



WHO Global Network of Age-friendly
Cities and Communities

Great Lakes Progress Report
2015

Background

The Great Lakes is located on the mid-north coast of New South Wales, Australia, about 3 hours' drive north of Sydney. Covering an area of 3,500 Km², our local government area has a high proportion of farms, State Forests and National Parks, and a population density of just 0.1 people per Hectare. Total population is 36,312 residents

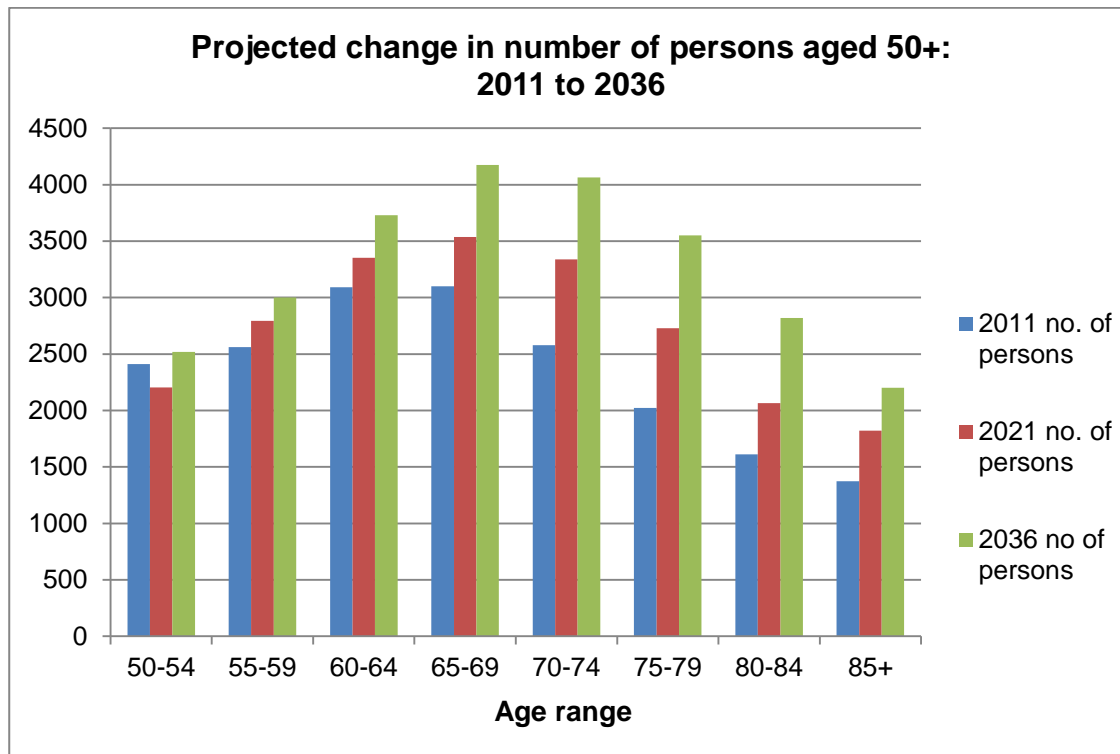
To give an idea of the size of the area, it takes one-and-a-half hours to travel from the main residential area of Forster Tuncurry in the north, to the next biggest residential area of Tea Gardens/Hawks Nest in the South, travelling at 110 km/h along the motorway.

Over the Christmas/New Year holiday period, it is estimated that our population swells from just over 36,000 residents to over 100,000 people.

We have the oldest population in NSW and the third-oldest in Australia. More than half of us (53.6%) are aged over 50, and almost 40% are over 60. Our Local Government Area's (LGA) population has double the state average of 60+ year olds (at 20.3%) and well above the regional average of 24.5%. We also rank number 1 in New South Wales for dementia cases, which is directly related to our demographics.



The number of people in our local government area aged over 60 is expected to rise by 44.7% by 2036. While the 'young old' appear to remain relatively static, the increase in the 'older old' is significant, particularly past the age of 70 years (when our current younger retirees become older).



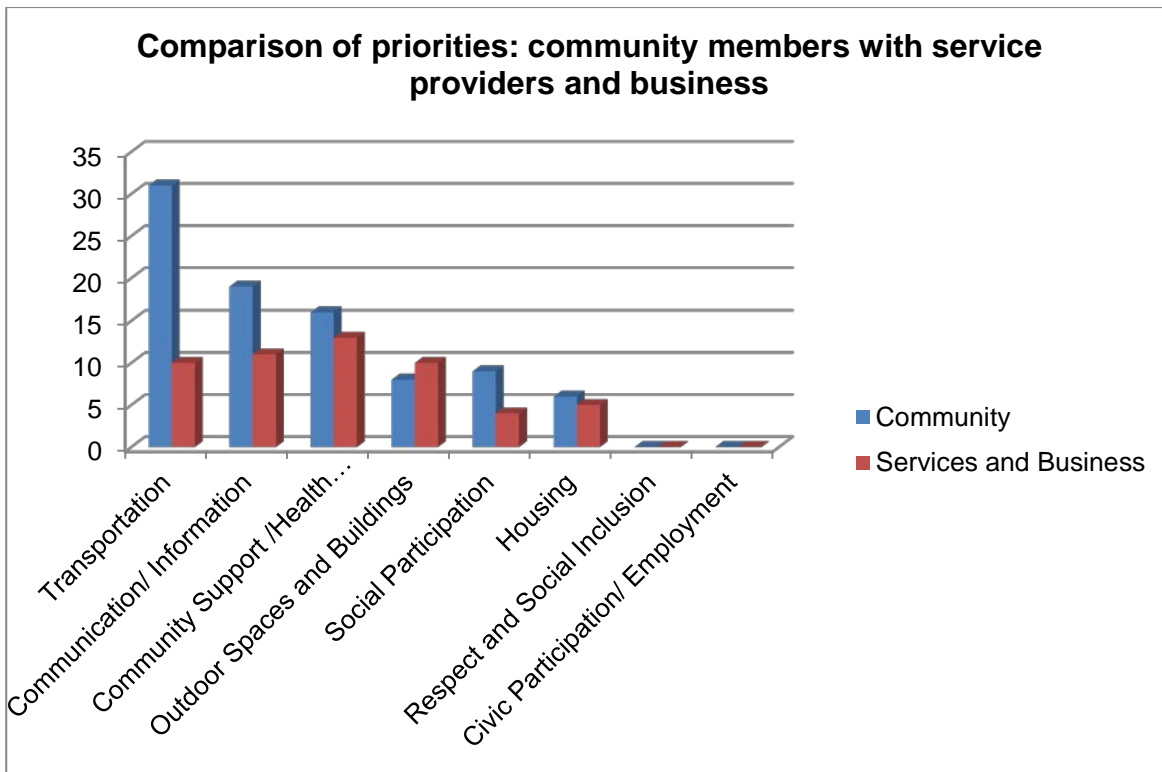
Given the demographics of the area, Council resolved to become a “Centre of Excellence for Ageing” in December 2012.

With regard to planning and providing for an ageing population, we were already doing some things in an ad-hoc way, for example, thinking about seating and foot paths, and we were doing other things really well - we have provided Ageing & Disability care services (previously known as HACC services) for more than 15 years and attract some \$2.5 million in funding per annum for those services.

In 2012 we partnered with COTA (formerly the NSW Council on the Ageing), and hosted a Liveable Communities workshop. We then worked with Dr Jane Bringolf from COTA in 2013 to participate in a pilot project to apply to WHO for membership of the Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities - the first step of which was to develop a Whole-of-Council Ageing Strategy - involving significant community consultation.

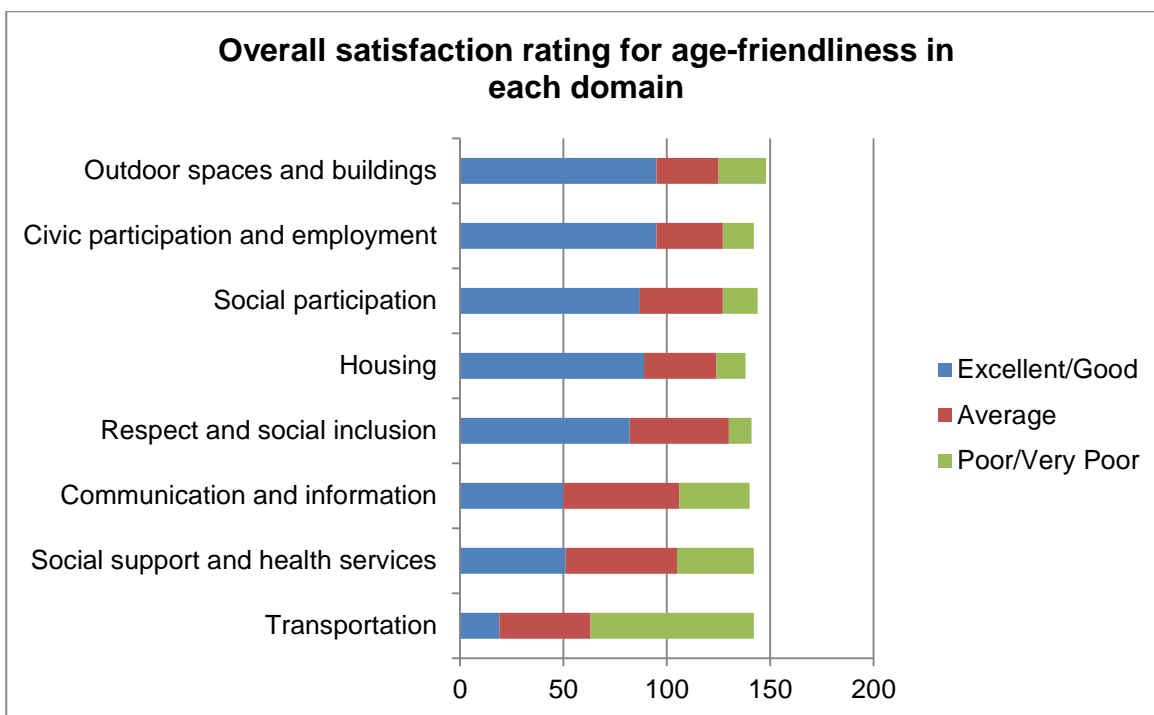
Our focus groups identified 3 clear areas of concern that were consistent across the LGA with community members –

- Transportation
- Provision of and access to information
- Access to health services.



Consultation with service providers and business highlighted the same 3 areas of concern, but in a different order. The areas of respect and social inclusion, and civic participation and employment were not considered to be areas of concern by either group – probably because our focus groups comprised active people who were well connected in the community.

This second chart is based on feedback from a supplementary survey, and clearly shows where Council needs to focus its efforts in terms of becoming more age friendly.



Implementing the Ageing Strategy

Following are details of actions taken across Council to improve on the age-friendliness of the LGA.

General

During 2015, Council upgraded its website to ensure it was more accessible. Apart from a more user-friendly, cleaner and responsive design, the website also has features enabling users to listen to information, and change the size of the font to make information easier to read. Users are now also able to pay rates online to save them visiting Council in person, and are able to log requests (for example, pot holes in roads, blocked drains, tree issues) and make submissions on documents on exhibition, through the website. Users can also view information on roadworks, and sporting ground closures during wet weather, and can track the progress of their Development Applications. These improvements to accessing services and information save residents having to phone, or visit Council offices to meet their needs, and go some way towards addressing concerns raised during consultation with older people regarding the WHO domain of Communication and Information.

Council offers a community grants program annually to community groups. During the 2015 funding round, fourteen of the 34 applications which were funded directly benefited projects for older people. This represented some 41% of the grant funding. Examples of projects funded are the provision of fans for a social group of older ladies meeting at Nabiac hall, which does not have air conditioning, and the provision of music books for the singing group of U3A (University of the Third Age) - a group of older people who meet regularly to offer members an opportunity to use their leisure time to learn and teach together, thus keeping their brains active. This meets the needs of older people under three of the GNAFF Domains: Civic Participation, Respect & Social Inclusion and Social Participation.

Council has worked closely with the Hawks Nest Bridge Club to facilitate the Club's desire to construct a purpose-built clubhouse. The Club comprises a group of very active, older residents, who have been fundraising for several years to erect their own building. During 2015 Council resolved to lease land at a subsidised rate to the Club. The project meets a need for this area under the WHO domains of Social Participation and Respect & Social Inclusion.

Planning Section

In June 2015 Council changed its planning controls to prevent low density housing from being developed in "greenfield" areas zoned for medium density housing.

This also included a provision for minimum development density of 30 dwellings per hectare in medium-density zoned "greenfield" sites.

A driving factor behind the changes was the fact that many areas zoned for medium density housing were only being developed for low density residential development. This has resulted in a lack housing diversity and, in particular, housing for older residents. Council is very aware of the high percentage of older residents in Great Lakes and of the need to ensure a greater diversity of housing. This step ensures the development of more appropriate housing (like villas and small apartment blocks) which suit older people who can no longer cope with mowing lawns and other maintenance requirements of a larger block,

and ensures a diversity of housing types close to services and facilities which will lead to more affordable housing.

Council has also resolved to allow for smaller minimum lot size in those medium-density zones.

Currently Council has planning controls that provide incentives for new multi-unit residential development that incorporates adaptable housing design. One of the main objectives of these designs is to provide for ageing-in-place in the town centres.

The provisions specifically allowed a 10% increase in the height of buildings and floor space ratios in various zones for development that incorporated adaptable housing.

Feedback from the development industry has indicated that the 10% development incentive currently provided is insufficient to cover the additional construction cost associated with providing adaptable housing in accordance with the Australian Standard 4299-1995 Adaptable Housing. In this regard it has been noted that the Standard:

- is only available as a fee-for-purchase document;
- has onerous design and construction requirements; and
- requires the installation of building fixtures that cannot be sourced within Australia.

In a pilot project for New South Wales, that to our knowledge is also a first for Australia, Council wants to introduce new incentives based on the Livable Housing™ Design Guidelines. These will replace AS 4299 - 1995. The new guidelines have been developed in conjunction with the Housing Industry Association and a range of public agencies to ensure the recommendations can be implemented. The Guidelines are also available as a public document from www.livablehousingaustralia.org.au and dwellings can be certified as being of a Silver, Gold or Platinum Performance Level.

Council hopes that these more flexible and updated standards will provide greater incentive for the provision of liveable housing, especially for older people. This fulfils a number of strategies under the Housing domain, outlined the Great Lakes Active Ageing Strategy.

Engineering Section

This section of Council has conducted a number of projects during 2015 which are outlined in the Great Lakes Active Ageing Strategy, within the Outdoor Spaces and Buildings domain.

Council obtained State funding of \$1 million for a cycleway project for the twin towns of Forster and Tuncurry. Under this project the following has been achieved:

- Over 2 Km of shared pathways have been constructed and linked up, including the linking of two aged-care facilities
- Improved end-of journey bike facilities have been established to further encourage cycling

Improvements to shared pathways was a key priority identified by older people during consultation for the Great Lakes Ageing Strategy.



Improved cycling facilities at Forster's Main Beach Ocean Baths (above) and Central Business District (below) - part of a project to encourage cycling in Forster and Tuncurry



The Engineering section has also managed a project resulting in a regional bus stop in Tuncurry being upgraded to meet accessibility guidelines.

In collaboration with seven other Council areas, this section has also designed and launched the 2016 Safer Seniors Calendar, focusing on road safety. The calendar covers new legislation/road rules, tips for low risk driving, and mobility options, with a section at the back providing contact details for emergency services, medical and health-related services and other government agencies. This partnership project with the Great Lakes Museum, based in Tuncurry, enabled the Museum to provide a number of historic motoring-related photographs used in the calendar.

Safer Seniors Calendar

An initiative of your local council as part of the **Local Government Road Safety Program**

2016

The 2016 Safer Seniors Calendar produced in collaboration with Maitland, Gosford, Wyong, Cessnock, Gloucester, Greater Taree and Port Stephens Councils

Driving the Safest Car

Modern cars offer better protection, especially for older drivers and passengers, who are more susceptible to injury in a crash. Safety features of new cars include electronic stability control, autonomous emergency braking, airbags and seatbelts that tighten automatically when a crash is about to happen.

New car vehicle safety ratings can be found on the Australian New Car Assessment Program website www.ncap.com.au
Used car vehicle safety ratings can be found at www.hovsafeforyourcar.com.au

Archibald Street Long lefts, image courtesy of Wyong District Museum and Historical Society.

MARCH 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
					Good Friday	Easter Saturday
27	28	29	30	31		
Easter Sunday	Easter Monday					

Public Holidays
 School Holidays
 School Zones in effect

A page from the Safer Seniors Calendar featuring 'Driving the safest car'

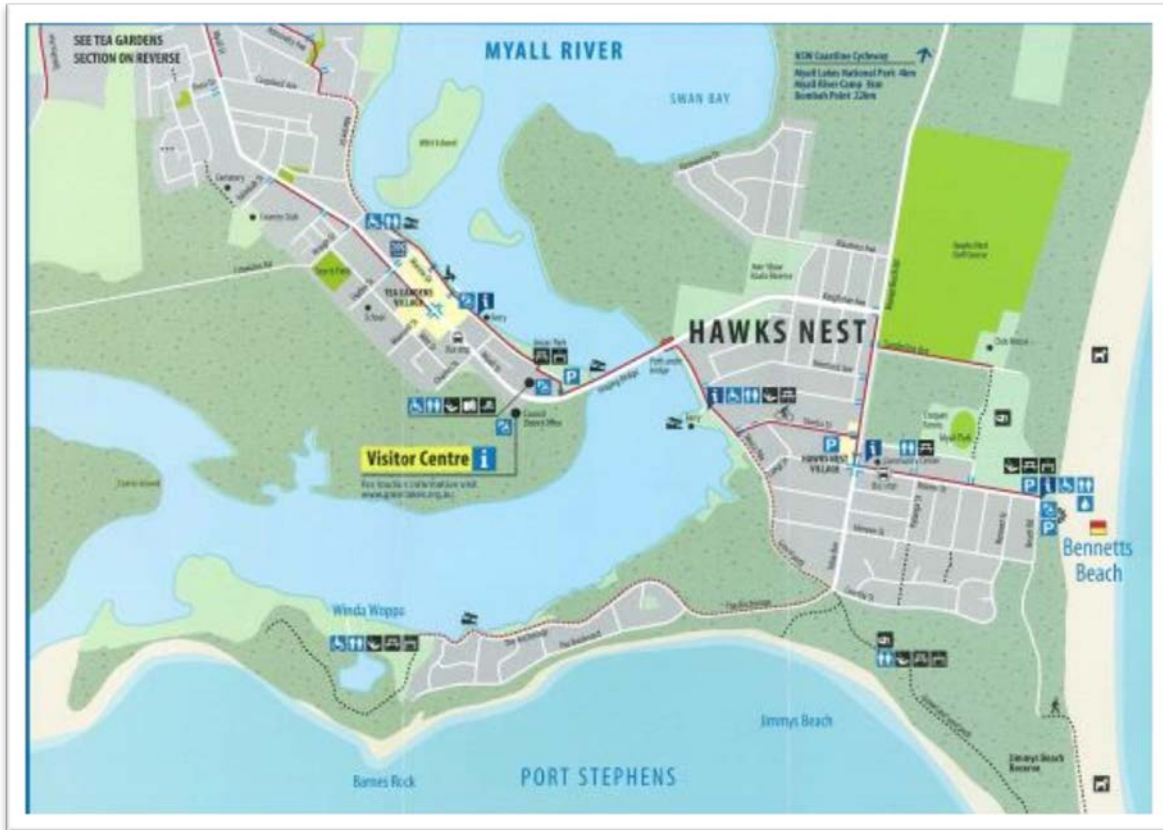


Council's Road Safety Officer, Chris Dimarco at the launch of the Safer Seniors Calendar with Alan Wright at Great Lakes Museum, with one of the new calendars

During 2015 the Engineering Section of Council expanded upon the success of the Mobility Map of Forster and Tuncurry produced in 2014, by producing a similar map for the twin towns of Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest. This map outlines kerb ramps, pedestrian crossings, accessible toilets and parking, general parking and public toilets, seating, walking routes, coastal cycleways police and medical centres, and more. The map has been distributed to Tourist information centres, library and Council offices in the Tea Gardens/Hawks Nest area, so that it is available for residents and visitors. It is also available for download from Council's website, and is available in mobile-device format.



Hawks Nest / Tea Gardens Mobility Map



Hawks Nest /
Tea Gardens
Mobility Map

The Little Street bus stop upgrade project in Forster, involved upgrading the pathway to make it more user friendly, replacing the gravel section with concrete and adding seating. The improvements link to a path network. A nearby carpark was removed to improve visibility, making it safer and more accessible for older people. The plan is to continue these works so that people can walk all the way from the breakwater to Little Street along a continuous length of footpath. This area is a key recreational walking and fishing destination and links with central business district.



Before - the Little Street bus stop area, showing uneven ground and a dark and dingy area before (with the yellow bus stop structure just visible behind the vegetation on the right). The ground is uneven, vegetation makes lighting uneven, and the carpark increases risk of a reversing car hitting a pedestrian



After - the Little Street bus top area, showing the new, flat walkway, now light and airy, making it safer for seniors who wish to walk along the foreshore. Wallis Lake is just out of the picture on the left.

Parks and Recreation Section

This section of Council manages Council's parks, swimming pools and public spaces across the LGA. During 2015 they achieved a number of projects to improve the age-friendliness of the Great Lakes within the Outdoor spaces and Buildings domain.

Construction of new accessible unisex toilets at Coolongolook Oval commenced during 2015 and are scheduled for completion in April 2016. The project was designed in consultation with the Coolongolook Action Group (a group of older residents), and also included accessible parking, pathways and additional seating.



The hall in the small rural community of Coolongolook - showing new accessible parking, pathways and additional seating

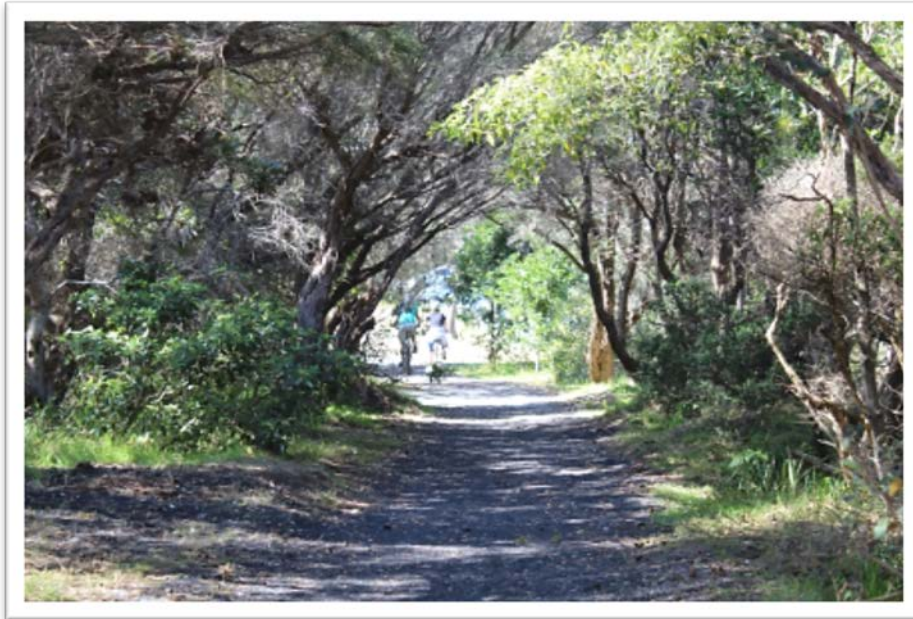
A new accessible toilet was completed adjacent to the Green Point Hall and is open to the public during daylight hours and used by the hall users, playground users and general public.

This is a popular spot for local older people to meet and watch their grand-children play in the park.

The design for new accessible toilets at Smiths Lake and Bulahdelah showgrounds' are in the planning stages and should be completed in 2016.

The Green Army (group of volunteers) completed an upgrade at Pebbly Beach in Forster, making walking tracks more accessible, and constructing two picnic tables.

Coolongolook, Greenpoint, Smiths Lake, Bulahdelah and Nabiac are small villages with limited services and amenities, and which are somewhat isolated from the bigger residential areas of Forster Tuncurry - the closest being a half hour car trip away. Improving public and outdoor amenities greatly enhances social and health aspects for residents in those areas.



These people riding their bikes along a pathway through the Pebbly Beach reserve are older people, making the most of being able to remain active in a beautiful part of Forster



The improved pathway along Pebbly Beach reserve, which was previously uneven and rutted, is now a much more suitable pathway for older people (and others) to enjoy

In Nabic improvements were conducted to existing pathways to make them more accessible (wider and smoother, gravel surfaces). Seating was upgraded along the way. People can now walk along the pathway from Memorial Park to the new swimming pool. Shelters along the walkway will be installed next year. Trees are being planted around the park to create shade.



Nabic before - showing a section of the overgrown and messy area between the town and the recreational area



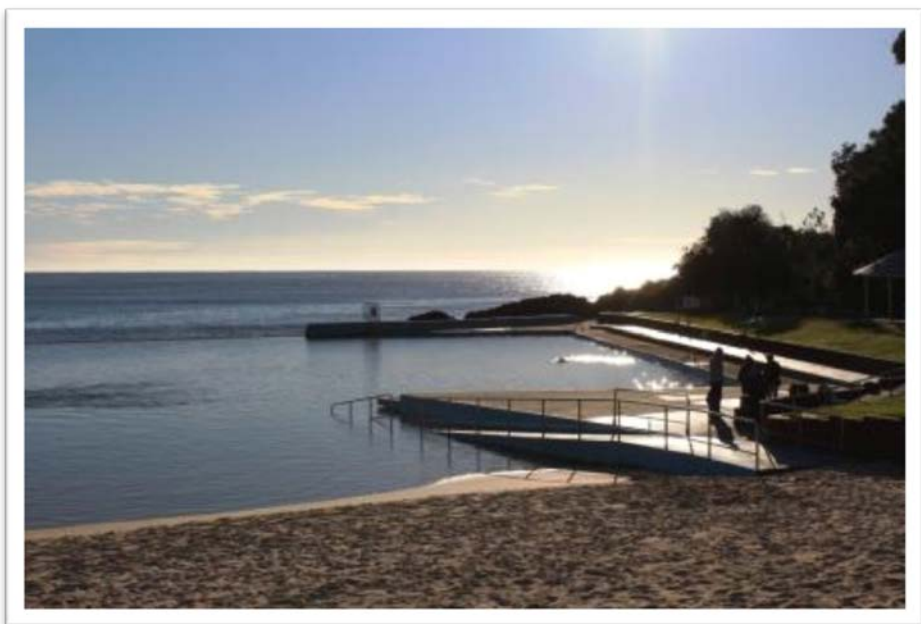
Nabic after - a new pathway links the town with the recreational area making it safer for older people to access

A 13-year project to provide a swimming pool for Nabic residents came to fruition in 2015. Nabic is a half-hour drive away from the nearest beach or public pool, and residents have long campaigned and raised funds to build a pool in the town. Forty-four percent of Nabic's population is aged over 50, and the provision of the pool provides an alternate opportunity for exercise and social interaction for those older people.



The newly-completed swimming pool at Nahiack

Forster Main Beach Ocean Baths (affectionately known as 'The Bullring' at Forster) enjoyed a revamp of parking and landscaping around the pool, making it safer and more level for older people.



Improved facilities at Forster's "Bullring" Ocean Baths, making for easier and safer access for older people

At Bulahdelah Lions Park work has been completed in consultation with the local Lions Club to improve overnight camping facilities for Recreational Vehicles (RVs). The project included new gravel pads for parking caravans on making it easier and more stable for older people. There is now also more seating, a shelter, more bins, and signage to assist people in using the park. This is an important project as Bulahdelah is very close to the motorway and a convenient stop-off point for travellers - just 3 hours from Sydney. A great many visitors to the Great Lakes are affectionately known as 'grey nomads' - retirees who purchase a caravan or RV on retirement, and set off to see Australia.

At Coomba Park outdoor fitness equipment has been installed by volunteers. Four pieces of equipment were installed, with more planned to follow as funds are raised. Council is supplying gravel pads to go under the equipment to make it easier to use and help with maintenance.

Council's Parks and Recreation section also currently manage 973 volunteers - 658 do mowing and 315 are bush regeneration volunteers, ie mix of dune care and land care. At the end of each year, the Parks section hosts a thank-you party for its volunteers. Apart from the opportunity to say thank you to the volunteers for their commitment and work during the year, the event provides an important opportunity for social interaction - most of the volunteers are older people.

In Tea Gardens, Council has provided additional storage at the public pool, to enable older people to store equipment used for activities (eg pool 'noodles' for the 'noodle ladies' who do aquarobics in the pool).



2015 Volunteers Christmas party at Council offices



Council staff members are currently working with the Residents Association at the small, isolated village of North Arm Cove to develop a village green to provide flat open space for walking, kite flying, kicking a ball with the grandchildren. This area will include a walking track and seating. This project was identified by local residents and involves significant community contribution.

Extra seating was constructed in Marcell Terry Reserve (at Forster). This was important as this spot is about half way for people who walk to the Stockland shopping centre and provides an important rest spot for older people.

Community Services Section

This section of Council manages Cemeteries, Public Halls, and performs Community Engagement and Community Development services to the LGA.

In Nahiack, outdoor seating was provided at the public hall, so that older people who have attended an activity or social function at the hall can rest (under shelter) while awaiting carers or family to pick them up from the hall.

The Public Halls Officer has worked with and on behalf of the various Hall Committees (exclusively comprising older residents) applying for external funding to enhance the facilities at the halls, which in turn enhances residents' experiences in using those halls.

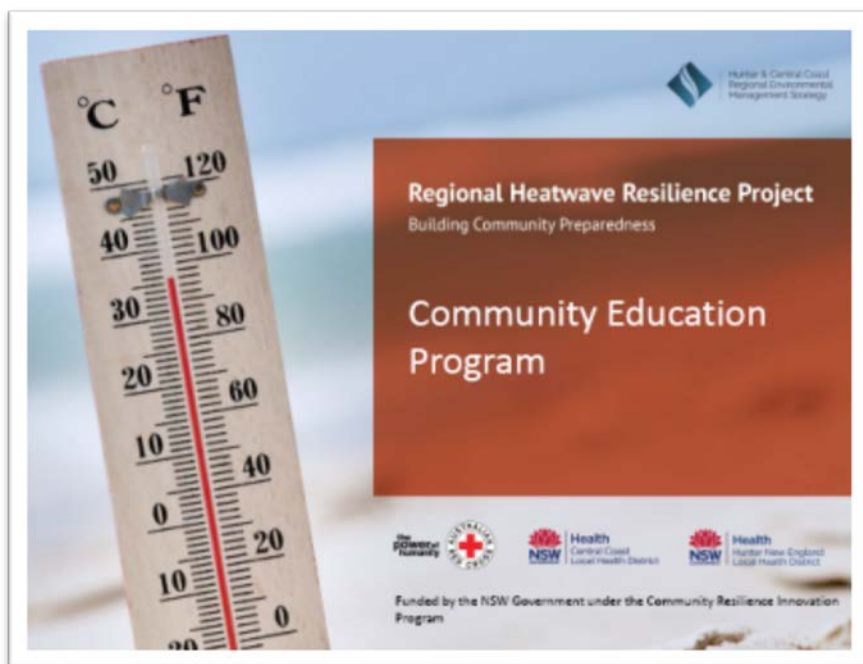
External funding was sought during 2015 for an event across the LGA to celebrate Seniors Week 2016. We are still awaiting the outcome of that application.

In addition, funding applications were lodged for two other projects that would enhance the age-friendliness of the area. One was to develop an accessibility toolkit for local businesses, to assist with developing those businesses to become more age friendly (and more accessible for people with disabilities generally). The project covers website, printed material, physical environment, and training of staff to recognise when customers might have dementia, or have vision or hearing problems, and to respond accordingly.

The second project is somewhat experimental, and will not be measurable for some years - to run a workshop for local architects and designers to become accredited in Livable Housing™ design. They would then become the advocates to young families and older people, and developers who are building new homes/apartment complexes, etc, to encourage ageing in place by building the structure correctly in the first place, so that as additional features are required (grab rails etc), they can easily be installed without any retrofitting. We propose that it will be relatively easy to ascertain the success of 'selling' this concept - those professional who Council has trained in these guidelines can report back on the number of clients who agree to implement the principles into their designs, but measuring how or if this has enabled people to successfully age in place in the future will be hard to measure. At the time of writing this report, the outcome of those two funding applications was still unknown.

Council staff members also worked closely with the Hunter Councils organisation (a stand-alone entity with members comprising 14 of the Councils in the Hunter Region of New South Wales) on a Government-funded Heatwave Resilience project. The project aims to build community preparedness to heatwaves. Heatwaves are becoming more frequent and more intense, and kill more Australians than any other natural disasters. They place significant stress on emergency services and infrastructure, but they appear to be off everyone's radar.

People at risk include the elderly, very young, people with disabilities and people with pre-existing medical conditions. Following participation in a workshop to identify the issues, the Community Services section of Council has been engaged in a number of education sessions to raise awareness of the risk of heatwave, and provide some simple, practical actions to help plan for these events. Education sessions have been held with local service providers, aged care facilities, local health committee and Council's own Ageing and Disability Services section. The next phase of the project is the development of a Heatwave Communications Framework, so that when a heatwave is forecast, a chain of events is actioned, to ensure that vulnerable people in our community receive the support and assistance required to survive these events.



Plans commenced in 2015 to work in partnership with Alzheimer's Australia - to promote Great Lakes as a Dementia-friendly area. This partnership also includes the Great Lakes Local Member of Parliament, and Council's Ageing & Disability Services section. Stage one of the project is a public meeting to raise awareness of memory loss and promote 'healthy brain' activities in an effort to prevent the onset of dementia-related illness. Council and the Local Member have been working on an invitation list that includes key community members and groups (police, fire, local clubs, social groups, etc) to ensure that the message is widely spread, and that it is heard by people and groups that will continue the momentum of the project. The first public meeting is scheduled for February 2016.



In November 2015, the Draft Hunter Regional Plan was released by the NSW Government Department of Planning & Environment, and placed on exhibition for comment. There is concern that the document focused heavily on the energy industry and its potential impacts on the region going forward. The big issue of an ageing population received only a passing mention, but it seemed that the best planning the Strategy put forward to cope with this 'problem' was to ensure that there were sufficient cemeteries and crematoria to cope. There was no mention at all on the impact of an ageing population in infrastructure design, service delivery, transport and health needs. Whilst there was some mention of improving planning for housing services, there was no mention of adaptive housing, affordable housing or aged-service planning. Nor was there any mention of planning to prevent chronic disease. The issue of obesity is huge for this region. While it received a passing mention, there was no mention of how that would impact on health and allied services, and no mention of improving walking and cycle ways, or outdoor exercise stations across the region to reinforce the preventative health message and promote active ageing. Emergency planning was absent - this region is vulnerable to bush fires, floods and storms. There appears to be no coordinated planning for emergency response across the region. Council's Community Engagement Officer and Community Development Coordinator spent considerable time reviewing the document and providing input to Council's overall response to the draft document, to ensure that planning for older people received some attention.

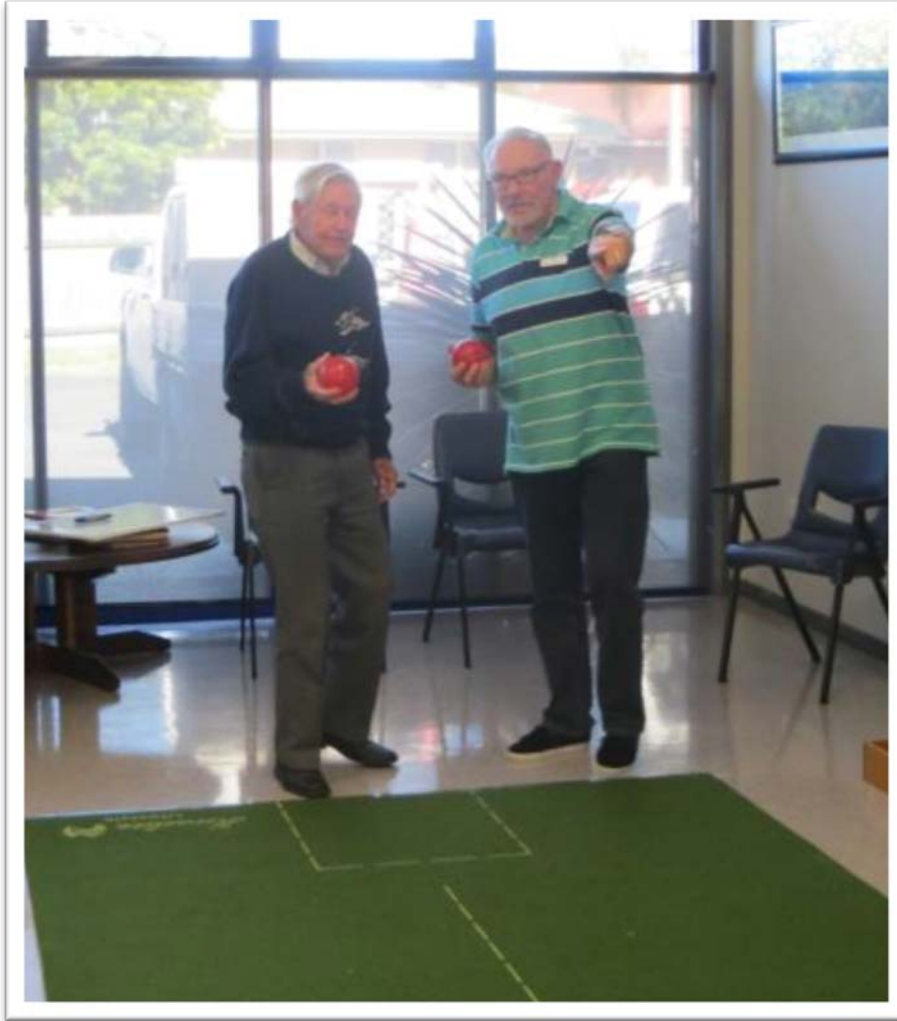
Ageing & Disabilities Services

Council's Ageing & Disability Services provide support and social activities for frail older people in the Great Lakes, and people with disabilities. Services range from social outings to case management of people with complex needs, and assistance with shopping and housework to help older people age in place. The service has been operating services under Council for 20 years and it's budget is now over \$3 million pa.

2015 was a year of uncertainty for this section with Federal Government-driven changes to the way this industry operates, requiring them to be competitive in the future. As a result a great deal of time was devoted to rebranding and marketing.

However, the section also managed to deliver some significant projects which have improved the age-friendliness of our area.

Council is grateful for the strong contribution of a group of 95 volunteers, 90% of whom are aged over 50. These energetic volunteers perform a range of activities, from one-on-one assistance (eg taking a frail older person out shopping), to group sessions (such as helping out with activities for the group of older people with dementia).



Ageing & Disability volunteer Alan Twemlow (right) and client Bill Walshe (left) discussing the finer points of lawn bowls

External funding was received for a Healthy Ageing Carers project. 2015 was year one of this 3-year project to assist ageing carers to remain in their caring role, by providing assistance and support.

Under the project, occupational therapists assess the carer by observing them in their caring role in the home. A report and recommendations are provided to Ageing & Disability Services staff who then talk to the carer and develop a care plan. The plan includes actions like exercise, stress relief, linking to other services, purchase of equipment (eg aids for lifting), and arrangement of home modifications.

This section has been involved in the already-mentioned planning for the Great Lakes to become a Dementia-friendly community

Planning is well advanced for January 2016 - when the section will hold a 'Together Day' - an expo-type event to showcase Council's services, but also to provide resources for people who are ageing, people with disabilities and their carers. The event includes activities, morning tea, guest speakers and a fashion parade. The aim of the event is to promote togetherness, inclusiveness and community spirit.



Volunteer Teila Bulmer assisting client Gwen Cook to use assistive technology taking digital photos of the library

The Coordinator of Ageing & Disability Services has been part of a panel of presenters appearing on local radio fortnightly to promote healthy lifestyle programs aimed at older people. Topics covered include dementia, respite services, living with a disability, vision, physiotherapy, and changes to the Federal Government's MyAgedCare social service.

Great Lakes Library

The Library sourced funding through PATCE (Productive Ageing Through Community Engagement), to train people aged over 60 to become literacy tutors. These tutors are now available to help people of all ages in the community on a one-on-one basis with literacy problems. Some tutors are in great demand by local schools to work with young people.

Other tutors have decided they would prefer to work with adults, and a number of older people (tutors and non-tutors) have been engaged in the Better Reading, Better Communities committee, which seeks to promote better reading in the community. Members of this committee are generally older people with a passion for literacy.

The committee has come up with a number of novel ways to reach people who need assistance with their literacy, including from offering a service to assist people with filling in forms, homework help for school children, and helping older people tell their stories. Members have also recognised a need for residents in nursing homes to be read to, and volunteers visit nursing homes regularly to read newspapers and fiction to the residents. This service has been extremely well received, and the volunteers are in great demand.



Literacy tutor Maggie, assisting Gabrielle in the Storytelling program

Whilst this project was started prior to Council's acceptance as a member of the World Health Organisation Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities, the momentum of the project has continued through 2015. Two more groups of older people have been trained as tutors during the year, including a number of Aboriginal Elders to work specifically within the Aboriginal community, and a new on-line version of the training was launched for potential tutors in the Tea Gardens Hawks Nest area.

These older members of our community who are trained up as literacy tutors are in demand by a range of residents, which has the double benefits of the 'student' receiving assistance, and the tutor being engaged in meaningful volunteer work, and in many cases engaging in inter-generational activities.

A number of older people volunteer at the library after school hours during school terms to help students with homework. These volunteers are a mixture of trained tutors and non-trained older people (some of whom are retired school teachers). This homework help program is very popular, and is another program that promotes meaningful intergenerational interaction.

The Library has over 140 volunteers, 95% of which are aged over 50, who assist with library functions (processing books, replacing books on shelves, etc), and of course the Friends of Great Lakes Library ladies (FOGLLS) (all older residents) who provide the catering for all the events hosted by the library, and conduct fund-raising activities for the library.



A homework help session in progress at Forster library

The clientele of the Great Lakes Library Service reflects the demographics of the Great Lakes area - with a high proportion of older members and users. As a result the Library has tailored its services to meet the demands of that demographic. The Library offers a home-lending service to frail older people who find it difficult to get out to the library - whereby a volunteer visits those clients weekly, with a selection of appropriate books. The Library also has the highest proportion per capita of large-print books and talking books in NSW.

With reference to the previously-mentioned Heatwave Project, the library has also volunteered to be marketed as a 'cool spot' during heatwaves - enabling older people to spend time in the air-conditioned space during heatwave conditions.

Community Reference Group

Given the large size of the Great Lakes LGA, it is just too problematic to host one single committee meeting. No matter where the meeting is held, a large number of members will be required to travel up to an hour-and-a half each way to attend the meeting. Being a rural area, public transport is pretty much non-existent in the Great Lakes. We do not have a rail line running through our area, and bus transport within towns is scanty, and pretty much non-existent between towns. Those older people who have no drivers' licence, or a restricted licence (ie limited to driving within a radius of 10Km of their home) are therefore automatically excluded from a meeting which requires travel, unless they can prevail upon a family member or friend to drive them to the meeting venue, wait until the meeting is over, and drive them home again.

A solution to this problem was to establish a Community Reference Group. While the group is still being promoted and is growing slowly, we now have 47 members. We do not restrict the age of the members, but as it turns out 43 of the 47 members are aged over 50. Thirty-one members have expressed an interest in Ageing, and these are therefore, our 'committee' members. We have consulted with them by email, phone and post, during the year on a number of issues - seniors' week activities, commenting on the draft Ageing Strategy, arts and culture, and local community plans that are currently being developed. They understand that they are free to contact us at any time on issues that they are concerned about, or may

be of interest to us, thus we have an ongoing, effective two-way communication process in place.

We hope during 2016 to be able to convene a number of 'local' meetings of these members so that we get to know them on a face-to-face basis, and this will enable us to focus on issues or areas of interest to those specific smaller communities.

Summary

Great Lakes Council is pleased with progress during 2015 to become more age friendly. Since the adoption of Council's Active Ageing Strategy at the end of 2014, staff closely involved in the development of that strategy have worked with other staff to change the way we think, so that consideration of older people is a core component of everything we do.

We are looking forward to continuing these works during 2016 to continue our efforts to become an age-friendly community.