

## National Ageing Research Institute

### Inquiry into Environmental Infrastructure for Growing Populations

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Prof Pazit Levinger

<https://www.nari.net.au/>

## About the National Ageing Research Institute (NARI)

- Australia's only independent Medical Research Institute (MRI) devoted to research on ageing
- strong emphasis on **translation into policy and practice** across health and community settings
- **widely networked** across ageing and aged care service, advocacy and research nationally and internationally
- 55 strong multi-disciplinary team covering social, clinical and public health aspects of ageing
- 44 year history and strong reputation



## What drives us

- Mission/aim to make significant improvements to the lives of older Australians
- Understand the 'gap' - what can be done
- Research-driven process
- Opportunities to collaborate and work together



## Few facts - ageing population and covid19

- Global population forecasts suggest the proportion of people aged 60 years and over will continue to increase and will nearly double from 12% to 22% by 2050.
- The World Health Organisation estimated that by 2020 the number of people aged 60 years and older will outnumber children younger than 5 years

## 2020 - a challenging year

Older people in particular have been impacted- facing illness, loneliness, fear, stigma and physical deconditioning.

The importance of outdoor environments (parks, recreational spaces, and neighbourhood) to our **physical** and **mental** health



## Outdoor environment and physical activity

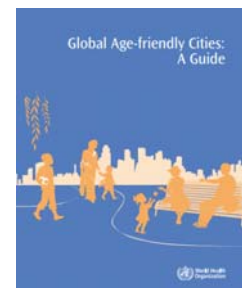
- Well-designed public open space and activity-friendly urban design are associated with health and health-related benefits at the population level.
- Outdoor environments can play a significant role in engagement in physical activity for the prevention of chronic conditions and better health

## Age friendly communities – challenges we face

Often recreational outdoor spaces and parks are focused on facilities and amenities that cater for the younger demographic, and the needs of older people are being ignored.

### Recommendation

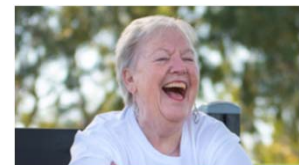
Careful planning of the design and location of outdoor environments so that they are accessible and suitable to **all age groups** and people of all abilities.



## Older age **does not** necessarily mean illness or poor health

Physical activity can counteract and or revert age-related multi-morbidity.

Outdoor spaces can be valuable settings for older people to undertake physical activity.



Thomastown - Barry Rd (Whittlesea city council)  
 Hoppers Crossing Lansdale circuit (Wyndham City Council)  
 Leith park St Helena (Old Colonists' Association of Victoria)  
 Mt Pleasant, Ballarat (Ballarat City Council)  
 Ivanhoe Park, Ivanhoe (Banyule City Council)



## Key considerations

- Regional/Rural areas often have little resources, poor infrastructure to connect neighbourhood and communities.

**Recommendation:** Further investment and resources needed

- Variation in policies within local governments, (no state policy/blue print) often policy is not supportive or suitable for the older demographic.

**Recommendation:** Better guidance and an overarching state policy relevant for the older demographic to assist with better decision making process.

- Fragmentation within councils – silo work of divisions without input of positive ageing/age and disability or equivalent in design/location

**Recommendation:** Engagement with older people and community members during the design phase can be very valuable to better care for older people needs.

## Key messages

- Understand and cater for older people needs
- Commitment from Local Governments and State Government
- Location, amenities, accessibility, safe suitable exercise equipment
- Knowledge/upskill, and research evidence driven process
- Engagement with community, stakeholders, seniors, experts
- Capacity buildings, champions/ambassador
- Better policy/overarching guidelines/blue print

