



# AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY PLAN

2026-2031



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# FOREWORD

The Shire of Cunderdin is committed to fostering a community where people of all ages feel valued, supported and able to live well. As our population continues to age, thoughtful and proactive planning is essential to ensure older residents can remain in their homes, stay connected to community life and access the services and infrastructure they need to thrive.

At the time of the 2021 Census, 18.3% of the Shire's population was aged 65 years and over, a proportion higher than both State and National averages. By 2036, this is projected to increase to approximately 24% of the total population, with the most significant growth occurring in those aged 85 and over. This shift presents both opportunities and challenges for our community.

Older residents make a substantial contribution to the Shire's social and economic life. Many continue to participate in the workforce, and a significant proportion are actively involved in volunteering, community groups and local initiatives. Their skills, experience and commitment strengthen the fabric of our community.

At the same time, community consultation has highlighted important priorities. There is growing demand for age-appropriate housing and care options, including independent living and residential aged care. Transport remains a key concern, particularly for those who no longer drive. Infrastructure improvements are needed to ensure accessibility and safety across both townsites. Maintaining opportunities for social connection, participation and meaningful engagement is also critical to reducing isolation and supporting wellbeing.

The Shire of Cunderdin Age Friendly Community Plan 2026–2031 provides a clear and practical framework to guide Council's actions over the next four years. It identifies priority areas across four key pillars: supporting physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing; creating safe and friendly communities; strengthening connection and engagement; and ensuring older residents feel heard in local decision-making.

This Plan recognises that enabling people to age in place benefits not only individuals, but the broader community. By working in partnership with service providers, community groups and residents, Council is committed to creating an environment that is inclusive, accessible and responsive to changing needs.

Through the implementation of this Plan, Council reaffirms its commitment to supporting older people to remain independent, connected and valued members of our community.

Cr Alison Harris  
*Shire President*

# PLANNING CONTEXT

The Shire of Cunderdin Age-Friendly Community Plan has been informed by and aligned with international, state, regional and local planning documents and policy frameworks, including:

## World Health Organisation: National Programmes for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities: A guide (2023)

Age-friendly environments enable all people to contribute to their communities, build and maintain relationships, enjoy independence and good health, continue to develop personally, be included and supported and age well in a place that is right for them.

Age-friendly cities and communities improve access to key services and enable people to be and do what they value through action across eight domains:

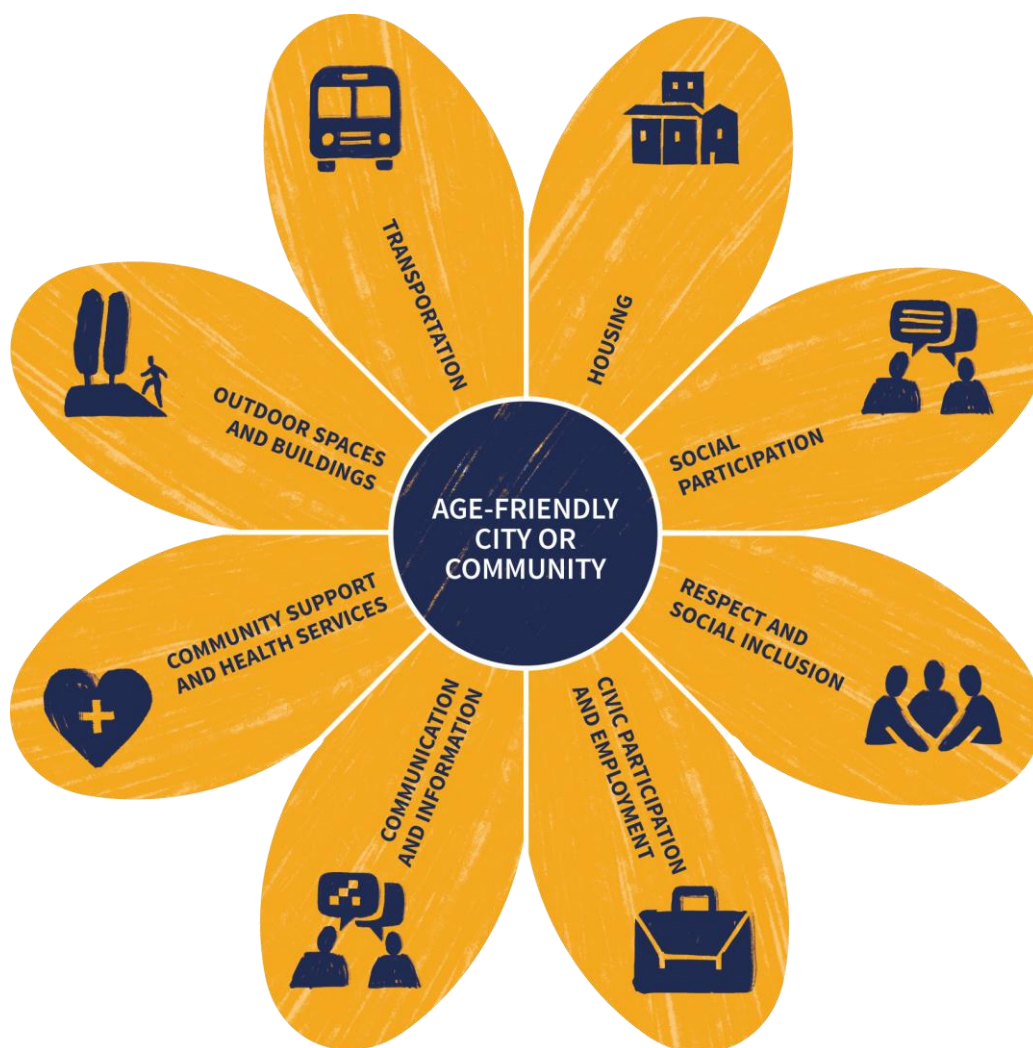


Figure 1 Eight domains of an Age Friendly City or Community. Source: National programmes for age-friendly cities and communities A guide. World Health Organization 2023. X

## An Age Friendly WA – State Seniors Strategy 2023 - 2033<sup>1</sup>

The State Seniors Strategy outlines how the Western Australian Government will support and empower seniors across the State over the next ten years. The Strategy is guided by the vision that *“Western Australian seniors feel valued, safe, and empowered to lead happy and fulfilling lives in age-friendly communities.”*

The Strategy recognises that approximately 14 per cent of seniors live in regional and remote areas of Western Australia and highlights ageing in place as a key priority for these communities. In this context, supporting access to services, housing, transport and social connection is critical to enabling seniors to remain in their communities as they age.

To achieve improved outcomes for seniors, the State Seniors Strategy identifies four pillars of change and associated focus areas that guide government action across policy, planning and service delivery.

Pillars of Change	Key Focus Areas	Alignment with Domains of the WHO Age-Friendly Communities Framework
Thriving physically, mentally, and spiritually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Staying in place</li> <li>• Care and support</li> <li>• Wellbeing Support for carers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community and healthcare</li> <li>• Housing</li> </ul>
Safe and friendly communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive communities</li> <li>• Infrastructure and spaces</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect and social inclusion</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Outdoor spaces</li> </ul>
Staying connected and engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Volunteering and social participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and information</li> <li>• Civic participation and employment</li> <li>• Social participation</li> </ul>
Having views that are heard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representation and advocacy</li> <li>• Diverse views</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic participation and employment</li> <li>• Respect and social inclusion</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> [An Age-Friendly WA – State Seniors Strategy 2023 – 2033](#)

## Living Well in the Wheatbelt<sup>2</sup>

Living Well in the Wheatbelt is a long-term strategy developed by the Wheatbelt District Leadership Group to improve outcomes for communities across the Wheatbelt region. The strategy is guided by the vision: *“Individuals and families in the Wheatbelt region are empowered to thrive and participate in their communities, education, work and life.”*

The strategy is structured around four strategic pillars: Start Well, Grow Well, Live and Work Well, and Age Well. The *Age Well* pillar specifically focuses on supporting senior citizens and Elders to live and age in place within connected, supportive communities, recognising the importance of inclusion, access to services, and opportunities for social participation.

In developing this strategy Wheatbelt people were asked what they need to be able to age well in their communities:

- More services for older people, people living in outlying towns and support for volunteers.
- Access to community transport to get to appointments.
- Support for people who are lonely and isolated.
- More aged-appropriate accommodation.



<sup>2</sup> [Living Well in the Wheatbelt](#)

## Shire of Cunderdin Planning Documents

### *Strategic Community Plan 2022 – 2032*

The Shire of Cunderdin Strategic Community Plan articulates the community's long-term vision, goals, and strategies for the future. The Age-Friendly Community Plan builds on this direction by detailing the strategies and actions Council will implement to improve outcomes for older residents and ensure the Shire remains inclusive and supportive of all ages.

Priorities identified in the Strategic Community Plan that closely align with the objectives for age friendly communities include:

- 1.1 Community members have the opportunity to be active, engaged and connected.
- 1.2 A healthy and safe community is planned for.
- 1.3 Advocate for the provision of quality health services, health facilities and programs in the Shire.

### *Cunderdin Pathways Plan*

The Cunderdin Pathways Plan, which was developed in 2024, is aimed at developing a network of safe, accessible, and attractive footpaths that promote walking, enhance community connectivity, and contribute to the overall well-being of residents and visitors in the Shire of Cunderdin.

Amongst the objectives of this plan is to increase accessibility for all residents including those with disability, elderly and families with young children.

The Plan provides a 10-year pathway update program for the townsite of Cunderdin.

### *Disability Access & Inclusion Plan*

In 2023, the Shire consulted with the Cunderdin community as part of a major review of Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP).

During the review process potential areas of improvement were identified:

- Assessment of assistance rails in Shire's bathroom facilities.
- Accessible toilets in all venues.
- Implementation of inclusive exercise classes.
- Accessible community bus.
- Ingress and egress difficulties from local business.

# DEVELOPING THE SHIRE OF CUNDERDIN AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY PLAN

## Community Engagement

In February 2026 Council engaged with seniors in the community to better understand the needs and aspirations of older people in the Cunderdin Shire. Two senior specific workshops were held – one in Cunderdin and one in Meckering.

In early 2026, the Shire of Cunderdin also undertook a comprehensive review of its Strategic Community Plan. This process included face-to-face community workshops, as well as a resident and ratepayer survey, providing multiple opportunities for community members to share their views. Feedback relevant to ageing well in the community has been drawn from this broader consultation to ensure strong alignment between these key guiding documents.

What you told us will make it easier for people to stay in the Shire of Cunderdin as they get older:



Improved transportation options.



Services for those not eligible for funded care packages, that are local and affordable.



More aged housing – independent living units and residential aged care.



Infrastructure improvements – pathways (more in Meckering, wider in Cunderdin), seating, lighting, universal access into all public buildings.



Opportunities to socialise and stay active.



Communication of information and opportunities for seniors across multiple mediums (e.g. notice boards, social media, emails, etc.).

## Desktop Review

In addition to community engagement, the Plan has been informed by a desktop review of relevant international, state and regional strategies, frameworks and evidence-based research related to age-friendly communities. This review considered demographic trends, best-practice approaches to supporting ageing in place, and an assessment of existing services and programs currently available to older people in the Shire of Cunderdin.

# PROFILE OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE CUNDERDIN SHIRE

As per *An Age-Friendly WA: State Seniors Strategy 2023 – 2033*, the term senior refers to anyone aged 65 years and over, or any Aboriginal person aged over 55 years.

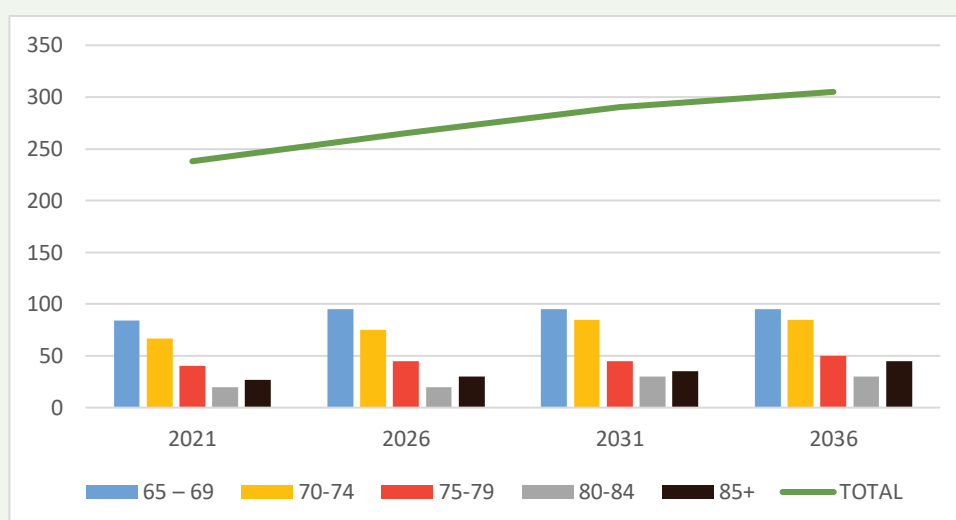
At the time of the ABS 2021 Census of Population and Housing there 1,302 people living in the Shire of Cunderdin. Seniors (65+) represented 18.3% of the total Shire population which is slightly higher than both State and National averages. Aboriginal Persons aged 55+ represented just 0.6% of the population, which is substantially lower than the corresponding rates for Western Australia and Australia as a whole.

WA Tomorrow Population Forecasts predict that the proportion of seniors in the Cunderdin population will increase to 24% by 2036. The greatest increase (as a percentage) will occur in the population of persons aged 85+ (67% increase from 2021).

Seniors in the Shire of Cunderdin are active contributors to both the community and the local economy. According to the 2021 Census, 20.4% of all volunteers in the Shire were aged 65 and over. Additionally, a quarter (25%) of seniors in the Shire were engaged in paid employment either in a full-time or part-time capacity.

	Shire of Cunderdin	Australia	WA
Total Population	1,302	25.42 million	2.66 million
Male	52.4%	49.3%	49.7%
Female	47.6%	50.7%	50.3%
Median Age	37	38	38
% Seniors (65+)	18.3%	17.2%	16.1%
% Aboriginal Persons 55+	0.6% (8 persons)	13.5%	12.8%

**Table 1** Cunderdin Demographic Profile. Source: ABS Census of Population & Housing 2021.



**Figure 2** Seniors Population Forecast 2021 – 2036. Source: WA Population Tomorrow Report 12

# KEY CHALLENGES

The demographic profile of the Shire of Cunderdin coupled with the feedback provided by the community highlights several key challenges that must be addressed to support an age-friendly community:

- 1) Increased demand for services:** The projected growth in the senior population will generate increased demand for home support, personal care, transport and aged care services. Planning ahead is essential to ensure services can meet future needs and support ageing in place.
- 2) Expanding housing & care options:** There is already significant unmet demand for independent living units. At the same time, the Shire currently has no residential aged care facility. As the 85+ population grows, more residents will require age-appropriate, accessible housing and, for some, higher-level residential care. Without investment in additional independent living units and pathways to residential care, older residents may be forced to leave the community to access suitable accommodation and support.
- 3) Creating sustainable transport solutions:** Transport was consistently identified as a challenge in community consultation. As the population ages, particularly the 85+ cohort, the number of non-drivers will increase. Current transport arrangements rely heavily on volunteers and limited-service availability. Without more sustainable and accessible transport solutions, older residents risk becoming isolated from health services, shopping, social activities and community events. Reliable transport is fundamental to independence, social connection and equitable access to services.
- 4) Upgrading Infrastructure for Accessibility & Safety:** Accessibility is inconsistent across the Shire's two townsites. Issues such as narrow or disconnected footpaths, limited seating, poor lighting, and inadequate accessibility in some public buildings present barriers for older residents. As the number of older people increases, particularly those with mobility limitations, infrastructure that does not meet accessibility standards will restrict participation and reduce safety.
- 5) Community participation:** Seniors in the Shire are active contributors to both community life and the workforce. Initiatives that support social connection, volunteering, and ongoing engagement in work and community activities will be essential to maintain their active participation.

# THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

Responsibility for policies and programs that affect older people is shared across all levels of government in Australia, with each playing a distinct but complementary role in supporting ageing well.

The Australian Government has primary responsibility for aged care and in-home support services, primary health care, disability services, income support, taxation and superannuation, workplace relations, and protections against age discrimination.

The State Government focuses on enhancing inclusion and access for older people through the provision of mainstream services and infrastructure such as public spaces, public transport, hospitals, social housing and the justice system. In Western Australia, the State Government also provides financial assistance and concessions for seniors, including the WA Seniors Card and cost-of-living support programs, and delivers or co-funds residential aged care, Transition Care and Multi-Purpose Services.

Local government plays a key role in creating age-friendly communities through the provision and maintenance of local facilities and infrastructure, including recreation and cultural facilities, libraries, footpaths, public open spaces and community buildings. In partnership with community organisations, local governments also deliver local programs, events and initiatives that respond to community needs and support social connection. In addition, local government has an important advocacy role in working with other levels of government to ensure appropriate services and facilities are available locally to support ageing in place.



# LOCAL SERVICES & PROGRAMS

There are several services and programs available to older people in the Cunderdin Shire that support positive ageing, including leisure, recreation, social activities, as well as home support services and health care services.



## Housing

- Sandalwood Village 8 independent living units (2 bed, 2 bath) owned by the Shire of Cunderdin and 10 independent living units owned and managed by Cunderdin Meckering Cottages Inc.
- A Palliative Residential Unit (3-bedroom, 3 bathroom) and respite care unit owned and managed by the Shire of Cunderdin were built but due to staffing issues have not been utilised.



## Care Co-ordination & Programs

- Cunderdin MPS is a service provided by WACHS. Through the Commonwealth Home Support Program, the Cunderdin MPS provides a range of services to support older people including domestic assistance, meals, transport, group and individual social support, care, home maintenance and repairs.
- Shopper bus operates Thursday mornings for HACC clients.
- Staying in Place Cunderdin – the Cunderdin CRC is working with Mable and InCasa to coordinate at home care for seniors.



## Community & Social Support Groups

- The Cunderdin Men's Shed meets weekly on a Tuesday and have a breakfast once a month. Regular bus trips are facilitated to attend events and activities in other towns.
- The Meckering Men's Shed is a small group, who assist with local and joint (with Cunderdin) projects.
- Meckering Ladies Club Cuppa meets twice a month on a Monday morning at the Meckering Sporting Club.
- Cunderdin Needle Craft meet every Tuesday at the Museum.
- Various sporting clubs in both towns offer access to recreation and physical activity including tennis, bowls and golf.
- Cunderdin CRC facilitates senior's activities and events. For example:
  - Over 65s Christmas Luncheon
  - Over 65s Balance and Strength program
  - Savy Seniors
  - Seniors Road Trip
  - Cunderdin, Meckering, Tammin (CMT) Seniors Days



## Health Services

- Cunderdin Health Centre provides 24/7 nurse-led emergency care, aboriginal health services, mental health services, and a range of allied health services including dietetics, physiotherapy, podiatry and occupational therapy.
- Cunderdin General Practice operates Monday to Thursday.

# VISION FOR AN AGE FRIENDLY CUNDERDIN

*Older people in the Shire of Cunderdin are supported to remain independent, connected and valued members of our community.*



## OBJECTIVES & ACTIONS

The Shire of Cunderdin objectives for an age friendly community mirror those of the State Seniors Strategy and are closely aligned to the Living Well in the Wheatbelt Strategy and the World Health Organisation domains of age-friendly cities and communities.

This Plan sets out strategic objectives and actions for a four-year implementation period.



### Objective 1: Thriving Physically, Mentally & Spiritually

#### Goal:

People in the Shire are supported to maintain their health, independence and wellbeing as they age.

#### Key Focus Areas:

- Access to appropriate fitness and recreation facilities and programs.
- Access to local allied and primary health care services.
- Age-appropriate housing options to support ageing in place.
- Affordable support for those not eligible for funded care packages.

#### Actions:

- 1.1. Promote existing services and programs through Shire communication channels, including digital and non-digital formats.
- 1.2. Continue support of the GP service in Cunderdin.
- 1.3. Investigate and support access to services for older people who are not eligible for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme, including affordable local options.
- 1.4. Continue to manage and maintain the Sandalwood independent living units and work collaboratively with Cunderdin Meckering Cottage homes to secure funding to build additional units.
- 1.5. Advocate for the reintroduction of residential aged care services in the Shire to support older residents with higher care needs.
- 1.6. Support the delivery of health and wellness programs for seniors.



## Objective 2: Safe and Friendly Communities

### Goal:

The Shire's towns, facilities and public spaces are safe, accessible and age-friendly, enabling older people to move around confidently, access essential services and remain connected to their community.

### Key focus areas:

- Safe and accessible footpaths, facilities and community buildings.
- Reliable and sustainable transport solutions, for all senior residents in the Shire.
- Infrastructure improvements, including lighting, seating, and universal access.

### Actions:

- 2.1 Extend the existing Cunderdin Pathways Plan to include an assessment of, and forward plan for pathways in the Meckering townsite to ensure the safety and walkability of both towns.
- 2.2 Conduct accessibility audits of all public buildings and open spaces in the Shire to ensure they reflect best practice universal access and inclusive design principles.
- 2.3 Prioritise infrastructure improvements including to footpaths, seating and lighting to meet accessibility standards.
- 2.4 Investigate and implement sustainable community transport solutions, including volunteer transport models and partnerships with regional providers.



## Objective 3: Staying connected and engaged

### Goal:

Older people are actively and meaningfully participating in community life and feel welcomed and included in local events, programs, and activities.

### Key focus areas:

- Accessible and inclusive social and recreational opportunities.
- Structured programs that encourage volunteering, intergenerational engagement, and community participation.
- Affordable and accessible events and activities for seniors.

### Actions:

- 3.1 Community Resource Centre to continue working with residents to design and deliver accessible, and affordable programs and events for older people.
- 3.2 Investigate options for a dedicated seniors gathering space, utilising current facilities.
- 3.3 Support community led events and programs that encourage participation of older people in the community through community grants, event promotion, partnerships and/or use of Shire facilities.
- 3.4 Monitor and evaluate the reach and effectiveness of social programs, ensuring they respond to seniors' needs and preferences.



## Objective 4: Having views that are heard

### *Goal:*

Older people can easily access information, navigate services, and have meaningful opportunities to contribute to local planning and decision-making.

### *Key focus areas:*

- Clear and locally relevant information about services, programs, and opportunities.
- Communication methods used by the Shire reflect varying levels of digital access and literacy.
- The Shire of Cunderdin adopts inclusive consultation processes that reflect the voices of older residents.

### *Actions:*

- 4.1 Provide information in multiple formats, including via email, social media, flyers, the Bandicoot and notice boards.
- 4.2 Undertake targeted engagement of older people in community planning and decision-making processes.
- 4.3 Engage older people in the design of new or upgraded public buildings and open spaces.
- 4.4 Regularly evaluate communication effectiveness and consultation processes to ensure information reaches all seniors.

