

Northern Territory Seniors Policy

Implementation Plan

2022-2024



TERRITORY FAMILIES,
HOUSING AND
COMMUNITIES



NORTHERN
TERRITORY
GOVERNMENT

Vision

Senior Territorians are valued members of the community and are independent, healthy and well. All Territorians recognise and respond effectively to the opportunities and challenges associated with ageing.

Priority areas and actions

The Northern Territory Seniors Policy 2021-2026 was released by the Northern Territory (NT) Government in August 2021. The NT Seniors Policy is inclusive of people from the age of 50 and recognises that seniors come from a range of backgrounds and are an important and vital part of the NT community.

Outcomes and actions which support the NT Seniors Policy are set out across four key priority areas.

1. Economic participation and financial security.
2. Safety and security.
3. Health and wellbeing.
4. Social inclusion and diversity.

Delivery of the NT Seniors Policy is underpinned by the NT Seniors Policy Implementation Plan 2022-2024 (this Plan), which details the NT Government's approach to meet our responsibilities under the policy.

Monitoring and reporting progress

The Office of Senior Territorians will work across the NT Government to coordinate, monitor, review and report on progress against actions outlined in the NT Seniors Policy and Implementation Plan.

An annual progress report will be provided to the Minister's Advisory Council for Senior Territorians and published on the NT Government website.

A second Implementation Plan will be developed by the end of 2024, based on the progress against this plan and priorities that will continue to deliver our vision for senior Territorians.

Priority 1: Economic participation and financial security

1.1

Mature age workers are supported to continue to participate in the workforce, taking into consideration their needs and preferences

1.1.1 Work in partnership with key organisations to identify programs that can support employment opportunities for senior Territorians, including vocational education and training.

We will:

- » promote the Equity Training Program through key organisations that support employment opportunities for senior Territorians, to ensure grants are accessed to assist with delivering training and employment programs
- » develop, support and promote programs and activities aimed at increasing financial security and rates of employment for older women.

1.1.2 Promote strategies under the NT Public Service (NTPS) Ageing Workforce Framework across NT Government agencies to better support mature aged workers.

We will:

- » ensure the tools and resources developed as part of the NTPS Ageing Workforce Framework are included in the workforce planning offerings and promoted to NT Government agencies
- » continue to facilitate superannuation information sessions for staff through State Wide Super
- » continue to promote the 'Flexible Retirement Hub' information on NTG Central, with HR Business Partners and through existing NTPS marketing channels.

1.2

More workforce, training and education choices are available for senior Territorians

1.2.1 Attract, develop and retain seniors into the NTPS acknowledging that pre-retirees and seniors are the fastest growing group in the NT population and the public sector is the largest employer in the NT and across a range of industry sectors.

We will:

- » include specific reference to ageing workforce, transition to retirement and succession planning in merit selection training
- » continue to promote and encourage flexible working arrangements to encourage and facilitate transition to retirement arrangements in the NTPS
- » continue to collect engagement and satisfaction data for older NTPS employees to monitor and address any workplace cultural issues identified
- » continue to offer training and development opportunities aligned to the NTPS Capability Framework.

1.2.2 Investigate incentives for businesses to retain and hire mature-age workers, provide targeted assistance for mature-age job seekers and training and re-skilling services, including programs for people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal Territorians.

We will:

- » research and promote Australian Government incentives provided to businesses through Small Business Champions.

1.3

Seniors are well informed about their financial options with a focus on financial security in later years

1.3.1 Ensure current, relevant and easy to understand financial information is available to all senior Territorians, including on superannuation and retirement savings for people planning to retire.

We will:

- » promote and provide opportunities for the delivery of information and resources, through the Office of Senior Territorians website, community organisations and libraries as appropriate, to assist in the management of finances and economic security, including superannuation and retirement.

1.3.2 Encourage and support the use of interpreters when providing financial planning information and services wherever necessary.

We will:

- » promote the use of interpreters to organisations that provide financial planning services and advice to non-English speaking Territorians
- » develop and share resources, through the Office of Senior Territorians website, community organisations and libraries, regarding existing financial planning information and services that are translated into languages other than English.

1.3.3 Provide access to financial planning and counselling services.

We will:

- » provide information through the Office of Senior Territorians website, community organisations and libraries, which assists senior Territorians to access financial counselling services.

1.4 Seniors are supported with the cost of living in the Northern Territory

1.4.1 Improve and simplify access to the NT Concessions Scheme and NT Seniors Recognition Scheme for eligible members, in particular for seniors living in remote areas and people on temporary visas who have a Medicare card.

We will:

- » continue to increase membership and accessibility of the NT Concession Scheme for remote residents through targeted engagement strategies for members and the people that support members, including attendance and/or advertising at seniors' events
- » update the membership application form to improve and simplify access to these schemes for eligible remote residents and temporary visa holders
- » promote the use of contact centre services which takes into consideration the unique needs of members of the NT Concession Scheme and NT Seniors Recognition Scheme to provide over the phone support to members living in remote areas and unable to access a service centre or remote service hub.

- » provide training on the NT Concession Scheme and NT Seniors Recognition Scheme across the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities to support the integration of frontline services and phone lines, to ensure seniors are supported to apply for the scheme and access the scheme's benefits at multiple touch points
- » develop additional promotional resources for the NT Concessions Scheme and NT Seniors Recognition Scheme in languages other than English
- » ensure future system and policy developments consider the diverse needs of seniors across the NT, including remote residents and seniors that have migrated to the NT, through user testing and consultation with the Minister's Advisory Council for Senior Territorians.

1.4.2 Promote streamlined processes for membership for the NT Concession Scheme and NT Seniors Recognition Scheme, including the availability of the identity verification form for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander seniors.

We will:

- » promote the use of identification options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander seniors, including the use of the identity verification form which can be verified by a NT Government employee for applicants who do not have 100 points of identification.

1.4.3 Encourage the participation of more Territory businesses to offer discounts to seniors and produce and distribute the annual Seniors Discount Card Business Directory.

We will:

- » continue to fund the administration of the NT Seniors Discount Card, including the engagement of NT businesses through the Council on the Ageing NT, to offer discounts to seniors and promote participating businesses through an online and printed Seniors Discount Card Business Directory.

Priority 2: Safety and security

2.1 Senior Territorians are safe at home and in the community

2.1.1 Focus on community safety through community justice and preventative community safety initiatives to reduce crime and reoffending.

We will:

- » continue to implement public safety measures that support and protect Territorians, including seniors through agreements with Neighbourhood Watch and Victims of Crime.

2.2 Raise awareness of prevention strategies and respond to the abuse of older persons through specialist and mainstream services and community awareness initiatives

2.2.1 Contribute to cross jurisdictional work on the abuse of older persons through working groups associated with the implementation of the National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians.

We will:

- » contribute to national groups under the Meeting of Attorneys-General which are working toward the development of a national register for enduring powers of attorney and for greater uniformity of legislation relating to powers of attorney.

2.2.2 Fund services and initiatives to support older people experiencing abuse.

We will:

- » continue to fund activities aimed at preventing or reducing the incidence and impact of elder abuse in the NT, including the provision of information and resources
- » identify older people who are at risk of, or who are experiencing abuse, by conducting detailed and holistic health and psychosocial assessments
- » refer older people who are experiencing abuse to support services such as the Seniors Relationship Service, Crime Stoppers NT, National Elder Abuse Phone Line, Aged Care Advocate, Alice Springs Women's Shelter and the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service
- » participate in national, regional and local initiatives to support older people experiencing abuse, as appropriate.

2.2.3 Support organisations and their workforce under the NT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018 - 2028 to respond to the abuse of older persons.

We will:

- » provide funding where appropriate, as well as information around training, to NT organisations to assist in the prevention and response to elder abuse in the NT.

2.2.4 Run the 1800 ELDERHelp phone line through the FACES Family Support Line NT.

We will:

- » continue to run the 1800 ELDERHelp phone line through the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities FACES Family Support Line NT.

2.2.5 Coordinate Australian and Northern Territory Governments and non-government agencies in responding to the abuse of older people across urban, regional and remote locations.

We will:

- » continue the coordination of responses to the abuse of older people in urban, regional and remote locations of the NT. This will include participation in national governance groups responsible for overseeing the National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians and in the Older Persons Abuse Prevention Services Network.

2.3

Senior Territorians have access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing options and are supported to age in place

2.3.1 Develop and encourage provision for private, public and affordable housing for senior Territorians across urban, regional and remote locations.

We will:

- » support the growth of social and affordable housing across urban, regional and remote locations through:
 - completion of John Stokes Square in Nightcliff, targeted to seniors and people with limited mobility
 - release and implement the draft NT Community Housing Growth and Reform Strategy to support renewal and new supply of social and affordable housing.

2.3.2 Increase options for retirement villages and ageing in the home to support senior Territorians to remain in the NT.

We will:

- » promote the Australian Government's My Aged Care funding which can be used towards home services
- » Promote the Australian Government's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care which provides aged care support for Aboriginal people in remote areas.

2.3.3 Work in partnership with the Australian Government and non government sectors, to increase housing options for senior Territorians, including those residing in Aboriginal communities.

We will:

- » work in partnership with the Australian Government and non-government sectors to increase housing options as part of the NT Community Housing Growth Strategy 2021-2030, including through providing incentives for community housing providers to leverage funding to invest in new social and affordable housing.

2.3.4 Increase accessible housing stock to improve the lives of people who are ageing or living with a disability and those who support them.

This will be achieved through:

- applying liveable housing design standards under the National Construction Code for new residential building in the NT
- continuing to modify existing public housing to meet specific requirements of people with mobility issues.

We will:

- » apply the National Construction Code 2022 for all new homes, which will include mandatory accessible housing specifications.

Priority 3: Health and wellbeing

3.1

Senior Territorians have access to high quality, culturally secure, preventative, primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare

3.1.1 Identify opportunities, and work with the Australian Government to increase the capacity and accessibility of medical facilities and services in proportion with population growth and changing need.

We will:

- » continue to work with the Australian Government and other stakeholders to explore opportunities to increase senior Territorians access to health care through the National Aged Care Reform Agenda and National Health Reform Agreement, in particular through Schedule C 'Long-Term Health Reform Principles' and Schedule F 'Interfaces Between Health, Disability and Aged Care Systems'.

3.1.2 Identify opportunities, and work with the Australian Government to increase focus on preventative health, screening and early intervention to reduce the impacts of age-related illnesses, chronic disease and injury.

We will:

- » continue to work with the Australian Government and other stakeholders to explore opportunities to increase senior Territorians access to health care through the National Aged Care Reform Agenda and National Health Reform Agreement, in particular through Schedule C 'Long-Term Health Reform Principles' and Schedule F 'Interfaces Between Health, Disability and Aged Care Systems'.

3.1.3 Provide accessible and easy to understand information about aged-care options available to senior Territorians.

We will:

- » promote and provide opportunities for the delivery and provision of information and resources about aged-care options available to senior Territorians, including through the Office of Senior Territorians.

3.1.4 Work with the Australian Government and the NT Public Health Sector to explore options to improve mental health services and ensure uniform and coordinated approaches for seniors.

We will:

- » continue to identify older people with mental health issues through detailed holistic health and psychological assessments and referrals, and provide Psychogeriatric Case Management Services
- » continue to action and recommend referrals for support through available mental health services
- » continue to ensure needs of older people are considered in the pandemic response, including through the establishment of a new COVID-19 Aged Person Mental Health Nurse position.

3.1.5 Improve regional health systems and support those that are eligible to access the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

We will:

- » continue to engage with key stakeholders including the National Disability Insurance Agency and participate in relevant networks/forums to better facilitate and support those that are eligible to access the NDIS and liaise with local service providers to provide assistance to those people who require support to navigate the system.

3.1.6 Promote and advocate for the implementation of LGBTQIA+ awareness training for Northern Territory aged care services and workers.

We will:

- » promote and advocate for the implementation of the Silver Rainbow Program by Northern Territory aged care services to improve the experiences of LGBTQIA+ people as they enter the aged care system.

3.2

The health and wellbeing of senior Territorians is promoted and protected

3.2.1 Identify opportunities to work with the Australian Government to influence the development of a long-term strategy for aged care services in the NT.

We will:

- » continue to work with the Australian Government to progress the national aged care reform agenda, including specific initiatives to improve equitable access to aged care for Aboriginal people and special needs groups.

3.2.2 Promote and support programs and activities that improve the social and emotional wellbeing of senior Territorians.

We will:

- » continue to promote and provide opportunities for the delivery and provision of programs and activities that improve the social and emotional wellbeing of senior Territorians, including through the provision of funding and support to community organisations.

3.2.3 Ensure disability supports are provided to those that are not eligible for access to the NDIS.

We will:

- » continue the Transport Subsidy Scheme and Lift Incentive Scheme for participants who are not eligible for transport in their NDIS plan.
- » continue to support seniors with access to disability and community services, including through the Seating Equipment Assessment and Technical Service and the Territory Equipment Program.

3.2.4 Continue to promote and provide advanced personal planning in advance of loss of capacity and end of life. Promote the option of using the Seniors Recognition Scheme pre-paid card to pay for the development and lodgement of Advance Personal Plans.

We will:

- » continue to support seniors to develop advanced personal planning
- » continue to provide the NT Seniors Recognition Scheme prepaid card to eligible seniors, which can be used at a wide range of businesses including for government services or legal services to support with the cost of developing and lodging Advance Personal Plans.

3.2.5 Explore opportunities to increase access to culturally secure palliative care and respite services, including investigating options to allow for the culturally appropriate choice of facilitating death “On Country”.

We will:

- » continue to actively consider and meet the cultural needs of older people when accessing palliative care and respite services. This includes supporting older people who express their wish to die “on Country”.

3.2.6 Advocate on behalf of Territorians to have the choice for legislated assisted dying options.

We will:

- » continue to advocate to the Australian Government and Federal Opposition for the rights of the Territory to legislate on assisted dying options as appropriate.

Priority 4: Social inclusion and diversity

4.1

An inclusive society that values, respects and contributes to the positive role that seniors bring to the Northern Territory

4.1.1 Support social participation through grant funding for community groups to celebrate and recognise Seniors Month.

We will:

- » continue to provide grant funding for community groups to celebrate and recognise Seniors Month.

4.1.2 Continue to produce and distribute a Seniors Month events calendar to support social participation.

We will:

- » continue to provide free special events buses for Seniors Month events being held in Darwin
- » continue to provide funding to the Council on the Ageing (COTA) NT to produce and distribute the annual Seniors Month Calendar.

4.1.3 Provide grant funding for social inclusion and wellbeing programs that support seniors from diverse backgrounds and communities.

We will:

- » continue to provide funding to community organisations for social inclusion and wellbeing programs, including through the Office of Senior Territorians, Gender Equity and Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, that support seniors from diverse backgrounds and communities.

4.2

All senior Territorians have access to activities, recreation and events that encourage social participation

4.2.1 Promote and support volunteering opportunities for senior Territorians in partnership with community organisations.

We will:

- » continue to promote and support volunteering opportunities for Senior Territorians in partnership with community organisations, including through providing support for events which attract and recruit senior volunteers throughout the year.

4.2.2 Promote healthy lifestyles, social connection and physical activity for older people through relevant public health and community led initiatives.

We will:

- » continue to conduct detailed holistic health and psychosocial assessments that consider lifestyle, social connection and physical activity of older people
- » liaise with local service providers to identify available formal and informal supports, and to make referrals as appropriate
- » provide community outreach services at individual client level
- » continue to support activities that promote healthy lifestyles, social connection and physical activity for older people.

4.2.3 Develop a Seniors Active Recreation Plan mapped to the existing NT Active Recreation Strategy 2020-2024 in the Northern Territory supported by grant funding.

We will:

- » incorporate actions under the Northern Territory Sport and Active Recreation Plan that are specific to seniors and will review actions annually.

4.3

Physical environments are safe, accessible and appropriate for seniors – including buildings, recreation spaces, roads and footpaths

4.3.1 Promote and advocate the use of age-friendly strategies for outdoor spaces and buildings, including with local governments.

We will:

- » adopt a safe system approach to infrastructure design and implementation
- » work with the Local Government Association NT representative on the Minister's Advisory Council for Senior Territorians to promote and advocate the use of age-friendly strategies for outdoor spaces and buildings.

4.4

Government information is accessible and useful for seniors, acknowledging there is a digital divide for some Territorians

4.4.1 Identify opportunities for mature aged workers to undertake vocational training programs as part of the Northern Territory digital economy.

We will:

- » create a generic infographic about JobTrainer for distribution through NT Government agencies, COTA NT and National Seniors.

4.4.2 Identify programs that support improved digital literacy skills for seniors where needed, including those offered by a range of organisations and local government.

We will:

- » promote digital literacy courses and programs being run in the community, including through community organisations, libraries and the Office of Senior Territorians.

4.5

Safe, accessible transport is available for seniors and ensures they can maintain involvement and independence in social, economic, health and other essential lifestyle pursuits

4.5.1 Maintain public transport safety through Transit Safety Officers and CCTV monitoring.

We will:

- » continue to provide Transit Officer presence on the bus network, including contracting static security guards at priority areas.

4.5.2 Provide concessions through the NT Concessions Scheme for vehicle registration, free drivers licence renewals and concessional fares for public transport.

We will:

- » continue to promote to the community that seniors are provided with:
 - free public transport in Darwin and Alice Springs for NT Seniors cardholders and Seniors Card holders from other jurisdictions
 - concession fares for Commonwealth concession card holders and NT Concession Scheme card holders
 - free driver licence renewal for NT Concession Scheme cardholders
 - concession on vehicle registration for NT Concession Scheme card holders and discount on registration for NT Seniors Card holders.

4.5.3 Support seniors travel through the NT Seniors Recognition Scheme.

We will:

- » continue to provide the NT Seniors Recognition Scheme prepaid card to eligible seniors, which can be used at a wide range of businesses including for travel and accommodation within the NT, interstate or overseas.

4.5.4 Support improved transport options to increase access for senior Territorians to public and community based key destinations such as hospitals, health clinics and shopping centres.

We will:

- » continue the two dedicated bus services per day, which run Monday to Thursday, between Darwin shopping centres and the Royal Darwin Hospital, providing free travel for seniors.

4.5.5 Promote active transport options for senior Territorians through integrated land use and transport planning and the provision of walking and cycling infrastructure.

We will:

- » undertake a review of the NT Government owned shared path network in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs regions to strategically assess the existing networks and provide recommendations for improvements, enhanced connectivity and network extensions.

4.6

All Territorians including those from diverse backgrounds are engaged to enjoy active and productive senior years and provide seniors with opportunities to maintain connections with their cultural traditions

4.6.1 Support, encourage and promote intergenerational activities, including funding events to celebrate Grandparents Day each year.

We will:

- » continue to provide grants and funding for activities that promote intergenerational activities including celebrating Grandparents Day each year.

4.6.2 Promote and develop opportunities that link younger and older Territorians to enable them to share experiences, debate issues and foster positive attitudes between generations.

We will:

- » continue to provide grants and funding for activities that link younger and older Territorians with the aim of fostering positive attitudes between generations.

4.6.3 Provide a range of activities promoting cultural diversity and inclusion during Seniors Month and throughout the year.

We will:

- » continue to provide grants and activities that promote cultural diversity and inclusion during Seniors Month and throughout the year
- » continue to provide free special events buses for the Seniors Month calendar of events in Darwin and Alice Springs.

4.6.4 Create opportunities for Aboriginal seniors to continue to pass their lore of cultural knowledge and traditions from generation to generation, in acknowledgement of their status as cultural knowledge holders.

We will:

- » continue to implement the Everyone Together Aboriginal Affairs Strategy 2019-2029 Focus Area 2 'Aboriginal cultures and languages are valued and celebrated'
- » continue to support the operation of Mikan East Arnhem Reference Group which is made up of community Elders and leaders from the East Arnhem region that advises the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities on child protection cases to ensure responses are culturally safe.





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