



Department for Community Development  
Government of Western Australia

Office for Seniors Interests and Volunteering

# CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE SENIORS: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION RESEARCH PROJECT 2006

## REPORT

Research conducted by  
Matrix Consulting Group &  
Barbara Gatter and Associates



An initiative of *Generations Together* -  
The Western Australian Active Ageing Strategy

The Office for Seniors Interests and Volunteering is the state government agency whose primary focus is Western Australia's seniors, people 60 years of age and over. The mission of the Office is to enhance seniors' quality of life through active ageing.

This research project was undertaken to investigate the community participation of culturally and linguistically diverse seniors and their perceived barriers to community participation. It is hoped the research findings will stimulate discussion on how the perceived barriers identified in the report can be addressed to enhance active ageing.

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## Glossary & Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
HACC	Home and Community Care Program
LGA	Local Government Authority
GP	General Practitioner
NGO	Non-government organisation
OMI	Office of Multicultural Interests
OSIV	Office for Seniors Interests and Volunteering
TIS	Telephone Interpreter Service
WHO	World Health Organization

## Terminology

### **Culturally and linguistically diverse**

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare considers that people are of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds if they were born overseas in countries excluding the mainly English-speaking countries of the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Ireland, the United States and Canada. Culturally and linguistically diverse refers to the wide range of cultural groups that make up the WA population and WA communities. It includes groups and individuals who differ according to religion, race, language and ethnicity. For ease of abbreviation CALD is used interchangeably with culturally and linguistically diverse.

### **Seniors**

There are many different definitions of what constitutes a senior. Chronological age is not a good definer and Federal and State Governments use different ages to define seniors. For the purpose of the project a senior was anyone aged 60 years and over; however a small number of people aged less than 60 years participated in discussion groups.

For the purpose of the project a CALD senior is a person of non-English speaking background, born in a non-English speaking country and aged 60 years and over. It is important to acknowledge that there are specific differences in language, culture and social and cultural attitudes among those seniors.

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## OVERVIEW

### Introduction

The Western Australian State Government's Active Ageing Strategy, *Generations Together*, is based on a 'lifecourse approach' to programs and policies for older people. It acknowledges the important influences of earlier life experiences, gender and culture on how individuals age, while also addressing the specific demands of ageing in later years.

*Generations Together* defines active ageing as a way of thinking and working to "optimise opportunities for health, community participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age"<sup>1</sup>.

The strategy is a whole-of-government approach that promotes partnerships with local governments and community organisations. It aims to maximise the social, economic and environmental outcomes of demographic change for all generations. The strategy has been acknowledged by the World Health Organization as an example of leadership in active ageing policy and practice.

Through *Generations Together*, the Office for Seniors Interests and Volunteering undertook the *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Seniors: Community Participation Research Project* to gather information from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) seniors<sup>2</sup> about their involvement in the community and their perceived barriers to participating in community activities. The project was conducted to generate discussion and provide input into policy, programs and services for CALD seniors in Western Australia to facilitate active ageing.

This overview provides a snapshot of the research project undertaken by independent researchers Colin Penter from Matrix Consulting Group and Barbara Gatter from Barbara Gatter and Associates. The research project was overseen by a Project Advisory Group with representatives from:

- Australian Asian Association of WA (Inc)
- Chung Wah Association Inc
- Serbo Australian Welfare and Information Centre Inc

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<sup>1</sup> This is the World Health Organization's definition of active ageing.

<sup>2</sup> The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare considers that people are of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds if they were born overseas in countries excluding the mainly English-speaking countries of the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Ireland, the United States of America and Canada. Culturally and linguistically diverse includes groups and individuals who differ according to religion, race, language and ethnicity. A CALD senior is defined as a person of non-English speaking background, born in a non-English speaking country and who is 60 years of age or over. It is important to acknowledge that there are specific differences in language, culture and social and cultural attitudes among these seniors.

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- Office of Multicultural Interests
  - Office for Seniors Interests and Volunteering.

## **Project aims**

The aims of the research project were to identify and explore what successful ageing means for CALD seniors and to identify what would enable them to age more successfully. Specifically the project sought to explore:

- involvement in different types of community activities and satisfaction with that involvement
- perceived barriers to community involvement
- perceptions about the value accorded to seniors
- feelings of safety
- access to transport, ease of getting around and barriers to getting around
- meanings associated with successful ageing and
- services that would assist CALD seniors to age successfully.

The information obtained from the research project will also be used to supplement a number of the indicators contained in *Western Australian Seniors – Active Ageing Benchmark Indicators*. These indicators will be used to measure the state's progress towards the active ageing of Western Australia's seniors.

## **Research approach**

The research project involved two stages. The first stage was a literature review and the second stage involved consultations with approximately 500 CALD seniors, through 30 discussion groups and a small number of individual interviews, and consultations with 90 service providers. The discussion groups were held in partnership with local groups and organisations and the majority were conducted with seniors who had limited English language proficiency. Nineteen of the groups were assisted by bilingual translators.

## **Characteristics of seniors consulted**

Three out of four of the seniors who took part in the discussion groups were women (n=375, 74%) and one in four were men (n=127, 26%).

Most seniors who were consulted were at least 60 years of age. The age breakdown of seniors consulted was:

- less than one in ten was aged less than 60 years (n=36, 7%)
- one in four was between 60 and 69 years of age (n=120, 24%)
- one in three was between 70 and 79 years of age (n=159, 32%) and
- almost two out of five were 80 years of age and over (n=187, 37%).

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The seniors who were consulted were from the following countries, ethnic or language groups:

- African
- Burma
- Central and Eastern Europe (Poland, Russia, Ukraine etc)
- China
- Dutch
- Filipino
- Former Yugoslavia
- Germany
- Greece
- India
- Iran
- Iranian Baha'i
- Italy
- Japan
- Macedonian
- Malaysia
- Malta
- Muslim
- Netherlands
- Philippines
- Poland
- Portugal
- Singapore
- South African
- South and Central America (Brazil, Chile, Colombia and El Salvador)
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Vietnam.

The seniors who participated in the discussion groups were not randomly selected and may not be representative of the entire WA CALD seniors' population. However, the discussion groups comprised seniors who were able to provide meaningful information about their community participation. The seniors consulted included those who were active in their community and those who were not as active or who rarely left their home.

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## **Main findings**

### **CALD seniors population growth**

The literature review found that the proportion of older Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is increasing at a faster rate than the increase in the number of older Australian born people. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2004) has projected that the number of older Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds will increase by 66% over the fifteen years between 1996 and 2011. The older Australian born population is expected to increase by only 23% in the same period.

By the year 2020, a substantial proportion of older people in Australia will have been born overseas in a non-English speaking country. It is projected that the growth in this group will be dramatic (Hugo & Thomas, 2002).

### **Activities of CALD seniors**

The discussion group findings suggest that CALD seniors are involved in a wide range of activities, similar to the types of activities in which all seniors participate. The main activities were found to be:

- family and home duties and responsibilities
- caring responsibilities (for partners, grandchildren, other family members and other seniors)
- recreational and leisure activities
- social connections (with family, friends, neighbours, people of similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and the local community)
- culturally specific social and community activities
- participation and involvement in community, church and civil society activities
- paid and voluntary work
- using services, programs and activities (public, private and community) and
- intergenerational activities, involving responsibilities for future generations.

Many of the seniors recognised the benefits of physical activity. However, the women consulted were more positive about the benefits of physical activity than the men. Previous Australian research has found that people from CALD backgrounds are at greater risk of physical inactivity (Osborne, Haralambous et al 2003).

The most common physical activity seniors were involved in was walking. Most of the seniors who participated in group physical activities did so with groups broader than their own cultural group.

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The seniors who were most active in their communities were found to have some of the following features:

- a functional level of English language proficiency (or a level of support from others who speak their language)
- access to private, public and Home and Community Care (HACC) community transport
- social support and networks with seniors of a similar cultural and linguistic background
- meet regularly with other seniors of a similar cultural and linguistic background
- involved in social and cultural activities organised through specialist multicultural and ethnic seniors' centres, day centres, ethnic community groups and non-government organisations and seniors' centres
- a positive will and capacity to overcome barriers to participation and
- a functional level of health and mobility.

### **Participation in community programs and activities**

Many of the seniors were involved in activities organised through specialist multicultural and ethnic senior citizens' centres, day centres, ethnic community groups and non-government organisations.

These centres and programs were found to be particularly important because they were:

- the major form of community participation for many seniors and highly valued
- the key point of contact, providing information about services and activities
- facilitating participation by providing social activities, language groups, transport and day centres
- providing opportunities to develop social networks
- particularly important for seniors who lack English language proficiency in overcoming social isolation and
- able to create an environment in which cultural identity is an integral component of service delivery.

There appeared to be a strong tradition of 'self-help' among many ethnic communities, resulting in the establishment of formal centres, clubs, groups, agencies and support structures tailored to meet the needs of specific cultural groups. The research findings indicate that many of these centres, programs and services appear to receive little or no financial support.

The extent of seniors' involvement in these centres and programs confirmed the importance of culture, language and ethnicity in their community participation.

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### ***Ethnic specific or mainstream community activities***

For many seniors their main form of community participation involved activities with people of a similar cultural and linguistic background. The majority of seniors who spoke English, indicated that they preferred to participate in activities with people of a similar cultural and linguistic background, but also enjoyed mainstream community activities.

There were some seniors who had been in Australia a long time and were proficient in English, who did not identify with a particular ethnic, cultural or linguistic group. There was also a small number of seniors with limited English who indicated they did not want to participate in activities with people of a similar cultural or linguistic background. This appeared to be due to political, religious, cultural, geographical and historical differences between peoples from their country of origin.

For a proportion of the seniors, community activities and programs provided by ethnic or cultural groups were not always accessible or appropriate for them. For example, they were considered to be too costly, or were provided too far away from where they lived.

The service providers consulted felt the key issue was not specifically the presence of seniors from the same country of origin, but rather the primacy given to a multicultural or ethnic-specific approach to the setting.

### **Social isolation, loneliness and mental health concerns**

Social isolation and loneliness are widely recognised as major issues affecting all seniors, not only CALD seniors (Orb 2002; Findlay & Cartwright 2002; Queensland Government 2004). Social isolation and depression affect the motivation of some seniors to participate. Loneliness and social isolation are particularly acute for seniors with limited English language proficiency and can be a major problem for those who came to Australia later in life (Orb 2002).

Many of the seniors spoke about loneliness and isolation as the worst aspects of ageing. Another recurring theme was that mobility restrictions, both physical and social (eg lack of transport), contributed towards loneliness and isolation.

The service providers felt that contributing factors were interrelated and cumulative. Lack of English proficiency meant that people did not go to various places and this often led them to lose social networks, confidence, social skills and motivation.

It was also indicated that seniors who are ageing and in reasonable health, but with limited income and transport, are often more isolated and less able to participate in

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the community than those who are frailer who have some access to HACC transport services, day centres and home assistance.

### **Paid and voluntary work**

For many seniors, paid and voluntary work is an important form of community participation:

- providing a sense of enjoyment, identity and achievement
- giving seniors something tangible to do and to feel they are making a contribution to the community and
- assisting people in their development of social networks, social connections and English language skills.

The failure to find paid work is experienced as a major form of social exclusion. For those seniors who wanted to work, their inability to find work was a negative and debilitating experience, affecting their motivation and capacity to participate in the community.

Some of the seniors felt that job search services did not recognise their unique needs and were failing them and that employers are sometimes biased against older workers, particularly those with limited English.

Participation in voluntary work varied widely across the discussion groups. There were seniors in every discussion group who were active volunteers. Some volunteered up to 30 hours per week while others only did limited voluntary work, perhaps one or two voluntary activities on a regular basis. Some seniors indicated that health and mobility constraints and lack of transport limited their involvement in voluntary work.

### **Use of infrastructure and services**

Accessing infrastructure and services provides an important opportunity for community participation. The literature review highlighted that there is a notable under-utilisation of services by CALD seniors and that many services and infrastructures are inappropriate to CALD people (Orb 2002).

The seniors described many examples where community participation was limited by inadequate infrastructure and the response of mainstream services and programs to their needs. These included:

- Health services – medical staff who neither speak their language or use bilingual translators; lack of access to female doctors in hospitals; long waiting lists for hospital appointments; and the tendency to treat seniors in a patronising way.

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- Swimming pools – lack of appreciation of different cultural values that limits use of public swimming pools; entry costs; and lack of transport to pools.
  - Recreation facilities – long distances to be travelled; lack of appropriate programs; too costly; lack of accessibility; and youth-oriented culture.
  - Public housing – some seniors were critical of a perceived lack of appreciation of issues facing CALD seniors; and the high housing costs that limit community participation as less income is available to spend on activities.
  - Interpreters – reduced access to interpreters.
  - Public libraries – lack of papers and books in language of origin.
  - Cinemas – lack of transport; too costly; and not enough movies in their own language.
  - Arts and culture – too costly; transport difficulties; and performances at night.

The service providers acknowledged the inadequacy of mainstream agencies to respond to CALD seniors. These included: failure to use interpreters; limited cultural awareness; not having information available in various languages; and inability to communicate with CALD seniors.

## **Transport**

The findings from the consultations indicated that public and community transport is a lifeline for many seniors. The majority of seniors were totally or heavily reliant on public and community transport, particularly buses, to participate in community activities. The capacity for community participation is limited without access to affordable and appropriate transport, particularly public and community transport.

### ***Public transport***

The cost of public transport was an issue for many seniors because of the number of times they used buses and trains on a daily or weekly basis or because of the distances they had to travel to meet with people from the same cultural group. Transport at night was identified as a problem. Safety on public transport at night time was a concern for many, as were the distances they have to walk from the bus stop or train station at night. Many seniors did not take up the offer of a free train trip each year, mostly due to the cost of accommodation at their destination. Seniors valued the free Sunday bus travel and many wanted it extended.

### ***Community transport***

Community transport, that is buses provided by local government, non-government and community agencies, was found to be critical for many seniors, who by virtue of their lack of English, or lack of mobility and capacity to access public transport, were otherwise completely isolated in their own home.

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Some seniors who attended HACC funded day centre programs observed that they were out in the community a lot more since they started at the day centre. This was because they could also participate in outings the day centre organised using its own bus to community events, picnics, beach trips and other places.

Some community organisations reported that a lack of transport for seniors who “were not bad enough” for HACC services was a major concern.

### ***Taxis***

Seniors indicated that taxis were often too expensive, particularly for a long trip. Many seniors expressed frustration at the decision-making process used for allocating taxi vouchers. Seniors indicated that doctors’ recommendations were often ignored and reasons for non-allocation were rarely given. Seniors felt that the policy seemed to be designed to restrict access to vouchers. Seniors also mentioned the reluctance of taxi drivers to take them on short trips.

### ***Driver’s licences***

A number of seniors also mentioned the difficulties associated with the process of gaining a driver’s licence, particularly the computer test.

### **English language proficiency**

The findings from the consultations indicated that a lack of proficiency in English was the major barrier to community participation. This finding was supported in previous research. A lack of English proficiency can and does limit community participation, constraining what seniors can do and with whom, and their use of services.

Access to bilingual workers, interpreters and translators is vital for community participation. However, it was evident that seniors believed access to interpreters and translators had declined.

The seniors also believed that English language classes were often not available or appropriate for CALD seniors. There was a great enthusiasm among many of the seniors to learn English but they believed there was a lack of appropriate programs for them. A common theme among the seniors who had no English or minimal English language skills, was that they would like to access social English language classes specifically designed for older people and held somewhere they felt comfortable. However, a few thought that learning English was too hard or that they were too old to learn.

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The seniors with good English language indicated that their English language skills made a big difference to their enjoyment of community life. Previous research found that seniors who don't speak English have less knowledge about existing programs and activities (Tilbury et al 2004).

Service providers acknowledged seniors' willingness to learn English and the difficulty in finding appropriate ways for them to learn. They also indicated their own difficulties in accessing bilingual workers.

### **Social connections and networks**

Social support and networks play an important role in facilitating community participation. Social networks are particularly important for seniors with limited English, who can receive support and solidarity from others who speak their language.

The importance of multicultural day centres and ethnic community groups in providing social support and social networks for CALD seniors was clearly evident throughout the discussion groups. Social networks with people of a similar culturally and linguistically diverse background lead to the development of a sense of social solidarity and overcome the isolation that results from language difficulties. However, many of the seniors indicated that they still also wanted to meet and participate in the wider community.

Concern was also raised about men's lack of social networks and isolation, particularly men who were single or widowed.

### **Contributions to the community**

It became apparent from the discussion groups that the seniors make a significant contribution to their own communities and the wider community as carers, friends, paid workers, volunteer workers, community leaders, organisers, activists and members of management committees and groups. Many seniors were involved in voluntary work, although they may not have described what they do in those terms.

Many seniors had significant care-giving responsibilities for a partner, children, family member or grandchildren. For some seniors the time and demands of their caring responsibilities limited their capacity to be involved in wider community activities.

The findings also indicated that in many CALD communities and cultural groups, seniors have inter-generational responsibilities for children and young people. There was an expectation that these seniors would act as elders, role models, leaders and guides for children and young people.

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## **Barriers to community participation**

Three categories of barriers to community participation were identified:

- Barriers that relate to language and culture:
  - lack of English proficiency
  - lack of family connections and social networks
  - legacy of trauma experienced in the country of origin or from the migratory experience and negative effects of settling in a new country
  - cultural and religious traditions and
  - racial discrimination.
  
- Barriers that affect all seniors generally such as:
  - transport difficulties
  - limited awareness and information about activities
  - insufficient time
  - lack of affordable, challenging and appropriate activities
  - health and mobility problems
  - no-one to go out with and anxiety about going out alone and
  - financial insecurity.
  
- Systemic barriers such as:
  - waiting lists
  - 'user pays' policies
  - culturally inappropriate services and attitudes
  - lack of employment
  - availability of bilingual interpreters and translators and
  - racial vilification and discrimination.

## **Successful ageing**

The seniors recognised the importance of remaining physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially and linguistically active. Many spoke about the importance of a strong and positive state of mind for community participation and successful ageing.

A variety of attributes were identified that they thought were essential for successful and active ageing:

- importance of family, particularly grandchildren, and friends
- recognising the negative experiences of ageing
- remaining active - physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually and psychologically
- remaining independent
- participating in challenging, meaningful, interesting and enjoyable activities

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- continuing to remain involved in meaningful things and to make a contribution, be it through paid work, voluntary work or community involvement
  - remaining mobile
  - retaining and developing social support and social networks to overcome isolation
  - having a cultural identity and solidarity with people of a similar cultural and linguistic background
  - retaining a positive and inquisitive state of mind and
  - remaining positive, determined and hopeful in the face of adversity and difficulties, for example loss of a partner or health problems.

### **Attitudes towards seniors**

The seniors felt respected and valued by their families and communities. However many were concerned about social and community attitudes that leave them feeling devalued, excluded, disrespected and discriminated against. Instances of racial harassment, vilification and abuse were described by seniors.

Some seniors mentioned that employers, some medical practitioners and some young people displayed a lack of respect for CALD seniors.

### ***Negative community attitudes***

Racial vilification and discrimination directly impact on community participation. Some seniors, in particular Muslim women and some seniors from Africa, reported increasing levels of racial vilification and discrimination. This finding is consistent with recent studies.

Many seniors expressed concern about the perceived hardening of community attitudes towards people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Some reported instances of disrespect for cultural and religious traditions; widespread availability of alcohol and inappropriate food; and stereotypical assumptions about CALD seniors. A number expressed concern about the self-focused, individualistic and material aspects of Australian life.

### **Positive and negative experiences of ageing**

#### ***Positive experiences of ageing***

Seniors reported that the most positive experiences of ageing were involvement with family, children and grandchildren. They were very appreciative of being in Australia and preferred ageing in Australia to their country of origin. In particular, they valued: financial and other support provided by governments; quality of the environment;

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political freedom; opportunities here in Australia for them and their families; and quality of services.

### ***Negative experiences of ageing***

The seniors reported a variety of negative experiences associated with ageing, the most common being the negative effects of the ageing process. Other negative experiences mentioned included: loss of family and friends; financial insecurity; housing circumstances (for those in the rental market); dependency on family and friends; and negative social and community attitudes.

### **Safety**

There was considerable variation among the seniors in their attitudes about safety. Some seniors were concerned and worried about safety in their home, in their neighbourhood and in public places, such as shopping centres and on public transport. While others expressed no concern about safety and reported feeling safe in their home and community and in public places. The most common safety concern was going out at night.

### **Computer usage**

The seniors reported that their use of computers and the internet was limited. This finding was consistent with previous research findings.

Among the seniors there was a considerable lack of interest in the use of computers. Other barriers that limited computer usage included: poor memory span; lack of English language proficiency; limited understanding and knowledge; and insufficient money to buy, upgrade or maintain a computer.

The seniors who used computers did so for work and sending e-mails to friends and families.

### **Suggested strategies and activities to increase community participation**

Some of the main strategies and activities identified by seniors and service providers that would increase the community participation and successful ageing of CALD seniors are outlined below.

#### ***English language proficiency***

- Improved access to interpreters and translators (eg through services like the Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS)).
- Increased availability of bilingual workers in agencies that have contact with seniors.

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- Social English language classes designed specifically for CALD seniors, and English language teaching for CALD seniors.

### ***Transport***

- Free bus travel extended to Saturday as this is a day when seniors can go out and do much more than on Sunday (eg more shops are open).
- Continued improvements to public transport services (eg more frequent buses; better alignment of bus routes; multi-rider system valid for a longer period of time; flexible use of annual free train trip; and reduced fare options for high use seniors).
- More widely available community transport (eg sharing of community buses; wider availability of community transport through local government authorities, community groups and non-government agencies; availability of community transport for seniors not eligible or not disabled enough for HACC services; and availability of community transport services across local government boundaries).
- Wider availability of taxi vouchers through revised eligibility criteria, and through local councils.
- Fewer language barriers in obtaining a driver's licence.

### ***Information provision***

- Better information about services and programs in more languages.

### ***Exercise and physical activity***

- More local walking programs and groups.
- More physical activity programs at day centres, seniors' centres and community centres where CALD seniors gather.
- Development and expansion of exercise and physical activity programs (such as strength training; dancing programs; and stretching programs) that cater specifically for CALD seniors.
- Recreation centre programs that are more inclusive of CALD seniors and provide a greater array of programs.
- Swimming programs for CALD seniors at public swimming pools<sup>3</sup>.

### ***Events and outings, activities and programs***

- A wider range of activities, events and outings at centres, agencies, groups and services.
- Packages for day and overnight outings to attractions close to Perth, including bus tours outside Perth.
- More low cost social activities, outings and events.
- More ethnic community and day centres.

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<sup>3</sup> For example the program currently being offered by Beatty Park Swimming Centre.

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### ***Arts, music and cultural activities***

- More catering for CALD seniors by mainstream providers - eg seniors' programs, seniors' packages and specific programs.
- Publicity about available packages and programs in a variety of languages distributed through ethnic and multicultural groups, agencies and services in contact with CALD seniors.

### **Key issues**

- It is expected that the growth in the number of seniors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Australia between 1996 and 2020 will be dramatic. It is essential that policies, programs and services are in place to facilitate active ageing among CALD seniors.
- Seniors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds share the same issues as seniors in general, however many are compounded by language, ethnicity and cultural differences. These factors may form barriers to community participation in their own right.
- Culture, language and ethnicity are important in the community participation of CALD seniors. For many seniors maintaining their cultural identity is fundamental to successful ageing and community participation.
- Ethnic-specific services, programs and centres are extremely important to CALD seniors to assist them to be involved in the community.
- While ethnic-specific services, programs and centres are important to CALD seniors, many still want to mix with mainstream seniors and seniors from different cultural backgrounds.
- Many mainstream services and programs are not appropriate for CALD seniors as they do not take sufficiently into account their ethnic, language and cultural differences.
- Lack of English language proficiency appears to be the biggest barrier to community participation.
- Another significant community participation barrier is the lack of adequate and appropriate public and community transport.
- Social isolation and loneliness can be important issues for all seniors, but more so for CALD seniors who cannot speak English. CALD men appear to be more vulnerable, particularly those who are single or widowed.

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- Seniors who are ageing and in reasonable health, but with limited income and transport, can be more isolated and less able to participate in the community than those who are frailer who have some access to HACC transport services, day centres and home assistance.
  - Negative community attitudes to people from different cultures may also have a negative impact on community participation.
  - Lack of ability to find employment, limited income and inadequate housing are debilitating experiences - as for all seniors generally. However, difficulty in finding employment appears to be greater for CALD seniors who are not proficient in English.
  - Therefore, to increase the community participation of those CALD seniors who want to be more involved in the community, the research findings indicate that provision needs to be made for:
    - Adequate and appropriate ethnic-specific services, programs and centres for CALD seniors, as these are vital for their community participation.
    - Adequate access to appropriate English language tuition, interpreters and bilingual workers.
    - Mainstream services to cater more for CALD seniors' needs, including providing information in other languages.
    - Improved access to public and community transport.
    - Addressing negative community attitudes towards CALD seniors.
    - Encouraging CALD seniors to interact with seniors from their own cultural and linguistic group, other backgrounds, and seniors generally, to enhance their enjoyment of life and to reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation.

## **The Next Step**

The report findings will be considered within the framework of the State Government's Active Ageing Strategy to provide input into policies, programs and services for CALD seniors in Western Australia. The report will also be distributed to key stakeholders, including the members of the Active Ageing Implementation Committee, to ensure the findings are considered within their policies, programs and services.