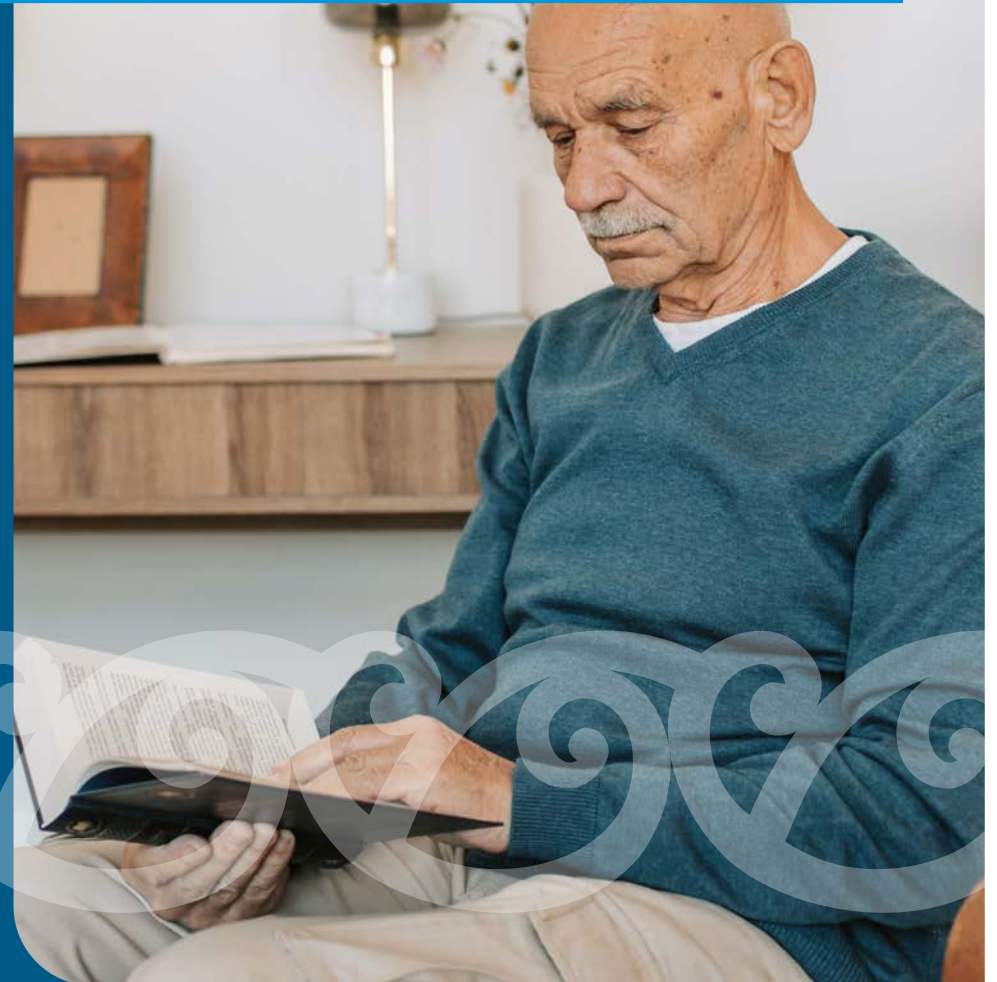


Ko wai ō mātou kaumātua? | Who are our older people?

Internationally, there are many ways to define who are our older people. It can be linked to chronological age, health status, or capacity to contribute to the community.

The United Nations defines Older Persons as those aged 60 and over, internationally that encompasses approximately 670 million people, approximately 12% of the global population.



Gerontologists - those that study the varied components that make up ageing - often break the category of “old age” down into further subcategories to reflect the changes in physical, psychological, and cognitive wellbeing that occur as someone ages.

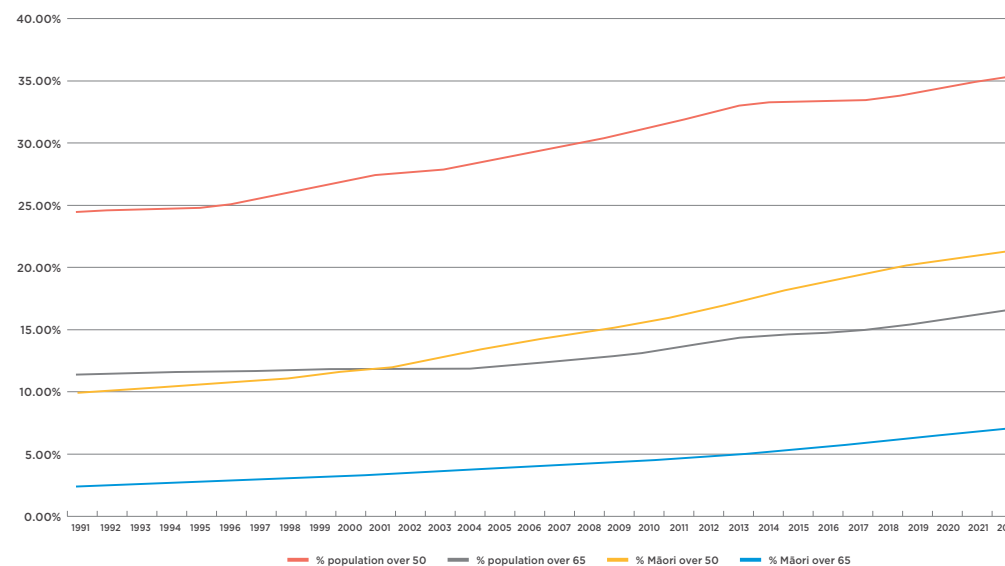
Although the categories are not universally set, the common concepts are that of a “young-old” category of about 60 to 70-75, a “middle-old” category of about 70-75 to 80-85, and an “old-old” category for all those above the middle-old bracket.

Here in Aotearoa, we largely define older age as beginning when an individual turns 65, as it is linked to our superannuation eligibility.

Health inequalities stemming from colonisation and systemic racism have resulted in Māori having a reduced life expectancy of approximately seven years, as well as higher incidence of earlier disability. These factors have combined to adjust the threshold for classifying Māori as “old” to 55 instead, although this is not reflected in their eligibility for superannuation. Based on statistics from the end of 2022, 35.2% of the overall population was over 50, and 16.54% was over 65, reflecting a reduction of approximately half between these age cohorts. In Māori, 21.3% were over 50, while only 7.09% were over 65, reflecting a reduction of two thirds.

This graph shows how the total population percentage of people aged 50+ and 65+ has changed over the past 30 years.

Percentage of Population in Older Cohorts from 1991 onwards

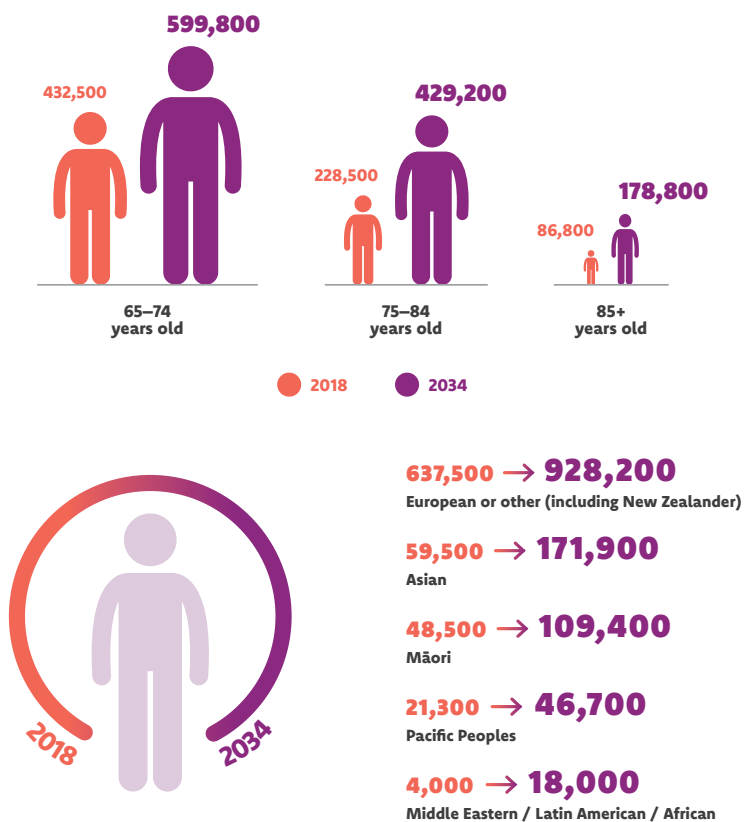


It is also worth noting that most demographic data for this age group focuses on the most recent census (2018), and projections. A major reason for this was the small sample size of the 2018 census, but also that with an ageing population we are deeply interested in what might come next.

With that in mind, below are current and projected estimates for common demographic groupings. We think that this forward-thinking approach is crucial, and these images really help support people to understand a key point of this report – we need to take more action, now, to support our increasing numbers of older New Zealanders.

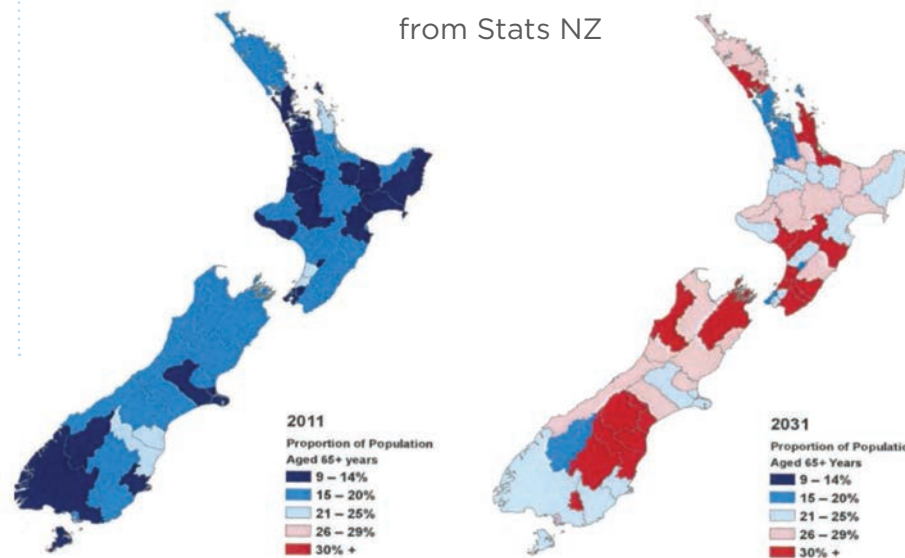
Gender and Ethnicity projections

from the Ministry of Social Development's Better Later Life Strategy



Geographic Spread projections

from Stats NZ



Older People in Work projections

from Stats NZ

Labour force aged 65+ years (1988-2068)

