19-20 October 2023

**NSW Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing 19 October 2023 Seniors Forum and 20 October 2023 Meeting - Communique**

Seniors Forum – 19 October 2023

The Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing (MACA) hosted its Seniors Forum on 19 October 2023 at NSW Parliament House. Invited stakeholders represented a diverse range of government and non-government organisations working with NSW Seniors. The one day Forum focused on Ageing in Place / Community, Housing, and opportunities for collaboration.

Attendees noted the pervasive effects on ageism in the broader community and that with the vast majority of seniors living at home strategies were needed to maintain health and independence. There is a need for accessible, adaptable and appropriate housing choices including support for silver level access standards in the National Construction Code and better coordination of services to address gaps and build community capacity to assist seniors.

The Hon Jodie Harrison MP, Minister for Seniors, and the Hon Rose Jackson MP, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, also spoke at the Forum and discussed priorities for NSW seniors. Attendees saw value in:

* Recognising and combatting ageism.
* Local government support for seniors ageing in community.
* Funding for place based community centres.
* Support for the Ageing on the Edge NSW proposal to:
	+ Fund a specialist older person’s housing information and support service that comprises both an early intervention and crisis response, similar to the ‘Home at Last’ model in Victoria.
	+ Lower the priority age for social housing eligibility from 80 years as a matter of urgency.
	+ Build 5,000 social and affordable homes per year for 10 years, at least 20% of which should be dedicated to older people.
* Specific initiatives for older Aboriginal people to return to country, and also for rent to buy housing schemes.
* A consistent approach to ageing qualification thresholds for services.
* The role played by the many and diverse volunteer driven organisations supporting seniors.

The Seniors Forum gave voice to stakeholder views regarding issues that impact older people in NSW. This will support work to advance the [Ageing Well in NSW: Seniors Strategy 2021–2031](https://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/community-inclusion/seniors/ageing-well-in-nsw-seniors-strategy-2021-2031.html) and [Action Plans](https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/documents/community-inclusion/seniors/Ageing_Well_Action_Plan_2023-24_FA_300123.pdf).

Attendees also noted the opportunity for informal networking and a better understanding of each other’s work, with the potential to collaborate on issues affecting seniors. The MACA will look to hold a follow up Seniors Forum event in 2024.

MACA meeting – 20 October 2023

Following the Seniors Forum the MACA held its fifth meeting for 2023 on 20 October 2023. The MACA discussed outcomes from the Seniors Forum and confirmed it will focus on Housing issues at its next meeting including Retirement Villages.

The MACA is also continuing to hold meetings with interested NSW Ministers to discuss the cross over between seniors issues and their respective portfolios. The MACA seeks to provide an 'Ageing lens' on any new government policy or program affecting seniors. Since its last meeting in August the MACA has met with:

* The Hon Kate Washington MP, Minister for Families and Communities, Minister for Disability Inclusion regarding a joint Housing issues paper developed by the Disability Council, Carers Council and MACA.
* The Hon Jo Haylen MP, Minister for Transport, regarding community transport, the Regional Seniors Travel Card, and the Bus Industry Taskforce.
* The Hon Chris Mins MP, Premier, regarding outcomes from the 19 October Seniors Forum, consultation for the NSW Housing Strategy, impacts of social isolation on mental health, importance of primary health care, and the Commissioner for Senior Victorians model.

Council's next meeting will be on 14 December 2023 in Sydney.

**Margie O'Tarpey**

**A/Chair**