

Whangarei District Council Policy

Positive Ageing Policy

Policy 0117

Policy title			
Audience (Primary)	External	Business Owner (Dept)	Community Services
Policy Author	Community Services Adviser	Review date	March 2021

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Introduction

The 2013 census indicates that the population of the Whangarei District has been ageing over the last decade with the proportion of residents aged over 65 years increasing from 14.0% in 2001 to 18.1% in 2013. The District has an older resident population than that of New Zealand overall, with a median age of 41.8 years compared to the average for New Zealand at 38 years. This unprecedented rate of growth has major implications on the demand for services, and will result in significant social, economic and cultural impacts on the District. The Whangarei District Growth Strategy Sustainable Futures 30/50 (both the Strategy Development and Implementation Plan), the Whangarei District Council (WDC) Long Term Plan 2015-2025 and the WDC Whangarei 20/20 Momentum provide a vision for the future that recognises these changes.

In partnership with central government and the community, the Council will play a critical role in meeting the future needs of older people. Research into the impacts of an ageing population indicates that older people tend to be:

- More active and engaged, placing greater demand on infrastructure and facilities and providing opportunities for community activities
- More likely to remain in employment beyond retirement age
- increasingly demanding of social and health services and expenditure over time
- More ethnically, socially and economically diverse – which means they cannot be treated as an homogeneous group
- Increasingly isolated due to economic, health and social factors
- More likely to be ‘ageing in place’ with a bias towards solo women who outlive their male partners
- Increasingly caring for grandchildren or family, which has implications for home support services.

Such trends pose opportunities and challenges for the District as it plans for the future. This policy is a local response to the Government’s Ten Positive Ageing Goals for central and local government agencies and communities to support positive ageing.

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1. Income - secure and adequate income for older people
2. Health - equitable, timely, affordable and accessible health services for older people
3. Housing - affordable and appropriate housing options for older people
4. Transport - affordable and accessible transport options for older people
5. Ageing in the Community - older people feel safe and secure and can age in the community
6. Cultural Diversity - a range of culturally appropriate services allows choices for older people
7. Rural Services - older people living in rural communities are not disadvantaged when accessing services
8. Positive Attitudes - people of all ages have positive attitudes to ageing and older people
9. Employment Opportunities - elimination of ageism and the promotion of flexible work options
10. Opportunities for Personal Growth and Participation - increasing opportunities for personal growth and community participation

Purpose

The Positive Ageing Policy provides direction for the Council to consider and plan for the impacts of an ageing population on its services. This will help ensure that the District accommodates the needs of its residents as they age.

Scope

The scope of this policy is broad and encompasses the roles the Council can play in:

- positioning Whangarei as a desirable place for older people to live and visit
- promoting the District as a safe, attractive and inclusive place for older people to live and visit
- ensuring that people have adequate transportation and access to health, housing and social services
- ensuring that people remain engaged and valued members of the District as they age, and in retirement.

Definition

The concept of 'positive ageing' embraces a number of factors, including health, financial security, independence, self-fulfilment, community attitudes, personal safety and security, and the physical environment. It is based on the premise that the years of 'older age' should be viewed and experienced positively and therefore focuses not only on the experience of older individuals, but also on younger generations' attitudes, expectations, and actions regarding ageing and older people.

Related Policies and Documents

National and Local Positive Ageing Strategies

Central government responded to the growing proportion of older people by developing the Positive Ageing Strategy (2001). This strategy affirms and supports the contributions of older people to society and was used as a guideline for "Ageing in Our Place", Whangarei District Council's Positive Ageing Strategy, 2005-2015 (2005)

The District Growth Strategy

The Whangarei District Growth Strategy - Sustainable Futures 30/50 provides a vision for the District's future. This guiding document establishes the major drivers for change, and considers the

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ageing population to be an important factor. Subsequent strategies, urban design frameworks and action plans will recognise and plan for the needs of an ageing population.

Long-Term Plan (LTP) 2015-2025

Councils are required to regularly develop and review their LTPs. These explain what the Council plans to achieve over a ten-year period, why it plans to do it, the associated costs and how it will be funded. Activity areas reflect the community outcomes desired by the District's residents, including those that impact on the ageing population.

Accessibility Policy

This policy is designed to improve Whangarei's reputation as an inclusive and socially responsible District – one that is accessible, safe and easy to get around. It focuses on making the District and its facilities and services more accessible for those with physical limitations of any nature.

Pensioner Housing Policy

This policy assists Council to fulfil its long-standing commitment to providing housing for elderly residents who, through personal circumstances, are unable to own or rent accommodation on the open market.

Vision

Whangarei will be a District where older people are highly valued, their contributions acknowledged, their participation encouraged, and where they are recognised as an integral part of the community

Objectives

The Council commits to help guide its planning, decision-making processes and service provision by:

- consulting with older people's representative groups through the Positive Ageing Advisory Group
- considering the needs of an ageing population in its strategic, annual and long-term planning processes
- ensuring that Council's service delivery considers the needs and rights of older people
- communicating and providing information via media accessible to older people
- promoting the contributions made by older people
- providing opportunities for recreation and participation that are diverse, safe, affordable, accessible and attractive to older residents.

Monitoring

The Community Services Department will monitor this policy.

The policy will be reviewed by the Community Services Department every five years or at the request of Council, in response to changed legislative and statutory requirements or in response to any issues that may arise.

Adoption

Policy adopted by Planning Committee Resolution on 9 March 2016