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Housing and Demographic Snapshot of Southland's Ageing Population

This report aims to provide insights for councils, developers, investors, regulators and the general community to guide the provision of fit for purpose homes for the region's older residents, now and into the future. It draws on 2023 Census data and other sources and provides a snapshot of the older population of Murihiku Southland - where people aged 65 and over live, the homes they live in and the income and housing pressures they face.

The report is divided into three sections providing key demographic insights and housing and renting information. An infographic summary also provides a snapshot of key facts.

The current picture that emerges is one of a steadily ageing region with high home ownership, a shortage of smaller affordable homes and a small but growing group of older renters exposed to rising costs.

Section 1: Key Insights about Southland's Ageing Population

1

Southland is older than the national average

Southland already has a higher share of older residents, and this gap is expected to widen.

Median age 40.4

NZ median 38.1

Gore 42.8



2

One of New Zealand's highest 65+ shares

People aged 65+ make up a larger proportion of Southland's population than most regions.

18.5% aged 65+

18,516 people

NZ 16.6%



3

Different ageing patterns across the region

Invercargill has the largest older population, Gore has the oldest age structure, and the Southland District is ageing fastest.

Invercargill 10,251 aged 65+

Gore 21.4% aged 65+

Southland District +19.6% growth in 65+ residents



4

Ageing faster than overall growth

The 65+ population is growing much faster than Southland's total population.

+12.3% 65+ growth

+2.7% total growth

+2,031 older people

2018–2023



5

Many older people live alone

Nearly one third of Southlanders aged 65+ live alone, especially in urban areas.

31.2% live alone

34% Invercargill & Gore

25% Southland District

NZ 25%



6

Ageing conditions vary across the region

Socioeconomic deprivation among older people is more concentrated in urban areas.

15.3% in most deprived areas

Gore 20.0%

Invercargill 18.2%

Southland District 7.7%



7

Low fixed incomes increase housing pressure

Many older Southlanders have low, largely fixed incomes, making housing and living costs harder to absorb.

62% earn under \$30,000

Median income \$26,400

NZ Super reliance

Affordability risk



Southland already has a higher proportion of older residents than the national average and this gap is expected to widen. With slow overall population growth, an ageing baby boomer cohort, and net internal migration losses (particularly of younger people moving to larger centres), the region faces a more acute demographic shift than most of New Zealand. This has significant implications for services, workforce and local infrastructure planning in the years ahead.

1.1 Southland's population is older than other places in New Zealand¹

- The region has one of the oldest median ages in New Zealand at **40.4 years**, compared to **38.1 years** nationally.
- This is the sixth highest of 16 regions nationally.
- The Gore district has the highest median age at **42.8 years**.

Table 1: Median age by area (2023 Census)

Area	Median age (years)
Gore District	42.8
Southland District	40.3
Invercargill City	40.0
Southland region	40.4
New Zealand	38.1

1.2 The Southland region currently has a higher proportion of 65+ people than the national average²

- In 2018, **16.9%** of Southland's population were aged 65 years or over (16,485 people).
- In 2023, this grew **1.6** percentage points to **18.5%**, well above the national average of **16.6%**.

1.3 Ageing trends in both rural and urban regions are contributing to the regional picture³

Across the Southland region, there are three distinct profiles:

- **Invercargill** has the largest older population (10,251 people) — the biggest pool to plan services around.
- **Gore** has the oldest age structure (21.4% of their population are 65+, median age 42.8) - it's furthest along the ageing curve and suggests a maturing need now.
- **Southland District** is the fastest-ageing - its 65+ group jumped nearly 20% in five years, more than double the rate of the other two councils. This rapid growth of 19.6% suggests rising demand for rural-served aged care, transport and housing in smaller communities

Table 2 — Growth in the 65+ population by district, 2018 to 2023

District	2018	2023	Change	65+ share of population 2023
Southland District	4,635	5,544	+909 (+19.6%)	17.4%
Invercargill City	9,345	10,251	+906 (+9.7%)	18.4%
Gore District	2,508	2,721	+213 (8.5%)	21.4%
Southland Region Total	16,485	18,516	+2,031 (12.3%)	18.5%

¹ Ethnicity (detailed single / combination), age, and gender for the census usually resident population count, (RC, TALB, SA2, Health), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses

² Aotearoa Data Explorer • Ethnicity (detailed single / combination), age, and gender for the census usually resident population count, (RC, TALB, SA2, Health), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses

³ Aotearoa Data Explorer • Ethnicity (detailed single / combination), age, and gender for the census usually resident population count, (RC, TALB, SA2, Health), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses

1.4 Southland is ageing faster than it is growing⁴

Southland's total population grew **2.7%**, from 97,467 in 2018 to 100,143 in 2023. Over the same period the number of people aged 65 and over, rose **12.3%** - an additional 2,031 people. This illustrates that the region is ageing faster than it is growing.

Table 3 — Population change, 2018 to 2023

Measure	2018	2023	Change
Total population	97,467	100,143	+2.7%
People aged 65+	16,485	18,516	+12.3%
65+ share of population	16.9%	18.5%	+1.6pp

Statistics NZ projections indicate this trend will continue. Under a medium projection, the 65+ population grows to 26,000 by 2053 - making up **22.4%** of the projected population. Even under low-growth assumptions, where the total population falls, older people still rise to around **21.8%** of the total.⁵

Around one in five Southland residents will be aged 65 or over by 2053 regardless of overall growth.

1.5 Not all older people are ageing under the same conditions in Southland⁶

Socioeconomic deprivation among people aged 65 and over varies markedly across the region with deprivation more concentrated in urban areas.

- Region-wide, **16.4%** of 65+ live in the least deprived areas (NZDep deciles 1–2) and **15.3%** in the most deprived (deciles 9–10).
- Deprivation is more concentrated in urban areas with around **one in five older residents in the Gore District and Invercargill City** living in the most deprived neighbourhoods, compared with **well under one in 13 in the Southland District**.

Table 4 — Share of 65+ living in the most deprived areas (NZDep deciles 9–10)

Area	65+ in deciles 9–10
Gore District	20.0%
Invercargill City	18.2%
Southland District	7.7%
Southland region	15.3%

Please note: In New Zealand, deprivation is a way of describing how difficult life can be for people who have fewer social and material resources. It reflects things like lower incomes, unemployment, poorer housing, overcrowding, lower educational achievement, and reduced access to transport or communication services. It does not measure an individual person's circumstances but instead gives an indication of the level of disadvantage experienced within neighbourhoods and communities.

⁴ [Aotearoa Data Explorer • Ethnicity \(detailed single / combination\), age, and gender for the census usually resident population count, \(RC, TALB, SA2, Health\), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses](#)

⁵ [Subnational population projections, by age and sex, 2023\(base\)-2053](#)

⁶ [New Zealand index of socioeconomic deprivation, individual home ownership, ethnicity, age, and gender for the census usually resident population count aged 15 years and over, \(RC, TALB, Health\), 2023 Census](#)

1.6 Many people who are over 65 years in Southland live alone⁷

Almost one third of people aged 65 and over live alone (31.2%) which is a small decrease since the 2018 census.

- This figure is higher in the region's more urban areas of Invercargill City and Gore District with **34% and 34.1% respectively** living alone and lower in the Southland District with **24.6%** of people aged over 65 years living alone.
- Southland region is significantly higher than the rest of New Zealand, where there are **25.2%** living alone.

1.7 Many older Southlanders are on low, fixed incomes, increasing exposure to housing and living-cost pressures⁸

Most older Southlanders are living on low, largely fixed incomes, so rising housing, rates, insurance, maintenance and energy costs create real affordability risk - especially for renters, people with mortgages, and older women.

- **Income levels are low:** 62% of Southlanders aged 65+ earn under \$30,000 a year, with a median income of \$26,400.
- **Fixed incomes increase vulnerability:** Many older residents rely mainly on New Zealand Superannuation, limiting their ability to absorb rising living and housing costs.
- **Older women face greater income risk:** Across all districts, women aged 65+ are more likely than men to earn under \$30,000.
- **Urban areas show slightly higher income pressure:** Invercargill and Gore have higher shares of older people on low incomes than in the Southland District.
- **Rural older people are more likely to still be working:** Southland District has higher full-time and part-time employment among people aged 65+, possibly linked to farming, rural businesses and later retirement.⁹
- **The housing implication is affordability, not just supply:** Even where older people own homes, ongoing costs may be difficult; for renters or those without mortgage-free ownership, the risk is sharper.

Table 5 — New Zealand Superannuation and support (after tax, from 1 April 2026)¹⁰

Payment / support	Amount
NZ Super — single, living alone	\$1,110.30 / net per fortnight
NZ Super — couple, both qualify	\$1,708.16 / net per fortnight
Accommodation Supplement (Southland, area 4) ¹¹	\$70–\$80 / week
Median personal income (gross), 65+	\$26,400 / year

Note: During December 2025, nearly 19,800 people across Southland's districts were receiving NZ Superannuation. Accommodation Supplement eligibility (individual) begins at rent above \$139/week or mortgage above \$167/week.

⁷ Aotearoa Data Explorer • Disability indicator, household composition, ethnicity, and age for people aged 5 years and over in households in occupied private dwellings, (RC, TALB, Health), 2018 and 2023 Censuses

⁸ Individual home ownership, total personal income, age, and gender for the census usually resident population count aged 15 years and over, (RC, TALB, SA2, Health), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses

⁹ Birthplace, work and labour force status, age, and gender for the census usually resident population count aged 15 years and over, (RC, TALB, SA2, Health), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses

¹⁰ How much you can get for NZ Super - Work and Income

¹¹ Benefit rates at 1 April 2026 - Work and Income

Section 2 — The Housing Situation for People aged over 65years in Southland



Very high home ownership

Most older Southlanders own their home or hold it in a family trust, well above the regional and national averages.

4th highest region in NZ

86.7% own their home up from 82.2% in 2018



Older people stay longer in place

Older Southlanders have lived at their current address for longer than older people nationally.

21.9 years average

18.1 years nationally

23.3 years Southland District



Residential care remains comparatively low

Most older people live in private dwellings, with only a small but growing group in residential care.

94% private dwellings

~5% residential care

780 to 843 places

2018–2023



Many homes are larger than needed

Southland has a shortage of smaller homes, leaving many older people in houses bigger than they need.

77.5% homes have 3+ bedrooms

64.8% homes have 2+ spare bedrooms vs 57.6% nationally



Older homes affect health and wellbeing

A large share of Southland's housing stock is older, which can create warmth, dampness and maintenance challenges.

72% built before 1980

7.7% dampness

5.1% mould

Cold-climate risk



Rural ageing is increasing housing demand

Fast ageing in the Southland District is adding pressure in rural towns with people attracted by affordable housing and retirement opportunities.

+19.6% 65+ growth

Riverton & Te Anau

Affordable-home pull

2.1 Southland has very high home ownership compared to the rest of New Zealand¹²

Home ownership for people aged 65 years or older is particularly high, with Southland having the fourth highest home ownership of all regions in New Zealand.¹³

- Across the region, **86.7%** of those aged 65 and over own their home (outright, partly, or held in a Trust), up from **82.2%** in 2018.
- The homeownership of 65 and over is well above the regional rate for the whole population of **72.3%**.

Ownership is lower for Māori and Pacific (76.4%) and Asian (73.2%) residents, and this could signal that these groups have greater rental-market risk.¹⁴

Home ownership is high in Southland compared to the rest of New Zealand (72.3% vs 65.5% in 2023).

Table 6 — Home ownership among people aged 65+ (own or family trust)

Group	Ownership rate
65+, Southland region (2023)	86.7%
65+, Southland region (2018)	82.2%
Māori and Pacific 65+	76.4%
Asian 65+	73.2%
All Southland households	72.3%

2.2 Longer length of stay in current address for older people compared to rest of New Zealand¹⁵

Older Southlanders also look to be staying where they are, having lived in their current address for a long time:

- People aged 65+ have lived at their current address for **21.9 years** on average, compared to **18.1 years** nationally (2023 census).
- In the Southland district, they have stayed for **23.3 years** which possibly reflects farm ownership and long-term connections to rural areas.
- Recent consultation as part of Southland and Gore District Council’s community spatial planning processes indicates that older people like to stay in areas where there is access or close proximity to healthcare and other amenities and services. It is also important to them that they have support of friends and family so the ‘sense of community’ which is often developed overtime could be reflected in these statistics.
- It also could be the case that some older people cannot afford to move to another more highly priced location such as Central Otago due to the lower value of their home versus higher values elsewhere.

¹² [Disability indicator, tenure of household, ethnicity, age, and gender for people aged 5 years and over in households in occupied private dwellings, \(RC, TALB, Health\), 2018 and 2023 Censuses](#)

¹³ [Disability indicator, tenure of household, ethnicity, age, and gender for people aged 5 years and over in households in occupied private dwellings, \(RC, TALB, Health\), 2018 and 2023 Censuses](#)

¹⁴ [Disability indicator, tenure of household, ethnicity, age, and gender for people aged 5 years and over in households in occupied private dwellings, \(RC, TALB, Health\), 2018 and 2023 Censuses](#)

¹⁵ [Years at usual residence, tenure of household, age, and gender for people in households in occupied private dwellings, \(RC, TALB, SA2, Health\), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses](#)

2.3 Many older people are in homes bigger than what they need¹⁶

Southland's housing stock is dominated by larger homes. Of all 46,056 private dwellings, about **78% have three or more bedrooms**. Consent data shows that dwellings which have been or are being built are larger than the national average showing that bigger homes are still being built in the region.

In short, there is a shortage of smaller dwellings and while some are being built, more are needed¹⁷

There are early signs the market is responding. New dwelling consents rose from 321 in 2024 to 428 in 2025 across all three districts in Southland, while the average size of new homes fell from 162.4 m² to 153.5 m² - still above the national average of 140.8m². The shift aligns with more townhouses being consented (up from 25 to 69), alongside 13 retirement-village homes and 12 apartments in Invercargill. Monitoring this annually will show whether the trend continues.

Table 7 — New dwelling consents, 2024 vs 2025

Measure	2024	2025
New dwelling consents	321	428
Average size of new dwellings	162.4 m ²	153.5 m ²
Townhouses consented	25	69

Note: National average size of new dwellings: 140.8 m². 2025 consents also included 13 retirement-village homes and 12 apartments in Invercargill.

The impact of a shortage of affordable, warm and smaller homes is that **many older people are in homes bigger than what they need**.

This is backed up by the data relating to household under-utilisation among older people and it is very high in Southland – **64.8% of older people's households have two or more spare bedrooms**. This compares to 57.6% nationally.¹⁸

Through recent surveying, many have indicated that they would consider downsizing, but cannot due to the limited supply of smaller, affordable homes, and the fact that selling a larger home often does not free enough equity to buy a smaller one mortgage-free.¹⁹

Providing more small, warm, accessible homes would release larger homes for families and other workforce.

Table 8 — Households with two or more spare bedrooms, 65+

Area	65+ with 2+ spare bedrooms
Southland District	74.1%
Gore District	64.5%
Invercargill City	59.8%
Southland Region	64.8%
New Zealand	57.6%

¹⁶ [Aotearoa Data Explorer • Household composition by number of usual residents and number of bedrooms for households in occupied private dwellings, \(RC, TALB, SA2, Health\), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses](#)

¹⁷ From <https://infoshare.stats.govt.nz/>, select 'Industry Sector', 'Building Consents - BLD', 'Building consents by territorial authority (Qrtly-Mar/Jun/Sep/Dec)', select TAs, Building Type, Building Nature, and observations as per data and then export as csv or excel file as required.

¹⁸ [Household crowding index, ethnicity, and age for people in households in occupied private dwellings, \(RC, TALB, SA2, Health\), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses](#)

¹⁹ Housing & Community Needs Survey (2026)

2.4 Southland has a small but growing number of people in residential care²⁰

Most people aged 65 and over (94%) live in private dwellings, and the use of residential aged care is comparatively low, around 5% locally.

Residential care places rose only modestly between the 2018 census and 2023 one (780 to 843), consistent with more seniors ageing in their own homes.

A small number of people over 65 years live in “other” dwellings such as motor camps or mobile homes; while this equates to only 120 across the region, this has more than doubled from 51 in 2018 and is worth monitoring. This increase could be linked to a lack of smaller, warmer and affordable homes or people choosing to sell their house and travel around the country in a motorhome.

2.5 Southland has some of the oldest homes in New Zealand and this can affect health and wellbeing²¹

Around 72% of Southland homes were built before 1980 which reflects an ageing housing stock.

The age of housing is particularly important for Southland considering its cold climate particularly during winter. It is unknown how many homes have been insulated, double glazed or have had other renovations.

The condition of older people’s dwellings is concerning with anecdotal feedback indicating that some lack basic amenities which can affect people’s health, wellbeing and cost to heat their home in the winter. It is not uncommon to hear that some people only heat certain rooms in their home during winter due to the cost.

The affordability pressure for older people living in older homes applies to those who own homes as well as rent.

Table 9 — Housing quality concerns reported in 65+ private dwellings

Concern	Share of 65+ dwellings
Dampness (always/sometimes) ²²	7.7%
Mould over A4 size (always/sometimes) ²³	5.1%
Unsafe tap water	2.0%
Homes built before 1980 (all Southland)	72%

2.6 Southland has growing numbers of older people in rural areas attracted by affordable housing and retirement opportunities²⁴

In the Southland district there is very fast ageing with 20% growth in the last 5 years of people aged 65+ which is more than double the rate of the other two councils.

This could be attributed to the general population ageing and people retiring in rural areas near lakes or rural areas they may have farmed in. Some people may also be unable to afford to retire in Central Otago so are looking at places like Riverton or Te Anau.

However, what this could also be reflecting is that some older people (and actually the general population) are moving to where they can find affordable homes and many of these are located in townships throughout the region

²⁰ [Dwelling type, ethnicity, age, and gender for the census usually resident population in occupied dwellings, \(RC, TALB, Health\), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses](#)

²¹ [Murihiku Southland Housing Needs Assessment \(2023\)](#)

²² [Dwelling dampness, ethnicity, age, and gender for the census usually resident population in occupied private dwellings, \(RC, TALB, SA2, Health\), 2018 and 2023 Censuses](#)

²³ [Dwelling mould, ethnicity, age, and gender for the census usually resident population in occupied private dwellings, \(RC, TALB, SA2, Health\), 2018 and 2023 Censuses](#)

²⁴ QV, 2026 and Great South, 2026

(see Table 10). Increasing housing values is a key consideration across the region noting that within this growth is variation regarding the type and quality of homes which an average statistic cannot reflect (Table 9)

Table 10 - Average House Price

Average house price	2007	2025	% increase
Southland District	190,782	558,744	193%
Southland Region	181,848	527,431	190%
New Zealand	393,801	910,118	131%

Table 11 - Average House Price

Average house price	2025
Riversdale	500,033
Edendale	466,722
Wyndham	303,667
Lumsden	418,364
Otautau	413,895
Riverton	597,038
Te Anau	695,395
Tuatapere	308,750
Winton	550,115
Southland District	558,744
Southland Region	527,431
New Zealand	910,118

Section 3 — The Renting Situation for People aged over 65 years in Southland

1



Small and financially vulnerable renter group

A small but more financially vulnerable group of older people rent their homes.

1,830 renters aged 65+

9.9% of 65+

79% rent privately

2



Limited social housing

Southland has significantly less social housing than elsewhere in New Zealand.

454 Kāinga Ora homes

4.4 per 1,000 residents

13.7 nationally

3



Council housing is important

Southland councils provide much-needed elderly and community housing.

ICC 222 units

SDC 69 houses

\$155–\$221/week

4



Rents are rising sharply

Older renters are increasingly exposed to higher private-market rents and limited affordable alternatives.

\$475/week private-market median

12.7% paying
\$400+/week

\$20,800/year at \$400/week

3.1 A small but financially vulnerable group of older people rent their homes²⁵

In 2023, 1,830 people aged 65 and over were renting in Southland which is **9.9%** of this age group. While there are more people renting than in 2018, overall, this is a slightly smaller share of all people 65+ (down 0.6% from 10.5%).

Most older renters are in the private market and rely primarily on New Zealand Superannuation, leaving them increasingly exposed to rising rents. Research shows that some move from ownership into renting through forced circumstances - financial shocks, relationship breakdown or caregiving - rather than by choice.²⁶

Table 12 — Where 65+ renters rent (2023)

Landlord type ²⁷	Share of 65+ renters
Private landlords	79.0%
Councils	11.9%
Kāinga Ora	5.8%
Community Housing Providers	2.3%

3.2 Southland has significantly less social housing than elsewhere in New Zealand

Social housing in Southland is limited, with only two public homes available in the Southland district (which accounts for roughly 11% of New Zealand’s land area including national parks).

- Kāinga Ora has **454 homes** in the region as at 31 May 2026
- This equates to **4.4 per 1,000** residents, compared to **13.7 per 1,000** nationally.

3.3 Southland Councils provide much needed elderly housing

Councils provide additional ‘below-market or affordable housing’.

- Invercargill City Council has **222** elderly housing units (renting at \$174–\$221/week)
- Southland District Council has **69** community houses within ten towns (\$155–\$175/week).

The provision of these homes is important considering they are most probably related to the low number of government social housing (3.2 above) particularly in the Southland district.

Because councils cannot access the Income Related Rent Subsidy available only to Community Housing Providers (CHPs), any further council housing is likely to be subsidised by ratepayers. Please note: Southland has only one active CHP with limited homes available.

²⁵ [Disability indicator, weekly rent paid by household, sector of landlord, and age for people aged 5 years and over in households in rented occupied private dwellings, \(RC, TALB, Health\), 2018 and 2023 Censuses](#)

²⁶ [BERL. \(2024, August 7\). Home ownership and unequal ageing. And Dale, M. C. \(2024, September 25\). Housing options for older people in Aotearoa New Zealand: Trends and challenges \(PIE Pension Briefing 2024-1\). Pensions and Intergenerational Equity Hub, Economic Policy Centre, University of Auckland.](#)

²⁷ [Disability indicator, weekly rent paid by household, sector of landlord, and age for people aged 5 years and over in households in rented occupied private dwellings, \(RC, TALB, Health\), 2018 and 2023 Censuses](#)

Table 13— Social and council housing for older people²⁸

Provider	Homes / units	Weekly rent
Kāinga Ora (all Southland)	454	Income-related
Invercargill City Council — elderly housing, 2026/27 ²⁹	222	\$174–\$232
Southland District Council — community houses, 2026/27 ³⁰	69	\$170–\$195

Note: Kāinga Ora provision equates to 4.4 homes per 1,000 residents in Southland, compared with 13.5 per 1,000 nationally.

3.4 Rising rents are affecting older people in Southland

Affordability in the private rental market has clearly deteriorated in Southland.

The Census median rent across all rental types was **\$300/week**, but the private-market median reached **\$475/week** by December 2025 - up from around **\$270** in 2018.

The effect on older renters is stark with the share of people aged 65+ paying more than \$400/week rising from **2.3%** in 2018 to **12.7%** in 2023.

As the number of older renters grows, pressure on the region's limited social and elderly housing will intensify.

Table 14— Rent levels and affordability for older renters

Measure	2018	2023 / latest
Private-market median rent (per week) ³¹	~\$270	\$475
Census median rent, all types (per week) ³²	\$200	\$300
65+ paying more than \$400/week	2.3%	12.7%

Note: Private-market median uses Tenancy Services bond data (December 2025) and excludes social housing. \$400/week equates to \$20,800 per year.

In summary

Southland's population is ageing steadily and will keep ageing regardless of overall growth, with around one in five residents aged 65 or over by 2053. Most older people own their homes, value staying in them, and prefer to age in place but the region has too few smaller, warm, accessible homes to let them downsize, leaving larger family homes under-utilised. A smaller group of older renters, concentrated in the private market and reliant on fixed incomes, faces the sharpest pressure as rents rise and social housing remains limited. Planning early for the right homes in the right places, smaller, affordable, warm and accessible, will be central to supporting older Southlanders to live well in the years ahead.

²⁸ [Key statistics by territorial authority - Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport \(Formerly Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development\)](#)

²⁹ [40 Elderly Persons Housing.pdf](#)

³⁰ [Schedule of Fees and Charges](#)

³¹ [Rental bond data » Tenancy Services](#)

³² [Aotearoa Data Explorer • Totals by topic for households, \(RC, TALB, UR, SA3, SA2, Ward, Health\), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses](#)

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Southland People 65 & Over

All information is for **65+ age group** unless otherwise specified

This infographic brings together key data on where older Southlanders live, how they're housed, and the pressures many face around income, housing quality, and affordability. The picture that emerges is one of increasing need for warm, accessible, smaller homes that support ageing in place. These insights help us understand what's changing – and what kind of housing Southland will need to plan for now and into the future.

Total Population

100,143

in Southland 2023
97,467 in 2018

2.7%
increase

55,599

Invercargill City Council 2023
54,204 in 2018 (ICC)

31,833

Southland District Council 2023
30,864 in 2018 (SDC)

12,711

Gore District Council 2023
12,396 in 2018 (GDC)



65+ Population

	Region	ICC	SDC	GDC
2018	16,485	9,345	4,635	2,508
2023	18,516	10,251	5,544	2,721
% Change	12.3%	9.7%	19.6%	8.5%

Projections for 65+ ^{1,2}

Medium projections with 2023 base.

	Region	ICC	SDC	GDC
2038	23,700	12,700	8,000	3,050
2053	26,000	14,200	9,000	2,800

Ethnicity

European	Māori	Pacific Peoples	Asian
94%	6.8%	0.9%	1%

18.5%

of Southlanders are 65+
40.4 years is the **median age**.

NZ
38.1
years

40 years

18.4%

ICC

40.3 years

17.4%

SDC

42.8 years

21.4%

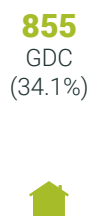
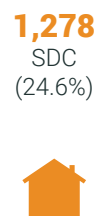
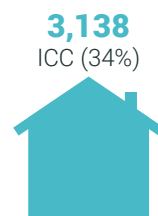
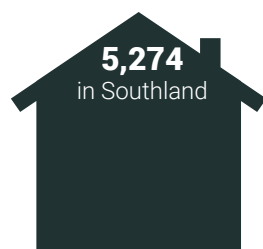
GDC

Southland's median age is higher than the national average

Living Alone ³

31.2% of people 65+ in Southland **live alone**

NZ
25.2%



Nearly a third of all 65+ in Southland live alone.

People with disabilities ⁴

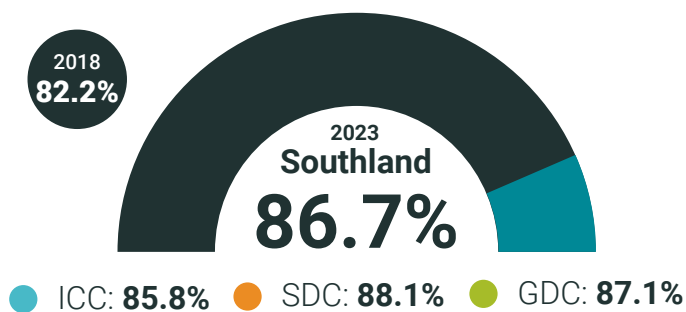
2,631 people 65+ (**16.5%**) have a disability

1,575
ICC 2023

654
SDC 2023

402
GDC 2023

Home ownership ⁵



Male: ⁶
87%



Female: ⁶
86%

● European ⁷: **87%**

● Maori ⁷: **76.4%**

● Pacific People ⁷: **76.4%**

● Asian ⁷: **73.2%**

For the total population in Southland 72.3% of households own, partly own or hold in family trust. This is higher for older households, but ownership is lower for Māori, Pacific, and Asian communities.

Length of residence ⁹

21.9 years

Southland Average

NZ
18.1 years

21.2 years

Invercargill City Council

23.3 years

Southland District Council

21.4 years

Gore District Council

The long tenure of the 65+ cohort highlights aging-in-place.

Income ¹⁰

62.3% of 65+ have income less than \$30,000 per year

\$26,400 is the **Median Personal Income.**¹¹

ICC

\$25,900

SDC

\$27,800

GDC

\$26,100

Income for the majority of 65+ is modest and this is more likely for females. This highlights possible affordability issues for fixed income seniors.

Type of dwelling ⁸

Private dwellings remain dominant indicating most older people are ageing in private homes, not in institutions. Residential care increased in count, but fell slightly as a share. That suggests more ageing in place and/or use of community supports. Other private dwellings more than doubled, still <1% of 65+ dwellings but a watch point.

Total Dwelling

2018 Region: 16,657

2023 Region: 17,907

Private

2018 Region: 94%

2023 Region: 94.2%

● ICC: 92.5%

● SDC: 96.9%

● GDC: 94.8%

Residential Care

2018 Region: 5%

2023 Region: 4.7%

● ICC: 6.4%

● SDC: 1.4%

● GDC: 4.9%

Other Private

2018 Region: 0.3%

2023 Region: 0.7%

● ICC: 0.3%

● SDC: 1.3%

● GDC: 0.8%

Other private dwelling includes dwelling in a motorcamp, mobile home not in a camp, impoverished dwelling or shelter and roofless and rough sleeper.

Employment¹²

	Region	ICC	SDC	GDC
Full	15.4%	12.6%	21.2%	13.8%
Part	11.9%	10.3%	15.4%	10.8%

64.8%

ICC



Male:
60.3%



Female:
68.7%

56.7%

SDC



Male:
50.9%



Female:
63.7%

64.1%

GDC



Male:
59.9%



Female:
67.6%

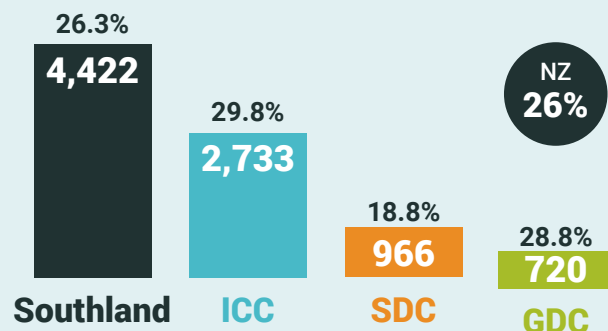


Home Underutilisation ¹³

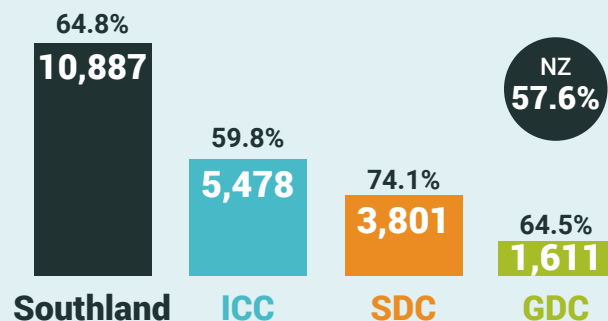
16,917

households in the Southland Region

households with **one spare bedroom**



households with **two spare bedrooms**



Household under-utilisation is significant: 64.8% of 65+ households have two or more spare bedrooms. Given the average 21.9 years at current residence, many seniors value place attachment.

Lacking Basic Amenities



Cooking Facilities
174 | 1.1%



Safe Tap Water
327 | 2.0%



Kitchen Sink
102 | 0.6%



Refrigerator
246 | 1.5%



Bath or Shower
114 | 0.7%



Toilet
102 | 0.6%



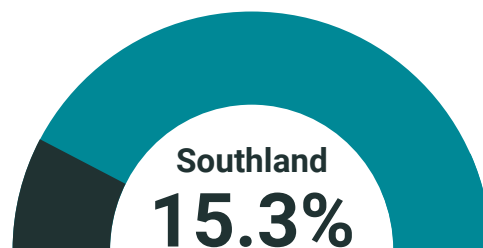
Electricity Supply
195 | 1.2%



None of these
33 | 0.2%

A small but important number of 65+ lack access to basic amenities

Deprivation ¹⁴



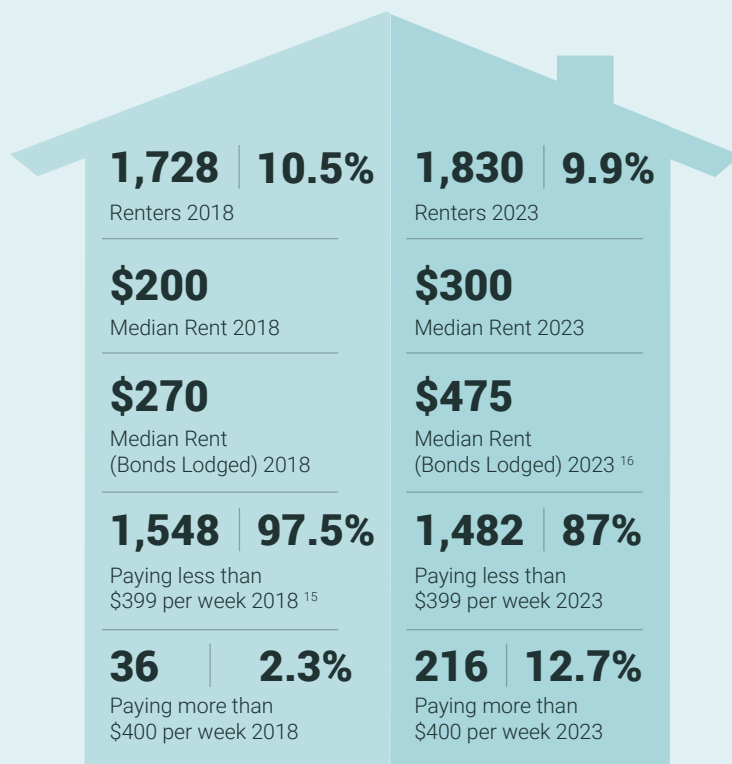
ICC: 18.2% SDC: 7.7% GDC: 20%

Deprivation is based on where you live. Noticeably more 65+ live in deprived areas in Invercargill and Gore than Southland District.

Renting

Census median rent includes all rental properties eg social housing, while Bond data includes only private rentals.

Current median rent (Dec 2025) is \$480 per week.



1,434 | 79%

in private rental in Southland 2023 ¹⁷

216 11.9% in council housing	105 5.8% in Kāinga Ora Housing	42 2.3% in Other Community Housing
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The number of renters is increasing and the amount of rent paid is also. This is especially significant in the private rental market where the majority of 65+ live.

Mouldy Homes ¹⁸

Number of homes that always or sometimes have mould more than A4 size.

819 (5.1%)

Mouldy homes in Southland

● ICC: **510** ● SDC: **213** ● GDC: **96**

Damp Homes ¹⁹

Number of homes that are always or sometimes damp

1,245 (7.7%)

Damp homes in Southland

● ICC: **729** ● SDC: **369** ● GDC: **147**

Building Consents ²⁰

428

Total New Dwelling
Building Consents in 2025

153.5 Average Floor Area m²

ICC

218 2025 Number of Consents
150 Average Floor Area m²

25 Number of Townhouses
98.7 Average Floor Area m²

SDC

259 2025 Number of Consents
158.6 Average Floor Area m²

30 Number of Townhouses
89.1 Average Floor Area m²

GDC

51 2025 Number of Consents
152.6 Average Floor Area m²

14 Number of Townhouses
83.6 Average Floor Area m²

The average floor area of new homes in Southland is greater than the national average of 140.8m². The Southland average has reduced since 2024 when it was 162.4m². There has been a marked increase in the number of townhouses being consented in the region in 2025 when there were 69 up from 25. 13 retirement village homes and 12 apartments have also been consented in Invercargill in 2025.

Percentages are calculated from the appropriate population using total stated data.

Non-response categories are excluded unless valid responses. Results may not total 100% due to rounding or multiple answers.

Sources

¹Total Population 65, Number of people 65+

Aotearoa Data Explorer • Ethnicity (detailed single / combination), age, and gender for the census usually resident population count, (RC, TALB, SA2, Health), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses

²Projections Subnational population projections, by age and sex, 2023(base)-2053

Ethnicity Aotearoa Data Explorer • New Zealand index of socioeconomic deprivation, birthplace, ethnicity, age, and gender for the census usually resident population count, (RC, TALB, Health), 2023 Census

³Median Age: Ethnicity (detailed single / combination), age, and gender for the census usually resident population count, (RC, TALB, SA2, Health), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses

⁴Living Alone Aotearoa Data Explorer • Disability indicator, household composition, ethnicity, and age for people aged 5 years and over in households in occupied private dwellings, (RC, TALB, Health), 2018 and 2023 Censuses

⁵Disability Aotearoa Data Explorer • Disability indicator, access to basic amenities, tenure of household, ethnicity, and age for people aged 5 years and over in households in occupied private dwellings, (RC, TALB, Health), 2018 and 2023 Censuses

⁶Home ownership Disability indicator, tenure of household, ethnicity, age, and gender for people aged 5 years and over in households in occupied private dwellings, (RC, TALB, Health), 2018 and 2023 Censuses

⁷Māori & Pacific Disability indicator, tenure of household, ethnicity, age, and gender for people aged 5 years and over in households in occupied private dwellings, (RC, TALB, Health), 2018 and 2023 Censuses

⁸Gender Disability indicator, tenure of household, ethnicity, age, and gender for people aged 5 years and over in households in occupied private dwellings, (RC, TALB, Health), 2018 and 2023 Censuses

⁹Length of residence Years at usual residence, tenure of household, age, and gender for people in households in occupied private dwellings, (RC, TALB, SA2, Health), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses

¹⁰Type of dwelling Dwelling type, ethnicity, age, and gender for the census usually resident population in occupied dwellings, (RC, TALB, Health), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses

¹¹Income Individual home ownership, total personal income, age, and gender for the census usually resident population count aged 15 years and over, (RC, TALB, SA2, Health), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses

¹²65+ working Birthplace, work and labour force status, age, and gender for the census usually resident population count aged 15 years and over, (RC, TALB, SA2, Health), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses

¹³Household size/crowding Aotearoa Data Explorer • Household composition by number of usual residents and number of bedrooms for households in occupied private dwellings, (RC, TALB, SA2, Health), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses

¹⁴Basic amenities Disability indicator, access to basic amenities, tenure of household, ethnicity, and age for people aged 5 years and over in households in occupied private dwellings, (RC, TALB, Health), 2018 and 2023 Censuses

¹⁵Deprivation New Zealand index of socioeconomic deprivation, individual home ownership, ethnicity, age, and gender for the census usually resident population count aged 15 years and over, (RC, TALB, Health), 2023 Census

¹⁶No. of renters, Renting (less/more \$400) Disability indicator, weekly rent paid by household, sector of landlord, and age for people aged 5 years and over in households in rented occupied private dwellings, (RC, TALB, Health), 2018 and 2023 Censuses

¹⁷Census median rent Aotearoa Data Explorer • Totals by topic for households, (RC, TALB, UR, SA3, SA2, Ward, Health), 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses

¹⁸Rent – Tenancy median Rental bond data » Tenancy Services

¹⁹Quarterly report median Rent - <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/664be90b1348334d6bab3ea9/t/69b9e4d1b12401492c302e4f/1773790417670/Q4+Southland+Housing+Quarterly+Report+-+Oct-Dec+2025.pdf>

²⁰Landlord Disability indicator, weekly rent paid by household, sector of landlord, and age for people aged 5 years and over in households in rented occupied private dwellings, (RC, TALB, Health), 2018 and 2023 Censuses

²¹Mould Dwelling mould, ethnicity, age, and gender for the census usually resident population in occupied private dwellings, (RC, TALB, SA2, Health), 2018 and 2023 Censuses

²²Dampness Dwelling dampness, ethnicity, age, and gender for the census usually resident population in occupied private dwellings, (RC, TALB, SA2, Health), 2018 and 2023 Censuses

²³Building consents From <https://infoshare.stats.govt.nz/>, select 'Industry Sector', 'Building Consents - BLD', 'Building consents by territorial authority (Qrtly-Mar/Jun/Sep/Dec)', select TAs, Building Type, Building Nature, and observations as per data and then export as csv or excel file as required.

