

# Community Feedback on Tasman's Ageing Population and Age-Friendly Issues

Between 9 July and 24 August 2018, Council sought community feedback on issues for consideration in Council's Age-Friendly Policy.

Feedback was received from about 180 individuals and organisations, via a feedback form and/or focus group meetings in Richmond, Takaka and Motueka. Council staff also attended Motueka and Golden Bay Community Board meeting and meetings at Te Awhina Marae, Waimea Menzshed, Ngati Kuia and Mohua Social Services.

This feedback has informed the Proposed Age-Friendly Policy which is open for consultation from 9 November 2018 to 25 January 2019.

- Head online to [www.tasman.govt.nz/age-friendly](http://www.tasman.govt.nz/age-friendly) for further information on the policy and to make a submission

OR

- Collect a copy of the Proposed Age-Friendly Policy and a submission form at your local library or Council service centre, or by phoning Tasman District Council.

The main topics covered in the feedback, in order of frequency, were:

1. Transportation
2. Housing
3. Accessibility
4. Social participation and recreation activities
5. Communication
6. Affordability

People also commented that most of these issues are interrelated.

### **Transportation**

The majority of feedback on Transportation issues were about the need for safe infrastructure for older pedestrians, mobility scooter users, and cyclists, and the need for public or community transport services across the District, particularly for residents who can no longer drive. There was support for people and pedestrians (rather than vehicles) to have priority in the design of town centres. Providing a range of transport options, age-friendly footpath networks, and pedestrian-only areas also enables social participation, including opportunities for incidental social connection.

### **Footpaths and pedestrian areas**

Town centres, and the main routes in and out of them, need to be easy to access for pedestrians and mobility scooters. Feedback was generally on the quality of existing footpaths and the need for regular surveys and timely repairs and maintenance of vegetation. There was also feedback on specific locations which needed a footpath. In some cases, people on mobility scooters were having to go on the road. It was also noted that improved footpaths would also benefit parents with prams/pushchairs.

It was noted that footpaths are getting busier with increasing numbers of mobility scooters, skateboarders, children on bikes, and cyclists who don't want to be on the road. There was also feedback on the need for safe pathways through car parks. It was suggested that training could be offered on the safe use of mobility scooters.

There was also lots of positive feedback on the wide, smooth Queen St footpaths and lack of kerbs.

The feedback suggested that footpaths and pedestrian areas need to:

- be wide, level, and smooth (and preferable formed from asphalt rather than concrete)
- have trip hazards and potholes repaired in a timely manner
- be more level at driveway crossings
- allow for mobility scooters (and survey footpath condition using a mobility scooter)
- minimise obstacles (sandwich boards, signs, tables, recycling bins) to allow a straight line of travel
- be reserved for pedestrians and mobility scooters only – cyclists/skaters need to stop using footpaths
- have priority for footpath users from vehicles at driveway crossings
- have seating for rest stops and/or socialising, both in town centres and on pedestrian routes to town
- have better enforcement of encroaching vegetation
- have better enforcement of illegally parked cars
- remove grass berms to allow for wider footpaths or for cycleways

There was also a suggestion for all walkways, streets and parks to have signs with their names at each entry and exit point, to assist navigation for older walkers who are forgetful. The signs would only need to be big enough for walkers.

There were specific comments on locations where the footpaths need improvement or where there is a need for a footpath. These comments have been sent to Council's Transportation team.

### Pedestrian crossings

There was a strong demand for more pedestrian crossings to ensure a safe network of routes to, from and around town centres. These also need to be designed for mobility scooters.

There was feedback that crossing points need to be located away from busy roundabouts and intersections, especially given the increasing traffic density around Richmond. Crossing at roundabouts pose a number of safety issues for pedestrians with impairments.

#### Specific locations for pedestrian crossings

- Motupipi St, Takaka, to access the supermarket
- Mapua Library on Aranui Road, and in Mapua in general
- Wensley Road, by Kerslaw House
- High St, Motueka (Tudor St, Whakarewa St, King Edward St)
- Pah St, to supermarket
- More in Queen St

### Shared pathways

Shared pathways need to be better managed. There was feedback that shared pathways and the speed of cyclists are challenging for people with vision, hearing or mobility impairments and they would prefer separate pathways. Some people suggested signs or lanes to keep people left. There were also suggestions that cyclists should give way to pedestrians and cyclists and mobility scooters should have bells to warn other users. However for blind people, this means people come up from behind and cause a fright. Older people told us they feel more fearful of falls as they get injured more easily, and also sometimes get a fright as they can't hear the cyclists coming up behind them.

### Cycle lanes and cycleways

There was strong demand for more cycleways and a continuous network of cycle lanes to, from and around town centres. It was noted that there are increasing numbers of e-bikes. The cycleways also need to have vegetation maintained to ensure good visibility, particularly at blind corners. There was feedback that the posts and ropes on the Great Taste Trail can be a hazard to cyclists.

#### Specific comments

- Extend cycle lanes down Lower Queen St
- Improve cycleway crossing at Champion Road
- Improve Great Taste Trail crossing at Lower Queen St
- Need more cycleways on Marae side of Motueka
- Continue the cycle path in Queen Victoria St to Pah St
- Need a cycle lane through Three Brothers Corner
- Prevent parking on cycleways around Motueka (esp near Marae)
- Yellow lane lines on Great Taste Trail at Motueka Bridge (esp coming on/off)
- Queen St too narrow for cyclists

- Give Way signs for cars and cyclists on the Great Taste Trail between Riverside and King Edward St are confusing and contradictory
- Continue new shared pathway from Pohara to Ligar Bay

### Parking

People asked for more parking and specifically for more mobility car parks. There was a suggestion for 'elderly' carparks, and one comment on the need for bigger parking spaces. There were also suggestions for parking more mobility scooters near main services (health centres and WINZ) and shops. Some Motueka residents complained about parking pressures on narrow, residential streets near High St.

### Public or community transport services

There was a lot of feedback on the lack of affordable public transport services across the District and the issue of isolation for older people when they lose their confidence or ability to drive long distances. Transport services can also enable people to stay in their own homes and communities. Key destinations are local town centres, libraries, health services, Richmond Aquatic Centre, Nelson hospital, and the airport. Motueka residents are able to use the St John Health Shuttle to attend medical appointments.

There was also feedback on the fact older rural residents are unable to access transport subsidies such as free Goldcard travel or Total Mobility, due to the lack of services outside of Richmond, i.e. no taxi or companion driving services (although a new taxi service has recently started operating in Motueka).

Suggestions included:

- Extend bus routes, including NBus to Three Brothers Corner
- Shuttle services around town (Motueka)
- A mini-van servicing an area once a week, taking people to Takaka, Motueka or Richmond
- Supporting community transport initiatives
- Provide more information on existing commercial services (bus stops, timetables, fares)
- Increase Total Mobility funding and the subsidy per fare, especially for the rural population
- Vehicles need to be accessible for safe boarding and disembarking
- Advocate to central government for GoldCard travel subsidies that could apply to community vehicles, such as Wrinklies Express

### Other transportation issues

There was also feedback on the need for:

- better street-lighting
- sweeping streets more often
- planning for increasing numbers of electric or autonomous vehicles
- speed restrictions in some busy residential streets
- better visibility at Motueka intersections (issues with parked campervans, vegetation and tall fences)

## Housing

There was strong feedback on the need for smaller housing and affordable housing, including rentals, and the need for housing which is accessible (wheelchair access) and warm. Higher density, multi-unit housing was suggested as an alternative for people who don't want or can't afford to live in a retirement village. There was feedback on the lack of housing choice in the current market. There was support for co-housing (e.g. Waimea Village or Brownacres) and co-living (e.g. Abbeyfield) housing options which would also provide social connection for the increasing number of older people living alone, and free up existing houses. There was a suggestion that allowing two dwellings on one site would allow a range of housing options (two couples, two singles, ageing parents and adult children, owner/occupier plus a rental). People also like the idea of older people being housed within the wider community and within their own familiar community, rather than being segregated into separate villages. There were concerns about the lack of tenure security for the increasing number of older tenants.

Suggestions included:

- Enable development of serviced caravan parks or tiny-house communities for short and long-term accommodation
- Keep or increase Council housing for older people
- Enable papakainga type developments (could also provide a model for all ethnicities)
- Support initiatives like Abbeyfield with rates relief, reduced DC's and easier subdivision and service connections
- Flexible planning rules and lower compliance costs to encourage smaller, higher density housing, or to allow minor dwellings, or to allow two dwellings on one site (extend the rural subdivision and minor dwellings plan change)
- Encourage lifetime/universal design into all new dwellings (currently specific only to the Richmond Housing Choice plan change)
- Changes to the Building Code to require ramps, wet areas, bathroom rails
- Home insulation/heating subsidies
- Support prefab housing made locally

There were comments on new housing developments continuing to build large, stand-alone houses, and the issue of covenants which limit the supply of new small or attached dwellings.

Suggestions included

- Require developers to offer a range of section sizes and minimum house sizes
- Require developers to include a portion of land for social housing or a portion of older people's housing
- Promote and educate on the demand for a range of housing needs

There was also feedback on the lack of age-friendly housing options in Golden Bay, particularly near town or the health centre, for existing residents who want to age in the community where they have social connections. It was noted there had been recent Plan Changes but more was needed to enable the development of multiple dwellings on existing sections and comprehensive developments for smaller, affordable dwellings. It was also noted that sometimes there is a perception that planning and building regulations are more onerous than in reality. The issue of flood prone land and costs of development were seen as a barrier, such as consent fees, servicing connections, and unit title legal costs.

Suggestions included:

- Support retirement housing in Golden Bay
- Council to facilitate co-housing developments (outlining the process in a simple way)
- Review Takaka zoning and land issues
- Address flooding issues to enable more housing near Takaka town centre

### Accessibility

The main issues raised in terms of accessibility were seating, toilets and pathways. Feedback on the need for accessible footpaths has been included in the Transportation section.

There is demand for accessible seating in reserves (including accessible picnic tables), at playgrounds and town centres. The seating needs to have backs and arm rests. There were also requests for seating for rest stops when walking into town, to key destinations, or along walkways. Wooden seats are preferred to cold metal seating.

There was a mixture of positive and negative feedback on public toilets. There were suggestions for more toilets and better signage to find them, and suggestions for more accessible toilets, including the need for handrails on both sides.

We also received feedback on the need for wheelchair/mobility scooter access to parks and reserves, and the need for access points to beaches with solid steps and handrails.

In general, Council buildings and facilities need to be accessible for wheelchairs and mobility scooters. It was suggested that the design of Motueka's new library consider the future needs of an ageing population. There was mixed feedback on the best location for the library (current location or Deck's reserve). There was a suggestion that a larger conference room is needed in Motueka for public meetings.

There was specific feedback on the need for microphones at the Golden Bay Community Board meetings. There was a suggestion to provide Skype facilities available at the service centres for presenting in public forum at Council or Committee meetings. Another suggestion was to provide transport to bring older rural residents to regular open forums.

### Social participation and recreation activities

The issue of social isolation was raised, as well as the need for opportunities for social connection, and the impacts on mental health. It was also noted that these are issues for all ages but particularly for people who are less mobile or have other physical impairments. Transport to get out and about, and safe accessible environments are both seen as being strongly linked to social connection. There was support for organised/structured activities as well as vibrant town centres, with public spaces and seating, which encourage informal and incidental opportunities for social connection.

There was positive feedback on our library staff and on the role of Libraries as a community hub. Motueka residents would like a bigger library, with a meeting room, some quiet spaces, good ventilation, and possibly a café.

Residents of Richmond, Motueka and Golden Bay told us there are lots of social and recreation activities.

People were also keen to see more intergenerational activities and opportunities for connection.

The need for, and health benefits of, physical activity were also raised. There were requests for swimming pools in Motueka and Golden Bay.

Suggestions included:

- Provide transport to events and activities at community centres
- More meetings/activities at local halls and community centres
- Support (funding) for organisations, projects or activities which provide opportunities for older people to socialise and be active
- Weekly community lunches, especially for older people without transport (food could be provided by other (younger) older people or by local restaurants)
- Appoint a coordinator for activities and support for older people, which could include arranging transport
- Outdoor gym equipment or an age-friendly community gym (Motueka, Golden Bay and Tapawera)

### Communication

Feedback on communication largely focussed on accessibility in terms of providing multiple formats (not just online), readability of text in various formats, and the need to easily find information on services and activities.

It was noted that not all older people have computers or access to the internet. Older people also like to have printed paper trail of correspondence to keep track of previous interactions with Council. There was also support for Council's phone service and the ability to talk to a real person at the end of the line. There were reminders to allow plenty of time for consultation and surveys to allow for slower postal services.

There were suggestions to have all information on services and activities for older people available in one place, including Council, community and commercial services. Another suggestion was for a regular item in Newsline on age-friendly topics. There was positive feedback on the Positive Ageing Expo, including requests for more events like this.

There was support for Mudcake and Roses with suggestions to promote it more, make it available at more cafes, and one suggestion to post it out. However, there was also feedback that the colours, types and size of font used were not easy to read for its target audience (also for Newsline).

In terms of consultation, there was positive feedback on the opportunity to provide feedback on the Long Term Plan. However, there was negative feedback on some consultation not allowing enough time after the Newsline article, and that a phone number should be provided so people can request documents to be posted out.

Suggestions included

- A telephone information service, especially for road closures, bus service changes and other accessibility and safety information
- Hold public meetings close to the town centre (e.g. in Motueka, not at the Top Ten or St John Hall)
- Website audits by the Blind Foundation
- Appoint an age-friendly officer at Council as a single point of contact and coordinator for all services and activities for older people
- More Council information at Motueka library and Mapua library
- Keep the NBus website updated with information on bus stop locations, routes and timetables

## Affordability

There was some feedback on the need for rates to be affordable, or lower, or to only increase in line with inflation. There was feedback on rates being a high proportion of the total income for people who rely solely on superannuation. There were requests to have exemptions for charges for services that aren't used, such as recycling or refuse collection and compulsory water schemes. There was also feedback on the rating system's use of fixed charges which disproportionately affect low income ratepayers.

There was also feedback on the rates rebate scheme and the need for this to be promoted and expanded. There were suggestions that the income thresholds needed to be higher and needed to be adjusted in line with increases in superannuation.

There was one suggestion that older people should have cheaper dog licenses.

There was also feedback on the need for affordable access to recreation and pool facilities.

## Other

**Safety:** A small number of people raised concerns about safety, including the risk of older people who prefer to carry cash. There was a suggestion of providing self-defence training for older people. Two people requested more policing of dogs on leads.

**Cultural diversity:** There was a suggestion that the policy aims to reduce inequities so all population groups enjoy good health and are supported to improve their health and wellbeing. There was also a suggestion to work with the Nelson Multicultural Council to help different ethnic groups.

**Employment:** There were a few comments on the need to retain and attract younger age groups with employment and career development opportunities.

**Customer Service:** There was positive feedback for Council front desk staff and a request to make it easier for family to contact Council on behalf of ageing relatives.

**Recycling bins:** There was feedback that the wheelie bins are too big and impractical for some older people, particularly those living up long driveways or hills.

**Air Quality:** There was feedback on the importance of good air quality on the health of older people.

**Climate Change:** There was feedback on the impact of climate change on older people, particularly the effect of higher temperatures, power outages, resilience to threats and the challenge of evacuations.

**General:** need to have systems in place to check all projects are assessed and planned to be age-friendly

**Health:** there were concerns raised about health services in Golden Bay and the difficulty visiting relatives who have been transferred to Nelson Hospital. Home support services have also been identified as an issue contributing to people's ability to age in place in Golden Bay. The feedback will be passed on to NMDHB.