

The CEO

Office for Seniors

### **Review of the Positive Ageing Strategy**

Currently there are three strategies relating to older New Zealanders

- Healthy Ageing Strategy
- Disability Strategy
- Carers strategy

*How could the new strategy for an ageing population complement these?*

Policies relating to

- The Environment (Massey's OPERTAT)
- Life mark housing
- Employment
- Isolation
- Age Friendly Cities

*How do you think the expectations of older Maori People can be best be supported?*

- *Engaging more with Iwi elders*
- *How can we respond most effectively to diversity?*
- *Establishing multi-cultural organisation*
- *How can we make sure people continue to feel valued as they age?*

*How can we ensure that older people are respected and receive the support they need?*

- Provide a decent liveable income and good housing

*What helps older people stay connected?*

Social isolation is now well known to increase ill health and mortality among older people. Many older people use the internet for maintaining and developing existing social connections, both locally and at a distance. People who use the internet more, are more likely to belong to beneficial social networks. The development of internet use has the potential to contribute to the increased well-being of older adults. In particular, developing the capacity for internet use, and its use to make new connections, among those at risk of isolation and poorer health may be a useful intervention. There is a potential for an increasing digital divide. There is a danger that the privileged access to digital media may result in widening differences in social engagement and health outcomes. Providing access to digital media is an important aspect of preventing a widening digital divide in the ageing population. Avoidable internet use among older people needs to be encouraged.

Volunteering is also a way of preventing social isolation. Volunteering organisations need to recognise the wealth of potential volunteering power that will be increasingly available as more baby boomers reach retirement. In addition to recruiting appropriately, volunteering organisations need to develop policies that care for older people's particular needs. Social policies should employ a range of approaches, rather than suggesting that there is one solution for all.

Affordable and accessible transport options for older people also help prevent social isolation. Public transport needs to be user-friendly in terms of routes, egress, timetables and affordability and safe. Driver re-licensing provisions for older drivers need to be based on ability, not age

What could strengthen older people's ability to adapt to life changes and expected shocks?

- Financial Training
- Physical and mental fitness

How can we better support older people to remain in work?

- Provide working environment suitable for older people

What changes could employers make to help?

Work practices can operate as a facilitator or a barrier to continuing in the workforce for older workers. Recognition of experience, knowledge and skill are important if employers want to recruit and retain older workers. They need to ensure that the organisation recognises and appreciates the expertise and experience that older employees bring to the workplace. Organisational strategies such as flexible work arrangements and ergonomics of the workplace are important

What are your expectations and aspirations in employment?

- A liveable wage
- A working environment suited to my needs
- Combining paid employment with caregiving of family members is an important issue for older workers in New Zealand. Flexible working conditions play a key role in determining how successfully the roles of carer and worker are reconciled. f

What would reduce older people's risk of abuse and harm?

- Training of health, social workers, carers, and retirement village staff in the detection of elder abuse

How can older people be supported to continue to make their own decisions and prepare for the future?

- Good financial advice
- Accessible medical advice at a reasonable price

What would improve the position of older renters in New Zealand?

- Better security of tenure
- Warrant of fitness designed round for elderly renters

Older people are increasingly renting accommodation and policies such as income-related rents policy for state and local body housing are important. Assistance towards the cost of local authority rate. Strengthen legal protection for retirement village residents. Central government and local government need to increase the supply of energy-efficient low-rental

housing, including supported pensioner housing complexes. Government assistance to enable low-income families to purchase homes needs to be addressed.

*What can we do to enable older people to be more secure and healthy in their homes and communities?*

Covered in the Health of older people strategy. However, many people in older age move. Although there are alternative modes of housing for older people wishing to leave their family home, the retirement village is currently the dominant model in New Zealand. Not everybody can afford this choice. There needs to be provision made for declining health, security and household assistance in older age. New housing policies to meet the needs of the arrival of the 'baby boom' generation at retirement.

Kevin Burrows

President

Kapiti Coast Grey Power