Who we are
Life Activities Clubs Victoria Inc. (LACVI) represents a network of incorporated Life Activities Clubs throughout Victoria that are operated by volunteers on a non-profit basis.

Life Activity Clubs provide people in retirement or approaching retirement (typically aged 50 and over) opportunities to enjoy a full, satisfying and connected community life and maintain lifelong wellbeing.

There are currently 22 Life Activities Clubs in Victoria (17 within the Greater Melbourne metropolitan area and 5 in regional centres) with each Club offering its members a wide range of recreational and social activities that provide physical, mental and social stimulation. The available activities for the over 3,500 club members are determined by the interests of the members of each club.

Brief history
Beginning in 1971 as an Early Planning for Retirement Group in Camberwell, the Early Planning for Retirement Association (the forerunner of Life Activities Clubs Victoria Inc.) formed early in 1972 (the year U3A first formed in France) to promote the establishment of a network of similar groups with an emphasis at the time on providing financial literacy and assistance in the transition from work for the many workers experiencing forced early retirement.

As social and employment conditions changed and new regulatory regimes were adopted, the groups adapted their focus to social, physical and recreational activities. In 1995 Early Planning for Retirement Groups were renamed Life Activities Clubs and the parent body was incorporated as the Life Planning Foundation of Australia Inc. to match the new focus.

Following further evolution and changes in focus, Life Activities Clubs Victoria Inc. replaced the former Life Planning Foundation of Australia in 2009.

Community benefits provided by clubs
Forty years of experience has demonstrated the value of Life Activities Clubs in the community. There is well-documented evidence that maintaining a healthy mind and body, an active social life and making time for some recreation all contribute to improved quality of life, as well as longevity. Social engagement, in particular, helps avoid depression and these become more important factors as we age.

As well as the personal benefits achieved through ongoing participation in these activities, the community benefits are substantial. Longevity can be a two-edged sword if extending life entails
additional periods of dependency on government or community services, adding significantly to health and aged care costs in particular.

Life Activities Clubs keep older people active and engaged, forming new long-term friendships and improving individuals’ quality of life. They should be seen as a useful tool in deferring the time when people become dependent on high levels of expensive public support. They are instrumental in extending active ageing and although they remain relevant to very old people (there are some Clubs with active members well into their 90s), Life Activities Clubs focus more on people who are approaching or in retirement who are still able to participate in physical and social activities without serious health or mobility constraints.

It is the availability of varied social and recreational activities within each Life Activity Club that make our organisation unique. In this sense, Life Activities Clubs are well-differentiated but complementary with other community groups such as U3A, Probus, Senior Citizen Clubs, Men’s Sheds and the many other single purpose clubs.

The activities provided within each Life Activities Club and the times they are available are determined by the members. Activities are common within the following broad categories: Indoor Games, Outdoor Sports, Day Outings, Travel, Dine Outs, Dancing, Cinema, Walking, Exercise and Theatre.

**Key issues for government**

- **How to attract more seniors to participate in social & recreational activities?**

  The number of Victorians over 60 is expected to grow from 19% of the population in 2010 to 23% in 2020 and to 29% in 2050 and overall, the proportion of older people in rural and regional areas is greater than in metropolitan Melbourne. To become active, one of the most important messages seniors need to hear is that there are organisations in their community that will welcome them into a friendly and secure environment that allows them to participate at their own pace in a wide variety of activities available.

- **How to provide adequate community facilities for seniors to participate in social & recreational activities?**

  Clubs often have difficulty finding suitable affordable community spaces where their members can enjoy activities in a comfortable and safe environment. Infrastructure requirements can include indoor centres, outdoor sports areas and walking tracks. Although these facilities are often provided by Local Government, they are frequently not affordable for our Clubs and their members.

- **How can the costs of social and recreational activities for seniors be made affordable?**

  Maintaining independence and dignity as seniors age is of critical importance, with many having significant potential to adopt more healthy ways of living if activities were available at an affordable cost considering that many are pensioners.

**Are there solutions?**

Solving these issues will require a coordinated effort by each layer of government; Federal, State and Local.

Victoria’s response to population ageing is shared across a range of portfolios and service sectors within the three levels of government in Australia. Local councils are often the first point of contact.
for many older people as they play a key role in providing local infrastructure necessary for the physical and social activities of their ageing communities.

Committed state and federal resources will be essential if local government is to develop the infrastructure that can make a positive difference to the quality of life, social participation, health and wellbeing of older people.

Life Activities Clubs Victoria Inc. has adopted a development strategy for the next three years which aims to:

- Increase the number of Life Activities Clubs, particularly by opening Clubs in additional regional centres
- Increase the total number of members participating in all clubs
- Increase the percentage of men participating in clubs.

Life Activities Clubs Victoria Inc. is committed to working with each level of government in the varied ways the three key areas must be addressed to ensure that shared outcomes for an expanded healthy ageing lifestyle for seniors are achieved.