

ACTIVE AGEING PROJECT – Reshaping aged care

Giving older people what they want – not what we think they need

The new generation of older people is looking for more than just personal care and home support services – they want individualised programs that will enable them to age independently in their own homes and stay connected with their local communities.

That's the message that's been given to the Eastern Regional Alliance (ERA) of councils in Adelaide following detailed consultation with more than 500 older people living in ERA's six council areas.

It was found they are looking for a broader and more sophisticated range of volunteer roles and increased access to community-based learning opportunities - and they are increasingly expecting local government to provide the answers.

However, the evidence from ERA councils is that social support and community participation programs are over-subscribed and unable to meet the needs of the estimated 8000 older people who are increasingly socially isolated across the region.

ERA has proposed development of a new model of regional community care that increases choice and control and enables more active engagement in community life.

The new care model for eastern Adelaide would focus be as much on creating new experiences and facilitating relationships as it would be about providing showers and cleaning.

ERA proposes to support the training and professional development of a new generation of care workers who deliver personal care, home and social support by enhancing personal capacity and enabling thriving lives.

The ERA councils believe that when older people are empowered to make decisions regarding the issues that affect their lives, when they are active participants in flexible and responsive services, when they participate as volunteers and are connected to their communities, they are enlivened and enriched and in turn they enliven and enrich their communities.

As volunteer mentors, advisers and trainers, older people would work alongside TAFE SA and ERA staff to help design and deliver the required training, with student placements made available through ERA councils and their contracted service providers.

In the long term, the project is designed to shape a better trained, more stable care workforce in eastern Adelaide for a new generation of older people who have different goals, aspirations and interests from the generation that proceeded them.

Care-workers will be encouraged to move beyond the provision of traditional personal care and home care services and respond flexibly and creatively to the care and respite needs of a new generation of educated and demanding baby boomers of eastern Adelaide."

Working in partnership with the Australian Centre for Social Innovation, new tools would be developed that assist older people in moving beyond their limitations and disabilities and focusing instead on activities and experiences that lead to a thriving life.

ERA will also work in partnership with the proposed Wellbeing Institute and the work of Dr Martin Seligman to incorporate strategies aligned with his theory of Wellbeing and PERMA (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment). These strategies will improve wellbeing and decrease the risk of mental illness by measuring wellbeing, applying proven wellbeing interventions and undertaking applied research in the region to determine the efficacy of interventions

ERA councils would work in collaboration with other service providers and community organisations to expand the range of opportunities that are available for older people.

The project is consistent with the directions of the Productivity Commission's report into *Caring for Older Australians* and the Commonwealth's *Living Longer Living Better* policy, which both confirm the importance of independence, choice, connection and participation:

"Older Australians generally want to remain independent and in control of how and where they live; to stay connected and relevant to their families and communities; and to be able to exercise some measure of choice over their care," the Commission reported.