

# Takatāpui & Rainbow community groups

*"I most definitely want to meet rainbow people of all ages." NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 65-69 years*

*"I opt to help as a volunteer [community group] because I'm needed and appreciated more there than attending LGBT+ support groups. Most in those groups are way younger than me." Māori bisexual trans woman, 75-79 years*

*"I live in a part of the country where there are very few opportunities to socialise with other gay people, then it becomes a matter of age... if you're not in their age group, they really can't be bothered." NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 75-79 years*

*"I recently returned from [overseas], during COVID, where I had a moderately active social life including mixing in the queer community. Since returning I have become very isolated and apart from apps which are ineffective for older people I have no direct contact with the queer community in [city]. I feel very disassociated from them." NZ European/Pākehā gay man, 65-69 years*

*"I yearn to meet with people like me but don't know where to find them." NZ European/Pākehā non-binary person, 65-69 years*



One in four elders (25%) do not socialise with others in Takatāpui and Rainbow communities – but most really want to!

## We need to provide opportunities for intergenerational spaces

Takatāpui, Pasifika and ethnic Rainbow people (younger than elders) believe that older people are less valued and respected inside western cultural norms, including white-dominated Rainbow community spaces. Many elders experience ageism or invisibility within Rainbow communities; and many want the opportunity for more intergenerational connection with other Takatāpui and Rainbow people. Elders who answered our survey were significantly more disconnected, and felt less belonging, to Takatāpui and Rainbow communities than to other people their own age.

## We need to know our whakapapa – there is not one (white) story

Many elders do not feel the history of activism and experience of Takatāpui and Rainbow people is well understood by younger people, including the specific histories of Takatāpui, Pasifika and ethnic Rainbow communities. With so many elders in our communities wanting more connection, there are enormous opportunities to correct this, by uplifting diverse elder voices, particularly outside our larger cities. These histories should include storytelling about events that impact today's community dynamics, such as the dominance of white cultural values, Takatāpui, Pasifika and ethnic Rainbow histories, and the specific experiences of people living with HIV, bisexual, trans and intersex people.

## We need specific groups and activities relevant for Takatāpui and Rainbow older people

Elders cannot find community or activities aimed at them – not only from social services, but inside Takatāpui and Rainbow communities. This is likely to reflect who is involved in Takatāpui and Rainbow community groups at voluntary, paid and governance levels, and may require groups to actively seek more engagement with elders. How do you communicate with your community? If it is only online, elders say it does not work for them. What kind of language and promotion do you use? If your community group does not actively invite in Takatāpui and Rainbow elders, you are only likely to be serving the needs of younger people.

## We need social change and advocacy work that doesn't end at thirty

Many Takatāpui and Rainbow community groups are actively involved in important social change and advocacy work in their communities, including workforce training and policy development. However, one size does not fit all when it comes to age (or anything else). We need these social change efforts to highlight the needs and experiences of Takatāpui and Rainbow elders, as well as young people. This is particularly relevant in terms of training in mental health, healthcare, housing and social services, and will require the guidance and meaningful inclusion of Takatāpui and Rainbow elders. Training also needs to be specific and relevant to local contexts, including iwi and rohe contexts.

*"Between 1986 and 1998 I lost 44 NZ age peer friends – incl my partner of 22 years – and 38 died of HIV-AIDS related illnesses." Another ethnicity, gay man, 75-79 years*

*"As I get older I find younger rainbow forget all the hard work already done on behalf of the LGBTQI+ community. I tend to socialise with lots of different groups and feel ignored if at a rainbow event." NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 65-69 years*

*"As an older lesbian, in the 21st century I feel very assured about coming out. This was not the case in the 1950s, 60s or 1970s." Pasifika lesbian woman, 70-74 years*

*"Reception in "rainbow" community has sometimes been worse than in straight community. Verbal abuse for being bi by lesbians and gay men within last ten years. Verbal and online abuse for not being cisgender in last five years." NZ European/Pākehā bisexual non-binary person, 60-64 years*

*"I find it difficult to join in with groups due to anxiety. Most of my life was religiously based and it is hard to discuss things with others as I have not had the exposure to other rainbow groups as I only came out a few years ago." Māori gay man, 65-69 years*

*"I recently came out to a colleague/close friend after 12 years. She hasn't spoken to me since. This only replicates why I am reluctant to be openly out. My past has taught me it's not safe to be gay :(" NZ European/Pākehā lesbian woman, 55-59 years*

*"I moved away from the lesbian community a long time ago then moved cities and don't know how to reconnect." Māori lesbian woman, 70-74 years*

We heard from 424 Takatāpui and Rainbow elders via a confidential online survey, and we interviewed 11 elders in depth. We also held six focus groups with tangata whenua, Pasifika and ethnic Takatāpui and Rainbow people and service providers. You can read the full report, Uplifting Takatāpui and Rainbow Elder Voices: Tukua kia tū takitahi ngā whetū o te rangi and listen to the 16 interview podcasts at [Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura](#) or [Rainbow Hub Waikato](#).

