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Age friendly communities - achieving positive outcomes by working together

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Age friendly communities - achieving positive outcomes by working together

Abstract

Across a broad scope of global challenges the decade from 2020 to 2030 represents a decisive time. It will, in many respects, be a time for action, one where we have the chance to formulate concrete solutions and enact strategies to ensure we all live well, longer.

Keywords

age, working, together, positive, -, achieving, communities, friendly, outcomes

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Age Friendly Communities – achieving positive outcomes by working together

By Mark Jones, Lorna Moxham, Justin Placek and Toby Dawson

Across a broad scope of global challenges the decade from 2020 to 2030 represents a decisive time. It will, in many respects, be a time for action, one where we have the chance to formulate concrete solutions and enact strategies to ensure we all live well, longer.

Ageing and all that is associated with it, is indeed one of the greatest global challenges. Let's be clear - the proportion of people 55 years and over in the current Australian population is 1:4 but over the next few decades this will be 1:3.

Drilling this down to a more local level, across the Illawarra it is estimated there will be an increase of 40,000 persons aged 70+ over the next 20 years. We also know that the majority of people still age in place and only 5.4% are in retirement villages.

This tells us that ageing is an issue for everyone and isn't just the business of the

'aged care industry'. Just like the proactive approach to patient discharge, which is actually considered on patient admission; ageing issues (positive and negative) need to be considered before we age and they need to enhance inclusion.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reminds us that a key strategy to facilitate the inclusion of older people is to make communities more age friendly. Age friendly communities enable all people to actively participate in activities whilst treating everyone with respect, regardless of their age.

Age friendly communities are places that make it easy for older people to stay connected to people that are important to them, and are environments that help people stay healthy and active even at the oldest ages (WHO).

Age Friendly Illawarra (AFI), which is working across four council areas, is being proactive and thinking about ageing. AFI is an alliance that aims to create opportunities for older people to lead active, engaged lives and contribute positively to Illawarra communities. The eight domains of an age-friendly community provided the framework for AFI. These domains are outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information and community support and health services.

AFI is made up of business, government and community organisations working to drive

social, civic and employment participation by Illawarra seniors and access to transport, housing and support services.

One of the ways that AFI is working to raise awareness and progress the concept of aged friendly communities is to develop toolkits in relation to 'How age friendly is your establishment?' and 'How age friendly is your event?' These toolkits are being developed in consultation with Age Friendly Illawarra members and the community and are based on the principles of the WHO's Age Friendly Cities guide with ideas from network members across the globe.

AFI knows that better outcomes come when people work together and collaborate. If you want any information you can email contact@agefriendlyillawarra.org

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Reference

WHO – who.int/ageing/age-friendly-world/en/

