



The Need for Reform: Aged Care in the Wheatbelt Region

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An Australian Government Initiative



RDA Wheatbelt

- Federally funded NFP one of 52 across Australia
- 10 point Charter – economic development
- Committee represents region
- Partnerships, connections, facilitation
- Transport, aged and disability care, telecoms, small business, Aboriginal enterprise



Wheatbelt Aged Care Context

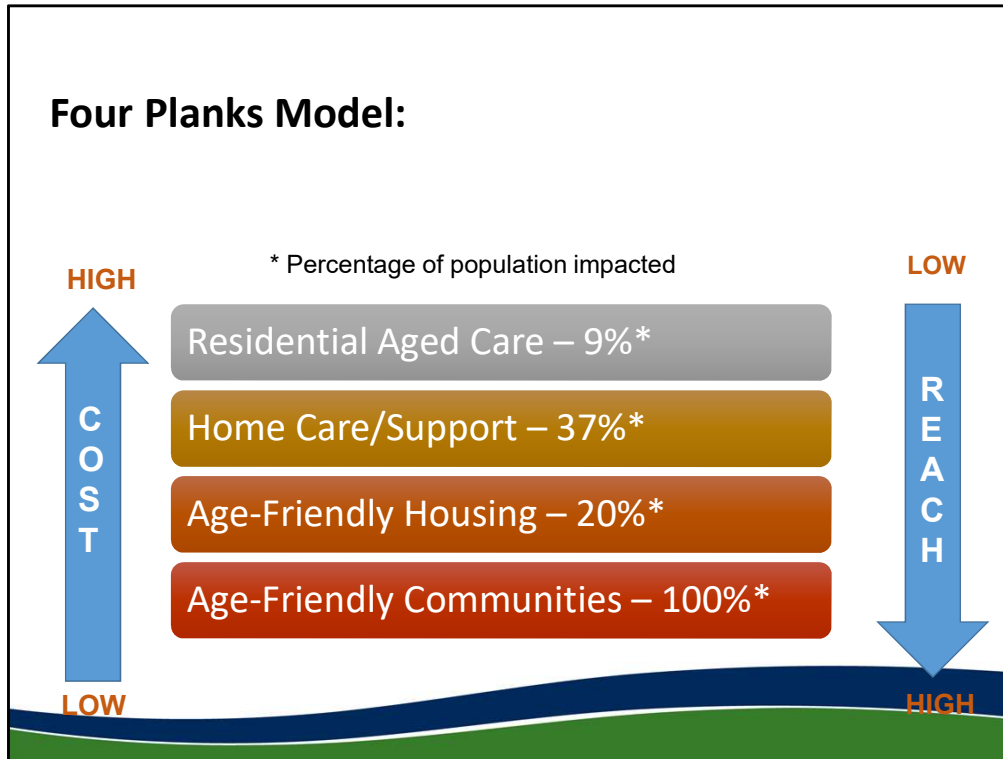
- Sparse and geographically dispersed ageing populations;
- Shifts in policy and funding at a State and Federal level including the consumer directed care model; and
- Significant and sustained demand for aged and home care services from a regional aged population growing at faster rates than metropolitan Perth.
- Four reports looking at solutions since 2012

Wheatbelt Challenges

- 155,000 sq. kms, population of 75,000
- Population widely distributed – 200+ small towns
- Even “large” towns not really big (Northam 6,600, Narrogin 4,300)
- 5 regional centres supporting large hinterlands
- Similar rural areas interstate have major towns of 15,000 plus
- Distances + sparsity = viability challenges

Wheatbelt Opportunities

- Strong focus on aged care service and industry opportunities at all 3 tiers of government – commitment to do things differently
- Strong social capital and safe communities leading to in migration of 55+ population
- Strong health network across 23 state run (WACHS) health services
- Direct economic impact of industry = \$4.8m



- Wheatbelt communities have strong social capital and ‘sense of community’
- Some of Australia’s highest rates of volunteering
- Transport is key deficit hindering ageing in community – issue across all sub-regions.
- 36 of 42 Wheatbelt LGAs have age friendly plans in place

Home Support & Care Overview: [HACC](#)

Uneven service across locations

HACC is the “bedrock” service assisting people to aged at home

WACHS transitioning out of service provision

[Community Packaged Care \(C’With Home Care\):](#)

Overall Wheatbelt has high allocation of Home Care (mostly NFP providers)

Provider viability/sustainability challenged in ‘thin markets’

Works well where providers collaborate across communities and services – but rare and ad hoc.

[Residential Care Overview](#)

Provided in WACHS MPS hospitals and NFP providers in some locations

Significant unmet demand for dementia and respite care . People leave region to access care, placing greater pressure on metropolitan facilities

Issues Identified

- Projected growth
- Viability of regional service providers in 'market failure' settings
- widespread unmet demand for housing
- uneven availability of support and care in the home including respite
- varied circumstances and context of care for older Aboriginal people



Issues Identified

- Importance of transport services to access services
- criticality of strong telecommunication systems to deliver telehealth services and easy access to information to facilitate consumer choice



RDA Wheatbelt Discussion Paper

- Draws on work conducted since 2012
- Analysis of census data to profile region
- Discussion on the employment and economic opportunities
- Supports the regional model solutions identified in the WDC, RDAW, WACHS and Medicare Local SW WA project.
- Being used as a tool for Federal discussions.



Employment and Economic Opportunities

Employment ratio by care places	Residential ratio	Home care ratio	HACC ratio
Ratio of direct employment by places	1.4 places: 1 FTE	1.5 places: 1 FTE	12.8 places: 1 FTE
Ratio of indirect employment by places	6.5 places: 1 FTE	16 places: 1 FTE	122 places: 1 FTE
Ratio of total direct and indirect employment by places	1.1 places: 1 FTE	1.4 places: 1 FTE	11.6 places: 1 FTE

RDAW and WDC

- RDAW and WDC have a joint operational plan
- Strong focus on aging in place
- Creating Age Friendly Communities in Small Towns project
- Supporting the development of age friendly cluster housing
- Supporting work towards solutions identified in previous work



Guiding Principles

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Principle 1: The importance of place

Principle 2: Community life

Principle 3: Community's sense of ownership

Principle 4: Focus on the person

Principle 5: Choice


Principle 6: Equitable access

Principle 7: Practicality

Principle 8: Viability



Solutions

- Support the 'four planks' aged care solutions model
 - Support innovation through flexible delivery and digital solutions
 - Tailor consumer directed care in thin markets – look to 'geographic footprint' models to drive integration
 - Address shortage of residential beds
 - Develop deliberate workforce strategy
 - Provide culturally appropriate care services for Aboriginal residents
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RDAW Aspiration

To negotiate a Regional Deal with the Federal Government for aged and disability care service delivery in the Wheatbelt.

- Based on the City Deals model, **Regional Deals** bring together all levels of government around a clear set of objectives.
- Deals are tailored to each region's comparative advantages, assets and challenges and reflect the unique needs of regional Australia.
- Regional Deals support 'a place-based approach' by putting community-identified priorities at the centre.

Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG)

Potential Regional Deal

Objectives:

Develop and implement a regional solution to allow ageing residents to remain in their communities for as long as possible

Grow economic and jobs opportunities in this emerging industry



Going Forward

- Refine discussion paper
- Connect with Federal Ministers
- Leverage existing work already done and being planned
- Draft a Regional Deal model ready for the next EOI



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