

Operational Transition of Community Centres



Start of our journey

In August 2017, the Maylands Autumn Club Inc. resolved to disband, as it could not attract volunteers to form a committee, as required by its constitution.

At the same time, the City undertook a review of the two remaining senior citizens' centres (Bayswater and Morley), as programmed in the City's Corporate Business Plan.

Staff at each centre were previously accountable to both the Club Executive Committee (as combined Secretary and Treasurer of the Club), and the City (as employees), which led to conflicts of interest and lack of role clarity for the staff.

A comprehensive Community Engagement Plan was developed to guide interactions with major stakeholders over a period of six months.

The City made a commitment from the start, to involve each of the Senior Citizens' Centre Associations throughout the review process:

How the decision to change the operational model of the Centres was made

City staff and members of Bayswater and Morley Senior Citizens' Centres visited several established and well-functioning seniors' centres in other localities, to observe and consider other operating models. Committee members from both centres met on 26 October 2017 to consider these models, and agreed to a preferred model - Option 3 (see table below).

OPTION 1 TWO CLUB MODEL - SELF SUSTAINING	OPTION 2 SOCIAL COMMITTEE MODEL	OPTION 3 CITY-MANAGED MODEL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two separate clubs - retain incorporation • Two operating venues • Seniors only between 8:30am and 3:30pm (quarantine space and time) • Outside above hours - City to manage hall hire • No staff at venues <p>Example: City of Wanneroo model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One club - two venues • No incorporation • Informal social committee to organise fellowship events e.g. over-80s lunch, friendship group • Primarily seniors use centre between 8:30am and 3:30pm • Outside above hours - City to manage hall hire • City-run <p>Example: City of South Perth model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One club - two venues • No incorporation, no committee • City to manage hall hire • Completely City-run, based on feedback/ ideas from club members • Still a seniors' club, but not incorporated • Volunteers take ownership of activities • Trial of new diverse activities, opportunity for events and activities <p>Example: City of Cockburn</p>

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Why a City-managed model (Option 3) was chosen

Feedback from committee members generally suggested that this model was seen as 'middle-of-the-road', with the advantage of removing a range of obligations from the volunteer committee.

Both Committees had to consider their sustainability into the future without the support of City staff (as members of their Committees). There was consensus that without direct support from City staff, their sustainability was questionable; it was difficult to get people to volunteer for Committee positions (feedback suggested most seniors want to participate in activities and not be part of the planning or organising Committee).

How Option 3 was selected

Following on from the Committee decision to adopt Option 3 (a City-managed model), staff attended both Centres to present the preferred model to members.

In each location, a vote was taken to determine if members would accept the preferred model.

Over 60 members attending a Bayswater Senior Citizens' morning tea on 30 October 2017 were asked to vote; 44 voted 'Yes' to implement this model, and 29 voted 'No'.

Further voting took place at the Morley Senior Citizens' Centre on 1 November, 2017. 39 voted 'Yes' to implement this model, and 22 voted 'No'.

All members were invited to attend to vote, however, there were a number of members who did not attend the Centres to vote on the day.

Overall, members across both Centres supported the preferred model – Option 3.

Summary of how seniors were involved in the decision-making process

- City officers met with Club Executive Committees to understand the Association's strengths and weaknesses, discuss responses to feedback from the Age Friendly Strategy, and ideas for the future.
- Officers and nominated Club representatives visited three seniors' centres in other localities, which operate under different models.
- Officers facilitated a joint meeting of Club Committees to vote on an operating model for presentation to both Associations.
- Club members were invited to a meeting, where City officers presented the preferred operating model, and conducted a vote.

How the review impacted other seniors living in the City of Bayswater

It is considered that the review had minimal impact on the wider community of seniors (over the age of 65 years). Aside from the members of both Centres, there are approximately 8,000 more seniors living in the City of Bayswater.

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How the transition was planned

The City prepared a formal action plan to facilitate a smooth new operational model transition by 1 January 2019.

Transition successes

The transition was considered a success, due to the following achievements:

- The City formally recognised the two former Associations' contributions at a formal civic function in December 2018.
- Previous Lifetime Memberships were honoured by the City in the new model of operation;
- The City honoured \$5 memberships for access to both centres for the first six months of the new operational model;
- \$10 annual membership (to access both centres) will continue at this low price for 2019/2020 financial year;
- 100% of activities were retained at Bayswater Community Centre and 95% at Morley Community Centre;
- The number of activities and memberships have increased since 1 January 2019;
- Staff has been retained at both centres (familiar faces);
- There has been a significant growth in the number of registered volunteers;
- With the City's support, the formation of *Morbay Active Ageing Association Incorporated* has enabled members to continue playing bingo at the Bayswater Community Centre on weekends;
- Fortnightly bus trips are continuing from both centres;
- New operational documentation has been created;
- Both centres have revamped their appearance with new signage, painted walls, new furniture and revitalised hair salons;
- Coffee catch-ups continue to be held as one way to engage with members;
- The *Centre Newsletter* has been improved and continues to be circulated; and
- All members were surveyed on the transition process in April 2019, which enabled everyone attending the centres to have their say.

The City will continue to communicate and improve on activities at both centres, however it cannot guarantee there will be no additional changes, as all programs evolve as part of growth, improvements, funding, law changes and changes to City operations.