

Dr Sarah Palmer
Principal Research Officer
The Community Development and Justice Standing Committee
Legislative Assembly Committee Office
Level 1
11 Harvest Terrace
West Perth WA 6005

27 June 2014

Dear Dr Palmer,

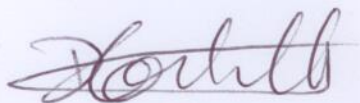
Re: Inquiry into the policy implications of an ageing community

I write to thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important community issue for Western Australia.

Please find attached ICCWA's submission on the Inquiry into the policy implications of an ageing community. I would also like the opportunity to appear before the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee to present ICCWA's case should the committee wish us to do so.

Should you require further information in relation to the attached submission please contact Michael Atkinson, Operations Manager, ICCWA matkinson@iccwa.org.au or 9420 7212.

Yours sincerely



Deborah Costello
Chief Executive Officer
Injury Control Council of WA

Encl.

The Injury Control Council of WA submission on the inquiry into the policy implications of an ageing community

Introduction

The Injury Control Council of WA [ICCWA] is the peak not-for-profit organisation involved in injury prevention and community safety promotion in Western Australia. Advocating and collaborating with government agencies, community organisations and individuals to promote age-friendly communities and prevent injuries across the lifespan are top priorities for ICCWA.

Injury prevention and safety promotion is an ongoing priority for all Australians and is listed as one of the nine National Health Priority Areas within Australia. Often preventable, injury is a leading cause of hospitalisation and death in Australia. One of the major contributors to the injury burden arises from the management of injuries in older people that have resulted from falls¹.

ICCWA's vision is to be leaders in the promotion of safe and healthy communities by reducing the incidence, severity and effect of injuries through the promotion of safe and healthy communities. ICCWA does this through a variety of programs including Stay On Your Feet WA[®] Falls Prevention Program, Partnership and Sector Development Program and Road Trauma Support Service. Key features of these programs are presented below:

Stay On Your Feet WA[®] Falls Prevention program

- Impact focused, evidence based health promotion
- Cross-sector coordination and capacity building
- Strategic awareness-raising

Partnership and Sector Development Program

- Workforce Development
- Local Government engagement (focused on the WHO Safe Communities model)
- Community engagement and awareness raising

Road Trauma Support Service

¹ Fitzsimmons, P.R., et al., 2010. A readability assessment of online Parkinson's disease information. J R Coll Physicians Edinb, 40(4): p. 292-296.

- Information
- Peer support
- Specialised trauma and bereavement counselling, and
- Prevention education

ICCWA's submission is based on 21 years as the peak injury prevention and community safety agency and 13 years as a key player in the community sector delivering a variety of community engagement and falls prevention programs in Western Australia. ICCWA's comments are representative of our organisation which has knowledge and experience focussing on injury, health, community safety and specifically in relation to falls prevention.

With these factors in mind, please find below the response to the Inquiry into the policy implications of an ageing community.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SENIORS STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK 2012-2017 IN GUIDING POLICIES AND PROGRAMS TO CREATE AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE STATE

SUMMARY

Overall, the document proposes a strong framework for creating age friendly communities that can be delivered across many sectors. ICCWA supports many elements of the Seniors Strategic Planning Framework 2012-2017 [SSPF] although key aspects we would like to emphasise and support moving forward are:

1. Promoting health and wellbeing: "Prevention is better than cure"

- *Where to next*
 - encouraging healthy and active lifestyles across the life-span
 - supporting people to maintain their independence
 - building social connections and community participation
- *What will help*
 - promoting healthy eating and physical activity at all ages
 - ongoing education about the risks of smoking and harmful levels of alcohol use
 - preventive health measures to reduce the risk and impact of chronic disease and injury
 - initiatives to maintain physical functioning and protect against falls and other injuries
 - encouraging healthy and active lifestyles across the life-span

- continued expansion of the range of affordable recreational, cultural and creative pursuits available through discounts linked to the WA Seniors Card
- continued support for seniors participation in sport and recreational activities designed to meet the unique needs of seniors
- support for and engagement with carers
- promotion and adoption of Universal Design Principles all types of property development

2. Access to essential services; "What, when and where"

- *Where to next:*
 - Continuing to improve access to health, housing and transport services particularly in regional areas
 - Building partnerships with the community sector to provide community services that are responsive, flexible and innovative
- *What will help:*
 - *Health*
 - Community partnerships to reduce demand on hospital services, such as triaging alternatives, community based care and aged care alternatives
 - Prioritisation of flexible and affordable training for staff in health, aged and community care, particularly in regional areas
 - Initiatives to support a bilingual and multicultural aged care workforce
 - easy access to affordable primary health care services
 - *Transport*
 - Public transport fleet upgrades and expansion to further improve accessibility
 - Initiatives to support older people to continue to drive safely and to support the transition from self-driving to other options when required

3. Economic security and protection

- *Where to next:*
 - Continuing to challenge negative stereotypes about the ageing population
- *What will help:*
 - Concession and subsidy schemes to support seniors who are financially vulnerable
 - community networks to reduce social isolation

Suggestions for improvement

ICCWA believes there are some aspects in which the SSPF could increase its effectiveness in guiding policies and programs to create age-friendly communities throughout the State; these are as follows:

- i. Increased focus on implementation
- ii. Inclusion of measurement indicators
- iii. Ongoing engagement of seniors
- iv. Greater emphasis working in partnership
- v. Recognition of other related WA strategies and programs
- vi. Inclusion of reference to informing documents such as World Health Organisation (WHO)'s Active aging: a policy framework and WHO's Global age friendly cities: a guide and Universal Design Principles
- vii. Greater emphasis on regional access

REASONING AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Promoting health and wellbeing: "Prevention is better than cure"

Focus on prevention of injuries and disease

The SSPF's endorsement of the importance of preventative health is welcomed especially the inclusion of alcohol use which is particularly relevant to injury and falls. ICCWA supports these recommendations given that it is essential to address the underlying causes of preventable injury and disease in order to reduce the impact of disease and injury upon our community².

There are many positive changes that individuals and families can make, but if the environment in which they exist – where they live, work and play, interact and experience life – is not conducive to health, the impact on individual behaviours may be severely limited³.

Encouraging healthy and active lifestyles across the life-span

ICCWA and Stay On Your Feet WA[®] also support the recognition within the SSPF that planning for an age friendly WA also includes the promotion of health and wellbeing in younger age groups.

In order to create a robust and healthy population, a whole-of-life approach to education and awareness raising is needed. The consistent delivery of healthy lifestyle messages to the

² Department of Health, Western Australia, 2012. WA Health Promotion Strategic Framework 2012–2016. Perth: Department of Health, Western Australia.

³ National Preventative Health Taskforce, 2009. Australia: the healthiest country by 2020. National Preventative Health Strategy - the roadmap for action. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

general population across the lifespan will help to normalise these behaviours. This will ensure that people are empowered and educated at a time when they are well positioned to adopt positive lifestyle-related behaviours that optimise bone health as well as muscle strength and balance⁴.

Supporting people to maintain their independence

ICCWA and Stay On Your Feet WA[®] support the recognition within the SSPF that continued support can be beneficial to help individuals maintain their independence. Sedentary behaviour and impaired physical capacities are recognised as significant risk factors for falls in seniors⁴. Overall physical inactivity is responsible for 6% of the total burden of disease and injury in WA⁵. A number of factors recognised within SSPF would address barriers for physical activity including the availability of a range of sport and recreational pursuits, flexible and affordable training for service deliverers, concessions and subsidies, the availability of public transport and the availability of language services and cultural training.

Building social connections and community participation

ICCWA and Stay On Your Feet WA[®] recognise that social connectedness should be considered when forming a framework for age-friendly communities especially in regards to community safety and falls risk. Factors such as fear of falling, social isolation and reduced activity levels can profoundly affect function and quality of life; and in doing so can increase the risk of seriously harmful falls⁶.

2. Access to essential services: "What, when and where"

ICCWA and Road Trauma Support WA supports the recommendations towards public transport and safe driving and transition initiatives from self-driving, given that "persons aged 60 years and over made up 13% of all persons killed or seriously injured" and of those, 60% were the drivers in those road traumas⁷

3. Economic security and protection

See comments above within '*Supporting people to maintain their independence*'

⁴ Department of Health, Western Australia, 2014. Falls prevention model of care. Perth: Department of Health, Western Australia.

⁵ Hoad, V., Somerford, P., Katzenellenbogen, J., 2006. The burden of disease and injury attributed to preventable risks to health in Western Australia. Perth: Department of Health, Western Australia cited in Department of Health, Western Australia, 2014. Falls prevention model of care. Perth: Department of Health, Western Australia.

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008. Population Projections 2006 to 2101. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

⁷ Bramwell, J., Hill, D.L., Thompson, P.E., for Office of Road Safety, 2012. Reported Road Crashes in Western Australia in 2012: Focus on regions. Perth: Office of Road Safety, Western Australia.

Suggestions for improvement:

i. Increased focus on implementation

An Age-friendly WA: The Seniors Strategic Planning Framework 2012-2017 (SSPF) closely aligns to ICCWA's core values:

- Evidence
- Innovation
- Diversity
- Building Capacity
- Working with others

In ICCWA's most recent successful funding application for the State wide delivery of the Falls Prevention Program SSPF was utilised and referenced as a policy document that would influence the delivery of the program.

The SSPF provides an overarching document that addresses complex ideas and distils them into key themes and strategies. As an organisation that is solution focused, ICCWA would like to see that in an effort to ensuring that the strategies are implemented, a complementary 'implementation guide' that is aimed at a variety of audiences is created. The implementation guide should focus on ensuring recommended services and infrastructure are localised depending on the need of that community.

ii. Inclusion of measurement indicators

Following on from the need for an 'implementation guide', evidence and measurement indicators are key to understanding the effectiveness of a framework. Integrating measurement indicators into the framework would assist with this.

iii. Ongoing Engagement of Seniors

The framework contains reference to important values such as respect, inclusion, seniors involvement and contribution. It is suggested that this goes one step further and that people should have the right to self-determine – "for seniors by seniors" – and that the framework needs to be underpinned by ongoing input from seniors. An example of this is that the reference in 'welcoming and well-planned communities' of the importance of embedding age friendly designs and consultation needs to be acknowledged in all areas not just related to infrastructure and social planning.

iv. Greater emphasis working on partnership

Community level engagement programs and partnerships are ICCWA's strengths and this is encouraged as best practice throughout the injury prevention sector. An emphasis on working in partnership would also be beneficial within SSPF.

The SSPF widely discusses the government, not for profit and community sectors. Including the private sector in policies such as SSPF needs to become part of ongoing practice in such documents. The Government of Western Australia, Department of Finances "Delivering Community Services in Partnership" policy which states: This Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy goes one step further than the previous policy by putting the interests of citizens at the centre of the relationship between the public and community sectors, and challenges both sectors to redefine the way they engage in the planning, design and delivery of human services.

v. Inclusion of other WA strategies and programs

Although many valuable strategies and programs are mentioned within the SSPF documents. ICCWA would encourage the inclusion of a number of other guiding documents, which include:

Falls Prevention Model of Care: Currently the SSPF does not make reference to the Falls Prevention Model of Care (2014). The Falls Prevention Model of Care is a key document in guiding falls prevention and injury in WA which aims to articulate a best practice approach to reduce falls risk, fall incidents, and falls-related injuries. It aims to achieve this by ensuring individuals receive: The right care, at the right time, by the right team, in the right place, with the right resources⁴. Many of this Model of Care's principles are closely aligned with the SSPF

WA Indigenous policy documents (such as the frameworks developed by the office of Aboriginal Health): It is acknowledged that the Partnership with Close the Gap The National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap Indigenous Health Outcomes is stated within the SSPF although it is suggested that it would be beneficial to acknowledge state based policies.

Other Department of Health Western Australia Falls Networks Models of Care including:

- Diabetes
- Osteoporosis

Although these conditions are discussed as part of the Department of Health WA Chronic Health Conditions Framework 2011-2016 (a document mentioned as part of the SSPF) ideally these Models of Care would also be referenced.

vi. Inclusion of reference to informing documents such as World Health Organisation (WHO) – Active aging: a policy framework and WHO - Global age friendly cities: a guide and Universal Design Principles

While these documents have informed the development of the SSPF, they are not acknowledged or referenced within the Bibliography. Global age friendly cities also places a greater emphasis on the implementation so there is great benefit in making a transparent connection to both documents.

vii. Emphasis on regional access

ICCWA provides a State-wide service with Regional communities being a key focus in our programs now and into the future. To ensure equity of services and knowledge transfer, regional communities need to have a large emphasis in overarching framework document such as the SSPF especially in relation to issues such as:

- injury and falls prevention
- continued high rates of seniors living in regional WA

Compared to the State rate, the rates of female Accidental falls hospitalisations in the Wheatbelt, Pilbara, North Metro, Midwest and Kimberley areas were significantly greater for persons aged 60-85+ years⁸.

The age composition of Western Australian's population varies between regions. Projections for 2014 indicate that the Perth metropolitan area will have the highest proportion of people aged 60 years and over (36% of the population). This was closely followed by 35% in the Wheatbelt region and 24% in the Great Southern region. 2014 projections show that the Kimberley region has the highest proportion of older Aboriginal people, aged 45 and older (8% of the total population) followed by 2% of the population in both the Pilbara and Midwest regions⁹.

⁸ Epidemiology Branch, 2013. 'Accidental falls related hospitalisations by external causes in Health Regions areas for persons aged 60-85+ years'. Epidemiology Branch in collaboration with the Cooperative Research Centre for Spatial Information (CRC-SI). Generated using data from the WA Hospital Morbidity Data Collection. Accessed Wednesday, 9 October 2013.

⁹ Epidemiology Branch, 2013. 'Percentage of the predicted 2014 population who are defined as older adults within the targeted populations of the Falls Prevention Program', unpublished.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED IN WA.

ICCWA supports the use of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Safe Communities model and the Age Friendly Cities model when considering the extent to which age-friendly communities have been established in WA. The WHO Safe Communities Model is an effective method of a whole of population approach to disseminating injury prevention and sector development information to change behaviour. The program has been running internationally since 1989 and the concept is an evidence-based best practice model for addressing community safety issues at the local level. It incorporates both general health promotion concepts and strategies for grass-roots level participation. This model is one in which all sectors of the community work together in a coordinated and collaborative way, forming partnerships to promote safety, manage risk, increase the overall safety of all its members and reduce the fear of harm.¹⁰

The key feature is the creation of local infrastructure (i.e. coalition of community business, government and non-government leaders) that combines their resources and interests to address local concerns about injuries, road crashes, anti-social behaviour and crime in a co-ordinated and sustainable manner¹⁰. Local Government is ideally placed to lead in this approach and there are many successful examples both in Australia and Internationally. Essential themes of the model are to reduce injury and promote safety and well-being for all citizens in a community, including for seniors.

ICCWA will be utilising the Safe Communities Model to develop new partnerships and build capacity for stakeholders and the community to collaborate. There are currently 319 Safe Communities worldwide including several in Australia. Monash University is expected to become a Safe Community in 2014 and the City of Melbourne has been redesignated this year¹¹. ICCWA is currently working with the City of Melville to obtain their Safe Communities accreditation and will be supporting additional local governments into the future.

The Age Friendly Cities model helps cities see themselves from the perspective of older people, in order to identify where and how they can become more age-friendly. It considers the advantages and barriers that older people experience for every area of city life. A checklist of core age-friendly features is provided as a tool for a city's self-assessment and a map to chart progress. The key principle is to involve older people as full partners at all stages. In assessing the city's strengths and gaps, older people describe how the checklist of features matches their own experiences, provide

¹⁰ Australian Safe Communities Foundation, 2013. Becoming a Safe Community. Australian Safe Communities Foundation. [Online]. <http://www.safecommunities.net.au/index.php/becoming-a-safe-community>.

¹¹ Karolinska Institutet, . Indicators for International Safe Communities. WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion. [Online] 26 June 2014. http://www.ki.se/csp/who_safe_communities_network_en.html

suggestions for change and may participate in implementing improvement projects. This bottom-up approach provides the essential information to be distilled and analysed by decision-makers in developing or adapting interventions and policies. In the follow-up stages of “age-friendly” local action, it is imperative that older people continue to be involved in monitoring the city’s progress and acting as age-friendly city advocates and advisers.

ICCWA welcomes the Department of Local Government and Communities encouragement and support for local government authorities (LGA) to adopt the World Health Organisation’s Age-friendly Communities model. ICCWA is encouraged by the work that has already happened within this space including the pilot project in four LGAs, and the grant provided to another 15 LGA’s and the 2012 Forum. ICCWA are keen to work with and support activities to encourage the development of age friendly communities particularly from the perspective of the Stay On Your Feet WA® falls prevention program.