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Transport key for ageing population



ELDERLY people will have better access to services to help the state's ageing population, through provisions outlined by the Norwood, Payneham and St Peters Council.

The council's draft ageing strategy report outlines critical areas including affordable housing, improved public transport and home assistance in response to the State Government's prediction that one in four South Australians will be 65 years or older by 2056.

The report, released last week, shows almost 23 per cent of people living in the council area were aged 60 years and older in 2006, which is 3 per cent more than the Adelaide average.

Norwood, Payneham and St Peters Council community services manager Rosanna Busolin said it was necessary to prepare a support network for older people to ensure more people continued living in their community. "There is a concern about social isolation in older people, particularly older people living on their own being socially isolated, because they don't have transport," she said.

"It (planning for the future) is about ensuring you have got the recreational facilities available, you have got ser-

vices available and the appropriate infrastructure."

A State Government report predicts the council's elderly population of 7786 in 2006 will grow to 10,646 by 2021.

Council on the Ageing chief executive Ian Yates said access to better services would work only if improvements were made to public transport.

"It is a significant cultural shift to have a much older population and larger numbers of very old people than we have ever had before," Mr Yates said. "If you talk to older people in their 70s and 80s about their needs, transport comes one, two and three.

"A very significant proportion of the population make that type of journey (on public transport)."

Health and Ageing Minister John Hill said an increased older population would not be a burden if all levels of government worked together.

"It (the ageing population) is an issue we need to address... and that includes housing and how to support those people and how you transition them," he said.

The report will be released for consultation next year.



ON THE MOVE: Pia Palumbo, Myra Holzapfel, Ada Zurawska and Joan McLeod with community transport volunteer Ron Newbold.