Aging Well in New Zealand: Messages for Practice

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Dancing Jandals: Occupational Therapy in the Pacific Rim
The character of a nation and what its people enjoy doing is likely to be shaped by the environment, the racial origins of people who live on and settle the land, and the unique set of conditions that prevail as the nation grows and develops.

Te Ara: The encyclopaedia of New Zealand. (2006)
Overview of Presentation

- Researching Aging in the Everyday
- Aging New Zealand
- The People
- The Environment
- The Occupations
- The Lived Experience of Aging Well
- Messages for Practice
Researching Aging in the Everyday

- How elders experience aging in their everyday community lives

- Non-Maori 80+
- Maori 70+
Aging New Zealand

- By 2051 people aged 65 years and older will make up 26% of the NZ population, a 150% increase.
- People aged 85 years and are the fastest growing sector of the population.
- By 2051 there will be a 600% increase in those aged 85 and older.

(Davey, de Joux, Nana & Arcus, 2004)
Figure 2.2: Population age structure for New Zealand in 2001 and projected for 2051, by five-year age groups

The People

- 4 million New Zealanders
The People

- Maori as tangata whenua from 1250
- 1 in 7 people identify as Maori
- Maori aged 65+
  will increase from
  3% of all Maori
  in 2001 to
  16% in 2051
- But will make up
  only 7% of all
  those aged 65+
The People

The visible settlers

- Early settlers from England, Scotland and Ireland came in search of a better life
The People

The hidden settlers

- People’s fleeing persecution in their lands of origin sought the freedom of settlement in New Zealand from 1870
The People

- Diverse groups of peoples now choose New Zealand as their new homeland
The Environment

- The natural environment
- 130 kms to the sea
Madge’s Story at 95
The Environment

The Built Environment

- Home ownership is decreasing
- Multi-Unit dwellings are increasing
- Retirement villages as lifestyle
- Gated communities for security
Florence’s Story at 90
The Occupations

In and Around the Home

- Gardening and gardens
- DIY home maintenance
- Reading books and magazines
- Organised sports
- Watching television
Tom’s Story at 91
The Lived Experience of Aging Well
Messages for Practice

- It is time to consider:
  - Our strategic place and purpose in aging New Zealand
  - How our culture of practice might serve the diversity of aging New Zealanders
  - Adjusting the focal distance of our professional gaze from persons to populations, and
  - To consider how to add our voice to creating occupationally enabling environments within our communities.
References

Questions & Discussion
Messages for Practice

- **It is time to consider:**
- Our strategic place and purpose in aging New Zealand
- How our culture of practice might serve the diversity of aging New Zealanders
- Adjusting the focal distance of our professional gaze from persons to populations, and
- To consider how to add our voice to creating occupationally enabling environments within our communities.