

Information sheet (simplified): Population aging

What is population aging?

Population aging is a term used to describe a situation where soon there will be more older people than young people. It is expected that the numbers of older people in New Zealand will reach 60 percent by 2051 (Population Aging Technical Advisory Group, 2008:8).

Effects from population aging

It is thought that soon there will be a smaller labour force in the world as the population gets older (OECD, no date), due to better healthcare and so on. More people will be needy and fewer people will be working. This will mean it might be harder to keep current living standards.

Why is it relevant to the western Bay of Plenty sub-region?

Population aging is relevant to the western Bay of Plenty sub-region as it has one of the highest numbers of older people in New Zealand (MOH, 2007 in Population Aging Technical Advisory Group, 2008:8).

Compared with other districts, the Bay of Plenty District Health Board already has the highest percentage population over 65 years. There are high numbers of 50- 60 year olds in the current western Bay of Plenty sub-region population (see figure 1). It is estimated that the number of people aged over 80 will grow from under 3,000 in 2006 to 35,000 people in 2050.

Figure 1 – Age structure of the western Bay of Plenty sub-region (2006)

Source: Population Aging Technical Advisory Group, 2008:10

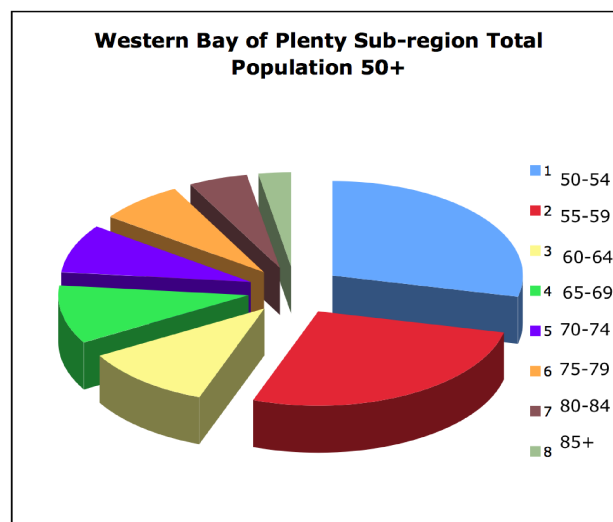


Figure 1 Showing the Western Bay of Plenty Sub-region 50-85+ Age Cohorts 2006

Factors that cause the increased number of older people:

- People living longer.
- People having fewer babies.
- Migration (older people moving into the sub-region).
- Tangata whenua aging dynamics (high Māori birth rate in under 20s).

Additional facts about the western Bay of Plenty sub-region:

- Population growth is fastest among older people aged over 75 years.
- There are currently 24,591 people in the sub-region aged over 65 and 2,616 aged over 80 years.
- The predicted increase of people over 65 is 118 percent in Western Bay of Plenty District and 77 percent in Tauranga District.

(Source: Population Aging Technical Advisory Group, 2008:10)

What are we doing about population aging in the western Bay of Plenty sub-region?

SmartGrowth and the Western Bay of Plenty District Health Board have combined to develop a Smart Aging Action plan.

Consider: What kind of life will you want when you are 75?



OECD Ageing and Transport 2001

References and additional reading:

SmartGrowth and Bay of Plenty District Health Board, Population Aging Technical Advisory Group. 2008. *Smart Aging Action Plan 2008 – 2012*.