



Older Aucklanders: A Quality of Life Status Report 2017

Te Hunga Kaumātua ake o Tāmaki Makaurau:
he pūrongo mō te kōunga o te pae oranga 2017

Summary report

Find out more:
visit aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
or phone 09 301 0101

Introduction

Kupu Whakataki

Older people are a taonga (treasure), contributing to Auckland's economic and social fabric, nurturing younger generations and sharing their knowledge and wisdom.

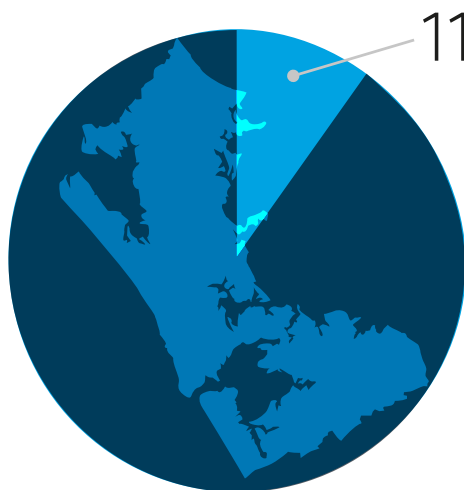
Older Aucklanders need a city that enables them to live happy and healthy lives, as full participants in creating their futures.

Auckland Council recognises the contributions, as well as the challenges, that an ageing population can bring. Auckland Council has a clear directive in the Auckland Plan to "recognise and value the contribution of older people to the community"¹. The council's Seniors Advisory Panel plays a key role in this. It provides insight on issues that are important to older Aucklanders in relation to the council's regional strategies, policies, plans and bylaws. The panel also advises the council on how to engage effectively with older Aucklanders.

This report is an executive summary of Older Aucklanders: A Quality of Life Status Report. It presents an overview of the social and economic status of 'older Aucklanders', defined as people aged 65 years and over and living in Auckland. It provides a snapshot of the diversity of older Aucklanders, with some key insights to guide future research and policy development.

Me mahi tahi tātou mō te oranga o te katoa.

We should work together for the wellbeing of everyone.



11%

AUCKLAND

In 2013, 11 per cent of the total Auckland population were people aged 65 and over.



27%

NEW ZEALAND

In 2013, a quarter of all people aged 65 and over in New Zealand (27%) lived in Auckland.

¹Auckland Plan, 2012.

About the report

E pā ana ki tēnei pūrongo

The Older Aucklanders: A Quality of Life Status Report 2017 outlines findings across eight broad domains or themes that contribute to high quality of life and wellbeing: housing; neighbourhood; transport; social connectedness; health and care; status in society; culture and identity; and economic standard of living.

These domains complement the goals of the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy but are focused on Auckland, unique in New Zealand because of our large, multi-cultural and predominantly urban population. The domains, indicators and measures used in this report were selected through a multistage iterative process, which included:

- a literature review on the determinants of well-being among older people (Auckland Council technical report TR2016/047)
- a review of domains and indicators in the New Zealand government's Positive Ageing Strategy and the World Health Organisation's Age-friendly Cities material
- external stakeholder consultation with subject matter experts (including Auckland Council's Seniors Advisory Panel) on draft domains and indicators
- data collection from existing sources (the Census of Population and Dwellings, and other official statistics) and from a survey commissioned by Auckland Council in 2016 of 846 people 65 years old and over.



Key insights

Mātauranga Matua

The findings presented in the report highlight the diversity of the lived experience of Auckland's older population.

A quarter of New Zealand's older population lives in Auckland

In 2013, there were 163,161 people aged 65 and over living in Auckland, accounting for 11 per cent of our total population, and a quarter (27%) of the national count of older people.

Auckland's older population is projected to continue growing

Over the next 20 years, not only will there be more people living in Auckland but there will be increasing numbers of older people. The number of older Aucklanders is projected to more than double in the two decades between 2013 and 2033, reaching a total of 353,600. This means an increasing proportion of Aucklanders will be aged 65 and over.

Older Aucklanders are diverse

Auckland is the most diverse multi-cultural city in New Zealand, and older Aucklanders are a part of that diversity. Older Aucklanders are an ethnically and culturally diverse group, albeit predominantly European. In 2013, just over three quarters (78%) of older Aucklanders identified with a European ethnicity. The next largest group were those classified under the broad Asian category (12%), followed by Pacific peoples (6%), and Māori (4%).

Greater ethnic diversity in younger age groups means that in the future, older Aucklanders will be even more ethnically diverse. Older Aucklanders also have multiple overlapping identities, e.g. cultural, linguistic, religious, spiritual, sexual orientation and gender identities.

Auckland is a great place to live for many older people

The 2016 survey of Older Aucklanders found the majority of respondents:

- rated their health as being good or excellent
- belonged to one or more social groups
- had not felt lonely or isolated in the previous 12 months
- agreed they got on with the people in their neighbourhood
- felt safe in their home at night.

There are some concerns, particularly for people with limited means

This report highlights the importance of acknowledging that older Aucklanders are not a cohesive, homogenous group.

For example:

- in 2013, 22 per cent of people aged 65 and over lived in areas of relative socio-economic disadvantage (decile 8, 9 or 10 areas)
- almost one in five respondents to the survey of Older Aucklanders felt that older people are not valued in our society
- perceptions of safety drop as income levels drop. Just over half (53 per cent) of those on incomes of \$20,000 or less reported feeling safe compared to 68 per cent of those on incomes of \$100,000 or more.

Levels of home ownership among Aucklanders aged 65 and over are decreasing

Levels of home ownership among Aucklanders aged 65 and over are decreasing – 72 per cent in 2001, 70 per cent in 2006 and 67 per cent in 2013. This is 10 per cent lower than the rest of older New Zealanders outside of Auckland (77 per cent). Greater numbers of older Aucklanders are renting, often from private landlords.

Housing is an area to watch

The majority of older Aucklanders are currently in suitable housing situations. However, more than 7000 older Aucklanders are living in crowded situations.²

Almost 20 per cent of respondents to the survey told us they did not think their housing costs were affordable, and that they could not afford to heat their homes properly during winter.

These issues may intensify as the older population grows and home ownership decreases.

Full report provides a good baseline for the future

The full Older Aucklanders quality of life status report 2017 provides a useful foundation upon which Auckland Council can continue to track the status of older Aucklanders, and can respond to the substantial demographic shifts over the next few decades.

Generally older Aucklanders are doing well but there are also a few areas to watch. We must consider changing needs, aspirations and wellbeing as our older population rapidly grows, and becomes more diverse.

It will be valuable to reflect on the quality of life of older people again in three to five years.

²Statistics New Zealand (2013), customised data.

Population overview

He tirohanga tatauranga ā-iwi whānui

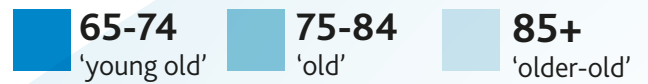
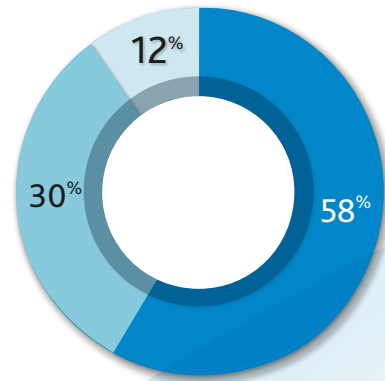
All over the world the number of people aged 65 and over, as well as the proportion of national populations who are in these older age groups, is increasing.

Auckland is no different, with demographic trends showing that Auckland will be home to significantly more older people over the next few decades.

The demographic phenomenon of population ageing is occurring across New Zealand. It has several drivers, including improvements in life expectancy and longevity combined with a decline in birth rates. This decreases the proportion of the population that is young and increases the proportion that is old.

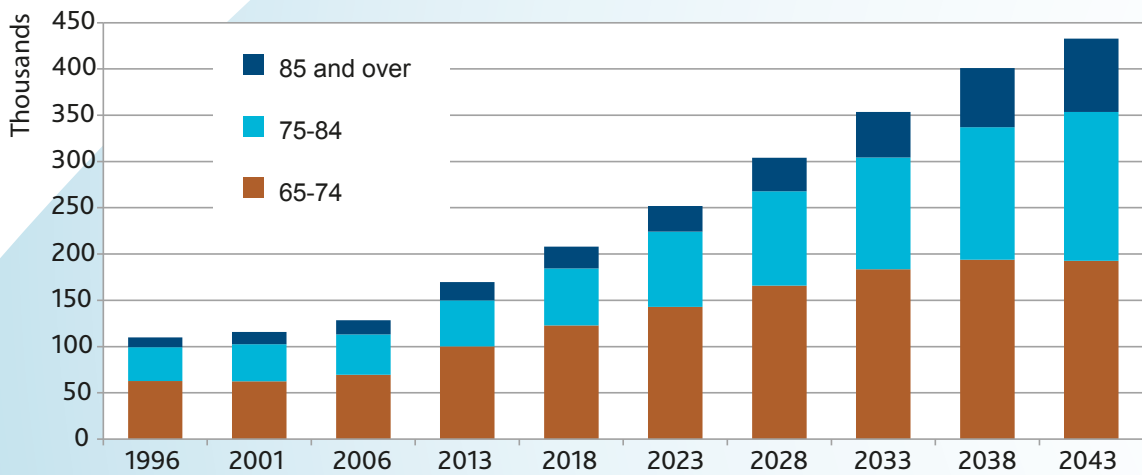
This group spans several life stages.

The number of older Aucklanders has been increasing over the last few decades. This growth has been particularly large in the 65-74 year age group, jumping from 62,820 in 2006 to 95,190 in 2013. This is related to the baby boom cohort (often referred to as those born between 1946 and 1964) reaching age 65, and will also be a result of net immigration from other parts of New Zealand and overseas.



Auckland was home to 165 people aged 100 and over.³

Actual and projected numbers of Aucklanders aged 65 and over by age group 2013 to 2043



Data source: Statistics New Zealand, Census and Statistics New Zealand, subnational population projections 2013 (base)- 2043 (updated) (medium series projections)

“ Other than herding into retirement villages (usually not the best long-term economic option) there is very, very little - in fact, no other option - or incentive for the older age group to stay in Auckland. ”

Respondent to the survey of Older Aucklanders, female, 65-69

³Statistics New Zealand, Census 2013.

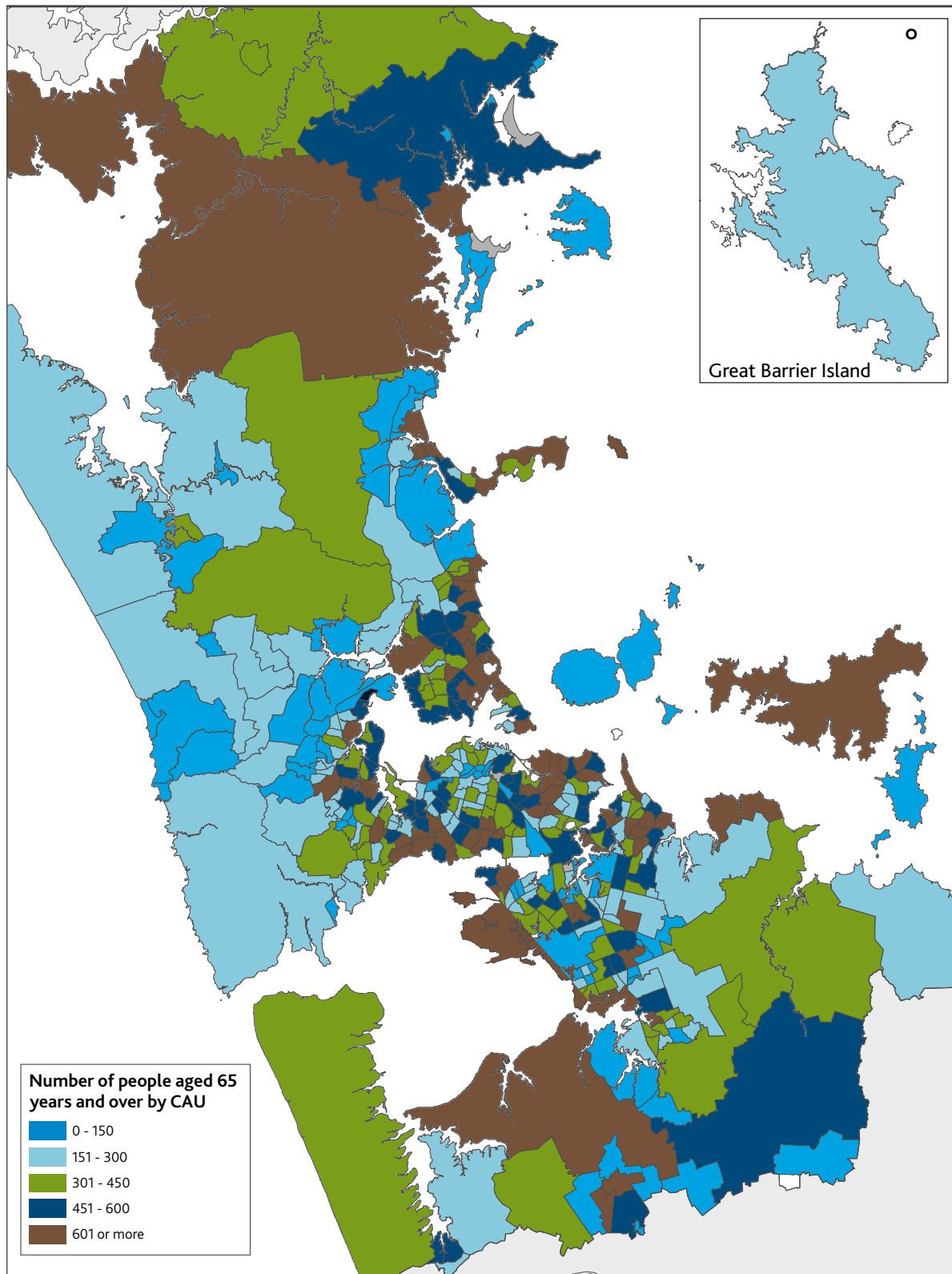


Statistics New Zealand population projections (medium series) suggest that the number of older Aucklanders will more than double in the two decades between 2013 and 2033, reaching a total of 353,600. Such significant proportionate growth is not anticipated in any other age group and is unprecedented in New Zealand history.

As the map shows, large numbers of older Aucklanders live in areas on the edges of the isthmus, on the northern coast, and on the edge of the urban area, including Whangaparaoa peninsula and Waiheke.

Distribution of older Aucklanders by Census area unit (2013)

Data source: Statistics New Zealand, Census 2013



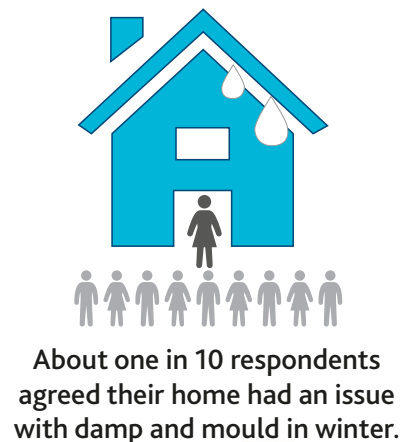
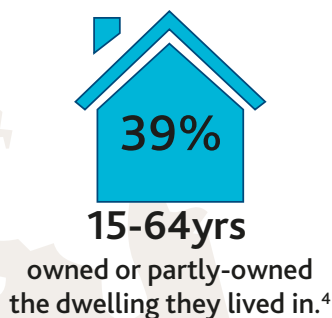
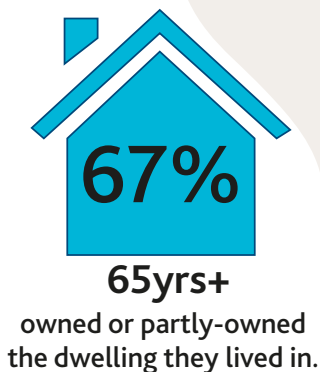
How are older Aucklanders doing?

He pēhea te noho a te hunga kaumātua ake o Tāmaki Makaurau?

Domain 1: Housing

Older Aucklanders live in a range of housing situations.

In 2013, a quarter lived on their own and 44 per cent were in a household that was defined as couple-only. A small proportion (5%) lived in crowded situations (i.e. requiring extra bedrooms). Levels of home ownership among older Aucklanders are higher than the rest of the adult population, although they are gradually decreasing over time.



Around one in five (17%) of respondents to the survey disagreed that their housing costs were affordable.

“ The increasing cost of housing makes it difficult to downsize, as does the lack of smaller single level home units. ”

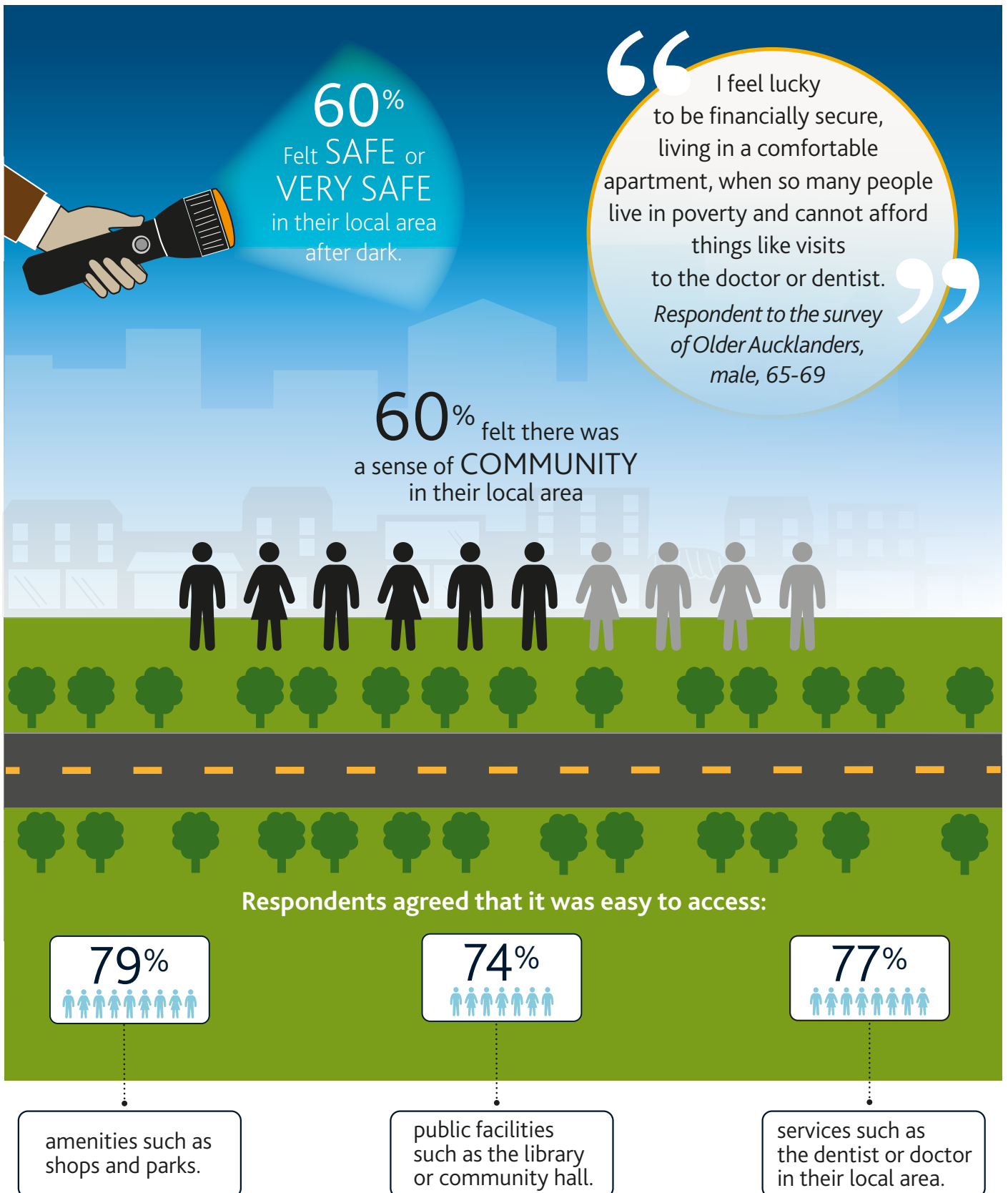
Respondent to the survey of Older Aucklanders, male, 65-69

⁴Census 2013, Statistics New Zealand

Domain 2: Neighbourhood

Neighbourhoods can provide older Aucklanders with a healthy and supportive living environment. This includes the physical environment, as well as the socio-cultural aspects of community engagement and support.

We asked respondents to the survey of Older Aucklanders a few questions about their neighbourhoods.

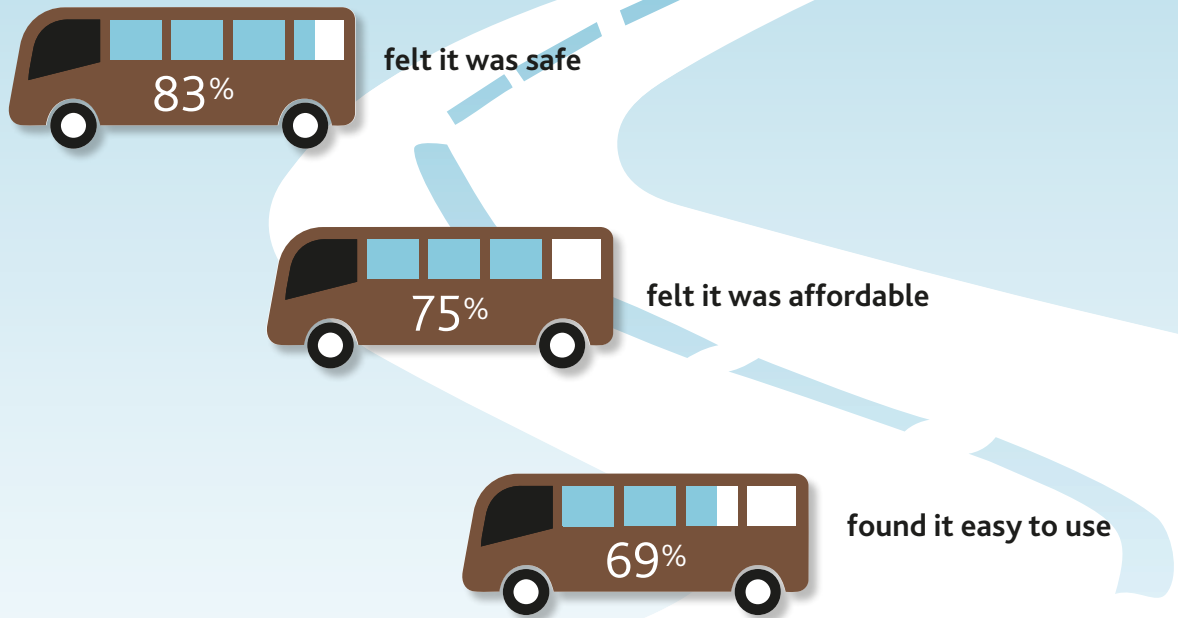




Domain 3: Transport

Mobility and being able to get around the city easily are vital to an active and healthy life. Most older Aucklanders are eligible to use the SuperGold card for free travel on public transport services. This is particularly beneficial for people on fixed incomes, as well as those who do not wish to or can no longer drive.

Respondents to the survey of Older Aucklanders who had used public transport in the previous 12 months



“ Failing eye sight restricts my ability to drive at night. Reduced walking already means I can’t walk as far or as often as I would like. I prefer to not drive in/through Auckland unless it is absolutely necessary. Traffic density is off-putting. ”

Respondent to the survey of Older Aucklanders, female, 80-84

“ It is extremely important to me to be able to continue using the SuperGold card/Hop card, especially for travel after 3pm for medical appointments and community activities. Due to times of appointments and meetings and distances of travel required around Auckland, if the times of use for the SuperGold card/Hop card changed this would have a significant impact on my life, health and finances. ”

Respondent to the survey of Older Aucklanders, female, 65-69

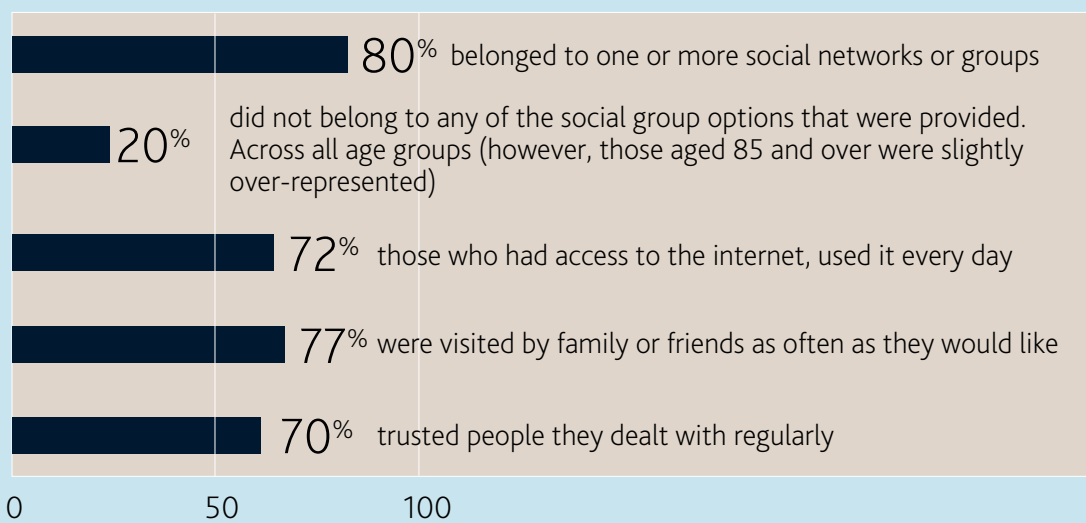
Domain 4: Social connectedness

Mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing among older Aucklanders is enhanced by meaningful social connections.

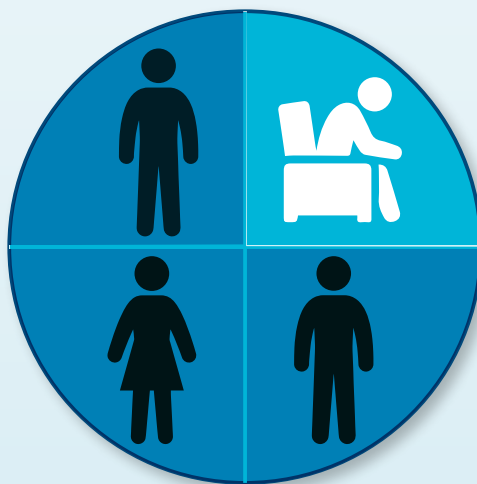
“ [I have..] a very good and happy family who visit often and phone me every day, having good friends, and a wonderful church community. ”

Respondent to the survey of Older Aucklanders, female, 80-84

Respondents to the survey of Older Aucklanders said that they...



Age Concern (as well as other agencies working with older people) report that loneliness is a very real issue for some older members of society, leading to depression and anxiety.



25% of respondents to the survey said they had sometimes felt lonely and isolated in the previous year.

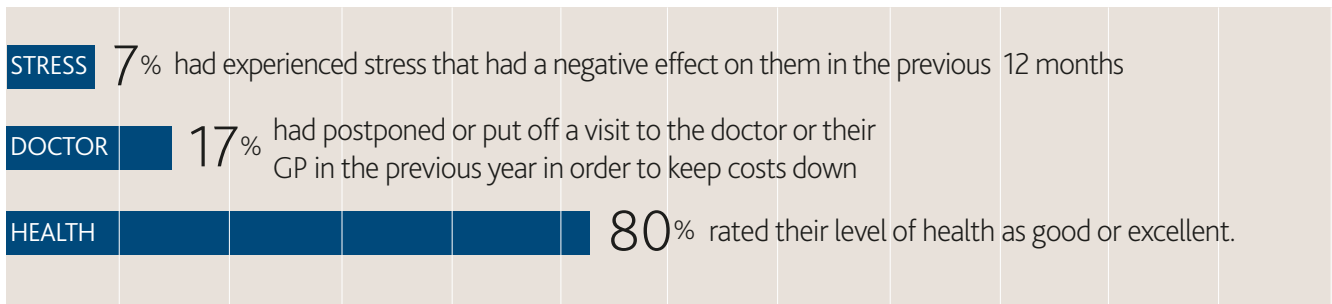


Domain 5: Health and care

As people age, health needs can become more immediate and there tends to be a greater reliance on the healthcare system.

In 2015, there were more than 3000 public hospital discharges and 102 deaths related to falls among Aucklanders aged 65 and over. More than half of these deaths were among people aged 85 and over.

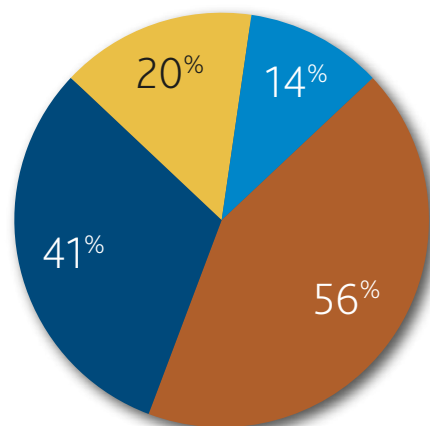
The Older Aucklanders survey told us that:



Domain 6: Status in society

The expression of positive attitudes and behaviours towards ageing and the aged within broader New Zealand society underpins a sense of belonging and inclusion.

- felt they had been discriminated against in the previous 12 months because of their age
- felt that older people are valued in Auckland
- felt that they had the opportunity to play a role as an elder in their family or wider community
- felt that older people were not valued in Auckland.



Large proportions (83%) of older people eligible to vote did so at the 2014 central government elections.

Data on voting is not available for local elections. However, Auckland Council data suggests that at the 2016 local government elections older people were highly represented among those who stood for elected roles.

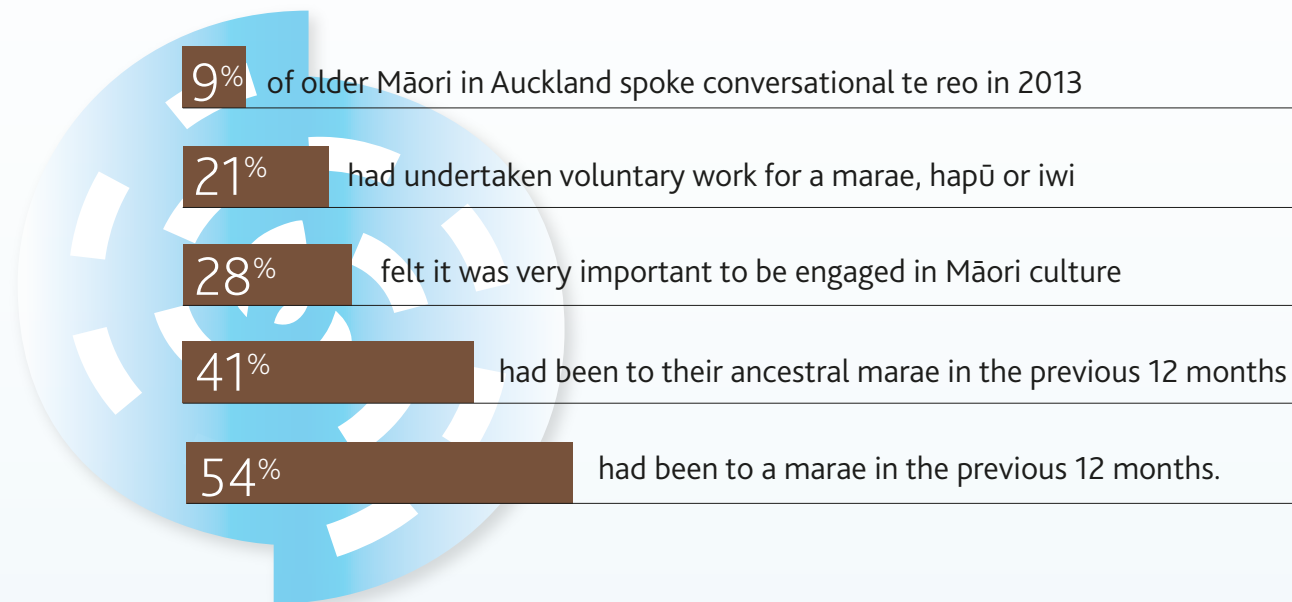
“ The biggest thing which impacts on my happiness ... is that my husband has dementia. I know there is a lot of support and help out there which I wouldn't have in a small place. So that's another plus for living in Auckland and being 75 yrs old. ”

Respondent to the survey of Older Aucklanders, female, 75-79

Domain 7: Culture and identity

It is important that diversity among older Aucklanders is recognised and responded to appropriately, starting with recognition of the benefits for older Māori to engage with Te Ao Māori (including te reo, tikanga, wāhi tapu and access to whanau and hapu).

The 2013 Statistics New Zealand Te Kupenga survey found that among Māori aged 55 and over living in Auckland:



Auckland's multi-cultural society is reflected in the older age groups (albeit not to such a large extent as in younger age groups). Samoan, Yue, northern Chinese and Hindi languages are the most commonly spoken languages among older Aucklanders after English (approximately 3000 in each language group).

Almost half (48%) of respondents to the survey of Older Aucklanders agreed that their culture was an important part of their identity, particularly those who identified with an Asian ethnicity (72%).

A majority (83%) of those who strongly identified with a religion or spiritual group agreed they were able to regularly participate in spiritual events, activities and traditions that were meaningful to them.

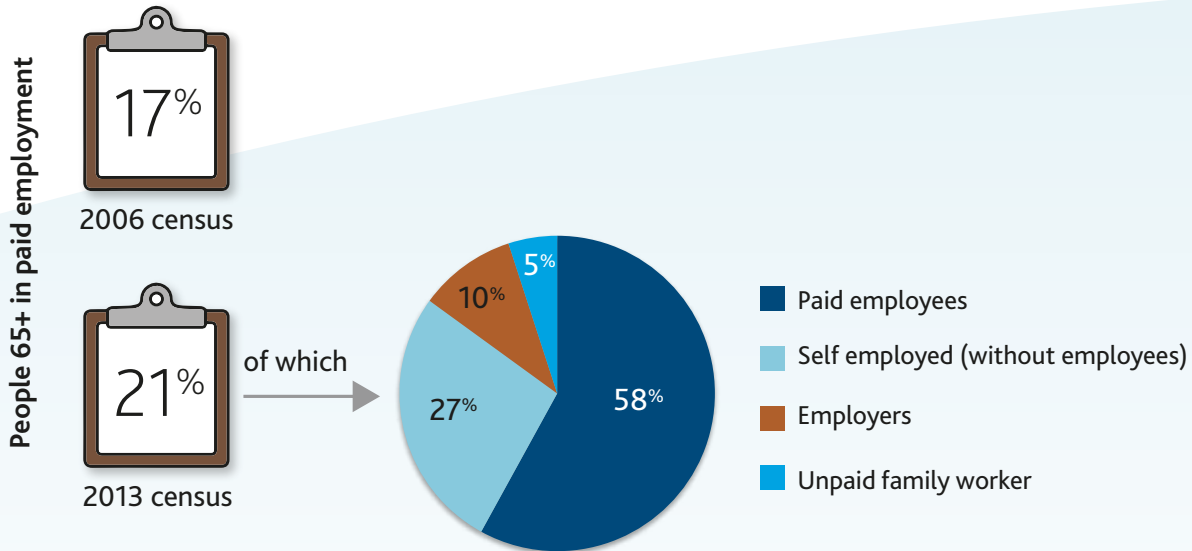
Many older Aucklanders raised in New Zealand, and elsewhere, have lived through a time when diversity and difference from mainstream western European values was not recognised or celebrated. This may have had deep and lasting impacts on how they view themselves and others, and can impact on their experience in healthcare and support systems.



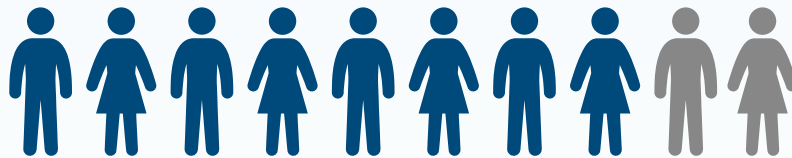
Domain 8: Economic standard of living

Movement into older age can be a challenging time financially, for example due to lowered income in retirement, additional costs of housing, healthcare or support, or the requirement to financially support other family members.

People aged 65 and over in paid employment:



At the 2013 Census, 8 in 10 Aucklanders aged 85 years or over



said they had undertaken unpaid activities, including household work or childcare in the four weeks prior to census day.

Older Aucklanders contribute significantly to Auckland’s economy and society through their unpaid labour and volunteer work, including caring for family members. While this can keep people connected it is also essential they are adequately supported.

The median personal income among people aged 65 and over was \$20,900 in 2013, compared to a median of \$29,600 for the overall population aged 15 and over. Over half (58%) of older Aucklanders who stated an income source on their census form listed more than one source. Eighty-five per cent reported they received an income from NZ Superannuation or a veteran’s pension.

Almost 35,000 older people (22%) lived in areas rated 8, 9 or 10 (most deprived) on the NZ Deprivation Index.

“ Concerned that rates and water bills continue to escalate beyond pension increases with little opportunity to trade down property for releasing capital (unless move away from Auckland where medical support services are available). ”

Respondent to the survey of Older Aucklanders, male, 65-69

Final thoughts

Whakaaro mutunga

Auckland is a great place to live for many older people and there is much to celebrate. However as the full report and this summary report signal, there are some areas of concern that may grow as our older population increases.

Auckland will be home to substantially larger numbers, and greater proportions, of ethnically and culturally diverse older people over the next few decades. These trends will bring specific challenges and opportunities across Auckland's housing, transport, employment, healthcare, service and support systems.

This report provides a useful baseline upon which Auckland Council and others can continue to monitor and understand the quality of life of older Aucklanders.

Auckland Council will continue to work with its stakeholders to create an age-friendly environment in which older Aucklanders can thrive.

The full report from which this summary document was drawn was prepared by the Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) at the request of the Community and Social Policy Department within Auckland Council. It has been published as an Auckland Council Technical Report, and can be found on Knowledge Auckland: knowledgeauckland.org.nz/assets/publications/TR2017-014-Older-Aucklanders-quality-of-life-status-report.pdf

Details of full report

Reid, A. (2017). Older Aucklanders: A Quality of Life Status Report. Auckland Council Technical Report, TR2017/014.

ISBN 978-1-98-855548-5 (Print)
ISBN 978-1-98-855549-2 (PDF)