



**STRONG SENIORS:
SENIORS
PARTICIPATION
FRAMEWORK
2016-19**





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Introduction

The *Strong Seniors: Seniors Participation Framework 2016-19* (the Framework) supports the *Strong Society, Confident Culture Strategy Social Participation Framework* (the Social Participation Framework) and the Northern Territory Government's *Framing the Future*, and responds to the need for a whole-of- government policy direction for senior Territorians.

For Territorians to remain physically active, socially connected and independent as they age, the Northern Territory Government's strategies, policies and service provision must be proactive and innovative while also recognising and embracing the many opportunities provided by our growing senior community.

This Framework provides objectives and strategies aligned to the nine Priority Areas for Action identified in the *Social Participation Framework*; community, diversity, children and families, housing, economic security, education, health, community safety and lifestyle. This document includes transport as a tenth priority area.





Vision

‘Senior Territorians are valued members of the community able to make decisions that support their independence and well-being; all Territorians recognise and respond effectively to the opportunities and challenges associated with an ageing population.’

Age-friendly communities

The World Health Organisation’s Age-friendly cities was developed in 2007 and is a global initiative identifying concrete indicators of an age-friendly city.¹

“An age-friendly Territory encourages and contributes to positive ageing by optimising and adapting its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of, older people with varying needs and capacities, thus enhancing the quality of life as people age.

An age-friendly Territory recognises that chronological age is not a precise marker for the biological changes that accompany ageing.

Age-friendly communities are universal in design and provide a physical or social environment that can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.”

COTA NT, 2016

This Framework commits NTG to adopting an age-friendly approach in development of policy and initiatives where applicable.

¹ World Health Organisation ‘Age-friendly Cities’, viewed 23 February 2016, http://www.who.int/ageing/projects/age_friendly_cities/en/

Community



Staying connected in communities through senior years is vital to emotional, mental and physical well-being.

Social isolation in seniors has been attributed to mental and physical illness and can result in shorter life expectancy, higher risk of elder abuse and many other negative effects.

Seniors remain active and contribute to their community through volunteering, participating in group activities and supporting their families and friends.

OBJECTIVES

A collaborative government and non-government environment supporting senior Territorians.

Strong, resilient communities built on individual participation.

STRATEGIES

- Strengthen the Northern Territory Government's partnerships between the Commonwealth Government, non-government organisations and seniors organisations through avenues such as the Minister's Advisory Council for Senior Territorians (MACST).
- Support local government and seniors organisations to communicate and coordinate activity through avenues such as the MACST.
- Continue to support social participation and program development through grant funding for community groups to celebrate and recognise Seniors Month.
- Continue to support social participation through production and distribution of Seniors Month calendar.
- Promote and support volunteering opportunities for Senior Territorians in partnership with community organisations.
- Promote volunteering opportunities to support government agencies initiatives for example 'Becoming a Foster and Kinship Carer'.



Diversity



The Northern Territory has a diverse multi-cultural population.

Social isolation, limited access to services and limited employment opportunities are significant areas of challenge for senior Territorians from diverse backgrounds.

A culturally responsible framework that engages all senior Territorians and enables older people from diverse backgrounds to enjoy active and productive senior years is essential.

OBJECTIVES

All senior Territorians are valued.

All senior Territorians have access to activities and events that encourage participation.

Territorians from diverse backgrounds are engaged to enjoy active and productive senior years.

STRATEGIES

- Support organisations and programs that are working to provide senior Territorians with equal access and opportunities.
- Provide opportunities for senior Territorians to celebrate diversity.
- Provide opportunities for senior Territorians to be recognised and acknowledged for their positive differences.
- Provide a range of activities promoting cultural diversity during Seniors Month and throughout the year.
- Work closely with Office of Multicultural Affairs, Office of Women's Policy and Office of Youth Affairs to promote and integrate activities.
- Support initiatives such as 'Men's Sheds' to engage older men.

Children and Families



Seniors have an important role to play in families.

Senior family members can provide much needed support to young families and working parents. Many seniors rely on their family for support in later years.

Intergenerational relationships are vital to a well-functioning society.

OBJECTIVES

Senior Territorians are enabled and supported to play an active and productive role in the lives of children and families.

Senior Territorians are valued and supported by their families.

STRATEGIES

- Promote and develop opportunities that link younger and older Territorians to enable them to share experiences, debate issues and foster positive attitudes between generations.
- Support, encourage and promote intergenerational and grandparents activities.
- Provide support for grandparents and older foster carers caring for children.
- Support and promote Grandparents Day with schools and childcare providers.
- Promote activities and businesses that encourage family participation through Seniors Card.
- Promote and create awareness of the issues around elder abuse, support the Elder Abuse information line.
- Explore and promote strategies that reduce interstate migration by senior Territorians.
- Explore initiatives to encourage and support seniors to consider becoming foster and kinship carers or respite carers.
- Encourage seniors to play a positive and active role with their families and families to play an active role with seniors.
- Support the Neighbourhood Activity Centre (NAC) Sanderson pilot program.



Housing



A home represents security, continuity, familiarity, and a sense of place.

Older people who choose, or who are forced, to move from their own home, are often constrained in their choices by a lack of suitable housing alternatives within their local community.

There are many personal factors that affect housing choices for seniors including proximity to family and community networks, health, mobility, access to transport and services and lifestyle choices.

In addition, for Senior Territorians, external factors that affect housing choices include the high cost of purchasing or renting and limited availability of public housing

OBJECTIVES

All Territorians have a place to call home..

Vulnerable Territorians are assisted to find and/or stay in accommodation

STRATEGIES

- The Northern Territory Government and the Commonwealth Governments, in conjunction with non-government sectors, work in partnership to increase housing options for senior Territorians.
- Develop and stimulate provision for private and public and affordable housing for senior Territorians.
- Support ageing Territorians to transition into appropriate accommodation 'downsizing' and 'rightsizing', particularly those who live in rural and remote areas transitioning to locations with access to appropriate support services.
- Investigate the causes of homelessness in the Northern Territory and explore strategies to reduce the rates of homelessness experienced by senior Territorians.

Economic Security



Economic security is having financial independence through stable income to support an acceptable standard of living.

The number of senior Territorians is predicted to more than double by 2041. Seniors are healthier and living longer and many older people are willing, and able to, continue to participate in the labour force.

It is important to encourage experienced workers to remain in the workforce and pass their skills and knowledge onto others.

OBJECTIVES

Create workforce and education choices opportunities for Seniors Territorians.

Territorians are well informed about their financial options and how to attain financial security in later years.

STRATEGIES

- Work with Department of Business, Training NT to explore options for senior Territorians to actively participate in the workforce and training sector.
- Work in partnership with key organisations to identify current programs providing employment opportunities for senior Territorians.
- Identify and lobby to remove discriminatory legislation on the basis of age; for example workers compensation age limits.
- Investigate incentives for businesses to retain and hire mature-age workers, provide targeted assistance for mature-age job seekers and training and re-skilling services and programs.
- Ensure current, relevant and easy to understand financial information is available to senior Territorians and on superannuation and retirement savings for people planning to retire.
- Reduce the cost of living for senior Territorians.
- Work with non-government organisations to provide informative activities during Seniors Month.
- Continue to provide savings for eligible seniors through the NT Pensioner and Carer Concession Scheme.
- Encourage the participation of more Territory businesses to offer discounts to seniors through the Seniors Card Discount Scheme.
- Continue to produce and distribute Seniors Card Business Directory.



Education



Australia's ageing population, longer working lives and technological change mean investment in education and training for seniors is increasingly needed and desired.

The social, emotional and intellectual benefits of undertaking education in senior years is well-documented. Engagement in learning activities brings about positive change in an older person's life.

OBJECTIVE

Senior Territorians have access to and are supported to participate in quality education and training.

STRATEGIES

- Work collaboratively with education providers, government and non-government organisations to provide opportunities for senior Territorians to undertake education and training.
- Investigate and provide an assessment of opportunities for senior Territorians to undertake education and training.
- Investigate and provide report on senior Territorians currently undertaking education and training.
- Provide opportunities for seniors to be involved with the education of younger people, and vice-versa.
- Investigate and look at ways to increase levels of uptake in technologies by Territorian seniors.
- Promote opportunities for seniors to participate in informal education i.e.: hobby classes.



Health



Senior Territorians require a focus on and investment in strategies that encourage healthy and active living. Healthy and active living is important to ensure quality of life in later years.

Access to health care is extremely important to allow prevention, early detection and treatment of illness, and management of chronic conditions.

Some Territorians, particularly those in rural and remote areas of the Territory can face significant barriers in accessing health care services and information.

OBJECTIVES

Senior Territorians have access to good quality healthcare.

The health and wellbeing of senior Territorians is promoted and protected.

Senior Territorians are aware of safety issues such as falls that can affect long term health.

STRATEGIES

- Promote healthy lifestyles and physical activity.
- Focus on preventative health, screening and early intervention to reduce the impacts of age-related illnesses, chronic disease and injury.
- Increase opportunities for people to participate in activities within their communities.
- Increase the capacity of hospital facilities in proportion with population growth; improve mental health services, improve regional health systems.
- Expand the range of affordable recreational activities for Senior Territorians; particularly through the Seniors Card and during Seniors Month.
- Work closely with the Australian Government to influence the development of a long-term strategy for Aged-Care services in the Territory; focus on retaining staff in the Aged-Care industry; provide accessible and easy to understand information about Aged-Care options available to Senior Territorians, provide access to culturally secure palliative and respite services.

Community Safety



Senior Territorians, like everyone, have the right to feel safe at all times, and research shows that those who appear confident and take security precautions are less likely to be victims of crime.

Statistics show the older you get the less likely you are to become a victim of crime however; the impact of crime may be much more significant.

Seniors are less likely to place themselves in high risk situations, they are careful and more experienced and they tend to spend more time at home and with family.

OBJECTIVES

Senior Territorians are safe at home and in the community.

STRATEGIES

- Focus on community safety through highly visible frontline Police, Fire and Emergency Services and preventative initiatives to reduce crime and reoffending.
- Provide community education and support for victims of abuse; Elder Abuse, abuse by carers and / or domestic and family violence.
- Improve safety and security for public housing tenants.
- Improve public transport safety and road user behaviour.
- Review the Northern Territory Safe Streets Audit and consider strategies and recommendations for crime reduction.
- Work collaboratively with community groups, police and government agencies to identify and address safety concerns for Senior Territorians.
- Build resilience and preparedness to respond to disasters and emergencies through community participation and education.
- Promote and support Neighbourhood Watch.
- Investigate production of a new Community Safety Resource with information specific to Senior Territorians.
- Promote the checklist of outdoor spaces and buildings for age- friendly cities.



Lifestyle



Seniors are increasingly leading active and healthy lives.

A focus on and investment in strategies that encourage healthy and active living are vital to ensuring our older generations have a quality of life in later years.

Physical activity in older years is crucial to maintain a healthy body and mind.

OBJECTIVES

Senior Territorians are supported to participate in and have access to art and cultural events.

Sport and recreation activities are available for Senior Territorians.

STRATEGIES

- Senior Territorians have opportunities to participate in cultural events and are recognised and acknowledged for their positive differences; senior artists and performers are supported and promoted.
- Senior Territorian sportsmen and women are supported and promoted; all seniors have opportunities to participate in sport and recreation.
- Promotion of healthy lifestyles, physical activity and strategies to minimise the impact of falls and other injuries.
- Ensure that public spaces are easily and safely accessible for seniors.
- Support senior Territorians to maintain their independence.
- Continue to support and promote the Portrait of a Senior Territorian Art Awards.
- Support community involvement through volunteer programs and groups and encourage and promote volunteering opportunities.
- Celebrate World Health Organisations Older Persons Day on 1 October.
- Provide easily accessible and easy to understand information about support services and products particularly those that encourage and support independent living, entitlement, community groups, retirement planning and healthy living for senior Territorians.
- Continue to support and promote the Alice Springs Masters Games.



Transport



Transport that is safe, affordable and accessible is vital to ensuring that seniors are able to maintain involvement and independence.

Affordable and reliable transport infrastructure and services provide equal opportunity for social and economic participation as well as access to health and other essential services.

OBJECTIVES

Senior Territorians have access to transport that is affordable, safe and inclusive.

STRATEGIES

- Improve public transport safety through measures such as Transit Safety Officers and monitoring through CCTV.
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- Improve road user behaviour through road safety strategies and visible front line police activity.
- Continue to provide concessions for motor vehicle registration, free drivers licence renewals and concessional fares for public transport through the Northern Territory Pensioner Concession and Carer Scheme.
- Continue to provide a concession for the Motor Accident Compensation component of car registration through the Seniors Card program.
- Continue to provide concessions for interstate / overseas travel through the Northern Territory Pensioner Concession and Carer Scheme.
- Support access for senior Territorians to public and community-based key destinations such as hospitals, health clinics and shopping centres.
- Promote active transport options for senior Territorians through integrated land use and transport planning and the provision of walking and cycling infrastructure.



Evaluation and Reporting

This Framework provides objectives and strategies to assist government and non-government organisations to map activities that are already happening and look at what can be implemented to provide a socially inclusive and age-friendly Territory.

The Office of Senior Territorians is committed to developing an action plan to look at how the strategies outlined in this Framework will be implemented, including specific timeframes, who is responsible and how progress can be reported.

The Office of Senior Territorians will provide an annual report to the Minister for Senior Territorians, which outlines government progress against the objectives and strategies in this Framework.

Both the action plan and the annual report will be available to the public. Data and indicators that can be used to measure changes over time will be investigated and reported on. These may include statistics on population projections and distributions, community and lifestyle, housing, health, employment status and community safety.

