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Roundtable |  
Renewal of the NSW  
Ageing Strategy  
Workshop notes



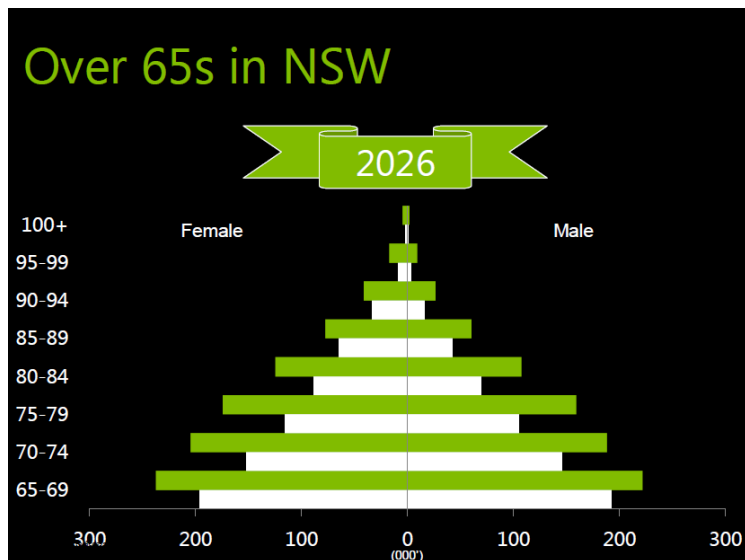
# This document

On 15 April, 2016, the Hon. Minister Ajaka invited representatives from the private sector – for-profit, not-for-profit and research and policy bodies to attend a roundtable on ageing in New South Wales.

This document provides an overview of the key discussion points from the session.

# The Ageing Population

The number of older people in New South Wales is increasing and the proportion of older people within the total population is also growing.



## Ageing in New South Wales

The number of older people in New South Wales (NSW) is increasing and the proportion of older people within the total population is also growing.

The number of people aged 65 and over is expected to grow by 9 per cent over the next decade. This will see this cohort comprise one fifth of the total NSW population. Indeed, the over 65 population is expected to more than double by 2056 – which will see this cohort comprise a quarter of the total NSW population.

This growth is the outcome of a number of factors - changing migration patterns, increasing life expectancy and, the ageing of children born during the baby boom in the 1950s and 1960s.

This ageing population reflects medical advances and the successes of social and economic policy over the years. Further still, the ageing population will continue to shape the economy and social landscape for years to come.

It is timely, therefore, for everyone – the government, the private sector, the community sector and the community – to plan and prepare their business, their policy, their strategy for this change.

The NSW Government wishes to harness the combined experience and resources of the private sector, of civic society and of the start up and entrepreneurial community to work together on the big social opportunities and risks for older people in NSW.

# Objectives of the session



“I want our discussion to focus on how together we can address these priority areas. I want to talk about how we can unlock the benefits of our ageing population, turning around what initially appear to be challenges”

Hon. Minister Ajaka

## The Ministerial Roundtable

The NSW Government is in the final stages of drafting its *Renewed NSW Ageing Strategy*. The Strategy is built upon the following strategic vision:

**“People in NSW experience the benefits of living longer and enjoy opportunities to participate in, contribute to and be included in their communities”**

The success of the Strategy is contingent upon the willingness of Government, the private and community sector and society to convert planning to action. On 15 April, 2016, the Hon. Minister Ajaka invited participants from a range of private sector, not-for-profit, research and policy bodies to attend a half-day Roundtable.

Together, attendees discussed the challenges, common misperceptions and opportunities that are embodied in addressing the needs of the ageing cohort.

Discussion points considered employment, consumption and civic participation. Further, attendees were asked to consider how these

opportunities could be realised in concert with other parties including Government.

At the end of the session, participants wrote down practical actions that they could take back to their organisations at the end of the day and begin to action. Participants noted what their next steps would be and who they would involve in the process.

# Challenging stereotypes, reframing perceptions



“People don’t come with a use-by date”

Kathryn Greiner

## Addressing ageism

A central theme across all discussions during the day was reframing negative stereotypes and perceptions.

Speaking on ageism, Kathryn Greiner AO encouraged that the discourse move away from the consideration of ‘age’ and instead towards a discussion of ‘life experience’. Kathryn emphasised that people ‘do not come with a use-by date’.

Related to this were discussions of how we can avoid falling into stereotypes. Participants around the tables spoke of the importance of understanding the diversity in ageing – moving away from the typical ‘iStock imagery’ of ageing towards real-life experiences.

Participants from NSW Government provided a clear example of how this is being addressed in the public sector. A series of photographs have been commissioned depicting the ‘real face of ageing’. The photographs will be exhibited later in 2016.

Speaking to this point, several participants noted that playing to stereotypes can also see

organisations address older persons in a manner which is inappropriate or patronising. One table held an extended discussion about the need to move away from marketing which made reference to age and ‘being old’.

Tim O’Leary from Telstra spoke about the successes of removing ‘jargon’ when explaining technology. Speaking to Telstra’s innovations through the Tech Savvy Seniors program, Tim explained that “Kids who explain email to their grandparents don’t begin with a lecture on digital disruption. Instead, they say ‘press this button and you can send pictures’ or ‘let’s buy a movie ticket.’”

The takeaways from these discussions centred on the following two points:

- Ageing is not homogenous – it is a different experience for everyone. It is a diverse population. People are better considered in light of their experience rather than a number.
- Engaging individuals is not about one way ‘teaching’. It is about finding the points of interest and fostering real points of inclusion.

# Ageing and the labour force



Planning ahead for longer working lives, quality of life after retirement, and how to leave paid work and manage finances are very important.

## Flexible time, agile skills

Where life expectancy has been rising, current practice suggests that additional years are more likely to be banked as years in retirement rather than years in the labour force. As the age of retirement increases and, for some, there is either a desire or financial need to work for longer. Participants discussed the barriers which older persons may face in the workplace including stigma around productivity, capability, cost and sustainability. Participants noted, however, that it was time to break down the stigma barrier and foster positive conversations and intergenerational connections.

Ainslie van Onselen spoke about the flexible workplace policies implemented at Westpac to encourage prime of lifers (over the age of 50) to take up opportunities other than retirement such as part time work, mentoring or becoming an ambassador.

Ainslie's comments on workplace flexibility were echoed in Brad Kitschke's description of the flexible workplace offered at Uber. Brad noted that flexibility was important not only for individuals themselves but also as individuals aged and became primary carers

for their ageing partners. He noted an example of an employee who self-determines her driving schedule around her husband's medical appointments.

Others spoke the need to help older persons think laterally about how their skills can evolve given changing needs of the labour market and their own changing physical capabilities. Paul Orton from the NSW Business Chamber spoke of the piloting of a 'skills checkpoint' program – allowing older workers to access resources that help them think about work futures they may not have thought about.

Participants also spoke about the importance of breaking down stigma in the workplace. Debbie Poole from Bunnings noted that their ability to attract and retain older workers was related to the fact that they didn't target 'older' people, they targeted 'experience' and 'attitude'. Another participant remarked that they targeted workplace stigma through the use of intergenerational job share arrangements. A number of participants commented on workplace alumni arrangements –ensuring the employer-employee relationship does not end at retirement.

# Working alongside the NSW Government

There are a number of ways of engaging with Government to meet the needs of an ageing population.



## Working it together

There are a number of ways of engaging with Government to meet the needs of an ageing population. Traditional methods would see an arms length 'funder/regulator' relationship. More recently, however, we see more collaborative approaches to implementing mutually beneficial programs of work.

Meagan Lawson from the Department of Family and Community, noted a number of examples of collaborative approaches that were already underway with the private sector. These included examples of co-design, shared marketing and targeting, and, newer mechanisms of funding such as the use of social impact bonds.

Participants commented that the private sector has the expertise and financial drive to hear their older consumers and the government has the capacity to bring private sector ideas to those people. Participants recognised the importance of partnership and connections.

Kirsty Nolwan from the Benevolent Society spoke on the use of social impact bonds in

public/private partnerships. Kirsty noted that they are not a solution to every challenge, but in certain instances can work very well. To seek out opportunities, Kirsty suggested seeking out the 'points of cost to government', thinking about mutually beneficial ways to come together, finding solutions and equally importantly – defining measurable outcomes.

Through the discussion it was clear that there was a willingness for government to engage and collaborate with the private sector in innovative ways. The private sector in turn noted that there are many opportunities to seek out mutually beneficial returns by working together.

# Next steps



## Keep the conversation going

This Roundtable was intended to represent the starting point of an ongoing conversation between private sector and government about strategies for ensuring positive ageing in NSW.

Participants took away with them a write up of their personal 'next steps'. The NSW Government is keen to continue the discussion around these action items with participants.

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# Roundtable participants

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<b>Luke Lawler</b>	CEO and Scientific Director	Prima Health Solutions
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