

Indigo Shire

**Senior Citizens Clubs and Centres
Future Directions Report**

**Final Report
(Full)**

2022

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim and Objectives of Study

Indigo Shire Council is reviewing the current usage of its Senior Citizen's Centres to ensure equity of access to community space and innovative use of existing infrastructure, as per action 5.5 of the Indigo Ageing Well Strategy. The objectives of the review are to:

- Audit the governance and management arrangements at and the operational policies and processes of the senior citizens clubs and centres in Indigo Shire.
- Identify the role that the clubs and centres play in meeting the service/activity needs of Indigo's community and the type and levels of use the centres receive.
- Identify the factors that prevent the centres from being optimally used.
- Identify the actions that could be taken to optimise the use of the centres and discuss the merits of these options, including an increased Council support of the U3A model.
- Make final recommendations about the clubs and centres which will enhance their operation and optimise their use.

1.2 Scope

The study focuses on the Indigo U3A and the five senior citizens clubs/centres that operate in the Shire – Beechworth, Chiltern, Yackandandah, Rutherglen, Wahgunyah.

1.3 Methodology

The methodology for the review involved the following steps:

1. Review of relevant literature.
2. Audit of the provision of senior citizens clubs/centres across Indigo and the operation of the U3A.
3. Visit to the centres to assess their physical condition and functionality.
4. Consultation with the clubs and U3A to discuss what they see as the roles of the clubs/centres, their membership numbers, the activities they currently and would like to offer, the barriers/factors that prevent people from participating in club activities, facility and operational issues the clubs/centres are experiencing and the actions that could be taken to optimise the use of the centres.
5. Consultation with relevant Council staff regarding their priorities/concerns about the management, use, and condition of the senior citizens centres.

6. Investigation of contemporary practice in other Victorian LGAs with respect to the provision of senior citizens facilities.
7. Review of the outcomes of the steps above and assessment/identification of the following:
 - The adequacy/suitability of the clubs/centres with respect to their:
 - Physical condition and functionality and capacity to meet current and future demand
 - Operational processes and management arrangements
 - The actions required to increase the use of the centres and improve their condition and functionality.
8. Production of draft and final reports which includes a plan for future operation and use of the centres.

Note: In the report, the names of the clubs/centres are sometimes abbreviated to their township names, e.g., Beechworth Senior Citizens Centre abbreviated to Beechworth.

2. COUNCIL STRATEGY AND POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Council and Health Well-being Plans 2017-2021

These Plans indicate that Council gives a high priority to ensuring that Indigo residents are healthy and active, are connected and involved in community life and have equal access to services. They also indicate that Council is committed to providing a well maintained buildings. Key strategies in the plans that have relevance to the provision of program and facilities for older people, including the U3A program and Indigo's senior citizens clubs/centres, are:

- Promote physical and mental health and resilient communities through the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- Deliver infrastructure to meet the health and wellbeing needs of the community.
- Support a broad range of recreational activities.
- Provide inclusive and accessible services and programs across all age demographics.
- Support and promote volunteers and community groups.
- Support clubs that encourage their members to be mentally and physically active.
- Together with community members and service partners, identify barriers to and solutions for improving health and wellbeing.

2.2 Indigo Ageing Well Strategy 2019-2023

This Strategy commits Council to ensuring that elderly people in Indigo feel safe, remain active and connected and have access to suitable community facilities. Key priorities and actions in

the Strategy that have relevance to the provision of program and facilities for older people, including the U3A program and Indigo's senior citizens clubs/centres, are:

Priorities

- Ensure the built environment facilitates safe and active living.
- Enable social mobility and access to services within and beyond the Shire.
- Support community connectedness and reduce isolation.
- Ensure people are respected and valued as they age.
- Encourage residents to be actively involved in the community throughout their lives.
- Ensure residents can access the services they need to age well.

Actions

- Ensure all new building projects are designed to be fully accessible.
- Progressively review and adapt Council facilities, infrastructure and services to ensure their design is consistent with dementia friendly design principles and are physically accessible to all residents.
- Implement a project aimed at assisting residents to access additional free community transport options to and within nearby towns.
- Advocate for improved access to and reliability of public transport options.
- Investigate community bus options with local health services.
- Provide adequate numbers of appropriate disability parking spaces in Council carparks.
- Partner with local providers to promote recreational opportunities for seniors.
- Secure a suitable premises for the Indigo U3A.
- Ensure the fees and charges for Council venues support affordability for seniors groups.
- Review current usage of senior citizens centres to ensure equity of access to community spaces and innovative use of existing infrastructure.
- Promote and support volunteering across the Shire through training and committee governance assistance.
- Identify new volunteering opportunities for people as they age.
- Promote existing 'cool relief centres' and explore provision of 'cool refuge public indoor spaces'.

2.3 Active Indigo Recreation Strategy 2018-2026

The Strategy contains a section on older adults and people with disabilities. The Strategy recommends that Council invest in providing suitable programs and infrastructure for disabled and elderly people. The key actions in the Strategy that have relevance to the U3A and Indigo's seniors' facilities are:

- Ensure that older adults have access to sport and recreation facilities that are most likely to appeal to them and provide the social and health benefits of physical activity participation.
- Consider investing in walking and cycling paths/trails, spaces in halls/buildings/pavilions where programs such as table tennis, yoga, tai chi and strength training can occur.
- Design facilities according to Universal Design Principles and ensure that facilities are compliant with (or preferably exceed) Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) regulations.
- Improve access to public and community transport.

2.4 Indigo Shire Council Access Policy 2017

This Policy commits Council to removing obstacles that prevent people with a disability from fully participating in their local community and ensuring that Council's functions or those of organisations/facilities it supports are non-discriminatory. Actions and principles outlined in the Policy that have implications for the future provision of U3A and seniors facilities are as follows:

- All new facilities and services operated by the Council will be designed to be fully accessible, where practical.
- Existing Council facilities, infrastructure and services will be progressively adapted to ensure accessibility for residents.
- Council will facilitate access by providing adequate numbers of appropriate disability parking spaces, both on the street and, where possible, in Council car parks.
- Council will regularly review its design requirements and specifications to be consistent with any current relevant legislative instruments concerning disability access.

2.5 Other Council plans and policies

Other Council policies and Plans have relevance to the future provision of the U3A program and senior citizens clubs/centres. They include the Asset Management Policy (2017) and Plan (2017), Advocacy Plan (2020), Climate Change Policy (2019) and Heatwave Plan (2019). Relevant actions/principles include advocating for public and community transport,

considering whole of life costs and the climate impact when redesigning buildings and providing cool places for the elderly during heatwave conditions.

3. SENIOR CITIZENS CENTRES AND U3As

3.1 Seniors Citizen Centres

3.1.1 History and role in Victoria

The first senior citizens centre in Victoria was built by the South Melbourne Council with funding support from the State Government. There are now 288 Council owned, senior citizens centres across Victoria.

The senior citizens clubs/centres have and still perform a number of roles. These include:

- The provision of social and recreation activities – either at the centres or offsite.
- Meeting places where seniors can interact, make connections and find companionship.
- Places where seniors can access personal care, health and community support services – e.g., visiting podiatrists, hairdressers, Centrelink staff, grief counsellors.
- Places where community meal programs are offered.

The clubs require participants to become members. The fees are very low – around \$5-10 per annum. Many senior citizens buildings, particularly those built between 1960 and 1985 have similar designs and component spaces – foyer, office, consulting room, lounge, kitchen, storeroom, amenities and hall. Many centres have been redeveloped. Typical works include extension and refurbishment of kitchens, provision of disabled toilets and construction of access ramps.

Some significant trends are occurring in the membership numbers of and the operation and design of facilities for senior citizens groups:

- Active member numbers in the traditional seniors' citizens clubs in Victoria have declined. The factors driving down participation levels are as follows:
 - People working longer as a result of the removal of the compulsory retirement age
 - People remaining more active and in better health until later in life
 - Older people preferring to participate in learning and personal development type activities such as those offered by community centres and U3As
 - The significant growth in the number of alternative clubs available to senior citizens - e.g., Probus, friendship clubs, gardening clubs, arts and craft groups etc.

- The growing interest among senior citizens in outdoor recreation rather than indoor recreation
- The poor image of some senior citizens clubs in the community, particularly with the new generation of older people
- The declining condition/dated appearance of some seniors’ facilities.
- Senior citizens centres were traditionally purpose built, single use centres that were solely used by one or more senior citizens clubs. Often these centres were managed by the resident club/s. Typically, the centres comprised a main hall (often with a stage), kitchen, meeting room, consulting room, amenities and courtyard. In recent years, the use of many senior centres in Victoria has diversified. Clubs still use and manage the centres but their proportion of use has generally declined. The vacant times have been filled by other community groups and local service providers – many of these groups and services provide activities for senior citizens (U3A, walking clubs); some provide activities for broader age groups (theatre groups, choirs, church groups, dance groups). This has occurred to a degree at the Indigo centres where the centres are now being used by some local community groups, service providers and local residents.

3.1.2 Membership numbers

There are five senior centres/clubs in Indigo. In total, the clubs have 271 members: down from 341 in 2016. The clubs range in size from 37 to 103 members. Yackandandah commenced in 1970 and is the oldest club; Wahgunyah is the youngest (1990). Women make up the bulk of the memberships numbers - estimated at 80%. The predominant age group in 70-90 years. Membership numbers at of the clubs, except Chiltern, have declined or fluctuated around the same number in recent years. Chiltern attributes its increase in numbers to it decisions to spend the club’s reserve funds on outings/trips.

Table 1 – Membership numbers, Indigo seniors clubs

	Year club started	Membership 2021		
		Number		Trend
		2016	2020	
Beechworth	1977	113	103	Fluctuating
Chiltern	1975	15	37	Increasing
Rutherglen	1977	89	37	Declining
Wahgunyah	1990	78	47	Declining
Yackandandah	1970	46	47	Fluctuating
		341	271	

3.1.3 Centres

Four seniors’ citizens centres are located on Council land and one, Wahgunyah, is on Crown Land and is owned by the Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning (DEWLP).

The centres on Council land are purpose built. Wahgunyah is located in a small hall which is an annexe off a larger arts facility, the Wahgunyah School of the Arts.

Beechworth, Chiltern and Rutherglen were built in the mid to late 1970s, Yackandandah in 1983 and Wahgunyah in 1990. Beechworth, Chiltern, Rutherglen and Yackandandah were built by the Council with capital funding support from the State. Yackandandah Senior Citizens Club claims that it also provided capital funding towards the construction of its facility. Rutherglen is the largest building - 500m² under the roof line. Wahgunyah is the smallest, 180m² (note: the club accesses the larger School of the Arts Hall for indoor bowls). The purpose built centres have similar component spaces, although they differ in size. Common spaces include foyers, consulting/rest rooms, lounge areas, storerooms, kitchens, halls/stage areas, M/F toilets and accessible toilets.

Some internal spaces in the facilities need updating but generally the centres are in good condition. From a functionality perspective, the centres have a number of positive attributes:

- All centres have access to on-site and/or nearby on street carparking.
- All are disability accessible - ramps, unimpeded entrances, clear paths of travel to through the buildings.
- All centres have multiple activity spaces – halls, recreation rooms, consulting rooms, meeting rooms.
- All centres have good sized kitchen areas which are directly connected to their main halls.
- The hall spaces at the centres are open, have good natural light and good visibility.
- All the centres have good sized amenities areas and effective heating and cooling systems.

With the exception of Beechworth, the clubs describe their facilities as being highly functional and suitable for the clubs' needs. Beechworth operates more like a community centre and would like to redesign its facility to allow concurrent use, including enclosing the rear patio area and managing the use of the adjoining Platelayers Cottage.

Table 2 – Club facilities

	Year built	Facility description		
		Size m ²	Components	Condition/functionality
Beechworth	1977	280	Component elements: small foyer, office, main hall, kitchen, storeroom, toilet area, room used by croquet club, rears veranda	Good condition. Does not meet needs - not suitable for concurrent use by different groups
Chiltern	1976	300	Office, M/F toilets, accessible toilet, hall, stage, kitchen, utility room	Good condition and highly functional. Meets needs

	Year built	Facility description		
		Size m2	Components	Condition/functionality
Rutherglen	1977	500	Foyer, consulting room, storeroom, M/F toilets, main hall. kitchen, lounge, stage, games room	Good condition and highly functional. Kitchen about to updated
Wahgunyah	1990	180	Activity room, store, kitchen, M/F toilets, accessible toilet	Good condition and highly functional
Yackandandah	1970	410	Foyer, office, restroom/store, M/F toilets, shower, cleaners' rooms, large hall with stage, lounge room, large kitchen, rear veranda	Highly functional. Good condition. Amenities need updating.

3.1.4 Occupancy, governance and maintenance arrangements, financial position

There are no occupancy agreements between Council and the senior citizens clubs using the Council buildings in Wahgunyah, Chiltern, Rutherglen and Yackandandah. Beechworth has a lease dated November 2008 which sets out the obligations and commitments of Council and Beechworth Senior Citizen Club. The club pays no rent, utilities and has no written maintenance responsibilities. It pays its public liability insurance. Wahgunyah pays rent to the Wahgunyah School of the Arts for access to the hall annexe and larger hall – around \$600pa. Council reimburses the club for this cost.

Historically, the state government provided Sector Support and Development funding, which in Indigo Shire equated to roughly \$35,000 annually. This funding is no longer provided to Councils to support the running costs of senior citizen facilities. All maintenance costs fall to Council to find the funds. The clubs, and in particular Beechworth and Chiltern, have demonstrated consistent maintenance contributions. In the past six years, Beechworth have contributed around \$60,000 to the improvement of the centre

The senior's citizens clubs are run by volunteer elected committees. Four are incorporated (Rutherglen is not incorporated). All allow external use of their centres. The external use of Yackandandah is coordinated by Council. External use of the other centres is managed by the clubs. Beechworth has appointed a booking officer to perform this function.

The senior citizens clubs' main sources of revenue are fundraising and members fees (\$5-10pa). They have minor expenses – as mentioned above the clubs pay no rent and Council meets all utility and cleaning costs and undertakes all maintenance. The clubs are in strong financial positions. All operate with a small annual surplus and have monies in the bank – term deposits and cash. Some clubs are using their funds bank to make improvements to their centres (e.g., Beechworth) or subsidise/expand club activities (e.g., Chiltern). Others are retaining their funds to generate interest and protect against future declines in revenue (e.g., Wahgunyah).

Table 3 – Clubs’ financial positions

Centre	Funds in the Bank, 2021 \$
Beechworth	49,000
Chiltern	16,000
Rutherglen	25,000
Wahgunyah	27,000
Yackandandah	9,000

3.1.5 Use of senior citizens centres

The centres are used for a range of seniors club and other community group’s activities. Of the purpose built seniors, Beechworth is the busiest centre – used regularly by six groups for up to 50 hours per week. Rutherglen is the quietest. Four clubs offer the traditional activities of cards and bowls. Beechworth is different and offers arts and craft groups and dancing.

Table 4 – Use of senior citizens centres

Centre	Users	Activities	Est Hours per week
Beechworth	Beechworth SCC/Croquet Club BEAT Beechworth Dancing Indigo Yoga Spaces Ukulele/Spring and Sing CWA Beechworth Very little casual hire because hall is heavily used by regular hirers	BSCC, 4 days per week, craft, painting, art, line dancing Croquet Club, 5 days, competition and social BEAT, 3 days, gentle exercise, table tennis Beechworth Dancing, 1 days, dance Indigo Yoga Spaces, 1 day, yoga Ukulele/Spring and Sing, 2 days, porch songs, movement and Remedial Massage CWA Beechworth, 3rd Friday - Meeting	48
Chiltern	CSSC Chiltern Red Cross Available for community hire, community groups not charged	CSCC, 4 days, choir, yoga/cards, Tai Chi Red Cross, once a month, meetings Other casual hirers	18
Rutherglen	RSSC Probus Garden Club – Available for community hire	RSSC, 2 days, cards, bowls Probus, monthly, club meetings Garden, 1 day, meetings Community hire - parties, wakes	12
Wahgunyah	WSCC Other users book through WSOA – a few other regular users	WSCC, 2 days per months, cards, meetings	10
Yackandandah	Yackandandah Senior Citizens Club Beechworth Connection Group Community Christian Group Music teacher	YSCC, 3 days, bowls, scrabble, cards, Connection Group – 2 day, supports program Christin group, 1 day, church service Music teacher, 1 days, classes Community hire	20

3.2 U3A

3.2.1 History and role

U3A stands for University of the Third Age – the third age being active retirement. The first Australian U3A was established in 1984 in Melbourne. There are now around 270 U3As across Australia with approximately 120,000 members. These numbers are increasing each year. U3As are typically autonomous organisations managed by volunteer committees. They offer a broad range of courses and other group activities including music groups, language classes, film clubs, book clubs, computer groups, exercise groups and craft groups. The courses/activities are normally delivered by volunteers. People wanting to participate in U3A activities pay an annual membership fee. The majority of members are in retirement or semi-retirement. However, there are no formal age qualifications and people in their 40s and 50s can become members.

Some Victorian LGAs have multiple, separate U3As programs e.g., Yarra Ranges Shire which has 6 programs. Others have single municipal wide programs, e.g., Kingston and Indigo. Often, the municipal wide programs operate from a number of locations. Sometimes, the U3As have dedicated access to new or repurposed buildings/spaces; mostly they have access to a combination of dedicated and shared spaces (like Indigo). The spaces they need are classrooms, meeting rooms, offices, storage, kitchen and amenities areas.

Typically, U3A membership fees are very low – mostly around \$30-100 per annum. Normally, this fee entitles a member to attend any activity offered by the U3A free of charge. In some cases, U3As have reciprocal arrangements with other U3As and members. U3As sometimes form networks and share administration resource, tutors etc.

3.2.2 Indigo U3A

Indigo U3A started in 2010. It uses the Old Railway Building in Beechworth under a memorandum of understanding with Council as a sub-tenant of the Beechworth Food Co-Op. It has dedicated access to an office and storeroom at building. It has shared access to an activity room, kitchen and amenities. It is allocated these spaces for set times each week. It pays \$680 in rental per annum. Given the recent decision of the lead tenant, the Food Co-Op, not to re-sign a lease with Council the Old Railway Building will now be open to an expression of interest, which leaves the future operational base of the Indigo U3A uncertain.

The Indigo U3A program has 135 members. This figure is growing each year. The membership fee in 2021 is \$30pa which entitles members to attend any sessions offered by the U3A. The

age range of members in 50-90 years; 75% live in Beechworth. The U3A offers a wide ranges of courses which include topics such as arts and cultural studies, health and wellbeing, history and current affairs and philosophy and ethics. Like the seniors clubs, it offers games, cards and similar activities. The U3A program uses the Old Railway Building weekday mornings, afternoons and sometimes evenings. Some of the activities are large (40-60 participants), others have 10-20 participants.

Although known as the Indigo U3A, the program offers most of its activities from the Old Railway Building in Beechworth. It has no presence in the other townships in Indigo, however, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, discussions for quarterly presentations in Rutherglen were underway and the Yackandandah Community Centre are working to have regular U3A events, including adult computer literacy programs under Be Connected The closest U3A programs to Indigo are in Wodonga, Wangaratta and Myrtleford. The U3A is in a sound financial position - it operates in annual surplus and has around \$10,000 in the bank. It has outlaid significant sums in recent years on equipment and building its IT and audio-visual capacities.

4. OLDER POPULATION IN INDIGO

The size and characteristics of the local aged population will have significant demand implications for community meeting spaces, including Indigo's senior citizens centres. Table 5 provides data on anticipated population change in the Indigo community. The data indicated that the older aged population will grow strongly over the next 15 years. Some notable characteristics are as follows:

- Indigo's total population is projected to increase by 2,350 between 2016 and 2036. The majority of this increase will occur in the Beechworth Chiltern sub-region (+1,951).
- Indigo's 55+ years population will increase numerically and proportionally between 2016-2036 (+1,389 and +3% of the total population).
- Re sub-regions, the larger numerical increase will occur in Beechworth Chiltern (+893). The larger proportional increase will Rutherglen (+33%)
- Re age cohorts, the largest numerical increase will occur in the 75-84 years cohort (+714). The largest proportional increase will occur in the 85+ years cohorts (+102%).
- Re sub-regions and age cohorts, the largest numerical increases will occur in Beechworth Chiltern in the 75-84 years and 65-74 years cohorts (+435 and +353). The largest proportional increase will occur in Rutherglen in the 75-84 years and 85+ years cohorts (+131% and +127%).

Table 5 – Population change, seniors age cohorts, 2016-2036

	2016	2021	2031	2036	Change 2016-2036	% increase/ decrease
Beechworth Chiltern						
55-64	1996	2052	1929	1884	-112	-6
65-74	1463	1706	1899	1816	353	24
75-84	901	741	1204	1336	435	48
85+	233	214	287	450	217	93
	4593	4713	5319	5486	893	19
Rutherglen						
55-64	660	607	624	592	-68	-10
65-74	532	639	678	710	178	33
75-84	213	272	462	492	279	131
85+	84	101	134	191	107	127
	1489	1619	1898	1985	496	33
Indigo Shire	6082	6332	7217	7471	1389	23

Table 6 provides data on the characteristics of the Indigo Shire. Some notable characteristics are as follows:

- The level of disadvantage across Indigo increased between the 2011 and 2016 census dates – in 2011, it ranked the 53rd/80 on the LGA disadvantage table (with 1 being the most disadvantaged LGA). In 2016, it ranked 51st/80. This declining position was largely due to growing disadvantage in the Chiltern, Wahgunyah and Rutherglen townships.
- On a township basis, Wahgunyah and Rutherglen are the most disadvantaged communities and Yackandandah the most advantaged. On a state-wide basis, these townships and Chiltern are also considered to be disadvantaged with Wahgunyah, Chiltern and Rutherglen ranked in the top 20% of disadvantaged communities.
- Yackandandah aged the most between the 2011 and 2016 census dates with its median age increasing by 4 years. Although, it had the smallest rise in median household income, it remained the least disadvantaged community.
- Beechworth is the oldest community with the highest median age. However, unlike Chiltern, Rutherglen and Wahgunyah, its level of disadvantage declined between the census dates.
- Wahgunyah household structure changed significantly between the census dates, with the proportion of lone person households decreasing from 32% to 26%.

Table 6 – Characteristics: Indigo Suburbs

	Beechworth		Chiltern		Wahgunyah		Rutherglen		Yack'dah		Indigo	
SEIFA index 2016	2011	2016	2011	2016	2011	2016	2011	2016	2011	2016	2011	2016
– Score	993	1005	981	948	952	941	971	945	1052	1057	1010	995
– Position in Victoria with 1 the worst/1520/2650	478	1374	379	447	225	355	322	396	1091	2029	53/80	51/80
– Position in Indigo with 1 the worst/5	4	4	3	3	1	1	2	2	5	5	-	-
Median age	48	49	45	47	42	11	44	47	44	48	44	46
Median household income, \$	954	1152	987	1182	893	1142	962	1106	1247	1395	1066	1205
% of population born overseas	18	20	16	18	13	11	11	14	12	14	13	17
Lone person households as a % of all households	29	30	27	28	32	26	28	32	21	25	25	25

5. CONSULTATION FINDINGS

5.1 Senior Citizens Clubs

The clubs were asked to respond/provide their thoughts about the following:

- The role of the clubs and the barriers that exist to people participating in club activities.
- The challenges/issues/concerns the clubs are experiencing and how they can be addressed.
- The activities that the clubs would like to introduce but cannot because of space or other limitations.
- The actions that can be done to ensure the clubs remain viable and relevant?
- The clubs' facility needs and ways to optimise the use of the clubs' facilities.
- How can Council best support the clubs?

The clubs' responses were as follows:

- The clubs' main role was to provide opportunities for all older people to socialise, connect and make and maintain friendships. Beechworth and Chiltern mentioned a secondary role which was to give older people the opportunity to continue to learn and enjoy new activities.

- There are no barriers to participation other than declining physical and mental health. Cost is not a barrier as the annual membership fees at the clubs are \$10 or less. Membership is open to all older residents from Indigo and beyond. Members who have no form of transport are picked up by other club members.
- The clubs are facing a number of challenges/issues/concerns. These include:
 - Competition from a growing number of groups that provide activities for older people – U3A, Probus, friendship groups.
 - Older people having less time to be involved in seniors' clubs: more men working into older age, more women in the workforce and also working into older age, more older people minding children.
 - Difficulties finding members to serve on club committees
 - A lack of understanding/knowledge in the community of the activities/supports the clubs have to offer
 - Perception in the general community that the clubs are not open to all older residents.
- The clubs do not feel limited in what they can do, other than by cost. Some clubs are content with the range of programs/activities they offer; they would just like more people to attend. Others have tried to introduce new activities (mainly outings) but there has been little interest. Two clubs, Chiltern and Beechworth, have introduced non-traditional activities, such as Tai Chi, Yoga and dance, and offered more subsidised outings. These have been popular. All the clubs want the community meals program to be reintroduced.
- The impact of COVID-19 cannot be understated. The majority of the clubs did not meet at all during 2020 after the emergence of COVID-19, and many are struggling to get members to return due to ongoing fears about the virus.
- Some clubs are concerned about their future viability. Others are confident about their future. Actions that the clubs suggested to improve their viability were:
 - Changing the name of the club from senior citizens to another description that makes the clubs sound more welcoming/contemporary (Beechworth)
 - Updating the appearance of the centres to make them more attractive and welcoming
 - Exploring community transport options
 - Looking for new program options
 - Better promoting and communicating the roles of the clubs and their activities to the general community.
- In the main, the clubs were satisfied with their facilities. There were some concerns about physical access – heavy front doors and lack of disabled carparking. Beechworth is the only club that mentioned major works. It wants to reconfigure and possibly

extend its facility to enhance its capacity and make it suitable for concurrent use. It also is keen on getting access to the adjacent Platelayers Cottage.

- Clubs are trying to increase the use of their facilities. The three clubs that coordinate the external use of their facilities will allow any reasonable hire. They only charge a small fee and hire rules are not onerous.
- Council can best help the clubs by:
 - Providing advice on program opportunities
 - Helping to arrange activities
 - Promoting the clubs
 - In the case of Beechworth, helping with the preparation of plans for the redesign of the facilities and accessing funds for the redevelopment.

5.2 Indigo U3A

The U3A was asked about its future development plans and its facility needs and how Council can assist. Its response was as follows.

- The U3A program wants to continue to grow its memberships and the range of activities it offers and ultimately expand its presence across Indigo Shire, i.e., offer classes in multiple townships.
- While COVID-19 presented interruptions to the functioning of the U3A program, it embraced technology and offered many sessions via Zoom. This increased the programs and membership numbers and allowed residents from other towns to attend virtually. It will continue to offer Zoom hybrid sessions even after COVID restrictions abate.
- The U3A wants access to its own dedicated facility. This facility would have an office/administration area, activity/classrooms, store, kitchen and amenities. This would be the program's main base. It would hire facilities in other locations.
- Council can assist the program by:
 - Promoting the activities of the U3A
 - Helping to find a suitable location/s for the U3A
 - Helping to explore collaboration opportunities with the Beechworth Senior Citizens Club.
 - Providing operational support
 - Advocating on behalf of the U3A to government
 - Keeping the U3A aware of grant opportunities.

5.3 Council

Council officers involved in liaising with the senior clubs and U3A or who had responsibility for overseeing the use of and maintenance of Council buildings were asked to comment on the following:

- Their concerns, if any, about the occupancy arrangements at and use of the senior citizens buildings and the governance arrangements.
- The concerns they have about the future viability/operation of the clubs.
- The actions that can be taken to address these concerns.
- The facility needs of the Indigo U3A and how they can be addressed.
- How Council can best assist the seniors clubs and Indigo U3A.

Their responses were as follows:

- There is a perception that the seniors' buildings are the property of the senior's clubs. They are Council buildings and should be available for broader community use.
- No formal occupancy arrangements exist at three senior citizens centres – Chiltern, Yackandandah, and Rutherglen, while Beechworth is outdated (2008). Arrangements should be put in place. The arrangements do not need to be onerous. They could be in the form of a lease and specify the tenancy period (say 15 years), the lease fee (peppercorn) and the obligations of Clubs and Council.
The obligations of the Clubs could include the following:
 - Maintaining their incorporated status
 - Operating their facilities in a safe and orderly manner
 - Encouraging external use of their facilities
 - Providing the following information to Council on annual basis - names of committee members, membership numbers, activities offered, use of buildings, financial reports, evidence of insuranceThe obligations of the Council could include the following:
 - Maintaining the facilities in good condition
 - Meeting utility and cleaning costs.
- Measures are needed to make the clubs and centres more appealing to older residents. These measures may include changing the names of the centres and expanding the activities at the clubs to include more outings, classes etc.
- The U3A program has outgrown its current facility and needs access to more space. Facility options need to be explored. The seniors centre in Beechworth could be a suitable option.
- Council can best help the clubs by:
 - Continuing to provide access to the centres at no or little cost
 - Continuing to maintain the centres facilities and meet cleaning and utility costs

- Providing advice on legal, insurance and operational issues as they arise
- Providing advice on program opportunities
- Promoting the clubs

In return for this assistance, Council should require all clubs to expand their activities and encourage greater external use of their facilities.

6. CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE/CASE STUDIES

The following information is provided in Appendix C.

- A summary of a report compiled in 2016 by the MAV which investigated the issues confronting seniors clubs in Victoria and the actions taken by selected Councils to address these issues.
- The key findings of study undertaken by Darebin Council into the use of its seniors centres.
- Information on development projects undertaken by Councils where the senior citizens clubs have been revitalised by being associated with U3As and other seniors groups such as Probus Clubs

The key learnings from the case studies are as follows:

- The issues and challenges that the Indigo clubs are facing – falling memberships, decreasing use of senior's buildings, problems with forming committees – are not peculiar to Indigo. These trends are occurring across Victoria and, like Indigo, many Councils are trying to find solutions.
- Unlike Indigo, Darebin Council coordinates the use of all its seniors' facilities. Council took on this function because that senior clubs were finding it hard to manage the external demand on their centres. Council management has resulted in the centres being optimally used. For example, 29 community clubs/groups use the Northcote SCC (a small purpose built centre) on a weekly basis.
- Establishing formal relationships between seniors clubs and groups like U3A and Probus can help to arrest and reverse the decline in membership numbers at senior citizens clubs. This has been the experience in Myrtleford, Mt Beauty, Ballarat and Numurkah. It has also led to the development of significant facilities such as the Ballarat North Community Centre and the Numurkah Seniors Hub, where the senior clubs are the lead tenants and U3A and Probus Groups also occupy the buildings.
- Like Indigo, Councils are appointing community development officers to work with their older citizens groups. One of the main tasks of the officers is to provide support to the seniors clubs and explore ways to rejuvenate the clubs and make optimal use of their centres.

7. ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This section discusses the major issues that emerge from the previous sections of the reports and the actions that should be taken in response to these issues.

7.2 Issues and recommendations

What should be the role/s of the senior citizens centres?

The senior citizens centres in Indigo were originally places where elderly residents came to connect, socialise and access personal care and support services. For many years, they performed these functions. However, in recent times, their role has narrowed to being places where people recreate and socialise. Membership numbers have declined and the hours of use of the centres have fallen. Three centres get little external use.

The centre buildings, however, still remain valuable assets. They are accessible and prominent facilities with ample carparking. They are in good condition and contain spaces that can cater for a range of community activities – from small playgroups and exercise classes through to large community meetings.

It is claimed that one of the reasons the seniors buildings get little external use is that they are perceived by the community as not being available for general use. They are also ageing facilities which are dated in appearance. This perception and appearance need to change. Council should consider formally changing the names of the centres to a more general title such as community buildings or community centres and updating the appearance of the facilities. The seniors clubs should be involved in the name change. The clubs should remain as the lead tenants and continue to co-ordinate the use of the centres. If the centres get busy, programs relating to older people should be given priority access.

Recommendations

- In collaboration with the seniors citizens clubs, rename the centres as general community buildings.
- Encourage broader community use of the buildings.
- Update the appearance of the centres – signage, landscaping, entrance, external appearance.

How should the centres be managed into the future?

The seniors clubs should retain the management role, at least in the short term. Council should actively support the clubs in this role – provide training, assist with booking systems, help to resolve disputes etc. However, if it becomes apparent that management by the clubs is not working well, then other options should be considered. These options could include another user group taking on the role, a management committee being established or Council coordinating the use of the centres.

Note: The Yackandandah Seniors Club does not currently coordinate the external use of its facility. It should be asked to take on this role.

Recommendations

- Appoint the seniors clubs as the initial managers of the renamed community centres.
- Assist the clubs in performing this role.
- Review the arrangements after 2-3 years. Introduce a new management approach if required.

What occupancy arrangements should be put in place between Council and the senior clubs

Formal occupancy arrangements should be established at all the centres. The arrangements should be in the form of a lease and specify the tenancy period (initially 3 years), the lease fee (peppercorn) and the obligations of the clubs and Council.

The obligations of the Clubs could include the following:

- Maintaining their incorporated status.
- Operating the facilities in a safe and orderly manner.
- Encouraging external use of the facilities.
- Providing the following information to Council – committee members, membership numbers, activities offered, use of buildings, financial report, promotional activities.

The obligations of the Council should include the following:

- Maintaining the facilities in good condition and meeting utility and cleaning costs.
- Reaching agreement with the clubs on hire fees for the facilities.

The lease should also contain a clause relating to the process for the review after 3 years and the steps that should be followed, if required, in transitioning to a new management arrangement.

Recommendation

- Enter into formal occupancy arrangement as described above.
- Review the arrangements after 3 years is needed.

What actions can be taken to attempt to boost the membership numbers of the Club?

Two Indigo seniors clubs have been able to arrest or reverse the decline in their numbers. Beechworth has done this by broadening its activities to include programs like yoga, line-dancing, ballroom dancing, etc., as well as having an active croquet club as part of the senior citizens club. Chiltern is using the funds it has in the bank to subsidise outings.

The other clubs could do the same as Chiltern and Beechworth. They have funds in the bank and vacant times at their centres. Some may be reluctant to spend their funds and may need encouragement by Council. A dollar for dollar grant program might be worth considering. This could be spent on an agreed program of activities that is different to what is normally offered by the clubs.

The analysis of contemporary practice undertaken for this study indicated that seniors groups can co-exist with and be rejuvenated by being associated with U3A programs. This should be tried in Indigo. The Indigo U3A is looking for better facilities. Council is facilitating discussions between the U3A and the Beechworth Senior Citizens Club about the U3A using the Centre. The U3A wants to expand its activities across Indigo. The senior's centres in Chiltern, Rutherglen, Yackandandah and Wahgunyah could be suitable locations for these activities.

Recommendations

- Encourage clubs to use their funds in the bank to increase the number and range of activities they offer.
- Give consideration to establishing an activities program with the clubs which is jointly funded by Council and clubs and provides activities not normally provided by the clubs.
- Encourage and support the Indigo U3A to offer activities at the senior centres in Chiltern, Rutherglen, Yackandandah and Wahgunyah.

What financial and other assistance should Council provide to the Clubs? What should it expect for this assistance?

Indigo Council meets all utility and cleaning costs and undertakes all maintenance works at the centres (note: the Beechworth Senior Citizens Centre contributed to improvements at its facility). The clubs pay no rent. In return for this assistance, Indigo Council expects the clubs to keep their facilities in a safe and tidy condition and coordinate external use. It is suggested that Council ask for more than this. It should require clubs to actively promote the facilities and seek out external use. This responsibility should apply to Yackandandah which is currently not involved in the coordination of external use.

Recommendation

- In return for the assistance Council provides, require the Clubs, including Yackandandah, to become more actively involved in promoting their activities and encouraging external use.

How can the facility needs of the U3A be met?

The U3A has outgrown its current facilities. Council is facilitating discussions between the U3A and the Beechworth SCC about the feasibility of the U3A operating from the senior citizens centre. This may be feasible if the centre can be reconfigured or extended and/or the club/U3A can get access to managing the use and booking of the Platelayers Cottage. However, it may only be a short term solution. The U3A will continue to grow and may become too big for even an extended Beechworth SCC. A facilities plan is needed for the U3A. It should examine the U3A's future program development plans and facility needs. It should consider a range of facility models from a centralised building in Beechworth through to a base in Beechworth and locations in other Indigo townships.

Recommendation

- Prepare a facilities plan for the U3A.

What other facility improvements are required?

The senior's centres are generally in good condition and, with the exception of Beechworth, are described by their seniors' clubs as being highly functional. There are some access issues, e.g., heavy front door at Rutherglen and accessible carparking at Yackandandah. Beechworth is trying to operate like a community centre. Its design does not allow it to provide for concurrent use. It has raised the notion of getting access to the Platelayers Cottage. This will

increase its capacity and flexibility. It is also talking with Council and the Indigo U3A about the U3A operating from the centre.

Recommendations

- Address the problem with the heavy door at Rutherglen.
- Develop a facilities plan for the Beechworth Senior Citizens Centre. Consider the needs of the Indigo U3A and the opportunities provided by the Platelayers Cottage when developing this Plan.

Other operational and facility issues

Three other operational and facility issues were raised and suggestions made. They should be considered.

- A central database of all the community facilities that are available for hire should be created. This may help to further activate the senior's centres and other facilities in Indigo.
- Defibrillators should be provided in the main activity rooms at the senior citizens centres.
- Some centres are dated in appearance. They should be refreshed.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

1. Welcome all - In collaboration with the Senior Citizens Clubs, rename the centres as general community buildings to both embrace older people and the general community.
2. A new look and feel - Update the appearance of the centres such as the signage, landscaping, entrance and internal and external appearance.
3. Programming and activities:
 - Support the clubs in promoting their activities and encourage broader community use.
 - Encourage clubs to use their existing funds to increase the number and range of activities on offer.
 - Research and finance a centralised on-line booking system and support its introduction into the clubs.

- Encourage and support the Indigo U3A to engage with interested parties in Chiltern, Rutherglen, Tangambalanga and Wahgunyah to form their own branch of a U3A.
4. Future opportunities:
- Prepare a facilities plan (including appearance, accessibility and more significant infrastructure needs) for all senior citizen centres, including the U3A.
 - When developing the plan for Beechworth, the precinct encompassing the Beechworth Senior Citizen Club. And Croquet Club, Gang Platelayers Cottage and the Old Railway Building should be considered for broader planning for community use as a consolidated hub.
5. Management modelling
- Appoint the senior citizens clubs as managers of the renamed community centres and aid the clubs in undertaking this role.
 - Review the arrangement after 2-3 years and introduce a new management approach if required.
 - Enter into formal agreements with all Senior Citizens Clubs as a core requirement of Council.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Detailed Audit of U#A and Senior Citizens Facilities

Indigo U3A

Question	Response/info
Name	Indigo U3A
History of club/centre	Started in 2010.
Management/occupancy arrangements	Occupies Old Railway Building under an MOU arrangement with Council. Lead tenant for facility, Beechworth Food Cooperative. U3A has access to hall, kitchen and amenities at set times each week. Pays \$680pa in rental.
Membership numbers	130 members, increasing each year. \$30pa membership fee. 70% female, Age range 50-90 years, 75% from Beechworth Closest U3As are in Wodonga, Wangaratta, Myrtleford
Financial position	Cash in bank \$10,000. Operates with a small surplus. Main revenue sources - grants and membership fees.
SITE/BUILDING	
Location and setting	Old Railway Building in Harper Ave Beechworth. Facility is part of a community precinct. Skate park at front. Safe, accessible, prominent location.
Description of site - size, shape, zoning, physical access	Site zoned – PPR with heritage overlay. Parking on street and onsite.
Building and component areas	Old railway station building, 410m ² under roof line. Component elements: offices, store, hall, kitchen, activity rooms, amenities, accessible toilet. U3A has dedicated access to the store, office and shared access to the hall, kitchen and amenities areas.
Condition and functionality	Facility is in good condition. Kitchen needs updating. Toilets are distant from hall space. Otherwise reasonably functional.
ACTIVITIES AT CENTRE	
Activities	Provides educational and social activities. Classes/activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arts and cultural studies - Computers and technology - Geography and environmental science - Health and Well being - History and current affairs - Learning and leisure - Philosophy and Ethics - Skills building - Science activities - Games, craft and like activities
Hours used	Use hall space every weekday - am and pm.
Future development plans	Continue to expand number and range of activities. Grow membership numbers. Offer programs from other locations in the Shire.
FACILITY NEEDS	
Current site	Dedicated access to hall space Prefer to have control over facility. Ideal facility would have 3/4 different sized activity rooms, amenities, office, kitchen store.
How can Council assist?	Assist with providing access to suitable facilities.

Beechworth Senior Citizens Centre

Question	Response/info
Name	Beechworth Senior Citizens Club. Beechworth Croquet Club separately incorporated but members are all members of the Senior Citizen's Club.
History of club/centre	Club started in 1977
Management/occupancy arrangements	No current occupancy agreement with Council. Council pays for utilities, cleaning and insurances and maintains the facility. Club manages regular and casual hire. Has a booking officer. Club contributes to works and equipment - \$60,000 since 2015.
Membership numbers	103, fluctuated between 92 and 123 over past 5 years. 80% female, average age 72 years.
Club's financial position	Cash in bank \$49,000, operating surplus in 2019/20, \$7,000 Main sources of income are hall hire and bingo. \$10 annual membership fee.
SITE/BUILDING	
Location and setting	Beechworth Senior Citizens Centre. Detached building on a 2.8ha park. Croquet court at rear.
Description of site - size, shape, zoning, physical access	Site – large irregular shaped site 2.8ha. Zoned – PPR with heritage overlay. Parking on street and onsite. Disability access from rear.
Building and component areas	Purpose built facility, 280m ² Component elements: small foyer, office, main hall, kitchen, storeroom, toilet area, room used by croquet club, veranda
Condition and functionality	Facility is in good condition but not functional as a community centre. Needs to be extended and reconfigured to make it more multiuse.
ACTIVITIES AT CENTRE	
User groups	BSCC BEAT Beechworth Croquet Club Beechworth Dancing Indigo Yoga Spaces Ukulele/Spring and Sing CWA Beechworth Very little casual hire because hall is heavily used by regular hirers
Activities and hours used	BSCC - Friday am - Craft Group, Tuesday - Painting/Art Groups, Monday pm, Thursday evening - Line Dancing. BEAT - Monday am, Wednesday am - Gentle exercise, Thursday pm - Table tennis, Wednesday am - Wednesday am. Beechworth Croquet Club - Tuesday am, Wednesday evening, Thursday am, Saturday am, Sunday pm Beechworth Dancing (weekly) Indigo Yoga Spaces - Wednesday evening. ukulele/Spring and Sing, Sunday am Porch songs, Sunday am - Music, Movement and Remedial Massage. CWA Beechworth, 3rd Friday – Meeting.
FACILITY NEEDS	
Suggested improvements/works	Extend and reconfigure centre: 2-3 activity rooms, toilets that can be accessed off each meeting room, Kitchen, offices, storerooms.

Chiltern Senior Citizens Centre

Question	Response/info
Name	Chiltern Senior Citizens Centre
History of club/centre	Started in the mid-1970s.
Management/occupancy arrangements	Club has occupied facility for many years. No current occupancy agreement. Club can hire out facility and retain income. Club does not charge community groups for hire.
Membership numbers	32, growing, up from 17 in 2015.
Club's financial position	Club in strong financial position, \$16,000 in bank. Gradually using funds to subsidise activities.
SITE/BUILDING	
Location and setting	Conness St, Chiltern. Detached building in park. Next to a large hall. Ample parking on site and on road.
Description of site - size, shape, zoning, physical access	Site – large regular shaped site, 970m ² Zoned – local use local government with flood overlay On street at front, also on site next to building Ramp access to front door, double door which is wheelchair accessible Two side doors have steps but are rarely used
Building and component areas	Purpose built facility, 280m ² Component elements: office, M/F toilets, accessible toilet, hall, stage, kitchen, utility room
Condition and functionality	Facility is highly functional and in good condition
ACTIVITIES AT CENTRE	
User groups	Chiltern Seniors Chiltern Red Cross Available for community hire, community groups not charged
Activities and hours used	Chiltern seniors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday – Choir • Tuesday – Yoga/cards • Wed – Tai Chi • Thursday – Yoga Red Cross – once a month Other hirers
Club development plans	Continue to build numbers by offering diverse activities – particularly offsite activities.
FACILITY NEEDS	
Suggested improvements/works	Nil

Rutherglen Senior Citizens Centre

Question	Response/info
Name	Rutherglen Senior Citizens Club
History of club/centre	Club started in 1977. Centre constructed in 1978– purpose built facility
Management/occupancy arrangements	No occupancy agreement in place Council pays for utilities, cleaning and insurances
Membership numbers	37, down from 89 in 2015
Club's financial position	Cash in bank \$27,000, operates with a small surplus \$5 annual membership fee
SITE/BUILDING	
Location and setting	Douglas St, Rutherglen.
Description of site - size, shape, zoning, physical access	Block off service road, Irregular shape Zoned public use local government Parking at front
Building and component areas	Purpose built facility, 500m ² Component elements: foyer, consulting room, storeroom, M/F toilets, main hall. kitchen, lounge, stage, games room
Condition and functionality	Good condition and highly functional Kitchen about to be refurbished Front door very hard to open and keep open Building needs and internal refresh
ACTIVITIES AT CENTRE	
User groups and time used	RSSC – Monday, Wednesday Probus – 4th Tuesday on the month Garden Club – weekly Available for community hire
FACILITY NEEDS	
Suggested improvements/works	Automatic front door

Wahgunyah Senior Citizens Centre

Question	Response/info
CLUB	
Name	Wahgunyah Senior Citizens Centre
History of club/centre	Club started in 1990
Management/occupancy arrangements	Site owned by DEWLP Club occupies venue under a rental agreement with the Wahgunyah School of the Arts (lessee) Pays \$22 per meeting, 2 meetings per month. Also pays \$125 per annum for access to a storeroom Maintenance undertaken by School of Arts. Club sometimes contributes
Membership numbers	47, gradually declining, 78 in 2016
Club's financial position	Club in strong financial position, \$27,000 in bank including \$23000 in term deposit. No plans to spend the funds. Main source of revenue – fundraising and membership fees
SITE/BUILDING	
Location and setting	Wahgunyah School of the Arts Buildings, Ford St Wahgunyah Semi-detached building off the main hall. Next to a church. Houses across the road.
Description of site - size, shape, zoning, physical access	Site – large regular shaped site 1200m ² . Zoned – commercial with heritage overlay. Parking on street at front, also on site next to building.
Building and component areas	Purpose built facility. 180m ² . Component elements: hall, store, kitchen, amenities, accessible toilet (external).
Condition and functionality	Facility highly functional and in good condition.
ACTIVITIES AT CENTRE	
User groups	Senior CC use 2 times/days per month. Other users book through WSOA – a few other regular users.
FACILITY NEEDS	
Suggested improvements/works	Accessible carpark

Yackandandah Senior Citizens Club

Question	Response/info
Name	Yackandandah Senior Citizens Club.
History of club/centre	Club started in 1970. Centre constructed in 1983 – purpose built facility. Funded by Government, Council and Club.
Management/occupancy arrangements	Club is the main user. No current occupancy arrangement. Council manages booking outside of club use. Council pays for utilities, cleaning and insurances.
Membership numbers	47, fluctuated between 46 and 55 over past 5 years.
Club's financial position	Cash in bank \$8500m operates with a small surplus. \$5 annual membership fee. Main revenue sources – memberships, fundraising. Main costs – activities.
SITE/BUILDING	
Location and setting	14 Wellsford Street, Yackandandah. Next to a park in a residential street. Commercial buildings at rear.
Description of site - size, shape, zoning, physical access	Site – Sloping, regular shaped, rectangular site, 1200m ² Zoned – Public Use: Local Government. Two overlays – heritage and bushfire management. On street parking bays. Dedicated off street carpark. No disabled bay in carpark. Pedestrian access off Wellford St, through park on northern side and from rear. Ramp access to building. Heavy front door which is difficult to keep open.
Building and component areas	Purpose built facility, 410m ² Component elements: office, restroom/store, M/F toilets, shower, cleaners' rooms, large hall with stage, lounge room, large kitchen, rear veranda.
Condition and functionality	Generally, in good condition. Amenities need to be updated. Highly functional facility – good spaces, large kitchen, large amenities. Club would like larger space for bowls.
ACTIVITIES AT CENTRE	
User groups	Yackandandah Senior Citizens Club. Beechworth Connection Group. Community Christian Group. Music teacher.
Time used	Yackandandah Senior Citizens Club: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday, Wednesday – indoor bowls 10-20 members. • 1st Friday – Harry Keeble indoor bowls, 16-24 members. • 3rd Friday - Golden Oldies indoor bowls, 40 members. • Wednesday – Scrabble/cards 10-12 members. • 2nd Friday – Meeting, 12-17 members. Beechworth Connection Group - Monday and Thursday. Community Christian Group – Sunday. Music teacher – Monday.
FACILITY NEEDS	
Suggested improvements/works	Update bathrooms.
OTHER COMMENTS	Happy with arrangement at Centre. Confident clubs will remain viable. Happy for more external use as long as it does not conflict with club use, including no use of the hall on the days the clubs meets. No major issues in the past.

Appendix B – Contemporary practice/case studies

1. MAV Study - New Futures for Senior Citizens Centres and Clubs. A report for Local Government 2019

Examined 5 LGAs – Alpine, Banyule, Moira, Mornington Peninsula, Kingston

Note: The MAV is currently undertaking a new study with the LGAs on senior citizen centres and clubs and the role of Council. This is particularly in the light of the impact that COVID-19 has had on the membership numbers and the ongoing fear and reluctance of older people to socialise; as well as the termination of Sector Support and Development funding from the State Government for senior citizen centres.

1.1 Common experiences

- Some centres were used more by Clubs and external groups than the Councils had thought
- Clubs had started sharing their buildings with other seniors groups and general community groups
- Some had removed seniors from their names, which had resulted in more use

1.2 Alpine

- 3 purpose built facilities all constructed in the 1970s – Mt Beauty, Bright and Myrtleford
- 2 clubs responsible for internal maintenance. Council provides operational subsidy. Council now manages Myrtleford Centre
- Long term sustainability concerns – one centre was busy, others at risk of closing
- Membership of other seniors groups rising – Probus and U3A
- Myrtleford and Bright – 4 programs per week, Mt Beauty SCC which has partnered with U3A, 24 programs per week
- Bright moved to open up its building to other groups. This was successful. Myrtleford did not.
- Council has since created a dedicated seniors citizens liaison role, provide training to seniors groups and helps to facilitate increased usage of facilities.

Mt Beauty Senior Citizens Centre

- 2005 – 5 members

- 2007 – started hiring out spaces. U3A one of the groups.
- U3A grows. U3A participants become members of senior citizens centre. Numbers grow to 150 members. Each groups still has its own management committee.
- U3A organises the activities. Venue still hired out to community groups.
- Physical improvements have been made in recent years to cater for all the groups.

Activation of Myrtleford Senior Citizens Centre, Report 2017

- 2016 – 20 members, used centre twice a week, no other uses.
- Purpose of project – activate the centre.
- Club was responsible for maintenance of centre and making bookings etc. Little capacity to do this role.
- Council took over management of centre. Centre went into decline.
- Usage picked up – now 9 groups using the Centre.
- Recommendation to start a U3A and attach it to the Centre.

1.3 Moira

- 5 clubs. Clubs responsible for internal maintenance. Council provides operational subsidy.
- Four clubs belong to seniors' network.
- Nathalia SCC has 130 members. Share facility with U3A group. Yarrawonga 40 members, Cobram 45 members. Numurkah SCC main user of Numurkah Seniors Hub. It has 500 members and 25 activities per week.
- Council was concerned about the long term sustainability of 3 clubs. Council consulted with seniors committees. Found that committees were struggling. Resolved to establish a senior network. SCCs, Probus, U3A and other groups all part of network.
- Network has identified barriers to participation and is addressing. Clubs have accepted need for change and have taken steps towards increase utilisation.

Numurkah Seniors Hub

- Transition from NSCC to Numurkah Seniors Hub began in 2006.
- A number of groups involved in early design – Council, SCC, Lions Club, Probus, MHA Care.
- \$1m grant from State Government, Council \$250,000, SCC \$50,000.
- SCC membership growing, now at 200.
- Building opened by 2013. Council owns building and is responsible for external maintenance. SCC responsible for internal maintenance.

- SCC now has 500 members. 5 other groups use the Centre, including Probus. Program are held every day – recreation, arts, health. 3 activities can be held concurrently.
- SCC is the lead tenant, lease arrangement in place.

2. Darebin CC – Seniors Citizens Centre Review

- 6 senior citizens venues in the LGA 4 are purpose built but smaller in size than Indigo centres.
- 5 centres are managed by Council. Centre run like community centres.
- In total, 70 community groups have used the centres over the past two years. 27 are regular weekly users and 43 are casual or regular non-weekly users. Seniors groups are happy with these arrangements.
- Council is changing names to community centres.
- Learning: the capacity of small facilities to get heavy usage and to be used for a broad range of activities.

Use of senior citizens centres 2017-2019

Centre	Use	Hours of regular use per week
Northcote SCC	<p>23 groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10 regular weekly users - Batman's Greek Elderly Women's Groups, Matrix Guild of Victoria, Greek Senior Citizens Club – The Hope, Northcote Senior Citizens Club, Northcote Macedonian Seniors Club, Northcote Australian Greek Society for the Aged, Darebin U3A, Just Holler Community Choir, Vox Chops Community Choir, Greek Ex-Serviceman Club of Northcote, St Johns Ambulance (licence) - 13 casual and regular users – not weekly - Australian Greek Ex-Serviceman Association, Northcote Italian Pensioners Club, Northcote Region Indian Senior Citizens Association, Sahara Victorian Association, Squawkestra Inc, Hellenic Cultural Association of Melbourne, St Johns Ambulance Victoria, , Christina Tester – Singing Rehearsals, Northern Inner Melbourne Multiple Births Association, Orkastra Glasso Bashalde Music Performance, The Social Research Centre, Victoria Arya Samaj, Weave Movement Theatre 	88
East Reservoir SCC	<p>27 groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6 regular weekly groups - Reservoir Chinese Group, Proclaim Church, The Spring Dreams, Your Community Health, Leisure Centre classes, Home Away from Home Chinese Elders Group - 21 casual or regular groups not weekly - East Reservoir Senior Citizens Club, Matrix Guild Of Victoria, Alpha and Omega Greek Community of Melbourne, Combined Probus Club of Reservoir, Nub Omarang Association on Victoria, Roma Social Club, Spectrum, East Reservoir Community Garden Group, Learning skills for the community, Australian Electoral Commission, Australian Fiji Society, Melbourne Suva Football Club, Non-denominational church group, Syad Hashmi Festival, Salvation Army Reservoir, Ebenezer City Church, Hirgi, The Catchment Players of Darebin, Thornbury Japanese Language Club, Gala's Garden, Victorian Aboriginal Childcare Agency 	48

3. Ballarat North Community Centre, formerly Ballarat North Senior Citizens Club

- The building first opened in 1973 as the Ballarat North Senior Citizen Club Rooms.
- The building was recently transformed into a community hub, with upgraded meeting rooms, updated toilet amenities and new kitchen facilities.
- Works included removing the redundant stage, increasing the floor space of the main hall, upgrading the foyer area and north entrance.
- The centre is one of the most popular community facilities in Ballarat. More than 70 hours of community programs are delivered at the venue each week.
- The centre accommodates three regular users with a combined membership of 1200 people – Ballarat North Senior Citizens, Ballarat University of the Third Age (U3A) and the Genesis Church. The centre also receives considerable casual use.