

- In 2007/2008 Human Resources will be undertaking the “Ways of Working” project. This project will explore the various work options including the feasibility and benefits of working from home, reduced hours, and job sharing.
- Council’s recruitment centre is open to exploring avenues for recruiting older workers if any groups want to target older workers specifically.
- In terms of promoting volunteering and employment opportunities outside of Council, organisations such as Work and Income, Department of Labour, Volunteering Auckland and other organisations provide this type of service.
- Council supports many employment-related organisations through its various funding mechanisms. In addition, Council works closely with Volunteering Auckland and has recently entered into a funding agreement with them. This funding has a diversity focus (including older adults) and will be used to enhance their services in this area. The Council encourages groups to recognise and reimburse their volunteers and many of the funding applications received for the various funds are for initiatives like this or incorporate reimbursement as part of a broader application.
- The Council has a page on volunteering as a part of the community development services webpage and this has a link to Volunteering Auckland. Volunteering opportunities are further featured periodically in the Catalyst. The Council will also include links of organisations such as Work and Income, Volunteering Auckland and others on Council’s 55s and over webpage that is currently being developed.
- Council provides a number of volunteer opportunities within its own services. These include Friends of the Zoo, Art Gallery guides, community centres, events, and tree planting days. In addition, Council indirectly provides for volunteer opportunities through its support/funding of community organisations which are reliant on volunteer contributions.

Affordability

Thirty-three submissions commented on affordability of activities and how this impacts on how older people can participate in city life. The main issues raised included affordability of transport, health services, events and activities as well as affordability of community facilities and swimming pools. Some suggestions were around having free or discounted services and having a rates reduction for seniors. Three submissions commented that Council should not assume that older people are generally poor, but rather understand that many older people are consumers who have disposable money, which often seems to be ignored. Below are some examples of comments:

“Free swimming pools to encourage general fitness.” 39

“Although it may not be the Council’s responsibility to organise social groups for seniors, at least we can make suitable facilities available at very reasonable prices for gatherings.”-96

“Reduction in rates for seniors-not the rebate as present, which is ridiculous as one can only have a very small amount of savings. 2) Waver rates payments until property sold without high interest rates-higher threshold than now.”-47

“My mother is almost 80, gorgeous still and occasionally wants to go out to be with people her own age - share experiences, flirt, have a chat. - Where do you go? she's sick of being the oldest person wherever she goes. The library just isn't enough of an experience for this. There needs to be lively venues that specifically target older people to get together. Besides, from a consumers point of view a lot of older people have disposable money, have inherited, etc and it seems to me if they are going to indulge in any way, they seem to leave, and go on holiday. This points to the fact that it is so limited here.”-74

Responses:

- The current swimming pool price entry allows for senior citizens discounts. The Council is currently undertaking a Pricing Policy Review for pool entry. Further concessions for senior citizens will be considered within this review. Based on anecdotal comments from YMCA staff, Council's swimming pools are well used by seniors.

The ability for people (including older people) to fully participate and socialise within the City is critical to building strong and healthy communities. The affordability of housing, transport and health services, events and activities has been identified by a number of submitters as affecting upon their ability and others to participate in the life of the City. The Council acknowledges the need to provide activities/programmes/facilities, which are affordable to the community. For example, initiatives like:

- The affordable housing demonstration project which is targeted at first home-buyers on low to moderate incomes.
- Reduced entry prices for older people at specific community facilities (e.g. zoo, pools) and subsidised prices for all groups at community centres and halls.
- Community funding grants
- Rates rebate scheme
- Free events
- Low rentals for community groups using Council leased buildings e.g. Senior Citizens;

are all aimed at making the City more affordable to certain sectors of the community, including older people. However, Council's ability to further increase the level of funding to subsidise these initiatives and others to address affordability within the City is constrained by funding levels. The adoption of the LTCCP committed Auckland City to a large work programme (\$7 billion operating expenditure and \$5.3 billion capital expenditure) over the next 10 years. It also committed Auckland City to specific investment in identified projects or service improvement initiatives that are required to meet the challenge of growth and make faster progress towards achievement of the long-term vision. Any increase in funding to provide additional subsidies (which would need to be significant) to tangibly address the issue of affordability in the City, is considered to be beyond the scope of the LTCCP at present. There is a continued and expanded role for Council, however, to address the affordability of the City in conjunction with other central government agencies (Housing New Zealand), Auckland councils and regional agencies (ARTA) through advocacy or partnership approaches.

- It is considered that Council provides a reasonable level of subsidy for community centres and halls. Many older people are users of community centres and halls to the same or greater extent than other age groups.
- The majority of community centre managers do offer special start up rates for new classes and groups, which may be "free" for groups to begin with (first couple of weeks to a month). This helps the groups' organisers get on their feet and get them going, but also to ensure that they can be moved on to more equitable rates. Centre managers also work with their community advisor in regards to other funding opportunities and especially the Accommodation Support Fund for regular users. The new accommodation support fund is an additional new vehicle to make sure those who are needy can be subsidised to access Council and non-Council facilities in the course of the community work.
- The Art gallery always has free access to its collection shows. Where there is an exhibition piece a concession to senior citizens is always offered. The Museum entry to its collection is by donation (suggested \$5).
- Auckland Theatre Company has made tickets available for community groups through a programme called First Free Friday. The Museum has a large range of free public programmes, talks and concerts.

- As a part of Council's annual grant to support the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra our contract stipulates that they provide a number of free concerts to create greater accessibility.

Supporting other groups working with older people

Ten submissions spoke of supporting or encouraging volunteers and other groups in the community that assist older people or are groups of older people themselves. Three suggested providing funding to organisations, while two submitters spoke of the need for more sustainable funding to the existing community groups who have been providing social support services for a considerable length of time. Shanti Niwas also spoke of the insufficient storage space for community groups using the hall a few times a week.

Responses:

- A number of senior groups including Age Concern, Alzheimers Auckland Inc, Auckland Old Folks Association, Care and Craft Centres of New Zealand Trust, Mt Roskill Retired Persons Club, Waiheke Senior Citizens Association, Senionet Eastern Bays, and NZ Tamil Senior Citizens's Association received some form of financial support through Council's community funding schemes for their 2007 costs. Council also provides low rentals for community groups leasing Council buildings. A number of these groups provide services and activities for older people; e.g. Senior Citizens groups.
- Council's funding is available to all eligible groups for them to be able to develop additional services until they can take hold, implement capacity building initiatives and fund one-off projects. However, Council does not wish to create a culture of dependency and reliance on its funding, but for a group to be able to continue to operate. Council recognises the great work being done by the many community groups in Auckland, but also needs to be able to support groups dealing with new and emergent needs/communities. Council also encourages groups to collaborate and pool their resources, to avoid duplication of work, where this is possible. Council does have longer term funding agreements with some key organisations and this is something that could be explored further with groups whose strategic aims are aligned with Auckland City's.
- Council acknowledges that it is difficult for groups on Great Barrier to access the Community Group Assistance Fund. However, they can access all the other funds Council manages. The main three funds, Community Board Local Funding, Community Board Event Funding and Community Board Discretionary Funding provide a total of \$51,000 available per community board. Per capita Great Barrier Island gets more Community Board Discretionary Funding than any other community board in the Isthmus. In addition Great Barrier residents can access some national funds (e.g. rural funding) that are not available to groups in a metropolitan area.
- Council also runs two workshops on funding application training and sponsorship and fundraising to assist groups to access other funders. The Council also purchased and makes available the Fundview database (a national database of funding agencies) and hold an annual funding expo.
- Council currently advertises and promotes the services community groups provide, both directly and indirectly. Groups can feature their services in the Catalyst Community newsletter, on the community notice-boards including community notice-boards on Triangle TV and the community networks.

Zoo

Two submissions suggested that the Zoo could be made more accessible to older people. Their specific comments are included below:

“Zoos could provide scooters so that elderly people who find walking difficult could enjoy the zoo. You could train them to give zoo tours to all the mothers with small children who visit the zoo regularly.”-94

“One suggestion is for a "Seniors Day" at the zoo, welcoming the elderly either free, or for a nominal sum.”-96

Responses:

- The Zoo currently provides senior concessions (\$14 dollars instead of \$18). There are no plans at this stage to increase the level of subsidy of the Zoo.
- Council is currently finalising the contract for the placement of 2-4 mobility scooters at the Zoo.

Other comments relevant to this area

Twenty submitters provided specific comments or suggestions relevant to participation and socialising. Comments/suggestions are summarised below:

“Morning tea at the church hall for our older people, and if you could afford an outing lunch together is a good socialising programme.”-35

“It's important to recognise what people want to choose. Some people are reluctant to be a part of an event suddenly-just because there is an event happening-they do not want to lose their privacy.”- 45

“Sending Kuia and Kaumatua to Auckland for a day out with lunch and travel supplied.”-88

‘It would be great to have a drop-in centre like the Centre for the Elderly in the Wellington Library building, but one that is for anyone to drop in and socialise.’-92

‘Goal one all ‘opportunities’ should be fully listed. Items 3.1.1 to 11. All these actions appear to be based on existing ACC programmes and show little understanding of the individuality of the various communities which go to make up the city.’-107

Responses:

- While the Council recognises that morning tea at churches and sending Kaumatua and Kuia from Waiheke Island to Auckland has merit, this kind of service is not budgeted for.
- The development of a dedicated drop in space for older people is not supported. However, Council will ensure its facilities are accessible and that there are a range of programmes for older people in Council libraries, recreation centres and community centres. Council provides a number of venues across the city for senior groups.
- As the Positive Ageing in Auckland plan is a strategic document listing all opportunities is not practical. The Council has various channels we use to promote our activities. We have the Ak@Play guide which covers events happening between November and March. We also have City Scene which is distributed weekly and contains event information on the dedicated Ak@Play back page. The council also has a weekly email newsletter that people can sign up to, and the website also has up to date event information.

CULTURE

Out of 110, 48 provided some kind of feedback to this area. Particular suggestions and comments included:

City Scene and the portrayal of older people

Thirteen submissions focused on the importance of portraying older people in a positive light. Of these, eight specifically focused on the need for City Scene to have not only more images of older people but also to provide more information relevant to this group, including stories about the contributions and active participation that this group makes.

Fifteen submissions commented specifically on the role that City Scene could play in relation to information dissemination to older people, generally and specifically in relation to the programmes and services available to this group. Four commented that the delivery of City Scene was sporadic and therefore not always a reliable source of information.

Examples of comments include:

“Suggest regular section in City Scene directed to older people, with helpful information; for instance half fare in taxis available with GP certificate. Also advise on how to ensure regular delivery of City Scene. Perhaps monitoring delivery.”-40

“Have more stories in City Scene highlighting the contributions of older people to society especially for the many who give their time as volunteers on a regular basis.”-82

“More positive images in all the City publications for our older citizens.”-10

“Portraying older people positively is crucial. Council could promote good news stories about older people on a regular basis; maybe have a regular half an hour slot on older people's issues...It's important to know how to represent older people in media-maybe featuring an icon on a regular basis-it needs to be subtle.”-45

“City Scene is the best vehicle for any promotion [of culture that values older people] as it reaches every home in the city.”-65

“We agree with the use of more images that depict older people positively; however, this tactic must not be separated from the accessible communication imperative. We recommend strategies for depicting older people appropriately and for addressing that key audience in ways that will enable it to hear and respond to council messages. (key audience in social and economic terms, as the population ages”-86

“City Scene is excellent news of people helping people and sharing social cohesion.”-61

Responses:

- Auckland City is aware that delivery in certain areas is sporadic and is striving to improve the distribution of City Scene. People are invited to call 379 2020 to let the Council know of any specific problems in this regard.
- The Council has various channels to promote our activities. The Council has the Ak@Play guide which covers events happening between November and March of every year. The Council has City Scene which is distributed weekly and contains event information on the

dedicated Ak@Play back page. The Council also has a weekly email newsletter that people can sign up to, and the website also has up to date event information.

- Through the Positive Ageing in Auckland plan we will ensure that current publications such as CityScene and CityWire promote positive and diverse images of older people.
- The Council will investigate the feasibility of potential story ideas as a mix to be placed on a regular basis in CityScene.

Intergenerational projects

Seventeen submissions commented that intergenerational interaction is essential to the community and that it is strongly connected with the goal of promoting a culture that values older people. Some ideas included in the feedback focused on older people sharing their experiences and knowledge with the young generation, especially through schools, while others spoke of the reciprocal approach so that each generation can learn some things about and from the other. Some comments include:

“Bringing older and younger people together is very important. It would not only ensure that the knowledge base is passed onto the younger generation, but it would also encourage positive perceptions of older people. Also older people could learn from children about technology (e.g. computer literacy, mobile phone use).”-45

“Programmes should be worked out so that older people can be involved in schools. With today's fractured families and mobility, many children, from pre-school onwards are deprived of contact with 'grandparents'. It would benefit the children and help older people to learn about the younger generation.” -38

“Many of the barriers society puts before people are attitudinal, and we agree that there should be an effort to create a more older person friendly culture in Auckland. In the past research undertaken by the library has suggested that people do not welcome programmes specifically for older people. Tactics need to be inclusive rather than separating older people out.”-86

Responses:

- The Council acknowledges that intergenerational interaction benefits the community at large. Last year the Council developed a generations project where younger people interviewed older leaders in their community. Their stories were also published. The Council is further committed to facilitating new opportunities for intergenerational interaction as indicated in the Positive Ageing Action plan.
- The Council will continue running the Growing Older and Bolder symposium.

Consideration of the needs of older migrants/inter-cultural awareness

Six groups mentioned that the needs of older migrants such as consideration of language difficulties as well as the consideration of their culture needs to be considered when promoting opportunities for participation. Other submitters spoke of a similar concern in relation to other goals, such as access to information, a culture that values older people and safety from injuries. For instance, submitters spoke of the need to consider the diversity of culture in older age when promoting a culture that values older people as well as in relation to any events or services provided. Some comments include:

“Do a survey looking at the knowledge bank of older migrants, and looking at older migrants who are unemployed, but would like to be. For example, in Canada, they would bring in grandparents to help out in kindergartens and schools.”-45

“It is important to reflect the diversity of Auckland's population and facilitate opportunities for intergenerational [interaction] in New Zealand society.”- 73

“Consider the different needs of older migrants.”-77

Responses:

- Auckland City Council recognises the growing cultural diversity of Auckland city and that this diversity spans across all ages. Auckland City has allocated an additional \$600,000 for this financial year to specific diversity projects. Some of these projects include cross-cultural training for frontline staff, libraries migrant and refugee services, Migrant Expo, and Diversity information boards.
- Through the Positive Ageing in Auckland Plan, Auckland City will further facilitate opportunities for interaction and knowledge sharing of older people from a number of different cultures.
- Auckland City also has the language line service. Assistance is available in 37 different languages.

Raise awareness of older people's needs within Council

Two submitters stated that it was important to raise the awareness of older people's needs across Council to ensure that all Council business is responsive to the specific needs of older people. An individual was pleased with an action 4.1.2. Establishing Council's internal older people's champions network, while the community reference group's comment is listed below:

“Raising awareness across Council of older people's issues and needs to ensure that the communication from Council is made easier and more accessible to older people.”-45

Responses:

- The establishment of Council's internal older people's champions network will encourage more collaboration, raise awareness and increase Council's staff responsiveness to the diverse older people's needs and concerns. Reporting annually to Council and the community on the Positive Ageing in Auckland action plan will also be used as another vehicle to raise awareness of and responsiveness to older people's issues

GENERAL COMMENTS

A large number of general comments included positive feedback on the plan. The comments ranged from commending the Council for taking the initiative and endorsing the Plan to appreciating the performance measures set for the plan. People also welcomed the opportunity to be involved in the Plan development. Other positive feedback was specific to services, events and programmes that Council provides. This included library services like the mobile library, the Growing Older and Bolder symposium, the Never 2 Old programme and music events in parks. The Council was also commended on broadening the definition of 'older person' to consider the diversity of ageing experiences.

Nine people showed reservation about the plan or thought that this should not be Council's responsibility. Comments ranged from thinking that many of the issues mentioned in the Plan and specifically around participation and socialising, are an individual's responsibility to others believing that the plan was 'all talk' and that the Council was not truly committed to older people.

Some general comments include:

"The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) generally supports the direction and content of the draft plan and looks forward to continuing to work with Auckland City Council to assist in its implementation. It is great to have the largest metropolitan city in New Zealand develop such a strategy." -111

"Appears to be all talk. Nothing above from an older persons point of view is about anything tangible for them. What the hell is "Intergenerational interaction"-is this just a word concocted to sound good or is it something that will actually happen and benefit the aged." - 10

Specific suggestions/comments and responses are:

"The Positive Ageing in Auckland plan will only work through a national effort towards at least a minimally meaningful "middle class" level of personal (retirement) wealth ownership by all citizens eventually-to be initiated (modestly) by allocating the NZ Super Fund to personal accounts." -28

"Many of the homeless of Auckland are elderly and I expect they don't feel valued at all. What is being offered to these people?"-92

"The Ministry would welcome a section that details how and why Auckland City is different for older people than other parts of the Auckland region and New Zealand."-111

"The Ministry would like to see how the connection is made with housing, including affordability and ageing in place, as well as health and disabilities."-111

"The Ministry, and in particular Work and Income, are very interested in working with Auckland City Council on the implementation of this "Positive Ageing in Auckland Plan". A large number of Work and Income clients are older people living within the Auckland City catchment area. It may be useful at some stage to 'drill down' into the relationships that Auckland City Council would like to maintain with the Ministry in relation to the Positive Ageing in Auckland Plan, owing to the breadth of the Ministry's role in the social sector within the Auckland region and also through the Office of Senior Citizens in Wellington."-111

"Auckland City is unique among the larger local authorities in owning no housing for the aged. This places a greater responsibility on it to provide positive incentives to those community and private organisations shouldering that vacated responsibility. There is no recognition of that responsibility in the draft plan. In particular rating and zoning incentives must be considered that positively discriminate in favour of housing for the aged on appropriate sites.

Appropriate sites are those most sought after by other uses, being close to transport shops and community facilities. Housing for the aged must be fully integrated into new developments that also allow for such uses. Current height restrictions around so-called growth nodes should be urgently reviewed. Increased height bonuses and reduced on-site car parking requirements should be considered for the provision of housing for the aged.” -71

“I also think rest homes need to get behind the concept of socialising and participating, empowerment and active inclusion. Many of our elderly have had active lives. Passive exclusion, isolation and disempowerment would not be their choice of life. This area is crucial. A visit to some of our rest homes. Hospitals indicates the need for and importance of participation and socialising. The alternative is a 'waiting room' with no destination but a guaranteed decline. The ideas are great but at present it seems we have policy in one area, our elderly in another and services separate aging. If you're lucky and all the 'ducks' line up you may get assistance. Likewise if you are considered 'mainstream' all is well, my concern is with those who fall to the side through no fault of their own. How are their needs met? Who advocates for them?”-100

“Help with rubbish bin, recycling contents of blue bins, to have them emptied regularly.”-102

“How about an 'elderly' TV station even if only 2 days a week or a few hours a day.”- 3

“More elders should be encouraged to visit Auckland by liberalising immigration laws. Should also be permitted to take up employment suited to their academic and physical/mental abilities.”-57

“Exploring options to increase usability of Auckland City website is essential. Important that there is always a person to person or hard copy version of anything made available online – so everyone is included.”- 80

“Document contains a number of generalisations from various government departments and concerns itself primarily with the position of the council’s involvement with minimal concerns for the activities which are not promoted by the council or use council facilities.”-107

Responses:

- Auckland City Council acknowledges the feedback and the issue. However, the NZ Super Fund as well as retirement income is a Central government responsibility.
- While funding and the delivery of social services is primarily a central government responsibility, Auckland City has taken the initiative to work with homeless services to address the issues of homelessness. The homeless action plan aims for a coordinated response in partnership with a number of agencies who work directly with the homeless, such as the Salvation Army, Auckland City Mission, Methodist Mission Northern, government agencies like the Auckland District Health Board, Work and Income and Housing New Zealand. Some of the action areas include: developing a better response system to complaints through customer call centre; better management of public space in relation to homelessness and developing an outreach service together with the key stakeholders to fill in the gaps and reach certain populations that are missed out.
- At the current time there are no plans to include a specific section on how and why Auckland City is different for older people than other parts of Auckland region. It is considered that adding this section will not add anything further to the Plan. However, in order to keep the action plan relevant, more detailed profiling of Auckland’s older population will be undertaken in the next two years and further demographic analysis will be added to the on-line version of the Plan. Demographic analysis from the 2006 census is now available to Council. This will allow Council to look at trends for this segment of the population as it relates to specific areas of the City.

- The Plan, in the identified issues section does state the importance and connection of housing, including affordability, ageing in place and health and disabilities – “A supportive home environment is necessary for positive ageing. Inappropriate housing may contribute to various health problems such as falls, dampness, cold, respiratory problems”.
- In principle, the use of economic instruments, such as rating and zoning incentives for the provision of affordable housing; in this case for older people is supported. Agencies at central government level have and continue to explore this as a means to addressing housing affordability in New Zealand. The use of inclusionary zoning¹ will be investigated further by officers².
- The Council welcomes the opportunity to further collaborate with the Ministry of Social Development in this area.
- The Council will explore the most appropriate ways to involve Great Barrier’s older residents when undertaking activities specifically relevant to them.
- The management of rest homes is primarily responsibility of Auckland District Health Board.
- Rubbish bins are currently emptied on a weekly basis.
- Auckland City Council does not have control over the national TV media.
- Any changes to immigration laws are a central government responsibility.
- The website team is reviewing the design of online forms as a result of the comments received on the usability of the submission form. Auckland City is committed to making the Auckland City Council website more user-friendly.
- The draft Positive Ageing in Auckland Plan was developed with consideration of stakeholder feedback, comparisons of other national and international strategies involving some of the issues around older people and looking at what can be achieved within the scope of the Auckland City Council’s respective roles, responsibilities and available resources. A consultative workshop was held in July 2006 with more than 35 key stakeholder organisations working with, or representing, the views of older people to find out what the key issues facing older people in Auckland were. More than 70 people attended.

¹ A proportion of new housing in a development has to be set aside by the developer for affordable housing.

² In October 2006, Council’s Urban Strategy and Governance Community requested officers to report on how Council can advocate for, and implement inclusionary zoning as a tool to ensure affordable housing is provided.