

Positive Ageing in Auckland Plan Plan summary

May 2007

Contents

The purpose of the plan	→	3
Definition of an older person	→	4
The role of Auckland City Council	→	4
Identified issues and consultation	→	5
Priority areas for action	→	7
Priority area one: Access	→	8
Priority area two: Safety	→	8
Priority area three: Participation and socialising	→	8
Priority area four: A culture that values older people and the important role they play in society	→	9
Some new actions	→	10

The purpose of the plan

The population of Auckland city is getting older. Similarly, Auckland city's 55+ population is expected to increase from 69,600 (18 per cent of population) in 2001 to 123,400 (23 per cent of local population) in 2021¹. To prepare for this growth in the older population, Auckland City Council has developed a Positive Ageing in Auckland plan.

The Positive Ageing in Auckland plan looks at how Auckland City Council can address some key issues for older people and how it can guide the council's planning for the shift in the population profile. The plan recognises the positive contributions older people make to the life of the community and aims to maximise the opportunities for older people to contribute to and partake in everything that life in Auckland city has to offer.

To achieve the best possible outcomes for older people in the community, effective collaborations between the council and agencies like Auckland District Health Board, Age Concern, Ministry of Social Development and other community organisations is critical.



¹ Statistics New Zealand (2006). Demographic Aspects of New Zealand's Ageing Population.

Definition of an older person

To reflect the transitional phase of preparing for retirement as well as the diversity of ageing experiences influenced by the different cultural, biological, social and economic factors, the Positive Ageing in Auckland plan largely focuses on those aged 55 and over.

The role of Auckland City Council

Auckland City Council's involvement with older people is broad and varies from issue to issue. Some of the broad roles that Auckland City Council undertakes include:

Facilitator: Providing opportunities for older people and stakeholders who work with older people to meet, socialise and work on issues together. Organising the Growing Older and Bolder symposium annually and providing community facilities are examples of this.

Initiator: Initiating projects with other agencies that would address concerns of older population. An example here is bringing organisations in the injury prevention sector to work together through the council's Communities Living Injuries Free initiative.

Advocacy: Representing issues and aspirations associated with being an older adult through the council's work with central government agencies and other service providers. For example, the council advocates for more accessible public transport such as kneeling buses, integrated ticketing and better route planning.

Funder or partner: Providing financial assistance to a number of community groups that cater for or are inclusive of needs and interests of older adults. Some of the funded groups include Age Concern, Shanti Niwas Charitable Trust and Senionet Eastern Bays.

Provider: Catering for and being inclusive of older adults through the provision of community centres, halls, recreational facilities, swimming pools and libraries as well as through a provision of information, services and programmes that the council offers.



Identified issues and consultation

The consultation with key stakeholders was conducted in 2006 to identify what were some of the issues for older people in Auckland city and to examine what actions Auckland City Council could undertake in the future. Additional public consultation was carried out from January to February 2007.

A number of identified issues included:

Diversity: There are substantial differences in lifestyle, interests, social relationships and the level of functioning between individuals aged 55, 70, 80, 90 and 100+, as well as across different cultures.

Health and wellbeing: Most people over 55 are fit and healthy. Some, especially those 80 years and older become frail and vulnerable or have to live with a chronic illness and may need higher levels of support.

Socialisation and participation: An environment that reduces the isolation of older people, encourages active minds and promotes active participation across a range of activities is a key factor in the wellbeing of older people. Opportunities for participation can take many forms, including lifelong learning and developing, sharing skills and knowledge, and civic engagement.

Transportation options: Insufficient access to transportation options is linked with the social isolation of older people as it reduces community participation and access to activities and services.

Access: This incorporates access to parks, footpaths, appropriate street furniture, access to buildings and access to information about available programmes and services. Limited access may restrict older people's participation.

Affordability: As people grow older their financial resources decrease, which affects their ability to participate fully in the cultural and social life of Auckland city.

Housing options: Inappropriate housing may contribute to various health problems such as falls, dampness, cold and respiratory problems. As the generation of baby boomers ages, there will also be an increase in demand for affordable and varied housing options.

Safety: Safety is identified as one of the priority areas for older people living in Auckland city and is one of the key community outcomes in Auckland City Council's Long-Term Plan. This area includes safety from injuries, actual and perceived safety from crime.

Attitudes towards older people: Frailty, increased dependence, lack or loss of productivity and contribution to communities are some examples of negative stereotypes that exist around older people. These attitudes can result in discriminatory behaviours towards older people and contribute to limiting opportunities for older people's participation in the life of the city. Older people are also likely to experience physical, emotional, verbal and financial abuse.



Priority areas for action

The information gathered has influenced the direction and emphasis of the Positive Ageing in Auckland plan. These issues have been grouped under four priority areas. Each area has associated goals linked to new initiatives that the council will undertake for older people in Auckland city.

For some of these issues, the council will not have a direct provider role, but it will collaborate and advocate on behalf of other key stakeholders working in this area to achieve the best possible outcomes for older people.

Priority area one: Access

This area encompasses a number of issues such as physical accessibility to buildings and open spaces, access to transport options as well as access to information.

Goal one: Auckland city becomes more physically accessible.

Goal two: Older people have easy access to all council information.

Priority area two: Safety

This area is concerned with safety from injuries, as well as actual and perceived safety from crime. For many older people concerns about safety from crime and injuries may influence whether or not they choose to live in their local communities and homes.

Goal one: Safety of neighbourhoods and the home are improved through working with local communities and stakeholders.

Priority area three: Participation and socialising

Participation and socialising are key factors in the wellbeing of older people. Opportunities for participation can take many forms, including learning and developing, sharing skills and knowledge, and having an active civic voice in democratic process. Promoting and furthering opportunities for older people to participate and socialise is essential to ensuring that older people can contribute to and partake in Auckland city's life. Further, participation and socialising

ensures that older people are connected to community life, other people and places.

Goal one: There is a wide range of opportunities for older people to participate in Auckland city.

Priority area four: A culture that values older people and the important role they play in society

Negative as well as one-dimensional perceptions combined with the lack of awareness around the diverse needs, concerns and aspirations of older people can limit opportunities for participation, undermine communities and negatively affect the wellbeing of older people. Promoting positive attitudes and dispelling negative stereotypes of older people and ensuring that the diverse needs of this group are considered is vital for the promotion of inclusive communities and the improvement of older people's wellbeing.

Goal one: Raise the awareness of and responsiveness to the varied needs and aspirations of older people among the public, the council, community agencies and businesses.

Goal two: Celebrating the diversity of ageing experiences.



Some new actions

The following are some of the actions that Auckland City Council plans to undertake:

- Explore ways to increase transportation options for older and disabled people in partnership with agencies like Auckland Regional Transport Authority and community stakeholders. This will also include exploring the feasibility of a council sponsored taxi scheme for older people.
- Develop consultation and communication guidelines that ensure Auckland City Council's information is accessible for all.
- Develop effective responses to safety needs, including older people in partnership with community agencies and other organisations.
- Establish, facilitate and support a positive ageing forum. This forum aims to address the needs and issues of the older population through a partnership approach.
- Extend the accessibility and appeal of library facilities, collections, services, events and outreach programmes to encourage more older Aucklanders to participate in intergenerational experiences and learning opportunities.
- Facilitate new opportunities for intergenerational interactions.
- Increase physical activity opportunities for older people by introducing the Never 2 Old programme in eight Auckland city YMCA facilities. The programme focuses on improving fitness and wellbeing of older people.
- Ensure that the council's current publications such as *City Scene* promote positive and diverse images of older people. A part of

the project will include investigating the feasibility of potential story ideas around older people as a part of the mix to be placed on a regular basis in *City Scene*.

- Establish an internal champions' network within the council to encourage more collaboration and knowledge sharing in the implementation of this plan.
- Where appropriate, support events that celebrate older people and their experiences such as the "Growing older and bolder" symposium.



If you would like more information on the Positive Ageing in Auckland plan, you can:

- call 09 379 2020
- visit www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/positiveageing
- write to Auckland City Council, Private Bag 92516
Wellesley Street, Auckland 1141.

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+ HIGH SKY +
WIDE WATER

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