

Living and Ageing Well in Merri-bek

What is an age friendly city?

An age friendly city is a place where everyone, as we age, can live, work and enjoy life. This can look different to each individual, and an age-friendly city supports this diversity. It helps people stay active, healthy, and connected as they age. This is done by creating an environment that supports older people's needs and abilities.

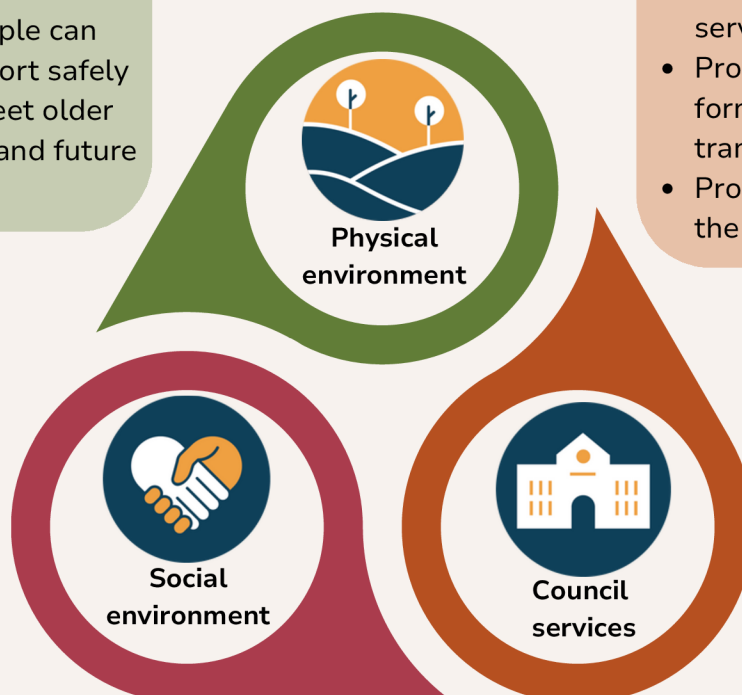
What is the Living and Ageing Well Framework?

Merri-bek has a Living and Ageing Well Framework that focuses on three main areas to achieve an age friendly city:

- 1. Physical Environment:** Safe and accessible streets, footpaths, buildings, parks and public transport which allows people of all ages, including those with mobility challenges, to get around easily.
- 2. Social Environment:** This fosters a community where older people feel included, safe and valued. It offers chances to engage in social, cultural, and community activities. It also fights ageism and elder abuse while tackling other forms of discrimination.
- 3. Council Services:** This ensures that services and information are easy for older people to access and understand. It makes sure that services are inclusive for everyone, no matter their age or ability.

What we aim for

- Improve walkability and accessibility
- Ensure older people can use active transport safely
- Housing must meet older people's current and future needs



- Provide information and support to live well in older age (like service navigation)
- Provide information in different formats for all older people (like translations, videos, paper)
- Provide services which cater to the needs of people as we age

- Ensure access to physical activity opportunities
- Provide social, learning, and decision-making opportunities
- Celebrate older people
- Prevent and address discrimination

Summary of Evaluation Findings from Engagement in 2024

We heard from community members, staff & organisations through:

- 31 Engagement activities (pop-ups, interviews, groups, meetings and submissions)
- 389 survey responses (in multiple languages)

Older people in Merri-bek

- In 2021, 13.3% of Merri-bek's population were aged 65 years or older.
- Merri-bek is projected to see a 107% increase in people with dementia by 2054.

What you said

Physical Environment

- **Public accessibility and safety:** poor quality footpaths, and other hazards pose risks. There is a lack of lighting, appropriate seating and toilets in public areas.
- **Transport and parking:** Merri-bek has good public transport coverage, but needs safer, more accessible, and more frequent services, better community transport and improved parking options.
- **Housing and Services:** timely access to in-home care is essential for independent living. Rising cost of living, and a shortage of affordable housing are pressing issues.

Social Environment

- **Social participation and connection:** Merri-bek is a vibrant, welcoming & diverse community but some residents experience isolation. More culturally appropriate programs, community gathering places, & inclusive movement activities are needed.

Council Services

- **Invisibility, stigma and discrimination:** older people's needs are often overlooked, and ageism limits their community participation. Experiences of those who speak a language other than English often differs.

What we will do: Action Plan 2025-2029

Physical Environment

- Apply age friendly design principles to public infrastructure, improve cross-Council coordination.
- Prioritise older people's needs in street and transport planning and advocate to the State Government to improve public transport and housing.
- Deliver falls prevention initiatives.
- Evaluate older people's exercise park.

Social Environment

- Create more opportunities for older people to be active and socially connected.
- Build on successful intergenerational projects.
- Expand volunteering opportunities and succession planning.
- Challenge ageism and promote older people's strengths.
- Deliver activities which support the needs of older people from Council's Human Rights Priority Groups.
- Create opportunities for older people to have a voice in decision making.

Council Services

- Deliver inclusive, age friendly Council services and programs.
- Ensure older people can access the information they need to stay connected.
- Connect people to relevant community and health services.