

# AGE FRIENDLY NEW PLYMOUTH



August 2017

The best place to live, work, visit and age

The first Age Friendly Strategy sets out the vision for a New Plymouth District where people all people as they age can flourish and thrive.

# Age Friendly New Plymouth

STRATEGY 2017 - 2027

## INTRODUCTION

An every age friendly community is not about structures, it is about people, belonging, meaning and contribution. The age friendly process is incredibly important because it is raising the conversation in the community about what it means to age well. The process that has been undertaken in New Plymouth represents a community conversation about what we value and what we want to protect. Our strategy approach has not been to think about what it means to be aged friendly; it is about age friendly, all age friendly.

Ageing is not a homogenous process – there is a pathway to ageing well it is something that we all experience differently. Regrettably, there are an increasing number of vulnerable elderly, who have been more adversely affected by economic and social instability more than any other generation. The number of older renters is increasing, we have people who are living off limited savings and who lost their investments in the global financial crisis and there is a generation of people who are transitioning from a life on benefits to a life on a pension. Access to state support can be difficult for the over 65s and as a society the working age population are telling the ageing generation that they did not prepare well enough. The life of the older person today is different from the one of our parents.

As we age and live out our life on superannuation, our engagement with society lessens, and it can be difficult to maintain the same level of social confidence and independence that we had when we were working and more independent. Levels of vulnerability are increasing through this isolation. When we are working and have children we lead very public lives, as we age this diminishes and society sees us as less valuable because our contribution is not quite as visible. We lose confidence in our identity and connections diminish when work stops. When work stops or slows, it is important that people maintain activity, participation, connection and companionship in their lives. People with a sense of purpose and belonging generally have more happiness and life satisfaction, and better cognitive functioning. It is important that we remain engaged and connected and valued by our communities as we age.

Whilst there are challenges to ageing in today's society there are many opportunities that we are the first generation to enjoy – technology, travel, art, culture, recreation, good health and more. We want all of our people as they engage to continue to benefit from the positive offerings that age can bring.

An age friendly community is a community that cares, and caring is the responsibility of all. Central and local government and statutory crown agencies can provide leadership and create policy to encourage age friendly communities, they can provide investment and commitment to shaping a community where no-one is left behind. An age friendly community cannot be achieved in a vacuum and support from the network of community service providers and the wider district community is essential to move this strategy beyond a vision into a programme for action, implementation and change.

Remember, we all get a turn at being old.

Lance Girling Butcher

Chair, New Plymouth Positive Ageing Trust

## Preface / Acknowledgements

This strategy was prepared by Dr Louise Tester of Guild Research and Consultancy Services in collaboration and partnership with the Age Friendly Working Party, the New Plymouth Positive Ageing Trust, and the New Plymouth District Council Disability Accessibility and Aged Issues Working Party. The project would not have been possible without the generous funding support from The Office of Seniors, Ministry of Social Development.

We would like to express our gratitude to the many community partners who collaborated with us to develop this plan. This includes Lance Girling Butcher, Keith Allum, Roger Catlin, Joe Rodrigues, Lin Tucker, Gillian Goble, Brian Erikson, David Showler, Philippa Townsend, Channa Perry, Gordon Hudson, Agnes Lehrke, Callum Williamson, Doug Hislop, Andrew Brock, Dr Craig Ashcroft, Linda Cox, Janica Heirhly, Michelle (from Access Radio), Valarie Howe, Mayor Neil Holdom, Morgan Harrison, Kevin Neilson, Barrie Smith, Graham Hill, John Sutcliffe, John Major, Alison Brown, Roger Hignett, Lyn Watson, Denise Fleming, Donald Crisp and Te Kaunihera o Kaumātua, Kaitake, the Health of Older People Consumer Reference Group, Inglewood, Clifton and Waitara Community Boards and the members of Grey Power and the Positive Ageing Trust. We would also like to acknowledge the individuals who offered their ideas and suggestions via the community questionnaire and community stakeholder workshop.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the next 50 years, the number of people aged 65 and older is expected to rise considerably, and as a community it is important that we embrace all of the opportunities (and challenges) that a shifting demographic brings. The United Nations Assembly proclaimed 1999 as the International Year of the Older Person; this was an important milestone that highlighted the need to respond to ageing in a concerted way. In the same year the New Plymouth District Positive Ageing Trust was formed. New Plymouth district embraced the call to action and in 2003 the Council and the Positive Ageing Trust made a commitment to work with the Office of Seniors on the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy. New Plymouth district became the first area in the country to sign up to the national goals. There has always been a strong relationship between the Council and the Positive Ageing Trust and in the early years of the relationship, the Council had in place policies to attend to ageing in the community, a relationship agreement and a Positive Ageing Strategy. The Strategy represented a committed from organisations across the district to work together to ensure that the needs and interests of people as they age are met. The emergence of the *Age Friendly* kaupapa represents another step in the journey to ensure that all members of our community may live and age well.

An age friendly community is one where partners across community challenge one another to do more and respond differently to the changing shape and needs of the community. It recognises the capabilities, capacities and resources among people as they age. It is a community that cares equally for all ages and responds flexibly to the the various needs that each age group may have. An age friendly community is respectful of difference and individual preferences and it is a community that cares and protects its most vulnerable. An age friendly community wants older people to be active participant in all areas of community life.

In developing the New Plymouth Age-friendly Strategy, a suite of community engagements took place to understand the perceptions and beliefs of people in the community. The objective of the New Plymouth Age Friendly Strategy was not to conduct an audit of what services and supports organisations may or not be providing for people as they age, it was intended to elicit meaning and understanding and promote conversation and awareness among the community that can lead to new and different and improved responses to an ageing community. The engagement was largely with those who identify themselves as ageing and connected to the kaupapa, because of its relevance to them. This is a strength of the strategy, because it brings front and centre the voices of older and ageing people in our district

community. Surveys, interviews, hui, small group discussions, informal conversations and network meetings took place over six months with a range of individuals and organisations. The feedback demonstrated the divergent views and diversity within our ageing community and highlighted areas of common concern and opportunity. In line with the World Health Organisations eight domains, the conversations have focused on eliciting information about the following areas:

1. Outdoor spaces and buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Social participation
5. Respect and social inclusion
6. Civic participation and employment
7. Communication and information
8. Community support and health services

This document contains the goals and objectives that reflect the outcomes of the consultation. Within each of the domain areas, a narrative has been produced to summarise the keys issues that have emerged from the consultations. And using this data, the strategy has developed a number of features that signify what an age friendly community could look like.

It was important to develop a strategy and an action plan that was both achievable, but challenging enough to keep the community focused on the outcomes sought. It is not a strategy with a large number of recommendations that can never be achieved. It is a strategy that contains 42 priority areas across the eight domains. It is our belief that with commitment and partnership across Councils, health providers, schools and the education sector, business and the community and social services sectors the action plan can be achieved.

The goals that we seek to achieve over the life of the strategy are:

- Environments enhance physical wellbeing promote independence, foster social interaction and enable people to conduct their daily activities.

- A public, community and volunteer transport mode enables all people to retain independence and social connections.
- All people have choices to live independently and age well in a healthy affordable home environment.
- All people are connected to their communities and have opportunities to participate in the social, cultural and spiritual life of their community.
- All people are respected as valuable contributing members of their communities.
- Employment, volunteering and engagement opportunities exist that connect people with and enable them to actively and positively contribute to their community.
- All people are well connected and have access to timely and relevant information.
- Appropriate community support and health services are available when needed and accessible to those that need them

The New Plymouth Age Friendly Strategy is an all age friendly strategy and promotes a vision for the community where every age flourishes and thrives.

## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Preface / Acknowledgements .....	3
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>AGE FRIENDLY NEW PLYMOUTH</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Our Vision.....	11
Our Values .....	11
Our Strategy Principles .....	12
<b>OUR AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Outdoor Spaces and Buildings.....	13
Goal .....	13
Key objectives.....	13
Age Friendly Features.....	15
Priorities for Action .....	16
Transport .....	17
Goal .....	17
Key objectives.....	17
Age Friendly Features.....	18
Priorities for Action .....	19
Housing .....	21
Goal .....	21
Key objectives.....	21
Age Friendly Features.....	22
Priorities for Action .....	23
Social Participation.....	24
Goal .....	24
Key objectives.....	24
Age Friendly Features.....	25
Priorities for Action .....	26
Respect and Social Inclusion.....	28
Goal .....	28
Key objectives.....	28
Age Friendly Features.....	29
Priorities for Action .....	30
Civic Participation and Employment.....	31
Goal .....	31
Key objectives.....	31



Age Friendly Features..... 32  
Priorities for action..... 33  
Communication and Information..... 35  
    Goal ..... 35  
    Key objectives..... 35  
    Age Friendly Features..... 36  
    Priorities for Action ..... 37  
Community Support and Health Services ..... 38  
    Goal ..... 38  
    Key objectives..... 38  
    Age Friendly Features..... 40  
    Priorities for Action ..... 40  
**IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING ..... 42**  
**REVIEW AND EVALUATION ..... 42**

## WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Active ageing is "the process of optimizing opportunities for optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age" (Active Ageing: A Policy Framework, WHO, 2002).



Making communities age-friendly is one of the most effective policy approaches for responding to demographic ageing. Key urban centres have the human, economic and social resources to make innovative age-friendly changes. Within larger urban communities, residents typically live, contribute, socialise, play, and obtain goods and services in smaller and often very distinct neighbourhoods. An age friendly community is most effective when initiatives and practices operate throughout all tiers of a community – from the top to the bottom.

An age-friendly community:

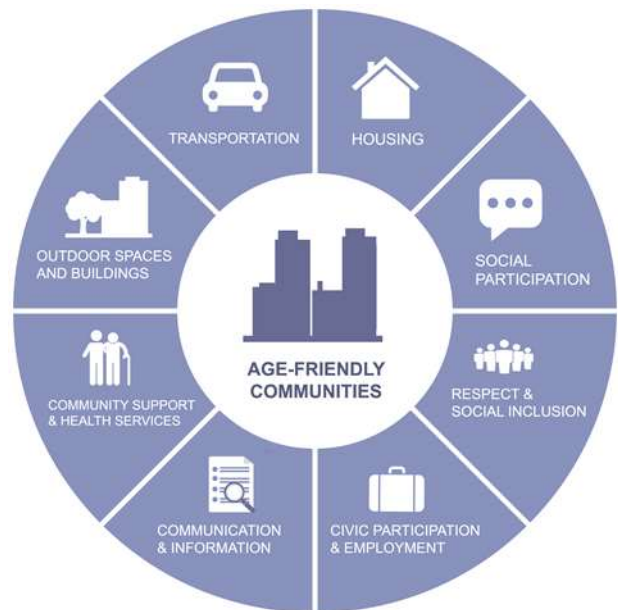
- recognizes the great diversity among older persons
- promotes their inclusion and contribution in all areas of community life
- respects their decisions and lifestyle choices, and
- anticipates and responds flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences.

In an age-friendly community, there is a culture of inclusion shared by persons of all ages and ability levels. Policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to support and enable older people to "age actively", that is, to live in security, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in society.

The World Health Organization (WHO) established the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities as "an international effort to help cities prepare for two global demographic trends: the rapid aging of populations and increasing urbanization." The network identifies eight domains of city life that might influence the health and quality of life of older adults:

1. Outdoor spaces and buildings: Environment, green spaces and walkways, outdoor seating, pavements, roads, traffic, cycle paths, safety, services, buildings, public toilets

2. **Transportation:** Affordability, reliability and frequency, travel destinations, age-friendly vehicles, specialized services, priority seating, transport drivers, safety and comfort, transport stops and stations, information, community transport, taxis, roads, driving competence, parking
3. **Housing:** Affordability, essential services, design, modifications, maintenance, aging-in-place, community integration, housing options, living environment
4. **Social participation:** Accessibility of events and activities, affordability, range of events and activities, facilities and settings, promotion of awareness of activities, addressing isolation, fostering community integration, outreach to those at risk of social isolation
5. **Respect and social inclusion:** Respectful and inclusive services, public images of aging, intergenerational and family interactions, public education, community inclusion, economic inclusion
6. **Civic participation and employment:** Options of volunteering, employment options, post-retirement training, accessibility, civic participation, valued contributions, entrepreneurship, paid opportunities to work
7. **Communication and information:** Offer oral communication, printed information, plain language, automated communication and equipment, broad public access to computers and the internet.
8. **Community support and health services:** Service accessibility; offer a range of health and community support services, voluntary support, emergency planning and care, coordinated service delivery.



## AGE FRIENDLY NEW PLYMOUTH

### Our Vision

**The community where every age flourishes and thrives.**

### Our Values

The following values have been identified as important for a community that is all age friendly.

**Connection and compassion**

**Inclusion is not exclusive**

**Invest in yourself and invest in others**

**Be flexible and be adaptable**

**Giving and achieving gives great satisfaction**

**Be kind to yourself and be kind to others**

**Improvement is always possible**

## Our Strategy Principles

The principles that will support the achievement of the strategy are:

**The contribution of people as they age is recognised and valued.**

**Services and supports will be mana enhancing and culturally relevant.**

**Protecting the vulnerable members of our ageing community.**

**Diversity and difference is celebrated.**

**Independence, inclusion and participation of all is promoted and enabled.**

**Healthy sustainable living options are available to all.**

**Compassion, cooperation and community are the cornerstones of our actions.**

**All lifestyles decisions and choices are respected.**

**We work together for the wellbeing of all.**

## OUR AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

### Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

#### Goal

Environments enhance physical wellbeing promote independence, foster social interaction and enable people to conduct their daily activities.

#### Key objectives

- Community infrastructure and outdoor spaces are inclusive, safe and accessible.
- Open spaces encourage active and passive recreational activities and foster social inclusion.
- Buildings are easy to access and navigate.



The quality of the natural environment is a key determinant that affects the quality of life for all people. New Plymouth district is fortunate to be served by a wonderful natural landscape of mountain and sea. Our access to a rich network of walkways, beaches, parks and reserves is one of the features that make the district a wonderful place to live, visit, work and age. With such a rich offering there is a need to have in place infrastructure and supports so that everyone may enjoy what the district has to offer. With a large network of parks, walkways and cycleway the community requires rest areas, toilets and shelter. Outdoor spaces are often separated by roadways, hills and communities, so quality pavements and crossings and street lighting is needed. The topography of the community is both an asset and a challenge for young and old, and it is important that we maximise the potential for all persons to access our environment and infrastructure equitably and safely.

The district has a reasonable number of rest areas and toilets; however there is always a need for more. With long stretches of walkways and pathways, it is important that the distance between facilities is not too great. It is important to offer places for older people to rest as they enjoy the outside environment.

Increasingly the districts cafes and business offer outdoor seating. Whilst this is a positive development for the vibrancy of the community, consideration must also be given to the level of encroachment onto footpaths, which impedes ease of access for young and old.

Across the district the pavements are of varying quality. Whilst improvements to pavements are taking place all of the time, pavements that are cracked, uneven or have high curbs affect the ability of people to walk and move around safely and easily.

New Plymouth is a district that is increasingly enjoying the outdoors – with a growing number of people cycling and walking. With this positive shift towards pedestrianisation, there is a need for a greater number of crossings that are well signposted, lit and demonstrate the priority of the person over the vehicle. As the district develops and evolves greater attention is required to designing communities for people, and communities that encourage ease of movement and access and place priority of people over cars. .

Walkways and cycleways are positive for the health of the community and the health of the environment; however consideration must be given to the varying abilities of the walkers and cyclists. Walking tracks and pathways in parks and public places should be accessible to people with varying mobility, and partnerships between Councils, government agencies and community can ensure that people with impaired mobility have access to information about what tracks will be accessible and suitable for their mobility. There is a feeling of insecurity among some elderly people because of the shared use of pedestrian spaces and cycleways. Shared spaces must be safe and accommodate the needs of different types of travellers of all ages.

The provision of accessible buildings is widely acknowledged as an essential component of an age friendly community, and whilst many of the district's buildings are accessible to a high standard, some buildings remain inaccessible. In some cases this is due to building structure and design, and in others it is due to the layout; shops having too little space to allow a wheelchair to travel through, or layout making it difficult for people with limited mobility to easily access the item that they want to purchase, without having to walk through an entire building or shop or stretch and reach uncomfortably. There is an opportunity for more education about how to design and set out buildings for optimal access of ageing people.

Toilets that are accessible to the public are an important feature for an accessible community. The provision of toilets extends beyond Council provided public toilets, it is about having toilet facilities that can be used in key places throughout the district and which may be provided by shops and offices and other private bodies. Quality customer organisations recognises the different needs of all people, and provide infrastructure that respect and accommodate different needs.

### **Age Friendly Features**

Based on the results of the consultation processes, the features and attributes that are important to an age friendly New Plymouth includes:

- All accessways and pathways to be fully accessible by pedestrians of varying mobility and people who use walking aids and mobility scooters
- Public spaces are well lit, safe, have an increased number of seats and where required, have shelter.
- Pavements enable safe and easy access for all and are free from barriers and impediments.
- Encroachments onto pavements are kept to a minimum.
- Pedestrian crossings are large in number and enable safe and easy access for all and are free from barriers and impediments.
- Cycle lanes and pedestrian priority areas are given primacy over vehicles in key public places.
- There is safe and courteous use of shared spaces.
- Street lighting in neighbourhoods and on the walkways facilitates feelings of safety.
- Accessibility awareness training (thinking differently) takes place across organisations and community groups to increase awareness about the importance of accessible spaces and buildings.
- Key retail areas and communities in the district provide high levels of access for all mobility types.
- Council buildings and key public buildings (marae, community halls) operate to a high level of accessibility compliance.



- Event organisers continue to ensure that events and venues are accessible to all people with varying levels of mobility.

### Priorities for Action

1	Maintain and enhance a pedestrian network (including appropriate crossings) that is comprehensive and safely located for all (particularly in communities where shops and services can be accessed without a vehicle).	New Plymouth District Council
2	Audit of pavements and crossings in key townships and communities.	New Plymouth District Council and Taranaki Disability Information Centre
3	Increase the availability of seating, shade and toilets in public spaces.	New Plymouth District Council
4	Accessibility awareness training is conducted with small businesses, large companies and public sector organisations.	Taranaki Disability Information Centre
5	Access audits take place in all retail outlets in the district.	Taranaki Disability Information Centre
6	Accessibility efforts among businesses and organisations are celebrated and awarded.	Taranaki Business Awards and Taranaki Disability Information Centre
7	Improve beach access for all mobility types.	New Plymouth District Council

## Transport

### Goal

A public, community and volunteer transport mode enables all people to retain independence and social connections.

### Key objectives

- Support community stakeholders to identify and develop responses to transport issues.
- Increase the ability and confidence of older people to use all transport modes.
- Promote information about local transport services to residents.
- Advocate to public transport services about the customer needs of older people.
- Facilitate programs to increase the competence and confidence of older drivers.



Transportation and the movement of people for essential and non-essential activities is a key factor influencing access to services, social inclusion and participation. Transport is a challenging issue for the New Plymouth district because of the reliance of the community on cars and private transport, the topography of the district, the location of townships and neighbourhoods, the placement of essential supports and services and the provision of public and community transport services. Transport is a topic that has generated a wide range of views and it is clear that there is no one solution that will serve the needs of all. However, the critical consideration is that all persons have access to transport solutions for their needs.

Public transport is an area of investment that requires further consideration. Public transport services across the district have increased and improved but there are gaps in service provision and there are perceptions that the services could be offered in a different way. A range of non-private transport services are needed that operate regular fixed route timetables but also flexible offerings that are tailored to an individual's needs are also needed. There is a need for communities outside of the main New Plymouth township to be better served, and ageing people require public and or community transport services that operate more regularly at the weekend and in the early evening. A conventional

model of big buses, fixed subsidy model is no longer appropriate for the growing and ageing population. Whilst more people are driving for longer, with an ageing population that is benefiting from increased longevity, there is a need to provide transport services that ensure that all people can remain part of their community for the whole of life.

There are many ways to encourage increased bus use by all members of the community; this includes increased frequency of services, which could take place by running a greater number of smaller buses particularly at the weekends and early evening. An increased offering would also encourage a greater section of the population (young and old) to use the buses. Route design is important – enabling people to travel and from their destination swiftly, and ensuring that key destinations influence route design for example travelling to major medical centres, supermarkets, the library, and hospital. Where bus routes are too long, this is a barrier to their use, which in turn makes them uneconomically and under used. The types of buses that are provided should be accessible by all – young and old who are both challenged by high steps. There must be sufficient space for wheelchairs and pushchairs. A transport network that caters for an ageing population caters for all.

Information can represent a barrier to a using public transport, timetables are too small, do not show the entire network and there is a lack of accessible information at the district bus stops. Currently the public transport infrastructure and information is not encouraging greater use of the transport network. The participants' expressed a wish for information that is in larger, more accessible formats and there is support for the development of a transport app and for the installation of real time information at bus stops.

### **Age Friendly Features**

Based on the results of the consultation processes, the features and attributes that are important to an age friendly New Plymouth includes:

- Bus services for ageing people are affordable.
- The frequency and availability of bus services across the district enables easy and regular movement of people across the district.
- Smaller townships receive a comprehensive network of public transport services.
- Public transport vehicles are of sufficient quality.

- Transport routes are designed to facilitate access to a range of key locations that older people use (i.e. medical centres, supermarkets, neighbourhood shops).
- Network wide public transport information is available in formats and print that is easy to read and understand, and technology based solutions (apps and real time bus stop data) are implemented.
- The voluntary transport network is comprehensive and well-funded.
- A community transport that serves the needs of smaller communities and rural communities is provided.
- Taxi cost subsidies continue to be provided.
- Enhanced road and street lighting enables safer driving for all.
- Free parking for gold card holders is provided.
- The community respect priority and disabled parking places.
- Additional parking drop off areas are provided for ageing people.
- Education, guidance and older persons driver courses is provided to support older drivers to remain independent and safe in their private vehicles.

### Priorities for Action

1	Investigate the establishment of a flexible community transport network (Mobility as a Service model).	Taranaki Regional Council
2	Provision of driving course and education services for older drivers.	Age Concern
3	Increase in the provision of public bus services and associated infrastructure	Taranaki Regional Council and New Plymouth District Council

4	Responding to the need for increased awareness and opportunity associated with mobility scooters.	New Plymouth District Council
5	Increasing the availability of accessible parking at key locations.	New Plymouth District Council

## Housing

### Goal

All people have choices to live independently and age well in a healthy affordable home environment.

### Key objectives

- Develop a diverse, flexible, adaptable range of housing types and tenures for older residents.
- Provide information to older residents about housing options and aged care support services.
- Advocate and enable the development of housing that is affordable, healthy and appropriately located for older people.



Healthy, affordable homes are essential to the wellbeing of a community. A home can enable independence, quality of life and good health among ageing people. There is a general perception that New Plymouth district has available a range of affordable appropriately located accommodation for most people, however there is a concern that an increasing number of elderly people on fixed incomes, who do not own their own home are not benefiting from a high standard of housing accommodation. The increasing trend to divest of state and Council provided housing is placing unnecessary pressure on older people who have to rely on private rented accommodation, which is of higher cost and can be of lower standard. For older people on fixed incomes in poor quality housing this has a major effect on their economic wellbeing and their health and social welfare.

When it comes to housing, it is important that as many people as possible have the choice about whether to age in their own home or in a retirement or rest home. Many people wish to live independently for as long as possible, but do require support and help to do so. Help may include shopping; gardening, cleaning, maintenance or it may include the installation of modifications. Whilst some people have the financial means to pay for these services and supports not all people do and financial assistance should be seen as an investment as costs would not be needed elsewhere.

A barrier to ageing well in place can be economics, with older people reporting the high costs of rates and utility payments. It is important that all people as they age have enough money to pay for the essential services to keep them warm and healthy and well.

The location of age-friendly housing is important. For ageing persons who live close to shops and other amenities there is likely to be higher levels of social inclusion and participation. Where older people live in communities that are less connected in terms of services and transport there is a greater risk of their being isolated and not ageing well in place. Issues around housing are closely connected to transport, health and social participation and inclusion.

Ageing well requires connection to other members of the community. Currently the model of housing that is on offer is either independent private homes, a small number of communities such as Masonic housing or state / Council housing and an increasing number of retirement villages. Retirement villages are being increasingly developed away from community services – shops, bus routes and other community services. There is a view from some that the retirement communities are isolating generations from one another, and some older people are reluctant to move to the villages because it detaches them from their communities, which is seen as negative. There is a need for housing for ageing people to be located as part of mixed housing developments within communities that have access to shops and services and amenities. Instead of housing for elderly people being located on the fringes of neighbourhoods and communities, where it is not possible to walk to a shop or a club, developments should be encouraged within community and alongside families and working households and schools.

Lifetime design is an important design feature of homes that can enable people to live in and enjoy regardless of their age, mobility or stage of life. Lifetime design must become a standard design feature for all homes because it makes adaptation and modification easier as people progress through their life.

### **Age Friendly Features**

Based on the results of the consultation processes, the features and attributes that are important to an age friendly New Plymouth includes:

- Dedicated provision of housing appropriate for ageing people and smaller households as part of mixed developments in established communities.
- Services to support elderly people to age in place are accessible and affordable for all.

- A range of service options and home support services support ageing people to remain in their homes and in their communities.
- The District Plan provides for the provision of papakainga, co-housing and kaumātua housing.
- A WOF for all private rental housing is mandatory.
- The homes of all elderly people are insulated, ventilated and have heating.
- Community and co-housing solutions for ageing people become the norm.
- Rest homes and retirement villages are located across the district in close proximity to services, supports and community.
- There is an increase in pensioner housing provided by the Council

### Priorities for Action

1	Introduction of a WOF for all rental homes.	New Plymouth District Council
2	Increase the number and quality of pensioner housing.	New Plymouth District Council
3	Homes of all elderly people to be insulated for free.	WISE Better Homes / EECA
4	Development of community / co housing / kaumātua housing models across the district.	To be determined
5	Retirement homes and village developments are encouraged in smaller communities close to amenities and services.	New Plymouth District Council – District Plan
6	Development of an inner city mission/centre for those in financial difficulties and/or the socially isolated can to meet rest and receive support.	To be determined
7	Advocate for the development of Lifetime Design homes as part of all new housing developments.	New Plymouth District Council / Positive Ageing / Community Housing Taranaki



## Social Participation

### Goal

All people are connected to their communities and have opportunities to participate in the social, cultural and spiritual life of their community.

### Key objectives

- Support the development of and promote a range of events, activities and programmes for older people to maintain competence, respect and esteem.
- Collaborate and build the capacity of established and emerging groups to enhance sustainability.
- Encourage participation in social activities through access to good local information, suitable transport and appropriate accessible facilities.



Remaining engaged and connected to the wider community is an important feature of an age friendly community. Ageing is not something that should take place in isolation, ageing is a process that is experienced by the whole community on a daily basis, and it is simply that each member of the community is at a different stage of their journey. Many of the people who participated in the development of this strategy were those who are connected to their communities via their social, voluntary, cultural and familial participation. However, there was a widespread recognition that we must be mindful of the need to provide services, supports and infrastructures for those whose voices and participation is not so visible.

There is no doubt that at a grand scale the New Plymouth district is well served by clubs and groups and networks. However the ability to participate in the community depends on the range of activities that are available in a given location, the supports that encourage and enable people to participate and the availability of transportation, access to the location or building and the affordability of the service and activity. There is a varying degree of awareness about the opportunities that exist within neighbourhoods and townships, and communities are not equally served because of their population and location. Participation is most difficult for people who live on the fringes of a community, have lesser

mobility or live in a rural or sparsely populated area. Participation is easier and more likely to take place when opportunities are close to home and when there is a means to easily access services.

Challenges around transport have been discussed, but when it comes to social participation transport is more of an issue than simply travelling to and from a venue. Many people feel awkward or uncomfortable travelling to a group or club on their own, so having transport to and from the venue also provides the means for an individual to travel with and feel part of the group which increases a sense of belonging and inclusion.

As people age, their friendships and relationships may diminish as people pass on or their health prevents them from socialising and engaging in ways that they used to. There are also an increasing number of ageing people who do not have regular contact with their families. Having someone to telephone or to telephone you is an essential need for people as they age. A conversation to alleviate loneliness and isolation and grief through the loss of a life partner is an important basis to maintain wellbeing. This type of outreach may be particularly important to actively encourage participation – a concerted effort to connect with people is just as important as the offering of the group or association. Organisations can be encouraged to connect with the ageing people in their communities, individual connections can be fostered using a friendship tree model and loss and grief services for ageing people are developed and offered.

It appears that women in New Plymouth are more likely to remain socially connected than men, and there is therefore a need to actively consider how best to encourage and enable meaningful participation and engagement by men in activities of interest and value to them.

An age friendly community is one where activities for older people are not always just for older people. The strength of a community is the degree to which it works across generations and communities. There is a strong call for older people to actively participate in activities and groups where they can work alongside or recreate alongside younger people. Social participation often crosses the generations, and an inclusive community is one in which ageing people contribute their skills, time and knowledge to the benefit of others.

### **Age Friendly Features**

Based on the results of the consultation processes, the features and attributes that are important to an age friendly New Plymouth includes:

- The district provides a range of event opportunities that are enticing for ageing people across the district.
- Events are accessible for all
- Event communications include information about the activities and opportunities that are on offer for ageing people at a neighbourhood / township level and contain information about transport, access and parking.
- Events are programmed with ageing people in mind
- New Plymouth should continue to be a safe place to attend events across the district.
- Events offer discounts for superannuitants, and for matinee events.
- Opportunities exist for organisations and groups within communities to proactively engage members in the community who may be socially isolated.
- Development of neighbourhood directories of services, supports and activities relevant for ageing people (i.e. Bell Block, Waitara, Inglewood, Oakura, Urenui/Onaero)
- The friendship telephone tree is extended to neighbourhoods and small communities across the district
- Selwyn Centres are provided in the district in major townships
- Social connection opportunities targeted to men are provided
- Every small neighbourhood has a way to contact all of its ageing and vulnerable members in the event of a civil defence or other emergency.
- Grief and loss services for ageing people are offered and accessible.

**Priorities for Action**

1	The friendship telephone tree is expanded throughout the district	Age Concern, Positive Ageing and New Plymouth District Council
---	---	--

---

2	Development of social opportunities targeted to men	Age Concern and Positive Ageing
3	Every older person has the opportunities to be connected to an organisation, group or club	Age Concern and Positive Ageing
4	Selwyn Centres are developed to support social connection opportunities for older people	The Bishop's Action Foundation

## Respect and Social Inclusion

### Goal

All people are respected as valuable contributing members of their communities.

### Key objectives

- Strategies eliminate barriers and reconnect and support isolated people into social activities and support networks.
- Seniors social groups and other clubs cater to the diverse needs of a growing older population.
- Initiatives educate the community about how older adults experience ageing.
- Positive public perceptions of ageing exist across the media and council and other public organisations



Attitudes towards people as they age vary. On one hand, people in New Plymouth report the community as friendly, caring and respectful, but at an institutional level there is a feeling that the contribution of people as they age is less valued. A tension, perhaps a misunderstanding exists about the wants and needs of an age friendly community and how that aligns to the whole community. Respect is widely acknowledged as an essential reciprocal component of society, with older people giving the same level of respect that they expect to enjoy. Whilst kindness and consideration exists at an individual and community level, there is a request for the same level of respect to be championed by leaders of all ages, throughout the community.

New Plymouth is an ageing community that targets investment towards a young generation with requests for investment from elderly people sometimes perceived and presented as selfish or greedy. The perception that older people are demanding an unfair or unequal share of resources is cited as a reason for a prejudice against people as they age. It is important that the misunderstanding does not continue.

An age friendly community is a community that affords the same level of access and equality of service and opportunity to all. It is a community that respects and embraces the difference and diversity that exists across culture, generations and communities. A community that cares for its older people will be a

community that cares for its young. Both older and younger generations can be faced with similar prejudices about values, beliefs, culture, experience and contribution. It is important that the imagery and messaging about people as they age is respectful and positive and inclusive.

Whilst there is a perception that the prejudice many ageing people experience emanates from the population group that is in control of the resources and decision making processes, there is also an opportunity to influence by providing opportunities for intergenerational collaborations and events. There is a greater potential for the ageing population to initiate this intergenerational working because they have the time, experience and skills to facilitate this process.

One of the challenges that exist within New Plymouth is the lack of considered opportunity that is given to the needs of older people to participate in decision making processes. Decisions are made by a few and too little time is given to actively engaging older people in decisions that affect them. This is also the case for younger people and other marginalized groups, including Maori. All community members should expect a meaningful voice and representation in decision making processes. The reality is that election processes do not always enable older and younger members of the community and other marginalized groups to achieve election, and it is thus important that a dedicated forums and opportunities exists to represent their needs, and provide necessary scrutiny in decisions making processes.

### **Age Friendly Features**

Based on the results of the consultation processes, the features and attributes that are important to an age friendly New Plymouth includes:

- Decision making forums and bodies of influence include people who actively represent the voices of older people.
- Businesses and service organisations recognise that a one size fits all model does not work and difference and diversity should be represented.
- Education takes places about how organisations can respectfully meet the needs of elderly people.
- Awareness about how to support vulnerable adults and those with impairments and special needs should exist across all services.

- The Council and other key public sector organisations positively promote the value of ageing people in the community.
- Aging forums, networks and groups initiate ideas and programmes to work alongside schools.
- Intergenerational activities and events (communities without boundaries) become the norm.
- Schools actively support and work alongside the ageing community.
- Community engagement strategies require the voice of the ageing population to be actively considered as part of decision making processes.
- Age friendly subcommittee (incorporating accessibility issues) is re-established (incorporating the voices of generations – young and old)

### Priorities for Action

1	An All Age Friendly Sub Committee in set up at the New Plymouth District Council	New Plymouth District Council
2	Programmes to connect schools with older persons groups are established	Positive Ageing Trust
3	Community engagement and consultation strategies actively consider the ageing population	New Plymouth District Council, Taranaki Regional Council, Taranaki District Health Board
4	Businesses and community organisations receive support and education about how to deliver services to an ageing community.	Chamber of Commerce, Venture Taranaki Trust
5	Churches are supported in their efforts to remain relevant and important to the social needs and fabric of the community.	The Bishop's Action Foundation and Positive Ageing Trust
6	Raise awareness and develop enhanced responses to elder abuse	Age Concern

## Civic Participation and Employment

### Goal

Employment, volunteering and engagement opportunities exist that connect people with and enable them to actively and positively contribute to their community.

### Key objectives

- Training opportunities are offered that develop skills and experience to enhance older people securing and maintaining employment
- Encourage flexible employment opportunities and transition into retirement programmes for older people to remain connected in the community.
- Increase opportunities for voluntary roles to match individual skills, interests and appropriate training.
- Provide opportunities for older people to be represented on Council, committees and boards.



The older population of the New Plymouth district is rising at a faster rate than the younger generation, therefore we cannot afford to ignore the important contribution that ageing people need to and want to make. An age friendly New Plymouth is one that provides opportunities for older people to work – be that full time, part time or self-employed, to volunteer their time and to enjoy their retirement. As many ageing people want to remain in employment or voluntary activity as want to enjoy retirement and it is important that businesses and organisations provide opportunities for flexible working and re-deployment into roles that meet the needs and capabilities of the ageing workforce. Organisations that are responsive to requests for flexible working are likely to enjoy greater levels of commitment and loyalty than those whose ideas about employment remain fixed. Where older people remain actively engaged in the paid or non-paid sectors, levels of health and wellness and social inclusion are maintained. With greater wellness, there is less of an economic burden on the community overall.

Barriers exist to older people maintaining or finding employment. Older people are competing in an employment market that is fast paced and ever evolving. This often results in older people being left to undertake jobs and tasks that are less skilled, less desirable and lower paid. Some older people believe



that they are being encouraged out of their roles to make way for a younger generation. There is the potential for the community to benefit from flexible employment patterns, lighter workloads and flexible holiday and sick leave provisions – which would also benefit other employees of a young age who equally do not want to be constrained by rigid traditional models of full time employment. Training and re-training opportunities are needed to support older peoples continued participation in the community.

An important area of skill development not only for employment and volunteering, but also to enable social and connection is to remain upskilled on the use of technology. Community education courses as well as employment focussed training can support older peoples continued engagement in the community, because their skills remain relevant.

The benefits of volunteering for all ages should not be underestimated. New Plymouth is a community that has high levels of volunteerism, yet many community groups are in desperate need for board members, support roles and other help. It would appear that a gap exists between the organisations that need help and the people want to help. Increased levels of volunteering can support intergenerational cooperation and respect, promote health and wellbeing, lessen the potential for social isolation and ensure that the skills and qualities and experiences of older people are enjoyed by the whole community. Many people are not aware of the volunteering opportunities that are available nor how their skills could help, and it is important that the barriers to volunteering are overcome – transport, unrealistic expectations and reimbursement of reasonable costs. A new approach to volunteering and volunteer organisation is needed.

### **Age Friendly Features**

Based on the results of the consultation processes, the features and attributes that are important to an age friendly New Plymouth includes:

- The volunteer network actively encourages and promotes ageing volunteers across all sectors of the community.
- A strong volunteer network exists at a township / neighbourhood level.
- Advocacy is required to promote and support older people in the employment sector.
- The advantages of flexible working are understood and embraced by the employment sector.

- Enhanced business development opportunities exist for older people's economic enterprises.
- Volunteering with organisations that support young people (Big Brothers Big Sisters, Rotary Readers etc.) is actively encouraged among the ageing sector.
- A database / network of volunteers at township level to enable volunteers within the communities that need and want them.
- An audit of groups and organisations that require / could benefit from volunteers is undertaken.
- Business guides are developed to educate employers about how to accommodate an ageing workforce and how to get the most out of the ageing workforce.
- Employment support providers work for the benefit of ageing people who wish to remain in the workforce.
- Transition to retirement programmes and supports are accessible to all members of the ageing community.
- Ageing is actively represented at the Chamber of Commerce and other business forums.
- IT and computer literacy training opportunities are supported and enhanced.

### Priorities for action

1	The volunteer service maintains a database of neighbourhood level volunteers and foster the development of locality based volunteering	New Plymouth Volunteer Service
2	Time bank is actively promoted and encouraged to ageing people	Time Bank Taranaki
3	Transition to retirement programmes are developed and free for all ageing people in the community	Positive Ageing Trust and Grey Power
4	Development of an employment / business guide for organisations sharing good practice about how to get the best out of an ageing community and an older workforce	Chamber of Commerce, New Plymouth District Council, Venture Taranaki Trust

---

5	Increased IT and computer literacy training is offered to people throughout the district (locality based)	Senior Net and Community Computer Access Centre
6	Promote and protect work opportunities for people over the age of 50 years through the expansion of the Employability Programme to include older people	Ministry of Social Development and Office of Seniors

## Communication and Information

### Goal

All people are well connected and have access to timely and relevant information.

### Key objectives

- Information is provided via a range of appropriate mediums.
- Older adults are provided with opportunities to learn and stay updated with changing technology and communication platforms.
- Information is easy to access and understand.



In an age where communication and information is everywhere, older people can feel disconnected because of the volume of information that is available in this information age. The volume of information that is communicated electronically represents a barrier for some people who are not digitally connected and may not want to be digitally connected, and an opportunity for those that are. Whilst there are increasing levels of older people who access the internet and email on a regular basis, the preferred and most regular means of communication for ageing people continues to be face to face or the telephone.

New Plymouth is well served at a district level by groups and organisations and services but it can be hard for older people to access the information that is relevant and useful to them in the community in which they live, in a format that is accessible and convenient for them. A consistent barrier to older people's engagement and participation in the community is a lack of awareness of the information that may be available – the travel timetable, the local event, the change to a service. The community's free newspaper therefore remains very important for many people; as this provides regular, up to date relevant information about local events and activities. A newspaper or newsletter that contains useful and important information is still a requirement, even in a digital age.

With the plethora of services and information and organisations that exist, it can feel as if information is duplicated or repetitive. A call for a one stop shop for information and services in a written form and at a service level has been requested by ageing people in New Plymouth for many years. Interpersonal

communication (kanohi ki te kanohi) is still very much wanted, for many people it is the best way to know what is going on, but it also provides an important means of social inclusion and connection to the world.

Members of the community, who live outside of New Plymouth central, have less access to services, supports and amenities (doctors, banks, supermarkets, post shop). The loss of these services in smaller communities not only undermines the fabric of the community but increases the prospect of an ageing person becoming isolated, because of issues around accessibility in terms of information and transportation. Age friendly communication ensures that communication is provided in a variety of mediums and forums, and it ensures that people have access to the information that they need when they need it. The challenges associated with social isolation has been discussed and it is important to have active networks and communication trees that keep people in touch with one another and ensure that the information continues to flow. The best means of ensuring that ageing people have access to information is by ensuring that they are connected to other people in the community.

As we age our auditory and visual senses lessen which means that the presentation and delivery of the information we require is crucial. It is not enough to say that a leaflet was produced, a letter sent or a phone call made, if the receiver of the information cannot access and understand the information. More attention is required by key providers of information to ensure that communication literature is accessible by those who require greater consideration of their accessibility needs.

### **Age Friendly Features**

Based on the results of the consultation processes, the features and attributes that are important to an age friendly New Plymouth includes:

- Information is available in many formats and mediums and is accessible to all members of the ageing community.
- There is a centralised repository and support service to help older people access information about the services that they need.
- Information is targeted to the needs of older people.
- Greater attention is given to providing information that is easily visible and accessible for people with sight impairments.

- Where face to face services are offered, providers are knowledgeable about how to deliver age friendly services and information.
- Publicity is automatically available in large print format.
- Computers are available at all district libraries and service centres
- Directory of services, groups and organisations that are relevant to older people by township / neighbourhood
- One stop shop for access to services and information
- Audit of information and support services with a view to rationalisation / amalgamation

### Priorities for Action

1	Development of directory of services and supports for community board area or neighbourhood level	New Plymouth District Council
2	Audit of older peoples services and networks with a view to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery	Positive Ageing Trust, Grey Power and New Plymouth District Council
3	Engagement of an dedicated resource to lead the implementation of the Age Friendly Strategy	Positive Ageing Trust and Grey Power
4	Re-investigate the feasibility of a Community Service Centre	Positive Ageing Trust and The Bishop's Action Foundation

## Community Support and Health Services

### Goal

Appropriate community support and health services are available when needed and accessible to those that need them

### Key objectives

- Collaboration between partners promotes preventative health initiatives to maintain wellbeing and reduce the burden of illness and disease.
- Community support and health services are accessible, affordable and equitable.
- The range of community and health services is well known and understood.
- Promote the health and social benefits from volunteering and provide information on where to access opportunities.



Health and social support services is a persistent concern for older people in New Plymouth. Whilst the quality of delivery is widely acknowledged, the community is concerned about the time taken to access services and the location of many of the services that are required. Older people are mindful of the role that they have to play maintaining their health, but the reality of ageing means that the body and the mind require more support to stay well. As much as an older person stays fit and active, mobility lessens, the senses weaken, and there is a greater risk of falls, chronic illness and disease. An age friendly community provides the necessary supports and services to enable older people to maintain a quality of life, in their own home for as long as possible.

There is an increasing reliance on the community and volunteer services to provide support for older people's wellbeing, and whilst in an age friendly community we must look after one another, this does not negate the need for a quality primary and secondary health and social services sector to provide services when needed.

A recurrent theme concerns the access to knowledge and information about the services and supports that are available, and then ensuring that the supports are available to all people regardless of their economic means. Concern has been expressed that people on lower incomes and those with moderate health needs are most at risk of falling through the cracks and not receiving the services they require in a timely fashion.

Older people want the choice to age well at home or opt to live in a retirement village and rest home. Where an ageing person wants to age at home, there is limited financial support available for them. However, the costs of providing free, low cost or subsidised services to help them to remain at home is more cost effective and more beneficial to a person's wellbeing than the high costs of a rest home. Greater investment and offerings are needed to support people to remain and live well in their homes for as long as they wish to.

New Plymouth has a reasonable range of health and social support services; however there is a need to better understand the scope of what is available and what the level of need is for different types of services – housekeeping, gardening, maintenance, cooking etc. so that it may be provided. Currently services are located throughout the district and there are perceptions of limited co-location or collaboration between services. Currently the responsibility for determining the level of support that older people are entitled to receive rests with Taranaki District Health Board, this means that only persons who have an identified health need will receive services. There is a however need for older people to have the ability to access cost effective services that support their health and wellbeing, whilst they are still well.

There is a shortage of healthcare and social services staff across the network and there is a need and reliance on volunteers to help meet the needs of people as they age. Many communities already help their neighbours, but there is a need for a support network for those people who do not have access to friends and neighbours for their help – support could be available via paid for services and a volunteer network.

With the increasing number of civil defence situations, there is a need to ensure that older people will not be left isolated or without the supports that they need. There is a role that the Council can play working alongside churches, community board and other support services to ensure that the needs of older people in a community are adequately catered for in the event of a civil emergency.



## Age Friendly Features

Based on the results of the consultation processes, the features and attributes that are important to an age friendly community include:

- Audit of older people's health supports and services.
- Greater use of technology to minimise the need for older people to travel for non-essential medical appointments (tele-medicine).
- Establishment of a quality mark / endorsement for older people's health and support services.
- Establishment of township / neighbourhood networks to support ageing people in the community.
- Emergency planning and civil defence neighbourhood networks ensure that elderly people are not left alone or isolated in the event of an emergency.
- Rationalised services and supports improve efficiency and effectiveness of delivery.

## Priorities for Action

1	Introduction of tele medicine opportunities.	Taranaki District Health Board
2	Expansion of public transport services to the hospital and key medical services.	Taranaki Regional Council
3	Completion of emergency management plans and programmes at a Community Board level.	New Plymouth District Council
4	Improve health literacy among older people.	Taranaki District Health Board
5	Ensure home and community support models of health include advice and support to enable people to remain physically and mentally active and strengthen skills they may have lost.	Taranaki District Health Board
6	Develop improved referral systems and improve the overall coordination of health services.	Taranaki District Health Board

---

7	Improve access to physical health services for people with mental health needs and those in residential care services.	Taranaki District Health Board
8	Explore options for aged care facilities to provide a broader range of services.	Taranaki District Health Board
9	Representation at Health of Older People 'study groups'.	Positive Ageing Trust

## IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING

The success of the Age Friendly Strategy requires support, collaboration, commitment and investment. The New Plymouth Positive Ageing Trust will champion the Age Friendly kaupapa and will communicate the strategy, but a wider partnership is needed to determine how we can implement the priority areas for action. The Strategy sets out what we want to achieve, it does not specify how. The Trust cannot specify how because it does not have the authority to command action (and nor would it want to) and it does not have the resources to do so. The Trust wishes to work in partnership with the agencies that are named in this strategy; those agencies that have the resources and authority to deliver. The Trust also wishes to continue to work in partnership with the Office of Seniors. The support of the Office will help the Trust promote the benefit of the Age Friendly Strategy to partners and stakeholders and funders. A partnership with community funders is also important. There are a number of priority areas where there is no obvious lead, actions where a facilitative role and community development type role is needed. There is considerable merit in a personnel resource to help lead and facilitate these areas and for this resource to ensure that the Age Friendly Strategy compliments and supports other strategies and plans (including the Disability Strategy). The New Plymouth Positive Ageing Trust is a voluntary committee, and they like other parts of the community sector are already stretched. The reality is that much of the community sector, do not have the capacity or resources to deliver and support everything that is required, and commitment to provide financial support will be fundamental to support the work that is proposed in this Strategy.

## REVIEW AND EVALUATION

An annual review of the Strategy will be completed to monitor the implementation of the action plan to ensure:

- implementation is on track
- assess the projects and actions to identify if they are achieving the results that are expected
- needs of the community have not changed
- update and amend the strategy (relating to the points above)

Key projects may be selected for an in—depth evaluation plans that can assess the impact on community wellbeing.

At the end of the first three years the priority areas for action will be re-defined, as required.