

Contents

What is social inclusion?	2
Social inclusion issues for senior Victorians in residential aged care	4
The <i>Count us in!</i> project	7
Further reading and references	11
Contact details	12

What is social inclusion?

A definition of social inclusion

A socially inclusive society is defined as one where all people feel valued, their differences are respected, and their basic needs are met so they can live in dignity. Social exclusion is the process of being shut out from the social, economic, political and cultural systems which contribute to the integration of a person into the community (Cappo 2002).

Quoted in VicHealth Research Summary 2 - *Social inclusion as a determinant of mental health & wellbeing (January 2005)*

Social inclusion, community inclusion, social connectedness, normalisation, social integration, social citizenship - all these are terms that relate to **the importance of the links between the individual members of our society and the role of each person as a member of this group.**

The values that underpin social inclusion

The values that underpin social inclusion

Everyone Is Ready – None of us has to pass a test or meet a set of criteria before we can be included.

Everyone Can Learn – As human beings we all grow and change and make mistakes: and we are all capable of learning.

Everyone Needs Support – Sometimes some of us need more support than others.

Everyone Can Communicate – Not using words doesn't mean we don't have anything to say.

Everyone Can Contribute – We need to recognise, encourage and value each person's contributions – including our own.

Together We Are Better – We are not dreaming of a world where everyone is like us – difference is our most important renewable resource.

Developed by Scottish Human Services Trust (2005)

Social inclusion issues for senior Victorians in residential aged care

The Victorian Government considers that older Victorians should be supported and encouraged in all aspects of their lives and not only be defined by their health and care needs.

Key policy directions in Victoria include

1. Enabling senior Victorians to lead independent, active and healthy lives for as long as possible.
2. Encouraging communities to value, listen to, and learn from senior Victorians, and understand and appreciate the diversity of the ageing experience.
3. Creating opportunities for senior Victorians to fully participate in economic, social and community life.

Older people are particularly at risk of becoming isolated because of the life events that typically happen as a person ages.

- Many older people have lost their partner and friends and relatives may have died, moved away or visit less often
- Income is frequently reduced
- Health problems are more likely to arise as people age
- Sensory loss and functional decline is more common
- Transport can be expensive, hard to access or unavailable
- Community venues are often inaccessible, may seem unwelcoming or do not cater for the needs of older people
- Some older people have fears about their safety in public places
- Older people may encounter negative responses about their capacity to contribute to community life.

These things may be relevant whether an older person lives alone in their own home, with family carers, in some type of group arrangement or boarding house or in residential aged care. However, the **Count us in!** project aims to address the particular needs of people in residential aged care.

Residential aged care is an important part of the care continuum, providing types and levels of care that may not be available to people living in their own homes or with carers. However, there are some aspects of living in residential aged care that can negatively affect the quality of life of residents and the image of the sector and residents.

As well as facing all the same issues as other older Victorians, people living in 'facilities' are at increased risk of being seen as passive recipients of institutional care who are too frail to benefit from and to contribute to their community.

A person in residential aged care, especially as their support needs increase, will have less choice and control over many basic aspects of their day-to-day life, including their opportunity to be involved in community activities of their choice.

There is a tendency for all aspects of a residents' life to be organised and lived within the facility, with the same people for company, the same routine every day, the same types of food and the requirement to fit with the needs of the majority, for example in choice of music, television channel, lights on or off, room temperature. More emphasis on social inclusion assists in providing variety, choice and improved quality of life for people in these circumstances.

There are trends in aged care worldwide to improve the availability of care and support to keep people 'in the community' and 'in their own homes'. However, there has been less focus on maintaining community networks, involvement and opportunities for those people who need to move to residential aged care.

People who live in residential aged care should be valued citizens who are enabled and supported to maintain their involvement in the social, recreational, economic and family aspects of life and society.

The *Count us in!* project will focus on breaking down barriers to inclusion, on producing positive examples of projects that work, on changing behaviours, attitudes and cultures and on moving towards a more inclusive life for people in residential aged care.



The *Count us in!* project

The *Count us in!* project will provide funding to community based agencies to work with Public Sector Residential Aged Care Services and others in the community to conduct initiatives that promote social inclusion for people living in residential aged care.

a The Project Model

Count us in! will focus on Public Sector Residential Aged Care Services (PSRACS). The results from all funded projects will be made widely available.

Submissions will be invited from established organisations to research, develop, implement and report on fixed term (6 month) projects in partnership with PSRACS within local communities.

Project proposals will need to show how the project will improve engagement of the broader community with residential aged care in ways that add to residents' quality of life and to the community.

Count us in! projects will need to:

- promote a positive image and valued roles for senior Victorians;
- include options for people with all levels and types of support needs;
- involve residents and their families/friends/carers in planning and implementation;
- make use of existing resources wherever possible;
- build on or link with any other current initiatives;
- encourage volunteer contribution; and
- demonstrate strong potential to create ongoing opportunities and benefits, both locally and more broadly.

b. Achieving Sustainable Change

At the project sites:

- Increased engagement between the local community and residential aged care residents.
- Improved access for people in residential aged care to the local community social supports and activity infrastructure.
- Improved health and wellbeing for people in residential aged care.
- Increased expectation that it is usual for people in residential aged care to be involved in their local community
- Opportunities for local residents of all ages to spend time with and learn from older people and to contribute their skills, time and energy to make a positive difference to the residents' quality of life.

Across the community:

- Changing image of and attitude to residential aged care and the people living there.
- Resources in the form of:
 - project reports (including information on how project was conducted, impact on residents, the service and the community).
 - champions (individuals and agencies who have completed projects and are available to pass on their expertise and support others)
 - networks with individuals and organisations.

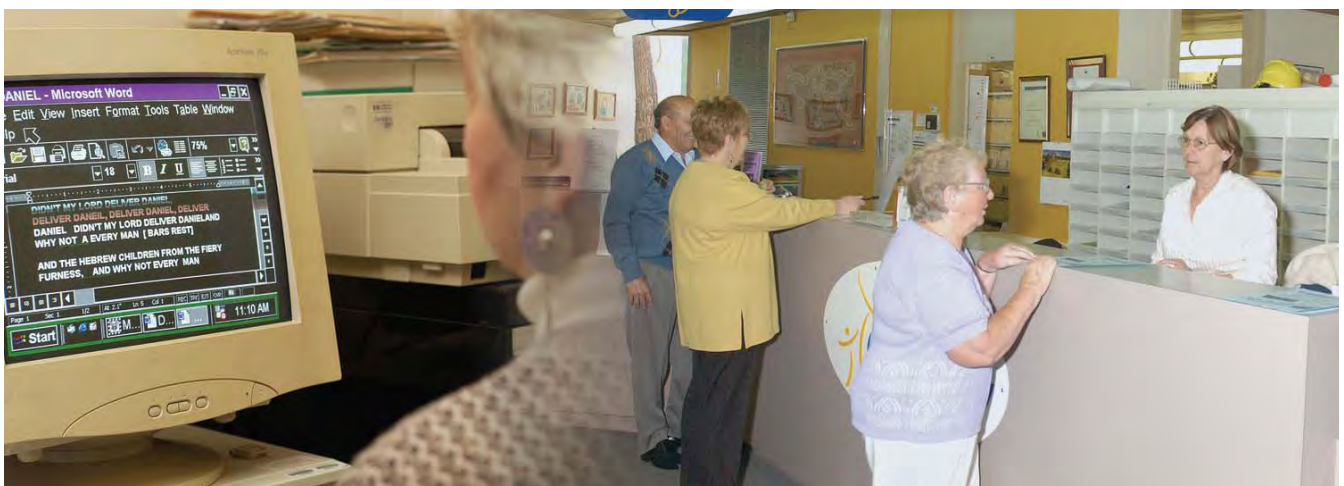
c. Some ideas for projects

Funding will be allocated to projects involving:

- establishment of groups and networks
- resident participation in community education, recreation or social activities
- production of resources
- promotion, training and publicity relating to social inclusion for people in residential aged care

Project activities may be conducted outside residential aged care facilities, within facilities or in a combination of venues, but must focus on including people as part of the wider community.

The project support and administration work can be completed by personnel from the funded agency, contracted workers or staff within the PSRACS, or a combination of these, provided that appropriate coordination is provided.



Some examples of the type of activity that may be incorporated in *Count us in!* initiatives are:

- Formation of a speakers network of PSRACS residents who are available to give talks to interested groups on a variety of relevant topics
- **Plan and conduct a local history forum – PSRACS residents in association with local history group, school or other community members.**
- Use technology to establish networks – school students or other young people assist PSRAC residents to establish computer-based links with family, friends and others.
- **Story groups/music groups/book groups – small groups of PSRAC residents and others meet fortnightly at a community venue such as library or neighbourhood centre**
- Personal histories - PSRAC residents in association with school community, using personal photos, documents, memories. Could lead into a short documentary or collection of stories.

Submissions for funding will need to clearly show how the initiative will address project objectives and how it will have an ongoing impact on inclusion for people in residential aged care.

d. Measuring outcomes

All projects will need to provide evaluation plans as part of their submission.

These evaluations will need to measure project outcomes and issues from the perspective of residents, resident family/friends/advocates, PSRACS staff and management, the funded organisation, the local community, the broader society.

The involvement of residents must be a core aspect of project evaluation

Evaluations will incorporate qualitative and quantitative elements wherever feasible.

Recommendations for future projects and strategies to promote sustainability will also be required.

Further reading and references

Website of the Office for Senior Victorians. Includes the Positive Ageing papers

<http://www.dvc.vic.gov.au/Web19/osv/dvcosv.nsf>

Website of VicHealth – Social Inclusion page

<http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Content.aspx?topicID=106>

Website of the Social Inclusion Board of South Australia

<http://www.socialinclusion.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm>

Website of Macquarie University's Centre for Research on Social Inclusion

<http://www.crsi.mq.edu.au/>

Website of Hawke Research Institute for Sustainable Societies

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/hawkeinstitute/hpw/socinclusion.asp>

A Sure Start to Later Life is a major social inclusion policy being rolled out by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in the UK which focuses on a shift away from just providing social services to promoting participation, leisure and education for older people

<http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/page.asp?id=573>

Inclusion and social justice articles

<http://website.lineone.net/~robertweetman/index.html>

Contact details

The *Count us in!* project will be advertised in late October 2006.

For further details on this project please contact:

Margaret Summers

Manager

Residential Care Strategy

Residential Services Unit

Aged Care Branch

Department of Human Services

Phone (03) 9096 6962

Email: margaret.summers@dhs.vic.gov.au

or

Elaine Pulleine

Senior Policy Advisor

Residential Services Unit

Aged Care Branch

Department of Human Services

Phone (03) 9096 8327

Email: elaine.pulleine@dhs.vic.gov.au