



# Investigation of Ageing in Place Services and Infrastructure in the Gympie Region

Final Report  
June 2022

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# 1. Foreword

A Draft Report regarding Ageing in Place (Gympie Region) was presented to Gympie Regional Council Workshop Meeting on 16 March 2022. Councillors discussed the report and preliminary recommendations. The Draft Report was refined based on Councillor and Project Working Group feedback.

The Final Report outlined in this document was presented to Gympie Regional Council's Ordinary Meeting on 28 June 2022.

Pursuant to M11/06/22, Councillors unanimously resolved to:

- Receive the Final Report - Investigation of Ageing in Place Services and Infrastructure in the Gympie Region;
- Endorse the twenty-five (25) council actions recommended in the Final Report - Investigation of Ageing in Place Services and Infrastructure in the Gympie Region; and
- Delegate to the Chief Executive Officer to assign timeframes and business unit responsibility for the council actions which will be delivered subject to Council approval of required resourcing.

## Recommendations for Council Action

### 1. Community, health and aged care services

Sub-topic	Recommendations for Council Action
Kilkivan Health Centre	1. Continue to advocate for improved and place appropriate health and medical services in Gympie and regional townships.
Access to online services	2. Continue to advocate to Telecommunication companies and Federal government to address network black spots and reliability in the region. 3. Facilitate information sessions in Council libraries about on-line services for aged care, carer's gateways and support services (i.e. partnership with My Aged Care, Nurse Navigators or providers to run programs throughout regional libraries). 4. Continue to provide and/or increase computer literacy sessions in Council libraries.
Carers	5. Invite Wellways Carers Gateway and similar Carer Peak bodies to provide information and resources at Seniors Month activities and community gatherings.
Outreach services	6. Within health and human services networks such as Gympie Collaborative Network, Cooloola Human Services Network, Local Level Alliance and Housing Networks, Council staff and elected Councillors to continue advocating for expansion of services and State and Commonwealth Government funding for programs outside of Gympie.



## 2. Infrastructure/built environment

Sub-topic	Recommendations for Council Action
Community Facilities	7. To the greatest extent possible, maintain and enhance community facilities (such as libraries and community halls) to enable older people to participate in and design social activities to increase community connection and reduce the negative health impacts of social isolation.
Aged care facility	8. As part of future economic development and/or planning initiatives, include investment attraction for small-scale respite and residential aged care centres in areas out of Gympie.
Council "Pensioner Units"	9. Explore future tenure arrangements and opportunities for Council owned "pensioner units" across the region to enable more low care, accessible and affordable accommodation for older persons.
Group home/units - affordable, accessible rental accommodation for older persons not requiring high levels of medical or supported care	10. Explore opportunities for a small scale accommodation centre in the Western district of Gympie Region/Kilkivan when a confirmed Business Case and Feasibility Study is submitted to Council outlining the upfront capital costs, ongoing operating model and funding plan.
Day respite	11. Undertake an Expression of Interest to establish a trial respite service from Kilkivan Hall premises.
Land Use Planning and Housing Stock	<p>12. Ensure that strategic land use planning, policy and regulatory instruments within Gympie Regional Council's scope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. enable increased universal design and accessibility for future development;</li> <li>b. enable a more diverse range of housing types within the Gympie Region to provide more choice for older people; and</li> <li>c. in particular, during the development of the new Local Planning Scheme for Gympie Region, ensure ageing population forecasts, research and consultation is undertaken to plan for the housing needs and liveability of older people (i.e. housing mix, housing land and supply, future demand for retirement villages and aged care facilities, proximity to services and transport infrastructure, subdivision, neighbourhood design and development of public spaces such as footpaths/older people car parking).</li> </ul> <p>13. Explore any impediments under the State Planning Act to increasing housing type, density and innovative age-appropriate housing for the region.</p> <p>As outlined in action 8 above, as part of future economic development and/or planning initiatives, include investment attraction for small-scale respite and residential aged care centres in areas out of Gympie.</p>



### 3. Social connection and wellbeing

Sub-topic	Recommendations for Council Action
Seniors activities to increase social connection and physical and mental health	<p>14. Continue to provide Community Grants Programs that community groups can access to deliver activities and events across the region.</p> <p>15. Continue to provide community groups with low cost hire charges for Kilkivan and Goomeri Halls to host community activities.</p> <p>16. Continue to provide affordable arts and cultural programs through the Gympie Regional Gallery, Gympie Civic Centre, Community Halls and Libraries to enable seniors to enrich their cultural wellbeing, increase mental health outcomes, social connections and community pride.</p> <p>17. Expand the Heart Foundation Walking Group program in the region through increased promotion, and community development support for volunteer walk organisers.</p> <p>18. Facilitate and/or seek funding to deliver active and healthy programs for seniors across the region.</p>
Volunteering	<p>19. Continue to provide Community Grants Programs that support volunteering and volunteer operated groups, with ability for grant funding to cover project coordinator work to decrease volunteer burnout and financial burden.</p>
Reliable telecommunications	<p>As outlined in Action 2 above, continue to advocate to Telecommunication companies and Federal government to address network black spots and reliability in the region.</p>
Interpersonal relationships	<p>20. Partner with funded services, local community groups and other levels of government to create community awareness about stereotypes, biases and social issues relating to older people.</p> <p>21. Promote activities and events for seniors and new comers to the region to encourage personalised, face-to-face, relationship-based interactions.</p>
Dementia Friendly Communities	<p>22. Continue to provide Council Community Grants programs to support community led projects that improve social outcomes (e.g. community workshops and projects relating to dementia friendly communities).</p>

#### 4. Transport

Sub-topic	Recommendations for Council Action
Transport from regional townships to and from Gympie	23. Advocate to the State Government to establish Translink services across the region to provide residents with better access to public transport services
Up to date information on Transport Options in Gympie Region	24. Collaborate with Translink to update the Transport Information on Council's website including information about transport for seniors and community operated transport providers.

#### 5. Career pathways for aged care and services that support seniors

Sub-topic	Recommendations for Council Action
Informal volunteers and unpaid carer workforce	25. Collaborate with industry and tertiary institutes (including USC Healthy Ageing Hub- Gympie) to develop models that deliver more respite services across the region in community facilities to reduce the reliance on unpaid carers and volunteers.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 The project

- Council's 2020/2021 Operational Plan included the action: *"Investigate Ageing in Place services and infrastructure in the Gympie region with an initial focus on the Western area"*.
- Council established the Ageing in Place Project Working Group in August 2020 to:
  - Assist in exploring and researching ageing in place services and infrastructure
  - Provide recommendations and suggestions in regard to ageing in place
  - Identify community needs for seniors in the western areas.
- The project working group was comprised of:
  - Cr Smerdon, Deputy Mayor and Councillor for Division 6
  - Andree Stark, Gympie Regional Council Community Partnerships Manager and Eadie Hancock/Nicole Harper, Community Partnerships Senior Officers
  - Rosie Fitzgerald (President) Kilkivan and District Community Care Association Inc (K&DCCA): a volunteer-run community organisation advocating for improved services and facilities for older residents in the Western part of the Gympie region; delivering social connectivity services and limited transport to the western area
  - Angeline Medland, Campus Lead, University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) Gympie
  - Dr Jayne Clapton, retired academic with specialisations in Ethics, Social Inclusion and Human Services
  - Representatives of the local aged care industry.

### 2.2 This document

- This document captures a summary of the investigation, findings and recommendations on Ageing in Place in our region, particularly the western area.
- The Project Working Group has highlighted that "ageing in place" and "ageing well" require collaboration between all levels of government, the commercial and community sectors.
- The five targeted topics reflect the key strengths and challenges for seniors identified through the 2019 Gympie Region Seniors Consultations, emerging issues identified by the project working group and results from the K&DCCA survey in 2020:
  1. Community, health and aged care services
  2. Infrastructure/built environment
  3. Social connection and wellbeing
  4. Transport
  5. Career pathways for aged care and services that support seniors.
- Recommendations for council action are included in Table A. The 25 actions are considered to be within council's legislative, policy and financial scope.

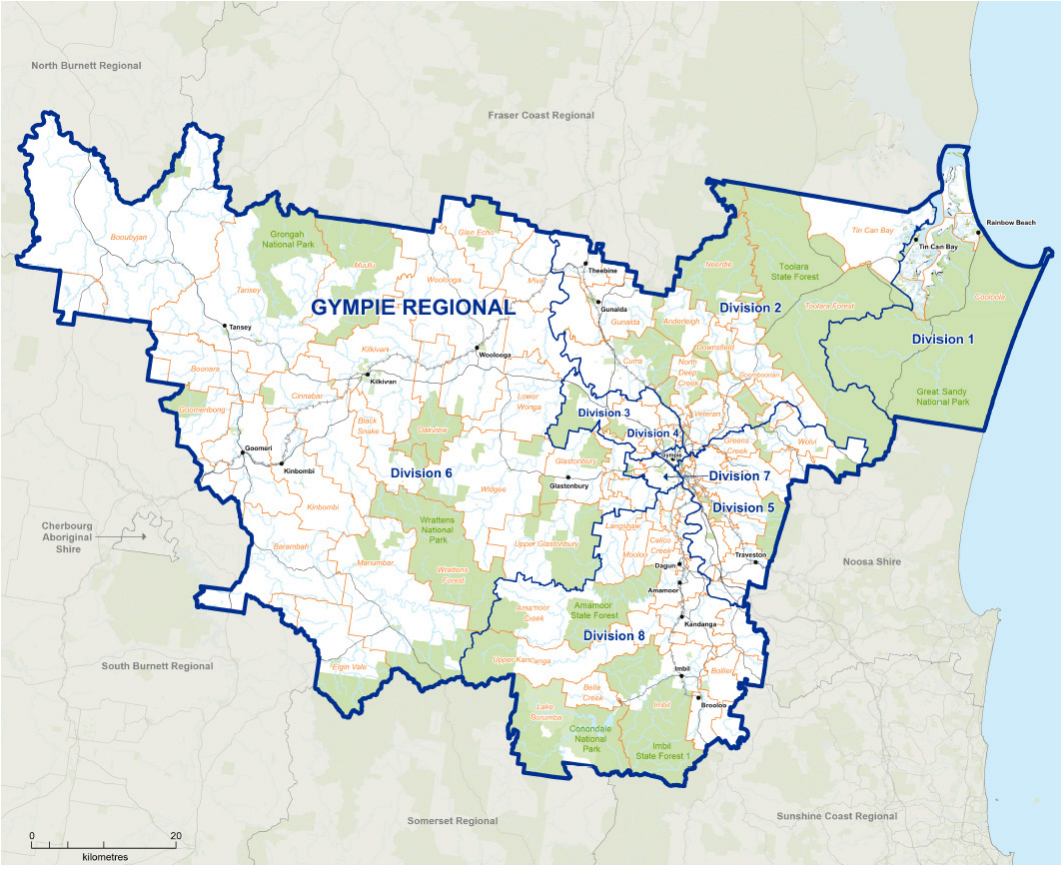


## 2.3 Definitions

Concept	Description
Aged care	The support provided to older people in their own home or in an aged care (nursing) home. It can include help with everyday living, health care, accommodation and equipment such as walking frames or ramps (DoH 2021).
Ageing in place	The ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently and comfortably, regardless of age, income or level of capacity. Ageing in the right place extends this concept to the ability to live in the place with the closest fit with the person's needs and preferences – which may or may not be one's own home (WHO 2015).
Ageing well	The process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables wellbeing in older age (WHO 2015).
Carer	<p>A person who provides care and support to someone else; such support may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• helping with self-care, household tasks, mobility, social participation and meaningful activities;</li> <li>• offering information, advice and emotional support, as well as engaging in advocacy, providing support for decision making and peer support, and helping with advance care planning;</li> <li>• offering respite services; and</li> <li>• engaging in activities to foster intrinsic capacity.</li> </ul> <p>Caregivers may include family members, friends, neighbours, volunteers, care workers and health professionals (WHO 2015).</p>
Median Age	Age that divides the population in two parts of equal size, that is, there are as many persons with ages above the median as there are with ages below the median.
Older person	A person whose age has passed the median life expectancy at birth (WHO 2015).
Rural/Regional	<p>The Modified Monash Model (MMM) is a geographical classification system developed in 2015 that categorises metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas according to both geographical remoteness and town size. This model uses seven categories to define locations. Government health and mental health funding and other programs in Australia define their eligibility using the MMM.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MM 1 Metropolitan</li> <li>• MM 2 Regional centres</li> <li>• MM 3 Large rural towns</li> <li>• MM 4 Medium rural towns</li> <li>• MM 5 Small rural towns</li> <li>• MM 6 Remote communities</li> <li>• MM 7 Very remote communities</li> </ul> <p>The city of Gympie and immediate surrounds is classified as MM3, with the remaining Gympie Regional Council area is classified as MM5.</p> <p>For more information go to <a href="https://www.health.gov.au/topics/rural-health-workforce/classifications/mmm">https://www.health.gov.au/topics/rural-health-workforce/classifications/mmm</a></p>





Concept	Description
Seniors	<p>There is no set age for becoming a “senior”. In Australia in 2022, being a senior is still traditionally linked to the “age pension” eligibility age or the so-called “retirement age” (though many people work well past this age). This Council report focuses on older Australians, generally those aged 65 and over. For older First Nations Australians, the age range 50 and over is often used, reflecting the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and the lower proportion of Indigenous people aged 65 and over.</p>
Western area	<p>For the purpose of this report, Western area is defined as Division 6 of the Gympie Region local government area that takes in the townships of Kilkivan, Goomeri and Woolooga, and localities of Tansey, Booubyjan, Elginvale, Glastonbury and Manumbar.</p>  <p>(Electoral Commission Queensland 2021)</p>

**Sources:**

World Health Organisation (WHO). 2015. World report on ageing and health. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565042>

Department of Health (DoH). 2021. What is aged care? Commonwealth of Australia. <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/aged-care/about-aged-care/what-is-aged-care>

Electoral Commission Queensland. 2021. Local government area boundaries. <https://www.ecq.qld.gov.au/electoral-boundaries/local-government-area-boundaries>

## 2.4 Approaches to ageing and aged care

There are a range of approaches to ageing and aged care which will not be explored in detail in this report. While these approaches can be global and national in their origin and implementation, they affect how residents in the Gympie region perceive ageing and how our community and local government plan for our ageing population. A summary of approaches is noted below:

- Medical approach – assessment of individual levels of functional dependence, independence and interdependence.
- World Health Organisation approach to Age Friendly Communities.
- Market driven vs universal, human rights approach to aged care.
- Binary situation of either ageing at home with limited support or moving to residential age care facilities “too early” without acute needs.
- Community development approach to ageing well – working with older people to design and deliver a range of activities to support the wellbeing and needs of older people.
- Research-led practice for ageing in rural communities.
- The impact of identity and values on our individual and community approaches to ageing, i.e. different feelings and attitudes that can be exacerbated with ageing, for example:
  - Letting go
  - Sense of loss
  - Embracing change
  - Belonging
  - Purpose
  - Celebration
  - Transition.
- Ageing can provide more space and time to reflect on the positives of life, time for more creativity, learning and connection. Conversely, ageing can be viewed as a deterioration of physical, mental and social wellbeing.
- The concept of level of control over one’s choices and abilities, versus feelings of helplessness. For example, practical home modifications such as ramps and shower rails are adaptive and can increase a person’s sense of control and independence and therefore their overall mental health and wellbeing.
- Attachment to place – to home, to daily experiences, memories and community of location can be a vital source of physical and mental health. “Home” can nourish sense of self and connection to past and present and self-identity. This attachment to place was highlighted through interviews conducted by QUT in late 2020 with 47 older residents from the Western area of Gympie (Beatson, A and Gottlieb, U 2021, Rural Ageing in Kilkivan, QUT, Brisbane Queensland).



## 3. Gympie Region Context

### 3.1 Demographic snapshot of the Gympie region

Source: id.communty, Demographic Resources, Community Profile <https://profile.id.com.au/gympie/>

Demographic	Statistics
Seniors	22.6 per cent of the Gympie region population is aged 65 years and over (compared to 16.9 per cent in regional Queensland and 15.8 per cent in Australia), with the largest age group being 65 to 69 year olds making up 7.9 per cent of the region's population.
Median age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tin Can Bay/Cooloola Cove/Rainbow Beach - 59 years</li><li>• Kilkivan/Goomeri – 49 years</li><li>• Gympie Regional Council area – 46 years</li><li>• Gympie city – 41 years</li><li>• Regional Queensland – 39 years</li><li>• Australia – 38</li><li>• South East Queensland – 37 years</li></ul>
Household Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Couples without children 29.6 per cent</li><li>• Lone person 24.6 per cent</li><li>• Couple with children 21.7 per cent</li><li>• One parent families 10.9 per cent</li><li>• Other not classifiable 5.9 per cent</li><li>• Visitor only households 3.6 per cent</li><li>• Group household 3.0 per cent</li><li>• Other families 0.7 per cent</li></ul> <p>Note that 54.2 per cent of households in the Gympie region consist of one or two people only, compared to 46.6 per cent in SEQ and 47.6 per cent in Australia.</p>

Demographic	Statistics		
Dwelling structure	Gympie region	Regional Queensland	Queensland
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separate house 86.9 per cent</li> <li>• Medium density 7 per cent</li> <li>• High density 0.3 per cent</li> <li>• Caravans, cabins 3.8 per cent</li> <li>• 3 bedrooms 42.1 per cent</li> <li>• 2 bedrooms 13.8 per cent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separate house 73 per cent</li> <li>• Medium density 16 per cent</li> <li>• High density 6.8 per cent</li> <li>• Caravans, cabins 2.8 per cent</li> <li>• 3 bedrooms 37.2 per cent</li> <li>• 2 bedrooms 16.5 per cent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separate house 73.6 per cent</li> <li>• Medium density 15.7 per cent</li> <li>• High density 7.8 per cent</li> <li>• Caravans, cabins 1.8 per cent</li> <li>• 3 bedrooms 37.2 per cent</li> <li>• 2 bedrooms 15.7 per cent</li> </ul>
	Note that despite the high per cent of households with two or less people in the Gympie region, the provision of housing type suited to this household type is low.		
People with disability over 65	44.5 per cent of people with need for assistance due to a severe or profound disability in the Gympie region are aged 65 years and over.		
Industry/employment	Healthcare and social assistance industry is 11.1 per cent of the region's full-time equivalent employment being the second largest industry by employment after construction at 12.3 per cent. This is followed by agriculture (10.7 per cent), manufacturing (10.6 per cent) and education (10 per cent).		
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No qualification 46.7 per cent compared to 40.9 per cent in Queensland</li> <li>• Bachelor Degree or higher 8.5 per cent compared to 18.3 per cent in Queensland</li> </ul>		
Unpaid carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gympie region 13.6 per cent</li> <li>• Australia 11.3 per cent</li> <li>• Regional Queensland 10.7 per cent</li> <li>• Queensland 10.7 per cent</li> </ul>		
Low income households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tin Can Bay/Cooloola Cove/Rainbow Beach 35.6 per cent</li> <li>• Kilkivan/Goomeri 33 per cent</li> <li>• Gympie city 29.1 per cent</li> <li>• Gympie region 26.4 per cent</li> <li>• Regional Queensland 19.4 per cent</li> <li>• Australia 18.0 per cent</li> <li>• Queensland 17.6 per cent</li> <li>• South East Queensland 16.2 per cent</li> </ul>		

## Change to population age structure from 2001 to 2016

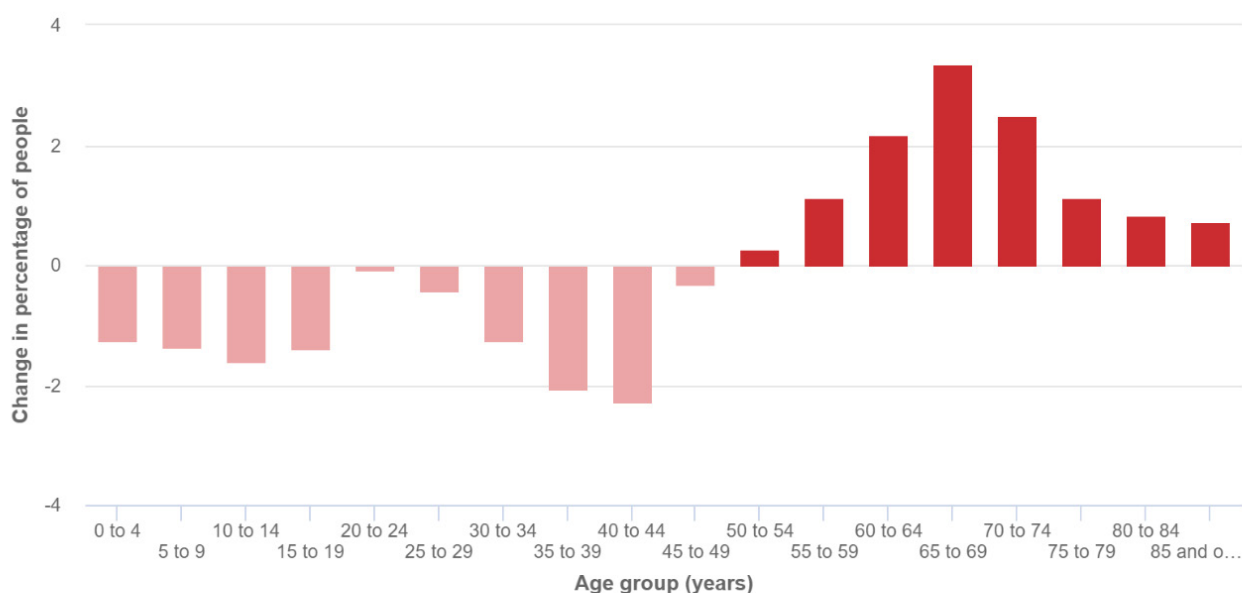
From 2001 to 2016, the population in the Gympie Region local government area increased by 12,100 people (32.3 per cent). This represents an average annual population change of 1.88 per cent per year over the period.

For Gympie region, the largest changes in the age structure between 2001 and 2016 were in the age groups:

- Empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69) (+3,960 people)
- Seniors (70 to 84) (+3,193 people)
- Older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59) (+2,355 people).

## Change in age structure - five year age groups, 2001 to 2016

Gympie Regional Council area - Total persons



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2001 and 2016 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions).

.id informed decisions

## Population 60 years and over by location

Location	2011	2016	per cent + or -
Tin Can Bay/Cooloola Cove/Rainbow Beach	33.7 per cent	49 per cent	+ 15.3 per cent
Kilkivan/Goomeri	29.7 per cent	32.6 per cent	+ 2.9 per cent
Gympie city	27.2 per cent	28.3 per cent	+ 0.8 per cent
Gympie region	26.6 per cent	30.3 per cent	+ 3.7 per cent
Regional Queensland	21.5 per cent	23 per cent	+ 1.5 per cent
South East Queensland	18.8 per cent	20.5 per cent	+ 1.7 per cent

### People who have moved address in the last 5 years

Location	as at 2016
South East Queensland	45.6 per cent
Gympie city	45 per cent
Regional Queensland	43.4 per cent
Tin Can Bay/Cooloola Cove/Rainbow Beach	39.6 per cent
Gympie Regional Council area	38.1 per cent
Kilkivan/Goomeri	30.4 per cent*

\* The Western area's lower "moving rate" supports working group members' representations that people in Kilkivan and Goomeri area tend to stay in their townships/rural properties longer and wish to stay living in their community.

## 3.2 GRC Seniors Consultations 2019

"Plan for our ageing community" was identified as a strategy in Council's 2017 – 2022 Corporate Plan, with the related action being "prepare an ageing strategy". In 2019, Council's Community Partnerships Team held five consultations with representative seniors' groups throughout the region to scope the needs of older residents:

- 30 May 2019 - Older Women's Network
- 12 June 2019 – Kilkivan Over 50's
- 18 June 2019 – Cooloola Coast Community Complex
- 24 June 2019 – Gympie Senior Citizens Club, Gympie U3A, Gympie Pensioners League, Gympie National Seniors
- 26 June 2019 – Goomeri Over 50's.

These sessions were comprised of a sample of older people, approximately 125 seniors living in the region. Participants of the research did not constitute an exhaustive list of organisations or individuals, but provided a starting point to gain a broad understanding of key needs and opportunities.

The community consultation sessions and the report that ensued provided foundational information and key themes for the present investigation into Ageing in Place Infrastructure and Services in the Western region.

## 3.3 Kilkivan and District Community Care Association Inc. Community Survey

This community led survey resulted in 88 surveys completed across Woolooga, Kilkivan and Goomeri townships in October/November 2020 (with 52 of the 88 respondents aged 66 and over). Respondents answered a series of questions relating to their current aged care services, needs, challenges and desire around ageing in place. The survey results found that priority issues were better access to medical services and access to community transport. The survey results also revealed a lack of awareness of how to access Aged Care Assessments and which services/information are already available to residents.



## 4. What Makes the Western Area Different?

While there are high rates of ageing across the Gympie region, there are a combination of factors that make the Western area different within our regional context:

- Second highest rate of aged population in the Gympie region
- Small population density, therefore a lack of “market demand” compared to bigger townships and new suburbs in the region
- Limited availability of medical and health services (e.g. lack of provision of full time General Practice). Currently a Sunshine Coast based GP visits the Kilkivan Health Centre once a fortnight for two days, and Murgon Family Medical Practice visits the Goomeri Health Centre once a month by appointment. In comparison, there are now three GP clinics on the Cooloola Coast located at Cooloola Cove, Tin Can Bay and Rainbow Beach servicing the growing population in that sub-region
- Rural/regional setting
- Lower comparative population growth
- Inter-generational attachment to place, multi-generational families. Younger family members leave which can create feelings of loss and lack of family support as compared to the Cooloola Coast where older people are choosing to move to the coast to retire and moving away from family in many instances.



## 5. Strategic Linkages/Broader Context

### 5.1 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety

The Final Report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety was tabled in Parliament on 1 March 2021. <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report>

In their Report, titled *Care, Dignity and Respect*, Royal Commissioners Tony Pagone QC and Lynelle Briggs AO called for fundamental reform of the aged care system:

*"The extent of substandard care in Australia's aged care system reflects both poor quality on the part of some aged care providers and fundamental systemic flaws with the way the Australian aged care system is designed and governed. People receiving aged care deserve better. The Australian community is entitled to expect better."*

The Royal Commissioners made 148 wide-ranging recommendations, including:

- A new *Aged Care Act* that puts older people first, enshrining their rights and providing a universal entitlement for high quality and safe care based on assessed need.
- An integrated system for the long-term support and care of older people and their ongoing community engagement.
- Support for development of 'small household' models of accommodation.

The Royal Commission report is comprised of five volumes. For the purposes of this Council report, officers have reviewed the Summary of the Final Report (pages 61 – 175) and the 148 recommendations (pages 205 - 309) of Volume 1 [https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-03/final-report-volume-1\\_0.pdf](https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-03/final-report-volume-1_0.pdf)

### 5.2 USC Healthy Ageing Hub – Gympie

USC is developing its regionally based campus as the USC Healthy Ageing Hub – Gympie to provide excellence in learning and research with a Health and Ageing foci.

USC Gympie is identifying existing and emerging regional issues related to the provision of, and accessibility of care for older people in the Gympie region. Initially, USC will focus on identifying skill and knowledge gaps in the care sector to determine priority-training areas aligned to local workforce needs (i.e. which education programs are needed locally, how and where to deliver; how to create career pathways by collaborating with local employers, schools, RTOs, TAFE and University; connectivity with Cooina Aged Care Centre).

USC and its partners will also work to identify research needs and establish networks and projects to address critical issues in the region, with the view to positioning Gympie as an Age Friendly City in alignment with the principles of WHO Age Friendly Communities. Councillor Stewart has been appointed to USC's Community Reference Group, which will





inform the development of the Hub.

## 5.3 PHN Healthy Ageing Strategy 2022-2027

The Central Queensland Wide Bay Sunshine Coast Primary Health Network (PHN), which services the Gympie region, worked with stakeholders across the region to produce the *Ageing well in our region: Healthy Ageing Strategy 2022-2027*. As outlined in the Executive Summary at page 6 of the Strategy, PHN states:

*The vision is that: "As people age, they have a valued place in community, are healthy, active, resilient and connected and are empowered to live the life of their choice." Using a life-course and functionality approach, the Strategy provides a framework to achieving this vision and responding to the needs of our communities through the action plan.*

*The actions within the plan are presented under four Strategic Priority Areas:*

- 1. People stay healthy, well and independent throughout their lives*
- 2. People with acute and chronic conditions live well with the care they need when they need it as close to home as possible*
- 3. Equitable access to systems for long term care and respectful end of life is available for people that need it*
- 4. The aged care system is progressive, sustainable and equitable through integrated and continuous system improvement.*

*In setting out this Strategy and action plan, we emphasise the need for a whole-of-society response, working together and in collaboration across sectors and agencies to transform systems and build age-friendly communities. Older people themselves are at the centre of this plan, which brings together governments, agencies, providers, professionals, academia, and the private sector to improve the lives of older people, their families and their communities. Implementing the action plan requires collective action, and the plan therefore identifies key players and those best placed to be the lead agency.*



## 6. Government Responsibilities

While Federal Government holds ultimate responsibility for the provision of aged care in Australia, it is increasingly recognised that local government has a key role to play in initiatives that encourage and facilitate ageing well. 'Partnerships' or 'collaboration' between public, private and community sectors underlie the national and state policy agendas in regard to services and infrastructure for older Australians.

*Members of Council's Ageing in Place Project Working*

*Group* have explored ways in which local government can positively affect the ability of seniors to age in place and age well in the Gympie Region.

### 6.1 Gympie Regional Council contribution to ageing in place and ageing well

It is submitted that Council can support ageing in place and ageing well through:

- land use planning and design that improves liveability for seniors (e.g. footpaths, disability and seniors parking, universal design in new housing developments/subdivisions and accessibility to public spaces and facilities);
- advocating for better health and ageing services in our region;
- funding and facilitating social and cultural activities and events to enable community connection and wellbeing;
- maintaining community facilities such as libraries and community halls to enable older people to participate in civic life;
- partnering with funded services, local community groups and other levels of government to create community awareness and education around issues such as digital literacy and elder abuse;
- attracting investment for public/private infrastructure that meet the needs of older people across the region and increases employment opportunities for local residents;
- collaborating with industry, tertiary education and community sectors in developing new projects



and/or research to achieve better outcomes for older people in our region;

- advocating for or supporting better public transport options.

## 7. Consolidated Findings and Recommendations

- Table A below outlines the key findings and regional responses.
- While the Western area was used as a starting point, many of the recommendations can be applied for the Gympie region to improve outcomes for all seniors in the region.
- The Regional Responses column in Table A outlines measures that have already commenced or been completed as at June 2022, as well as articulating recommendations for future action.
- Relevant recommendations and extracts from the Aged Care Royal Commission Final Report (2021) are included to provide insight into the broader reform agenda for Australian aged care and highlight potential application in the Gympie region.
- If the Recommendations for Council Action outlined in this Report are endorsed by Council, the Chief Executive Officer of Gympie Regional

Council will allocate timeframes on Council recommended actions and assign business unit responsibility.

## 8. Conclusion

The Project Working Group has deliberated a broad range of multi-sector issues which impact older persons' ability to age in place and age well, particularly in the Western area of the Gympie Region. Participants identified strengths, challenges and potential solutions for issues ranging from availability of medical services to volunteer burn out, from lack of market/profit driven models of care to townships' loss of older people as they relocate to more urban settings. Members of the Project Working Group emphasised that a more nuanced approach to ageing is required in our region, rather than the binary approach of older persons either leaving their community to access aged care services or remaining in their home without the medical and support services they need.

Members acknowledge that the challenges and opportunities posed by an ageing population can and must be addressed through collaboration; genuine place based solutions; adequate resourcing and a positive reconceptualisation of what it means to age and be an older person in the Gympie region.

The recommended actions in this report are submitted



to Council to assist in realising many local residents desire to stay living in the Gympie region as they age. Both Council and external funding may be leveraged to resource these actions.

## TABLE A – Consolidated Findings and Recommendations

### 1. Community, health and aged care services

#### **Aged Care Royal Commission Final Report – Relevant recommendations and extracts**

##### ***Recommendation 3: Key Principles - The new Aged Care Act ...***

- vii. To the fullest extent possible, older people should receive support and care in the location they choose or, where that is not possible, in the setting most appropriate to their circumstances and preferences.
- ix. Older people should have equal access to support and care irrespective of their location or personal circumstances or preferences.

##### ***Recommendation 25: A new aged care program***

##### ***Recommendation 26: Improved public awareness of aged care***

***Recommendation 27: More accessible and usable information on aged care*** - This should include developing a comprehensive provider search function on My Aged Care that allows people to review and compare:

- a. information on the kinds of services the provider delivers, including whether providers of home care services offered in regional, rural and remote areas are locally available;
- b. information on service capacity and use.

***Recommendation 32: Respite supports category*** - From 1 July 2022, the Australian Government should implement a respite supports category within the aged care program that:

- a. supports the availability of respite for the carers of older people earlier and more often to maintain their wellbeing and to sustain the caring relationship;
- b. provides a greater range of high quality respite support in people's homes, in cottages and in purpose-built facilities;
- c. provides people with up to 63 days of respite per calendar year;
- d. is grant funded with a potential capital component in areas where supply is inadequate.

***Recommendation 35: Care at home category*** - This category:

- a. supports older people living at home, to preserve and restore capacity for independent and dignified living to the greatest extent and prevents inappropriate admission to long-term residential care.

***Recommendation 39: Meeting preferences to age in place*** - The Australian Government should clear the Home Care Package waiting list, otherwise known as the National Prioritisation System, by:

- a. immediately increasing the Home Care Packages available and allocating a package to all people on the waiting list that do not yet have a package or do not yet have a package at the level they have been approved for (as set out in their letter from the Aged Care Assessment Team / Service). The package allocated should be at the level the person was approved for (Level 1, 2, 3 or 4). This must be completed by 31 December 2021.

***Recommendation 54: Ensuring the provision of aged care in regional, rural and***

**remote areas** - The System Governor should ensure that older people in regional, rural and remote locations are able to access aged care in their community equitably with other Australians by:

- a. identifying areas where service supply is inadequate, and b. actively responding by planning for, and supplementing services to meet entitlements and needs.

**Recommendation 55: The Multi-Purpose Services Program** - From 1 December 2021, the Australian Government, working together with State and Territory Governments, should maintain and extend the Multi-Purpose Services Program by:

- a. establishing new Multi-Purpose Services in accordance with community need as identified by the System Governor, including:
  - ii. in areas where there is not an existing acute health service, but governments agree that a combined aged care and health service would address local needs.

**Recommendation 58: Access to specialists and other health practitioners through Multidisciplinary Outreach Services –**

1. By 1 January 2022, the Australian and State and Territory Governments should introduce Local Hospital Network-led multidisciplinary outreach services.
3. The amended National Health Reform Agreement should include a recurrent and sustainable funding mechanism to stimulate outreach services.

**Recommendation 62: Enhance the Rural Health Outreach Fund to improve access to medical specialists for people receiving aged care** - The Australian Government should:

- a. amend the priorities of the Rural Health Outreach Fund by 1 July 2021 to include delivery of:
  - i. geriatrician services in regional, rural and remote Australia, and
  - ii. medical specialist services to people receiving aged care in regional, rural and remote Australia
- b. increase, for these additional priorities, the annual funds available by \$9.6 million, starting in the 2021–22 financial year, and

- c. ensure that these additional priorities of the Fund are maintained on an ongoing basis.

**Recommendation 63: Access to specialist telehealth services**

Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional Response
In home care services	<p>Multiple providers advise that they are servicing the area including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sunicare</li> <li>• Centacare</li> <li>• Bluecare</li> <li>• Anglicare</li> <li>• Home Instead</li> <li>• Leonie’s Caring.</li> </ul> <p>Potential for more seniors to get an ACAT (Aged Care Assessment Team) assessment and seek services, thereby increasing the market demand and supply of services.</p>	<p>Shortage of Commonwealth Home Support Packages (CHSP), resulting in long wait times.</p> <p>Shortage in funding for in home care packages.</p> <p>Lack of local providers with the workforce capacity to meet current and future need.</p> <p>Smaller population means a service driving to Kilkivan for one hour/one client is not efficient nor desirable.</p> <p>Potential unwillingness of community members to engage support (due to stigma, changing staff, poor experiences).</p> <p>Confusion over process.</p> <p>Waiting until crisis point before reaching out to services.</p> <p>Supply issues – not enough staff when positions advertised.</p>	<p><b>In progress/available/completed</b></p> <p>K&amp;DCCA: In May 2022, K&amp;DCCA launched a “self-managed home care model” in partnership with Mable and Trilogy Care to enable local residents to have greater care choice and value and increase local employment opportunities.</p> <p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>K&amp;DCCA: Encourage RAS, ACAT &amp; My Aged Care, NDIS registration amongst Kilkivan and Goomeri residents, and where possible support this through working collaboratively with the GP, Nurse Practitioner and Nurse Navigator to drive referrals.</p> <p>Federal Government implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission.</p>

Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional Response
Kilkivan Health Centre	<p>Several services operating out of the health centre.</p> <p>Provides access to a GP.</p> <p>Bulk billing or low/nil cost for all services.</p> <p>Known practitioners at Kilkivan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GP 2 days per f/n</li> <li>• Nurse Practitioner 1 day per week</li> <li>• Podiatrist 1 day per FN</li> <li>• Physio 1 day per month</li> <li>• Counsellor 1 day per month</li> <li>• Women's health specialist quarterly</li> <li>• Interest from new occupational therapist.</li> </ul> <p>PHN produces a "Kilkivan and Goomeri Health Services Guide" updated August 2021.</p>	<p>Booking service for some practitioners but not all.</p> <p>Practitioner sustainability in some areas (e.g. podiatrist, GP); lack of take up in other areas (e.g. the women's counsellor).</p>	<p><b>In progress/available/completed</b></p> <p>Three workshops facilitated by PHN in 2021 to develop a sustainable model for the centre, including expansion of the booking service.</p> <p>New Bookings officer appointed in 2021 for majority of practitioners at the centre.</p> <p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC Action 1: Continue to advocate for improved and place appropriate health and medical services in Gympie and regional townships.</p>

Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional Response
Access to online services	<p>Telehealth is increasingly more available.</p> <p>Kilkivan branch office can be used for telehealth but not widely known or advertised.</p> <p>Local libraries in Kilkivan and Goomeri have Wi-Fi to enable residents to access on-line information and registration.</p>	<p>Low computer literacy among some residents.</p> <p>Difficulty navigating My Aged Care.</p> <p>Limited to no internet access in some black spot areas that limits access to a range of services.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC Action 2: Continue to advocate to Telecommunication companies and Federal government to address network black spots and reliability in the region.</p> <p>GRC Action 3: Facilitate information sessions in Council libraries about on-line services for aged care, carer's gateways and support services (i.e. partnership with My Aged Care, Nurse Navigators or providers to run programs throughout regional libraries).</p> <p>GRC Action 4: Council continue to provide and/or increase computer literacy sessions in Council libraries.</p> <p>Federal Government implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission</p>
Carers	<p>Carers Gateway (plays a brokerage role in addressing the needs of carers).</p> <p>Over 50s groups in both Goomeri and Kilkivan provide an outing for carers.</p>	<p>Carers fatigue.</p> <p>Diminishing resource (i.e. less people to assist older people in the community, gaps are getting bigger, people have busy lives).</p> <p>Lack of volunteers to take on informal carer/support roles (e.g. what the neighbour may have done).</p>	<p><b>In progress/available/completed</b></p> <p>GRC staff connected K&amp;DCCA to Wellways Carers Gateway.</p> <p>Wellways hosting morning teas and outreach across the region.</p> <p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC Action 5: Invite Wellways Carers Gateway and similar Carer Peak bodies to provide information at Seniors Month activities and community gatherings.</p>



Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional Response
Outreach services	<p>Services can visit the K&amp;DCCA Seniors Hub to raise awareness and deliver services to community.</p> <p>Kilkivan Health Centre is available for use by outreach services.</p>	<p>Hesitation by local residents to use outreach services.</p> <p>Lack of privacy at the Health Centre which is particular to rural and remote areas (e.g. domestic violence counsellor attending on a specific day, everyone in town aware that you are seeing that counsellor on that day).</p> <p>Transient in nature (constantly changing in terms of availability, funding).</p> <p>Historically different views on whether access to medical services is a basic human right (or even taxpayer's right in Australia) vs the view that that market (and population density) determine access to health and ageing services. The Royal Commission Report places more emphasis on universal access to aged care support regardless of location (see recommendation 1 (3a).</p>	<p><b>In progress/available/completed</b></p> <p>Gympie &amp; District Women's Health – outreach to Kilkivan.</p> <p>PHN meeting re Kilkivan Health Centre.</p> <p>K&amp;DCCCA installed a defibrillator outside the General Store in Kilkivan, accessible 24/7 in the main street.</p> <p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC Action 6: Within health and human services networks such as Gympie Collaborative Network, Cooloola Human Services Network, Local Level Alliance and Housing Networks, Council staff and elected Councillors to continue advocating for expansion of services and State and Commonwealth Government funding for programs outside of Gympie.</p>

## 2. Infrastructure/built environment

### **Recommendation 45: Improving the design of aged care accommodation**

- The Australian Government should guide the design of the best and most appropriate residential aged care accommodation for older people by:
  - a. developing and publishing by 1 July 2022 a comprehensive set of National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines on accessible and dementia friendly design for residential aged care, which should be:
    - i. capable of application to 'small household' models of accommodation as well as to enablement and respite accommodation settings

### **Recommendation 46: Capital grants for 'small household' models of accommodation** -

1. From 1 January 2022, the Australian Government should provide additional capital grants for building or upgrading residential aged care facilities to provide small-scale congregate living.
2. The amount of annual grant funding should be increased to \$300 million in 2021–22, \$600 million in 2022–23 and \$1 billion in 2023–24, and should be indexed for inflation in subsequent years.
3. Priority for these capital grants should be given to approved providers whose premises have or will have a majority of aged care residents who are (within the meaning of section 7 of the Grant Principles 2014 (Cth)) in one or more of the following categories:
  - a. low-means care recipients, supported residents, concessional residents or assisted residents
  - b. people with special needs
  - c. people who live in a location where there is a demonstrated need for additional residential care services
  - d. people who do not live in a major city.

4. The capital grants program for building or upgrading residential aged care facilities to provide small-scale congregate living should continue after the introduction of the new Act.

### **Recommendation 142: Phasing out of Refundable Accommodation Deposits**

(Commissioner Briggs)- The Australian Government should:

- a. from 1 July 2025, begin to phase out Refundable Accommodation Deposits for new residents
- b. assist providers with the transition away from Refundable Accommodation Deposits as a source of capital by establishing an aged care accommodation capital facility, with the terms and conditions of assistance designed to create incentives for providers to develop small household models of accommodation.



Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional Response
Community Facilities	<p>Halls</p> <p>Character of older buildings (hotel, museum, churches)</p> <p>Community Health Centres – Kilkivan and Goomeri</p> <p>Libraries at Goomeri and Kilkivan</p> <p>Council Branch Office at Kilkivan</p> <p>Churches</p> <p>Bowls Clubs</p> <p>Other Halls (CWA, Mens Shed etc.)</p>	<p>Some shortcomings with existing facilities (i.e. residents noted acoustics in the hall and supper room).</p>	<p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC Action 7: To the greatest extent possible, maintain and enhance community facilities (such as libraries and community halls) to enable older people to participate in and design social activities to increase community connection and reduce the negative health impacts of social isolation.</p>
Aged care facilities	<p>Number of existing aged care residential facilities available in Gympie region, with further development applications pending or approved.</p>	<p>Commercial operators unlikely to operate high care facility in Kilkivan/Goomeri due to low population density.</p>	<p><b>In progress/available/completed</b></p> <p>Western District residents can seek to access Gympie aged care facilities, as their medical needs escalate.</p> <p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC Action 8: As part of future economic development and/or planning initiatives, include investment attraction for small-scale respite and residential aged care centres in areas out of Gympie.</p>
Council “Pensioner Units”	<p>Managed by Community Action Inc.</p> <p>Eight units at Kilkivan.</p> <p>Twelve units at Goomeri.</p>	<p>The facilities may be improved by further capital investment.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC Action 9: Explore future tenure arrangements and opportunities for Council owned “pensioner units” across the region to enable more low care, accessible and affordable accommodation for older persons.</p>

Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional Response
<p>Group home/ units - affordable, accessible rental accommodation for older persons not requiring high levels of medical or supported care</p>	<p><b>Proposal of K&amp;DCCA (developing)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community managed, not for profit model for affordable, supported living accommodation.</li> <li>• Mix of semi-permanent and temporary low cost rental accommodation to meet the needs of local community (i.e. short-term temporary accommodation for people recovering after hospital or if their carer is unwell; semi-permanent accommodation for older people with low care needs wishing to downsize from large or inappropriate housing).</li> <li>• Local solution to support local residents through transitional needs.</li> <li>• Reduce demand on carers.</li> <li>• Small community feel, with increased companionship for residents.</li> <li>• Continued contact with locals.</li> <li>• Provides an ageing in place solution for a small number of people.</li> <li>• Increased mental health as residents can remain living in their local community and retain contact with locals (e.g. the general store, library, park etc.).</li> </ul>	<p>Finding upfront capital investment.</p> <p>Having a comprehensive “feasibility study and business case” to satisfy funding bodies.</p>	<p><b>In progress/available/completed</b></p> <p>K&amp;DCCA to pursue this proposal with community, government and private sector collaborators.</p> <p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC Action 10: Explore opportunities for a small scale, affordable, place appropriate accommodation centre in the Western district of Gympie Region/Kilkivan when a confirmed Business Case and Feasibility Study is submitted to Council outlining the upfront capital costs, evidenced based operating model and funding plan. Collaboration with industry stakeholders to ensure the model is appropriate for a rural setting is vital (e.g. access to staff, the “feel and look” of the facility).</p>

Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional Response
<p>Group home/ units - affordable, accessible rental accommodation for older persons not requiring high levels of medical or supported care, continued</p>	<p>The K&amp;DCCA proposal has elements of many of the innovative models of residential aged care that are documented in a November 2019 Research Paper that was prepared for the Royal Commission <a href="https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-01/research-paper-3-review-innovative-models-of-aged-care.pdf">https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-01/research-paper-3-review-innovative-models-of-aged-care.pdf</a></p>		
<p>Day respite</p>	<p>Increasing levels of demand.</p> <p>Vacant community facilities and land that could be used.</p> <p>Active community organisation (K&amp;DCCA) advocating for the establishment of day respite.</p> <p>New models for providing day respite in collaboration with universities to enable educational experiences and training for students and also examples of using civic centres.</p>	<p>Nil in Goomeri and Kilkivan.</p> <p>Variability of demand with low population levels.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC Action 11: Undertake an Expression of Interest to establish a trial respite service from Kilkivan Hall premises.</p> <p>This will involve exploring partnerships and funding between Council, tertiary institutions and the age care sector to deliver a respite service in Kilkivan (e.g. one day a week pilot program operated out of the Kilkivan Hall engaging students on placement under supervision).</p>

Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional Response
Land Use Planning and Housing Stock	<p>Drive for universal design and accessibility to be included across public and private developments.</p> <p>Community desire to stay living in their township or the region if the right range of housing is available.</p> <p>As older people downsize to smaller housing types, there will be more larger homes available for families.</p>	<p>Older residential, commercial and public buildings not always fit for purpose for older people.</p> <p>Older residential housing in Kilkivan and Goomeri is often highset which can be expensive to retrofit and modify.</p> <p>Perceived/real limitations on “granny flats” in planning processes.</p> <p>Limited amount of 1-2 bedroom smaller residential dwellings or town houses to accommodate older people if they wish to move out of family homes or farm properties.</p> <p>Home and ground maintenance are key challenges for older people, and increase the desire to “downshift”.</p> <p>Lack of community understanding about how to have relocatable homes, tiny homes, modular houses etc. on existing private properties.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC Action 12: Ensure that strategic land use planning, policy and regulatory instruments within Gympie Regional Council’s scope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) enable increased universal design and accessibility for future development</li> <li>b) enable a more diverse range of housing types within the Gympie Region to provide more choice for older people</li> <li>c) in particular, during the development of the new Local Planning Scheme for Gympie Region, ensure ageing population forecasts, research and consultation is undertaken to plan for the housing needs and liveability of older people (i.e. housing mix, housing land and supply, future demand for retirement villages and aged care facilities, proximity to services and transport infrastructure, subdivision and neighbourhood design, development of public spaces such as footpaths/older people car parking).</li> </ul>

Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional Response
Land Use Planning and Housing Stock, continued			<p>GRC Action 13: Explore any impediments under the State Planning Act to increasing housing type, density and innovative age-appropriate housing for the region.</p> <p>As outlined in Action 8 above, as part of future economic development and/or planning initiatives, GRC to include investment attraction for small-scale respite and residential aged care centres in areas out of Gympie.</p>

### 3. Social connection and wellbeing

#### Aged Care Royal Commission Final Report – Relevant recommendations and extracts

**Recommendation 33: Social supports category** - From 1 July 2022, the Australian Government should implement a social supports category within the aged care program that:

- a. provides supports that reduce and prevent social isolation and loneliness among older people
- b. can be coordinated to the greatest practicable extent in each location with services and activities provided by local government, community organisations and business designed to enhance the wellbeing of older people
- c. includes centre-based day care and the social support, delivered meals and transport service types from the Commonwealth Home Support Programme
- d. is grant funded.

#### **Recommendation 44: Volunteers and Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme**

- From 1 July 2021, the Australian Government should promote volunteers and volunteering in aged care to support older people to live a meaningful and dignified life and supplement the support and care provided to them through the aged care system, whether in their own home or in a residential care home by:

- a. increasing the funding to the Volunteer Grants under the Families and Communities Program – Volunteer Grants Activity in 2021–22 to support organisations and community groups to recruit, train and support volunteers who provide assistance to older people
- c. providing additional funding, and expanding the Community Visitors Scheme and changing its name to the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme, to provide extended support for older people receiving aged care who are at risk of social isolation.

Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional response
Seniors activities to increase social connection and physical and mental health	<p>Over 50s meet in Goomeri and Kilkivan Halls on monthly basis.</p> <p>K&amp;DCCA commenced running monthly senior’s hub in August 2020 at the Kilkivan Hall Supper Room.</p> <p>Existing broad range of social activities/ facilities in the Western district including CWA, Mens Shed, Bowls Clubs, museum, markets.</p>	<p>Generational churn meaning that social support and activities are being restricted (i.e. socialising with family has been reduced).</p> <p>Recent defunding of Suncare Over 50s groups.</p> <p>Funding models (based on numbers, short timeframes).</p>	<p><b>In progress/available/completed</b></p> <p>Regular social activities are provided by community groups and regional libraries to support social cohesion in the absence of regular family support.</p> <p>GRC staff connected K&amp;DCCA to Relationships Australia, Senior Social Connection Program.</p>



Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional response
Seniors activities to increase social connection and physical and mental health, continued			<p>K&amp;DCCAI facilitated the “Memory Lounge” with Griffith University and the Queensland State Archives. In January and September 2021, local seniors gathered for a cuppa with Griffith University students in Kilkivan and considered archival photos from State Archives.</p> <p>K&amp;DCCA facilitated the Biography Project with Griffith University – two seniors shared their life stories with Griffith University students over the phone. Books were presented to the residents.</p> <p>Griffith University students also phoned self-selected seniors for a weekly chat over a 2-month period – designed to raise students’ awareness of ageing issues as well as reducing social isolation.</p> <p>K&amp;DCCA publishing a free, monthly newsletter called “Kilkivan &amp; District Kickstart”.</p>

Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional response
Seniors activities to increase social connection and physical and mental health, continued			<p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC Action 14: Continue to provide Community Grants Programs that community groups can access to deliver activities and events across the region.</p> <p>GRC Action 15: Continue to provide community groups with low cost hire charges for Kilkivan and Goomeri Halls to host community activities.</p> <p>GRC Action 16: Continue to provide affordable arts and cultural programs through the Regional Gallery, Gympie Civic Centre, Community Halls and Libraries to enable seniors to enrich their cultural wellbeing, increase mental health outcomes, social connections and community pride.</p> <p>GRC Action 17: Expand the Heart Foundation Walking Group program in the region through increased promotion, and community development support for volunteer walk organisers.</p> <p>GRC Action 18: Facilitate and/or seek funding to deliver active and healthy programs for seniors across the region.</p>

Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional response
Volunteering	<p>Ageing residents have time, expertise and experience to offer to the community.</p> <p>Volunteers at the Kilkivan and District Museum, Bowls Club, CWA and other community groups.</p> <p>Provide sense of purpose and positive contribution by older residents.</p> <p>Broad benefits to the community from the services provided by senior volunteers.</p>	<p>If seniors have to leave the area to access more appropriate housing options or health services, this volunteer contribution and wealth of community connection is lost.</p> <p>Less people available for volunteering.</p> <p>Burnout of existing volunteers.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC Action 19: Continue to provide Community Grants Programs that support volunteering and volunteer operated groups, with ability for grant funding to cover project coordinators work to decrease volunteer burnout and financial burden.</p>
Reliable telecommunications	<p>Libraries with internet access.</p>	<p>Absence or variability of quality internet access and mobile reception.</p> <p>Lack of internet and mobile reception limits communication with friends and family (thereby increasing social isolation), as well as reducing community safety as residents' contact with medical and emergency services is compromised.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC: As per Action 2, continue to advocate to Telecommunication companies and Federal government to address network black spots and reliability in the region.</p>

Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional response
Interpersonal relationships	<p>Small community feeling.</p> <p>Long-term relationships.</p> <p>Smaller population increases ease in establishing community connections (e.g. weekly/daily interaction with regular customers at Post Office, General Store).</p> <p>Local businesses can play a role in bringing people together.</p>	<p>Smaller population can lead to increased tensions and potential for misinformation.</p> <p>Unconscious bias against new people (potential mistrust or discouragement of "outsiders"/newcomers).</p>	<p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC Action 20: Partner with funded services, local community groups and other levels of government to create community awareness about stereotypes, biases and social issues relating to older people.</p> <p>GRC and its GRC funded/sponsored event organisers Action 21: Promote activities and events for seniors and new comers to the region to encourage personalised, face-to-face, relationship-based interactions.</p>
Dementia Friendly Communities	<p>Increasing community and academic focus on creating community awareness and support for people with dementia and their carers.</p> <p>Better cognitive capacity is maintained for people with dementia if familiar surroundings and people can be maintained for as long as possible.</p>	<p>If there are inadequate or no accommodation options available in your township/community, residents with high needs arising from dementia often need to enter residential aged care.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC Action 22: Continue to provide Council Community Grants programs to support community led projects that improve social outcomes (e.g. community workshops and projects relating to dementia friendly communities).</p>

## 4. Transport

Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional Response
<p>Transport from regional townships to and from Gympie</p>	<p>Graham House services clients in Goomeri and Kilkivan.</p> <p>Pursers Bus company has offered shopping trip for Goomeri seniors to visit stores in Goomeri.</p> <p>K&amp;DCCA KilkiVAN Project successfully obtained grant funding to purchase a vehicle and has commenced services to and from Gympie, Goomeri and Murgon.</p> <p>Gympie Medical Transport may have future potential to service Kilkivan (focused on medical appointments) if other providers not able to meet demand.</p> <p>PHN funded Graham House to bolster the availability of their existing transport service to attend various medical, social and business services in the Goomeri and Kilkivan area. Was funded for three years until 30 June 2016.</p>	<p>K&amp;DCCA resident survey of 2020 ranked the lack of transport as one of the two biggest challenges of ageing in place.</p> <p>Commercial operators have trialed services in the past, but insufficient regular users, potentially due to the service not being tailored to seniors needs (i.e. time to go to Gympie to shop and/or attend appointments).</p> <p>Currently no public transport available for residents to go food shopping in Gympie from Kilkivan and Goomeri, however this situation may be improved with increased availability of community transport options (i.e. Kilkivan and Graham House).</p> <p>Potential hesitancy to use the Graham House transport options as there may be a community perception that the volunteers are coming from Murgon and it is a “burden” on those Murgon drivers.</p>	<p><b>In progress/available/completed</b></p> <p>GRC staff advocated to Gympie Medical Transport to service Kilkivan area.</p> <p>GRC staff connected K&amp;DCCA to Gympie Medical Transport.</p> <p>K&amp;DCCA secured grant to purchase KilkiVAN and has commenced services to and from Gympie, Goomeri &amp; Murgon.</p> <p>GRC has provided K&amp;DCCA with tenure to store the Kilkivan at the shed on Bligh St, Kilkivan.</p> <p>GRC staff confirmed that Graham House provides low cost/free community transport to seniors and people under 65 (not eligible for NDIS) for social, medical and other appointment from Kilkivan, Goomeri and surrounds to Gympie and beyond if needed. In late 2021, Graham House had two cars in Kilkivan and 2 Kilkivan volunteers. Approximately \$20 donation from client to go from Kilkivan to Gympie and back but price is negotiable. Can take multiple people in the car if parties agree.</p>

Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional Response
Transport from regional townships to and from Gympie, continued		PHN has previously funded Pursers Coaches to extend their original one day per week service to two days per week to coincide with the day the GP visits Kilkivan. This service aimed to target Goomeri residents who are transport disadvantaged and to enable better health outcomes for Goomeri population through improved access to health services. Was funded for three years until 30 June 2016.	<p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC Action 23: Advocate to the State Government to establish Translink services across the region to provide residents with better access to public transport services.</p>
Up to Date Information on Transport Options in Gympie Region	<p>PHN produces a "Gympie Transport Options" brochure.</p> <p>Other local governments provide accessible information about transport on their websites.</p>	Lack of easily accessible public information on public and community transport options in the region.	<p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC Action 24: Collaborate with Translink to update the Transport Information on Council's website including information about transport for seniors and community operated transport providers.</p>

## 5. Career pathways for aged care and services that support seniors

**Aged Care Royal Commission Final Report – Relevant recommendations and extracts**

***Recommendation 75: Aged care workforce planning***

***Recommendation 79: Review of certificate-based courses for aged care***

***Recommendation 81: Ongoing professional development of the aged care workforce***

***Recommendation 82: Review of health professions' undergraduate curricula***

***Recommendation 83: Funding for teaching aged care programs***

***Recommendation 84: Increases in award wages***

***Recommendation 85: Improved remuneration for aged care workers***

Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional response
Local workforce for aged and community support	Local community members have skills and qualifications within the industry.	<p>Inability to attract and retain sufficient number of staff.</p> <p>Generally, not well paid positions.</p> <p>Staff from out of region driving to Gympie region to fill the jobs gaps.</p> <p>Gympie residents drive out of region for work – inefficient – leading to staff shortages.</p>	<p><b>In progress/available/completed</b></p> <p>In May 2022, K&amp;DCCA launched a “self-managed home care model” in partnership with Mable and Trilogy Care. This model has enabled self-employed people in the region to register on the Mable platform and offer a broad range of services (medication management, cleaning, yard maintenance, social and transport support, etc.).</p> <p>Service providers are creating stronger networks with RTOs in the region.</p> <p>USC Healthy Ageing Hub – Gympie is increasing the profile, and training and education opportunities, of aged care and allied health/care fields in Gympie region.</p>

Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional response
Local workforce for aged and community support, continued			<p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>Federal Government implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission.</p> <p>USC/TAFE/Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and Local age care/ seniors services collaborate to hold a Careers Expo and Recruitment Drive to inspire young people and mature aged employees to engage in training and careers to support and care for older persons.</p>
Lack of career pathways and awareness of opportunities in the aged care and community support fields	<p>Nursing Degree is available at Gympie USC.</p> <p>TAFE Gympie offers range of courses in aged care and allied health.</p> <p>Human Services courses at TAFE and Uni.</p> <p>USC offers a Graduate Certificate in Aged Care.</p> <p>Local Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) are providing training in aged care.</p>	<p>Limited higher education qualifications in aged care fields (outside allied health that may detract from people entering the field).</p> <p>Lack of awareness of career opportunities in the industry.</p> <p>Negative perceptions of career opportunities.</p> <p>Privatisation of education may affect the quality of certification in aged care sector.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>Progress USC Healthy Ageing Hub – Gympie, which includes education programs and pathways (pre pathways course).</p> <p>Federal Government implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission.</p>



Sub-topic	Strengths	Challenges	Regional response
Informal volunteers and unpaid carer workforce	High level of unpaid carers supporting others in their community or families.	<p>Burnout.</p> <p>Less family around to support.</p> <p>Fragility of volunteer unpaid workers creates fragility within the wider community.</p> <p>Reliance on volunteers and ageing volunteers is unsustainable.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation/future action</b></p> <p>GRC Action 25: Collaborate with industry and tertiary institutes (including USC Healthy Ageing Hub – Gympie) to develop models that deliver more respite services across the region in community facilities to reduce the reliance on unpaid carers and volunteers.</p>