TE WAIORA Nelson Marlborough Health

Tasman District Council's Proposed Age Friendly Policy

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Submitter details

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 o Te Waka a Maui. NMH appreciates the opportunity to comment from a public health perspective on Tasman District Council's Proposed Age Friendly Policy.
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.
3. In December 2017, NMH provided Tasman District Council (TDC) with feedback on its survey about developing an age-friendly strategy, and this feedback gave specific recommendations regarding the importance of the built environment. In addition, in August 2018, NMH provided feedback on the draft strategy. NMH thanks TDC for the opportunity to feed into earlier drafts.

General Comments

4. NMH commends the Council on creating a robust policy that addresses the needs of an ageing population and improve the health, wellbeing and participation of older residents.
5. NMH supports the Vision and Guiding Principles of the Policy. It is pleasing to see that the guiding principles acknowledged that the Council, NMH and central government and the community all play a role in developing an age-friendly community and we look forward to working closely with the Council and its partners to achieve this.

Specific Comments

Social Participation, Health and Wellbeing

6. NMH supports the goal to increase opportunities for older people to enjoy social connection and healthy active lifestyles because this contributes to overall wellbeing.
7. NMH notes that AgeConnect[1] has not been specifically mentioned within the Policy. AgeConnect is a cross sector group that promotes positive ageing and encourages

[1] https://www.facebook.com/pg/ageconnect/about/

community connection for older people in Nelson and Tasman. In addition, one of the workstreams of AgeConnect concerns intergenerational relationships. As mentioned in our earlier submission, building intergenerational relationships can improve health and wellbeing, relieve social isolation and reduce stereotypes and ageism between generations.

8. *Recommendation*: that AgeConnect is added under the Ideas for Methods – *Actively participate in and support the Positive Ageing Forum and Expo, AgeConnect and Accessibility for All Forum* (page 7).

9. NMH supports the Council's objective to provide and support age-friendly and intergenerational community events and recreational services. It is important that people of all ages are supported, empowered and engaged in community life. Creating opportunities for people to interact can foster this, and this can be done through events or public spaces. The work of the AgeConnect could support this.

10. *Recommendation*: Consideration could be given to the introduction of more intergenerational community spaces and places such as community vegetable gardens that would promote healthy eating and sharing of gardening skills; outdoor fitness stations in Washbourn Gardens, chess tables in Sundial square/Mapua or events i.e. holding an intergenerational games where people across the ages compete together in a variety of events.[2]

Accessibility

11. NMH supports the Council's goals and objective that Council buildings, facilities, transportation networks and services are accessible and inclusive for all members of the community.

12. The Council has many connections with the business community in Tasman and it would be valuable for Council to highlight to the business community the importance of accessibility for older people.

13. *Recommendation*: That the Council promotes Accessibility for All (A4A)'s Accessibility checklist for businesses

14. *Recommendation*: That the Council considers adding a new requirement for accessibility audits[3] for new commercial enterprises.

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[2] https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2018/05/Intergenerational-Report-MMMI-Creating-Livable-Communities-Toolkit.pdf

[3] https://www.barrierfree.org.nz/

Housing

15. NMH supports the goal to provide a range of affordable and appropriate housing options for older people. NMH is pleased to see that the Council is enabling and encouraging smaller, more affordable dwellings as well as higher density development close to services. NMH is also pleased to see that Council is encouraging universal design in new developments to provide accessible housing.

16. NMH supports the Council regarding its short term plans to review the Council's role and level of provision of its housing for older people. It would be beneficial for this to be also done in the medium and long term to ensure that there is adequate level of Council housing for Tasman residents.

17. *Recommendation:* That the level of provision of Council housing is regularly reviewed to ensure it is meeting demand.

18. NMH notes that the Council's goal is restricted to affordable and appropriate housing options but there is no detail on the quality of housing. Poor housing exacerbates existing health conditions leading to increased GP and hospital visits. Older people living in colder dwellings have an increased risk of respiratory problems. Offering a service for households that gives independent advice about how to improve the health of homes would be beneficial and enable older residents to stay in their homes longer. The Eco Design Advisor service that runs in a range of councils across New Zealand, as the result of a Building Research Association of New Zealand (BRANZ) initiative[4] could be brought to Tasman.

19. *Recommendation*: that the Council considers offering free Eco Building Design Services.

Transport

20. NMH supports the goal that there is a range of safe, accessible, affordable transport options for older people. NMH supports the creation of an Active Transport Strategy that improves walking and cycling facilities in the region because this provides more transport options for people and enables people to remain active for longer.

21. Consideration could also be given to using young adults to help older people with using the bus network and feeling confident walking and cycling in their

[4] http://www.nelson.govt.nz/building-and-property/property-land-use/property-ownership/eco-building-design-advisor/

neighbours. This type of programme would also help establish bonds and build empathy between different age groups.[5]

Cultural diversity

22. NMH supports the goal to provide a range of culturally appropriate services allowing choices for older people. NMH was pleased to see that one of the Council's objectives was to further develop relationships with Maori health providers.

Safety

23. NMH supports the goal that older people feel safe and secure in their homes, communities and online.

24. NMH notes that this Age Friendly Policy has not made mention of climate change and the increased risk of extreme weather events to older people as highlighted in our previous submission. Older people may be physically, financially and emotionally less resilient dealing with the effects of a changing climate than the rest of the population. Consideration should be given to including an additional Council objective around supporting emergency preparedness. Emergency preparedness has been acknowledged as important in the World Health Organization's Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities. Adding an additional objective with also align this policy with the draft National Disaster Resilience Strategy[6].

25. *Recommendation*: that an additional objective is added under Safety regarding supporting and educating people on emergency preparedness.

26. Social isolation and safety has been identified within the Policy. One method on making people feel more safe and secure in their homes and online could be to train young people and teenagers in a home safety programme[7] where youth visit homes of older adults living independently to perform a safety assessment for the home and assist with online safety.

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[5] https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2018/05/Intergenerational-Report-MMMI-Creating-Livable-Communities-Toolkit.pdf

[6] https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/publications/National-Disaster-Resilience-Strategy/National-Disaster-Resilience-Strategy-FOR-PUBLIC-CONSULTATON-11-October-2018.pdf

[7] https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2018/05/Intergenerational-Report-MMMI-Creating-Livable-Communities-Toolkit.pdf

Employment

27. NMH supports the goal that the Council will explicitly take into account the ageing labour force in regional economic planning.
28. One of the consequences of an ageing society is an increased generational diversity in the workplace. People from different generations often have different sets of experiences and perspectives, which can pose challenges and opportunities.[8] The creation of a reciprocal mentoring schemes is one way where older workers can pass their skills to younger generations and younger workers can share skills regarding newer technologies and methods of adapting to rapid change. Greater understanding and more effective communication between generations will lead to more positive working environments.
29. *Recommendation*: that the section on Employment includes mention of the importance of reciprocal mentoring and consideration is given to adopting this type of mentoring within the Council and the community.

Conclusion

30. NMH thanks the TDC for the opportunity to feedback on the Age Friendly Policy.

Yours sincerely

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[8] https://generationsworkingtogether.org/downloads/504decd7a096f-Guide_to_Mentoring_Across_Generations_updated_15_Aug_2011.pdf