

**2020**

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**STATEMENT**

**Age-Friendly City Plan 2020-2024**

**Presented by  
Gordon Ramsay MLA  
Minister for Seniors and Veterans**

Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise in this Assembly today to table our new *Age-Friendly City Plan*. I am pleased to advise that I was able to launch the Plan last Wednesday, 27 May, at a small gathering of key stakeholders, who made significant contributions during the consultation phase, as did many other community organisations and individuals.

This plan is the culmination of two years of consulting with and listening to the ideas, concerns and solutions of older Canberrans and key sector stakeholder organisations. It will guide the ACT Government over the next four years as we continue to work towards ensuring older Canberrans can live their best lives possible.

The *Age-Friendly City Plan* is part of the ACT Government's broader social inclusion agenda. As we build on this successful work, we will continue to work closely with all parts of our community including our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural communities.

The focus of the *Age-Friendly City Plan* is on practical achievements and outcomes.

This is a plan which significantly addresses barriers older Canberrans have told us they face in staying mobile and socially connected, accessing services and living free from abuse.

Its implementation involves collaboration across ACT Government Directorates, and also with our Commonwealth and state and territory counterparts, to achieve wide-ranging and holistic reforms.

I am immensely proud of securing such commitment to improving the lives of some of our most vulnerable citizens.

While the consultation process to formulate the Plan has unfolded during the past two years, the ACT Government has been working diligently for more than 10 years to shape Canberra as an age-friendly city.

In 2011, Canberra was accepted as a member of the World Health Organisation's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities.

In this context, during the past decade, the ACT Government, with input from the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing, has been actively working to drive better support, connections and initiatives for older Canberrans across the areas of transport, infrastructure, health, justice and human rights.

In 2018, older Canberrans participated in the Age-Friendly Survey, which asked them to share their views and experiences on what was working well and what needed to improve.

The survey led to the development of *Age-Friendly Canberra- A Vision for Our City*, which was tabled in February 2019. The Vision outlined 12 principles across four focus areas:

- Involved, connected and valued
- Safe, secure and free from abuse
- Information, services and support which embrace diversity
- A city for all ages

These principles provided the basis for the consultation forums that were held throughout 2019, to inform the development of the *Age-Friendly City Plan*.

The forums built on what we heard through the survey, bringing together community members, representatives of key sector stakeholder organisations and government services to generate ideas and develop solutions.

The Age-Friendly Survey and the consultation forums revealed that older Canberrans have a high level of engagement with the community and actively help and support family and friends.

Almost all respondents indicated they had the information and support needed to stay healthy and connected.

However, older Canberrans also told us that we need to better value the experience and knowledge of older people, and highlighted the prevalence of age-based discrimination.

With regard to housing, through consultation we heard of the need for more ground level, single storey, affordable housing options close to transport and amenities. Our transport and parking facilities also need to be affordable and accessible.

The *Age-Friendly City Plan* is organised under the same four focus areas as the Vision. Each focus area has designated outcomes, actions and indicators for achievement. It is holistic, intersecting across areas including health, public transport, human rights and planning.

As Canberra has been working toward becoming an age-friendly city for some years, some programs and initiatives already exist, such as the Age-Friendly Suburbs Program and the ACT Seniors Card.

The *Age-Friendly City Plan* seeks to add value to these, and address gaps that were identified through the consultation process. It is designed to align with other key ACT Government Frameworks such as the ACT Housing Strategy and the ACT Wellbeing Framework, not duplicate them.

Indeed, the plan seeks to further embed age-friendly approaches in future service design and delivery.

Crucially, it aligns with work at the national level, particularly the *National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians 2019-2023*.

Internationally, we have learnt from the Dementia Friendly Rotorua project and the Age-Friendly Manchester Programme. Nationally, we have gleaned insights from projects and frameworks such as the Western Australian Strategy to Respond to the Abuse of Older People (Elder Abuse) 2019-2029 and the City of Fremantle Age-Friendly City Plan 2019-2024.

We know that there are about 50,000 Canberrans aged 65 years and over, and that this number will continue to grow.

Our older citizens are an asset for our city. We can all learn from their knowledge and experience, and they also make enormous contributions through caring for family and friends, volunteering and in advisory roles. In turn, it is our duty to ensure older Canberrans are acknowledged and cared for, and that we adapt our services to suit their needs as their journey through life continues.

I would like to thank the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing for the guidance and wisdom they have shown in the development of this plan.

I would also like to thank the community members and organisations who participated in forums for their willingness to come together to tackle these issues.

Together, we can all contribute to the ongoing development of Canberra as an inclusive city which values the contributions, involvement and needs of older Canberrans.

Madam Speaker, I commend the *ACT Age-Friendly City Plan* to this Assembly.

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