision and responses which are specific to this life-stage.

Combined, CENSW and Co-operatives currently have 428 residents over the age of 60 and 266 residents over 70 years of age. These residents range from those who are active and in good health to frail-aged and experiencing the increasing impacts of aging.

Older residents also represent a range of cultural backgrounds and live in varied household configurations. Older co-operative residents live in: Senior specific Co-operatives (there are 7); inter-generational Co-operatives with seniors as residents; or in CENSW's Directly Managed housing stream.

While there is overlap, varied actions have been identified/adapted to ensure a best fit response to the needs older Co-operative residents and older Direct Managed residents.

3. Common Equity's Role

Duty of Care

To maintain a positive and safe experience for CENSW residents as they age, CENSW's Duty of Care is to:

- Ensure that older residents be treated equitably and with dignity and respect.
- Ensure that our older residents have access to safe, accessible and affordable housing, enabling them to continue to meaningfully connect and engage in community life.
- Set and meet sound housing service standards for all residents; all residents to feel engaged and supported; and ensure that specialised support is made accessible for residents with complex needs.
- Set and meet property condition standards, delivering these through strategic asset management planning and property maintenance programs.
- Respond to changing housing needs and ensure fit for purpose housing for older residents - either through retrofitting existing properties; supporting reallocation where feasible; or the delivery of new, seniors' specific developments.

Other Support

For other services – beyond the scope of CENSW's housing provider role – CENSW offers a Tenancy Support Program. A central function of this program is to link residents in with specialist service providers who can best respond to their needs.

CENSW has an allocated tenancy support position within the Co-operative Development team. This position is designed to assist residents with making initial contact with services and is available for subsequent referral and support.

In developing the Plan CENSW has identified a number of actions to strengthen and promote this program, particularly in regard to supporting older residents. All residents across the Sector and in Directly Managed properties can access this program.

4. A Role for Co-operatives

The Co-operative Housing Benefit

Co-operative living, particularly when paired with housing affordability, provides a valuable offering in addressing many contemporary challenges for ageing at home. It offers significant benefit in terms of social and wellbeing support such as: reduced isolation and light informal care; resource pooling – including of more formal care arrangements; fit for purpose property design and an ongoing sense of purpose and contribution.

Co-operative Involvement

Drawing on early Sector contributions and other emerging ideas, The Plan identifies: a number of Co-operative led actions; CENSW and Sector collaborative actions; and actions for training and development for Co-operatives to build the knowledge and skill required to best meet the needs of their older residents.

5. Actions

The goal output for this plan was to develop clear and deliverable actions. Actions have been drawn from Sector input (Co-operative Forum 2021), interdisciplinary staff involvement and industry best practice. Each Action has been assessed for feasibility and resourcing, allocated a lead responsible for delivery and assigned a target timeframe (short, medium or long term).

Timeframes

The length of each term has been defined as the following:

Short	1 year
Medium	1 - 3 years
Long	3 – 5 years

Action Areas

A positive and safe ageing experience for residents requires a holistic approach. CENSW has developed four action areas of focus to ensure a comprehensive plan. The four areas are:

Fitting Housing to Needs

Under this area we responded to:

- The demands on existing properties as residents age at home. Specifically, property upgrade requirements as resident's physical ability is impacted by ageing.
- CENSW and Co-operative opportunities, challenges, and obligations in responding to these.

Partnering for Health and Wellbeing

In this area we considered:

- Health and wellbeing opportunities and obstacles relating to ageing at home.
- The scope of our role in sustaining and improving tenant health and well-being outcomes.
- Linking residents with specialist services to meet their needs as they age.

Strengthening Connections

Under this area we responded to:

- The social impact of ageing; how it applies particularly to Co-operatives and tenants (such as social opportunity and social isolation).
- Social measures that need to be put in place (such as how we support connection – physical and digital).
- Enabling/encouraging Co-operatives and tenants in initiating social activities which support positive ageing.

Sustaining Co-operatives and Tenancies

Under this area we responded to:

- Policies and procedures required to ensure consistent, efficient, and transparent decision making.
- Service provision commitments to be formalised and resourcing impacts.
- Training and capacity building CENSW can offer Staff and Co-operatives to continue to sustain older Co-operative members' involvement and tenancies.

6. Plan Governance and Reporting

Business Plan Reporting

Developing the Positive Ageing Action Plan is identified under the 2022/23 Business Plan. This plan is reported on quarterly to the Board. Progress on delivering actions identified in the Plan will be reported to the board as part of broader business plan reporting. Actions will be tracked as being on track, delayed or completed. Delayed items will be flagged early and monitored to completion.

Plan Review Period

A Plan review period of 2 years will be set. This will allow opportunity to evaluate deliverables and reprioritise where necessary. Changes over a two-year period may also mean that new actions are identified and included in the plan or redundant items (if any) removed.

7. Action Tables

Fitting Housing to Needs

Action		Lead	Co-operatives / DMs	Timeframe	Status	Resourcing
1	<i>Property assessments to support positive ageing at home</i>					
1.1	Document a clear process for: assessing home modification needs resulting from permanent mobility changes.	PCG	Both	Short term		BAU Service delivery
1.2	Develop and promote a fact sheet outlining process for assessing home modification needs.	CDM / Member Director	Both	Short term	Started	
2	<i>Property upgrades to support positive ageing at home (accessibility and mobility)</i>					
2.1	Efficiently and effectively respond to OT recommendations - meeting resident needs and LAHC guidelines: - develop a clear process for resolving or escalating modifications and clear response timeframes (<i>standard modifications</i>) - Develop a specific <i>specialised/complex modification policy</i> (chairlifts, hoists etc)	PCG	Both	Medium term		Capital expenditure: Property maintenance budget - Disability Modification budget line (existing). Plan for budget increase/escalating costs as proportion of older tenants increases. Potentially, individual my age care claim.
2.2	Develop an approach to improving pedestrian access and mobility in common areas (internal and external). Include as priority in annual <i>Schedule 3</i> property maintenance planning	PM	Both	Medium		Capital expenditure item in Schedule 3 budget
3	<i>Older tenant reallocation - Assist with the reallocation of older tenants to ground floor/accessible dwellings to support changing mobility needs</i>					

3.1	Develop a shared sector waiting list for older people needing accessible accommodation (ground floor; lift access etc) to enable tenant transfer to appropriate dwellings.	CD Manager	Co-operatives	Short	Started	Incorporate in CDT future workplan
3.2	Develop waitlist for DM residents needing accessible accommodation	CD Manager	DMs	Short	Started	Combine as part of above procedure. Incorporate in CDT future workplan
3.3	Consider/test development of a flexible dwelling allocation approach to increase availability of properties for reallocation.	Member director/P CG	Co-operatives	Medium		Separate subgroup to develop (proposal?)

Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Action Item		Lead	Co-operative/ DM	Timeframe	Status	Resourcing
1	<i>Strengthen CENSW Tenant Support Program (TSP):</i>					
1.1	Assign a designated staff contact to offer age specific referral support through the tenant support program	CDM	Both	Short term	Started	CD Team member
1.2	Raise resident awareness of the TSP by developing service flyer.	CDM Coms Co-ord	Both	Short term	Started	BAU (think about frequency given available resources)
2	<i>Establish a continuum of health and wellbeing support:</i>					

2.1	Develop and promote high-level directory sheet identifying gateway referral services, specialising in positive ageing information and referral.	Content: CDM/Member Director Promotion: Coms Co-ord	Both	Short term	Started	Ongoing resourcing consideration - how to keep current. - review annually/18months. Who? Keep succinct to a few gateway services
2.2	Complete annual seniors outreach wellbeing checks: direct phone call ensuring aware of support available. Targeting oldest tenants as first priority. Refer to and provide Positive ageing info kit.	CDM	DM	Medium term	To be developed	Resourced within TSP/ Volunteer program
2.3	Explore potential to establish a volunteer inter-Co-operative support network to complete wellbeing checks.	CDM/ Co-operatives	Co-operatives	Medium term	To be developed	
3	<i>Share 'Healthy Ageing' support information with Co-operatives and residents:</i>					
3.1	Include at regional meetings a program of talks/speakers to build resident and Co-operatives' awareness and knowledge around positive ageing.	CSM	Co-operatives	Medium term	To be developed	Resourced within regional meeting planning. Volunteer Speakers.
4	<i>Staff capacity and resourcing</i>					
4.1	Targeted training for frontline service staff (CDT and Property Team) to strengthen service provision to older residents through increased knowledge.	CSM	Both	Medium term	To be developed	Resourced within staff training budget
4.2	General training and awareness raising for staff relating to supporting positive ageing for tenants.	CSM	Both	Short term	Started	resourced within staff development training. Volunteer speakers

Strengthening Connections

Action Item		Lead	Co-operative/ DM	Timeframe	Status	Resourcing
1	<i>Strengthen engagement and collaboration with older tenants</i>					
1.1	Establish Positive Ageing Reference/Working Group	CDM	Both	Medium		Will need additional resource to establish, co-ordinate and follow through on actions
2	<i>Support resident access to social activities and connections</i>					
2.1	Develop and promote fact sheet on how to find/where to look for activities to connect within your local area.	Manager CDM /Coms Co-ord	Both	Short	Started	BAU - produce in house.
3	<i>Enable Co-operative led connections</i>					
3.1	Utilise Co-operative development planning to identify social support activities targeting older people in Co-operatives	CDM	Co-operatives	Short		BAU for CDT
3.2	Activity idea share - co-operatives share social activities they run, how they do it, why it works, and benefits	Co-op Sector	Co-operatives	TBC with Sector		Voluntary - To test interest with Sector
3.3	Establish a resident 'meet-up program', connecting like-minded residents with shared interests from similar locations	Co-op member led (Jannali)	Both		Started	Member Volunteer
4	<i>Improve digital connections</i>					
4.1	Deliver a second round of the digital literacy training program that includes a specific component on: video calling using Zoom and Facetime; and other online social platforms to improve online social connection.	Manager Corporate Services (MCS)			started	funding dependant

Sustaining Co-operatives and Tenancies

Action		Lead	Co-operative/ DM	Timeframe	Status	Resourcing
1	Ensure relevant CENSW governance documents are aligned with the actions and outcomes of the PAAP					
1.1	'Changing Needs Policy' - Update to align with actions and direction set in Positive Ageing Action Plan	CSM / CDM	both	Short	Not started	BUA
1.2	'CCA inclusions' -Consider developing service level agreement schedule tailorable to specific co-operative capacity an needs -consider any other inclusions resulting from the PAAP. Eg. reallocation; property modifications etc.	CSM / CDM	Co-operatives	Short	Started	BAU Monitor to see if it does result in additional workload and impact on staffing.
2	Create opportunities for training and capacity building					
2.1	Develop a 'Positive Aging Training Module' to offer to Co-operative Committees.	CDM / Member Director / External Specialist Provider	Co-operatives	Medium	Not started	Additional resources required - seek funding
2.2	Digital Transformation Training and Support: - Provide targeted opportunities for older co-operative committee members to improve their digital literacy skills. -Develop fact sheet on where else you can learn and improve digital skills	CSM / PO	Co-operatives	Short to Medium	Started and ongoing	Additional resources required - seek funding

8. Reference List

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