

Briefing to the Incoming Minister

**Taking a Positive Approach
to Ageing**

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*Briefing to the Incoming Minister
Taking a Positive Approach to Ageing*

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Introduction

Approximately 495,000 people aged 65 years and over currently live in New Zealand.¹ Within the older population, the same variation of views, needs, interests, cultures, wealth, experiences and lifestyles exists as in the general population. In commenting on and formulating policy, it should not be assumed that older people are all the same.

Older people now and in the coming decades will live longer, and will be healthier, more active, more diverse, and better educated than any cohort before them. They will want to work longer, and will have different lifestyles at the end of their active working lives. Our policies and services in the future need to be designed to support people as they grow older to contribute to the economy and participate in society.

A key responsibility of the Office for Senior Citizens is to advise and support you as Minister for Senior Citizens in your role as an advocate for older people at Cabinet and in other government policy forums. The scope of your portfolio is very broad, incorporating positive ageing, retirement income, health, housing, transport, security, and the interests of older people.

As Minister for Senior Citizens, you have responsibility for the ongoing implementation of the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy. The New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy sets out government's commitment to positive ageing and reaffirms the value of older people in society. Older people have skills, knowledge and experience to contribute to New Zealand, and government has an interest in enabling them to remain active participants in society for as long as possible.

In this briefing, we provide an overview of how the older population is changing. We highlight the challenges government faces in enabling older people to stay connected and to participate in their communities. We also outline the responses to these challenges, and the opportunities that the rapidly changing demographic of the older population will bring for New Zealand over the next three years.

The messages on the next page summarise the key areas that government needs to focus on to improve the life experience of older New Zealanders.

We look forward to working with you.

Natalie Lavery
Director
Office for Senior Citizens

Key messages

- People aged 65 years and over are a growing proportion of our total population. By 2051, around 1.3 million of all New Zealanders (26%) will be 65 years and older and around one-quarter of these will be over 85 years. We need to be aware that older people now and in the future will be more active, more diverse and better educated than any cohort before them.
- To ensure good outcomes for older New Zealanders, we need to incorporate positive ageing principles into government policy and service delivery.
- Local authorities are demonstrating a keen interest in their older citizens. Extension of the Positive Ageing Strategy to local authorities is enabling older people to participate in their communities as long as they choose.
- An increasing number of people aged 65 years and over are choosing to remain in the workforce. Flexible employment options will encourage other older people to continue working so we can meet the challenge of skill shortages. Longer workforce participation assists older people to enhance financial provision for their older age.
- Programmes to promote responsible savings and planning ahead for life in retirement will help future older New Zealanders to do the things they want to do when they retire.
- Older people are living longer and healthier lives. The biggest increase in numbers is in the group over 85 years and these have higher support needs. We need policies and programmes that link home-based services together so people in later life can live in their own homes and communities as long as they are able.
- While home ownership across the total population is decreasing, older people have significant financial investment in home ownership. Well-regulated home equity conversion schemes could enable older people to use this equity to support their personal financial wellbeing in retirement. Those who have not been able to accumulate assets to provide for themselves in later life will require alternative and responsive housing options.

- We need flexible transport options, linked to support services, to allow all older people to continue to be active in their family and community life.
- There is evidence that older people are sometimes subject to abuse and neglect. Improving enduring powers of attorney legislation will provide greater protection for older people in making provision for managing their finances and welfare when they are no longer able to make decisions for themselves.

part one

Overview – older New Zealanders today and tomorrow

Part one : Overview – older New Zealanders today and tomorrow

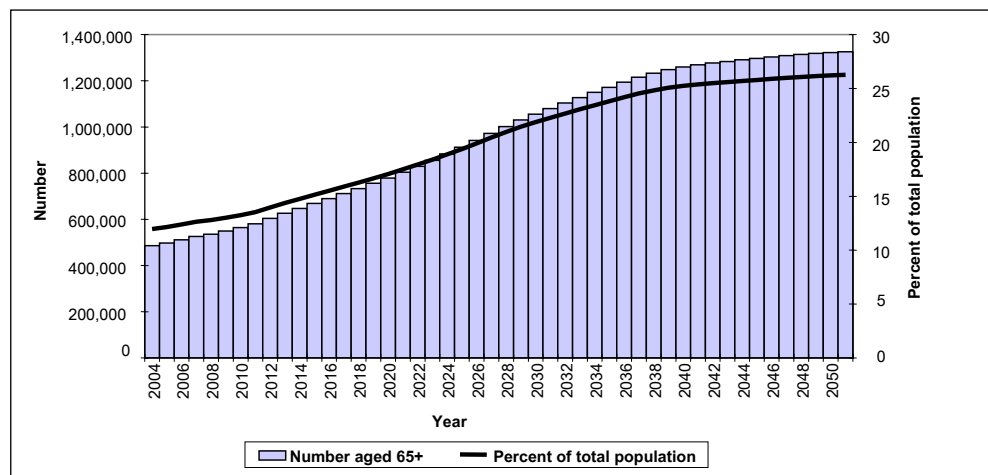
The older population is growing faster

People aged 65 years and over currently make up 12% of the total population. This proportion will rise to 17% by 2021. By 2044, older people will make up around 26% of all New Zealand residents (Figure 1.1). Population projections indicate that by 2051 there will be 322,000 people aged over 85 years, accounting for 24% of the older population.

The number of older New Zealanders is predicted to double by 2030

At the end of March 2005, an estimated 494,500 people aged 65 years and over were living in New Zealand. This number is expected to increase to 586,600 by 2011. The rate of growth in the older population is currently just under 1% per year. This rate will accelerate to over 3% per year after 2011, as the oldest members of the post-war baby boom generation begin turning 65. It is projected that the number of older people will reach one million by 2028, levelling off at around 1.3 million towards the middle of the century.

Figure 1.1 Projected number and proportion of people aged 65+, 2004–2051



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2004-based resident population projections, Series 5, assuming medium fertility and mortality, and long-term net migration of 10,000 per year

Women still have longer life expectancy than men

While the rapid growth in the older-old population, i.e. those over 85 years of age, will place stress on health care and community support services, younger cohorts of older people will continue to contribute to the economy by working past the traditional age of retirement.

There are more women than men in the older population

Because women have longer life expectancy than men, they make up the majority of the older population. Their predominance in the older population increases with age.

Table 1.1 Age and gender distribution of 65+ population, March 2005

Age group (years)	Males	Females	Total %	% Females	
				2005	2020
65–74	58	50	53	52	52
75–84	34	36	35	57	54
85+	8	14	11	69	62
Total 65+	100	100	100	56	54

Source: Statistics New Zealand, estimated resident population as at 31 March 2005; 2005-based resident population projections, Series 5

While women currently account for 56% of all those aged 65 and over, this proportion increases with age, with women aged 85 years and over outnumbering their male counterparts by more than two to one. The gender imbalance has, however, decreased in recent years, and will continue to lessen for older people in the future. This is because men have made greater gains in longevity in the last two decades than women.

Ethnic diversity will increase as the population ages

The ethnic mix of older people will change significantly

The older population is less ethnically diverse than the population aged under 65. In the 2001 Census, only 2% of the older population identified with more than one ethnic group, compared with 10% of those aged under 65. However, this ethnic mix will change significantly over the next few decades.

In 2001, 93% of people aged 65 and over affiliated with European ethnic groups. Māori comprised 4% of those aged over 65, compared with 16% of those aged under 65. A further 2% of older people identified as coming from the Pacific Islands, and another 2% were of Asian ethnicity.

The ethnic composition of the older population has been shaped by patterns of migration in past decades, as well as ethnic differences in life expectancy. For example, in 2001, almost one in seven (14%) people aged 65 and over said they were born in the United Kingdom or Ireland, compared with 4.9% of people under the age of 65. This reflects the effect of immigration policy, which gave unrestricted access to British migrants until the mid-1970s. In all, 29% of older people were born overseas, compared with 22% of people aged under 65.

Māori in the older population

The Māori population aged 65 and over numbered approximately 18,000 in March 2001, an increase of 61% (6,700 people) from 1991. Older Māori made up 3.4% of all Māori in 2001, up from 2.5% in 1991. The number of Māori aged 65 years and over is projected to nearly treble between 2001 and 2021, from 20,000 to 57,000. By 2021, they will account for 8% of all Māori, compared with 3% in 2001.

The representation of Māori decreases with age: in 2001, they accounted for 6% of all 65–74 year olds, 3% of 75–84 year olds and 2% of those aged 85 and over. Due to lower life expectancy rates than for New Zealand Europeans, almost three-quarters of older Māori (74%) are aged between 65–74 years, a further 22% are aged 75–84, and 4% are 85 or older.

Pacific peoples in the older population

At the 2001 Census, there were 7,600 older Pacific people. The number of older Pacific peoples doubled over the decade to 2001, and is projected to nearly treble between 2001 and 2021, from 9,000 to 25,000.

Older Pacific peoples accounted for 3% of the total Pacific population in 2001. This proportion will increase to 4% by 2011, and to 8% by 2031. Pacific peoples have a similar age structure to that of older Māori, with 71% aged 65–74, 25% aged 75–84, and 4% aged 85 or over.

Proportions of older Māori, older Pacific peoples and older Asians in the population will increase significantly

Pacific older people currently account for just 1.7% of all older people. This proportion is expected to rise slowly but steadily over the next three decades. Pacific peoples currently comprise less than 1% of the population aged 85 and over, compared with 2% of those aged 65–74. The vast majority of older Pacific peoples migrated to New Zealand: in 2001, only 4% were born here.

Asian people in the older population

The Asian population in New Zealand is also relatively young, with 4% aged 65 and over. This is not unexpected, given that many of the Asian groups consist of recent immigrants to New Zealand, who are largely people of working age. In 2001, 93% of the older Asian population were born overseas. In 2004, the Asian population made up 2.3% of all older people.

The number of Asian people aged 65 years and over is projected to reach 55,000 by 2021, five times the 2001 population of 11,000. By 2021, they will account for 9% of all Asian people, compared with 4% in 2001.

Languages spoken by older people

While the majority of older people are English language speakers, around 40,000 of older people (9%) were able to speak two or more languages at the time of the 2001 Census. The proportion of multilingual speakers is highest in the younger age groups, declining from 12% among 65–74 year olds to 7% among 75–84 year olds and 5% of people aged 85 and over. Table 1.2 shows the most frequently spoken languages after English.

Table 1.2 Main languages spoken among the older population, 2001

Language spoken	65+
Māori	11,232
Dutch	7,542
French	5,691
German	4,158
Samoan	3,684
Yule (Cantonese)	2,853

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Census of Population and Dwellings, National Summary, Table 14

A small proportion of all older people were Māori language speakers in 2001 (3%). Among older Māori, more than half (54%) were Māori language speakers, twice the proportion in the 15–64-year age group. Two percent of the older population, or 9,771 people, were non-English speakers.

Relationships are changing among older people

In 2001, the majority of older people (88%) were either married or widowed, reflecting the higher levels of marriage and lower incidence of separation and divorce among older cohorts. Over half (55%) were married, the proportion being higher among younger ages and among men. Seventy-six percent of men and 57% of women aged 65–74 were married, while 9% of men and 30% of women were widowed. Over the age of 85 years, 43% of men were widowed, compared to 81% of women. This difference can be attributed to the longer life expectancy of women, along with the tendency for men to be married to women younger than themselves.

A significant trend in the marital status of older people is the growth in the number of people who are separated or divorced. Between 1971 and 2001, the proportion of older people who were separated or divorced increased from 3% to 9% among those aged 65–74, and from 1% to 2% among those aged 85 and over. These proportions can be expected to grow as the generations of New Zealanders affected by higher rates of separation and divorce in recent decades enter older age.

Another emerging trend is the growth of cohabitation among older people. The number of women and men aged 65 and over who were living in de facto relationships trebled between 1991 and 2001. While making up a small proportion of older people overall (2%), this proportion is likely to grow in future decades.

Older people who have had children

The current older population includes the parents of the baby boom generation, and is more likely to have had children than older people of the previous generation. A question in the 1981 Census showed that 79% of women aged 65 and over had had at least one child; the proportion in the 1996 Census was 87%.

Currently more older people are married compared to younger people

Separation and divorce among older people are increasing

Cohabitation is likely to increase

Older people are more likely to have had bigger families than the younger population

Older people today are also more likely to have had larger families than the younger population. In 1996, women aged 60–64 years were estimated to have had 3.24 children on average over their lifetime, compared with 2.47 children for women aged 45–49. As children can be a potential source of care for their parents in older age, the current older population may be relatively favoured in this respect.

Grandparents raising grandchildren

In the 2001 Census, over 4,000 children were being parented by their grandparents. In New Zealand, as in many western countries, kinship care is the preferred option for out-of-home placement of children needing care. Grandparents, in particular, are assuming custody of their grandchildren.

While it may be normal for grandparents in many cultures to play a part in the raising of their grandchildren, those who take total responsibility for the care of children who have suffered abuse or neglect often find this situation stressful and demanding. The demands can frequently overwhelm grandparents' emotional and financial resources.

Older people caring for their grandchildren need greater support

Work is needed to improve the policies and services provided to grandparents who are aged over 65. Considerable hardship is being experienced by grandparents who care for children and rely on New Zealand Superannuation as their only source of income. It is essential that older people who take on care responsibilities for children at this stage in their lives are supported in their roles, and that the children are not disadvantaged.

More older people are working

The pattern of older people retiring from the workforce at the time they qualified for New Zealand Superannuation is beginning to change. As people born in the 1950s and 1960s turn 65 and reach what would previously have been retirement age, they may choose to extend their working lives.

People aged 65 and over

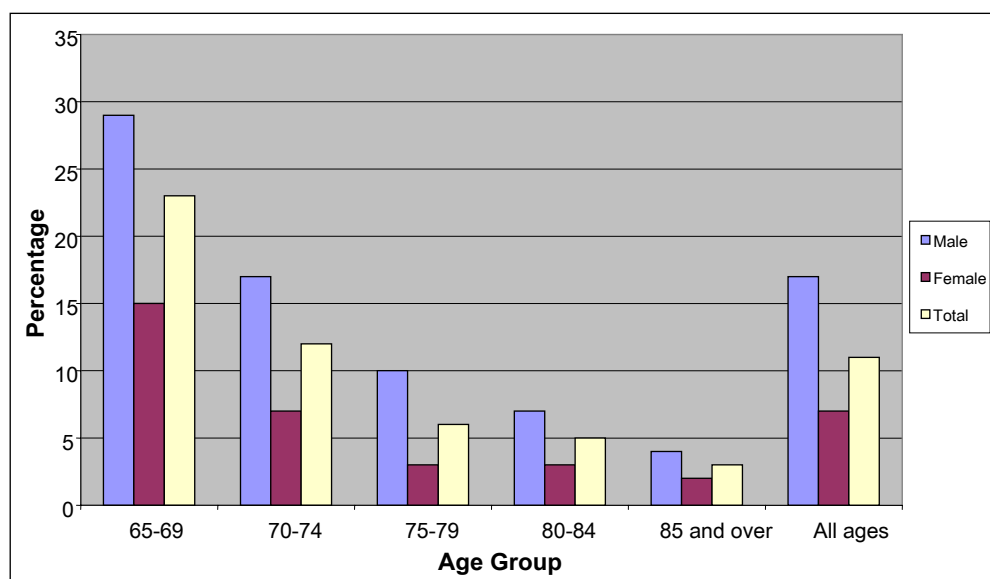
The number of people aged 65 and over in paid employment more than doubled between 1991 and 2001. In 2001, 11% of people aged 65 and over (49,935 persons) were in paid employment. The percentages by age group were: 17% of 65–74 year olds (up from 9% in 1991); 5% of 75–84 year olds; and 3% of people aged 85 and over (Figure 1.2).

Employment levels drop as age increases, from 22% of 65–69 year olds employed to 3% of those aged 85 or over. The drop is particularly sharp between the 65–69 and 70–74 year age groups.

Women are consistently less likely to be employed than men at all ages over 65. In 2001, around 7% of women aged 65 and over were employed, compared with 17% of men. Nearly one in three men and one in six women aged 65–69 were employed.

More older people are working past the age of 65

Figure 1.2 Employment rate for people aged 65 and over, 2001

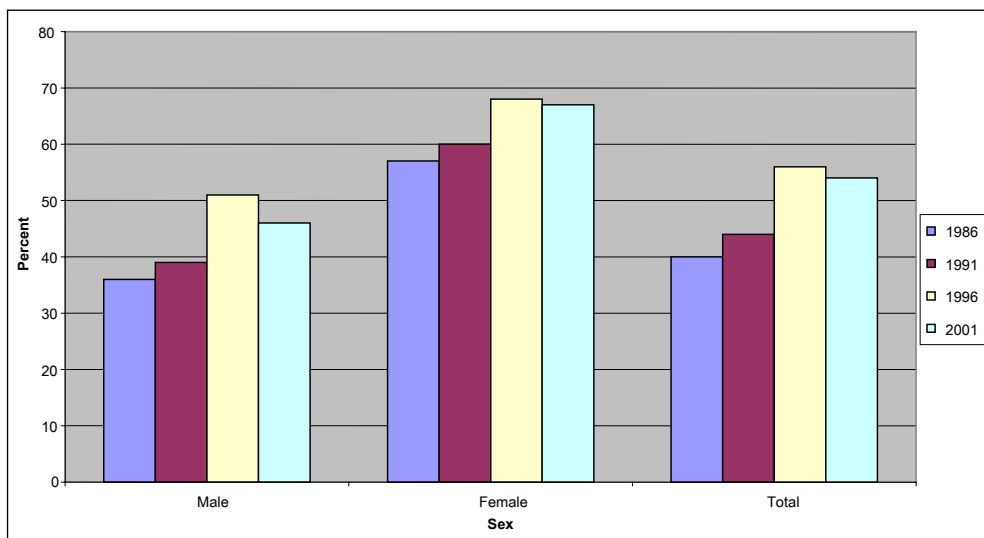


Source: Statistics New Zealand, Census of Population and Dwellings, 2001

Part-time work has always been common among people aged 65 and over. Between 1986 and 2001, the proportion of employed older people working part-time grew by nearly one-third, from 40.6% to 53.1% (Figure 1.3). In 2001, 45.6% of employed men, and 67.6% of employed women, aged 65 and over worked part-time.

Part-time work is common

Figure 1.3 Part-time employment status for employed people aged 65 and over, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, Census of Population and Dwellings, 2001

Current Trends: people aged 60–64

Since the age of eligibility for retirement income support began rising in 1992, the employment rate for people aged 60–64 has more than doubled for men and trebled for women (Figure 1.4). In 2004:

- 45% of women and 67% of men aged 60–64 were employed full-time or part-time
- 57% of men aged 60–64 were employed full-time, compared to 25% in March 1992
- 10% of men aged 60–64 were employed part-time, compared to 8% in March 1992
- 27% of women aged 60–64 were employed full-time, compared to 8% in March 1992
- 18% of women aged 60–64 were employed part-time, compared to 8% in March 1992.

**More 60–64
year olds are
working than
12 years ago**

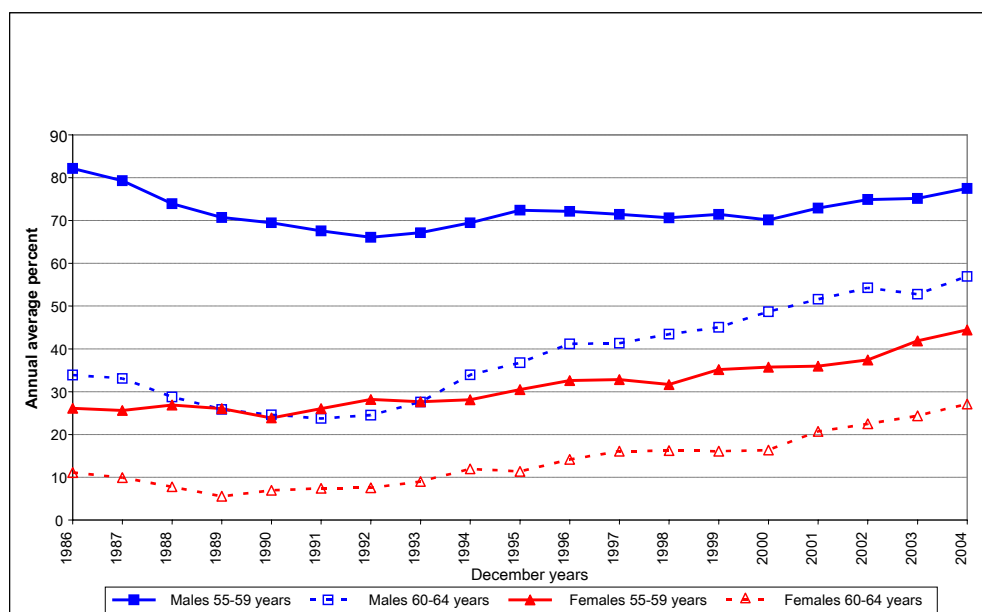
Future Trends: people aged 55–59

The proportion of 55–59 year olds employed full-time in 2004 (61%) has surpassed 1986 levels (55%). The growth in employment among women aged 55–59 is a primary reason for this increase. In March 1986, women made up 23% of the full-time employed aged 55–59; in 2004, that rate had increased to 37%. The full-time employment rate for women of this age group increased from 26% to 44% over the same period, 1986–2004.

More 55–59 year olds, particularly women, are working

The full-time employment rate of men aged 55–59 stood at 82% in 1986, hit a low point of 66% in 1992, and was up to 77% in 2004; an improvement, but still not back to the 1986 rate.

Figure 1.4 Proportion of 55–64 year olds employed full-time, 1986–2004



Source: Statistics New Zealand, Household Labour Force Survey

Education and access to technology are increasing among older people

The proportion of older people with formal qualifications is likely to increase in future years, as younger generations who have benefited from higher participation in education enter older age. In 2001, just over half of older people (54%) had a formal qualification, compared with three-quarters of the population aged 15–64. Gender disparities in the qualifications of older

Around one in six older people have internet access

people are also likely to reduce. In 2001, 49% of older women and 43% of older men had no formal qualifications.

In the 2001 Census, virtually all older people (98%) reported that they had access to a telephone. Around one in six older people (17%) were living in households that had access to the internet, with men more likely to report access (19%) than women (12%). Internet access declines with age, from 21% among 65–74 year olds to 11% among 75–84 year olds and 7% among those aged 85 and over.

At ages 65–69, almost half of Asian and other ethnic group older people had access to the internet, compared with a quarter of Europeans and an eighth of Pacific and Māori older people.

Approximately 1% of older people stated that they lived in a household that did not have telephone, fax or internet access.

This section provided a picture of older people today. Information included a consideration of how and why the population is ageing, as well as how older people themselves are changing as the baby boom generation moves into middle and later life. The next section considers the policy needed to respond to the issues and challenges of this rapidly changing landscape of older people in New Zealand.

part two

Issues and challenges for ageing in place

Part two : Issues and challenges for ageing in place

Most older people have enough to live on but some face difficulties

New Zealand has a universal superannuation system. It is unique in that it is neither income nor asset tested. The New Zealand state superannuation system is generally accepted as one of the most comprehensive state-funded pension systems in the world, and as recent research on the living standards of older New Zealanders shows, it supports an adequate standard of living for the majority of older people.² Some older people do, however, experience poverty, particularly those who do not own their own home or have not been able to save for their retirement.

NZS supports an adequate standard of living for most older people

New Zealand Superannuation (NZS) provides a basic income that enables the majority of older people to live adequately in New Zealand. The married couple rate of NZS is set at not less than 65% of the average ordinary time weekly wage, and is adjusted annually on 1 April to reflect increases in the Consumer Price Index.³ The married couple rate is used as the threshold for the single living alone and single sharing rates of NZS, which are set at 65% and 60% respectively of the married couple rate.

Older people have lower incomes and lower levels of poverty

Reflecting their lower levels of employment, older people have lower incomes, on average, than adults aged 15–64. In the year before the 2001 Census, the median annual income of people aged over 65 (from all sources and before tax) was \$13,100, compared to \$18,500 for all adult New Zealanders. One-quarter of older people had an annual income of \$10,000 or less, while just 5% received income of more than \$40,000.

Older people have lower incomes than 15–64 year olds

The level of earnings among older people varies by gender and across ethnic groups. In the 12 months before the 2001 Census, older men's median income was \$13,600, compared with \$12,800 for older women. The income gap between men and women reduces with age, falling from \$1,500

Older people have varied sources of income

among 65–74 year olds to \$600 among the population aged 85 years and over.

While most of the usually resident population aged 65 and over received NZS in 2001 (93%), more than half also received income from other sources. This includes income from interest, dividends and rent (40%) and income from other superannuation and annuities (15%). Men were more likely than women to receive income from other superannuation and annuities (20% and 11% respectively).

Six percent of older people reported that they had received income from wages and salaries in the 12 months before the 2001 Census, while 6% had received income from self-employment. The 65–69 age group was the most likely to receive income from wages and salaries (14%) and self-employment (12%).

While older people as a group have relatively lower levels of poverty than any other group in society, some people within the older population experience material hardship.

Around 7% of older people experience quite marked material hardship

*The Social Report 2005*⁴ showed that around 7% of the older population experience quite marked material hardship. The *Living Standards of Older Zealanders* report found that a further 5% to 10% have some difficulties.⁵ Older people of Māori and Pacific ethnicity are more likely to experience difficulties than other older people.⁶

Older people are living longer but need health support later in life

People are generally living longer and are in better health in older age. Despite this, many older people remain concerned about health issues, and current and future access to health services. Older people, particularly those in very old age, are relatively high users of health and disability support services.

The New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy has a health goal of “equitable, timely, affordable and accessible health services for older people”. The Ministry of Health’s policy framework for health sector action to 2010 is set out in the Health of Older People Strategy, which supports the health and independence goals of the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy.

Together, these strategies provide the vision and policy framework for developing an environment where older people receive support services so they can age in place as long as possible, and have access to higher-level supportive care if and when it becomes needed.

As far as the public is concerned, these strategies are meaningless if they do not drive better outcomes and better services for older people. For example, access to appropriate health care is paramount if older people are to remain living in their own communities.

In 2001, government devolved responsibility for the funding of disability support services for older people from the Ministry of Health to district health boards (DHBs). Devolution of the disability support services for older people took place in October 2003. This was designed to provide greater integration of support services with other health services at the local level, and provides for a holistic focus on the total health needs of older people.

Under the Health of Older People Strategy, each DHB is required to outline in its annual plan the progress it has made towards the development of an integrated continuum of care for older people. The integrated continuum of care programme for older people is expected to be implemented nationwide by 2010.

Primary health care

In 2002/2003, primary health organisations (PHOs) were established. A PHO is a local health provider that is a not-for-profit organisation, and is funded by the local DHB. The purpose of the PHO is to provide better access to primary health care to people of all ages, primarily through cheaper doctor visits and prescriptions. All people aged 65 and over belonging to a PHO now have a maximum prescription charge of \$3.00. This has significantly reduced the costs for superannuitants who previously did not have access to a Community Services Card.

Secondary health care

Older people are extensive users of hospital services. Waiting lists are an area of major importance to many older people because delays in treatment make it more difficult to remain living independently, especially if the health condition affects mobility or vision.

Access to health services is a concern for many older people, and is crucial to “ageing in place”

PHOs have reduced the cost of primary healthcare for many older people

More cataract operations and hip and knee replacements will be provided in coming years

Funding was provided in 2005 to increase the numbers of cataract operations and hip and knee replacements in recognition of the growing numbers of older people in the community requiring these treatments. In 2004, the Breast Screening Aotearoa programme was extended to women up to their 70th birthday.

Most older people want to live in their own homes

Home is a familiar place and a treasure chest of memories. It can be an expression of one's personality, hobbies and skills. Home provides a sense of identity and a face to the community.

(Creating communities for all ages 40+ Project and Age Concern, 2000)

Access to affordable and appropriate housing options for older people is essential to ageing in place.

Table 2.1 65+ housing tenure by percentage of total population, 2001

Age group	Owned with a mortgage	Owned without a mortgage	Owned unspecified	Rented	Rent free	Not specified	Total
65–74	9	68	1	12	4	6	100
75–84	5	69	2	13	4	7	100
85 plus	5	64	3	15	5	9	100
Total population	39	25	1	29	3	4	100

Source: From Birth to Death database 2001, cited in Accommodation options for older people in Aotearoa/New Zealand – New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing (NZIRA) Report for the Centre for Housing Research, Aotearoa New Zealand (CHRANZ), 2004

Home ownership is high among older New Zealanders. In 2001, three-quarters of all older people, and more than half of people aged 85 and over, owned or part-owned their homes (Table 2.1). In part, this reflects past government policies that fostered home ownership through low-interest loans and the capitalisation of family benefit. The proportion of older people who own their own home has declined since the last census, from 81% in 2001 to 75% in 2004.

Home ownership is high among older people, though rates are likely to decline

There is likely to be more diversity in housing tenure among older people in the future, including larger numbers living in retirement villages in owned, rented or leased units, or in houses owned by family trusts. Possibly fewer older people will be mortgage-free home owners.

In 2001, one-third of older people were living on their own, with almost three-quarters of these being women. Around 14,500 women aged 85 and over (68%) were living in a single-person household. While most older people live independently in their own homes, around 50,000 respondents to the 2001 Census aged 65 or over (13%) said they usually lived with their children.

One-third of older people (three-quarters of them women) live on their own

Older people receiving residential care

In 2001, 7% of the older population were living in non-private dwellings. Of these, 81% were living in a retirement home, while 9% were living in a hospital. The likelihood of living in non-private dwellings increases with age, rising from 2% of 65–74 year olds to 30% of people aged 85 and over.

Older women are more likely to live in non-private dwellings than older men. At the time of the 2001 Census, 8% of women and 4% of men were living in a non-private dwelling such as a retirement village, a home for older people, or a hospital. Women made up 55% of the 65–74 age group, and 80% of the group aged 85 and over, living in a long-stay residential care facility.

Older New Zealanders are less likely to live in rural areas

Older people are slightly less likely than the rest of the population as a whole to live in rural areas (11%, compared to 14%). In 2001, more than two-thirds of older people lived in major urban areas, around a fifth in secondary or minor urban areas, and just over a tenth lived in rural areas (Table 2.2). The likelihood of living in a rural area was greater among people aged 65–74 than among those aged 75 and over. This may reflect the fact that the very old are more likely to require access to the services and amenities available in urban areas.

Older Māori are more likely than older non-Māori to live in rural areas – affecting access to services and amenities

Older Māori are more likely than older non-Māori to live in rural areas. In 2001, one-quarter of Māori aged 65 and over lived in rural areas, compared with a tenth of non-Māori of that age. Therefore access to health and other services is likely to be more difficult for Māori.

Table 2.2 Urban and rural distribution of older people, 2001

	Number	Percentage
Main urban areas (more than 30,000)	310,116	69
Secondary urban areas (10,000–29,999)	38,442	9
Minor urban areas (1,000–9,999)	52,281	12
Rural centres and rural other (0–999)	49,524	11
Total	450,420	100

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Census Regional Summary, Table 2 and Table 2a

Older people make valuable contributions to their communities

Working for the community keeps me connected. I continually make new friends and we help each other just by doing things that need to be done.

(Roma Cook, Positive Ageing Ambassador for the Office for Senior Citizens)

Older people are a significant proportion of the voluntary workforce, bringing great benefits to themselves and others

The value of older people to their communities cannot be underestimated. Many older people are involved in unpaid activities, either inside or outside of the home, and older people comprise a significant proportion of the volunteer workforce. Around 15% of all unpaid work is done by older people.⁷ In the four weeks before the 2001 Census, 17% of people aged 65 and over had been involved in voluntary work, such as for an organisation, group or marae. This proportion was highest (21%) among 65–74 year olds.⁸

Older people volunteer in many different ways. They are volunteers in community groups and are business advisors and mentors. They volunteer on boards, in schools, on the marae and in kōhanga reo, in health and support services, as sports coaches and for their churches.

Older people report that volunteering can be emotionally and spiritually satisfying. It contributes to their physical and mental wellbeing, and it provides opportunities to learn new skills and to continue to actively contribute to their communities. People of all ages benefit from the talents and knowledge that older people share through their voluntary work.⁹

part three

Opportunities for action

Part three : Opportunities for action

The major demographic shift of the ageing population will provide opportunities, as well as challenges, for government's policy responses.

Older New Zealanders want to participate and contribute to their own wellbeing, to the wellbeing of their families, and the wider New Zealand community. Factors influencing their ability to do this include not only their income and health status and access to housing and transport, but also their easy access to information and advice about social support services. The Ministry of Social Development is well positioned to provide the leadership to ensure that older people are able to "age in place" through partnerships with other agencies, local government and communities.

Government policies should allow and encourage today's older people, and future generations of older people, to experience ageing as a positive and productive stage in their lives, and to have access to good information and advice to do so. The underpinning premise is that the years of older age should be viewed and experienced positively by both older people and younger generations.

The Office for Senior Citizens leads the response to older people's issues across the government sector. We do this by promoting and monitoring the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy, and applying the principles of the Strategy to all our advice. We provide second-opinion advice on policies that affect older people, to ensure that older people's priorities are brought to the table when policies and legislation are developed. The Strategy's principles also drive the connections we make with the community through the Volunteer Community Co-ordinators programme. This programme is key to developing good relationships with older people, and their service and advocacy groups, throughout New Zealand.

New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy – a living document¹⁰

The purpose of the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy is to promote positive ageing across a broad range of portfolio areas, and to improve opportunities for older people to participate in the community in the ways that they choose. The Strategy identifies policy principles for positive

Older New Zealanders want to participate and contribute

The Positive Ageing Strategy is our framework for achieving this

The Strategy's success will be measured by improvements in the status of older people

ageing, priority goals and key actions, and is used in policy planning by central, regional and local government agencies.

The New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy was released by the Minister for Senior Citizens on 10 April 2001. The Office for Senior Citizens developed the Strategy in consultation with a range of older people's expert and advisory groups, key sector organisations, individuals and communities of interest from all over New Zealand.

Older people were engaged from the outset in shaping and defining the issues and activities covered by the Strategy. Ultimately, its success will be measured by improvements in the status of older people. Older people are both the purpose and the outcome measure of the Strategy, and their input into its development was critical.

The Office has co-ordinated and produced five annual action plans since 2001. Each year's action plan has provided a larger collective work programme, and has involved a wider range of government agencies at central, regional and local levels.

Some examples of recent achievements include the development of new thresholds for the Rates Rebate scheme, the review of the Older Driver Licensing System, and the ACC Falls Prevention programme. This programme involves tai chi classes to strengthen muscles and to reduce injury to older people from falls.

Making positive ageing local

Setting up the Positive Ageing Group to work with our local Council has kept me busy and out of trouble.

(John Cunningham, Volunteer Community Co-ordinator with the Office for Senior Citizens)

The 2003/2004 Action Plan was the first to include actions from a local authority, the New Plymouth District Council. This is an example of local government using the framework of the Positive Ageing Strategy to provide policies for older people in their district.

More local authorities are getting involved, providing a basis for community action

The New Plymouth District Council, along with a local collective of older people's organisations and regional government agencies, formed a Positive Ageing Reference Group to work together on local solutions to meet the needs of local older people. A district-wide Positive Ageing Policy document for older people in the area was developed and approved by the Reference Group, and published by the New Plymouth District Council.

The 2005/2006 New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy Action Plan includes more than 193 projects and initiatives to be carried out by 56 agencies at central, regional and local government agencies. This includes 17 local councils, A significant increase on previous years.

Review of the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy

In 2001, the Status Report *Positive Ageing in New Zealand: Diversity, Participation and Change* provided an initial snapshot of the situation for older people in New Zealand. The information provided a baseline for evaluating New Zealand's progress in achieving the Positive Ageing Strategy's goals.

A review of the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy is considering how the 10 goals and issues identified in the 2001 Status Report have been addressed through the five successive New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy action plans.

Early findings from the review suggest that significant progress has been made towards the goals of the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy, but that there is still room for more improvement.¹¹ In particular, progress is required in making public transport more accessible, in developing housing options that enable older people to remain living in their own communities for longer, in improving access to services for older people in rural areas, and in improving attitudes to ageing.¹²

The New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy action plan and annual report process has led to good short-term outcomes. The review provides the Minister for Senior Citizens with an opportunity to revisit the format and process for the development of the Strategy documents. More importantly, it gives the opportunity to refresh the Strategy to ensure it makes a real difference to older people's lives. The review will mean that the Strategy's goals and key actions stay relevant to older people now and in the future.

The current review is a good opportunity to revisit and refresh the Strategy

Active ageing requires flexible work options

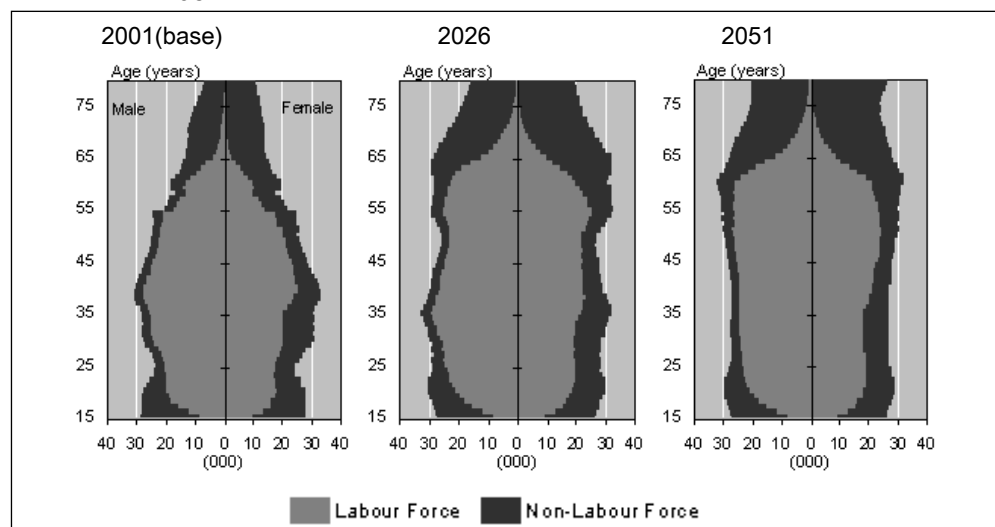
The choice to work later in life, using flexible and part-time arrangements, is of central importance to meeting the active ageing challenge.

Research findings suggest that those who work longer, either paid or unpaid, enjoy better health in their older age. The policy conclusion is clear: it is imperative to maintain people in gainful activity longer. To achieve this objective, more emphasis must be given to lifelong learning for workers of all ages, so that workers maintain and increase their skills and productivity as they grow older.¹³

Full-time employment rates for people aged 60 and over have increased since the age of eligibility for New Zealand Superannuation began rising in 1992.¹⁴ Another change driving this increased labour force participation was the introduction in February 1999 of provisions in the Human Rights Act 1993 prohibiting compulsory retirement on the basis of age.

In 2004, 57% of men and 27% of women aged 60–64 were in full-time work, over double that in 1992. The proportion of people aged 65 years and over in part-time or full-time employment nearly doubled between 1992 and 2004, from 6% to 11%.

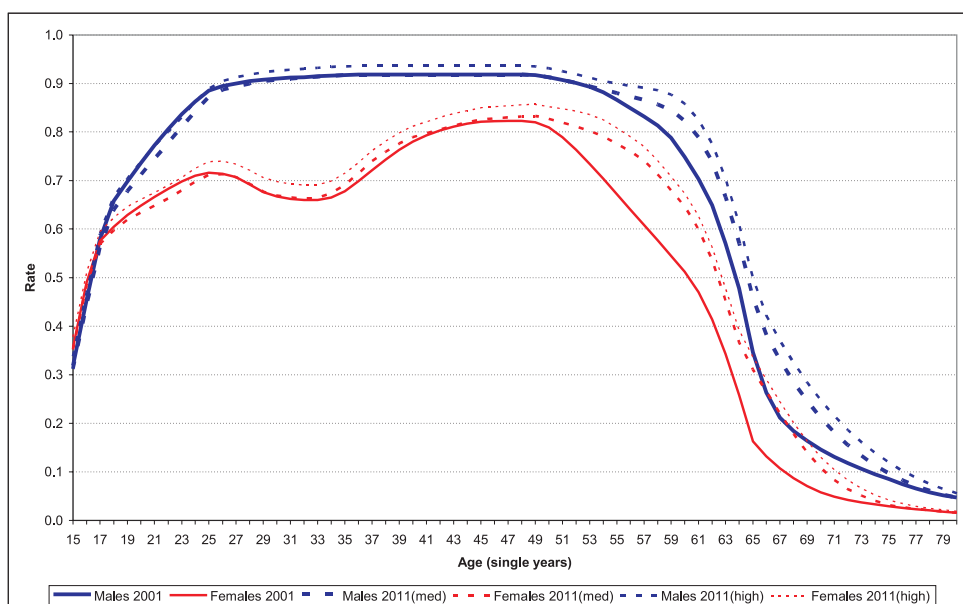
Figure 3.1 Population by labour force status, by age and sex, 2001, 2026, 2051



Source: Statistics New Zealand, National Labour Force Projections

A greater proportion of older men and women are projected to be working in 2011 than in 2001 (Figure 3.2). Women aged 50 and over are expected to have large increases in labour force participation rates, and for men the biggest changes are expected in the 60 years and over population.

Figure 3.2 Projected increase in labour force participation at older age, by age and sex, 2001 and 2011



Source: Statistics New Zealand, National Labour Force Projections, assuming medium and high labour force participation

While greater numbers of older people are choosing to engage in full- or part-time employment, some older people face specific barriers to work. Barriers can be both general and personal.¹⁵

General barriers can include negative attitudes of employers to mature workers, the ability to pay lower wages to young people, and employers wanting to give younger people a chance. Personal barriers include a lack of confidence, a lack of computer skills, being either under- or over-qualified for the positions available, having to accept lower income levels than previously, and not being able or willing to relocate to take up work opportunities.

Attitudes of employers to older employees are complex. Research undertaken in New Zealand in 2000 found a perception among employers

Barriers to work for older people include lack of confidence, a mismatch of skills, and employer attitudes

that older workers are change-resistant and have difficulty with technology, but are also dependable and productive.¹⁶ Many employers and older employees said that, while the introduction of human rights legislation banning discrimination by age in employment had been effective in changing job advertising, it had effected little change to actual recruitment practices. For this reason, it is important that policies are directed to changing attitudes to ageing across all age groups.

There is still a need to improve employers' attitudes to older workers. Some older people are not in work but have chosen not to register as unemployed, either because they have chosen early retirement rather than unemployment or because they have become discouraged from the labour market because of negative experiences.

Because these older people are not registered as unemployed, they do not receive support with finding work from case managers within the Work and Income service of the Ministry of Social Development. If older people are to be encouraged to help fill the gaps in the labour market, it is important that those who have become discouraged are identified and provided with the support and retraining they need to move back into work.

Eldercare will be needed for some older people while younger women work

The changing ratio of older people to potential carers outside the labour force will need to be addressed in the medium future. In the past, middle-aged adult daughters have largely provided such care on an unpaid basis.

Changes in women's labour force participation, delayed childbearing, smaller families, and increased geographical mobility among older people have reduced the capacity of daughters to provide such care. There is currently just over one person aged 75 or more for each person aged 45–64 who is not in the labour force and could potentially provide support.

The ratio will change rapidly from about 2020, and by 2031 there will be almost two people aged 75 and over for each person aged 45–64 years not in the labour force. These ratios assume that the current labour force participation rates of women and men continue.

Older people seeking paid employment may need support and retraining

In future, fewer people outside the workforce will be available to care for older people who need support

Savings are key to a comfortable future

The New Zealand Superannuation Fund was created as a strategy to deal with the fiscal burden of an ageing population. The Fund sets aside savings now to cover the cost increases created by the baby boomers as they retire and claim New Zealand Superannuation (NZS).

If retired New Zealanders want to enjoy the same or a similar standard of living as they did when they were working, it is unlikely that reliance on NZS alone will enable this over their lifetime. Encouraging New Zealanders to save enough now is the next challenge in ensuring that older people in the future have a secure and adequate income.

The Retirement Income Act 1993 established the position of the Retirement Commissioner, funded through Vote: Social Development. The role of the Retirement Commissioner is to raise awareness of the need to plan for retirement, and to educate the New Zealand public about financial management and retirement planning. One way this is being done is through the Sorted website¹⁷, where a 60plus section has been set up to help older people manage their investments once they retire.

Support services will enable older people to stay in their homes

Assisting people to remain in their own homes requires policies that allow older people to continue to live as independently as possible while they are able, and to provide quality residential care when their care needs increase.

The Ministry of Health has identified challenges to providing support services for older people and people with disabilities. Priorities for action include improving training and career development opportunities, as well as remuneration for the home care and personal support workforce. Residential care workforce issues related to workforce training and retention are also being addressed.

Admission to residential care is based on an assessment process, designed to restrict admission to those with the highest care needs. If residential care is required, a residential care subsidy based on income and asset tests is available.

We must encourage New Zealanders to save now for their retirement

We need to build the capacity of the workforce for home and residential care

On 1 July 2005, the allowable asset level was increased from \$15,000 for a single person and \$45,000 for a married couple to \$150,000, with a subsequent \$10,000 increase to the asset level each following year. This will result in greater numbers of older people having an entitlement to a residential care subsidy.

In the past, religious and welfare providers were key players in the provision of residential care. Over the past 18 months, religious and welfare providers have started to exit the market. This leaves a gap, particularly for those older people who need care but may be considered difficult to place.

Responsive housing options are needed for older people

Older people who do not own their own home or who have not been able to accumulate substantial assets have fewer housing options later in life.¹⁸ They tend to be limited to Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC) or local government authority houses or units, or those provided by the voluntary or private sectors.¹⁹ These types of housing have, in the past, often been inadequate to address older people's needs. More recently, both HNZC and some local authorities have worked towards providing more suitable accommodation options for older people.

A number of different housing options already exist, including sheltered or extra-care housing, retirement villages or social villages. Other options will need to be encouraged to meet the future needs of older people and allow them to age in place. Staying in the family home may not be the best option in all circumstances, and so alternatives to residential care need to be found.

A 2004 report from the Centre for Housing Research Aotearoa New Zealand identified two challenges to older people being able to age in their communities.²⁰ The first challenge is to maintain and upgrade the living conditions of older people in mainstream housing, so this remains a viable option as the numbers of older people increase. The second challenge is to develop a range of alternative housing options to meet the care needs and social or cultural preferences of older people²¹ who lack the personal and financial resources to ensure adequate and appropriate housing without assistance.

Good housing options will support older people to age in place

The recently released New Zealand Housing Strategy provides an opportunity for the development of a work programme that will address some of the current housing gaps.²² HNZC is committed to developing a housing work programme in 2005, to work towards meeting the needs of older people in the future.

One model for potential development in New Zealand is sheltered or extra-care housing as seen in the Abbeyfield model. This volunteer-based, not-for-profit organisation provides affordable quality rental housing on a communal-living basis. The houses are aimed at older people with low incomes and limited assets, but people who have previously owned a house are not excluded.

There are a number of local councils providing excellent pensioner housing for older people. The partnerships forged by the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy, with local authorities, hold potential for the Office for Senior Citizens to promote the inclusion of housing policies in local authorities' Long Term Council Community Plans.

Retirement villages

Many older New Zealanders are taking up the option of moving to a retirement village. While the numbers of retirement villages have increased throughout the country, they only provide for those older people who have sufficient capital assets and can afford to make this choice. Problems with the charging and management practices of some retirement villages have been the subject of considerable complaint over a number of years. This resulted in the Minister for Senior Citizens asking the Office for Senior Citizens to lead the development of the retirement villages legislation.

The Retirement Villages Act 2003 is designed to enhance older people's confidence in retirement-village living as a residential option. It balances the interests of retirement village residents and owners and establishes standards of practice in retirement villages.

The Act will ensure a degree of external oversight by the Registrar of Retirement Villages through the provision of statutory supervisors to oversee the financial viability of villages. There is also a requirement to establish a process for the on-selling of vacated units, and to provide for appropriate sanctions and penalties for breaches of the legislation.

Abbeyfield is a good model for alternative, affordable, quality housing

The Retirement Villages Act will establish standards of practice in retirement villages

Regulations are being developed to enable the Act to come into force in 2006. The Retirement Commissioner is finalising a draft code of practice to set standards in retirement village practice, for submission to the Minister responsible for the Act. Responsibility for the Act passed from the Office for Senior Citizens to the Department of Building and Housing on 1 July 2005.

Providing flexible transport options will enable active participation

I was born when no one had a car. We walked just as we can do now.

(Gladys Goodall, senior citizen Christchurch)

Access to transport is central to older people's active participation in the community. Connecting with the community helps to prevent social isolation and keeps older people living independently in ways that they choose.

Access to transport is a key way of enabling older people to age positively. It is essential that central, regional and local government agencies consider older people's transport needs when developing public transport options. The New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy is a framework for developing partnerships between government and local authorities, so older people's transport needs are considered during the development of local and regional transport policies.

Being able to travel both within the community and to other areas is likely to be an important indicator of the degree of independence among the older population. In the 2001 Census, the majority of older people (84%) stated that they had access to at least one motor vehicle. The proportion declines sharply with age: 91% of 65–74 year olds have access to a motor vehicle compared with 79% among 75–84 year olds and 55% of people aged 85 and over. Men are more likely to report having access to a motor vehicle than women (92% compared with 78%).

Coping without a car

In 2004, the Office for Senior Citizens commissioned research from the New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing (NZiRA) on the impact that the lack of private transport had on older people's lifestyles and quality of life. The research, called *Coping without a Car*, also examined how older people who do not have access to private transport meet their transport needs.

Loss of access to private transport and the consequential loss of independence emerged as a significant issue for older people. To maximise access to the findings of the *Coping without a Car* study, in 2005 the Office produced a pamphlet for public distribution.

The Minister for Senior Citizens launched the pamphlet *How will you get around when you stop driving?* on 7 July 2005. The Office distributed 300,000 copies to the Volunteer Community Co-ordinators, Work and Income service centres, and a wide range of other organisations. These included RSA, Age Concern and Grey Power branches, medical centres and chemists, libraries and Citizens Advice Bureaux, and Automobile Association branches throughout New Zealand.

How will you get around when you stop driving? provides a trigger for people to think about and plan for a time when they may need to stop driving. This includes making choices that will enable people to continue being able to do the things they want to do. This pamphlet should help older people and their families to recognise and respond to some of the difficulties that may be faced by many older people when they stop driving.

We have had excellent feedback from many of the groups who received the pamphlet, including comments that the pamphlet was timely and provided concise and relevant information. Occupational therapists find the pamphlet particularly helpful for their clients.

Older driver licensing review

In October 2004, the Government announced a review of the current older driver licensing system, in response to criticism from older people's advocacy groups about the costly and discriminatory nature of the system. The current system has a requirement that, when drivers reach the age of 75, they must obtain a medical certificate and pass an eye test. Drivers

***Coping without a Car* examined the issues for older people without private transport**

The pamphlet *How will you get around when you stop driving?* provides a trigger for people to plan ahead

aged 80 and over are required to pass a medical test and an eye test and take a driving test every six months.

In April 2005, the Government announced support for a new system, which will include no mandatory age-based on-road test. The new older driver licensing system is planned to come into effect during 2006/2007. If this happens this is likely to result in older people, who in the past may have given up driving because of the stress associated with taking the test, being able to maintain their independence longer.

Public transport

The *Coping without a Car* study found that, while public transport tends to be an important option for older people who do not drive, it is not universally available throughout the country, particularly in rural areas.²³ Furthermore, public transport is only a practical alternative if there are services at the times older people want to travel and to the destinations they want to travel to, and if the older people have the mobility to get on and off vehicles. More flexible and responsive forms of public or community transport will be needed in the future, to respond to the transport needs of increasing numbers of older people.

Rural transport

The loss of private transport can be particularly difficult for rural older people, and can cause major lifestyle changes if transport alternatives are not available. Some rural communities have used creative solutions to enable members of the community to access services when public or private sector transport is not available. For example, voluntary groups can partner with local authorities to provide community transport options.

Much work is still needed to ensure that older people who can no longer meet their own transport requirements can still access local and more distant services. In rural areas, work is urgently needed to ensure that older people have access to essential services such as health care. Specialist or hospital appointments will often require travel to a larger centre some distance away. The cost of public transport, when it is available, may compromise older people's ability to pay for necessities such as heating and

Public transport isn't always an option for older people, particularly in rural areas

The cost of transport can affect spending on other essentials

food. Other aspects of older people's lives may also be affected because of the costs of travel to health services.

Improved and responsive transport services will enhance older people's lives by allowing them to continue participating with their families and in their communities.

Strengthening legislation supports older people's choices

The Office for Senior Citizens has been reviewing the enduring power of attorney legislation and has begun developing an industry code of practice for home equity release schemes to provide strengthened legislative protection for older people.

Review of enduring power of attorney legislation

The Office for Senior Citizens is currently responsible for a review of the provisions in Part IX of the Protection of Personal and Property Rights (PPPR) Act 1988 relating to enduring powers of attorney (EPA). The purpose of the EPA provisions in the PPPR Act is to allow mentally-capable adults to make private arrangements for their personal care and welfare and their property management, in the event they lose personal capacity to look after these matters themselves.

The review of the PPPR Act follows a review of the legislation and a public consultation process undertaken by the Law Commission into the misuse of EPAs. The Law Commission identified insufficient protection for donors in the initial granting of a power of attorney, among other issues. Concern was also expressed by older people's interest groups that the current EPA provisions provide insufficient protection of older people's rights and interests.

The proposed amendments to the legislation follow the recommendations of the Law Commission in their April 2001 report, *Misuse of Enduring Powers of Attorney* (Report 71). The amendments aim to tighten requirements around the creation of an EPA, to clarify the process relating to activation of an EPA, and to tighten provisions relating to gifting in the context of an EPA. Further work will be done with key agencies on the issues of providing easier access to the Courts if abuse is alleged.

Proposed amendments will tighten and clarify the enduring power of attorney legislation

Elder abuse and neglect, including financial abuse, is a social issue

In its initial discussion paper on the misuse of EPAs, the Law Commission noted that many social workers and others concerned about the welfare of older people were convinced of the occurrence of EPA misuse. It also referred to an examination of 130 case studies of elder abuse, compiled by Age Concern Auckland over a two-year period. The examination showed that 40 elder abuse cases were attributable to misuse of an EPA.

On 1 July 2005, the Family and Community Services and the Older People's Policy teams in the Ministry of Social Development took over responsibility for contracting with service providers and for policy development relating to Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention Services. *Opportunity for All New Zealanders*, the summary statement of government strategies to improve social outcomes for all New Zealanders, identifies elder abuse and neglect as one of five critical social issues for priority interagency action over the next three to five years.

Home equity release schemes – code of practice

A home equity release scheme is a type of insurance scheme that releases the equity older people have in their home, in the form of an annuity, lump sum or periodic payment. This lump sum can be used to enhance an older person's lifestyle or to enable them to remain living in their home for longer than they otherwise could. Home equity release schemes have become more prolific in New Zealand in recent years.

Most older people own their own homes, the vast majority without a mortgage, and the money they have tied up in their homes is a major aspect of their net wealth. Older people are interested in making use of their equity in their homes in a way that enables them to supplement their fixed income, but they lack confidence in the schemes. They are wary of the financial consequences of taking what amounts to a reverse mortgage.

Budget 2005 provided funding of \$258,000 (GST exclusive) over the next two years for the Office for Senior Citizens to develop an industry code of practice for home equity release schemes. Such a code will provide older people considering using home equity schemes with a level of protection for their financial interests. It will also give them confidence when looking at a wide range of options for enhancing their lifestyle. Where these schemes exist overseas, it is common practice to have regulatory controls.

An industry code of practice for home equity release schemes will give protection and confidence to older people

An international literature review is being undertaken to examine how reverse mortgage schemes are regulated in other countries, and what industry controls are in place. The code of practice will be negotiated with the insurance industry, and is expected to cover issues such as disclosure of terms and conditions, risk management practices and recoveries. It will not seek to promote or endorse home equity release schemes.

part four

How the Office works

Part four : How the Office works

Our role

The Office for Senior Citizens was established in 1990 to act as a focal point for older people's issues within government. The ageing population means that the profile and significance of our portfolio has increased since our establishment. Government agencies, community organisations and the public are taking a greater interest in issues related to ageing. Organisations representing the interests of older people are also becoming more forthright in presenting their views.

The expectations of older people are that the Minister for Senior Citizens reflects their views and interests at government policy and decision-making forums, and represents and explains policy changes clearly and sensitively.

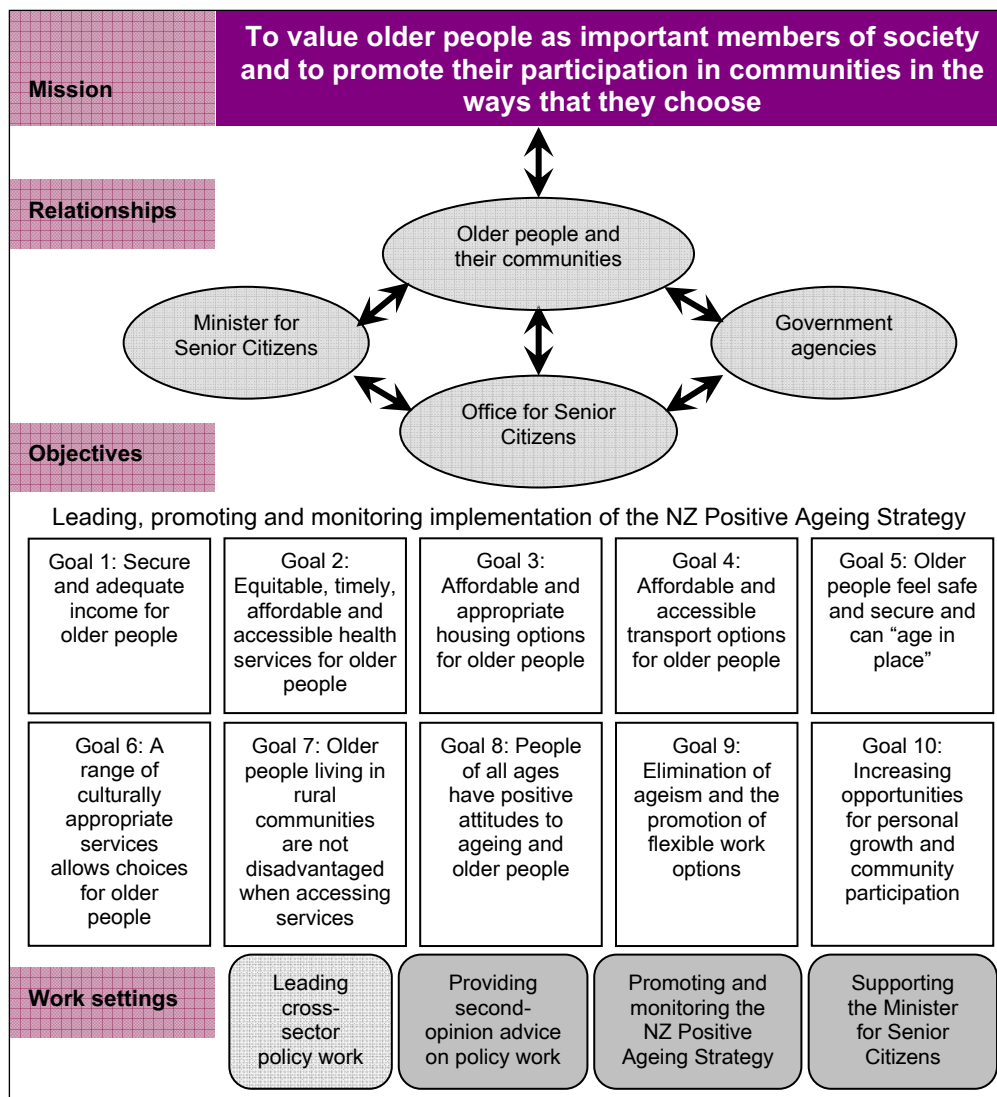
While the portfolio responsibility requires the Minister for Senior Citizens to represent the needs and expectations of older people, these must be balanced against the interests of other age groups in society, and those of future generations of older people. In considering such issues, the focus of the Senior Citizens portfolio is to enhance the wellbeing of today's older people and older people in the future.

In providing advice on these issues, the Office contributes to the Ministry of Social Development's goal of ensuring that "older people are valued as important members of society and have the right to dignity and security in their senior years, [and that] they have opportunities to use their skills, knowledge and experience to contribute to society".

The Office for Senior Citizens was established in 1990 as a focal point for older people's issues within government

We need to balance older people's needs and expectations against those of other age groups

Figure 4.1 Strategic focus of the Office for Senior Citizens



We have the following key roles:

- supporting the Minister for Senior Citizens
- promoting, monitoring and reporting on the progress of the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy within government and the wider community
- providing policy advice on older people's issues, including:
 - leading strategic policy development across government

- maintaining an overview of, and contributing an older people’s perspective to, policy development by other agencies
- developing policies to protect the rights of older people
- building healthy relationships with older people and their organisations.

The New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy underpins all of our work. To achieve the goals of the Strategy, we work across central, regional and local government, and with older people and their communities, supporting the development and achievement of action plans.

The New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy underpins all our work

Our responsibilities

Supporting you, the Minister for Senior Citizens

A primary function of the Office is to support and advise you. We will ensure that you are well informed about key issues and trends for older people, and will provide advice regarding opportunities for leadership.

As portfolio Minister, you are responsible for the priorities and work programme of the Office. There is a direct working relationship between the Office for Senior Citizens Director and you.

You have a direct working relationship with the Office’s Director

The effective management of ministerial correspondence is critical to maintaining credibility with the sector and the public. We prioritise our support, including drafting replies to ministerial correspondence, parliamentary questions, notes for speeches and requests made under the Official Information Act 1982 and any other briefing that you may require.

A weekly issues update and briefings on request ensure you are well informed about current issues for older people, in particular those that might arise in Cabinet discussions.

How we are funded – Vote: Senior Citizens

The Senior Citizens portfolio is funded through Vote: Senior Citizens. Currently, the Office for Senior Citizens operates on a budget of \$814,000. Overhead costs bring the total Vote to \$1,186,000 (GST exclusive).

Table 4.1 Vote: Senior Citizens budget

	Budget 30/06/2006 \$000s
Operating budget	714
Volunteer Community Co-ordinator programme ²⁴	100
Total operating budget	814
Overheads²⁵	372
BUDGET TOTAL (GST exclusive)	1,186

An annual performance agreement is signed between the Minister for Senior Citizens and the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Social Development on behalf of the Office. The agreement outlines the parameters of the work for the Office for Senior Citizens, and sets performance measures for policy advice and ministerial services. Every six months we provide a draft work programme for your consideration, and we provide a report on the work programme at the end of each six-month period.

Office structure

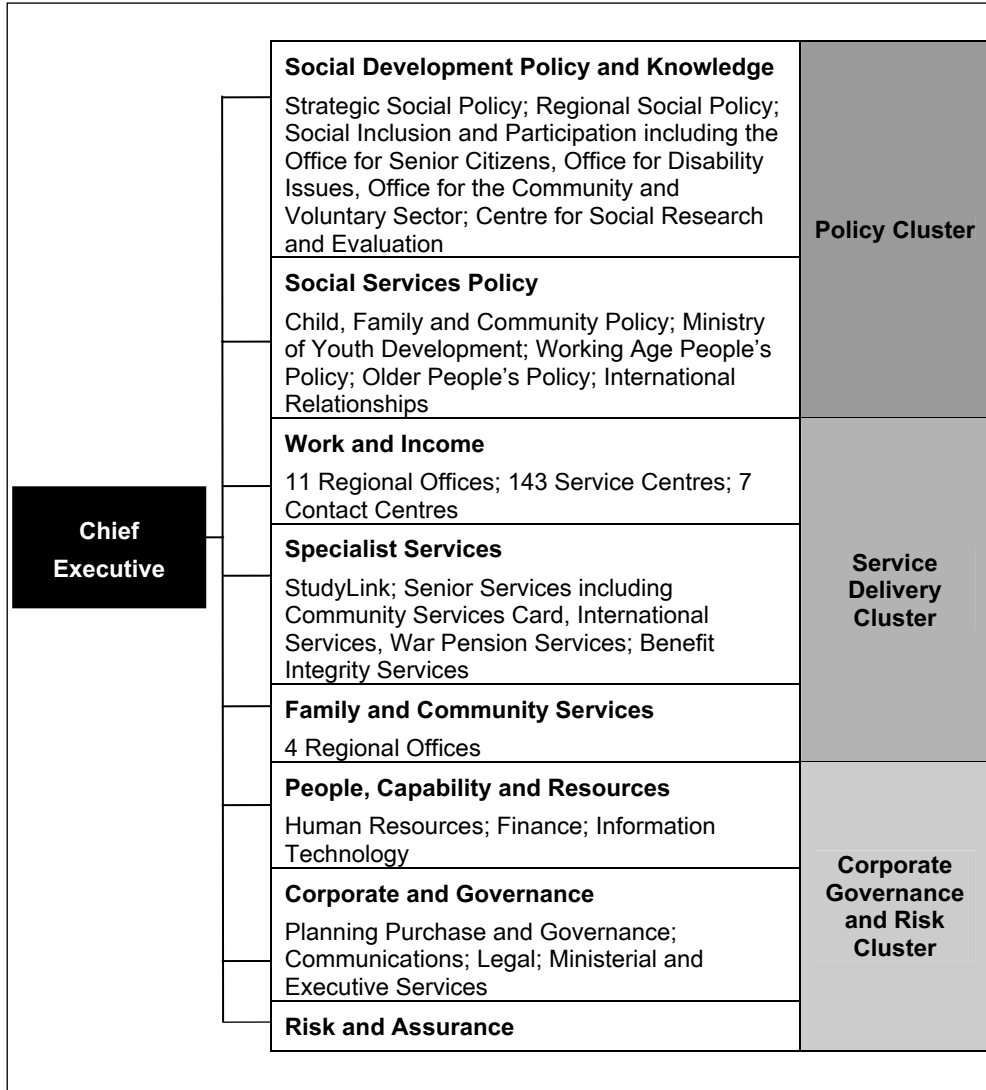
The Office has a Director, two senior analysts (one part-time), two analysts, a Volunteer Community Co-ordinator programme manager and an executive assistant.

Relationship to the Ministry of Social Development

The Office is located within the Social Development Policy and Knowledge Group of the Ministry of Social Development, along with several other units with a whole-of-government perspective. These are Strategic Social Policy, Regional Social Policy, the Centre for Social Research and Evaluation and the Office for Disability Issues and the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector.

We are funded from Vote Senior Citizens, and sit within the Ministry of Social Development

Figure 4.2 Where the Office fits within the Ministry of Social Development



Location within the Ministry of Social Development enables us to access the corporate support provided by the Ministry, including expertise in financial and human resource management, evaluation and research, and communication. Our administration and overhead costs are minimised through the economies of scale available to us as part of the larger Ministry.

Our inclusion within Social Development Policy and Knowledge enables us to contribute to the Ministry's strategic policy development.

Our location gives us good infrastructure support, and enables us to contribute to strategic policy

While our role has remained unchanged since 1990, over the past year there has been a major development in the way we work. This has occurred through the establishment of an Older Peoples' Policy Group within the Ministry's Social Services Policy Group.

The close working relationship between the Office and the Older Peoples' Policy Group has enabled officials in each group to work together on a daily basis on policy issues and policy development. The pooling of resources has resulted in a better understanding of older people's issues within the Ministry, and a more focused response to both the Minister for Senior Citizens and the Minister for Social Development and Employment.

A networking group of officials from the policy, research and delivery arms of the Ministry meets regularly to network and discuss policy and delivery issues and to ensure clear communication across different reporting lines.

Advisory Council for Senior Citizens

The Advisory Council was established in 1992. Members are appointed by the Minister to provide independent advice on issues concerning the wellbeing of older people. Members are appointed as individuals, because of their knowledge of older people's issues and their community involvement, and not as representatives of particular interest groups. The Minister seeks Cabinet approval for appointments to the Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council has four members, one of whom is appointed as Chairperson. The term for each member is usually not less than two years. The Council may, from time to time, co-opt up to two people to provide expert advice on particular issues. The Advisory Council meets six times each calendar year. The Minister generally attends part of the meetings to discuss issues with members.

The current members of the Advisory Council for Senior Citizens are:

- Marlene Mulholland (Chairperson), Wellington
- Edith Ieremia, Christchurch
- Jim Ross, Kapiti
- Eru Manuera, Timaru.

The Advisory Council develops an annual work programme for your consideration. Throughout the year, it undertakes other work at your request, or at the instigation of Advisory Council members. The Advisory Council receives policy advice and secretariat services from the Office for Senior Citizens.

The terms of the four Advisory Council members expire on 30 June 2006.

Keeping in touch with older people and their issues

The Office for Senior Citizens has a very effective programme to connect with older people in their communities. Regular consultation with older people's groups is essential to the development of good advice. It enables us to keep in touch with the issues affecting the older population and ensures that our advice to you accurately reflects the views of older people. Consultation also raises public awareness of the Minister for Senior Citizens' role, and increases knowledge about the portfolio.

We regularly consult with older people's groups in our communities using our network of 40 Volunteer Community Co-ordinators

Volunteer Community Co-ordinators

I won't take the credit for the work we do for our community. I just get people together and help get them pointed in the right direction.

(Ruby Aberhard, Volunteer Community Co-ordinator with the Office for Senior Citizens)

Our network of 40 Volunteer Community Co-ordinators (VCCs) is a key link between the community, the Office and the Minister.

VCCs maintain an avenue of communication between us and local older people's interest groups. They bring together people from different cultures and backgrounds, including older Māori, representatives from rural and urban areas, community organisations, local and central government and individual older people to participate in projects that contribute to policy development.

We developed the VCC programme in 1999, the International Year of Older Persons, to raise awareness about the year and to encourage people throughout New Zealand to take part in activities and celebrations. In setting

up the programme, the first point of contact was with key older people's organisations and government agencies, including Te Puni Kōkiri and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs. We then established a network of 29 VCCs around the country, a network that has since grown to 40.

The geographical spread of the VCCs means they are a great source of community-specific information. As part of the portfolio responsibilities, the Minister regularly receives requests to meet with a range of organisations representing the interests of older people. The Minister also receives invitations to address meetings and conferences that cover the matters specifically relevant to the portfolio. The grass-roots knowledge of the VCCs helps keep you informed of community developments affecting older people and identifies points of relevance to older people in geographic areas or interest groups.

In 2004, the VCCs found respondents for the *Coping Without a Car* research interviews. In 2005, they participated in design workshops for the pamphlet *How will you get around when you stop driving?*, based on the findings in the *Coping Without a Car* report.

The VCCs are also collecting information for the proposed development of an internet portal for Senior Citizens. Each year, the VCCs distribute the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy annual reports and action plans to local service agencies and older people's interest groups in their communities.

The VCC programme provides the Minister for Senior Citizens with access to regional, national and cultural perspectives on a wide range of issues.

Ambassadors for Positive Ageing

Through our work with communities, we have developed contacts with a wide range of older people from different communities. Some have worked with us over a long period of time and, while they are not actively involved in the VCC programme, they have maintained a keen interest in the portfolio and have close ties with the Office. From time to time, we invite one of these older people to be an Ambassador for Positive Ageing.

**Ambassadors
for Positive
Ageing have
made a special
contribution to
our work**

The term Ambassador for Positive Ageing is given in recognition of the work an individual has done to promote positive ageing, and honours their wisdom and standing in the community. Ambassadors have demonstrated exemplary personal qualities and leadership in positive ageing.

Working together

This briefing provides you with an overview of the Senior Citizens portfolio and its issues and challenges. It also outlines our role and the opportunities to make a difference for older people in the period ahead. We are able to provide further briefings, upon request, as a basis for decisions you may wish to take on the issues and actions we have raised.

We look forward to working with you.

Sources and endnotes

¹ Statistics New Zealand (2005) *National Population Estimates* (March 2005 quarter) <http://www2.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/pasfull/pasfull.nsf/web/Hot+Off+The+Press+National+Population+Estimates+March+2005+quarter?open> (downloaded 10 May 2005)

² Ministry of Social Policy (2001) *The Living Standards of Older New Zealanders – A Summary* Ministry of Social Policy, Wellington, p 5

³ The married rate of NZS is currently just minimally over 65% of the average wage. The average ordinary time weekly wage measure comes from the Statistics New Zealand Quarterly Employment Survey (QES). The QES is designed to measure quarterly estimates of change and levels of average hourly and average weekly (pre-tax) wages, average weekly paid hours, and the number of filled jobs. QES statistics are derived quarterly from approximately 19,000 surveyed business locations in a range of industries and locations throughout New Zealand. Information relates to the pay week ending on, or immediately before, the 20th of the middle month of the quarter (i.e. February, May, August and November). Average ordinary time earnings include all shift, penal and other allowances, bonuses, paid leave, and commissions earned in the survey pay week

⁴ Ministry of Social Development (2005) *The Social Report 2005* Ministry of Social Development, Wellington

⁵ Ministry of Social Policy (2001) *The Living Standards of Older New Zealanders – A Summary* Ministry of Social Policy, Wellington, p 5

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ Susan Gee (2001) *Experience of a lifetime: Older New Zealanders as volunteers* Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington

⁸ Statistics New Zealand (2002) *Census 2001 Snapshot 9: Older People Statistics* New Zealand, Wellington

⁹ Gee (2001)

¹⁰ www.osc.govt.nz/positive-ageing-strategy.html

¹¹ Judith Davey (forthcoming) *Progress towards the goals of the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy* Office for Senior Citizens, Wellington

¹² *ibid*

¹³ Jean-Claude Paye (1996) "Strategies for a Learning Society" in *OECD Observer* No 199, April/May 1996

¹⁴ Social Policy Agency (1999) *Social Environment Scan June 1999* Social Policy Agency, Wellington

¹⁵ Judy McGregor and Lance Gray (2001) *Mature job-seekers in New Zealand* Massey University, Palmerston North

¹⁶ Judy McGregor (2001) *Employment of the Older Worker: Helping Build a Better Workplace* Massey University, Palmerston North

¹⁷ www.sorted.org.nz

¹⁸ *ibid*, p 174

¹⁹ *ibid*

²⁰ Centre for Housing Research, Aotearoa New Zealand (2004) *Accommodation Options for Older People in Aotearoa/New Zealand* CHRANZ, Wellington, p 14

²¹ *ibid*, p 15

²² Housing New Zealand Corporation (2005) *Building the Future: The New Zealand Housing Strategy* HNZA, Wellington, p 7

²³ Office for Senior Citizens (2004) *Coping Without a Car Summary Report* Office for Senior Citizens, Wellington, p 10

²⁴ Funding for the Volunteer Community Co-ordinators programme falls out of the International Year of Older Persons, Budget commitments. The VCC funding is not part of the operating or personnel budget of the Office for Senior Citizens

²⁵ Overhead costs include occupancy, depreciation, capital charges and support services costs