

Humanity is ageing.

The global population is growing older. Around the world, people are living longer and having fewer children.

New Zealand's population is also ageing.

A person born in New Zealand today is expected to live for more than 80 years.



And while the average NZ woman had four children in 1960...



... today, she has two.



But these changes in demographics reflect positive things.

Improved healthcare and living conditions help people live longer.



Empowerment of women allows them to pursue careers.



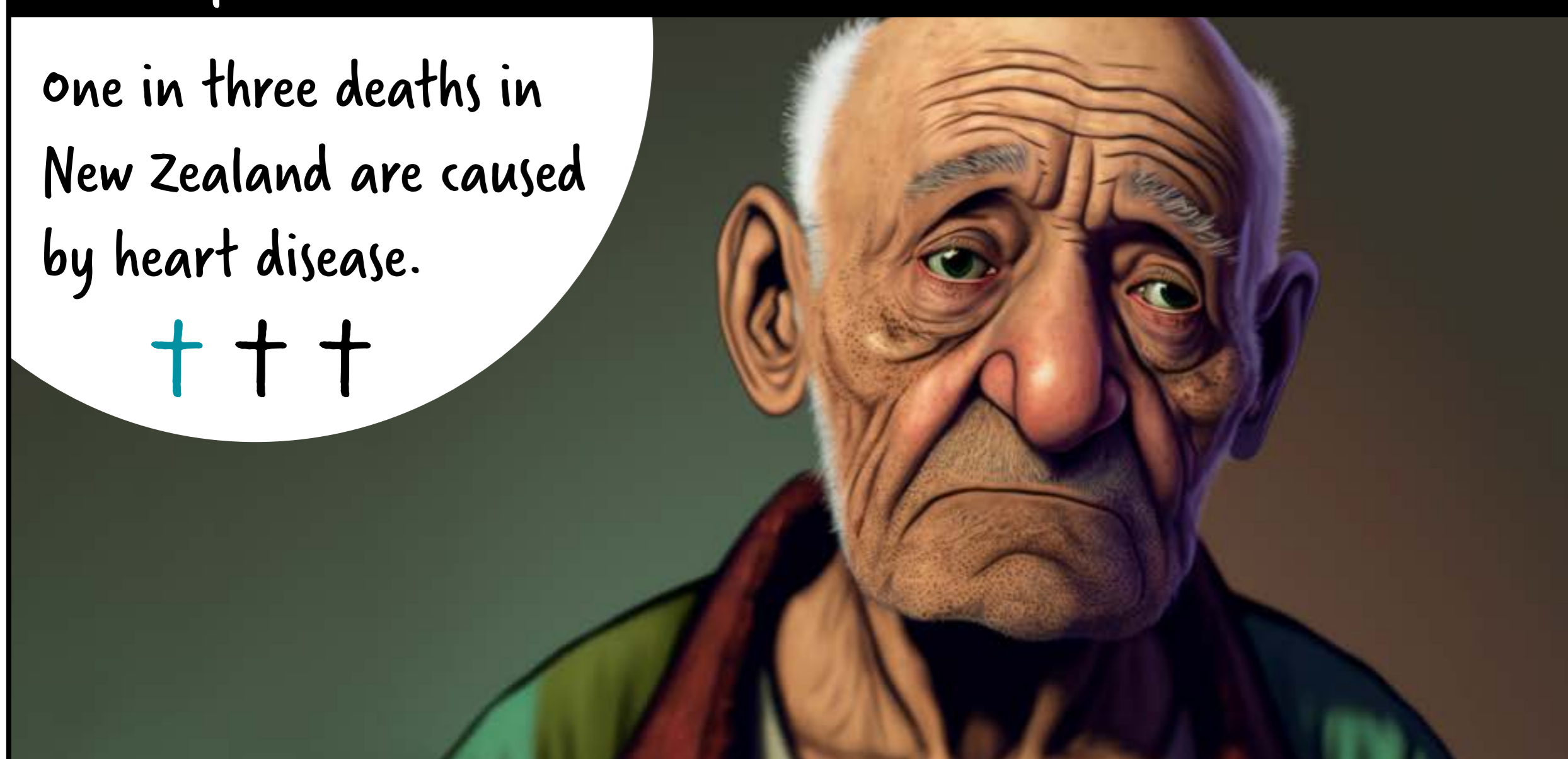
Therefore, an ageing population is often seen as a sign of a healthy society.

However, while fewer people born may be good for the climate, there are consequences of an ageing population that governments need to consider.

HEALTHCARE

Governments need to provide healthcare to a larger proportion of the population.

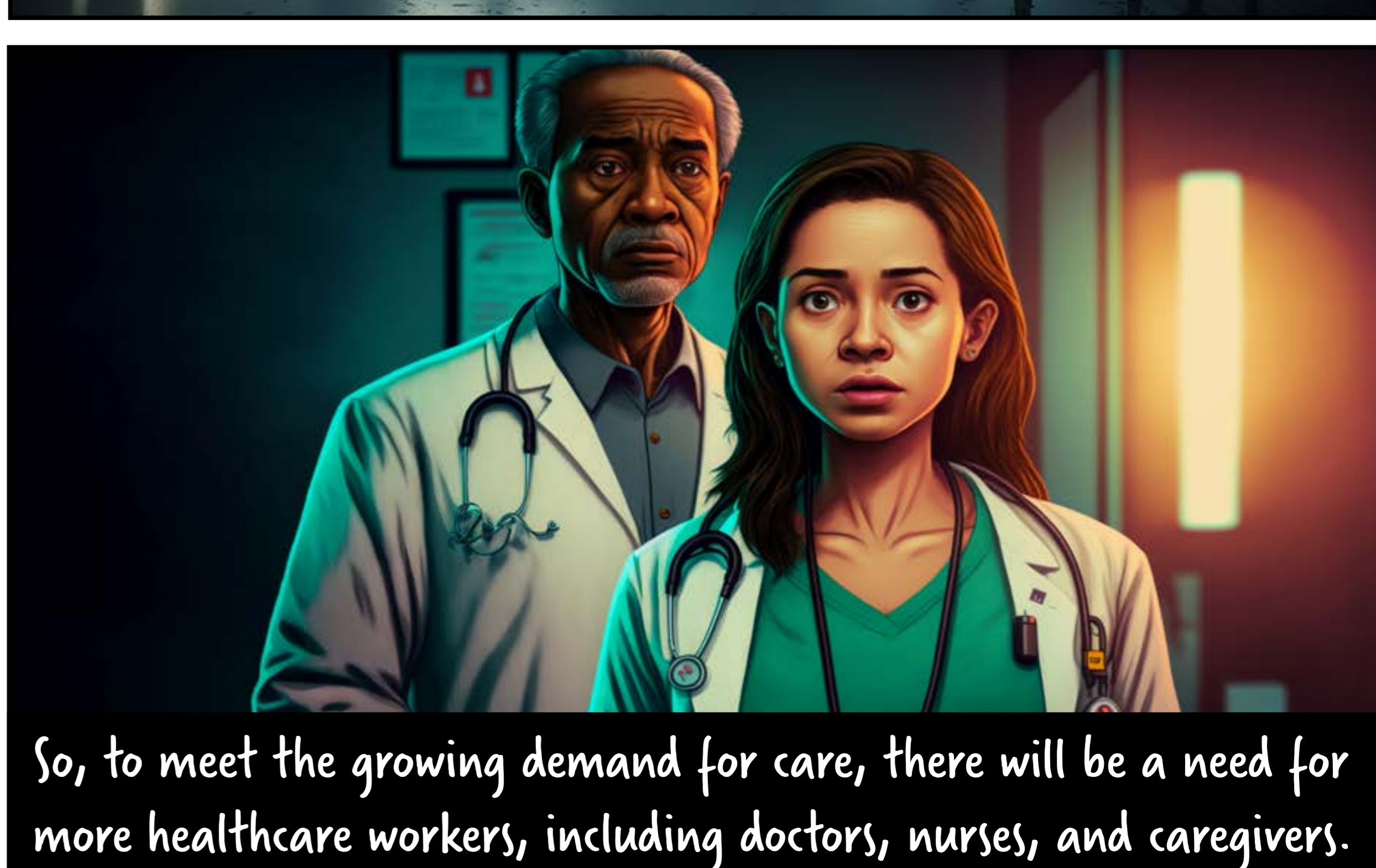
As people age, they are more likely to have ongoing health issues that require medical care.



But ageing populations can put strain on healthcare systems...



... as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.



FINANCIAL SUPPORT

As populations age, governments need to support more retirement-aged people.

In 1960, there were six working-age people for every retired person in New Zealand.



Today, that ratio is around four-to-one.

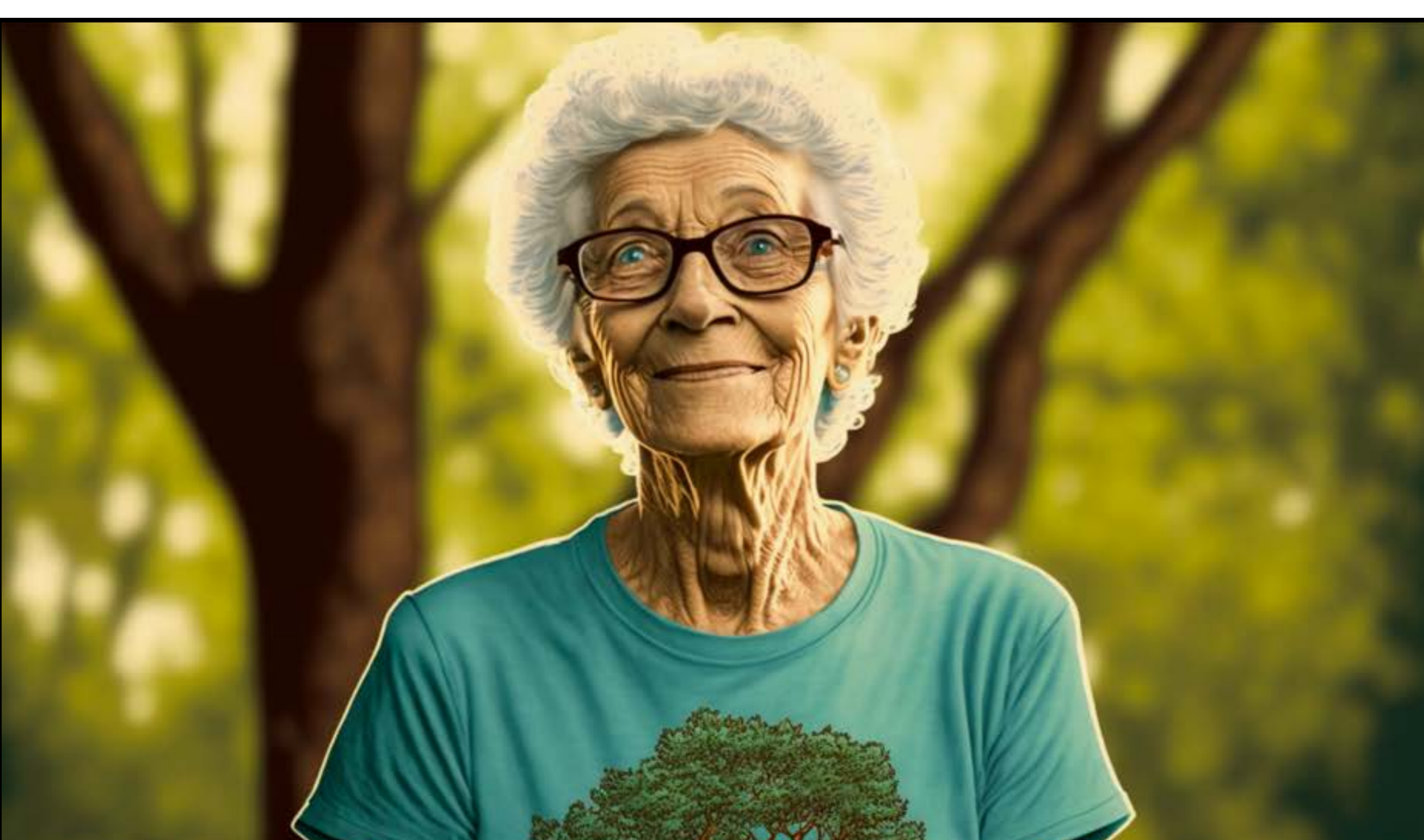
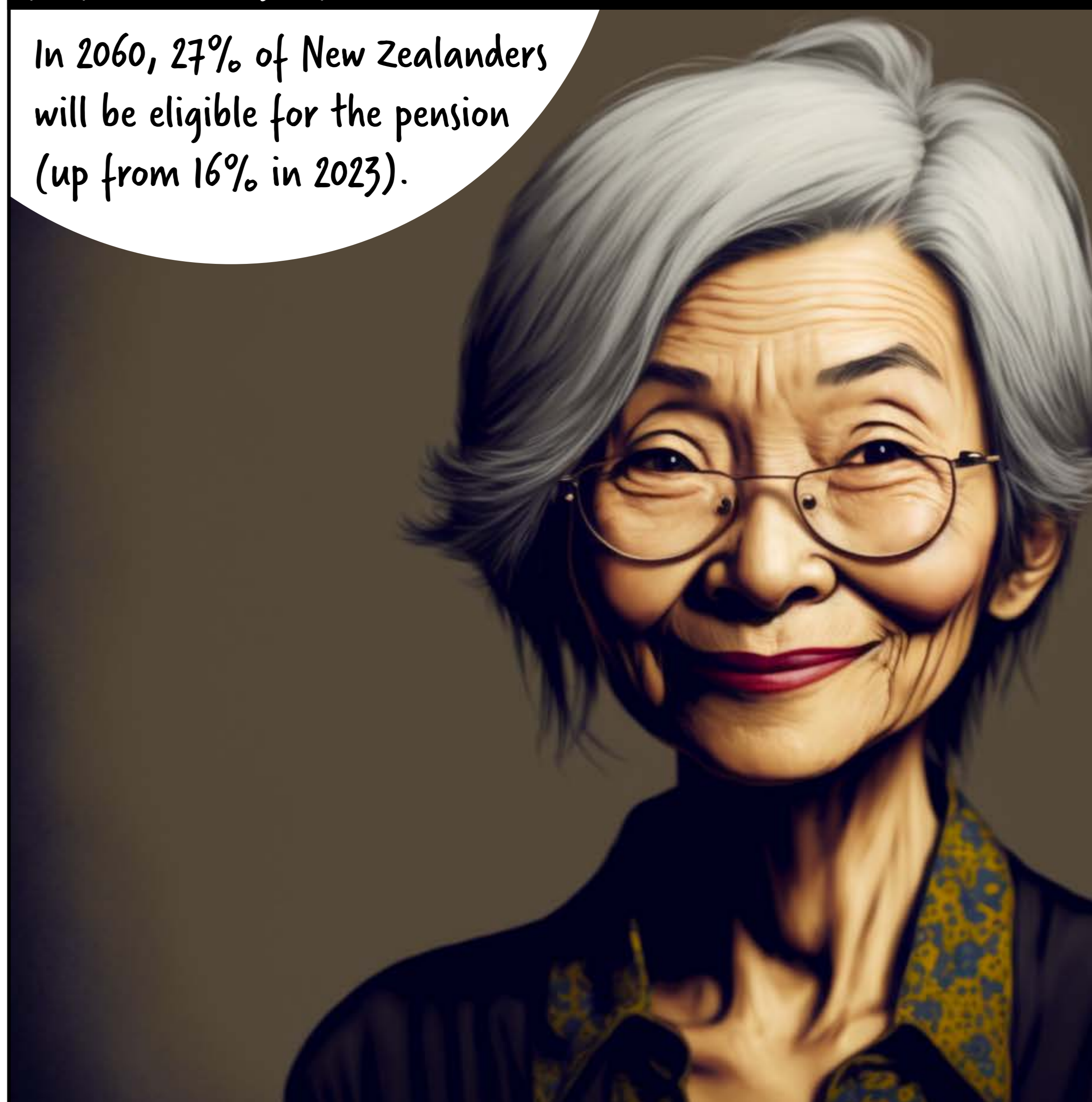


In 2060, that ratio is projected to be two-to-one.



Over time, there will be fewer people paying taxes and more people receiving a pension.

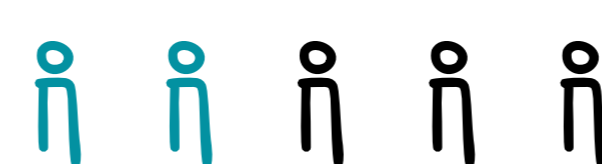
In 2060, 27% of New Zealanders will be eligible for the pension (up from 16% in 2023).



The New Zealand pension helps people to maintain a basic standard of living in retirement...



For every five older renters, two will pay 80 Cents of every pension dollar to their landlords.



...but many people still need additional income in order to maintain their desired lifestyle.



As a result, many New Zealanders feel they won't have enough money to retire unless they continue working past the age of 65.

Therefore, as the population ages, it's important for **governments and communities to find ways to support and care for older people.**

MIGRATION CAN BOOST THE WORKING POPULATION

Migration is the permanent movement of people from one place to another. It's used by countries to help compensate for falling birth rates.

Younger people move to cities for job opportunities and access to higher education.



Older people approaching retirement can also influence migration by moving to smaller towns that fit their preferred lifestyle.



As a result, cities usually have younger people living in them, while smaller towns and rural areas have more older people.

But, in recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic altered this balance.

In 2022, the number of people living in Auckland city decreased for the second year in a row.

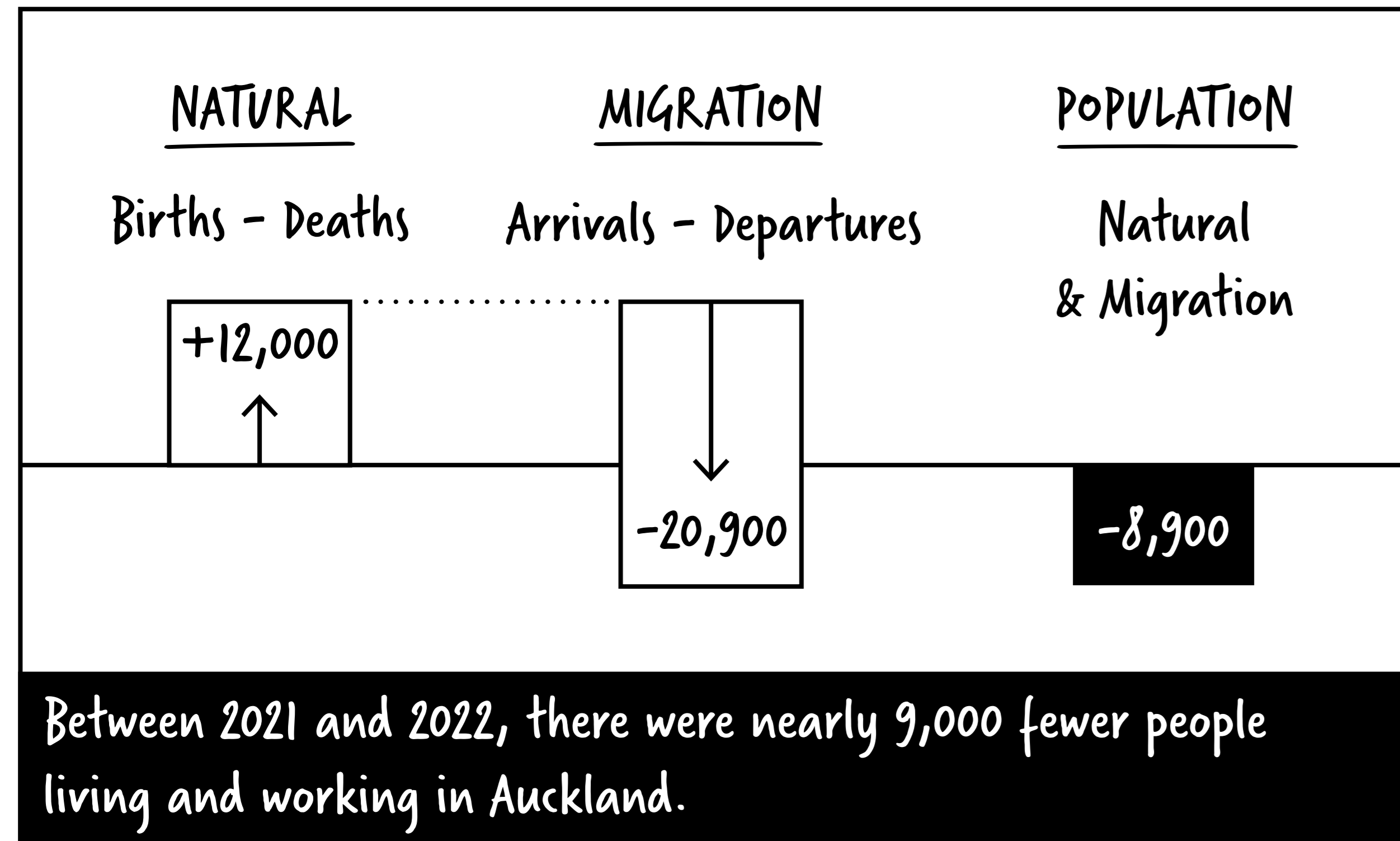



More people moved out of Auckland to live in other parts of New Zealand.

Auckland's population decline is usually offset by people arriving from other countries.



However, the COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on how people move around the world.

Auckland businesses struggled to find enough workers to meet the demand from their customers...



... driving the NZ government to modify its immigration policies in response to the new realities of the pandemic.

Migration can therefore significantly impact the demographics of a region.

TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP SUPPORT OLDER PEOPLE

Digital tools and services enable people to maintain their health and well-being.

Communication technologies help older people stay connected with loved ones, reducing loneliness and social isolation.



In New Zealand, one in three people over 65 years reported feeling lonely in 2021.

Wearable devices track health indicators and help with early detection of diseases.




Smart home technologies allow older people to live independently in their own homes.

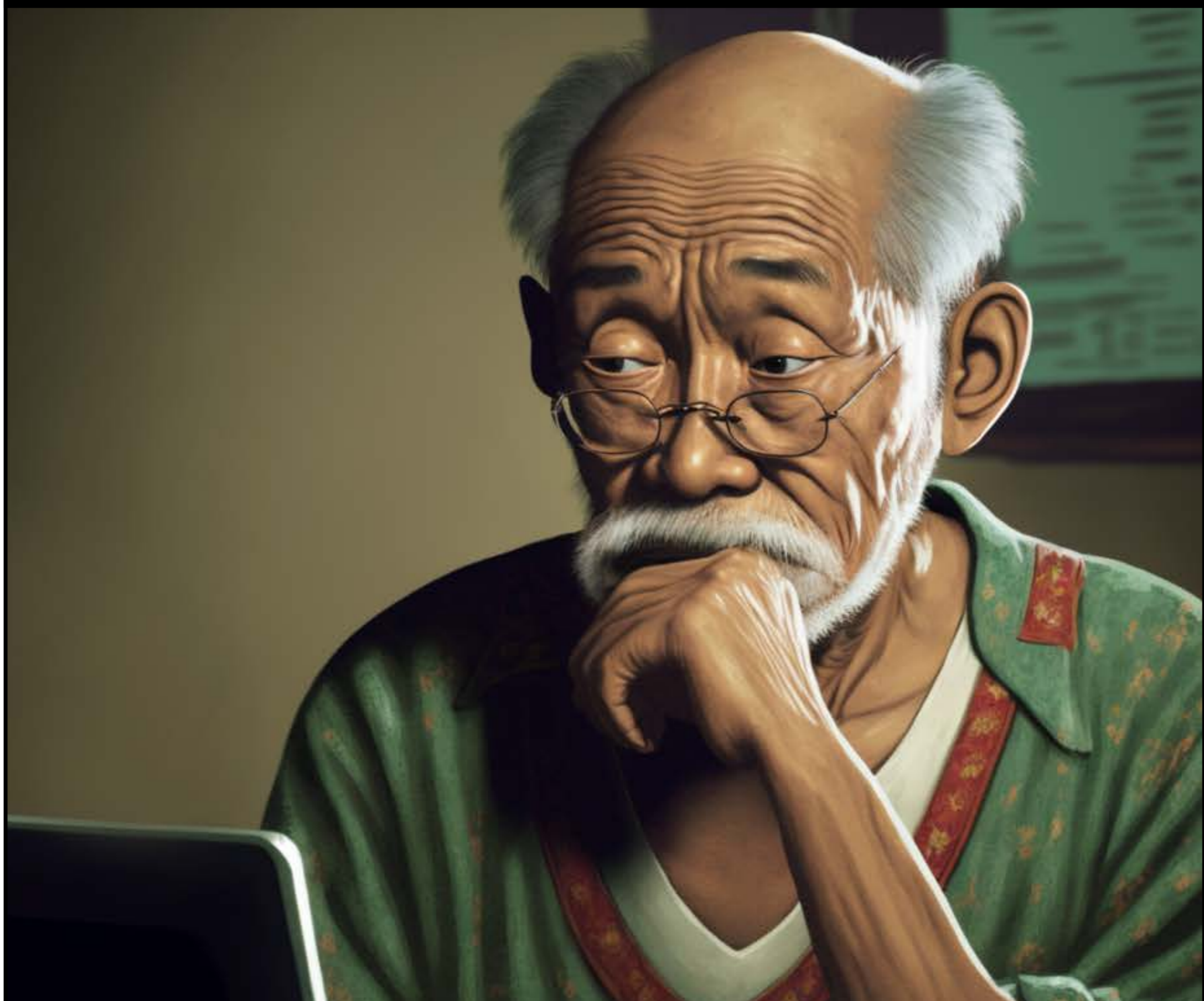


Yet, there are risks to consider when using technology.

If healthcare technology malfunctions, this can be dangerous.



If personal information is misused online, this can be harmful.



Technology can be expensive, making it difficult for some to access.

It's estimated, one in three older people in New Zealand do not use the Internet.



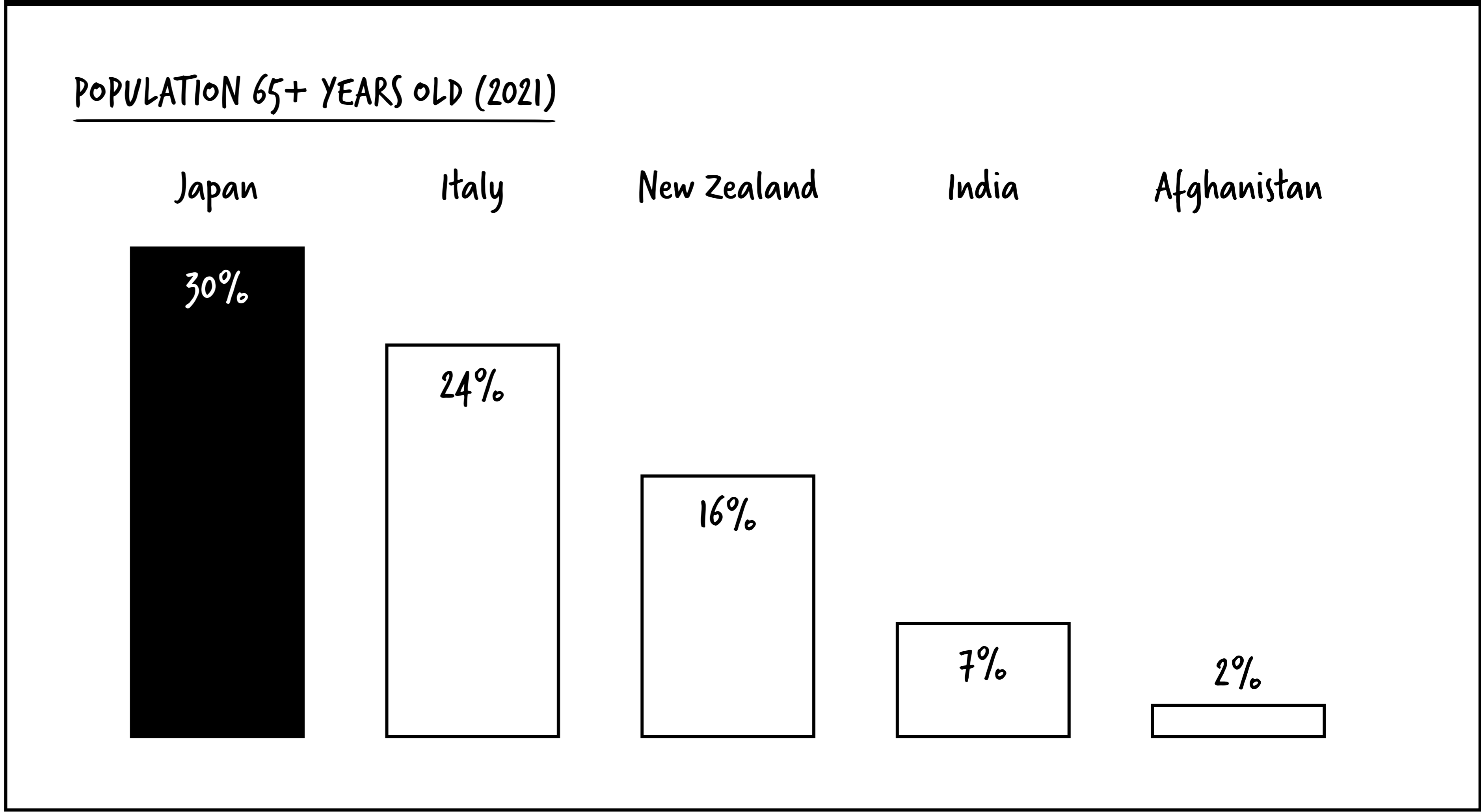
It's therefore important to consider both the benefits and risks of using technology to support older people in maintaining their health and well-being.

A large proportion of Japan's population are elderly.

It's estimated, 30% of people living in Japan are 65 years or older.



Japan's proportion of elderly is significantly higher than other countries.



This hyper-aged society has its challenges which the government of Japan is addressing with various initiatives.

Japan aims to increase workforce participation of women and the elderly, improve welfare services, and encourage immigration.



Japan also recognised that digital transformation is crucial for preparing its healthcare system to serve an ageing population.



Consequently, Japan now has the experience to provide guidance to other countries facing similar demographic shifts.

As we age, we have the opportunity not only to look back on the past, but to actively shape our future.

Governments play a vital role in how this future looks.



Governments have a responsibility to educate both their employees and the public on global issues. It's not until everyone understands these issues (even at a high level), that nations can begin to discuss solutions. Given the varying levels of data literacy within this broad audience, spreadsheets alone won't achieve this understanding - not for the majority of people. Governments should be thinking about how they communicate the meaning of data, in combination with (or even instead of) the data itself.

This visual data story has been prepared for The World Government Summit Organization (a global, neutral, non-profit organization dedicated to shaping the future of governments) and focuses on New Zealand in a global context. It has been designed to demonstrate how population data (and its context) can be presented to engage and upskill a more general audience. The images were generated using a text-to-image AI and edited using Adobe Photoshop and Procreate.