



Older people

City of Port Phillip Health Profiles

Worldwide, people are living longer, bringing new opportunities for older people to take on a greater role in contributing to and nurturing their communities; and creating new challenges for the provision of social, political economic and health delivery systems that meet the needs of older people. Ageing affects people in different ways. Many older people experience good health and wellbeing as they age, while others experience declines in mental and physical capacities and require significant help from their families and communities.

Who lives in our municipality?

As of 2021:

- People aged 60 years and older make up 18 per cent of the resident population, compared to 20 per cent across Greater Melbourne. This is an increase from 16 per cent in 2016, where the percentage across Greater Melbourne was also lower at 19 per cent. For wider context, statewide, Victoria's population is ageing. In 2021 there were almost 1.5 million Victorians aged 60 years or older, representing 22 per cent of the total population. By 2046, that number is expected to increase around 60 per cent to more than 2.3 million Victorians, when 25 per cent of the population is anticipated to be 60 years or older (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, 2022).
- 44 per cent of residents aged 60 years and older were born overseas. The top 4 most common overseas birthplaces were Greece (5 per cent of the overseas population being born there), the United Kingdom (6 per cent), Italy (2 per cent) and New Zealand (2 per cent). Compared with Greater Melbourne (92 per cent), a higher proportion (74 per cent) speak only English at home. Excluding English, the most common languages spoken at home were Greek, Russian, Italian and Polish.
- People aged 60 years and older living in the City of Port Phillip were more likely to have a formal educational qualification (with 54 per cent having one) than their cohort across Greater Melbourne (41 per cent). This marked an increase from 2011, where 34.8 per cent of older Port Phillip residents (aged 60 years and above) had a formal educational qualification.
- 60 per cent of Port Phillip residents aged 60 years or older were not in the labour force, lower than the Greater Melbourne percentage of 63 per cent. 15 per cent were working full-time, 14 per cent were working part-time and 2 per cent were unemployed but looking for work.



- A higher proportion of Port Phillip residents aged over 60 years in lone households (34 per cent) compared to Greater Melbourne residents in this age category (27 per cent). Compared with Greater Melbourne, a higher proportion of people aged over 65 years are living in dwellings that are rented (21 per cent compared with 9 per cent).
- This group is significantly more likely to be living in medium or high-density housing compared to their Greater Melbourne counterparts (84.3 per cent vs. 23.4 per cent). 66.3 per cent were in households with an internet connection, in line with proportions in Greater Melbourne at 66.9 per cent.
- Of the approximately 11,600 residents aged 65 years and over, more than 5,000 (under half) are receiving the aged pension in the City of Port Phillip (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019-20).

Future forecasts:

- Current population forecasts predict that the percentage of people aged 60 years and older that make up the Port Phillip population will increase slightly from 18.4 per cent in 2021 to 18.9 per cent in 2026, with a larger jump to 20.4 per cent in 2041.

Please note – the above statistics have been gathered from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data, using the latest available information, as the ABS progressively releases its 2021 Census results (.id, 2023).

How are older people in our municipality tracking?

- In 2021, 2,359 people aged 60 and over (12 per cent of the resident population aged 60 and over) were recorded as needing help in one of three core activity areas: self-care, mobility, and communications. This is in line with the proportion for the Great Melbourne region of 13 per cent.
- A study commissioned by Dementia Victoria in 2017 estimated that 1,197 Port Phillip residents were living with **dementia** in 2016 and that this would increase more than threefold by 2050 (National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling, 2016).
- In Victoria in 2019, 10 per cent of people over 60 experienced **chronic loneliness** (Department of Health and Human Services, 2019). Living alone is a key risk factor for mental ill health. Whilst data on social connections and loneliness is limited, the City of Port Phillip has a high proportion of older people who live in lone households (35.1 per cent in Port Phillip compared with 24.4 per cent in Greater Melbourne) although this proportion has remained relatively stable over time.
- The relatively high proportion of **older people living in rented premises or social housing**, is a trend that requires monitoring (21.4 per cent are currently renting including 10.7 per cent in social housing vs. 10.7 per cent of Greater Melbourne residents aged 65 years and over or which 3 per cent are in social housing). In an uncertain economic climate particularly post COVID-19 restrictions, and with projected growth in the population of older people, there is potential for more older people to be at risk of losing access to adequate housing and economic disadvantage.



- **Elder abuse** is one of the worst manifestations of ageism and inequality in our society, and most commonly occurs within the family. A 2017 review of 52 studies in 28 countries from diverse regions found that in the year prior, 1 in 6 people (15.7%) aged 60 years and older were subjected to some form of abuse (World Health Organisation, 2022). The exact prevalence of elder abuse within Victoria is unknown, however it is believed to be greatly under-reported.

How do outcomes vary for different population groups?

- Overall in 2018, Australians aged 65 and over lost more than 2.1 million disability-adjusted life years due to premature death or living with a disease (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018).
- Older Australians contribute to a large share of the total burden of disease, which has been shown to increase with age. To put this in perspective, people aged 65-69 made up 5 per cent of the population but contributed to 9 per cent of the total burden, while people aged 70 and over made up 11 per cent of the population, but contributed to 35 per cent of the total burden.
- The disease burden is relatively evenly distributed between older (65 years and over) males and female, with males accounting for just over half (51 per cent) of the burden (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018).
- Indigenous Australians have a lower life expectancy than non-Indigenous Australians. Between 2015-17, the life expectancy of Indigenous men was 8.6 years lower than for non-Indigenous men, while it was 7.8 years lower for Indigenous women compared to non-Indigenous women. For this reason, the term “older person” encompasses Indigenous people aged over 50.
- Older people who are part of the LGBTIQ are at a higher risk of loneliness and less inclined to enter mainstream services because of concerns they will face discrimination. This can lead to poorer health outcomes (Commissioner for Senior Victorians, 2016)
- Older people have become more likely to undertake roles and responsibilities related to being a carer. Older carers are at a high risk of social isolation and loneliness. Additionally, older people make up 11.5 per cent of the resident volunteer population in Port Phillip.

Current impacts on older people?

- The COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose a threat to older people, as they can be particularly vulnerable to its effects and are more likely to become severely ill from contracting it. The functioning of residential and aged care facilities continues to be impacted, as they may lockdown if cases become present.
- For some older people, the pandemic has provided opportunities to move online and take advantage of connecting with families and services virtually. For others, the digital divide has been exacerbated, putting them at heightened risk of isolation.



- The recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety are still being rolled out via the Commonwealth Aged Care Reforms and it is uncertain how they have impacted the sector to date. Reviews and learnings from this process will likely inform significant changes to the lives of older people.

Why is supporting older people important for our community?

- People are living longer and the proportion of older people in the population is growing. The vitality of the local communities and economies are linking the extent to which older people's participation is fostered and encouraged.
- Older people have a right to participate and be included in society. The stories, experiences and wisdom of older people contributes to a civil society and can help build community values of inclusion, participation and respect.
- Many older people are active workers, helpers, carers, parents, and grandparents. Nearly 40 per cent of Victorians aged 65 to 85 also volunteer for their communities (Department of Health and Human Services, 2019).
- Providing services that support older people creates new opportunities for them to make incredibly valuable contributions to our communities
- Preventative approaches to create age-friendly communities that increase healthy behaviours and social participation will prevent or delay the onset of many illnesses.

What is the role of Council in contributing to outcomes for older people?

Services for older people operate in a complex and rapidly changing environment. Over the last ten years, numerous Commonwealth and State inquiries have considered reforms and made needed changes.

Victorian local governments are required to promote the health and wellbeing of all its residents, including older people. In addition to mandated responsibilities, over the next three years Port Phillip has the opportunity to make a more substantial contribution to outcomes for older people in the municipality by:

- Co-designing policy that sets out the aspirations and needs of older people in our municipality and principles for what services Councils should provide
- Supporting opportunities for older people to participate in community life, including the Senior's Festival and the Older Persons Consultative Network, the seniors register and Linking Neighbours Program and programs that address the digital divide.
- Providing home and community care services including the community bus and community meals that meet the needs of our community and align with changes resulting from federal aged care reforms



- Providing community and recreational facilities and funding for community organisations to support the needs of people of all ages and background to socialise, be active, and contribute to community life
- Providing financial support for people who are asset rich and income poor through rate payment plans and pensioner rebates
- Maintaining Rainbow Tick accreditation for home and community care services to ensure that they are responsive to and supportive of the needs of LGBTIQ+ people
- Implementing workforce training and create referral pathways to family counselling and mediation, and financial counselling for those subjected to elder abuse
- Supporting the work of our regional elder abuse prevention network to raise awareness and identify opportunities.

Who are our partners?

In order to facilitate a comprehensive, consistent and whole of community approach to ensuring equitable outcomes for all older people, Council partners with community organizations and other levels of government to deliver community interventions. Some of our key partners include:

- Local residential aged care providers
- Department of Health (formerly part of the Department of Health and Human Services)
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (formerly part of the Department of Health and Human Services)
- Community health care organisations
- Commonwealth My Aged Care
- Local Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community groups
- Southern Melbourne Elder Abuse Prevention Network
- EveryAGE Counts
- South Port Day Links
- Port Phillip Community Group
- St Kilda Police
- Council of the Aging Victoria
- Seniors Rights Victoria
- University of the Third Age - U3A Port Phillip
- Port Phillip Life Activities Club
- St Kilda and Port Melbourne Probus



- Port Phillip Men's Shed Association
- Community centres and Neighbourhood Houses

What may change over the next five years?

- Commonwealth aged care reforms in Victoria, which may include changed funding model and new accountability requirements will require Council to determine its role in direct service delivery and how the needs of the most vulnerable are met under the new model.
- The outcomes of the Royal Commission into Aged Care may give a new focus to the type and quality of service provided to people as they age and/or require assistance to continue to live independently at home and in the community.
- The separation of Assessment Services and Direct service will be further embedded in a new model and this may lead a redefining of Councils role in advocacy and in service navigation.
- Labour shortages continue to plague the aged care sector, so may affect the quality of care that older people receive.

References

- .id. (2023). *Home | City of Port Phillip | Community profile*. Retrieved from .id community | demographic resources: <https://profile.id.com.au/port-phillip>
- ABS. (2019-20). *Survey of Income and Housing*. Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2018). *Older Australia at a glance*. Melbourne: Victorian Government.
- Commissioner for Senior Victorians. (2016). *Ageing is everyone's business: a report on isolation and loneliness among senior Victorians*. Melbourne: Department of Health and Human Services.
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. (2022). *Ageing well in Victoria - An action plan for strengthening wellbeing for senior Victorians 2022-2026*. Melbourne: Victorian Government.
- Department of Health and Human Services. (2019). *Ageing*. (Victorian Government) Retrieved 16, 2021, from <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/ageing>
- National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling. (2016). *2017 dementia prevalence by local government area*. Alzheimer's Australia Victoria. Retrieved 16, 2020, from https://www.dementia.org.au/sites/default/files/VIC/documents/2017_dementia_prevalence_by_LGA.pdf
- World Health Organisation. (2022, 1 25). *Abuse of older people*. Retrieved from World Health Organisation: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/abuse-of-older-people>