

Another year gone, just 32 to go



As 2009 draws to a close, our thoughts turn to spending Christmas with family and friends. For many of us, family get-togethers are becoming increasingly inter-generational. Where three generations was once the norm, as we live longer lives now four and even five generations of families will gather to celebrate Christmas.

It's appropriate then, that this issue of the UDS newsletter looks at how population growth over the next 32 years will change the age composition of our community, our workforce, choice of housing and use of services – and whom we'll be celebrating Christmas with in the years to come.

When it was completed in 2006, the UDS planned to manage growth over the next 35 years until 2041. At that stage we didn't have access to data from the 2006 Census. Using the now available Census results, Statistics New Zealand has updated our initial projections.

Not surprisingly, most of our assumptions about population growth have been confirmed, however there's one area where the effects of the projections may have been underestimated, not just by the UDS partners but also by the wider community. The dramatic increase in the proportion of residents aged over 60 (the baby boom generation) has been described as an aging bomb with good reason.

The notion that when people reach 60 they'll assume the mantle of senior citizen and all that goes with that (retirement, an older-persons house and lawn bowls) is looking increasingly unrealistic. With proportionally more, older members of the community, and fewer people of traditional working ages (15-64 years), retirement may not be an option for everyone at 65. Workforce shortages, and the need to earn money to pay for the cost of living longer may force some older workers to either stay in employment, or be lured out of retirement.

Fit and active retirees may not want to downsize their lives, give up their gardens, or restrict their lifestyles to passive activities – and why should they? As the baby boomers enter their senior years, we should expect the generation that 'turned on and tuned out' to shake, rattle and roll away all the expectations of aging. Perhaps 60 really is the new 50, and 75 the new 65?

As you will read in this newsletter, changes to the size and composition of our population are already happening and look sure to continue. The challenge for us will be to understand what these changes mean for the planning and provision of employment, housing, community services and facilities.

These changes are still some way off in the future. For now, let's focus on finishing the year with our families and friends. No matter how many generations of your family gather together this year be sure to have a great Christmas in Greater Christchurch.

Bill Wasley
UDS Independent Chair



Introducing the 35-year plan

The Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (UDS) is a 35-year plan for managing growth in Greater Christchurch, through integrating land use, transport, infrastructure and funding. The UDS partners are the Christchurch City Council, Environment Canterbury, Waimakariri District Council, Selwyn District Council, and the New Zealand Transport Agency. For more information go to www.greaterchristchurch.org.nz/

The age bomb's coming – are we ready?

The population of Greater Christchurch is projected to grow on average by 1% per annum, from 413,500 residents in 2006 to 548,500 in 2041. Small, regular population increases would seem to be the ideal conditions for managing growth, but the overall projections hide a seismic shift in the average age of our residents over the next 30 years.

While the total population grows by 135,000, this increase won't be evenly spread across all age groups. Around 100,000 of these extra residents will be aged over 60, doubling the number of senior citizens living in Greater Christchurch by 2041.

What these projections mean for the future workforce, housing needs, the look and feel of our urban communities, the services Councils provide and lifestyles of residents is the theme for this newsletter. The information is based on updated projections commissioned by the UDS from Statistics New Zealand. For further information see the 2009 Demographics Update at www.greaterchristchurch.org.nz



Are you old enough?

When does a resident of Greater Christchurch become a senior citizen?

The traditional definition for senior citizens was those people who reached the official retirement age, currently 65 years of age. Two trends challenge our notions of what is considered old, elderly and senior, and the age projections look set to blur the definitions even more.

Improvements in diet and health care, coupled with less physically demanding employment have resulted in people living longer. Whereas men seldom got to enjoy their hard earned retirement, life expectancy for men now extends into the late-70s, giving many 10-15 years of retirement. Women's life expectancy has also increased and this trend is expected to continue over the next 30 years.

With improvements in health, an increasing number of people have chosen not to retire fully at 65, but to continue working though sometimes in part-time employment.

With increasing numbers of over-60s living longer and working longer the idea that people over 60 years of age are 'elderly' no longer rings true. The population and age group projections suggest that the proportion of people aged between 60 and 75 will double by 2041, and people aged over 75 will triple in number.

It seems unlikely this growing group of fit and able over-60s will accept having old-fashioned notions of elderly expectations forced on them. Some commentators are referring to the 'young olds' (aged 60-75 years) and the 'old olds' (aged 75 and over) to accommodate the new group of senior citizens who don't see themselves as elderly.

By way of example a focus group of senior citizens, recently convened by the City Council, consisted of people aged over 60. Imagine the convenor's surprise to learn that several of the participants had one or both parents still very much alive. Which begs the question: even if you're aged over 60, are you old enough to be a senior citizen while your parents are still alive?



Year	Age Group					Total
	0-14 yrs	15-39 yrs	40-59 yrs	60-74 yrs	75+ yrs	
2006-41 (35 yrs)	+7,420 +9%	+16,140 +11%	+13,410 +12%	+44,940 +98%	+52,190 +191%	+134,100 +32%

Table 1: Projected UDS Age-Specific Population, 2006-41



Thought about retirement? Think again.

We're constantly reminded of the need to plan for retirement, but at what age will that happen? The official retirement age might be 65, but the latest labour force projections suggest without significant adjustment, Greater Christchurch faces chronic long-term labour force shortages.

That means many over 65 year olds will likely stay in employment, or come out of retirement in coming years. Some retirees may be happy to have the opportunity to earn more money to fund their retirements, but attitudes will have to change amongst employers and younger employees if returning retirees are to successfully slot back into the workforce.



Year	Age Group			Total
	15-39 yrs	40-64 yrs	65+ yrs	
2006-41 (35 yrs)	+19,730 (+17%)	+27,810 (+26%)	+15,210 (+277%)	+62,750 (+28%)

Table 2: Projected UDS Age Specific Labour Force, 2006-41

Home sweet home - alone

By 2041, almost one third of us will be living alone, compared to the 24% of residents who currently live alone.

The UDS expects the number of households will increase at a greater rate than population growth, due to fewer people living in each house. Projections of future household types show other significant changes as well.

Though the total number of households is projected to increase by 74,800 (46%) significant rises in the numbers of couple-only and one-person households are expected, while households with children decline from 40% to 28% of all households in Greater Christchurch.

These changes in the number of people in each household have real consequences for the demand and type of houses we need to build. Whereas in most new suburbs houses of 3-5 bedrooms are being built to accommodate families, within the next 30 years demand for these larger houses is likely to wither, with fewer families needing the space. Instead more couples and singles (of all ages, but many will be over 60 years of age) may want smaller houses (probably without stairs) cheaper to run and maintain.

In addition houses in newer outer suburbs far from community services and amenities are unlikely to meet the desires of an

aging population, wanting easy access to shops, libraries, health services, recreation centres and public transport, unless we plan these communities much better than we have in the past.

These changes in household type are occurring more rapidly than many commentators, developers and planners have realised. Indeed, entire subdivisions are being planned based upon the family household profile predicted to shrink significantly over the next 30 years. Given that houses built today may be expected to last at least fifty years and possibly one hundred, Greater Christchurch could face a real housing mismatch with too many larger houses and insufficient smaller houses.

The solution may not be as simple as building more Older Persons' Housing (OPH). Anecdotal feedback suggests that the scale of many of these dwellings, the number of units on sites, the distance from community amenities and public transport and the lack of privacy and outdoor space is making them unpopular with some elderly occupants and prospective buyers.

There's a housing dilemma on the horizon. Perhaps it's time for the UDS partners, developers and the building industry, and community groups to get together and review whether the current fashion for building bigger houses really is what we need for the future?

Year	Couple without children	Two-parent with children	One-parent with children	Other multi-person	One-person	Total
2006 % share	48,500 29.7%	45,700 28.0%	20,300 12.4%	9,100 5.6%	39,700 24.3%	163,300 100%
2041 % share	83,600 35.1%	39,800 16.7%	26,200 11.0%	12,100 5.1%	76,400 32.1%	238,100 100%
% Change 06-41	+72%	-13%	+29%	+33%	+92%	+46%

Table 3: UDS Area Household Type Projections, 2006-41



2009 – the UDS year in review

The end of the year provides an ideal opportunity to reflect on the UDS successes and achievements of 2009. Here is a short summary of some key UDS projects undertaken by the partners in 2009.

At Christchurch City

1. Area Plans

The Council adopted the South-west Area Plan, which sets the framework for managing urban development in South-west Christchurch, in 2009. The south-west is the biggest area of new growth identified in the UDS and will eventually be home to an extra 35,000 residents. The Belfast Area Plan, which is the second biggest area of new growth in the UDS, was released for consultation late in 2009, and should be adopted in 2010.

2. Biodiversity Strategy

As part of the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy, work is underway to bring together all the ecological records held by the Council into a single source, to enable better-informed decision-making and planning for the future of habitats and species.

In Selwyn District

1. Rolleston Structure Plan

On 23 September 2009, the Selwyn District Council approved a visionary Structure Plan that will turn the town of Rolleston into a lifestyle city. Rolleston is expected to grow from its existing population of just over 7,000 to around 20,000 by 2041. The Rolleston Structure Plan proposes a number of key features including a revamped Town Centre, a mix of housing for varied ages, lifestyles and family sizes, a new 40 hectare Recreation Precinct and 100 hectare District Park. The Plan can be found on the Selwyn District Council's website www.selwyn.govt.nz

2. Subdivision Design Guide

Selwyn District has developed a Subdivision Design Guide which outlines ways to design attractive subdivisions which make the best use of their surroundings and setting. It also provides guidance for developers on how the Council will use its discretion in the assessment of subdivision applications.

At the NZ Transport Agency

1. Bus Priority Lanes

Introduced on key routes in northern Christchurch to improve timetable reliability for bus users these lanes will be largely completed by Christmas. This project is a joint initiative involving the NZ Transport Agency, Christchurch City Council and Environment Canterbury.

2. Christchurch Roads of National Significance

Projects on state highways in and around the Greater Christchurch strategic road network are now in the investigation and design stage. These projects are part of the Government's initiative to provide lead infrastructure on parts of the agreed strategic road network sooner than planned by the UDS. Construction of stage one of the Christchurch Southern Motorway will start in 2010. Construction will also start on the Western Corridor (Yaldhurst Road to Wairakei Road) next year.

At Environment Canterbury

1. Proposed Change 1 to the Regional Policy Statement

Proposed Change No. 1 to the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) is the primary policy document for implementing the UDS. It includes urban limits for Christchurch City, new urban limits for Rolleston, Kaiapoi and Woodend and a revised noise contour for Christchurch International Airport. Hearings were held throughout 2009, where submitters presented their views and gave evidence on the proposed change to the Commissioners. In December this year, commissioners will make recommendations to ECan on proposed change 1 to the Regional Policy Statement.

2. Clean Heat Project

After strong advocacy from Waimakariri District Council on behalf of their ratepayers, Environment Canterbury's Clean Heat Project ran a door-to-door campaign in Rangiora and Kaiapoi to encourage people to change to cleaner forms of heating.

3. Metro Public Transport System

During 2009, Greater Christchurch's world class Metro service was improved still further with customer-led refinements based on a service review and the fitting of bike racks on ten routes involving hills or significant distances.

In Waimakariri District

1. East & West Rangiora Structure Plans

Rangiora's population is estimated to grow by approximately 22% between now and 2041 - in line with the UDS, the East and West Rangiora Structure plans prepare for the management of that growth, including the location of future housing, development of activity centres and integration with transport networks.

2. Rural Residential Planning

UDS provision has been made for rural residential growth for the Waimakariri District - the Rural Residential Development Plan identifies potential locations for that growth, based on current and future development patterns and the effective provision of services to future rural residential areas.

3. Kaiapoi Town Centre

The Kaiapoi Town Centre Revitalisation Plan is part of the Waimakariri District Council's Kaiapoi Development Strategy, integrating residential development, town centre enhancement, transport and service infrastructure, and business land opportunities. The Kaiapoi Accessibility project, also part of that Strategy, is exploring the ease with which cyclists and pedestrians can have access to and move around in the town centre.