WHAT THE PROJECT IS ABOUT

The project has been exploring what “ageing well” means and how people with a disability can best be supported to live a good life into old age. The aim has been to find out how best to support the changing hopes, choices and needs of people ageing with a disability.

Where the project is up to

March included a trip to Mildura to talk with people with a disability and staff at the Christie Centre Inc., and to attend part of the Ageing Carers Forum. It was a great trip, incorporating visits to the Centre’s various enterprises - the Around Again recycle depot and shop, ArtRageous art space and the Chocolate Factory. Conversations were had with many people, including members of the Christie Centre’s Round Table Committee, a self-advocacy group similar to the Have a Say Group at Amicus.

The research and design phase of the Project is now coming to an end. It will be completed by the end of May 2014. Information gathering has drawn to a close. Participants in the research, through informal interviews and discussions (group and one to one) have included:

- 31 people with a disability;
- 36 staff and consultants in the field (from 11 organisations).

The project has incorporated information provision and discussion at 4 networks and forums: Regional Providers Network; Aged & Disability Services Planning and Advisory Group; Amicus support staff (one large group meeting one sub-group); Haven Assertive Outreach Team; Ageing Carers Network Loddon Mallee (2 forums). It has also included informal advice and suggestions, in the form of email exchange, with 12 practitioners and academics within Australia and overseas.

Currently, the findings are being written up into a report that will: 

HAVING A SAY ABOUT AGEING

“[I want to] get married and have lots of kids and families that care for me. Lots of people I’d like to care for me .... I don’t want to be alone”

“It’s important to stay where I am ... it’s important to have one another .... We take turns cooking”

“[I’d like] to have great superannuation .... Money to do the things you want”

(from Conversations at The Christie Centre Inc. in Mildura).
Provide an exploration of positive ageing in general – the ‘big picture’ of ageing well – and of ageing well with a disability;

Articulate some of the theory and values that support ageing well and living a good life, principles that might form the foundation of a program;

Describe some relevant learnings and inspiring examples of programs ‘in action’, approaches most likely to enable people with a disability to age well;

Set out a program to pilot based on all of this, including program logic, skills and resources needed, timeframe, evaluation framework and the like.

Thank you to people with a disability, carers and advocates who have generously shared their time, views, experience and contacts during this research and design stage of the project. Thanks in particular to my hosts at the Christie Centre Mildura, and all those people who provided ideas, views and hospitality on that trip.

NEXT STEPS

If you are interested in any aspect of the project and would like to be involved in some way as it moves into the next stage, please get in touch (see contact details top left). Please also get in touch if you would like to receive a copy of the report.

Inspiring quotes

“Trust is essential for our social well-being. Without trusting the goodwill of others, we retreat into bureaucracy, rules and demands for more law and order. Trust is based on positive experiences with other people and it grows with use. We need to trust that others are going to be basically reasonable human beings”.


“In ordinary terms ‘inclusion’ is what the human race wakes up to every day. It’s our neighbours, families, schools, associations, friends, businesses and governments. It’s an intricate web of experience and opportunity where we belong, learn, love and grow from the moment we are born. It’s very ‘ordinary’ and very familiar”.