

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA

Fleurieu Peninsula Seniors Needs And Wants Research Report

Prepared for: Research Development Australia
Contact: Johanna Milbank
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 **McGregor Tan Research**
Strategies, Marketing and Social Research
Head Office: 259 Glen Osmond Rd, Frewville, SA 5063
research@mcgregor.com.au www.mcgregor.com.au
Tel: 1300 533 362 : 08 8433 0200

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Disclaimer Statement

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BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND

Currently 51% of the population in the Fleurieu Peninsula are aged over 50 years, and those over 65 represent 27% of the population, compared to the state average of 16%. This age cohort is also staying in the family home longer before moving into aged care facilities.

Rather than seeing this as a problem, Regional Development Australia (RDA) is keen to identify where and how the region can benefit socially and economically by tapping into the requirements of this older age group. RDA consider the potential benefits to include:

- utilising the talents of this age cohort for social and economic benefit by keeping older people engaged and active within the community
- engaging older people with requisite skills and experience to act as mentors to younger generations seeking to make progress in their chosen fields of enterprise

To achieve this may require focusing on the needs of this older cohort in the region and customer dynamics for this age group.

Research is therefore needed to gain a better understanding of the senior population in the region to enable RDA to target these areas of action. What services are needed to support older people in the region and how can they be encouraged to make their own positive contribution to the local community, especially as volunteers.

METHODOLOGY

Three focus groups were conducted of this age group in Yankalilla, Victor Harbor and Goolwa (the latter including people from Strathalbyn and Port Elliot) during mid July 2016.

Further research was conducted in August and September through interviews with 20 senior individuals and by 10 aged care workers in the Fleurieu Peninsula region, who have been asked for their input in relation to the products and services available for older people in the region.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FOCUS GROUP - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The underlying issue of this study is whether older people retiring from full time employment, and/or retiring to live in a regional town or district, want to immerse themselves in the life of their community. It is clearly down to the personal disposition of individuals whether they want to get involved or not.

Some feel personal fulfilment by offering themselves as volunteers for local projects or to help others in need. Some are motivated by a sense of duty. And, yes, some have no desire to undertake community service.

The first step for most newcomers to a regional area is to join a club or society associated with their own areas of interest – sport, gardens, books or the arts more generally. Usually, one thing leads to another, and they soon find themselves involved in a number of organisations or ventures.

The first challenge for these individuals is to discover what opportunities exist in their community for them to become involved and how to actually get involved. For some, taking the initial steps towards getting involved constitutes a further challenge. They need encouragement.

It is fundamentally incumbent on the community, both as a collective and as individuals, to make a concerted effort to welcome newcomers to the area by providing them with information about all the opportunities available within the locality and to encourage them to join and get involved.

Retiring from the workforce can be a major challenge in several respects: the impact on personal relationships including marital harmony; losing the shelter and companionship of the workplace with its attendant disciplines and support base; and finding one's feet in a new environment. For some, continued self-esteem may be at risk, especially if they had experienced enforced retirement or did so reluctantly. Finding a part-time or voluntary role in their local community may well constitute a valuable lifeline.

As to personal motivation, we feel the following comment made by one of the focus group participants is of exemplary value:

“My philosophy about retiring is you need just the right amount of money to live on, not a huge amount but enough to manage. You need an engrossing hobby to keep you busy. You need to belong to a strong social group, and really feel you belong. And you need to give back. If you do all those things, you'll be fine.”

ABOUT THE GROUP PARTICIPANTS

The groups which met in Yankalilla and Goolwa comprised, in roughly equal proportions, recent arrivals, people who had settled in the area a few years ago and those who had been living in the area for several decades. The Victor Harbor group had a higher proportion of recent arrivals. There was one person in each group who had been born in the area.

It was noteworthy that the Yankalilla and Goolwa groups included the fact that they were active volunteers when introducing themselves, and in both cases virtually all the participants played an active role in their communities. The participants in the Victor Harbor group did not seem to be so involved, and they were noticeably less vibrant or enthusiastic than the other groups.

FOCUS GROUP - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It was commented on by some participants in different groups that Victor Harbor had become less attractive as a place to live in recent years. The participants in the Victor Harbor group tended to be more negative about the opportunities open to them, often citing reasons for not getting involved.

Very few of the participants in these groups were still working – only a couple on a fulltime basis and a couple doing part-time work.

A few participants were actively skill-sharing or fulfilling in some way a role of mentor to others. These were doing so by participation in school activities.

GETTING INVOLVED

“Volunteering is the best way to become involved in the community and to keep yourself active in a positive way. It’s enjoyable – for instance, here at the bowling club - but we also do a lot of work for the local community as volunteers.”

Given the enthusiasm voiced by some for their work as volunteers (as evidenced by the comment from the group participant quoted above), it was perhaps surprising these same individuals spoke of the difficulty and the anxiety they had experienced when first arriving in the community, feeling nervous to push themselves forward and waiting to be invited to join in.

For many, moving to a regional town had been quite a challenge, especially if it coincided with their retirement from the workforce. Several had been regular visitors to the region on their annual holidays – some already owning a holiday house in the area. But moving there permanently had not been as easy for them as they had assumed.

They all stressed, however, that one thing usually led to another. Once they had joined one club or group, they soon found themselves getting involved in other areas as well.

From a practical point of view, they said the first challenge was to find out what opportunities there were for them to pursue their current interests, or find new interests or hobbies. Most agreed it would be a big help for them to receive an information pack providing details of local clubs and groups. It was agreed their local Council was best placed to do this, since it knew about new arrivals through the issuing of rates notices.

All three groups agreed an annual “expo” in their towns was a good way to highlight what local clubs and societies have to offer newcomers and long-term residents. (An event like this is organised bi-annually in Victor Harbor.)

Once again, the consensus was that the local Council (and/or the local information centre) was best placed to coordinate this, as well as developing a skills register of older people and retirees who are willing to provide the benefit of their skills to younger people trying to climb the ladder of success.

Getting involved does not just happen. It needs to be encouraged, and these were practical measures suggested by these focus groups.

FOCUS GROUP - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

An important part of this research was to ascertain the extent to which the participants felt their needs were currently being met in their local areas.

The participants in the Yankalilla and Goolwa focus groups were broadly happy with the level of their local services and facilities, which fully met their day-to-day needs.

They accepted that they had to travel elsewhere to obtain several goods and services. However, there was criticism of the fact that access to certain Government services (such as Centrelink, car registration) was so restricted and not effectively accessible locally or online.

The group in Victor Harbor was far more critical of the level of services in their area, complaining about their local shops, which did not meet the needs, they said, of locals or visitors, with most of them closed on Sundays. They were critical they had to go to Christies Beach to register their cars.

All three groups complained about the lack of public transport linking the key towns in the Fleurieu Peninsula and the limited service available from the region to Adelaide.

It became apparent that none of the participants felt the Fleurieu Peninsula region had any focal point or centre, and that the region constituted several distinct areas, all of which gravitated to exterior focal points for transport, shopping or Government services.

The groups made the following observations:

- access to financial services was fine - many did their banking online
- however, many older people had limited access to the internet
- several males said they were reliant on their partners to handle their daily needs through online services
- most participants in the Yankalilla and Goolwa groups were happy with their local retail services for their day-to-day needs – the Victor Harbor participants were less content with their retail facilities
- Yankalilla and Goolwa groups were happy with the eateries in their areas, but the Victor group was more critical of local facilities, and felt they had to make do with cheap meals in local pubs
- most accepted access to local medical services was broadly fine, whilst depending on external services for more specialist needs
- The key issue for all three groups was a lack of public transport other than through Seaford, with limited medical and community transport

The more specific issues raised by different groups included:

- limited provision of gym, swimming, keep fit facilities in Yankalilla
- limited walking and pedestrian paths (recreational and roadside) and safety concerns for pedestrians having to share them with cyclists;

FOCUS GROUP - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- a reliance on Victor Harbor for regional arts, entertainment and cinema, although local arts events/activities in Goolwa and Yankalilla were highly successful and much appreciated
- extensive provision of aged care support within the district.

There were mixed views about the provision of services and investment in their communities by their respective councils.

- the Yankalilla group felt their Council could do more, but understood it had limited resources
- participants in different groups criticised Victor Harbor Council for over-spending in certain areas at the expense of the more routine and day-to-day services it ought to be providing
- a couple of individuals in the Goolwa group (but not the group as a whole) criticised Alexandrina Council for allegedly prioritising Goolwa for investment at the expense of other towns

One of the issues of concern which was common to all the groups – the participants in each group being equally uncertain and confused – related to the provision of practical community care services - cutting the lawn and other gardening or household jobs which older people were unable to do for themselves. Participants were uncertain about how such services were provided, with different councils seeming to have different levels of service and poor communication about these services.

UTILISING THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE OF OLDER PEOPLE

Despite explaining this aspect of the research clearly to the groups, few of the participants seemed able to get beyond the idea they were being asked to offer their services to the community as volunteers. One or two of them had tried to offer their professional skills, but felt their offers to help had been spurned – largely for legalistic or regulatory reasons.

A composite response from the groups might be voiced as follows:

“A good idea – but what about workers’ compensation – I’m not qualified to teach - how do you co-ordinate such talent?”

Most of the participants had retired happily, and, whilst wanting to enjoy a more restful time (often in a new home in a new environment) they were looking for new challenges, which might not fit with carrying on in some way with a similar role to their previous work.

The key issue would seem to be that they had not been approached to take on the role of skills-sharer or mentor.

Maybe the first step would be for the local Councils in each area (or the RDA for the region as a whole) to try and establish a skills register of the older people in the area, which included an indication of the kind of support these people could offer.

We suggest some pilot schemes should be conducted which might lead to increased interest in this concept, once the positive results of these initiatives were available.

FOCUS GROUP - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Given the reliance of most Government agencies on their websites for their services and/or information about services, the groups said more needed to be done to train older people in the use of their computers. All three groups indicated that computer classes were available in their local libraries, but is this enough?

The groups also indicated there was a need for other personal development courses, somewhat like the courses provided by WEA. University of Third Age offers some support, but they suggested this too was not enough.

COMMUNICATION

As with most research projects, the issue of effective communication is clearly of paramount importance. This research has been initiated by RDA, but ongoing promotion of the outcomes of this initiative will rest with the local Councils and other public agencies.

Many of the existing services for older people fail to communicate effectively with their target audience. That said, even the best communication strategies often fail to hit their mark for a variety of reasons.

Local newspapers and newsletters were seen as the most powerful means of communication locally, along with word of mouth. Local community radio was also seen as an effective means of communication, with several of the participants saying they were regular listeners.

OTHER ISSUES

Among latent issues of concern which emerged from our discussions with the three focus groups were older females living alone and older men (with or without partners) needing to be encouraged to be more open about the issues which concerned them, especially their health.

No instant solutions were offered for either, other than the need to heighten awareness of the risks of individuals becoming socially isolated or depressed, in the hope that service providers, local groups and concerned neighbours will be more alert to the needs of older people.

Raising these issues evoked a broad agreement that more should be done to ensure older people did not become loners in their own homes. Once again, this comes back to the need for effective communication and positive encouragement for them to become more involved in community activities.

When asked "Is there anything else you want to say?", each group stressed the lack of public transport (or the limited services available) as the single most burning issue that needs to be addressed.

FOCUS GROUP - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The groups were broadly content with the range of services and facilities available within their communities, save for some improvements as follows. Our recommendations are:

- provide an information pack about local clubs and groups
- improve communication about in-home services for older people
- promote the notion of getting involved as a volunteer
- invite individuals with professional or specialist skills to share those skills
- introduce a skills register (trialled through a pilot scheme)
- provide training in use of computers, the internet and social media
- improve online access to Government services (e.g. Centrelink, car registration)
- explore ways of improving public transport both within the region and to the city
- explore ways to help older females living alone to overcome social isolation
- explore ways to help older males (married or single) to join networks of other older males

SENIORS AND AGED CARE WORKERS - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

This research serves to underline many of the points highlighted in our focus group research, namely the need for improved access to local services (through a better system of public transport) plus the need to reassure seniors that they have a positive role to play in their local community.

CURRENT PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

The responses from the individual seniors and their carers laid the greatest emphasis on what precluded them from participating. For the individual seniors, their inability to participate more than they do was largely attributed to the fact they were getting older and less mobile, and in several cases to specific health issues affecting their ability to participate. Practical factors also played a key part, such as limited transport services in the region.

This last point was highlighted still further by the aged care workers who attributed the reason why seniors were not more active to limitations on their opportunity to do so resulting from decisions made by the managers of aged care providers, and specifically on limited transport options for senior

All of that said, an overall picture of their current lifestyles suggested that most of the seniors interviewed were actively involved to some extent, notably in social and recreational activities, walking and sedentary activities, such as reading. Two thirds of them accessed local medical services, financial services and eating out venues in the area.

As to their contribution to their local community, in terms of any participation in local clubs or as volunteers, about a third of these participants indicated they played no part in any local clubs, with 20% saying they did not make any contribution as volunteers. The area most cited for such participation was Meals on Wheels.

The other general issue highlighted by both the individual seniors and the aged care workers related to the limited services available for seniors in some areas. They specifically identified limitations of health services, which necessitated them having to travel long distances to obtain these services, and this brings us back to the lack of public transport.

Whilst the general tone of the individual seniors was one of acceptance of this as a reality of their lifestyle choices, the emphasis within the responses from the aged care workers was that more could be done to encourage seniors to become more active by improving local services, especially public transport and specialist transport services for seniors.

SENIORS AND AGED CARE WORKERS - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MEETING THE NEEDS OF SENIORS IN THE REGION

It follows from their explanations above about the extent of their own levels of participation in local activities that, in making a more general assessment of local services for seniors, both the individual participants and the aged care workers reiterated much the same reasons for limited participation by others – namely limited services in some areas and an overall lack of transport services to facilitate their access to local services.

Once again, there was an element of fatalism in the responses from the seniors, many of whom said they had to expect these limitations, given many of them were living in small rural townships. Some went further, saying they had little expectation that things would improve, although a few suggested that health services in the region had actually declined.

When asked what would improve their access to local services, apart from once again stressing the transport factor, a key issue for many of the seniors was insufficient support for them in terms of in-home services. They were not referring to aged care services as such, but rather to their need for more practical help for domestic chores, handyman jobs and gardening. They pleaded for tradies who were more attuned to older people and who were willing to provide their services at a more affordable rate.

An underlying issue – highlighted by the aged care workers – was the increased cost of all services, with seniors facing growing financial stress.

More broadly, two thirds of the aged care workers felt that seniors were largely well provided for in the Fleurieu Peninsula region, although these respondents all had suggestions for improvement in these services.

Whilst most of these improvements would require increased expenditure on these services, much of the tone of their comments had to do with the need to positively encourage seniors to become more actively involved, and this highlighted the need for better communication with them. They stressed the benefit of drawing in older people who were not currently participating in local activities, with an emphasis on the benefits of social interaction.

Several references were made to the need to help older people come to terms with today's technology along with the growing importance of knowing how to use the internet and online communications.

PERSONAL INTEREST AND LEISURE COURSES

Whilst the levels of non-participation in local activities have tended to be around one third of the seniors, non-participation in personal interest and leisure courses was noticeably higher, with half of them saying they had not participated in such courses.

The only notable area of interest they cited for such courses related to family research and life stories, with participants indicating a complete range of other areas of interest ranging from ancient history to cooking.

SENIORS AND AGED CARE WORKERS - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Given the reference above to the perceived need for seniors to become better acquainted with online technology, a cautionary point made in the responses from seniors was that relying too much on the internet carried the risk of individuals becoming more isolated rather than socially interactive.

The aged care workers suggested a whole range of courses should be provided for seniors which were not currently available or easily accessible to them. As with the individual seniors, they offered a range stretching across all areas of possible interest, but it was noticeable that many of them suggested courses which would involve collaboration and social interaction, such as choral singing and other forms of music-making.

The individual seniors and aged care workers were united in their views that as many of these courses as possible should be provided in local halls within the areas in which people lived, given that once again inadequate local transport services would inevitably limit levels of participation.

VOLUNTEERING

Having already noted that a fifth of this group of seniors admitted they did not offer themselves as volunteers, we should add that many of these said they were already committed in other ways, such as grand-parenting. Some echoed the reasons they had already advanced for not participating in many local activities, namely their own ageing, declining health and increased mobility problems as the reasons for not volunteering.

That said, the responses of some individuals carried an element of cynicism and disillusion, in that, despite their wealth of lifetime experiences and their own personal skills, they felt their services were not broadly welcomed in the wider community. This frustration was underscored when they talked about the red tape associated with their efforts to volunteer their services – the police checks etc.

Some were more optimistic and enthusiastic, especially on the topic of passing on their knowledge to younger people or acting as their mentors, since they saw this as offering a two-way benefit, with young people able to assist older people with modern technology and in other ways.

The aged care workers were enthusiastic about the potential involvement of seniors as volunteers, and listed an almost limitless number of options, with an emphasis on utilising their skills and experience development over a lifetime to support other seniors less able to manage for themselves.

Some of the aged care workers acknowledged that some seniors had doubts about their ability to be of positive value, portraying a lack of confidence, but they suggested these doubts could be easily overcome with greater positive encouragement for seniors to play their part as volunteers in their local community. Once again, they stressed the benefit of social interaction to them by such participation.

SENIORS AND AGED CARE WORKERS - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COMMUNICATION

Several references were made, especially by the aged care workers, to poor communication as one of the key reasons why seniors were not more actively involved in their local communities.

The seniors themselves believed that they relied mostly on word-of-mouth to discover what was happening in their community, although several of them highlighted their increasing reliance on the internet to find out about local activities and events.

Despite the emphasis placed by aged care workers on helping older people become better acquainted with the latest means of communication, it seems as if the seniors themselves were already getting to grips with this.

The aged care workers argued for communication to be improved on every level, with heavy emphasis on traditional means of communicating, such as the local paper, newsletters, letterbox drops and notice boards (for instance in doctors' surgeries), as well as modern techniques such as email.

FINAL COMMENTS

The seniors interviewed had little to add by way of final comment, but it is worth noting that when asked if they derived inspiration from any organisation in terms of what it did for people in their age group, several praised the Centre for Positive Ageing.

The aged care workers listed several organisations doing worthwhile things to support seniors, but many of them re-emphasised the need to positively encourage older people that they still have a constructive role to play within their local community.

I think seniors today feel they do not have a place once they retire. Being encouraged to share their experience with local schools or in other organisations could give them a purpose. We need to do more to instil this confidence in themselves.

FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTORY ISSUES

Introductory issues

Having explained the purpose of this research and their participation in these focus groups, we began each discussion by asking the participants to introduce themselves and to explain briefly how they had come to be living in the region. What were the specific reasons why, if they had not been born in the region, they had moved here? What had been their initial perceptions? Had they settled in well?

INTRODUCTORY ISSUES

Yankalilla Group

Having explained the purpose of the focus group discussion, we began by asking the group to comment on the right terminology to use when describing their age cohort. We explained that different terms were frequently used, such as seniors, the aged, the ageing, old people, older people etc. We asked if they were sensitive on this issue, and were they happy for us to use both the terms 'senior' and 'older people'.

They were instantly dismissive of this as an issue of concern to them.

"Just call us the wise people."

"The elders."

"I don't care what word is used. I'm proud of my age."

"The only time I get upset is when they call me an old bastard."

"I think we're getting far too politically correct on these matters. Let's face it we are old people."

"Seniors is a nice word – I quite like it."

We referred to the distinction between the "young old" and "older old people" which is frequently aired in public documents.

"The distinction we ought to be making is between healthy old people and those who are experiencing ill health because of their age – people who have dementia or are disabled in some way."

"You fully realise the distinction if you still have parents who are alive. I have my father, so he really is old, and I suppose I'm a young old."

INTRODUCTORY ISSUES

Yankalilla group

We then asked them all to introduce themselves and tell us something about themselves – how they came to live in Yankalilla.

“I’m probably a new person on the block. I’ve recently retired. I had a holiday house down here. I decided to sell my house in the city – I was sitting on a goldmine – and I moved down here permanently. My holiday house was a bit small, so I bought a bigger house in the next street. It’s enjoyable – peaceful and quiet – and I was able to park my caravan on my own property, without having to pay storage. I can now go away for short breaks without having to worry about a thing.”

“I’ve got this badge on to tell you all that I’m involved with the local arts festival, which is taking place in 2017. I’ve been here five years. We came here – not to retire – but to live. It’s a great place to live, although sadly my husband retired from the world a few months ago. I’m now living on my own, but it’s such a wonderful community, I don’t feel alone. Being involved with the Festival has been a big help for me. I know a lot of people don’t know how to get involved.”

“I retired down here about 20 years ago. We like it here - everything we need. Well, maybe not quite, but it’s really good here.”

“I moved here in the late 80s when I bought a fish and chips business, and worked it for two or three years and then retired. I thoroughly enjoy it. I’m involved with the bowling club, do a lot of volunteering with Meals on Wheels and Red Cross. I’d like to say we have everything, but it’s as good as it could be for a community our size.”

“I arrived about three years ago. I retired rather late, having worked for Telstra and for a research company. I’ve always wanted to live in the country. I’m very fond of animals.”

INTRODUCTORY ISSUES

Yankalilla Group

"I lived in Canberra for near on 40 years, and then I set up my own business as a consultant. We'd been visiting here for over 50 years. My father-in-law had a place at Lady Bay. We bought a property there and renovated it. I've been fully retired for about ten years. I'm also involved in various community activities."

"My husband and I bought a place at Wirrina in 1999, initially as a holiday home, but then we moved here permanently in 2007. I got involved too and was on the Council for four years."

"I reckon I must be the only local here! I was born here back in 1944. I spent 40 years working interstate – Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney and Perth as the Marketing Manager for one of the big companies. I came back here ten years ago. I've not actually retired. I still work fulltime. I manage a local holiday resort."

"I originally lived in Adelaide. My daughter suffered from asthma. We'd been coming here since I was a child. We moved down here. She got rid of her asthma and got a job here. Now the whole family is here. I worked as a consultant for 27 years, travelling in and out of Adelaide. We've been in the same house for 42 years. In theory I've retired, but I'm an inventor and still work at that, but I find time to play in the local bowls team."

INTRODUCTORY ISSUES

Victor Harbor Group

We had an initial problem with this group, in that our recording device malfunctioned, and we were not aware that the discussion was not being recorded for the first twenty minutes or so of the discussion. Given that much of this was the introductory explanation of the purpose of research and the introduction of the group participants, we are confident that we can report fully on the core issues of their discussion. We were fortunate in that our client was taking some notes of the initial discussion, but we are not able to provide the same level of verbatim reportage for this period of our discussion with this group.

This group discussion turned out to be much more low key than the first group discussion which had taken place earlier the same day in Yankalilla. As noted above, the latter group comprised a high proportion of people who were actively involved in a number of ways within the life of the community.

We suspect that Victor Harbor, being a larger town, was a less intimate community, because most of the participants had less active involvement and were far less vibrant in expressing their perceptions of life in Victor Harbor.

This discussion was not unlike a typical discussion in a metropolitan suburb with a higher expectation of state and local government agencies and a more frequent use of the word “they” which is often used when people want to complain about the local services provided. Whilst there is often criticism of local councils in regional towns, it is usually tempered with a degree of understanding and a willingness to accept that smaller councils do not have the resources to meet local expectations.

Whilst we are not able to record the details about the individual participants, we note that there were a couple of participants who had lived in Victor Harbor for several decades or even their whole lives, several who had moved into the area about seven years ago, and a couple who were recent arrivals.

INTRODUCTORY ISSUES

Victor Harbor Group

Several said they had been regular visitors to Victor for their vacations, and that they had taken to the area and decided to settle there when they retired.

A few of the participants, mostly males, had moved to the area with significant work profiles, whether in senior management roles or with a high level of skills, but most had ceased working even on a part-time basis. Only a few of these participants seemed to be active as volunteers within the community.

One of the males had worked as a car sales dealer in Adelaide prior to moving to Victor. He told us he was very busy in the genealogical field, offering his services to people wanting to develop their family tree. He also earned income as a specialist in finding lost people, relying mostly on his knowledge of how to do this on the internet. He said he did this both out of personal interest and to earn some income.

Another male had lived all his life in the area and had run a local business. He was clearly content with his life, showing enormous enthusiasm about the area.

One of the females, who seemed to be older than most of the other participants, had worked in a number of roles in the local hospitality industry. She gradually revealed that she lived alone and was heavily involved in her local church, which provided her with a sense of belonging and enabled her to offer support to others.

Another female who had arrived in the area within the last six months – the only participant who had not been here for at least several years – told us she and her partner had rented a house nearby, whilst their new house was being built. They had moved into their home just two weeks ago.

INTRODUCTORY ISSUES

Victor Harbor Group

This prompted us to ask how welcome she had been made to feel on her arrival. She told us that “they” had given her information about all the services and facilities she needed to know about, as well as details of clubs and recreational groups in the area. It turned out that “they” was the local council who had provided her with a welcome pack to the area with all these details. She said it had been very useful.

In introducing themselves, some of them spoke about their positive – along with some negative – experiences and perceptions of living in Victor Harbor.

One of the males told us of his health problems some years ago which had necessitated that he be transported to Flinders Hospital by a special medical transport service, which had cost him \$40. He was clearly appreciative of this service, but this led him to comment on the inadequacy of other transport-related services.

With regard to the more social aspects of living in Victor, along with getting involved in local groups, we were told that there was a 12-month waiting list for some of the local Probus groups, which had an upper limit attached to their membership. We felt it curious that this was described in somewhat negative tones, when a “glass half full” response to this question could well have been an alternative response, especially given that we were told a new group was being formed to address the high level of demand for membership.

Overall, however, this group seemed content with the lives they had adopted in the Victor Harbor area in their older years

INTRODUCTORY ISSUES

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

We asked this group to introduce themselves.

“I’ve lived in Strath for two and a half years. I was an engineer in Adelaide prior to moving here. The reason we came here is because of my interest in flying model aircraft. When we were here for a while, my wife’s asthma disappeared, so we decided to move here permanently.”

“I’ve worked in four countries, and have been in this neck of the woods for about 12 years, and just love it. I’ve been working part-time for the last five years and I’m going to retire next week. Although it has paid me very well as a consultant, I got fed up with having to track my working hours with total precision to satisfy the bean counters. So, I decided that’s it. I’m a statistician and have been working for PIRSA in research.”

“I’ve been in Strath for eight years. Prior to that I was in Victor Harbor. I come from a business and financial background, but I’ve stopped working to look after my husband who is disabled. I volunteer with the Home Assist program run by the Council. I absolutely love living in Strath.”

“We’ve lived in Port Elliot for 13 years. Prior to that we lived in Normanville for 35 years. I work as a volunteer with dementia patients, and the rest of the time I play golf. I come from a secretarial background.”

“I’m also from Port Elliot, and have been living in Elliot Gardens for about five years. It was spur of the moment when I took early retirement. I was working in mental health, and I’m volunteering in that field. I run a photography group for a group of men with bipolar disorder. I’m working with the occupational therapist at Southern Fleurieu Mental Health. I love travel and spend quite a lot of time away.”

“I moved to Goolwa eight years ago. We moved from Ingle Farm and lived in Port Elliot for 15 years. I’m volunteering in the field of mental health.”

INTRODUCTORY ISSUES

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

"I was born in Strathalbyn, and I still live there. I worked for four years in KI, managing a property, and then came back to run the silo. I ran other businesses, including Elders on a national basis, but got sick of the politics of a big company, and came back here again to run the local branch. I retired but got very bored, so I went back to running the silos and drive a tractor for a mate. I ran the commerce association in Strath for a while."

"I've lived in Goolwa for 14 years, since I retired and moved here from the Hills. I was a teacher and TAFE lecturer in history. I'm a member of the University of the Third Age with most of my activity in Victor. Goolwa is a wonderful place to live. My wife is a painter and we are both involved in the arts. My main interest is theatre, and I run a play reading group. We read Shakespeare's plays which is a bit unusual, I suppose. I started it off 14 years ago, wondering if anyone would be interested, and it just hasn't stopped. People keep coming back, and we get together every fortnight."

"I've lived here since '82. I came from Reynella prior to that. I brought up a couple of children, and I've been volunteering for 20 years. I've done Meals on Wheels and done lots of things for the school. Now I'm at the Centre for Positive Ageing."

We asked the group what they felt about the terminology we use to describe their age group. Were they happy with terms like senior or older people, or did they become irritated with the use of one word or another? When we stressed the term older people as opposed to old people, one of them protested.

"But we are old people. What's the problem?"

INTRODUCTORY ISSUES

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

It prompted some ribald comments.

“When I dream, I’m 35.”

“I’d like to know what you’re dreaming about.”

We moved on without further comment, other than to ask if they were saying this was not a sensitive issue. They agreed it was not an issue of concern to them.

We drew this section of our discussion to a close with the comment that the group was portraying a high level of enthusiasm about their lives in the region. We asked if they felt this was a fair comment. They agreed.

GETTING INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY - VOLUNTEERING

Getting Involved In The Community - Volunteering

It became apparent in our discussion with the first group (Yankalilla) that one of the problems newcomers face on arrival in a new community is getting to know the locals and getting involved in community activities.

GETTING INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY - VOLUNTEERING

Yankalilla Group

With several of these participants having spoken about their roles as volunteers, we asked how important volunteering was as a substitute perhaps for paid employment and a way of keeping themselves busy.

“Volunteering is the best way to become involved in the community and to keep yourself active in a positive way. It’s enjoyable – for instance, here at the bowling club, but we also do a lot of work for the local community as volunteers.”

“All the clubs do a fair bit for everybody, don’t they?”

“We started dancing recently. It’s very popular.”

“I always get surprised if I hear someone saying there’s nothing to do.”

One of them opened up the discussion about how difficult it can be for new arrivals to get involved in community events.

“It can be hard for some people to take that first step. You hear some people saying but they don’t know anyone.”

GETTING INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY - VOLUNTEERING

Yankalilla Group

We asked how someone could be encouraged to take that first step, to break the ice, especially for someone who is a bit shy. One of them kept using the word 'explicit' to describe the need for community members to make personalised approaches to new people in town – not just saying 'we welcome all newcomers'.

"As a newcomer you have to make an effort. I remember when I first came here to run the fish shop, I got to know a lot of people in the area, but not as friends, just as customers. I made a real effort to attend an event at the bowling club. When I walked in, they were all looking at me, and I wondered what I was doing. I'm actually quite shy, even though I was running a business. But someone came up to me, and it was all OK."

"But it's very much up to locals and members of the clubs to draw in the newcomers."

"That's what I mean by making an explicit effort. It doesn't just happen."

"But it does come down to a newcomer making some kind of effort. It's so easy, for instance, if you play golf. You walk into the club, sign up, and you get given a game and immediately you've met new people."

Several made the point that a lot of this is down to the character of the individual, whilst stressing that the slightest effort will be rewarded in a rural community.

"A lot of it has to do with age. So long as you're young enough, or young at heart if you like, then getting involved is easy. Once you get to a certain age, then you're inclined to find reasons not to go out."

GETTING INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY - VOLUNTEERING

Yankalilla Group

One of the males who had arrived in the area just a few years ago offered his perceptions of these issues.

“I’m not backward in coming forward – it’s part of my nature. I realised there were a number of people of my age living near us. I joined the men’s shed. Since I was a builder, that was a natural for me.”

A female participant was clearly more reserved and shy (being somewhat quiet in this discussion), and said that, having arrived about three years ago, it had taken her a year to get involved by joining Club Fleurieu.

“I come to play Scrabble and the quiz nights, and they have occasional bingo nights – there’s a lot of activities actually. There tend to be more women there than men. I’m not a social butterfly, but I do like company. You can spend too much time by yourself, and you need to get out.”

GETTING INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY - VOLUNTEERING

Victor Harbor Group

We approached our discussion with the Victor Harbor group in a different sequence, so the issues addressed in this section are addressed in the section commencing on page 74.

GETTING INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY - VOLUNTEERING

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

In introducing themselves, it became apparent that most of these participants had put themselves forward as volunteers in some capacity or another. For some it must have been a life-changing experience, given they moved into the area from Adelaide or the outer metropolitan area.

One of the males, who moved to Strathalbyn a few years ago, said he had been full of trepidation when he first arrived, not knowing if he would find it easy to settle into a completely different lifestyle.

“I remember saying to my wife when we first arrived – remember we had lived in the one place for 35 years up to that point – I said to her the only way we can make this work is to get involved in the community. And that’s what we did. I’m involved in the model aircraft club, the Men’s Shed and a choir. My wife is in just about everything. Oh, and we’re both involved in the local church as well. We didn’t have any friends when we first got here. We joined the walking group through which I learned about the men’s shed, and it all sort of grew from there. It has been amazing. My wife broke her hip three weeks ago, and the response from our friends and other members of the community has been over-whelming. I had no idea till then how many people she had got to know. There must have been 20 people who offered to help in one way or another.”

“You go to the local shop to buy a loaf of bread, and an hour later you manage to get home.”

One of the males painted a picture of the ideal attitude towards retiring.

“My philosophy about retiring is you need just the right amount of money to live on, not a huge amount but enough to manage. You need an engrossing hobby to keep you busy. You need to belong to a strong social group, and really feel you belong. And you need to give back. If you do all those things, you’ll be fine.”

GETTING INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY - VOLUNTEERING

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

We asked if any of them had had different experiences, or were they aware of people for whom it had not been an easy transition.

“When we first moved down here in '87, I didn't know anyone. My husband had moved down six months before – he was a tractor mechanic. I got here, and everyone called out to him in the street, but I didn't know anyone. I felt really down for a while. Then I got a job as a waitress in the Elliot Hotel, and I gradually got to know everyone, and it was fine. But it can be very hard to start with, and you need a lot of help from others.”

“We have neighbours who have just moved here from Melbourne. They are thrilled with the move. They have bought the house of someone who had lived here for 20 years, but has moved to Riverton because it's too hectic for him here!”

“We were just visiting when we discovered there was an open inspection at a retirement village in Port Elliot. Without hesitating we put a deposit down, and it was then I wondered what the heck I'd done. But I got involved with the volunteer work, and I never looked back.”

We asked if newcomers to the area received any kind of dossier from the Council about the range of opportunities open to them as new residents. They laughed almost in derision.

“You wouldn't get anything from the Council.”

GETTING INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY - VOLUNTEERING

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

The two participants from Port Elliot were living in a retirement village, and one of them said they received useful information like that from the village management.

“It was mostly about activities available within the village itself, and my first reaction was that they catered mostly for much older people, and I wasn’t interested – things like carpet bowls, crochet and knitting.”

We asked the group, thinking back, what they would like to have received.

“To know there was a book club and a yoga group. For quite a time after I arrived here I felt lost, wondering what I could do, but gradually I began to get involved in the community.”

“I’ve always wanted a nice garden but never had time to concentrate on this until I moved to Strath. A friend invited me along to the Garden Club, and I’ve never looked back. It has 170 members, and I’m the Treasurer which means I’m using my business and finance expertise. Everywhere I go, someone knows me. I have to pretend I know their names! But it has been great. The club does bus trips, and all sorts of other things.”

“The information centre in Strath is quite good at letting people know what’s happening. Also the library is an excellent information source.”

“When I was in the Commerce Association in Strath we used to give every new business an information pack about the town and its organisations.”

“Living in Strath, I know what’s available there, but I don’t know, for instance, what’s happening in Goolwa. It’s only half an hour away.”

GETTING INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY - VOLUNTEERING

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

“When I first arrived in Goolwa, my feeling was everything was happening in Victor and very little in Goolwa. That’s changed quite a lot due to the efforts of a few individuals. Now we have our own book club, there are events at Signal Point, but it’s still not enough for us, so we go to Victor quite a lot to take part in their local activities.”

“If you’re musically inclined there’s a ukulele group in Goolwa.”

We asked if they felt the Council ought to be providing some kind of induction package for newcomers, but the general response was that it just would not happen.

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Services and facilities

We asked the group participants to talk about the range of services, facilities and opportunities available to them within their respective towns and within the region. Were they adequate? What was missing?

We added a question as to their perception of the overall region in which they lived. Did they feel it had a focal point which acted as a drawcard for people living within the area covered by the three local councils, such as for specific services?

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

We asked first of all for their comments about the range of services and facilities in their immediate area, i.e. Yankalilla and Normanville.

"I tend to think the services down here are pretty good. My perspective is a bit personal, I know, but I've had a couple of heart attacks, and had to be rushed off to hospital, and then had a couple of scares which also required me to go to hospital. The local ambulance service have offered me the equivalent of frequent flyer points! More broadly, I find the computer is helping a lot. I'm amazed at how well our generation has adapted. I have a friend in her late 80s who is better using the computer than I am. But there is a big gap, such as registering your car. You have to drive into Noarlunga to do this. You ought to be able to do this online. We're being told all the time we have to adapt to the computer, but the Government itself is failing to provide all its services online."

Some disputed the need to go to Noarlunga, saying it is possible to register a car online, but it's possible they were referring to renewing their registration.

One of the males made the first reference to what became a trend in all three groups.

"To be honest, I don't know, because I hardly use the computer. My wife deals with those things. When they put a computer on my desk at work, that was the day I decided to retire."

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

Another spoke of limited use of modern technology in other respects.

“I run a local tournament and told people I would confirm details via an SMS message, and I found most of them didn’t know how to use their mobile phones.”

“I run the local sailing club. It took me a while to realise I could send out multiple emails by pressing a button, instead of doing them individually. But 40% of our members don’t have a computer. That means it costs \$20 just to send out a notice.”

“I think learning how to use the computer is important for people of our age, and that’s something maybe the RDA should be examining. I’d be in there like a shot.”

We asked if there was an internet café in the area or a location where people can go to use a computer if they don’t have one. We were told that the entire Yankalilla area is covered by a free Wi-Fi provided by the local council.

“The library has several computers. Each time I go there they’re all in use. There’s a Centrelink spot there too.”

“And they do training courses.”

Returning to the main point, another male agreed that the provision of local services was pretty good.

“For day-to-day needs, like grocery shopping and other daily needs, it’s fine down here. Just a few things you have to travel outside the area.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

We took them through a checklist to ascertain their perceptions of local services. We asked them about financial services, such as banks.

“There are two banks – ANZ and SA.”

“You can also bank with Commonwealth at the Post Office.”

We asked them if this was sufficient for their needs.

“I’d say so. I don’t think I’ve been in a bank for several years. My wife does all the banking online.”

We asked jokingly if this was becoming a trend – namely the wife doing these things.

“I take your point, but in all seriousness I used to have a secretary when I was working, and it became part of my way of life to have someone else do these things. When I retired, my wife took on these duties. But I am learning how to use the computer for lots of the things I do.”

“It’s a case of thinking outside the square.”

The female participant whose husband had died recently offered advice.

“We should all learn how to do these things, because you never know if you are going to be suddenly alone and struggling to work out how things were done by your partner.”

“It’s so important for us all to upgrade our skills and to do so when you’re able and young enough to learn new things.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

"It's not enough to rely on your grandchildren."

"I've got a computer, but I only use about 5% of what it can do for me."

We asked about the local medical and health facilities. Their immediate response was quite positive.

"It's good. We're well provided for."

"We've got nine doctors."

"And we're fine for chemists."

What about transport? This had already attracted some comment.

"When I told other people I was coming to this meeting, the one they all said had to be mentioned was the lack of public transport."

"There's none."

"The Sealink bus to Kangaroo Island does a pick-up for people wanting to be dropped off on its route to Cape Jervis, but only once a day each way."

"And it's subject to space. It's often full during the tourist season."

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

We were told Seaford was the nearest point for them to use public transport.

“The only way to travel across the region is to go into Adelaide and then out on another route by train or bus.”

“There’s nothing currently to get us from here to Victor. Several people have suggested to me that there should be a linking bus from Victor to here and then to Seaford. People in Victor are in the same boat – they can only get to Seaford by driving.”

At this point we asked if the region had a focal point to which they would go for certain services not available locally.

“My issue relates to Centrelink. Locally, we have the phone link in the library, but you’re lucky to get anyone to respond on that line for anything up to three hours – just waiting. You have to drive to Victor if you need any personal service from them. A lot of people have to go there to update their pension or for other reasons. A transport link would be good.”

“We’re at a disadvantage locally in that if you live in Victor there is a bus service to take people to Flinders Hospital, but it doesn’t come this way.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

Some pointed out there was a community car to take locals to hospital, and a taxi service had recently been established.

“We used to have a local taxi, but it didn’t last long.”

“It costs \$100 to go to the airport.”

“That’s not bad really, if your alternative is to drive your own car and park it or go through the hassle of parking it at a friend’s house. And they offer a 24-hour service.”

We asked if there was a community bus. There was a cryptic response.

“Sort of.”

“There’s a community bus which services the local area once a week. It goes down to Cape Jervis if people call.”

“If only it was more frequent. I’m sure people would use it, because you get to an age when you don’t want to drive or maybe you can’t because of a medical condition.”

“I used to be on the Council. The trouble is when it was first provided – a more frequent service - people just did not use it. You don’t use it – you lose it. And that’s what happened. It was cut back.”

“I know quite a few people in Victor who work in the city, and they would love to have a regular bus service to and from Seaford at a time when they can connect with the commuter trains from Seaford. Also a late night service if you want to go into the city to see a show.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

One of the female participants pointed out that the most common perception in the city, when the name Fleurieu was mentioned, was to assume this referred to Victor Harbor as the heart of the region.

“In fact there is no single centre in this region, and the northern border of the region seems to be moving further and further up. Some people seem to think Christies Beach is part of the Fleurieu.”

“But of course we think of ourselves as the centre of the universe!”

We then asked them about the local provision of sports, recreation and leisure. We asked if they felt well-provided for in this respect, and most gave a thoughtful nod.

“I think we cover most sports.”

“We don’t have a gym for fitness purposes or a public swimming pool.”

Some said private facilities were provided, such as the Sea Dragon Swim School & Fitness Centre at Delamere.

One of them pointed out that the local area was growing, adding that a growing population will increase demand for such services.

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

The male participant who had raised this pointed out that this private facility was 20 minutes away and a gym and pool were needed locally. A female responded.

“In fairness to the owner of this facility, she does provide fitness classes in town – at the library and at Club Fleurieu.”

“All credit to her. The council couldn’t afford to provide a pool or a gym – it’s only a small council – so she built it herself out of her own money left as a legacy to her by her mother, and she really deserves to succeed.”

A male participant said he happened to know that someone locally was hoping to establish a fitness facility closer to town, and discussions were in progress. Another participant said it was due to be established next to Minz (??) in Normanville.

We were told that Club Fleurieu had evolved from what used to be known as the Senior Citizens Club.

“It then became the Over 50s Club, but we eventually decided we wanted to be just us, so we dropped any reference to age. People used to stay away because they didn’t think they were old enough to join.”

She then rattled off a list of all the social and recreational activities organised by the club for its members. She stressed that it was well-supported. Membership was increasing to \$20, which some (only half-jokingly) thought might meet resistance, but the overall mood about it was very positive.

We asked if they had any other comments on this aspect of life in their area. The male participant who ran Normanville Sailing Club commented that he was finding it more and more difficult to attract new members.

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

Another male was critical of the cycle tracks in the region.

“The tracks round here are bloody terrible. There’s only one that’s any good, and that goes from Normanville to Carrickalinga. Anywhere else you’ve got to go on the road, and it’s too dangerous.”

Others agreed with this comment.

“Walking tracks and cycling tracks are really sub-standard round here.”

We asked for their perceptions of arts activities, both in terms of attending arts events and participation in the arts in other ways.

“In terms of art there’s a couple of well-run art groups. The Council is very supportive of that aspect. There’s an active quilting group too.”

“There’s a performing arts group called Sealand Theatre, which is very good. They did a variety show recently at Club Fleurieu. It’s based in Second Valley, and is only two years old.”

“The theatre group was set up by a number of individuals, but there isn’t a decent performance space. We used to have a very nice venue but it was taken over by the library, so we definitely need a performance venue.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

We asked if they thought there would be demand and support for an arts venue for performances as well as to display works of art. Several said they thought this would be supported by the community.

“We already have a successful festival every two years, and that is strongly supported by the community and by visitors. The last festival had several sold-out events.”

One of the participants repeated the point made earlier that the population was growing, which highlighted the need for such facilities.

“We already get very experienced artists who retire here from the city who participate in our events and give free lessons to other people.”

“There’s lots of people with other creative talents – singers, musicians and in other areas too.”

We asked where they went to see a movie – or was that not feasible?

“Victor Harbor has a pretty good cinema.”

“I doubt if we’re big enough for a cinema to be viable here.”

“Club Flieuriu puts on a film once a month, and they are usually quite recent releases.”

“But even that’s hardly viable. My wife used to be President of the club. When they started showing films, audiences were sometimes as low as only three people.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

“People have got Foxtel at home. There’s not really the demand.”

“And this is another good reason for wanting some kind of transport to and from Victor. It would be nice to get a bus to see a movie there.”

We asked them, in the event that an arts centre (for shows, concerts and as an art gallery) was established, say, in Victor Harbor, whether people in the region would support it?

“I don’t know. There’s a beautiful centre which has just opened in Mount Barker with private money. It would be wonderful to have more venues, if only for our festival. You try to get groups to perform, and they ask about the venue facilities – have you got a grand piano, and of course we don’t. Last festival we put on a concert in Christ Church in Yankalilla, and it was just perfect, but we could only accommodate 50 people. When the festival is not on, I’m not sure there would be enough demand to justify the cost.”

This participant went on to talk up the festival which is next scheduled for 2017.

“It’s a wonderful event. It’s not just the arts. It includes a whole range of community events. Last year it did really well. But it’s volunteer-driven. We’re always looking for performance spaces, especially a big venue.”

We then asked them about food and hospitality in the local area – day-to-day shops and places to eat out. Were they happy with what was currently available?

“We’ve got two very good supermarkets, two butchers, two bakeries.”

“And two post offices.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

“A gourmet butcher opened up recently with a delicatessen attached.”

“Let’s not forget the doctor’s surgery and the school – both in the centre serving both ends of the community.”

“Look, it’s a small town. You’re not going to get your boutique shops or a Kmart, but we do pretty well.”

“If you want to go out for a coffee, you’re spoilt for choice. We are so lucky, and during the holidays – with all the visitors and people with their holiday homes in town – the whole place is heaving.”

“We’ve got a couple of gift shops, and I do all my gift-buying locally.”

“I believe the permanent population is about 2,700 – it swells to over 10,000 during the school holidays.”

We asked specifically about eating out, and received an enthusiastic response.

“I reckon it’s fabulous. We’ve been going to the Courthouse for years.”

“But sadly it’s just about to close down. It’s to do with his lease.”

“But I’ve heard they’re planning to re-open elsewhere.”

They listed off other successful eateries, including one in Second Valley.

“Plus we’ve got The Links Golf Club.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

We asked about take-away facilities.

“There are plenty – I don’t know how they all survive.”

Once again they listed several outlets providing this service.

We asked if they thought there was a market for home-delivered cooked meals. Some talked initially about the local Meals on Wheels service, in which a couple were involved as volunteers.

“Some people turn up their noses at the idea of using this service, but it’s actually very good, and it’s terrific value.”

“Whilst some of it comes from a central area, a lot of it is cooked locally.”

“That needs to be better promoted, because it’s a good selling point.”

“It’s a pity it has that reputation, because there’s a lot of people who could do with that service.”

“People will often say it’s for really old people.”

“The truth is it’s a way of enabling people to stay in their own homes, rather than go into a nursing home. There’s lot of services available for old people living in their own homes. Meals on Wheels is one of them.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

There was some confusion about how a person is able to access this service.

“It used to be the case you had to have a recommendation from a doctor, but I’m not sure if this is still the case.”

“I think it’s more lenient now.”

We asked if they thought there was a market for home-delivered gourmet-style meals. There was a sceptical response. Several said they very much doubted it.

“It’s nice to go out for a meal. Having it delivered is not the same.”

One of the males asked the group if there was a local pizza delivery service. Most seemed unsure, but the participant who managed a local resort listed a few examples of home delivery, including pizzas.

“I know they deliver to our guests, because we provide the take-away shops with the code to get into the resort area.”

We asked if they thought there would be a market for the delivery of ingredients to cook a specific meal (along with the recipe) – a service like Home Fresh which is advertised widely in the metropolitan area.

“I’d be interested so long as I could be assured it’s not coming from Coles or Woolworths. There’s a big local movement here, with people wanting to support local suppliers and local shops. There’s a local market once a month where you get excellent vegetables at a better price. There’s also a market at Cape Jervis, and a lot of people go to the Willunga Farmers market. The only problem with them is you have to drive there, and if you can’t drive, then you’re limited to shopping in the locality.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

“There has been a push for some time to establish a market in Normanville but it hasn’t materialised yet.”

One of them referred to the occasional “veggie swap” event where people exchanged their surplus produce for other items.

We asked about aged care and community services. Was there adequate provision for this in the local area? How did it rate? They were not instantly responsive, and seemed a bit vague about this.

“I think there’s pretty good provision, and ACH are building some new facilities in the area.”

“It’s a retirement village – not aged care.”

“There’s quite a long waiting list, I’ve heard.”

“I’ve heard very good reports about the range of facilities for retired people and for aged care more generally.”

There was mixed awareness of the range of in-home community services provided (at a cost) for older people.

“A lady round the corner from me is living alone after her husband died, and she gets a range of services provided through ACH.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

A male participant said he had used a service he obtained through the Council.

“I’ve got to the stage where I won’t climb ladders anymore, so I got someone to come and clear our gutters. You’d give them a donation of \$10 for this. But that stopped. Locally you can’t get anyone to do this kind of thing. I had one guy come out, but when he told it would cost me \$50 an hour, I said no way. \$20-\$25 an hour would be OK.”

Others seemed to indicate that \$50 was a reasonable rate.

“For a start they have to pay insurance to be covered.”

One of the female participants was keen to raise an issue others had asked her to raise, namely the inadequate provision of support for carers. She referred specifically to cases where someone was in need of constant care and was totally dependent on their spouse for support.

“They really do need more support. As a community we need to look after people who are looking after other people. I’m talking about social support – intellectual as much as physical. I’m not sure what we can do, but I’m aware of a number of people who are stuck at home. I know there is some provision for respite care, but they need more than that.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

Finally, we asked if there were local opportunities for people to develop new interests or to learn new skills. We mentioned WEA in the city as an example of what we were meaning. Were such courses provided locally, such as learning about computers?

“When I came down here three years ago, I noticed the Lions Club was providing some computer classes but they stopped doing this.”

“I don’t think there was sufficient take-up of these classes to warrant keeping them going.”

“The Council provided some computer courses at The Centre. I don’t know if they are still doing them.”

Other than that, was there anything else?

“Art is pretty well catered for. We have events once a month with top artists coming in to give a talk.”

“I’d love to join an art class for beginners. When I read about the local art group, it all sounds too much for me. I want to go along and feel I can just dabble at art to get properly introduced to it.”

“There’s a very good history society.”

“The University of Third Age has been introduced to the area. I’m a Spanish teacher, so I have a small group that I teach on a regular basis. Obviously I do it on a voluntary basis. There are other classes too.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Yankalilla Group

One of them pointed out that these activities were not serious learning exercises.

“It’s much more a way to develop your wellbeing. It’s a bit like going for a walk. Some people feel the need for energetic exercise, whereas for others going for a walk is all they need for their wellbeing.”

“People aren’t learning languages specifically because they’re going to travel. They just want to use their brain.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Victor Harbor Group

Due to the malfunctioning of the recording device during the early stages of this discussion, we are only able to note some summary points about this group's thoughts about the provision of services in the area.

There was general acceptance that the area had sufficient banks and other financial services, and government services such as Centrelink were also readily available.

However one participant complained – and others agreed – that they ought to be able to register cars locally.

“It's crazy that we have to go to Christies Beach to register a car.”

They were broadly happy with the provision of medical services, and those who had used the local hospital said it provided excellent support and recovery services.

One participant described the hospital as a staging post for patients needing more serious attention in Adelaide, and patients were brought back to the local hospital for recovery purposes.

As regards local transport, there was some confused discussion about what was currently provided and what they believed might be possible. One of the males spoke about the limitations of the bus service provided from Victor to Adelaide.

“A friend of mine used to use the service but doesn't do so any longer because it doesn't have a toilet on board.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Victor Harbor Group

We asked for their reactions to the suggestion made in Yankalilla that there should be a loop link between Victor, Yankalilla and Seaford.

"I can't see that working, as it would involve too long a journey for us going that way. Going to the city direct from here takes about an hour and a quarter. Going on the loop way would make the journey much longer."

"Having said that, having a bus service linking Yankalilla and Victor would be good for people in both towns."

We asked about the current provision of sports, leisure, recreation and arts activities in the area. Was provision of this adequate for their needs?

"What I'd like to see is some kind of gym equipment for seniors located in the local parks. They have recreational facilities for young people and children, but very little for older people. It is a growing trend elsewhere. They see it as good for health and wellbeing and for socialisation. I'd also like to see more walking and cycling trails in the area."

"And benches to rest on when going for a walk. There are some but not enough. They ought to have backs and arms, not just a simple bench with no support."

"They need to have some kind of shade, because you can't sit for long in the open sunlight on a hot day."

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Victor Harbor Group

One of them said the existing pathways and cycle tracks were dangerous for pedestrians.

“It often happens that you’re walking round a bend and a cyclist is coming the opposite way at high speed.”

“Also they often come up behind you and yell at you to get out of the way or ring a bell at the last minute.”

“It’s a real problem for people older than us who are less mobile or agile enough to get out of the way.”

“The new bike laws are definitely not helpful to walkers. There’s no speed limit for cyclists, and sometimes they go really fast.”

Some broadened the topic to include roadside pavements.

“Leaving aside the recreational walking trails, some of the more rural roads have no footpaths by the roadside at all, and that is very dangerous for pedestrians who are walking to and from the local shops.”

“The aim is supposedly to have a footpath on at least one side of the road, but there are plenty with none at all.”

We asked about the availability of arts activities, whether active participation or attending as an audience member.

“The Church of Christ has a project centre where you can go to learn about certain types of arts and craft. They also have indoor bowling or you can play cards.”

“There are local groups for people interested in painting and that sort of activity.”

“But I’m not aware of any painting classes where you are taught the basics of how to paint.”

“There used to be more of that kind of activity when I first came here.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Victor Harbor Group

“But I’m not aware of any painting classes where you are taught the basics of how to paint.”

“There used to be more of that kind of activity when I first came here.”

We asked if there was an amateur theatre group which performed plays and musicals.

“There’s a very good group, but the facilities are atrocious.”

“There’s a group – the Choral Arts Society - that performs at the Town Hall. It involves people of all ages. It does very high quality productions.”

Did they ever get the chance to see professional theatre productions? Where would they be presented?

“You go to Goolwa or Noarlunga for that. They are both good venues.”

“There’s a small facility at Signal Point which also serves as an art gallery.”

We asked if they thought there was demand for a purpose-built arts centre in the local area or nearby. Some thought there would be support for such a venture, but others were more sceptical.

“It would need to be done by the Council, who would also have to run it. But the Council has so much debt already, it simply couldn’t afford it.”

“I suppose we have to be realistic and accept that we’d go to the city for that kind of entertainment. Lots of people travel to the Festival Centre to see shows.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Victor Harbor Group

We were told by one of the female participants that she happened to know there was an effort being made to establish some kind of arts centre in Victor, but she wasn't in the position to elaborate further on this.

We used this moment to ask these participants if they felt conscious of being part of a region with Victor Harbor possibly as the focal point.

"We would naturally claim Victor as the principal town in the region, so I guess the focal point would be here."

"But Goolwa is also very popular."

We asked about the cinema. Was that popular and well patronised by locals? They all felt it did well.

We asked if they were well served in the food and hospitality sector, i.e. day-to-day shopping and eating out. The general response was quite negative.

"There isn't a real central area for major shopping, but supermarkets which are scattered around the area."

"We miss out on quite a lot of shops and for certain goods. Some people seem to be horrified that we may get a Bunnings or a new Coles, but I think it would be good for the area. The trend seems to be local shops closing down rather than any feeling of growth in the area."

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Victor Harbor Group

Some said the local shops were fine for day-to-day purchases, but they go to Noarlunga Shopping Centre for any large shop and to buy clothes and other goods.

“You certainly can’t get much in the way of clothes here or shoes, and if you want kids stuff you go to Noarlunga. Also, we don’t have any gourmet style shops. If you want to buy decent meat, say from the Barossa, you have to drive up to Noarlunga or into the city.”

“I wanted to buy a Samsung TV from Betta Electricals in Victor, but they didn’t sell them. I went to Harvey Norman instead.”

Their feelings about shopping in the area were pretty downbeat.

“If you go to the shops on a Sunday, the whole place is pretty dead. Most of the shops aren’t open, yet it’s a tourist town.”

“The trouble of course is that to open on a Sunday you have to pay penalty rates to the staff. It’s not commercially viable.”

What about eating out at cafes and restaurants?

“It’s good if you don’t mind driving to McLaren Vale or Goolwa.”

“It’s really hard to find nice places to eat down here. Cheap pub meals are the specialty in Victor Harbor. I suspect it may be due to the demographic profile of Victor.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Victor Harbor Group

We asked this participant to clarify his last comment. He said he was commenting on the social-demographic profile of the resident population as well as the visitors.

We then asked about take-away services, such as Chinese or Asian cuisine. What about other fast food outlets?

“They’re all pretty ordinary.”

“We’ve got McDonalds of course.”

We asked if they thought there was a market for the home delivery of meals. What about Meals on Wheels? One of the males responded saying he was going to offer his services as a volunteer. That said, some were not impressed with the service.

“I’d decline to use the service because I don’t believe they offer good nutritional values. There’s not much variety in the food selection, and it lacks cultural variation. It seems to be very focused on meat and 3 veg.”

This group clearly preferred the idea of doing their own shopping and eating at home.

“Actually, there is a good shop in Goolwa that does pre-cooked meals for take-away.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

We asked this group as a general question if they felt that in their own towns the level of local services was adequate.

“The most glaring shortcoming is the lack of transport. If there was one thing that I’d like to be addressed it’s that. Goolwa is a terrific place to live, and I love it, but we need some kind of transport.”

Others agreed with this comment, but the situation varied from town to town. Some pointed out there was a community bus in Goolwa which provides transport to Victor Harbor. In Strathalbyn a bus provides transport to Adelaide three or four times a day.

“We used to have a community bus in Strathalbyn, which ran a bit like the one here in Goolwa, but that was cancelled by the Council.”

What about taxi services? The people from Strathalbyn said there were several taxis, but in Goolwa there was less certainty about this, although some said there were a number of taxis servicing Goolwa.

“In my circles in Strathalbyn, talking more widely about transport, there are calls for better connections to Mount Barker which is 26km away. There’s a limited service, but the issue is whether an expanded service would attract sufficient support to warrant the cost.”

We asked about the provision of financial services within their areas, and most seemed to be happy with the number of banks. Most of them did their banking online.

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

The dissatisfaction most strongly expressed related to the provision of local Council services, with one of the male participants from Strathalbyn complaining that the Council was based in Goolwa, and distribution of services, he alleged, was not in proportion to where the local population actually resided.

“Communication with the Council is diabolical.”

A contrary view was expressed by a female resident of Goolwa, but this served to only confirm the former participant’s complaint.

“That’s my point. It’s good for Goolwa. The state of the roads and footpaths in Strath is terrible, but you go to Goolwa, and it’s pristine. They refused to cut the grass in the local park because it wasn’t long enough. I said I hoped their insurance would be enough to cover the cost of someone being bitten by a snake. The grass was cut the next day.”

The participants from Port Elliot were more than satisfied with the range of services provided in their locality.

A female participant spoke about the need for better facilities for the Woodshed which operates like a typical men’s shed.

“It’s a terrific organisation which is bursting at the seams. The Council has been promising for years to provide new facilities for it. There’s no toilet there nor even running water which was cut off by the Council when they did the library. It’s desperately in need of these new facilities.”

One of the males present was treasurer of the Woodshed and painted a positive picture of reassurance that things were about to improve in this respect.

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

We asked about the current provision of medical and health services, concentrating initially on day-to-day medical services in the area.

“It used to be terrific in Goolwa, but then the Government shifted services to Victor which is costing them twice as much to run as when we had our own triage facilities.”

“We have two medical centres in Strath, but some people use facilities in Mount Barker. The provision of services is fine, but they’re all still flat out, and it can take several weeks to secure an appointment even for routine purposes.”

“Part of the problem is getting allocated to a specific doctor, or to be seen consistently by the same doctor. Some surgeries provide you with whoever is available at the time, and that is not good enough.”

“Most old people want their own doctor, not to be shunted from one to another.”

As regards hospitals, one of the participants from Strathalbyn was critical.

“Things are pretty pathetic in Strath, compared with how it used to be. We tend to rely on the emergency services in Mount Barker, but this is more like a staging post for Adelaide where the people are treated, and then sent back to Mount Barker to recover.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

We asked about the medical transportation to hospitals elsewhere – Medi-Ride. Some were full of praise for the services, whilst others had not heard of it.

“I used to be a volunteer driver to take people to medical appointments, and they were happy with that because of the one-to-one relationship. I used to go in with them and help with their paperwork. But Council, in its wisdom, decided to abolish the volunteer service and pass it on to the local taxi firm to manage. They not only lost a lot of volunteers, but people didn’t want to use the taxi company for fear they would just be dropped at the door – and their reliability was also questionable.”

One of the Goolwa residents commented that, in relation to all these topics, the pressure on services was likely to intensify because of the constant growth in the local population.

“Still concentrating on health issues, the problem is getting information to older people about what health resources are available in the area.”

“They don’t know about the range of services that are available to older people. They just don’t know they can get some gardening help from the Council or help to wash their floors. It only costs them \$5 an hour.”

We asked about sports, recreation and leisure. When introducing themselves these participants had demonstrated they had a range of interests. Did they feel there was sufficient choice for local residents?

“I’ve always believed we need a bowling alley – ten pin bowling. It would appeal to people of all ages.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

The general consensus was the three towns were well provided for, but there was criticism (again) from a male participant in Strathalbyn about Council spending, commenting this time on its decision to build a swimming pool in Goolwa.

“We’ve got a financial noose around our necks to build a 25 metre pool, which is not even full size.”

We asked if there was sufficient provision for those interested in arts and entertainment. Signal Point had already been mentioned as a performance venue. Were there sufficient facilities for the arts in general?

“The theatrette seats only 50 people, but we do have our glorious Centennial Hall. It got a huge financial boost when Goolwa was nominated as the South Australian Centre for Regional Culture in 2012. It totally transformed this town from the arts and cultural point of view. We have two galleries operating full time. We have a film society that meets in Centennial Hall once a month. It’s quite expensive to hire the hall on a one-off basis. But it’s a wonderful facility that can convert from a theatre to a nightclub-style of venue. The arts scene in Goolwa has exploded – it’s now what the town is known for.”

Others were also enthusiastic about the facility.

“We get shows from Adelaide down here, and it’s half the price.”

“Signal Point has regular shows by respected artists and the information centre at Strath also puts on art shows.”

“We have a group down here called Just Add Water, and they put on very good shows which are very popular.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

We asked if the arts activities in Goolwa drew on other towns in the region for their attendances at these events. We were told lots of people came from Victor and from other parts of the region.

“People come over to attend events organised by the film society. The films they show are not exactly arty-type films, but popular classics from the last 20 or 30 years.”

Was there a need for a cinema in Goolwa to show contemporary films?

“Not really people can go to Victor for that.”

“In Strath we have the Mount Barker cinema quite close, so we are covered too in this respect.”

Did this mean the region was adequately catered for in respect of an arts venue? Several agreed they was no justification to build another facility within the region.

“The people in Victor wouldn’t agree – they are crying out for a new arts venue in Victor itself.”

We asked about day-to-day shopping in their respective areas. Were they happy with local services in that respect? In the general reaction around the table, there was obvious consensus that they were well served for their basic needs.

“For things like footwear we have to go further afield.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

The participants from Strathalbyn said they tended to gravitate towards Mount Barker for their major shopping and for specialist needs.

We asked about eating out at cafes and restaurants. There was considerable enthusiasm from all three towns.

“We have a terrific range here.” (Goolwa)

“I went for a coffee yesterday in Port Elliot, and couldn’t even get in there.”

A participant from Strathalbyn listed the range of dining options there.

We asked for their comments about the more downbeat response from the group in Victor Harbor, and that verdict was echoed in this group.

“Victor has been heading downhill for a long time, in so many ways.”

We asked about home-delivery services, and several participants indicated that local restaurants provided this service, with the Strathalbyn people extolling the virtues of The Great Escape.

“They have a gourmet chef.”

“You can get groceries delivered by Woolworths and Coles.”

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

One of the females was full of praise for the local Meals on Wheels service.

“Whilst some of the food is transported from the city in bulk, a lot of it is cooked locally, and it’s a very good service.”

We asked what they thought about the range of aged care services in the region.

We were told there were plenty of services for the aged in the region, including community services in an old person’s own home.

“The Centre for Positive Ageing is very good in terms of the help and advice it provides. It helps lots of people get practical support in their own homes, and it works very well. It includes carers to help people shower and that kind of support.”

We asked if they felt there was sufficient opportunity for personal development in the region, such as training courses for the computer or language classes. Apart from University for the Third Age, were there other avenues open locally for older people?

“You have to be prepared to travel to learn about things and do training courses. It’s not realistic to expect a small country town to have that kind of facility.”

“The library offers computer courses.”

“In Port Elliot there are computer classes each week in a local church.”

UTILISING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Utilising skills and knowledge

Given the growth in the number of older people who are now living in their locality and within the overall region, and given that many of the retirees and older people have developed significant skills over the period of their lives, we asked how this expertise might best be used to benefit the local community. Did they perceive themselves as having anything to offer their local community in a voluntary capacity?

Were any of these participants still working in a part-time capacity, or would they like to be doing so? Would they be willing to consider acting as a mentor to younger people who were keen to benefit from their expertise and experience?

UTILISING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Yankalilla Group

We asked this group if they felt there was an opportunity to share their skills and expertise to younger people. Male participants were the first to respond to this.

“The local schools – Yankalilla and Myponga – take on volunteers in a number of ways. I’m a volunteer and talk to school kids about the work I do as an inventor. There’s no better audience for this than a group of kids, and I love doing this.”

“As an ex-builder, I guess my main contribution is through the local Men’s Shed. The truth of course is a lot of guys simply want to go and chat, and not necessarily to make anything. Most of their working life would probably have been with other men, so they miss this when they retire, and the Men’s Shed is a good outlet for them. If you’re talking about doing projects, most of them would only be interested in little things, and this doesn’t involve the skills required as a builder.”

“In our sailing club we recently had a discussion about how to teach young people to sail. It all got too hard, what with having to undergo a police check before you’re allowed any contact with young people, and there was insurance. You’ve got to make sure the boat is fully seaworthy, that there’s no danger the mast will fall down and kill them all. I’m sure that applies in other areas. What if someone comes into the Men’s Shed and doesn’t know how to use a chainsaw?”

“You have to have a permit for everything – even to shovel sand.”

UTILISING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Yankalilla Group

One of the females blamed communication failure.

“We’re not very good in the district at communicating to tell people what we do in the various clubs. I love the example of giving someone directions saying you go down as far as where McDonalds used to be. We think we’re communicating, but the message often gets lost.”

“It was good to hear what the school is doing to bring in people with specialist knowledge. I’m on the governing body of the school and on the child care centre, and we’re desperately keen to enable children to find out more about their future potential by meeting people who have done it.”

We asked if they thought an orientation day would be a good idea for all the local clubs and organisations to promote what they do – mainly for newcomers to the district but also as a reminder for the established locals.

“You mean a Yankalilla Expo. That would be a good idea.”

“They did something like that in Victor to promote NBN.”

“We don’t have anywhere in town where people can just meet. In Stirling the local library has space for people to just have a seat without having to buy a coffee or anything.”

UTILISING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Yankalilla Group

We brought them back to the topic by asking what kind of initiative would be needed to enable people with skills, which they were willing to share, to connect with people looking for help of this kind.

“The Council has something like this on their website.”

“It has been tried before – or something similar – but it didn’t get taken up by the local community.”

“If you think about it, with computers it would be a case of young people teaching us their skills.”

We pressed them further by asking if they would be willing to play the role of mentor to younger people seeking to gain new skills. Whilst reiterating what the schools were already doing, one participant enthused about it.

“Once you start doing it, you won’t want to stop. It’s a lovely experience to be sharing ideas with children.”

“There are lots of former business owners or academics in our community. I’m sure if they were approached in the right way, they would be willing to devote time to share their expertise.”

“It’s amazing the range of skills here. I was chatting to a woman in the health sector who had a biometric machine, and she told me that the guy who invented it was living just across the road. Her husband is an inventor, and he was in Germany at the time adding water to diesel to make it cheaper to use. He comes home once a month. You just think of all the skills that must be available in this locality.”

“People in natural resources are good at sharing their expertise. That’s being organised right now.”

“Recently I went for a geological walk round here with Pierre Cruse (?), and he was absolutely fascinating.”

UTILISING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Yankalilla Group

Some of them asked rhetorically.

“But how do you coordinate such talent?”

We asked if there was an over-arching coordinating body that coordinates in some way the various clubs, societies and other organisations. Some laughed at the thought of it. We asked if there was any kind of progress association for Yankalilla. They indicated there wasn't one.

UTILISING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Victor Harbor Group

Our entry point to our discussion with these participants on getting involved in the community and becoming volunteers was somewhat different.

We asked these participants to indicate if they felt they had work experience and skills they felt they could offer. There wasn't the same level of enthusiasm in this group that we had experienced in Yankalilla when asking a similar question. Indeed, there was almost a negative response from some.

One individual was somewhat negative throughout the discussion, always being the first to see problems associated with initiatives. For instance, he spoke of the limits imposed on individuals like him who might want to get more involved in local activities by offering his skills.

"If someone wants to run a car dealership, then maybe I could help, but I don't see much other possibility for me to offer my services."

We made the point that his experience as a car salesman must have meant he had developed sales skills that he could use or impart to others, but he was not convinced.

"If a local business wants to involve someone else, there are legal issues like workers' compensation to consider. It doesn't extend to people who are aged over 70 years. How do farmers manage to continue working if that's the case?"

A couple of other male participants also indicated they were somewhat reluctant to get involved, having had their offers of help spurned.

UTILISING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Victor Harbor Group

One of them told us of his efforts to persuade the local council to modify the approach to a major roundabout on the ring road. He himself had felt intimidated by the current layout of the road when approaching this roundabout, alleging that it was dangerous. He had offered the benefit of his own engineering skills, but had been told by a council representative that, if he felt intimidated by the road layout, he should maybe adopt a different route. He was clearly disillusioned.

We were told by the older female, living alone, about her frustrations when trying to get local help for household and garden chores, which she herself was no longer able to do for herself. She had approached the local council for advice, but had been told she was not eligible for assistance and would have to approach local tradies for help. It was not entirely clear if her concern related to the shortage of such services or that she would be liable to pay a high cost to obtain the kind of help she needed.

None of the participants seemed to believe retired people with the requisite skills or the physical capacity to undertake these tasks could be enlisted to help other older people in this kind of way.

We were reminded by the same individual of the legalistic obstacles to helping.

“If you get involved in any way as a volunteer, you’re required to get police clearance and someone has to carry insurance or legal liability in the event of damage or injury.”

One of the male participants said that more and more day-to-day dealings with local council or government agencies necessitated using the internet or other online services both to find out about the various services available or legal obligations of individuals for a range of purposes.

“The trouble is this age group is not computer literate.”

UTILISING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Victor Harbor Group

Several of the males admitted (as in Yankalilla) that they were reliant on their wives to deal with most of these online issues.

This prompted one of them to say there was a growing need for computer classes to assist older people to come to grips with the computer age.

One of the females pointed out that the library offered some kind of help in this regard. But one of the males responded.

“But you can’t take your own computer in there. You have to use one of the library’s computers.”

“If you use the Mac system at home, you can’t get help from anyone – not even the local specialist shops can give advice if you have a problem.”

Given the range of activities available in the area, we asked what they thought about an annual “expo” of all the community groups, in order to inform newcomers about everything that’s available as well as remind long-term residents.

We were told that something like this had already been organised for the various groups of seniors activities.

“I’ve attended three of them. They were OK, but I got the feeling that not many people even knew about it, so it kind of defeated the whole purpose of the exercise.”

UTILISING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Victor Harbor Group

A female confirmed that an expo of the kind we mentioned was actually scheduled to take place in October at Signal Point.

“It’s called Flourishing in the Fleurieu, and It’s intended to showcase the range of activities for seniors groups in the region. It’s held bi-annually and usually attracts about 300 people.”

Another female made an observation.

“We’re talking about an expo for newcomers, but it reminds me that it’s so easy for people who have lived here a long time to forget all that’s on offer. If you arrive and don’t manage to connect, or the activities which interest you don’t seem to be available, after a while you just accept it, and you give up trying. I think it’s just as important for the expo to be promoted to all residents, not just the newcomers.”

We asked if there was a need for personal development courses, the kind of training courses and learning experiences offered in the city by the WEA. Apart from the University of the Third Age, were any courses provided locally? Was there demand for such activity?

“If the WEA came down here, it would be great.”

We stressed we did not think that was an option, but asked them to clarify what else, if anything, was being provided.

“You’ve already mentioned University of the Third Age. They do a bit but not much.”

“They do lots of talks and language classes. They do some quite academic courses – philosophy, Latin and so on. There’s one in Victor and one in Goolwa.”

UTILISING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

We noted the fact that the participants in this group had a very wide range of skills which they had developed during their working career. Most of them had also indicated they were working in the community in an equally varied range of voluntary roles, and were thus sharing their skills with other people. We asked if there was any positive encouragement given to people like them to share their skills within the local community or even to act as some kind of mentor. There was a bit of a pause.

"I'd love to teach maths teachers, but I wasn't allowed because I don't have a teacher's qualification, even though there is a screaming shortage of skilled maths teachers."

"It's crazy when you consider our children are being taught maths by people who aren't skilled in maths."

Quoting one of the participants from early on in this discussion, we asked if they felt that they were mostly already giving back to the community. They nodded.

We commented that the response we received from the group in Victor Harbor both on this topic and more generally in terms of a noticeable lack of enthusiasm from the group in Victor. We asked if they could explain.

"Isn't Victor known as God's waiting room?"

"It's a strange place."

"I volunteer in Victor with dementia patients at Railway Cottage, and I love it in there."

"It may have more to do with Victor being such a tourist town."

"When we moved from Normanville 13 years ago, I never even considered the idea of living in Victor."

"I lived on the McCracken Estate for six years, and found it a bit snobby. The neighbours were so anti-social."

UTILISING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

We noted that they had all offered their services as volunteers without having to be pushed to do so. Did they feel there were others who had similar types of skills who needed to be encourage to get involved?

"I think if you've got it in you to offer yourself as a volunteer, then you will."

"It's a personality thing. There are people who feel happy to be helping out, but equally there are highly-skilled people who don't feel comfortable getting involved in the same way."

COMMUNICATION

Communication

There were repeated comments made throughout our focus group discussions about the trouble participants had experienced trying to keep people informed about the organisations or events in which they were involved.

COMMUNICATION

Yankalilla Group

One of the participants interrupted her contribution to the discussion about getting people to participate in community events by mentioning the typical reaction from locals who claim not to have known about a particular event.

“It’s always the same. You get people saying they didn’t know about an event, when in fact it had been heavily promoted in several ways, including the Yankalilla News.”

There were mixed comments about the local monthly newsletter.

“People often say they don’t read it, but my experience tells me most people do. But that doesn’t mean they necessarily see an advertisement or a notice you may have included in it.”

We asked what was the most effective way of communicating with the locals.

“The Normanville noticeboard. We all read it and the one in Yankalilla.”

“The Council’s ‘In the Loop’ is good.”

“Printed flyers also work very well.”

We asked if there was a community radio, and if so did they listen to it? Was it a good medium through which to communicate to the local community? Their responses became lost with people talking over each other, but one of them said there was a radio station in Victor Harbor. A few said they often listened to it.

We asked if there was any other means of communicating effectively in the area, and further mention was made of using community noticeboards.

“It’s very simple, but it works.”

COMMUNICATION

Victor Harbor Group

We noted that the Times was the local newspaper, and we asked if they thought most people in the area read it. Was it a reliable means of communication?

“If you want to keep up with the local gossip, you have to read it.”

We asked what was the best way to disseminate information of the sort we had been discussing with them.

“The trouble is that more and more information is put online, even though so many people still don’t have computers or have limited skills in using the internet and other forms of communication.”

“Using the Times is probably the most important.”

What about community radio? Did they listen to it? Was it an effective means of communicating with local residents or people in the region? We were told there were two local stations, and several people indicated that they listened to one or other of them on a regular basis.

“Our problem down here is getting adequate reception for mainstream radio programs. There are several FM stations we don’t get, and in some areas you can’t get all the free to air TV stations either.”

“Mobile phone coverage is also very poor in some areas.”

Some said they used social media, such as Facebook.

COMMUNICATION

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

We established that communications in this region were covered by the Times for Goolwa and Victor and the Southern Argus for the rest of the region. Did they find it easy to communicate with members of their local communities?

“Most of the residents read their local paper, even though they may joke about how bad it is – they still read it in case they miss out on something.”

“I call the Argus the three-minute paper, because that’s how long it takes to read it, but I still do read it.”

“We’ve got the local community radio and they carry information for free. It’s based in Victor but carries information about the whole region.”

Several indicated that they listened to it regularly.

“We use shop windows for our communications. Everyone looks at the information posted there.”

One of the males explained the local psyche – at least as far as Strathalbyn was concerned.

“A typical resident will think of Milang and Langhorne Creek as their neighbours, and Mount Barker is the big town up north. We don’t even think about Goolwa or Victor as part of our daily lives.”

“Most people shop where their kids go to school, or they stop off on their way home. It’s why people in Strath took to Mount Barker, because so many of them used to travel through there when going to and from Adelaide.”

COMMUNICATION

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

We outlined the concept of a local “expo” to promote clubs and organisations in each town. Did they feel that concept might work in their towns?

“Maybe, but our experience in Strath is to make sure the local visitor information centre has details about the clubs and what they are doing.”

OTHER ISSUES

Other Issues

We asked the participants if there were any other topics they would like to raise that related to the topic being discussed – how to involve older people better within their local community.

OTHER ISSUES

Yankalilla Group

A couple of points had arisen in the discussion which we wanted to discuss further.

The first related to the problems faced by older females who were living alone – in many cases because their partner had died, or they had been separated due to divorce, or indeed had never been married. It had been suggested earlier that there was a need to make a conscious effort to reach out to them.

“I can confirm that we have quite a lot of women on their own at Club Fleurieu evenings. They’re reluctant to go out at night, so they come to the centre for daytime activities or simply because they want company.”

“The trouble is you make an effort to encourage people to come. For instance, we persuaded the Council to undertake a trial period when the community bus was used to pick up people wanting to come to the club, but it was hardly used, so that opportunity will be lost soon at the end of the trial period. There’s only so much you can do to motivate people.”

A similar issue we raised with them related to the needs of older men, not necessarily those living alone, but all men when they get to a certain age who tend to bottle up their concerns, especially concerning their health. We wanted to know if they agreed this was a tendency with men as they grow older, and to what extent organisations like the Men’s Shed had a role to play in encouraging men to become more open.

Although there seemed to be an initial “grunt” of approval, the males were somewhat slow to respond to this.

“My wife used to run cooking schools. Men used to turn up to them.”

“It’s another example where communication is the key issue.”

OTHER ISSUES

Yankalilla Group

We asked them if there were any other issues. One of them had talked to other people prior to attending the focus group discussion, and her notes of this consultation had listed the following issues: isolation (geographical, physical and mental), informing and drawing in the newcomers, meeting area, a community garden – in other words, several central locations where people can sit and chat to other residents.

“One of the people I consulted spoke about a shelter on the beach, to encourage older people to stroll down there and sit for a while. People sit in their cars on the seafront as a protection from the weather, but it would be far better for them to sit in a sheltered spot on the beach.”

She added that someone had spoken about the need for a community garden.

“A place where people can have a plot to grow their own produce and flowers – it would be another way to get lonely people out of their homes.”

This speaker said there was an ideal location with a block of land belonging to the Council which could be used for this purpose.

The final moments of this focus group consisted of participants stressing the need for some positive outcomes from this process. Also, they wanted to be told of any results that may emerge from it.

OTHER ISSUES

Victor Harbor Group

We asked this group for any comments they might have about older women living alone after the death of a partner or due to divorce – or because they had remained single. Did they perceive this to be an issue of local concern?

One of the older females had indicated that she was involved with a local church group, and she felt that this was an area where groups like hers could be of help.

“It’s the sort of thing church groups would do – to call in on older people living alone to see how they’re going and to try and involve them in church activities to avoid feeling isolated. Like all of us, they need company. It can make so much difference calling in on someone for half an hour or so, and encouraging them to get out of the house to meet other people.”

“It’s not just an issue for older people. My daughter is nearly 40, and she is single, and she finds it awkward to go out socially.”

“Most social events involve couples. At your daughter’s age, there would be some tension if a wife felt that a single woman might cause domestic problems in relation to her husband.”

A male participant agreed with this.

“It’s often very awkward for the male partner to even talk to someone of the opposite sex, especially if she’s single. I gather it’s just as much an issue among older couples. I find it amazing that this can be so. You’d think a marriage of an older couple would be able to withstand that kind of tension and jealousy.”

OTHER ISSUES

Victor Harbor Group

Another male made a similar comment, referring to fears of competition if there is a single person in a group, male or female.

One of the females said she found it inhibiting being on her own when going to the theatre, but not so much when going to a cinema.

“Theatre-going is more of a social activity.”

What about men? We made the comment that, whether single or married, older men tended to repress their feelings and keep their worries to themselves. We asked if they felt this was an issue of concern that needed to be addressed in some way.

There was a very hesitant response from the males in this group – there were five.

“There is a men’s shed which seems to work well. It must be doing well, because they secured funding to build a new facility on a different site.”

“A friend of mine goes there, and he commented it was a politically-run show with a couple of head honchoes insisting on doing things their way. I’m told it discourages people from joining or staying in the group.”

“Typical of lots of groups I’d say.”

“Perhaps one of the best things about groups like that is that men do get together to chat among themselves. You don’t have to be skilled in any way if your main purpose is to enjoy mixing with other men casually.”

OTHER ISSUES

Victor Harbor Group

One of the females told us about another local group.

“My husband goes once a fortnight to a group called Men’s Engagement Network – MEN. They have regular talks mainly to encourage them to have conversations. In terms of success, their attendance goes up and down week by week, but he seems to think it’s worth going.”

The fact that none of the males in this group knew about it underlined the problem touched on earlier about the problem of keeping people informed about the range of activities available in the region.

A one-off issue raised by one of the males related to boat ramps, which was clearly a local issue.

“The facilities are totally inadequate. I have cray pots, and I get there in the early hours – 5am or 6am – and there is often nowhere at all to park, and you see people turning round to go home again.”

OTHER ISSUES

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

We asked this group if they felt that older women living alone needed any extra attention by the local community. Did they feel this was an issue of concern? It clearly was an issue, as reported by a female participant from Port Elliot.

“It’s a big issue. I’m part of a local women’s network, and we often ask members what are the issues of concern to them, and it’s surprising how many are living alone because of domestic violence. There’s a lot of it in the area, and surprisingly perhaps there’s a high level of homelessness among the older generation. At Junction Housing we had over 80 cases of domestic violence to deal with. There’s a high level of isolation among the elderly, and most of them don’t know where to go or what to do.”

“The Centre for Positive Ageing is very good for people who are living on their own. It’s over 30 years old. It’s going to be renamed the Community Centre. It’s not like a senior citizens club. It’s primarily there to provide information and advice, and you get personalised help if you’re grieving. They provide a range of activities like exercise classes. It’s where I’m doing my bit as a volunteer.”

“It is a real problem. Even people who are established members of the community can lose it all when a partner dies. There was an older lady, who was a pillar of the community. When her husband died, she just went to pieces, and it was the army which picked her up and gave her the support she needed. Now she’s OK and back to her old self. I know another couple who are very worried about his pending retirement. He’s actually petrified at the prospect. He has joined the bowling club, and is doing what he can to adjust, but they’re finding it very hard to deal with.”

OTHER ISSUES

Goolwa, Strathalbyn & Port Elliot Group

Some made the point there was only so much other people can do to help.

“A lot of it comes down to an individual’s approach to life.”

“The first step for people in such a situation is to recognise they may need help. There is so much help available for people willing to accept it. Living in a retirement village offers an automatic network, not only in that the village and the management are there as a protective support, but it’s also the neighbours who keep an eye on each other.”

We then asked them if there were also issues relating to older men. What did they feel needed to be done, if anything, to encourage older men to be more open about their anxieties and concerns, which typically they tend to bottle up? Is it the men’s shed type of approach or was there more that could be done? We were told the equivalent in Strathalbyn was the Woodshed.

“I agree that this is a good approach, but it also comes down to involving your friends as well.”

“There has to be a common bond, a strong theme that links people. It’s not just a case of chatting to other blokes. You need to be involved in some kind of activity that brings them together, and then the network is there to provide support when it’s needed. I’m in a stamp club, and that is just old blokes. I find attending our meetings provides support of different kinds, but it’s the only time we see each other.”

“Communication for men is about doing stuff. Personal connections evolve from this. It’s not about sharing your heart, although this may follow from getting together for specific reasons.”

“A good example is the Boatshed at Goolwa which has people involved with the wooden boat.”

SENIORS AND AGED CARE WORKERS ANALYSIS

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

We asked participants to describe themselves – their lifestyle, the extent of their involvement in the local community, along with their general perceptions of the extent to which they felt their needs and wants were currently catered for.

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

The majority of the participants (72%) were female, and most were 65 to 80 years of age with nearly 70% aged 65 to 75.

The majority of the respondents lived in Goolwa and Strathalbyn, with a few from Port Elliot and Yankalilla/Normanville. Others came from Clayton Bay and Middleton.

We asked them what were the main factors which precluded them from being more active in the community, and two thirds of them cited broad-ranging issues relating to ageing, including increased mobility problems (20%) and more specific health issues cited by a third of the respondents. Whilst 20% of respondents said there were no specific barriers to their involvement in the community, several said they had no spare time because of their other commitments.

We asked them to indicate what local services they currently used. About three-quarters of them specified each of the following: medical/health services, financial services and eating out. A third accessed recreation and leisure services, and a third accessed some kind of aged care or community service.

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

We asked what other services they used. A third of them said none at all. The rest of the respondents cited a whole range of services, the largest proportion of them being health-related.

We asked the participants what were the leisure activities in which they participated.

As with other questions of this kind, the range of their responses was very widespread, which indicated that respondents had very broad-ranging interests, including recreational sports and exercise (over 20%), walking (20%), reading (20%), various other activities, such as entertainment (20%), gardening (less than 20%) and several other activities, such as board games,

We asked the participants to tell us the clubs in which they were involved. Nearly a third said none. The areas which attracted most respondents were social and recreational sports.

We asked the participants to identify any areas in which they were involved in a voluntary capacity. Their responses were very varied, with individuals identifying areas of specific interest with little “generalised” direction, save that 20% said they had no involvement at all. The only area identified by several individuals related to their involvement with Meals on Wheels.

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

Aged Care Workers

Aged Care Workers

We asked the participants to describe the work they do in aged care. Their responses were as follows:

I am a staff services coordinator, I oversee HR, Training, WH&S, staff rosters and compliance.

Lifestyle coordinator / volunteer coordinator.

Organise activity programs on site or in the community for 64 residents who live in a residential facility. Coordinate, train volunteers to assist in the activities and provide opportunity for 1:1 social visits with the residents. (17 volunteers are over 65)

Lifestyle Coordinator for an Aged care Residential Facility.

Plan and program activities and outings for our residents.

I am a day care supervisor for community clients and nursing home residents.

I am the Village Manager of a Retirement Village

Executive Director at aged care facility.

Village Manager of an Over 50's Lifestyle Village

Provide meaningful activities for all our residents

They worked in Victor Harbor / Encounter Bay, Strathalbyn, Goolwa and Yankalilla.

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

Aged Care Workers

We asked them what – apart from physical limitations - were the main factors which precluded seniors from being more active in the community. As can be seen, their responses related more to levels of participation by this age group in services being provided for them, rather than (as with our question to the seniors) the extent to which they were actively involved in community activities.

Lack of services in rural areas.

Lack of support and individualised programs. Cost for transport. Support from family. Lack of confidence to try a new activity. Living in a secure environment. Lack of activities suitable in the area. Requiring an escort to community events. Limited wheelchair transport and some businesses having steps to enter.

Lack of confidence. Fear of falling. Poor vision.

Depression. Isolation.

They need more social interaction to get them interested in going out etc. We have no bus to take them out of their four walls. Day care runs Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for three hours. We used to have clients for 5 hours but due to a management decision we were shifted from our day care centre and placed in the foyer of the nursing home with reduced hours. Some of my clients did not return to day care as they felt uncomfortable being in the front foyer of an aged care facility. We are on display to all and sundry people who visit the facility.

A community bus for those who cannot drive or are not as mobile would be a big help in getting the elderly to attend more community activities.

Lack of activities/services or affordable activities/services.

Cost of living increasing.

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

Aged Care Workers

Little is offered to this age group within Strathalbyn, and what is offered is often costly. They often only last a couple of sessions and then canned due to lack of interest. More often than not the targeted audience is unaware it is being offered until it is too late.

Encouragement from family and sufficient staff to encourage residents to being more active. Despite lifestyle activities available the residents need to be motivated to be more active.

Lack of public transport in our area.

No real barriers, working within their limits - residents are encouraged to take part in everything they choose.

We asked these participants to identify any issues regarding the services currently provided to seniors in the community in which they work.

We have very limited transport options.

Unable to access local banks due to steps.

Requiring support from families or volunteers and even ambulance to attend medical appointments.

Unable to access swimming pool.

Limited numbers when accessing out of local town due to transport & volunteer assistance and seats.

Many senior citizens have difficulty with anything related to IT. Most don't have internet access and are computer illiterate which causes anxiety as most things these days require computer access.

Those residents who do not drive have to rely on family (if they have any nearby) or other residents to take them into town to do their banking shopping etc. or pay for a taxi which adds up very quickly.

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

Aged Care Workers

We have a taxi service which caters for aged clients in the community, meals on wheels is an excellent service. Two doctors surgery services makes our area well covered, as well as an excellent chemist. As we do not have a bus, going out to eat together is a problem. The only way we do it is to use our own cars. Nursing home residents rarely eat out with other residents due to management decision.

Residents are often unaware of community and in-home services available to them. There needs to be much more information given to the elderly regarding services that are available to them.

Eating out for those that do not drive is not an option unless they can also afford the taxi rides to and from in the budget which most cannot.

Getting in to see a doctor is a nightmare in Strathalbyn unless you know you are going to be sick two weeks in advance. We need more GP's and maybe even 3 times a week free clinics held in a central location for those who don't feel they need to worry the doctor. Nine out of ten times, it is something serious, but due to the wait time the elderly don't want to bother the doctor until it is too late.

Distance from the main town to the facility. Spouses of the residents unable to travel to visit the facility without costing a taxi fare.

Limited Banks in Goolwa. Most need to go to Victor Harbor.

Lack of public transport.

We have always been well received within the community. In some cafes the room is too small or the toilets are not suitable. Sometimes it's hard to park our bus near venues. Taxi drivers sometimes do not move to allow the bus to get close for us to unload. Access cabs are hard to book during school run hours - residents have waited hours at the clinic to get home.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE REGION

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE REGION

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

We asked a range of questions to determine the perceptions of the respondents over the provision of services for older people in the region.

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

Just over half of the respondents felt that the needs of older people in the region were being catered for, but 40% of them were non-committal. Only 8% of respondents felt that seniors' needs were not well catered for.

We asked them to specify what needs were not being catered for. Their responses were evenly spread across the following issues:

- inadequate public transport
- limited services available in their locality, especially health-related

Some felt strongly about these issues:

I have to travel 170 KMS per day for medical treatment. Given that knocks the shit out of you, it's not ideal. Rural health is virtually non-existent and is rapidly declining under the present State Government.

Easy access to all assisted avenues e.g. physio, acupuncture, physicians, injections. I have spent thousands of dollars trying different "remedies " it is very costly to keep "mobile".

Some of them were more broad-ranging in commenting on this:

It's difficult for the elderly to access their needs without assistance and sometimes they do not have adequate family or friends to assist them. Therefore the social system which supports them could improve.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE REGION

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

How to find appropriate activities e.g. exercise groups; intellectual stimulus; finding appropriate transport options; home care as needed.

One of them pointed out the importance of location – where they live – as a major factor relating to their ability to access public services:

I have needed an amount of hospital care over the last 10 years and have been told that due to where I live I FALL BETWEEN THE CRACKS.

Half of the respondents did not believe anything could be done to overcome the barriers to their participation, but the main specific issues they raised related to transport – or, more precisely, the lack of adequate public transport in the region (cited by nearly a quarter of respondents), with others saying only an improvement in their health status would make much difference to them.

When asked whether they had any issues relating to provision of “other” services, a third said they did not have any issues. A few spoke about inadequate public transport and other distance factors making them difficult to access. Others lamented the decline in their ability to access health services.

The transportation service in the country is very poor. You can only travel by bus at the designated times, which may not suit you and there are not many services which will allow you to travel to the city.

Also the Health system is not as good as it once was. You once would be taken to the local doctor's surgery for assistance and assessed to see if you needed an ambulance to the hospital - this service is gone. You can no longer get appointments on the day at the doctors surgery very easily and it is very expensive - no bulk billing. The local hospital is also private, which is expensive as well.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE REGION

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

When asked what services they would like to be provided which are not currently being provided to people in their age group in the region, the most significant responses related to inadequate public transport (just over 20%), whilst a similar proportion spoke about the need for better in-home services, such as domestic and gardening.

More public transport is needed to go to Mount Barker, as it is the main shopping centre.

The bus service to Adelaide not very good. We need a better bus service.

As to the need for better in-home services, their comments were broad-ranging.

For those aged over 65 I would like to see more in-home assistance that is affordable for them. This would enable them to stay at home longer and therefore be less burden on the society around them. I have noticed that a lot of people over 65 tend to isolate themselves and therefore can become depressed.

A list of Tradies that are particularly kind and patient with people our age.

We have been taken advantage of by a reputable well known plumber company and had to fight for our rights to be treated fairly.

Over charging is rife!

When pressed on what they thought was missing for their age group, several (about a third of them) indicated they did not think much was missing, with some suggesting it was up to themselves to fulfil their needs.

That said, transport was the one issue singled out for special attention with 20% of respondents believing there was a need for improved public transport.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE REGION

Aged Care Workers

Aged Care Workers

We asked these participants what could be done or offered to overcome the barriers to greater participation in the local community by older people aged 65+. Their responses were widespread:

More funding for programs to run that are better suited to the elderly.

More wheelchair/gopher access to local businesses which are essential for access. Automatic doors.

Have accessible transport on a regular bases to access services and community events outside local area.

More funding to employ more lifestyle staff in the facility.

Build relationship. Earn trust. TLC. Build confidence.

Encourage movement/ exercise.

More senior appropriate activities.

Memory exercises.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE REGION

Aged Care Workers

A bus from the council would be an advantage and longer day care hours. We only just get started with activities and have to pack up. A trip would need more than 3 hours to go any distance.

A community bus for those who cannot drive or not as mobile would be a big help in getting the elderly to attend more community activities. A community bus is not offered to the Strathalbyn elderly and I myself have tried to get this up and running. However I have hit many brick walls with council etc. If a small community like Milang can get one why is it so hard for Strathalbyn which has a large and growing elderly population?

Make activities free or gold coin donation.

Get the advertising right! Letterbox drops. Most of my residents don't buy the local paper. If it's not free they generally don't read it! Flyers for retirement villages, aged care facilities, bowls clubs, service clubs, senior citizen clubs etc.

Staff to encourage the residents and have a suitable activity program to make them more positive to participate in the activity.

Bus service in our area or reinstate the train service.

Always offering residents the choice with encouragement.

We asked if they felt that the needs for seniors was well catered for in the local community. Most of them thought these needs were well catered for (63%), with a quarter believing this was not the case.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE REGION

Aged Care Workers

Which needs did they think were not well catered for?

Assistance when coming into residential care. The system is very difficult to navigate and elderly people find it overwhelming.

Access to major centre either Victor Harbor or Noarlunga where people can access specialists, larger stores to purchase gifts, clothes, shoes etc. Visiting the cinema and larger community events, such as AFL football & national sporting events.

More senior events for the senior citizens of Victor Harbor in both small and large group settings.

Local exercise groups for seniors free of charge focusing on balance.

Mind exercises for Seniors free of charge.

Friendship groups and lunch outings organized for seniors.

More interaction with all groups in the town.

Again a community bus run with a gold coin donation to enable elderly to even go to the shops to get their shopping done, meet with friends for lunch/dinner, go to the library, attend community events.

Exercise classes e.g. Tai Chi used to be offered however became too expensive.

Community gatherings just getting together at the town hall for a cuppa and a chat.

Singing groups not for anything more than pure fun and enjoyment.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE REGION

Aged Care Workers

Old time band not for anything more than pure fun and enjoyment.

Old time dances brings the music and movement together a win win.

Community bus service/transport due to the location of the facility.

Help with Centrelink documentation has been really difficult. The closest Centrelink office is Victor Harbor & you can not get any one on one assistance anymore. They have to go online & many elderly do not have a computer.

Sometimes being out in the community it is hard to find an appropriate toilet facility nearby. Good seating in parks, suitable for the elderly.

We asked the participants what other services should be available for seniors that are not currently being provided. A couple were unsure and another participants felt most areas were well covered, they responded as follows:

Transition programs for seniors to have a come-and-try day at residential care facilities. Any assistance that is offered to seniors feels rushed and the elderly struggle to understand the process.

IT support for seniors.

More transport for seniors.

Exercise for seniors to prevent falls and build confidence.

Free Community activities for seniors in the community.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE REGION

Aged Care Workers

Free GP clinics.

Specialists who offer classes in their field e.g. Physio could offer movement classes.

Community officer going around just to check in on the elderly and make sure everything is OK or do they need help and then helping them obtain the extra help they need.

Someone to help with the My aged care website. Most of my residents cannot navigate this site and then when they phone them a lot of residents are hard of hearing and simply give up on the entire system.

Computer courses for beginners.

Easier transport.

PERSONAL INTEREST AND LEISURE

PERSONAL INTEREST AND LEISURE

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

We asked the respondents to indicate the extent to which they had participated in learning courses, and over half of them said they had not done so.

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

The areas in which those who had participated in some form of learning related to family and archival research.

I have researched and documented many family histories for my extended family. Also WW1 and WW2 where family members have been involved. Identified hundreds of old photographs dating back to late 1800's.

Writing "life" stories for the grandchildren.

We asked what courses they thought would be relevant to their age group. Whilst a fifth of respondents offered no suggestions on this, the broad response was so varied – covering a whole range of topics – that little generalised conclusion can be made in this regard. They included: history, crafts, health, spiritual issues, music, art appreciation, languages etc. etc.

In fact, one of the participants summed it up well:

The over 65's are interested or curious about any subject you could name.

PERSONAL INTEREST AND LEISURE

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

Another participant highlighted the social aspects – or risks - of participating in the range of learning courses available online:

On line courses are too isolating and do not assist with loneliness issues for single dwellers.

Whilst stressing overall the value of personal learning courses, we asked the respondents how they thought these courses should be delivered. Most stressed the social value of them being delivered in local community or educational facilities.

They should be delivered in local community halls, and the time frames should suit the elderly - halls for positive ageing. This would help to integrate the community into aged care without it being such a "scary place".

When asked what additional leisure or social activities they thought needed to be provided for the 65+ age group, over a third said they did not believe there was a need for additional activities, with several saying specifically they thought enough activities were already being provided.

The activities suggested by individuals included crafts, cooking, Latin dancing and recreational activities such as boules.

PERSONAL INTEREST AND LEISURE

Aged Care Workers

Aged Care Workers

We asked them to identify any leisure or personal learning courses provided in the community for seniors.

Sometimes they are offered computer courses for free. There isn't a lot of courses around that I am aware of.

Broadband for seniors, cooking for men, Club Fleurieu has a group of activities. Bingo, scrabble cards, concerts, old style dancing.

CWA.

Encounter Wood Work.

Church groups.

Walking groups.

U3a is active in Strathalbyn, senior citizens, there are a few exercises classes and in Milang the mosh is very good with courses for seniors.

Broadband for seniors.

Positive Ageing enable seniors to participate in learning courses.

Art classes, exercise classes, bird watching.

Computer courses - exercises at the Positive Ageing - other courses and activities available.

PERSONAL INTEREST AND LEISURE

Aged Care Workers

We asked if there were personal learning courses not currently provided which would be of interest to seniors in their community.

Keeping up with technology.

How paywave works.

Aqua aerobics, digital media, photography, recording history, researching on line.

IT for Seniors.

Craft.

Exercise.

Social interaction.

Gardening.

Maybe classes in cooking for 1person healthily.

Photography.

Book club.

Nutrition.

Cooking healthy on a budget.

PERSONAL INTEREST AND LEISURE

Aged Care Workers

Budgeting on a pension.

Gardening.

Arts and crafts (pottery, painting etc.)

Unsure.

Computer courses which include using online banking.

Computer – iPad.

How and where did they believe these courses should be delivered?

Some could be delivered at council chambers or at health services.

Through council, library, pool.

Community centre.

Local Church Halls.

TAFE.

Retirement Living.

Residential living facilities.

At Citizen Club in Strathalbyn.

PERSONAL INTEREST AND LEISURE

Aged Care Workers

In a central location like the town hall or library meeting rooms. You need to supply transport for those who cannot attend otherwise.

Weekly although with fortnightly content so those who cannot attend one session can catch up the following week.

Public library or residential village centres.

At the Positive Ageing Centre.

We asked if there were leisure activities not currently provided which would be of interest to seniors in their community.

Craft.

IT.

Gardening.

Cards.

Exercise.

Mind Exercise.

Friendship groups.

Healthy cooking.

PERSONAL INTEREST AND LEISURE

Aged Care Workers

Budgeting.

Exercise.

Dancing.

Learning to play a musical instrument.

Singing.

Relaxed get to-gethers.

Community gardening - community veggie/ fruit gardens like they do in Paris, helping to feed the homeless.

We provide many activities in the facility to entertain residents and we also engage with the community to ensure residents have the opportunity of having community involvement.

Computer courses for beginners.

Dancing for fitness.

VOLUNTEERING

VOLUNTEERING

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

When asked to nominate areas in which they could become more involved as volunteers, most of the responses suggested they were already fully committed to areas for volunteering or that they were otherwise committed to the extent that they could not take on additional responsibilities.

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

We asked them to indicate what skills they believed the 65+ age group had which could be contributed on a voluntary basis. Once again their response can be best summarised as “many and varied” skills.

Whilst some of them said they believed this age group had much to offer in this regard, some seemed to be frustrated that their willingness to make a positive contribution in this way was often largely ignored by the general community.

When I first moved here I volunteered my services to the Clayton Bay Community Association and being a retired fitter and turner welder I thought my skills would be of use. Not on your life. I was told "We have no use for you" so I didn't bother anymore.

Nevertheless, this was an area which others felt could be of general value.

Home handyman skills. How to add up when the computers go down. How to look after your own car and what maintenance you can do yourself for both male and female. How to paint a house. All the trade skills that seem to be getting lost.

VOLUNTEERING

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

We took this further by asking what experiences, skills or knowledge they believed could be passed on by those aged 65+ to younger age groups. The most significant responses suggested that older people had a wealth of lifetime experiences which could be of benefit to younger people, and indeed that this had the potential to be a two-way process.

People over 65 have a lifetime of experiences. Everyone has a different story to tell. I think the young can show the elderly how to learn about computers and technology etc. But the elderly can teach the young about what life was like in their day, the differences about machinery, cars, TVs, telephones and everything that the children take for granted was different - even food, dining out and fast food outlets, transportation, etc.

Some spoke about the potential for them to mentor young people, including those still at school.

Yet, whilst there was a belief that the older generation had the ability and potential to pass on their lifetime experiences to younger people, there was a degree of cynicism about whether this would be accepted by the younger generation.

I am not sure that they are necessarily cross generational. The older generation is not currently seen to be of much use to younger people.

VOLUNTEERING

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

Others were convinced it could be a two-way process and that they had a lot to learn from young people about the various new forms of technology.

The younger generation's lives revolve around technical stuff that us oldies struggle with. If there was a way for the young ones to have the time to sit and explain the practical use of computers and I-phone. If I get into trouble with my phone I call on my grandchildren to sort it out and they are more than happy to help. Also my grand-daughters do some volunteering for our wildlife rescue group which I love sharing with them.

Despite this level of doubt and even cynicism, we asked the participants to identify what they felt was inhibiting seniors from fully participating in their local community.

As before, the issues highlighted related to their health and other issues relating to ageing (40%), access problems (over 20%) and the “red tape” associated with the requirement for police checks for anyone wanting to volunteer in certain areas.

VOLUNTEERING

Aged Care Workers

Aged Care Workers

We asked the participants what voluntary roles were available in the community for seniors to fulfil.

We have a volunteer information centre and there are numerous opportunities for the elderly to volunteer.

Variety in aged care industry, meals on wheels, op shops, lap programs at the school. sporting club communities. church committees.

Meals on Wheels.

Volunteering at Aged Care facilities.

Church groups.

Hospital trolley and reading at the schools.

Library.

Bridge club. Lions, Probus, Rotary. But residents become aged and then not interested in attending due to ill health or changing their mind at the last moment.

Library, nursing homes, visitors centre; land care.

We have a good support of volunteers at Goolwa.

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VOLUNTEERING

Aged Care Workers

Were there other ways in which seniors in the community can be encouraged to make their own contribution?

Child Care Centres.

Schools.

Assist with organizing friendship groups in different areas.

Assist with Exercise Groups.

Assist with transport and appointments for seniors.

Community gardens growing fruit and veggies in a spot that anyone can access and therefore helping the homeless too.

Going to schools and teaching the pupils about the importance of politeness and the role the elderly provide in the community.

Children visiting the facility. High School students visiting to assist residents in the facility.

Teaching seniors the computer and how to communicate through email.

Students assist by participating in games etc.

Being seen within our community is important.

VOLUNTEERING

Aged Care Workers

We asked these participants what skills seniors possessed which could be used in the community on a voluntary basis.

Many older style crafts could be taught to people, knitting crocheting etc., These could be taught at schools.

How to make a meal from nothing.

Sharing knowledge and history, Trees for life, local clubs, LAP at the school - depends on cognitive level and transport.

They already have the skills - life experience!

May need training in exercise or IT.

Visiting schools on special days interacting with kids who do not have grandparent close by. Reading.

Life knowledge & experience.

Gardening.

Individual job specific skills they can pass on to the younger generation.

Life experiences always is a positive.

Financial understanding, helping others with pension structure & how rent assistance works etc.

Knowledge of many skills.

VOLUNTEERING

Aged Care Workers

We asked the participants where they thought seniors' skills and knowledge could be used to benefit themselves and the community.

Local schools and kindergartens.

Nursing homes.

In the school or library with history.

I feel that is where there is a void as I don't think seniors know where they can go and local government don't appear to be driving this terribly well.

Seniors have so much knowledge and skills that would benefit the wider community-we just need some structures in place.

Keeping their mind and body active helping kids who do not have the guidance of role models especially children from single parent families.

Out and about in the community.

High school students love to hear the residents experiences.

Ensuring they are getting the best value for money when it comes to energy providers etc.

VOLUNTEERING

Aged Care Workers

We asked these participants if there was anything which stopped or inhibited seniors from volunteering or participating in their community. They responded as follows.

Lack of support and not feeling welcomed.

Lack of education regarding what is available.

Fear of failure.

Lack of confidence.

Not being able to get to places as they do not drive any more.

Lack of transport.

Mobility.

Scared they might get attacked.

Age and frailty.

Not really but some may find it difficult if they don't drive.

No - we have residents who attend community centres.

COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

We asked the participants how they currently obtained information about local products and services of relevance to them as older people.

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

Most of the responses related to word of mouth (40%), with a third of them also identifying information they obtained through local media or newsletters. The local information centre and/or notice boards were also important sources of information.

It is important to note that 40% of respondents specifically mentioned the internet as a vital source of information, with most of them using their computers (and Google) to find out information about services and activities in their own locality. Most said these sources of information were sufficient for them to know what was happening within their local community.

COMMUNICATION

Aged Care Workers

Aged Care Workers

We asked these participants how seniors currently find information about local products and services for seniors in the local community.

Health service.

Locally thought Yankalilla News, notice boards, Victor Harbor Times and word of mouth.

Local paper.

Local Council.

Local Churches.

Through council senior citizens and neighbourhood house and carers groups.

Free publications.

Letterbox flyers.

Notices on shopping centre notice boards.

Magazines, daily newspapers, business cards, brochures at reception, residents meetings, lifestyle activities.

Local paper - discussed within a weekly group - notice board - radio - volunteers and staff.

COMMUNICATION

Aged Care Workers

We asked what type of communication or promotion would influence seniors to find out more about a product or service. Their responses were as follows.

Flyers in letterboxes as they are not fans of electronic media.

Health services.

Doctor surgeries.

Come-and-try days at residential villages.

Community radio.

Local Paper.

Local Council.

Posters around community.

Letter in mail.

Big ads in the local paper or through the council.

Letterbox flyers.

Flyers in places they frequent (clubs community centres etc.)

COMMUNICATION

Aged Care Workers

Talks held in centres & advertised in local papers.

Local paper or flyer.

We asked how they felt seniors in the community would like to be told about local products and services for them.

Email.

Letters and flyer.

In paper format, Less chance of forgetting the service or product.

Local Paper.

Local Council.

More information being sent out to retirement villages.

Regular visits from community officers armed with information for us to give our residents.

Database on internet - being aware of the different internet sites to source information. Lifestyle staff tend to do this for the residents.

Internet is fine for me but older people prefer it in writing.

Local paper especially for seniors.

FINAL COMMENTS

FINAL COMMENTS

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

When we asked them if there were any other programs or services for seniors from which lessons could be learned for the Fleurieu Peninsula region, many (nearly half) said enough was already being done in this regard.

Seniors in the Fleurieu Peninsula

Some organisations were singled out as providing an exemplary role in promoting local services to the older age groups:

Centre for Positive Ageing is a centre where the elderly from the community come together and learn all sorts of things, and are able to socialize.

The local libraries are also important to the elderly and have often got coffee shops and training sessions available.

The local TAFE runs courses in which elderly people can participate.

Reference was also made to the range of existing social and sporting clubs which had the potential to provide a range of other activities for their members.

In asking the participants in the concluding session to identify any other areas in which older people could derive benefits, most were not able to identify anything else. However, many of the participants reiterated the points already made above, namely the need for an improved public transport service in the region as the key issue for those who were keen to access local services.

FINAL COMMENTS

Aged Care Workers

Aged Care Workers

We asked the participants if there were any programs or services for seniors in rural areas which successfully met their needs.

We used to run a national respite carers group and that was well attended. We would also have the carers met up and bond over similar experiences.

CWA.

Meals on Wheels.

Church groups.

The only one that springs to mind is MOSCH in Milang however I don't know that much about what is offered there.

Visiting artists provide classes to the residents. Volunteer visits to provide pottery classes. Historical car club visit quarterly and BBQ is served and community is invited.

Local entertainers in the community come to visit the facility and provide regular entertainment.

FINAL COMMENTS

Aged Care Workers

We asked if there were other products or services which they felt should be offered to seniors in their community.

Walking groups, Men's Shed.

Increased community awareness of people who have a disability or cognitive impairment and acceptance when they become older and frail.

IT Computer Lessons.

First Aid.

Exercise and balance groups.

Social interaction groups.

More information and courses that continue and not dry up when funding is finished.

Free financial advisory service.

Mobile banking service that comes into communities such as ours to enable those who cannot get to the bank to do their banking. Most elderly do not trust internet banking.

Lifestyle source many external visitors - clothing and shoes are booked regularly to provide residents the opportunity of purchasing items they would purchases in the community.

Shopping sprees offered to residents and escorted by the lifestyle staff.

FINAL COMMENTS

Aged Care Workers

We asked them to describe what they felt instinctively were the most important issues facing seniors today.

I think seniors today feel they do not have a place once they retire. Being encouraged to share their experience with local schools or in other organisations could give them a purpose.

Not feeling accepted when they become frail. Example a person who attended a seniors club for 15 years moved into the residential facility after being unwell for 6 months. When he returned to the seniors club, they wouldn't allow him to play lawn bowls as he was too slow and would only be there to watch and for others to chat to. After two weeks he declined to go back. When people move into a facility many people in the community fall away and the older person loses contact to community members.

Isolation, Lack of confidence and fear of falling.

Managing finances and running the home on a tight budget.

Isolation from friends and families and if you are unable to drive getting from a to b without costing a fortune in taxi fares.

The lack of free transport in regional areas and remoteness.

Taxis are expensive - good seating in cafes/hotels etc. parks.

FINAL COMMENTS

Aged Care Workers

Finally, we asked if there were other issues relevant to this discussion. Most of the respondents had little to add to their earlier comments. A few offered their final observation.

We need to stimulate a culture of respect and honour for the elderly.

The typical aged care worker is not educated enough or paid enough, and this is encouraging the wrong type of person for the job, which is putting our elderly at risk.

We have many resources to contact to ensure a full program is delivered to residents.

APPENDIX 1: DISCUSSION GUIDE

Project: 10590 – Regional Development

Focus Group Discussion Guide

Please NOTE: This is not a questionnaire per se, but a guide or tool for the moderator in the conduct of the groups, so that all the points we want covered, are raised.

We allow the moderator flexibility to address these open topic cues in their own style or way.

The discussion is flexible to allow completeness in areas that are of interest to the participants and meaningful to the topic of the research.

Moderator's Focus:

The research should gain an understanding from the senior population in the Fleurieu about:

- *their current requirements and desired needs for local products and services including food, hospitality, financial, medical and health, sports, recreation and leisure, transport and aged care (including in-home services) and community services*
- *their satisfaction levels about utilising their skills and knowledge in the community (including self-employment, additional and supplementary sources of income and volunteering)*
- *where there are gaps or opportunities for improvement in products and services seniors use and the use of senior's skills and knowledge for seniors and the region to benefit socially and economically*

Introduction of Moderator, and project specifics

Introduction, privacy

Today, we are talking about your views and expectations in relation to the needs and wants of the senior population in the Fleurieu Peninsula and would appreciate your opinions.

We would like you to be open and frank on the understanding that the information gathered in these groups is absolutely confidential and will be reported on without the use of your names.

Opening Discussion

- Can I get each one of you to introduce yourself?
- Where have you come from to attend the group today?
- Do you do any part time work or volunteering?

Products and services

- Can you tell us about the services that you currently access locally? What about:
 - financial services?

-
- medical and health services?
 - transport?
 - sports, recreation and leisure?
 - food and hospitality? (including home delivered meals and eating out)
 - aged care and community services (including in-home services)
- What are the needs of older people living in the area in relation to these services, products etc.?
 - Do you feel that seniors living in the region currently have their needs and wants met in regard to these?
 - What needs are not being met? Where?
 - What might be some areas where there could be potential opportunities for new forms of services that are currently limited or not available?
 - What about the nicer things in life like dining out and cafes? Is there anything else that you would like to see in the area?
 - In terms of other areas do you seniors have a desire for the arts? What about theatre?
 - What's currently available? What's missing that the senior community would like? And where should these be held?
 - Thinking about areas such as personal interest and personal development do you feel that seniors needs are well catered for?

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- What about in the area of computer courses? or leisure courses?
 - Are there any other areas or courses that seniors would be interested in?
 - How and where should these be delivered?
 - In terms of exploring other areas of needs and supply, what about medical and health services, sport and recreation and leisure, transport, home and community care etc.?

Utilising skills and knowledge

- There are many seniors living in the area. What do you think is the contribution of seniors to the economic and social well-being of the region?
- Can you give some practical examples of this contribution?
- Is this contribution recognised, encouraged or appreciated?
- What skills do you and other seniors have that could be used in the region on a voluntary basis?
- Are you or other seniors interested in additional or supplementary sources of income? How would this be possible? Are there areas where you think seniors could be employed? What about self-employment?
- What interest do seniors have with interaction with younger groups in the community?

-
- What about mentoring and other programs that tap into their experience, skills and knowledge that can be passed onto younger groups?
 - Where else can senior's skills and knowledge be used to benefit themselves and the community?
 - Is there anything stopping or inhibiting seniors from volunteering or earning additional or supplementary income?

Communications

- How do you currently find information about local products and services? Probe for specific papers, magazines, websites, blogs etc., What about the annual directory of organisations in the Times Community guide?
- What type of communication or promotion would influence you to find out more about a local product or service?
- What role do advertising and communications play in your choice of choosing a product or service?

Final comments

- Are there any other issues that you think are relevant to this discussion?
- Do you have any other comments or suggestions?