

Older Persons – Executive Summary

- The working party have regard to the following recommendations:
- “The NZ Positive Ageing Strategy”, April 2001, Ministry of Social Policy.
- The 1999 Research Report accompanying the International Year of Older Persons “Factors Affecting the ability of older people to live independently”, Ministry of Social Policy.
- “The Health of Older People Strategy”, April 2002, Ministry of Health, April 2002, Ministry of Health.
- The outcomes of the Social Housing workshop, 14 September 2001.

Guiding Principles

- Diversity and choice of services is important; higher-rise developments may be quite suitable for some older people, as well as those housed more closely on the flat in grouped living situations supported by a warder, etc;
- Diversity and adaptability in housing type is important, together with security tenure;
- Integration of all housing types together, and within and part of the wider community should be sought;
- The ability for tenants to transfer from one housing type to another is important, as their needs and wants change over time;
- Older people should not be isolated by these developments, but integrated, and where appropriate, supported as part of the community.

Key Outcomes

- People are supported wherever they are;
- Older people are included in a diverse community and not segregated or isolated;
- Housing options reflect the diverse needs of the older community;
- Older people are enabled to move to housing more appropriate to their needs by there being real advantages for them to do so.

Key Issues

The key issues identified by the working party were:

Support to older residents is essential through:

- The availability of properly trained, resourced and reliable community workers;
- The adequate resourcing of voluntary community agencies working with and supporting older citizens;
- Providing a point of reference for community information and resources;
- Possible availability of a social worker or community worker resident caretaker to assist older citizens.

Older people are included in all communities:

- To avoid isolation with its attendant health and support issues;
- To preserve linkages with community and support services.

Housing reflects older persons needs by:

- Appropriate ‘design codes’ for older persons housing being developed covering
 - materials and non traditional building methods
 - amenities
 - wheel chair accessible rooms and facilities

- security features
 - ventilation
 - insulation
 - communications
 - environment;
- Alternative housing models being supported by innovative funding and ownership initiatives.

Goals

The following goals are recommended to be set for achievement within a ten-year horizon:

- The establishment of an infrastructure of support and information services and networks for older residents;
- The development of a design manual for older persons' housing;
- The establishment of a sound funding base for the voluntary sectors working with older citizens, to ensure voluntary support services can be delivered;
- The establishment of practical support mechanisms for expanding and fostering alternative models of housing for older citizens.

Objectives

Immediate to medium term objectives are identified as:

- The identification and implementation of initiatives to release under-utilised housing stock and encourage, through the benefits seen, older residents to move to more appropriate housing;
- Maintaining the integration of older people in their community;
- Facilitation of private sector/alternative housing models.

Action Plans

To give impetus to the recommendation, the following action plans are recommended:

- Initiatives from the voluntary and commercial sectors that support older residents should be encouraged;
- Initiatives that support the policies referred to in the documents referred under 'guiding principles' should be implemented;
- Initiatives that support ageing in place should be implemented;
- Submissions from the commercial and voluntary sectors should be called for in support of initiatives to 'fast track' the development of support for alternative models of housing;
- Initiatives should immediately be implemented to commence a design manual and codes for older persons' housing;
- A 'housing resource stock survey' should be commenced to ensure that the best allocation of resources is achieved.