

COLLABORATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

BRIEF REFLECTIONS FROM THE 2014-2016 AUCKLAND COUNCIL SENIORS

ADVISORY PANEL

Mā whero mā pango ka oti ai te mahi

With red and black the work will be complete

This electoral term has seen the establishment of the Seniors Advisory Panel for Auckland Council, the first meeting being held in June 2014. The first few months were spent in coming to an understanding of the roles, relationships and likely outcomes of the panel's activities. The last year has seen the panel take on a more proactive role in a wide number of issues.

Central to our panel's activities was the development of our work programme. This comprised priorities determined by the panel and signed off by the Regional Strategy and Policy Committee in 2014. Once our priorities had been approved, the panel decided on the associated key outcomes it would 'advise' to be achieved by September 2016, on completion of the panel's term.

In addition to the panel's own work programme, an extremely wide number of policies, strategies and projects have been brought to the panel for advice. Most of these items have been initiated by council or council controlled organisation (CCO) staff members (see Appendix).

The following is a general summary only of the achievements the panel believes have been made. The Appendix lists specific activities of our panel.

(A) SENIORS ADVISORY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

1 INCLUSIVENESS

1.1 International Day of the Older Person

There have been some changes for this international day during the panel's term. The panel advocated for a more focused approach, using the occasion to further a key priority issue. Advice was also provided on the key role that the council could play in finding out what activities were going on in local areas and publicising these through its own communications. This year staff from Auckland Libraries advised a number of events planned across the region's libraries. This has been welcomed with much enthusiasm, as it will allow more localised events and activities which can be better linked to local boards. This whole area needs fostering. Members of the panel look forward to taking part in these events along with the mayor's civic reception, which has occurred for some years.

1.2 Positive Imaging of Seniors

The panel has taken an active role in this area, having noted that seniors were almost invisible in council's publications and communications, both internal and external. Where there were images, they tended to be very stereotyped and mono-cultural. Members have taken a wide range of roles in this regard including arrangement of photo shoots, being active in the press, radio and in person. Two members have personally challenged the stereotypes by registering as runners in the International World Masters Games to be held in Auckland in 2017! It has been heartening to see several articles in *Our Auckland*, and to have staff now approach the panel for input into such imaging. It would be very rewarding to see this more formalised with a tool developed to ensure appropriate quality and quantity of imagery in all communications and engagement.

1.3 Cultural Participation

This area has long been of concern as the council, along with many other agencies, has tended to consult largely with the more mainstream, vocal non-governmental organisations (NGOs). While this is to be applauded, a quick glance at the ethnic diversity of Auckland's seniors shows the widening gap in the cultural representative voice. The concern was to ensure especially that kuia and kaumatua were actively consulted, and then the very large range of other cultural communities whose voice often remains unheard. There has been much 'advice' provided to staff on these issues and the panel chose to use its 2016 'summit' to begin to address these issues. The 2016 Seniors Forum was held at the Aotea Centre in July, and attracted around 350 participants from a very wide range of cultural groups across the region. From that event a database of seniors' groups has been compiled, which has been shared with council departments, local boards and the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) to promote more widely, with the intention of encouraging more inclusive participation from a wider range of seniors in local and regional activities. In addition, a large portfolio of photos from the 2016 forum has been added to the communications images database for future use in council publications.

2 AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES

Right from the outset, the panel made it clear that Auckland should become part of the World Health Organisation (WHO) international network of Age-Friendly Cities if it was to be the world's most liveable city. There is much to be gained from this for seniors and all age groups, and few disadvantages as there are no direct costs. Instead it would allow the seniors 'lens' to be applied to all planning in Auckland. Panel members have made a very large contribution in raising awareness of this - especially via the two Auckland District Council of Social Services (ADCROSS) forums where partnership with the panel attracted over 100 attendees at each occasion, and included academic and community leaders as keynote speakers. Input and presentations have been made to council. At this point the Regional Strategy and Policy Committee has accepted the notion 'in principle'. Panel members await the committee's September 2016 meeting, hopeful that Auckland becomes an Age-Friendly City by the end of its term. There will be considerable concern from the senior community if this does not occur. Other activities have included meeting with Dr Alex Kalache), opinion pieces in the *NZ Herald* and *Our Auckland*, promotion at key events including a recent Auckland Conversations panel, and the whole panel meeting with the mayor in December 2015, to raise our concerns about the way such a commitment might best be moved forward.

What has been achieved is the development of descriptive profiles about Auckland seniors that provide baseline information across key domains of the WHO Age-Friendly Cities policy framework that can be used in the establishment of an Age-Friendly Auckland. The descriptive profiles include information presented in the following reports:

- Economic and Social Research and Evaluation Team. (June 2015) *Older Aucklanders: Results from the 2013 Census*. Auckland Council 2013 Census report developed by the Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) at Auckland Council.
- Yeoman, R. and Akehurst, G. (2015) *The housing we'd choose: a study of housing preferences, choices and trade-offs in Auckland*. Auckland Council technical report, TR2015/016. Prepared by Market Economics Limited for Auckland Council. Auckland: Market Economics Limited.
- Bush, Rohan. (March 2016) *Affordable Housing Update*. 21 March 2016 Seniors Advisory Panel Meeting Agenda Item, File CP2016/04484.
- Howell, Kimberley. (May 2016) *SENIORS HOUSING: Issue Identification Paper*. Auckland Council Affordable Housing, Community and Social Policy report.
- *The Status of Older Aucklanders* (Research being conducted with around 800 Auckland Seniors by Gravitas Research & Strategy Ltd for Auckland Council).

Currently seniors groups are discussing with the council the possible establishment of a seniors hub, seen by many as an important step in becoming an Age-Friendly City.

3 HOUSING AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN

3.1 Housing for Seniors

There has been significant input on the housing issue both formally and informally over this period. The panel is of the opinion that the two housing studies mentioned above were likely brought forward because of the panel's advocacy, although they were both flagged in the Auckland Plan. These are very important pieces of work, as they have raised issues not previously studied concerning older Aucklanders. It is hoped that the next step will be a housing options paper. The panel prepared a reflections paper in response to the *Issue Identification Paper* to record for its own purposes the aspects that might need to be considered in future work. It had been hoped that a ten year strategic plan for housing older Aucklanders would be in place by now. While this has not occurred, the above papers will set the groundwork for such a plan. There is an urgent need for this in order to house the burgeoning number of future seniors in Auckland. Such planning needs to take place now.

A wide range of other activities related to housing include membership of the cross-agency group 'Fast Ideas for Affordable Housing', support for the retention of Liston Village for pensioner housing, and the successful representation to Council to limit rent increases. Members have also contributed to research outcomes at Auckland Council that focused on vulnerable older people, and recommended linking research evidence to inform designs for older people's houses. The panel has raised the need to be aware of gender inequities which become amplified in retirement years.

3.2 Council-Owned Housing for Older People

There has been much change in this area with the council seeking an external partner to work with it and Panuku Development Auckland (Panuku) when providing rental accommodation for older Auckland residents. The panel has presented to the council its support for the need to increase the number of housing units, and this change has been made to the Housing Action Plan. Three panel members are also part of the Sector Reference Group (SRG) that Council has established to advise the new joint venture company formed from the partnership between Panuku and the selected partner, the Selwyn Foundation. In addition, significant advice has been provided around design issues for Wilsher Village as well as the design guidelines for all new building.

It is very pleasing to see these guidelines reflecting much of what the panel has been advocating (and reflecting advice about imagery as well as content). The panel has also been informed that its advice in several other areas has been implemented with more positive outcomes for current residents. These include such issues as advice on the criteria for selection for pensioner housing, staff training, establishment of champions and coordinators in the villages, and especially guidelines around facilitating engagement with residents which has increased their participation levels. It is hoped that on-going membership on the SRG will ensure that such advice continues.

3.3 Universal Design

Universal Design (UD) is critical for an ageing population as it ensures that the building of both homes and public spaces are suitable for people of all ages and abilities. UD principles make good sense for designing and building dwellings that include these details right from the outset. The panel has worked closely with the Disability Advisory Panel on this issue. Several joint meetings resulted in our 2015 'summit' being a forum with the very newly-established Panuku Development Auckland's senior management. The joint request was that UD become 'part of the DNA' of Panuku in all its own developments and as a role model for all other developers and planners. Indications to date are that this is starting to occur. The document *Design Brief: Housing for Older People* has incorporated these key issues. Panuku also advises in a recent e-mail that they are now testing these principles in both the public realm and in housing projects.

Council has also established a UD coordinator in its Auckland Design Office to oversee all UD issues. In October 2016 the office is planning a full day seminar on this, alongside an Auckland Conversations event in the evening. Panel members have been asked to be involved in these events. It will be important that future panels continue to keep a watching brief on this and continue to advocate for an Auckland accessible to **all** its citizens.

4 TRANSPORT

The key priority outlined for this was the development of an accessibility plan by Auckland Transport. Such a plan would incorporate many of the mobility issues faced by older people. Auckland Transport's Disability Action Plan is on target to be completed by December this year. Panel members have taken part in the Passenger Transport Accessibility Group (PTAG) and more recently on the Capital Projects Assessment Group (CPAG). The panel has often taken the opportunity to acknowledge the generous hours of free public transport provided to superannuitants. This continues to be a major part of seniors' ability to take an active role in their community. Such participation is known to be a key health benefit, resulting in improved physical, psychological and social wellbeing.

The panel also assisted ADCOSS in organising and participating in a seminar on Accessibility and Auckland Public Transport. A panel member has also presented a paper on trialling an extension of the free off-peak hours such as the Gold Card provisions, and attended the launch of the 'Thank You Driver' training video for bus drivers to ensure they accommodate the diverse needs of public transport users.

With regard to the Super Gold AT HOP card, the panel was very concerned that the well-publicised problems prompted Auckland Transport's first engagement with the panel about this issue. Many of these difficulties could have been prevented if this dialogue had occurred at the planning stage.

5 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Seniors Advisory Panel members were present at the Regional Strategy and Policy Committee meeting when Council determined to apply to WHO to be an international Safe Community. Along with many other sectors, the panel had long advocated for this as a key priority. Safety from injury and crime is a key concern for seniors.

The other priority in health and safety was that Council continue to facilitate the development of a multi-agency elder abuse strategic plan for Auckland. The panel assisted staff in identifying key stakeholders who met for an initial meeting in June 2015. This meeting included the director of the Office for Seniors in Wellington and many other key stakeholders such as the District Health Boards (DHBs). A high level of agreement and buy-in was achieved with all agencies keen to play their part in this initiative. Unfortunately the planned follow-up meeting never occurred. To date there has been no movement on this important issue.

The panel has facilitated important linkages between the council and researchers (especially those associated with the NZ Association of Gerontology), health consumer representatives, health agencies, and a wide range of other work being undertaken on the health and wellbeing of older people. The panel provided significant advice on the civil defence plan for Auckland to ensure it accommodated the needs of vulnerable older people.

(B) ADVICE SOUGHT BY STAFF

Most agenda items have been matters brought to the panel by council staff. A list of these is attached in the Appendix.

It is difficult to know to what extent this advice has resulted in actions taken by staff. However from the limited feedback received there is evidence of action arising from the panel's advice, for example:

- advice regarding rates rebates and postponements has resulted in staff training for both library and customer services staff to better respond to requests for information and assistance from the public
- advice regarding the lack of images of older people has resulted in photo shoots of seniors and increased coverage in publications
- advised changes to texts and images in documents have been made
- advice has resulted in much more engagement with a wider range of seniors groups
- advice about the aural communication needs of older people, especially in relation to age-associated hearing losses and the importance of providing appropriate acoustic environments and amplification, has enhanced awareness of how to facilitate creating more inclusive information exchanges
- advice on the council's pensioner housing regarding design, maintenance, safety, rents and selection criteria
- advice on encouraging and enabling seniors to participate actively in local government elections as questioners, commentators, voters and candidates
- advice about formatting text in different media to accommodate the needs of older people with visual sensory impairment has also been shared with staff
- advice resulted in important changes to strategy documents covering areas as diverse as civil defence, arts and culture and community facilities
- the Hibiscus and Bays Local Board invited two panel members to facilitate engagement with 24 local residents (aged 60+ years) to determine their priorities for the local board plan; a report was produced from the feedback
- at least three local boards now have members holding a seniors portfolio
- several local boards now have specific strategies for seniors in their local board plans, and funding for seniors related programmes has increased
- Panuku Development Auckland has made changes as noted earlier

(C) GENERAL COMMENTS

As a panel we believe that we have increased awareness of the needs and achievements of our generational cohort. There is now a much more diverse social network than would otherwise be available to council staff. Our panel's work programme has created awareness of Auckland's ageing demographic, challenged the invisibility of seniors in many Auckland Council operations and policies, and advised council staff who have been aware of our presence about using elder-friendly approaches when engaging with older people. We have been concerned particularly for those seniors whose voices are infrequently heard, and reminded the council of the need to consider them especially in decision-making. We have therefore increased the council's capability and effectiveness in accommodating the diverse future needs of the city's rapidly changing social demographic profile.

A key to this work has been the networks brought by members, which have provided linkages with a very wide range of sectors, groups and academic institutions. These have facilitated the many undertakings that panel members have engaged in. The panel is made up of highly skilled and experienced members whose contribution of volunteer hours has been considerable as indicated in the appendices.

ON REFLECTION

The considered opinion of our Seniors Advisory Panel members has revealed that currently:

- **seniors are now much more visible in Auckland Council's organisational culture;**
- **we are less stereotyped as our increasing diversity is beginning to be acknowledged;**
- **the value of seniors' work and volunteering is more readily recognised and appreciated;**
- **there are now some key contributory studies that provide a baseline for further research and strategic planning;**
- **and we are well on our way to becoming an Age-Friendly Auckland!**

So our panel members collectively affirm the value of having a Seniors Advisory Panel, and we recommend that in the new term a second Seniors Advisory Panel be appointed, to continue to advocate for Tāmaki-Makaurau seniors - who are a vibrant, vital and rapidly growing part of the wonderful diversity that makes up our Auckland.

APPENDIX

ACTIVITIES OF THE SENIORS ADVISORY PANEL

June 2014 - September 2016

INPUT PROVIDED BY THE PANEL WITH PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL

- The Seniors Panel provided comprehensive feedback on seniors and broader issues on the council's draft long term plan in 2014, and on its annual plans in 2015 and 2016
- Presentation on panel's work programme to the Regional Strategy and Policy Committee 2014
- Presentation on work of the Panel to the Community Development and Safety Committee 2015
- Presentation on Age-Friendly Cities to Community Development and Safety Committee 2016
- Auckland Development Committee: Panel spoke in support of motion to amend Action 5 of Housing Action Plan 2016
- Joint presentation along with the Youth Advisory Panel on the social implications of intensification to the Community Development and Safety Committee 2016

INPUT PROVIDED AT MEETINGS AND IN WRITING

- Status of older Aucklanders research
- SuperGold AT Hop Card
- Pedestrian safety and older people
- Universal access and design
- Draft Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group Plan 2016-2021
- Annual budget 2016-2017
- Housing for Older People project
- World Masters Games 2017
- Panuku Development Auckland
- 2016 local government elections
- Disability Operational Action Plan
- Liston Village (Puketapapa Local Board)
- Understanding the activity needs of older people
- Auckland global identity and story (ATEED)
- Digital Citizenship
- Empowered communities approach
- Multi-sector action plan to prevent family, whanau and sexual violence in Auckland
- Auckland Design Manual
- Housing for Older Persons
- Rates rebate uptake
- Long-term Plan and financial policies for the LTP (2014)

- Community Facilities Customer Experience Project
- Regional Facilities Auckland - Local Board Engagement
- Arts and Culture Strategic Action Plan
- Rental Housing Policy
- Protocols for Council Imaging and Engagement with Older Persons
- Draft Community Facility Network Plan
- Significance and Engagement Policy
- Housing for Older Persons Work Programme
- Draft Local Alcohol Policy
- Draft Local Board Plans

OTHER PRESENTATIONS AND FACILITATIONS

- International Day of the Older Person: presentations in 2014 and 2015 at mayoral morning tea for invited guests, Auckland Town Hall, and opening address at West Auckland event 2015
- Presentation to Selwyn Group Papakura on work of the panel, 2014
- Presentation 2015 to UNESCO Conference: Policies and Practices for Disabled People in Asia and the Pacific
- The panel supported ADCOSS in organising and participating in two public seminars on housing issues for senior citizens
- Age Concern North Shore: Facilitation by the panel of the Symposium on Vulnerable Older People at North Shore Stadium, 2015
- Facilitation and organisation of speakers at two ADCOSS Forums On Age-Friendly Cities 2015 and 2016
- Presentation on work of the panel, Grey Power Regional Meeting, Onehunga, 2015
- Facilitation by members of an engagement discussion with seniors, Hibiscus and Bays Local Board
- Arranged and hosted welcome and visit to Auckland University's Centre for Brain Research for the Vice Governor of Shandong Province, China and her delegation, 20 June, 2016

STRATEGY MEETINGS WITH OTHER AGENCIES

- Ministry of Health - Health of Older Peoples Strategy 2015 and 2016
- Office for Seniors, MSD Positive Ageing Document
- WHO Age-Friendly Cities international advocate Alex Kalache
- Age Concern Auckland and North Shore - World Elder Abuse Day
- Panuku Development Auckland senior management regarding Wilsher Village and universal design
- Member of Deputy Mayor's interagency group 'Fast Ideas for Affordable Housing' - several meetings
- Planning for 2016 Summit with other agencies
- Planning meetings Age Concern North Shore - Vulnerable Older Adults Symposium

- Meeting with St John Northern Region
- Meetings at the Centre for Brain Research regarding dementia-friendly design principles in the built environment
- Meetings with ADCOSS & Grey Power regarding Pensioner Housing, Age-Friendly Cities and Transport Accessibility
- Contact with CCO board members to advocate for more age-friendly environments – especially in relation to seniors’ invisibility
- Linking Ministry of Health staff with council staff to provide improved consultation opportunities for Health of Older People Strategy
- Meeting Grey Power re-establishing of a Seniors Hub
- Consultation meeting regarding Arts and Culture Strategic Action Plan
- Meeting regarding the needs for older people’s communication needs in the face of living with sensory losses such as hearing impairment and impaired vision
- Wide-ranging input to planners and policy makers
- AUT feedback of research to Orewa residents regarding their concerns about the built environment
- Facilitation regarding connecting older people and leisure centres
- Meeting regarding Silver Line telephone counselling for lonely older people

MEETINGS WITH COUNCIL STAFF

- Panel representation on Auckland Council's Local Body Election's Planning Group persuaded it to emphasise seniors’ roles not only as voters but as candidates
- Housing Office, Social Policy and RIMU staff - several meetings re seniors’ housing issues
- Panuku Development Auckland regarding Council Housing for Older People and Universal Design
- Age-Friendly Cities
- Elder Abuse
- Universal Design, Auckland Design Office
- Te Waka Angamua regarding the need for the council to understand more about kaumatua
- Auckland Transport regarding accessibility issues
- Urban Design research
- Civil Defence & Emergency Management
- Research into well-being of older people
- ADHB and WDHB regarding Auckland Council engagement to improve health and social services for older people

SENIOR ADVISORY PANEL'S SUMMITS

2015: Universal Design

In partnership with the Disability Advisory Panel, the Seniors Panel held a forum at Auckland Town Hall with Panuku Development Auckland's newly appointed senior management team. The intention was to have Universal Design become 'part of the DNA ' in every development undertaken in the public and built environment by this new agency. The specific aim of the day was to have this imbedded in the wording of the terms of reference set by the council for this new agency.

2016: Culturally Diverse Auckland Seniors

The aim of this summit was to provide an opportunity for senior groups across the region to come together and celebrate their diversity and profile the activities of their groups. It was also hoped to initiate the development of a much wider database of senior groups for the council to consult with. This was to be shared with council units, local boards, and sent to the national CAB database. An additional aim was to provide opportunities for the capture of an album of seniors' images from Auckland's diverse communities that could be used in future council communications and publications. Around 350 seniors attended from across the region with over 30 groups profiling what they do and how others can become involved. Members attended many planning groups for both these summits and took on a number of active roles at both events.

MEDIA / COMMUNICATIONS

- *NZ Herald* and *Our Auckland*: opinion piece on why Auckland should become an Age-Friendly City
- *NZ Herald* - letter to editor on inclusiveness
- *RNZ* interview Todd Niall - HOP card issues experienced by older people and involvement of MSD in distribution
- Media release regarding entitlement to rates rebate - used widely
- Radio interview 30 minutes with *Senior Focus*, *Planet FM*
- *Our Auckland* photos of panel and key focus of May 2016 edition
- Media release on social response to Auckland's growth (jointly with Youth Advisory panel), June 2016
- Photo shoots including Seniors Forum
- Media release following Seniors Forum was distributed widely and picked up by several outlets: e.g. *East and Bays Courier* had full page spread of colour photos and story from Forum
- ADCOSS magazine - articles on 2016 Seniors Forum and 2016 Towards an Age-Friendly Auckland Forum
- Auckland Conversations '8:80 Cities'. Chair was member of panel for this. Audience of 600 and streamed live from Aotea Centre

OTHER MEETINGS ATTENDED BY MEMBERS ON PANEL BUSINESS OR WHERE THE PANELS' PROGRAMME AND PRIORITIES WERE DISCUSSED

- Age-Friendly Cities: Meeting with Mayor as requested in December 2015, with all panel members
- Visit to Abbeyfield House - all panel members
- Facilities Auckland events - Aotea Precinct and new developments at Auckland Zoo
- Grey Power meeting North Shore
- RIMU Insights Meetings on:
 - i. 2015 MADE Real World Competition, Auckland University Economics Students' Presentations
 - ii. Transport
 - iii. Industry Training System
 - iv. Ethics in the Age of Co-Governance & Big Data: Mātauranga Māori and Indigenous Data Sovereignty
 - v. NZ's Living Standards Framework at a time of unsustainability
 - vi. Flourishing Whānau
- Review of panels chairs' meeting, all panels' Saturday workshop and feedback session on panel review findings
- Have Your Say and other council engagement sessions
- Planning meetings for both summits
- Professor Shanti Ameratunga re Auckland University study about pedestrian safety
- AUT Associate Professor Erica Hinckson – an intergenerational citizen science project to identify and record barriers to physical access in 32 Auckland neighbourhoods
- Input into doctoral student's age-friendly design options, Auckland University's School of Architecture and Planning
- Input into AUT PhD student regarding 85+ year olds' participation in civic life in Auckland
- Membership of national reference group 'Life when Renting' – MBIE's Ageing Well National Science Challenge
- 2016 Summit on 'Finding the Best Fit for Comfortable Living in Older Age' – CRESA's research tool
- 2016 Auckland Conversations - Housing problems in Auckland 8/80 City
- Input regarding bus routes in Glen Eden
- Attendance at Hibiscus and Bays Creative Communities Seniors' Writers Workshop
- Auckland Transport's PTAG & CPAG meetings
- Women's Health Action's 'Creating Health Strategies for Older Women'
- Health Forum
- Centre for Brain Research regarding a Dementia-Friendly Auckland
- Silver Line
- Commission for Financial Capability regarding retirement villages