

Te Paepae

Waikirikiri Selwyn Ageing Well Strategy
2024-2034



Toia te pae tawhiti kia heke iho
Bring closer the distant horizon as learnings to pass on



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Kupu Whakataki Introduction

Te Paepae | Ageing Well is a strategy for Waikirikiri Selwyn. It identifies what residents aged 65 and over need so they can age in place well, supported by comprehensive and equitable services within a vibrant, connected, and inclusive community.

This strategy provides a platform for fostering collaboration among a diverse array of partners including the Council, community members, government agencies, non-government organisations, community service groups, and businesses. Collectively we can achieve the vision of making the district a great place to live through all stages of life.

The strategy document is the initial stage of a two-stage approach. The first stage establishes the direction and clarifies Council's role and responsibilities.

The second stage involves planning collaboratively with stakeholders to facilitate, advocate, enable, or shape actions that advance the vision. Te Paepae is a living document with planning and delivery both ongoing and adaptive. This approach enables us to take advantage of new opportunities and celebrate as actions are completed.

Measurable and specific actions will be a feature of planning and delivery and will align with the strategic priorities and Waikirikiri Ki Tua Future Selwyn, which is the Council's long-term strategic framework.

Reporting on the progress on the strategy is incorporated into the Council's Long-Term Plan 2024-2034 as a significant activity. This will focus efforts and ensure progress.

The naming of Te Paepae

Te Paepae speaks to embracing the learnings from our past whilst holding onto the vision of a strong future for Waikirikiri Selwyn. It encompasses the wisdom, wealth of knowledge and lived experience of the elders in our community. It provides the example for ageing positively, with dignity and respect, and the passing of teaching, tradition, and legacy to future generations.

Paepae carries several meanings. It is a horizon, mountain range, region, or area. In a wharenuī, the paepae is the orator's bench or the threshold of the house. The paepae is the place where the mana of the marae and community resides, it's the place of the leaders, the elders, the experts, the representatives and the esteemed.

The name Te Paepae was developed for this strategy by Te Pou Mataaho, the Council's iwi Māori partnerships and capability team.



Te whakatakoto i te tūāpapa Setting the Scene

In the last two decades, Waikirikiri Selwyn has experienced rapid and transformative population growth. It has evolved from mainly rural townships to a diverse mix of expanding urban areas, rural townships, and remote villages. In particular, the district's youth population has grown substantially in urban areas while our rural areas are ageing.

There were **10,131** people aged **65+** in the district, according to the 2023 census. That is **13.0%** of the population or **1 in 8** people. This is lower than the national rate of **16.8%** or **1 in 6** people.



The next 30 years sees the district's population rapidly ageing

Over the next 30 years, the district's urban and rural population is projected to age rapidly, partly due to people living longer. The Council's high-growth projection model shows a population in 2053 of 36,758 people aged 65+; that is an increase of 262% on the 2023 population of 10,131.⁵³

The proportion of Waikirikiri Selwyn's 65+ population is projected to change from 1 in 8 people in 2023 to 1 in 4 people in 2053.⁵³

This means this age group will increase from 13% to 24% of the district's total population. By 2053, the district will have surpassed the national proportion (23.8%) of 65+ people; thus, making Waikirikiri Selwyn the most rapidly ageing territorial local authority in the country.⁵⁴

As the ratio of older to younger people increases the number of young people entering the labour market will fall below the number of people nearing retirement age. There will also be a declining birth rate. Attracting migrants and retaining young people in the district will not be sufficient to offset the population decline. This natural decrease will likely impact taxation, affecting superannuation provisions and leading to workforce shortages in the industries needed to support an ageing population¹².

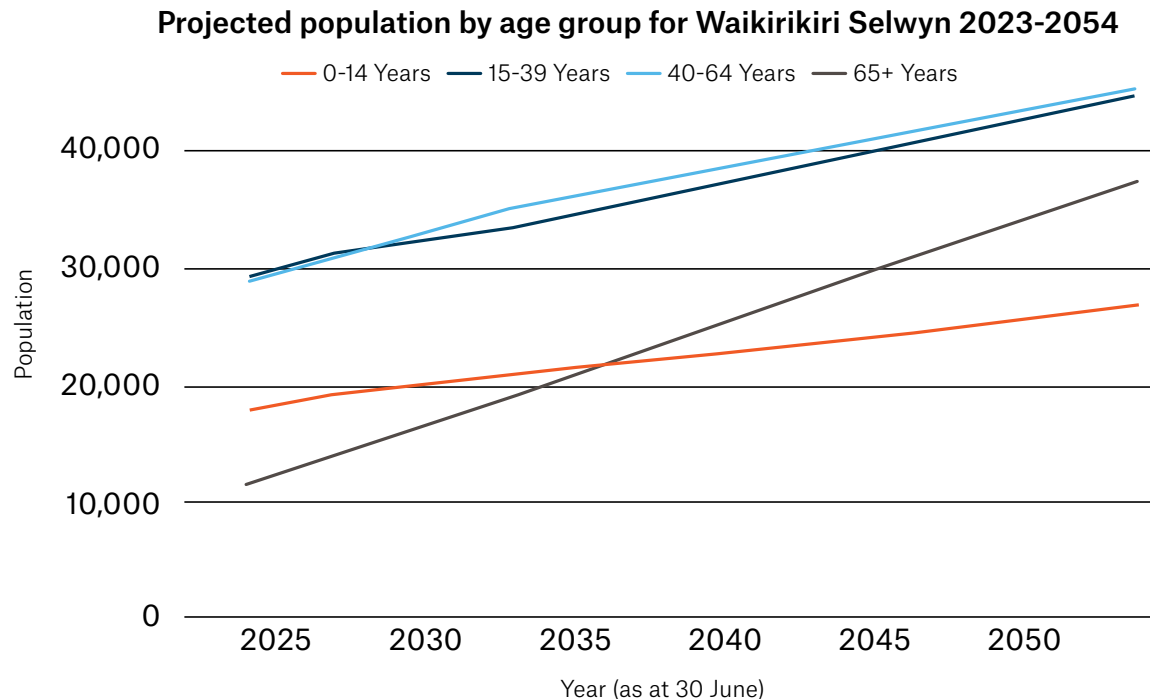


Figure 1: Waikirikiri Selwyn District Council Projected Population Change by Age 2023 to 2054
Source: Formative

People are less likely to age in place in Waikirikiri Selwyn

By comparing the number of people aged 80+ in the district with the same cohort nationally, we can determine if individuals choose to age in place and remain residents of the district.

There are 1,587 people³ aged 80+ residing in Waikirikiri Selwyn. This is 15.4% of the district's total 65+ age group; a much lower percentage than the national percentage of 24.4%⁵⁵. It suggests that the district's ageing people are unable to, or choosing not to, age in place.

Waikirikiri Selwyn is becoming multicultural ⁵⁶

Waikirikiri Selwyn is becoming increasingly multicultural⁵⁶. Census statistics show that between 2013 and 2023 the district's European population decreased from 91.9% to 84.1% and the iwi Māori population increased from 7.0% to 9.0%.

Migration has increased the district's population and diversity. Asian populations almost quadrupled from 3.2% to 11.4% of the total population, Pacific people doubled from 1.2% to 2.4%, and MELAA (Middle Eastern/Latin American/African) also increased from 0.6% to 1.5%.

National and global context

Ageing populations are a global phenomenon. Most countries, including Aotearoa New Zealand, are facing or soon to be facing, the challenge of preparing their health, community, and social

systems for the unprecedented pace of population ageing and the increasing number of people living into their 80's.

The global population is ageing as people live longer and the baby boomers reach retirement

The World Health Organisation projects that by 2050, the number of people in the world aged 60+ will double to 2.1 billion and the number of persons aged 80+ is expected to triple between 2020 and 2050 to reach 426 million⁴.

The growth is driven by increasing life expectancy and longevity. The rapid ageing of populations is attributed to the post-World War 2 birth rate boom, which spanned from 1945 into the 1960s. This generation, known as the "baby boomers", is the healthiest and wealthiest to ever reach retirement age⁵⁷.

Since the baby boomers began turning 65 in 2010, they have been redefining ageing and expecting to age differently than previous generations⁵⁷.

Aotearoa New Zealand has high life expectancy but there are inequities

Aotearoa New Zealand has one of the highest global life expectancies with people aged 65 years old generally living 21–24 years beyond 65⁵. In 2019, the life expectancy for New Zealand men was 80 years and 83.5 for women. However, this increase in longevity is not experienced equitably.

Indigenous peoples globally experience lower life expectancy and poorer wellbeing outcomes

due to systemic inequities⁶. In 2017–2019, the life expectancy at birth for Māori males was 73.4 years and for Māori females 77.1 years. In contrast, European males are expected to live to 81.0 years and European females to 84.5 years⁷. Although the gap in life expectancy between Māori and non-Māori has improved markedly since the 1970s it remains significantly lower.

Pacific people also continue to experience lower life expectancy; 75.4 years for men and 79.0 for women whereas Asian New Zealanders experience higher life expectancy; 85.1 years for men and 87.9 for women⁶.

Other factors shaping people's lives

Other factors are shaping the lives of residents including climate change, the pandemic, and challenges with health, housing, and the cost of living.

Climate change presents the greatest challenge for current and future generations, bringing unpredictable and extreme weather events, sea level rise, and warmer temperatures. Aotearoa New Zealand is particularly vulnerable due to its extensive coastline and reliance on agriculture⁵⁸.

In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic forced Aotearoa New Zealand and the world into isolation to prevent the virus's spread. Lock-downs and other preventative measures severely impacted the global and national economy, causing business closures, job losses, and reduced economic activity.

The government provided financial support to businesses, increasing national debt but offering

essential economic relief. Additionally, the pandemic disproportionately impacted ageing people, who faced higher Covid mortality and hospitalization rates. Lockdowns exacerbated social isolation and loneliness among ageing people, leading to mental and physical decline⁵⁹.

A nationwide shortage of medical professionals and resources is straining the country's health system, particularly in rural areas where access to primary and specialized care is limited. This shortage is expected to worsen as the population ages and requires more intensive health services⁶⁰. The shortage of nurses and general practitioners has increased wait times for treatment and made accessing timely and effective healthcare more difficult, leading to adverse health outcomes. Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora is responding by promoting and implementing preventative community health measures and working with rural communities to improve equitable access to services closer to home⁶¹.

The cost of living has consistently increased since 2021, with a 7% rise reported between December 2022 and 2023⁶³. High inflation, particularly in food, housing, and transport, is the main driver. The pandemic disrupted global supply chains, creating production bottlenecks, and this has been exacerbated by global conflicts and extreme weather events like Cyclone Gabrielle⁶³.

Many people aged 65+, who depend on New Zealand Superannuation as their primary income, are struggling to afford basic needs. Increased rents and house prices have further contributed to the rising cost of living. Mortgage payments have increased by almost 50% in the last 15 years,

making Aotearoa New Zealand one of the least affordable countries to buy a house⁶⁵. Renting, however, remains more expensive, with rent payments increasing by 93% in the last 15 years⁶⁵. In 2022, 25% of households spent more than 40% of their disposable income on rent^{62 65}.

The number of people aged 65+ registering for the Public Housing Register has tripled from 942 in March 2019 to 2,967 in March 2024, rising from 8.5% to 11.6% of all applicants⁶⁶.

The strategic context

Te Paepae was informed by national and global strategies which aim to prepare communities for an ageing population. It is also informed by the local and regional strategic context.

United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing

In response to the growing number of ageing people, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2021–2030 the Decade of Healthy Ageing and tasked the World Health Organisation with leading its implementation.⁶⁷

This initiative supports the reduction of health inequities and improvement of life for ageing individuals, their families, and communities through collective action. It is also strengthening the evidence base for underprioritised issues and developing a framework for measuring and monitoring healthy ageing. It aims to change perceptions of ageing, foster communities that meaningfully support ageing adults, and ensure access to quality care for those who need it.⁶⁷

Better Later Life | He Oranga Kaumatua

In 2019, the Office for Seniors | Te Tari Kaumātua released a strategic action plan covering 2019–2034 called Better Later Life | He Oranga Kaumatua. The strategy aims to create opportunities for everyone to participate, contribute and be valued as they age. The action plan is guided by 5 principles⁶⁸:

- valuing people as they age
- keeping people safe
- recognising diversity and that everyone is unique
- taking a whole-of-life and whānau-centred approach to ageing
- taking collective responsibility to plan and act for later life.



Council's strategic framework

Creating a vibrant and resilient community in Waikirikiri Selwyn means ensuring it remains a great place to live at every stage of life. By fostering a shared sense of place that reflects the community's diversity and life stages, we can enhance both community and economic resilience and wellbeing. This inclusive approach will attract talent, driving economic innovation and developing a workforce essential for providing the services and opportunities the district needs to serve its entire population.

Waikirikiri Ki Tua Future Selwyn

Te Paepae sits within the Council's long-term strategic framework, Waikirikiri Ki Tua Future Selwyn, which responds to and prepares for population changes ahead by setting the vision and direction for the district for the next 50-100 years. One of the outcomes is to make Waikirikiri Selwyn a great place to call home. Ageing residents are integral to this vision.

Te Paepae's place in the overarching strategic direction is Ō tatou hapori | People and communities. Measures for Te Paepae align with Waikirikiri Ki Tua Future Selwyn.



Te Paepae and Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Ngāi Tahu have resided in the district for over 40 generations. The principle hapū, Ngāi Te Ruahikihiki and Ngāi Tūāhuriri, hold the mana in this district. The two hapū are acknowledged as the primary kaitiaki, stewards and puna mātauraka, the traditional knowledge holders, on behalf of Ngāi Tahu, for the district.

The Council acknowledges Ngāi Te Ruahikihiki and Ngāi Tūāhuriri as mana whenua and that the two hapū are represented formally by Te Taumutu Rūnaka and Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnaka. It also recognises mana whenua's role as the customary tribal authority over land, water, and environment in this district. The expression of these relationships is set out in the various iwi management plans and relationship agreements with Council and other entities.

The Council recognises its role as a partner with mana whenua through Te Tiriti o Waitangi and any direct relationship agreements with rūnaka. During Te Paepae engagement Council gained some understanding about the lived experience of kaumātua Māori in Waikirikiri Selwyn. Te Paepae discusses the deliberate recognition, support, and respect for kaumātua Māori in section 5 of the strategy. It is recognised that initiatives for kaumātua Māori benefit the wider district.

Te Rautaki Tikaka Rua | Bicultural Strategy

Te Paepae is guided by the Council's bicultural strategy, Te Rautaki Tikaka Rua. While an internal strategy, it gives effect to the Council's Treaty partnerships and obligations, builds a foundation of cultural confidence, competence and understanding, and provides the platform for being a good host to multiculturalism.

Council assumptions

Te Paepae has been informed by the following Council assumptions about the district.

1. The Waikirikiri Selwyn population will continue to grow at a high rate, similar to that experienced over the past ten years. Growth will be focused in Rolleston and the Eastern Selwyn area, with moderate rates elsewhere.
2. Population and demographic structure will remain similar for the district progressing to an ageing population pattern like the Aotearoa New Zealand median.
3. The district will remain a popular location for internal migration of families.
4. There will be a growth in traffic on state highways and local networks within the district. This will vary across the district, but generally be consistent with projected population growth rates with an emphasis on the Greater Christchurch areas of the district. Heavy vehicle traffic growth will be higher than general growth with concentrations around industry and freight transport hubs, including the Rolleston inland ports.
5. Passenger public transport growth will progressively increase in the district. There will be a continuing effort to encourage walking and cycling as a viable transport alternative in urban areas to manage demand and reduce vehicle use.
6. Council's economic development role is to support entrepreneurship, provide infrastructure, facilitate workforce development, and collaborate with stakeholders to identify opportunities to grow the economy and to promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth.
7. Council contributes to the overall quality of life and connectedness of the community by promoting social wellbeing through the provision of essential services, fostering connected and inclusive communities, ensuring public safety, and engaging with residents.
8. As the population increases and as the district continues to grow and change it is expected that there will be incremental changes and greater demand for the levels of services and facilities.
9. As people age, there will be greater demand for accessible services and facilities as people become less mobile.

Council's role

As a territorial local authority, Council has a statutory responsibility for promoting the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future. This provides focus for Council in working alongside the many local community groups, service providers, organisations, and entities who possess unique knowledge and expertise and who are already working within our communities.

Council does not aim to duplicate the work of community nor deliver services in core areas that are the domain of central government or community organisations. Council plans its activity guided by seven archetypes that include:

- **Community leader** to bring people together around a shared vision for the district
- **Integrator** to bring people together within the community to make meaningful change
- **Shaper** to shape the look and feel of the district through planning, rating, and regulatory function
- **Service provider** to provide and commission community services that improve social, economic, environmental, and cultural outcomes
- **Infrastructure provider** to provide reliable public infrastructure for communities
- **Promoter and Advocate** to represent the district externally to advocate for what the community needs and to attract appropriate investment
- **Enabler** to use the Council's financial resources to enable activities within the district that might not otherwise occur.

You can read more about these and the key roles in the Appendix on page 51.

Action planning and measures

The strategy is a two-stage process with this document being the first stage. The next stage involves planning collaboratively with stakeholders to facilitate, advocate, enable, or shape actions that advance the vision. Te Paepae is a living strategy with planning and delivery both ongoing and adaptive to new opportunities.

The overall success of the strategy will be measured using three Waikirikiri Ki Tua Future Selwyn (WKTFS) measures and three population level measures. Additional measures for specific goals will be developed during action planning. The high-level strategy measures are:

- rating of quality of life (WKTFS measure)
- rating of Waikirikiri Selwyn as a place to live (WKTFS measure)
- rating of sense of community (WKTFS measure)
- percentage of residents in the district who are 80+ years compared regionally and nationally (showing if a growing proportion of this cohort is remaining in the district to age)
- percentage of residents enrolled at a GP (measuring access to health care)
- percentage of residents enrolled at a GP out of district (measuring access to health care in the district).





Engagement and research informed Te Paepae

We listened to many different people through a range of different activities and considered this alongside other research to inform the development of Te Paepae. You can read more detail in Our engagement for Te Paepae on pages 48-49.

Desktop research helped us to understand challenges and opportunities and included a review of literature encompassing national and international research, policy and strategies, and the strategies of other Council's across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Surveys and focus groups helped us collect local and contextual evidence that was based on the experiences of people in Waikirikiri Selwyn. We asked ageing people:

- What do you need to age well in the district?
- What community services and support do you need to age well in the district?
- What activities do you need to age well in the district?

Forums and meetings with people and organisations working with ageing people also provided valuable expert insights.

In all, we engaged with over 1,000 people who were 60 years or older; this represented 6.4% of our target population. The level of engagement has given us confidence to extrapolate the results across the district.

Strategy Map

Vision: Waikirikiri Selwyn is a great place to live through all stages of life

Mission: To support people to age well in Waikirkiri Selwyn

Improved access to services and information

- Accessible transport
- Accessible health and community support services
- Accessible information and communication

Opportunities for connection, participation, and sharing

- Meaningful social connection
- Inclusive community participation
- Cultural inclusion
- Support for multicultural leadership
- Changing the narrative

Access to age friendly spaces, places and a variety of housing options

- Accessible infrastructure and community spaces
- A variety of housing options

Kaumātua Māori are deliberately recognised, supported, and respected

- Support for kaumātua Māori cultural leadership
- Support for kaumātua Māori to participate in kaupapa taiao
- Meaningful engagement and consultation

Intersecting themes

Affordable access to opportunities and services

Equitable access to opportunities and services for rural areas and Māori communities



Intersecting themes

Strategic priorities emerged from what we heard during our engagement. Three themes stood out because they intersected with all the strategic priorities. The themes were:

- Affordability
- Rural areas
- Māori communities

The intersecting themes recognise that some people experience greater barriers to accessing the services and opportunities they need because of factors such as where they live, finances, health, housing, ethnic background, transport, and so forth.

For example, a person who rents their home with only the pension for income is at greater risk of poor outcomes than a person who owns their home mortgage free with savings as well as the pension. Another example is a person who lives rurally and can't drive or lives in a Māori community near their marae but needs ongoing health care that is only available in Rolleston or the city.

For some people, these intersecting themes impact their ability to age well in Waikirkiri Selwyn.



Affordability



Rural areas



Māori communities

Affordability

Strategic goals

- Affordable opportunities, and access to transport, information, health and community support services.

People told us...

The issue is we are asset rich and cash poor.

Cost is a thing; a lot of people can't afford much.

Costs for activities and things to do - it all adds up.

"Some people can't afford \$20 a week to join a wellness centre or club, I grow vegetables so I can afford my food.

The cost of living appears to be a real issue as townships grow.

I would love to swim. We can't afford to go to Rolleston every week. I can't swim in the Selwyn River at Glentunnel because of the algae and I can't afford to swim in the Glentunnel School pool because it's a \$100 per season.

Money, it's difficult on a pension. House insurance is 1½ week's pension per month - just for house insurance.



23%

Sometimes, rarely or never
have enough money to meet
their everyday needs (n=673)

7%

Rarely or never have enough
money to meet their everyday
needs (n=673)

Residents and experts told us affordability is a significant issue. 23% of survey respondents said they *never, rarely, or only sometimes* have enough money to meet their everyday needs, with 7% *never or rarely* having enough.

The New Zealand Government assesses areas of deprivation using an Index of Multiple Deprivation which is a set of census measures such as a person's access to housing, income, education, crime, health, and access to services. The current index, using 2018 census data, ranks Selwyn as one of the least deprived districts for concentrations of multiple deprivation.

However, this does not mean there are not people living in the district without access to the necessities or wellbeing. Some people we engaged with told us how lack of affordability was impacting their life, including:

- inflation outpacing adjustments in New Zealand superannuation
- difficulty affording primary healthcare or running a vehicle
- rising cost of insurance and rates
- inability to purchase a home or free up capital by downsizing due to a lack of smaller 1-2 bedroom homes
- the loss of retirement businesses and life savings due to circumstances outside of their control.

Rural areas

Strategic goals

- Equitable access to opportunities and transport, information, health, and community social services for rural areas.

What we heard

We heard from residents in rural areas they feel overlooked in service provision, and they wanted cross-agency collaboration to guarantee rural areas have equitable and consistent service delivery particularly for transport, health and community support. They also want access to local opportunities to socially connect.

Māori communities

Strategic goals

- Equitable access to opportunities and transport, information, and health and community support services for Māori communities.

What we heard

Iwi Māori and some other ethnic populations experience lower life expectancies and an increased likelihood of wellbeing issues. Kaumātua Māori focus group participants told us they experience challenges accessing facilities and in-home community services, particularly near the Taumutu settlement and on Te Pā o Moki.

In the Ageing Well survey, kaumātua respondents rated access to housing, access to health and community services and transport close to their marae as requiring significant improvement. This feedback and the implications for equitable access are discussed under each strategic priority in Te Paepae. Addressing the issues will require cross-sector collaboration and access to culturally appropriate services close to Māori communities.



Improved access to services and information



Accessible transport



Accessible health and community support services



Accessible information and communication

2

Accessible transport

Strategic goals

- Accessible transport options to meet demand including near rural areas and Māori communities.

Why it is important

Accessible transport options are crucial for individuals as they age, regardless of their location or mobility level. Transport allows people to freely engage in daily activities, maintain independence, access essential services, participate in social interactions, and contribute to their communities.⁶⁹

Public transport patronage in Waikirikiri Selwyn has steadily increased since 2021. While four out of the district's seven bus services run directly to Christchurch city at peak times, these routes effectively operate as one-way trips, with morning services heading into the city and evening services returning outwards.⁷⁰

The remaining three routes serve Lincoln, Rolleston, Prebbleton, and Burnham, with only one route connecting Lincoln and Rolleston directly.

Participants in our focus groups emphasised access to transport as one of the most crucial factors to age well in the district.



People told us...

While I can drive and keep good health this is a wonderful community to live in. However, lack of public transport...could be an issue in the future.

If you are unable to drive you are stuck as there is only one bus to Christchurch at 7am and returning at 5pm.

As we age, driving can be stressful going into a busy town, so to be able to stay in some communities a bus service would be great even if it was once or twice a week.

The bus route in Lincoln does not service the newer areas.

The current bus times don't work for most working people and wouldn't work for me if I couldn't drive.

The greatest influencer is money for fuel. We tend to make a list and then exhaust ourselves trying to complete and justify the hours' drive return.



Survey respondents were asked if access to transport made it difficult to participate in every-day activities. While many *never*, or *rarely* had a problem with transport, the graphic below shows a significant number of people do *sometimes*, *often*, or *all the time*.

Does access to regular transport make it difficult for you to:

Selwyn District Council 2024 Ageing Well Survey

% sometimes / often / all the time



Connect with friends and whānau (n=643)

20%



Participate in community (n=650)

28%



Undertake everyday activities such as shopping (n=644)

30%



Access health services (n=646)

33%



Access council facilities and services (n=649)

29%



Access other community services (n=638)

20%

Survey respondents told us they want to use public transport services but cannot access them at off-peak times, and that peak time services are at full capacity. This particularly impacts rural communities with only one bus service per day travelling between Rolleston and Christchurch city, and Darfield and Christchurch city.

Focus group participants told us they have no transport options other than private vehicle and are unsure how they would get around if they could no longer drive. 4% of survey respondents did not have a driver's license, and an additional 20% struggled to access regular transport.

Participants also spoke about their need for increased access to regular public transport as they experience decreasing confidence in driving, rising safety concerns about their driving, and that they cannot afford the growing costs of owning and running a vehicle.

We heard a strong desire for expanded public transport services within the district and out-of-district routes to Christchurch city and Hornby. We also heard older people want these services during times when Gold Card usage is permitted and at a greater frequency allowing for trips of shorter duration.

There was interest in an Uber-type bus servicing rural areas, and establishing transport options to remote rural areas to assist with accessing services and shopping on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Some residents suggested reinstating return passenger rail services to Christchurch and introducing proven carpooling models.

Intersecting themes: affordability, rural and Māori communities

We heard rural areas are grappling with significant transportation challenges. Rural residents often need to travel long distances to access vital services, community activities, social connection, and necessities such as grocery stores, making transport less affordable due to higher private vehicle fuel use, and maintenance costs. Affordability is a particular concern for ageing individuals reliant solely on government superannuation. Rising vehicle costs can reduce available funds to participate in other activities to maintain independence and connection within their communities.

National data shows women without a driver's license living in rural areas are particularly vulnerable to isolation from lack of transport. National research shows 71% of people experiencing transport access vulnerability are women⁸.

The absence of public transportation and limited community transportation to marae and wider Māori communities poses challenges for kaumātua residing within and outside the district, as they rely primarily on private vehicles. This lack of transport access directly impacts the ability of kaumātua to engage with their marae, hindering their connection to tūrakawaewae (tribal land, place where one has the right to stand) crucial for preserving and passing on taoka protected under Te Tiriti⁹.

Lack of transportation also impacts kaumātua accessing marae with 64% of kaumātua Māori survey respondents rating access to transportation to their marae as poor or fair. There is evidence the lack of urban transport systems are linked to inequities in health and traditionally communities with a greater number of Māori having experienced transport disadvantage through inequitable access to transport funds, infrastructure, and services¹⁰.



Accessible health and community support services

Strategic goals

- Accessible health and community support services that meet demand.
- Health and community support services are accessible to rural and Māori communities.
- Health and community support services are culturally appropriate.
- Accessible residential care options for people with dementia or needing hospital level care.

Why it is important

As people age, their health needs grow, necessitating more care to prevent and manage chronic long-term conditions and disabilities. While the current ageing population is the healthiest ageing generation to ever exist, there are individuals living with disability and long-term conditions that, if not managed, can lead to a loss of independence. Maintaining wellness in older adults requires investment in protective social and health factors, including suitable housing, accessible parks, opportunities for social connection and community participation, and easy access to local health services¹¹. This section discusses access to health and community support services, while other preventative health factors like housing, infrastructure, social connections, and community prevention initiatives such as community participation and social connection are addressed in later sections.

Access to health care and community support services in the district can be difficult due to several factors. The growth in services has not kept pace with the rapid population growth experienced over the past 20 years, and resources have been further strained by a nationwide health workforce shortage¹².

Waikirikiri Selwyn has a shortage of general practitioners (GPs) as evidenced by the substantial portion (52%) of the district's residents who are enrolled at practices outside of the district. Even when factoring in GPs in Halswell and Hornby servicing our residents living near the district's border, 32% of all enrolled residents are still registered outside the district. ⁷¹

This is twice the rate of the neighbouring Waimakariri district, where only 15% of residents are enrolled outside their district. Additionally, 15% of residents in Waikirikiri Selwyn are not enrolled at any GP compared to the national unenrolled rate of 6-10%¹³.

Ensuring a high quality of life for ageing residents with health needs requires a variety of tailored and diverse care options, particularly for those with dementia or requiring hospital-level care. The district lacks residential facilities offering secure and general hospital-level care. This limits individuals and family's choices for suitable care arrangements within district and near to home.

Lack of residential care options in the district means accessing out-of-district options. This severs social connections, leaving individuals feeling isolated, while also making it difficult for family members to provide the necessary support due to the logistical challenges of distance. Prioritising residential care options within the district can help maintain social ties and facilitate family involvement and promote a sense of belonging and continuity for those in care.

In addition to residential care options, some older people need to access in-home care services. This is where a service provider attends an older person's home to assist with activities of daily life such as health needs or showering. In-home services allow people to remain in their home and communities while accessing the care they need; maintaining their independence and established social connections. Across the sector, there is a trend to reduce in-home service provision,

particularly in rural areas, due to increasing need to have two staff attend for health and safety requirements, and transport costs.⁷²

Intersecting themes: affordability, rural and Māori communities

Participants and experts told us there is inequitable provision of health and community support services being provided to both rural and Māori communities. Rural and kaumātua Māori focus group participants consistently highlighted the challenges of accessing health services both in-home and in their communities. Experts engaging in our forums have concerns about a rise in carer fatigue exacerbated by the lack of community support services.

Kaumātua Māori face lower life expectancies when compared to pākeha. The Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022 includes among its purpose the achievement of equity by reducing health disparities among Aotearoa New Zealand's population groups, in particular for Māori.

The cultural importance of Māori approaches to wellbeing and health are discussed further in the strategic priority "Kaumātua Māori are deliberately recognised, supported, and respected". We note however, there are currently no tikaka Māori health services offered in the district and 57% of kaumātua Māori survey respondents rated the health and community services close to marae as *poor* or *fair*.

In response to inequitable rural access to health services the New Zealand Government has prioritised rural communities in its *2023 Rural Health Strategy*¹⁴. This strategy outlines the central

government commitment to develop policies and planning aimed at meeting the health needs of rural communities, including enhancing rural access to preventative health interventions, ensuring more equitable access to services closer to home, and cultivating a supported rural healthcare workforce through initiatives such as mobile outpatients, digital solutions, and increased in-home services.

The solutions include training programmes to increase the number of qualified caregivers, innovative transportation solutions, and leveraging technology to provide remote in-person support and telehealth services. Improving care infrastructure will enable more rural residents to age in place and maintain their independence and overall well-being.⁷³

People told us...

It's quite serious because when you really do need [home based] support it's impossible....You can't rely on people coming to you, [Rural focus group participant]

When I am unwell, and I drive to the GP out of district I am concerned I am going to kill myself or someone else on the road.

I want [the] ability to book doctor's appointment when I'm ill not three weeks later. Selwyn has grown too big without upgrading facilities.

Tell you what, [accessing health services] is a nightmare. It is quite serious.

Throughout our engagement, we heard firsthand accounts of the challenges of accessing health services in the district and the impact of this on residents. We heard our community wants more accessible and comprehensive healthcare services close to home.

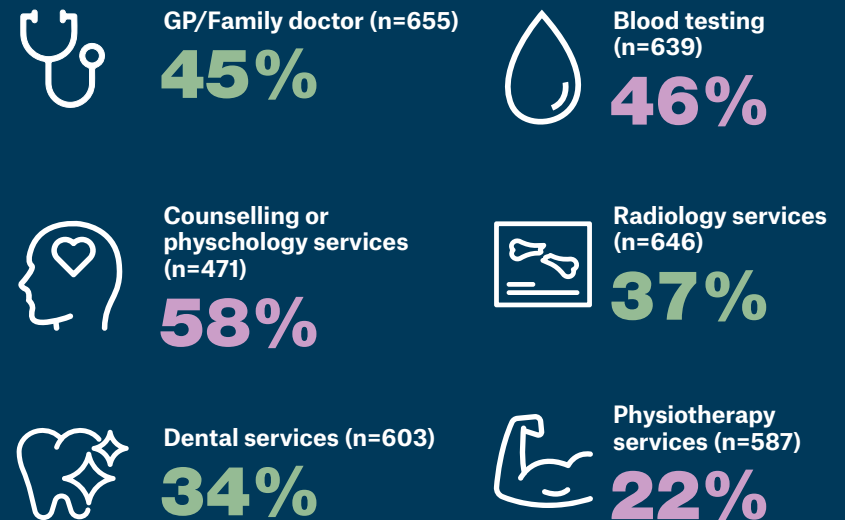
Respondents and participants emphasised an urgent need for expanded local health and community support services. The most requested services were more GPs, government-funded blood testing services, and better transport options to Christchurch Hospital, including ambulance services.

There was also strong support for the establishment of an after-hours accident and emergency service in the district, highlighting the critical importance of round-the-clock access to medical care.

How would you rate your ability to access the following health services in Selwyn?

Selwyn District Council 2024 Ageing Well Survey

% Poor / Fair



We asked survey respondents to rate how easy it is to access health services. 45% of respondents reported their access to a GP is *poor* or *fair*. This rating is more than double the national 'unmet need for GP due to wait time' percentage (over 21%)¹⁵. 46% of respondents said access to blood testing services was *poor* or *fair* which is not unsurprising given there are no government funded blood testing facilities for Waikirikiri Selwyn's 78,000 residents. *Poor* or *fair* ratings for access to counselling or psychology services were also very high at 58%.

Community support and health service experts told us accessing healthcare in Waikirikiri Selwyn is increasingly challenging and coincides with a rise in chronic progressive diseases, isolation, and a lack of connection among ageing residents. They would like integrated, cross-sector efforts to address barriers to health care access and bolster local service provision.

Focus group participants in rural areas and Māori communities told us they experience barriers in accessing in-home care services because of a scarcity of trained caregivers and logistical issues, such as transportation and geographical isolation. This lack of service negatively impacts their independence and well-being.



Accessible information and communication

Strategic goals

- Easily accessible information about services and opportunities, communicated in ways that meet people's needs.

Why it is important

To age well, people require clear and easy ways to get the information they need to be independent, be safe, make informed decisions about their well-being, find appropriate services and support, and access opportunities for community engagement, and social connections.

Technological proficiency, individual health and sensory changes, and preferred communication methods can present challenges for ageing people wanting to access information. In the last 20 years people who are 65+ have seen communication change from being primarily tangible - such as letters, telegrams, newspaper adverts, and landline phone calls - to digital communication such as text messages, email, mobile phones and video calling, and social media.

Many older adults prefer personal face-to-face interactions and phone calls, and information from information sources like personal recommendations and community networks. Written information can be a barrier if it is only available online or is in small and hard-to-read fonts. Ever-changing technology can be a barrier for people in accessing the information they need. Understanding these preferences is crucial for planning communications to ensure ageing people can access information in ways that suit their needs.⁶⁹

Intersecting themes: affordability, rural and Māori communities

Fixed incomes and limited financial resources can prevent some ageing people from accessing digital services including the increasing number of services that are only available online. The high cost of purchasing and maintaining digital devices, software and apps, internet access, and accessing digital literacy training could be offset by solutions such as subsidies, public Wi-Fi, and other information coordination access points. To improve access and reduce online scams affordable training programmes and 'safety online' courses are needed.

People told us...

I don't own a computer; you have to make it hardcopy.

We are not all IT savvy.

We need multiple ways of being told - hardcopy booklet, email, newspaper, posters.

We need a community navigator or guide to advise people.

We need a What's On format for what the council can do for older people.

You don't know what you don't know, and you don't know where to find out what you don't know.

Our engagement revealed a notable absence of coordinated information about services and community events, which is hindering participation and access to services. We heard that community members find it challenging to discover information about the services available in the district and the activities and opportunities on offer. Urban and rural residents who have lived in their communities for decades find this as difficult as newcomers.

Participants we engaged with highlighted that online-only communication is a barrier to community participation, emphasising that not everyone has access to, or proficiency with, technology. Nearly a third of our survey respondents opted for hardcopy forms.

Experts at our Council forums reported seeing rising stress among ageing people trying to navigate an increasingly technology-based society.

We also heard requests for more community information coordinator roles or organisations in the district to provide guidance on local opportunities and services. Participants emphasised the need for multifaceted communication channels for local activities, events, and services, requesting a mix of email, newspaper, and online communication.



Opportunities for connection, participation and sharing



Social connection



Community participation



Cultural inclusivity



Support for multicultural leadership



Changing the narrative



Opportunities for meaningful social connections

Strategic goals

- Accessible activities and opportunities that foster meaningful social connections and community participation including for rural areas and Māori communities.

Why it is important

Social connection refers to the relationships and interactions people have with others in their social network. This includes whānau, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances. Research shows investing in social connections at both individual and community levels is essential for fostering a healthier, happier, and more resilient society. Individuals who maintain strong social connections with whānau, friends, and community are happier, physically healthier, and live longer¹⁶.

It is the quality, not quantity, of social connections that matter. Deeper, more meaningful relationships yield greater benefits for both individuals and communities¹⁷. Meaningful social connections are relationships involving trust, emotional bonds, shared experiences, and genuine concern for each other's well-being. It is for this reason the New Zealand Mental Health Foundation's *Five Ways to Wellbeing* lists 'meaningful' social connections as one of five ways to enhance wellbeing. This does not mean daily interactions with strangers in communities, shops, or while walking are not important, rather, communities need to foster both welcoming environments and investing in increasing quality social connections.

Loneliness is linked to detrimental mental and physical health outcomes. It can lead to poorer sleep, cognition, cardiovascular health, and higher rates of morbidity and mortality impacting the ability to stay independent and participate in community^{18 19}. Some researchers have likened the impacts of loneliness to being as deadly as smoking a pack of cigarettes a day. Access to meaningful connections is therefore essential to healthy ageing.

Communities can measure how well they support social connection by monitoring the levels of loneliness caused by social disconnection²⁰. Our survey questions about social connection and loneliness indicate a need for opportunities that are inclusive, accessible, and designed to foster meaningful relationships. The most successful strategies for reducing loneliness and increasing social connection involve integrated, cross-sector collaboration between community providers and government agencies²¹.

Intersecting themes: affordability, rural and Māori communities

Limited financial resources can hinder participation in social activities, community events, visiting friends and family, joining clubs, or paying for social services. Additionally, the rising costs of owning and operating a vehicle increasingly restrict people, especially in rural areas, from engaging in face-to-face connections within their community.

Affordable transportation options and subsidised social programmes can help ageing people in rural areas to maintain in-person social connections.

“

People told us...

It's quite easy to get isolated in the smaller communities.

Yeah - it's a lonely place if you have mobility issues.

I connect with people through my volunteer work, going to local exercise classes and seeing my family.

We'd like a regular morning tea or similar in a community facility so that isolated and alone elderly can have contact.

At present, through work but in future I would like to meet people through local groups and clubs.

I have to make the effort to go to places. Today's people are so wrapped (sic) up tight in their own bubbles they forget to actually be the one to go the extra mile. It's not easy to always make the first moves. You feel like an outsider.

”



We heard that participating in community, having meaningful social connections, and having an inclusive community are some of the most important things residents need to age well in Waikirikiri Selwyn. A key way that residents connect with others is through shared learning and activity, which is also noted as important for wellbeing in the Five Ways to Wellbeing model. The most popular opportunities for connection that people told us were:

- interest groups and clubs
- short courses and hands on practical learning
- exercise classes, sport activities, and walking groups
- employment.

10% of survey respondents said their daily interactions with strangers and retail assistants were how they socially connect.

Despite these opportunities, social isolation and loneliness remains a concern. Sector experts told us loneliness and lack of connection is increasing due to whānau living out of district and being busy. We heard this impacts the ability for ageing people to access support and be heard.

9% of survey respondents reported feeling socially isolated *often* or *all the time* in the past year and 28% reported feeling lonely or socially isolated *sometimes*.

Focus group participants highlighted several challenges that prevent them from connecting socially:

- difficulty finding information about connection opportunities and available groups
- difficulty joining established groups that are at full capacity
- cost of group subscriptions
- impact of mobility issues on participation.

On a positive note, over three-quarters (77%) of survey respondents reported

experiencing positive interactions with young people in the community in the past year. Survey respondents and focus group participants, who mentioned young people, all expressed a keen desire for more safe intergenerational opportunities to pass on skills and knowledge, and to offer young people support.

Inclusive community participation opportunities

Strategic goals

- Accessible and sustainable opportunities for contributing to the community.
- Ageing people have opportunities to tell their stories and share their knowledge.

Why it is important

Giving back to the community and others through work and volunteering is one of the five key actions individuals can take to protect their mental and physical wellbeing. Community participation can vary in frequency and commitment, can encompass either paid or unpaid work, as well as civic service, and includes the ability to access public spaces, places, and community facilities.

Investing in community connection and participation is also a proven way to foster strong, flourishing, and resilient communities²² in times of crises. Investing in local capacity building and community development before a crisis occurs, grows a community's capability and resiliency mitigating suffering during a civil defence event and helping recovery from economic recession²³.

Volunteering

Research shows volunteering has many wellbeing and quality of life benefits including increased:

- purposefulness
- life satisfaction
- empowerment
- social connectedness
- sense of community.

Volunteering also has a positive health effect on cognition, longevity, and maintenance of independence²⁴.

Volunteering often involves learning new skills, engaging in training, and staying active – all ways that individuals can enhance their wellbeing. The greatest benefits are gained when these are positive, helpful, inclusive, and aimed at fostering social acceptance and friendship²⁵.

Research shows volunteering creates and enhances community resilience and cohesion⁷⁴. Volunteers gain first aid, community organising, and emergency response skills which are valuable in times of need. Strong volunteer networks are associated with quicker community recovery, as they establish social ties and support systems that enable the rapid mobilisation of resources during emergencies⁷⁵. These networks provide person power, distribute supplies, and offer essential services when professional services are disrupted. The connections and social ties formed through volunteering help communities withstand, adapt to, and recover from natural disasters, economic downturns, and social upheavals, such as sustained rapid population growth²⁶.

Kaumātua Māori volunteering is essential to the huge task of managing the marae and is reliant on the support of the hapu. Support for kaumātua Māori is discussed further under the strategic priority section '*Kaumātua Māori are deliberately recognised, supported and respected*'.

Workforce participation

The number and percentage of older workers in Aotearoa New Zealand is increasing with currently a quarter of people aged 65+ engaging in paid employment. Many occupations already have significant proportions of older workers, including in the education and health sectors. In the future, many workplaces will need older workers to maintain or grow their businesses²⁷.

Ageing people are diverse and offer employers life experiences and gained knowledge. Older workers can bring strong work ethic, a positive attitude and are loyal, reliable and stay in jobs longer. They can share a wealth of experience, knowledge and skills to pass onto younger teammates and boost productivity. Older workers can also provide a balanced workplace reflecting all ages of an employer's customer base⁷⁶. The government's older workers employment toolkit offers employers best practice guidance in the employment and support of older workers⁷⁶.

Older workers have unique and complex challenges in finding and staying in employment. If older workers are made redundant or have had to leave paid employment, it can take longer for them to find alternative employment compared to younger people and they may have lower incomes when they do. The government has developed an older worker's action plan (Older Workers Action Plan 2019-2034) to ensure those who want or need to work can find sustainable employment that fulfils their needs and aspirations⁷⁷.

Intersecting themes: affordability, rural and Māori communities

The New Zealand Retirement Commission | Te Ara Ahunga Ora reports that a third of people aged 65+ work because they financially must. An increasing number of 65+ people neither own their home nor have significant retirement savings, therefore it is a necessity to continue working in some capacity⁷⁶.

Some older workers are less likely to have choices around working and the impacts can intersect with other disadvantages. For example, older female workers are overrepresented in unpaid carer roles and low paid part-time work. Ageing Māori and Pacific workers consistently have higher rates of unemployment than pākeha workers, and disabled workers are half as likely to be employed as people of the same age who are not disabled²⁹.

“

People told us...

Getting into a volunteer group is quite hard.

I give youth free driving lessons, but it was costing me \$2000-3000 per year so I only do locally in my own town now. We need more volunteer teachers.

There is a huge pool of volunteer people who are going to grow half as much again, who have skills, and who just want to help their community, I think if we can tie those people in the community, it would be better.

I am concerned volunteer groups won't be seen as a priority when all they would need is a few thousand dollars seeded. Volunteering costs are getting harder to absorb, it's like an additional tax as we want to give back to community.

We don't care how hard it is we just get on with it and that's what you do" (resident speaking about volunteering and contributing to community).

”





43%

of survey responders who currently volunteer (n=669)

44%

of survey responders who **don't currently** volunteer but want to (n=424)

Our survey showed that Waikirikiri Selwyn has a high number of ageing people (43%) contributing to the district through participation in the volunteering economy.

Furthermore, 44% of the respondents who do not currently volunteer want to. We asked our survey respondents to tell us the frequency of their volunteering and the number of hours they donated. By extrapolating this data to the district's entire 65+ population of 10,131 people, we calculated that the annual volunteer return to the district by ageing people is between \$37 million and \$49 million (based on the living wage)³⁰.

Focus group participants said they want to give back to the community and pass on skills and knowledge, particularly to support young people. These people fell into two distinct groups; retired professionals with qualifications and experience to assist in economic and community development, and people who have intergenerational knowledge and practical skills to pass on.

Many people who don't volunteer expressed a desire to volunteer but were unsure of how to find volunteering opportunities; and current volunteering groups reported difficulties attracting and matching volunteers. Our engagement identified the need for:

- capacity building around managing the rapid growth of groups, and succession planning
- advice on how to cover running costs and apply for funding
- continued access to funding (including Council funding) for local groups



Selwyn volunteers aged 65+ invest between \$37 million and \$49 million per year in unpaid wages

Calculated using rate of volunteering and average hours volunteered per week (based on SDC Ageing Well Survey 2024) multiplied by the living wage. 95% confidence interval.

- consideration by the Council for increased discount on hire charges for volunteer groups using Council facilities
- help with coordinating volunteering information and matching people who want to volunteer with available opportunities.

We did not ask survey respondents or participants about their working status, but 20% of survey respondents stated they connect with other people through their workplace, and several focus group participants mentioned working full or part-time. We were also asked to run an evening focus group to accommodate people who were working during the day and could not attend our day-time focus groups.



Cultural inclusivity

Strategic goals

- Accessible culturally inclusive opportunities to socially connect and participate in community.

Why it is important

Being culturally inclusive means ensuring everyone feels welcome and respected regardless of their background. This is important because Waikirikiri Selwyn is becoming increasingly diverse and multi-cultural which will benefit the district by fostering stronger more vibrant communities and local economies³¹. Cultivating culturally inclusive communities brings together diverse perspectives, experiences, and ideas to strengthen cohesion, fuel creativity and innovation, and introduce new ways of approaching challenges.

When people feel their culture is respected and valued by other community members they feel welcome to fully participate and connect with others, and a sense of belonging. Culturally inclusive communities increase a community's ability to communicate well and build good relationships with people who have different backgrounds and beliefs, and foster people's confidence to express and practice their culture in a way that makes them feel strong, proud, and connected to their heritage³².

Selwyn District Council is one of around 40 accredited local government partners participating in the *Welcoming Communities* programme run by Immigration New Zealand, Ministry of Ethnic Communities, and the Human Rights Commission. The programme aims to create more welcoming and inclusive communities for everyone by promoting inclusion and diversity and improving socio-cultural well-being within communities. Accredited partners develop policies and practices that encourage inclusion and ensure widespread benefits for newcomers and the entire community⁷⁸.

Rates of loneliness among ageing migrants are higher than most ageing people born in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Ageing migrants experience significant impacts on “social networks, changed intergenerational family and societal relationships, and the separations inherent in living as a transnational family” and people emigrating later in life experience greater feelings of invisibility³³.

While English language is one barrier to social inclusion and community participation it is not the only factor. Communities welcoming ageing migrants need to consider providing easy to access opportunities for social and community participation and information in plain English and/or relevant languages and distributed by specific cultural media outlets³⁴.

Iwi Māori

Rates of loneliness are highest among kaumātua Māori³⁵. Research shows greater access to, awareness of, and engagement with Māori cultural traditions, such as tikaka Māori, te reo Māori, and whanaukataka, serves as a protective factor against a range of negative health outcomes³⁶. “Culture as cure” perspectives indicate increased Māori cultural efficacy has a direct protective effect for those who may be at risk from negative psychological outcomes and associated ill health. Kaumātua Māori and culture are discussed under the strategic priority *Kaumātua Māori are recognised, supported, and respected*.

What we heard

Many event participants told us inclusive communities were important for ageing well in Waikirikiri Selwyn. Some focus groups discussed cultural inclusion and the importance of communities that are welcoming to newcomers and people from overseas. We heard from a few participants about the difficulty they faced joining established and full networks and groups when moving to smaller communities and finding it hard to be accepted into already established groups.



Support for multicultural leadership

Strategic goals

- Supporting and empowering people to fulfil their cultural leadership roles.

Why it is important

Cultural leaders support the cultural aspirations of future generations and are vital to maintaining continuity, preserving culture, and providing cultural education within their communities.

As Waikirikiri Selwyn becomes increasingly multicultural, supporting ageing multicultural leaders is essential for the well-being and cohesion of our diverse community. Cultural leaders possess rich knowledge and play a crucial role in bridging cultural gaps and fostering understanding and unity within growing communities. Supporting ageing multicultural leaders enhances their ability to advocate for their communities' needs and rights, promoting equity and inclusion. The sense of purpose and meaningful intergenerational connections provided by multicultural leadership roles are linked to lower rates of depression and isolation and an improved quality of life for all ages³⁷.

Support is even more critical for many ageing members of multicultural communities that struggle to speak their community's dominant language. The Ministry for Ethnic Communities created *Unlocking Language Barriers*, a guide with practical advice and information to support better communication with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. The advice to local government includes recognition of New Zealand Sign Language and te reo Māori as official languages and the need to understand the different ethnic communities within the district and the languages spoken. Information, facilities, and services need to be provided in the official and predominant multicultural languages⁷⁹.

What we heard

We heard elders from multicultural communities have an important cultural leadership role in their communities and carry responsibilities for the transfer of cultural knowledge and language to younger generations. We also heard there is a need for intergenerational housing in Waikirikiri Selwyn; this is discussed further in the strategic goal *A variety of housing options*.



Changing the narrative

Strategic goals

- Acknowledging and celebrating peoples voices and contributions.

Why it is important

The current generation of New Zealanders aged 65+ continue to innovate and push boundaries, reshaping perceptions, and expectations around what it means to age positively.

The Baby Boomer generation is challenging traditional stereotypes and transforming societal definitions of ageing. Born between 1945 and the 1960s, the Baby Boomer generation has redefined each stage of life by challenging societal and economic norms in every age they have lived through starting with the 1960s social revolution, civil rights movement, and women's rights⁸⁰.

Not surprisingly, Baby Boomers are now busy reshaping the narrative around ageing. This demographic is demonstrating positive ageing is possible and can be transformative for society³⁸. People are working longer, remaining active in the community longer, and are the healthiest and wealthiest generation to reach retirement age.

The wider community has an instrumental role in shaping the district's vision by emphasising the valuable contributions of the 65+ age group. Our approach to nurturing an age-friendly district involves celebrating the vitality and contribution of ageing residents, acknowledging their diverse needs as they age, and fostering positive and realistic, self-defined perspectives on ageing.

Intersecting themes: affordability, rural and Māori communities

Research shows media can marginalise indigenous interests framing Māori in a comparatively negative light⁴⁰. To ensure equitable and balanced narrative for the ageing people of the district we need to ensure kaumātua voices are welcomed and te ao Māori perspectives and stories are heard.

What we heard

Focus groups and event participants do not see themselves as *old* or *older* but as *ageing*. They expressed a keen interest in sharing their life experiences, skills, and knowledge with their communities and beyond.

Some participants emphasised the importance of acknowledging and sharing their vital role in volunteering and community engagement, underscoring the need for opportunities to connect, contribute, and be celebrated for their ongoing impact within the community. On the other hand, some participants told us that they just get on with things and don't like to call attention to their needs.

Acknowledging and celebrating the voices, contributions, and needs of ageing people in Waikirikiriri Selwyn allows people to participate more in community, bond with others and create bridging connections among groups. At a community level this inclusive approach strengthens community ties and fosters a sense of belonging and purpose among ageing adults. At an individual level wellbeing is enhanced through talking and listening to others and by sharing experiences and knowledge.

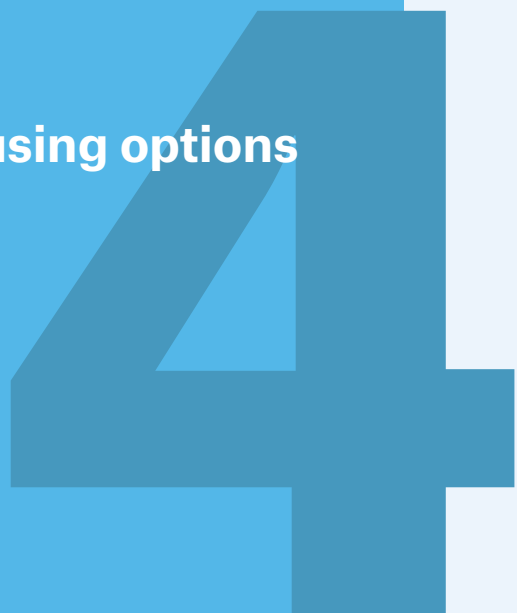
Access to age friendly spaces, places, and housing



Accessible infrastructure and community spaces



Variety of housing options



Accessible infrastructure and community spaces

Strategic goals

- Providing accessible, safe and suitable infrastructure for ageing in place and maintaining people's dignity and independence.
- Designing community spaces and places to encourage community and intergenerational connection.

Why it is important

Safe and accessible spaces, places, and infrastructure are vital to ensuring older people can get where they want, keep active, and stay connected regardless of where they live or their mobility. Age-friendly community spaces, infrastructure, and facilities promote respect, inclusion, dignity, and connection⁸¹.

Aotearoa New Zealand belongs to the *World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities*. This programme offers a comprehensive framework for building environments conducive to ageing well, encompassing aspects such as living, working, playing, and growing. By developing age-friendly physical and social environments, communities can support not only ageing populations but also enhance the overall well-being for people of all ages⁴¹.

The Office for Seniors | Te Tari Kaumātua provides local government with an urban model *Ngā tū wāhi tāone pai mō te hunga kaumātua: Age friendly urban places* as a benchmark to create and assess age friendly urban design consistent with the WHO framework. The Office for Seniors also offer technical resources targeted at local and central government urban planning and design practices to help improve outcomes for ageing people⁸² in relation to:

- streets and spaces designed for accessibility, fun, and inclusivity ensure everyone feels welcome, regardless of ability or age. These designs foster community cohesion by encouraging interaction, connection, and activity.

Examples include community gardens, event programming, parks, and squares. Accessible, co-created, comfortable, safe spaces are more likely to be used, respected, and contribute to a community's sense of ownership and identity.

- housing that addresses the diverse living needs and preferences of ageing people, influenced by their individual circumstances, physical abilities and disabilities, family situation, and cultural background. This topic is explored further in the next section.
- community connection and participation being vital for keeping ageing individuals active. While civic participation and volunteering were discussed earlier, this section focuses on accessibility and age-friendliness of parks, community spaces, sports grounds, and pedestrian networks.

In 2019, the Selwyn District Council signed the *Accessible Selwyn Charter / Te Arataki Taero Kore* which sets out four key principles the Council will take to support accessibility. These include leadership in committing to best practice accessibility, education for staff to apply best practice accessibility principles, technical expertise for universal design, and encouraging health and wellbeing by linking the wellbeing of people and creating accessible places and spaces.



People told us...

Footpaths aren't ideal. They're very uneven in some areas, tree roots etc., I have had a couple of bad trips and stumbles in the past.

Streets with footpaths only on one side means having to cross the roads and navigate traffic is annoying especially down long roads as you have to constantly changeover.

They don't make a footpath long enough to allow you to [get] all the way across the road without an edge, it drives me b**y crazy, we don't want to go around but across.**

The footpaths are not mobility friendly. Many of them are cracked and uneven, making walking and wheelchair use difficult and, in some places, dangerous. I have to plan the route to avoid bumps, kerbs etc and it can be 2-3 times longer than if the footpaths were completed and maintained.



Focus group participants and survey respondents told us about the importance of safe public spaces and places, and the need for infrastructure improvements. Most comments involved safe, accessible footpaths and cycleways, and Council facilities.

Safe, accessible footpaths and cycleways

We heard from our community that safe, accessible footpaths and cycleways are essential for accessibility, injury prevention, and keeping residents active. Walking groups are in high demand, with two-thirds of survey respondents saying they walk to stay active and a third walk for social connection. Over a third (35%) of survey respondents rated the district's footpath safety as *poor* or *fair*. Focus group participants highlighted specific aspects of the pedestrian network accessibility needing improvement as being:

- uneven surfaces caused by tree roots - causing falls and making it inaccessible for mobility scooters
- poor camber (curvature or slope) of footpaths
- footpaths interchanging to different sides of the road on alternating blocks creating the need for multiple road crossings
- footpaths ending before the end of the road so mobility scooters cannot get down onto the road
- telephone or electricity poles in the middle of footpaths – making it impassable for mobility scooters.

Council facilities

Survey respondents highlighted the importance of Council facilities such as libraries, swimming pools, parks, and sports facilities for staying active and connected, with 73% rating them positively for their impact on wellbeing and 77% noting that they bring community benefits.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents use these facilities to meet new people and connect with loved ones, while 82% appreciate the recreation space they provide. Additionally, 72% rated the facilities as *good* or *excellent* for accessibility and mobility.

However, 61% of respondents called for more infrastructure improvements with over a third (35%) wanting better pedestrian networks provided by developers.

14% sought specific accessibility enhancements such as more carparks near amenities, improved bus stops, and more benches for resting (preferably in shaded areas and with arm rests to help people stand up from sitting).

Only one focus group raised the issue of cemeteries and memorial spaces. Rolleston residents expressed a desire for adequate cemetery space so they can be buried in their community and a memorial garden for those choosing cremation.



A variety of housing options

Strategic goals

- Advocating for a variety of housing options for people including 1–2-bedroom homes, multigenerational homes, and kaumātua Māori and social housing.

Why it is important

Housing needs to enhance the confidence, independence, and dignity of people by allowing them to continue living in their established community. To enable residents to age in place with appropriate housing the district needs a mix of homes that encourage independence, are future proofed for disability, and provide residential facilities offering the full scope of services from village to hospital and secure care units⁴².

As the district grows increasingly culturally diverse, there will also be demand for multigenerational housing options for people identifying as iwi Māori, Pacific, or Asian (22.8% of Waikirikiri Selwyn's population in 2023). Multigenerational housing is essential for inclusion, wellbeing, and transfer of cultural and intergenerational knowledge.

Homeownership is high in Waikirikiri Selwyn with 8 out of 10 households living in owner-occupied dwellings⁴³, leaving fewer rental options in the district and few if any smaller sized rentals. Renting in the district (23.1%) was less affordable than in Aotearoa New Zealand (22.0%) in the year to March 2024, based on the ratio of mean rents to mean household incomes⁴⁴. Renters may face rent increases and uncertainty of tenure in lower quality houses with limited accessibility. This trend is disproportionate, affecting a higher number of women renters aged 65+ when compared to men⁴⁵.

In the last 10 years, house prices across the country have doubled. While Waikirikiri Selwyn has more affordable housing compared to the national

average, its house prices have also been rising significantly⁸³. This increase is largely driven by a supply and demand imbalance, as the number of privately occupied dwellings grew by only 1.3 percent annually between 2013 and 2018, failing to keep up with population growth⁸⁴. Although there is a market for the larger family homes occupied by ageing residents, the lack of downsizing options and competition for newly built homes on smaller sections forces people to move out of the district.

Intersecting themes: affordability, rural and Māori communities

Currently, Waikirikiri Selwyn's housing stock is primarily made up of 3-4-bedroom family homes⁴⁶ in line with the Aotearoa New Zealand trend towards larger homes. However, unlike broader national trends, there is little diversification in the district's housing stock, leading to low provision of multi-unit or 1-2-bedroom homes. A low provision of smaller houses, situated on maintenance friendly land holdings, limits the ability for ageing people to purchase a more affordable home or to downsize and free up capital to supplement superannuation.



People told us...

We are still in our 3-4-bedroom properties, we are asset rich but cash poor, but there are no smaller homes. I feel guilty rattling around when there is a housing shortage.

The issue is we are asset rich and cash poor.

I am concerned about my future and what house I will be able to afford by myself. I want more 1- and 2-bedroom homes supplied to the private market so retiring single women can afford home ownership.

It would be great to have multigenerational housing on the market - we want our moko living with us.

Nice to have that mix of younger and older people [in housing areas]. That's where it's nice when you have a mix of younger and older [people]

My husband has a disability, and we need to downsize but we have to move out of the district to find a smaller property.

There is a large number of us who can't afford our own homes.



We heard from participants that housing is a crucial factor in ageing well. Residents expressed concerns about the shortage of private 1-2-bedroom homes in the district, which affects their ability to downsize, free up capital for retirement, and reduce the burden of home maintenance. Several residents mentioned they were moving out of the district, necessitating a fresh start in communities where they have no existing connections.

There were also concerns about Council approving numerous subdivisions without ensuring that services and amenities are in place or there is provision of smaller homes to service the needs of community. Some residents pointed out that not everyone owns their home and suggested that the Council should advocate for suitable social housing initiatives and a range of rental options.

We heard from engagement participants and sector experts about the importance of increasing multigenerational housing options. Participants highlighted that multigenerational housing is the way forward, rather than rest homes, allowing mokopuna and wider whānau to live together. However, kaumātua Māori noted a shortage of such housing options near Māori communities suggesting kaumātua Māori flats might meet the needs of those without large whānau.

Kaumātua Maori are deliberately recognised, supported, and respected



Support for kaumātua Māori cultural leadership



Support for kaumātua Māori in kaupapa taiao



Meaningful engagement and collaboration

Kaumātua provide stability and hold mana as the protectors of present and future Māori generations and their customs, knowledge, and whakapapa⁴⁷. Kaumātua have a key role in transferring mātauraka (cultural knowledge and wisdom) to future generations and for maintaining hapū and iwi wellbeing.

The right of kaumātua to transfer mātauraka knowledge is recognised by the government of Aotearoa New Zealand in the following ways:

- As signatory to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* agreeing to respect and promote the inherent rights, culture, and traditions of indigenous peoples, and recognising their contribution to sustainable and equitable development and proper environmental management
- The Local Government Act (LGA) 2002 requires local authorities to collaborate with mana whenua and iwi Māori. Local government must establish and maintain processes to provide opportunities for Māori to participate in decision-making, enhance Māori capacity to engage in decision-making, and supply relevant information to assist Māori in their decision-making roles.

The Selwyn District Council's policy, *Māori contribution to the Council's decision-making processes* outlines the steps council will take to ensure kaumātua and iwi Māori are supported in contributing to decision-making processes. The Council's primary relationships are with Ngāi Te Ruahikihiki and Ngāi Tūāhuriri as represented by Te Taumutu Rūnanga, Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga, and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. Council also recognises the presence of members from all iwi Māori living in Waikikirī Selwyn who require support and collaboration.

Due to lower life expectancies experienced by indigenous populations, there are several kaumātua Māori under the age of 65+ fulfilling senior tribal elder roles. For this reason, kaumātua in this section also refers to Māori who are known as kaumātua and aged younger than 65 years.

Support for kaumātua Māori cultural leadership

Strategic goals

- Deliberately supporting kaumātua to fulfil their leadership roles.

Why it is important

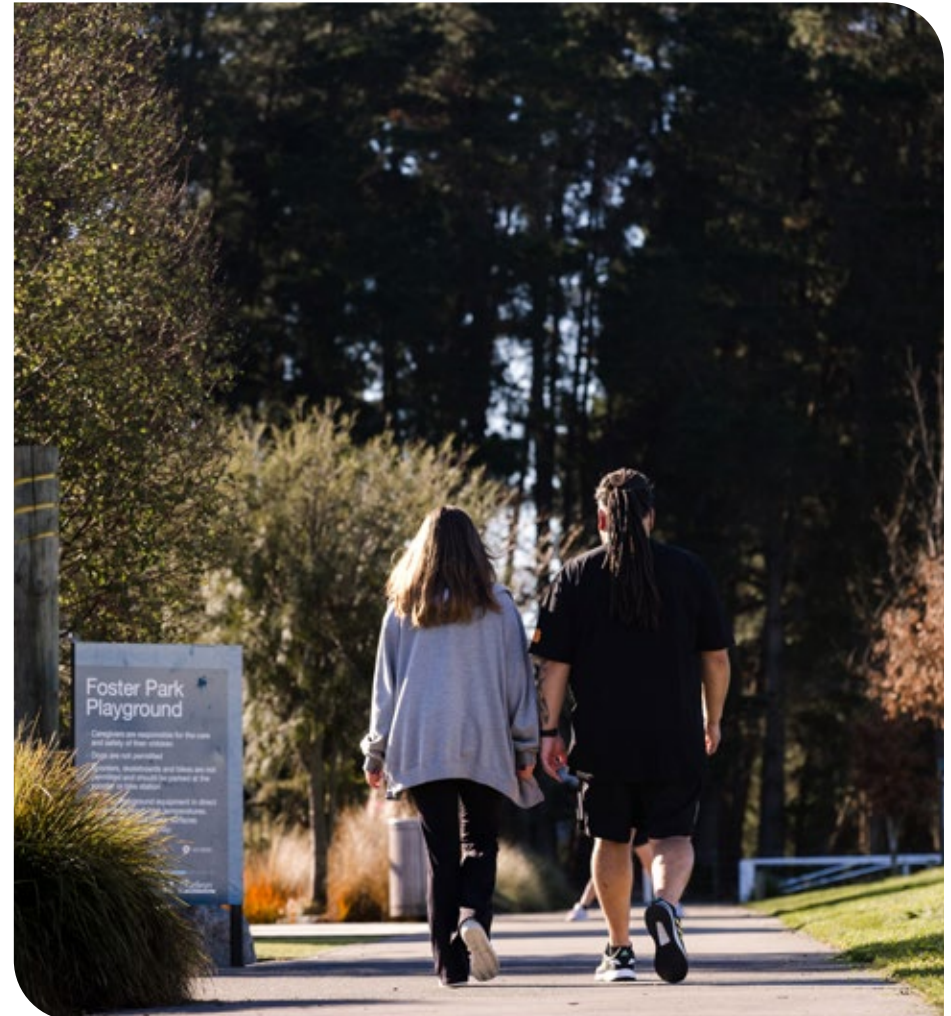
For indigenous communities, culture is a protective resource, and research shows kaumātua supported in engaging with their culture have lower levels of psychological distress and greater levels of wellbeing. Research also shows engagement with Māori culture and kaumātua cultural guardianship roles serve as a protective resource to maintain and increase wellbeing for all iwi Māori⁴⁸.

Fostering the development of Māori leadership capacity to contribute to decision-making processes in local government involves supporting communities to reduce health disparities between Māori and non-Māori. This support allows kaumātua to age more equitably and with opportunity to fulfil their cultural guardianship roles⁴⁹.

It is important to acknowledge that Māori wellbeing encompasses the many broader health elements of whānau (taha whānau), cultural (taha ahurea), spiritual (taha wairua), land (taha whenua) and ecological health in addition to mental health (taha hinengaro) and physical health (taha tinana). If the elements of health are in balance, people can thrive; if one of these elements is out of balance, wellbeing is impacted. Supporting kaumātua requires supporting all elements of wellbeing and includes environmental health and land protection⁵⁰.

What we were told

Kaumātua told us how a few individual leaders carry significant responsibility and are at risk of burn out. We heard from some kaumātua they would like support with capacity building and succession planning for their kaumātua leadership roles and responsibilities.



Support for kaumātua Māori to participate in kaupapa taiao

Strategic goals

- Collaborating with and supporting kaumātua Māori to participate in kaupapa taiao discussions about climate change and biodiversity conservation.

Why it is important

Today's kaumātua Māori are tribal kaitiaki (guardians) of the environment at a time papatūānuku (the earth) is experiencing unprecedented climate change and biodiversity loss. As a signatory to the *Aotearoa New Zealand Local Government Leaders' Climate Change Declaration 2017*, Council is committed to engaging with kaumātua and mana whenua to develop and implement plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to support resilience within our local communities. In the Canterbury region, the Mayoral Forum has oversight of the Canterbury Climate Change Working Group which brings together all 10 territorial authorities, Environment Canterbury and Ngāi Tahu as a region-wide partnership focused on climate change.

Under the Local Government Act 2002 local authorities must identify decision-making involving "significant decision(s) in relation to land or a body of water, take into account the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites, wāhi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taoka". Two areas requiring significant support and engagement with kaumātua and other mana whenua leadership involve mitigating climate change effects and biodiversity conservation.

Climate change

Across Aotearoa New Zealand, climate change is creating hotter days, varying, and increasing rainfall, more extreme weather events, and rising sea levels. The Canterbury earthquakes accelerated rising sea-levels throughout the Canterbury region due to shifts in the earth's crust causing vertical land movements, liquefaction, and ongoing subsidence. Rising temperatures and sea levels will significantly impact the district's environment and our communities, affecting social, economic, and health and wellbeing⁵¹.

Centred on the waters of Te Waihora (Lake Ellesmere) and adjoining lands, the community of Taumutu is especially susceptible to rising sea levels and is situated in a tsunami vulnerable area. Forecasts of sea level change indicate that the marae, church, urupā (cemetery) and the community will become increasingly difficult to inhabit. Sea encroachment has already washed away or disturbed pā sites, urupā and kāika nohoaka (temporary camping sites). Discussions and preparations for managed retreat further inland, away from both the coastline and the lake's edge are significant issues this community will have to deal with over the next two decades.

Whenua (land) is the foundation of iwi Māori health and wellbeing and any loss or disturbance of pā whenua will signify hapū losing a tūrakawaewae (the place where they stand) and their "source of life, nourishment and wellbeing for everyone"⁵². Responding to the loss of tribal land will require iwi and kaumātua to collaborate with government and community to mitigate its impacts and plan for its relocation. In the meantime, there are associated flooding risks to mitigate through collaborative emergency management planning.

Biodiversity conservation

Biodiversity holds profound cultural significance for Māori for whom nature and humans are interconnected through whakapapa, kaitiakitaka, customs, language, and spirituality⁸⁵. Kaumātua are the protectors of environmental knowledge for both present and future generations and have a pivotal role in transferring mātauraka (cultural knowledge and wisdom) to future generations and for maintaining ecological wellbeing. Preserving this biodiversity is also essential for the district's economic and ecological wellbeing⁸⁶.

The *Selwyn Biodiversity Strategy* provides an overarching view of how Council intends to achieve the protection, maintenance, and restoration of indigenous biodiversity within Waikirikiri Selwyn. The strategy aims to build on the good work already occurring in the district; support and encourage the associated efforts of mana whenua, communities, landowners, and individuals; raise awareness of biodiversity values and facilitate the coordination of agency effort through alignment and partnerships. Te Paepae will support the actions in this strategy.



People told us...

**Council needs information from people who live there
(near rising sea water).**

We sit and watch it (sea level rise).



Kaumātua participants told us about the challenges of climate change and decreasing biodiversity. They said that the District Plan needs to acknowledge tsunami vulnerable areas and the challenges of rising sea levels. Some kaumātua living at Taumutu said they would like to further their relationship with Council and the rūnaka to mitigate climate and biodiversity change and to discuss plans for responding to forecasted flooding and adaptive emergency management processes. Of particularly concern is the lack of fixed tsunami alarms.



Meaningful engagement and collaboration

Strategic goals

- Ensuring meaningful, respectful, and balanced relationships and collaboration with kaumātua Māori.

Why it is important

It is important that Council is an active, responsive, and respectful Treaty partner with a balanced partnership and positive relationship manifested through meaningful engagement with kaumātua to determine what support is needed⁸⁷.



People told us...

A council representative presenting the District Plan at a Rūnanga meeting for ten minutes is not consultation.

If you want Rūnanga consultation you need to fund the leaders and experts on the topic to [attend] weekend Rūnanga. This is meaningful consultation and relationship, it recognises there are high personal costs in time, expertise and travel cost for the leaders and experts.



Kaumātua told us they want adequate resourcing of Council and hapū relationship management and roles. We heard that for meaningful engagement to occur there needs to be frequent hui with Council, rūnaka and iwi Māori to carry out well-informed and meaningful consultation with relevant leaders and experts. Council funding would enable this. We also heard, kaumātua Māori were appreciative of the opportunity to meet and talk.



Appendix: Our engagement for Te Paepae

Desktop research

We began the development of this strategy with desk-top research of ageing strategies from other councils across Aotearoa New Zealand, national policy documents, and international strategies. We accessed literature to further understand the issues, opportunities and needs of ageing people within the context of the Council's role and responsibilities. The aim was to gain a broad understanding of current themes and approaches to ageing well in communities. The results of the research were used to inform the development of engagement events and the *Ageing Well Survey* questions.

We engaged using a broad range of activities

We held face-to-face engagements in rural and urban areas

We held workshops with local experts such as service providers and agencies to understand the needs of a growing 65+ population in Waikirikiri Selwyn, and we talked with experts and residents at the Selwyn Wellbeing Expo and Leeston Day Club. We asked participants of these engagements:

- What do you need to age well in Selwyn?
- What community services do you need to age well in Selwyn?
- What activities do you need to age well in Selwyn?

Participants also identify their priorities for what they needed to age well in Selwyn on a "top 3 choice" card that we had developed.

We ran the Ageing Well Survey

We received 685 responses to our *Ageing Well Survey*. The survey questions were informed by the literature review and focussed on areas relevant to the Council's role and responsibilities. We asked about local needs, issues and lived experiences in relation to:

- access to Council facilities and services, health services, transport, and housing
- residents' views and involvement in community participation, volunteering, social connection, wellbeing, and isolation
- access to transport, housing, and community and health services near marae.

Our target audience for the survey were residents and caregivers or supporters of ageing people with a particular interest in people who were aged 65+ and those aged 50 – 64.

We promoted the *Ageing Well Survey* in the Selwyn Times and on social media and invited groups to distribute surveys and promote them to their members or residents, this included five residential and retirement facilities in the district, nine service groups and twelve interest groups and sports clubs. Council facilities such as the libraries, community centres and pools also promoted the survey with hardcopy forms available alongside a QR code and web address for online responses. Hardcopy survey responses were entered into the Council's online 'HaveYourSay' survey tool so that data could be collected into one place. We offered an opt-in prize incentive for completing the survey.

685 survey responses were received; of those, 68% (465) were entered online and 32% (220) were provided on hardcopy forms. 76% (524) of the respondents opted into the prize draw and 53% (364) asked to stay up to date with strategy development. The high number of survey responses (685) provide Council with contextual information robust enough to extrapolate to the whole of district. There were strong responses from both rural and urban areas.

Demographic data was only collected for the survey. None of our other engagement activities collected this data. Of the 685 respondents in the Ageing Well Survey, 71% (488) were aged 65+ and 27% (186) were aged between 50 and 64. 88% (601) were aged 60+. 3% of respondents identified themselves as a caregiver filling the survey out on behalf of an older person.

There were more female (75%, 502) than male respondents, (25%, 170) but the high number of responses still allow us to extrapolate results for both genders. Non-binary people accounted for 0.3% (2).

Thirty percent (201) of respondents live in rural areas and 70% (461) in urban areas.

3.4% of respondents identified as iwi Māori (23) approximating the regional iwi Māori population aged 65+ (3.7%, 25). Pacific people accounted for 1.6% (11), slightly higher than the regional percentage of 1.0% aged 65+. 1.3% (9) of respondents identified as Asian which reflects half the regional Asian 65+ population percentage (2.8%). It is possible language was a barrier for older Asian residents.

We held 9 focus groups

Results from the *Ageing Well Survey* helped inform the questions we used to guide the discussions in the Focus Groups and through the Council's Edge Connector outreach vehicle. The Edge Connector engaged with 25 participants in Glenroy, Springfield, and Rakaia Huts. A further 62 participants attended 5 Focus Groups held in Leeston, Lincoln, Rolleston, and Darfield (one in each ward) with an extra Rolleston Focus Group held in the evening to enable participation by people in the workforce.

We ran a survey for elected members

The Mayor, Councillors, mana whenua representative on Council, and the Malvern Community Board were invited to complete a survey. 12 members responded. We asked:








- What needs are you seeing/hearing about among older people in your ward/across the district?
- What services do you think residents need to age well in place (i.e. to age where they live rather than having to move away) in your ward/in the district?
- What does "putting older people first" mean for Council?
- What outcomes do you want from Te Paepae for the community/for the Council?

Their input generally aligned with the responses of the community and experts.



Appendix: Council Archetypes

These archetypes show the various roles of Council. These are referred to in the discussion on page 12.

Archetype	Description	Key Roles
 COMMUNITY LEADER	Using the moral authority of the Council to bring people together around a shared vision for the District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate a vision for the future of the District • Be a voice for the community nationally and internationally • Develop long-term and annual plans for the District
 INTEGRATOR	Bringing people together within the community to create meaningful change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate discussions between stakeholders within the District • Create connections between key players • Co-designing solutions with the community
 SHAPER	Shaping the look and feel of the District through planning and regulatory functions, and rating functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the behaviours that will contribute to achieving the desired future shape and objectives for the District — through planning, regulations, and revenue policy setting. • Discourage undesirable behaviours using the same tools • Ensure the way in which revenue collection tools (rates, fees, fines) are used is equitable
 SERVICE PROVIDER	Providing and commissioning community services that improve social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide or commission community services required by legislation • Provide or commission other services that will benefit the community, with a particular focus on services that others are not willing or able to provide
 INFRASTRUCTURE PROVIDER	Providing reliable public infrastructure for communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest and commission new infrastructure to meet the development needs of the District • Maintain existing infrastructure
 PROMOTER AND ADVOCATE	Representing the District externally to advocate for what the community needs and attract appropriate investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for the District's interests at regional and national levels • Attract appropriate investment into the District • Promote the District to potential future residents and/or visitors
 ENABLER	Using the Council's financial resources to enable activities within the District that might not otherwise occur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Council's purchasing power to shape local markets • Provide subsidies, grants and other financial incentives to encourage desirable activities within the District that might not otherwise occur

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- ⁷⁰ MacDuff, K. (2024, January 24). [Growing bus patronage set to challenge resourcing](#). The Press. Growing bus patronage set to challenge resourcing | The Press
- ⁷¹ Te Whatu Ora, Locality Planning presentation to Selwyn District Council, Public Service Forum, 2 May 2024.

⁷² Consistent feedback received from community health organisations attending Selwyn District Council Quarterly Wellbeing Forums held throughout 2023.

⁷³ Minister of Health. 2023. Rural Health Strategy. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

⁷⁴ Talò, C. (2018). Community-based determinants of community engagement: A meta-analysis research. *Social Indicators Research*, 140(2), 571-596.

⁷⁵ Rivera-Muñoz, G. (2021). Post-disaster housing recovery and community resilience: the case of the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 (Doctoral dissertation, University of Otago).

⁷⁶ [Older-Workers-Action-Plan-FINAL.pdf](#) (officeforseniors.govt.nz)

⁷⁷ [Older Worker Employment Toolkit](#) — business.govt.nz.

⁷⁸ [What is Welcoming Communities?](#) | Immigration New Zealand accessed on 28th May 2024.

⁷⁹ [MEC-Unlocking-Language-Barriers-Web.pdf](#) (ethniccommunities.govt.nz).

⁸⁰ [Boomers and babies – our population transforms](#) - Massey University.

⁸¹ [WHO National programmes for age-friendly cities and communities: A guide 9789240068698-eng.pdf](#) (who.int).

⁸² [National programmes for age-friendly cities and communities: a guide](#) (who.int).

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⁸⁴ Selwyn District Council Growth and Demand Report.

⁸⁵ Rochford, T. (2004). Whare Tapa Wha: A Māori model of a unified theory of health. *Journal of primary prevention*, 25(1), 41-57.

⁸⁶ [Biodiversity in Aotearoa - an overview of state, trends and pressures](#) (doc.govt.nz).

⁸⁷ Local Government Act 2002

