

WAITAKERE WELLBEING SUMMIT

OLDER PEOPLE LIVE WELL IN WAITAKERE

Potential Focus Areas:

Health, wealth and wellbeing, living standards, growing old where you live

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Issues and Indicators:

The proportion of older people in the city (9.3%) is smaller when compared with New Zealand in total (12.3%). This is consistent with a larger proportion of working age people in the Waitakere urban area compared with the national average.

- The number of residents in Waitakere City over the age of 65 in all ethnic groups is projected to rise steadily. (Statistics New Zealand)
- In 10 – 20 years time, older people are unlikely to be as well off as the current generation of older people. This will seriously impact on their living standards and wellbeing.

Living standards:

- Older New Zealanders generally have good living standards and the risk of hardship is lower than it is for the population as a whole.
- The high level of assets amongst the current generation of older people contributes significantly to their wellbeing.
- Past policies that have assisted homeownership and asset accumulation for this age group contribute to their current favourable living standards.
- Older New Zealanders who rent, have high housing costs and have few assets are more likely to be in hardship than other older New Zealanders.

Refer: New Zealand Living Standards 2004. Ministry of Social Development.

The Quality of Life Survey 2006 shows positive results for older people in Waitakere:

- Older people in Waitakere City were significantly more likely (65%) to feel a sense of community in the neighbourhood compared to other age groups.
- Those aged 65 years or older were slightly more likely than other age groups to have had positive social contact with people in their neighbourhood and slightly less likely to have had negative social contact with people in their neighbourhood.
- Perceptions of safety for those over 65 were similar to other age groups.
- 78% of respondents over 65 never or rarely felt isolated, similar to other age groups.

Health

- Older people are higher health service users due to their stage of life and more complications occurring with falls, chronic health conditions.
- Disability increases with age, impacting on mobility and access to services and amenities

HOW CAN WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE – WHAT WORKS?

Proven & Promising Strategies & Activities:

Suggested support strategies for increasing the wealth/wellbeing of older people:

Changes in social, demographic and economic trends indicate that the substantial level of asset accumulation that occurred over the working lives of most people in the current older population may not be repeated in future ageing generations. (New Zealand Living Standards, Ministry of Social Development 2004)

- Provide social and health services for older people that are responsive and appropriate culturally and are accessible to where they live.
- Ensure all future planning for services takes into account the increasing proportion of older people in our community and their needs, particularly those population groups who are not as well resourced.
- [Promote savings and asset accumulation \(through home ownership or otherwise\).](#)
- [Develop specific strategies to assist people on low incomes to accumulate assets.](#)

Refer: New Zealand Living Standards, Ministry of Social Development 2004

Although the majority of older people currently have relatively good living standards and quality of life, they will continue to require high levels of health and disability services. Those less well off will also require additional assistance with housing and social support services.

- [Current targeted income support provisions such as the Accommodation Supplement are critical to maintaining adequate living standards for older New Zealanders in need.](#)

Good practice to support people to live in their own homes and communities:

- Housing developments or re-development that is designed for older people to have easy access to services and social amenities, inclusive and appropriate for different cultures levels of mobility and assists people to remain part of the community
- Co-ordinated case management to better facilitate older people's access to health and support services has been shown to reduce hospital admissions, mortality etc.
- Rehabilitation strategies to bring a comprehensive range of health and rehabilitation specialties together to support the rehabilitation and independence of older people after an adverse health event (stroke, fall etc.).

Refer: Ministry of Health ASPIRE report 2006.