

# Age Friendly initiatives in Whangārei

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# We will be talking about:

## *Pensioner Housing Development*



## *Silver Festival*





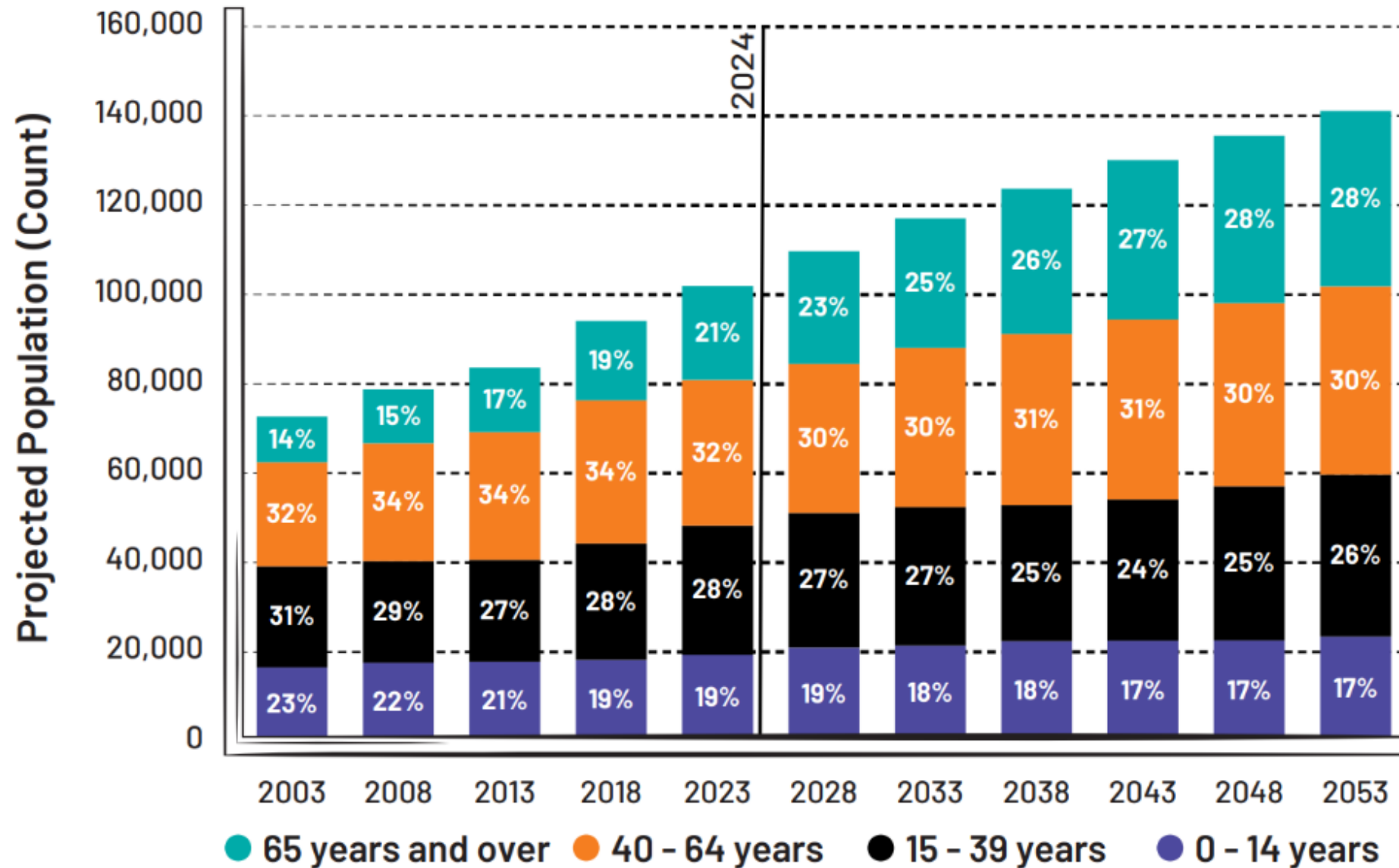
**Total population:** 96,678

**Ethnicity:** 76.30% European, 31 % Māori, 6.4% Asian

**21% of the population is aged 65 or older**, a proportion significantly higher than the national average for New Zealand (17%).

**Median Age:** 41.6 years in the Whangārei District, compared to the national median age of 38.1 years.

## Whangārei District population projections by age







# Silver Festival





# Overview

## Purpose & Evolution

**Goals:** Combat social isolation post-COVID, support small volunteer-led groups, and connect seniors with their community.

**Growth:** Expanded from a 3-day event with 44 activities to a 2-week program featuring 70 events.

**Approach:** Focuses on small, intimate gatherings to create safe spaces.

## Advisory Group Role

Council's Positive Ageing Advisory Group initiated and trialed the festival, advocated for council support, and continues to advise on accessibility and relevance.

They engage directly with local groups to promote participation and distribute materials.



# Key outcomes

## Inclusivity & Diversity

Emphasis on accessibility, intergenerational activities, and representation of Māori and multicultural communities.

Events cater to varied interests including tech, creativity, physical activity, and entrepreneurship.

## Capacity Building

- Promotes Whangārei as an Ageing-friendly city.
- Encourages organisations to value older adults.
- Builds local skills and connections through collaborative event planning.
- Supports local community organisations as a marketing and exposure avenue
- The festival booklet serves as a year-round resource and directory.



# Benefits

## Local Economy Boost:

- Businesses involved see at least a 10% increase in activity.
- Provides opportunities for businesses to showcase services and grow over time.
- Attracts visitors, encourages spending during off-peak periods, and stimulates the regional economy.

**Social Connection:** Opportunities to meet new people, strengthen relationships, and combat loneliness.

**Physical Activity:** Events encourage movement through dance, sports, and gentle exercise, improving health and mobility.

**Mental Stimulation:** Includes workshops, lectures, and creative arts to keep minds active and reduce cognitive decline risk.

**Sense of Purpose & Fun:** Participation brings joy, a sense of value, and enhances overall life satisfaction.



## SILVER FESTIVAL *Group Bike Ride*



Bring yourself, your helmet and your bike and explore some of Whangārei's shared path network!

This is your chance to meet other riders and discover some great places to ride.

Ebikes, bikes and trikes are all welcome. Let's roll!

**Free!**

Friday 10 October 2025  
10:00 am - 12:30pm approx  
Ride starts and finishes at Pohe Island Bike Park  
109 Dave Culham Drive, Whangārei

For more information please email [info@bikenorthland.co.nz](mailto:info@bikenorthland.co.nz)



# But funding...

- Event costs around \$13-14k (mainly marketing, staff, printing)
- Previously funded through Council's Event Development fund though this cannot continue in 2026. Gained a one-off contribution from Community Funding for 2025
- ACC and others due to cost cutting measures no longer sponsors this event.
- Trial run of advertising in booklet from local business/museums offering a silver festival special/discount to older adults.
- Need sponsorship to cover costs for future events.



# Pensioner Housing in Whangārei



# Background

- Whangarei District Council is currently the largest provider of affordable rental housing for older people in the district, managing 164 units across 16 different sites.
- Positive Ageing Advisory Group made a submission to the Long Term Plan 2021-2031 for increased housing stock and maintenance funding.
- In 2022, a Council briefing confirmed a desire to retain and potentially expand the pensioner housing portfolio.
- Whangārei District Housing Strategy highlighted housing issues for older adults prompting a review.



# Review findings



- The current model is financially unsustainable.
- Rising costs and limited redevelopment potential hinder expansion.
- Council cannot access **government subsidies** like the Income-Related Rent Subsidy (IRRS), available only to registered Community Housing Providers (CHPs).
- Other councils are facing similar challenges and shifting away from direct provision

Recommendations included:

- expanding portfolio by purchasing units delivered by others
- selling units that were not meeting the needs of tenants
- partnering with an existing Community Housing Provider

Review of Pensioner Housing:  
Future Growth Opportunities  
Whangarei District Council

September 2024

# Recent developments

## **Affordable Housing Partnership**

Formal collaboration between Council and Habitat for Humanity to deliver affordable housing for older adults in Maunu.

## **Project Overview**

- Location: 469 State Highway 14, Maunu
- Investment: \$11 million
- Units: 26 one-bedroom homes
- Features: Dedicated parking, communal spaces to foster social connection

## **Council's Contribution**

- Purchasing 8 units for seniors (65+) with limited financial means
- Homes leased back to Habitat for Humanity to manage
- Rent capped at 25% of residents' income

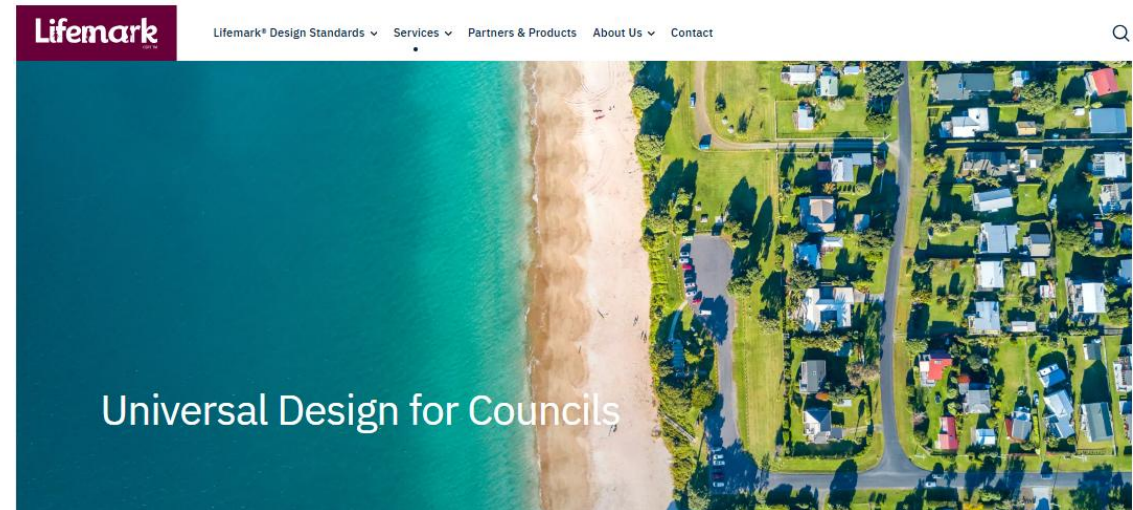


# Design standards

- Built to Lifemark 4 and 5 standards
- Lifemark is based on Universal Design which is designing for all ages, life stages and abilities
- Ensures accessibility, safety, and suitability for ageing in place
- Supports individuals with significant mobility needs

<https://www.lifemark.co.nz/our-design-standards/why-universal-design>

<https://www.lifemark.co.nz/services/councils>





# Q & A session

For more information on:

- **Pensioner housing**

Jacki Cooper – Manager Community Development [jacki.cooper@wdc.govt.nz](mailto:jacki.cooper@wdc.govt.nz)

- **Silver Festival**

Nicole Stanton – Community Development Advisor [nicole.stanton@wdc.govt.nz](mailto:nicole.stanton@wdc.govt.nz)