

PRIORITIES FOR RESEARCH ON AGEING

New Zealand is experiencing population ageing, which reflects global trends, but also entails local situations which are different or unique.

In considering the challenges of population ageing there are a number of issues which need to be researched. They fall broadly into two "streams".

Later life

How can the ideals of the Positive Ageing Strategy be realised in terms of ensuring that older people live secure and satisfying life, feeling that they are still involved in the community and with their families and making a contribution? What will the emphasis on "ageing in place" mean for older people now and in the future?

There are implications for –

- Housing – the majority will be in mainstream housing which will need adaptation, renovation and maintenance.
- Specialised housing – how can supported housing be developed and will it replace rest homes?
- Residential care – how can older people with high care needs (e.g. dementia patients) be housed and cared for?
- Home-based care – how will services be delivered to older people who remain living in the community?
- Health services – how significant growth in the very old population will affect them.
- Social support and social isolation.

Mid-Life

People in mid-life, including the baby boom generation, are important as representing the on-coming generation of older people and as one of the main sources of workers to meet current and predicted shortfalls in skills and labour supply to maintain a healthy economy. In addition, there is clear evidence that experiences in mid-life strongly influence how well people age and how well they are set up for old age.

- Labour force participation – how can we maximise the potential of older workers?
- Decisions about retirement – how are they made in an environment when there can be no compulsory age of retirement?
- How is retirement changing and what will it mean in the future?
- Who should support us in our old age? Implications of population ageing for retirement income support and private provision
- What influences whether people save for retirement, how do they do it and how successful are they?
- Are patterns of voluntary work and informal care (often of older people) changing among mid-life people? How will these tasks be achieved in future?
- How are lifestyles changing as people move away from a linear lifestyle model into more cyclic and fevers patterns?