

Positive Ageing Advisory Committee



Minutes

Date:	Friday 1 August
Time:	10.30am – 1.30pm
Venue:	Nillumbik Shire Council Office – Civic Drive Greensborough Council Chambers
Chair:	Councillor Peter Perkins

1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

Apology: Narelle Hart Manager Community Programs, Tanya Cottrell St. Vincent's Healthy Ageing Service, Julie Cassim.

Welcome - Angela Lampard who is acting in Narelle's absence and will be the Minute taker today.

2. Acknowledgement of Country – Read by Cr Perkins.

3. Conflict of Interest & Informal Meeting of Councillors Record

Nothing to declare

4. Minutes of previous meeting & outstanding action items

Heather Macmillan Positive Ageing Officer gave an update on two items carried over from previous Positive Ageing Advisory Committee Meeting.

The recommendation made by PAAC '*That PAAC advises the Council to support free use of their leisure indoor facilities for 80+ aged users*', she advised that the Briefing being led by the Recreation and Leisure team will be tabled in September.

Richard (previous PAAC member) suggested feedback cards be developed and made available for Committee members. Due to the bi-monthly nature of the Committee Meetings, it was decided that a timelier approach was required. Richard's idea was further developed into an Ageing Well team postcard with key contact information. This way, members are equipped to follow up with relevant Officer or services at any time or pass these postcards out to community members. Hard copies were disseminated to the group.

Action: electronic version of the card is to be provide to the Committee.

5. Role and scope of PAAC & feedback from induction

Stephanie Vassilios, Coordinator Ageing Well team:

Stephanie referred to the previous Advisory Committee induction session and elaborated on the role and scope of the Committee and member expectations. PAAC supports the delivery of actions and plans relating and concerning older people. It's about consulting with and representing the voice of older people. Members are ambassadors for positive ageing.

PAAC is about broader issues identified in the community for older people in Nillumbik. If you have a specific issue relating to your personal circumstances or group, please utilise the resource card by contacting the relevant service area outside the time allocated for this Committee.

The Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan are the main guide for the Ageing Well team's work. We want to partner with PAAC where we're able to and given it's about the voice of the broader community, it's an opportunity to bring it back to Council, with an older person's lens.

A reminder to act respectfully and actively listen to one another. Issues discussed are confidential in nature.

6. Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan update

Sangita Parsot, Social Planning & Policy Officer

Sangita provided an update about the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (which is the key Plan most relevant to PAAC to guide its work).

Please refer to the slides for an overview about the new 2025-2029 Health and Wellbeing Plan, consultation and endorsement journey. An Ageing lens has been applied to the Plan, acknowledging that people who are older may need additional supports.

Annual Action Plans will outline how we are going to address the high-level H&WB plan priority issues.

Endorsement of the Health and Wellbeing Plan will happen on 30 September 2025.

Member Question – what does 'including food systems' mean?

Response - Access to food, the means by which food is grown, transported, stored and available to community. Access to healthy and nutritious food. There is a lot of food insecurity in the Shire.

7. Stretch Break

8. NSC 'Ageing Well' team introductions and operations

Jodie Hoskins – Aged Care Navigation and Advocacy Officer

Refer to slide pack where you will find more information about how this role supports people over 55. Services are centred around independence and linking people in with support and providers.

Summary: Information sessions explain the aged care system, aged care reforms, death café.

Help to navigate My Aged Care from entry level. Can link in with Services Australia to help you with costs. 1:1 support or drop-ins. Can visit people's homes as well if needed.

You can self-refer to My Aged Care, it can be quite complex but part of Jodie's role is to support and educate people about their choices.

Member query - Assisted dying was suggested by a member as a potential workshop topic at 'Death Café'. Jodie said it hasn't come up previously but the events she runs are safe and respectful spaces and if discussion on this topic became a need, we could consider it.

Member query - For Jodie to chat to the Men's Shed about her role.

Action – Jodie will follow up and organise to visit to St Andrews Men's Shed.

Mel Sanders – Community Transport Officer

Refer to slide pack where you will find more information about how this role supports older people with door-to-door transport in Council bus or in volunteers' own vehicles. Currently Council has 24 volunteers who assist approx.100 Nillumbik residents.

Key takeaway point: eligibility for service is for entry level clients via My Aged Care. Small fees for transport and slightly more if it's outside the Shire.

Stephanie Vassilios – previous Social Connections Officer (role is being recruited to currently) as Stephanie is now the Ageing Well Coordinator.

Role fosters connections to reduce loneliness and isolation of older people. Targets social connections and with this in mind, is responsible for developing community events and programs that bring people together.

Examples include:

- **'Together through loss'** is a mental health support group in partnership with United Minds. Psychologist there to support.
- **'Digital Mentors'** – a program via the e-safety commission – young people are paired with an older person to help them develop confidence in using a particular technology e.g. their mobile phone, Facebook. Young people gain leadership and communications skills, and older people are more confident online. Also reduces stigmas.
- Nillumbik **Cognitive Stimulation Therapy**. For people with mild to moderate dementia. Partnership pilot with HolStep Health. Improves quality of life and gains in memory and cognition. Program runs for 7 weeks, twice a week. High demand, with 6 people on a waiting list for this program if it runs again.
- Regular **Social Support Group** funded through Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) runs on a Thursday.

Responsible for developing the **Ageing Well in Nillumbik newsletter** a quarterly newsletter that goes out to 800 residents. AWiN promotes Council activities and event as well as work of partner organisations and Community groups.

Administers two grant rounds over the year; one is for Seniors Festival and the other is to encourage community events that promote social connections for people aged over 55. The Social Connections Officer also works closely with the Positive Ageing Officer.

Always open to ideas and feedback.

Heather Macmillan – Positive Ageing Officer

Role responsibilities:

- **Convenes the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee.** Manages the Agenda, keynote speakers, promotes organisation-wide opportunities for consultations. Manages the turnover of the committee every 2 years.
- **Supports community projects, with a focus on positive ageing.**
- **Seniors Festival forums and initiatives:** For example, last year a Housing Forum was held.
- **Education sessions for the community or with community groups.** E.g. Elder abuse information sessions. NARI exercise park in Eltham – activating it with the support of volunteers. Coordinates Vic Roads funding, Wiser Driver and other programs.
- **Work internally** to ensure Positive Ageing is on the agenda across council: Key plans like the Health and Wellbeing plan.
- **Prepares submissions for grants.** This includes support for clubs and groups re: older people – e.g. how to become incorporated etc. with consumer affairs Victoria. Understanding insurance. Regular mailing lists to promote what's happening across the Shire. Helps facilitate speakers for groups.

9. Lunch – 12:30 – 1pm.

10. PACC introductions (x7) 5 mins each

As a way of people getting to know one another PAAC members were asked to come prepared to speak for 5 minutes and answer either:

- ***What does your agency/group provide to support aging well in Nillumbik?***
- ***What do you think is vital to supporting ageing well in Nillumbik?***

Tom – talked about the NARI exercise facility. Outdoor exercise facility that has 14 stations, designed by physiotherapists. Tom is one of the volunteers who runs weekly sessions to support attendees. In the year and a half Tom has been doing it; he has noticed his balance has improved significantly. Be great to get more older people involved. Walking is not enough for fitness for older people. This facility works every muscle group. Lots of information on Council's website if you'd like to learn more.

Re-wire musical memory choir – meet once a week at Hurstbridge Hub and is coordinated by a musical therapist. Meets over the school term. Tom has a flyer that could be sent to the group, as well as information about the free Estia concert in Wattle Glen on 20 August.

Action: Heather to follow up to circulate the flyers about the Re-wire memory choir and Estia event.

Sophie – talked about her experience as a member of the Nillumbik Chinese Seniors Association (NCSA).

NCSA provide many activities to support ageing well, every Tuesday they run Tai Chi and line dancing, cards, yoga, singing. Social connection activities and information sessions on a variety of topics e.g. welfare, health, aged care and other fun and interesting topics. NCSA currently has 90 people registered.

Group is truly a multicultural group, with members from many different countries. Social connection benefits are broad and support the philosophy of ageing well.

NCSA are running a 'Come and Try Day' as part of the 2025 Seniors Festival in October the day is an invitation for older members of community to come and try some Chinese activities like: try tai chi, dumpling making, ballroom dancing and mahjong. You can choose to try one of these activities or all four of them.

Steve – Men's Sheds support positive ageing of men. The St Andrews Men's Shed is registered charity now. Shed at St Andrews was an initiative by the women (coming out of the 2009 bushfires) as a way to support the men. Steve said he would argue it's just as much about the women as well as the men. Huge expertise and experience at the shed. Like any org there are challenges and some banned topics. Community gets a lot of benefit from the work they produce – e.g. primary schools in the area, St Andrews market, living and learning centres, 600 nest boxes for possums and birds have been made for \$50 dollars each. Getting men side by side means they start to talk. The Men's Shed are currently constructing an Arbor for the Community Centre.

Marlwood- Was a teacher and has now retired. Hadn't thought about what he would do once he retired. Got him wondering more broadly if new retirees are aware of what's available in their own Shire. He has been looking for things to do to help others and use his skills running cricket associations. Has been supporting Diamond Creek Community Garden for four years (also known as Thrive Community Garden). He has a grant for a sign. The garden has no power or water on the site. 20 people are involved, and they produce things for themselves and for the local food banks. They are not doing as much as they would like due to vandalism – there's no fence. He encourages people to walk through.

General observation: Marlwood goes to Echuca once a month – amazed at what Nillumbik offers compared to Campaspe Shire, but he wonders how information gets communicated and how we can improve getting the message out. Perhaps the Ageing Well newsletter could be more broadly promoted. He wants to work on this as a priority.

Action: Heather encouraged Marlwood and PAAC to sign up people they know so others know what's available and how they can get involved locally.

Tamsyn – HolStep health – Merri Health and Banyule Health have merged to create HolStep Health. Works in the Carer Gateway service (representing anyone who is looking after a loved one). Spreading awareness about carers and carer support is her job. Accessing health services – linking people in with their local community, she is that connection. Recent example is a partnership with the Nillumbik Dementia Friendly Alliance. She's also supporting one of Nillumbik's local carers groups from Carer Collective as they don't have capacity. Agrees that it's vital to support ageing well initiatives – social connection is everything. Knowing what's available is key.

Natalie – is an Executive Manager at HealthAbility which has two sites one in Eltham, and one is in Box Hill. HealthAbility provide many services: Home Care packages – lots of free services including Care Finders who help with aged care pathways. HealthAbility also offer allied health services like physio, podiatry, nursing. Chronic disease programs like Diabetes. Mental health supports, as well memory cafes and health promotion.

Natalie wants to learn from the Committee and also promote services while listening and adapting to local needs. Please visit the HealthAbility website to learn more, or feel free to approach her – over 70 different services offered.

Stella – Member of the Chinese Senior Citizen Group. Sophie has spoken about the activities offered but just wants to reiterate the importance of physical and mental health. She has started teaching yoga classes this year. Anyone can do yoga – standing positions are helpful for older people. Connection with others. Even when there is a language barrier there is a warmth there for everyone to feel welcome and to belong.

11. Roundtable:

The Roundtable is an opportunity for PAAC members to raise relevant issues related to ageing well in Nillumbik for discussion or to seek advice or action on. These issues may involve access, equity and inclusion of older adults. The Roundtable is also an opportunity for any PAAC members to inform others about upcoming events and activities of interest to over 55s .

Natalie – HealthAbility will run a couple of Seniors Festival events, one on 17 October from 1:30 -3:30 Craft session and afternoon tea. There is a new community cupboard at the Eltham site. You can help yourself or refer people there. Stocked by staff and community donations. You can also drop things off.

Ann gave an update on LINC (Love in the Name of Christ) who top up food pantries around the Shire and provide emergency food parcels.

Food pantry at St Margarets Church Eltham is open 24/7. Wednesdays are fresh fruit and vegetables, otherwise it's nonperishables.

Emergency food parcels -This month they did 29 food parcels due to funding provided by HealthAbility. Increase in uptake of community food parcels.

Question to the group from Natalie: Is there an increase in need or are people more comfortable to access it now. The group think it is becoming more common/comfortable for people to access support these days.

On the topic of food, Heather told members to look out for the following in the upcoming AWIN newsletter – **NEST program** (nutrition education skills training) run in partnership with Oz-Harvest. NEST is a cooking course for people who might be new to cooking due to changed life circumstances. It's a 5-week course and will be run at Edendale Farm in November /December 2025, the program will be limited to 15 participants. It will teach people how to shop for what they're going to cook (how to save money), simple recipes, food safety and nutrition. Participants will also enjoy eating lunch together after each session.

Seniors Month – a Senior's Festival booklet is being prepared to go in the Spring AWIN newsletter, look out for fun and interesting activities all around the Shire put on by Council, partners like the library service, Aligned Leisure, Living and Learning and community groups.

Did you know its Aged Care Worker Day on Thursday 7 August, an opportunity for us all to say thank you to someone we know in this space.

12. 1.15pm Meeting close

Next meeting date and location – Friday 3 October at the Hurstbridge Community Hub