

Policy and Practice on Ageing: Informed by evidence Building Ageing Research Capacity Colloquium

Network Themes and BARC Strategic Areas Workshops

Afternoon Workshop 2 – Independent Living and Social Participation

Day 2 – 5 July
1:30 -3:00 PM

Presented by:



ARC/NHMRC Research
Network in Ageing Well

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Disclaimer:

This is a background document that has been produced by the ARC/NHMRC Research Network in Ageing Well and is only to be used for the purpose of informing discussion at the workshop on 5 July 2006. The materials contained herein are not available for the purposes of quotation until the workshop discussion has been incorporated. An updated version will be sent to all workshop participants and will be made available on the Network website (www.ageingwell.edu.au).

Any statements about proposed Network actions or directions are statements of possibility only. Directions will be determined at a later date after taking into consideration the discussion at the workshop.

Research Network
Convened at



The University of Sydney

Major Partners



Independent Living and Social Participation - Workshop

Background

The Independent Living and Social Participation Theme relates to the activities and roles of older and ageing people within their societal, social, physical, political and economic contexts. It is relevant to a body of theoretical literature, has policy implications and has been identified as requiring further research in international and Australian research agendas. This paper describes the current policy context, suggests future directions for research, and provides a summary of Theme activities to date.

Policy context for Independent Living and Social Participation Theme

Gerontological research has tended to both reflect and shape government policy and service development and evaluation and societal beliefs and values (Bengston et al., 1999; Estes et al., 2003; Minichiello et al., 2005). The interrelatedness of research and policy dictates that researchers need to be aware of the current national and international policy context. In addition, the policy implications of research findings should be articulated and disseminated to key stakeholders. There are numerous international and national policy documents which form the policy context for ageing research into independent living and social participation.

The international policy context

The needs of ageing populations and the desire to improve quality of life in older age have led to the drafting of international documents by the United Nations and the World Health Organization. The United Nations Program on Ageing incorporates a variety of international policy aims and research priorities. The United Nations Principles for Older Persons (1991) encouraged governments to consider and incorporate the principles of independence, participation, care, self fulfilment and dignity of older people into policies and programs. More recently, the Madrid International Plan on Ageing, 2002, aimed to “ensure that persons everywhere are able to age with security and dignity and to continue to participate in their societies as citizens with full rights” (p. 7). Three priority directions were identified to help to meet this aim:

1. Older persons and development;
2. Advancing health and well being into old age; and
3. Ensuring enabling and supportive environments.

A need to ‘mainstream’ ageing issues has also recently been identified by the United Nations, so as to encourage the social integration, and the social, political, cultural and economic inclusion of older people (Venne, 2005).

The World Health Organization contributed the Active Ageing Policy Framework to the International Plan on Ageing. It suggested a move away from a needs based policy model to a rights based one, emphasising the rights and responsibilities of older people and encouraging their involvement in policy making and implementation (World Health Organisation, 2002). Three pillars to the policy framework were identified:

1. Participation
2. Health (including quality of life) and
3. Security.

Within this framework, the need to consider social and physical environments, related to healthcare and community life, is noted and the importance of interdependence, barrier-free living and age friendly environments is stressed. Again, it is stated that social and physical environments that support ageing people, would support all people (World Health Organization, 2002). Therefore, both the United Nations and the World Health Organization characterise ageing policy as something currently requiring attention, inclusion in general policy making and potentially improving conditions and outcomes for the population as a whole.

The Australian policy context

There have been numerous policy documents related to ageing produced at a national and state level. The National Strategy for an Ageing Australia (Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, 2002) identified four policy themes to address the issues related to an ageing population, the first two of which are relevant to the ILSP Theme. They are:

1. Independence and self provision
2. Attitude, lifestyle and community support
3. Healthy ageing
4. World class care.

In addition the strategy identified principles, noting that quality of life and access to services were issues facing all people over the lifespan, and that individuals, family and the community should be supported but not replaced by government policy, and that policy should be underpinned by a strong evidence base. Goals identified within the National Strategy of particular relevance to the ILSP Theme include:

- Society has a positive image of older Australians, appreciates their diversity and recognises the many roles and contributions they continue to make to the economy and the community.
- That public, private and community infrastructure is available to support older Australians and their participation in society.

The Strategic Ageing Research Themes contained in the Framework for an Australian Ageing Research Agenda (2003) that link most closely with the ISLP Theme are:

- Developing positive images of ageing and supporting continued social participation.
- developing age-friendly infrastructure and built environment.

The focus on healthy ageing within policy also led to the development of a number of policy documents that give insight into the broader meaning of this term for policy or research. The Commonwealth, State and Territory Strategy on Healthy Ageing (Healthy Ageing Task Force 2000) documents a vision for Australia as “a fair society where all older people can lead satisfying and productive lives which maximise their independence and wellbeing” (p. 3). It identifies six universal principles of healthy ageing:

1. Support independence
2. Encourage a good quality of life for Australians as they age
3. Promote fairness and equity
4. Recognise interdependence
5. Recognise and respond to Australia’s growing diversity
6. Encourage personal responsibility while providing support for those most in need.

Key focal areas requiring action were identified, including community attitudes, health and well being, work and community participation, sustainable resourcing, inclusive communities and appropriate care and support. A summary table of some of the key policy recommendations of various government and stakeholder organisations is provided as Attachment 1. Many of these areas relate to the Theme of Independent Living and Social Participation and these are bolded.

The international and Australian policy contexts have some shared themes that relate to independent living and social participation. The diversity of the process and outcomes of ageing and the individuality of needs and experiences of older people are recognised. Positive outcomes of ageing have been emphasised and tend to include independence and autonomy, well being, and participation in and contribution to community, family and work life. The influence of social and physical environments on the participation of older people (and the population as a whole) has also been noted. Ageing is also characterised as a whole of life issue, with emphasis being placed on the need to bring ‘ageing issues’ into the mainstream to benefit the population as a whole. Policies have also supported the need to involve older people in articulating and pursuing what contributes to their quality of life, so that policy and research agendas can be meaningful to older people.

Key Issues

The purpose of the ARC Research Network on Ageing Well is to facilitate high quality research related to ageing. It aims to promote collaboration, facilitate involvement in international ageing research, support research capacity and quality, improve its efficiency and involve key stakeholders in research, so as to facilitate the application of findings. It aims to prioritise innovative, quality research that draws on multiple disciplines, universities and geographic locations. Large scale projects requiring collaboration among research groups and with the potential for national policy and practice application are particularly sought. It is also desirable that early career researchers are included in projects, to foster future ageing research capacity. The members of the Independent Living and Social Participation Theme aim to stimulate and support proposals that address these criteria.

There are three key research areas that the Theme is considering addressing. How best to address each of these research areas is currently being discussed and any additional input is welcome.

1. The nature of independent living and social participation

Research is needed to determine the characteristics of independent living and social participation. What constitutes a life lived independently and with social participation? What constitutes quality of life at different ages? We cannot assume the quality of life or levels of independence and social participation desired by community members, nor can we assume the levels that are of most benefit to their physical, mental and financial well-being.

Future research could focus on the following questions:

- What do older people perceive as successful, optimal, productive, active ageing?
- What constitutes quality of life throughout the lifespan and in later life?
- What do quality of life, independence, and social participation mean to older people?
- What is the relationship between ageing in place and independent living and social participation? To what extent should ageing in place be supported and under what circumstances?
- How much variation is there among older Australians in the attitudes, desires and needs with regards independence, social participation and quality of life? For example, do older Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds differ?

2. The determinants of independent living and social participation

Research is needed in order to identify the determinants of quality of life, independent living and social participation. In particular aspects of the social environment that support Independent Living and Social Participation must be identified.

Future research could focus on the following questions:

- How does the context in which older people live influence independent living and social participation?
- What is an optimal lifestyle that maximises quality of life for current and future older people?
- What is the connection between the micro (e.g. experience) and the macro (e.g. infrastructure) when it comes to independent living, social participation and quality of life?
- What comprises “age friendly” or enabling environments?
- Which contextual factors (social networks and attitudes, societal and institutional structures, infrastructure and build environmental, economic factors) affect quality of life, independence and social participation of older people?

3. The facilitation of independent living and social participation

After identifying the nature of independent living, social participation and quality of life, and the determinants of these factors, research can then focus on the best strategies for their facilitation. Research should be outcome oriented in order to identify those strategies that are most effective at establishing levels of independence and social participation that are of optimum benefit to older Australians.

Future research could focus on the following questions:

- What contributes to promoting quality of life?
- How successful have ageing policies been in achieving their goals?
- How can the Independent Living and Social Participation of older people be facilitated?
- What is the capacity to deliver a better environment? What facilitates and impedes this?

Approaches which meld different theoretical perspectives, bridge disciplinary and geographic boundaries and involve stakeholder groups will help to address these questions. Innovative research projects exploring the activities and roles of older people within their relevant contexts will help to improve outcomes now and in the future.

Possible Network Directions:

- Discussion among Network members examining the above three research areas taking into consideration the content of the colloquium workshop discussion?
- Support of large-scale, multidisciplinary projects investigating these issues?
- Completion of a background paper including the current research context with regards to Independent Living and Social Participation that will appear on the Network website (www.ageingwell.edu.au) and will be disseminated widely?

Summary of the Theme and Activities To Date

Independent Living and Social Participation

To date, a working group has been established. The members of the Independent Living and Social Participation Theme have met in Brisbane to identify and discuss key issues and future directions. This information has been compiled into several papers including:

1. This paper on the key issues, policy context and future directions;
2. A background paper including the current research context with regards to Independent Living and Social Participation that will appear on the Network website (www.ageingwell.edu.au). This paper provides a snapshot of current and recent research (including Australian policy research) based on information extracted from Ageing Research Online (www.aro.gov.au) and the Emerging Researchers in Ageing (ERA) Conference Proceedings; and
3. A longer scoping paper that includes the above, as well as definitions of the key terms, and discussion of the philosophical and theoretical contexts of the Independent Living and Social Participation Theme which is also available on the Network website

The Independent Living and Social Participation Theme was involved in submitting a proposal entitled "Pathways in Ageing and Care Program" to the NHMRC/ARC Ageing Well, Ageing Productively Program (AWAP). The Pathways project will provide a comprehensive, consumer-driven study program to inform policy, program, and practice improvements in aged care. The primary objective is to construct a dynamic view of the 'care' pathways undertaken by older people in later life. The aim is to better understand the 'natural history' and determinants of needs for care; risk and protective influences in maintaining capacities; and consequences of service use (or not) for quality of life for older people and carers. This program will identify opportunities for interventions that can improve outcomes for older individuals, carers, and service systems. This project will also identify ways to further improve the delivery of aged care services through enhanced professional practice, assessment, and information systems. The project will be led by the University of Sydney in collaboration with the University of Queensland, Curtin University of Technology, and the University of New South Wales and will bring together Network Participants from across the country.

Many of the members of the Independent Living and Social Participation Theme are also involved in the state-based activities of the Network in Queensland. A one-day Research Symposium was held at Customs House in Brisbane on the 27th of April this year. The symposium brought together the key players in ageing research from across Queensland to talk about their research, to network, and to consider future research directions. Approximately 30 presenters were drawn from nearly every Queensland University and were broadly spread across the disciplines. The topics covered included: aged and community care, active ageing, cognition, cross-cultural issues, financial and workforce issues, education and technology, the built environment, injury prevention and biomolecular approaches. Approximately 80 researchers, service providers, representatives of older people's organisations, and government representatives attended the symposium in total.

In addition, Professor Helen Bartlett of the Australasian Centre on Ageing at the University of Queensland established the Emerging Researchers in Ageing (ERA) initiative. Support for ERA is one of the core activities of the Network. This initiative has built up a national network of PhD students and operates an annual national conference. It liaises closely with the student section of the Australian Association of Gerontology. In 2006 the ERA Conference will be held outside Queensland for the first time and will take place in Sydney on 21 November.

**Attachment 1:
Examples of policy needs related to Independent Living and Social Participation**

NATIONAL POLICY	
<p>PMSEIC (Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council) Promoting healthy ageing in Australia Working group – prevention and healthy ageing (last updated April 26 2005)</p>	<p><u>Important messages</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ageing is an opportunity – (healthy ageing needs to be supported by the social environment in which people live and by the built environment) 2. Adverse trends in risk factors for chronic disease 3. A whole of life approach to healthy ageing: never too early and never too late 4. Small improvements in disease risks across the whole population have major benefits 5. Making healthy choices easy choices (environment) 6. Multidisciplinary collaborative approach is needed 7. There is a major research agenda to promote healthy ageing (including enhancing the social, work and built environment for older people) <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical activity 2. Nutrition 3. Work and social environment (barriers, transitions) 4. Built environment (mobility, independence and autonomy) 5. National network for healthy ageing research 6. Longitudinal studies of healthy and productive ageing.
STATE GOVERNMENT POLICY	
<p>Victoria (Making this the age to be in Victoria, 2003)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enable senior Victorians to lead independent, active and healthy lives for as long as possible. 2. Encourage communities to value, listen to, and learn from senior Victorians, and understand and appreciate the diversity of the ageing experience. 3. Create opportunities for senior Victorians to fully participate in economic, social and community life. 4. Equip senior Victorians with the information they need to understand their rights, and the choices and opportunities open to them. 5. Raise the profile of population ageing as an issue for government, business and the community, and build partnerships for action. 6. Provide opportunities for senior Victorians to contribute to planning for the future and promote informed decision-making by government, business and the community.
<p>Queensland (Our shared future: Queensland's framework for ageing)</p> <p><i>“an inclusive and fair society where all older people are able to lead productive and fulfilling lives as valued members of their community”</i></p>	<p><u>Areas for action</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State government leadership on ageing issues (promote the interests of older people in Queensland) 2. Community participation (Provide opportunities for older people in Queensland to participate fully in all aspects of community life) 3. Community infrastructure (Promote access to appropriate infrastructure for older people) 4. Health and well being (Promote improved health and well being for all older people in Queensland) 5. Employment and retirement planning (Promote opportunities for older people in Queensland to access and maintain employment and to plan for their retirement).
<p>Western Australia (State Aged Care Plan for Western Australia 2003-2008)</p>	<p><u>Vision</u> Independence, well-being and quality of life for older people through responsive health and aged care services and supports.</p> <p><u>Objectives</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Realise the vision for health and aged care services 2. Ensure older people are valued 3. Improve coordination in planning for aged care 4. Support transitions across the continuum of care 5. Improve quality of life and independence for older people 6. Tailor services designed to meet specific needs 7. Sustain a workforce sufficient to meet demand 8. Support professional development, education and training 9. Formally recognise carers and volunteers.

<p>Tasmania (Tasmanian Plan for Positive Ageing 2000-2005)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community attitudes: To develop a more positive community attitude to older people and ageing; 2. Community participation: To increase the participation of older Tasmanians in recreation, paid work and voluntary activities; 3. Living in the community: To improve local planning and design and access to transport to better meet the needs of older Tasmanians and to enhance their feelings of safety and security both within their homes and within the community; 4. Health, independence and community support: To support and promote older people's maintenance of a healthy lifestyle and independence in the community; 5. Education and information in the community: To improve older Tasmanian's access to and understanding of information, continuing education and technology.
STAKEHOLDER GROUPS	
<p>Alzheimer's Australia (National philosophy, principles and service standards)</p>	<p><u>Principles</u> People living with dementia, their families and carers have the right to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o access high quality support services which uphold all their rights o access flexible, responsive and timely support services o be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect, to have their feelings validated and their choices and individual beliefs respected. This includes sensitivity to culture, age, language, location, educational background and level of impairment of the person using the service. o services which support both the person with dementia and their families individually and together provided always that serving the best interest of the person with dementia be the overriding aim. <p>Whenever possible, services will be provided free and no person with dementia or their family or carer will be denied access due to their inability to pay.</p>
<p>Carers Australia (Strategic Plan 2004-2008)</p>	<p><u>Goals</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To influence public policy and service delivery to improve the health and wellbeing of all carers 2. To enable the public and private sector to meet the needs of carers in different caring roles through high quality information, education and training and support strategies and mechanisms 3. To be a well governed and resourced organization.
<p>The Australian Association of Gerontology</p>	<p><u>Mission</u> To expand knowledge of ageing Why: To improve the experience of ageing How:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Promoting and supporting research o Disseminating information o Promoting and providing education o Promoting informed debate o Cooperating with other stakeholders o Providing leadership

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