

Submission to the Office for Seniors

Strategy for an Ageing Population Discussion Document

Auckland Council, August 2018



Mihimihi

Ka mihi ake ai ki ngā maunga here kōrero,
ki ngā pari whakarongo tai,
ki ngā awa tuku kiri o ōna manawhenua,
ōna mana ā-iwi taketake mai, tauiwi atu.
Tāmaki – makau a te rau, murau a te tini, wenerau
a te mano.
Kāhore tō rite i te ao.

*I greet the mountains, repository of all that has been
said of this place,
there I greet the cliffs that have heard the ebb and
flow of the tides of time,
and the rivers that cleansed the forebears of all who
came those born of this land
and the newcomers among us all.
Auckland – beloved of hundreds, famed among the
multitude, envy of thousands.
You are unique in the world.*

Title: Submission on the Strategy for an Ageing Population Discussion Document

Introduction

1. This submission is from Auckland Council (the council) and has been approved by the Environment and Community Committee.

Overall position

2. The council supports the Office of Seniors intent to develop a Strategy for an Ageing Population because:
 - Auckland has the largest population of older people in New Zealand
 - while most of the current 65+ population are well-placed, some face hardship and this is likely to increase
 - the council has committed to becoming a member of the World Health Organisation Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities
 - the intent of the document aligns to the outcomes set out in the Auckland Plan 2050.
3. A suggested vision for the positive ageing Strategy is: *To make New Zealand a place where older people's diversity is valued, they can access opportunities, participate and contribute to an equitable society.*

Ngā tūtohunga / Recommendations

4. The council recommends:
 - that the Strategy and actions be developed in consultation with local authorities, older people and communities
 - strengthening the diversity section to recognise the need for culturally appropriate services to meet the diverse needs of older people
 - promoting the positive and diverse portrayal of older people in all media
 - strengthening discussion on the range of living standards experienced by older people and the need to target investment to support those most in need
 - greater consideration be given to the role and specific needs of kaumātua Māori
 - further consideration be given on how to support accessible and affordable housing choices for older people to enable ageing in place, including:
 - different tenure models
 - raising minimum standards in the built environment and strengthening the application of universal design
 - stronger emphasis on the need for accessible and affordable transport
 - that the Strategy reflects and supports the growing role of older people as volunteers, 'teachers' and caregivers
 - recognising older peoples' changing work needs including supporting initiatives that enable older people to stay in the workforce and transition to retirement

- that the Strategy reflects the importance of health and wellbeing investment in inclusive services, facilities and activities that enable life-long participation, intergenerational activity and social connections
- increased clarification on the role of local authorities in preparing for an ageing population.

Horopaki / Context

5. This Strategy is important to the council as Auckland has the largest population of older people in New Zealand and their geographic distribution is varied between urban and rural settings.
6. In the Auckland region, there are 163,161 older residents which represents 11.5 per cent of the population. The Auckland population of people 65+ is projected to reach 349,800 by 2033.
7. Compared to the rest of New Zealand, this group is significantly more ethnically diverse and less likely to own their own home. The 2013 Census shows that 43.1 per cent of older Aucklanders were born overseas compared with 27.5 per cent of older New Zealanders. Homeownership for Aucklanders aged 65+ is 69.6 per cent, compared to 74.5 per cent for older New Zealanders.
8. In Auckland, there are more older females than older males – an overall ratio of 120 females to 100 males.
9. The diversity of an ageing Auckland population presents challenges and opportunities in terms of infrastructure, transport, housing, healthcare, recreation, leisure, accessibility, social cohesion and work and labour force participation.¹
10. Managing many of these challenges and opportunities is the responsibility of Auckland Council. In Auckland local governance is shared between the Governing Body and 21 local boards. Local boards enable democratic decision making by and on behalf of communities within the local board area. Both bodies will be responsible for implementing the Strategy.

Tātaritanga me ngā tohutohu / Analysis and Advice

Culturally appropriate services required to meet needs of diverse older Aucklanders

11. Auckland's older population is not a homogeneous group. Older Aucklanders identify with over 150 ethnic groups.²
12. Older people, particularly newer migrants, may face language and other barriers to culturally appropriate information and services – particularly in health and social services.
13. The discussion document makes very little mention of Pacific people. Auckland has New Zealand's largest population of Pacific peoples; they make up six per cent of older Aucklanders. An understanding of their point of view, experiences and needs should be represented strongly in the Strategy.

¹ Auckland Council. (2015). *Older Aucklanders. Results from the 2013 Census*. RIMU. p.3.

² Auckland Council. (2015). *Older Aucklanders. Results from the 2013 Census*. RIMU. p.1.

14. Many older Aucklanders have lived through a time when diversity and difference were not recognised and celebrated. These lived experiences can influence their current interactions with health care and support systems.
15. The council recommends strengthening the diversity area in the Strategy. The full spectrum of diversity (e.g. LGBTI, age and spirituality) needs to be included to ensure barrier free access to services and facilities that cater to the needs of diverse populations.

Older people may experience discrimination due to negative attitudes and stereotypes

16. The council would like to reaffirm the importance of respect and inclusion.
17. Auckland is undergoing significant growth which brings significant challenges to communities. To ensure positive life experiences for all we need to be open to learning about and valuing differences.
18. There is a lack of positive imaging of older people which can lead to low self-esteem and prejudices. Positive imaging of older people helps to combat ageism and negative stereotypes by indicating to people that they are included and valued and that a service or activity is for them.
19. Council recommends promoting the positive and diverse portrayal of older people in publications and media.

We need to address equity of outcomes and focus on those most in need

20. The material wellbeing of a person as they enter older age has a significant impact on their quality of life. Some older people are at higher risk of material hardship and this proportion is likely to increase with declining home ownership rates and the rising cost of living.
21. In the future more older people may face constrained living standards. This may mean making trade-offs in essential services as well as experiencing greater health and housing needs.³
22. Māori and Pacific peoples and those in lower socio-economic areas of Auckland are more likely to experience significant inequities as they enter older age with fewer assets because they:
 - are over-represented in lower-skilled and lower-paid occupations
 - rent rather than own their own home
 - live in poor quality and/or overcrowded housing
 - experience poorer health outcomes.
23. As people age gender income inequities are more pronounced. It is important to acknowledge that women traditionally live longer than men and that income inequities disproportionality affect women. This disproportionality has an impact on women's ability to accumulate wealth and access resources such as housing and health care.
24. Council recommends strengthening discussion on the range of living standards experienced by older people across New Zealand. Investment needs to reflect the different realities of older people to ensure that services are targeting those most in need.

³ Ministry of Social Development. *Briefing to the Incoming Ministers*, October 2014, p.31.

Kaumātua Māori among those in most need

25. The discussion document is largely silent on issues for kaumātua (elder) Māori.
26. Kaumātua have significant experience and insight into the future direction of their people. The Strategy should provide ways to work collaboratively with kaumātua to co-design and deliver culturally appropriate services.
27. Older Māori have lower levels of wealth, income and rely heavily on superannuation. Focusing efforts in the Strategy on the wellbeing of older Māori is also warranted considering the health and socio-economic disparities faced by Māori across the lifespan.
28. The Māori world view of ageing does not take a 'deficit' view of ageing as deterioration, dependency and vulnerability. For many, ageing is part of a positive life course transition that increases a person's standing in a community. This view may not reflect the typical experience of older Māori and their whānau in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland).
29. The council recommends engagement with kaumātua about this Strategy, and including more specific reference to Māori and their role, experiences and needs.

Accessible and affordable housing is critical to positive ageing

30. The council agrees with the issues raised in the housing and place to call home sections of the discussion document. In particular acknowledging the need for affordable, healthy and accessible housing.
31. We recognise one of the key issues is the ability for people to “age in place”. For older people, the ability to stay living in their local community and preserve social connections are key factors in maintaining health and wellbeing. We recognise that this may be more difficult for those in rural or isolated communities.
32. Ageing in place and the opportunity to downsize can be hindered by a lack of options for smaller, affordable and accessible housing across all communities. The council supports the provision of greater housing options to support ageing in place. This includes intergenerational housing and support for those in more remote areas such as the Hauraki Gulf islands.
33. Council is ensuring successful delivery of healthy, affordable and accessible homes. The Auckland Plan 2050, focus areas particularly relevant to older people are to:
 - a) accelerate quality development at scale that improves housing choices
 - b) increase security of tenure and broaden the range of tenure models
 - c) improve the built quality of existing housing, particularly rental housing.
34. Auckland has some of the highest housing costs in New Zealand. A decline in home ownership among today's 30-50-year-old cohort, will likely mean more older people retiring into the private rental sector.
35. This is an issue for older people on a fixed income in Auckland where the demand for rental accommodation is high and landlords can be selective about whom they rent to and at what cost. For government, this may mean greater investment is needed to support financially vulnerable older Aucklanders and has unknown implications for demand on social housing, housing provided by community providers and care facilities.

36. The council would welcome further discussion with central government on different tenure models to enable greater housing security and improved outcomes for long-term renters.
37. Accessibility, both within the home and local area is key to participation, engagement and social inclusion. This issue is highlighted by older people as a critical barrier that impacts their everyday lives.
38. The use of universal design (including dementia friendly design) is an important step in removing these frequently cited barriers. Universal design is an internationally recognised discipline that designs for all and promotes best practice.
39. In the built environment for example, the Building Act and the Building Code are key mechanisms for ensuring minimum standards. Achieving universal design demands more commitment from multiple parties and requires raising minimum standards. Regulatory settings can also be applied to features within a home such as heating, energy efficiency and sustainable design.
40. Current regulatory settings and the planning system rely heavily upon good will and the encouragement of building owners, developers and architects to build beyond minimum standards. Private landlords may be unwilling to modify/increase accessibility in homes to enable or continue tenancies.
41. The Auckland Design Panel and the Auckland Design Manual are examples of best practice and demonstrate how this can be achieved. Despite this proactive approach in encouraging best practice in both public and private domains, this alone will not deliver sufficiently widespread change.
42. We strongly believe that there is enough evidence to make a case for further regulatory improvements and setting stronger building standards relating to accessibility and strengthening the application of universal design. This would also benefit all people including those with a disability.

Older people want accessible transport to get where they want, when they want

43. As people age their ability to move around can become more limited giving rise to concerns for safety and access to services and facilities.
44. A lack of accessible and affordable transport can limit access to essential services like supermarkets and health and care facilities as well as impede the maintenance of whānau and social connections. Transport is important to enabling older people to continue to carry out activities such as working, caring responsibilities, social participation and voluntary work. Accessible transport allows older people to maintain independence, combat isolation and continue health and wellbeing activities.
45. Research shows that the free travel provided by the Super Gold card is a motivator and enabler for exploring new areas as well as local activity.
46. We need to continue to encourage the use of public transport because it is fast, safe, reliable, accessible and affordable. So older people are familiar and confident users of public transport by the time they receive their Super Gold card.

47. Auckland Council and central government have worked together on transport planning for Auckland. The Auckland Transport Alignment Project (ATAP) sets the direction for the development of the transport system over the next 30 years.
48. ATAP aims to make transport safer, environmentally friendly and more accessible for all Aucklanders. For older people this means being able to provide high quality and affordable choices to all, regardless of age or ability. There is a need to ensure that this aim of affordable and accessible choices for transportation is reflected in the Strategy.
49. While it is essential to provide accessible transport options to enable older people to participate in the community, this must be supported in other aspects of planning, from designing for walkability, safety, mobility parking, electric mobility vehicle parking access to buildings and in development planning.
50. The redesign of the station at Karangahape Road, as part of the City Rail Link, is a good example of the efforts of both local and central government to ensure that the station is accessible for all Aucklanders.
51. The council recommends including discussion on accessible and affordable transport and mobility. This should contain the implementation of universal design principles to encompass the whole of journey experience. Including the movement of people between and through places and spaces including buildings, footpaths and access ways (e.g. pedestrian crossings, public toilets).

Older people make a significant contribution through voluntary activities and caring

52. Many older people participate in a wide range of unpaid activities for the benefit of families/whānau, communities and wider society.
53. The ageing population is a growing resource for the voluntary sector.⁴ Community connections can be made through participation and the sharing of knowledge and skills. Health and life satisfaction are positively supported by informal and formal volunteering.⁵
54. For many families and cultures the passing down of knowledge by elders is an important function. Kaumātua have important functional and symbolic roles in relation to the transmission of tikanga (customs and protocols), kaupapa (topic or issue), kaitiakitanga (guardianship of the environment) and whakapapa (genealogy). The role of kaumātua can be demanding in terms of time and personal resources to actively participate in community events such as tangihanga (funeral) and hui (gatherings).
55. Older people are also taking on more carer roles within families. There are a significant number of grandparents who are taking a significant burden of caregiving from parents. The legislative definition and recognition of 'family' needs to be flexible to ensure government support of the changing nature of families.

⁴ The Ready for Ageing Alliance. (2013). Getting Ready for Ageing: a manifesto for action. Retrieved from: http://www.cpa.org.uk/cpa/docs/Ready_for_Ageing_Alliance_Manifesto.pdf

⁵ Onyx, J. and Warburton, J. (2003). Volunteering and health among older people: A review. *Australasian Journal on Ageing*. 22(2). p.65.

56. It is important that the Strategy reflects the growing role of older people as volunteers, 'teachers' and caregivers. As well as what can be done by organisations to support and actively encourage these roles and how the community values and makes the most of their contribution.

Older people will be increasingly active in the labour market

57. The labour market participation of older New Zealanders is increasing and with it their economic contribution.
58. The council appreciates that older employees can face ageism within their roles and finding new employment can be harder and take longer than for other age groups.
59. We also run the risk of older people exiting the labour market and taking their skills and knowledge. This potentially leaves gaps in some professions and trades if the transferring/passing on of expertise has not been provided for.
60. Council supports initiatives that will enable older people to upskill and retrain to continue in employment or to transition to retirement. This support can include flexible working arrangements as well as acting as mentors to younger employees as each group transitions through their life course.
61. Providing flexible working arrangements is a clear example of how both local and central government can role model behaviour to facilitate positive ageing.
62. The Strategy should recognise older peoples' changing work needs. This includes supporting initiatives that enable older people to stay in the workforce and transition to retirement.

Ageing population will see more facing poor health outcomes

63. Health and wellbeing are key issues for older people as rates of poor health and disability increase with age.
64. There is a need for investment and innovation in preventative care and in dealing with the medical and functional needs of a dispersed ageing population. This includes accessible health information and the ability to travel easily to and from healthcare facilities, as well as strengthening the connection between health and social services for holistic primary care.
65. Dementia is one of New Zealand's most significant and growing healthcare challenges. Increasing rates of dementia will increase public and private costs and necessitate the design of dementia-friendly services and spaces. People with dementia have challenges relating to confusion and disorientation that can be mitigated by design and raised awareness amongst staff working with sufferers.
66. Elder abuse is also an issue of concern and as the older population grows it is likely that cases of elder abuse will increase.⁶ The council supports initiatives that will reduce older people's risk of abuse and harm, including technology-based scams.

⁶ The World Health Organisation defines elder abuse as "a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person. This type of violence

Social connections and participation are important to health and wellbeing

67. Loneliness and isolation are public health issues for older people.⁷ Research has found that social integration and social intimacy is a key predictor of a healthy life.⁸
68. Social networks and the physical ability to participate socially can change as you age. Loneliness and social isolation can be due to socio-economic factors, language barriers, lack of transport and physical ability or lack of personal connections.
69. There is likely to be a growing need for community spaces and programmes to foster participation, wellbeing and personal connections.
70. The council continues to make an effort to ensure that its transport system, community facilities, parks and open spaces are able to be accessed by people of all abilities to enable physical activity and social connections.
71. In the Auckland Plan 2050 there is a focus on promoting participation in arts, culture, sports and recreation as a major contributor to our quality of life, particularly our general health and wellbeing. This includes focussed investment to address disparities and serve communities with the greatest need.
72. This focus on promoting participation is also reflected in the council's Disability Operational Action Plan, the Community Facilities Network Plan, Toi Whāitiki and the Sports and Recreation Strategic Action Plan.
73. In Auckland, it is important that older people from diverse cultures and traditions are able to participate in a range of activities and customs that give expression to their cultural identity.
74. The Strategy needs to reflect the importance of health and wellbeing investment in inclusive services, facilities and activities that support life-long participation, intergenerational activity and social connection.

Local authorities play a significant role in improving outcomes for older people

75. The council has recently resolved to become a member of the World Health Organisation's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities (Network).
76. The Network membership is a visible commitment to improving the outcomes for older people and raising awareness of their needs.
77. We would like to understand what influence the Office for Seniors affiliate membership to the Network will have on the Strategy.

constitutes a violation of human rights and includes physical, sexual, psychological, emotional; financial and material abuse; abandonment; neglect; and serious loss of dignity and respect" (WHO site).

⁷ Fox, Alex. Ed (2013). *The New Social Care: Strength-Based Approaches*. Public Services Hub, United Kingdom. p.7.

⁸ Blundell, Sally. (2015, August 22). *Village People*. *Listener*, 3927, pp.17-18.

78. The responsibility of local authorities is referenced in the discussion document. It is recommended that a description of the role and responsibilities of local government in relation to the Strategy is given. This would provide greater clarity on how central government and the council work can together.
79. It is recommended that local government is involved in any relevant legislative changes as a result of the Strategy. This will help ensure legislation is well designed and clearly communicated, as changes will have an effect on how the council creates policy and delivers services.

Ngā koringa ā-muri / Next steps

80. The council would like to remain connected to the development of the Strategy. We welcome discussion on our submission to ensure the successful development of a Strategy for an Ageing Population that considers the impacts on local government and the communities we serve.
81. Council is committed to its leadership role in Auckland and as an employer and will continue to work with central government and others to improve the lives of older people.