

## Economic Policy Centre

### Pensions and Intergenerational Equity

## Age Friendly Auckland's Symposium 2023 says "Yes, Auckland will be Age Friendly"

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### **PIE Commentary 2023-17<sup>2</sup>**

PIE highlights intergenerational equity issues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A recent essay collection from the UK's Centre for Policy Studies argues: "*The gap between young and old has become the defining political and economic issue of our time.*"<sup>3</sup> Age Friendly Cities and Communities have evolved over time to recognise that the 'age friendly' approach benefits everyone in the community.

*For those who access them, Auckland retains many of its easy-going lifestyle advantages.... The perceptions and performance of Auckland are still high in relation to its natural environment, low pollution, and friendliness. These factors breed an abiding international appetite to visit Auckland. Auckland is also making more steps than others to translate its accumulated diversity into a fairer city. The city is one of the most ethnically diverse in the world. Although there is a long way to go, it has made more moves than many towards more equal gender outcomes and to begin closing the economic, social and skills gaps for Māori and Pacific peoples. Auckland's indigenous people and culture emerges as a distinctive asset that offers opportunities for a resilient future. Yet big challenges remain. ... Concerns about housing affordability and safety have become chronic. The city is falling behind in terms of vibrancy and international recognition. ... Access to good jobs is uneven. Skills supply is further behind demand in advanced sectors. And in the global technology innovation race, there is a bigger challenge attracting business investment and commercialising ideas..... Auckland is by far the largest urban economy in New Zealand – so how it performs has a disproportionate effect on the fortunes and outlook of the whole nation.<sup>4</sup>*

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### **International context of Age Friendly Cities and Communities**

In 1991, United Nations Member States adopted The United Nations Principles for Older Persons, based on the International Plan of Action on Ageing, encouraging governments to incorporate the principles of independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity into their national programmes wherever possible. These principles are the foundation for the Age-friendly Cities and Communities approach. By 2007, the World

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<sup>2</sup> PIE Commentaries are opinion pieces published as contributions to public debate, and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Pensions and Intergenerational Equity Hub.

<sup>3</sup> See: <https://cps.org.uk/research/justice-for-the-young/?cmid=c26874b0-9e42-4ba8-9606-32d0e6a2cc66>.

<sup>4</sup> See: *The State of the City- Auckland Benchmark 2023* at: [1](https://www.1news.co.nz/2023/12/06/auckland-the-least-safe-city-in-australasia-new-report-says/#:~:text=%22Auckland%20ranks%20only%20124th%20in,a%20tough%20approach%20to%20crime,pps. 8-10.</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

Health Organisation ([WHO Global Age-friendly Cities Guide](#)) focused on eight areas of urban life: outdoor spaces and buildings; transportation; housing; social participation; respect and social inclusion; civic participation and employment; communication and information; and community support and health services.

In 2015, the *World report on ageing and health* provided a new framework for understanding and fostering *Healthy Ageing* (replacing WHO's previous Active Ageing Framework) built around the concept of functional ability. Also in 2015, the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs), an integrated, indivisible set of global priorities for sustainable development, were adopted. Ageing is relevant to 15 of the 17 SDG's.

In 2017, Development of the WHO *Global network for age-friendly cities and communities* was identified as one of WHO's *ten priorities on Healthy Ageing* for 2017 - 2020. Then the UN declared 2021-2030 as the Decade of Healthy Ageing.

*This Decade, by combatting ageism, We can improve economic development, harness intergenerational knowledge, and create more equitable, healthier, and happy societies: a world for all ages... By providing integrated care, We can treat the person and not just their individual diseases, so that we can better manage chronic conditions, maintain physical and mental capacity, and prevent care dependency. By ensuring access to long-term care when we need it, we can make sure that we all have the care and support required to live with dignity, meaning, and rights. And by creating age-friendly environments, We can enable older people to age safely in a place that is right for them, continue to develop personally, be included, and contribute to their communities while retaining their independence and health.<sup>5</sup>*

In 2022, Auckland was officially accepted into WHO's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC). Chief Executive Officer of Age Concern Auckland, Kevin Lamb, said "Auckland is right on track to becoming a world-class city for the ageing... It's about making it a great place for everyone, regardless of background, ethnicity, gender or age."<sup>6</sup>

Despite Auckland's welcome into the WHO's network of age-friendly cities and communities in 2022, very few Aucklanders are aware of this achievement, nor are they aware of the existence of the Age Friendly Auckland Action Plan.

### **Overview of Auckland's older population**

At the 2018 Census, while 20.0% of Auckland's population was under 15, 12.0% were aged 65 or older. According to that Census, in the Auckland region in 2018, there were 189,177 residents aged 65 years and over. Of this group, 58.1% were aged 65 to 74 years, 30% were aged 75 to 84 years and 11.8% were aged 85 years and over.

In 2023, those aged 65+ in Auckland number 232,160, and the New Zealand total of that age group is 832,160. So almost a third of New Zealand's older population is based in the greater Auckland area, although it only holds 23% of New Zealand's total population.<sup>7</sup>

Stats NZ projections, based on the 2018 Census, suggest 'European or Other' ethnic group population (3.44 million in 2018) will increase to 3.68–4.07 million in 2043, and this ethnic group will be the only group to decrease its share of New Zealand's population over the projection period. By 2043, the Māori ethnic group population (0.82 million in 2018) will increase to 1.14–1.34 million; the Asian ethnic group population

<sup>5</sup> See: <https://www.decadeofhealthyageing.org/about/about-us/what-is-the-decade> .

<sup>6</sup> See: <https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/news/2022/03/auckland-officially-an-international-age-friendly-city/>.

<sup>7</sup> See <https://ecoprofile.infometrics.co.nz/auckland/Population/AgeComposition>.

(0.77 million in 2018) will increase to 1.32–1.58 million; the Chinese ethnic subgroup population (0.27 million in 2018) will increase to 0.38–0.49 million; the Indian ethnic subgroup population (0.26 million in 2018) will increase to 0.48–0.61 million; the Pacific ethnic group population (0.41 million in 2018) will increase to 0.59–0.74 million; the Samoan ethnic subgroup population (0.20 million in 2018) will increase to 0.29–0.39 million; Middle Eastern/Latin American/African ethnic group population (0.08 million in 2018) will increase to 0.14–0.19 million. Age structures will change, with the number and share of people aged 65+ years set to increase in all ethnic groups, reflecting the combined effect of people having fewer children – and people living longer.<sup>8</sup>

Stats NZ also predicts that by 2043, 18.6% of Aucklanders will be aged 65+, around 432,000 people. The physical and mental health and wellbeing of this significant and growing proportion of Auckland's population is vital for the future social and economic wellbeing of the city, and of the country. A plan for an Age Friendly Auckland is critical. The good news is that there is such a plan, and there is a dedicated team working toward its achievement.

### **Auckland's Age Friendly Action Plan**

The Age Friendly Auckland implementation group: Te Rōpū Whakamana ki te ao, released its first [Annual Report](#) in September 2023. The Chair of Te Rōpū, Maxine Stiling, writes in the report:

*Te Rōpū is a diverse cross-sector group who collaborate to lead, connect, enable, and monitor the implementation of the plan.... Over the last 2 years we have learned the tremendous importance of building connections in and across the sector and the value that is created from these relationships. This was evident in the way Te Rōpū members worked together to support older Aucklanders during the emergency weather events.... We also acknowledge and thank Auckland Council for being the backbone for the age-friendly action plan and supporting community networks like this.<sup>9</sup>*

*The Action Plan has 106 actions attributed to council, central government and NGOs. Of those 106 actions, 70% are either 'underway' or 'complete'. The domains of Respect and Social Inclusion and Communication and Information were areas with the most progress.*

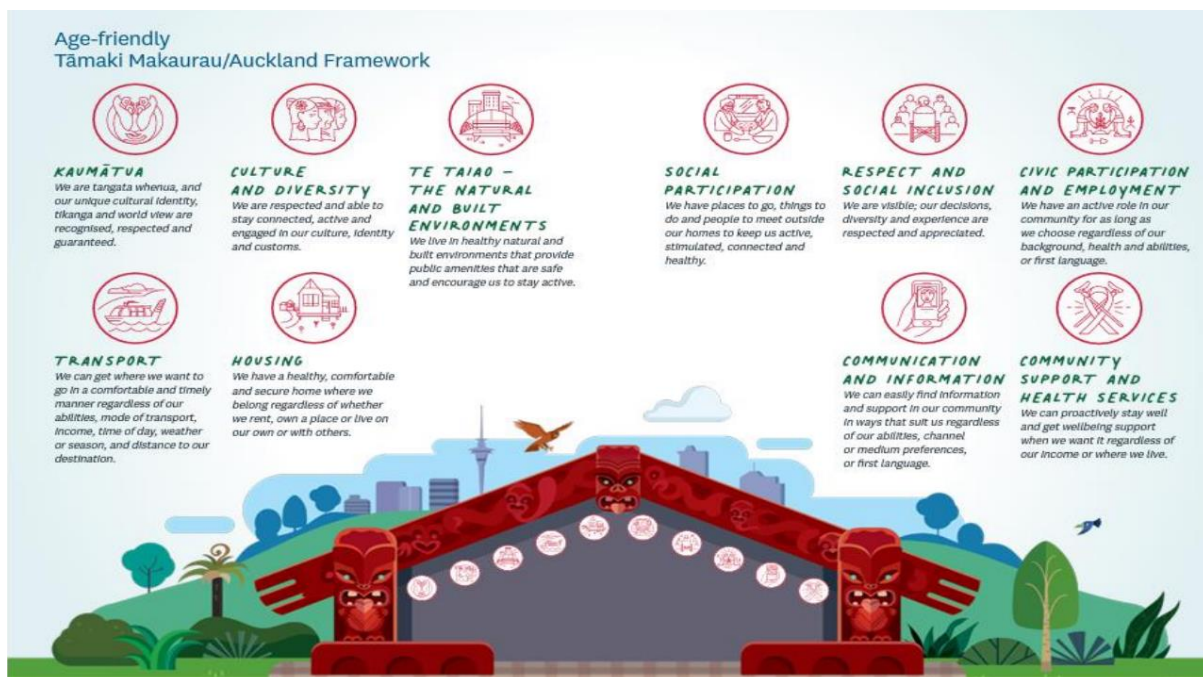
*In several domain areas of the action plan key lessons noted are that improving communication and relationships between central government agencies, council and the aged sector will lead to better progress under the plan, and better outcomes for older Aucklanders. This was also noted regarding response to the extreme weather events by central and local government, and the aged sector.<sup>10</sup>*

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<sup>8</sup> See: <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/national-ethnic-population-projections-2018base2043-update/>

<sup>9</sup> See: <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/topic-based-plans-strategies/community-social-development-plans/agefriendlyplansreports/age-friendly-auckland-annual-report.pdf>, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, P. 8.



## Age Friendly Auckland Symposium 2023

The first Annual Report of the Age Friendly Auckland implementation group: Te Rōpū Whakamana ki te ao (Te Rōpū) was launched at the *Age Friendly Auckland Symposium: Uplifting the voices of older people*, 1 November 2023.<sup>11</sup> The Symposium was supported by Te Rōpū, the Centre for Co-Created Ageing at the University of Auckland and the Office for Seniors. In addition to bringing together the aged sector and community organisations in Tamaki Makaurau Auckland, the Symposium commemorated the International Day of Older Persons on 1<sup>st</sup> October.

As well as amplifying positive images, sharing research, stories of ageing well, and ideas to lift the quality of life of all older people in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, a main aim of the symposium was to:

*Create a collaborative space to brain-storm age-sector driven solutions to issues affecting older Aucklanders, including social isolation; the wellbeing of kaumātua, kuia and all older Māori; hauora/health and wellbeing of all older Aucklanders; culture and diversity; housing quality and safety; transport; digital equity; work and retirement.*<sup>12</sup>

The programme was full! From the Mihi Whakatau provided by Ngāti Whātua Orākei, whose oratory and waiata resonated in the acoustics of the venue, to the Council's closing karakia, the audience was mentally and often physically engaged.

After the Welcome from Chair of Te Rōpū, Dr Fiona Cram (Ngati Pahouwera) talked to her research: *Quality of Life for Older Māori in Auckland*. This was followed by a performance and guided practice in Tai Chi by the NZ Taiji Martial Arts Society that had the whole audience attempting to follow their graceful movements. After morning tea, Joanna Maskell, an Auckland Council member of Te Rōpū, provided an update on the Age Friendly Auckland action plan.

<sup>11</sup> At this Symposium, Dr Dale, the author of this paper, chaired the Panel discussion: "Combatting Ageism in Tamaki Makaurau".

<sup>12</sup> Programme: *Age Friendly Auckland Symposium: Uplifting the voices of older people*, 01/11/2023.

The next speaker, Carolyn Cooper, Aged Care Commissioner, presented on the theme of *Voices of Older People* and Consumer Rights. After another Tai Chi interlude, Diane Turner, Executive Director of the Office for Seniors, assisted by her principal policy advisor Rosie Anderson, spoke on the *UN Decade of Healthy Ageing # Adding Life to Years*. She emphasised the need for evidence-based research to inform policy.

More kai, accompanied by a Pacific drum and dance performance, was followed by another interactive session: *Live stronger for longer*. Bethan Collings, Julia Spinley and Tux Cocker each presented on their expert area, and the session ended with 10 minutes of interactive NymbL. The Panel comprising Bruce Davies (Ngāti Rehua, Ngāti Wai, Ngāti Porou) JP; Paul Jarvie, Employment Relations and Safety Manager, EMA; Emeritus Professor Edwina Pio, ONZM; and Jenny Wang QSM, Founder and Director CNSST; discussed: *Combatting Ageism in Tamaki Makaurau*, facilitated by Dr M.Claire Dale. Each Panelist offered a personal insight into ageism and addressing it. Paul Jarvie's discussion on workplace ageism particularly captured the audience's attention.

More kai, then the topic of the final speaker, Professor Ngaire Kerse, Joyce Cook Chair in Ageing Well at the University of Auckland, was *Ageing well in Auckland*. She celebrated the opportunity she has to be involved in research with, by and for older people. Appropriately, the final session, led by Susan Jordan, was a presentation: *Seniors' dance*, followed by audience participation in a short choreographed dance. A final karakia and the symposium was over.

As both audience member and presenter, the highlight for me was to spend the day in a packed room that truly reflected the people of Tamaki Makaurau Auckland. Every age and every culture was there, smiling, laughing, listening, questioning. Tatou tatou. The aims of the organisers were achieved.

Auckland truly might become an Age Friendly City and Community.

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