



Discussion Paper



This Discussion Paper will provide Council and other stakeholders with information and data (gathered recently) relating to the ageing population in the Winton Shire, and how our region's situation compares to other areas both regionally and nationally.

This report is designed to initiate discussion and arm Councillors Council staff and other stakeholders with relevant information that can inform conversation with the community and other involved parties. The report outlines different directions an 'Aged Care Strategy' could potentially take in terms of strategic directions and priorities. Ultimately, the report recommends engagement of a specialist consultant, to create a Strategy and Action Plan, with the goal of uniting the many voices in the community who have a vision of how aged care should look within the Winton Shire. The proposed Strategy and Action Plan would be created in collaboration with the community and be capable of meeting the needs of the Winton community now and into the future.



Winton Aged Care – the current picture:

People commonly think of nursing homes or residential care when they think about aged care. However, aged care is not a single service. It is provided over a range of programs and services and ranges from low-level to intensive support. It includes assistance with everyday living activities such as cleaning, laundry, social participation, and shopping. It also includes respite, equipment, and home modifications. The term “Aged Care” encompasses health care, nursing and allied health and accommodation. It can take the form of being provided in people’s homes, in the community and in residential aged care settings. Outlined below are some of the services currently operating in Winton which deliver Aged Care.

Diamantina Gardens: Diamantina Gardens was opened in 1992 and has 20 units, made up of 18 single occupancy and two couple rooms. Given the unpredictability of length of stays it is difficult to estimate the amount of time the units are occupied by a resident. Rent is \$102 for a single and \$124 for a double unit per week.

“Pelican Waters” was an independent aged living facility of 4 units in a past life but is currently being used as overflow Council staff housing and houses one resident from its previous purpose.

Winton Multi-Purpose Hospital (Winton MPHS) has six hospital beds allocated for the use of Winton’s aged residents who are no longer able to care for themselves at home. These residents require assistance with high care needs and mobility. Residents are allocated a bed on a ‘needs basis’ with a waiting list due to there being only 6 beds available. Resident’s stays are often long term in nature which means there are currently no vacancies and very little turnover. Therefore, residents requiring this level of care have no alternative but to move away from their families with ‘Bolton Clarke Pioneers’ in Longreach being the closest facility available. Staff estimate over the last five years, 25 Winton residents have had to be placed in facilities elsewhere. Winton MPHS is funded through Federal funding which is based on the “Connections to Community,” programme (keeping people close to home), an initiative which helps to reduce congestion in metropolitan areas.

Inclusions and Exclusions –

- MPHS pays for all meals, but it does not cover medication or personal items.
- Cost to client- the client pays roughly \$57.90 per day which is $\frac{3}{4}$ of their pension.
- Clients may leave the hospital grounds at any time if they let hospital staff know where they are going. This is an important distinction which must be communicated as many people considering care options are reportedly fearful that they are not allowed to leave the facility.
- Winton MPHS does not take wandering or aggressive dementia clients. All clients must be assessed through ACAT (my aged care) for permanent aged care residence.

Commonwealth Home Support program -

The CHSP is a federally funded program which provides entry-level in-home care and support for clients 65 years or older (50 years or older for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people), or 50 years or older (45 years or older for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people), for those who are low income and/or homeless, or those at risk of being homeless.

Care and support can vary greatly between clients and can include food preparation, transport, assistance with housework and errands, personal hygiene, home and garden maintenance, home adjustments and more.

Currently there are three full-time and five casual staff members funded by CHSP on Council who deliver services in region. The Community Care Manager (CCM) provides support and delivers various services to forty-two clients in Winton, and thirteen in Isisford.

It should be noted that CHSP's have a no 'double-dipping' policy which means that if someone is receiving care under another program that relates to aged care or an organisation is funded to provide this service through another programme, they are not eligible to receive CHSP.

Winton Home Care Packages

Home Care Packages (HCP) are the second tier of aged care in the federal government strategy and are aimed at clients who may require additional support. Currently there are fifteen residents receiving care and support from the Community Care Services. through this program, however eligible residents can choose who provides this service. This program will be merged with the Commonwealth Home Support Service within two years at this stage.

NDIS support

Certain 'frail aged' people under the age of 65 are eligible for funding under the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This funding is to provide similar services and support as CHSP and the HCP but may also be used for providing more specialised care as it relates to certain disabilities (medical specialists, home adjustments etc).

60 and Better

The program is funded by the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services to enable older people at the local community level to participate in decisions and activities which affect their health and wellbeing. Winton's 60 and Better programme endeavours to promote healthy activities for older people and encourage positive community attitudes to ageing. Winton's 60 & Better Program supports older people in our community by offering a mix of activities. Regular activities include craft, games mornings, bingo, lunch, morning tea, movies, age-appropriate exercises and internet access. Everyone is welcome to drop in and join in any activities. Currently this program is run by a council staff member who has reported a regular attendance of aged residents.

Jessamine place (upcoming)

Jessamine Place is a proposed low-care aged care facility for Winton. This is advocated for by the Winton Community and Aged Care Services Incorporated (WCACS).

The Jessamine Place proposal has current community support and interest. The committee backing the project have held numerous successful fundraisers. Total cost for the building itself is between \$7.8 and \$11.5 million according to the Jessamine Place Business Case. Council have budgeted \$1million towards the construction of Jessamine Place as well as donation of the land upon which the structure will be built.

Strategic Planning

The Queensland Government's strategy 'Healthy ageing: A strategy for older Queenslanders Staying in good health for longer,' (2019, p 35) recommends health systems that supports healthy ageing works across governments and communities to ensure that the conditions in which people live, positively influence their health outcomes. A focus of a health system should also include preventative healthcare, including early detection and promoting age-friendly environments and healthy behaviours in partnership with primary care providers and the community. In the Winton context, this might translate to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of health services by improving collaboration between agencies, and increasing access and provision of allied health services, facilities, specifically designed programs and education which support healthy ageing. Supporting residents through a healthy ageing journey is an area which has many avenues to discuss, research and plan for in the Winton context.

Lack of Dementia Care and Complex Care is a theme isolated in the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report Volume 1, and this issue is keenly felt in Winton. Aged citizens of Winton impacted by dementia and complex care cases (and their families) currently have no options to age in Winton and must seek care elsewhere. This reportedly affects the families of those impacted and creates a sense of fear and anxiety around the aged care system in general.

The Queensland Government's strategy 'Healthy ageing: A strategy for older Queenslanders Staying in good health for longer,' states that 'Providing person-centered care to an older patient demographic will require the development of care pathways and collaborative service arrangements that span the health care continuum and extend to other community and aged care service providers. The concept of person-centered care also requires that the patient, and by extension their informal care network of family and friends, is and should be engaged as an active partner in care. Actions will include enabling patients' participation through supporting self-care and the ability to navigate health and related care systems.' (2019, P 13) In the Winton context, there is recognition of a general sense of fear regarding access to the Aged Care system due to a fear of dislocation, or lack of choice when accessing services.

The aged care system is difficult to access and navigate. People trying to get aged care have reported the experience as time-consuming, overwhelming, frightening and intimidating. The availability of helpful and comprehensive information is critical to ensuring older people get timely access to the care they need and to empowering them to make choices about their care.¹ This finding on a national scale is consistent with reported findings in Winton when seeking information about how to access the Health Care Options available to them. More work is needed to engage and educate the community about healthy ageing and encourage them to use services that will assist them to remain healthy and live at home as long as possible.

As a result of recognising this existing need and emerging trend as a critical issue for the Winton Shire, the following specific related strategies/actions were identified as opportunities to be pursued in the following plans: Corporate Plan 2022 – 2027, Economic Development Strategy 2022 – 2027 and the Local Housing Action Plan 2021-2025.

¹ Page 65 - *Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report Volume 1 2021*

Corporate Plan 2022 – 2027

Stream 4 – Thriving Together

Letting people stay in their own homes longer as well as a range of preventative health strategies.

Making the community more aware of the range of valuable services provided – particularly programs aimed at youth, the elderly and families

Continue to support development of Jessamine Place

Looking after elderly residents

More bike and elderly scooter pathways

Develop and implement aged precinct masterplan

Economic Development Strategy 2018 – 2023

Theme 6: Liveability, investment, and attraction

Support training and upskilling in aged care, tourism and hospitality including through RAPAD Skilling

Develop Winton as a location of choice for retirees through growing the region's capacity and capability in allied health care

Local Housing Action Plan

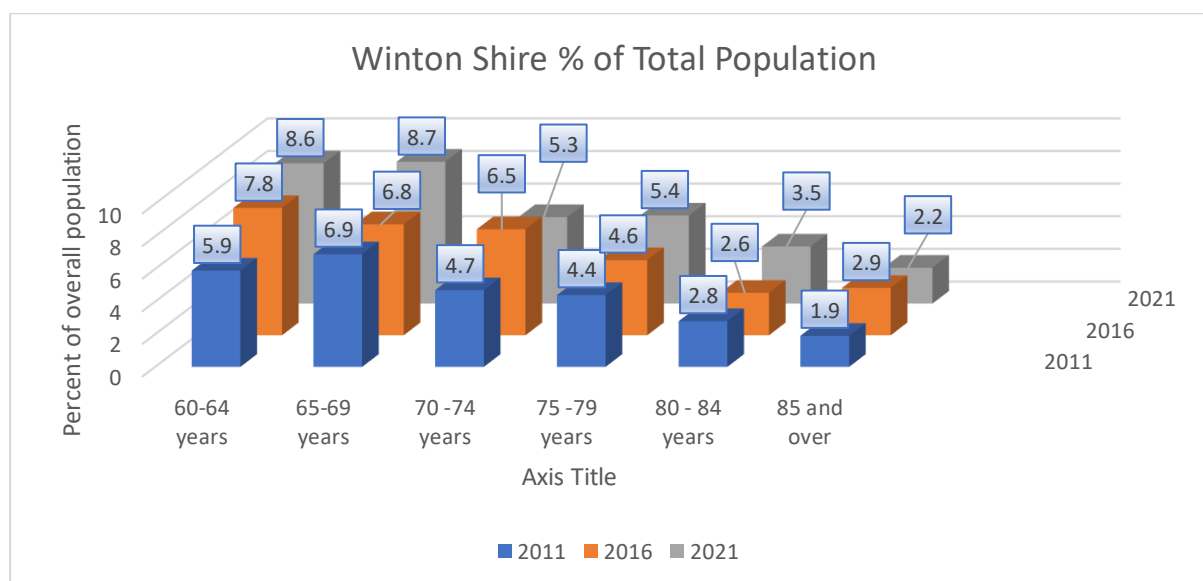
Review aged housing and care provision in the shire and the linkage to the effectiveness of the stay-at-home strategy delivered through home care packages

Undertake an assessment of aged housing demand and resolve institutional roles of aged pensioner housing delivery in addition to accessing local social housing

The Ageing population (Statistics)

Research shows that the Winton Shire is somewhat different to other regions in Queensland and other parts of Australia in terms of its ageing population. In the last census period (2021), the number of people as a percentage of the overall population who were aged 65 and over was **15.5%** of the population, and in Queensland and the rest of Australia that figure is just **11.9%**.²

The number of people between the ages of 65 and 94, as a percentage of the overall population of Winton Shire, is changing rapidly, and at a greater rate than in Queensland and Australia in general. Data taken from the last three census periods (2011,2016,2021) shows that significant changes have taken place.³



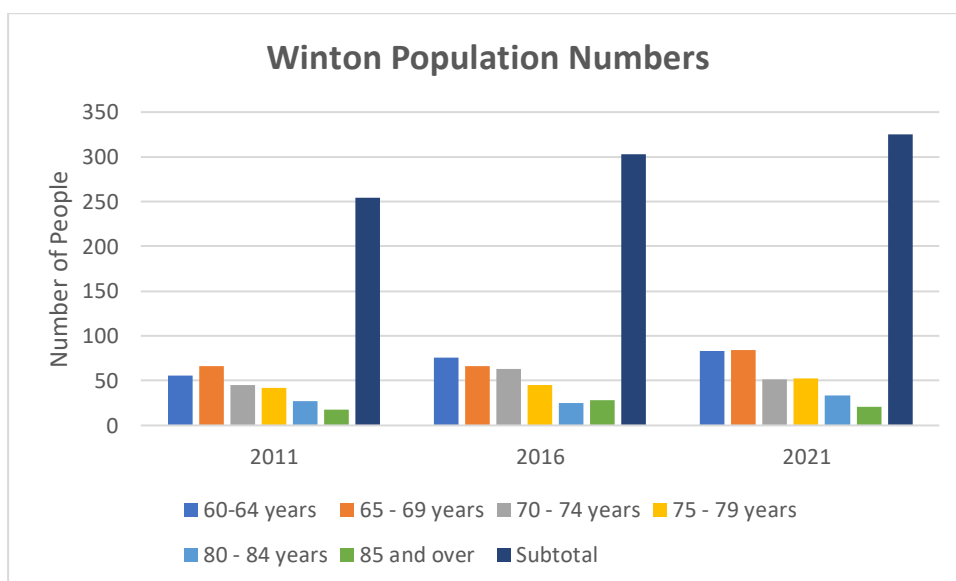
² Australian Bureau of Statistics <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/POA4735>

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/POA4735>

The following key observations are relevant:

- The total percentage of aged people in these brackets, as a percentage of the overall population of Winton Shire has increased from **26.6%** (at the 2016 census) to **33.7%**, as at the last Census in 2021.
- In the 60-64 years bracket the statistic has increased by a **third** from 2011 to 2021, and the implications of this ever-increasing bracket will be felt across the spectrum of aged care services in the coming decades.

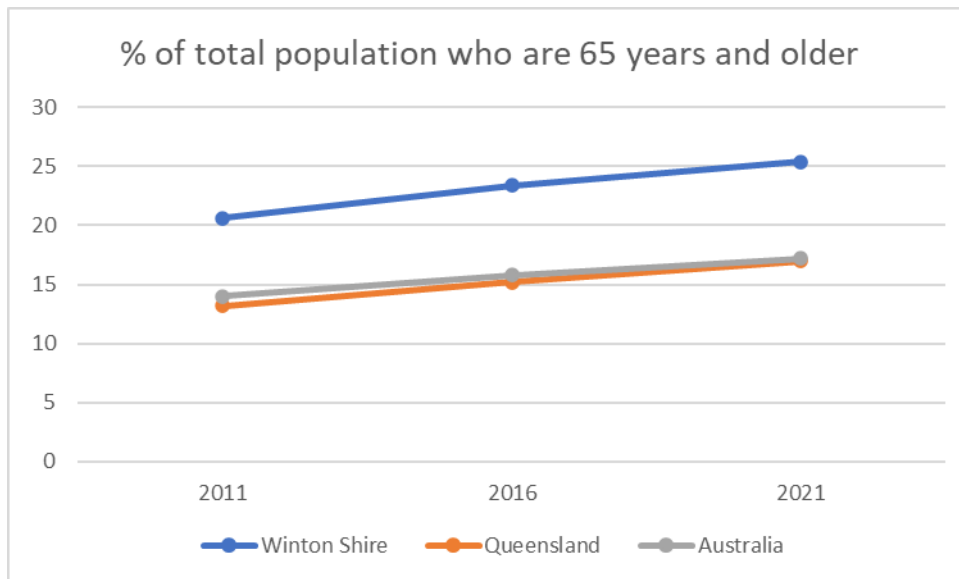
When shown in terms of the actual numbers of relevant people, the changes are certainly significant:⁴



The following key observations are relevant:

- In 2011 the number of persons in Winton Shire in all these age brackets combined was 254.
- In 2016 that figure had increased to 303 persons 60 years and over;
- In 2021 that figure increased again to 325 (a 28 % increase from 2011).

⁴ Graph is based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data



A comparison with the Winton Shire data and Queensland and Australia data shows that all three areas are showing significant increase in their ageing populations. Unlike data from Queensland and Australia, the Winton situation is far more pronounced, with a far higher proportion of residents being in the 65 years and older bracket.

The National Picture and the Challenge for all Levels of Government

It is projected that the number of Australians aged 85 years and over will increase from 515,700 in 2018–19 (2.0% of the Australian population) to more than 1.5 million by 2058 (3.7% of the population).⁵ "In 2019, there were 4.2 working age (15–64 years) people for every Australian aged 65 years or over. By 2058, this will have decreased to 3.1. This decline has implications not only for the financing of the aged care sector but also for the aged care workforce."⁶ For Winton (whose proportion of residents in the 65 age and older category as a proportion of total population is evidently much higher than the national average), the upwards trajectory of an ageing population does not seem to be a short-term event, but rather a long-term trend:

"By 2071, Queenslanders aged 65 years and older are projected to make up between 24.9% and 26.6% of the State's population compared with 16.6% in 2021."⁷ Older people are more likely to have more than one health condition (comorbidity) as their life expectancy increases. As the population

⁵ Page 61 - *Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report Volume 1*

⁶ Page 62 - *Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report Volume 1*

⁷ Page 3 - *Queensland Government population projections, 2023 edition*

of older people increases, more people are expected to have memory and mobility disorders. In 2019, there were 4.2 working age (15–64 years) people for every Australian aged 65 years or over. By 2058, this will have decreased to 3.1. This decline has implications not only for the financing of the aged care sector but also for the aged care workforce. The percentage of working to aged people will be lower effectively decreasing the revenue base from which the aged care system is funded and reducing capacity to meet growing demand for services in the future.

In real terms what do these figures mean? To put the situation in perspective the fact that the population is ageing significantly overall means that changes will be needed to respond to this transformation. These changing demographics, together with changes in the patterns of disease and dependency, and in the expectations of older people and society, will impact on demand for aged care in several ways. These include the length of stay in residential aged care, the increase in care needs, the demand for a variety of care choices, and the desire of older people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. All three tiers of Government will need to keep pace with the changing demographics and specifically plan to provide services and infrastructure that are appropriate and therefore meeting the needs of ageing communities.

Strategy and Action Plan is Necessary

How are other regions dealing with the change?

Many of the regional responses are focused on increasing access to health services and support, and not aimed specifically at aged care services. It is noted across the board that an ageing population is a factor that must be considered when planning health service delivery. It is also frequently noted that declining working-age populations across the region will impact available health services and contribute to ongoing staff shortages across all industries. Another critical issue is a lack of housing across the region. Many strategies that look at increasing housing stock also include expanding or opening new aged care facilities.

Strategy: 2021-2025 Mount Isa Housing Action Plan

Aged care facility: Injilnji Aged Care, 12 beds and Laura Johnson Home, 12 beds.

Laura Johnson home is currently undergoing an \$18.5 million redevelopment that will expand the facility to 75 beds and provide staff housing to combat staff shortages. This upgrade is federally funded and began in 2016 and is an ongoing staged process.

Charters Towers Regional Council

Strategy: Community Strategic Plan 2023-2033

Aged care facility: Eventides, 110 beds. The residential aged-care facility includes 10 psycho-geriatric beds and 26 dementia-specific beds. The remaining beds are designated high-care beds, each a single room with shared bathroom facilities. Eventide provides 24-hour nursing services and on-site allied health services.

Blackall-Tambo Regional Council

Strategy: Regional Economic Development 2011

Aged care facility: Barcoo Living Multi-Purpose Service operated by Churches of Christ Care is a 24-bed residential service offering a range of personal care, therapies, and accommodation options. "Residential accommodation creates their fees based on a RAD (Refundable Accommodation Deposit) and a daily rate. A lower RAD can be offset by a highly daily rate eg. \$220 000 incurs a \$0 daily rate, \$100 000 RADF incurs a \$26.79 daily rate."⁸

Barcaldine Regional Council

Strategy: Corporate plan 2021-2026, 'Services'.

Action: To continue supporting vulnerable residents and advocate for ageing and living in place opportunities

Aged care facility: Barcaldine Multi-Purpose Health Service, 6 beds.

Development underway of the Barcaldine aged care facility with over 1 million dollars raised by the community over a decade. Council has gifted a block of land and local engineering service offered in-kind contributions in the way of design and project management. This facility **MAY** comprise of 7 x 2 bed detached, 10 x 2 bed duplex and 8 x 1 bed duplex units.⁹

⁸ <https://www.dailycare.com.au/residential-aged-care/in-qld/churches-of-christ-care-barcoo-living-mps>

⁹ <https://www.gbaengineers.com.au/post/barcaldine-aged-care>

Longreach Council

Strategy: Corporate plan 2017-2027

Aged care facility:

Bolton Clarke, fifty-nine beds with varied care available. Payment Options include Daily Accommodation Payment \$84.40 or pay a Refundable Accommodation Deposit (RAD) \$378 000 or pay a combination of both payments.¹⁰

Boulia Shire Council

Strategy: Operational plan stipulates to support the WQAC LHAP

Action: Undertake a needs assessment to determine the future needs for aged accommodation

Aged care facility: nil

Conclusions/Recommendations

As has been highlighted, the Winton situation is not dissimilar (although slightly more pronounced) to other areas in Australia in terms of its ageing population. However, the remoteness of the region, combined with the small population base and general decline of working aged people in recent years, will increase the challenges locally and should influence the ultimate strategy directions needed and actions taken to improve outcomes.

Fortunately, the Winton community has a well-established interest group in the form of WCACS who have been lobbying tirelessly for better outcomes for its aged community and a strong track record of volunteering in large numbers. The Winton Shire Council is keen to harness the dynamic nature of the WCACS group and continue with innovation and solutions-based strategies and actions for the Winton Shire Community.

Creating a collaborative and well – thought out Strategy and Action Plan should involve the following priorities:

¹⁰ <https://www.boltonclarke.com.au/globalassets/rac/village-accommodation-options/pioneers-pricing-oct-2023.pdf>

1. A comprehensive audit of existing services and programs currently available to Winton Shire residents, and the corresponding needs of Winton Shire residents (gap analysis).
2. Reference to the range of existing strategies and the action plan created by WCACS in recent years.
3. Develop a business case with an operational plan which explores the management structure and cost to consumer of Jessamine Place. Estimate the cost to the end-user will be and whether there will be a market for the product and how the end user will bear that cost. Include in the business plan the necessity for high quality housing to attract and retain aged care staff, and funding models for their remuneration and the day to day running of the facility.
4. Plan to construct additional healthy ageing infrastructure for example wider footpaths, ramps to all community facilities and access to recreational facilities eg pools, and sporting facilities to encourage preventative health strategies.
5. Consider council's strategy regarding preventative health strategies and plan for age inclusive fitness, social inclusion and learning engagement options.
6. A campaign to educate the community about the importance of engaging with healthy ageing services and supports, reducing the stigma of engaging with My Aged Care.
7. Audit of allied health services and their current service locations and a gap analysis with community needs and the needs of the provider in terms of how suitable the current service location is for delivery. Additionally, acquiring data on how often patients must travel or miss services due to a lack of local options, strengthening a case for planning an allied health centre to be prioritised.
8. Creation of a Road Map of existing services and programs (to be used for raising awareness and providing simple to use information for users).

9. Broad and inclusive engagement and consultation with the Winton community, and other stake holders (including the state and federal governments).
- 10 Explore how Winton can be made more livable and supportive of healthy ageing with a keen focus on what the council can achieve individually, as well as in partnership with stakeholders (including state and federal governments).
- 11 An analysis and business case for the inclusion of Council (community) owned housing (currently thirteen properties) and how these assets could add value to an integrated aged care framework in the future.
- 12 Strengthen the relationship between the WCACS advisory body and Council, given that many of the aged care facility upgrades and developments throughout the region have been developed by community groups.
- 13 Identification of some quick wins in relation to immediate actions the Winton Shire Council can take on its own to improve outcomes for this sector of the community.
- 14 Identification of a full list of detailed short-, medium- and long-term strategies and objectives, and their associated action plans.

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