

JULY 15, 2022



QUALITY OF LIFE OF OLDER MĀORI IN
AUCKLAND
FINAL RESEARCH REPORT
PREPARED FOR AUCKLAND COUNCIL

CORRESPONDING RESEARCHER: FIONA CRAM
KATO A LTD
fionac@katoa.net.nz

He Mihi

E ngā mana, e ngā reo,

Tēnā koutou katoa

He mihi whanui tēnei ki a koutou e awahi nei i tēnei kaupapa

He putanga tēnei mahi arotakenga nā koutou

Nō reira e rau rangatira ma

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

Acknowledgements

Our many thanks to all those involved in and supportive of this kaupapa to explore what matters for ensuring the quality of life of older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau. Special thanks to the Te Atatū Branch of the Māori Women's Welfare League for their support and encouragement.

We have received immense support with the study's methodology and the interviewing of older Māori from Kahurangi Areta Koopu.

This study would not have happened without the interviewers who sat in conversation with older Māori. Our many thanks to Whaea Mariana Andrews, Deb Cole, Yvonne Edwards, Ruth Herd, Carolyn Makiri and Ngaroimata Reid.

And a huge mihi to all the older Māori who shared their time and their knowledge with us, including Denise Huiarangi Anderton, Tony Andrews, Sally Collins, Violet Mckenzie, Rebecca McMath, Donna McMath, Pat Shipworth, Tauranga Tahitahi, Te Ara Totoro and Whaea Phyllis.

Researchers

Oversight of the research was provided by Kahurangi Areta Koopu.

The Katoa Ltd research team for this study included Fiona Cram, Ocean Phillips, Anna Adcock, Christina Stockman, Aneta Cram and Sarah Tawhai.

The Auckland Council RIMU research team included Kathryn Ovenden & Ashleigh Prakash.

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ISBN 978-1-99-110180-8 (Print)

ISBN 978-1-99-110181-5 (PDF)

Cover pic

Created from the interview transcripts using wordart.com.

Disclaimer

Care has been taken in the quotes used in this report to accurately report what participants said. Our apologies if this is found not to be the case. Some editing of quotes has occurred to assist readability.

Suggested citation

Cram, F., A. Koopu, O. Phillips, A. Adcock, A. Prakash, K. Ovenden. (2022). *Quality of life of older Māori in Auckland*. Prepared by Katoa Ltd for Auckland Council

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Selected Te Reo Māori translations

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Iwi | tribe |
| Kahurangi | Dame |
| kai | food |
| kaitiakitanga | stewardship |
| kanohi ki te kanohi | face-to-face, in-person |
| kaupapa..... | agenda |
| kotahitanga..... | togetherness |
| Mana Whenua..... | Māori who have territorial rights in the area they live in |
| Manaakitanga..... | hospitality |
| marae | Māori community centre |
| maara kai..... | gardens |
| Matawaka | Māori who are not in a Tāmaki Makaurau Mana Whenua group |
| mokopuna..... | grandchild/ren |
| Pakeke | older Māori |
| pūhā | perennial sowthistle |
| takatū..... | adaptability |
| taketuku..... | transmission |
| tākoha..... | contribution |
| Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland |
| tangihanga..... | funeral, rites for the dead |
| taupaenui..... | realised potential |
| te ao Māori | the Māori world |
| te ao Whānui | the global world |
| te reo Māori | the Māori language |
| te Tiriti o Waitangi | the Treaty of Waitangi |
| te wai | the water |
| teina..... | younger, junior |
| tino rangatiratanga | self-determination |
| tuakana..... | elder, senior |
| tūpuna | grandparents, ancestors |
| tūrangawaewae..... | place of belonging through kinship and whakapapa |
| whakapapa | genealogy |
| whakamā | reticence, shyness |
| whānau..... | kinship collective |
| whanaungatanga..... | kinship, connectedness |
| whenua..... | land |

Abbreviations

| | |
|--------------|---|
| GNAFCC | Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities |
| QoL..... | Quality of Life |
| RIMU | Research and Evaluation Unit |
| WHO..... | World Health Organization |

Executive Summary

In the coming two decades the number of older Māori (65+ years) living in Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland is predicted to triple (to around 33,000). Working to ensure that older Māori have a good quality of life is part of Auckland Council's commitment to te Tiriti o Waitangi and its responsibilities as a member of the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities. To understand how best to do this, council is undertaking research to inform its strategic direction.

Auckland Council commissioned Katoa Ltd to undertake a small qualitative study of the quality of life of older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau, guided by a Kaupapa Māori (by, with, and for Māori) distributed methodology. Seven community interviewers recruited older Māori through their networks. Thirty-five older Māori (28 women and 7 men) aged from 60 to 93 years (average=74 years) were interviewed, half of whom described their whakapapa connections to Iwi of Tāmaki Makaurau. The interviews canvassed the personal experiences of older Māori as well as their insights into the quality of life for older Māori in their community. Topics were guided by ngā rōpū (domains) in Tāmaki Makaurau Tauawhi Kaumātua (the Age-friendly Auckland Action Plan). These included participants' views on the role of whānau, wairua (spiritual wellbeing), hinengaro (mental and emotional wellbeing), tinana (physical wellbeing), iwi katoa (activities), and te taiao (environment) in older age.

Findings

- Older Māori participants who were Matawaka (not from Tāmaki Makaurau) acknowledged Mana Whenua and had not forgotten where they were from.
- They continued to live by the values that they had learned from their tūpuna and worried about being able to pass these and their knowledge on to younger generations of their whānau.
- Although maintaining connections with their whānau took a variety of forms, participants expressed their love for their whānau and those they considered to be like whānau.
- Younger generations of their whānau supported older Māori to become technologically savvy, with COVID-19 restrictions being the push needed for some older Māori to get on social media.
- Community groups supported the social connectedness of older Māori, something participants had missed during COVID-19 restrictions, even though they still felt well cared for.
- Participants stressed the heterogeneity of older Māori and their desire to be involved in social groups and organisations that respected them as individuals and as Māori.
- Involvement in social, cultural and religious groups provided older Māori with camaraderie and supported their emotional wellbeing. They encouraged older Māori who were whakamā to join in these groups in the knowledge that they would be welcomed.
- Challenges experienced by older Māori included isolation brought on by them not feeling valued or listened to, financial insecurity, mistreatment and abuse, and everyday racism.

Discussion

The present study affirmed that a life course approach is needed to understand the quality of life of older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau. The values they had gained from their tūpuna had supported them to live in Tāmaki Makaurau, including seeing them through times of hardship. Now that they wanted to pass these values on to younger generations, consideration should be given to the creation of opportunities for intergenerational connectivity to support quality of life for older Māori and their whānau. Initiatives to support older Māori who are isolated can also support the quality of life of both them and those who visit with them. The facilitation of social connectedness may also mean connection with affiliation groups that can support their holistic wellbeing. Overall, older Māori wanted to live out their older years as Māori elders who were respected, cared for, and loved.

Introduction

Older Māori (those aged 65 years and over) comprise a small (4.7%) but increasing and significant proportion of the older population of Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland. According to the 2018 New Zealand Census, almost one in five older Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand live in Tāmaki Makaurau (that is, 9144 people) (Roberts, 2020). The proportion of older Māori living in Tāmaki Makaurau is also predicted to increase to 7.6 percent of the older population, or around 33,000 people, by 2043.

This means that the population of older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau will more than triple over the next two decades, highlighting the growing importance of prioritising their needs and wellbeing. Moreover, it is anticipated that this population of older Māori is, and will continue to be, diverse in their life experiences, cultural knowledge, needs and aspirations (Lloyd-Sherlock, 2002). In 2007, Professor Tā Mason Durie noted, 'A shift towards an ageing population has resulted in a greater visibility of older people within whānau and communities and has challenged society to rethink traditional attitudes towards older members' (Durie, 2007, p. 4). This rethinking enables the revitalisation of traditional roles and the establishment of new roles for older Māori that reflect their diversity as well as their ongoing contributions to Māori society (Kukutai, 2006).

Future generations of Māori elderly may be less able to depend on secure roles in Māori society and may have less opportunity to develop cultural identity. Unless their position is adequately considered, in advance, there is a danger that they will become a seriously disadvantaged and alienated group (Durie M. H., 1999, p. 17).

It is important to build knowledge that can contribute to this rethinking of traditional and new roles and helps ensure older Māori have a good life. In this way, Tāmaki Makaurau will be a good and hospitable place for Māori to grow old, for as long as they wish to remain here. The research described in this report uses a quality of life lens to build this knowledge. This aligns with the Auckland Plan 2050 and council's commitment to advancing Māori wellbeing (Auckland Council, 2018). It also aligns with The Māori Plan for Tāmaki Makaurau, in which the key direction of Manaakitanga involves improving quality of life of Māori with the aim of ensuring 'satisfaction with our environments and standard of living' (Independent Māori Statutory Board, 2018, p. 17).

The following sections first provide an overview of the background, purpose, and quality of life lens of this study. Two of the models used in this inquiry to conceptualise Māori wellbeing are then described. This is followed by an overview of understandings of the wellbeing of older Māori, especially older Māori living in Tāmaki Makaurau.

Background and purpose of this study

The current study was commissioned and funded by Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland Council. Auckland Council is committed to ensuring positive outcomes for Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau, as outlined in the Kia Ora Tāmaki Makaurau Māori Outcomes Framework. This includes ensuring that the urban and natural environment is tailored to the needs and priorities of Māori, to promote their wellbeing and quality of life.

The Older Aucklanders Quality of Life study

Auckland Council's strategic focus on the wellbeing of older people (Auckland Council, 2018) was built on in council's Tāmaki Makaurau Tauawhi Kaumātua – Age-Friendly Auckland Action Plan (Auckland Council, 2022). The plan aims to improve the quality of life of older Aucklanders, ensure the region's sustainability as a place where people can age well, and inform actions that help eliminate need and vulnerability in those aged 65+ years. The development of the plan partially supported Auckland Council's application to join the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global

Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC). This application was accepted in March 2022 and Auckland joined the GNAFCC.

Council's strategic focus on older Aucklanders' wellbeing underpins the need for good-quality evidence to better inform planning and delivery of services that meet the needs of the city's ageing and increasingly diverse population. To this end, council's Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) conducted a baseline survey of older Aucklanders' quality of life in 2016-17. The suite of indicators used in this survey covered eight domains of wellbeing: housing, transport, neighbourhood, social connectedness, health and happiness, status in society, and culture and identity. The indicators were informed by the research literature as well as stakeholder engagement and feedback. The survey results were analysed alongside the New Zealand Census, the Quality of Life in New Zealand Cities survey and the Māori Social Survey – Te Kupenga.

This baseline study provided valuable information about the wellbeing of older Aucklanders. However, since then, much has changed in Tāmaki Makaurau, such as increasing housing unaffordability and the cost of living, ongoing climate change, and the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes highlighted the need to update the evidence base by conducting a second quality of life survey of older Aucklanders, to support council's understanding of the wellness of older residents in the midst of the social, health (e.g. pandemic), economic, housing, cultural, and demographic shifts of the past six years.

Given council's commitment to ensuring its obligations to Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau are met, it was considered vitally important to prioritise understanding the needs and wellbeing of older Māori in the region. The second quality of life survey of older Aucklanders (undertaken in late 2021) found that many older Māori respondents said they had a good quality of life, but that the COVID-19 pandemic had negatively impacted on their social ties and mental health. Otherwise, they were generally well-connected, felt they were valued as elders by their whānau and communities, and were largely in good health. The concerns they expressed were more structural than personal; for example, they were dissatisfied with the cleanliness of the green spaces they accessed, had concerns about the safety and accessibility of public transport, had low access to the Internet compared to other ethnic groups, and expressed some difficulties about heating their homes in winter (Prakash & Ovenden, 2022, in peer review). These findings for older Māori confirmed that in many ways they were like other older residents of Tāmaki Makaurau but in important ways they were culturally different.

While the survey collected valuable information from older Māori, there was a need to explore in more depth (through a qualitative component) what makes a good life for older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau.

Quality of life

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), quality of life refers to 'individuals' perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns' (World Health Organization, 2012, p.12). There are many elements contributing to individuals' quality of life, including relationships, health and wellbeing, safety, environmental wellbeing, and material wellbeing. Quality of life studies often aim to monitor a range of indicators that describe these various aspects that impact quality of life, which are then used by governments and not-for-profit organisations to inform policies, plans and other initiatives aiming to improve quality of life.

A major limitation of using existing concepts in quality of life research is that most studies in this arena have been conducted in Western contexts, using Western concepts and based on Western participants. In that sense, there are some profound limitations in how this research can be applied to non-Western, Indigenous understandings of quality of life and wellbeing (Selin & Davey, 2012). Only in the last decade has there been a growing number of studies examining quality of life in non-Western cultures. Several studies have shown that Indigenous concepts of health and wellbeing tend

to differ to those of non-Indigenous peoples, and therefore, existing (Western) understandings of quality of life may not be appropriate to apply to Indigenous contexts (Angell, et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2021; Terpstra et al., 2021). Indigenous frameworks must be applied to appropriately understand the relevant factors contributing to their wellbeing and quality of life.

Māori models of wellbeing

This inquiry takes a Kaupapa Māori lens and is informed by Professor Sir Mason Durie's Māori models of health and wellbeing – Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1985) and Te Pae Māhutonga (Durie, 1999).

Te Whare Tapa Whā is a holistic model of health and wellbeing conceived by Sir Mason Durie in 1985, which uses the whareniui to conceptualise the domains of wellbeing. In this model, the four walls of the whareniui (or the four domains of health) are anchored to whenua (the land, roots), which forms the foundation of our wellbeing. Individuals thrive when all four domains of wellbeing are balanced – however, if even one domain of wellbeing is imbalanced, this negatively impacts the health of the whole self. The four domains of wellbeing encompassed in the model are taha tinana (physical health), taha wairua (spiritual health), taha hinengaro (mental and emotional health), and taha whānau (family/relationship/social health).

Te Pae Māhutonga is a Māori model for health promotion, first conceptualised by Dr Maui Pōmare and further developed by Sir Mason Durie. It refers to the star constellation known as the Southern Cross and brings together the four key elements of health promotion work: Mauriora (cultural identity), Waiora (the physical environment), Te Oranga (participation in society), and Toiora (healthy lifestyles). These four elements are underpinned by two pre-requisites for effectiveness: Ngā Manukura (Leadership) and Te Mana Whakahaere (Autonomy).

These models of hauora Māori provide insights into the scope of any inquiry into the quality of life of older Māori. The models emphasise the need to develop holistic understandings within a Māori worldview that is relational – linking people with people, people with the environment, and people with the cosmos.

Older Māori and Their Wellbeing

A 2007 study found that those growing old in Aotearoa New Zealand were generally thought to have a standard of living comparable to their counterparts in other developed countries, with this attributed to universal superannuation, high home ownership and a public health system (Waldegrave & Cameron, 2009). However, amid this good news, being of Māori ethnicity was identified as a predictor of older people shouldering an unequal burden of poorer living standards. Thus, the socio-economic disparities Māori experienced throughout their lives were carried with them into older age. Since this time, the ability of Māori to live good lives in older age has been further challenged by:

- Declining home ownership: Data on national home ownership from Stats NZ shows that, although home ownership has been declining since the 1990s, there have been faster declines for Māori across the whole country (Stats NZ, 2020).
- Going into old age with little by way of savings and being wholly reliant on superannuation as income (Johnson et al., 2018).
- An improved but still shorter life expectancy than non-Māori: The most recent data from Stats NZ on life expectancy at birth for different ethnic groups show that life expectancy is lower for Māori compared to other ethnic groups. In the 2017-2019 period, life expectancy for tāne

Māori is 73.4 years (compared to 80.9 years for non-Māori males) and is 77.1 years for wāhine Māori (compared to 84.4 years for non-Māori females) (Stats NZ, 2021).¹

It would be accurate to say that in many ways, older Māori are the ‘canary in the mine’ as they are among the first and most heavily impacted by socio-economic challenges and may or may not be able to call upon the collective resiliency of their whānau to help them in times of need. The reasons for this lie in the historical impacts of colonisation, including loss of land, dislocation and marginalisation, and trauma. Māori migration from rural to urban centres after the Second World War was largely prompted by this land loss, whereby Māori did not have enough land and resources to secure good lives for their large whānau. At the same time, a chronic and inequitable lack of investment by the government in the infrastructure and resources rural Māori needed to make remaining land viable and to house their whānau adequately increased the attractiveness of relocating to cities to access jobs, education, and healthcare (Edwards et al., 2018; Harris & Williams, 2017).

As Ian Pool (1991) observed, among the urban centres Auckland was the most popular destination for Māori rural to urban migration. Even so, it would be a mistake to think that the Māori migrating to Auckland shared common aspirations for being Māori. The growing Auckland Māori population over the past 70 or so years has reflected class and socio-economic differences alongside diverse political views and allegiances (Poata-Smith, 2004). Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau are a diverse mix of Mana Whenua – those whose tūrangawaewae is in the region—and Matawaka—those who reside here and whose whakapapa links and tūrangawaewae lie outside the region. This has meant that in 2022 there is an increasingly large population of older Māori residing in the region (see above).

Māori voluntary associations (e.g. religious, cultural, sporting, tribal, and benevolent organisations) enabled Māori who migrated to urban centres to adjust to urban life. Ranginui Walker (2004, p. 199) wrote ‘the essence of Māori voluntary association is group membership with the common goal of promoting the kaupapa of perpetuating Māori identity, values and culture’. As urban tribal marae were unable to cope with tangihanga pressures from the increasing Māori urban population, urban marae—the first being Te Puea in Mangere, 1965—also became a feature of urban landscapes. These marae were established variously on principles of kinship, religion or secular multi-tribalism, and, according to Walker (2004, p. 201), signalled ‘the transplantation of [Māori] culture into the urban milieu’. The voluntary associations and urban marae were sites for Māori to make and maintain connections beyond their whānau and to offer help and support to others—although as Melissa Williams (2015) noted, this did not necessarily mean that whānau wanted voluntary associations such as the Māori Women’s Welfare League in their homes. In this way, Māori migrants (or Matawaka) and Mana Whenua came into contact and became known to one another.

In 2013, Natacha Gagné published a book on ‘Being Māori in the city’ based on her time studying in Aotearoa as an international student from Canada. In the second chapter, she reported on interviews with Māori between 2001 and 2002 and her examination of ‘Māori life in Auckland in all its diversity and the ways that Māori express their experiences—of the city and Auckland in particular, of their relationships with other Māori, and of the nation—and their sense of home in terms of comfort’ (Gagné, 2013, p. 48). Gagné noted that at the start of the 2000s, the diversity of Māori in Auckland was also marked by generational persistence in the city, with some Māori being the third or fourth generation of their whānau to live in the city while others were more recently arrived. Economic downturn in the 1990s, with the retrenchment of the social welfare system and high Māori unemployment, also led to counter-migration, whereby Māori who had migrated to the city earlier now left Auckland and returned home (Waldegrave et al., 2000).

¹ As a result of these data pointing to lower life expectancy for Māori, a decision was made to define ‘older Māori’ as those aged 60 years and over for this study.

Quality of life

This section canvasses some of the research that has been done in the past 10-15 years that explores the quality of life or wellbeing of older Māori, particularly older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau. In their review of academic literature, Dawes, Lapsley and Muru-Lanning (2022) reiterated that hauora Māori is multi-dimensional, spanning relationships, whānau, whenua and community as well as individual physical and mental health. Their review reinforces the need for Kaupapa Māori research that draws on the voices and experiences of kaumātua themselves so these can inform policy and help ensure strategy includes a growing population of older Māori.

In his doctoral research, Will Edwards (2010, p. iii) described a life-course approach to understanding the positive ageing of Māori whereby 'ageing is a life-long process where circumstances encountered during life may impact cumulatively and manifest in old age'. He also identified Māori-specific outcomes from his interviews with older Māori: kaitiakitanga – stewardship for the environment and care for other people; whanaungatanga – connectedness within and beyond their whānau; taketuku – transmission of values and knowledge; tākoha – contribution to Māori collectives; takatū – adaptability over time and between te ao Māori (the Māori world) and te ao Whānui (the global world); and tino rangatiratanga – self-determination. These outcomes contribute to an overarching outcome of taupaenui – realised potential, which is compatible with notions of quality of life for older Māori.

Cassandra Williams (2012) interviewed older Māori (55+ years) living in and/or having a whakapapa connection to the Coromandel region for her doctoral research and found that their relationships to place were complex. Participants' positive connections and memories held feelings of home for many. Feeling connected to their tūpuna was positively associated with ageing, as was people having choice and control over their situation. While most of the participants were able to access affordable and culturally safe Māori health services, a lack of financial resources was a barrier to access for some.

Dyall and colleagues (2014) reported on the quality of life of the 80–90-year-old Māori participants (421 participants, 267 of whom completed a comprehensive interview that involved quality of life questions) in LiLACS NZ (Life and living in advanced age: a cohort study in New Zealand), who were from Rotorua and the Bay of Plenty. Participants had moderately high mental health-related quality of life, and moderately low physical health-related quality of life. In addition, lower mental health-related quality of life was associated with 'ever' experiencing discrimination, while better physical health-related quality of life was strongly associated with higher frequency of marae attendance and unmet need for social support. The researchers concluded that 'greater language and cultural engagement is associated with higher QOL [quality of life] for older Māori and unmet social needs and discrimination are associated with lower QOL' (Dyall, et al., 2014, p. 62).

In 2018, Te Pou Matakana undertook a study of North Island kaumātua to inform their Whānau Ora commissioning. The researchers surveyed Whānau Ora providers and interviewed kaumātua about their needs, issues, and supports (Allport et al., 2018). Vulnerabilities identified for kaumātua included: housing, transport, isolation and loneliness, lack of access to services, and lack of support for kaumātua raising their mokopuna. The interviews with older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau identified six main contributors to wellbeing: planning well ahead for the realities of ageing; thinking positively; sharing lessons with the younger generation; keeping well, independent, and mobile; having their own home; and keeping social connections. The researchers concluded by describing quality ageing as a holistic mix of these wellbeing factors.

Kaumātua seek safety, support and reduced stress. They also want the opportunity to carry out cultural practices. The future for their mokopuna, including those in their care, are of great importance. Being able to engage regularly for exercise and social outings with others, helps overcome feelings of isolation and loneliness. Finding ways of sharing knowledge with younger generations is also an aspiration of some. In relation to healthcare, advocacy through the

health system and health providers who work in partnership with kaumātua and their whānau are a preferred option (Allport et al., 2018, p. 25).

In summary, being realistic about ageing while seeking to remain in control over their situation, stay well and maintain their cultural and social connectivity stand out as important elements of ageing for older Māori. As Edwards and colleagues (2018, p. 10) write, 'Māori positive ageing is reinforced when the needs and desires for social connectedness are met, which includes the capacity to serve others, being valued and included, having purpose and making a contribution'.

The Present Study

This qualitative study provided an opportunity to find out more about quality of life of older Māori² in Tāmaki Makaurau by inviting a small sample of older Māori to talk about their personal and community knowledge of what it means to age well in Tāmaki Makaurau. The findings of this research will help deepen understandings of quality of life for older Māori and will be used to support Auckland Council's policy development and strategic thinking about how best to serve older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau.

Katoa Ltd was commissioned by Auckland Council to undertake this research and the researchers (Fiona Cram and Ocean Philips) worked alongside researchers in the Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) (Kathryn Ovenden and Ashleigh Prakash) to design the research methodology. Kahurangi Areta Koopu, who has a rich knowledge of te ao Māori contexts and ties to Tāmaki Makaurau, oversaw the cultural safety and appropriateness of the research design, including the interview method and questions.

To promote engagement in the research with older Māori and to alleviate concerns about the spread of COVID-19 in the community, the lead researchers worked with Kahurangi Areta to recruit community-based interviewers to undertake interviews. Six wāhine were recruited through Kahurangi Areta's extensive networks. They then leveraged their existing networks to invite, visit with and interview older Māori. This was considered an appropriate way to reduce any worries that older Māori might have about meeting with people they did not know (because of the community spread of COVID-19), and a way to facilitate a more conversational style of interview.

² It is partly in acknowledgement of the diversity of Māori that this research report settled on the phrase 'older Māori' to describe Māori aged 60+ years who reside in Tāmaki Makaurau. While 'kaumātua' may be preferred, the definition of kaumātua often implies that someone has the cultural capabilities to be an elder within Māori society (Kukutai, 2006). However, diversity among older Māori – in terms of their life experiences, cultural capabilities and lifestyle (to name but a few things) – means that not all will be able to fulfil the expectations of kaumātua (Durie M. H., 1999).

Method

Ethics approval was obtained for this study from Te Roopu Rapu i te Tika/New Zealand Ethics Committee (NZEC) (application number NZEC21_61). Qualitative methods were used to collect data for this study between March and May 2022. A combination of focus groups and one-on-one interviews were conducted *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face-to-face) with participants, depending on their preferences to be interviewed alone or alongside others. This flexibility helped create safe and welcoming spaces that enabled participants to share openly.

Participants

In total, 35 older Māori participated in the research. Table 1 displays the key characteristics of participants and shows that there was a diverse mix of older Māori who participated. Please note that although older people are generally defined as those aged 65 years and over in academic literature, a decision was made in this study to include older Māori aged 60 years and over, due to their lower life expectancy compared to non-Māori (see *Older Māori and Their Wellbeing*).

Interviews

An initial interview discussion guide was developed to provide interviewers with conversational prompts to lead their *kōrero* with participants (see Appendix C. Interview Guide). The topics included in the discussion guide were developed to align with the domains in the Tāmaki Makaurau Tauawhi Kaumātua – Age-Friendly Auckland Action Plan. As interviews progressed, the questions were refined to ensure they were relevant to the participants. The questions covered topics such as: *whānau* and relationships, *wairua* and belonging, *hinengaro*, *iwi katoa*, *taiao*, and *kaitiakitanga*.

Despite the spread of COVID-19, participants expressed a preference for *kanohi ki te kanohi* participation, rather than remotely via videoconferencing methods. The researchers ensured that this could be conducted safely by implementing hygiene practices, physical distancing methods, and ensuring that all interviewers were vaccinated against the virus. This enabled participants to be interviewed at a place of their choosing, such as at their homes, a social club, or after church.

All participants were provided with information about the study beforehand and were given multiple opportunities to ask questions and have them answered. Consent was declared and signed for by participants before any data collection, using information sheets and consent forms (see Appendix A. Information Sheet in English and Appendix B. Consent Form in English. Te reo Māori versions were also provided to participants). The information sheet explained that participants would remain unidentifiable in the study unless they wished to be named and acknowledged for their contributions, and additionally, that there would be an opportunity for them to attend a meaning-making *wānanga* during the data analysis stage.

The interviewers explained the study again to participants before the interview, ensured they understood what participation involved and answered any questions. The interviewers emphasised that participants were under no obligation to participate and that they could withdraw at any time. Interviews were centred on *whanaungatanga* and building a safe, trusting space for sharing, alongside exploring what quality of life means for the participant.

Most interviews were conducted in a mix of English and te reo Māori. Two interviews were conducted fully in te reo Māori. Interviews were audio-recorded using voice recorders and downloaded to secure Auckland Council folders immediately after the interview. Detailed notes were also taken during the interview, where possible. Each participant received a \$50 supermarket voucher as a thank you for their time and for sharing their knowledge. This was either given by the interviewer at the end of the interview or, in most cases, sent to participants afterwards in a thank you card from Auckland Council.

Table 1: Participant demographics

| Age | |
|------------------------|----|
| 60-64 years | 4 |
| 65-74 years | 17 |
| 75-84 years | 9 |
| 85 years and over | 5 |
| Gender | |
| Female | 28 |
| Male | 7 |
| Iwi^a | |
| Ngāti Porou | 10 |
| Te Arawa | 5 |
| Ngāpuhi | 4 |
| Te Rarawa | 4 |
| Tūwharetoa | 4 |
| Ngāti Maniapoto | 3 |
| Ngai Tahu | 2 |
| Ngāti Kahu | 2 |
| Ngāti Kanohi | 2 |
| Ngāti Pikiao | 2 |
| Ngāti Tiipa | 2 |
| Ngāti Whakaue | 2 |
| Ngāti Whatua | 2 |
| Tainui | 2 |
| Tūhourangi | 2 |
| Ngāti Amaru | 1 |
| Ngāti Awa | 1 |
| Ngāti Hine | 1 |
| Ngāti Rangī | 1 |
| Tapuika | 1 |
| Te Aitanga-a-Hauti | 1 |
| Te Aupouri | 1 |
| Tuhoe | 1 |
| Waikato | 1 |

Note. a. based on the Iwi affiliations provided by 31 participants. Please note that the total adds to more than 31 as participants had multiple iwi affiliations.

Data analysis

Interviews were transcribed verbatim. Te reo interviews were not translated to English for analysis to ensure interpretations of the data were accurate. Reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyse the data, with the te reo Māori transcripts analysed by a te reo Māori speaker. This is a relational analysis process involving a dialogue between data, theory and interpretation that is compatible with Kaupapa Māori research.

Data analysis was completed collaboratively by the research team. This was essential to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi and to ensure that there was an Indigenous lens guiding interpretation of the data and to ground the data in the specific Tāmaki Makaurau context.

As part of the data analysis process, the researchers invited participants and interviewers to a meaning-making wānanga that took place at Tātai Hono Marae on 16 May 2022. This provided an opportunity for the researchers to share preliminary findings with participants and interviewers and to generate further discussion of important themes. It also provided an opportunity for the participants and interviewers to connect more deeply with the research, particularly the lead researchers and the council research team. The information gathered at this wānanga helped inform further analysis of the findings.

Strengths and limitations of this study

The strengths of the study were the Kaupapa Māori methodology and Kahurangi Areta's involvement. These ensured that the research was Māori-led and designed to provide strengths-based insights into the life worlds of older Māori as well as a structural analysis of any barriers to their quality of life. In addition, the community-based interviewers provided feedback on the study methodology and recruited and interviewed a range of older Māori. The meaning-making wānanga then provided an opportunity for everyone to gather to meet one another, meet with the researchers and those involved from Auckland Council, and consider preliminary findings.

The low participation of older Māori men is a limitation, potentially the result of the female interviewers (as no men stepped forward for this role) recruiting participants from within their largely female community networks. It was noted by interviewers from the start that older Māori men were 'scarce' and despite an explicit plan to recruit them, this only resulted in seven male participants.

Results

Analysis of the interview transcripts yielded six primary themes aligned to the interview topics (see Table 2). These primary themes are interdependent, with participants noting in particular the connectedness between te taha tinana, te taha hinengaro and te taha wairua. Each primary theme then consists of two secondary themes that are described below. Excerpts from participants' interview transcripts are included to illustrate the themes. Excerpts from interviews conducted in te reo Māori have an English interpretation footnoted. The participants have been given pseudonyms which begin with 'A' for those in their 60s, 'H' for those aged 70-74 years, 'K' for those aged 75-79 years, 'M' for those in their 80s, and 'R' for the participant who was in their 90s.

Table 2. Overview of primary and secondary themes

| Primary Themes | Secondary Themes | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. General Quality of Life | Connection to Tāmaki Makaurau | Values passed down |
| 2. Te Taha Whānau – Relational Wellbeing | Whānau connectedness | Social connectedness |
| 3. Te Taha Tinana – Physical Wellbeing | Being healthy and able-bodied | Eating well |
| 4. Te Taha Hinengaro – Mental and Emotional Wellbeing | Belonging and feeling valued | Security |
| 5. Te Taha Wairua – Spiritual Wellbeing | Spiritual wellbeing | Reflecting on death |
| 6. Taiao – Environmental Wellbeing | Connection to tūrangawaewae | Connection to the environment |

1. General Quality of Life for Kaumātua in Tāmaki Makaurau

The interviews began with a general question of what participants thought was important for quality of life for older Māori in Auckland. Participants described their connection to Tāmaki Makaurau. Those who were Matawaka had found a home in the city and expressed their respect for Mana Whenua. Connections back to their own Iwi were described, although some participants expressed concerns about the loss of this connectedness and the need for Matawaka older Māori to have a strong voice about issues that impacted them. Participants talked about how they were raised and the values instilled in them by older generations before them. These values gave them a sense of satisfaction and the strength they needed to live in the city.

Connection to Tāmaki Makaurau

Half of the participants did not identify as Mana Whenua of Tāmaki Makaurau. Like Ataahua and Hinewai, many moved to the city because of employment opportunities—as children with their parents or other whānau, or as young adults. They went on to get married and raise their whānau there.

I live in Auckland because this is where my parents moved to in the early 60s after Dad had finished working on the hydro dams in Mangakino and Ātiamuri, so we moved here. I've always lived in Auckland. I've never lived anywhere else. I don't know anything different. (Ataahua, wahine, 60-64 years)

Well, I moved from Port Waikato to Ihumātao when I was 13, it was in the country so we were able to walk to the paddocks to get to the beach and we never went anywhere unless my dad took us to the movies or something, caught the bus to school... (Hinewai, wahine, 70-74 years).

Other participants migrated back to Tāmaki Makaurau after being away for work or education. Matiu described the homesickness that brought him back to the city with his wife.

Basically, when we went down to South Island, me and my wife were homesick, not for up the coast or she's from Huntly, no we weren't homesick for those places, we were homesick for this place. (Matiu, tane, 80-84 years)

Although Tāmaki Makaurau provided a home for them, participants who were Matawaka (not connected to Tāmaki Makaurau through whakapapa) emphasised the importance of acknowledging and respecting Mana Whenua. Kahu and Hine both talked about the protection of Mana Whenua as a component of their sense of security and belonging in Tāmaki Makaurau. They also stressed that their connections to their own lwi remained strong.

I know where I come from and I know my identity, my whenua. I know the tikanga pertaining to me and how I grew up and where I am from. That is very important. But now I live in town, I am an outsider within Ngāti Whatua therefore I am under the guidance... of Ngāti Whatua here. They inform me of their tikanga, they assist me. I know there is a different identity here and I am not to disregard that. I am an outsider. (Kahu, wahine, 75-79 years)

Kaua e wareware kei konei koe, kei te noho koe i raro i te maru o iwi kē. Kaua e wareware ki te karana atu ki a rātau nē, ki te pōhiri ki a rātau, hey, kua karanahia mai au ki te whakahere i ēnei kaupapa, enari, ka taea e ahau, enari, e hiahia ana ahau ki te whakaputa atu i ōku whakaaro kei a koutou te mana whakahere. Kaua e wareware nō wai tēnei mana nē, kei a wai te mana, ehara kei a au, kei a koutou kē.³ (Hine, wahine, 70-74 years)

Ataahua described the efforts of her whānau to maintain tribal connections when they moved to Tāmaki Makaurau, noting that this was not as common now because young people were different, busier.

When we were younger growing up Mum would drag us around to anything that was Ngāti Porou in Tāmaki Makaurau and we were all there from different age groups. Not so much today because the younger generation are different to how we were. They're busy doing their own, doing something different to what we used to. (Ataahua, wahine, 60-65 years)

There was a concern raised by a few participants that being Matawaka in Tāmaki Makaurau undermined the connection that older Māori had back to their own lwi and home place. One Mana Whenua participant, Mere, talked about this within the context of people moving to Tāmaki Makaurau to find a better life.

But the other people that didn't come from here, although they lived here all their lives and became part of who we are here, still felt that home was always home, not here. This is not their home. This was Tāmaki, this belongs to Tāmaki, and home was home wherever home was, and unfortunately for them they came to look for a better life when they were young and they found the better life, but they also lost their connection back home in some ways, not all ways, but in some ways. (Mere, wahine, 80-84 years)

While Matawaka were described by participants as having different rights and responsibilities than Mana Whenua in Tāmaki Makaurau, some also talked about the need for them to also have a voice and be considered.

I think those of us who are not Mana Whenua do need a place or do need somewhere where we can go and kōrero and be listened to. (Mereana, wahine, 80-84 years)

For Aroha, having a voice as Matawaka extended to her desire to find a place to live among other older Māori, and Mana Whenua are best placed to respond to her query. By contrast, Maia's kāinga was the retirement village she lived in that, although not solely for Māori, she felt was good for her.

³ I do not forget that I am from another lwi and that I live under the protection, guidance of another lwi. I don't forget who is the Mana Whenua and I don't elevate my own lwi up above the Mana Whenua where I live... We know the tikanga, Mana Whenua first; they are the ones who arrange, control, organise the kaupapa.

So, Mana Whenua and Iwi around here have housing for their Iwi... Well, where do we go? How do we become entitled to find a nest with kaumātua and with kaumātua flats and in that little kāinga village? (Aroha, wahine, 60-64 years)

I live in a retirement village, we are independent and so there I feel okay, I feel good. (Maia, wahine, 80-84 years)

Values passed down

Participants reminisced about growing up as Māori. Whether they recounted growing up in rural areas before moving to Tāmaki Makaurau or were raised there, they spoke of being raised in tight-knit collectives where they had people they could go to for support. Hoani, for example, talked about it being safe and normalised that people of all ages would visit and stay with different relations in their rural community.

I would say I didn't have a permanent address... we knew where we lived of course and which was our house but that wasn't necessarily where we would always be. We'd be going up to my nana's or... going over to uncle's... we felt safe to be able to do those things and we weren't the only ones. People would come and stay with us, kids would come and stay with us. (Hoani, tane, 70-74 years)

Participants expressed their appreciation for the values that had been passed down to them from their tūpuna, as these values provided a link to the past and a sense of cultural continuity into the future. Participants described these values as creating blessings for them as they journeyed through their own lives after their tūpuna had passed. Like Kara, they talked about learning manners, cultural protocols, a strong work and education ethic, and how to look after a home and family from their elders.

And I think that's where we're very lucky because of our whakapapa and our background, our old people, they instilled that into us as we were growing up, manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, just how important it was and we've just ordinarily just carried it on. (Kara, wahine, 75-79 years)

For Mere, her upbringing and the gifts she had received from her tūpuna, including te reo Māori, were more valuable than material goods.

I've been blessed with having a good life, I never had anything, it's not the material things in life that I have, but I tell you I've had the most beautiful upbringing by people that are no longer here. But what I am so grateful for is that they gave me good skills to listen to them and to carry on with the taonga that they left behind which is te reo. (Mere, wahine, 80-84 years)

Being strong in their identity gave participants a sense of security and satisfaction.

I love being Māori. (Heeni, wahine, 70-74 years)

Some participants, like Aroha, did not have a positive experience growing up. It was their recognition of whānau dysfunction and a desire to break the cycle of intergenerational trauma that informed their values as they started their adult lives in the city.

I also wanted to leave where I came from, the place that I was abused by Māori, and resettle in a place that was totally new and different to me. (Aroha, wahine, 60-64 years)

Living by their values had often meant working hard throughout their lives. This was usually described as positive by participants and as a reason why they had achieved so many things and been able to provide for their families, even if they had experienced hardships along the way.

Well you've got to suffer before you have a good life. You've got to have hardship, hardship, problems, all these things, you cannot live without them. (Kahu, wahine, 75-79 years)

The impression was that their lives in Tāmaki Makaurau had not always been easy but that they had been able to see through hard times because of how they had been raised. Participants talked about

feeling fortunate and lucky for the lives that they had lived, and hopeful for future generations. Having worked hard in their lives to survive and thrive gave participants a sense of accomplishment and pride. This supported their confidence and their sense of having led fulfilling and meaningful lives; lives they saw as continuing to be enriching and independent.

I will continue in what I'm doing 'till these fingers can no longer do anything, and I like to live the lifestyle that I'm accustomed to when I was working. So, that's still happening and that's my future, that's what I'm looking at. I will continue doing these things as long as I know to have a downtime, and this is my downtime, I love what I'm doing aye, so, that's why I do these things because I enjoy them, they are not a chore. (Hine, wahine, 70-74 years)

2. Te Taha Whānau – Relational Wellbeing

Te Taha Whānau is about the connections that people have to their whānau and to those who are like whānau (e.g. friends). This is perhaps more appropriately thought of as whanaungatanga, or a sense of kinship or family connection that is developed through shared whakapapa and experiences. Participants were asked what sort of relationships—including whānau relationships and social relationships—support older Māori to live good lives. While they described whānau connectedness in a diversity of ways, they were troubled by what they saw as the impact of a fast-paced world on their ability to pass on values and knowledge to younger generations of their whānau. They also described their social connectedness, including services they provided back to their community. Tāmaki Makaurau was seen as having the services that older Māori needed to thrive, although participants stressed that these needed to be a good fit for older Māori. While COVID-19 restrictions had impacted participants' ability to meet in person with others, they maintained connections through social media and felt well-cared for by whānau members and community service providers.

Whānau connectedness

Participants acknowledged that there were now many more ways to stay in touch with whānau. While they agreed that whānau was important, participants had a range of views about how they liked to stay in physical contact with their whānau. For some, like Anahera, whānau came together when they needed to. She described them as being individuals who together were strong as a whānau, even if they did not constantly inhabit each other's lives. Heeni and Marama, by contrast, liked knowing their whānau was around them.

I've always thought of our family as being individuals and very healthy, strong individuals but could easily come together as whānau and when the opportunity arose, they did exactly that... I still believe that we are individuals. We don't have to live in each other's pockets but we're still strong as whānau. (Anahera, wahine, 60-65 years)

For me I think it's having family around, just being able to connect with your family. (Heeni, wahine, 70-74 years)

As long as the family are available, I'm quite happy. (Marama, wahine, 85-89 years)

Some participants also talked about their partner and what it meant to them to have someone to love. They considered themselves fortunate and, like Hemi, reflected on how they expressed this within their day-to-day relationship.

My wife... makes my life good because, well she does, she provides for my needs, and I try not to be demanding but she does... She looks after our whānau, she's a matriarch of our whānau and it's wonderful to have all our mokopuna. (Hemi, tane, 70-74 years)

Hemi's talk about the love for his mokopuna was echoed by other participants when they spoke about their relationships with their mokopuna, nieces and nephews and, in Hana's case, those who considered her to be like whānau, like their Nan. Āwhina described the importance of these

relationships for making a house a home and the yearning of older Māori when they did not get to see their younger relations.

Now I've got a lot of young people around me, not related to me in any way, shape or form but call me Nan and then their children call me Nan. (Hana, wahine, 70-74 years)

Home is being surrounded by the warmth of love, having a right to be, home is a welcoming area and I relate it to the marae that many of these elders were brought up there... Having to deal with other elders when they yearn for the mokopuna, they yearn for the nieces, the nephews, their family environment. (Āwhina, wahine, 60-64 years)

The strong values that participants described as grounding and engendering a sense of belonging (see Values passed down), were also something they wanted to pass on to their mokopuna generation. Participants reflected on how their role as older Māori was to impart knowledge as their tūpuna had done, even if their young whānau did not quite grasp the importance of it.

And though it may not make sense to the young people now, as they get older those sorts of things, the advice that the now older person gives to the younger one, it's something they remember. (Mereana, wahine, 80-84 years)

Many participants were concerned about the fast-changing world they now found themselves in. This was usually framed negatively, as hard to comprehend and hard to navigate because it felt so different compared to their experiences of their own lives and those of past generations.

Unfortunately, with the young ones there's a lot of the generation that don't know much about their whakapapa... let alone know which hapū or Iwi they belong to which is also very, very sad. (Hinemoana, wahine, 70-74 years)

Participants' worries were tinged with nostalgia for earlier times when roles and relationships were more clearly defined. Now participants identified rifts between generations where they saw lost opportunities for them to fulfil their kaumātua responsibilities and pass on their knowledge. For Hana, these rifts reflected a loss of respect for older Māori, while Mere spoke about a loss of love and compassion because of the erosion of the collectivism that had made the world orderly and safe. For her, the rise of individualism meant people were now growing up and living in a 'wilderness'.

Well, I think back to the days, early days on the marae where the children were included in all the hui at the marae but they would sit at the feet of their kaumātua kuia and sit there and listen or play quietly. That doesn't happen anymore... and that's where I see part of that respect break down. (Hana, wahine, 70-74 years)

Individualism has come in many shapes and forms... and I think that's how a lot of people are growing up today in the world that, wilderness, in a wilderness space. I don't think there's that love and compassion that we used to have and I don't believe that we'll ever get that back. (Mere, wahine, 80-84 years)

Male participants in particular talked about recognising that they needed to change with the times and that tikanga might evolve. Kauri talked about his father being cremated as an example of how it was okay for things to change. His father and the kaumātua he referenced laid down a revision of tikanga that gave Kauri the courage to adapt to the changes he was experiencing in his own life.

Tikanga is evolving... And my experience of it evolving was my dad. See my dad was one of the last babies to be born in Parihaka and he got cremated... And it is not the done thing... He said, if you take me to a marae and you get me cremated, I'll come back and I'll haunt you. So, as [name] would say, if it's tika, then that's the tikanga, so that's why it's evolving. (Kauri, tane, 76-79 years)

The pandemic had also opened up a world of possibilities for participants remaining connected with whānau through the Internet and social media. Some were already familiar with this technology and

knew that connecting with whānau lifted their spirits. For others, like Hoani, being unable to meet with whānau in person pushed them to overcome their reluctance to use social media.

Especially in your wairua, when they text you every day. It doesn't matter where they are, and it makes your wairua feel really good. (Hera, wahine, 70-74 years)

I think the opposite during COVID. I think our whānau became, thanks to technology which I was sort of reluctant to join, I remember my daughter once describing me as a technosaurus and she's probably right. I think because of COVID and, well not because of COVID, when COVID hit, our whānau became I think a lot closer. (Hoani, tane, 70-74 years)

Participants felt it was their younger whānau, and their mokopuna in particular, who would help them adapt to changing times, learn new technologies and understand the world. Ari's advice, for example, was the world belongs to young people. He talked about the value of sitting with his mokopuna and getting them to teach him about social media like TikTok. These intergenerational moments were also seen by some participants as opportunities for the mutual sharing of knowledge.

Anā te whakautu mō wērāka mahi, āta noho i te taha o wō tamariki, āta noho i te taha o wō mokopuna ko koe te tauira. Mā rātau hai tohutohu ki a koe mō ngā tūmomo mīhini nei, rorohiko nei. Ahakoa he ao hou tēnei, nō rātau tēnei ao, kāore au i pakeke i tēnei ao.⁴ (Ari, tane, 65-69 years)

Social connectedness

In addition to their whānau, participants talked about the importance of their social connections who were often like whānau to them. The importance of being able to access support services and everyday needs was emphasised, with participants expressing their sense of the city having the necessities needed for them to thrive as older Māori, such as social services, health care, and even supermarkets.

Community groups like Te Whānau o Waipareira Trust were frequently noted as providing crucial support for older Māori. Mereana explained that the desire for older Māori to be part of a collective was cultural, so isolation was not good for people's wellbeing. Kara described how she would usually be engaged in such gatherings, including being picked up and dropped back home by the service provider.

Māori are a collective society which is why we don't cope well with isolation, right, because we are a collective society. We are hapū and Iwi and whānau... and so we're a social society. (Mereana, wahine, 80-84 years)

I do have quite a bit of contact with a lot of people actually. We meet once, I also am part of the Waipareira Kuia Kaumātua Group, and we get together once a fortnight, we have a singalong, we have line dancing and we quite often have people coming and talk to us and that goes on for about a couple of hours and then we end up with our cup of tea, quite often we are picked up from wherever we are living in West Auckland and taken home again. (Kara, wahine, 75-79 years)

Like those who talked about Te Whānau o Waipareira, Hana described the importance of services supporting the identity and wellbeing of older Māori. Haeata also noted the services she could access in order to remain living in her home.

When I say a wellbeing clinic, I'm talking about Rongoa Māori mirimiri, that sort of thing, something that takes them back to who they are and yet gives them a sense of wellbeing with it. (Hana, wahine, 70-74 years)

⁴ Sit with your mokopuna as a student and get them to give you instructions how to work the device. I know how to write but I don't know how to type, how to change screens. It is good that they see that you are the student.

There are a lot of services. Like I can have someone coming and cleaning the house, if I need to have someone for a shower if I can't shower myself, they got all, someone take me shopping. (Haeata, wahine, 70-74 years)

It was important for participants to find the right fit when they joined social groups. This often meant a group that was designed for Māori older people. Some participants said they longed for opportunities to speak te reo Māori. Some, like Marama, had not taught her children when they were growing up so relied on their social connections for being able to speak te reo. Other participants were whakamā because they did not know a lot of te reo Māori. Aroha described how this shyness might make older Māori reluctant to join in.

I miss that, I can't speak te reo to the family 'cause they don't know it and I regret that. I regret not teaching them when they were growing up. I don't know what, if 'cause I was so busy that I forgot to teach them. (Marama, wahine, 85-89 years)

And so, the pressure of having to know reo when you go onto the marae, it's quite intimidating, that we can't speak te reo so we shy away, we might, I have to talk about myself, I might shy away from making those connections. (Aroha, wahine, 60-64 years)

Participants who were active in groups were very encouraging of others to join in. Like Ari, they realised that some might not be confident or might be shy and wanted them to know that they would be welcomed. He advised that they should join a Māori group, like those run for kaumātua by Te Whānau o Waipareira.

Ki ngā Māori e noho i waho o taua ao, haere ki tētahi rōpū Māori pērā i te rōpū kaumātua, kuia, koroua i Waipareira me wētahi o ngā rōpū Māori a ia hapori. Haere koe te noho i tō rātau taha, haere te noho ki te paku kapu tī, te paku kai, te noho, te whakaronono. Mā rātau hei kōrero ngā kōrero pai ki roto i a koe. (Ari, tane, 65-69 years)

Participants also talked about the need for services to acknowledge the diversity of older Māori, as the range of te reo expertise described above illustrates, and not think of people as being homogenous just because they were older. Maria, for example, spoke about her dislike of being treated like she could not think for herself, even in social groups set up specifically for older Māori. Āwhina also had a word of caution about not making assumptions about what older Māori were like and instead giving them choices.

Well, I've been to several kaumātua groups, and I always think I'm not going back there again 'cause I don't want to be treated like that. You're treated like you can't think or we're going to have singing now, or we're going to have dancing, alright, okay [laughter]. I just think that when I go there now, I always want to say, I can't because it's not my group. (Maria, wahine, 80-84 years)

Older Māori people are community people, do not push them to do a task that they do not know but encourage them. Encourage them, give them a choice. (Āwhina, wahine, 60-64 years)

While some participants talked about getting on with Pākehā in their community, Hoani pointed out that finding a social group that was a good fit for him as Māori was not always easy when he tried to connect with mainstream rather than Māori groups. He attributed this difficulty to older Pākehā being monocultural and often quite racist.

And sometimes Māori, I don't know, Māori sometimes feel that some of the social groups that are available are not for them. Their whole kaupapa doesn't suit many Māori, like that club that I went to join. I mean they were all happy there, but it wasn't for me. (Hoani, tane, 70-74 years)

Mahi aroha or community service was mentioned by some of the participants as a way for them to be with and support other people. Marika did this through formal channels and building trust relationships with people, while Kara did it more informally in her community through the relationships she already had (although it is likely that her service strengthened Kara's relationships).

I was doing voluntary work... And meals on wheels with my friend which when she left to go back to [name of town] I finished but I kept going to [Retirement] Village 'cause I used to read to blind, people that can't read their mail. That's a... good job to do... And they trusted me. (Marika, wahine, 85-89 years)

I drive... to the supermarket and someone's calling out from where we stay, 'Are you going down to the shops today?' 'No, but I will be going down tomorrow'. 'Alright, can I come with you?' So, I quite often take two or three, maybe once a week. (Kara, wahine 75-79 years)

When older Māori did not have established relationships, some participants said they felt hesitant about offering support. Kahu said she would be happy to help someone she knew but not someone she did not know because she felt it was rude and they might be rude back to her.

If somebody was sick from our church, I'd go and see them and pray for them because they know who I am... But I could never go to a person that I don't know because he would turn around and say, 'Who the hell are you?' (Kahu, wahine, 75-79 years)

Hoani gave the example of being unsure how to help a whānau he did not know when a child was having a tantrum. His experience spoke to the erosion of the cultural licence for Māori to support childrearing because whānau do not live in close-knit communities in Tāmaki Makaurau.

...and then you think do I go and help that person or just support that person but how do I do that? I might get a whack in the nose or told to buggie off. Sometimes I feel like I want to get into that situation and offer assistance, but I don't know how to do it sometimes. (Hoani, tane, 70-74 years)

Participants talked about the impact that COVID-19 has had on their ability to access services and remain connected. Kahu described the impact on herself and her social circle as well as how older Māori were especially missing Te Whānau o Waipareira.

It's stopping us from doing everything, it's going to the church, going to work, going shopping, so it's, they've actually put fear into people, that's what it's about. (Kahu, wahine, 75-79 years)

I miss Waipareira to be quite honest and I love the way you do it... I love everybody that comes, and they miss it and that's why they get a little bit stroppy every now and again because they've been so away from it and they need to be able to do something. (Kahu, wahine, 75-79 years)

COVID-19 restrictions had shown participants how deeply their whānau and their community cared for them as they had received care packages and been well looked after.

A lot of people have lost their jobs and a lot of the marae are supporting Māori families out there with food, even City Mission are doing a lot of that and every marae in Tāmaki Makaurau is supporting, especially Waipareira Trust, they are just absolutely amazing. (Aria, wahine, 65-69 years)

[Our whāngai mokopuna] is always there. During the beginning of the isolation he used to deliver us our shopping and never, we didn't pay him because he wouldn't take it. (Kauri, tane, 75-79 years)

3. Te Taha Tinana – Physical Wellbeing

Te Taha Tinana is the physical side of good health, including exercise and healthy eating. Many of the participants who described the importance of good physical health also described the other aspects of holistic health that were important to them (e.g. spiritual health, mental health).

Their tinana, their hinengaro, the way they feel, that's looked after because they become a valued member of the community because of their knowledge... their wairua is looked after as well. Those three things go together, you can't look after one without it affecting the rest. (Mereana, wahine, 80-84 years)

While many participants were physically active, they were also increasingly realistic about the limitations that came with ageing. They wanted to stay in good health so they could keep living independently and fulfil any caretaking responsibilities they had. When they talked about food, participants commented that compared to when they were growing up, younger generations no longer knew where their food came from.

Being healthy and able-bodied

Participants described the importance of being able-bodied, including those participants who lived with poor health or a disability. Being and staying in good health was described by participants as part of being able to stay and live independently, especially for those like Huhana who were on their own. Kara also explained how being healthy was important for those looking after their mokopuna.

Health is a primary for me, being independent as I get older, that's a primary for me primarily 'cause I'm on my own, being able bodied. I think those are my two primaries with living in the city, would be security and health. (Huhana, wahine, 70-74 years)

Well sometimes like you have to organise yourself because I'm bringing up my mokopuna, so I have to make sure that I'm well so that I can look after the children really well cause I'm bringing up the mokopuna. (Kara, wahine 75-79 years)

Participants were often physically active, taking part in exercise, bowls, swimming, line dancing and/or kapa haka. They saw these activities as good for their physical health and also as getting them out of the house and mixing with groups where they found camaraderie and had fun. For Ari, these activities were important because it was not good for people to be alone, where bad thoughts could undermine their spiritual and mental wellbeing. Kiri described how activity supported her mental agility.

Kei te kite au i wētahi o ngā Māori, kei te mōhio au wētahi o ngā Māori e noho mai i roto i taua wāriu iti, pakupaku. Anā, te rongoā mō tērā, kāore he pai kia noho mokemoke, kia noho ai rātau anahe i roto i tō rātau ao. Te tikanga, me haere rātau i waho i tō rātau ao anahe. Kua e noho i tō kāinga ki te ...mō te kore noa iho. Kua e noho i roto i tō kāinga kia kaihia te whakaaro kino i tō wairua, i tō hinengaro. Te mea tika, kia haere koe i waho i a koe nā te mea, i roto i te ao Māori, kāore koe i noho anahe i roto i tō ao. Titiro koe i tō whakapapa, te whārua, te teitei, te hōhonu o tō whakapapa. Kua e noho ko koe anake i roto i tō whakapapa, i roto i tō ao. Haere i waho i tērā, mēnā i tētahi hākinakina, tētahi karapu, tētahi rōpū, haere ki a rātau, mā rātau hei tiaki i a koe.⁵ (Ari, tane, 65-69 years)

I just found that attending not only church but kapa haka it was really uplifting, and it kept your memory going, even though I feel like sometimes I might be a bit Alzheimer-ish but when you have to remember words like singing and things like that, you actually feel it's a big help. (Kiri, wahine, 75-79 years)

It was, however, noted by a blind participant that staying active and getting around the sidewalks can be dangerous for older Māori with visual impairment.

Anyway, so we think it's important to have good level streets, footpaths because we like to go for walks and overhanging branches are a real hassle, nuisance. And because neighbours, people don't think about their overhanging branches over their fences and it's a problem with blind people, you can walk along, and you get whacked across the face. (Ariana, wahine, 65-69 years)

Some participants reflected on the importance of being realistic about their abilities and accepting their limitations as part of getting older. The tongue-in-cheek way participants like Hana and Ana expressed this reflected their positive framing of ageing.

⁵ Go outside of your home, in te ao Māori, you should not stay at home isolated. Look at your whakapapa, at the depth of it – do not isolate yourself in your whakapapa, in your world. Go out, exercise, join a club, a group – they will look after you.

For me, I still feel I can do everything that I used to do [laughter]. Just the mind is saying, 'Wait for me, I can't keep up'. [Laughter] Does that make sense?... So, this is me and my life. (Hana, wahine, 70-74 years)

I really wish we were 20 years younger but we're not going to get that are we. (Ana, wahine, 65-69 years)

Even when she described her worry about memory loss, Anahera was circumspect about recognising that she would soon need to ask for help.

It's frustrating for me and I've always prided myself on having a good memory so to speak and capable of doing anything. Now I'm not and I have to admit to that, and I guess admitting to it makes it just that little bit easier I suppose because you know you have to ask for help and get over yourself and ask [laughter]. (Anahera, wahine, 60-65 years)

Some participants who were not in good physical health lamented missing out on the activities and work they used to be able to participate in. For Anahera, poor health had meant an early retirement that left her with feelings of resentment because she missed activities and having a job. She was less circumspect about this because it had happened because of illness rather than through a natural process of ageing.

I've been [retired] for a long, long time because of illnesses... I miss all that sort of activity [like waka ama]. I still to this day miss having a job. I hate not having a job. It took me years to get over it, when I got cancer when I was what, 50 odd, and everything that followed after that prevented me from working and I resented it, I hated it and today if I could work full-time I would. (Anahera, wahine, 60-65 years)

Eating well

Those participants who talked about kai connected eating well with a good life and also with feeling loved and cared for. For Mere, there was nostalgia associated with memories of growing up with whānau eating together, eating well, and being able to discuss and solve problems around a kai table.

A good life is to... have enough food to eat. (Makere, wahine, 85-89 years)

They always seemed to have solved their problems around the kai table and before that kai ended it was like everyone went home with not only a full puku of kai, they also well I suppose loved and cared for with the wisdom and the words that they've shared together on the table because that was oranga at that time. (Mere, wahine, 80-84 years)

Ariana described the recreation of this kai table when they met friends for meals at their local restaurants. When there were six of them meeting, there would also be three guide dogs present so it was important that where they ate was also accommodating of their guide dogs.

We also go over to meet our friends at their local restaurants and places they go to and frequent... We have discussions to plan our next dinner together with them, there's usually about six of us and of course three of our friends have guide dogs... So it's important that restaurants are very welcoming and they know dogs are allowed in public places. (Ariana, wahine, 65-69 years)

Some participants noted the difference between the natural foods they were brought up eating and the less natural foods whānau consumed now. These natural foods were those participants had grown up collecting or harvesting. Rama described how apart from shopping for flour and sugar, her whānau had lived completely off the land, the sea and the lake when she was growing up.

We used to all get on the truck and go to Maketu and gather up kai moana... it would just depend on what we had, [we] either cooked it or strung [pipi and mussels] on a string and hung it on the fence to dry in the sun. (Rama, wahine, 90-94 years)

When participants described 'less natural' kai, they were referring to store-bought food. Āwhina described today's food as 'a foreign object' because people did not know the source of their kai, while Mereana spoke about the difficulties of older Māori not being able to eat the kai they were more used to.

Sometimes it's families don't give them the sort of kai they were brought up on... Because... a lot of [families] probably don't even know what a pūhā looks like but that sort of thing, the old age person back home ate things like, had kai like pūhā and boil up and whereas now generation it's quicker to go to the roast shop and get a meal. (Mereana, wahine, 80-84 years)

4. Te Taha Hinengaro – Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

Te Taha Hinengaro encompasses both mental health and emotional wellbeing. Many of the participants spoke about valuing themselves, feeling like they belonged and being secure. This section begins with some of their kōrero before examining the challenges participants described to older Māori feelings of belonging, being valued and secure. Many of these issues have been canvassed in other primary themes so the focus here is largely on what challenges the mental and emotional wellbeing of older Māori, including isolation, exclusion, and financial worries.

Belonging and feeling valued

Participants talked about the importance of valuing themselves and living a good, happy life.

I think you should value yourself because your value is also your mana, eh. (Kauri, tane, 75-79 years)

Well for me no 'cause I'm very happy in my own skin and I enjoy my own company. (Huhana, wahine, 70-74 years)

Why can't you have a good life living... It's up to you as an individual to create that time of healing and happiness. (Aria, wahine, 65-69 years)

Even with this discussion about them valuing themselves and being in control over their lives, participants were aware of how important it was for older Māori to have a good sense of belonging. This sense of belonging, in turn, came through whanaungatanga – knowing who they are, being connected to others, having a home and whānau, and being part of a community. Hine talked about the importance of people being involved in kaupapa that gave them a sense of belonging and lifted their spirits, and so connected belonging with te taha hinengaro and te taha wairua. She described how seeing people happy because of her involvement with them also strengthened her spirit. Aroha described this sense of belonging as becoming more about their whānau caring for them as people grow older, and so connected belonging to te taha whānau.

Ki a au nei, he tino whakapiki wairua tēnei ki te mōhio kei te awhi mai, kei te koa, kei te ora nā tanata e manaaki nei ahau, e whakahaere kauapapa nei ahau, e tautoko nei ahau, e tiaki nei ahau. Kei te koa, kei te ora, kei te hari. He aha ahau e mōhio ai ki tērā? Nā kōrero kite ana ahau i nā tanata e haramai nei ki taku kaupapa ka kite mai ki a au, kua kite i taku kaupapa whakahaere ana i runa i te pouaka, tere kē ki te haeremai kua waea mai te tanata, kua kite au i nā kōrero i runga i a Pukamata, wērā mea katoa. He whakapiki wairua, he whakakaha i tōku wairua ki te mōhio there is people out there who do think you are just so amazing, and you are just what they are looking for. You add life, you give them a sense of belonging; you give them that yes if she can do it we can do it.⁶ (Hine, wahine, 70-74 years)

⁶ Seeing people – and knowing their involvement in kaupapa. Then they know my face, they will ring me if they need/want something – and then they feel wanted too ... to me it is very uplifting to know that the people that I look after /care for are happy and healthy and that ...there are people out there who do think you are just so amazing, and you are just what they are looking for.

When you get older a sense of belonging is about becoming more about the inner circle and that sense of belonging comes with that sense of security and feeling secure with your family that they're gonna take care of you and look after you. (Aroha, wahine, 60-64 years)

The poor experiences that participants spoke about and the impact of these on the wellbeing of older Māori were connected with older Māori not being listened to or consulted about what was important to them. This was described by Haeata, with Huia saying that when older Māori were treated like this, it led to physical illness.

Sometimes elder people can be ignored and not taken notice of... And not appreciated, not being appreciated and not being listened to, they don't want to hear what they have to say. (Haeata, wahine, 70-74 years)

The challenges would be treating them like a child, overly instructing them without hearing them... They are our elders, and we treat them like babies. We are not nurturing them, we are not hearing them but they, when you treat them like that, they will feel undervalued, and it leads to illness. (Huia, wahine, 70-74 years)

Being ignored or not listened to could isolate or exclude older Māori from activities and roles they would gain a sense of value and wellbeing from. Āwhina talked about this in relation to older Māori not having avenues for sharing their knowledge with others, as they had been raised to understand that this would be an important role for them when they were older.

When you isolate older Māori people, you have not given them a right therefore there is no purpose and they need to be needed whether it be for knowledge, for being able to share and find their self-worth... I do see that. They find a sense of value on sharing of their knowledge... They feel very important that they have a role in life, an important role, for they are undervalued. (Āwhina, wahine, 60-64 years)

It's very important that you be recognised as an elder and treated as an elder. (Marama, wahine, 85-89 years)

Hine described the isolation felt by older Māori who had lost loved ones and were grieving or too embarrassed to ask for help to join in activities outside their home, especially when they had done everything with their partner.

He tino mokemoke tērā te noho kotahi. Te nuinga, well, nā mea kātahi anō ka ngaro atu tērā o rāua, anā, koirā te tino aroha pea, anā, kua kore noa iho e mōhio me aha, kua kore noa iho e pīrangī ki te puta atu i te whare 'cos i nā wā e ora ana tērā o rāua ko rāua i te mahi ngātahi, haere rāua ki te toa, haere rāua ki wā rāua hākinakina, haere rāuatahi ki te mahi i wā rāua kaupapa, ki te awahi i ētahi atu, ināianeī kua noho mai tērā māna e hiki.⁷ (Hine, wahine, 70-74 years)

Hera also talked about older Māori who she felt isolated themselves and who get annoyed when they are offered help or support.

I think with older kaumātua some of them are so set in their ways they just don't want to ask for help. There are some kaumātua out there and if you get into their space they get really annoyed because they don't want anyone to help them or support them and I do have some cousins that are like that. (Hera, wahine, 70-74 years)

Participants said that mistreatment and abuse by others could also isolate and exclude older Māori. Marika described this happening within whānau, when children or mokopuna would demand money or resources from an older relation.

⁷ I see many [older Māori] who stay at home by themselves, shy, embarrassed to ask for help... No money and feeling embarrassed to ask for someone to pick them up, so they become accustomed to being alone... Lonely and living alone. Those who have lost their partners, their loved one, not wanting to go out because they did everything together, so the person left no longer wants to participate without their mate.

And they will, they will even go without, and this is the saddest thing is when you see the older children come back on their older parents ... Pakeke sacrificing – intentionally or through abuse – for their whānau. (Marika, wahine, 85-89 years)

Other participants reported everyday racism against them or being expressed in their presence. When the latter happened, it heightened their awareness that Pākehā did not see how racist society was and that this racism could isolate or exclude older Māori from participating in mainly Pākehā activities or clubs. Ari acknowledged this and advised that it was best to ignore it and join supportive Māori groups. Some, like Heeni, expressed how the foundations of racism were in the colonisation of Aotearoa. She also described colonial systems as being designed to disrupt Māori collectivism and community values.

Kāore au i te wareware i ngā kōrero i utainahia ai ngā rāwaho ki te Māori, ko ngā kōrero kaikiri nē hā, ngā kōrero kaikiri, te rahi o ngā kōrero kaikiri i utainahia ai ētahi atu iwi i runga i ngā Māori pakeke i roto i wō rātau pakeketangata. Te tikanga, waiho wērā kōrero ki te taha, waiho wērā kōrero ki te taha, tō ake mahi ki te piri haere koe ki tētahi rōpū Māori, kimi haere i tētahi rōpū Māori, te āwhina te rōpū Māori i a koe.⁸ (Ari, tane, 65-69 years)

Like that woman down in the news because she had her moko and those two Pākehā women said to her, 'Leave the park or cover your face,' and I'm thinking like... That hurts. Absolutely hurts... [We have] two societies. One has power, one has less power. One community is predominantly white, one community is predominantly brown. So we go back to colonisation... Because the systems have been designed to deconstruct Māori as a community. (Heeni, wahine, 70-74 years)

Security

Security was important to participants, with this expressed in a range of ways – from feeling comfortable in themselves like Maraea, to the point where the opinions of others no longer mattered, to having the love of their whānau and being financially comfortable as described by Anahera, to feeling safe in their home like Ataahua.

I used to have that feeling oh I don't want to go to that Pākehā's place, they invite you there, cause my clothes not good enough and they'll be staring at you but, oh man I'm in the front I don't care what I wear... Oh I get a real thrill of doing things and going here and there. (Maraea, wahine, 85-89 years)

It means having security, it means having love with your whānau, it means just being, I've already said secure, just being comfortable in who you are... And that's security and more in monetary ways rather than any other thing because I'm confident that I have everything else I need in terms of where I am financially. So if you lack, I think security for me is having enough money to live comfortably with. (Anahera, wahine, 60-65 years)

It's a safety thing. It makes me feel safe in my home if I know that my doors are closed behind me and even locked and whether that's because I've always lived in Māngere I don't know but yeah it's just something that I've always done. (Ataahua, wahine, 60-64 years)

Participants expressed concerns about their security that ranged from worries about potential accidents at home, to whether their home was safe, to wider concerns about events in their neighbourhood that scared them. As Hinemoana explained, these worries were often founded on their knowledge of what had happened elsewhere and how times had changed to become unsafe. Kahu described how her reassurance in the face of her concerns came from knowing the police were responsive and also from having had her home blessed.

⁸ Older Māori experience a lot of hostility and racism that they need to ignore. If people join a Māori group they will feel more supported.

Well, you get the, like those home invasion and people just go into your house and they've had, there's been the odd occasions when that has happened and I mean it's not happened to me, but I mean these are the changes, these are the things that I've seen and the difference from back then to today. (Hinemoana, wahine, 70-74 years)

I need safety with my house. When I came here, I've forgotten how long ago it's been here, I got a priest to bless my house... I'm living by myself, so my security was when they had all the Police down here, I needed the Police, they were down there, they had helicopters and I thought that's my security, I'm happy. (Kahu, wahine, 75-79 years)

Participants acknowledged the importance of money for being able to live comfortably in Tāmaki Makaurau. When people did not have money and could not call on whānau they could experience difficulties getting out to appointments, activities, or shopping. According to the participants, a lot of older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau no longer drive and are unable to walk as much as they did in their younger days and they often remarked that the SuperGold Card⁹ is a wonderful solution. Being picked up by services or having transport available where they lived also helped prevent older Māori from being isolated if they could not drive or take public transport.

I get a real thrill of doing things and going here and there. Before the bus starts I'm there in the seat... Transport, yes. Transport is free here... I've been able to go out and enjoy myself. (Maraea, wahine, 85-89 years)

Participants had more general worries about the financial and material struggles that older Māori were trying to cope with, especially if they did not own their own home and had to pay high rents. Some participants, like Huhana, had to continue working in order to afford to live in Tāmaki Makaurau.

I work 'cause I have to not 'cause I want to. I don't need the stimulus. I'm a homebody... Material is a major I think, having available the supports that allow you to live a comfortable physical life can provide so much relief and support to you, they're important factors in city living now. (Huhana, wahine, 70-74 years)

A few participants had also had to cut back on things to make ends meet, with this impacting on their ability to stay in touch with and visit friends and whānau and take part in activities. Both Ana and Makere were finding it harder to live on their pension and having to adapt and cut back where they could. This not only challenged their sense of security but potentially led them to self-isolate.

Definitely not enough money, you can't do a lot [laughter]... The pension doesn't pay that well either, but you know but oh well, it keeps everyone on an even keel, and you learn how to adapt to that amount of money. (Ana, wahine, 65-69 years)

Well for me, I'd like more money to have a good life... because power has gone up, rates have gone up, food has gone up, what else is there, petrol. For me to get out, you have to not go out as much as you used to see family, 'cause it impacts on going to see other family, friends and it hinders on your lifestyle. (Makere, wahine, 85-89 years)

Anahera was concerned about older Māori who were fiercely independent, so would not ask for it when they were struggling financially. Their cutbacks in order to cope might put their health at risk.

They lived more independently, they were more self-sufficient and as they get older in these times where it's extremely, everything's expensive, they're resistant to asking for help... Aunty [name] would be one of those that would go 'No thank you, I don't need help'. (Anahera, wahine, 60-65 years)

⁹ https://supergold.govt.nz/info_for_cardholders/about_the_supergold_card

5. Te Taha Wairua – Spiritual Wellbeing

Participants linked a sense of belonging with spiritual wellbeing (also see above, Belonging and feeling valued). As the space between people is a wairua space, when older Māori connect with others and feel they belong then their spiritual wellbeing is strengthened. This strengthening was also described by participants as coming from their faith-based journeys. Some participants also reflected on their own mortality and the concerns they had about where they would live, where they would be buried, and what their mokopuna would do when they were gone.

Spiritual wellbeing

Many participants talked about how their spiritual health came from their faith in God, with this belief going back to their childhood, as Hinewai explains. Makere describes her faith as the source of her strength.

I've known the Lord from a young child and being with me. (Hinewai, wahine, 70-74 years)

It's up to us really to make an effort... to feel strong and good and how we're going to do that, how are we going to be feeling strong and good. Well, first of all, we look to the Lord... We have to have faith in God... The Lord Jesus Christ. (Makere, wahine, 85-89 years)

Regular attendance at church also gave participants a social connection that they had sorely missed with the move to online services during the COVID-19 restrictions. Anaru also talked about church social connections strengthening their Mana Whenua connections, back where they were from.

Weekly Sunday interaction is good. Spiritual, wairua... Yes, the church connections have provided a backbone for our own Mana Whenua connections back where we came from, and it's become a kind of vehicle for maintaining our manaaki, our wairua to a degree and that's reinforced weekly through church services. (Anaru, tane, 65-69 years)

A few participants talked about other sources of spiritual wellbeing, including both water and music as cleansing and healing. Water, te wai, has long been thought of by Māori as having healing properties.

We need to be able to go to the water, to be washed in the water, to get all the stuff for healing ... Absolutely, it's medicine in itself, let's put it this way. (Kahu, wahine, 75-79 years)

Music is a healer though; I think music is healing. I look at club nights and I think, 'oh god, I just want to stay home, I don't want to go.' And when you go home, oh, you're all hyped up because, and it's that, it's the singing, it's the music. (Kiri, wahine, 75-79 years)

Reflecting on death

Some participants talked about where they planned to be buried, or where others they knew of had been buried. For Matawaka there were decisions to be made about whether they would be buried in Tāmaki Makaurau or back at home. Mere described people's decisions to be buried in Tāmaki Makaurau as a sign that they had lost their connection with their own home places. Matiu described sorting out his affairs before he was buried back home.

Some would have lost their connection because this life, city life, they didn't know anything else after they'd been here too long. They got lost in this big city life and... then the old people ended up being buried here. (Mere, wahine, 80-84 years)

Just going home to die and get buried down there... A lot of my whānau is buried [back home] ... I need to go back to [town] and sort out all my whenua and then bring all our kids into a trust before I depart from this world. (Matiu, tane, 80-84 years)

Hoani's recent illness had been worrying him as he had thought more about his own mortality and whether he needed to shift into a retirement village, 'just in case' something happened to him that needed to be noticed and attended to quickly.

Fear of death's not the word that I'm trying to think of... but... I'm at that stage, I've become more acutely aware of my mortality, and I started thinking about what if I drop dead. Well, the good thing is I won't know 'cause I'll be dead [laughter] but am I prepared to die, have I got things looked after, am I gonna ... Maybe I've had those sort of thoughts longer than I'd like to remember and perhaps it's because I live on my own. (Hoani, tane, 70-74 years)

Other participants also worried about what would happen to their mokopuna when they passed away. Makere worried because all the land was gone. Her message to council was to supply land so whānau could have housing. Mere was worried because her mokopuna would not know about her life and the implications of this for them being a 'different generation' who had lost some connections with the past.

Look at the grandchildren, what kind of life are they gonna have? All our land is gone, tell the council to give it back, for our children... Give one of those football fields back to the people to build some homes. (Makere, wahine, 85-89 years)

It's worrying for me to know that my grandchildren will no longer know what it's like when I grew up and what my childhood was like... [they've] got a different outlook altogether and it's all lost connections all along the way I suppose you can say. (Mere, wahine, 80-84 years)

6. Te Taiao – Environmental Wellbeing

Te Taiao is included here as the component of wellbeing that rests on the connections that older Māori feel to their home place and to the environment more generally. This was articulated by participants as a connection to their whenua, their marae and to their home.

Connection to tūrangawaewae

Participants described the importance to them of staying connected to their land and their marae, and the importance of these connections being imparted to their mokopuna and nieces and nephews. Maria's return to her whenua, for example, was as much about the rest of her whānau and the next generations as it was for her. Huhana's experience of stepping on to her marae trust board echoed the experiences of living among their relations prior to their move to Tāmaki Makaurau that some participants reminisced about.

I'm now going back to the whenua right and whatever I put up there, it means when the rest of my family, their children, all my siblings' children, can come there and there's something there. They can always say, 'That belongs to us, that's our house, that's our ...' So, for me, I'm kind of in a way, I always thought of it as the tūrangawaewae or you could say the umbilical cord, that never got cut. (Maria, wahine, 80-84 years)

I'm a city Māori, I've never lived up there other than to visit for holidays and things when I was much younger but there's certainly a kinship up there and that speaks to, I think, more about their locality whereas here we live separately. Up there you can lean out your door and go 'Hi,' and you're speaking to your neighbour who's your aunt or your cousin or something. (Huhana, wahine, 70-74 years)

Some participants emphasised the importance of a connection to tūrangawaewae for the wellbeing of older Māori. At the same time, they realised that the strength of this connection to home may have dwindled for some older Māori. Even then, Hana's solution was that they should journey home.

It is important to stay active, be with your Iwi and whānau... My whakapapa is important. (Atawahi, tane, 65-69 years)

I think they had it in them to hold onto what they could hold onto [and return home] but some of them would have lost it because they lived too long in the city. (Mere, wahine, 80-84 years)

Without that tūrangawaewae, that place for you to stand, what have you got? ... They need to go home. (Hana, wahine, 70-74 years)

However, the oldest participant, Rama, described how it was now harder for her to go back home because of the physical limitations of her age.

Yes, I used to go back but I find it hard now to go back. (Rama, wahine, 90-94 years)

Connection to the environment

A few participants expressed their love for the environment, while others were concerned about environmental degradation. Atawhai, for example, talked about his love of the sea.

I love that environment. We were brought up being connected to the sea... we had the coast on both sides, we lived it growing up and it will always be part of me. It calms me, its relaxing. (Atawhai, tane, 65-69 years)

Aroha placed the blame for environmental degradation at the feet of Pākehā. Heeni also blamed colonisation as it had disconnected Māori from the environment and their traditional stewardship or kaitiaki roles and responsibilities for ensuring the wellbeing of the environment.

Pākehā ...[are] on the land or digging up the land... And destroying the land. (Aroha, wahine, 60-64 years)

We've experienced intergenerational trauma; we destroy each other and waste our environments. (Heeni, wahine, 70-74 years)

Discussion

This Kaupapa Māori qualitative study of the quality of life of older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau involved a team of seven community researchers interviewing a total of 35 older Māori from within their networks. The study was guided by Kahurangi Areta Koopu, who was also one of the interviewers. The participants—the youngest of whom was 60 years old and the oldest 93 years of age—shared their personal and community knowledge. Many then came to a meaning-making wānanga to meet one another, to meet the research team and to consider preliminary findings. This methodology provided a relational context for conversational interviews and strengthened the connectedness between interviewees and interviewers.

The first part of this discussion looks at the implications of the findings, while the second part looks at what has been learned from this study about using a quality of life lens and how future research might address gaps that this study has not fully covered.

Study implications

While participants continued to live values-informed lives, as they had been raised to do, the world around them was quite different to the one they had grown up in. This aligns with Will Edwards' (2010) assertion that positive ageing is a developmental process that begins a long time before old age. For participants in the present study, this long time was back into their childhoods and beyond this into the lives of their tūpuna. The values that had been instilled in them as children and young people provided them with a certainty of identity and a satisfaction in being Māori and, as also reported by Williams (2012), supported their positive ageing. Participants had drawn strength from these values as they had faced hardships throughout their lives in Tāmaki Makaurau, with this resiliency undoubtedly supported by their involvement with other Māori through the Iwi-based and Māori groups and organisations that formed in the city (Walker, 2004). Many participants have continued to be involved with Māori-centred activities, including church and kaumātua groups. The implication for the quality of life of older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau is about the importance of affiliation groups, where older Māori can connect based on commonalities in their life stories and value-systems.

Having described their commonalities it must also be said that the participants reflected the diversity of older Māori predicted by Durie (1999), and they were united in their view that older Māori should not be treated as a homogenous group. Homogeneity did not let them shine as individuals and in its own way isolated them, preventing them from connecting with one another and thus removing any positive impacts a group might have for their mental and emotional wellbeing. Their assertion of their independence and right to be treated as individuals reflects Edwards' (2010) ageing well outcome theme of tino rangatiratanga, or self-determination. This does not undermine the importance of affiliation groups and social collectivity. As Allport and colleagues (2018) found, older Māori wished to retain their independence and self-reliance while at the same time wanted to engage with others. For example, organised religion, church services and other related groups and activities that also gave many participants a diverse and caring social group were a good fit for them in older age. As Paterson (2021, p. 1) writes, 'churches are cultural and social spaces as much as they are spiritual ones, and Māori have generally felt more comfortable in congregations where their tikanga, reo and identity have been the norm'. For affiliation groups to be a good fit for older Māori, they need to acknowledge the heterogeneity of older Māori and also provide opportunities for stimulating cultural, intellectual and social engagement. Doing this potentially also opens up possibilities of older Māori sharing their knowledge and expertise with one another.

Loss of a much-loved husband or wife was identified as a source of the whakamā or reticence that prevented some older Māori engaging in group activities, especially if they had always gone to

activities and events with a partner who was now gone from their lives. Encouragement and the assurance that a group would welcome them would get weighed up against their loss and the sadness that lingered for them. The irony is that this self-imposed isolation comes at a time when comfort can most likely be found with other older Māori who know what they are feeling and who can provide advice about how they might go on with their lives. The quality of life of older Māori who are at risk of becoming isolated because of loss or other barriers to participating in social activities might be enhanced through investment in measures to stay in contact with and keep a watchful eye on them. For example, in a tuakana/teina intervention (Oetzel, et al., 2020) older Māori tuakana (peer educators) spent time visiting and in conversation with older Māori teina (recipients). The outcomes for teina included social connectedness, mana motuhake (self-determination) and the receipt of information about social and health services. This ‘by older Māori, for older Māori’ intervention demonstrated that peer-to-peer support can be an effective way of facilitating the quality of life of older Māori.

Participants in the present study also expressed their preferences for how they wanted to connect with and interact with their whānau, mixed in with their desire to pass on knowledge and values to their mokopuna. This desire often led to their frustration with changes in society that meant that the knowledge of older people was seen as less relevant by younger generations. Edwards (2010), however, describes the importance of older Māori adapting over time, including learning how to apply their customary values and knowledge in the present day and into the future. This includes finding ways to transmit what they know and value to their mokopuna. When participants talked about what prevented them sharing knowledge with younger generations, they identified the rise of individualism as the main barrier. The strong collective values of older Māori may not easily adapt to overcome this issue. Instead, they may need to find new ways to create a sense of being a collective for young people. Such adaptation was shown by older Māori who sought out their younger relations for support with new technologies and social media. As Lorraine Eade (2008, p. 28) explains, ‘a reciprocal relationship is embedded in terms of caring for whanau’. When older Māori acknowledge the technological expertise of younger whānau members and ask for help, the establishment of this caring relationship provides a connection where knowledge sharing can be two-way – from younger to older and vice versa – rather than a more formal, one-way imparting of an elder’s knowledge. These informal moments within reciprocal relationships go some way to forging connections between past and future generations (Dawes et al., 2022).

Opportunities for intergenerational connectivity are actively promoted and facilitated by organisations and community groups. For example, the Geek Café at Tāmaki College in East Auckland provides an opportunity for older people to seek out technical assistance from the College’s students (Tāmaki College, 2022). The Kaumātua Mana Motuhake Pōi research project includes the tuakana/teina initiative described above (Oetzel, et al., 2020) along with a planned intergenerational model of learning to support physical activity and cultural knowledge exchange (Hokowhitu, et al., 2020). The intergenerational model will be tailored for the te reo expertise level of older Māori and involve them sharing mātauranga Māori with whānau members, while they participate in a physical activity together. The researchers describe this as a Māori epistemology of ageing that has the potential to improve life outcomes for older Māori.

Creating intergenerational sharing opportunities through gardening can similarly be described as a Māori epistemology. When the government launched its investment in the development of maara kai or community gardens, the then Minister of Māori Affairs, the Honourable Pita Sharples (2009, p. 1) described maara kai as enabling ‘the transference of traditional knowledge and practices from the experienced to the inexperienced... [contributing] to strengthening the foundation of our society as whānau’. Iwi reported that maara kai were an opportunity to share knowledge about land tenure and occupation, and traditional journeys, roles and responsibilities (Cram & Paipa, 2010). As Ngāti Whātua ki Orakei have demonstrated, maara kai are also an inclusive environment where all are

welcome, including those living on the streets of Tāmaki Makaurau, as ‘the sharing of food comes second to the strengthening of relationships’ (King et al., 2015). In addition to affiliation groups, the quality of life for older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau can also be enhanced by the provision of opportunities for intergenerational sharing, where older Māori are supported to share their knowledge and values with their mokopuna.

Although their physical health did not feature largely in their kōrero, declining physical health in older age was seen by some participants as a part of ageing and many were aware of their declining physical health, even when this decline was slow rather than steep. They also understood that their ability to live independent lives would probably depend on their physical health. Hirini and colleagues (1999) found that self-reported physical illness among Māori participants ($n=66$) was significantly worse than among non-Māori. In addition, ‘physical symptoms, chronic symptoms, and limitations in functioning, all increased with age in the Māori sub-sample’ (p. 5). Although this survey was some 25 years ago, health disparities in the physical health of older Māori have persisted. The difference is that now these disparities are attributed to the ongoing impacts of colonisation, land loss and racism (Stephens et al., 2022). Dyall and colleagues (2014) found that the low physical health-related quality of life of Māori aged 80-90 years was moderated by cultural engagement which, in turn, also provides a context for people to talk about the structural issues impacting older Māori. Similarly, opportunities for participants in the present study to engage in physical activity, worship or organised groups with Māori were also opportunities for analysis, fellowship, staying active, and mental wellbeing. While marae-based activities were not specifically asked about, it is assumed that these would provide the same benefits for those involved. So, while participants were accepting that physical limitations were a part of ageing, their quality of life can be supported by culturally responsive opportunities that keep them moving, engaged, and connected.

Just as participants were clear about what it meant to belong, feel valued and be secure, they were also aware of what could isolate older Māori and undermine their mental and emotional wellbeing. While the focus of the interviews was not explicitly on housing, the participants included rental housing on their lists of the increasing cost of living. They knew that those who were trying to make rent payments would be having a hard time because anyone trying to get by on superannuation alone was finding it increasingly difficult. To cope, some older renters had started to trim their contact with friends and whānau. While this strategy might save some money, the long-term consequences for their mental and emotional health might quickly outweigh any financial savings. The homeowners in Allport et al.’s (2018) Auckland sample of older Māori had more choices while those who were renting saw this as a future challenge, with their future likely to involve moving away from Auckland. There are tensions therefore between Stats NZ’s (2021) projected older Māori population in Tāmaki Makaurau and the potential outward migration of older Māori who can no longer afford to live in the city and who sever their social and whānau ties even more dramatically. Ways of securing affordable housing in the city for older Māori will support their quality of life.

Participants also spoke of their concerns for older Māori who were at risk of abuse from younger whānau and the demands they made on the resources and finances of older Māori. It is possible that some participants were experiencing this but were too whakamā or shy to mention it to the person interviewing them or speak out loud about it within a group interview setting. The Office for Seniors estimates that around one in ten older New Zealanders experience some form of abuse (likely lower than the true proportion, due to the under-reported nature of elder abuse), and additionally, that this abuse goes largely unrecognised or ignored (Office for Seniors, 2022). The elder abuse strategy developed by the Ministry of Social Development (2020) recognises both the need for and the scarcity of culturally responsive services for older Māori. Ensuring the freedom of older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau from abuse may require Auckland Council working closely with community organisations, as outlined in Tamaki Makaurau Tauawhi Kaumātua (Auckland Council, 2022).

Just as Māori had come to the city as children and young people and found a place for themselves as adults to live, work and raise whānau, older Māori may find that their foothold in the city is tenuous because of housing insecurity. Mana Whenua have been actively building or planning to build housing for their people, including kaumātua flats (Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, 2022). The return of older Māori to their whenua has been done in close consultation with them about accommodation that will suit them and meet their needs. The retention of older Māori who are Matawaka needs the same sort of attention and may potentially be possible in collaboration with Mana Whenua as part of their host responsibilities. While there is controversy about the urban migration of Māori because it threatens people's links with marae, hapū and Iwi (Dawes et al., 2022), the quality of life of older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau depends on enabling those who want to remain in the city to do so and enhancing their ability to stretch out to visit their tūrangawaewae, their kāinga tahi – first home places – and also maintain some connectivity there for themselves and their whānau.

Quality of life

Although the interview questions asked in the present study split the quality of life of older Māori into discrete components (e.g. te taha tinana, te taha whānau), it was clear from the conversational interviews that both interviewers and interviewees saw quality of life as integrated and holistic. Opportunities for spiritual wellbeing, for example, were also opportunities for social and cultural connectivity. Likewise, opportunities for physical activity were also opportunities for mental and emotional wellbeing. The core components of a quality life were also clear; namely, the ability to live a values-informed, self-determined life. These core components can guide initiatives that seek to support the quality of life of older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau, and strongly suggest that the first step in the development of such initiatives should be listening to and co-designing with older Māori.

There are gaps in the present study that have been covered by other researchers, and so should not be overlooked as components of the quality of life of older Māori. These include the cultural associations of older Māori such as their engagement with marae in Tāmaki Makaurau. In addition, the importance of having their own home (Allport et al., 2018) was touched upon when participants described the challenges of cost of living increases. Further exploration is warranted of the living circumstances of older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau. While participants in the present study may have lived in their own home, with whānau, in kaumātua or council flats, or in residential care facilities, their sense of having a home was not explicitly inquired about. Those who spoke about it confirmed that whānau makes a house a home (Cram, 2020).

Conclusion

In conversational interviews, undertaken by older Māori with older Māori, participants spoke about older Māori wanting to maintain mana Motuhake or independence in the context of kotahitanga or togetherness with their whānau and in social groups and activities. Older Māori did not necessarily say what types of services and activities would keep them well and able to age in place – in their home and in Tāmaki Makaurau. Rather, they indicated that anything that was done for them needed to be done with them if it was to be culturally responsive and facilitate their quality of life. This quality of life, in turn, was a holistic – combining whanaungatanga with physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional wellbeing as well as connections with the environment.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Information Sheet in English

Kaumātua Quality of Life study Information Sheet

Tēnā koe,

This is an invitation to be part of a study investigating quality of life of Kaumātua living in Tāmaki Makaurau.

What's the research about?

This study is part of a research project led by Dr Fiona Cram in collaboration with (and funded by) Auckland Council, who are interested in understanding how kaumātua make sense of wellbeing and what it means to live a good life in Tāmaki Makaurau.

Who's being invited to take part?

We're inviting whānau who are kaumātua that are living within the Tāmaki Makaurau area. We'd love to chat with kaumātua who are willing to speak about their own and their wider communities' experiences of living in Tāmaki Makaurau. Taking part is completely up to you.

How long will our talk take?

It'll take around 1-2 hours. The time it takes really depends on how much you'd like to say. If you'd like to talk for longer, I'm happy to listen.

What will I be asked?

These are the sorts of questions I'll be asking you:

- What sorts of relationships support older Māori to live good lives?
- Is a sense of belonging important for a good life for older Māori?
- Is the feeling of being valued essential for the quality of life of older Māori?

We'll also ask you some questions about you, so we can understand the types of people we are talking to.

Before we talk, I'll ask you to sign a consent form. This is just for us to make sure that you understand what it means to take part in this study. Signing the consent form doesn't stop you from changing your mind if you want to withdraw.

I'll ask you if it's okay for me to audio-record our talk. If, during our talk, you want to say something "off the record" just tell me, and I'll turn the recorder off. If you don't want to be recorded just let me know and I'll take notes when we talk.

Where will we talk?

We can talk at a place where you feel most comfortable. This might be your home, your office, or at a café, or park. It might be at the offices of a service provider you use. Being mindful of the new restrictions in place, we are also happy to connect with you virtually. It's up to you where we talk.

Do I have to answer every question?

No, just tell me if you'd rather not answer a question. And if you don't quite get what a question means, just tell me and I'll have another go at asking it.

If, after we've talked, you change your mind about being involved in this project, just let me know and I'll delete our conversation from my files. Because of our schedule, we ask that if you want to withdraw, please do so within a month after we talk.

What will happen with what I say?

After we talk, we'll transcribe our talk so we can analyse the ideas in the interview. We'll give you a copy of your transcript so you can check that we understood your views. We'll store and protect all your data safely in our system so that no one except my team can access it.

We'll be writing a report towards the end of February, based on everything people tell us. This will include common themes or things that lots of people talk about as well as interesting ideas that might come from only one or two people. If you are interested, we'll invite you to come along to a wānanga with other participants, to talk about all the ideas that you shared. It is up to you whether you attend this wānanga. We will give you more information about it so that you understand what this will involve.

You won't be identified in this report, unless you want to be named and acknowledged. If you want to be identified, it's important to know that this means that other people will know that you have taken part and that they will know about some of the ideas you have shared. We can talk more about the pros and cons of being identified.

I can send you a copy of this report when it's completed. It will also be shared on the Knowledge Auckland website: <https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/>

What if I still have questions about the research?

Please ask me any questions you have.

Kia ora

We really appreciate you taking the time to consider being part of this research

Appendix B. Consent Form in English

Kaumātua Quality of Life study Consent Form

About this kōrero

We want to talk with you today about your views of what it means to live well as older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau. What we talk about today will help inform Auckland Council's work to better understand quality of life for older Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau. We want to hear what you think. This is voluntary - you do not have to talk to us today if you do not want to. Saying no will not have any negative effects. Please see the information sheet for more details.

If you talk with us today, everything you say is private (unless you want to be identified in our report).

1. We would like to record our discussion so we can focus on what you say. We will not write down your name on the recording. Only our research team will have access to the recording or the notes.
 - a. Your recorded responses will only be used for analysis by our team.
 - b. The person who types up what is recorded in your interview has signed an agreement to keep your information private and confidential.
2. You can choose not to answer a question if you don't want to. You can ask to finish at any point. You can withdraw at any time during this kōrero, or withdraw any information you share up to 1 month after the interview. If you want to remove something from your interview transcript, please contact our researchers within a month of your participation.
3. All your information will be password protected and securely stored for five years, after which it will be destroyed.
4. The results of this research will be published as a publicly available report. Findings might be shared at conferences and/or published in an academic journal.

Do you have any questions?

Are you OK to start talking? **Yes/No**

Have you read or talked through the information sheet? **Yes/No**

Are you OK for us to record our kōrero? **Yes/No**

Do you want to review your interview transcript? **Yes/No**

Would you like to be identified in the report? **Yes/No**

If 'yes', using what name would you like to be identified:

Do you want a copy of the final research report? **Yes/No**

If 'yes' please provide an email or postal address where we can send the report (and koha, if we talked to you online):

Please write your name in full:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix C. Interview Guide

Initial question

1. What does it mean to live a good life when you're older, say 65 years and older?

Whānau

2. What sorts of relationships support older Māori to live good lives? *Probe: for example siblings, mokopuna, friends?*
3. How can we support older Māori to have these good relationships?
4. What are some of the things that prevent older Māori from having these kinds of good relationships?

Wairua

5. Is a sense of belonging important for a good life for older Māori? Why/why not?
6. What supports older Māori to feel like they belong?
7. What are some of the challenges for older Māori in feeling like they belong?

Hinengaro

8. What impact does feeling valued having on quality of life for older Māori?
9. Where does this sense of being valued come from? What supports it?
10. What are some of the things that make older Māori feel like they're not valued?

Iwi Katoa

11. Is being able to participate in activities and events important for older Māori? Why/why not?
12. Are there things preventing older Māori from participating?

Taiao – Kaitiakitanga

13. How important is a connection to a home place for older Māori?
14. How important is a connection to the place they are living, if they are not Mana Whenua?

Other questions – if not addressed above

15. How much do you think the quality of life for an individual is linked to the quality of life for the collective (and vice versa)?
16. How much do you think the quality of life for an individual is linked to the wellbeing of the wider environment (and vice versa)?
17. How does the life a person has led when they were younger impact on the quality of life that an older Māori person will experience?
18. Do you feel quality of life for older Māori changes with age? For example, does a good life when you're 65-79 years old differ when you're 80+?

