Timaru District

Age-Friendly Strategy

2022 - 2025







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Overview

Timaru District's Population

Populations are ageing for the first time in human history. Although New Zealand's population is still growing, it is structurally ageing – it is becoming hyper-aged.

Fertility rates have dropped steadily, and people are living longer. Mathematically, this means the proportion of young people is shrinking, while the proportion of older people is growing.

This is happening in almost every community in the country including the Timaru District and our neighbouring regions.

In the Timaru District the total estimated 2023 population is 48,710 an increase of 14% since 2006. Department of Statistics project that the total population will increase by only 1% by 2048.

During these same two time periods the over 65 population increased by 45% and from 2006 -2023 through to 2048 is projected to increase by a further 32%. The under 65 aged population is expected to peak in 2023 and then decline by 85% by 2048.

Timaru District Population Projections 2018 Base - 2048

| | 2006 | 2013 | 2018 | 2023 | 2028 | 2033 | 2038 | 2043 | 2048 |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Under 15 years | 8253 | 7956 | 8289 | 8400 | 8000 | 7600 | 7300 | 7100 | 7000 |
| 15-29 years | 6591 | 6864 | 7596 | 7340 | 7250 | 7230 | 7170 | 6780 | 6450 |
| 30-64 years | 20178 | 20109 | 20280 | 21570 | 21200 | 20760 | 20450 | 20730 | 20860 |
| 65+ | 7845 | 9003 | 10128 | 11400 | 12900 | 14100 | 14900 | 15000 | 15000 |
| Total | 42867 | 43932 | 46293 | 48710 | 49350 | 49690 | 49820 | 49610 | 49310 |

Timaru District has a high proportion of older people and will experience an increasing proportion of older residents in future years.

Currently the 65+ age population is about 24% of the total population. The 80+ age population is 6.1%. By 2048 nearly one third of the population will be age 65 and over (80+ will be 12%).

By 2048 there will be 6,000 residents aged 80+, twice the current 80+ population.

As more baby-boomers reach 65 years of age through the next 15 years, this will place increasing demands on Council, health agencies, and social support resources.

Why does this matter?

The greater the number of older people in our community, the greater the need is for affordable and accessible housing, improved access to medical and health systems, and associated community and age-related services. Making the district as age-friendly as possible is becoming increasingly important.

Some communities are better set up to support their expanding ageing populations than others with facilities, accessible spaces and venues, and services that enable people to participate, contribute, and be valued as they age.

This ageing population presents a significant opportunity for businesses and service providers who are willing to innovate, enhance existing products and services, or develop new product lines suitable for the older consumer.

This Age-Friendly Strategy has been developed from community discussions where older people and stakeholders identified issues for improvement. It is expected

that this will lead the way to building liveable communities where people can 'age-inplace' and progress actions that will make the Timaru District a vibrant and age-friendly community. One where older people are engaged and connected to a community that values, respects and supports them and who have the best possible future with opportunities to achieve their full potential, regardless of their capacities, resources, lifestyles, or preferences.

Our community is already doing remarkable work, and this document seeks to reinforce and improve these efforts, as well as identify new opportunities to address any remaining gaps in services for older people in the Timaru District.



National Context

In 2019, the Office for Seniors published Better Later Life, He Oranga Kaumātua. This is a strategy that maps the way forward for senior care nationally through to 2034. The strategy identifies the following key areas for action:

- Achieving financial security and economic participation.
- Promoting healthy ageing and improving access to services.
- Creating diverse housing choices and options.
- Enhancing opportunities for participation and social connection.

These priorities set the national priorities and inform some of what Timaru needs to be thinking about in its strategy.

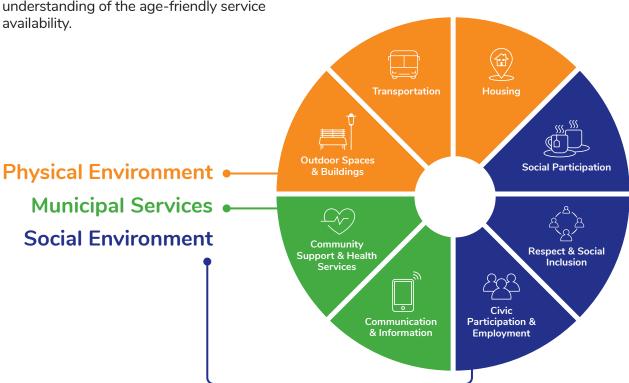
International Context

The WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities project provides criteria and checklists that can be used for the assessment of towns and cities regarding the current state of their age-friendly service provision capabilities and standards. It can also be used to map a path for progression toward age-friendly goals.

WHO recommends that for work to be most effective, older people should be involved as key participants as they have the greatest understanding of the age-friendly service

The WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities project includes eight categories:

- Housing
- Social participation
- **Transportation**
- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Community support and health services
- Communication and information
- Civic participation and employment
- Respect and social inclusion



Timaru's Positive **Ageing Vision**

What you told us

How the Age-Friendly Strategy was developed.

The Timaru District Council and Venture Timaru, established a multi-agency Age-Friendly Communities Steering Group (AFCSG).

Working collaboratively the steering group designed, developed and undertook consultation with the community throughout the Timaru District. Consultation included community workshops, a community survey, and discussions with a variety of agencies and organisations that provide support or services for older people in the Timaru District.

The purpose of the consultation was to hear directly from residents about the key issues facing older people in the Timaru District and find out what can be done to improve the age-friendliness of the city.

Vision

The Timaru District is the ideal place to grow older and lead valued, connected and fulfilling lives.

Goals

- Build liveable communities which respect, value, and support people to actively participate and contribute to community life as they age.
- Value the wisdom and experience of our older community members.
- Celebrate diversity and work to eliminate ageism and inequities.
- Appreciate and celebrate cultural and ethnic diversity.
- Be actively inclusive in how we deliver services and provide information.
- Support people to live independently in the community as they age.
- Provide appropriate and accessible public spaces and buildings.

Principles

- Focus on the needs and wellbeing of our older people.
- Build on what we already have in place.
- Encourage and empower local community action.
- Foster, celebrate, and promote opportunities for older people to contribute to business and the wider community.
- Work in partnership.
- Respect cultural differences and viewpoints.

What you told us



Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Upgrades or new facilities should consider how older people will use them and should be designed in ways that are accessible to older people. Physical barriers will stop many from using them, along with real or perceived risks to safety.

Parks and recreation spaces must have good surface conditions with fully accessible pathways, walking tracks and cycling trails. They need large clear signage, good parking, including plenty of mobility parking and well designed, safe pedestrian crossings. Other features include good lighting, plenty of shade and seating, and clean toilets.



Respect and Social Inclusion

Many respondents felt that the community in general does not always show respect for older people and does not value their experience or recognise they are an important part of society.

This was across most age groups, ethnicities and locations and included:

- Planning of council amenities and events
- Communication and information (too much reliance on mobile phone and digital platforms).
- Employment (ageist attitudes from some employers are a barrier to employment).
- There is a lack of respect for non-Euro-centric ethnicities – especially Māori, Pacific and Asian.



Transportation

The MyWay service rates very highly with those who live in the Timaru township however, those living in rural communities and satellite towns do not have the same access to public transport. This is considered a substantial barrier to those who may no longer have their licence and cannot afford some of the alternative services.



Housing

There is a high rate of home ownership amongst older people, but this is changing quickly as younger generations begin to move into retirement age. More older people will be renters, with less expendable incomes than generations before them and this will result in more older people requiring rental accommodation, social housing or other semi-communal alternatives including retirement villages.

As residents' housing needs change over time, it is important that a range of housing choices and support services continues to be provided throughout the Timaru District, to allow people to live independently and remain part of their communities as they age.

Some key challenges include:

- Housing modifications are not affordable.
- There are not enough smaller units.
- Affordable and social housing wait lists
- Housing is not located near amenities (especially transport links), leading to social isolation and a loss of independence.



Social Participation

There are a range of community facilities and events in the Timaru District suitable for older people and which encourage social participation, but there is no central hub where older people can connect and meet others.

Many agencies in the Timaru District provide programmes that aim to increase social participation. However, most of these agencies operate on limited budgets, often with external funding which must be applied for annually.



Communication and Information

Many older people do not have access to a mobile phone or the internet, so their main source of information is newspaper and newsletters from community organisations or churches. It is important this is considered when planning distribution of information.



Civic Participation and **Employment**

Respondents identified a lack of opportunity for ongoing education and suggested there could be more flexible approaches to employment.

Some respondents felt that community leaders and councillors do not listen to older people when planning council amenities and projects like new buildings, roading upgrades or footpath repairs.



Community Support and Health Services

Many people consider our health and community support services to be adequate. However, there are a significant number of people who struggle to access information and some health services. This is more noticeable in smaller towns and rural areas.



Outdoor Spaces & Public Buildings

Context:

Outdoor spaces and public buildings are critical for older people as they provide opportunities for social interaction, physical activity, and access to essential services.

It is important that these spaces are designed with accessibility in mind. This includes having fully accessible pathways, walking tracks, and cycling trails, as well as clear signage and ample parking including designated mobility parking. Other essential features include well-lit areas, plenty of shade and seating, and clean restroom facilities.

The public spaces and recreational areas in Timaru District, particularly Caroline Bay, are cherished among older people.

Any upgrades or new developments must prioritise the accessibility and usability of these spaces so that older members of the community can continue to enjoy and benefit from them.

What older people told us about outdoor spaces and public buildings:

- Timaru District's outdoor parks and green spaces are enjoyed by many older people.
- Ensuring that footpaths are in good condition for pedestrians, wheelchair users, mobility scooters and for people with vision or mobility impairments is important.



The community has places to enjoy and be part of outdoor activities that are accessible and where people feel safe.

| Actio | n Required | Status | Responsible Party |
|-------|--|---------|--|
| 1.1 | Greater consideration of accessibility and usability for older people in any upgrades or new developments in parks and open spaces. | Ongoing | Timaru District Council Parks & Recreation Team |
| 1.2 | Mapping of Timaru District accessible public facilities including toilets, local walkways, parks and transport. | New | Venture TimaruTimaru District Council |
| 1.3 | Develop a resting-place plan to provide more accessible outdoor seating across the Timaru District. | New | Age ConcernCommunity groups |
| 1.4 | Continue to improve footpaths, walkways and safety and security of public outdoor spaces – review surface conditions, increase widths and improve curb transitions | Ongoing | Timaru District Council |



Transport & Mobility

Context:

Transport plays a crucial role in connecting older people to essential services, programmes, employment opportunities, and social engagements in our communities.

Public transport, active transport like walking and cycling, and mobility aids are crucial for the elderly. They are more likely to be users of public transport, and therefore, access to safe, reliable, and affordable public transport is particularly important.

The maintenance of footpaths, cycle paths, and cycleways is crucial for the safety of older people who use active transport.

Timaru is well served by the on-demand MyWay by Metro Service, with the SuperGold card providing free off-peak travel for older people.

Ensuring accessible and reliable transport systems is vital for the independence and quality of life of our older citizens.

What older people told us about transport and mobility:

- Uneven walkways caused by cobblestone and tree roots act as a barrier to walking and the safe use of mobility scooters, walkers, and wheelchairs.
- MyWay rates highly, there are suggested improvements relating to accessing the MyWay app, the need for an expanded service (hours and location) and the lack of a booking service.
- More thought should be given to public transport options for residents living in satellite towns and rural areas.



Everyone's needs are considered in the planning and operation of transport infrastructure and public transport services.

| Actio | n Required | Status | Responsible Party |
|-------|---|---------|--|
| 2.1 | Continue to ensure that the public transport services are responsive to the needs of older people. | Ongoing | Environment CanterburyTimaru District Council |
| 2.2 | Continue to provide driver refresher training for older people. | Ongoing | Age ConcernWaka Kotahi |
| 2.3 | All footpaths and crossings are designed, upgraded, and maintained to provide safe use by pedestrians especially older people | Ongoing | Timaru District Council |
| 2.4 | All walking and cycle paths are designed and maintained to provide safe use and meet the needs of older people | Ongoing | Timaru District CouncilWaka KotahiLocal Walking/Cycling Groups |
| 2.5 | Planning for e-bike and e-scooter use will consider the impact on older people | New | Walking and Cycling Groups |
| 2.6 | Information about public transportation is easy to understand and accessible. | Ongoing | EcanCommunity Groups |
| 2.7 | More disability carparks are provided in locations frequently used by older people and people with mobility impairments. | Ongoing | Community and Business Groups |



Housing

Context:

Suitable housing is a vital indicator of wellbeing for older people, impacting their mental and physical health as well as their community connections. It plays a significant role in their quality of life and the ability to age in place within their communities.

There is a high rate of home ownership among older people in the Timaru District, but there is a shift towards more older people becoming renters with less expendable incomes, resulting in a greater need for rental accommodation, social housing and retirement villages.

It is essential to provide a range of housing choices and support services throughout the Timaru District to allow older people to live independently and remain part of their communities as they age.

What older people told us about housing:

- 78% of respondents own their homes.
- Social and community housing stock needs to increase, and be realistically priced.
- There are concerns around increasing housing costs, the affordability of housing and the lack of quality social housing.



Older people have a choice of housing that is appropriate, accessible and affordable, with universal design.

| Action Required | | Status | Responsible Party |
|-----------------|---|---------|--|
| 3.1 | Ensure house planning and development considers the needs of older people. | Ongoing | TDCMSDKainga OraCommunity groups |
| 3.2 | Ensure housing options are affordable, appropriate, safe, and accessible for older people | Ongoing | TDCMSDKainga OraTe Whatu OraCommunity Groups |
| 3.3 | Develop additional age-friendly housing stock that meets the needs of the residents. | Ongoing | Community GroupsPrivate Landlords and DevelopersTDC |
| 3.4 | Support (services and funding) for affordable maintenance and modifications to home. | Ongoing | Kainga OraMSDAge ConcernChurch GroupsCommunity Organisations |



Social Participation

Context:

Social participation is crucial for older people's health and well-being. Opportunities for social engagement and support should be accessible to all older people, and agencies should continue to provide programmes that encourage participation in social, recreational, cultural, and spiritual activities.

By doing so, we can ensure that older people maintain their skills and knowledge, and form respectful and supportive relationships within their communities.

There are a range of community facilities and events in the Timaru District suitable for older people and which encourage social participation.

What older people told us about Social **Participation:**

- Local fitness facilities and walking and cycle paths are well utilised by older people
- A lack of public transport, especially in rural areas, is considered a barrier to participating in the number of social, spiritual and cultural activities available in the region
- Further advertising of events is recommended so older people are aware of what is happening in the district



Older people can connect with family and friends and also with people in the wider community in which they live.

| Action Required | | Status | Responsible Party |
|-----------------|--|---------|---|
| 4.1 | Support community organisations and community support networks to hold a range of programmes and activities suitable for older people. | Ongoing | Age Concern MSD Church Groups Funding Groups Social Sector Forum Ministry for Seniors |
| 4.2 | Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a community centre/senior hub for older people in Timaru (and other locations). | Ongoing | Social Sector ForumCommunity Organisations |
| 4.3 | Support the development of intergenerational and multicultural activities and events. | Ongoing | Multicultural Aoraki YMCA Ara Schools Churches Age Concern Presbyterian Support SC Community Organisations |



Respect and **Social Inclusion**

Context:

Respect and social inclusion plays an integral role in creating a community that values and celebrates older people.

By creating age-inclusive places, spaces, and events, we can promote the wellbeing and happiness of all members of the community, creating a positive environment that celebrates diversity and promotes social inclusion.

Older people's contributions as storytellers, mentors, and teachers of valuable life skills brings impactful value to our communities. By recognising and celebrating their knowledge and contributions, we can reduce isolation and improve the wellbeing of everyone, encouraging full participation in community life.

Partner agencies play a crucial role in ongoing advocacy for older people, fostering awareness of their needs and contributions to the community.

What older people told us about respect and social inclusion:

- Work is needed to remind other age groups of the strength and value of older people.
- Greater opportunities for intergenerational connections of benefit to both older and younger people would be appreciated



Older people are included, valued and appreciated by our communities.

| Action | n Required | Status | Responsible Party |
|--------|---|---------|--|
| 5.1 | Incorporate positive images of older people in the community where appropriate | Ongoing | Venture Timaru Chamber of Commerce Community groups Organisations and Government Agencies Age Concern |
| 5.2 | Communicate age-related issues in relevant publications/websites. | Ongoing | Government agencies,Community Organisations,TDCMedia |
| 5.3 | Promote intergenerational programmes, events, and activities. | Ongoing | Community groups,Organisations and Government AgenciesAge Concern |
| 5.4 | Promote awareness of the value, needs and preferences of older residents to the local business community, to improve service delivery and employment opportunities. | Ongoing | Age Concern Social Sector Forum Venture Timaru Chamber of Commerce Te Whatu Ora Government Agencies |



Civic Participation and Employment

Context:

New Zealand has a high labour force participation rate for those over 65 years, and it is expected that an increasing number of healthy and active older people will remain in the workforce well past the retirement age.

This presents a unique opportunity to harness the knowledge, experience and skills of older people in both paid and voluntary work.

We need to foster, celebrate and promote local businesses who have established innovative age-friendly employment practices so other employers can learn and implement similar practices. There is also a need to encourage workforce policies which include proactive approaches to up-skilling, retraining, recruitment, and succession & transition planning for older employees.

The challenge for employers is to be able to cater for the needs of such an ageing

workforce, remove barriers and at the same time find suitable transitions into retirement. This may involve flexible working conditions or responsibilities over time while allowing older people to continue to make a meaningful contribution to the workforce.

Older people are also significant contributors as volunteers for many organisations and the capacity of many non profit and community agencies will continue to rely on the active engagement of older people as volunteers.

Older people in the Timaru District are generally well represented in civic matters. They vote in high numbers and are prepared to be involved in civic processes at both local and central government level. However, as technology changes, a challenge is to ensure there are equitable opportunities for older people to remain involved in civic life.

What older people told us about civic participation:

- More needs to be done to provide ongoing education options for older people
- There is support for the establishment of a Seniors Advisory Group to ensure that older people are consulted in decision-making.



Older people are considered productive in the workplace, and are actively involved in the community through volunteering, supporting local events and taking part in local politics.

| Action | Required | Status | Responsible Party |
|--------|--|---------|--|
| 6.1 | Encourage businesses to support older employees to prepare and move into retirement, and to engage in volunteering activities. | Ongoing | Venture TimaruChamber of CommerceAge ConcernSocial Sector Forum |
| 6.2 | Encourage businesses to realise the economic opportunities created by an ageing workforce through the promotion of age-friendly practices. | Ongoing | Venture TimaruChamber of CommerceGovernment AgenciesTDCCommunity Organisations |
| 6.3 | Ensure community consultation is representative and older people are included. | Ongoing | TDC Government Agencies Community Groups |
| 6.4 | Promote mentoring roles in the community and encourage more people to become volunteers. | Ongoing | Volunteering South CanterburyAge ConcernCommunity Organisations |



Communication and Information

Context:

Access to information is an important part of building an age-friendly society. The availability of age-friendly services and facilities relies on the distribution of clear and relevant information to people of all ages and abilities. This information is essential for maintaining the health, quality of life and community connections of our residents.

Through effective communication of programmes, services and opportunities, older residents can maintain their independence and participate fully in community life.

Older people have a diverse range of needs and skills - from those that are reliant on written information and different languages, through to those who are increasingly using online and social media platforms.

We have several free publications that serve older people, and several agencies provide training and support for older people to gain skills and confidence around finding information online.

Keeping up with technological advancements is important, and agencies must be supported to adapt to these changes over time.

What older people told us about communication and information:

- More needs to be done to improve communications so that people know what services are available.
- Older people gather information from a variety of sources including from friends and family, Internet or social media and local newspapers.



Communication and information about events and important services is inclusive and easy for older people to access.

| Action | n Required | Status | Responsible Party |
|--------|---|---------|--|
| 7.1 | Develop a portal for information relevant to the needs of older people and their families | Ongoing | Social Sector ForumTe Whatu OraCommunity OrganisationsGovernment Agencies |
| 7.2 | Improve digital literacy and provide assistance and support to older people to access new technologies | Ongoing | Office for SeniorsAge ConcernCommunity Organisations |
| 7.3 | Encourage businesses to adopt processes that make documents easy to access and read for older people. | Ongoing | Government AgenciesVenture TimaruCommunity Organisations |
| 7.4 | Ensure there is a range of lifelong, affordable, and accessible learning opportunities available to older people. | Ongoing | LibrarySchoolsAraCommunity Organisations |



Community Support and **Health Services**

Context:

Promoting physical and mental wellbeing in the Timaru District requires appropriate community services that enable residents to remain independent and healthy for longer.

There are a variety of health and community services available in the district, provided or funded by the public and private sector or by not-for-profit organisations. There is a need for improvements in coordination and financial support, particularly for smaller not-for-profit organisations.

Addressing these issues will ensure that all residents, regardless of their health or income, can access the services and activities they need to maintain their wellbeing.

The COVID-19 pandemic has particularly impacted older people, who were required to self-isolate earlier and for longer than others.

Many residents must travel outside Timaru for health care, and there are long waiting lists for specialist care and some home support services. Additionally, there is a shortage of aged care facilities, especially rest home and dementia beds, which can negatively impact the wellbeing of older residents.

What older people told us about community support and health services:

- Many residents are happy with the standard of health care provided in the Timaru District, however lack of access and a shortage of GPs was a significant issue, particularly for rural residents.
- More needs to be done to support older people living on their own.
- The costs of medical care creates barriers for older people.



Accessible, affordable and flexible health and social services are available for older people to support their wellbeing.

| Action Required | | Status | Responsible Party |
|-----------------|--|--------------------|---|
| 8.1 | Improve health literacy – continue to offer education and information for older people or their families to navigate their way through health and social services. | Ongoing | Te Whatu OraCommunity Organisations |
| 8.2 | Continue to provide age-appropriate aquatic services and hydrotherapy at Timaru District Pools. | Ongoing | TDC Community Organisations Service Clubs Business sponsors |
| 8.3 | Continue, and enhance, programmes that support older people with fitness and coordination. | Short to Medium | Age-Friendly Steering Group membersACCTe Whatu Ora |
| 8.4 | Improve funding opportunities for community organisations providing support to older people | Short to Medium | TDC Community Organisations |
| 8.5 | Promote the Age-Friendly Strategy with primary health care providers and seek opportunities for partnership. | Ongoing | TDCTe Whatu OraAged Care AssociationRest HomesCommunity Organisations |

Appendix 1

Original Members of the Age-Friendly Timaru Steering Group

- Sally Parker Timaru District Councillor and Te Whatu Ora
- Lee Cordell-Smith Te Whatu Ora
- Nigel Bowen Timaru District Mayor
- Symon Leggett Timaru District Council
- Katrina Symons Timaru District Council
- Chris Thomas Age Concern South Canterbury (previously Timaru Senior Citizens)
- Katy Houstoun Multicultural Aoraki
- Airini Knight Alzheimer's South Canterbury
- Lizzie McIvor Presbyterian Support South Canterbury
- Maria Parish Arowhenua Whanau Services
- Nigel Davenport Venture Timaru
- Abi Goodhew Venture Timaru
- Michelle Robertson Timaru District Council
- Robyn Baldwin Retired
- Carolyn Cooper Presbyterian Support South Canterbury



