



LIVING ALONE AS A LIFE STYLE among Older People in New Zealand

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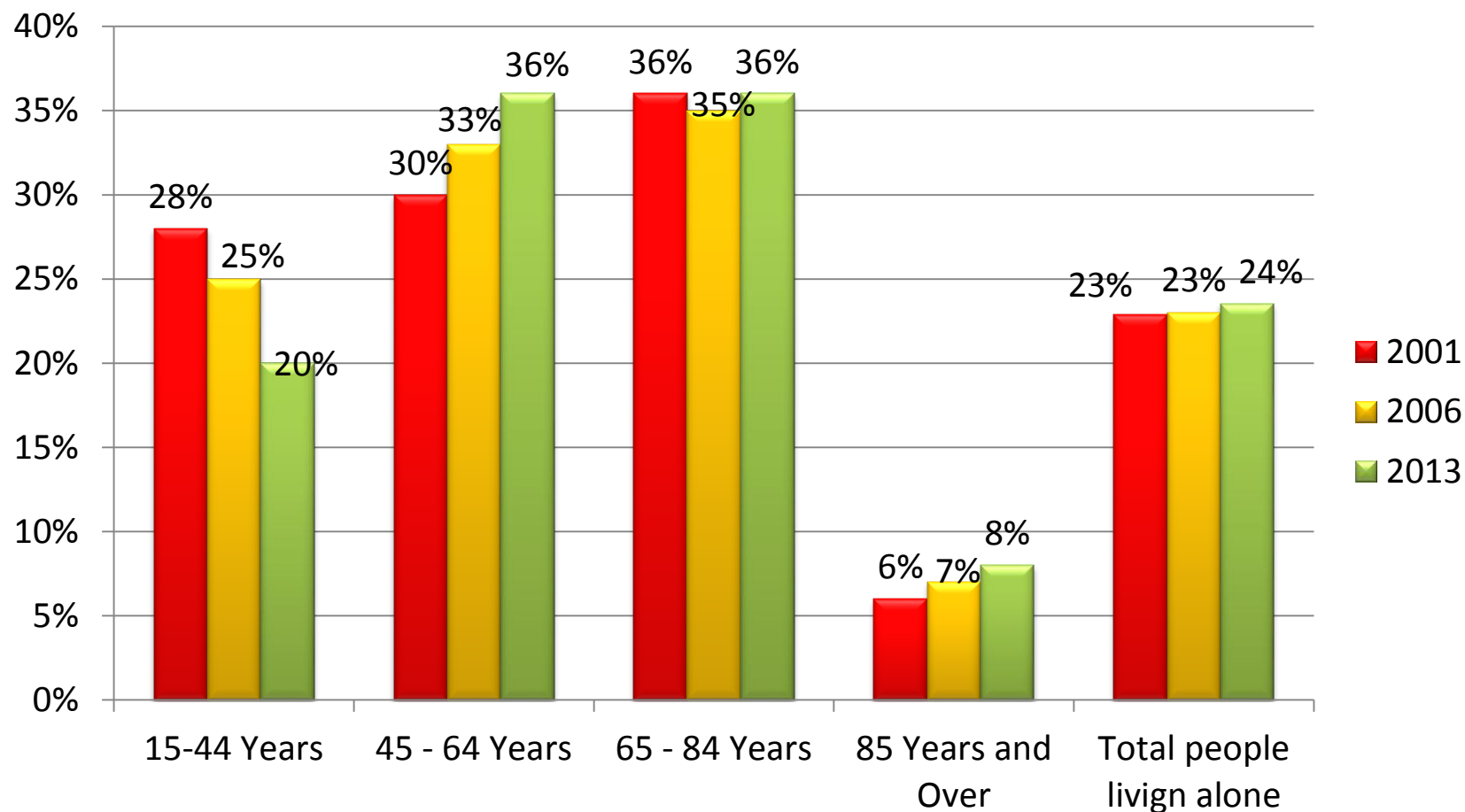


Living alone in New Zealand



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Living alone by age group, 2001, 2006, 2013



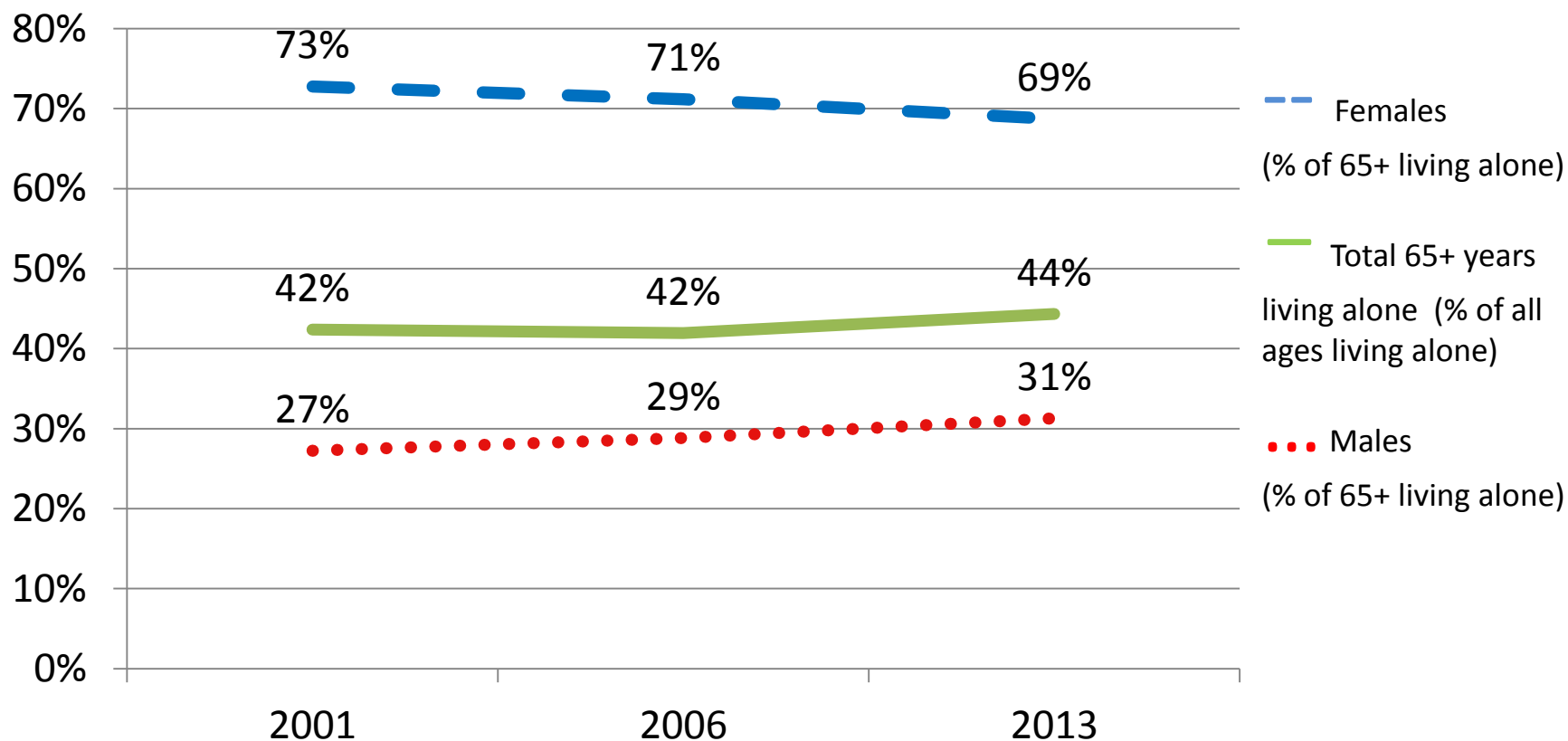
Source: Statistics New Zealand 2014, customised data

Older New Zealanders living alone



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People 65+ years living alone in New Zealand as % of total population living alone, by gender, 2001, 2006, 2013



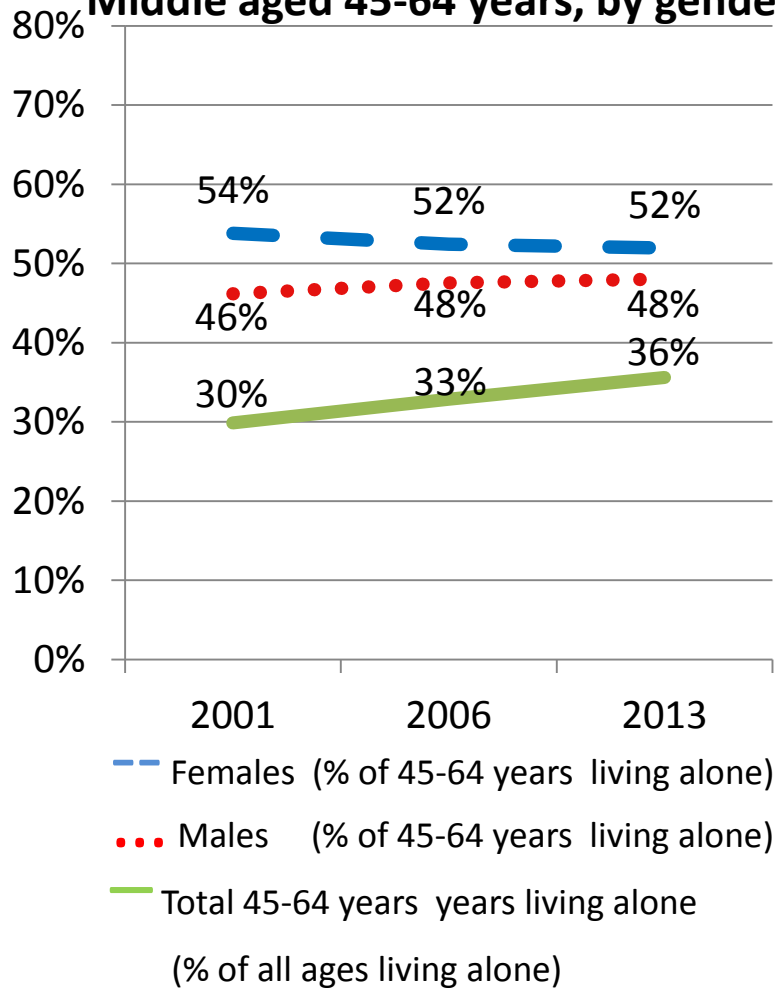
Source: Statistics New Zealand 2014, customised data

Middle-aged and older people living alone in New Zealand

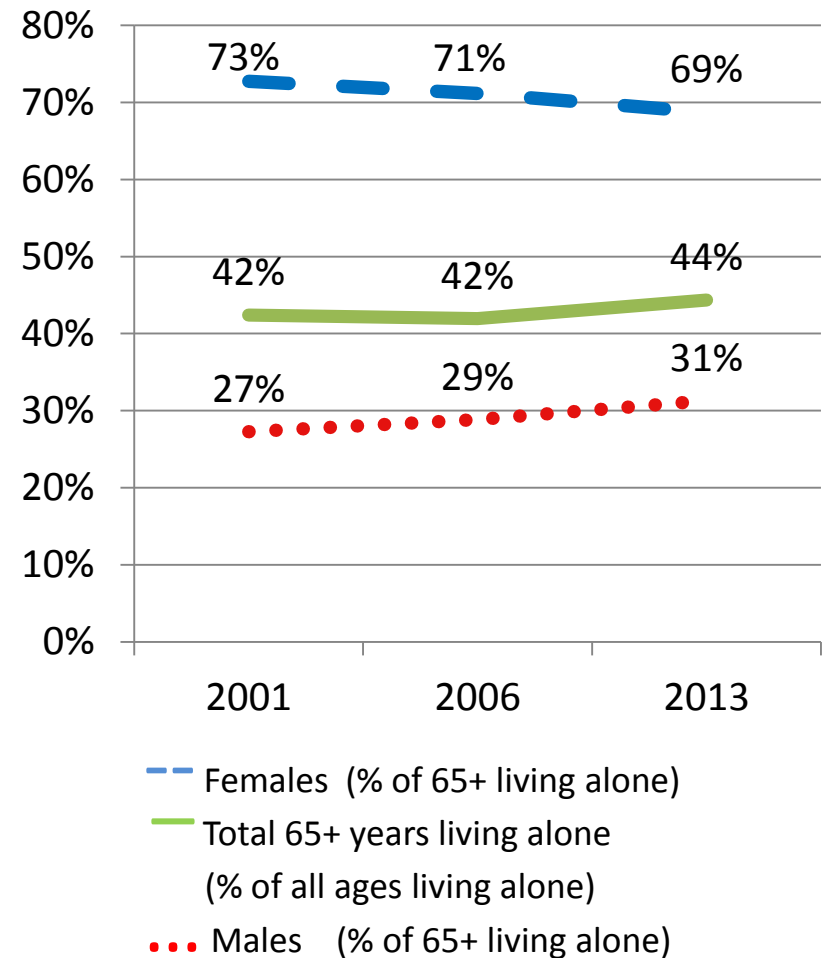


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Middle aged 45-64 years, by gender



Older people 65+ Years, by gender

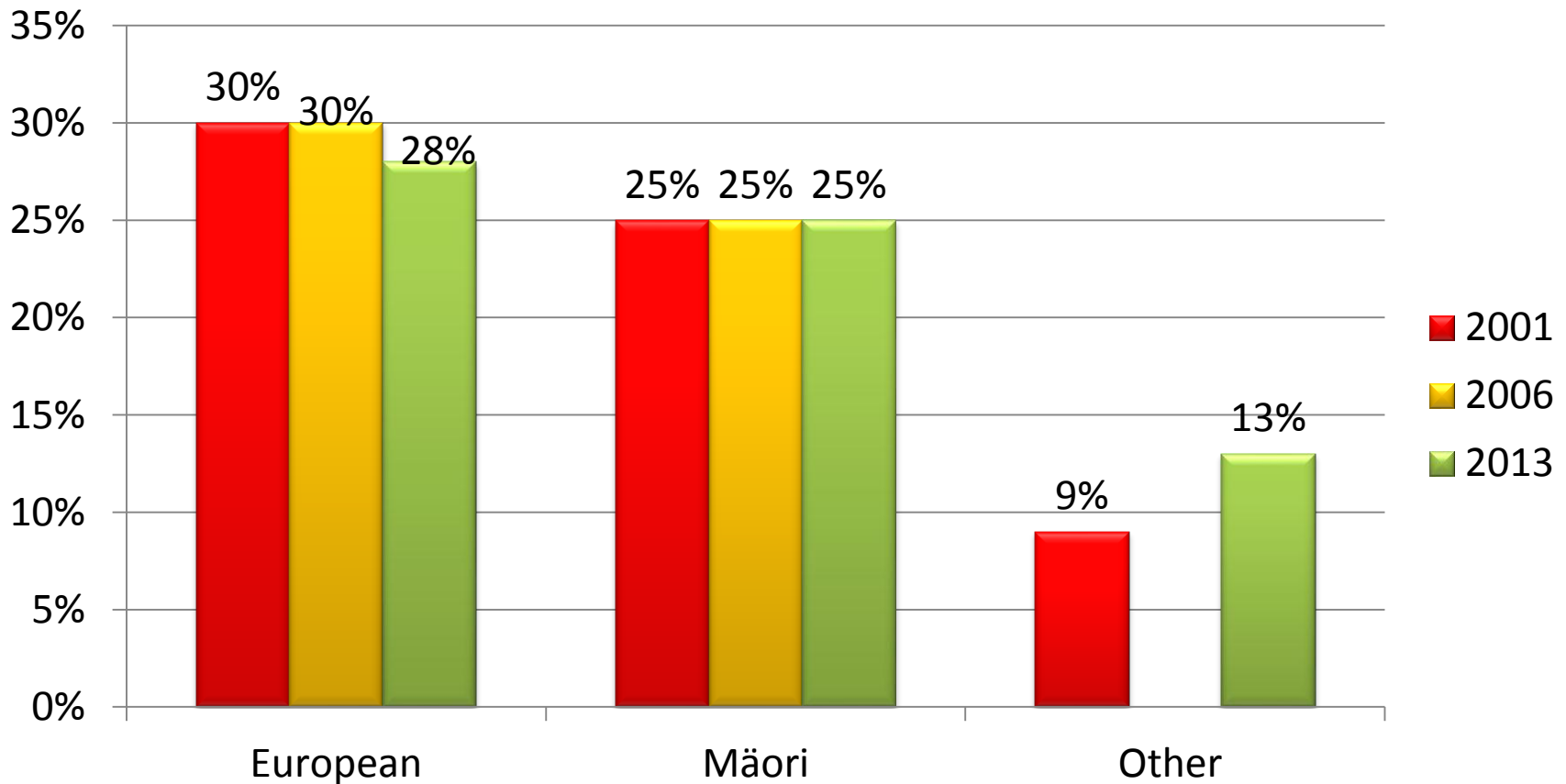


Older people of different cultures living alone in New Zealand



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Older people (65+) living alone by ethnicity, 2001, 2006, 2013

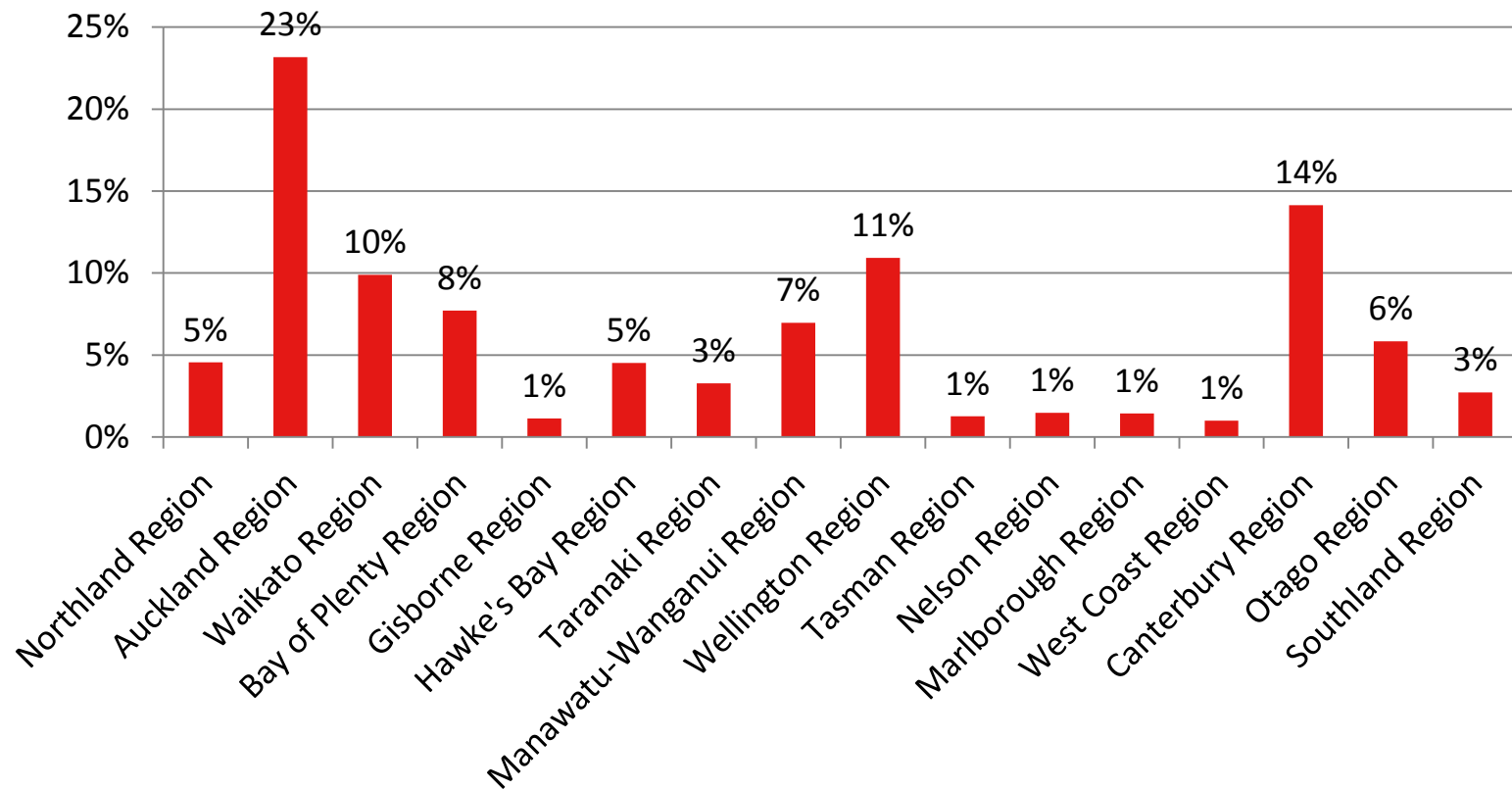


Older people living alone in the regions, compared with total older people living alone in New Zealand



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**Older people 65+ living alone
as a percent of total 65+ living alone, by region, 2013**



Why live alone (as an older person)?

Motivation for Living Alone comes from:



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- Freedom and greater choice/personal control – in use of time, resources and activities
- Being able to do things by/for yourself – personal care, household maintenance, going places.

Styles of living alone as an older person



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1. Lived alone – always
2. Living alone with occasional family visit
3. Living in the same town/suburb where family member, friend, or volunteer visits regularly
4. Living alone with occasional stay overs of a friend/family
5. Routine of living alone/and with others for part of the year, e.g. 1/3 living alone, 1/3 with daughter, 1/3 with son.
6. Living alone with a pet, teddy bear, robotic dog.

- Continuing to live alone possibly becoming a lifestyle choice - choosing not to live with their family/whanau or with others...but also want to be connected. The idea of “living apart, together” (LATs).
- Those who live alone “compensate for lowered social contact in the household by being more socially active, and cities with high numbers of singletons enjoy a thriving public culture” (Klinenberg, 2012).

Why would you NOT live alone as an older person? De-motivators for living alone



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- Poor or declining health
- Loneliness and sense of isolation
- Lack of mobility or transport
- Difficulty in decision making
- Limited financial skills.

Implications of living alone as a lifestyle – from an older person's perspective



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- “No-one to help me if I fall”
- “No-one to take me anywhere – to the medical centre, shopping”
- No-one to take responsibility
- No-one to talk or share with
- No-one to hug
- No-one to provide another perspective, or to help with decisions.



“A meaningful life for an older person is a life where the person living it has

- a sense of purpose, or motivation, and
- a feeling of significance” (Koopman-Boyden, 2014).

What provides a sense of purpose? for older people?

- Personal activities (self-relationship)
 - doing things by/for themselves, personal care, exercise, routines etc
- Social interaction (inter-personal relationship)
 - Contact with family and friends, marae, interest groups
- Work outside home (public relationship)
 - Paid work, unpaid work, or volunteering.

What provides a feeling of significance? For older people?



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- Achievement
 - taking a walk, a productive garden, learning a new skill
- Being valued or appreciated
 - being referred to by younger generation, intergenerational interchanges
- Giving back, continued contribution
 - volunteering, donations, contributions to marae
- Being there, belonging
 - to support a grandchild's interests, in a family emergency.

Mobility

- Bus stops closer to supermarkets
- Wider pavements for mobility scooters
- Chairs in shops.

Maintenance

- Low maintenance, single person houses with new technology alarms, lighting, heating etc.

Finances

- Advice on budgeting and managing finances
- Simpler procedures for reporting financial abuse.

Health and Nutrition

- Regular hearing, teeth and vision checks at GP visits.

Emergency support

- Life tubes (Age Concern), Ecolite dynamo kits
- House & social alarms.

Social connectedness

- Programmes/courses for those starting to live alone
- Regular 'senior hour' at local cafes
- Internet courses.

Technological possibilities

- Health monitoring watch



- Vivago watch – social alarm



- Smart watches – iWatches from Apple.....

Key points for Active Ageing and Meaningful Life for older people living alone



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Key points for Active Ageing and Meaningful Life for older people living alone (cont)



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- Keep busy
- Be valued
- Keep connected.



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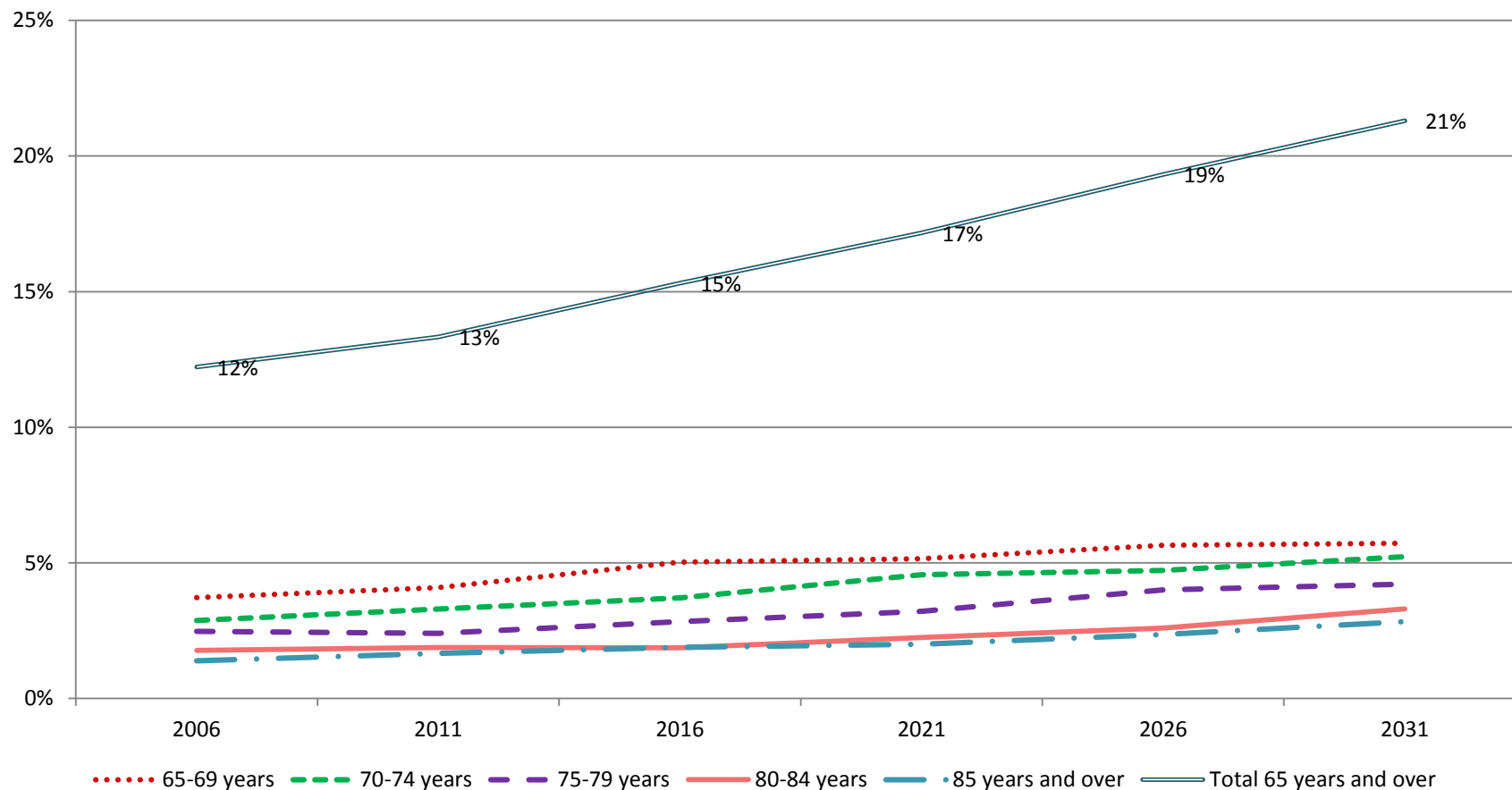
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Older people in New Zealand



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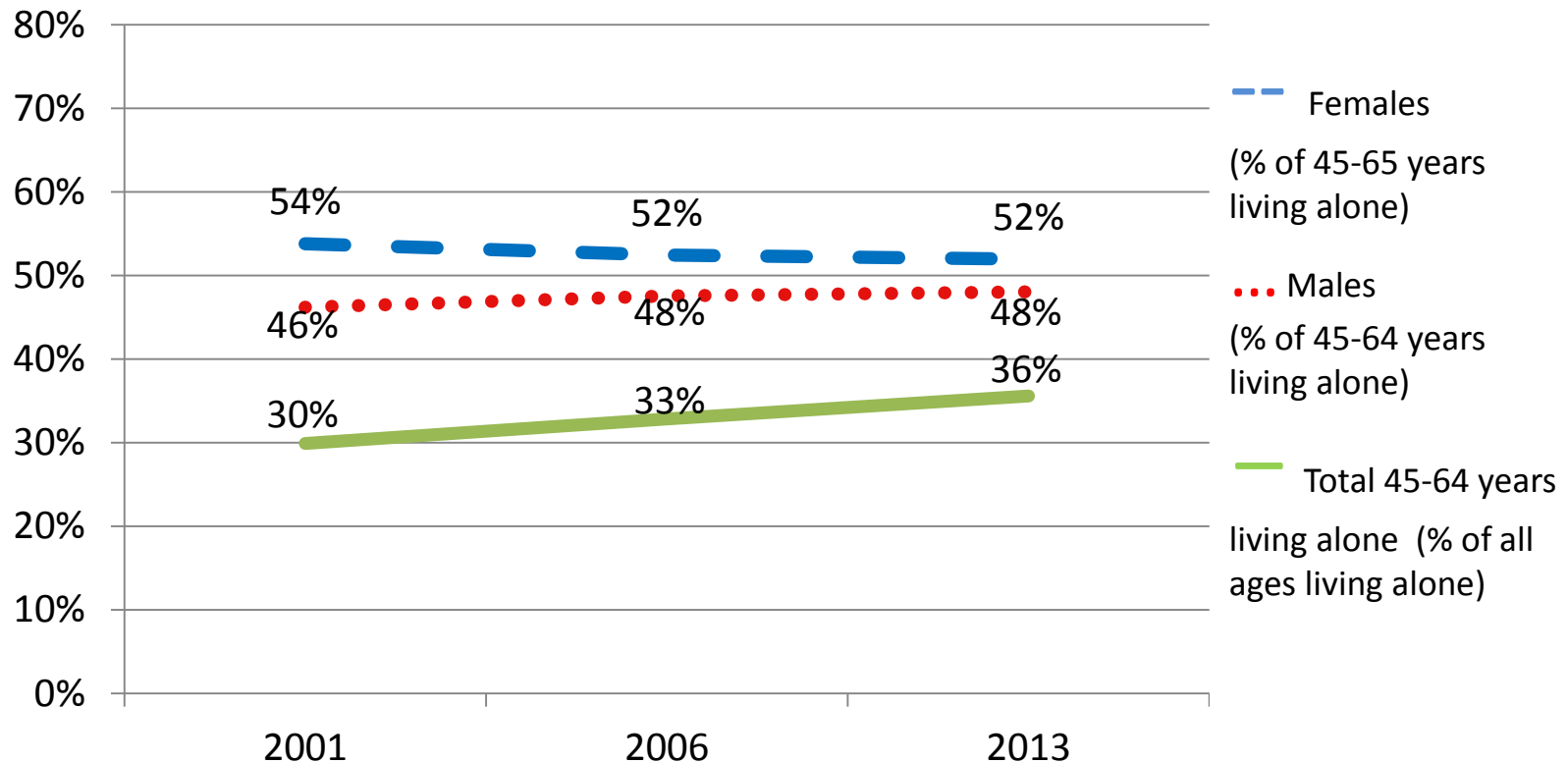
Projected population of 65+ New Zealanders 2006 (base) – 2031 (% of total population)



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2012

Middle-aged living alone in New Zealand

People 45-64 years living alone in New Zealand as % of total population living alone, by gender, 2001, 2006, 2013



Overseas examples

- First contact service
- Vivago watch – social alarm
- Intergenerational solidarity programmes.



Older people living alone compared with total older people living with/without others, by region

Older people living in private dwelling alone, as a percent of total older people living in private dwellings with/without others, by region, 2013

