



MONASH University

Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences

Prepared by:

Susan Feldman

21 November 2008, AAG, Perth

FOOD FOR ALL

The children will be there to help:
Implications of changing family
circumstances for accessing food

Focus Group theme: Support from family in an environment of change

- **Expectations and capacity of the family**
- **A cultural perspective on family support**
- **Alternatives to family support**

Expectations and Capacity: Can we rely on assistance from our family?

- *“It’s being said here that it’s not necessarily that the kids are unwilling, but consider that the kids are... apart from their family responsibility, some may be in debt and therefore they’re working longer hours. They’re not available because they got to pay off their debt.”*
- *“Say for argument sake, something happened to Jo, it could affect her because she can’t drive and as I said, she lives out of town. It would be hard for her. She would have to have family help of some sort.”*

Expectations and Capacity: Family not always able

- *“I don't like my daughter coming home from work and thinking she has to cook for me. I've had this two weeks and I never even told my family, but I don't because I'm independent and I don't like to put on my family. But my son wouldn't be able to because he lives at I like my independence so I do what I do myself...I just manage myself.”*
- *Jane “I've got a daughter who lives inNow if I had a headache or I felt a bit giddy by the time...”.*
- *Rose “By the time she comes, you'll be dead”.*

Expectations and Capacity: A range of views

- *“The children will be there to help and to at least to bring the shopping over.”*
- *“Family does not always live close by and sometimes people have poor relationships with family and just have to get on with it as best they can.”*
- *“We are also family oriented and we do things together as a family – shopping cooking and such.”*

Expectations and Capacity: A range of views

- *“Well I’ve got a roof over my head, my son pays electricity, the gas, the rates, he pays his house payment, everything. I buy the food which I do not mind. I’ve still got enough money out of my pension so I buy all the food for me and my son”.*

A Cultural Perspective

- Families assist one another – reciprocal relationships between generations
- Live in close proximity to children and family
- Reliance on community support – e.g. Church based organisations – community kitchens
- Sometimes realistic about changing family values and diminished support from children
- Not everyone in specific communities think the same way about family relationships

A Cultural Perspective

- *“When we are not able any longer to do the shopping, to physically drive for example, we will have children or grandchildren. We always put aside some money for older age and then from that money we’ll pay for their travel expenses or that they get us to the place to do the shopping or we’ll give them a little bit of money for them to get richer and in that way they feel to help us in such circumstances”.*
- *“We help each other, no matter if we are old or not. There are other people though with different life styles”.*

A Cultural Perspective

- ***“They live with their children, so this is like a communal household”.***
- ***“I think Alf has experienced it. He came next to his kids here and then they shifted. They moved somewhere else”.***



Alternatives to family support

- 30% of participants said they relied on assistance from family as well as friends and local government

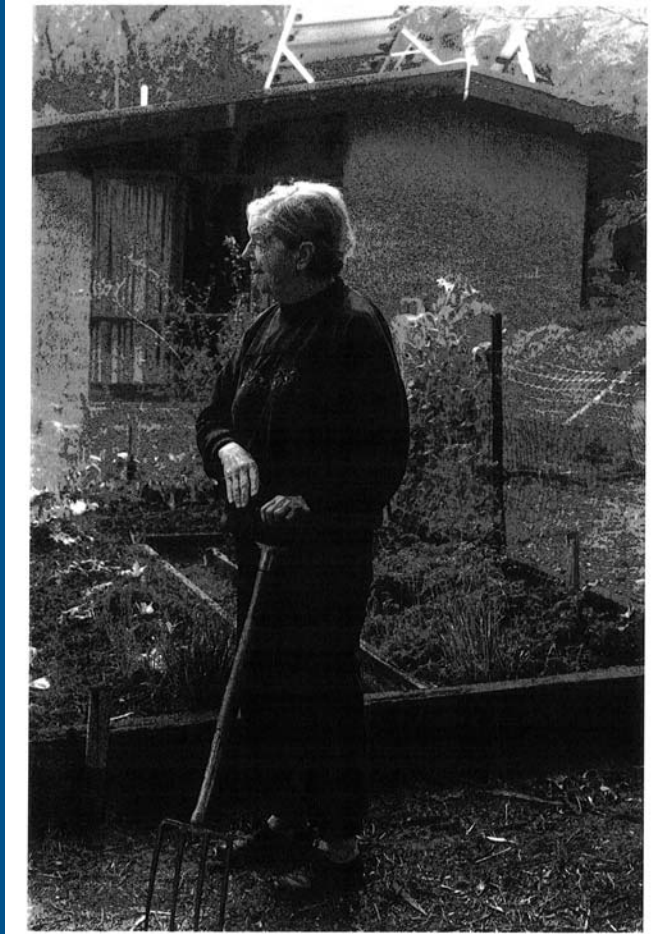
“My friend meets me and she comes around with me, and I tell her; she takes me into every place and I tell her what I want, I have it written down, and she tells me the price and all that and we put it in the trolley.”

“If I wasn’t with my son I would use Meals-on-Wheels or frozen food and quick meals.”

Community filling the gap for family

The most popular community actions that the respondents identified were:

- Home delivery service (56%)
- Growing local fruit and vegetables (48%)
- Cheap/free transport to food outlets ('shopping shuttle') (47%)
- Lunch clubs (36%)
- Increasing public transport routes (35%)
- Community or collective kitchens (including seniors community centre dining room, CALD community church based food services) (32%)



- 12% reported their main source of fresh food was grown in their garden

"We grow mint, peppers, tomatoes, everything. There is not a Macedonian household that doesn't do that."

Communities cooking for their members





*“...it’s vital
that we have
this
community
bus...”*

The dining room...

In response to a question about why participants use the dining room meals service:

“Because we’re lazy [laughter] It’s because the meals are nutritional, we do it.”



In summary: Policy and planning

- **Central role of LGAs**
 - To maintain existing services given an ageing population with increasing proportions of older CALD people
 - To promote an integrated and whole-of-government approach
 - Strategic planning

Policy and planning - key considerations

- **Family, social and community support**
 - Current safety net – voluntary and vulnerable
 - Changing role of family
- **High levels of illiteracy and implications for health promotion**
 - Alternative avenues of information
- **Informal food networks**
 - Extensive hidden local fresh food providers

Policy and planning - key considerations

- **Changing health circumstances with age**
 - Reduced capacity for shopping, private transport, food preparation and cooking
- **Pivotal role of transport**
 - Gender and CALD issues – accessing local providers
 - Local public transport
 - Council Services

Thank you!

