

Ageing in NSW.

A NACRA representative as one of 10 delegates representative of the Tea Gardens, Hawks Nest, North Arm Cove, Bundabah and Pindimar communities was recently invited to attend a seminar conducted by the NSW Government Office for Ageing and Great Lakes Council to consider matters effecting the predominantly ageing population in this area.

NSW's population is ageing. By 2050 the number of people aged 65 and over will more than double

Our area has the highest proportion per capita of aged people in NSW and whilst the area is seen as being rich in natural and social amenities to support mobile seniors it is lacking in basic infrastructure to support this community as they grow into older age.

The three major concerns identified by the community representatives were

- 1. Local Transport :** As there is presently no local public transport a continuous shuttle bus service should be available to service Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest townships with regular extended routes to North Arm Cove, Bundabah and Pindimar villages.
This service should link and coordinate with public bus services to Raymond Terrace, Newcastle and Sydney.
The cost should be linked to the Senior Concession Ticket i.e. \$2.50 for a day ticket to enable aged independence with local shopping, medical and social activities.
- 2. Improved GP and Medical Services:** Presently the only local GP Practice has a two week wait to see a doctor unless there is an emergency and for the senior practice doctor a 6 to 8 week is wait is advised for a GP consultation.
There is a continuous change of staff and part time and locum doctors are utilised It is difficult to establish an on going and desirable relationship with a caring GP as community aged medical needs increase.
- 3 Poor Emergency Communications:** A recent 30 hour power blackout caused by storm damage left aged and frail residents in villages and remote locations without even water, telephone or lighting.
Landline telephone service failed after around 8 to 10 hours (inadequate back up power supply) Mobile telephone Internet are not fully understood or utilised by the aged community. In home roaming telephones fail when power is lost to the base transmitter
Contact with Police, Ambulance, Fire Brigade, Doctors, relatives, friends and service providers were lost leaving a number of aged residents isolated and unable to request assistance.

The seminar organisers assured all present that no immediate promises could be made but our concerns would be addressed as part of future aged care planning.

Len Yearsley. NACRA Executive

