

# OLDER PERSONS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

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The Older Persons Consultative Committee (OPCC) has been appointed by the City of Port Phillip council to be its main advisory body on all issues affecting older residents living in the City of Port Phillip. Encompassing a wide range of backgrounds and views, the OPCC is accessible and engaged.

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## **ANNUAL REPORT January to December 2020**

### **Introduction**

This is the Annual Report of the City of Port Phillip Older Persons Consultative Committee (OPCC). The report covers the activities of the Committee for the period January to December 2020.

2020 has been a particularly difficult year for the OPCC due to the death of two extremely valued and respected members, Lesley Greagg and Alex Njoo, and the resignation of long-term Committee member Dr Jane Sims. The OPCC would like to acknowledge their valuable contributions and service which they gave freely to Council and older residents of the City of Port Phillip.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on the activities of the OPCC and the way we have conducted our meetings. The Committee has stayed informed on how the pandemic has affected older residents in Port Phillip and has kept Council updated.

In June 2020 Council endorsed the OPCC to co-opt four new members to the Committee, this resulted in three new members joining the Committee in August.

### **OPCC Terms of Reference and Objectives**

The Committee was established in 2000 as an outcome of the International Year of the Older Person, celebrated in 1999.

The stated purpose of the OPCC:

The Older Persons Consultative Committee will provide advice to Council and Council officers about policies, plans and services affecting older people.

- To be the peak advisory and advocacy body on issues affecting the wellbeing of older people (55+) within the Port Phillip municipality.
- To provide advice to Council and its officers on policies, plans and services that affect older people and their interests.
- To advocate to the Community and Council, on behalf of older people, reflecting the United Nations principles of independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment and dignity.
- To connect with other community advisory structures of Council.
- To liaise with other organisations and networks who have a direct interest in older persons in the City of Port Phillip.

## 2020 Membership

Membership of the OPCC includes:

<b>Members</b>	<b>Location</b>
Freda Erlich	St Kilda
Betty Knight	Albert Park
Coralie Ling	St Kilda
Brigid McCoppin	Albert Park
Sue McGowan	Port Melbourne
Liz Robson	Port Melbourne
Jose Simsa	Middle Park
Georgina Tsolidis	Elwood
<b>Co-opted Members</b>	
Nicholas Green (August 2020)	Middle Park
Ian MacDonald (August 2020)	St Kilda
Sheila Quairney (August 2020)	Port Melbourne

<b>Past Members</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Term of membership</b>
Lesley Greagg Deceased June 2020	Elwood	Founding Member – January 2000 to June 2020
Alex Njoo Deceased December 2020	St Kilda	August 2014 to August 2020
Dr Jane Sims	St Kilda	March 2011 to March 2020

<b>Office Bearers</b>	<b>Position</b>
Jose Simsa	Chairperson (January to September)
Jane Sims	Deputy Chair (January to March)
Freda Erlich	Deputy Chair (April to September)
Freda Erlich	Acting Chair (October to December)
Coralie Ling	Acting Deputy Chair (October to December)

<b>Council Representative</b>	
Cr Dick Gross	Councillor Representative, January 2020 – September 2020
Cr Peter Martin	Councillor Representative, December 2020

<b>Council Officer/s</b>	<b>Position</b>
Laura Cattapan	Coordinator Grants & Community Building
Sherridan Green	Community Development & Liaison Officer

### Past Members

St Kilda resident **Dr Jane Sims** resigned from the OPCC in March 2020. Jane had been an active member of the OPCC since March 2011 participating in several subcommittees and holding the positions of Chair and Deputy Chair during this time. As a Gerontologist Jane kept the Committee abreast of the key issues and needs of older persons more broadly and how this related to older residents in Port Phillip. This was particularly pertinent during the transition of Council's aged care services to the Commonwealth Home Support Program. Jane was a strong advocate for secure housing for older women and was instrumental in guiding the OPCC in the development of their annual Objectives and Action plan.

### Vale Lesley Greagg



Lesley Greagg was a long-term resident of Elwood and had been a member of the OPCC since its inception in 2000, attending her last meeting on 2 March 2020. Lesley's contribution to the OPCC and the Port Phillip community was extensive. Lesley was an active committee member regularly raising important issues during Committee meeting and at Council meetings, on behalf of older residents. Lesley's historic knowledge and insights enlightened the Committee on our achievements for older residents of Port Phillip over the past 20 years. Lesley also participated in many OPCC subcommittees and since 2003 was a member of Port Phillip Seniors Festival Subcommittee, initiating the Port Phillip Writes Writing Awards as part of the Festival in 2004. The awards, now in its 16th year, is a corner stone of the Festival program, with Lesley being the Awards ceremony MC for 15 years. Lesley also spent many long hours proofreading, organising the ceremony and awards.

### Vale Alex Njoo



Alex Njoo was a long-term resident of St Kilda and a member of the OPCC from August 2014 to August 2020. Alex Njoo was a highly valued member of the Committee. An impassioned advocate, with a strong base in social justice, Alex was a leading voice in the OPCC's consultation on Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area (FBURA), the St Kilda Triangle and South Melbourne Market. Alex represented the OPCC on both the FBURA and St Kilda Triangle Community Forums, where his commitment to the Age Friendly Cities Framework and expertise in planning and architecture played an important and influential role.

### OPCC Objectives and Plan January to December 2020

The OPCC 2020 Planning Working Group was established to develop the OPCC objectives and action plan for 2020. The session was held in the Training Room at the St Kilda Town Hall on Monday 6 January 2020. The Working Group was made up of the OPCC Chair, Deputy Chair and six members of the OPCC who nominated to participate. Council officers Mary McGorry Manager Diversity and Inclusion, Laura Cattapan Coordinator Access and Inclusion and Sherridan Green Community Development and Liaison Officer also attended to provide relevant information and administrative support.

The 2020 Objectives and Action Plan was developed within the context and aligned to the following documents:

- OPCC Terms of Reference – April 2017
- City of Port Phillip Council Plan 2017-27
- City of Port Phillip Health and Wellbeing Implementation strategy
- OPCC 2019 Objectives and Action Plan
- World Health Organisation (WHO) Age Friendly Cities (AFC) Framework

Seven objectives were identified and aligned to the Council Plan and AFC Framework, they included:

1. Advice and Advocacy: To represent and advocate for the interests of older residents of Port Phillip.
2. Communication and Information: To listen to and communicate with older Port Phillip residents.
3. Diversity: To ensure that the OPCC activities reflect the diversity of the older community.

4. Networking/Partnerships: To continue and further develop information exchange for networking and partnerships.
5. Sustainability, Climate Change: To consider the implications/impact of climate change for the ageing population of Port Phillip.
6. Physical Environment: To continue to promote the concept of Age Friendly Cities.
7. Governance: To ensure transparent, sustainable processes for the Committee.

The draft was presented for consultation at the 3 February 2020 OPCC meeting and endorsed by the Committee at the 2 March 2020 meeting.

Attachment 1.1 City of City of Port Phillip - Older Persons Consultative Committee Objectives and Action Plan January – December 2020



Older Persons  
Consultative Commit

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic many OPCC working groups ceased to meet and some actions and deliverables outlined in the 2020 Objectives and Action Plan were not achieved or postponed in hope that they will be able to be progressed in 2021.

## Meetings

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the OPCC monthly meetings schedule was disrupted. The Committee attempted to meet in person whenever possible though due to the COVID-19 restrictions we met mostly online via the WebEx platform and then later in the year by the Microsoft Teams platform. The quorum at each meeting was upheld.

A total of nine OPCC meetings were held:

- February and June – St Kilda Town Hall
- April and May - via WebEx
- June – St Kilda Town Hall and WebEx
- August, September and November – Microsoft Teams
- December - Cora Graves Centre

The OPCC members continued to consult on matters relevant to older people residing in the City of Port Phillip, particularly the impacts of COVID-19, and deliberated on specific Council matters concerning older people and the broader community.

Community trends relevant to Council were identified through OPCC meetings where reports were provided from OPCC representatives. The OPCC continued to maintain connections with relevant associations and participate in relevant networks and forums both within and external to Council.

OPCC members represented the following associations/networks and reported relevant activities at the OPCC monthly meetings:

- Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area (FBURA) Community Forum - Alex Njoo
- Council of the Ageing (COTA) Victoria - Betty Knight
- U3APP – Sheila Quairney
- Linking Neighbours Leadership Group - Lesley Greagg and then Sue McGowan
- Port Phillip Multifaith Network - Coralie Ling
- Port Phillip Multicultural Advisory Committee - Georgina Tsolidis
- Australian Association of Gerontology - Jane Sims
- Port Phillip Lions Club - Sue McGowan

OPCC members participated in the following forums/training:

- EveryAge Counts webinar, 'Beyond 2020 – What's ageism got to do with it?' – two OPCC member represented.
- Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, No Victorian Left Offline Roundtable – two OPCC members represented.

To progress the actions highlighted in the 2020 Objectives and Plan the following OPCC working groups and subcommittees that were still able to continue to meet during COVID-19 restrictions included:

- OPCC 2020 Planning Working Group
- OPCC Seniors Festival Steering Committee
- OPCC 21st Anniversary Working Group (previously titled 20th)

As part of the consultative role of the OPCC, Council Officers regularly sought advice and feedback on Council business relating to the needs, engagement and inclusion of older people. In turn the OPCC brought to the meetings feedback and issues were raised by the older residents in the community.

## **2020 Council business - OPCC consultations, feedback and information**

*Council's Draft Customer Services Charter Consultation, Customer Experience Lead Ruth Kimpton and Fiona Symmons Customer Experience Specialist (OPCC Meeting - February)*

Ruth advised that Council is developing a customer charter outlining a set of promises on the interaction of Council and how customers experience this. Ruth requested feedback from the committee on the draft set of promises documented. The OPCC gave considered and constructive feedback including querying why the word customer was used rather than community. How the charter would be communicated to the community and how Council will be made accountable. They asked for consideration to be made to include the word respect in the language of the charter and simplify the language. It was felt that the first sentence was negative '*changing the way we work*' which implies Council is currently not working correctly and requested that the first statement be more positive. They said also suggested that both parties', the provider and recipient, responsibilities be included. The OPCC would consider using the Charter when dealing with Council.

*Diversity & Inclusion Manager update, Mary McGorry (OPCC Meeting – February)*

Mary Reported that Council had received confirmation from the Commonwealth Government that the Regional Assessment Service contract had been extended until March 2021. Previously this service was due to cease in June 2020. Mary will be looking at developing a Council aged care policy which will come to the OPCC. Council is still receiving phone calls regarding very isolated older residents which are not referred to My Aged Care due to needing support to go through the process.

*Amendments to the Local Government Act, Cr Dick Gross (OPCC meeting – April & May)*

Cr Gross informed the OPCC of the impact on Council in relation to the changes to the Act. This included a return to single member wards, no attendance voting, and only postal votes. The current wards will stay in place for the 2020 election, however next election it will change back to single Councillor wards. Other changes will include new standards of behaviour for Councillors, an obligation for councils to consider the environment, the ability for councils to enter land contracts outside of the municipality, and a focus on accountability, community engagement and consultation.

*City of Port Phillip Public Toilet Plan correspondence, Kimberly Harrison Asset & Property Portfolio Manager (OPCC meeting – May)*

The OPCC asked to be provided with an update on the Public Toilet Plan and discussed the need for Council to prioritise cleaning and ensuring facilities are opened to the public. The condition of the South Melbourne Market toilets was also raised. The Committee will continue to advocate on these issues as part of their deliverables in 2021. Kimberley Harrison corresponded, providing an overview of the plan for both 2019/20 and 2020/21, highlighting planned upgrades and construction of facilities.

*OPCC correspondence on Draft Council Budget (OPCC Meeting – May)*

The OPCC raised the following issues and questions for consideration in the Council budget process:

- Improving street safety and amenities – streetlights, footpaths, outdoor seating.
- Housing and homelessness initiatives, particularly the impact on older women (recently reported to be as high as 55%).
- Aged Care Services - will Council continue to provide services and subsidies to the same level, or higher, as previous years?
- Provision of health and wellbeing opportunities for older people e.g. exercise programs, social inclusion projects such as the unique Linking Neighbours program, Seniors Festival, Library services.
- Continuing to mitigate the impact of Climate Change on older people.
- Providing accessible information for older people on services and amenities.

*Diversity & Inclusion Manager update, Mary McGorry (OPCC Meeting – May)*

Mary informed the OPCC that the Commonwealth Government have now announced that they are withdrawing the tendering out of the Regional Assessment Services (RAS). The Port Phillip RAS team will continue to work for Council until 22 June 2020 when the broader Aged Care Reforms are scheduled to be rolled out. Mary also informed the Committee that due to COVID-19 Council's Social Support Service has ceased operation out of the Cora Graves Centre and is conducting welfare checks and doing one on one visits with clients. The Community Bus is still in operation and practicing social distancing. Council's in-home aged care services were initially quiet, now are experiencing an influx of new clients due to lockdown.

*Diversity & Inclusion Manager update, Mary McGorry (OPCC Meeting – June)*

Mary informed the OPCC that Multicultural Seniors Groups are being provided with a free meal per week in replacement for the Meals subsidy, Port Phillip Community Group are providing food services for residents experiencing food insecurity, including people experiencing homelessness. Council has identified many more people who are very vulnerable due to the pandemic

*Maintenance and replacement of public lighting in Port Phillip, Brett McDonald Portfolio Owner - Clever City, Response (OPCC Meeting – August)*

Brett provided an overview of Council's role in monitoring and maintaining public lighting and that CitiPower is responsible for public lighting in the north of the municipality and United Energy (UE) in the South. Maintenance and renewal of public lighting is controlled by the electricity companies including whether they choose to use more environmentally, accessible and economically viable technology. The electricity companies often have different approaches to upgrading/replacing public lighting. UE does not tend to replace the lights until they fail. Council's role is to conduct site visits and provide the company with information about faults and negotiate with the companies to have issues resolved. The OPCC decided they would draft a letter to Council to advocate to the Essential Services Commission regarding the current inadequacy of the Public Lighting Code and its impact on older residents. To be progressed in 2021.

*Diversity Officer portfolio and consultation on the Future Ready Multicultural Seniors Review, Ewa Zysk Diversity Officer (OPCC Meeting – August)*

Ewa provided an overview of her diversity portfolio, and context on how Council has supported our local multicultural seniors' groups. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Council has been mapping vulnerable communities, and has been in contact with services, local groups and individuals weekly. As part of the process Ewa has raised awareness of some of the issues and challenges faced by our multicultural communities. This includes our new and emerging communities. Ewa provided a summary of the Future Ready review including demographics and the profile of local senior's groups. She outlined the public value and future challenges for these groups and the recommendations that came out of the review. The OPCC agreed to endorse the recommendations.

*Council Organisational Restructure – Change of Department and Position, Laura Cattapan Coordinator Grants & Community Building (OPCC Meeting – September)*

Laura reported that as an outcome the Council budget process there has been an organisational restructure. This resulted in five organisational Divisions being collapsed into four. Both Laura and Sherridan Green Community Development & Liaison Officer were now members of a new Department, Community Building and Inclusion, and Laura's role has been changed to Coordinator Grants and Community Building. The OPCC is still part of Laura's remit. The new Department Manager is Katrina Terjung who will be invited to attend future OPCC meetings.

*Outcome of OPCC representative's meeting with Port Phillip Green House Programs Officer, Brett Hedger, November 2020*

Two members of the OPCC, Coordinator Grants & Community Building and Community Development & Liaison Officer met with Brett Hedger. The meeting provided an opportunity for the OPCC to explore further options including what other local council are doing and whether they had Climate Emergency Plans. The OPCC decided that this would be considered a priority for their 2021 workplan.

### **OPCC informing Council on matters affecting older residents**

*Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre (MSAC), MSAC CEO (email correspondence, OPCC Meeting – February 2020)*

OPCC members were concerned about MSAC's attitude towards older users, particularly at their front desk. This feedback was provided to the MSAC CEO by the 2019 OPCC Chair. 2019 Chair received correspondence from the MSAC CEO in response, however the Committee did not feel that the access and inclusion issues had been addressed. The Coordinator Access & Inclusion advised that given MSAC was not a Council facility that this issue would need to be pursued independently and that Council would provide support where possible. (OPCC Meeting – February & March)

*Victorian Active Ageing Project (VAAP) – Assistant Director, Seniors Programs and Participation, Department Health & Human Services (email correspondence, OPCC Meeting – February 2020)*

The Assistant Director provided a response to the OPCC Chairs correspondence advocating for the continuation of the Victorian Active Ageing Partnership project. The Committee felt the response was a standard response and would like to have a representative at the round table on the future direction on active ageing in Victoria. (OPCC Meeting – February)

*OPCC actions and correspondence regarding Fitzroy Street and Placemaking Team (OPCC Meeting – March & November)*

In 2019 the OPCC raised concerns to Council regarding the treatment of homeless people on and the removal of seating in Fitzroy Street. The Chair and Deputy Chair had corresponded with Councillors and Council Officers several times in relation to this issue. OPCC members represented the Committee on various Fitzroy Street community consultation processes and the Deputy Chair attended a Street audit. The Chair and Deputy Chair felt that the OPCC had been engaging with Council regarding Fitzroy Street for some time and that there had not been any progress or action, particularly with reinstalling public seating. The OPCC Deputy Chair subsequently resigned from the OPCC. The issue of homelessness in Fitzroy Street was again raised in the November OPCC meeting with concern around the treatment of homeless people on the Street. It was described as disturbing given the impact of homelessness on older people and women. The Committee agreed to continue to pursue this issue as a 2021 priority.

*Public lighting in Port Phillip (OPCC Meeting – March to September)*

The issue of public lighting was initially raised by a member of the OPCC in relation to the corner of Barkly and Dickens Streets in Elwood. Through this issue the OPCC were informed on how public lighting is maintained and replaced and that Council only have a statutory relationship regarding lighting. Maintenance is managed by the electricity provider however; Council pays for the actual lights. The OPCC were keen to support Council to advocate for a more equitable and sustainable process for the maintenance and replacement of public lighting in Port Phillip, particularly in Elwood and St Kilda. The OPCC will provide correspondence to Council in 2021 in relation to this matter.

*The impact of COVID-19 on older people in Port Phillip (OPCC Meeting – April to December)*

This was a regular item on the OPCC agenda. The OPCC supported Council's vulnerable person's framework mapping. The Committee informed Council of community concerns and awareness of any gaps in services which could potentially make older residents more vulnerable during the COVID-19 lockdown and restrictions. The OPCC raised social isolation, lack of digital literacy and ageism in the media as issues older residents were experiencing. They also raised concerns about Diversity going online as there are many older residents who are not online, and even if they are online may not have the technology skills to access the newsletter. Other concerns raised by individual members during meetings included that COVID-19 has exposed the community's ethics of human life and ageing, and the value of human life, that there is a perception that older people matter less as they have lived their life. One member of the committee expressed that this had not been their experience.

*Hiring of Council Community Facilities (OPCC Meeting – December)*

It was raised that due to the COVID-19 pandemic Council has implemented a new process and cost for hiring community facilities. This has potential to create barriers for older people to remain socially connected, especially if they are unable to afford or access these facilities. The OPCC agreed to address this issue in 2021.



## **OPCC activities and engagement with external groups and organisations**

*Shrine to Sea Project Consultation, Fran Horsley Project Manager Metro Open Space Strategy, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)*

Fran outlined that DELWP are working very closely with Council on the Shrine to Sea project and provided the committee with some context about the project, this included that it was announced in the 2018 state budget with the following objectives:

1. Create a contemporary boulevard.
2. Provide walking and cycling pathways.
3. Incorporate connections of local stories (herstory).
4. Focus on current open space in this corridor and the area more broadly including usable open space, so the project has greater clarity over how the spaces are currently being used i.e. Northern Boundary of Albert Park.

Fran outlined the Project's community engagement process with the first stage being consulting with the Community to gauge their opinions and aspirations for the project. She asked the committee what the best way is to stay connected and consult with older residents during the project. The OPCC's responses included engagement with local older persons community groups including Council's Linking Neighbours Program, University of the Third Age Port Phillip (U3APP), Multicultural seniors' groups through the Port Phillip's Multicultural Advisory Committee. It was also proposed that Fran could present at one of U3APP's monthly forums. Other suggestions included engaging with Port Melbourne Historical Society who would be a great source of information, and Trades Hall regarding information on the history of the wharf and the wharfies. The OPCC support the Project's objectives as they reflect the amenity and safety that the committee advocate for on behalf of older people. They will continue to participate in the Project's ongoing consultation process.

*Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, No Victorian Left Offline Roundtable, 10 August 2020*

Two OPCC members participated in the Roundtable. They reported the event was well attended and focused on the impact of COVID-19. They advocated for the many older people who are currently not online. To facilitate older people coming online would require one on one training sessions.

*EveryAge Counts webinar, 'Beyond 2020 – What's ageism got to do with it?' - December 2020*

One OPCC member participated in the webinar and encouraged all OPCC members to view it. Some of the messaging that came out of the webinar included that older people are an asset to the society in the context of economic development i.e. create needs that provide jobs for working age people. COVID-19 has accentuated ageism, this has been evident in residential care.

## **OPCC Forums, Events and related programs**

*Linking Neighbours Seniors Register (regular item on the OPCC meeting agenda)*

Due to the impact of COVID-19 the OPCC raised that social inclusion/connection for older residents needed to be a priority for Council and that Council's Linking Neighbours Program (LNP) has been an extremely valuable program for older residents during the restrictions and recovery. During this period LNP members were sent three letters providing up to date information about the restrictions and support to keep them connected via phone, post and online, as well as information about other community groups and services. 65 members participated in texting images, and the Community Development & Liaison Officer was in contact with over 30 members per week via the phone and regularly emailing other members who had requested to be emailed.

### *The City of Port Phillip Seniors Festival October 2020.*

The City of Port Phillip Seniors Festival is held in October each year and recognises the valuable contribution older people have made and continue to make to our community. The 2020 Festival was guided by the OPCC Seniors Festival Steering Committee who assisted with shaping the festival's program and corporate events. Due to COVID-19 restrictions the 2020 Seniors Festival was reimagined with a range of events that residents could participate in by post, phone or online. To create a sense of community ownership of the Festival, each year, Council conducts a grants program which enables local services and community groups the opportunity to put on specific seniors' festival events. This year due to COVID-19 they were asked to re-imagine running an event online. Nine groups rose to the occasion and applied, resulting in a range of activities on offer from sing-a-longs, documentaries, webinars, to concerts with an amazing array of culture and talent. The Festival Program was posted out to over 1600 residents, promotional posters were displayed in local businesses, on the Community Bus and billboard display on the St Kilda Town Hall lawn. This year Council held 19 events with over 2900 people participating. Residents are still able to access some online activities.

### **OPCC Promotion and Communication**

2020 OPCC promotion:

- OPCC Brochure distributed throughout the community including Town Halls, Community Centres and Libraries.
- OPCC featured in Port Phillip's 2020 Seniors Festival Program.

### **Acknowledgement**

The OPCC would like to acknowledge the support throughout the year of the Councillor nominated by Council to support the OPCC, Cr Dick Gross. The following formal acknowledgement was made to Cr Gross at his last OPCC meeting in September:

*The OPCC A/Chair thanked Cr Gross on behalf of the OPCC for his excellent contribution on the Committee during his term on Council. She thanked him for his energy and working with the OPCC to try and tackle the big issues for older residents including transport, housing, aged care services. Cr Gross was also acknowledged for raising the profile of the OPCC and ensuring the Committee's valued reputation with Councillors and the Organisation as a whole.*

This report was prepared by Laura Cattapan Coordinator Grants & Community Building and OPCC Chair Jose Simsa.

It was confirmed by the OPCC Committee at the 1 March OPCC meeting.

Jose Simsa  
OPCC Chair  
2020