

TE WAIORA



Nelson Marlborough
Health

Submission on the Nelson Tasman Future Development Strategy

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Introduction

1. Nelson Marlborough Health (Nelson Marlborough District Health Board) (NMH) is a key organisation involved in the health and wellbeing of the people within Te Tau Ihu. NMH appreciates the opportunity to comment from a public health perspective on the Nelson Tasman Future Development Strategy.
2. NMH makes this submission in recognition of its responsibilities to improve, promote and protect the health of people and communities under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 and the Health Act 1956.

General support

3. NMH welcomes this opportunity to participate early in the formation of this Strategy.
4. NMH supports the growth scenario that intensifies development within existing centres. The sustainable use of land and infrastructure, compact walkable neighbourhoods promoting incidental exercise and improved social interactions, and more affordable housing for smaller household sizes are just some of the benefits that urban intensification can provide, leading to improved community health and wellbeing outcomes.
5. In addition, consideration needs to be given to the provision of affordable housing and provisions for diverse range of housing which caters for Tasman's ageing population, those living with disabilities, and those requiring social housing.

Housing intensification

6. NMH supports the proposed intensification within existing towns as a way to avoid urban sprawl. Ensuring that residents are able to easily access goods, services, education and employment is of particular importance as it promotes community connectedness. It also ensures that the ageing population continue to have access to opportunities to participate in their local community rather than become isolated due to distance from amenities. Tasman's Age Friendly Strategy stated that the number of older residents in Tasman is projected to almost double over the next 20 years therefore supporting this age group's ongoing social and economic contributions is vital.

Housing that caters for older people and people with disabilities

7. Nelson Marlborough has a higher proportion of its population in the 65+ year age group than other New Zealand regions, and this difference has increased

between the last two Census years to a greater degree in Nelson Marlborough.¹ Tasman and Marlborough are projected to have the largest rate of growth of people aged 75+ years, doubling by 2033.²

8. NMH believes that allowing the intensification of brownfield locations, close to amenities and services, is necessary in providing for the region's ageing population to "age in place" (live at home into your older years). Older persons generally state a strong preference for living in their own home or non-institutional community settings.³ This enables older people to maintain independence, autonomy, and connection to social support, including friends and family and delays the need for institutional care.⁴ Private homeownership has been associated with better health outcomes for older people as it alleviates the financial pressures and anxiety associated with high accommodation costs and minimal security of occupancy.⁵ Subsequently there is a growing demand for smaller houses and properties.⁶
9. Additionally, adults living with a disability are more likely to be living alone or with a partner only.⁷ NMH considers that an increase in the availability of smaller, easy care properties close to amenities and services may go towards providing greater independence and more housing choice.
10. However, in addition to encouraging smaller compact properties, housing also needs to be functional. Key factors include accessibility (ease of entering and navigating in and around the home) and adaptability (to cater for changing needs such as experiencing an injury or disability).
11. Older people have more sensory and physical limitations than younger people. Housing that does not meet their needs exacerbates existing health conditions and heightens the impacts of impairment. This triggers dislocation from their

¹ Norrish A. 2017. *Aged population profile for the Nelson Marlborough District: 2013 Census data*. Richmond: Nelson Marlborough Public Health Service

² Heslop M, Bullen C, Cassidy T. 2017. *Health Promotion Services Review*. Report prepared for the Nelson Marlborough District Health Board.

³ Nelson Marlborough District Health Board. 2015. *Nelson Marlborough health needs and service profile 2015*. Nelson: Nelson Marlborough District Health Board

⁴ Wiles, J., Leibing, A., Guberman, N. (2011) The Meaning of "Ageing in Place" to Older People. *The Gerontologist* Vol. 52, No. 3, 357–366 Retrieved from <https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/assets/Dig-deeper/The-meaning-of-ageing-in-place.pdf>

⁵ Waldegrave C, Urbanova M. 2016. Social and economic impacts of housing tenure. A report for the New Zealand Housing Foundation. Wellington: Family Centre Social Policy Research Unit.

⁶ Nelson City Council. 2017. *Nelson's aging population*. A background paper. Nelson: Nelson City Council.

⁷ Stats New Zealand. 2017. *Disability and housing conditions: 2013*. Accessed 16 November 2017 http://m.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/health/disabilities/disability-housing-2013.aspx

communities, admission to an unnecessarily high level of care and support, and shifts the cost of what is primarily a housing problem onto the health and social services sectors.⁸

12. New Zealanders living with a disability also find it “impossible” to buy homes that meet their needs, and it is also very difficult to find suitable rental properties.⁹
13. The Strategy must enable the provision of universal design principles to ensure that Tasman housing is accessible and the opportunity to age in place or live independently is provided for. Universal housing suits a family’s needs over a lifetime and can easily be adapted with minimal cost to meet individual and specialist needs. Dwellings have long lifetimes and at some stage in a dwelling’s life it will be either occupied or visited by someone with mobility issues.⁷ Universal design ensures a home is sustainable and can be adapted to meet the life-time needs of the resident from the stage where they have young children in pushchairs to when they are elderly and/or have a disability.¹⁰ Specifically, it ‘describes the concept of designing housing features to be aesthetic and usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status in life’.¹¹
14. Universal design can also lessen the impact of falls. Nearly 400,000 medically treated injuries attributed to falls occurred in the home and community settings in 2012.¹² A community trial in Taranaki has shown that the adoption of universal design modifications have resulted in an estimated 26% reduction in the rate of injuries caused by falls at home per year in those houses where modifications have been made.¹¹
15. BRANZ research⁸ has shown that it is considerably cheaper and less disruptive to incorporate universal design features into a new build than retrofit the same house later. As an example, the average extra cost of equipping a new house

⁸ Saville-Smith K, Saville J. 2012. *Getting accessible housing: Practical approaches to encourage industry take-up and meeting need*. Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment for the Office for Disability Issues and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

⁹ Stuff. 2016. *No houses available for disabled New Zealanders*. Accessed 16 November <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/82528058/no-houses-available-for-disabled-new-zealanders>

¹⁰ Lifemark. 2017. Positive changes: More access to more homes. Accessed 16 November 2017 <http://www.lifemark.co.nz/news/positive-changes-more-access-to-more-homes/>

¹¹ BRANZ. N.d. *Universal Design*. Accessed 14 November 2017 https://www.branz.co.nz/cms_display.php?sn=215&st=1

¹² Keall MD, Nevil P, Howden-Chapman P et al. 2014. *Home modifications to reduce injuries from falls in the home, injury prevention study: A cluster-randomised controlled trial*. Otago University, Massey University and Building Research Association New Zealand.

with universal design features is \$1,720 while retrofitting these new houses at a later date would cost an extra \$16,990 on average (using 2011 figures).

16. The uptake of universal design principles is more critical when Councils are considering intensification. Allowing some multi-storey housing is appropriate for intensification purposes however accessibility needs to be a consideration.¹³ Specific design features need to be incorporated during the build phase of a multi-storey home to ensure that could be used for ageing residents and/or those living with a disability.
17. In order to meet the strategic goal of providing housing that caters for Tasman's changing demographic profile and offers a range of living options, NMH considers that developers need to be provided financial incentives to incorporate universal design features within the smaller brownfield developments. Incentives may include measures such as reducing development contributions and reserve financial contributions, structuring policy and rules to reduce uncertainty and costs for building consent processes, and/or allowing an increased building coverage for homes that incorporate universal design standards as done by Thames-Coromandel District Council.¹⁴
18. Additionally, NMH believes that consideration should be given to requiring the incorporation of universal design standards within a certain proportion of large multi-unit developments. The following standards are used by Banyule City Council in Melbourne, Australia¹⁵:
 - a) 10+ dwellings = minimum 20% of dwellings incorporate Liveable Housing Design Guidelines
 - b) 3-9 dwellings = minimum of one dwelling incorporate Liveable Housing Design Guidelines
 - c) 1-2 dwellings = voluntary incorporation of guidelines.

Availability of Affordable Housing

19. Housing is widely acknowledged as a determinant of health, housing quality can directly impact physical health, while affordability and stability can impact mental health. Concerns over the stability of one's housing situation and poor control

¹³ Richmond Residential Advisory Group. 2015. *Richmond Residential Advisory Group recommendations to Tasman District Council on Richmond Residential Intensification*. Report prepared for the Tasman District Council.

¹⁴ Lifemark. 2016. *New initiative set to reduce cost of building consents (press release)*. Accessed 16 November <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/AK1608/S00105/new-initiative-set-to-reduce-cost-of-building-consents.htm>

¹⁵ Banyule City Council. N.d. *Liveable housing: Liveable Housing Design Guidelines*. Accessed 16 November 2017

over the conditions of one's home can result in distress and subsequent mental disorders. As housing conditions are tied to economic factors, vulnerable populations (i.e. ethnic minorities, families with young children, the elderly, and low-income households) are most likely to experience housing insecurity and suffer health consequences related to poor housing conditions, residential instability and unaffordable housing expenses. In addition, renting is associated with poorer health outcomes, including increased risk of mortality, while high levels of home ownership are associated with improved community cohesion due to neighbourhood stability, social ties and investment.¹⁶ Therefore it is imperative that the Strategy enables the provision of affordable housing. It is hoped that allowing intensification the building costs can be reduced and more affordable housing is available on the market.

Availability of Social Housing

20. The lack of supply of affordable housing for people on low incomes has resulted in more demand for social housing. Nationally, the number of community housing units has increased, but it has been off-set by the decrease in local authority housing and in state-owned Housing NZ units, meaning overall there is less social housing.¹⁷ The ageing population will also result in greater numbers of people requiring social housing. All partners to the Strategy along with Central government, and providers need to consider how to address this ongoing demand for social housing.

Risk of Natural Hazards and Sea level Rise

21. NMH recommends that development in areas identified as highly prone to hazards such as floods and coastal hazards is avoided. Flooding can cause significant damage to property and people. Storm surges in coastal environments and heavy and prolonged rainfall can lead to flooding of low-lying areas. It is important for Councils to avoid development in high risk areas and prioritise investment in effective storm water management solutions including storm water detention basins and diversions from low-lying areas. Intensive residential development may increase site coverage of impervious surfaces requiring effective storm water management to reduce the risk of flooding.

¹⁶ Canterbury District Health Board (2012) *Housing, home heating and air quality: a public health perspective*. Community and Public Health. Retrieved from <https://www.cph.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/housingheatingairphperspective.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://nzccss.org.nz/news/2017/04/less-social-housing-greater-need/>

Importance of Transport Connections

22. NMH recommends improvements to the transport network that support intensification, especially in relation to public transport, walking and cycling links across the region. Transport is an important determinant of health, and providing opportunity for residents to be active or use public transport instead of private vehicles has important positive health and environmental outcomes such as improved cardiovascular health and air quality and reduced carbon emissions. In addition, the provision of active and public transport options for within and between urban centres also has potential positive flow on effects for rural business activities through reduced overall congestion which allows goods to be transported more efficiently. In contrast, the growth scenarios related to spreading out or creating new townships would require further transport infrastructure investment and promote the ongoing use of cars which exacerbate problems in relation to congestion, air pollution and ill-health.

Access to Green space

23. The Strategy needs to include provision and access to green space. Evidence shows that access to green space is very important to people's health and wellbeing. Liveability measures such as square metres of public open space/resident; square metres of public open space/hectare of urban form; maximum walking distance to a public open space could be included to ensure minimum adequate reserve/public open space provision. There is a relationship between green space and non-communicable diseases such as coronary heart disease, anxiety and depressive disorders, stroke and type 2 diabetes mellitus. Green spaces and reserves provide places for people to increase their level of physical activity along with providing places for formal and informal social interactions and exposure to the restorative effects of nature. This is also very important to people's mental health. Green spaces also form an important part of urban ecology by improving air quality, reducing heat sinks and the impacts of climate change.¹⁸

Expand Business Opportunities.

24. NMH recommends that the Strategy also identify opportunities to expand existing businesses and attract new businesses to the region. Local employment creates strong connections with the community which in turn enhances individual wellbeing.

¹⁸ Community and Public Health (2016) Associations between urban characteristics and non-communicable diseases: A rapid evidence review. Community and Public Health, Canterbury District Health Board.

25. In addition, consideration needs to be given to providing for a mixed use of activities in new residential areas so that essential services such as doctors, community spaces, cafes and small supermarkets are close by. Having mixed use developments improves people's access to work opportunities, especially low income earners. Mixed use can also help create more socially diverse environments as everyone can have equal access to facilities regardless of whether they own a car.¹⁹

Conclusion

26. NMH thanks Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council for the opportunity to comment on the Future Development Strategy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'P. Bramley', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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¹⁹ <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/towns-and-cities/summary-value-urban-design-economic-environmental-and-social-benefi-12>