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## Neighbourhood satisfaction among residents : a snap shot of 60+ year olds

Catherine Underwood

ACER, [catherine.underwood@acer.edu.au](mailto:catherine.underwood@acer.edu.au)

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“I’ve lived here for 89 years in the same house and I’ve seen a lot of changes in the street in my time.” ...

# Neighbourhood satisfaction among residents: A snap shot of 60+ year olds

**Neighbourhood satisfaction is an important component of life satisfaction and is associated with levels of well-being among older residents. Older resident’s satisfaction plays a significant role in influencing their level of engagement and interaction with neighbours and their feeling of safety within their neighbourhood.**

This ‘snap shot’ highlights the extent to which residents aged 60 years and over living in six Victorian municipalities (3 metropolitan and 3 regional) felt satisfied and engaged with their neighbourhood. The sample comprised 816 residents drawn from a total sample of 2,313 residents. The data was collected from a self-completed survey distributed as a letterbox drop. Residents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to a number of statements covering various aspects of their neighbourhood. Data was collected in 2010 for VicHealth.

With 19 per cent of the Victorian population aged 60 years or over in 2010<sup>1</sup> the information obtained from this cohort of residents provides a useful picture of resident’s views.

## My neighbourhood ...

Access to amenities such as local shops, public transport, parks and recreational areas are important considerations to enhancing older people’s independence and connectivity with their neighbourhood. Connectivity is good. Nearly all respondents had positive views and it does not much matter if they live in Melbourne or in country Victoria.

|  | Metropolitan | Regional |
|--|--------------|----------|
| has public transport within easy walking distance    | 90%          | 91%      |
| has footpaths on most of the streets                 | 88%          | 95%      |
| has bicycle paths                                    | 87%          | 76%      |
| has plenty of open spaces                            | 83%          | 73%      |
| has local parks within easy walking distance of home | 79%          | 83%      |
| has local shops within easy walking distance of home | 71%          | 82%      |

## Safety ...

For older residents, moving around freely in their community is influenced by their sense of safety. Again nearly all respondents feel safe – again in the city and the country.

|  | Metropolitan | Regional |
|--|--------------|----------|
| I feel safe walking around during the day                          | 95%          | 89%      |
| I feel comfortable talking to people I don’t know when out walking | 92%          | 87%      |
| Children can walk or cycle to school safely                        | 79%          | 69%      |
| Children can safely walk or ride to local park or playground       | 75%          | 68%      |
| There is danger presented to children by strangers                 | 44%          | 51%      |

Older residents are much more concerned about the safety of children.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010). *Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia*, ABS Cat. no. 3235.0. Canberra: ABS.

## Traffic and road safety ...

The level of traffic in neighbourhood streets influences the extent to which older residents feel comfortable moving around in their neighbourhood. The use of traffic calming devices is an important means of enhancing traffic and pedestrian safety and preserving neighbourhood character. Interestingly, older residents in regional Victoria are more concerned about traffic than those in the city.

|   | Metropolitan | Regional |
|---|--------------|----------|
| Drivers exceed the speed limit                                      | 66%          | 76%      |
| There are speed humps and roundabouts to slow traffic               | 56%          | 62%      |
| There are pedestrian crossings and signals                          | 51%          | 54%      |
| There is a lot of traffic making it difficult or unpleasant to walk | 31%          | 38%      |
| I do not feel safe because of the amount of traffic on the streets  | 27%          | 32%      |

## Neighbourliness ...

A sense of 'neighbourliness' is important as the large majority of older persons see their neighbourhood as friendly.

|                                    | Metropolitan | Regional |
|------------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| My neighbours are friendly         | 83%          | 83%      |
| Neighbours look out for each other | 72%          | 68%      |
| Families talk to their neighbours  | 76%          | 73%      |

## Child friendly neighbourhoods ...

The extent to which children can independently move around in their neighbourhood plays an important part in developing an active sense of engagement among residents, awareness, and a sense of belonging. Older people are far less likely to see their community as child friendly.

|   | Metropolitan | Regional |
|---|--------------|----------|
| Children play outside on the street in my neighbourhood       | 23%          | 20%      |
| Children walk or cycle to school each day in my neighbourhood | 53%          | 51%      |
| Children ride bikes, scooters rollerblades or skateboards     | 25%          | 16%      |
| Children play outside on the footpath or street               | 16%          | 9%       |
| My neighbourhood is popular with young families               | 56%          | 62%      |

In summary; residents aged 60 years and over had a very positive view of their neighbourhood for themselves, but less so for children.

### Contact details for further information

Catherine Underwood  
Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation  
Australian Council for Educational Research  
Email: [underwood@acer.edu.au](mailto:underwood@acer.edu.au)  
[www.acer.edu.au](http://www.acer.edu.au)

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