





Age-Friendly Northeast Victoria is a collaborative partnership of older people, state and local governments, community-based nongovernment organisations, and researchers. It is a common platform for action to improve the health and wellbeing of older people, now and in the future, for themselves and their communities through the creation of an age-friendly northeast Victoria.

Central Hume Primary Care Partnership is the host organisation for Age-Friendly Northeast Victoria

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## Introduction

Supporting communities to become age friendly is one of the most effective strategies to create thriving places in which everyone can live, learn, work, play and age to the best of their abilities.

Many people are growing old in the towns and communities where they have always lived. At the same time, many people are moving into rural communities in later life perhaps to escape an unsupportive urban environment. Tourists of all ages spend time in rural communities and are essential for the economic prosperity of our region.

Creating age-friendly environments is crucial for communities to be places where older people can continue to develop personally, contribute to their communities, and age safely in a place that is right for them. Such places promote health, remove barriers to participation, and provide support to people experiencing losses in mental or physical capacity.

The Age Friendly Rural Victoria Checklist is a tool from the Age-Friendly Northeast Victoria Handbook, a step-by-step guide for communities interested in implementing the World Health Organization Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities (WHO AFCC) approach.

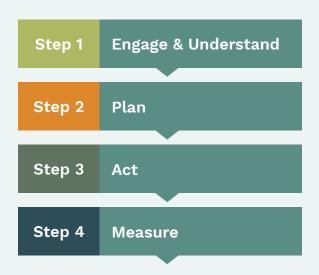




WHO AFCC employs a simple, effective four-step approach to creating age-friendly communities.

This Checklist can assist with the first step in the process—understanding how aspects of community life enable, or create barriers, to healthy ageing.

The Checklist is a way for communities to come together to see themselves from the perspective of older people. It provides an opportunity to identify and understand what's working well, and areas that could be improved to become more age-friendly.



## How was the checklist developed?

The Age Friendly Rural Victoria Checklist is based on the WHO Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities (2007) and Public Health Agency Canada's Age Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Checklist (2007). Both these documents are used extensively internationally, and in Australia, to assist communities to assess the age-friendliness of their local urban and rural communities. However, many elements of these Checklists may not always be relevant to Australian communities.

We adapted these guides following a review of Australian and international research on

what helps people live a good later life in rural settings, and the views of older people found in local data collections.

Residents in all communities across the Mansfield Shire Council, through their Age-Friendly Mansfield project, trialled the Checklist, providing constructive advice and valuable feedback.

The Age Friendly Rural Victoria Checklist follows the eight domains of the original WHO Checklist, reflecting the essential, interconnected areas of life that impact on our ability to age well.

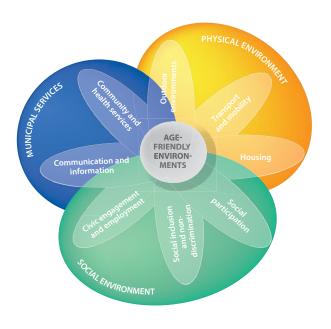


Figure 1, WHO Regional Office for Europe: The eight domains reflect the social determinants of ageing.

### **Physical Environment**

The first three domains (Outdoor Space and Buildings, Transport and Housing) provide key features of the physical environment. These aspects strongly influence personal mobility and access, safety, physical health and social participation.

### **Social Environment**

The following three domains (Social Participation, Respect and Inclusion, Civic Participation and Employment) list aspects of the social environment and culture that affect income, participation, security and subjective wellbeing of people.

### **Municipal Services**

The last two areas (Communication and Information and Community Support and Health Services) list the factors that shape the ways older people develop knowledge of the world around them with a specific focus on the social and health services available to them.

## Who should use this checklist?

The Age Friendly Rural Victoria Checklist was developed to provide a baseline assessment of the age-friendliness of rural and regional communities. This assessment is part of the first step in the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities approach (GNAFCC).

### The guide can help:

- Communities at the beginning of their age-friendly journey to understand the perspective of older residents, tourists, businesses and employees.
- Local Governments with well-established community consultation approaches by reviewing their processes through an agefriendly lens.
- Form the baseline age-friendliness of a community and to monitor progress over time.
- Identify areas that impact on older people's capacity to age well that may not have been considered previously.
- Build more effective communication between residents, elected councillors, council staff, community-based organisations and government departments.
- Provide an opportunity for residents to work alongside council staff to contribute equally to the creation of an age-friendly community.

When undertaking the assessment it is essential to include the active participation of the diversity of older people in the community. It must be undertaken in a way that supports their involvement.

In order for older people to be equal collaborators, the following principles, developed by the WHO GNAFCC and the National Development Team for Inclusion, should be considered:

- Involve the diversity of older people living in the community from the beginning to the end of the assessment.
- Provide a range of ways in which older people can contribute in ways that are meaningful to them.
- Ensure meetings, materials, and venues are accessible – all older people can get there, are able to prepare for the meeting, and be heard, hear, and follow the progress of creating an age-friendly community.
- Create spaces where everyone feels safe to speak up and to be listened to.
- Use the skills, knowledge and experiences of older people in multiple, different ways.
- Ensure decision-making is transparent.

Using the Checklist will give a view of the community through the knowledge, experience and perspectives of older residents. This will provide the work with an important source of evidence for the parts of the community that support healthy ageing now, and what features need to be improved.

## How to use this checklist

The aim of assessing the age-friendliness of the community using the Age Friendly Rural Victoria Checklist is to ensure that future actions reflect the needs and preferences of the whole community. It also establishes a sound baseline against which the progress of work can be measured.

There is no prescriptive way of using the Checklist. It is important to determine what approach will work best for the community, given its geography, timeframe and resources. One community may choose to use the whole Checklist, while another may focus on one domain at a time, or a cluster of domains. Individual items in the Checklist might also be used as a basis for surveys or conversations with residents, businesses, government or services.

However it is used, the assessment should be conducted over a set period of time with a firm date for reporting back to the organising body and the community.

## Below are some of the ways in which communities might consider using the Checklist:

### Follow the Vancouver protocol

The Vancouver protocol is widely used in communities around the globe. It was the research protocol for the collaborating groups in cities that led to the development of the WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide and companion, Checklist of Essential Features of Age-Friendly Cities.

The protocol is straightforward, requires a minimum of material and technical resources, and is adaptable to varying cultural and economic contexts. Separate focus groups are conducted with a diversity of older people, including those with physical and cognitive impairments, informal carers, and providers of services, council staff from planning, social and health services, chambers of commerce, restaurants and cafes, tourism and recreation, religious organisations and volunteer organisations.

In semi-structured focus groups, participants are asked by a facilitator to identify the positive and negative features of their community in each of these eight domains, using the items in the Checklist as prompts. This Checklist can be used the same way.

In Hong Kong, the Vancouver Protocol was adapted with focus groups comprising of a mix of older people who were representatives of place-based organisations, government representatives, academics and representatives of commercial companies.

### **Community group meetings**

The Age Friendly Rural Victoria Checklist can be used as the basis for community group meetings, public forums, or 'listening posts'. These can be held for the whole community, or in smaller meetings using existing groups.

Consider the groups that are already formed in the community. Approach them to complete the Checklist in one of their meetings. This might include: Senior Citizens, University of the Third Age (U3A), Red Cross, CWA, CFA, Historical Society, Men's Shed, Carers groups, sports clubs such as golf, football, cricket, netball or walking; bushwalking groups; hobby groups such as quilting, sewing, wood work; performing and visual arts groups; or volunteer groups.

Mansfield Shire Council in Victoria brought together older people in each township to complete the Checklist. Through lively, engaging conversations, participants discussed each item, reaching agreement on some items, and noting the different perspectives on others.

In Montreal, Canada, the Mayor held a townhall meeting, with councillors facilitating a table of older people from their particular ward. Each table worked through the WHO Checklist over the course of the day.

### Walking assessment

Walking around a defined part of the community is a very effective way of completing many items in the Checklist. Existing walking groups can be encouraged to take part, or small groups of community members can be brought together to walk and discuss their findings.

In Hamilton, Canada, a walking assessment of the built environment was led by Occupational Therapy students, while in the United States of America, Portland brought together intergenerational groups of residents with a Councilor and senior Council staff member to complete an age-friendly assessment of parts of their community.

In Tweed Heads, Australia, older people used an iPad app with a modified version of the WHO Checklist pre-loaded. They were asked to complete a 400 metre walk in a radius from a central point at various times across a month, making notes and taking photographs of what was, and was not, age-friendly.

### **Community surveys**

The Checklist can be adapted to a paper or electronic survey. Particular items might be selected for a brief survey held over a short period of time, perhaps one month, and then a new set of items for each month over a year. Alternatively, a larger survey might be undertaken covering a selected number of items from each of the eight domains.

Benalla, in Northeast Victoria, Australia employed a survey at the beginning of their Age-friendly journey. Comprising many of the Checklist items, the survey was widely distributed across Benalla Rural City, with trained older people assisting with data collection.

### Report the results of the assessment

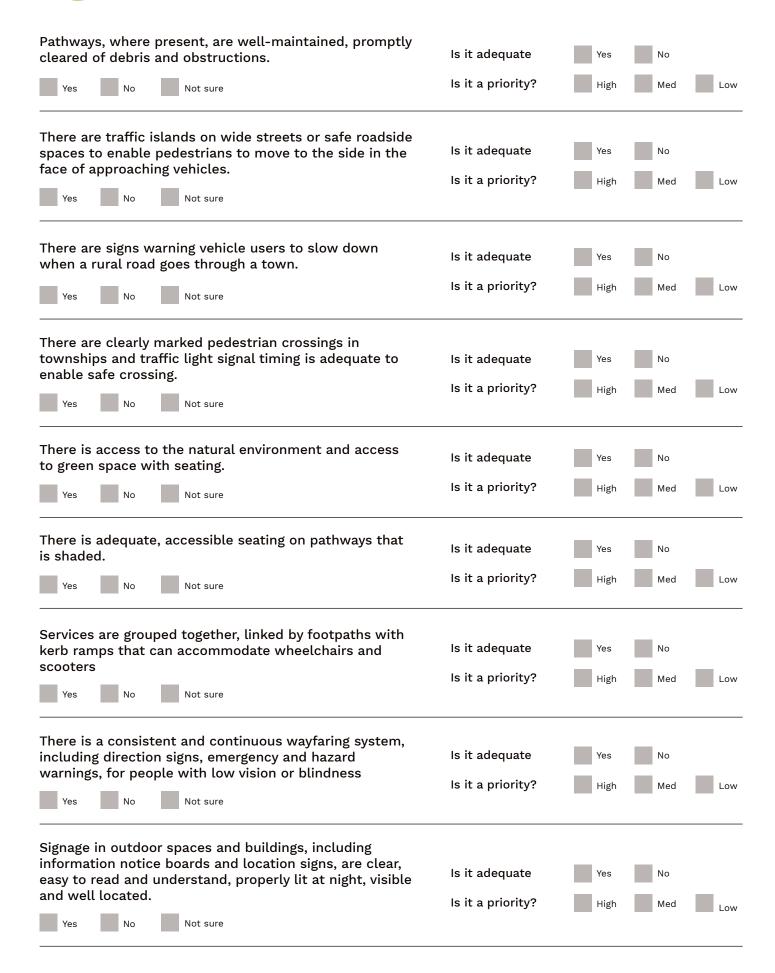
Drawing together the results of the assessment is an equally important task that should be completed as soon as possible after the assessment with a range of people taking part.

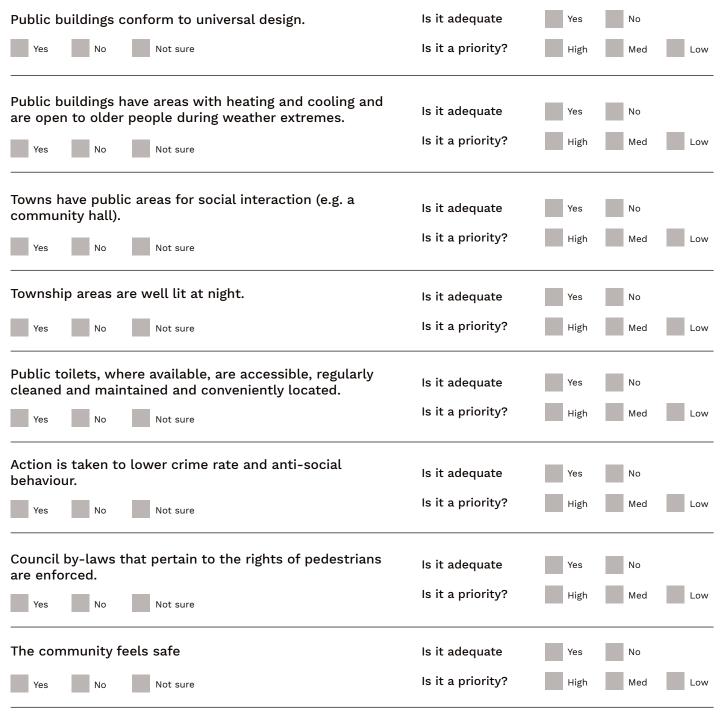
The report should include how the assessment was conducted, who undertook the assessment, and what it found. Not all the findings will be in agreement. The report should highlight those areas identified as community strengths, along with the areas identified for improvement.



### Age Friendly Rural Victoria Checklist

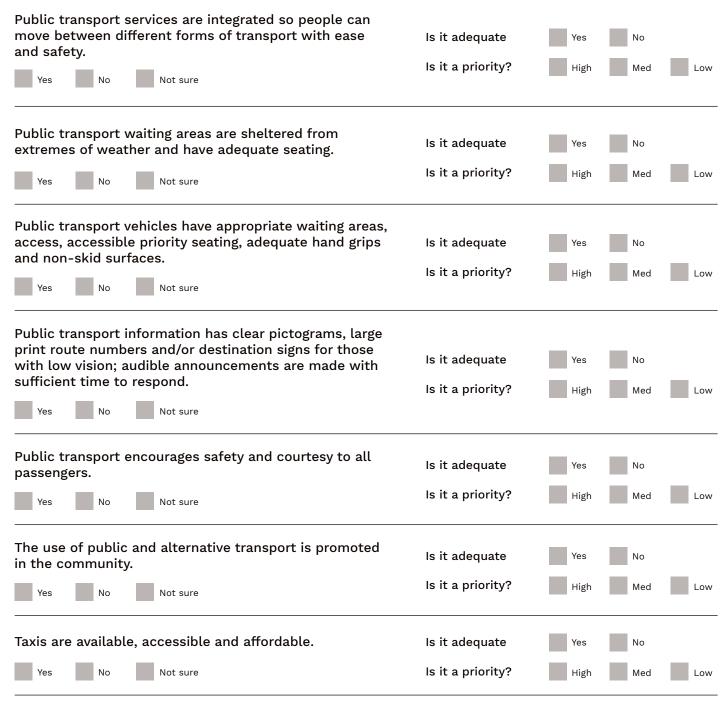
## **Outdoor Spaces & Buildings**





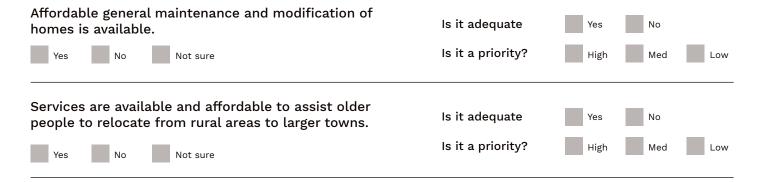


Roads in townships are well-maintained, well-lit and supported by visible signage.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Paths, roads and tracks are cleared regularly of overgrown vegetation and unnecessary obstacles.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Practical driver refresher courses are available and affordable.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Parking is located close to amenities; parking				
regulations are enforced; drop-off and pick-up areas are clearly marked; and there are a sufficient number of	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
disabled parking spots  Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Scooter recharge points are available.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Affordable and accessible community transport services are available, including for people with a variety of disabilities.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Public transport is affordable and there are known, accessible outlets to purchase tickets.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Public transport connects smaller towns with larger service centres throughout the day and evening.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Where public transport exists in towns, it is accessible,	1. 10 . 1			
operates at various times, and connects older people with the services they need.  Yes No Not sure	Is it adequate	Yes High	No Med	Low



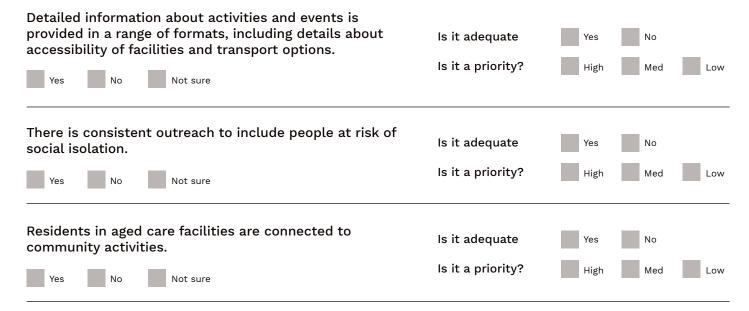


A range of comfortable, accessible, affordable housing options for sale and rent are available including one, two or three bedroom separate houses, flats, units or apartments; multi-unit dwellings, independent living	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
units and residential aged care.  Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Affordable assisted living and residential aged care is available and located within the community.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Subsidised housing is available, comfortable and accessible.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Subsidies are available for utilities and other housing-related costs and charges.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
New housing is designed and built for accessibility, comfort and ease of use to meet the needs of people	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
across the life-course.  Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Housing is located close to key services.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Housing is located to take advantage of the natural environment and provides access to green space.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Older people are supported to heat and cool their homes.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Affordable services and supports are available to enable older people to remain at home.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low



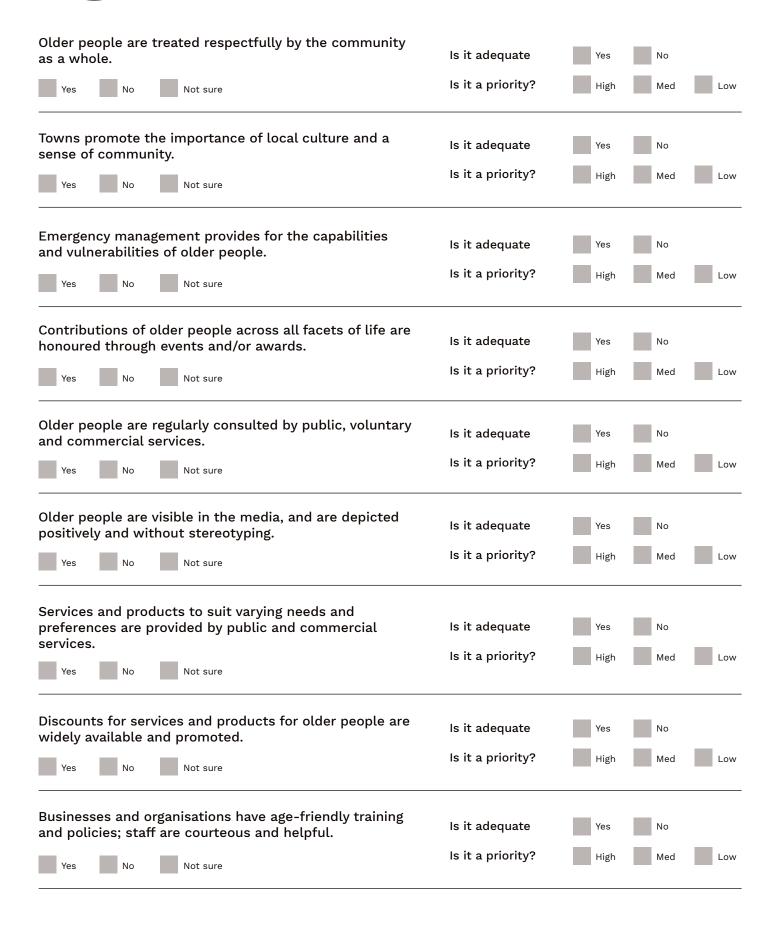
# Age Friendly Rural Victoria Checklist Social Participation

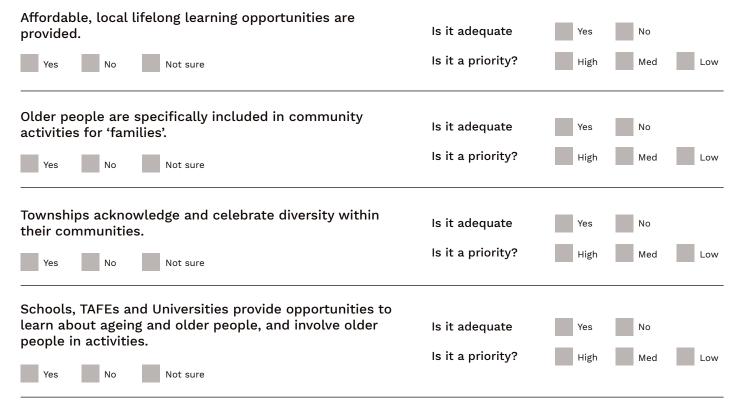
located, accessible, with restrooms, well-lit and easily reached by public transport.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	_
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
A wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities is offered to appeal to the diverse population of older people.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Activities are hosted by a wide range of organisations.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Community gatherings include older people and are held				
in various local community spots, such as recreation centres, schools, libraries, community centres, churches	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
and parks.	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Yes No Not sure				
Activities are available and promoted that provide for intergenerational and diverse groups to mix.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Events are held at times convenient for older people.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Activities and events can be attended alone or with a companion.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
Activities and attractions are affordable, with no hidden				
or additional participation costs.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	_
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low
The rights of older people who are not interested in	lo it adazveta	V	NI-	
participating in community life are respected.	Is it adequate	Yes	No	_
Yes No Not sure	Is it a priority?	High	Med	Low



### Age Friendly Rural Victoria Checklist

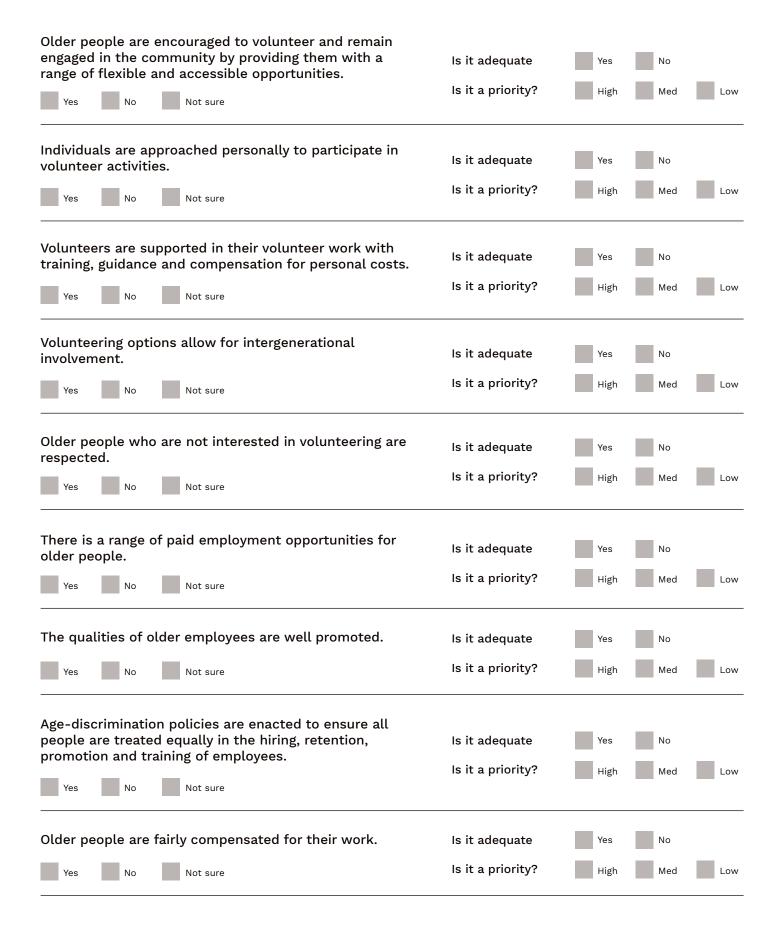
## **Respect & Social Inclusion**





### Age Friendly Rural Victoria Checklist

## Civic Participation & Employment

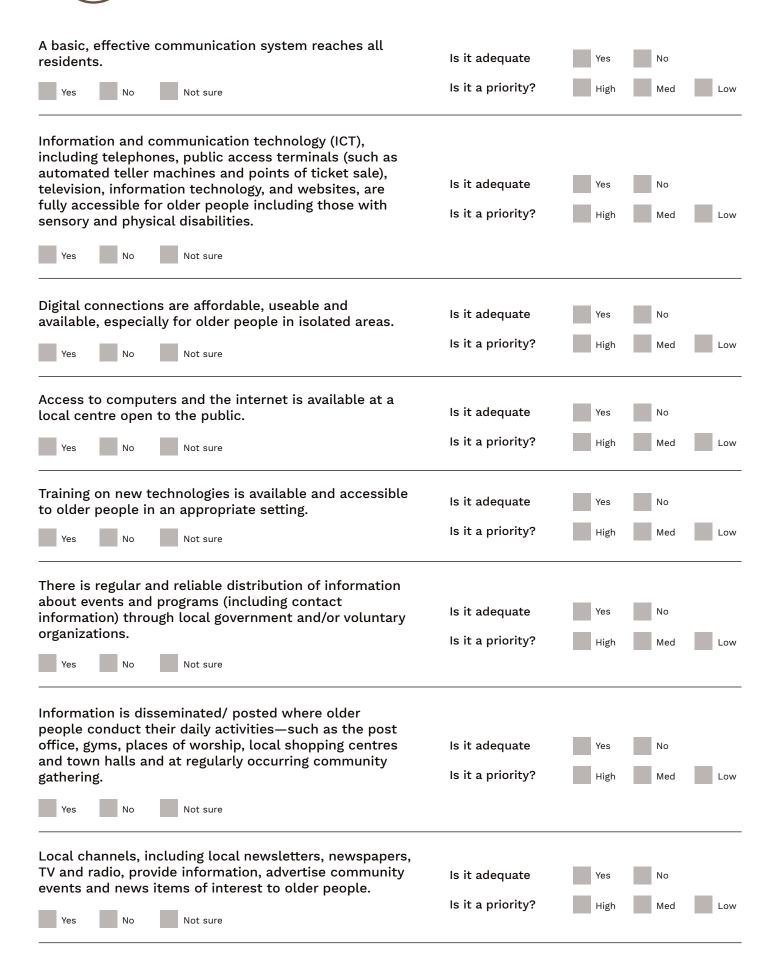


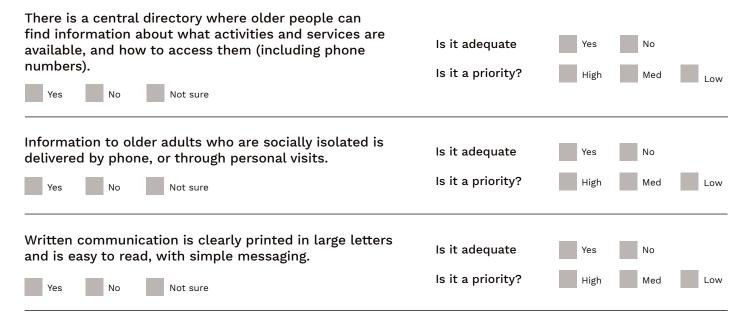


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### Age Friendly Rural Victoria Checklist

## **Communication & Information**

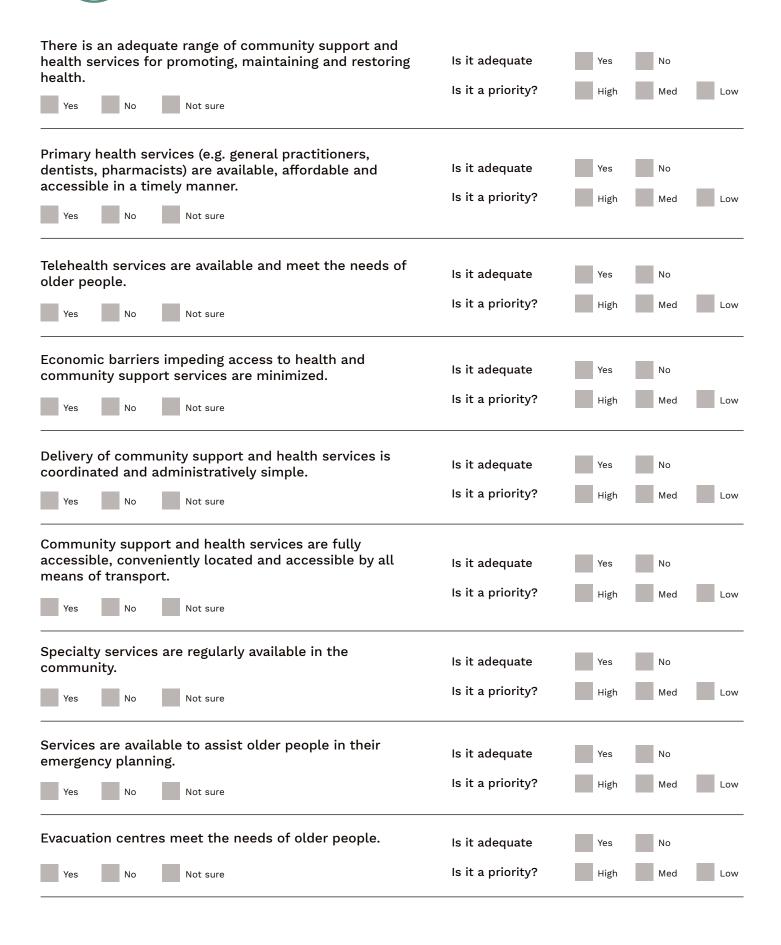




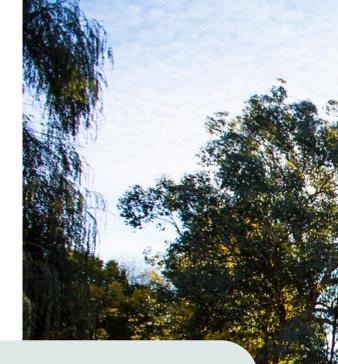
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### Age Friendly Rural Victoria Checklist

## **Community Support & Health Services**







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