

Over 65 and not out!

Our population is ageing – fast. By 2030, about 1 million NZers will be over 65.

What do older adults want from their recreation?

How might this be changing?

Aging communities

Some communities have much [larger proportions of older adults](#) aged over 65 compared with NZ's main centres (10-16% of population): Thames-Coromandel (31%); Marlborough (22%)

The proportion of people over 65 is increasing.

People are seeking activity

Older people [would like to do more](#) active recreation (55% of people 65-74; 35% of people over 75)

Inter-generational opportunities [are of particular value](#). Older adults benefit in such ways as improved communication and decision-making, connection and feeling valued, children benefit in many ways including academic achievement, confidence, role models, and emotional bonding.

Physical activity also gives [structure and meaning](#) to people's lives, according to new research.

Equity is an issue

60% of single adults and 40% of couples aged over 65 [have little or no income](#) beyond NZ superannuation.

Maori, Pasifika, refugee and migrant older adults, and women are [more likely to be financially disadvantaged](#).

Challenges for recreation provision

- **Older adults are not a homogenous group:** one 70-year-old might be healthy and active - another may have life-long health issues from work-related injury.
- **One-size doesn't fit all.** People seek to recreate with their cohort: whanau and family, or those of similar ability and interests, or those in their physical community, or on their own.
- **Barriers to participation still exist:** physical, social and intra-personal. (eg) People starting exercise after a lifetime of working, or after illness or injury; or people trying to manage on a reduced income.
- **We are a bicultural and superdiverse nation.** Provision for older adults whatever their age or ability also needs to be a perfect cultural fit
- **Changed motivations:** changes in health status, recovery from illness or injury, change and loss in life can all impact on a person's ability or motivation to participate.



Benefits of activity to overall health

Participation improves overall health of older adults [in myriad ways](#).

Regular active recreation participation impacts the physical, mental and emotional health of older adults. It keeps older adults well for longer, allowing them to stay connected to their communities and to age in place.

Cultural connectedness is of value to all, particularly Māori and Pasifika. The longitudinal [LiLACS study](#) of people 85 years and over found that almost all Māori had been to a marae in the last 12 months (82%). Māori in advanced age living in areas of higher socioeconomic deprivation were significantly more likely to attend marae.

Activity as injury preventer and rehab

Active recreation can prevent illness and be a way of recovering from illness or injury. Active recreation [prevents falls](#) by providing strength and balance based activity.

There is increased focus on improved health outcomes for people following serious illness, such as [cancer](#), through participation in regular and appropriate physical activity.

Continued participation in cultural and recreation activity contributes to quality of life.

Preferred activities (Active NZ)

Activity	adults aged	
	65–74	75+
Walking	56	42
Gardening	32	25
Individual workout with equipment	13	7

Deprivation impacts on participation: those in high deprivation areas were significantly less likely to walk, do Pilates or yoga, swim or cycle. Boxing was popular as were other home-based activities.

Top 3 motivations to participate (adults 65-74 yrs)

- Physical wellbeing (75%)
- Emotional wellbeing (23%)
- Fun (21%)

For those aged 75+ fun comes in at almost 20% and 'emotional wellbeing' takes second place.

Case Studies

Golden Guys fitness class, [CLM the Bays](#)

This men-only class is aimed at the older man. Participants complete a pre-exercise medical questionnaire to ensure awareness of any illness or injury; and the instructor gives multiple options where needed for different participants' needs.

'This circuit-based class works on strength, cardio, core and flexibility - in a friendly, non-judgmental environment.'



Image: CLM The Bays group fitness class

Age Friendly Hamilton

Older adults initiatives as part of Hamilton City Council's [Age Friendly City plan](#) include the following projects (as examples only):

- Exercise stations installed in retirement villages, staff to observe/record use
- Consultation with older adults on design of public buildings
- Regular cycle trainings for older refugees and migrants
- Provision of mobility scooters and wheelchairs at Hamilton Public Gardens

Aroha Ngā Mokopuna Project

Explore opportunities to expand [Aroha Ngā Mokopuna Project](#) connecting Kaumātua and school students, to promote healthy lifestyles and foster cultural connections. This project was created by Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust. Watch [this clip](#) for more info.

Principles in action

Policy	Recognise specific needs of diverse range of older adults Inclusive policy (eg vulnerable populations, pricing) Use good data
Environment	Design – accessibility of spaces and buildings including transport, parking
Physical	Toilets – remember the Loo Leash
Social	Accessibility – including physical, aural and sensory Create opportunities
Social engagement	Networks - using existing (finding your peeps, one or many) Cultural click - Maori, Pasifika, migrant groups
Whanau, family	Encouragement & active support Multi-generational activity Enabling attitudes and open minds
Intra-personal	Self perception - what is possible Reframing identity as an older adult Addressing loss of confidence (mental/physical/emotional change)

Further reading and resources

Stats NZ <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/national-population-projections-2020base2073#ageing>