





# Downsizing in New Zealand: meaning and experiences

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Bev James – Public Policy & Research  
Fiona Cram – Katoa

Presentation to Auckland and Tauranga Summits,  
August 2016



# Talking with Older Residents

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- Aged 55+
- Mostly owner-occupiers
- Mix of those who have and have not downsized
- Located in Nelson, Tasman, Marlborough, Tauranga, Kawerau
- 58 interviewed
- Over 80 in focus groups (one FG in Auckland)

# Meaning of Downsizing

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- Moving from larger to smaller dwelling and/or section
- Having less to worry about
- Reducing consumption
- Divesting possessions
- Changing lifestyle
- 'Rightsizing'

# Reasons for Downsizing

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- Less house and section maintenance
- Cheaper house running costs
- Lifestyle improvement
- Health and mobility concerns
- Financial concerns
- Closer to services
- Closer to family
- Moving back home

# Looking for Improved Quality of Life

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- Warmth
- Independence
- Maintenance-free home and section
- Cheaper running costs – utilities, rates, insurance, maintenance, transport
- Handy to services
- Some space
- An outlook

# Information Needs

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- Strong reliance on own knowledge, family and friends
- Almost no use of professionals for advice
- It's hard to find information
- Internet use – either nil or a lot
- Different approaches to planning
- Varying control over the decision

# Very Few Housing Options

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- Dominance of larger homes in the market – limitations on building/ buying /renting smaller homes
- Financial constraints on changing housing
- Houses not designed for older people's needs and preferences



# Upsides of Downsizing

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- Improved dwelling performance and condition
- Improved physical and mental health
- Releasing capital to deal with mortgage, debt (not so much for investment)
- Improved house running costs
- Maintain or improve connections

# Downsizing also involved ...

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- Some increased costs
- Some unexpected costs
- Divesting possessions – both good and bad experiences
- Adjusting to new life, new environment

# Staying Put & Making Changes

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- Improving house performance, warmth and safety
- Additions and renovations
- Modifications to improve accessibility
- Reducing the size of the garden; easy care garden
- Living in part of the house
- Provision for live-in carer

# Older People's Tips

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- Talk about it with family and friends
- Make lists – priorities, wants, needs
- Make a plan
- Inspect properties and get technical advice
- Use older people's support organisations
- Don't move in haste



# Māori Case Study

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- Material, cultural, personal and locational factors that shape the housing decisions of older Maori older.
- Kaupapa Māori methodology
- Qualitative methods

# Method

- Consultation hui
  - Wairoa
  - Hastings
  - Christchurch
- 12 key informants
- 29 participants
  - 23 women, 6 men
  - 61-91 years
  - Mean age 74.4 years



# Advice from Māori Case Study

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- Downsize
- Don't isolate yourself
- Find a compatible community
- De-clutter
- Commit



# Culturally Responsive Housing

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Housing that allows and supports occupants to “maintain connections with their own cultural and organisational forms” (Habibis, et al., 2013, p. 16)



# Culturally Responsive Housing

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- Available, affordable, accessible, quality
- Peaceful, secure, healthy
- Universal design
- Connected to local environment
- A turangawaewae