

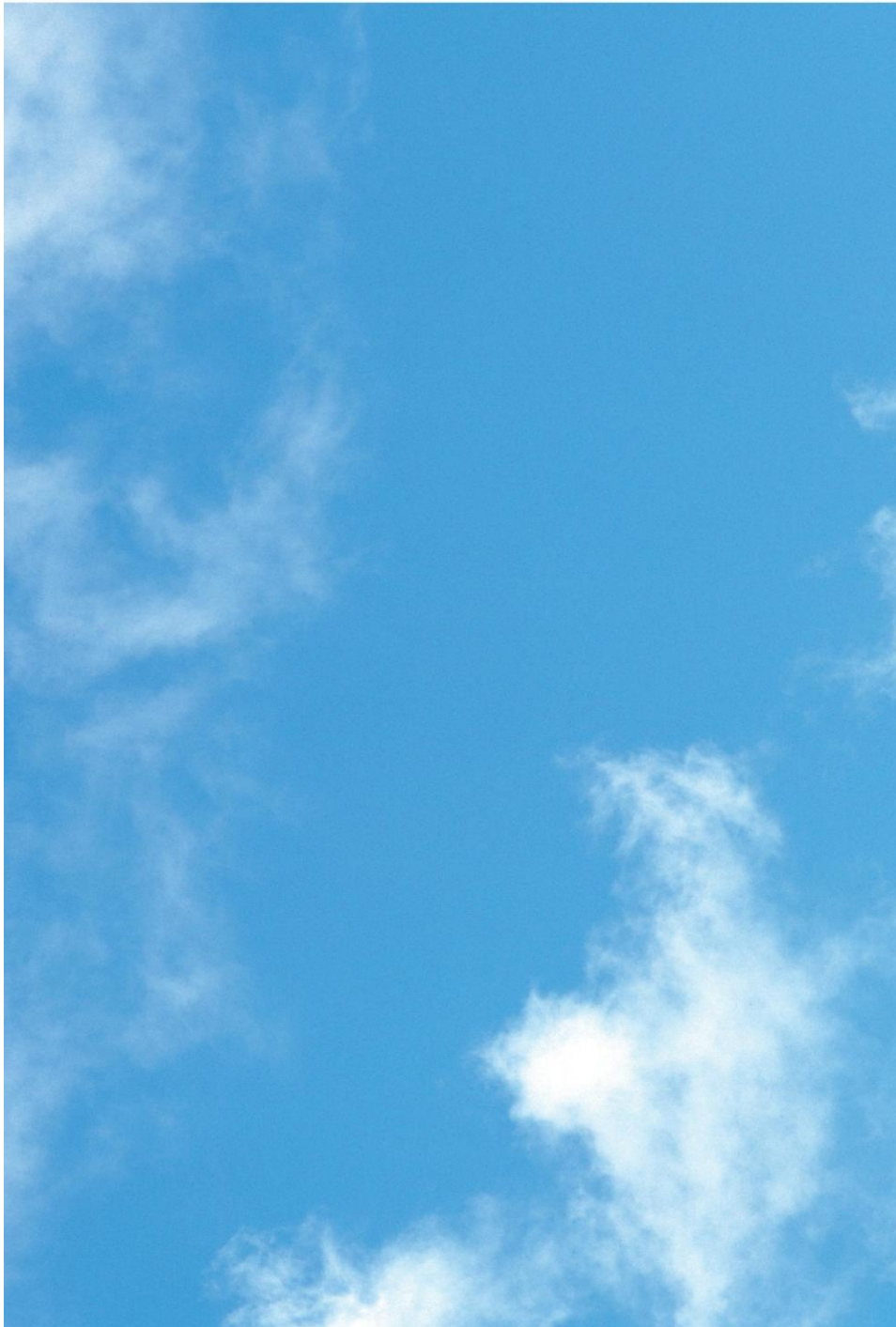


**THE UNIVERSITY
OF AUCKLAND**

**FACULTY OF MEDICAL
AND HEALTH SCIENCES**

Resilient Ageing in Place

Project Recommendations & Report



Resilient Ageing in Place

Social and Community Health, School of Population Health

2011 | Project Recommendations and Report | Dr Janine Wiles

Introduction

This report arises from an HRC-funded project on Resilient Ageing in Place, which explored the question of 'What is the ideal place in which to grow older?' In the project, more than 120 older people from two communities (Glen Innes in Auckland, and Tokoroa in the South Waikato) participated in workshops, focus groups, and interviews to discuss what elements of their homes, neighbourhoods, and communities enable them to 'age well'. We have presented the recommendations as first, a set of overarching principles, followed by more detailed action points. Then specific recommendations from the groups who participated in the project are outlined.

Finally, the background of the project and participants' quotes are presented, to give a sense of the rich data from which the principles and recommendations were drawn.

Principles for Resilient Ageing in Place

These six overarching principles need to frame policy, research and service provision in relation to ageing and place.

1. Emphasise the need to consider ageing in place at **different scales** and in relation to **different sectors** beyond just the level of housing, including neighbourhoods, communities, infrastructure, fiscal policies, and cultural needs
2. Address the issue of **inequalities and inequities** in 'ageing in place' including housing, health, care and support services, finances, transport, cultural amenities, remembering that older people are not an homogeneous group
3. Ensure that policies and strategies prioritise the need for older people to have **choices** for ageing in place. Barriers to there being a range of options need to be addressed, recognising that ageing in place includes private and residential care as well as staying in one's home or community
4. Commit to the need for **partnership** with diverse older people in developing and implementing policies, practices, and research that affect both them and the wider community, recognising the skills and advocacy roles that older people possess
5. Take into account **Māori self-determination** in relation to whenua, tangata whenua, te reo Māori ngā tikanga, marae, urupā, wānanga, whakapapa
6. Incorporate **best-practice national and international guidelines**, including principles endorsed by the United Nations, World Health Organisation, New Zealand's Positive Ageing Strategy and local government commitments in relation to older people.

The six key principles apply to all the following recommendations. Many participants appreciated the way they can age in place but also expressed frustration about not being heard by policy makers and service providers; we hope these specific recommendations will provide points for action.

Information

1. Ensure that all older people have regular and ongoing access to up-to-date information about:
 - Housing options, including housing assistance and funding for home modifications
 - Support entitlements, including pensions, income support, disability support, home care services, and transport subsidies
 - How to deal with any form of elder abuse
 - Legal and financial planning issues e.g., advance directives, power of attorney, reverse equity
2. Facilitate access to community and social services and information in different languages, and through ongoing knowledge-sharing meetings, not just written material

Housing

3. Create and maintain a diverse, high-quality housing stock that provides older people with a range of choices including:
 - Affordable retirement villages, including rental/low-income options
 - Community-based rental accommodation, including requiring public/private developers to provide a percentage of rental/affordable housing for older people in new developments
 - Co-operative housing, multi-units with shared rates/maintenance, support services (such as care worker, meals, cleaning), shared social spaces
 - Housing based around marae
 - Flattening with other older people, e.g. the Abbeyfield model, Intergenerational Housing
 - Rest homes and private hospitals that are responsive to cultural difference and well-resourced, and use social models
4. Provide adequate financial support to enable low-income older homeowners to undertake essential household maintenance and modifications
5. Establish an independent housing advisory and advocacy service to provide older people with the support and technical advice to enable them to undertake essential household maintenance and modifications
6. Ensure that housing, including new build, housing renovations, and public rental housing, incorporates principles of universal design and accessibility, and that architects and planners are trained to be aware of the needs of older people
7. Promote personal and property security through well-designed homes, lighting, ramps and railings, and neighbourhood accessibility
8. Ensure public rental housing is safe and well maintained in a timely manner, and provides opportunities for older people to have input into operational and strategic decisions that affect them

Neighbourhood design

9. Provide high-quality built environments that support continuing mobility and security, and incorporate principles of age-friendly design, including high-quality footpaths, road crossings, adequate disability parking, well-located and clean public toilets, seating in parks and on walking routes, and infrastructure for mobility scooters
10. Provide dedicated, centrally-located social venues for older people where they can rest, take medication, socialise, and exercise

Community participation

11. Take into account opportunities for safe and enjoyable physical activity, social interaction, and engagement with education, arts, and culturally specific programmes for older people
12. Ensure local community centres and amenities are accessible, affordable, and available for older people, including transport options to facilitate flexible attendance
13. Challenge cultural stereotypes of 'the elderly' as a 'burden' by providing regular public celebrations and acknowledgements of the contribution that older people, and their paid and unpaid work, make to the local community and economy
14. Take into account the important role played by older Māori in community life and self-determination and ensure Māori authority as tangata whenua is taken into account
15. Celebrate and support older people and cultural diversity
16. Take into account older people's crucial role in protecting and caring for families, cultures and places, support opportunities for intergenerational links (e.g., school visits, put child-care centres near older peoples' facilities).

Transport and Mobility

17. Provide older people, including those living outside larger centres, with affordable, accessible public transport, including creative options beyond buses/trains, and with affordable accessible parking (e.g., at hospitals, in town centres)
18. Support public transport use among older people, including bus shelters, large-print timetables, and training for drivers to ensure they give older people sufficient time to board and sit down safely
19. Work with older people to promote and enable active modes of transport, including walking and scooters

Health and Care

20. Ensure that older people have access to expanded levels of high-quality care and health services to enable them to maintain their wellbeing and independence. This must include prevention, treatment, maintenance and rehabilitation services
21. Consult with and provide adequate and appropriate information, training and financial support to family and whānau carers, in particular, with Māori and Pacific people
22. Develop platforms for informed public discussion and debate on the structure and level of care and financial support

Income support

23. Ensure that superannuation, pensions, and benefits are adequate and keep pace with increases in inflation and living costs, including heating and food costs
24. Provide independent advocacy services to ensure that all older people, including English as a second language speakers, gain their correct entitlements to income support
25. Ensure processes for accessing superannuation and old age-related entitlements are respectful and transparent to older people

Future research

26. Undertake a survey of New Zealand councils and urban planners to establish the extent to which they are incorporating the needs and concerns of older people into statutory and non-statutory planning processes
27. Investigate the feasibility of New Zealand cities joining the World Health Organisation Age-Friendly Cities programme
28. Complete a GIS-based analysis of neighbourhood walkability and service accessibility based on the needs and priorities of older people living in New Zealand towns and cities

B: Specific recommendations

The following are specific recommendations and suggestions made by participants in the project. In some cases, the suggested resource does exist in some form, but is possibly not accessible, not known about, or inadequate for the needs of older people in its current form.

1. Glen Innes/Ukutoia

Older people in Glen Innes/Ukutoia made the following specific recommendations.

Activities for older people

- It would be great to have more activities for older people (free or very inexpensive – i.e. gold coin donation), including more activities for kaumātua
- People working with older people need training in hospitality – knowing how to make older people feel welcome and wanted.

Housing New Zealand

- Older people need more information about HNZ processes for dealing with repairs and maintenance.
- The timeliness of the HNZ maintenance service needs to be addressed.
- There is a need for more HNZ housing that suits the needs of older people – e.g. no stairs, and small, easy care sections.
- HNZ needs to be more proactive about disruptive tenants and drug dealing in HNZ complexes
- Residents' committees should have more say about who goes into HNZ houses.
- Housing New Zealand should investigate creating areas of housing specifically for older people, so that they can socialise and help each other out more easily.

Other housing options

- Options to try out retirement villages – rent before you buy.
- Good housing around Ruapotaka Marae.

Council

- Free access to swimming pools for older people.
- Council returns the land around Ruapotaka Marae.
- Community centre hire needs to be more affordable for older people.

Work and Income NZ (WINZ)

- Older people need more information about entitlements to support from WINZ.
- Older Cook Islanders need an advocate at WINZ who can speak their language.

Other services

- The Citizens Advice Bureau should have some volunteers who can speak Chinese.
- Older Chinese people need to be able to access a Chinese-speaking doctor in their local area.
- It would be great to have regular older people's forums in Glen Innes attended by government and community agencies where older people can ask questions and discuss any difficulties that they might be having.

Care and support

- Older people need more information about entitlements to home care services.
- Older people could work together to set up a scheme to share domestic support staff so that they can stay in their homes longer.
- Family / whānau giving up paid work to care for elderly relatives need an accessible and financially adequate carer's payment.
- There needs to be more discussion about how to deal with elder abuse in the community – including issues such as family accessing older people's benefits by using their ATM cards, and attacks at ATM machines.

Mobility

- Parking at the hospital needs to be more affordable for superannuitants.
- There is a need for more disability parking around Glen Innes. It would be great to have at least 10 parks in the community centre car park, including some near marae.

2. Tokoroa

Older people in Tokoroa recommended the following.

WINZ

- More respect from WINZ, and WINZ are obliged to tell you what you're entitled to, you don't have to ask

Information

- Education programme for older people so that they know what they are entitled to - knowledge sharing Hui with WINZ, health services, Raukawa
- A 'social register' that you could 'ring up and get a solution for the problem that you're facing right now' – tap into each other's knowledge.

Health/social services

- More specialists visiting hospital, so don't have to go to Hamilton.
- Specialist in old age care at hospital
- A hospice
- Better home care – More hours and higher quality
- Whānau should be paid to provide home care, and should receive training

- A service that you could call that's going to reinforce that you're doing well. 'Just a phone call to say, hey, you're living by yourself, and you're coping well'

Activities for older people

- More activities for older people
- Senior Net or computer group for older people
- A building downtown like a gym, with social space where older people can gather and do activities
- More concrete walkways so that people can exercise in places where there is sure footing, especially around the lake

House maintenance

- Subsidised maintenance service for older people – How to organise?
- Priority list for local tradespeople

Council

- Council that is aware of the needs of the older population

Housing options

- Affordable retirement units for older people – Like in Putaruru (Rangiuru). To rent and to buy
- A rest-home for Samoan and other Pacific older people should be established

Mobility

- A bus service
- Parking spaces for scooters, especially outside supermarket. Supermarket aisles wide enough for scooters.
- Enforce bylaw about cars parking on pavements – dangerous for walkers and people on scooters
- All mobility scooters should have horns
- More crossings for older people and people on scooters

Community amenities

- More shops – shoes and clothes
- Samoan hall – needs better heating.

3. Older Māori people

Older Māori people recommended the following.

Glen Innes/Ukutoia

- Good housing around Ruapotaka Marae
- Council returns the land around the Marae
- More activities for older Māori people

Tokoroa

- Knowledge sharing Hui – WINZ, health services, Raukawa
- Whānau paid for caring for parents/relatives

4. Older Samoan people

Older Samoan people made the following recommendations.

- A rest home for Samoan and Pacific elderly people be established.

- Samoan and Pacific people are employed to provide care and treatment, and cultural advice in rest homes.
- Training is provided for mature children providing care for their elderly parents.
- Family members designated by the family with the care of their elderly are paid.
- Approach the local council to urgently provide safe crossing on the main road.
- Subsidise scooters and wheelchairs for the elderly
- Make available scooters and wheelchairs in supermarkets
- Provision within immigration policy to allow children living in Samoa to come to NZ to care for elderly parents
- School activity for senior students include programmed visits to rest homes (need for young people to connect with elderly in their area)
- Similar programme for unemployed young people

5. Older Cook Island people

Glen Innes/Ukutoia

- Older people need more information about Housing New Zealand (HNZ) processes for dealing with repairs and maintenance, as well as more information about entitlements to support from WINZ and home care services.
- The timeliness of the HNZ maintenance service needs to be addressed.
- There is a need for more HNZ accommodation that suits the needs of older people.
- Older Cook Islanders need an advocate at WINZ who can speak their language.

Tokoroa

- Older people living on low incomes need financial assistance with the costs of electricity, food, home maintenance and repairs, and burial plots.
- Older Cook Islanders would like opportunities to have more input into Council decisions
- WINZ should provide a mobile service, and a separate queue for older people at WINZ offices.

6. Older Chinese people

- Housing New Zealand create areas of housing specifically for older people, so that they can socialise and help each other out more easily.
- HNZ housing for older people has smaller easy-care sections.
- Older Chinese people work together to set up a scheme to share domestic support staff so that they can stay in their homes longer.
- There should be regular older people's forums in Glen Innes attended by government and community agencies where older Chinese people can ask questions and discuss any difficulties that they might be having.
- The Citizens Advice Bureau should have some volunteers who can speak Chinese.
- That older Chinese people can access a Chinese-speaking doctor in their local area.

Background: The Research Process

The Resilient Ageing in Place project asked diverse groups of older New Zealanders 'What is the ideal place to grow older?' The reason we asked this question is because in recent times there has been a lot of debate about the living conditions of older New Zealanders. The New Zealand population is 'ageing', so as we grow older, *where* and *how* do we want to live? When asked these questions, most older people say that they would like to stay in their communities rather than go into institutional care. This ideal, *community living*, is referred to by the government and policy-makers as 'ageing in place'. So if community living is the ideal, then what makes communities liveable for older New Zealanders?

We asked older people in our two study sites, Glen Innes/Ukutoia¹, Auckland, and Tokoroa what they thought about these questions. This report provides a summary of the key findings from the focus groups and interviews held in these two sites. The study participants were recruited through local community groups and community networks. As well as interviews and mixed focus groups we also held four focus groups with older Māori people, a group with older Samoan people, four focus groups with older Cook Islanders, and one focus group with older Chinese migrants. Many of the focus groups were facilitated by older people from the community. This report is one of seven reports for participants. There are also separate reports for Glen Innes/Ukutoia, Tokoroa, Māori older people, Samoan older people, Cook Island older people, and Chinese older people.

Why did we use the term 'Resilient' Ageing in Place?

We used the term 'resilient' ageing in place because we wanted to recognise the strengths of older people. As the famous quote goes "old age ain't no place for sissies"², and there are certainly a lot of hard things about getting older, particularly where health is concerned. However, older people are also the "strongest of the strong."³ After a lifetime of learning how to deal with the good and the bad, older people are amongst the most 'resilient' members of our community. Research shows that while older people often experience more significant hardship than younger people, they also have a greater range of resilience resources. For instance they have more accumulated knowledge and expertise; better skills in life planning, life management, and emotion management; they have a greater sense of self-worth and self-acceptance; they are more flexible and open to change; and they have a wider range of coping skills⁴. So we believe that we need communities, and community living policies that *value, protect, and enhance* this resilience.

¹ Ukutoia is the traditional Māori name for the Glen Innes area. This was the name for the area used by participants in the Māori focus group held at Ruapotaka Marae. Ukutoia means to pull the waka up on to the clay.

² Quote attributed to Henry Louis Mencken

³ Hamarat et al, 2002, pg. 365

⁴ Staudinger et al, 1993

What makes a community liveable for older people?

People talked about four important aspects of community living:

My home	My neighbourhood
My community	My life

My home

Some of the people in the study were renting while others owned their own home. People in Glen Innes/Ukutoia were more likely to be renting, while the people in Tokoroa were more likely to be homeowners. Most people said that they were happy with their housing situation. Many people, including those who were renting, had been living in their homes a long time (sometimes as long as fifty years), and they liked the fact that their home was familiar to them, and that they had been involved in 'improving' it:

P1: For me, I like looking at my trees. I planted them myself.
(*laughs*)

P2: You're quite happy, ay? You're quite happy just looking outside - just like me. (Glen Innes/Ukutoia – Cook Island focus group)

Although people were generally happy with their homes, many people were also starting to struggle with some aspects of household maintenance. The size of their house and section was a concern for some people, who wished that there was some way you could 'magically' shrink your house, so it is easier to maintain:

Eunice: Yes if only you could sort of wriggle your nose and your house would shrink, it would be lovely, wouldn't it?

Rose: Yes, yes, exactly, Eunice

Nancy: Unfortunately, those extra bedrooms, come and take them away. I don't need them. You can have them!

Eunice: Yes just leave me with this little home

Rose: Yes, it would save you having to even pack up! (Tokoroa - Focus group)

Not everyone agreed, however, that having a smaller house would be better. People with large whānau in particular, were keen to make sure that they had plenty of space available if their children or grandchildren want or need to come and stay. Both renters as well as homeowners said that household maintenance was a big issue for them. The cost of maintenance is a concern for those who own their homes. Several people asked if funding could be made available to help older people complete household repairs:

If we could get a help because my roof is starting to leak. You know, this is only a thought. For a way to help us because our pension money really is not enough. Or maybe we could look at some coconut leaves for roofing (*laughs*). (Tokoroa - Cook Island men's focus group)

Household maintenance was reported to be particularly difficult for those who are living on their own:

One thing I struggle with is as a woman living on my own is maintaining my home. Things like painting, replacing rotten timber etc., these are all very difficult to do and very expensive. I hear WINZ will help, but imagine it is repayable (*chorus of 'yes' from other people in the room*). So that is something that is quite hard (Tokoroa - Māori focus group)

For those who are renting, and especially those living in Housing New Zealand (HNZ) houses in Glen Innes/Ukutoia, maintenance is also an issue for other reasons. A number of people said that they have difficulty getting HNZ to undertake household repairs in a timely fashion:

In times like this, rainy, windy, we have come across this sad situation. One of the kids opened one of the windows and the wind blew open the window and smashed it! I reported it. They said: 'Yes! We will come'. A week went by. The wet was still coming in. They kept saying 'Yes' they will come. I fixed it in the end. When they finally came, they asked who fixed it. I said, I did. They think we were going to sit like this, with the rain pouring in? That was that! They went back. (Glen Innes/Ukutoia – Cook Island focus group)

People had mixed views about future housing options. Most people said that they would like to stay living in the community as long as possible, and that they would like to avoid living in a resthome if at all possible. The Māori, Samoan and Cook Island groups were most anxious about going into resthome care, due to concerns about the lack of availability of culturally appropriate care.

People were more positive about retirement villages; however most people in both communities felt that this probably wasn't a realistic option for them. In Tokoroa, many people said that they didn't like the look of what was currently on offer, and they would prefer retirement villages like those in Putaruru (Rangiuru). In Glen Innes/Ukutoia, currently available retirement housing was seen as financially out of reach for most people. People talked about the need for new models of retirement housing in Auckland, including the option to rent before you buy in retirement villages, and more Housing New Zealand complexes for older people that enable older people to socialise, share resources and support each other.

[W]hat happens in Glen Innes now, people are much dispersed, we live in the government houses - well, most of us do; only a few have got their own. So ... is it possible that these people could be relatively concentrated in a certain place, so ... we can have activities together. Even if somebody is sick, we can take care of each other. It's also easier for public health care providers if they are willing to make home visits. Now we are dispersed everywhere, it's very difficult to look after us even if they want to. (Glen Innes/Ukutoia – Chinese focus group)

However, not everyone liked the idea of living with other older people. One man said that he hated the idea of a retirement village, because it would be filled with 'old people', and this would mean that you were 'taken out of the community' (Glen

Innes/Ukutoia Interview – Charlie). Some people said that they preferred a model of mixed housing where young and old live together. During the discussion at Ruapotaka marae, one person said that they thought this was a better model for Māori:

Open to all! Open to Ngā Hau e whā [[The four winds]]. Have our single parents, or single tamariki [[children]] or rangatahi [[older children]] here, it is unique to mix. (Glen Innes/Ukutoia - Māori focus group)

Although people had different views about what sort of housing arrangements would be acceptable to them, almost everyone agreed that it is important that older people have *choices* about where and how they want to live:

Joy: I believe that for me to age in place, and be resilient, I need to stay in this house. And so, as I age, I would expect things to be put in that would enable me to do that. So that you age where you want to be. Now some people might want to go to a rest home. Some people might want to go to a retirement village. Some people might want to shift out of their home and their town and go to the beach. Or something like that. But it's where, I think the ageing in place, to me, the important bit is where I want to be (Tokoroa - Interview)

My neighbourhood

Because Tokoroa and Glen Innes/Ukutoia are both relatively young settlements, many of the people talked about how they had been there from the beginning, and how they had taken an active role in 'building' their neighbourhoods. Several people in Glen Innes/Ukutoia shared their stories of moving into the newly developed state housing area forty or fifty years back:

Margaret: The day I moved in I got my car bogged. ... I came down Line Road ... and I had a child, and a cat, a Morris 8 ... and I got bogged, right up to my axels.... I started digging myself out ... and a man from the houses up the back there, like Evandale, he came down. He said, 'It looks like you're in trouble, lady'. I said, 'Well, yes, I am', so he dug me out and got me mobile. ... So that was my introduction to Glen Innes. Yes, it's totally different [now] ... where the kindergarten is now, there was a cow bale partly on that section and partly into this next section next door to us. ...No street names. Eight months before we had a street name in the place, and no street lights or anything. No letterboxes, no clotheslines or anything. ... You were really out in the sticks. (Glen Innes/Ukutoia - Interview)

Their long history in the area means that they know their neighbourhood well:

Margaret: [T]he [Council] guy said 'Oh we can't do anything with the Pohutukawa Tree, because it's over 100 years old.' I said, 'Excuse me I saw the lady plant that'. 'So' I said 'it's not a hundred years old!'" (Glen Innes/Ukutoia – Interview)

People in Tokoroa also talked about their experience of moving to the new mill town, and how everyone 'pitched in' to help build the new township:

Bernie: As well as your home, the neighbourhood or our community is our best asset in Tokoroa. I think for any of us that have lived here for a long time, in the old days, if I can put it that way, fifty odd years, um, when Tokoroa was being born, um, the local residents ...all those people ... clubbed together and they worked together as a unit to um, build the playgrounds, the play equipment, ... helped to build the churches and

Merle: Swimming pools.

Bernie: Everything, yes, everything that the community needed, people mucked in and they helped everybody. ... Everybody knew everybody and they participated in making the community ... just a wonderful place to be. (Tokoroa - Focus group)

This long history in the area means that people in both places feel a strong sense of pride and attachment to their neighbourhoods. Although people also talked about how much their neighbourhoods had changed over time, and many people had mixed experiences with their current neighbours. On the whole most people were positive about their neighbours:

Joan: [T]he boys next door come over, they're very good to me. They bring me fish, they love fishing these two boys. So they fillet it and bring me a nice fillet, sometimes scallops. And they grow vegetables and I get tomatoes and things like that. But then I've got fruit trees on my place, so I give them grapes and feijoas and stuff like that, oranges and stuff. So it's nice. (Glen Innes/Ukutoia - Interview)

Several people talked about the practical support they receive from their neighbours:

Jane: My community is my fanau, my family. Because I can't drive - I only can drive my husband up the wall (*group laughs*), but my neighbours offered to drive me anywhere when Steven is not there. (Tokoroa - Samoan focus group)

Other people who had also had positive experiences with neighbours talked about their neighbourhood as their extended 'home':

Rose: And it's part of your home isn't it? You know it's like an extension of your own

Joyce: - it is, it's like your own little community. (Tokoroa - Focus group)

Not everyone had good experiences with neighbours, however. Where people were unhappy with their neighbours, it was usually related to noise, criminal activity, or lack of respect for their property boundaries. Housing New Zealand tenants were the most likely to have negative experiences with their neighbours. Drug dealing in HNZ complexes was a particular concern for some:

Vic: I think, where the safety issue comes in, unfortunately, there is quite a few of these complexes, Housing New Zealand, they are selling marijuana. And we bring ... this to the police attention, and they go and search the premises, and they can't find any, so they leave it at that, but we know for a fact that people go and buy it on a regular basis. And this is where, when you talk about safety,

I think intimidation; I think that is a word, because a lot of people feel intimidated by the people that is coming to buy drugs. I mean, sometimes we have had break ins what never occurred until this drug dealer arrived. (Glen Innes - Interview)

Most people agreed that it was important to have easy access to good community facilities in your neighbourhood. In Tokoroa people were generally positive about the overall quality of their neighbourhood facilities:

Laurie: You know the services are good. The rubbish picked up every week. We've got a recycle program here that every fortnight they come along and take all the recycling stuff.

Jane: Which I think is a real blessing.

Interviewer: Roads and footpaths are in good repair. Majority of the people keep their places tidy.

Jane: Oh, well around here they, yes.

Laurie: The street trees make it attractive in the summer, well in the winter time too but more so in the summer time with the street trees, it's quite an attractive sort of place to live. (Tokoroa - Interview)

People in Glen Innes/Ukutoia were also positive about their neighbourhoods, although they expressed more concerns about safety and crime. Most people had personal experience of crime, mainly burglary:

Joan: I have actually had my house broken into twice and I've also, at different other times disturbed a man in my house, once in the kitchen and once in my laundry. (Glen Innes - Interview)

A number of people were concerned about mobility and how easy it would be for them to get to the shops and health care services if they become less mobile. This was more of a concern in Tokoroa, where there is no public bus service. Several people there said that while they are okay while they can still drive, that they are worried about how they will get around if or when they lose their license, especially with the lack of public transport. A number of people in Tokoroa said that there needs to be better neighbourhood infrastructure for mobility scooters, including improved pavement quality, and more crossings, parking and power points for scooters.

My community

Overall, most people said that they love living in their community, and they wouldn't want to move anywhere else. Most people said that they would like to stay in the community because it feels 'familiar' and 'comfortable' to them:

Bruce: I've been giving it a lot of thought actually, because all my whānau are in [another region] ... but I think you've gotta be comfortable where you're at. ... [So] when I get down the track further may[be] there is that drawing to go back to the whānau and whatever, ... but right at the moment I'm happy here, so, why would I want to move? ... I mean, I think it's important that we get

comfortable. [W]e need to stay in our comfort, rather than be uprooted and planted somewhere else, somewhere foreign (Tokoroa - Focus group)

Several people in Tokoroa said that they had moved away, but they had come back, because the town feels familiar:

Joyce: Well that's why we came back. Because we still had friends here and things like that. And it was just like shifting into a nice pair of comfortable shoes! You just carried on! It was just in a different house! (Tokoroa - Focus group)

People in both communities, but particularly in Tokoroa, also talked about the multi-cultural nature of their community as a major advantage:

[O]ne of the other things I'd just like to be able to say at this point is, um, with children growing up in this community, I actually think that any child who is born and bred in Tokoroa, are privileged children. Because they grow up with all the different ethnic groups that are here that we have here in Tokoroa. And, um, they grow up, they go to school together, they play together, they sleep – they do everything together. (Tokoroa - Māori focus group)

People in Glen Innes/Ukutoia were particularly positive about the level of services and community facilities available for older people in their community:

[S]hopping, medical services and the surrounding environment are all suitable for old-age. ...We all think that as we are old, this place is suitable for us. Why? Firstly, when you are old, it's hard to avoid illness; when you are ill, you have to be seen by doctors. This is a very convenient and easy spot, walking less than five minutes you can find doctors. Shopping for your daily needs is very easy as well. ... So even though my son asked many times, he wants us to move to closer area to them, we didn't go (*laughing*). (Glen Innes/Ukutoia – Chinese focus group)

People in both communities also felt like there were plenty of opportunities to socialise with other older people:

Regarding the environment, I've chosen to live in Glen Innes, it's because there are many senior friends we know in this area. We came from thousands of miles away from China. Ten thousands kilometer, right? We never met each other before, now we become friends. ...[W]e as friends can come together often, doing activities together, meeting each other, or organise games, for example playing table tennis, Mahjong, singing, dancing or doing fitness exercise etc. These activities are essential for old people like us. Without these conditions, staying home alone by yourself would be very hard. (Glen Innes/Ukutoia – Chinese focus group)

People in Glen Innes/Ukutoia listed good public transport (both train and bus services that enable them to get to the central city, Sylvia Park, the beach, and the hospitals easily) as a major advantage of living in the area.

Most people in both communities said that they love living in their area because they think there is a strong feeling of community pride, and that people are quick to help each other out:

Vic: ...[T]hat's what I love about this place, there's so much aroha here, no matter what you ask people. I mean, my mate if he says I'm going down to swimming baths, the first thing I say is do you want a lift? ... And it's not just me, it's *everyone* around our place, if anybody's going anywhere the first thing anybody says is are you okay for a lift? ...

Dot: Well you go to the beach and get a load of mussels, or a load of pipis, you know, I'm forever, or if I go down with the whānau in Waikato and I'll bring back a load of watercress. And I know the ones that like the watercress and so I'll drop it off. I mean you just do.

Vic: I mean that's the sort of thing. We get that around our place. (Glen Innes/Ukutoia - Focus group)

Finally, a number of people talked about the importance of their marae and iwi-based organisations. Ruapotaka marae was said to be a great community asset in Glen Innes/Ukutoia:

Vic: I think we're very fortunate in having a marae like we've got, because they're very, very helpful in a lot of ways. They do a lot for the youngsters as well. Because we work in unison with the marae. Well, you know, they let us know what's happening and we let them know what's happening. (Glen Innes/Ukutoia - Focus group)

Without this awahi [[embracing]] of our marae we have no, this is the only place we can stand and talk our, make our mana [[prestige]]. Nobody can come in that gate. Only us as Māori to say what we want to say. Nobody can come in, the government can't come in here and say 'Do this, you do that, you do this'. We say taihoa, you stay out there, we powhiri[[welcome]] you and you come in under our grounds. But it's because this is what this place is, a safety zone for us as Māori to say our piece. (Glen Innes/Ukutoia - Māori focus group)

Likewise, in Tokoroa, several participants commented appreciatively about the services provided by Raukawa.

My life

There was lots of discussion about how to age 'well'. Many people said that they thought it was important to keep busy, and stay involved in the community:

Harry: You can't just sit down and say oh well, I've had it, I'm too old. You've got to get up and do something. (Tokoroa - Focus group)

Many people said they believe that there are lots of great activities for older people in their communities (although some people thought there was still a need for more), and that it is really important to keep active, and to get out of the house as often as you can:

Colleen: Yes, you've got to get out of your home. Yeah, cause you know, somebody said to me the other day, oh, how are you enjoying Senior Citz? I said I'm enjoying it for one specific reason, you're not sitting in a square room, watching a square box. (Tokoroa - Focus group)

Lots of people talked about the volunteer work that they do in the community. People in the Māori focus groups talked about the excitement as well as hard work associated with taking on the new role of kaumātua/kuia:

[K]a eke te tangata ki te taumata o te kaumātuatanga [[when a person reaches the stage of becoming an elder]], your whole life changes. ... I became more involved with the marae and the iwi back home, and now I've kind of taken a leadership role, for my, for the hapū. And that's been a huge challenge, but ... you get a lot of purpose, personal satisfaction out of it, you've got something to get up in the morning for, and live life for, and be happy with what you're doing. (Tokoroa - Māori focus group)

Despite the fact that lots of people said that there were a range of interesting activities available to older people in their community, people also felt that there was a lack of appropriate venues that older people can use if they want to set up social activities. In Glen Innes/Ukutoia there was widespread dissatisfaction with the cost of hiring the community hall, which most people felt was stopping older people planning more activities together. In Tokoroa many people said that there is a need for a meeting space for older people in the middle of town where they can rest and socialise.

As well as activities and new roles, good relationships with friends were considered to be really important:

When you are lonely, you only just have to pick the phone up and call someone to come over and stay. And then you call your team of friends in your embroidery group. (Tokoroa - Cook Island women's group)

Dot: A few of us get together on a Friday, some Friday nights, and we have a few beers and a bit of a laugh, a tuck in, it's good. But it's better than staying at home.

Vic: Friendships are the most important thing. I think friends are the most important thing on earth. (Glen Innes/Ukutoia - Focus group)

Family are also very important to lots of people.

Firstly, my children, and then my grand-children. [I]f ... now I was taken away from my ... daughter and her children. I [would] feel lonely. ... To have them in our home is, bring[s] me life, brings me life. ... I love my grand-children saying: 'Ay papa! Papa!' See! I feel alive! That gives me the life! And to the grand-mother: 'Ay mama or nena' (Glen Innes - Cook Islands focus group)

Several people, especially in the Cook Island and Samoan groups talked about the importance of spending time with your children to make sure that you tell them your stories before you pass on:

Hey! Listen, while I remember, to all of you sitting around this table, you have a legacy to leave back to your children. Talk to your children, tell them your story as to how you came to Tokoroa. What you did in those days. Tell it before the shovel makes that noise! ⁵ (Cook Island men's group)

Money and finances was also an important issue for many people. Overall lots of people said that there is a need for more financial support for older people, to help them out with things like home maintenance, electricity costs, food costs, and funeral and burial plot expenses. Most people are living on low incomes, and those who had lost a spouse found it particularly difficult going from two incomes to one. Many people said that you need to learn to be very, very good at managing your money:

P1: [Y]ou know, we got to learn to be damn good budgeters, because we only have a dollar, as we are going to make our kai go to two dollars. So, you know, that's how we are, that's how Māori is, they will spend a dollar to put two dollars worth of kai on their plate

P2: Ah, yeah, pick some pūhās,[[sow thistle]] and, yeah, yeah (Glen Innes/Ukutoia - Māori focus group)

In addition, people said that when they are struggling financially, they aren't always sure of their entitlements from Work and Income New Zealand. The Cook Island focus groups said that they think the language barrier is also preventing members of their community from accessing their correct entitlements. People in Tokoroa, in particular, also said that they felt that there was a need for more respect from WINZ staff:

Bruce: I think respect. ...[T]hey're not dealing with unemployed teenagers, straight out of school, they're dealing with people who have basically grown up here all their lives, paid taxes, done their dues

Jack: Yeah

Bruce: and, so there should be some respect -

Jack: Yes

Bruce: - for the older people - rather than, like you say, the smugness and if you don't ask you don't get it. (Tokoroa - Focus group discussion)

As well as greater respect, there was also a request for a separate queue for older people, and a mobile service that could go to people's homes when they are too ill to travel.

Finally, people also talked about care services. It was considered to be important to maximize the opportunities that older people have to care for each other:

⁵ Translators note: A Cook Island slang/joke - a polite way of saying when somebody dies, you hear the shovel digging into the soil to cover the grave. It is called *parara te tuapara*

I think that when people are getting older, the most important thing is to be able to help each other. If something happened, when I need help from others, there is somebody available. If I'm still capable, I could help others when they need it. To be able to do these things is very important. (Glen Innes/Ukutoia – Chinese focus group)

And people also said that there is a need for more financial assistance and training for family/whānau who are looking after older people in the community:

Jane: Another issue is that there is no training of workers, or our children. I have a child who should be trained so that (she/he) can handle (care) for me.

Mati: This is a very important issue. So if there is an elderly person within the family, there should be training (for the family) to provide care for the elderly person

Jane: [The body] is hurt because their bodies are soft/weak and if you grab her government [workers] will come [and see] that you are bruised all over, or your next door neighbour will see your bruised body (Tokoroa - Samoan focus group)

The way forward

The Resilient Ageing in Place project is part of a longer term programme of research on ageing in New Zealand conducted by Dr Janine Wiles at the University of Auckland. The results of this research will be used to inform local community groups, councils, and policymakers about the concerns and priorities of older people in Glen Innes/Ukutoia and Tokoroa.

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