



BUSINESS SCHOOL

Retirement Policy and Research Centre

Department of Economics, Owen G Glenn Building, 12 Grafton Rd, Auckland

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To: Age Friendly Auckland Project c/o agefriendlyauckland@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Feedback: Age Friendly Auckland Project Tāmaki tauawhi kaumātua

Thankyou for the opportunity to comment on the Age Friendly Auckland project.

The Retirement Policy and Research Centre (RPRC) is based in the Department of Economics at the University of Auckland Business School. Information on the people and their research is found on the website at <http://www.rprc.auckland.ac.nz>.

We applaud Auckland Council's development of this vital initiative toward joining the **World Health Organisation Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities**. Membership of the network requires a commitment to a continuous improvement process for creating age-friendly environments.

The Community Engagement Findings Report was comprehensive.

A vision for positive ageing now and in the future involves promoting and valuing wellbeing across all generations, returning to a 'cradle to the grave' approach to social support.

Our concerns are:

1. **The lack of consultation with businesses**, who will need to work together with Council, NGOs and communities to respond effectively to the changing shape of society. Seniors currently make up around 6.2% of the workforce, and by 2033 they will make up 10.6% of the workforce. An ageing population, a declining birth rate and a deepening skills shortage demand that New Zealand intelligently manages its ageing workforce. This cannot happen without business engagement.

Auckland Council could refer to the white paper on the ageing workforce produced by a working group co-ordinated by the Employers & Manufacturers Association and the Commission For Financial Capability, *Act Now Age Later: Unlocking the potential of our ageing workforce*¹, launched in June 2018. That paper reported

¹ The white paper *Act Now Age Later* is available here: <https://www.ema.co.nz/resources/EMA%20Reports%20and%20Documents/Advocacy/Act%20Now%20Age%20Later-Aging%20Workforce%20White%20Paper%202018.pdf>.

that a recent EMA Employers Survey showed 83% of employers have no plans to address the challenge presented by the ageing population. The white paper's three key recommendations are: A) A national strategy on the ageing workforce to ensure Government agencies work collaboratively on key policies; B) Establishment of a independent taskforce to design key outcomes and co-ordinate key stakeholders; and C) Development of an ageing workforce tool-kit for both employers and workers to ensure their future needs are met.

2. **The lack of an intergenerational equity lens.** We can make sure people continue to feel valued as they age by ensuring our children and young people are valued and receive the support they need.

The Welsh Government in 2015 introduced the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act*.² This law means that, for the first time, public bodies listed in the Act must ensure that, when making their decisions, they take into account the impact they could have on people living in Wales in the future. The Act also established a Future Generations Commissioner for Wales,³ whose role is to act as a guardian for the interests of future generations in Wales, and to support the public bodies listed in the Act to work towards achieving the seven well-being goals.

3. **The lack of reliable coverage for wireless technology.** To help older people access new technologies and stay connected, the price of connection has to be affordable, the methods of connection have to be easy to learn, and the technology has to be reliable. If landline-based telephony is to be phased out, reliable coverage must be available everywhere, including remote areas, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all citizens.
4. **The lack of safety for pedestrians on our footpaths.** The Auckland Council decision to restrict e-scooters to footpaths has destroyed the enjoyment of walking in the city and suburbs. This has occurred at the same time as massive disruption as cycle-ways are developed.

The decision to restrict e-scooters to footpaths must be revisited if Auckland is to become a truly age-friendly city.

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² See <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en>.

³ See <https://futuregenerations.wales/>.