



# **Age-Friendly Community Evaluation**

Report prepared for the Office for Seniors

Ministry of Social Development

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## Executive Summary

The Auckland University of Technology Centre for Active Ageing was contracted by the Office for Seniors, Ministry of Social Development [Office for Seniors] to evaluate the process of implementing age-friendly approaches in Kāpiti Coast District, New Plymouth and Hamilton, also referred to as pilot sites. The evaluation was conducted from November 2017 to May 2018. A variety of data sources were used and these included qualitative interviews with Office for Seniors staff, as well as community and local council members from the three pilot sites.

Results from this evaluation show the three pilot sites utilised different approaches and progressed at different rates in implementing age-friendly programmes. Key success factors included having:

- support from the Office for Seniors
- local council buy-in – top-down approach
- strong community engagement – bottom-up approach
- robust community consultation processes
- undertaken a needs assessment of existing age-friendly activities and projects, and
- implemented age-friendly initiatives.

Engagement with Māori communities, although limited was evident across each of the pilot sites. However, community processes need to be strengthened through undertaking comprehensive consultation processes to ensure Māori are appropriately involved in any future age-friendly planning and implementation of initiatives. Minimal engagement and consultation with migrant communities was also evident and needs to be addressed moving forward.

As a result of this evaluation, there are several initiatives the Office for Seniors could consider developing that would support existing communities and those communities interested in becoming age-friendly. Firstly, the development of a toolkit to support communities to become age-friendly. Secondly, foster the development of positive working relationships between local councils and communities. Thirdly, provide guidance to communities on mechanisms for engaging with Māori and migrant communities. Finally, undertake an educative role to ensure central and local government and communities understand what age-friendly means.

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## Introduction

### 1. Background

Advancing age-friendly communities has become a priority for governments internationally and in New Zealand in response to the ageing population and ageing in place policies (Associate Minister of Health, 2016; Buffel, Phillipson, & Scharf, 2012). It is estimated that by 2036, between 21% and 24% of the population in New Zealand will be aged 65 years and over (Bascand & Dunstan, 2014). Previous research indicates older people prefer to age in communities that are familiar to them (Wiles, Leibing, Guberman, Reeve, & Allen, 2011). However, ageing in place requires communities to be age-friendly and therefore appropriate places for older people to live (Neville, Napier, Adams, Wham, & Jackson, 2016).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) launched the *Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide* in 2007 following a major coordinated research project undertaken in 33 cities across 22 countries. Eight themes, identified from consultation with older people and community representatives, were found to be essential for an age-friendly city: outdoor spaces and buildings; transportation; housing; social participation; respect and social inclusion; civic participation and employment; communication and information; and community support and health services (Plouffe & Kalache, 2011).

The age-friendly cities concept built on the WHO's active ageing framework (World Health Organization, 2007b). Following adoption of the term "active ageing" at the United Nations International Year of Older Persons in 1999, the WHO launched *Active Ageing – A Policy Framework* as a contribution to the 2002 Second World Assembly on Ageing (World Health Organization, 2002). Active ageing is defined as "the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age" (World Health Organization, 2002, p. 12).

Since release of the *Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide* in 2007 the *Checklist of Essential Features of Age-Friendly Cities* has been developed to assist communities to assess their age-friendliness and monitor progress. The checklist was designed to include older people as full partners in its administration (World Health Organization, 2007a). The age-friendly framework and checklist was later adapted for use in rural and remote

communities. Subsequently, the term age-friendly cities and communities has become more widely used in recognition of the diversity of places older people age in (Plouffe & Kalache, 2011).

Internationally, an increasing number of cities and communities have started to implement age-friendly programmes to create supportive environments that promote respect, inclusion, empowerment and participation for older people. Since 2007, in excess of 500 cities and communities throughout 37 countries have joined the Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. The Network was established to encourage sharing of experience and learning between cities and communities worldwide (World Health Organization, n d).

New Zealand responded to the WHO call to action promoted by the active ageing theme with the *New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy* (NZPAS) in 2001 following extensive consultation with the older population. The NZPAS provided 10 goals addressing a comprehensive range of physical and social determinants under the headings: income; health; housing; transport; ageing in place; cultural diversity; rural; attitudes; employment; and opportunities (Dalziel, 2001). The 2014 *Report on the Positive Ageing Strategy* reported on progress in meeting the 10 goals (Office for Senior Citizens, 2014).

The *Health of Older People Strategy* (HOPS) was developed in 2002 to complement the NZPAS as a guide for District Health Boards in providing an integrated approach to health and disability service for older people (Ministry of Health, 2002). In 2016, the HOPS was revised and rebranded as the *Healthy Ageing Strategy*. The rebranded strategy has an increased focus on health and wellbeing and recognises that people age in different ways. In line with the WHO's age-friendly cities and communities, the *Healthy Ageing Strategy* vision statement is : "Older people live well, age well and have a respectful end of life in age-friendly communities" (Associate Minister of Health, 2016, p. 16).

A key focus for the Office for Seniors is ensuring all communities in New Zealand are age-friendly. From mid-2015 the Office for Seniors has been working in partnership with three pilot communities to implement the WHO age-friendly cities and communities framework . The three pilot sites Kāpiti Coast District, New Plymouth and Hamilton have undertaken different approaches to the implementation of the age-

friendly framework including the process for engaging with their respective communities and prioritising initiatives.

Auckland University of Technology Centre for Active Ageing was contracted by the Office for Seniors to undertake an evaluation of the processes utilised by the three pilot sites in implementing the age-friendly cities and communities framework. The evaluation was conducted from November 2017 to May 2018.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Overview**

The aim of this evaluation was to describe the process of implementing age-friendly approaches in Hamilton, Kāpiti Coast District and New Plymouth. The evaluation will provide the Office for Seniors with foundational empirical data that will support future age-friendly initiatives both within the three pilot sites as well as in other communities in New Zealand.

This process evaluation used a case study approach to provide a descriptive understanding of the implementation of age-friendly programmes in Hamilton, Kāpiti Coast District and New Plymouth. A participatory approach was deployed and involved active collaboration with, and input from key stakeholders in the design, implementation and interpretation of all aspects of the evaluation process. Specifically, the stakeholders and evaluators jointly developed the research questions and discussed the results at a sense-making session. A further strength of this evaluation was the triangulation of data sets using data from relevant documents from the Office for Seniors and the three pilot sites, along with the interview data.

#### **2.1.1 Evaluation Questions**

Five main evaluation questions were developed for the evaluation in consultation with the Office for Seniors and the communities.

- What processes were used to initiate an age-friendly approach in each of the sites, including top-down/bottom-up?
  - What processes were undertaken to assess community needs in each pilot site?
  - To what extent have communities been engaged with in each age-friendly pilot site?
  - To what extent have Māori and migrant communities been engaged with in each age-friendly pilot?

- What age-friendly activities have been initiated in each pilot site (activities that have happened)?
- What age-friendly projects are planned for the future in each pilot site?
- What are the enablers to initiating age-friendly programmes/activities?
- What are the barriers to initiating age-friendly programmes/activities?

### 2.1.2 Evaluation process

a) Development of the evaluation framework

The principal investigator met with the Office for Seniors to refine the scope of the evaluation and guide development of an evaluation framework that informed the evaluation process.

b) The principal investigator held meetings with key stakeholders to confirm the focus of the evaluation.

c) Data collection

Data collection sources were guided by suggestions from meetings with key stakeholders and consisted of:

- document review (Office for Seniors, local government planning documents, meeting minutes of the groups and publically accessible information), and
- qualitative semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders to collect data relevant to the research questions (see table 1)

**Table 1: Interview schedule**

Stakeholder group	Number of participants
Office for Seniors	4
Hamilton <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hamilton City Council</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Age-friendly Steering Group</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community representative</li> </ul>	1  2  3
Kāpiti Coast District <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Kāpiti Coast District Council</li> </ul>	1

<input type="checkbox"/> Age-friendly Steering Group	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Community representative	3
<b>New Plymouth</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> New Plymouth Council	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Age-friendly Steering Group	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Community representative	3
<b>Total number of participants</b>	<b>22</b>

d) Data analysis

Analysis of key documents:

- The principal investigator and key stakeholders identified documents that were considered relevant to the research questions. A data collection form was developed to summarise the data from the document reviews.

Analysis of interview data:

- The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The data was analysed using a general inductive approach which is an appropriate method to establish clear links between the evaluation questions and data (Thomas, 2006). The transcripts were read, discussed and analysed by all members of the evaluation team. Data analysis continued when the main findings were presented and discussed with key stakeholders at a sense-making session to inform the recommendations for the future development of age-friendly communities.

## **2.2 Ethical approval**

This evaluation project was reviewed and approved by Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEK) on 1 December 2017; approval number: AUTEK 17/404 Evaluating age-friendly community initiatives. All participants gave informed consent.

## **3. Results**

Relevant data collected during the evaluation are presented in this section and used to provide direct answers to the evaluation questions. Data sources are derived from key documents provided to the evaluation team and data excerpts from interviews undertaken. Illustrative participant quotes are presented in italics. The first section provides a summary of how the Age Friendly Cities and Communities (AFCC) initiative began at central government level and in the Kāpiti Coast District, New Plymouth and Hamilton communities. Data was sourced for this section from the analysis of key documents and from interviewed participants.

### **3. Office for Seniors**

#### **3.1.1 How it started**

In 2012 the Office for Seniors began supporting a community-initiated and -led pilot project called *Napier Connects*. The purpose of this project was to address social isolation among older people and focused on developing volunteer and other networks to strengthen social connectedness. Out of this project came the idea to align the *Napier Connects* initiative with the WHO *Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities framework*.

Sarah Clark was the Director of the Office for Seniors from early 2014. At the beginning of her tenure, Sarah started a review of the *New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy* (2001). This process included organising a framework bringing together all of the various AFCC strands that could lead to the development of a uniquely New Zealand version of AFCC. Coinciding with this project, a member of the Kāpiti Coast District Older People's Council, Jill Stansfield, raised the idea of introducing the AFCC programme in Kāpiti Coast District with Sarah Clark.

The development of an AFCC framework and focus was appealing as it resonated with how communities were currently responding to ageing issues. During 2014, Sarah Clark

began to incorporate the AFCC framework into strategic planning documents for the Office for Seniors. In September 2014 a new Minister for Senior Citizens came into office. This Minister supported the continued development of an AFCC framework incorporating a network of age-friendly communities throughout New Zealand.

### **3.1.2 How the pilot sites were chosen**

The selection of pilot sites was a pragmatic and organic process that developed from two Office for Seniors staff engaging with different community groups around the country. The intention was to have a socio-culturally diverse mix of communities who utilised different approaches to developing AFCC. Further, communities that were most interested and had mechanisms and beginning projects in place were favoured. Consequently, Kāpiti Coast District, New Plymouth and Hamilton were approached to potentially become AFCC pilot communities. Additionally, having an Older Person's Council or positive ageing groups in place were believed by the Office for Seniors to be integral to advancing age-friendly initiatives.

## **3.2 Where the pilot communities are at now**

The three pilot communities have all had quite different approaches and experiences to initiating an age-friendly framework in their communities and as such have progressed at different rates.

### **3.2.1 Kāpiti Coast District**

The Kāpiti Coast District Council (KCDC) has included a commitment to being age-friendly in their long term plan. The Kāpiti Coast District Age-Friendly Steering Group undertook a needs assessment survey in 2016. An age-friendly strategy or plan is yet to be developed. Instead, Kāpiti Coast District has focused on the business sector, developing an age-friendly customer choice business award as part of the Electra Kāpiti Horowhenua Business Awards. The customer choice award is a section of the wider business programme developed to acknowledge businesses that provide age-friendly products and services. It is intended that businesses will be recognised and commended as part of a local accreditation process.

### **3.2.2 New Plymouth**

New Plymouth Age-Friendly Steering Group has developed their age-friendly strategy which was presented to the New Plymouth District Council (NPDC) in February 2018.

The Steering Group took the draft strategy document to the local community and community boards across the region and rural areas. This consultative process was valuable to test their ideas and to raise awareness across the region. The strategy will inform the council's long term plan and the council will be asked to endorse the strategy and support the application for membership to the WHO AFCC Network (Age-Friendly New Plymouth Strategy, 2017).

### **3.2.3 Hamilton**

Hamilton Age-Friendly Steering Group presented their age-friendly strategic plan to Hamilton City Council (HCC) in November 2017 (Plan and process for becoming a more age-friendly city, 2018-2021: For presentation to the World Health Organization, 2017). In February 2018, an application was lodged with the WHO for consideration to join the Age-Friendly Global Network. The application process involves a review of the age-friendly plan by a regional expert based in Melbourne. Additionally, the plan is accompanied by a letter from the Hamilton City Mayor. Some members of the Age-Friendly Steering Group have indicated their interest in sitting on the implementation group that will oversee the next stage in the process and will report to the HCC.

## **3.3 What processes were used to initiate an age-friendly approach in each of the sites (including top-down/bottom-up)?**

### **3.3.1 Kāpiti Coast District**

Kāpiti Coast District was an early adopter of the age-friendly framework and is an example of a predominantly community-driven or bottom-up approach.

*I found out about this in Melbourne. When I came back home to New Zealand I went to the Ministry of Social Development and said I was really concerned for the future and that we needed to be planning more positively to cope with the demographic change [increase in the number of older adults]. The person I spoke to about it just looked at me and said "I agree completely". Now I'm going to send you to the Office for Seniors because that's the avenue you need to take. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

An Older Person's Council, an advisory group to KCDC, already existed. A group of community-based people made submissions to KCDC to ensure age-friendly policy was evident in the council's long term plan which was successful and resulted in the formation of the Kāpiti Age-Friendly Steering Group. Membership of this group includes

representation from local council, key community groups and interested members of the community.

Getting buy-in from local government has been recognised in international age-friendly initiatives as important for capacity building and sustainability (Menec, Novek, Veselyuk, & McArthur, 2014). This includes having a strong community voice to ensure age-friendly issues become part of the councils' list of priorities. However, from the KCDC perspective, there has been a loss of momentum in getting some age-friendly initiatives up and running.

*... there hasn't been a whole lot of action on the ground recently [community engagement]. The council from our perspective is wanting to support age-friendly initiatives. We are waiting for the community-led stuff to happen with our support. There's also the view that the council needs to adopt an age-friendly strategy which is absolutely correct. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

The difficulty for community groups working from the bottom-up was keeping the momentum going. Community groups relied on people to volunteer their time and often had minimal resources. Further, a lack of strategic focus and a number of personal agendas demotivated members.

*... I withdrew from the group just simply because of the time and I guess the direction. It was going nowhere as far as I was concerned. It became more of a venue I think for people to be able to link personal problems they were having through either a disability group or some group and that became the focus at meetings with little concern for the bigger picture. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

More recently, the Steering Group has invited input from the KCDC.

*Originally they decided they didn't want any influence or any council staff there. They wanted to develop it by themselves. And then later on, maybe earlier this year or late last year they changed their mind and actually decided we need to do this with council. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

### **3.3.2 New Plymouth**

New Plymouth started on the age-friendly pathway when Jillian Noble from Age Concern suggested that the New Plymouth Positive Ageing Trust (NPPAT) explore the WHO age-friendly framework in early 2015. Subsequently, Jillian Noble and Lance Girling Butcher from NPPAT visited Taranaki's three mayors, the Regional Council chairman and Taranaki District Health Board to assess interest. Following this consultative process, it was suggested that New Plymouth, as the largest district, seek

registration. Later in 2015, a proposal was submitted to the NPDC to become age-friendly which was accepted.

The Chairperson of the NPPAT had been a local councillor so had a strong connection with both the community and the local council. The challenges and opportunities presented by the ageing population came to the chairperson's attention while he was a councillor on the NPDC.

*I'm not sure how many years ago, about five or six I think, the Hastings District Council held a two-day seminar on this whole question and invited a top line group of speakers. They were economists, people with experience in demographics, leaders in the community ... I was aware of the potential difficulties we could face with this baby boomer generation going through, this really brought it home to me. I was then a councillor on the New Plymouth District Council and I attended with one of the Community and Development team who subsequently came to lead that team and we came back and began a little campaign of our own amongst the staff and elected members saying we need to do some detailed planning of this or it could overwhelm us. (New Plymouth Steering Group member)*

The Chairperson's council connections contributed to buy-in from the council.

*I think the real driver behind this work itself was a former councillor and community member who has been active in our area, Lance Girling Butcher. He approached council about three to four years ago and asked them to work on this [becoming age-friendly] and the council approved and it became part of their work. (New Plymouth Steering Group member)*

The New Plymouth Age-Friendly Steering Group was formed in 2015 and chaired by Lance Girling Butcher who was also chair of the NPPAT. The Steering Group had a range of expertise including representation from Age Concern, Taranaki Disabilities Information Centre, Taranaki District Health Board and NPDC Community Development Officer. The aim of the Steering Group was to ultimately submit an application to join the WHO Age-Friendly Global Network.

### **3.3.3 Hamilton**

The Advisory Panel on Older People was inaugurated in 2014 to provide advice to the HCC on various policies and strategies that were being developed to enhance the city for older people. The Advisory Panel on Older People comprised of approximately 12 community-based people with an interest in ageing issues in the Hamilton area. In June 2015, the Older Person's Plan (2015), developed by the Advisory Panel on Older People was adopted by the HCC. In May 2016 the Advisory Panel on Older People

recommended to the HCC that the city join the WHO Global Network. The council gave the advisory panel the go-ahead and in 2016 the Hamilton Age-Friendly Steering Group was formed. From September 2016 to March 2017, consultation with community groups and support agencies was undertaken across the city. The age-friendly plan was drafted and finalised and in November 2017 it was presented to the HCC. Subsequently, the plan was presented to WHO in February 2018.

This age-friendly plan process was strongly supported by the HCC. Nick Chester represented the council as a policy and administrative officer.

*The council gave their blessing just to go ahead and form a steering group, so we start putting together an age-friendly plan. We're now on the road ... that was about 18 months almost two years ago. I've been there to make sure that even though it's a community-led plan and we've emphasised that really, really clearly, it has had really good guidance and support from council all the way through.* (Hamilton Steering Group member)

The Steering Group comprised of people with expertise and specific skills rather than representing particular community groups. Essentially, they were hand-picked.

*... we tackled that by getting together a group of pretty high powered experts in the city I suppose.* (Hamilton Steering Group member)

Putting together the age-friendly plan involved wide consultation with the community.

*... our goal was to develop a plan that would meet the criteria outlined by the World Health Organisation, which is very broad. There are a number of ways you can do it, but developing an all encompassing community plan seemed to be the most straightforward way. So we went through the process of talking to the community and all the community groups and agencies to start pulling together a plan.* (Hamilton Steering Group member)

### **3.4 What processes were undertaken to assess community needs in each pilot site?**

Each pilot site undertook different processes to assess community needs. Engaging with the community is a key first step in the community needs assessment process. This means a diverse range of older people should be accessed to ensure their views are represented. There is a risk of politically motivated groups whose views are not representative of the wider community setting the age-friendly agenda.

*Proactively seeking out and listening to all the voices of older people is very important. It is a challenge to frame up the conversation in such a way that we engage and get meaningful feedback. Not to say that there aren't pockets of*

*excellence. I think community engagement and their views about what they think their community needs are, should be measured by people feeling that they've been listened to and the decisions made are reflective of their views. (Office for Seniors staff member)*

### **3.4.1 Kāpiti Coast District**

The Kāpiti District Coast Age-Friendly Steering Group had some difficulty getting the needs assessment process underway.

*Well in my opinion, none of that has happened. However, we did hold a forum where the World Health Organisation's checklist for age-friendly cities were put up, the determinants were listed and people could choose the areas they thought were likely to be most important to them. Transport emerged to be the one that was most critical to our community. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

Some needs assessment work was undertaken but was not progressed.

*I don't think it had got anywhere. There was a survey that was supposed to go out to the community with a whole list of questions around what they wanted to see or how they wanted to engage. I don't think it ever went anywhere ... there has been a lot of talk around what can be done but there hasn't been a lot of action. (Kāpiti community member)*

### **3.4.2 New Plymouth**

The importance of getting some expertise to help develop an age-friendly strategy was recognised by the New Plymouth Age-Friendly Steering Group. In 2017, New Plymouth secured funding through the Office for Seniors to commission a researcher to undertake a needs assessment project and assist with developing the age-friendly strategy based on the WHO eight domains. A success factor was having expertise of a professional researcher and strategist to undertake a needs assessment of the community.

*We managed to get a \$40,000 grant from the Office for Seniors and appointed Louise Tester, who was an experienced policy and strategist and worked for the council but was now out working independently and launched an intensive development programme for the strategy. (New Plymouth Steering Group member)*

The research project included an online questionnaire to gain people's views on a range of issues. Further, the researcher undertook interviews with approximately 30 individuals from the community.

*... we conducted a survey which around 80 people completed ... in parallel to the survey we undertook a number of key informal interviews. We had 25 conversations with key stakeholders then, in addition to that, we had about five*

*what you call network conversations or stakeholder workshops with groups of people who had a particular interest like Age Concern, the council, Grey Power, Positive Ageing Network and Taranaki District Health Board. Then in addition we interviewed several community boards, as well as the disability work group. (New Plymouth Steering Group member).*

The findings from this research project were summarised and presented to an open forum that included members of the community, the Mayor, two councillors and two health board members plus community development leaders.

*New Plymouth had essentially a community event at the local council chamber where the community were all invited to come along and talk about age-friendly and what they'd like to see. We learnt a lot from that, and actually Minister Barry came along and spoke and we had some key people in the community talking about age-friendly. (Office for Seniors staff member)*

### **3.4.3 Hamilton**

In Hamilton the views of older people were sought at multi-sectoral fora to find out what was available and to identify needs. These fora had the additional purpose of raising awareness of age-friendliness.

*... there were a 100, 150 people who came along including the local men's parliament, the city councillors, the newly elected mayor and two more councillors have also come along. We also had an entire busload from Presbyterian Support Enliven Centre taking their time to get off the bus because they had wheelchairs and walking sticks. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

Community needs assessment also included discussions with agencies and support services.

*... we did a lot of work talking to parts of the community. Then we also did quite a bit of work with agencies that delivered services. So we did a big session this time last year about what these agencies would like to see and what they could do and the idea of starting to get them to collaborate on different projects. So we tried to cover it from a number of different bases. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

The needs assessment process was forward-looking in terms of finding out what would improve the quality of the city for older people.

*We have been looking at what needs to happen to improve the accessibility or availability or the implementation of new activities and services for the older age group. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

### **3.5 To what extent have communities been engaged with in each age-friendly pilot site?**

#### **3.5.1 Kāpiti Coast District**

Raising awareness of the age-friendly movement was identified as an early step in engaging the Kāpiti Coast District community on ageing issues.

*I guess at a community level what's important is what's getting done on the ground. That's important to people whether or not it's a World Health Organisation thing or a community thing. So I think the label, because it sits under WHO, is important but not necessarily well understood at the ground level (Kāpiti Steering Group member).*

The community were active around key issues related to being age-friendly such as transport and health: however, it was not clear what processes were undertaken to engage with the community.

*Health and the transport are big issues for us up here too because we have a petition going at the moment around having a hospital up here. It's probably not going to happen for a long time but with a population of 50,000 it's quite a way to travel to Kerepuru and Wellington. (Kāpiti community member)*

There had been a more reactive rather than proactive approach to identifying needs in the community.

*One of our members has worked up an interview plan for a survey and I believe that she is talking to the Office for Senior Citizens about funding. Where that's got to at the moment I don't know ... the needs of people are really being assessed by complaints that have been received by Age Concern and Grey Power. Grey Power has about 4000 members so it's a fairly big organisation and people know to come to us if they have problems in that area. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

Raising awareness with a regular radio and local newspaper column was one initiative this community undertook.

*I also do a monthly column in one of the two local newspapers and I do two three minute broadcasts each month with the community radio here. These opportunities are always all around age-friendly. Strangely enough I do have some people who tell me they have either read about it in the newspaper or heard it on the radio. So somewhere along the line I must be doing something that trickles through to people's consciousness. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

#### **3.5.2 New Plymouth**

The Age-Friendly New Plymouth Strategy that sets out the 10-year plan was informed by community engagement and a needs assessment process that was undertaken.

*In developing the New Plymouth Age-friendly Strategy, a suite of community engagements took place to understand the perceptions and beliefs of people in the community. The objective of the New Plymouth Age-Friendly Strategy was not to conduct an audit of what services and supports organisations may or not be providing for people as they age. It was intended to elicit meaning and understanding and promote conversation and awareness among the community that can lead to new and different and improved responses to an ageing community. (Age-Friendly New Plymouth Strategy, 2017, p. 4)*

Community engagement included the data collected for the research project and the consultation process that occurred when the draft strategy document was presented to the community.

*... [the draft strategy document was] very effective in engaging people. We put on an event on a weekend where we presented the draft strategy to people and then we did workshops. So we would have 50-60 people attend and we broke up into groups and everyone had a look. I think they had the opportunity to look at two of the areas each. So we discussed these and post-it notes were used. (New Plymouth Steering Group member)*

To increase awareness of the age-friendly process and engaging with the community, various media channels were used.

*We used council's external communication channels like Facebook and the council website and then other steering group members in the organisations put it out through their networks. (New Plymouth Steering Group member)*

To ensure the views and needs from the rural community were included, members of the council's community development team, visited the districts' four community boards. The final strategy was then presented to the New Plymouth District Council for consideration.

### **3.5.3 Hamilton**

The age-friendly strategic plan provides extensive feedback from the community engagement that the Hamilton Age-Friendly Steering Group undertook in 2016-2017. This feedback is arranged under the eight domains of the age-friendly framework. The following groups, agencies and services were part of the community consultation:

- Older Persons Open Forum – 7 November 2016;
- Chinese Golden Age Society – 23 November 2016;
- Participants of Enliven day programmes – 17 February 2017, and 6, 14 and 22 June 2017;
- Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust – 6 March 2017;
- Hamilton Refugee and Migrant Communities – 6 March 2017; and

- Tamahere Eventide Rest Home – 8 March 2017.  
(Plan and process for becoming a more age-friendly city, 2018-2021: For presentation to the World Health Organization, 2017).

The Steering Group consulted widely and held several open fora for older people. This process was important for sharing information about what the city is like as a place to live for older people. It also highlighted the continuous improvement process of the age-friendly framework.

*One of the really key messages we received was that the city has got a lot of services and facilities that are available for older people. But in terms of that awareness and understanding what's out there, we don't do a great job. The city doesn't do a great job of promoting themselves as a good place for older people ... I think we're definitely along the path a little bit more now but it's definitely going to be an evolving story. So it's definitely a work in progress. I think we're in a much better place than we were maybe a year ago. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

### **3.6 To what extent have Māori and migrant communities been engaged with in each age-friendly pilot?**

The Office for Seniors recognised the opportunity to develop a uniquely New Zealand AFCC approach with a bi-cultural focus that was responsive to demographic change and an ageing Māori population. In applying the AFCC framework in a Māori context, engagement with Māori needs to be genuine and in good faith in recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi. Although each pilot site had some engagement with Māori, there was not a strong iwi representation on the Steering Groups. Equally, opportunities for engaging with migrant communities needs further work and commitment.

#### **3.6.1 Kāpiti Coast District**

There was an awareness of the need to work with iwi because of the high Māori population in the Ōtaki region. In the early stages of the AFCC project some work had been undertaken engaging with Māori. However, participants identified that this had not been sustained.

*When we first started going down this journey of age-friendly, we commissioned some work which included working with and understanding Kaumātua and a different value base I guess between indigenous Māori and other mainstream communities. We recognised the steering group and older persons council was 100% non-Māori, and that was not a reflection of our community. We need stronger Māori representation going forward. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

There was acknowledgement of the challenges associated with engaging with Māori that related to the three different iwi and the geographical location of the sub communities.

*Well, our community has three iwi and our Māori community as a whole find it difficult to engage with each other. There's a lot of urban Māori that live in Kāpiti and so it's very hard to find a way to engage with Māori as a whole. In the Ōtaki community, there's a high percentage of Māori living there ... but it is quite a unique situation with Ōtaki being on the edge of the Kāpiti. Historically they've always kept to themselves and want services particularly for them. (Kāpiti community member)*

Most of the participants agreed that there has been little engagement with migrant groups and there was a need for more inclusive engagement.

*As we progress we definitely need to work out a way to engage with the different migrant groups that live in our area so we are more inclusive and can be responsive to those group's needs. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

### **3.6.2 New Plymouth**

Although there was some engagement with Māori participants in the age-friendly project in the New Plymouth area, Māori were not given priority over other groups.

*We undertook some Māori based hui but most were undertaken with general community groups. We didn't collect demographic information but I do know some of those individuals identified as Māori. I would have to say overall we took a broad community based process. (New Plymouth community member)*

Community based people were interviewed as part of the needs assessment project and some had connections with Māori communities.

*I'm involved in some aspects of the Māori community. In Taranaki we've eight different iwi, so the entity I'm involved in Mahia Mai [community support service], we're based in Waitara. The reality is, it touches really only on one or two iwi because of the geographical locality of it ... the other six are not involved at all. So I have to be careful about overstating the involvement or engagement really. (New Plymouth community member)*

There was some engagement with existing Māori networks.

*We also visited a local Kaumātua group so we tried to cover a wide range, as wide a range of external sources as we could. I do a lot of work with Māori, in fact I'm on the board of Kāpō Māori, which is the organisation that looks after blind Māori, and they are keen to take a collective approach to this whole thing, and you know their whanau values, they look after each other to a much greater extent than I think other ethnic groups do. (New Plymouth Steering Group member)*

Little consideration was given to the needs of migrant and ethnic communities except for superficial engagement with multicultural groups in the community.

*We talked to the chairman of the multi-ethnic society here which runs a function every year where they have stalls and food and other ethnic activities so we didn't ignore them but they're all fairly significant minorities, sometimes you are surprised at how big they are. Like there's a little pocket of Samoans, there seems to be a lot of Sri Lankan's for some reason, Indians, Chinese, they are here. But they are only a minor part of the population. (New Plymouth Steering Group member)*

### **3.6.3 Hamilton**

The Hamilton Age-Friendly Steering Group had good connections with a local Māori group, the Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust. Te Runanga o Kirikiriroa, through Nga Rau Tatangi had representation on the Steering Group. The Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust and Nga Rau Tatangi work closely with older Māori and were engaged with the age-friendly framework at local and central government level.

*We've been quite close with Hamilton City Council. We're also a community house so we are quite connected in that sense ... things that happen at the council or anything pertaining to older persons, we're automatically engaged. So when the conversation came about, we're also very closely connected to the Office for Seniors. I think that we were most probably connected enough within the sector to know what the plans were, and we continuously inform our stakeholders as to what we are up to anyway, way before we started, and that process gives people the heads-up of what you're doing. So if there's anything that aligns well for it, then they naturally know where to come for feedback or to share the information that they know that we don't necessarily know. (Hamilton community member)*

The Hamilton City Council policy and administration officer on the Steering Group, was cognisant of the need to appropriately engage with Māori.

*Māori engagement ... generally when we have a project like this we would approach Waikato Tainui and have discussions with them. But I think they are going through a bit of a restructure at the moment so that wasn't an easy process for us ... Hamilton City Council actually have a iwi relationships advisor who works for us so I did a lot of work with him around how we engage with Māori and make sure we've got that process sorted. Basically we've got to the point where it was agreed that we would just talk with the Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust and they would be the point of contact in terms of ensuring that we had good Māori representation and that side of things was well covered in our documents. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

*I happen to serve as a Kaumātua at the local marae ... I know that there have been odd mentions by one or two of the other Kaumātua of the sorts of things which*

*have been the subjects of discussion between or on behalf of the steering group. So in that sense, I believe there has been useful contact with representatives of older Māori. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

Hamilton refugees and migrant communities were consulted as part of the needs assessment processes undertaken by the Steering Group during 2017.

*The council also has a migrant advisor, an ethnic advisor and she's been really helpful about making sure that we have some projects in the final plan that speak to the needs of our older ethnic and migrant communities. We've got quite a big migrant and refugee community here in Hamilton. I feel like migrant groups have been consulted and engaged with. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

### **3.7 What age-friendly activities have been initiated in each pilot site (activities that have happened)?**

#### **3.7.1 Kāpiti Coast District**

Participants identified a number of positive community level initiatives that fall under the umbrella of age-friendly.

*There's some exciting things happening at community level ... intergenerational opportunities ... we have a large elderly population and a growing younger population. This year we've had a newly opened childcare centre approach us and ask if they can bring some of their littlies in on a regular basis to visit older people living in one of our care homes. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

*We have also held an age-friendly age expo which the Older Persons' Council was strongly involved in and held each year. That brings together all sorts of operators who are interested in promoting what they are doing for older people. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

Funding from Kāpiti Retirement Trust and Office for Seniors, through the *Community Connects* grant, was made available for an age-friendly initiative, the Kāpiti Horowhenua Business Awards, and the Age-Friendly Customer Choice Awards.

*The steering group had one of its members who was also associated with the Horowhenua Kāpiti Electra Business Group arrange business awards in the Kāpiti Horowhenua area. There was always a people's choice component but the opportunity through the Kāpiti Horowhenua Electra Business Group to extend this to have a people's choice section included in the age-friendly business awards is relatively recent. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

Kāpiti Health Shuttle, an established community level initiative, provides transport for older people to get to hospital outpatient appointments. This service is predominantly staffed by volunteers.

*We provide transport for predominantly older people to get into Wellington or Kenepuru Hospitals for their outpatient appointments during the week. We have volunteer drivers and a paid coordinator to manage it all. (Kāpiti community member)*

### **3.7.2 New Plymouth**

Initiatives and activities that could be classified as age-friendly included reviewing public transport options, falls prevention programmes and Tai Chi group activities. The age-friendly strategy provided a strategic and cohesive mechanism to help achieve age-friendly goals.

*What we wanted to achieve from the strategy was a more coherent and cohesive approach. We now have an action plan so we can put things on that and then tick them off, or leave them open if they weren't happening fast enough. (New Plymouth Steering Group member)*

New initiatives have resulted from the age-friendly process.

*One of the churches now do regular breakfast in the morning for the community. You don't have to be over 65 to come, but a lot of people who are over 65 do come to the church breakfast. That's all sort of popped up through the networks and connections that are happening through the age-friendly process. (Office for Seniors staff member)*

Raising awareness about issues older people face in accessing services, has meant some of the work to improve the environment for people with disabilities has also been recognised as age-friendly.

*Another success we've done is the accessible shops programme where we turned it into a competition and that's achieved an enormous swing in the views of the retailers. When you tell them they're missing out on 30% of the population if they don't take in the needs of disabled and older people they stop and think. One of the things that we offer to the retailers is staff training so that their staff are much more aware of the needs of disabled and older people. Where we've managed to break through, they immediately become huge advocates of it so that's another part of our strategy. (New Plymouth Steering Group member)*

Additionally, issues of mobility, transport and access have been highlighted to the New Plymouth District Council through their age-friendly project.

*They've now got kneeling buses in New Plymouth. They've persuaded the council to put ramps in front of the shelters so that people in wheelchairs are able to better get on and off the buses. Now we are looking at ways to get people with wheelchairs and mobility scooters from the southern towns up to New Plymouth so they can go shopping. (New Plymouth Steering Group member)*

The age-friendly strategy has heightened awareness when new infrastructure is planned.

*When there's a new project, any project that's been done, I'm specifically thinking about roading or any form of infrastructure buildings ... that work is always taken to the age and accessibility issues working party and discussed there. (New Plymouth Steering Group member)*

While the age-friendly framework has led to the implementation of age-friendly initiatives it has also highlighted some social challenges for the community to think about.

*It's the more nebulous issues that are harder to find solutions to, I'm talking really about isolation and social loneliness. (New Plymouth Steering Group member)*

### **3.7.3 Hamilton**

Developing the age-friendly plan has provided Hamilton with the opportunity to continue initiatives and activities that work well, enhance existing activities, initiatives and programmes and plan new initiatives.

*There was a stocktake of what we are doing already ... what more we could be doing to be more age-friendly. We realised there are a lot of things already in place. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

New activities have been linked to the age-friendly plan.

*... collecting oral histories from our older Māori, I know for sure that wouldn't have happened if it hadn't been for this plan. We actually have a team who work in the Hamilton Library who collect oral histories. They've got Kaumātua there who are pushing late 80s early 90s and you know they are not going to be with us for too much longer and we'd like to collect that information before it's too late. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

During the community engagement, numerous activities were identified as inclusive and age-friendly. A good example is the Kaumātua Olympics, a regular event held by the Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust. This event has gained popularity among older Māori.

*... an opportunity to have some fun, to compete but be really light hearted ... it's one event that many from the region emphasise how important it is to have every year, because our Kaumātua look forward to it. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

Improvements to the physical environment and transport systems were underway.

*We've got an improvement in bus services, in the shelters and information that's available for buses. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

Some activities have been around raising awareness in the media.

*Hamilton has recently had quite a bit of media attention around their work ... there's a magazine that goes out in the Midland region called Seniors, so they've put articles in the Seniors magazine about the age-friendly work and what they are doing. (Office for Seniors staff member)*

### **3.8 What age-friendly projects are planned for the future in each pilot site?**

#### **3.8.1 Kāpiti Coast District**

In terms of specific age-friendly initiatives, Kāpiti Coast District Age-Friendly Steering Group has focused on progressing the age-friendly business awards with plans to develop an accreditation system for businesses that provide services and products for older people. Other ageing related activities are establishing annual age-friendly focused events. For example, the age-friendly expo organised by the Older People's Council.

*We have a number of retirement villages in Kāpiti and I believe Kāpiti is about the only one in the country where they run a resident-led inter-village games each year. That brings in a lot of people to the villages to see what it's like. The not-for-profit and corporate sectors get together to do that. I think that's something quite unique to Kāpiti. We also have seminars that have been run by the financial literacy division of the Ministry of Economic Development for people within retirement or looking at retirement villages as a place to live. Other things include developing a website and starting to investigate and talk about the development of an adult playground. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

#### **3.8.2 New Plymouth**

The Age-Friendly New Plymouth Plan had priorities for action under each of the eight age -friendly domains. Lack of housing options for older people living in the area has prompted investigating other living options beyond retirement villages.

*Co-housing is a far better system for older people where they can stay in their own homes but still be within the community. One of the things we are keen about is smaller housing developments, instead of a 600 square metre section they could be 300, and smaller apartments. These could be connected to a social hub which would include access to a doctor, chemist, library and the pub and so on. Rather than sending people like me, in a few years' time, away to a retirement village, those sorts of concepts are the things that we are working on quite seriously. (New Plymouth community member)*

Options to address the lack of transportation in the surrounding rural areas is also being discussed.

*One of the things we are doing is trying to set up a public daily service from Okaihau into town using an electric vehicle. (New Plymouth community member)*

The development of a series of seminars that are of interest to older people have been undertaken and have been a success, so more are planned.

*We did one on how to deal with a civil defence emergency. We did one on the brain and the things you can do to keep your brain active and working. We did one on strokes. So we're doing that sort of thing in conjunction with Grey Power and with our Kaumātua groups because we're trying to get them to come along to these things too. (New Plymouth Steering Group member)*

### **3.8.3 Hamilton**

The Hamilton age-friendly plan details new projects under the eight domains. The plan shows the agencies or individuals responsible, as well as the success indicators and time frames. An example of an upcoming event that promotes active ageing is ...

*It's called 50 Plus, I'm Loving It, and it will be held at Hamilton Gardens. It's a two-day event over a weekend and there will be lots of things for older people. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

Further, some improvements are planned in the outdoor spaces.

*There's been some improved access for parks in Hamilton so that will improve access for both older people and people with disabilities. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

Housing is one of the important issues addressed in the age-friendly plan.

*I think probably in terms of the really big things that have come out of this is housing. We're looking at a centralised housing hub which will be a place where people can go and get information about housing options. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

Another positive outcome from developing the age-friendly plan has been the opportunity for inter-agency collaboration.

*We've got some really great agencies doing some awesome stuff for older people in the community but they don't always talk to each other. A lot of them are running on a shoestring and they just don't have the time, they don't have anybody helping them to kind of collaborate with other organisations and so there's some really good opportunities here for those groups to start talking to each other. Age-friendliness is a really good catalyst to get inter-collaboration going. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

### 3.9 What are the enablers to initiating age-friendly programmes/activities?

Six key enablers to initiating age-friendly programmes/activities have been identified across all sites and are evident in the documents reviewed. These are:

- central government support
- local council support
- a committed steering group
- community engagement
- awareness, and
- strengths-based sustainability.

#### 3.9.1 Central government support

Commitment from central government was identified in all sites as an enabler to implementing the age-friendly framework. Internationally, age-friendly frameworks have succeeded when central government has provided support (Menec et al., 2014).

*I think the Office for Seniors support is important and for us it has been good and that's already an enabler here. You need people at the top level [central government] to help make stuff happen. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

Funding applied for through the Office for Seniors for specific tasks and initiatives and resources from central government were important to progress age-friendly initiatives.

*... financial support to develop our age-friendly plan ... we're really thankful for that because it just wouldn't have looked as good as it does if we hadn't had that. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

Central government attendance at steering group meetings was viewed as being supportive.

*One of the Office for Seniors staff attended all the steering group meetings that were held. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

Ongoing communication with the Office for Seniors was recognised as an enabler.

*I think it is so important that the Office for Seniors for example not only comes out and meets with people that are working in this area but also keeps in touch with them and follows up in an efficient manner so that communication is kept alive. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

#### 3.9.2 Local council support

The majority of participants across the three sites believed having local council buy-in and commitment was imperative for implementing an age-friendly programme and keeping the momentum going. Commitment included having council representation on the Age-Friendly Steering Groups and Mayoral support.

*... total acceptance and publication of that acceptance by KCDC. That to me is absolutely crucial. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

*Our new mayor was very supportive of this and he just said do what you need to do to get it done. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

The Office for Seniors staff had a role in supporting local councils to work with communities to support age-friendly initiatives.

*You have also got to have councils that are willing to engage. So a lot of the work we've been doing has been to raise awareness across the local government sector in particular. To make them aware of the issues and set a framework is fundamental to success. (Office for Seniors staff member)*

Additionally, working with community-led initiatives required local councils to work in a new way with their communities. This means an environment where the local council listens to the community and are not “in charge”.

*The challenge was really leading from behind and making sure that projects were robust and met the needs of the community. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

Local councils provided resources including people resources, use of venues and administrative assistance.

### **3.9.3 A committed steering group**

A committed steering group was central to the process of implementing an age-friendly programme.

*... having strong leadership from within the community. We couldn't have done what we have without the experience of the members of the steering group. All of whom were well-respected, informed and committed people. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

It was also recognised that managing community politics was a necessary skill required by the steering group leadership.

*Someone that's passionate about it but a little bit removed as well, so they can have the conversations with the different groups and navigate their way through all the local community politics. Having the right kind of knowledge and skill set is important. (Office for Seniors staff member)*

All three pilot communities had existing groups such as the Kāpiti Older Persons Council, the New Plymouth Positive Ageing Trust, and the Hamilton Older People's Advisory Group that advised the local council. These groups provided the foundation for the Age-Friendly Steering Groups and previous work undertaken was incorporated into the AFCC programmes.

### 3.9.4 Community engagement

Listening to the voice of the community supported a bottom-up approach considered vital to implementing an age-friendly framework. Utilising networks was identified as a way to facilitate engagement.

*... going out and utilising a number of the networks and structures that are in place is really important.* (New Plymouth community member)

Having a wide range of voices that reflected diversity in the community was considered to be an enabler.

*It's really easy to focus on a particular segment of the community that's likely to turn up to the council meetings and complain about their rates. Because they're the ones that turn up and engage it is important to make sure that you get the voices from other parts of the community as well ... taking every opportunity to promote and talk to a wide range of people.* (New Plymouth community member)

Furthermore, learning from and sharing information with other age-friendly communities was identified as a strength in the process.

*Sharing amongst different councils and different communities that are also doing age-friendly means that they can share ideas, share tools, share approaches ... so that everybody is not busily trying to navigate their way through the minefield all by themselves.* (Office for Seniors staff member)

*I visited the New York age-friendly project ... I also visited age-friendly in Melbourne. I would be expecting the communities in New Zealand to visit each other to discuss, share ideas and support each other.* (Hamilton Steering Group member)

Learning how other communities have engaged with iwi was considered important for developing a bi-cultural approach.

*Because of the challenges we have had, it would be really good to understand how other communities have engaged with their iwi partners. I think there's a lot of value in Māori frameworks where there's a natural fit with Kaumātua. So I think that's really important and something that possibly would be a learning for other projects.* (Kāpiti Steering Group member)

### 3.9.5 Awareness

Some participants found once the community was exposed to issues older people and people with disabilities faced they became advocates of the age-friendly concept. Promoting the AFCC framework as inclusive of all ages was considered important as it reduced some of the negative attitudes in the community.

*I think looking at frameworks where that whole idea of age-friendly being for all ages and all abilities with some inclusivity and accessibility and some strategies works. If you look at places like Melbourne who have embraced the whole 'let's make it accessible for all ages' has worked extremely well. Age-friendly is for toddlers, people who have a disability and those who have English as a second language. (Kāpiti community member)*

*If people came on board and realised that age-friendly is about all ages I think we would get a far better buy-in from the public at large. (New Plymouth community member)*

Raising awareness of age-friendly initiatives was linked to communication and providing information. Some of the ways older people communicated and received information included local news media, social media, the public library, the internet, word of mouth, radio, newsletters from various groups and information centres.

*The SuperSeniors website and Facebook page start to become channels that can be influential and start to build awareness that then people can see something that is of use to them. (Office for Seniors staff member)*

For some, face to face communication was the most valued.

*I honestly believe it's going out and utilising a number of the networks and structures that are in place and actually talking to people face to face (New Plymouth community member)*

### **3.9.6 Strengths-based sustainability**

Participants identified the importance of taking a strengths-based approach to age-friendly initiatives. Utilising existing resources and building on established infrastructure and systems was an enabler.

*Building on what already exists is important, if the community is going to do something like this, first of all they have to look at the resources that it already has. (New Plymouth Steering Group member)*

The Office for Seniors envisage an age-friendly framework that reflects the New Zealand context.

*In New Zealand we have a common understanding of what age-friendly means that reflects our unique societal and cultural setting. We are operating in a bicultural society where Treaty of Waitangi is the foundation document and I would expect to see some of those principles and ways that Māori society operates, capture those within the framework. It is important that it is uniquely a New Zealand framework. (Office for Seniors staff member)*

Involving broad networks across the community and having ongoing support from the council was important for sustainability.

*Look it's around that multidisciplinary, multi-agency interaction. For me the critical ingredient has been getting the key organisations together who provide services to older people and the absolute cornerstone of that is having the city council support. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

Planning the implementation stage, forming a committed implementation group with clear goals and framework to evaluate and manage progress was important for sustainability.

*So we'd actually put in a very clear process as to how this is going to be implemented. We've got an implementation group that will meet. We've said they were going to meet quarterly and they will report to Hamilton City Council every six months about how things are going. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

### **3.10 What are the barriers to initiating age-friendly programmes/activities?**

Five key barriers to initiating age-friendly programmes/activities have been identified across all sites. These are:

- lack of support from central government
- lack of support from local councils
- difficulties getting started
- lack of wider community engagement, and
- ageist attitudes.

#### **3.10.1 Lack of support from central government**

Support coming from the Office for Seniors staff was appreciated; however, some participants perceived central government were under-funding age-friendly initiatives.

*The Office are really supportive but I think they are really under-resourced, that's part of the problem. If we're talking about ageing being a significant issue for the country this is a tiny little office that's part of MSD [Ministry of Social Development] and they often just don't have the resources. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

Office for Seniors staff recognised the lack of resources available to communities.

*Some other countries have got quite robust toolkits and frameworks. Western Australia has got a local council committee that provides professional support for managers and councils. Canada has annual training workshops for communities wanting to become age-friendly. We've updated the website and added more clarity around the step-by-step process but really the material that we've got to help communities through the support we provide at a national level I think could be a bit better. (Office for Seniors staff member)*

A further barrier to progress at central government level was lack of an integrated approach to addressing the opportunities and challenges associated with an ageing

population. Office for Seniors staff linked this to a lack of common understanding of the demographic changes occurring.

*There is a lack of a common understanding across central government and some local government around the size and significance of demographic change. This influences at a regional level in particular and the need to be thinking differently about service delivery and the proportion of older people in our communities and what that's going to look like in quite a short period of time. (Office for Seniors staff member)*

### **3.10.2 Lack of support from local councils**

Local government support was not always available to age-friendly initiatives.

*I just wish the council would get a little bit more interested in it, that's all. Because they're a key player really. (New Plymouth Steering Group member)*

Paucity of support was linked to lack of knowledge about the age-friendly framework and having other priorities.

*I think lack of training and knowledge around the issues especially within council. So work being done without turning an eye to age-friendly issues. I think that's about training and about identifying that this issue is going to be more significant in the future and that's about making age-friendly a priority. It is a real issue now and in the future, I think we're really on the back foot. I really think it needs to be a priority for officers as well as elected members. A real fear of mine that we end up in a situation where we've got the most unusable community for older people and there's a large majority of our community that will be in that bracket. (New Plymouth Council Community Partnership Lead)*

In New Zealand, local council elections caused disruption to progress when changes in council staff and Mayor lacked knowledge of the age-friendly framework . This challenge was also identified in age-friendly initiatives in Canada (Menec et al., 2014).

### **3.10.3 Difficulties getting started**

Difficulties getting started associated with challenging group dynamics and individual personalities delayed progress of an age-friendly programme.

*It took a long time for us to get going. Initially our meetings were a glorified talk fest and very little emerged as a concrete outcome. I have to say, there's quite a few personalities in the older population and for them all sitting around one table and coming to an agreement that was a hurdle. (Kāpiti Community member)*

There was a heavy reliance on people volunteering their time to progress age-friendly initiatives. Involving people over a long period of time was challenging for some groups.

*I probably spent at least one day a week for two years doing this and that's a lot of time ... we have to be aware that in some communities they may be short of some of those resources. (Hamilton Steering Group member).*

*We find it extremely difficult for people to actually put up their hand and take a share of the work. It just seems to be that they make comments but don't seem able or willing to follow through. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

Groups were overwhelmed by the detail. The scope of the age-friendly framework was broad and could be daunting at the beginning of the process.

*People got bogged down in some of the detail and started going around in circles. When you look at the age-friendly framework, it's huge and it can be really daunting and can derail people which impacts on being able to make progress. (Office for Seniors staff member)*

#### **3.10.4 Lack of wider community engagement**

The difficulty in capturing a wide and diverse community voice was recognised. Engaging with a diverse representation of the community has been identified elsewhere as essential in forming an inclusive age-friendly plan (Buffel et al., 2014).

*I think only a section of our community was engaged with. There are many others who for one reason or another were not consulted. For example, those who are marginalised and forgotten because they're isolated will not have been consulted. (Kāpiti community member)*

There was also a perception that Māori were not always adequately consulted.

*In terms of our Māori engagement ... because generally when we have a project like this we would approach [name of Māori iwi] and have discussions with them. But I think they are going through a bit of a restructure at the moment so that wasn't an easy process for us. (Hamilton Steering Group member)*

More work was needed in finding ways to engage with Māori and migrant groups.

*When the age-friendly steering group decided to initiate some work there wasn't a lens for Māori or migrant groups, so that was a major disadvantage. Consequently, overall I would have to say that neither of these groups have been adequately consulted with and more work needs to be undertaken. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

#### **3.10.5 Ageist attitudes**

Ageist attitudes from the communities and local councils had negatively impacted on age-friendly initiatives. Further, media had contributed to negative attitudes by problematising ageing. Marketing the benefits for all ages to the community had been important in overcoming negative attitudes.

*European society tends to treat a lot of old people as old and stupid. I found some quite disrespectful attitudes really from some of the agencies I spoke to. They really just feel that this was older people whining or just self-entitled and they had it all and they ruined the planet kind of thing. I found that quite shameful really from some of the people. I don't think it's recognised enough how vulnerable they are at all kinds of levels. (New Plymouth community member)*

*Age-friendly is for older people. I guess it is an interpretation by the people, and that's my biggest hurdle ... because coming from a disability point of view, the majority of our clients and people we work with are disabled, they are not over 65 necessarily and it's their disability that prevents them from being included. (Kāpiti Steering Group member)*

## **4. Discussion**

The results from this evaluation identified the three pilot sites, Kāpiti Coast District, New Plymouth and Hamilton utilised different approaches and progressed at different rates in implementing age-friendly programmes. Firstly, this section provides a discussion of the key success factors in implementing the age-friendly programmes. Secondly, how bi-cultural values have been incorporated in the age-friendly programmes is examined. Thirdly, the role of the Office for Seniors in implementing the age-friendly cities and communities framework in the New Zealand context is considered. Finally, a list of critical success factors are presented.

### **4.1 Key success factors**

#### **4.1.1 A top-down approach**

Commitment from central government was identified by the three pilot sites as a key success factor to initiating the age-friendly programmes. Commitment by Office for Seniors to integrate the age-friendly framework with other programmes addressing inclusion of older people was strengthened by discussions around the country with motivated communities. Attendance at Age-Friendly Steering Group meetings and the associated support and encouragement offered by Office for Seniors staff was valued. Moreover, the Office for Seniors staff were able to bring a wider perspective and provide some useful resources such as demographic data and access to experts in the field. International frameworks have identified a central government hub to connect people, ideas and resources, all of which supports sustainability (Jeste et al., 2016). Additionally, funding to advance specific projects was considered by the pilot sites to be an important indication of central government commitment.

#### **4.1.2 Local government buy-in**

Support from local councils was essential to the progress of the age-friendly programmes; although, there was some disagreement on how the local councils should be involved. A key success factor was having a dedicated council representative sitting on Age-Friendly Steering Groups. This enabled access to a range of resources and recognition from the councils that they were committed to the age-friendly programmes. Each pilot site had existing advisory groups, previously established to advise the local council on ageing related issues and/or to promote positive ageing in the community. These groups were well positioned to transition to an Age-Friendly Steering Group. Existing relationships between steering group members and local councillors facilitated progress of age-friendly programmes. Furthermore, priorities previously identified by advisory groups provided the foundation for age-friendly programmes. A commitment from local councils to supporting age-friendly communities was evident in most sites and is considered an important success factor in the international literature (Menec et al., 2014).

#### **4.1.3. A bottom-up approach**

Findings demonstrate examples where age-friendly initiatives are community driven. Leaders of age-friendly programmes in each of the sites came from a variety of community backgrounds including the disability sector. Each pilot site approached forming their steering groups in different ways ranging from hand-picked people from the community with specific skills and knowledge, to people from the community representing interest groups and concerns of older people they served. A formative evaluation of age-friendly initiatives in Canada found communities with well organised age-friendly committees were more successful in advancing projects (Menec et al., 2014). In the current study, sites enlisting a community approach had members who were well informed about urgent issues and concerns of older people in their communities. Similarly, having an age-friendly champion from the community has been a success factor in other studies (Menec et al., 2015). However, competing personal and group agendas had a tendency to derail meetings.

#### **4.1.4 Community consultation**

All pilot sites undertook community needs assessments based on the eight WHO age-friendly domains. Success factors included consulting widely in the community, finding

out what already exists, identifying gaps and determining what the community needs to become more age-friendly. Experts from within the steering group or through contracting an outside expert contributed to successful needs assessments being undertaken. Strong inter-sectoral collaborations between agencies and communities are evident and were incorporated into age-friendly plans. These findings resonate with international age-friendly studies (Menec et al., 2015). Unfortunately consultation processes illuminated instances where ageist attitudes from communities and local councils were evident. Ageist attitudes are identified as barriers to implementing age-friendly initiatives (Buffel et al., 2014).

#### **4.1.5 Getting traction with manageable projects**

The needs assessment processes undertaken in each of the areas identified existing activities and projects that were age-friendly. These included enhancing access to outdoor spaces, widening footpaths and improving disabled parking. These achievements were encouraging to the community and provided the impetus to progress other age-friendly projects. Examples identified by steering groups as priorities included improved transportation options and centralised housing hubs which could take longer to advance as they required inter-agency collaboration and complex planning.

#### **4.2 How bi-cultural values are incorporated**

The Office for Seniors recognised the opportunity to develop a uniquely New Zealand age-friendly bi-cultural approach which was echoed by each participating site. All sites acknowledged the limited representation of Māori-for-Māori on the steering groups. One of the sites specifically targeted Māori representation through close links to the council, but recognised this representation was not reflective of the wider Māori community. Each site had some engagement with Māori, however several barriers to wider engagement were identified. These barriers included the challenges engaging with Māori across different geographical locations and differing perspectives from iwi groups. Steering groups used existing networks and connections, as well as local council support to engage with Māori. As a result of this engagement one of the communities had established a new age-friendly initiative specifically for older Māori.

### **4.3 Engagement with migrant groups**

Minimal engagement and consultation with migrant groups was evident. Only one community had engaged with migrant communities, resulting in the inclusion of culturally specific activities in their age-friendly plan. The lack of engagement with migrant communities is well recognised internationally, resulting in age-friendly programmes being criticised for being Eurocentric. The importance of including the perspectives of migrant communities when implementing age-friendly programmes has been highlighted in international literature (Phillipson, 2018).

### **4.4 Role of the Office for Seniors**

A key role of the Office for Seniors is to provide advice and information to the Minister for Seniors on issues relating to older people. Additionally, Office for Seniors staff considered their role was to raise awareness of the ageing population across other government agencies. This would enable wider central government discussions and collaboration that would further support New Zealand becoming age-friendly.

At the local level, Office for Seniors envisaged a role in facilitating collaboration between communities and local councils. The Office for Seniors should also provide capability training and access to toolkits and resources for communities and councils to utilise. Resources could include age-friendly frameworks for use in the New Zealand setting. As age-friendly programmes advance, there is potential for providing guidance and support on best practice outcome measures that could be used as evaluation tools.

### **Critical success factors are when:**

- there is buy-in from central and local government
- the Office for Seniors provide on-going support and resources
- age-friendly programmes are community-led
- age-friendly community partnerships are developed with Māori and migrant groups
- there is diverse representation on steering groups
- steering groups have clearly articulated vision, purpose and goals

- steering groups have strong community representation
- steering groups have skilled and effective leadership
- there is succession planning for leadership on steering groups
- a dedicated council representative sits on the steering group
- there is endorsement of the age-friendly programme by local council
- the Office for Seniors facilitate a relationship between steering groups and local council when necessary
- there are mechanisms for raising awareness of the age-friendly brand using a wide range of media and formats
- ageism is challenged and addressed, and
- communities have the expertise and ability to undertake their own needs assessments.

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