

Creating an Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand

Annual Update to the World Health Organization Global
Network for Age friendly Cities and Communities

1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022

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Purpose

To outline progress the New Zealand Government has made towards creating an Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand and to fulfil its role as an affiliate of the World Health Organization's (WHO's) Global Network for Age friendly Cities and Communities (the Global Network). It covers the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

Background

The Office for Seniors leads the New Zealand Government's response to an ageing population

[The Office for Seniors](#) (the Office) is the primary advisor to the New Zealand Government on issues affecting older people. We lead the [Better Later Life He Oranga Kaumātua Strategy 2019 to 2034](#) (the BLL Strategy), Aotearoa New Zealand's overarching strategy for an ageing population. We are also responsible for Aotearoa New Zealand's affiliate membership of the Global Network and support centrally and locally led action to create an Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand through our national age friendly programme.

The BLL Strategy guides the development of age friendly cities and communities in Aotearoa New Zealand

The BLL Strategy is a call to action for all New Zealanders to help make our cities, communities and environments age friendly. This includes central and local government, communities, businesses, academics, non-government organisations, and individuals. The BLL Strategy identifies five key areas for action which align with the eight domains of the WHO's Age friendly Cities and Communities Framework.

These BLL areas for action are:

- Achieving financial security and economic participation
- Creating diverse housing choices and options
- Enhancing opportunities for participation and social connection
- Promoting healthy ageing and improving access to services
- Making environments accessible.

The Better Later Life Action Plan identifies key central government actions for our ageing population

The New Zealand Government is giving effect to the BLL Strategy through the [BLL Action Plan 2021 to 2024](#) (the BLL Action Plan). This plan outlines 35 key central government actions focussing on three priority areas: Digital Inclusion, Employment and Housing. The BLL Action Plan also includes initiatives to address the BLL Strategy action areas

including continuing to develop the [Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand \(Age friendly\) Programme](#), raising awareness of and preventing elder abuse, and addressing the social and physical determinants of health.

The Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand Programme is focussed on enabling locally led action to create age-inclusive communities

The Age friendly Programme is led by the Office for Seniors and helps to foster locally led action to address population ageing. Through the Age friendly Programme we provide advice and feedback, and have created resources to guide age friendly community development. The Office also supports communities to become age friendly through funding initiatives such as the [Digital Skills for Seniors](#) programme and senior entrepreneurship pilots which are currently under development.

The Office's age friendly work also includes engaging with other government departments and advocating across central government to influence policies and programmes that enable age friendly communities. The Age friendly Programme works in combination with the BLL Action Plan and the Office's broader work programme to fulfil the New Zealand Government's obligations as an affiliate member of the Global Network.

Our progress

The following section summarises the New Zealand Government's progress towards an Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand. Key achievements for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 are listed under the each of the BLL Strategy and BLL Action Plan action areas.



Employment

- The Office led the development of the [Older Workers' Employment Action Plan](#) (OWEAP) which was launched in April 2022. The OWEAP is one of seven plans that target priority population groups and helps give effect to the Government's broader [Employment Strategy](#).
- A literature review exploring the *Experiences of older Māori and work* was completed in May 2022. It identified that there is a need to understand more about the experiences of older Māori working in frontline roles and in lower paid jobs. These findings helping to inform further phases of research which will be progressed over the next 12 months. This work will help to understand more about how the needs of this group can be addressed.
- The Office partnered with Selwyn District Council to pilot 'Starting a Business Later in Life' to support for older workers (aged 50+) wanting to start a business for the first time. Further pilots are being developed in 2022 to build on this work and to test and evaluate other approaches to enabling senior entrepreneurship.

- Te Kawa Mataaho (the Public Service Commission) has started to collect and report on [data about older public sector workers](#) as part of its Diversity and Inclusion work programme. This will help the Government to lead by example in addressing the needs of its ageing workforce.
- The Office has updated and published the [Business of Ageing](#) research report. This report highlights the economic contribution of older people to Aotearoa New Zealand over the coming decades. It particularly outlines the growing value of their labour market participation and their contribution as unpaid workers, volunteers, caregivers, consumers and taxpayers.



Housing

- The Office published the [Age friendly Urban Places](#) guide to help local councils, urban designers and planners implement the Government's [National Policy Statement on Urban Development](#) in September 2021.
- *Age friendly Urban Places* has been promoted through a press release, radio interviews and presentations to urban planners, designers and other local council staff. The Office continues to work with the Urban Design Forum and other stakeholders to promote this resource.
- The Minister for Seniors was invited by the Minister for the Environment to comment on several applications for expedited resource consent for new developments through the [COVID-19 \(Fast-track Consenting\) Act 2020 process](#). These included proposals to construct new retirement villages and mixed-use urban developments. We have prepared advice for the Minister for Seniors about these applications and provided feedback about their impacts on older people.
- Kāinga Ora, the Government's public housing agency, is collecting data on the accessibility of its dwellings and is developing housing projects to support older people to age in place. From 2021, at least 15 percent of all new dwellings constructed by Kāinga Ora must meet universal accessibility standards.
- The Office continues to be involved in the [Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities](#) National Science Challenge. This is a multi-university collaborative research programme and we have been involved with a project that investigates the implications of changing housing tenure among older people.



Digital Inclusion

- The Office continues to build on the Digital Skills for Seniors programme which is successfully helping older people to gain the skills and confidence needed to carry out essential tasks online. This programme will be expanded in 2022/23 to reach an even wider range of older people who are digitally excluded.
- Based on the success of *Digital Skills for Seniors*, Office for Seniors Director, Diane Turner was featured in the [Women in GovTech Special Report 2021](#) about leaders who have successfully driven change in this area.
- In May 2022, we launched the [Digital Inclusion Action Group for Older People](#), a network for providers who deliver digital skills training to older people. This group will work together to help expand digital inclusion initiatives to reach more older people.
- The Office presented at [TechWeek](#) in May to raise awareness of digital exclusion for older people and the Digital Skills Framework for Older People.
- The New Zealand Government is leading work to address digital exclusion through the [Digital Inclusion Blueprint](#). The Office continues to contribute to this work and advocate for the digital inclusion needs of our ageing population.



Participation and Social Inclusion

- The Office connects with:
 - over 350,000 older people through the bi-monthly Seniors' newsletter to keep them up to date with important information
 - over 800 community and other partners through its monthly Stakeholder Newsletter and other engagement channels.
- Regular media articles, social media posts and advertising campaigns by the Office also help keep older people and stakeholders informed and we also promote the Age friendly Programme and other Office initiatives through these online channels and other media.
- The Office has refreshed its website and branding so that they are accessible and culturally inclusive.
- We have updated and published [Attitudes to Ageing](#), a research report that explores public perceptions of ageing and ageism in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- The Office is contributing to work to raise awareness of, prevent and respond to elder abuse with the Government's Joint Venture for Sexual

Violence and Family Violence and the Ministry of Social Development. This includes:

- distributing \$250,000 of grants (of up to \$25,000 each) through the [Elder Abuse Prevention Fund](#). Grants were awarded to 11 organisations to implement innovative projects to raise awareness of and prevent elder abuse
- leading an [Elder Abuse Awareness Campaign](#) in June to coincide with World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.
- As part of its COVID-19 response, the Government has funded Community Connector roles to link people needing help to access information, support, and services to keep them safe and well. A small number of these navigators are specifically to support older people and the Government has extended funding for these roles through to the end of 2022.
- We are supporting the [Ageing Well National Science Challenge](#) and are directly involved in work that aims to identify the pathways that lead to social isolation for older Māori and Pacific people. This includes the development of a peer-support programme that focuses on social connectedness and wellbeing for kaumātua.



Healthy ageing and access to services

- In the second half of 2021, Aotearoa New Zealand moved away from its COVID-19 elimination strategy following the community spread of the Omicron variant. Responding to COVID-19 and minimising its impact on older people has been a priority for the New Zealand Government throughout 2021 and 2022.
- The Office and the Ministry of Health have been working across Government to ensure that messaging is appropriate for older people and that the COVID-19 response addresses their needs. This includes ensuring that older people could access COVID and non-COVID related vaccinations as well as their usual health and disability services.
- The Ministry of Health continues to lead the implementation of [the Healthy Ageing Strategy Priority Actions 2019 to 2024](#) which give effect to Aotearoa New Zealand's Healthy Ageing Strategy.
- The Government has established a dedicated [Aged Care Commissioner](#) role within the Office of the Health and Disability Commissioner. The new Aged Care Commissioner was appointed in March 2022 to provide greater oversight of the aged care sector and give older people and their family/whānau more confidence in the quality and safety of aged care services.

- The Office and the Ministry of Health are working together to develop Aotearoa New Zealand's response to the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing. A stocktake of cross government actions that contribute to the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing's Member State Actions has been completed and this is helping to inform our response.



Making environments accessible

- The Government has been working on establishing [Whaikaha, the Ministry of Disabled People](#) which will be launched on 1 July 2022. The new ministry will take on a whole-of-life approach to disability rather than viewing it as a health issue and address the systemic issues that impact disabled people, including older people with disabilities.
- The Minister for Disability Issues is leading a programme of work to make Aotearoa New Zealand accessible through a legislative framework, the [Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill](#), which is currently being drafted. It will include a suite of measures such as methodologies for addressing accessibility barriers, monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements, expectations for engaging with and listening to disabled people as well as the purpose and principles behind the accessibility framework. An Accessibility Governance Board, which will be led by and represent disabled people, will support the legislation's development, implementation and monitoring.
- The Office continues to engage across government to help agencies consider the accessibility and other needs of our ageing population in policy development. This includes feedback about policy areas such as:
 - climate change and emissions reduction
 - urban development and resource management
 - housing and housing insufficiency
 - the Government's proposed Accessible Streets changes to enable active modes of travel for all street-users
 - restructuring New Zealand's Health and Disability System
 - the development of a social cohesion framework for Aotearoa New Zealand with the vision that all people, whānau and communities thrive, belong and are respected in Aotearoa New Zealand
 - the New Zealand Law Commission's Review of Adult Decision Making Capacity
 - developing an Aotearoa New Zealand's Play and Physical Activity Action Plan in response to the WHO Global Action Plan on Physical Activity

- We have also engaged with other jurisdictions and the WHO about age friendly and other relevant policy areas through the Australasian Ageing Policy Network as an affiliate of the Global Network.
- The Office continues to support local age friendly approaches through its Age friendly Programme. In 2021/22 we have:
 - established an [Age friendly Network](#) for local councils and this has a membership of 15 communities
 - updated the [Age friendly Toolkit](#) and resources including publishing [three new case studies](#) and sharing these through our newsletters and social media
 - developed the [Age friendly Urban Places](#) guide and promoted age inclusive approaches to urban planning and design
 - provided \$100,000 of [Age friendly Fund](#) grants of up to \$15,000 each to support community-led age friendly plans and projects. Projects funded include the development of several local age friendly plans and a culturally appropriate age friendly plan for older Māori. The Age friendly Fund is also supporting an intergenerational project which provides social connection through sharing skills and stories and promoting the diversity of older people in the community
 - organised two online and one in-person meeting of our Age friendly Expert Advisory Group which has helped to inform the development of an updated Age friendly Programme Plan from 2022 to 2025
 - updated our Age friendly branding and web material to make it accessible
 - congratulated Gore, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and Nelson communities on becoming members of the Global Network
 - wrote an [article](#) on the [Tauawhi Tāmaki Makaurau Age friendly Auckland Action Plan](#) to celebrate Aotearoa New Zealand's largest city becoming age friendly and this was published on the Age friendly World landing page.

Future development

Over the next 12 months, the Office will be working across government and with communities to implement a range of actions to continue to create an age friendly Aotearoa through the BLL Action Plan. This will include:

- developing a Homeshare pilot to support older people into shared living arrangements and to help address living affordability issues

- completing further work to understand the experiences of older Māori and work including an analysis of longitudinal data from the New Zealand Health, Work and Retirement Study
- developing and evaluating further Senior Entrepreneurship pilots to enable older workers (aged 50+) to start a business
- expanding the Digital Skills Training for Seniors programme to reach a wider range of older people
- developing an Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand Research Agenda which will help to provide evidence to support the development of age friendly interventions
- working with policy colleagues from the Ministry of Social Development on a work programme to understand and address the impacts and opportunities of climate change for older people
- developing Aotearoa New Zealand's response to the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing, including promoting the Decade across government and to academics, communities, businesses, the media and other stakeholders.

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