



Afternoon Session B

Discussion Paper 8

Elders - What are housing needs of Elders and how can they be met?

CHALLENGE OUTLINE:

1. Just 5 per cent of the Aboriginal population is aged over 65 in Victoria compared with around 15 per cent in the mainstream community.
2. While this may suggest that housing older people is a problem on a smaller scale than the structural ageing we are seeing in Victoria's mainstream community, this is a misconception.
3. In fact, because of the extraordinary socio-economic disadvantage they experience, Aboriginal people carry a far heavier burden of disease (illness and disability) - 2.3 times greater than the rest of the population (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)). The result is we age earlier than the rest of the population.
4. This is evident in the fact that Aboriginal people aged 45-64 are three times more likely to require assistance with core activities than other Australians. (AIHW analysis of census data)
5. Census data suggests that 28% of Aboriginal people aged 65 years and over have a core activity need for assistance. (2006)
6. Higher rates of disability, greater early onset of dementia, rates of blindness and vision impairment three times greater than the mainstream and a lack of culturally safe aged care for the increasing numbers of Elders reaching older age all present significant challenges.
7. Because of their unequal burden of morbidity, unlike many Australians who experience an extended third age of healthy retirement, many Aboriginal Australians pass from middle age into fourth age dependency and decline.
8. Despite this, "Successive iterations of the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services indicate that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are eligible to receive an aged care assessment are less likely to be assessed than their counterparts in both the general population and in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. This disparity was evident both at a national level and in each Australian jurisdiction and suggests a need to support better engagement of older Aboriginal people within the aged care system." (Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) - Croakey)
9. "Adding further complexity to the space is the fact that 100% of the Stolen Generation will be at least 50 years old by 2023, i.e. eligible for aged care as Aboriginal people can access these services earlier due to their broader lower life expectancy. This group will require sensitive, trauma-informed care that does not re-traumatise them." (VACCHO - Croakey)
10. Compared to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the same age cohort who were not removed as children, older Stolen Generations members are almost three times (2.7) less likely to

own their own home and more likely to live alone. (AIHW) The necessary housing options for Stolen Generations Elders in Victoria do not yet exist.

11. The challenge is sharpened by the fact that, forecast growth indicates the number of Elders over 60 will double over the 20 years from 2016 to 2036, from 4,359 in 2016 to almost 9,000 in 2036.
12. Victoria faces real challenges in providing decent, secure housing for a growing numbers of Elders, many with significant support needs.
13. Added to this is the desire, which significant numbers of Elders have, to return to country towards the end of their lives and the limited housing options available to facilitate this.



Table 1: Forecast Growth in Aboriginal Elders in Victoria

Age-Groups	2016	2018	2021	2026	2031	2036
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
60-64	1,680	1,803	1,980	2,302	2,710	2,697
65-69	1,187	1,317	1,502	1,781	2,084	2,472
70-74	665	813	995	1,268	1,515	1,796
75+	827	833	938	1,229	1,593	2,006
Total	4359	4766	5415	6580	7902	8971

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

1. Policy settings need to recognise that old age may come earlier for some Aboriginal people and housing policy must reflect this understanding.
2. More work is needed to identify the characteristics and features of culturally safe aged care.
3. Scoping work is needed to map where there will be a critical mass of Elders to determine the viability of development of new integrated aged care with independent and high need support on the same site.
4. More work is required to understand the needs of Stolen Generations Elders and to support their particular aged care needs.
5. The findings of the Royal Commission into Aged Care and any specific findings for Aboriginal people should be carefully examined.
6. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Action Plan [Actions to support older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people](#) (released in February 2019) is expected to have particular application to Victoria, given VACCHO collaborated in its development and coordinated the consultation process in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and SA.