

Inquiry into support for older Victorians from migrant and refugee backgrounds submission (Edit) Microsoft Forms

1. Name *

2. Email *

3. Postal address *

4. Phone number

5. Are you a carer/family member helping an older Victorian fill in this survey?

6. Are you an older Victorian from a culturally diverse background? If yes, what is your age and cultural background?

Yes, I am almost 70 and have recently migrated here from Lancashire in the North of England. This means that like many other recent migrants, I am not entitled to many benefits.

7. What are some of the everyday challenges for you and your parents/grandparents?

My experience of day to day life around Port Phillip is that there is a disregard and a lack of respect for older people. I encounter many retired people in the local community, most have come from highly skilled and experienced professional backgrounds, but these skills and this wealth of experience is frequently disregarded by younger people who always seem to be determined to reinvent the wheel, and fail to learn from the experience of their elders. Challenges can be quite simple: there is a good bus service, which is ideal for older people, but because of the tight schedules of the drivers, the busses are frequently accelerating or braking aggressively, which makes walking along the bus to get on or off very hazardous. Pavements can be narrow and very uneven. When this is coupled with the poor lighting on many streets, it becomes dangerous to walk along the pavements in the dark. Older people also like to go out at night. Crowds of younger people gather on the popular streets, and have little regard for the needs of older people to pass them. When walking along the streets they seem to walk through you and refuse to divert their course. There is a sad lack of seating on the major streets of St Kilda. Older people like to go out and spend money in the local shops and cafes etc. But not having places to sit or rest on their route along major streets (eg. Fitzroy St) acts to deter us from visiting those areas.

8. What makes you feel safe in your community?

Better lighting on the streets at night would help.

9. Do you have access to adequate healthcare?

Yes, but only because I pay more than 10% of my income for private health insurance. I am an Australian Citizen, and a resident of Port Phillip, but I am still not entitled to apply for a health card. Just because I am white and speak English, does not put me into a more beneficial position than other migrants. There are limits to the help I can obtain.

10. Do you know where to find support?

I am not aware of what support may be available to me, so it's location is not relevant.

11. How can services be improved?

I would be grateful to know what services are available for me, Information of available services can certainly be improved. More entertainment and facilities for social interaction would be very helpful.

12. Do you have access to, and know how to use a computer? What would help you do this?

Yes, I am an experience professional. I have been working with computers for 40 years. Just because someone has grey hair does not mean they are not aware of technology.

13. What do you do to keep socially, physically and mentally active?

I walk, exercise, dance when possible, and attend classes and a local choir.

14. What more could be done to help you live happily?

Maybe one day i may not be able to look after myself, and I may be forced to consider moving into an age care home. What a horrible prospect! There are many such homes in this area and most of them have facilities and conditions far worse than prisons. There appears to be very little supervision of these places and the fact that most of these organisations are run on a profitmaking basis means that there is more priority to make bigger profits for the owners and shareholders, and no incentive to actually care for the residents, who are treated worse than cattle. I have had first hand experience of this recently with both my own mother, and also my partner's mother who sadly had to suffer their final months in age care homes.

15. Is there anything else you would like to add? *

Many people of my age have worked hard for almost 50 years. They have often started with nothing, and in order to provide a home for their families, they have endured mortgage interest rates of up to 18% per annum, for most of their lives. Many now live in a home they scraped and saved to buy 30 years ago, but however humble, this is home. They are not in a

position to move, usually because their family and other support systems are nearby, and the cost of moving is too difficult. Nevertheless these people become the subject of unfair criticism from young people trying to buy houses for the first time. These older people are not the ones pushing up the house prices, most of them have not bought or sold a house for over 30 years. The criticisms would be better directed at those people who own multiple properties, and buy and sell merely for speculation, and to capitalise on the difficult rental market. The elderly lady in the house across my street has lived in her home for over 40 years, she has raised her family there, her husband died 10 years ago, she has a very low income, but she works hard to keep her house clean and tidy and her garden in order. She has nowhere else to go. It is not her fault!