- Factors affecting access to resources

- Legal definition
ABS: “people who have lived for 65 years or longer”.
National Seniors Association: 50 and Over

- Social definition
‘The aged’ are often defined by people’s perception.
60-70 active ageing
70-80 less active and more housebound
80+ often frail- housebound or in need of care

- Identifying characteristics
The Australian Aged population is spread across an aged span of 65+ consisting of people with different needs. The aged population is differentiated by age, sex, socioeconomic status, ethnicity and heath. It is thus very difficult to generalize about the characteristics of the aged population. However some trends in characteristics arise.

When individuals become “Aged” their physical state is usually deteriorating with less mobility. Old age is associated with the increased need for care and support. They are more susceptible to certain illnesses such as lifestyle diseases and dementia (6% of aged have dementia). As a result 71% use at least one form of medication. Some requiring carers, become housebound, need respite care or the support of a retirement village or nursing home for a variety of reasons. Economically they have come to a stage where they are most commonly retired from the workforce, involved in phased retirement, or volunteer work. Thus their income is slowly reducing. This means that the aged often relies on government benefits as well as superannuation and savings. 67.4% receive the aged pension. The aged generally have a contracting family as their children have moved out of home and have their own children. For some this is a time when partners die and they can become lonely and detached from society. Unfortunately 1 in 10 experience depression.

The limits of the aged is gradually increasing with the increase in life expectancy. This trend is expected to continue for at least the next 50 years. The current life expectancy for men is 76.6 years and for females it is 82.1. The annual rates of population increase for the aged projected for the period 1976 to 2016 are significantly higher than for the overall population, with rates of increase highest among the very old. Twenty years ago, 9% of the population (or 1.3 million people) was aged 65 years and over. By 1996, this figure had increased to 12% (2.2 million) and by 2016 it is projected to increase to 16% or 3.5 million people. In 1976, one in six older people was aged 80 and over; by 1996 it was one in five and by 2016 it will be one in four. This increase in the number of aged people in Australia is of particular relevance with regard to planning for health services and long-term care.

The aged often have increased leisure time and as a result involve themselves in leisure activities and travel. Many may experience some technology phobia however others use this spare time to learn how to use new equipment.

- Needs
As individuals and families pass through various stages of the lifecycle, new needs arise and some former needs diminish. However, any human has certain physical, social and psychological needs which have to be satisfied if he or she is to achieve a state of total well-being. As the elderly are often subject to radical changes in their life pattern, stress can arise if certain needs are not met. To maintain the dignity, independence and individuality of the aged, it is necessary for society to ensure that the following needs are met.

**Needs (Classify specific needs and prioritise the significance of each to different groups)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to services</th>
<th>Access to services that are specific to being older are of great importance. This may include home care services that assist the older person to maintain independence in their home. Assistance may include shopping, transport, lawn mowing, simple home maintenance, personal care, washing, ironing and housework. There are a range of services provided but the demands on some of these are great, for example nursing home accommodation. Many aged people don’t admit to being old or sick and don’t attempt to access services. Some believe cost is too high, lack of knowledge or awareness of the services or restricted by physical problems to access them. Many believe it is the family’s responsibility to provide and care for their aged relatives. The support provided to families to do this must be adequate so that they can care for their relatives in their own home. Some aged people may have additional needs that effect their access to resources Example- Disability or language difficulties. The Aged care complaints resolution scheme has been set up to handle complaints about commonwealth government funded aged care services.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>For the elderly education is needed to stimulate their mind, body and soul. This is often essential as retirement brings ample time. There are many classes for instance TAFE for the elderly which might look at learning to use the Internet, reviewing books, learning skills such as pottery, or perhaps learning a language, the emphasis being on the development of courses designed specifically with the educational needs of the aged in mind. There is also the need to educate the community about the aged so that it is regarded as part of the lifecycle and not a separate phase. The elderly need goal-directed activities within ones physical and mental capacity for instance part-time work or new interests. Employers need to ensure older workers provided with equal access to training and personal development opportunities. Organisations should also ensure that training programs are provided to introduce older workers to new technologies in the workplace to ensure their employability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Employment has consumed a large part of the lives of many older people. For some it has been a source if identity and status. The aim of the elderly in most cases is a leisurely retirement. For some, part of this retirement involves regular part time, casual or volunteer work to boost their self-esteem. Both groups need to access employment opportunities if they wish to work. Many age people don’t work, due to health problems or choosing to retire. Workplaces can implement practices and policies to assist in meeting the needs of their aged employees. These may include phased retirement opportunities, flexible work patterns, training and personal development counselling, retirement seminars and employee assistance programs such as counselling, financial advice or health programs. Grandparents often take a very active role in raising grandchildren.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td>Financial support is necessary for the elderly. This financial support generally comes from the government. For elderly this support is in the form of the aged pension. Some of the aged rely on income from superannuation. This number is expected to grow in the future because of the introduction of compulsory superannuation. Whilst some expenses may decrease in old age, e.g insurance premiums, home-loan repayments, income is still required to cover expenditure on food, clothing, housing, heating and cooling and leisure. Medical expenses and fuel bills tend to rise, and often labor has to be hired to maintain the house and garden. Although a large proportion of the aged own their own homes and have collected money from pensions or superannuation, a large majority do not have sufficient economic resources to make retirement comfortable and dignified. Those who need assistance, major financial support is provided through Centrelink through not only the aged pension but the concession car, or commonwealth seniors health card.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>In general as people age their health deteriorates. The aged require healthcare that is affordable and age appropriate. Physically there is a decline in appearance; sight and hearing problems may develop; a general reduction in strength and endurance is evident; there is a decline in sexual potency; and there is greater difficulty in stooping, bending, stretching, lifting etc. The aged are subject to strokes, neurological disorders, arthritis, fractured hips, osteoporosis and arteriosclerosis. Mentally there may</td>
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</table>
be a decline in cognitive abilities and the grasp of new concepts and adaptations to change show a definite alteration. The aged have certain nutritional needs which, if not satisfied, can lead to more serious health problems. Decrease in physical capabilities, low incomes, lack of knowledge, particularly in the case of widowers whose wives formerly prepared all the meals, may prevent the elderly person from preparing simple nutritious meals. Many of the aged do not wish to admit to being old or sick or are reluctant to seek medical advice because of the cost. Although the extent of health problems differs with each individual certain physical and mental changes do generally occur during old age. While aging health care needs become much greater. Healthcare services must be affordable and local, easy to travel to.

| Housing | The majority of aged live at home or with family. However as people age they need more assistance to remain at home. The aged needs the security of being able to live in a safe and appropriate environment. For those who live independently there is a need for affordable housing that is well maintained and safe. They need housing that is close to transport and facilities used by the group. Some may need assistance whilst still living in their own homes e.g. home and community care, rental assistance. Some may need to move in with a carer; this may be made possible because of assistance provided through carer allowances and payments. Modifications may need to be made to existing dwellings e.g. ramps, handrails. If the elderly person cannot remain in their home there are other options available such as granny flats, smaller homes, retirement village, hostel, nursing homes or rental accommodation. However all this will depend on whether there financial security was developed or not during their working years. Their choice of housing should also be based on the services around them so they don’t need to travel far for the resources required. |
| Security and safety | Security and safety are most important to the aged. Many of the aged feel vulnerable because of their frailty and isolation. Safety issues for the aged may include the physical surroundings such as the installation of handrails, and personal security such as installing an alarm system. The aged need to make sure they are with someone when they are either shopping or have a procedure for making sure they are not being tricked or if by themselves to make sure that when they are going out of their house that there belongings are close to them. They should develop a procedure in which those safety and security needs are being met, either by friends or family. |
| Self-esteem | Self-esteem can vary from person to person, irrespective of age. Being older can influence a person’s self-esteem. The elderly needs to continue to live active, productive and meaningful lives, both physically and mentally. The presence of supportive people and networks, such as family & neighbours is needed to maintaining self-esteem. If an individual approaches ageing with a positive attitude it is more than likely that the individual will have positive self-esteem. The elderly can improve his or her self-esteem by helping out the community and getting involved with local activities as well as contributing to their family. Another way of developing their self-esteem is to reencounter their lifetime achievements. |
| Sense of identity | A person’s sense of identity refers to who they are and what they do. As the elderly change their lifestyle, including time away from paid work and being more independent pursuing personal interest. As their lifestyle is changing their sense of identity may change or make them question themselves who they are and what are they doing with their life. The aged want to feel needed, respected and to contribute to others welfare. Members of this groups need to be treated as individuals and not stereotyped. When the aged are excluded from society it affects their well-being and leads to a loss of identity. Being older leads to lifestyle changes that include a decrease in time spent at paid work an increase in time spent pursuing personal interests. As a result, an individual’s sense of identity may change or even cause them to question who they are and what they do. |

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- Government policies and regulations
The aged like any other human beings have Human rights. For the aged there are also many other rights that have been developed to help them through life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986</th>
<th>These acts describe that nobody should be discriminated in the workplace because of their race, colour, sex, sexual preference, age etc. Developed to ensure that the elderly are not forced to retire at the age of 60. The Humans Rights Commissioner found that ‘the policy of compulsory retirement upon attaining the age of 60 constituted discrimination on the base of age.’</th>
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<tr>
<td>Workplace Relations Act 1996</td>
<td>ACROD, Aged and Community Services Australia, Carers Australia, COTA National Seniors and the Australian Federation of Disability organisation-the Ageing and Disability coalition joined forces to create this policy. There aim is to promote and seek solutions to the issues facing people with disabilities who are ageing and their carers. This policy outlines their aims to work with individual services providers and stakeholders to: - Raise awareness and identify potential and practical responses - Provide information and training on disability and ageing issues through conferences, seminars etc. - Encourage partnerships between aged care and disability services at the local level to support people with disabilities who are ageing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ageing and disability policy</td>
<td>This act aims to prohibit intolerance, prejudice and discrimination in our community on the grounds of race, gender, marital status, physical or intellectual impairment or sexual preference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anti-discrimination Act</td>
<td>Outlines a framework for addressing current issues facing older people as well as preparing for future demographic changes. It demonstrates the Government’s commitment to ensuring that the ongoing contribution of older Australians is recognised, and that all avenues are explored to help meet their needs and aspirations of. It provides leadership for all sectors of community to take action on population ageing issues. As such it identifies a set of principles, goals and actions to guide the responses by Governments, business, the community and individuals in the community. The policy principles include: Protecting and extending Australia's infrastructure of social services; Promoting the rights of disadvantaged older people; Maximising opportunities for social and economic participation; Promoting sustainable, fair and responsible policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population Ageing policy</td>
<td>This covers the care of the aged in independent hospitals, nursing agencies and care homes. It outlines the conditions under which you have to comply with, and the consequences of not complying with these conditions and regulations. It involves inspections of the premises. It develops new standards for the inspection of care homes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Care Standards Act 2000</td>
<td>- This act governs all aspects of the provision of residential care, flexible care and Community Aged care packages to older Australians. The Act sets out matters relating to the planning of services, the approval of service providers and care recipients, payment of subsidies, and responsibilities of service providers. - This act legislated that people could remain in their home regardless of their increasing care needs. This concept I widely seen as giving all people the opportunity and support to choose where they live as they age. The objects of this Act are as follows: To provide for funding of aged care that takes account of: - The quality of the care - The type of care and level of care provided - To ensure access to care that is affordable by, and appropriate to the needs of, people who require it - To promote a high quality of care and accommodation for the recipients of aged care services that meets the needs of individuals - Appropriate to meet the needs of the recipients of those services and the carers of those recipients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged Care act 1977</td>
<td>- This act governs all aspects of the provision of residential care, flexible care and Community Aged care packages to older Australians. The Act sets out matters relating to the planning of services, the approval of service providers and care recipients, payment of subsidies, and responsibilities of service providers. - This act legislated that people could remain in their home regardless of their increasing care needs. This concept I widely seen as giving all people the opportunity and support to choose where they live as they age. The objects of this Act are as follows: To provide for funding of aged care that takes account of: - The quality of the care - The type of care and level of care provided - To ensure access to care that is affordable by, and appropriate to the needs of, people who require it - To promote a high quality of care and accommodation for the recipients of aged care services that meets the needs of individuals - Appropriate to meet the needs of the recipients of those services and the carers of those recipients.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992</strong></td>
<td>Under the Commonwealth Superannuation Guarantee Administration Act 1992 the employers are required to make Superannuation Guarantee contributions on behalf of any employees who earn more than $450 in a month. The rate of contributions will increase from the current rate of 6% to 7% starting from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 2000. Employers who fail to provide the minimum level of support are penalised by having to pay the Superannuation Guarantee Charge to the Australian Taxation Office. Employers must consider the increment of 1% in Superannuation Guarantee contributions from 6% to 7% and along with leave loading of 1.35% when calculating the notional package for job advertisements.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age Discrimination Act 2004</strong></td>
<td>The <em>Age Discrimination Act 2004</em> commenced on 23 June 2004. The Act prohibits age discrimination in many areas of public life, including: employment, access to goods, services and facilities, access to premises, administration of Commonwealth laws and programs, education and Accommodation, the transfer of land and requests for information. The Act applies throughout Australia.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Disability Act 1992</strong></td>
<td>This makes it against the law for anyone to discriminate against you because you have a disability. The definition of 'disability' in the Act is very wide and it includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory and neurological disabilities. It also covers learning difficulties, physical disfigurement and the presence in the body of disease carrying organisms. Additionally, you are protected under the Act if you are accompanied by an assistant, interpreter, reader, guide or hearing dog or if you use equipment or an aid such as a wheelchair or hearing aid.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Home and Community care Act 1985</strong></td>
<td>This governs financial assistance for home and community care services, the planning of services, and for people who are to be assisted through the program.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Privacy Act</strong></td>
<td>Your personal information (including medical/health, financial and business) is protected by Privacy laws at both Commonwealth and state and territory levels. All aspects relating to the collection, use, disclosure, quality and security of personal information is covered by the laws. Its “Privacy Principles” explain the responsibilities of all Commonwealth and other agencies and businesses when handling personal information. The <em>Privacy Act</em> also gives you the right to access and correct your personal information held by these agencies. You also have the right to make a complaint to the Privacy Commissioner if we think our personal information has been mishandled. Most states and territories have also developed their own laws or arrangements since 1988 to safeguard our privacy when our personal information is handled by state and territory agencies.</td>
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</table>
The community has many responsibilities in relation to the aged. They have a responsibility to:
- Not exploit or mislead the age due to their vulnerability.
- To encourage their independence, individuality and dignity.
- To be tolerant and patient
- To educate the younger generations and themselves about the needs of the aged and in general become more educated as a society in order to develop a positive view of the aged.
- To give opportunities for the elderly to be recognised for their skills and talents.
- To not discriminate against them based on age.
- To ensure access of the elderly to all facilities and service e.g ramps, wheel chair access, disabled toilets.
- Inform them of the available services
- Provide education and aid them with technology
- Ensure their safety on the road- reduce road rage
- Help them to feel respected and valued by using positive language when referring to the aged.
- To treat aged person as an individual not stereotype them into one group.
- The aged lose a lot of power in the community due to the lack of responsibilities. The community have many responsibilities to look after and to make for the needs of the aged are met.
- To be open to their ideas and opinions.
- To not have preconceived ideas about their capabilities

Some community members join service groups to fulfil their perceived responsibility to the aged. They can fulfil their responsibility through community programs such as the Red Cross, The Salvation Army, The Smith Family and St Vincent De Paul Society. All of which function on volunteers in this case providing emergency assistance in the form of food, clothing, accommodation and transport. While some of these community groups are funded by the government they are not possible without the community volunteers. Programs such as ‘Meals on Wheels’ make it possible for an essentially healthy person to remain in their home and still maintain social contact. It provides aged pensioners adequate meals.

- Rights of the group
The “Aged” population share many similar rights to other population groups these include:

- A right to a safe place to live
- A right to adequate social security, assistance and protection.
- A right to independence and dignity
- A right to be shown respect and feel valued
- Access to food water shelter clothing health care through community support and help
- Work regardless age
- Access education & training programs
- Serve as volunteers in comm.
- Form organisation to interact with other aged people
- Access social & legal services
- Privacy
- Access cultural spiritual recreational resources
- Live in dignity, security, free from physical abuse.
- The human right to freedom from discrimination based on age or any other status, in all aspects of life including employment and access to housing, health care, and social services.
- The human right to protection from neglect and all types of physical or mental abuse.
- The human right to full and active participation in all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life of society.
- The human right to full and effective participate in decision-making concerning their well-being.
- To quality care that is appropriate to their needs
- To full information about his or her own state of health and about available treatments
- To move freely both within and outside the residential care service without undue restriction
- To select and maintain social and personal relationships with any other person without fear, criticism or restriction.
- To maintain control over, and to continue making decisions about, the personal aspects of his or her daily life, financial affairs and possessions

However the there are also specific needs that are important to the wellbeing of “the aged. These can be broken down into three main categories: protection, participation and image. Protection refers to securing the physical, psychological and emotional safety of elderly persons with regard to their unique vulnerability to abuse and ill treatment. Participation refers to the need to establish a greater and more active role for older persons in society. Image refers to the need to define a more positive, less degrading and discriminatory idea of who elderly persons are and what they are capable of doing. Regional intergovernmental organizations in particular have begun to deal with these categories of rights in some detail in their recommendations and treaties.

Elderly persons’ right to security is particularly vulnerable to violation. For example, a component of the right to security is the right to healthcare if one, due to old age, is unable to afford or pursue healthcare on one’s own. Although many countries currently have universal healthcare systems, these systems are beginning to feel the strain of an increasingly aged population, and there is some question about how these systems will be maintained in the future. In other countries, like the United States, where there are only federally and state-subsidized healthcare programs for those who are indigent, disabled or elderly, rising healthcare costs are threatening the survival of these systems. These rights are related to the right to an adequate standard of living, which is often affected in the case of the elderly, due to lack of an adequate support system for them.

Elderly individuals also have the right to non-discrimination. Elderly people should not be thought of as useless to society simply because some of them may need more care than the average person. These stereotypes of the elderly can lead to degrading treatment, inequality and, sometimes, abuse.

Similarly, elderly persons’ right to participation is sometimes threatened due to prevailing negative images societies hold of the aged. The aged are often not given the same opportunities as others to be productive members of society. Governments are obliged to aid in creating a more positive image of the abilities and strengths of older populations as well as solid opportunities for elderly people to participate in the ongoing creation of their societies.

The elderly’s right to be free from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment is also often threatened. People sometimes take advantage of the vulnerability of elderly persons. People in old age, particularly older
women, are often victims of neglect and physical and psychological abuse. Additionally, elderly refugees during humanitarian crises often fall victim to the torture and abuse that is sometimes inflicted upon civilian populations.

- **Access to resources**
Each of these factors influence a range of priority groups however these factors are influential for many reasons specific to the characteristics of the elderly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>The Elderly are defined by age. This age is used in many cases to determine their entitlements to government and non-government services as well as financial assistance such as the aged pension. Sometimes age can limit a person’s ability to access resources because of mobility or confidence using technology. Older people may be aware of the existing services however some may lack the skills to access them. However often this is not the case and they may be more experienced at identifying resources and effectively using them. Societal attitudes about certain ages may also limit their access to resources. Aged based discrimination can affect many areas such as access to employment. The age of elderly reduces the ability to access resources because of their increased dependence and reduced mobility.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>Whilst having a disability is not unique to any age group, deterioration in body functions is specific to growing old. As individuals age they are more likely to suffer from health and mobility issues and as a result may be considered to have a disability. Having a disability may mean the individual is entitled to special care or assistance. It may also mean that an individual is limited in their ability to access a particular resource. ABS found that 50% of the elderly have a disability which results in difficulty in daily tasks. A disability may influence the individuals ability to move around, read a phone book or access the internet in search of services. Accessing resources may be difficult due to lack of confidence and physical strength. Disability may also influence access if the building or facilities don’t have appropriate physical access such as wheel chair ramps.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>The aged have had limited opportunities for education. The aged grew up in a time where social attitudes were very different from today, when young people went to work in order to help support their family. Therefore this group may experience difficulty accessing resources because the education they did receive was very basic and suited to the requirements of the time but is no longer relevant to their needs today particularly women. Few will have received additional education during their life time. Many elderly people have a lack of knowledge about modern technology and this limits their ability to access resources on the internet. Educated people feel empowered, have better health literacy skills and can therefore access and effectively use resources better. Those who lack education feel they lack control and therefore may not have the confidence to access the needed resources.</td>
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| **Ethnicity and culture** | Ethnicity and cultural background may influence an elderly person’s ability and willingness to access resources. Whilst both groups may be entitled to access a variety of resources the values and beliefs of their ethnic or cultural group may stop them from utilising them. Migrant and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may experience difficulties accessing resources because of language, communication and cultural differences. Being a different race doesn’t mean they cannot access some resources, yet they may lack the confidence. 

In terms of elderly ethnic people the usual pattern is that younger members of a family come to Australia first and send for their elderly parents once they are established. As the family has become “Australianised” to some extent, the elderly parent will probably not assume his or her traditional role of patriarch or matriarch. Communication may be difficult if the grandchildren do not speak both language, and elderly immigrants in this situation can become shut off from the rest of the family. They may also be dependent financially on their children. If elderly immigrant goes to a nursing home, they may experience many cultural differences, and problems arise in areas such as diet and language. |
| **Gender** | Access to resources may be influenced by an individual’s gender. Many resources are gender specific for instance a ‘women’s drop in centre. Social attitudes towards gender roles have developed in comparison to the past and as a result, gender may influence the ability of aged people to access resources. Women were brought up to become wives and mothers. They cared for the home and family. Men became the providers. As a result women in particular received little education and what they did receive tended to focus on their roles as wives and mothers. They were given little opportunity to participate in paid work outside the home although this changed during the wars. The husbands dealt with financial affairs and were perhaps in a better position to develop skills in accessing resources. The gender stereotypes of men as masculine and females as homemakers is more prevalent in this group. This can mean that men may be less willing to seek assistance than women as they often find it more difficult verbalising their needs and asking for help. They can often be stubborn in accessing services when they don’t want to admit that they need help. |
| **Location** | Aged are often affected by lack of mobility. Therefore location of their home is essential to their ability to access resources. Living in rural areas can often cause problems in accessing resources. Those living in the country will have access to different resources to those living in the city. It is also important for many of the elderly to be located in an area close to family and friends incase of emergency. These individuals can assist them to access resources. |
| **SES** | Socioeconomic status influences where we live, the car we have, the clothes we wear and the resources we are able to access. Many forms of support are based on income and assets. Socioeconomic status will be represented in a variety of levels. There will be those who are financially secure and who can choose they resources they wish to access. There will be those who are financially secure but who rely on some financial assistance in the form of a part pension. There will be those who rely totally on a pension to life from week to week. Many aged people experience a low socioeconomic status as they are retired and are no longer receiving an income. Limited money and other resources impact on the individual’s ability to access resources. |
- **Societal attitudes towards the group**

Societal attitudes may include the following:

- People may feel that it is their responsibility to look after an aged relative and have feelings of guilt if they don’t.
- People may be forced to care for an elderly relative with whom they have never had a good relationship; this may lead to stress and possibly resentment.
- People don’t want to look after elderly relatives because of the inconvenience and extra burden placed on their resources.
- Families and relatives often feel frustration and resentment in caring for elderly relatives, particularly if they have an illness such as dementia.
- People are of the opinion that it is too hard to look after an older person as it impacts on their careers, friendships, social life and relationships with others and can often lead the carer to feel isolated.
- In general, there is an agreement that adult children should provide appropriate assistance to their parents and maintain contact with them, but less emphasis is placed on living nearby and accepting potentially intrusive responsibilities, such as giving up work or living in the same household.

- Are respected by many people

- Looked up to in some cases due to their experiences and knowledge

- Aging is not commonly viewed in a positive light in our society. Many people find the image of the aged undesirable.

Indications are that there has been a shift in attitude towards the aged in recent years.

In general, there is an agreement that adult children should provide appropriate assistance to their parents and maintain contact with them, but less emphasis is placed on living nearby and accepting potentially intrusive responsibilities, such as giving up work or living in the same household.

Previously families took responsibility for caring for their elderly relatives, but since more women are participating in the workforce or looking at going back to work or study after their children have become adults, families are beginning to be unable or unwilling to look after elderly relatives. Those families that do take on the responsibility of caring for their parents often juggle jobs, child-rearing, education, family and social commitments.

- The increase in the number of divorces and sole parent households has also reduced the informal support networks that are available to the aged.

- The government’s policy is for the aged to stay out of nursing homes for as long as possible. (Federal Government provisions for nursing homes cost tax payers $18 billion a year.) However, this policy is placing greater strain on families to look after their elderly relatives.
- **Issues of concern for the group**

Increased life expectancy has created many issues of concern for the aged, relating to retirement, recreation, income, loneliness, health, Medicare, dependency and housing. As individuals have different needs and resources, there can be no one solution to these problems.

**Loneliness and isolation**

The aged living on their own spend an average of 12 hours alone each day. 1/3 of the aged live alone. Some old people who live alone are not lonely, because they have neighbourhood, family and community interaction. Loneliness can result, however, when physical incapacity poor health or low income renders the aged person immobile. Those with no family face perhaps the greatest risk of social isolation, which can also occur when one spouse dies. Also, as people grow older they lose an increasing proportion of friends and relatives through death. Many old people who become hypochondriacs are really only reaching out for someone, such as a doctor or nurse to talk to and perhaps alleviate their loneliness. Mental disorders can often result from loneliness and isolation.

**Retirement and recreation**

Upon retirement the aged person faces one of the greatest adjustments in his or her life. Job satisfaction, financial rewards and responsibility are missed; family routines change; personal associations through work are disrupted; the status which accompanies a work role is lost; and there is great difficulty in finding interests to fill in time. Women may face greater adjustments as they experience more than one retirement. E.g on the children leaving home, leaving the workforce and on the death of a husband. Many people feel that only work- either part-time or full-time can give the aged a feeling of being wanted or needed by society. For many individuals there is too much time after retirement which needs to be filled with leisure activities and interests.

**Health and nutrition**

Although the extent differs with each individual, certain physical and mental changes do generally occur during old age. Physically, there is a decline in appearance, sight and hearing problems may develop; a general reduction in strength and endurance is evidently there is a decline in sexual potency, and there is greater difficulty in stooping, bending, stretching, lifting etc. Because people now live longer they are more likely to become chronically ill or physically handicapped. The aged are subject to strokes, neurological disorders, arthritis, fractured hips, osteoporosis, and arteriosclerosis. Mentally, there may be a decline in cognitive abilities and the grasp of new concepts and adaptation to change show a definite alteration. Many of the aged do not wish to admit to being old or sick which places a strain on those who live near or with them. Many are reluctant to seek medical advice because of the cost. The aged have certain nutritional needs which, if not satisfied can lead to more serious health problems. Although the majority of aged persons have adequate diets and good appetites, decreased physical capabilities in some cases may mean they are not able to prepare meals properly. Low incomes may mean they cannot afford to buy protein-rich foods and fresh fruit and vegetables. Lack of knowledge, particularly in the case of widowers whose wives formerly prepared all the meals, may prevent the elderly person from preparing simple nutritious meals. In many instances, the elderly person loses interest in preparing meals for one after his or her spouse has died.

**Dependency and mobility**

Perhaps one of the greatest needs voiced by the aged is for independence. At the same time, however, the aged also want to feel that they are needed and can contribute to others welfare. If living with the children, the aged should be given jobs to do as this makes them feel more useful.

**Injuries and falls**

This is the major reason for hospitalisation in the aged.

**Aging carers**

Because of the Ageing population carers are also becoming older and are unable to cope.

**Lack of informal support networks**

The break down of families which is common in the modern society leaves the aged with little or no informal support networks. Also the aged person may lose their spouse and friends may also die.
Conflict between group and community interests

Conflict can arise between group and community interests due to their significant impact on the rest of the community and the health system. There is $30 billion a year spent on the aged and this is expected to increase. The expectations and demands of the aged well exceed the community’s ability to pay. In monetary terms they are large users of services but in most cases do not contribute to the funding. This creates strain on the community.

There is often conflict on the road particularly between youth and the elderly. Their motor skills are limited by health issues such as low co-ordination and eye sight. While Aged people want to keep their independence other people feel that they should be off the road. Older people due to driving at a lower speed often have conflict with younger people due to their increased speed. This can cause frustration in both groups when travelling on the road.

The older generation has different values about what is acceptable behaviour. For example the aged go to bed earlier and are thus less tolerant of noises late at night. Many aged people still believe the values that they were taught during their youth such as the white Australia policy (lack of multiculturalism) and attitudes to sexuality and religion. They are more conservative so therefore many of their values conflict with behaviour of people today.
- **Power within the group and the community**

In the past the number of people that were aged represented a smaller proportion in the government. However, the baby boomers will mean that the aged make up a larger proportion of the community therefore their voting powers will increase proportionately. On top of this, the baby boomers own huge assets of the country. This means that they control enormous amounts of financial power. In most cases, the aged are retired and have more time. This means they have a greater opportunity due to their spare time to spend as community representatives such as progress associations, council liaison groups and being involved in political lobbying and rallying. They have more resources to be persistent in such activities.

On top of this, there are many groups established to enable the elderly to obtain more power such as “Grey power” a lobby group. This group was formed to give the aged a voice and to cater, and lobby for the needs and wishes of all Australians especially the mature aged citizen. “The aged care rights service” gives the aged a voice and detailed precise info and guidance on a host of issues for the aged and the “aged care complaints resolution scheme” allows the aged to speak out if they are being mistreated. All of these initiatives allow the aged to maintain their power.

In terms of War veterans, they hold some form of power as they are respected within the community. The community has the power to raise awareness through aids such as the media on aged related issues. However, many aged people can lose this power when they physically or mentally lose the capacity to look after themselves. In this case, the community or their family has the power to decide the fate of the aged person.
Positive contributions the group makes to the community

The Aged make many positive contributions to the community many which people may not see. One of the greatest resources that they provide the community with is their time. Some of the contributions include:
- Fund raising
- Grandparent groups forming links between children and the elderly
- Time and effort with voluntary work e.g St Vincent de Paul, Salvation army
- Assisting with childcare for grandchildren and other children
- Guest speakers at organisations and schools sharing their experiences and wealth or knowledge and skills
- Supervising exams
- Visiting the sick
- Involved in such groups as Meals on Wheels.
- Source knowledge & support within families & communities
- Important group within the tourist market
- Intellectual and spiritual value to the community
- In 1997 older people spent around 30% of their working hours on unpaid work.
- Contributions to the workforce
- Childcare for families, or spouses.
- Provision of financial support for families
Extent to which the community service groups assist in meeting the needs of specific groups

Community service groups are highly significant in assisting the aged to meet their needs. There are a variety that aim to meet the aged individuals needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Community services that meets these needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Access to services                 | **- Transport is subsidised through Centrelink** to allow the elderly to maintain a sense of independence and a means of travel to education, social and sporting facilities.  
**- Community aid centres**- Established by local councils they offer a variety of services including information and referral services. Most district hospitals have a community health centre which usually works in conjunction with the community information centre.  
**- The council of the Ageing**- Provides information for the aged on access to resources such as community care services, housing, employment and income.  
**- Commonwealth Carelink Centres**- are information centres (online, phone and stores) for older people, people with disabilities and those who provide care and services. Centres provide free and confidential information on community aged care, disability and other support services available locally, interstate or anywhere within Australia.  
**- State councils on the ageing**- Each state has one of these councils, which publishes a series of easily understood pamphlets on all facets of ageing, information on health, diet, finance, accommodation, travel, adjustment to retirement, making a will, creative activities, where to go to find more information, and community resources and services that are available. |
| Education                          | **- University of the 3rd age** is one community service group. This is a program of special short courses covering a wide range of interests from Astronomy to Western Philosophy. You can study with a small group of people or undertake a course through self-study. The program is available to all older people and especially relevant for older members of the community who are isolated, either geographically or through physical or social circumstances. U3A Online is designed to make learning for pleasure and is low cost. You need no prior qualifications; there are no exams and no degrees.  
**- Education Network Australia (EdNA) online**- is a directory service and access point for education and training resources. It caters for all parts of the Australian education community and provides free access to all learners. It provides weekly e-mail newsletters about education and training issues, as well as search functions, information categories for resource discovery, and free interactive tools such as discussion lists, forums, chat rooms and notice boards.  
**- Worker’s education Association Adult education and training program**- Provides adult education classes. Each of these provide the aged population with an opportunity to interact with the community and learn new skills. This helps to meet their mental/emotional needs as it is stimulating their mind while at the same time enabling them to socialise with people of the same interests. |
| Employment                         | **Keep in touch scheme**- where retired employee can maintain a connection with their former employer through work on a short-term project or a similar scheme.  
**Jobwise**- is an Australian government website dedicated to mature age employment. The web site contains information for employers, mature age job seekers and mature age workers. |
| Financial support                  | **Centrelink**- is the Australian Commonwealth government’s welfare agency which is responsible for dispersion of all commonwealth payments. It allows people to get the help they need from one location. It offers the pensioners concession card which provides reduced cost medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme as well as reduced fares on public transport. It also provides the aged pension, rent assistance, funeral benefit, telephone allowance, remote area allowance, electricity, council and water rebate, reduction on security deposit for Australian Gas Light Company. Many hairdressing salons offer discounts to pensioners, reduction in telephone rental, Reduction in fees for special courses held by the Department of Technical and Further Education and the Board of Adult Education, some hospitals provide free dental attention, and some public hospitals authorise local dentists to provide free dentures for pensions. Free consultations by optometrists under the Commonwealth Health Scheme, Reduction in the cost of home district nursing services, free hearing aids, mail redirection concession  
**- Compulsory superannuation schemes** introduced by the federal government. The superannuation guarantee Charge is the mandatory occupational superannuation now required for all
workers. The aim of this scheme is to promote self-provision in old age and thereby reducing increasing government expenditure on the aged pension.

- **Charity organisations** - Charity organisations such as The Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul, Wesley Mission and the Uniting Church all provide financial assistance to the elderly through senior social groups, clothing, food, respite care, hostels etc.

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### Health

**Meals on Wheels** is a structure that assists in meeting the needs of the aged population. Through this service, an aged person’s physical and emotional needs are met. They are provided with food, which they may not be able to produce themselves, or may not be mobile enough to go out and get themselves, which meets some of their physical needs. Their emotional needs are also partly met, through interaction with the person bringing them the meal, as they have an opportunity to talk to someone else.

- **Hospitals and medical centres** (especially those related to aged healthcare) help to meet the physical and sometimes mental needs of the aged population. They provide the aged with essential healthcare services for the treatment of conditions that are prevalent in aged people, such as osteoporosis, arthritis and heart disease. Those that are mobile, eg. Community nurses, overcome the mobility problem that is common in the aged population. This also helps with their emotional security to some extent, as having contact with others helps them with feelings of connectedness.

- **Day hospitals, health centres and day centres**

These services have been recent developments in Australia. The day hospital was originally designed as a place which the aged could visit for the day, seek medical advice, talk to social workers and have a meal. However they developed into social centres where many elderly people made friends and in may cases received their only nutritious meal all week. As a result of this progress day centres which perform similar functions were established.

- **Palliative Care Australia**

Is a special kind of health care for individuals and families who are living with life threatening illness, usually in an advanced stage. The focus of palliative care is to provide the best quality of life for the terminally ill by ensuring their comfort and dignity. Palliative care services may be provided in the home, in the community based settings.eg nursing homes, in palliative care units and in hospitals. Services offered by palliative care workers:

- Nursing and advice
- Physiotherapy
- Dietary advice
- Home support services that provide assistance with household tasks
- Relief for the caregiver - Counselling and emotional support
- Grief counselling
- Follow-up counselling after death.

- **The Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS)** is the largest and oldest provider of home nursing and healthcare services in Australia. Grounded in the principles of care and compassion, RDNS is a not-for-profit organisation, delivering 24 hour a day nursing care to people in their homes, schools and workplaces. This service is provided 7 days a week, 365 days of the year.

### Housing

**Home and community care program of 1986** - In terms of housing needs the Commonwealth Governments initiative ‘Home and Community Care Program; of 1986 is of extreme importance. It is a commonwealth government-funded service that offers home help, home nursing, personal care, delivered meals, respite care, day care, home maintenance and modification and transport services. This program has meant that elderly could remain living at home. This promotes a positive quality of life and independence.

**Pensioners loans scheme** - allows the elderly to make modifications to the home.

- **Home-Help** - This service provides housekeeping and home assistance for aged people in ill health. The program is not as developed here as it is in Canada and the USA, but given more funding it is a service that could enable more elderly people to remain in their own home and in the neighbourhood they know

- **Community aged-care packages** - Is a commonwealth funded program initiated in 1992 that offers an alternative to residential hostel care. It provides an intensive level of home care to allow those with more complex care needs to remain at home. This program provides a coordinated package of care to care recipients with complex needs who are eligible for low level residential care. Approval must be given by an Aged Care Assessment Team before the coordinated package of care
can be provided. Services provided by as part of a package are similar to those available under HACC with the exception of nursing care and allied health care, and services are coordinated through a care manager/coordinator.

- **Rent assistance** - if receiving pension entitled to RA must be paying rent (other than public housing), money paid fortnightly to help with rent costs. **Housing Appeals Committee**

### Security and safety

- **Safely home** is a joint project of Alzheimer’s Australia NSW and the NSW police. It provides rapid and accurate identification and return of a wandering person to their home. It provides each person with a ‘safely home’ bracelet which features a toll free telephone number and personal identification number. When someone finds the lost person, they can simply look at the bracelet, telephone the police and quote the personal identification number. The police then make arrangements for the person to be returned safely home.

- **Telecross** is a free service offered by Australian Red Cross, providing a daily lifeline to thousands of people across NSW every year. Every morning, a trained Red Cross volunteer makes a short, friendly telephone call to a Telecross client to ensure that they are safe and well. If the call is not answered, a second call is made. If there is still no response, Red Cross initiates an emergency procedure and arranges assistance if necessary. By assisting the elderly and medically dependent in their own homes, Telecross helps clients to maintain their independence, thereby improving quality of life and reducing the necessity to move into residential care.

### Self-esteem

- **Counselling services**, although they are under-promoted in aged contexts, are invaluable for elderly people. As people age, and particularly after they retire, they may begin to have feelings of worthlessness and helplessness. These feelings are heightened if the aged person has no close family, eg. children, grandchildren, or if their spouse dies. Counselling services provide aged individuals with an outlet for their feelings, where they can express themselves honestly and have someone listen to their problems, as it is often the case that they are not heard in the wider community, because they are easily forgotten about.

- **National Seniors Productive ageing centre** - This centre assists senior citizens to gain confidence in using resources as well as provides social opportunities.

- The mental health of senior citizens is also taken into account through **clubs** organised for fun. In this local area there is a Barwalla club which involves raffles, bingo, guest speakers, performances and ultimately promotes social interaction. It also has buses, which collects the senior citizens they are able to attend. Outings are also provided for the groups.

- **Senior citizens centres** - These centres provide recreational and social opportunities for the elderly. Extra funding may allow them to increase their range of activities, and perhaps employ a social worker or officer to work with them.

- **Community visitors Scheme** - provides volunteer visitors to residents of aged care homes who are at risk of isolation from the general community. Community visitors visit at least fortnightly and provide friendship and companionship. The scheme is operated by community based organisations that receive Australian Government funds to recruit, train and monitor the volunteer visitors.

### Sense of identity

**Church groups** can help meet the needs of the aged population by developing a sense of belonging which comes from participating in the group. They will also benefit from social interaction. If the aged individual is able to help others through the group, eg. a church group helping a family/individual in crisis, the aged individual will gain a sense of identity and their sense of self-esteem and self-worth will increase.

- **Senior Australian of the Year**

  Through Initiatives such as Senior Australian of the Year awareness is raised further of the values of elderly in society and help to eliminate stereotypes, however further effort is needed.

- **The National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP)** is a national program funded by the Australian Government. The NACAP aims to promote the rights of people receiving Australian Government funded aged care services. They give advice on your rights and help you exercise these rights. Aged care advocacy services also work with the aged care industry to encourage policies and practices which protect consumers.
- Discuss the rights, responsibilities and attitudes of individuals within groups to the wider community

**Rights:** Discussed above

**Responsibilities:**

- To respect the rights of staff or carers in an environment that is free from harassment.
- To care for their own health and well-being as far as they are capable.
- To inform their medical practitioner as far as they are capable about their relevant medical history and current state of health.
- To respect the rights and needs of other people within residential care services, and to respect the needs of the residential care service community as a whole.
  - Share their experience.
  - Volunteer if they are capable to give back to the community.
  - To be actively involved in all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life of society.
  - To look after their homes to the best of their ability.
  - To take precautions to protect their own security.
  - To not take advantage of the provisions given to them for example claiming two pensions.
  - To respect and value other people.
  - To allow those willing to help to help them.
  - Not to discriminate against others.

**Attitudes**
The attitudes of the elderly to the wider community and specific age groups within the community will vary according to personal experience. For example if an elderly member has had negative experiences with services they may feel that this generation has different attitudes and levels of respect that they do not value. On the contrary the aged may have worked with volunteer organisations and experienced many thankful community members for their services. This aged member may have a positive attitude due to feeling valued in the community.
Hypothesise about ways of resolving conflict that might exist between the group’s needs and the expectations of the wider community

There are many possible ways of resolving conflict that might exist between the group’s needs and the expectations of the wider community some of these may involve:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict</th>
<th>Ways of resolving conflict</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conflict can arise between group and community interests due to their significant impact on the rest of the community and the health system. There is $30 billion a year spent on the aged and this is expected to increase. The expectations and demands of the aged well exceed the community’s ability to pay. In monetary terms they are large users of services but in most cases do not contribute to the funding. This creates strain on the community. Some areas of society may not feel that it is their responsibility to pay for aged people’s lifestyles on a daily basis.</td>
<td>- The government could use a health promotion campaign to increase awareness of the need for a pension of many aged people, their needs in the community, and how little the pension actually pays for. This might help them to come to a better understanding of the situation that the aged are faced with. Such a health promotion initiative could help to explain to younger generations that aged people need health care and they are often not able to fund this themselves so need assistance. This program could help teach younger generations that this group faces equity issues just like any other group such as youth and ATSI. Youth have similar health costs such as free transport, state education etc. It could also encourage positive attitudes towards social security payments for the aged, which may reduce younger people’s reservations towards contributing to paying for the aged.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The older generation has different values about what is acceptable behaviour. For example the aged go to bed earlier and are thus less tolerant of noises late at night. Many aged people still believe the values that they were taught during their youth such as the white Australia policy (lack of multiculturalism) and attitudes to sexuality and religion. They are more conservative so therefore many of their values conflict with behaviour of people today. | - A forum could be held between a government representative, several members of the community, and of the aged population, and a worker/professional from the aged care sector to try to develop strategies to deal with these conflicting values as well as have their opinions and concerns valued. This may result in improved communication between the groups in society. |

Others

- Educating the community to have a more positive view of old age, so that it is regarded as part of the lifecycle and not a separate phase. This may help the aged adjust more easily to retirement and increased leisure time. Education may be further enhanced by developing a unit on the Aged within the current PD/H/PE course, which is compulsory for years 7-10. This might help the younger generate not only recognise their substantial needs in the community but be more tolerant and respectful. It would encourage positive attitudes towards this group.
- From a young age, school-aged children could become part of a intergenerational programs involving the students regularly visiting elderly people, in local nursing homes, for example. This would almost ensure a positive relationship between youth and aged people, which is likely to continue into later life, thereby reducing conflict.
- Providing housing alternatives close to transport, shopping and support service
- Encourage professionals and family members to work in an integrated fashion in care of the aged
- Introducing phased retirement options and flexible wok patterns
- Introducing aged care policies so the elderly may continue to live active lives in the community for as long as possible
- Increasing support for carers
Chamberlain and McKenzie (2003) define three levels of homelessness. These are not mutually exclusive.

- **Primary homelessness** – People without conventional accommodation, living on the streets in deserted buildings, improvised dwellings, under bridges in packs etc. This group makes up only 14% (ABS) of the total homeless in Australia.
- **Secondary homelessness** – people who are in temporary shelter, crisis accommodation or staying with friends or other families because they have no accommodation of their own.
- **Tertiary homelessness** – people staying in boarding houses on a medium to long term basis without security of tenure.

SAPP- defines homelessness as not having adequate access to safe and secure housing” (SAAP)

- A person is homeless if and only if they have inadequate access to safe and secure housing. A person is taken to have inadequate access to safe and secure housing if the housing to which the person has access is:
  - Damaged or is likely to damage the persons health or
  - Threatens the persons safety or
  - Marginalises the person through failing to provide access to 1) adequate personal amenities 2) th economic and social support that a home normally affords; or
  - Places the person in circumstances which threaten or adversely affect the adequacy, safety, security, and affordability of that housing’
  - Has no security of tenure – that is, they have no legal right to continued occupation of their home.
  - A person is also considered homeless if he or she is living in accommodation provided by some form of emergency accommodation.

**Social definition of the specific group**

Those people without access to adequate housing. A lifestyle which includes insecurity and transition of shelter. It is not confined to total lack of shelter and often signifies detachment from family and vulnerability to dangers such as abuse and exploitation. Homelessness can mean the feeling of not belonging, and of being deprival of emotional, cultural and physical components that make up a home. People who lack a permanent, safe home environment they live on the streets, in parks or at the beach in refuges, caravans, tents or squats.
- Identify characteristics
  - Transient and Insecure lifestyle
  - Temporary accommodation in refuges, shelters or moving between relatives and friends in abandoned houses or other buildings
  - Having little support or protection
  - Often victims of physical, sexual, emotional or drug abuse
  - Often involved in criminal activity
  - May be involved on or directly affected by prostitution
  - May have poor literacy skills and little education
  - Mostly unemployed with few employment prospects
  - May have a history of domestic violence in the family home
  - Can suffer a loss of identity
  - May suffer loneliness and low self-esteem
  - Homeless people are among the most marginalised people in Australia and their profile has been changing from older, lone men to women, youth and families. This can be caused by factors such as:
    - Family breakdown
    - Deinstitutionalisation of disabled
    - Women and children fleeing domestic violence
    - Absence of low cost accommodation
    - Drugs
    - Changes in the structure of the labour market, fewer jobs for low-skilled workers and thus suffer unemployment and poverty
    - Discrimination in obtaining housing and employ.


- 58% male and 42% female
- 8.5% of total homeless people are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- 75% of homeless individuals have at least one mental disorder
- 93% have experienced at least one extreme trauma in life
- Children under 5 have the highest rates of using homelessness assistance services
- Almost 1 in every 50 Australian Children aged 0-4 will visit a homeless assistance service as part of a family group.
- On any given night 1 in 200 Australians are homeless only about 15% are lucky enough to find a bed in Australia’s under-resourced homelessness service system.
- Each year more than 53,000 Australian children stay with their parents in homeless assistance services.
- In 2004 more than 1 in every 75 Australian children under 12 will accompany a parent to a homeless assistance service
- Every day more than 200 children and families are turned away from the homeless service system due to lack of capacity to meet growing demand.
- Approximately 2/3 of families seeking assistance from the homeless service system will be children accompanying their mothers fleeing from domestic violence
- Homeless children commonly experience physiological problems including depression and low self-esteem health problems such as asthma, and social difficulties resulting from isolation from family and friends in unstable schooling.
- 100 000 Australians are homeless every night of the year. This includes 36 000 children.
- ATSI are more likely to experience homelessness than any other group in Australia. While 2% of the population are Indigenous 18% of the clients in SAAP services and 9% of the homeless population overall are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- There are 1286 homeless assistance services across Australia. However each day only 1 in 7 of Australia’s 100,000 homeless will find a bed in the homeless service system.

Every day more than 500 people requesting accommodation in the homeless service system are turned away.
**Specific needs**

Each individual family or group that finds themselves in a situation of homelessness has a unique set of circumstances that have led to their homelessness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to services</th>
<th>Homeless people often have services available to them but often either do not have the resources to access them, or they are already being used to their capacity. E.g they may be entitled to financial assistance from centerlink but are unable to read and write. Therefore they need assistance in identifying and accessing services. Access to public health and free counselling help the homeless to overcome obstacles such as physical and psychological illnesses and give them a better opportunity to escape the homelessness cycle. The homeless are at high risk of a large range of health problems.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>They need education programs that aim to develop self-esteem and autonomy. Homeless need opportunities for skill development in managing resources and problem solving. To escape the cycle and get a job, an income and some support networks. May have access to education facilities but might not be able to use these because of low self esteem, poor nutrition, no income, lack or social support. To keep an individual mentally stimulated and empower them through work and a stable inflow of income. Centrelink through its social workers, can help homeless youth to make contact with specialist units such as the Job Placement, Employment and Training program to assist them with education and work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Many homeless people may once have been employed, but few are in a position to become immediately employable. Homeless people need to have access to employment-training skills but only after their needs for food, clothing shelter and healthcare have been addressed. Many homeless people were in that situation because of lack of employment, 94% of SAAP users were unemployed. Many have trouble finding employment due to low self-esteem, poor health and lack or social support as well as low education. Some homeless have low paying jobs and cannot afford to support their family or afford accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td>Homeless have no fixed address which makes it difficult to open a bank account or receive payments from Centrelink. They need financial support to be able to buy food, clothing and shelter. Centrelink community officers are available to provide services to homeless people of all aged. They aim to help the homeless to understand access and retain income support payments e.g Youth allowance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Homeless people are at high risk for a range of health problems. They have health needs related to mental disorders, malnutrition, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual health and other acute or chronic problems. Problems such as frostbite, leg ulcers and upper respiratory infections are frequently encountered. Depression, self-hatred and feelings of powerlessness can lead to loss of control and to acts such as self-mutilation or dependency on drugs and alcohol. Homeless women often suffer from violence or sexual assault. Need for free, accessible and holistic health care. They need education about health issues such as STDs. However, health often comes second to housing, work and food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>This is a basic human requirement that provides cover from the elements. Lack of suitable housing is major problem for the homeless. Currently, there is a great need for emergency, short-term and more permanent housing. Need assistance to access this housing and to remain in housing. Great need for emergency, short-term and more permanent housing. Need assistance to access this housing and to remain in housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security and safety</td>
<td>The homeless are very vulnerable. They have little or no security and often find themselves in unsafe conditions on the street. They are in great need of a safe place to live and sleep. Temporary accommodation does not establish security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>The factors that lead to homelessness such as family breakdown have a detrimental effect on a person’s feelings of self-worth. The combination of this with limited support and state of homelessness leaves these people with a poor view of the future. Their level of self-esteem is low. Need access to resources which will improve Self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of identity</td>
<td>Many have no sense of identity thus they need to be put in a position whereby they can develop a positive sense of identity. Poor sense of identity due to low self-esteem, unemployment, low income, loneliness and the status of being homeless. No permanent address equates to lack of an established identity. Homeless people find it difficult to achieve a sense of identity, in fact near impossible, as their physiological, safety and love and belonging needs are not met. Their physiological needs are not met as they don’t have adequate shelter, clean clothing, food etc. They have difficulty meeting love and belonging needs as they don’t stay in the same place long enough to form sustainable relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Government policies and regulations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation to assist the homeless</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994</td>
<td>To provide transitional supported accommodation and related support services, in order to help people who are homeless to achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless persons assistance act 1974</td>
<td>An Act to provide for Payments by Australia in respect of the Provision of Assistance for Homeless Persons and for certain other Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minors (Property contract act) 1970</td>
<td>Allows those under 18 to sign a lease on rental property without a guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Procedures Act 1986</td>
<td>Covers those with a mental illness, if they commit a crime. It sets out ways of disposing of criminal cases involving defendants with mental illness or intellectual disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal Employment Opportunity Act 1987</td>
<td>This act requires certain commonwealth authorities to promote equal opportunity in employment regardless of sex, race, marital status, disability, pregnancy, sexuality or age.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation that work against the homeless</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vagrancy Act 1966</td>
<td>This act carries a maximum penalty of 1 year in prison or a fine of up to $12 000 for begging. Most people convicted of begging receive a fine of $50 for the first offence, $100 for the 2nd and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping or sleeping in a public place</td>
<td>It is an offence to fall asleep in a public place during sunset and sunrise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Act 1983</td>
<td>Power to arrest those without a ticket or those interrupting others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bail Act 1977</td>
<td>To be eligible for bail, you must fulfil a range of conditions. May not be considered if the applicant does not have a fixed address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti- Discrimination Act 1975</td>
<td>This act aims to prohibit intolerance, prejudice and discrimination in our community on the grounds of race, gender, marital status, physical or intellectual impairment or sexual preference. NB: (It does not include social status, the very thing which homeless are discriminated against)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community responsibility

The community has many responsibilities in relation to the homeless. They have a responsibility to:
- Not exploit or mislead them due to their vulnerability.
- To encourage their independence, individuality and dignity.
- To be tolerant and patient
- To educate the younger generations and themselves about the needs of the homeless and in general become more educated as a society in order to develop a compassionate and sympathetic attitude towards the homeless.
- To not discriminate against them based on their mistakes.
- To ensure the access of at least their physical needs such as food, shelter and clothing.
- Inform them of the available services
- Provide education
- To treat them individually and not stereotype them. There are a variety of reasons one becomes homeless not simply drugs.
- To prevent individuals ending up in this situation. The community has a responsibility to develop education and life skills as poor education is a factor and an outcome of homelessness.
- To fulfil their health needs.
- Provide employment assistance. Many homeless people are unemployed. Access to regular and stable employment is essential for preventing and reducing homelessness. Homeless people may require intensive support to access jobs but the majority could secure employment if given appropriate assistance.
- To re-establish family and community connections- People experiencing chronic homelessness often have little contact with parents, siblings, partners, children and their community. Social marginalisation is a significant barrier to helping people exit from homelessness.
- Provide affordable housing. The lack of affordable and secure housing is a substantial cause of homelessness. Demand for social and low cost housing far exceeds supply. Increasing the stock of affordable, well located, long term housing will have a major impact on reducing homelessness
- Working with other key stakeholders to ensure community services are accessible, appropriate and responsive to the needs of the homeless
- Not to inflict moral or religious judgment
- Provide rehabilitation Programs
- Donate goods
- Adapt ways of receiving financial support
- Provide safe, affordable, short and long term accommodation
- Review public housing
- Show empathy, tolerance and friendship
- Assisting to facilitate a coordinated approach by local support services for homeless people
- Examining planning policies of council and key stakeholders to ensure there is a reasonable distribution of services and facilities for homeless people across the local area.

Some community members join service groups to fulfil their perceived responsibility to the homeless. They can fulfil their responsibility through community programs such as the Red Cross, The Salvation Army, The Smith Family and St Vincent De Paul Society. All of which function on volunteers in this case providing emergency assistance in the form of food, clothing, accommodation and transport. While some of these community groups are funded by the government they are not possible without the community volunteers.

With “nearly half (46 percent) of those who are homeless being less than 25 years of age and young people aged between 12-18 years making up a quarter of all those who are homeless” (‘Homelessness: A new understanding. New responses’ report, www.mission.com.au) the community has a responsibility to help them gain better prospects and help them escape the cycle of homelessness. For many homeless people, they, with assistance want to again become a valued contributing member of society, however this may be difficult with little access to resources including money, power and education; the community has a responsibility to provide resources that can help them regain status and a happier future.
Little progress has been made in promoting and protecting the human rights of the homeless. It is arguable that people living in public spaces are experiencing a breach of their human rights on a daily basis. Denying the homeless this right is contrary to their human rights. The homeless population share many similar rights to other population groups. However the homeless are an inequity group because many of these rights are not satisfied and thus they have little or no sense of wellbeing. These include:

- A right to a safe place to live. Homeless are defined by the breach of this basic right. They have the right to physical, psychological and emotional safety.
- A right to adequate social security, assistance and protection.
- A right to independence and dignity
- A right to be shown respect and feel valued
- Access to food, water, shelter, clothing, health care through community support and help
- Access education & training programs
- Access social & legal services
- A right to non-discrimination. The stereotypes of the homeless often lead to degradation, inequality and often abuse.
- Privacy
- Access cultural, spiritual, recreational resources
- Live in dignity, security, free from physical abuse.
- The human right to freedom from discrimination based any status, in all aspects of life including employment and access to housing, health care, and social services.
- The human right to protection from neglect and all types of physical or mental abuse.
- The human right to full and active participation in all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life of society.
- The human right to full and effective participate in decision-making concerning their well-being.
- The right to freedom from torture and cruel inhumane and degrading treatment
- The right to liberty and security of person
- The right to freedom of expression
- Enjoy ones culture
- Social security without having proof of ID, a fixed address or opening a bank account
- Education that is non threatening and accessible to the homeless
- Right to an appropriate standard of living adequate for their health and wellbeing
- Right to live without fear of violence.
### Access to resources

There are many formal resources available to the homeless, but often the homeless lack resources to access them. It is fair to say that there are not enough resources to deal with the demand. Factors that affect access to resources include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>Many resources/services are age specific. Older individuals may be entitled to an aged pension. Younger people may be entitled to Youth Allowance. Homeless youth are often dismissed as young enough to go home, therefore less assistance is available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disability</strong></td>
<td>The type and degree of disability will affect the ability to access. Can affect mobility such as hearing or sight impairment will make communication difficult and thus affect access to resources. Multiple disabilities will increase the need for services and may decrease the ability of the individual to physically access the resource independently. Those with a disability have a great need for access, but have problems with knowledge of services and physically accessing services independently. 75% of homeless have at least one mental illness. Services which aid the homeless are often unable to also deal with a disability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>Good education can assist with identifying and accessing. People who are unable to read or write will have great difficulty. Youth homeless have limited access to education and funds for schooling. Education Facilities may be intimidating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity and culture</strong></td>
<td>Non English speakers will experience great difficulty communicating with services and gaining knowledge about available services. Hostels may not be equipped, or culturally sensitive, to deal with prayer time, food specifications, societal discrimination and clothing. 9% of Homeless are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td>Many services are gender specific. Females are more likely to seek help. Men are less likely to adapt and cope. A male homeless person may have a greater need for security and safety as they are more vulnerable living on the streets. Many of the hostels provide access that is gender specific and men would need to find a shelter that provides for men. There is a greater percentage of males living on the street than there are females and have a greater incidence of alcohol or drug abuse, therefore their health needs are a high priority. Men don’t often communicate their needs well and because of this suffer poor self-esteem and lack of identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>A person needs a stable area to live in (address) so they can access resources. Those who move from place to place will experience difficulty, so will people in rural locations. NSW has the largest population of homeless however Northern Territory has more homeless related to its size. A homeless person has a nomadic life style. Therefore they limit their ability to access resources by where they decide to live or sleep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socioeconomic Status</strong></td>
<td>Little or no money limits greatly the availability of resources for that person. Lack of financial support, address and distrust of authority means little chance of government payments. But why do the homeless have low socioeconomic status—because they are discriminated against based on social status and there for have difficulty gaining employment which would increase their SES.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
-Societal attitudes towards the group

Societal attitudes towards the homeless vary. Perhaps by understanding the causes of homelessness one can more easily analyse why these attitudes exist. Usually there is no single issue that causes individuals to be homeless. It is usually a combination of causes such as family conflict and disruption, poor housing, poverty, health and disability, an inability to get out of the homeless cycle, society’s tolerance of homelessness.

Society’s attitudes towards the homeless are often negative, with people having the opinion that homeless people are ‘misfits’ of society. The homeless are marginalised in society because of their limited ability to provide for their needs in relation to their total wellbeing and are people who have a lack of social connection with society and their families.

Society has generated many negative views of the homeless from the media. When homeless people are seen around residential areas they may be considered a nuisance by locals. People believe the value of their houses will decrease if homeless people are seen to be around the area. Some people may be to afraid to help the individuals.

The negative attitudes of society towards the homeless is often due to their physical appearance. A Homeless person may be seen doing things that are not considered ‘socially unacceptable’ such as urinating in the street or looking dirty and un-kept. These actions are often the only option that many have.

A large number of non-homeless people assume that those who are members of the homeless category are people who are violent alcoholics who have no hope, are sing government funds to feed addictions and are going to be on the street for life. In most cases however this proved to be very untrue. The majority of people are victims of family break-ups, job loss, lack of low cost housing and related issues.

Societal attitudes vary within the community, negative attitudes from society arise from a misunderstanding of reasons for homelessness. There is a great deal of misunderstanding amongst the public about what a homeless person is. For example most Australians picture a homeless person as being dirty, sleeping rough on the sleep. However the reality is that most live in cars, short term caravans squats or other temporary accommodation they simply don’t have a stable home. Similarly, many Australians don’t have a grasp of how many people there are who, as a result of their tenuous living or employment circumstances are on the edge of becoming homeless.
- **Issues of concern for the group**

The homeless have many issues of concern. All these issues marginalise these people and affect them accessing resources, fulfilling needs and goals and impacting overall on their wellbeing.

**Political** - The homeless are powerless, and those who are powerless are invisible to those that have power and the means to effect change. With no stable address, the homeless cannot vote and this decreases their power in society to be heard and make their opinions valid.

**Health** - Health is a major issue of concern for the homeless as a result of their lifestyle. This is apparent as they basic hygiene needs are often not even being met. Hygiene is difficult to maintain with the inability to wash and clean frequently due to lack of possessions such as soap and toothpaste. Having little or irregular income often results in physical health problems e.g poor dental hygiene, poor nutrition or malnourishment, STI’s, unwanted pregnancies and drug/alcohol abuse. A low income makes it also difficult to purchase medication. Problems such as frostbite, leg ulcers and upper respiratory infections are frequently encountered. Mental health is often both a cause and resultant of homelessness with 75% of homeless people with at least one mental disorder.

**Homeless women** often suffer from violence or sexual assault, to which they are very vulnerable whether on the streets or in temporary housing. Many often turn to sex work to survive, which in turn can create additional health problems if precautions are not taken to prevent STI’s and other diseases. The health needs of the homeless are high, often; however, health comes second to finding housing, work and food. This is because survival instincts are of a higher priority to other needs such as health and education.

**Violence** - This may be the initial cause for homelessness but it is also encountered on the streets and can lead to the homeless being victims of assault. Many homeless people especially women are victims of assault and verbal abuse.

**Lack of access to health care** - Health staff may be reluctant to provide care if an individual does not have a Medicare card and living without a stable address makes it difficult for a homeless individual to apply for a health care card. The homeless may only seek care when there is a crisis and often do not follow through with the advised health treatment. They also do not have enough money to purchase medication. The reduction of GP’s who bulk bill will affect availability, lack of opportunities for preventative screening.

**Stable Accommodation and personal safety** - A problem with the current system of housing is that the temporary support is in the inner city and when the homeless move to permanent housing they are usually forced away from this support. There are approximately 105 000 people who are considered homeless every night and 20 000 of them sleep rough (in the open, in garages or donation bins).

**Depression and Suicide** - Many homeless people suffer from low self-esteem and self-image due to their poor quality of life. This low self-esteem is often due to the way they are perceived by society as social outcasts. Due to unaffordable health services this is often never treated and may lead to suicide. The death rates among the homeless are fairly high as a result of suicide, drug or alcohol misuse and general health conditions relative to living in poor conditions. There are many community support services such as Burnside and Barnardo’s.

**Social relationship** - May be difficult to establish and maintain as homeless people more frequently by choice or because authorities or others force them to move. Therefore few meaningful friendships are developed. Also a breakdown in the relationship within the family is often the cause of homelessness and therefore result in cessation of contact with family. Social isolation then becomes associated with self-esteem and depression.

**Drugs & Alcohol** - The distress of not having a safe home loneliness etc. often leads to alcohol and drug use and abuse. The risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and hepatitis increases. The need to pay for these drugs can lead to a life of prostitution.

**Stress** is associated with physical wellbeing. It may be caused by sleeplessness, lack of safety and security, low self-esteem, social isolation and loss of identity. Stress and the need to survive can be powerful driving forces that lead to antisocial behaviour e.g. theft, drug abuse, prostitution or violence.

**Poverty** - Having little income limits housing, shelter options of the individual. The fact that the demand for emergency, short term and longer term accommodation is higher than supply leaves the primary and secondary homeless in a powerless situation. The waiting list for public housing are very long rental costs can be 30-50% of an individual income, leaving little money to pay for food, clothing and household bills. It is this situation that provides little likelihood of breaking out of the poverty or homelessness cycle.

**Employment** - It is difficult for the homeless to find housing and it is difficult for those with no permanent address to find employment, this situation is unfortunately the norm.
Conflict between group and community interests

Conflict can often arise between the homeless and community interests. This is particularly true when the homeless become desperate and resort to stealing or living in squats. Conflict may arise when some of the homeless show lack of respect for another’s property and cause damage usually through desperation. There are a variety of other factors that cause conflict. These include:

Public places:
Many homeless people use public spaces such as parks, rail stations and street areas to fulfil their basic needs and interests such as a dry, warm area to sleep and a place to eat as they have no table accommodation in which to use. However this conflicts with communities interests when they want these areas for recreational and public use without homeless individuals around. The community may not want the homeless near their homes or businesses due the image it creates about the area and the potential security factors.

Financial support:
Due to being able to access financial support, such as loans or a stable income; many homeless individuals have to resort to activities such as busking and begging in order to gain some financial independence and fulfil their basic needs such as food. However this causes conflict in the community because it is illegal and secondly community members may not like the aesthetic appeal of having beggars in their neighbourhood.

Closing of Hostels:
This may cause conflict as the community may want the area for recreational or private residential housing and as a result the homeless may not have low-cost accommodation available to them in their area. As a result of this, the homeless may be forced to live on the streets and the demand for housing will increase, placing greater demands on the services already available.

Areas of public housing:
Public housing is usually situated in areas of high unemployment with minimal services. They are surrounded by those in similar circumstances and there for there is little incentive to break free from the poverty cycle. This causes conflict, as the individuals living in public housing are most desperate for employment and accessing basic services, such as doctors. However, these services are situated in the more affluent areas as these areas can afford to visit and maintain them. Communities often don’t want public housing in suburban areas, and as a result end up in areas such as Redfern, where crime rates are higher and there are fewer opportunities for work.

Local Councils
Many local council’s remove things from the community to prevent homeless people residing in that area . For instance the removal of park benches to eliminate the opportunity for people to sleep on public land has caused many primary homeless people to lose their “home”. Community members often do not feel a need or want for services that may degrade the area and as a result , homeless people may not have the opportunity to get a regular meal and a chance to interact with other members of society that can relate to them.

Lack of Voting Power
Often what the more affluent members of society believe is the best for the community is not what is best for all members of society. Without having a fixed address, a homeless person cannot vote in any local, state or commonwealth election; diminishing their right to voice what they believe is needed in the community and to reflect resources and services needed by members of the community, such as soup kitchens and public housing that is not needed generally by the voting community.

Discrimination based on social status
This can cause conflict between the group and community interests as it can cause a ‘rift’ in society. Often, homeless people are looked upon as ‘drunken louts who put themselves on the street’ without the understanding of their situation. Many people think homeless are there because of circumstances created by their actions. However often this is not the case and may have been initially caused by their families situation.

People will be gaol ed if fines are not met:
Being placed in gaol for not meeting fines can cause conflict in society interests as homeless people often can’t afford to pay the fines and if gaoloed this appears on their criminal record which could jeopardise a job prospect in the future, this does not assist in decreasing unemployment rates which is a large community interest.

Cost of rental property has increased:
With the cost of rental properties increasing, the homeless have fewer opportunities to find stable, long-term accommodation. This will cause conflict in community interests, as the homeless will have to spend more time in temporary accommodation or on the streets; which does not promote equality in society and ‘degrades public spaces’

Public Housing Funding has been slashed
With the government now decreasing the amount spent in the budget on public housing, there are fewer areas that the homeless has to stay. This again, increases the demand on the available housing and the maintenance of it. Without assistance from the government more homeless people may find themselves on the streets or in temporary hostel accommodation; which doesn’t give them the same opportunities to vote, decreases their chance of a stable job etc.
**Power within the group and the community**

The homeless have little power over themselves and in society. Money, education and support is what often leads to power and the homeless are lacking in all three areas. Within society the only power they have is through the voice of larger organisations such as Mission Australia, St Vincent de Paul Society, The Salvation Army and the Council for Homelessness. These communities are their support and voice to the community and the government. Therefore the community not only has power over themselves but they have the power to help the homeless.

The homeless have a magazine called the “Big Issue” which is the communities attempt to give some power, independence and financial assistance back to the homeless. The Big issue is sold on the streets by people who are either homeless or unemployed. The magazine comes out every two weeks and sells for $3, of which $1.50 goes to the vendor. They pay for the magazines up front themselves, and they have usually gone through training and accreditation etc before they go out.

There are many community groups that have great power over the lives of the homeless. Therefore they develop initiatives such as Caritas Australia’s Winter Sleep out, The council to homeless persons, the shopfront- a youth legal centre, and Australian Federation of homeless organisation.

**Positive contributions the group makes to the community**

There is very little that the homeless can contribute to the community due to their situation. I suppose that they are a visual and constant reminder of how lucky people are and that there are always people that need our help. Homeless often look after each other despite needing help themselves by advising new homeless people about where to eat, and where to sleep. If they escape the cycle homeless people may be able to encourage and inspire others. They may be able to assist other people to understand the reasons for homelessness and possible strategies to prevent them becoming homeless. Their past experiences can be handed on to others so educating peers etc that living on the streets is not always the solution.

“One of our mission workers went up to Kings Cross while it was pouring rain, she walked up to a man who was standing on the street getting wet with all his worldly possession in two plastic bags by his feet, He simply said to her, ‘here have my umbrella or else you will get wet.’ With that he picked up his two plastic bags and walked away.”

(Mission Australia Worker)
- Extent to which community service groups assist in meeting the needs of specific groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to services</th>
<th>City of Sydney’s Homeless persons information Centre</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helps homeless people and agencies working with homeless people by providing: immediate advice and information, referral to crisis accommodation, referral to support services. The centre is in constant communication with welfare service providers throughout Sydney and NSW.</td>
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</table>

| Education | Centrelink through its social workers can help homeless youth to make contact with specialist units such as the Job Placement, Employment and Training program to assist them with education and work. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Job Placement Employment and Training</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is aimed at assisting students and unemployed young people aged 15-21 years (with priority to be given to those aged 15 to 19), who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Personal support program- Workplace.gov.au | People eligible for the PSP deserve individualised attention because of their difficult circumstances. The PSP acts as a bridge between short-term crisis assistance and employment-related assistance. |
|                                           | Service providers help participants work towards economic or social outcomes. Economic outcomes can include transferring to work programmes, study and vocational training. Social outcomes include stabilised circumstances, increased community engagement, stable accommodation or improved life skills. |

| Financial support | Centrelink community officers are available to provide services to homeless people of all ages. Officers visit rehabilitation centres, hostels, refuges or any place where homeless people gather. The officers aim to help the homeless to understand, access and retain income support payments including Youth allowance and aged, disability and unemployment benefits. Centrelink pays young people a higher rate of Youth Allowance if there are serious reasons why they cannot live at home. Centrelink also offers the crisis payment to assist eligible people affected by domestic violence or other exceptional circumstances to establish a new home. |
|                  | Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs(FaCSIA). Introduced the emergency relief program which provides funding to community and welfare organisations such as St Vincent de Paul, the Salvation Army, The Smith Family and Lifeline, so that they can help homeless individuals and families. |

| Health | St Vincent de Paul Society is the largest charitable organisation in NSW providing care and assistance to over 500,000 people each year. It helps many groups in need and has over 20,000 volunteers who help provide assistance to the homeless in many different ways. They run the Matthew Talbot Hostel for Men which provides up to 200 beds and serves 1000 free meals each day. They also run the St Vincent de Paul society night patrol. This takes place every night on the streets of Sydney and around the state. They go where homeless people gather delivering sandwiches, tea and coffee, blankets and jumpers as well as offering friendship and support. |
|        | - Health services for the homeless are provided by Area Health services, through hospital and community health services, and through specialist services such as the sexual health and Indigenous health teams. In addition NSW Health and a number of community agencies employ health workers who provide basic health care and assessment to homeless people in accommodation centres and on the streets. Homeless people also access a range of drug and alcohol services including counselling and support services and detoxification service. Protocols have been developed by the key government agencies to improve the access of homeless people to both these types of services. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing</th>
<th>Department of Housing</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In partnership with the community, industry and individuals, the Department provides safe, decent and affordable housing opportunities for people on low incomes so that they can live with dignity, find support if needed and achieve sustainable futures. It provides short-term temporary accommodation for homeless people through the purchase of low cost private sector hotel or motel accommodation. DOH also helps people to establish private tenancies and pays rental arrears to prevent evictions by private landlords. Temporary accommodation may also be provided by local governments and the DOH.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department of Community services</strong></td>
<td>The NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) is the leading NSW Government agency responsible for community services. Through their Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), DoCS runs the largest State program for homeless people in Australia. SAAP provides accommodation and a range of related support services to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, to return to independent living and to prevent the reoccurrence of homelessness. Their services work to resolve a crisis and re-establish family links where possible. It funds crisis accommodation, provides funding to more than 1200 agencies that help the homeless e.g half way houses, provides advice, information, assessment, referral, case management and outreach and mobile services. (NSW Department of Community Services/ Commonwealth government)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Shelter Organisation</strong></td>
<td>National Shelter is a national peak housing organisation which aims to improve housing access, affordability, appropriateness, safety and security for people who are on low-incomes, or who face disadvantage in the housing system. It works towards this goal by influencing government policy and action, and by raising community awareness in relation to housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Centrelink</strong></td>
<td>Centrelink provides rent assistance to low income households and individuals in the private housing market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Homeless Action Team</strong></td>
<td>works with the DOH to overcome issues experienced by individuals unable to exit SAPP funded accommodation. Their aim is to streamline the process so that individuals and families are able to access long term housing more efficiently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reconnect program</strong></td>
<td>is a new youth homelessness intervention program funded by the Commonwealth department of Family and community services which aims to encourage young people to reconcile their differences with their families and also to improve their educational and training skills. Reconnect services assist young people and their families where there is an imminent risk of early home-leaving or where home-leaving has recently taken place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Federal Organisation of Homelessness Organisation (AFHO)</strong></td>
<td>The role of the AFHO is to improve community awareness and understanding of the issues facing the homeless. Their aim is to represent the interests of more than 1300 homeless assistance services, and contribute to policy development and evaluation of Australia’s homeless service system. This body works collaboratively with “homeless people’s associations, homeless assistance services, state homelessness peak organisations, national peak organisations from other sectors, government, and the broader community to achieve these objectives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discuss the rights, responsibilities, and attitudes of individuals within the groups to the wider community

Rights of the homeless to the community previously discussed

Responsibilities of the homeless to the community

- Keep areas where they find shelter clean
- Utilise services available
- Try to maintain law
- Keep to areas which do not obstruct people or traffic
- Seek legal advice
- Access informal support networks
- Accept help when it is given

Attitudes of the homeless to the community will vary depending on own experiences
Hypothesise about ways of resolving conflict that might exist between the group’s needs and the expectations of the wider community

Increase low cost housing with suitable access to services
With the construction of more low cost housing in areas where services exist, the removal of more homeless people off the streets and temporary accommodation will occur. This will limit people in public areas that currently need them to fulfil basic needs.

Move families through community housing and education.
With continuing education and training and a stable living area for set period of time this will re-habilitate many homeless people giving them a greater opportunity to seek work and thus a stable income. It will also decrease the need for long term public housing as people will have money for their own housing, whether it be renting or eventually buying their own property.

Educating the community about the homeless as a group within the community with special needs and aiming to breakdown the stereotypes of the homeless.
With the removal of many of the stereotypes and generalisations associated with the homeless, the community would be able to work together as one large group to help tackle the homeless and poverty issues; as one voice.

Changes in government legislations that allow special provisions for the homeless:
Change in government legislation is crucial for the homeless. The government needs to provide services and resources through acts which do not penalise the homeless. Due to the homeless being unable to vote, the government needs to understand this and give the homeless a voice in the community.

Make access to financial support for the homeless more available by eliminating the need for an address and bank account to receive benefits
By eliminating the need for an address and bank account, the homeless would have less need to beg on the streets and use government agencies such as Centrelink for a more stable income. This financial support could help many homeless people escape the cycle and re-enter society as contributors to it, through seeking employment etc.

Prevention and early intervention to reduce the number of homeless:
With the prevention of the growing number of homeless people in Australia, society can combat many issues associated with the homeless. Funding can be reinvested in other areas, government benefits would reduce and society as a whole would be closer; with less of an economic gap.

More effective and accessible rehabilitation programs for the alcoholics:
With rehabilitation, homeless alcoholics would have more money to spend on basic needs and wants as well as a larger opportunity of gaining and maintaining a job.

Increased support for those with disabilities, particularly mental disorders:
With many disabilities untreated on the streets, increased support is needed in the way of doctors, specialists, rehabilitation and access to medicine for the homeless. This would again decrease the population of homeless people, as often families refuse to care for disabled members and are ‘outcast’ onto the street. This support would allow these people to care for themselves and possibly seek jobs and thus an income.

Greater access to counselling:
Many homeless people have been through crisis such as domestic violence and as a result ended up on the streets. Counselling would allow these individuals to express their feelings and help them to move on from those negative experiences and possibly start a new life with support and escape living on the streets.

Programs to reduce levels of domestic violence and alcohol and other drug misuse in the community
Decrease the number of fines incurred by homeless
Compulsory employment and skills training rather than jail
Allowed use of charity address for welfare payment and voting rights
Youth

- **Legal definition**
  There is no agreed definition of a young person in international or Australian law. The term has evolved to act as a bridge between childhood and adulthood. The span of 10-24 is used by the Australian Medical Association and the World Health Organisation to define health.

- **Social definition**
  The early part of life and growth. It includes the years between childhood and maturity in which they are being cared for. They are often receiving some form of education or training. Most youth go to school and live in a home environment under parental or guardian supervision. It is a time when a person reflects on their life, examines choices, considers the future and recognizes the opportunities available to them. It is also a time when roles, relationships and attitudes about life are questioned and independence is slowly established. It is characterised by rapid physical changes as well as emotion and intellectual change and maturity. For some it may be a time of confusion, stress and conflict. Some of this group are reliant upon others for the provision of their needs.
- Identifying characteristics
Youth undergo the transition from childhood to adulthood. They go through enormous changes associated with early, middle and late adolescence, which involve physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development. There are physical changes such as facial hair, broadening of shoulders, voice deepening and developing muscles in boys and broadening of hips, development of breasts and growing taller in females. They want assurance and stability for dealing with these changes such as developing their first period for females.

Hormonal changes associated with puberty influence both the physical characteristics and the feelings of young people. Youth tend to have mixed emotions due to stress and hormones changing as they are growing. Although they are still dependent on adults, peers become significant at this time, as do a yearning for independence, sense of identity and need for self-direction. They experience emotional, mental and social maturation. Their ability to think and reason becomes more developed.

Youth tend to want more privacy, food (major growing stage), independence and social opportunities. Another characteristic of this age is developing closer friendships and in particular with males. They often have needs and wants that they cannot afford.

Because adolescents yearn for independence their often rebel and perform risk-taking behaviour and experimentation. Young people engage in dangerous and reckless activities which endangers their health and safety. Young people today are eating unhealthy food and are exposed to a larger drug culture. Sexual promiscuity has increased in young people and the consequences are more dire with the possibility of contracting HIV aids, Hepatitis B and other STIs.
- **Special needs**

Males and females need adequate rest and relaxation, safe housing, privacy, coping strategies, sporting opportunities, positive people to look up to, peer acceptance, social and financial support, spiritual guidance, nutritious diets, independence from their families, work opportunities (part-time work), full education, age appropriate health care and supportive home environments which they feel safe living in.

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<tr>
<th>Needs (Classify specific needs and prioritise the significance of each to different groups)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access to services</strong></td>
<td>Many services available to this group, emergency help, crisis help, employment, education, social security, health, fitness, information groups. Awareness needs to be increased to be able to access the services with confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>Young people need an education that will be meaningful for life. They need to learn skills that will empower them and increase their chances of employment. They need flexible learning patterns and opportunities for further education or vocational opportunities. Education and educational resources are available to all and within school and other educational institutions there are counsellors, social workers, youth allowance, career advisers and others to help meet the educational needs on the youth age group. The better their education the more chances of employment. Further education after school is also available, such as collages. TAFE and university. The cost of an education – particularly at tertiary level, can be straining on a young person’s finances. Youth allowance from Centrelink can assist with this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment</strong></td>
<td>Young people need access to employment opportunities. For many youth this will mainly be a number of part time jobs. Many young people will be unable to find suitable employment and will need to develop employment-training skills. It is the responsibility of the adolescent to find a suitable job or plan for a future career and it’s the families’ responsibility to support and encourage them so they can develop some financial independence. It is the communities’ responsibility to provide resources to aid youth in finding employment. It is important if youth are studying while working that the manager is flexible about managing school and work. There are formal community resources available for youth to assist employment including: Job networks, training courses, apprenticeship programs, employment and training services. There are also informal resources available such as: family, peers, teachers and coaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial support</strong></td>
<td>Young people need financial assistance from parent’s whilst living at home. They may also need financial assistance from the government in the form of Youth, living away from home, family and rent allowances. Parental income and social location can affect the amount of assistance that can be provided. Parents who are financially secure can maintain their children as dependent youth for a longer time. Many youth, particularly in the 20-24 yr age bracket are financially independent. Their personal income allows them to satisfy their own needs. Need financial support to help them with their daily lives, usually given by parents when living at home.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td>Many have a good health but they need access to a range of healthcare services appropriate to their needs. Many are risk takers and have mental and emotional problems. This age bracket has an increased rate of suicide particularly males. The youth need to have access to a range of healthcare services when needed. They also need a Medicare card of their own so that they can privately seek medical attention. Not only do they need healthcare but also they need to be educated on health issues such as drugs, alcohol, smoking, sexual intercourse and the outcomes and safe sex contraception. Particular issues are of importance such as road and traffic related injuries, body image, mental illness and suicide.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td>Most live at home with parents. In this environment it needs to be safe, well maintained and provide privacy. As they grow older, they need to develop independence by moving out of home. They need housing that is close to transport and facilities used by young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Security and safety</strong></td>
<td>Need to feel safe and secure wherever they are; at home, school, work or in the community. A positive environment lowers involvement in violent behaviour, drugs, unsafe sex etc. The youth need to feel safe but at the same time gain independence to develop confidence. They need to feel valued and wanted and have adequate resources available to them, as well as a supportive peer group, and educators or employers who are interested in the individuals wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-esteem</strong></td>
<td>Need to feel good about themselves, participation in sport and other endeavours can develop this. May suffer low self esteem due to unemployment, poor self image, peer pressure or relationship problems. Youth need friends, family and school to ensure a positive self-esteem. Parents must be sure to give praise and encouragement to counteract various other messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sense of identity</strong></td>
<td>How we see ourselves affects our self-esteem. Young people need to be given positive images of themselves in order to develop a sense of identity that leads to positive self-esteem. Youth need to be respected and appreciated by family members. They need to develop friendships with peers in and out of school. Young people tend to look towards peers rather than parents and family to gain a sense of identity. Unfortunately, young people can often be stereotyped in society, which makes them lose faith in their own sense of self. Individuals need a sense of purpose, and need to feel like contributing members of society.</td>
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- **Government policies and regulations**

The government has developed rights for the youth to assist them in life. The following policies and regulations in place for youths are to ensure their safety on the road, ensure their health and well-being, and their emotional stability. They protect and guide young people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Act 1990 (NSW)</strong></td>
<td>Is one of many acts that ensures the educational needs of youth are met by having a compulsory schooling system in place for youth up to the age of fifteen. That education gives that child a good start for beginning life, and is legally able to start a full-time job at this age. It also explains that it is an offence to fail to send the child to school, and the regulatory nature of registering enrolments and attendances, and providing a certificate of exemption from attending school or particular classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marriage Act 1961 (Commonwealth)</strong></td>
<td>This act specifies a specific age for getting married and that it must be authorised for a person under 18 in exceptional circumstances. This is to guide and protect youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commonwealth Crimes Act 1914</strong></td>
<td>Specifies that it is illegal for people under the age of 16 to have sexual intercourse. It is designed to protect young and innocent children from physical and psychological harm caused by engaging in sexual intercourse before he or she is mature enough to consent to such activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Protection (Offenders prohibition orders) Act 2004</strong></td>
<td>This details the protection of young people through measures such as employment screening.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Liquor Act 1982</strong></td>
<td>Sets a limit on the age at which you can buy and drink alcohol (18 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Advisory Council Act 1989</strong></td>
<td>Under this act the Youth Advisory Council was established to ensure that Young people participate in the development of Government policies and programs that concern them. The youth advisory council advises the NSW Government on: - Issues of concern to young people (aged 12-25) in NSW; - Government policies relating to young people; and, - Youth-related programs. They help develop the activities associated with youth week in the local area.</td>
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</table>

**Others- Acts which protect children in NSW include:**
- **Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000**
- **Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998**
- **Child Welfare (Commonwealth Agreement Ratification Act) 1941**
- **Child Welfare (Commonwealth Agreement Ratification Act) 1962**
- **Children and Young Persons (Care & Protection) Act 1998**
- **Children (Care and protection) Act 1987**
- **Children (Community & Service Orders) Act 1987**
- **Children (Criminal Proceedings Act) 1987**
- **Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987**
- **Children (Interstate Transfer of Offenders) Act 1988**
- **Children (Protection and Parental Responsibility) Act 1997**
- **Children’s Court Act 1987**
- **Age limits for smoking, voting, driving permit (16 NSW), Red P plates (17), tattoos, body piercing without parental permission.**

**NSW Youth Policy 2002-2006** is a universal framework targeting all young people in this state. The policy will ensure that young people already doing well continue to do so. It also recognises that young people are a diverse group, whose needs differ according to their social, economic and cultural backgrounds and their support requirements. The policy has been developed to inform young people, their families and organisations that serve them about the outcomes the NSW Government seeks for young people. It provides strategic direction and an overview of NSW activities for young people under a single framework. Parallel with the aim of this policy is a commitment that vulnerable young people get the extra support they need, which is the focus of the Better Futures Framework. It also incorporates the increasing base of evidence about what works for young people. This policy is formulated using the help of young people by them telling what works best for them. In other words the formulation of this policy as well as the results of it involves giving responsibility, encouraging participation and valuing their contribution. This policy is based on increasing participation of young people in the community and involving them in the decisions and processes that impact on their lives.
- Community responsibility

The community has many responsibilities in relation to the youth. They have a responsibility to:
- Not exploit or mislead the age due to their vulnerability.
- To encourage their independence, individuality and dignity.
- To be tolerant and patient
- To develop a positive view of youth.
- To give opportunities for youth to be recognised for their skills and talents.
- To not discriminate against them based on age.
- Inform them of the available services
- Provide education
- Ensure their safety on the road
- Help them to feel respected and valued
- To treat youth as an individuals not stereotype them into one group.
- To be open to their ideas and opinions.
- To not have preconceived ideas about their capabilities
- Recognise the changing needs and requirements of youths.
- To provide work opportunities
- To provide social events e.g community dances, spiritual commitments, and community care.
- Providing local libraries as a study place away from home.
- Provide sporting fields as place for recreation and team competition in order to encourage positive youth development.
- Drop in centres and refuges for youths in crisis in order to maintain high levels of balance and happiness amongst youth needing help.
- Local transport systems such as buses trains- to develop a sense of independence and a means of travel to educational, social and sporting facilities.
- Provide youth with concession cards and other age appropriate discounts to facilities.
- Ensure a safe environment at school.

Some community members join service groups to fulfil their perceived responsibility to youth. They may work for free advice lines such as lifeline and kids help line and other volunteer organisations to ensure well-being for youth in a community. While some of these community groups are funded by the government they are not possible without the community volunteers.
Understanding young people's rights is a difficult thing. There is not just one document describing them. They come from many different places. Also, there are legal rights (stated by law) Convention Rights and moral rights (based on people’s sense of what is fair or just).

Youths have democratic rights like other age groups covered by the Universal declaration of Human rights, such as the right to life, freedom from torture, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion etc. These human rights are the same for all people everywhere – male and female, young and old, rich and poor, regardless of our background, where we live, what we think or what we believe. This is what makes human rights ‘universal’. However youth are particularly vulnerable so they also have particular rights that recognise their special need for protection and independence. For instance in Australia voting in local, state and federal elections over the age of eighteen. The right to obtain a learner’s driver’s licence at sixteen, drink and club at eighteen, as well as buying cigarettes, getting tattooed and marrying without parental consent.

The United Nations convention on the rights of the child is one convention that applies to the lives of youth all over the world (however only covers those under the age of 18) This is an international agreement and Australia is signatory to this convention. It is not law but outlines standards that governments should consider when making laws. It ensures that children around the world are protected from enslavement and various other human rights issues. Under the Convention youth have the right to the right to be free from sexual and economic exploitation, the right to your own opinion, and the right to education, health care and economic opportunity. The Convention says that your family is mainly responsible for your care and protection. However, in any legal process affecting you, the Convention says that the 'best interests of the child' must be the main consideration, and that your opinion should be heard. The Convention and its acceptance by so many countries has heightened recognition of the fundamental human dignity of all children and the urgency of ensuring their well-being and development. The Convention makes clear the idea that a basic quality of life should be the right of all children, rather than a privilege enjoyed by a few.

The Convention on the Rights of the child has 54 articles placing rulings for various issues regarding the Right of the Child. Following, are some of the articles, summarised:

**Article 1**: The Convention covers all human beings under eighteen

**Article 3**: All actions taken regarding children will be taken in the best interests of the child. Child protection laws and care will be implemented by States Parties, taking into account the duties and responsibilities of legal guardians.

**Article 6**: Parties recognise every child has right to life & shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child

**Article 8**: Respect the child’s right to preserve his/her identity. State parties will provide appropriate assistance and protection where necessary.

**Article 9**: A child is not to be separated from his or her parents against their will except where competent authorities determine it is in the best interests of the child

**Article 12**: States parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his/her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting him/her. These views will be given due consideration keeping in mind the age and maturity of the child.

**Article 14**: Children have freedom of thought, conscience and religion

**Article 15**: Children have a right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly

**Article 19**: State parties shall take all appropriate measures to protect the child from all forms of physical/mental violence, injury/abuse, neglect/negligent treatment, maltreatment/exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in their parent/legal guardians, or any other person who has the care of the child.

**Article 23**: Mentally or physically disabled children should enjoy a full & decent life in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child’s active participation in the community.

In terms of rights youth over 18, the International Convention on Human Rights comes into play for these individuals. As once you are 18, you are legally an adult and are covered by the same laws as adults. This means you no longer need your parents’ permission to do things. Before you turn 18, the law will sometimes say how old you have to be to do certain things. In other cases it’s not so clear. If there's no law setting an age limit,
it's up to you to work out with your parents what you can and can't do. Once you turn 18 you are generally able to carry out all legal activities, such as voting, entering into a valid contract, marriage, buying alcohol and obtaining a driver's licence. Some activities can be legally carried out before you turn 18, for example, getting a job, but there are strict legal requirements in place in order to protect the interests of young people and the community's interests as a whole.

For example:

- If you are under 17 years of age and wish to leave home or have left home, the Children's Court and Department of Human Services can intervene
- If you want to obtain medical advice or treatment from a doctor and are under 18 years of age, the doctor may inform your parents and require the consent of your parents
- If you are above 16 years and mature enough to understand the nature of the treatment and its likely consequences, then the doctor probably won't consult your parents

None of the rights mentioned in either of these conventions are too much to ask from any individual in society. These conventions prescribe rights which are reasonable, and are how we would all like to be treated.
## Factors affecting access to resources

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>Young people have difficulty identifying and confidently using community resources because of their limited life experience. They may however be technologically more confident. Age also determines the resources you can receive from the government e.g. Youth allowance.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Disability</strong></td>
<td>On one hand individuals may be entitled to additional services because of disability. A disability may also influence the individual’s ability to get about, to read a phone book or access the internet in search of services. Being young and having a disability would be very hard to gain a positive self identity and self-esteem, this means fitting in with our friendship groups will be much harder. Access resources will also be very difficult due to lack of confidence and physical strength. For disabled youth, they may need extra support to access resources, and if they wished, for personal reasons, to access resources alone it may be difficult, causing apprehension in accessing the resource and getting the help they require.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>When people are education they can empower themselves. An individual’s level of education and life experience can influence their ability to identify access and effectively use resources. Education also influences a number of other factors such as employment, health status, and financial resources that increase your ability to access resources. Education enables young people to make more informed choices about resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity/culture</strong></td>
<td>Ethnicity and culture may be associated with barriers to accessing resources. A person’s ethnic background or culture can influence their ability or willingness to access sources. Language barriers can make communication difficult. Differences in beliefs and traditions can limit or create opportunities to access resources. Whilst all young people may be entitled to access and utilize a variety of resources, the values and beliefs of that person’s ethnic or cultural background may not permit them using them. They may be apprehensive due to fear of discrimination, or if there are language barriers and the individual does not speak clear English. Some cultural groups discourage or forbid young girls to engage in certain behaviour because of beliefs about femininity. This could restrict their ability to access resources. The difficulty can also be caught between the values and expectations of peers and of the family.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td>Being male or female can influence the individual’s ability to access resources because many are gender specific. We also know that men and women communicate differently. Men may find it difficult to express feelings and emotions and ask for help. Resources are sometimes gender specific e.g. Women’s health centres. It has also been seen that younger men are less willing to seek medical assistance. For instance in terms of psychological help and counselling, males tend to look internally for help with their issues where females would prefer to get outside help. This is often due to the expectations society places on men to hold in their emotions. The result of this is, unfortunately, the higher youth suicide rate among males in comparison to their female peers. Prevailing notions of masculinity and femininity contribute to health behaviour that is harmful for the young person. Young people often develop values, beliefs, and behaviours that are closely associated with, and influenced by traditional perspectives of masculinity and femininity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>Where a person lives will influence his or her ability to access resources. Those living in the country will have access to different resources to those living in the city. Where a young person lives influences how well they can access resources. In urban area’s distance isn’t really a factor limiting resource access as there are many forms of cost effective public transport services running. However, in smaller rural towns, public transport services may be irregular or non-existing therefore making travelling to access a variety of resources more difficult. If they live far away from resources needed it could become very costly, and make it much more difficult to meet their needs. It is often difficult, too, for individuals to access resources due to lack of transport, and also issues such as not wanting their parents to know about where they have been. For instance if an individual wishes to go to the doctor to get a pregnancy test, and her parents do not know she is sexually active, and she has no way of getting to the doctors without her parents knowing or asking her questions about it, she may be apprehensive about accessing this resource and experience troubles in that regard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-economic status</strong></td>
<td>Socioeconomic status influences where we live, the car we have, the clothes we wear and the resources we are able to access. Many forms of support are based on income and assets. Socioeconomic status will be represented in a variety of levels. There will be those who are financially secure and who can choose the resources they wish to access. And those who either rely some part or wholly on financial assistance. Many youth are disadvantaged socioeconomically. This may be because they are unemployed, students, or paid poor wages because of their age and level of experience of skills.</td>
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</table>
Societal attitudes towards the group

It is difficult to determine societal attitudes as individual perceptions of young people will generally be based on experience. This may be positive, as when an older person is offered assistance by a young person or negative when a youth is abusive at a train station. The individual will use these experiences and their own memories of being young to make comparisons or judgments and arrive at a conclusion about all young people.

However, often the only experience they have had with young people is through the media. This can be negative as there are elements in the mass media that perpetuate negative stereotypes of young people. This can have a strong influence on societal attitudes towards young people. It would be beneficial if some elements of the media took greater care to represent young people more positively and give less emphasis to the small isolated groups. The perpetuating of stereotypes can also influence young people not to experiment in expressing themselves in other ways. If no alternative image or subcultures are presented, then they are likely to act out established roles rather than establish their own identity. However, if an individual works with youth in the community on various programs which youth are involved in organising, a general positive image will be present.

Generally though, the image of youth according to society (though there are exceptions) is that they are immature troublemakers, who act irresponsibly and inappropriately. The media tends to focus on the negative things which happen amongst our society – in all groups. For instance, although on the news we sometimes might see positive things (e.g., Young Australian of the Year Award) most of the things which are shown over and over again, and really drummed into the public's brains, are things like drink driving incidents, and gatecrashing incidents at parties – among other things. It’s similar to the theory about when you go shopping – if you get good service, you are not as likely to go home and tell your friends about how lovely the retail assistant was to you. However, if you go to a shop and get horrible service, it is possible that you will go home and tell friends not to shop there, because of the bad service. By this you can see how we often will overlook the positive only to take more notice of the negative.
- Issues of concern for the group

Stress & Mental health
There is a lot of stress, currently, put on young people to do well in their education – arguably a lot more than in the past. Parents need to be flexible to a variety of options for their children such as university, TAFE and apprenticeships. There also needs to be more education for parents, in relation to parenting young people and reducing stress. This is particularly important because of the prevalence of mental health in youth. It currently accounts for 74% of non-communicable disease in young people (for both males and females). Females are more prone to depression and eating disorders whereas suicide is substantially more common among males.

Injury in particular Road and traffic injuries
Injury is the second major burden to health for young people and this is particularly true for males. It is the leading cause of death for this age group (motor vehicle accidents followed by self-harm).

Employment
It is often difficult for young people to find employment, particularly employment that is flexible to school and recreation. This is evident through the higher level of unemployment in youth. It is also difficult to find work that is sustainable. In a small business it may be possible for the individual to inform the person who does the rosters that they require a minimum of two, for example, shifts per week, and a maximum of four. Employment should be convenient for both the employer and the employee.

Lifestyle behaviours
Young people generally behave in dangerous and reckless activities which endanger their health and safety and have the potential to influence their future health. Of particular concern is the likelihood of developing degenerative diseases. This takes into consideration factors such as youths generally poor nutrition and physical activity patterns, exposure to the sun, drug use and sexual behaviour. The invincible attitude of young people makes them think they can cope with drinking, smoking etc. but over time effects will become apparent through diseases such as cancer and CVD. Degenerative diseases such as CVD and emphysema begin with unhealthy habits such as smoking which are often sustained throughout life. As lifestyle diseases arise later in life young people find it difficult to perceive themselves as being at risk of suffering from these debilitating diseases. Sexual promiscuity has increased in young people and the consequences are more dire with the possibility of contracting HIV aids, Hepatitis B and other STIs.

Violence & Bullying
In this age group bullying, sexual assault/harassment, homophobic vilification and domestic abuse are an issue of concern.
Conflict between group and community interests

Youth are often viewed as one homogenous group. This by itself causes conflict between group and community interests. The negative stereotypes about teenagers are fuelled by the media's sensationalising of problems and downplaying of the positive impact of young people. For many young people, this causes conflict as they simply want to be viewed as individuals. The constant variation in expectations causes conflict for this group as they are constantly trying to discover their expectations. Some of the community treat them like adults and expect them to act that way while others continue to treat them like children.

Conflicting beliefs can lead to misunderstanding in society. Young people have different values about what is acceptable behaviour. For instance, the more laid back attitude of young people often clashes with the more strict views of some of the elderly. Many elderly people think that young people no longer have respect for themselves and others. However, this is more likely due to differing values such as attitudes towards sexuality and religion. Young people today are less conservative than those of the past, therefore many of their values conflict with those older than them.

There is often conflict on the road particularly between youth and the elderly. Young people due to often driving at a much faster speed can cause conflict particularly when the elderly often drive much slower. This can cause frustration in both groups when travelling on the road. Conflict also arises when young people take risks on the road that endanger others.
Power within the group and the community

While Young People may often feel powerless to many factors in their lives there are a variety of programs and legislation that give power to youth. These recognise the importance of young people in the future of Australia. There are a variety of opportunities available to young people to adopt leadership roles, develop citizenship or participate in community service both through schools and outside schooling. Young people have power if they are willing to give the effort. Some of these include:

The National Youth Roundtable managed by Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services is the centerpiece of the Australian Government's youth consultation mechanisms. It brings together young people to discuss issues that have an impact on youth. Roundtable members are from all States and Territories and various cultural backgrounds. Members work in collaboration with Government departments, members of parliament and consult with their communities.

Youth Advisory Council Act 1989- Under this act the Youth Advisory Council was established to ensure that Young people participate in the development of Government policies and programs that concern them. The youth advisory council advises the NSW Government on:
- Issues of concern to young people (aged 12-25) in NSW;
- Government policies relating to young people; and,
- Youth-related programs.
They help develop the activities associated with youth week in the local area.

Pastoral care policy- This policy is based on giving responsibility, encouraging participation and valuing young people’s contribution. Various activities such as peer support program- where year 11 students are designated to a group of yr 7 students develops responsibility and leadership in the older students and helps the younger students feel comfortable to participate in school life while making their transition from secondary school as smooth as possible. Within this policy young people meet as a group of the morning. This develops attitudes that makes students feel safe, supported, worthy and cared for which ultimately encourages them to participate in various aspects of learning and social life. Students feel proud to represent the school as a whole. This policy provides an environment that builds and nurtures relationships, as well as strengthens fractured relationships. This is fundamental to effective learning and teaching. This policy aims to empower each person to be optimistic in spirit and positive in their outlook to life. This policy is implemented through merit systems, restorative action procedures, the uniform policy, the litter policy, associated support documentation.

NSW Youth Policy 2002-2006- The NSW Youth Policy 2002-2006 is a universal framework targeting all young people in this state. The policy will ensure that young people already doing well continue to do so. It also recognises that young people are a diverse group, whose needs differ according to their social, economic and cultural backgrounds and their support requirements. The policy has been developed to inform young people, their families and organisations that serve them about the outcomes the NSW Government seeks for young people. It provides strategic direction and an overview of NSW activities for young people under a single framework. Parallel with the aim of this policy is a commitment that vulnerable young people get the extra support they need, which is the focus of the Better Futures Framework. The policy builds on the directions set in the previous NSW Youth Policy, Focus on Young People, released in 1998. It also incorporates the increasing base of evidence about what works for young people. This policy is formulated using the help of young people by them telling what works best for them. In other words the formulation of this policy as well as the results of it involves giving responsibility, encouraging participation and valuing their contribution. This policy is based on increasing participation of young people in the community and involving them in the decisions and processes that impact on their lives.

Within school is the Student Representative Council (SRC). Members of the SRC are involved in a variety of activities such as presentations at assemblies, welcoming and social committee, supporting younger students and assistance with canteen. SRCs work democratically to represent the student body in school decision-making. Students work together, with help from a staff member, to improve school life and to contribute students’ ideas. SRC encourages students to become more active in the decisions that affect them. It provides
the opportunity for the students to interact with teachers, parents and volunteers. It gives students a crucial leadership role within their school environment. They not only learn and gain respect they create a more harmonious environment. The Government has led the development of a ‘Charter for SRCs’ to build strong SRCs in primary and secondary schools. However not everyone can be a school captain or member of the SRC so schools provide other opportunities for young people to adopt such roles and be part of the student voice. Other opportunities that schools provide include: - House captains, Environment clubs or other groups e.g St Vincent De Paul committee, peer tutoring groups, class captains, sport’s, peer mediation, debating, arts events including music, art and drama, cultural events, academic competitions and events.

There are many opportunities available for young people for leadership roles, developing citizenship and participating in community services outside of school. One example is the Youth Advisory Council. This was established to ensure that young people participate in the development of government policies and programs that concern them. They advise the NSW Government on: Issues of concern to young people (aged 12-25) in NSW; Government policies relating to young people; and, Youth-related programs.

The National Youth Roundtable managed by Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services is the centerpiece of the Australian Government's youth consultation mechanisms. It brings together young people to discuss issues that have an impact on youth. Roundtable members are from all States and Territories and various cultural backgrounds. Members work in collaboration with Government departments, members of parliament and consult with their communities.

On top of this there are a variety of youth of the year programs such as ‘Lions Youth of the Year program’. This is a community project designed to encourage, foster and develop leadership qualities in young Australians.
Youth make many positive contributions to the community. In fact the many contributions they make are identified through Youth Week. This week is dedicated to highlighting, and acknowledging the positive contributions of youth.

One way young people contribute to the community is through engaging in part time or casual work as well as apprentices and traineeships. This helps with the community as they are more available and can often fill in for other members of the community who have families or other duties. On top of this they are large consumers which helps with the economy of the general community. They are most likely to spend the money they earn in their part-time work on products such as clothing, and accessories.

Young people are also one of the largest groups of people that volunteer their time often within schools such as SRC programs and out of school programs such as Red Shield Appeal, 40 hr famine, Caritas Australia Sleep out and the many fundraising events that are aimed at young people. They often volunteer for groups such as surf life saving which provides safety at the beach for the whole community. This is also true for many young people donating their time to referee sporting carnivals and games for younger or older members of the sporting community. Young people also volunteer their time to entertain the community in the way of concerts and organised theatre. Most of these contributions are due to having more available time.

In addition, young people also make a great contribution in the world of technology, often having the knowledge of computers, mobile phones, and other pieces devices and are able to help the older generations become learned in these practices.

Young people add tremendous value to dialogues on various issues in the community offering different perspectives and new ideas. They often provide fresh solutions to problems.

Young people also make up a large proportion of sporting communities. The large number of young people that play sport enables clubs to be viable and thus provide facilities for other members of the community. With such a large membership of young people clubs would perhaps not be able to maintain the upkeep of fields etc for other groups.
Various government assistance programs and community service groups exist to assist young people in fulfilling their needs. These include social groups, groups within the school system to provide with extra-curricular education and experience, government agencies such as Centrelink, among many more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to services</th>
<th>Concession cards &amp; rates allow cheaper travel on public transport for young people. Also including pass passes (now T Cards also) where students do not have to pay for their public transport to and from school, if they live outside of a certain radius from the school. Youth-LEAP an initiative that aims to increase the awareness of youth initiatives nationally so that all young people will have access to programs, opportunities and resources to develop vital enterprise and leadership skills.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Assistance for Isolated Children is payments for families with a child who cannot attend school locally because of distance or special needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Job placement, education and training helps in finding jobs for those at risk of becoming homeless.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td>Youth Allowance For full time students 16-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Youth health services &amp; Community health centres offers counselling services, women’s health &amp; pregnancy tests, STD screening, youth social groups (such as a gardening group, a gothic group, among others) as well as safe sex supplies and when needed, the morning after pill for females. These services are all confidential. Kids Helpline, Lifeline, Reachout and other similar phone &amp; internet support services offer emotional support and/or counselling services when needed most. Legislation monitoring alcohol limits in L &amp; P plate drivers is a vital legislation to improve safety for young people on the roads, effectively saving lives, and saving people from debilitating accident and injury</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Youth Housing Services offer affordable accommodation to individuals who do not live with their families.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security and Safety</td>
<td>PCYC- Offers a safe environment in which young people can hang out play sport, go to concerts, community dances etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>Youth Groups and Community Centres give individuals a social outlet to meet new people and have new experiences with all different types of people. Community centres often run free programs for individuals to go along and use Internet Café or learn to play the guitar for example. Extra curricular programs in schools and universities such as Student Representative Councils. These councils give young people a chance to speak up and help out in their place of education, in order to develop a sense of leadership and worthwhile in the student. Reach Out- Helping people get through tough times with factual information and inspiring stories.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense of identity</td>
<td>Make a noise- project for young people, serves as a youth voice portal. Promotes an environment that is more supportive of the youth, promotes self esteem and sense of identity.</td>
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</table>
- Discuss the rights, responsibilities and attitudes of individuals within the group to the wider community

Rights- previously discussed

Responsibilities-
For contribution to the wellbeing of the themselves and the general community young people have the responsibility to:
- Young people have the responsibility to take the consequences for their actions and do this in a mature way.
- To respect others in the community
- To promote the economy where possible
- To partake in education, employment or employment training
- To act lawfully, obey laws, rules and regulations.
- In order to contribute to both their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of the generally community, individuals should to be willing to be involved in their own lives, as well as that of the community. Individuals need to contribute positively to their environment whether it is their home environment, local area, or school environment, among others. This is required so as they feel a sense of satisfaction and worthiness within their environments, as well as for the overall improvement of the environment in question.
- The responsibility to voice your opinion only when appropriate.
- To act respectfully
- Partake in community activities which make society a better place to live in.

These responsibilities are just the basis of what is asked from young people within society, and although some, for some people may be difficult to achieve (sometimes particularly because of things like the ‘poverty circle’ [ie – parents are impoverished, so the children will be, then their children etc.], and the way individuals have been bought up in their family life) for the most part of society they are small asks in contributing to their own future – ie: you do not destroy what you will have to live in for the next 50 or so years.

Attitudes of individuals- will vary between each individual depending on a variety of factors…stubbornness, cynicism, sarcasm, open minded, independence.