CONNECTION CYCLE

Exploring language and collecting experiences, gifts and ideas of people over fifty (WISE people) to develop a deeper understanding of social connection

Mathers Place

MATHERS HOUSE

CRITERION HOUSE

A PROGRAM OF

City *of* HOBART

'Knowledge isn't power. Knowledge is a gift. A gift that should be shared.'

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge that this project took place on the land of the Mouheneener peoples.

I would like to thank all of those who engaged and participated in this project. Thank you for contributing your time and sharing your unique wisdom, skills, experiences and ideas around how to build social connection. This project aims to capture and amplify your voices and make visible all of your valuable contributions.

A huge thank you to Danielle, Della, Claire, Amanda, Sam and the Mathers House volunteers that were always so welcoming, generous and supportive throughout the project. I feel very privileged to have been able to spend time with all of you, and I have learned a great deal from your stories.

Another big thank you to the Community Development Division at the City of Hobart. Your constructive feedback, sharing of resources and warm and inviting space has added immensely to my experience whilst undertaking this project.

I must also mention the talented Sophie, who contributed her time to work on some beautiful illustrations that feature throughout this report.

I would like to acknowledge that the language used in this report refers to people over the age of fifty as wise people. This reference aligns closely with the preferences collected by the people who participated in the language survey. The word 'wise' is connected with deep understanding and experiences of life. It is my belief that people who have over fifty years of lived experience are in the possession of wisdom.

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Social connection is good for you.

connection

Being rich in relationships helps you live longer
and softens the fall in hard times.

However, not everyone has the same
opportunities for connection within their reach.

Equality
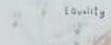
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tasmania is commonly referred to as the nation's 'grey' state. The age structure of Tasmania is predicted to change over the next decade. It is estimated that by 2030 a quarter of the population will be over the age of 65.(1) Evidence suggests that as you age your relationships decline.(2)

This project examines how language and social connections matter as you age. It explores the use of language around ageing, and collects wise peoples' unique stories, experiences, skills, gifts and strengths that enable their connection. This project explores ways to build social connection and its meaning.

The project aims to make visible the valuable contributions wise people make to the Hobart community. The research took place from July to October 2018. Data was collected over a one-month period from those that attended Mathers House. A survey, one-to-one interviews and community consultations were used to engage with participants of fifty years and over. A total of 90 people contributed to the project. This report presents the findings of their preferences, experiences, gifts and ideas.

"We are smarter when we listen, and stronger when we share"

– Queen Rania Al-Abdullah
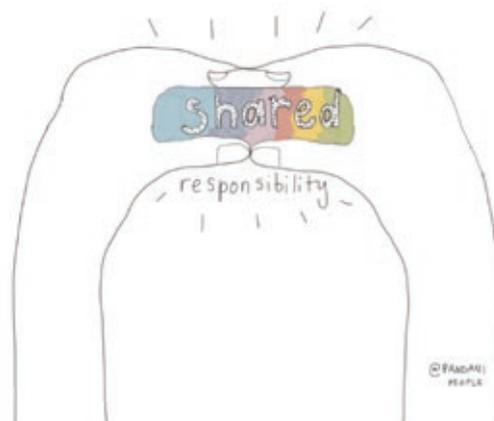
Some of the images included in this report were captured at a community consultation. The illustrations that feature in this report were locally designed to raise awareness around the importance of social connection.

MAIN FINDINGS

LANGUAGE

The survey highlighted the following preferences regarding language:

- Most of the participants preferred to be addressed by their first name.
- Most of the participants detested the word geriatric.
- Many of the adjectives listed in the language survey table were disliked, for example "sweet", "pet", "eccentric". The word "wise" was highly liked.
- Other comments on the use of language indicated that context, tone and delivery of speech were important considerations.

EXPLORING SOCIAL CONNECTION

Many participants provided insight into the different and diverse lived experiences of being socially connected. The following themes emerged:

- Expression of gratitude for their ability to be socially connected.
- Empathy, compassion and the ability to reflect on life as enablers of connection.
- Acknowledgment that the place you live impacts on your ability to connect. With reference to community resources, associations, houses as well as parks, the mountain and streets.
- The practicalities of being connected through transport, technology, time and accessibility.
- Things such as gardens, feeling spiritually connected and access to good health were shared by most participants.
- Social connection came back with a bigger bonus.

- Being involved in social groups forms connections that branch out and grow into other forms of connection.
- Social connection enables participants to be more open, less judgemental and accepting of differences.
- Friendship that formed within groups was referred to as a "quiet support" and knowledge that someone cares.
- Many participants acknowledged the benefits of being socially connected impacted positively on their health. Social connection acknowledged as a preventative means to decline.
- Acknowledgement that as you age your relationships change. The focus of independence shifts to interdependence as there is a greater realisation people need people.
- Many participants valued and cared deeply about family as a source of their connection. The participants valued other sources of connection such as informal encounters with people in the places they lived.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Wise peoples' voices need to play a key role in the development, design and delivery of local services.

2. A whole-of-community approach should be used to guide and build social connection.

3. Community organisations and facilities offer a variety of different services to accommodate a diversity of wise people.

4. Partnerships with schools should be formed to increase opportunities for intergenerational learning.

5. Superannuation funds should take a more holistic approach in planning and preparing wise people for their transition to retirement.

6. Transport options provided should be affordable and accessible to encourage greater social participation of wise people.

7. Partnerships should be formed with the not-for-profit sector to establish place-based skill inventories.

8. The Australian Government should consider the development of an information resource staffed with skilled workers that link people back to community.

NAVIGATING THIS REPORT

In light of the responses from the language survey, people over the age of 50 will be referred to as wise people in this report. This term of reference is appropriate for people who have over 50 years of lived experience.

The directly quoted views of wise people are presented throughout this report in this FONT COLOUR. This aims to amplify their voices through directly relaying their thoughts, experiences and ideas. Where required, other methods of communication have been used to provide further supporting evidence.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This report begins with an introduction to the project and provides a brief background to the research. The purpose, aims and methods of research are identified along with the limitations.

CHAPTER TWO: LANGUAGE

Explanation is then provided on the data collected from the language survey. Key findings are identified around the preferred use of language. Other considerations are explored such as context, tone and delivery.

CHAPTER THREE: SOCIAL CONNECTION

Social connection, gifts and social groups are explored in this chapter. The participants' responses are presented as enablers of social connection and have cyclical benefits. The participant responses have been separated into re-occurring themes. The spoken words of the participant is placed into word clouds. The participants have been separated into the heart, head and hands, while the concept of social groups is also explored. Lastly, the participants' ideas for building social connection have been compiled into a list and discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, this report makes a number of recommendations in light of the research findings. Eight key recommendations are based on participant's responses and ideas. Explanation is provided on why these recommendations are beneficial to enhancing social connections for wise people.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION
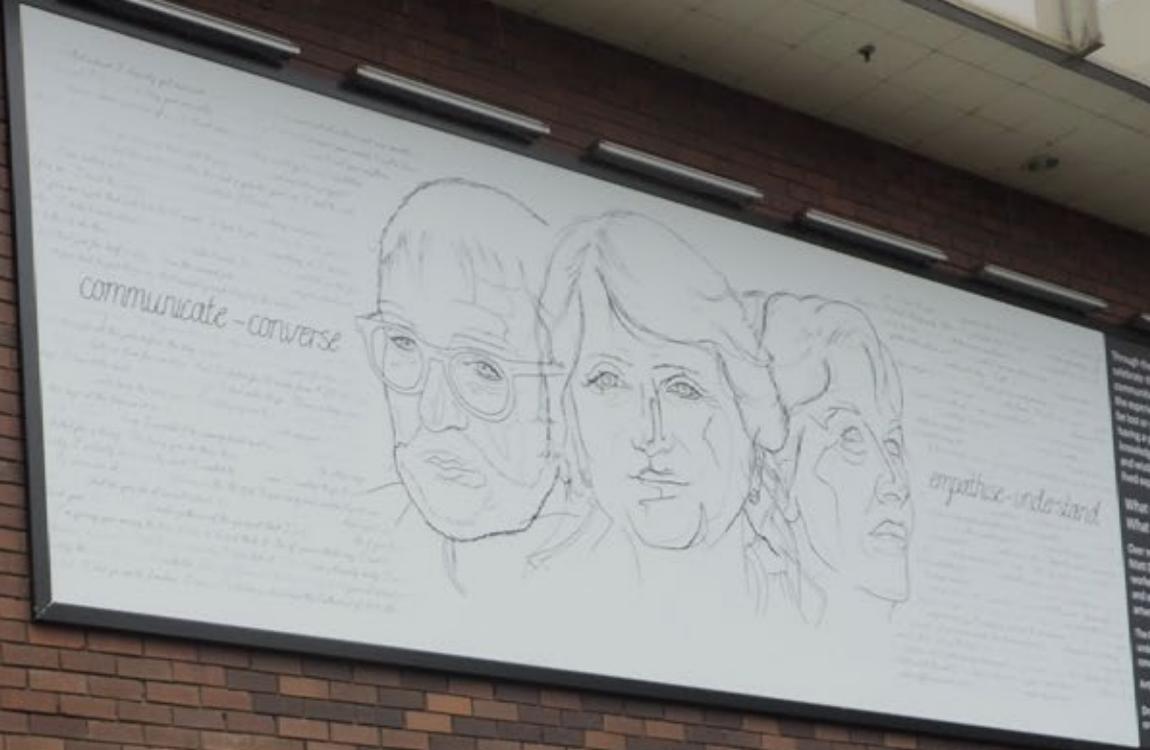
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Tasmania's population is projected to age rapidly over the next decade, with estimates that by 2030 one in four people will be 65 years or over.(1) This looming boomer bulge (3) in demographic charts is often constructed as an ageing population "problem" rather than an opportunity.

The ageing "problem" is enforced through cultural tendencies to view people as they age through a deficit lens. This positions the inevitable, ageing, as an undesirable horizon. The language used to construct this ageing pathway creates "age boxes" which are limiting by design. The assumption of "deficit", or, "lacking" identity, if internalised can impact poorly on relationships, self-esteem and overall wellbeing for wise people.

Relationships play an important protective function to people as they age. Research indicates, however that people as they age are at a greater risk of relationships thinning. (2) There are a number of factors that overlap, that place wise people at a greater risk of experiencing social isolation and loneliness. Some of these risk factors include: the loss of a spouse; familial circumstances; group attachments; health; and location.(2) Whilst true rates of social isolation and loneliness are difficult to gauge, some evidence suggests that as many as a third of wise people will experience loneliness at some point. (4)

On the other hand, social connection enriches people's lives and fulfils a basic human need. Research suggests strong social connection leads to a fifty percent increase in longevity. (5) Social connection generates a positive feedback loop, which flows into other streams to enhance wellbeing. (6) The benefits felt at an individual level branches out and extend into benefits for the broader community.

One participant when asked about social connection responded,

"We are social animals. We need it."

(F)

The purpose of this research is to encourage a re-visioning of wise people as valuable assets, rich in resources, full of unique experiences, wisdom, skills and gifts.

This project explores the lived experiences of socially connected people over fifty who access the community organisation's Mathers House. Responses from participants were obtained through qualitative and quantitative means and inform the findings and recommendations of this report.

This report is more significant for this and future generations as people live longer. Important considerations need to be given around ways to ensure wise people feel valued and empowered to enjoy quality lives, alongside living longer.

As one participant stated, the later years are "a winding up, not a winding down."

This report reflects the responses of participant's experiences of living in and around the greater Hobart region. The lived experiences of wise people who are socially connected should play a significant role in designing programs, and seek to increase their inclusion in civic participation. Place-based strategies are important considerations for governments, the not-for-profit sector, local businesses and other community stakeholders as it acknowledges the place you live in shapes the way you live. This report will make eight recommendations that align with this place-based approach.

This research aims to:

1. Raise awareness around how the use of language can place people into limiting "age boxes".

2. Build social connection through deepening understandings around the enablers, benefits and lived experiences, and the connection between social groups and community.

BACKGROUND

LANGUAGE AND THE LIMITING "AGE BOXES" IT CREATES

Language provides a cultural template for how wise people are perceived and understood. The language commonly used to describe the ageing process is loaded with assumptions, attitudes and judgements that often position the inevitable, ageing as a negative.

There is power behind language (7) and this power can be used to create limiting "age boxes". These age boxes refer to the stereotype, labels or 'cultural dopes' that wise people are often assigned that carry assumptions of limited capacity.

Discrimination based on age (ageism) is often subtle and discreet and may sometimes be disguised as a compliment. (8) For example, remarks made to a wise person about appearing "youthful" is ageist. This suggests youth is desirable, and therefore the opposite of appearing not youthful or "old" is undesirable. (9)

Similarly, the use of the words "still' or "remain" when speaking with wise people carries the assumption that wise people are generally sedentary and inactive. A person who is "still" active is believed to be an exception to the rule.

The term "elderspeak" (10) was developed to describe the patronising accommodations and adjustments made to speech style, which implicitly questions wise people's competency. This speech style involves the exaggerated intonations, slowing of speech and use of simple vocabulary to communicate.

@PANDANI PEOPLE
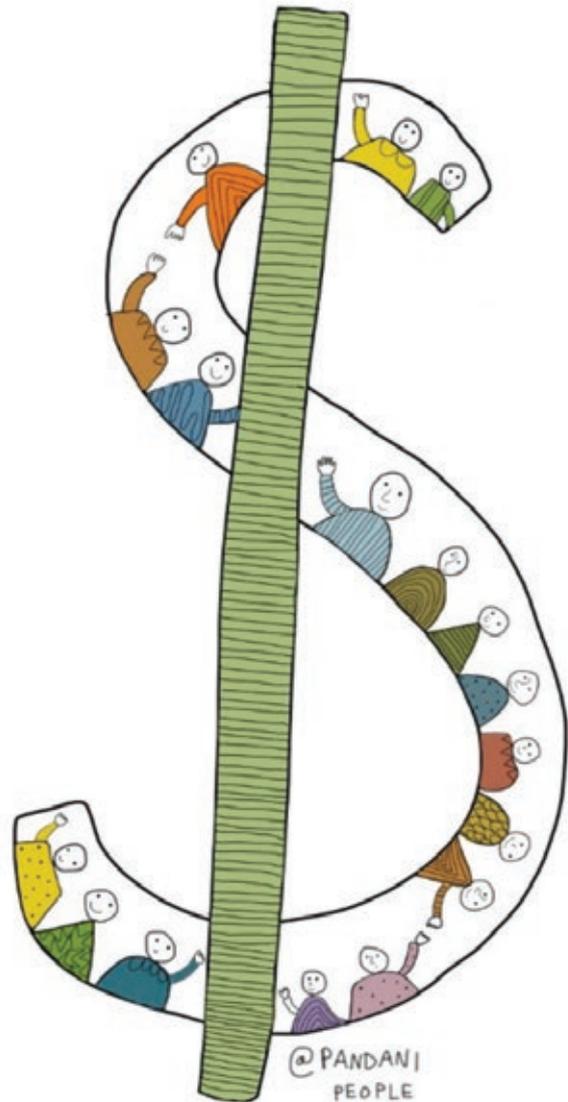
A lifetime of exposure to language that by design frames the ageing experience as a negative experience can become internalised and have impacts on overall health and social relationships. (8) Research indicates the embodiment of ageism (11) is linked to lower self-esteem and lower life expectancy. (12)

Careful consideration should be given when using language. The meaning that is often embedded within words extends far deeper than the words themselves. (8)

RE-VISIONING WISE PEOPLE AS VALUABLE ASSETS

Wise people are often labelled as passive recipients rather than active contributors. This tendency to frame wise people through a "deficit" lens rather than an "asset" lens creates poor outcomes for individuals and whole communities. (13) The narrow definition of wise members of the community acts to exclude them and lessens their ability to contribute their experiences, wisdom, skills and gifts.

Wise people represent a resource-rich segment of community and play an important role in revitalising spaces. Many wise people are valuable assets that are healthy and independent and contribute in many economic and non-economic ways to their local communities. Some of the roles they play are:

- economic contributors
- culture, tradition and history carriers
- volunteers
- carers for families
- social support for peers.

Wise people need to be properly recognised as valuable assets and included and connected with community life.

SOCIAL CONNECTION

Social connection can be defined as "a person's subjective sense of having close and positively experienced relationships with others in the social world". (6) The presence of positive social connection is suggested to be an optimal state, as the opposite, loneliness is the absence of positive social connection.(8) This can have poor impacts on mental health and wellbeing. (14) Therefore, social connection can be understood as a vital element that enables humans to thrive and survive.

There are many benefits of social connection that extend far beyond the "social" element. Research indicates strong social connection leads to:

- increased longevity (15)
- strengthened immune function and resistance to disease (16)
- increased self-esteem (17)
- heightened resilience and ability to cope with stressful events (18)
- heightened sense of belonging.(19)

Social connection promotes pro-social behaviours, as it acts as a primer to enhance empathy for others (6), promote trust in others (18) and increase levels of cooperation.(20) Therefore, building social connection amongst individuals has the potential for positive cascading effects on creating resilient, strong and caring communities.

BUILDING SOCIAL CONNECTION

There are many different suggestions around approaches to build social connection. One proposes social relationships or social connections can be nourished through social groups. Research suggests group interventions are more effective than one-to-one interventions in addressing social isolation. (21) Social groups enhance members of a groups' wellbeing through providing a supportive function and a channel for different communication and feedback outside of the family unit. Social relationships that are founded on support and are mutually beneficial contribute to promoting wise people's self-esteem. (22)

Community acts as a conduit to build social connection. The provision of safe, inclusive and accessible spaces enables social connection and supportive solid relationships to form. For example, Mathers House in Hobart is a community organisation that is centrally located and designed to be accessible for people 50 years and over. This positive ageing resource provides a space for skills to be developed and recognised amongst peers as well as opportunities for friendships to form and social connection to be satisfied.

"We grew up in an age where the world was wanting. Now we are in such excess of everything. Nobody needs somebody. I don't know about relationships."

(M)

RESEARCH METHODS

This research project took place at Mathers House in September 2018. The researcher was based in the Positive Ageing Centre of Mathers House. This enabled the researcher to engage with visitors and discuss the project's purpose and aims and welcome their engagement. An open-invitation community consultation was advertised internally within Mathers House for people to participate. The other community consultations took place with already established groups operating out of Mathers House.

A total of 90 people participated with the research project and their contributions inform the findings recommendations of this report.

This research used three different methods to engage with the participants (See Table 1):

- A semi-structured survey was designed for Mathers House attendees to anonymously participate and provide feedback on their preferences for the use of language. This survey did not request any identifying information from participants. An anonymous 'Language Matters' box was placed towards the front of Mathers House for people to submit their response. A total of 51 people participated in this survey.

- Eleven one-to-one interviews were undertaken. Only nine of these interviews were recorded and transcribed. Two participants' preferred only notes be taken. This sample consisted of Mathers House visitors and volunteers that were 50 years and over.

- Five Community Consultations took place out of the Mathers and Criterion House facilities. Between these five community consultations a total of 28 people participated. The community consultations followed the same format of questions asked in the one-to-one interviews, however due to time constraints and large numbers of people participating in this shared group environment, one group only addressed the first two questions. Information was recorded in these community consultations through listing the responses of the participants on butchers-paper in a group setting. Notes and observations were made by the researcher directly after to capture repeated themes and ideas.

Table 1. Forms of engagement

FORM OF ENGAGEMENT	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
RESEARCH AIM ONE: QUANTITATIVE	
Survey: Language Matters –Help Us Get it Right • Semi-structured survey with ability to add other comments and considerations	51 participants
RESEARCH AIM TWO: QUALITATIVE	
One-to-One Interviews • Recorded and transcribed	11 participants 5 Male / 6 Female
Community Consultations • Butchers paper was used throughout these community consultation. Notes were placed under each of the questions asked of the group. Self-completed notes made based on discussion directly after each consultation	28 participants 4 Male / 24 Female

The specific age of the participants was not obtained throughout this research project (however they were all over 50 years of age). This was a deliberate decision by the researcher as the project aim was to break-down the common cultural inclination to view age as precursor for capacity.

The gender of participants was recorded for the qualitative part of the research. Whilst more men were willing to engage in a one-to-one interview, the majority of people who participated in this research were female. See graph opposite:
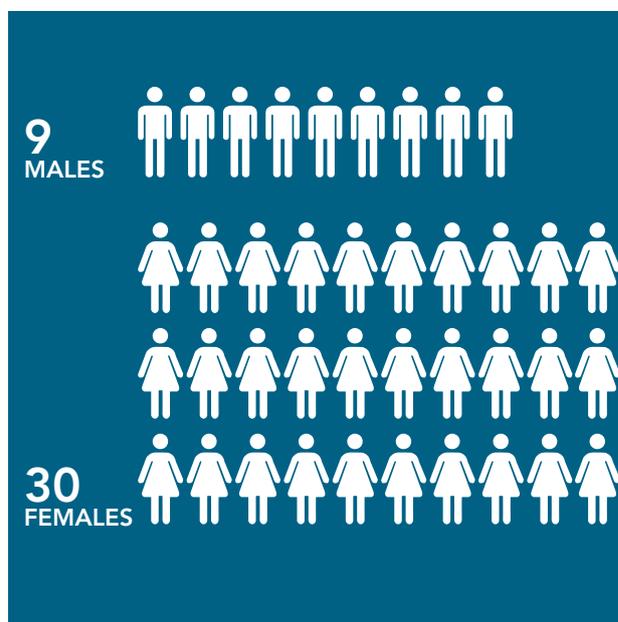
ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The community consultations and one-to-one interview questions were premised on the idea of focusing on what's strong, not what's strong. This focus aimed to look at the participants through an asset-based lens rather than a deficit-based lens and takes the glass is half-full approach. (See Appendix 1)

The first question aimed to develop deeper understandings of social connection and inquired into the enablers of this and the subsequent benefits.

(The) Asset-based community development approach offers wise community members a platform to explore, identify and mobilise their inner gifts and assets and implicitly empowers them with the capacity to act. (10) Section two was premised on the belief 'everybody has gifts and everybody has gifts to give'.

Social groups were further explored, with participants providing feedback on their accessibility, strengths and possible areas for improvement.

The last section requested participants to contribute their ideas on how to build social connection and reach people who may be socially isolated or lonely.

The research questions were designed to inquire into four separate areas:

1. Deepen understandings of social connection

    •   What enables you to be connected?
    •   What are the benefits of this connection?

2. Raise individual self-awareness of skills and gifts possessed

    •   What are the gifts of your hands?
    •   What are the gifts of your heart?
    •   What are the gifts of your head?

3. Exploring social groups

    •   How accessible are groups?
    •   What are the strengths of belonging to a group?
    •   Any possible ways to improve groups?

4. Ideas to build social connection

    •   Open discussion around ways to build social connection

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The sample size of this research project was small. This raise questions on how transferable these findings are to people who are fifty and over in the broader population.

The sample of wise people who were selected to participate in this project were selected out of Mathers House and represent a group of people who were already socially connected. The exact age of the participants was not obtained so their data is not able to be compared between different age strata, the young old (60 to 69 years), the middle old (70 to 79 years) and the old old (80 years and older).

The sample of wise people who participated in this project were predominantly female so   this gender imbalance is likely to have influenced the findings of this research.

This research was designed to look at wise people through an asset-based lens and take a glass is half-full approach. This means the questions were designed to develop understandings around positive experiences of social connection.

Further research is required with people who are less socially engaged to develop deeper understandings around the barriers and challenges they face.

CHAPTER TWO: LANGUAGE

LANGUAGE MATTERS FINDINGS

People first and foremost want to be acknowledged as people and addressed by their first name.

A language survey was constructed and made available to Mathers House visitors to complete and provide feedback on their preferences around the use of language and different terms of address (See Appendix 2 for results).

The results of this indicated that people regardless of their age first and foremost want to be acknowledged as people and addressed by their first name. Similarly, there was an overwhelming dislike of the word geriatric.

All participants' responses that received a score of 20 or over have been complied into a list below:
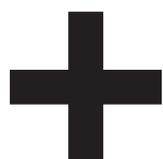
+	**–**	**✕**
I LIKE IT	**I DON'T MIND IT**	**I DISLIKE IT**
Being called by my first name	Elder	Elderly
wise	Older	Dear
	Senior	Sweet
	Mature aged	Eccentric
		Darling
		Elder
		Pet
		Grandmotherly
		Geriatric

These findings are consistent with previous research results which identify the use of adjectives to address and refer to wise people as disliked and therefore not culturally appropriate.

The term wise, alongside being called by my first name were the two responses that participants most liked.

Other comments and considerations collected illustrate that **CONTEXT**, **TONE** and **DELIVERY** matter.

See some of the participant's responses received in the other considerations section of the survey below:

"I believe how a word or expression is used and in what context is important. If it is used as a 'put down' or meant to be offensive then I don't like it. Also the tone of voice is important."

"It really depends on the tone of voice as to whether I like or dislike the adjective. Some I ticked as dislike and can be don't mind, can be I like depending on who says it and where it is said."

"I don't mind the various terms, but it is critical to me that my connection is polite, gracious, understanding, kind and not in a superficial uninterested manner."

"Who cares what we are called as long as they are polite to us."

"Tone and context matter."

One participant stated:

"Any of the above are better than being ignored."
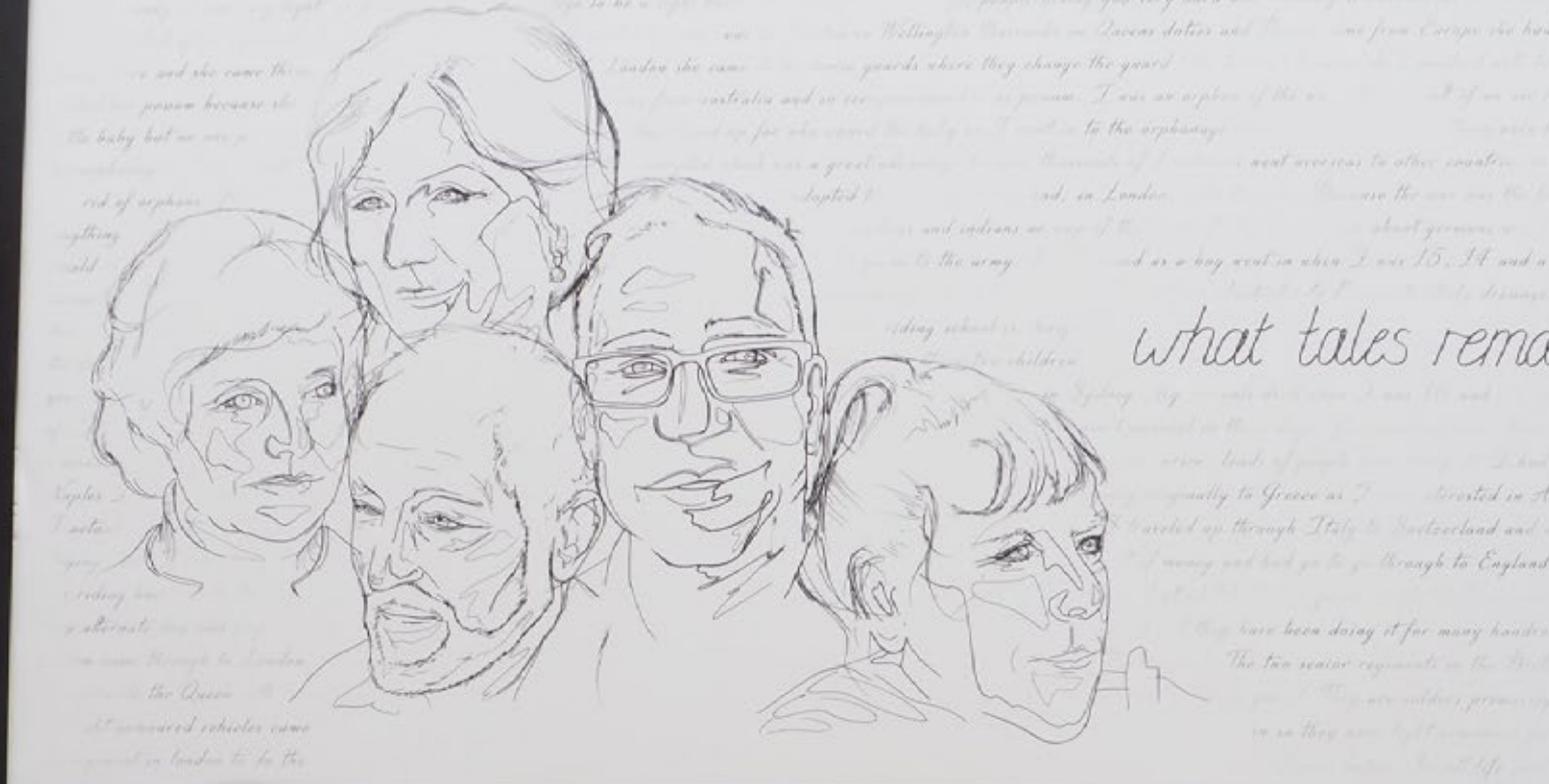
CHAPTER THREE: SOCIAL CONNECTION

Speaking with wise people throughout the project there was an overwhelming sense of gratitude expressed for their social connection.

This section focuses on deepening understandings around the ENABLERS of social connection and the BENEFITS of this connection. As the data was collected through community consultations and one-to-one interviews the responses have been grouped into themes, placed into word clouds, and expanded through the use of the direct spoken words of the participants.

The word clouds used in this report were generated by placing all of the responses of wise people conveyed in the community consultations and one-to-one interviews under each section. The larger the word in these clouds the more often it was mentioned.

QUESTION: WHAT ENABLES YOU TO BE CONNECTED?

The responses have been grouped into six separate areas:

- Personality
- Place
- Previous Experience
- Involvement with People and Pets
- Practicalities
- Other

WHAT THE PARTICIPANTS SAID?

One participant reflected with:

"People who need people are the luckiest people in the world."

(30) (F)

PERSONALITY

There were many responses that were linked to personality received under this section. The participant's responses are presented below. The larger words represent repeated comments.

Curiosity

Feelings of worthiness   Positive thinking

Dedicated mind-set

Mentally motivated   Attitude

Caring nature

Overcome fears   Determination

Hard work   individual responsibility

Interest in people

Like different people

Push yourself make the effort

self-sufficiency

Willingness to accept challenges

Like people
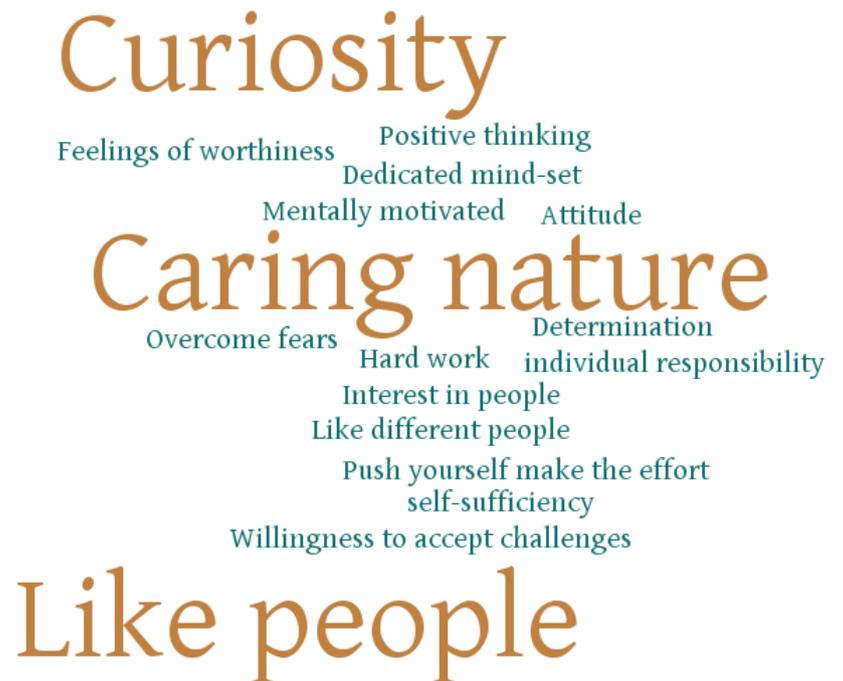
Another re-occurring theme through speaking with participants was the possession of inner-determination.

One participant expressed:

"You've got to be bold. And the older you get the bolder you have to become. You don't have as much to offer as you did yesterday. I have to take control of my interaction. I can't leave it to someone else." (M)

Another enabler of social connection for some participants was an internal need to be seen:

One participant claimed:

"I need to be slightly exhibitionist. I need to be noticed. I don't want to be a nobody. Unfortunately, that is the easiest thing." (M).

Another participant stated:

"That I have value and an identity – pretty easy to lose your sense of identity and belonging." (F)

An observation from a participant expressed:

"There are a lot of people in our lives every day we don't see." (F)

Many of the participant's expressed a genuine like and interest in people, new people and different people.

One participant stated:

"Well I like people so I am involved in lots of things." (F)

Some participants expressed they had to push themselves to be socially connected.

One participant shared the experience:

"I'm a little bit of an introvert. I have had to face a lot of anxiety. I just had to face a lot of things I retreated from in the past. I joined lots of groups." (F)

Other participants made comments around wanting to retreat to "shells" (F) "caves" (M) and being a "home-body" (F) and had to sometimes to push themselves to be socially connected.

PLACE

The natural and built environments in which people live impacts on their experiences, access and ability to be socially connected. This grouping of place combines both natural and built environments (including community resources and organisations). As this research project was run out of Mathers House this is likely to have influenced the participant's responses.

Community services and organisations played an important role in enabling social connection for many of the participants.

One participant spoke of Mathers House:

"It's an invaluable contribution." (F)

Another stated:

"Need more resources like this for the community. Warm, welcoming, accessible and affordable spaces." (F)

One participant spoke of their experience with a different community organisation:

"Like a crutch, like a walking stick. Help me while I'm in between." (M)

The natural environment that participants lived in impacted on their ability to be socially connected. Participant's indicated their "walking groups" and access to a "friendly community" enabled their connection.

Environment
Mens Shed
Community center lunches
Community houses
YMCA Library
Mathers House
Mountain   Red Cross
School for seniors
U3A   Salvos
Walking groups
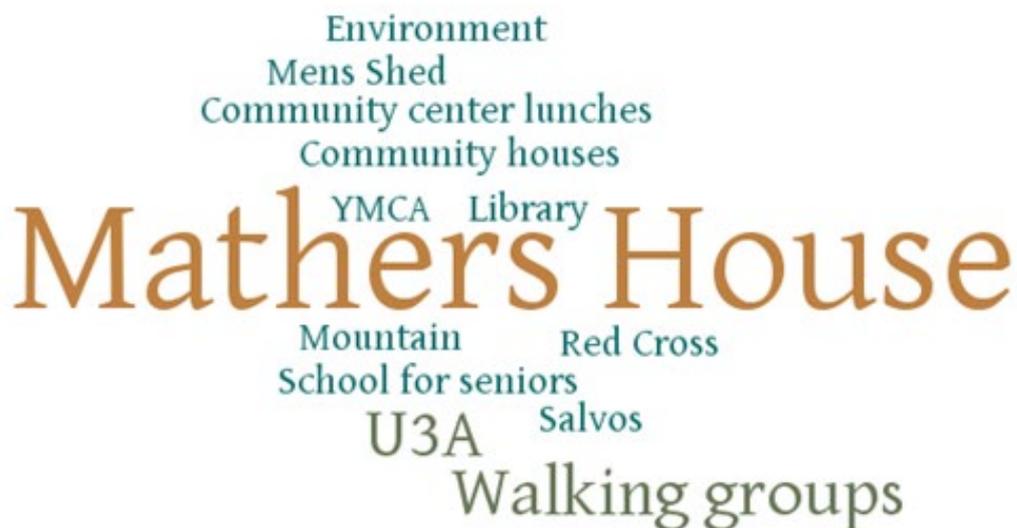
PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

The previous experiences of the participants arose as being enablers of their social connection.

Four participants' reflected on their previous experience of being shy and their ability to overcome this:

One participant stated:

"I am actually quite a shy person. And I know I could just disappear if I allowed that to take over. I have to take control of that person that wants to be a part of the world. You've just got to push yourself. It's not an age or anything. People are maybe just, not as much out there. I just say I'm going to do it and I do it. Maybe it's being shy that's made me who I am." (M)

Another person proclaimed:

"I'm a shy person. Once I start talking I can't keep quiet." (M)

Another participant:

"Shy growing up because I was different. Able to use that experience for good." (M)

Previous lived experience also enabled social connection and a different perspective for some of the participants.

"You have to listen to your own self first. As we get older we sort out in our own minds what is important what isn't important. As I have become older I've become less selfish. Also know I need people." (M)

Another participant stated:

"Empathy. As you get older I think you have more empathy with older people. That's the big one." (M)

One participant reflected:

"Live a long life. Can appreciate what we have and show compassion and empathy. Have lived through the changes, can look back and reflect." (F)

Empathy and sharing experiences with "people in the same boat" was an expression that came up in two of the community consultations.

Another participant pointed to previous connections:

"Old connections keep popping up. Old relationships." (F)

Previous lived experience whether it is an internal experience, feelings of being shy or external experience of previous relationships played a role for some participants in enabling their connection.

INVOLVEMENT WITH PEOPLE AND PETS

The participants responded that their relationships with other people and their pets enabled their social connection. Family was the most common response for social connection as shown below but informal encounters and opportunities to chat with strangers was a highly valued avenue for social connection.

Neighbours
Friendships
Volunteering
Babies
Family
Cats
Partner Motivator
Partner Dogs
Friendly Community
Informal encounters

One participant stated:

"You're connected from an early age. Depending on your family. The training you get in your family is what connects you." (F)

Another participant commented on the many different involvements with people that enabled their connection:

"I volunteer here (Mathers House). I volunteer in the Royal Hobart Hospital Kiosk. I still work for three different surgeries. That's what connects me. My husband and I are very sociable. That keeps me connected. I have a son that lives here with two children with two girls that also keeps me connected. And, I play bridge three times a week. When you play bridge you play with everybody." (F)

Informal encounters with people in the street, shops, tradies in the home were all responses to what enables social connection.

One participant stated:

"Like the Bette Midler song 'Hello in there'. That's what we really want everybody just to say hello." (M)

BETTE MIDLER'S LYRICS 1972, HELLO IN THERE (24)

We had an apartment in the city
Me and my husband liked living there
It's been years since the kids have grown
A life of their own, left us alone

John and Linda live in Omaha
Joe is somewhere on the road
We lost Davy in the Korean war
I still don't know what for, don't matter any more

You know that old trees just grow stronger
And old rivers grow wilder every day
But old people, they just grow lonesome
Waiting for someone to say
"Hello in there. Hello"

Me and my husband, we don't talk much anymore
He sits and stares through the backdoor screen
And all the news just repeats itself
Like some forgotten dream
That we've both seen

Someday I'll go and call up Judy
We worked together at the factory
Ah, but what would I say when she asks what's new?
Say, "Nothing, what's with you?
Nothing much to do."

You know that old trees just grow stronger
And old rivers grow wilder every day
Ah, but, but old people, they just grow lonesome
Waiting for someone to say
"Hello in There. Hello."

So if you're walking down the street sometime
And you should spot some hollow ancient eyes
Don't you pass them by and stare
As if you didn't care
Say, "Hello in there. Hello.

PRACTICALITIES

Practicalities of social connection are linked with the actual doing and experience of being of socially connected. Practical enablers of social connection that emerged were:

- Transport
- Technology
- Time
- Access – economical/locational and information.

TRANSPORT – Conversations arose on the importance of transport to improve access to services. There was a mixture of participants who drove, and some who rely on public transport. The participants that do engage with public transport spoke highly of the service and the opportunity for social connection that came with it.

One participant stated:

"The bus drivers here have been fantastic to me. I say thank god you have come along." (M)

One participant spoke highly of Community Transport Services Tasmania:

"It's a wonderful service." (F)

One participant pointed:

"Cars can be isolating." (M)

Some of the participants engaged in day trips out of the greater Hobart area and spoke highly of these experiences that were made accessible through organised group transport.
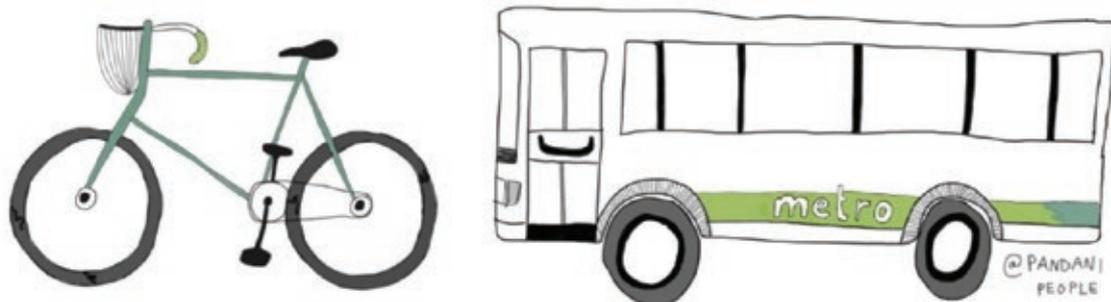
Transport

TECHNOLOGY – There were mixed responses from participants around technology as enabler for social connection. Many of the participants cited the value of technology, "mobile phones, the internet" and "computers" appearing as response in the enablers for connection.

One participant highlighted the isolation that comes with technology:

Work it seems to be broken down. What you can do. You can do it at home. It's another isolation. Everything with modern technology, you can now do it on a machine. There is no communication. What I class as communication. I want to share my soul with people. Everybody that's come in say what a lovely sunny day. That's what we want. We want that little bit of human contact." (M)

TIME – two participants responses indicated that time plays a practical role in enabling their connection. The response "have time" to connect.

ACCESS – Many participants referred to the accessibility of services. Sociality is not cost-neutral. (3) Practical elements were mentioned that enable social connection "affordable", "the right space" and right "time of day". One participant noted that activities held throughout the day were more accessible than in the evening.

One participant stated:

"Adult education is too expensive." (F)

Another participant commented:

"The location of the University of the Third Age makes it difficult to access." (M)

Access to information such as Mathers House 'What's On Newsletter'. "Hard mail" was an important enabler for connection for wise people that were not connected online.

Technology

This is EQuality

This is EQuity
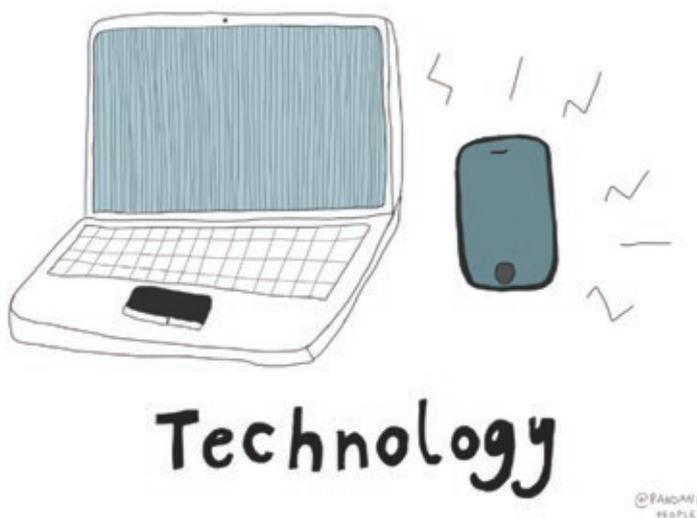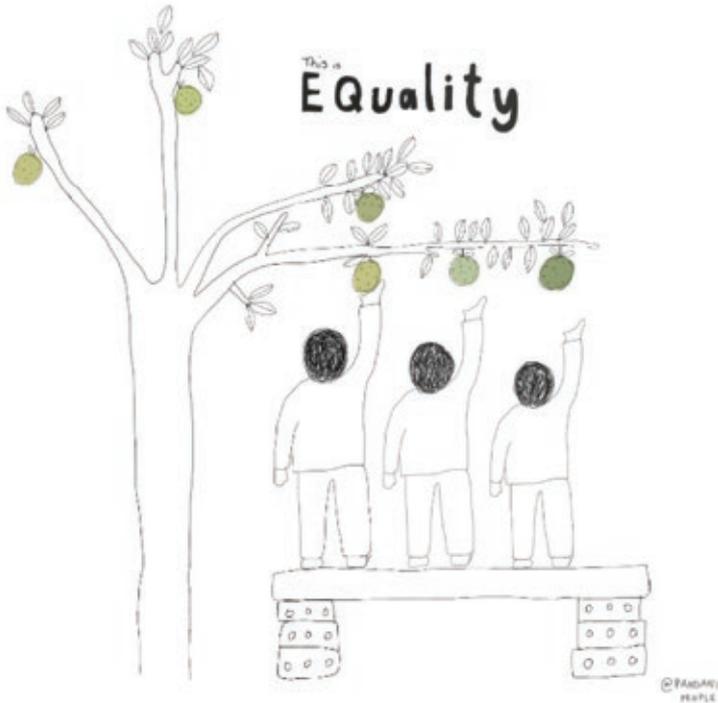
OTHER

Other commonly repeated responses by the participants which don't fit into other areas were:

• Gardening
• Good Health – Mental and Physical
• Spirituality/Religiosity

Gardening was stated by many participants as an enabler of social connection.Community gardens and being able to maintain gardens were played an important function in creating connection.

A few of the participants expressed having a spiritual connection also played a role in enabling further connection.

Health was mentioned by many participants as an enabler.

One participant stated:

"You've got to have health and fitness. With all the money in the world you don't have anything if you don't have your health." (M)
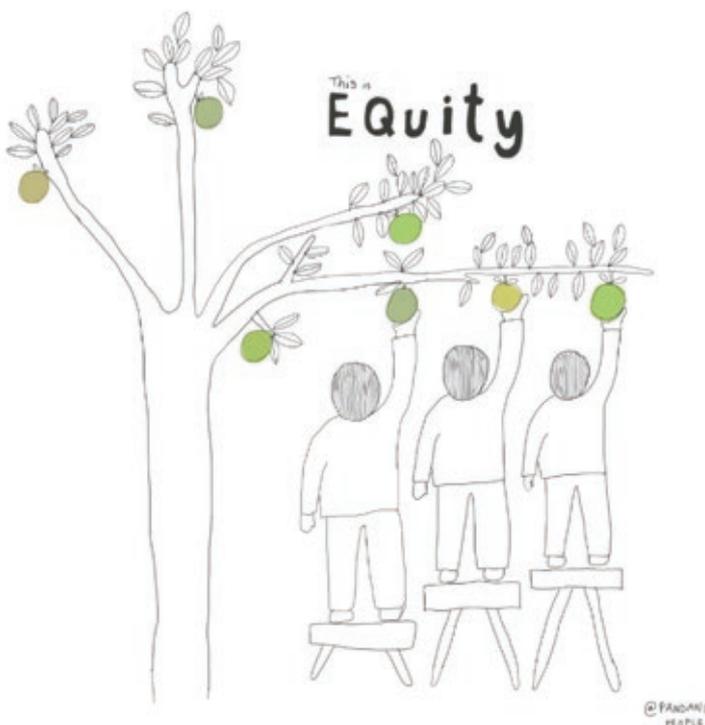
QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS SOCIAL CONNECTION?

The term "connection cycle" was expressed by a participant. From speaking with wise people there was a sense that the benefits of social connection come back with a bonus and provide far greater internal rewards.

The responses to this section have been grouped into six separate areas:

• Purpose and Reason
• Connection Cycle
• Open
• Friendship and Knowing Someone Cares
• Sociality
• Health

PURPOSE AND REASON

Some of the responses that were recorded throughout the community consultations and one-to-one interviews indicate that social connection provides many more intrinsic and unseen benefits than the connection itself. Some of the responses recorded were:

"value" "have an identity" "sense of belonging" " alive" "feel wanted" "good for self-respect" "feeling connected - still part of life" "gives reason" "purpose" "role in community" "sense of fulfilment" "respected"

Other responses indicated it provides reason for many participants to literally get out:

"That's something to get you out of the room" "something to get you out of the house" "You have to get out and make the best of things" "you don't lock yourself away" "something to be dependent on" "puts a smile on your face" "provide enjoyment" "get up and go attitude"

One participant stated:

"If I wasn't connected I would be a basket case. I am not horrified to be on my own for the day. If it's day after day. I can't bear the thought of that."

(F)

A common theme that emerged amongst participants was that the benefits you receive from the connection were much greater than the output. Some of the responses to the question included:

"Connection cycle" "Giving comes back with a bonus" "Appreciation" "Confidence which flows out" "Bigger internal rewards" "What you give out you receive back" "Links you to other things" "It is my pleasure" "Giving rather than taking is very rewarding."

One participant remarked on one of the benefits as:

"Getting information which then enables all sorts of things." (F)

Another participant stated:

"It's such a reward. A bigger reward. Selfish people will never really be happy because they are only thinking of themselves. Don't ask of anything but you give of yourself you will receive a lot more than you give." (M)

One participant stated:

"Further connection just rolls on. It is also having a family in the wider community." (M)

OPEN

The responses indicate that a benefit of being socially connected is it provides an open outlook.

Participant's responses that sit within this were:

"Helps you think of others, takes you out of the space of being self-involved"

"Broadened vision" "Ideas - everything" "non-judgemental."

One participant noted:

"You've got to open up yourself to expect something to come in." (M)

Another participant stated:

"You stop thinking about yourself and start to think about other people. I used to judge and now I appreciate." (F)

FRIENDSHIP AND KNOWING SOMEONE CARES

Participants indicated another benefit of social connection is the friendships formed which filled the internal human need of knowing that someone cares.

"Make friends" "Meet people" "Friendship" "Companionship" "Long-lasting friendship" "Friendly and caring group" "Chatting with people knowing someone cares."

One participant commented:

"It's a quiet support. There's nothing showy about the support people give you. It's there and you know you've got it. That is the strength of these groups." (F)

SOCIALITY

Another response to benefits of social connection is that it provides an outlet to socialise with people who have mutual interests.

"Meeting people in the same boat" "Talk to people not part of a system" "Have a chitty-watty" "Highlight of the week" "Social"

One participant confessed:

'Mentally challenged at times. I love chatting with people." (F)

Another participant:

"Interacting with other human beings. I think that's the thing. You've got to do it." (F)

HEALTH

Many of the participants spoke of the health benefits that were attached with being socially connected. Health under this area includes responses around laughter, mental and physical wellbeing.

"Laughter" "Physical health and balance" "Prevention of cognitive decline" "Health – movement – physical health" "Deter depression and poor mental health" "Smile"

One participant commented:

"Feeling good. The benefits are on your health. I think you keep going. They feel good in themselves. Put a smile on their face, you're achieving something." (M)

Good health was linked with the desire to be independent. One participant stated:

"I don't want to be a nuisance." (F)

RAISING INDIVIDUAL SELF-AWARENESS OF SKILLS AND GIFTS POSSESSED

This project adopted the mantra that "everyone has gifts, and everyone has gifts to give."

This next section has combined all of the participant's responses and mapped them into three separate word clouds for each of the following questions:

- Gifts of the Hand -
  Things I know how to do and enjoy
- Gifts of the Head -
  Things I know something about and would enjoy sharing
- Gifts of the Heart –
  Things I care deeply about

A gift-inventory table visually displays this (See Appendix 3).

"A lot of people don't recognise their gifts as gifts. It is just something that they do. But it is a gift that you are often given." (M)

WHAT THE PARTICIPANTS SAID?

GIFTS OF THE HAND?

Wound care
Woodwork Grow through adversity
Something that requires real interaction
Learn from mistakes Acting
Playing jazz travel Local History
Growing cactuses and succulents Driving
Painting Working with tools Singing
volunteering Bridge
unconditional love
Arranging flowers Exercising Music Computer skills

Walking outdoors
nursing
Family History Decoupage Playing with cat
Learning meditation art Physical skills
Waitressing Writing
Women's center Research Playing petanque
Engaging with community
cooking Rug-making Rock and roll band
Craft dancing Organising people
Crocheting Knitting Making people happy
Neighbourhood watch Make believe children's entertainment

GIFTS OF THE HEAD?

Sharing food and cooking
Teaching simple form of meditation
Speaking French
Gardening
people **Films** Craft
Life skills
Teaching Piano Attending concerts **Reading**
Children
community gardens
Flower show Positive encouragement Sharing the garden
Writing Teaching people how to do things
Resolving relationships Research Learning neuroscience
Theatre
Speaking German Engaging with community Analysing systems
Pub Quiz **Travel experience**
Entertainment
Local History Problem-solving for vulnerable Politics
Science Crosswords Good listener Education
Academic skills Sudoku
Literature Music
English History **books**
Meeting people talking to each other
Teaching English Physical exercise
Volunteering

GIFTS OF THE HEART?

social justice
Including strangers
Community organisations for the elderly
Environment
Issues abroad
Know people are in good health
Joy and appreciation of friends
Appreciation of nature
Aboriginal History
Local community
Inner beauty
Making time
dogs
Conversations with younger generations
Socialising
refugees
Disadvantaged and marginalised groups
Younger people and the future
Aged Care system in Tasmania
Promoting well-being and enabling others
Church
Desire to be involved
Family
Self-care Food
Respect for everyone
Good neighbours
Being able to communicate
Passing on knowledge to others
Spirituality
Art
Music
Feeling independent
People who are suffering
Work
Just giving love
Exercising
Smiling
Volunteering
Social isolation
Supporting others
Older people (wise people
Equal opportunity
Social determinants of health
Singing
friends
Brighten someones life with a skill
Tasmanian History
Youth suicide teaching resilience
Learning how to play piano

EXPLORING SOCIAL GROUPS

To develop a deeper understanding around the role that social groups play the participants were asked three questions around social groups. How accessible are social groups? What are the strengths of belonging to a group? Any possible ways to improve groups?

WHAT THE PARTICIPANTS SAID?

ACCESSIBILITY

There were mixed responses to this question. Participants viewed accessibility as including a number of different elements. See the responses below:

One participant stated insecurity may make groups less accessible:

"I think it's their insecurity. As we got older we don't think we have anything to offer. You've got be sure not to get upset if someone does not have the same opinion as you." (M)

And

"The problem is sometimes people are reluctant to join a group. Once they join they find it's alright. It's just getting there." (F)

Other participants stated that having a trusted referral gets you through the door:

"Workers take people there it's a referral system." (M)

"Word of mouth." (F)

"People I know." (F)

"Family can sometimes introduce you to groups." (F)

Other conversations with participants arose around the context and suitability of the group. The accessibility in this instance was seen as:

"Depends on the group...depends on the people." (F)

A couple of participants expressed the need for a variety of activities that were not typically for "old" people:

"The big thing is to try and provide something with a difference. It has to be a variety." (M)

Another participant stated that accessibility is determined by the level of interest.

"Enthusiastic about coming. Keen to come, they'll find a way to make it accessible." (F)

Some made statements around getting people to commit and come back:

"Sometimes you wonder. People come and they go. Sometimes people find it too much." (F)

"Being able to provide enjoyment. That's why they come along every week. As long as you can provide a service. It's getting people to commit to. That's the very very big one." (M)

Other considerations noted around accessibility of groups are similar to claims stated in the enablers of connection. Participants mentioned access to clean facilities, transport to the group and access to clear information:

"Options need to be affordable and accessible." (F)

Another participant spoke of her experience with some groups:

"They are accessible but sometimes they are a little cliquey. People can freeze you out." (F)

STRENGTHS

Some of the participant's responses around strengths of groups have been combined into a word cloud. See across:

The opportunity to learn and share was identified as a strength.

"We learn something new every day. Every person can teach you something. I still have a yearning to learn. I want to put something back in the brain. I don't want it to be empty. I love being parts of groups because from there I am going to learn something because somebody else has a different opinion. That's what life is about we have to accept not everybody is us. We've got to open up those doors. Be as open as the only way you're going to receive is to open up yourself. Don't block yourself. Don't close the door." (M)

Other responses indicated the strengths of groups is knowing someone cares:

"Caring thing that makes you feel that you're not totally on your own. Which can happen at my age. In these groups if you don't turn up someone will ring you and ask if you're okay. That's what is very very good." (F)

And

"I think the feeling of friendliness. You recognise everyone is there." (F)

Another participant made the observation that connection to social groups often branches into other things:

"Social communication. Once you've joined one group you're more liable to go to another. You make friends and have people to talk to." (F)

Friendship
Mental gain
Interaction can lead to other things
Exchanging experiences
Sense of belonging
Physical gain
Different support outside of family
Togetherness
Social relationships
Avenue for feedback
Provides links
Confidence
problem-solving

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Participants spoke about different group dynamics and diverse groups as being both a challenge and something to make it interesting. One participant stated:

"Diverse group makes it interesting. There will always be different personalities you get involved with." (F)

And another participant commented:

"Personalities. There are all sorts of things. That's human nature. You're going to get that everywhere. There's not anything that's painful or cutting that goes on in these groups. We come to enjoy ourselves and interact." (F)

A participant that held a leadership role in many different groups suggests a variety of ages should be involved in coordinating groups:

"I think we need a few more younger people. People that have a bit of 'get up and go'. People get to a certain age where they're not prepared to do it. The women I am talking about all look after grandchildren as well." (F)

IDEAS TO BUILD SOCIAL CONNECTION

The participants were asked this question to assemble a variety of ideas on how to build social connection. This question was sometimes reframed as how could we best reach socially isolated and lonely people.

WHAT THE PARTICIPANTS SAID?

• Clear and accessible information
• Need a variety of different services for people to connect with
• Attention of services, professionals and places that are in contact with isolated and lonely people
• Superannuation companies provide more than just financial advice in the planning and preparation phases of transitioning to retire
• Transport should be more accessible
• Attention on building relationships – what first gets you to a group is usually someone else

Access to clear information and an abundance of information was a common theme that emerged in ways to build social connection.

Things that were mentioned in this area were "advertising" "mail out" "using technology" "word of mouth."

One participant stated the importance of skilled workers delivering information:

"The wrong information is more harmful than no information." (F)

A few of the participants stated throughout the research that they did not like social groups and activities that were typically designed for "old" people. Providing a service that provides enjoyment and something people are eager to commit to is important.

One participant commented:

"Provide a service. Something new." (M)

Some participants thought more broadly about services that are in contact with lonely and isolated people. The services mentioned were "meals on wheels" and the "mobile library".

Other participants mentioned professions and places that isolated and lonely people may be in contact with "general practitioners" "pharmacists" "hospitals".

Two of the groups spoke about retirement and the transition to the next chapter and believed superannuation companies could do more:

"People need to start thinking earlier about the next chapter." (F)

A few of the participants noted that some people are more solitary and not as interested in connection. There needs to be an awareness and acceptance of this.

CITY OF HOBART **CONNECTION CYCLE**

CHAPTER FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has provided insight into some of the personal and practical barriers that may hinder one's ability to be socially connected.

These eight recommendations are based on the research presented here, alongside other investigations into effective frameworks and strategies for connecting people. Each recommendation provides an explanation and an example. Whilst these recommendations are not fully comprehensive, they seek to prompt further discussion and inquiry into ways to make Hobart a more accessible and inclusive place for wise people.

Many of these recommendations have been born from the participants' experiences and their ideas on how to build social connection.

1. WISE PEOPLES' VOICES NEED TO PLAY A KEY ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT, DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF LOCAL SERVICES.

Explanation: Different people have different experiences of ageing. In order for the development of effective strategies and programs to be enacted it is important that wise people are involved in this process and their ideas, beliefs and voices listened to and considered. This research identifies wise people's feelings of invisibility. With current projections that one quarter of Tasmania's population will be 65 years or over by 2030 it is imperative that valuable community stakeholders are recognised and included in the development of strategies for change.

Example: Consultations with this age-cohort should be place-based. Community facilities such as community halls, community houses and community organisations should play a role engaging with and involving wise people in discussions around ways to build connection.

2. A WHOLE-OF-COMMUNITY APPROACH SHOULD BE USED TO GUIDE AND BUILD SOCIAL CONNECTION.

Explanation: This research highlights that there are many different considerations required when attempting to build social connection. A whole-of-community approach is needed to address this complex issue. This requires the involvement of governments, the not-for-profit sector, councils, libraries and other local businesses. All people within a community share a responsibility in creating inclusive, friendly, safe and accessible places. Wise people who participated in this research valued their "friendly community" and identified "informal encounters" to play an important role in their social connection.

Services and professions that are typically in touch with socially isolated and lonely people were identified as connection points for further inquiry.

Examples: The services identified by participants were "Meals on Wheels" and "mobile libraries". Further inquiry into these services alongside postal workers should be undertaken to see what positive role they can play in linking people back to the community.

Professions such as general practitioners, pharmacists, nurses and hospital staff were all mentioned. Further inquiry into the development of "social prescribing" programs should be considered. See link for report of the social prescribing network conference 2016 in the United Kingdom. (25)

3. COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS AND FACILITIES OFFER A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT SERVICES TO ACCOMMODATE A DIVERSITY OF WISE PEOPLE.

Explanation: Some of the participants expressed the need for new and innovative services to be provided that were not typically designed for "old" people. The development of new and creative ideas for wise people to engage with would assist in breaking down ageist stereotypes. A variety of services enables a variety of people to be attracted to services. These services need to be engaging to attract the interest and commitment of wise people.

Example: There are a number of projects and services that could aid in dismantling ageist stereotypes. Anything from street dancing and slam poetry to street art. The more visible these are the better as it showcases to the community the capacities, skills and unique gifts wise people possess.

4. PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS SHOULD BE FORMED TO INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING.

Explanation: Many participants expressed an interest in teaching and learning new things. To encourage positive interactions and transference of skills across all ages, more could be done to increase the opportunities for wise people to interact and engage with younger generations.

Example: Develop partnerships between local community centres and schools that encourage and promote these opportunities for intergenerational learning to take place. This would open up opportunities for younger people to teach wise people how to use technology, and similarly allow wise people to teach and share with young people their wisdom, skills and experience acquired throughout their lifetime.

5. SUPERANNUATION FUNDS SHOULD TAKE A MORE HOLISTIC APPROACH IN PLANNING AND PREPARING WISE PEOPLE FOR THEIR TRANSITION TO RETIREMENT.

Explanation: Superannuation funds should take a holistic approach when preparing their clients for retirement. Research indicates that Australians are most optimistic about retirement, however were the least prepared for it. (23) Planning for retirement well before the intended date is vital to ensure a smooth transition. Whilst superannuation funds provide clients with financial advice this should be coupled with advice on the social implications of retirement. One participant stated "When people tell me they are going to retire in two years I say, be careful what you wish for." (F)

Example: Training should be provided to designated superannuation staff around ways to properly prepare their clients for the next chapter. This training should provide a holistic approach to preparing and planning for retirement and be considerate of not only the economical aspect but the social, physical and emotional aspects as well.

6. TRANSPORT OPTIONS SHOULD BE AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TO ENCOURAGE GREATER SOCIAL PARTICIPATION OF WISE PEOPLE.

Explanation: There needs to be a multipronged approach by governments, communities, the private sector and individuals to create transport options that are both affordable and accessible. Restricted mobility needs to be a consideration when designing transport policies for wise people. Greater attention should be paid to the spatial distances between bus stops as well as known community services.

Example: The national public transport model in the United Kingdom provides concessions to anyone 60 years or over. The person is provided with an older person's bus pass which enables their free access and movement on local buses in England.

7. PARTNERSHIPS SHOULD BE FORMED WITH THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR TO ESTABLISH PLACE-BASED SKILL INVENTORIES.

Explanation: Chapter three of this research highlights that many wise people are in possession of a number of different skills. One participant expressed "I actually get very sad. Because I know I've got a lot of things to give. But where do you go to give them?" (M) Place-based skill inventories would encourage the sharing of skills and gifts and provide a centralised system to monitor this. Wise people are valuable assets and there is potential for their skills to be better utilised by communities.

Example: Collaborate with the not-for profit sector and other community organisations to aid the development of time banks. Time banks enable the trading of skills within a community and create a circle of giving. See link for further information. (26) http://timebanks.nz/

8. THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INFORMATION RESOURCE STAFFED WITH SKILLED WORKERS THAT LINK PEOPLE BACK TO COMMUNITY.

Explanation: Wise people suggested the best way to connect people to the community is to provide information to a number of people in a number of ways. As one person stated "Everybody does not know everything. Need a resource." This resource needs to be easy to access and occupied by skilled workers to ensure the correct information and guidance is provided. A participant spoke about her informal role that she played in linking people back to community and knowing when to "step back" once the person was connected. The guidance provided should take a person-centred approach and seek to tailor personalised avenues for connection that meet specific needs.

Example: There is a Link Workers programme team that has been established in Scotland. This aims to explore how primary care can be extended to assist people to live well in their communities and provide information and guidance. See the link for further details. (27)

www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Recruitment-Module-44pp-FINAL.pdf>.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

There is no simple secret to ageing well. The ageing process begins from the moment of conception and is impacted by a number of different factors throughout all life stages, not just later life.

Language is one of these factors which impacts on a person's ability to age well. The lived experience of being in an "older" body often comes with assumptions, biases and judgements based on capacity and competency. Some participants expressed that the lived experience of growing "old" was linked with feeling invisible. This research highlights that people want to be acknowledged as people, irrespective of their age. There were mixed responses amongst participants around the use of labels such as 'elderly' or 'older' as descriptors of their group membership. The use of adjectives 'dear' 'sweet' 'eccentric' were highly disliked amongst participants with some also identifying that the context, tone and delivery of the spoken word also impacted on how warmly it would be received.

Similarly, social connection and the amount of supportive social relationships a person has access to throughout their life plays a part in determining advantages or disadvantages. The benefits of social connection are aplenty as it provides protection in the absence of other material means. This research demonstrates that social connection is crucial to health and wellbeing and opens up avenues for a broadened vision, a more empathetic and caring exchange between people and cyclical benefits for the whole community. This research demonstrates that accessing social activities can sometimes be a barrier that prevents people from engaging, however once they do commit to connect they are more likely to make additional social connections.

In order to design more culturally respectful and inclusive communities there needs to be a shift in the way ageing is perceived. An asset lens needs to be adopted when viewing wise people, so their skills, resources and capacities can be charted and more easily contribute towards community life. Positive words, with positive judgements need to be adopted to encourage positive ageing. How can words impact on wise people this much? This is similar to asking "how can plants blossom when placed in the shade?". A deficit lens will produce a deficit effect and very limited blooming. An asset lens will ensure flourishing and continual growth.

Wise people should not be treated by policy-makers as one homogenous group. This research illustrates the varied lived experiences of the participants and the diverse skills, gifts, and valuable contributions they make. The recommendations in this report seek to enhance social connection for wise people through providing avenues for them to be valued and contribute to their community. Relationships act as the cornerstone of community. (28) Through building social connection and bonds this has the potential to branch out into positive outcomes and aid in the creation of more resilient, strong, caring and inclusive spaces for all people. Wise people are a valuable community assets, rich in resources, full of unique experiences, wisdom, skills and gifts which need to be included and engaged with in order for the community to function at an optimal level.

Social connection creates a cycle of positive feedback which loops into other areas, where those who are connected reap the rewards. I leave the reader with one critical question by way of a challenge: What role must the community play in connecting more wise people into this positive loop?

APPENDIX 1
ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

CAN'T DO

"DEFICIT-BASED"

Problems

Blame

What's missing?

Scarcity

Risks

Needs

Control outside-in

Top-Down

Do 'to' or 'for'

Passive receivers

HALF EMPTY

HALF FULL

CAN DO

"ASSET-BASED"

Possibilities

Shared Ownership

What's there?

Abundance

Courageous Leadership

Strengths, capacities, assets

Step back inside-out

Citizen-Led

Do 'with' enabling

Active Producers

(Source: Russell, ABCD Institute 2013)

APPENDIX 2
ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

LANGUAGE MATTERS – HELP US GET IT RIGHT

Language has an impact on how we see ourselves and how we feel we are being treated. It would be greatly appreciated if you could provide feedback on the table below.

Please indicate by ticking a response:

	I DISLIKE IT	I DON'T MIND IT	I LIKE IT	I AM UNSURE
ELDERLY	25	17	3	1
ELDER	20	21	3	
SENIOR	6	23	16	1
DEAR	25	16	3	1
SWEET	34	10	2	
ECCENTRIC	24	15	6	1
DARLING	28	16	4	1
PET	30	11	2	
GRANDMOTHERLY	23	12	3	3
OLDER	12	23	7	
WISE	3	16	24	
LATER IN LIFE	17	17	4	2
MATURE AGED	11	24	8	
GERIATRIC	44	3		
BEING CALLED BY MY FIRST NAME		6	43	

APPENDIX 3 GIFT-INVENTORY TABLE

GIFTS	HANDS	HEAD	HEART
	• Grow through adversity • Learn from mistakes • Computer skills • Physical skills • Music • Working with tools • Cooking x 3 • Dancing x 2 • Craft • Outdoor walking groups x 3 • Singing • Acting • Artist x 3 • Growing cactuses and succulents • Gardening x 3 • Painting • Knitting • Driving x 2 • Research • Family • History • Local History • Making people happy • Crocheting x 2 • Playing petanque • Travel x 2 • Playing with cat • Volunteering x 2 • Exercising • Arranging flowers	• Resolving relationships • Meeting people talking to each other • Academic skills • Life skills • Reading x 2 • Physical exercise • Literature • Analysing systems • Problem-solving for vulnerable people • Research • Pub Quiz • Travel experience x 2 • Local History • Films x 2 • Music • Crosswords/ Sudoku • Books x 2 • Writing • Theatre • Flower show • Community Gardens x 2 • Teaching simple form of meditation • Gardening • Providing people with information x 3 • Speaking French • Speaking German • Movies/ Entertainment	• Supporting others • Including strangers • Smiling • Desire to be involved • Passing on knowledge to others • Social isolation • Tasmanian History • Aboriginal History • Aged Care system in Tasmania • Social Justice x 3 • Social determinants of health • Family x 7 • Music x 2 • Know people are in good health • Feeling independent • Being able to communicate • Just giving love • Dogs x 2 • Promoting wellbeing and enabling others • Disadvantaged and marginalised groups • Conversations with younger generations • Making time • Joy and appreciation of friends x 4 • Appreciation of nature

GIFTS	HANDS	HEAD	HEART
	• Learning meditation • Make believe children's entertainment • Playing jazz • Rock and roll band • Bridge • Wound care/ nursing • Waitressing • Engaging with community • Neighbourhood watch • Unconditional love • Decoupage • Something that requires real interaction • Rug-making • Woodwork • Writers group • Women's centre • Good at organising people	• Volunteering • Attending concerts • Science – neuroscience • Education • Learning • Good listener • Children • Politics • Craft • English History • Teaching Piano • Sharing food and cooking • Positive encouragement • Engaging with community • Teaching people how to do things • Sharing the garden • Teaching English	• Good neighbours • Self-care • Spirituality x 2 • Volunteering • Learning how to play piano • Singing • Exercising • Socialising • Environment • People who are suffering • Younger people and the future • Youth suicide – teaching resilience • Enjoy seeing what I can do for other people • Community organisations – for the elderly • Issues abroad • Refugees x 3 • Equal opportunity • Local community • Inner beauty • Art • Respect for everyone • Older people (wise people) • Church • Brighten someone's life with a skill • Work • Food

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