

## **TITLE: Identifying the Health and Wellbeing Needs of Older People Living in the Eastern Region of Melbourne**

### **BACKGROUND**

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Due to an ageing population in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne and the strong desire of older people to remain living independently in the community within their own homes, there was a need for a comprehensive collection of data about the health and wellbeing, independence and safety needs of older people in the area.

The aim of the needs analysis was to provide an evidence base from which to identify health and wellbeing issues for older people, to support planning, and with the view to future collaborative action to address some of these.

Longer term, the aim is to foster partnerships and collaboration that could pool resources and make a collective impact on improving the health and wellbeing of older people in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR). DHHS provided funding to extend the research from the Inner East area to include the whole Eastern Region of Melbourne.

### **PARTNERS**

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The following agencies were involved in the project:

Angliss Hospital and Yarra Valley Community Health, Boroondara Council, Bapcare, Carrington Health, Department of Health and Human Services, Doncare, Donwood Community Aged Care Services, EACH, Eastern Health, EMPHN, Knox Council, Life Assist, Link Health and Community, Manningham City Council, Maroondah Council, Migrant Information Centre, Shire of Yarra Ranges, St Vincent's Health, This Day and Age, Whitehorse Council.

### **METHOD**

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Qualitative and quantitative data was gathered through consultations, openly available data bases, and data collected and provided by partner agencies.

The following scopes were defined, and where possible, data was sought to meet these parameters:

- Geographic coverage: Boroondara, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges local government areas.
- People aged over 60 years, ideally in 10 year age ranges (60-69, 70-79 and 80+).

In addition, a grey (unpublished) literature review identified, collected and synthesised existing reports that were analysed thematically in line with the health and wellbeing indicators chosen for this research.

Data was also extracted from data bases, including the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, Community Indicators Victoria, Victorian Population Health Survey, and Victorian Admitted Episodes data.

Health and wellbeing data indicators were developed in partnership with the Steering Group and grouped to align with the World Health Organisation Healthy Ageing Framework.

A consultation workshop was held towards the end of the research phase with organisational representatives identifying key themes from the data.

A key aspect of the work was to promote and distribute the resources developed (final report, executive summary, snapshots and data profile) through a “roadshow” of meetings with managers and key staff (including local government health planners) at partner organisations.

## OUTCOMES

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The EMR has a comprehensive set of data about older people broken down by LGA and 10 year age groups. The data includes: personal characteristics, health characteristics, health behaviours, lifestyle behaviours, social and community networks, age friendly cities indicators (housing, crime, transport etc.), and socio-economic environment.

The research resulted in a full report of more than 180 pages, a summary of the major findings, 2 page snapshots for each LGA, PCP area and the EMR, and excel data file. Partners have full access to all of these through the IEPCP website.

Anecdotal feedback about the research is very positive:

*“I need to acknowledge that the end Report has become an important evidence base for a number of internal and external situations that have required justification for the need for services or indeed due consideration to be given to older people in Knox!” (Knox Council, Coordinator Age Friendly Planning, May 2017)*

*“Just wanted to give you some feedback regarding your request below, we posted the report on our website and in our newsletter and it has done really well! It was our top clicked link from this fortnights newsletter.” (OEPCP, March 2017)*

The research has also been the catalyst for further discussion and focus on healthy ageing and what actions could improve the health and wellbeing of older people in the EMR and has provided the groundwork for the IEPCP and the region to establish healthy ageing as a priority.

A key aspect of the work was to promote and distribute the resources developed (final report, summary, snapshots and data file) through “roadshow” presentations. In addition, the resources have been promoted through a range of newsletters, meetings and websites including the HaNet (Healthy Ageing Network), Chronic Illness Alliance, EMR Alliance, National Ageing Research Institute, Municipal Association of Victoria, Victorian Active Ageing Partnership, Outer East PCP e-news, and Eastern Metro Social Issues Council. An abstract was also submitted and accepted to present the findings to the Australian Disease Management Association Conference on 10 September. (Unfortunately the presenter had to withdraw for personal reasons).

The IEPCP has since engaged the National Ageing Research Institute to write a paper and framework on Healthy Ageing, building on the data, with a focus on supporting intervention and best practice. The intended audience is those promoting healthy ageing in the Eastern Metropolitan Region, including local government, decision makers, leaders, community members, health practitioners, business owners, students and researchers. The next steps are to utilise the PCP online portal, “The Well”, to share healthy ageing resources and a common framework for planning and acting on healthy ageing.

This work is timely in conjunction with local and state government healthy ageing initiatives, including the Victorian Active Ageing Partnership and the Active Health Ageing Advisor roles across Victoria funded by DHHS since June 2016. In addition, EMR local governments all have positive ageing roles and many incorporate positive ageing actions in their MPAH plans and most are currently developing their plans.

The PCP will continue to take leadership and coordination for future collaborative effort, and provide strategic direction and evidence for healthy ageing across the region.

This work has highlighted the importance of understanding what is of most use to our partners in supporting their work and strategic priorities by providing genuine opportunities for their contribution to the development of the information and resources, such as through a steering group and fostering of networks. Good quality resources about local needs are of high value to key partner agencies including local government and community health and are used in planning and funding activities. The data story is never complete with the need for some ongoing data collection and analysis, for example to incorporate new Census data or to focus on specific issues, such as gender.