

Creating an Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand

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

1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

Creating an Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand

Purpose

To report progress made on creating an Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand and to fulfil the New Zealand Government's role as an affiliate of the World Health Organization's (WHO's) Global Network for Age friendly Cities and Communities (the Global Network). This update covers the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

Background

New Zealand's vision is for older New Zealanders to lead valued, connected and fulfilling lives as described in the [Better Later Life He Oranga Kaumātua Strategy 2019 to 2034](#) (the BLL Strategy).

The [BLL Action Plan 2021 to 2024 \(the Action Plan\)](#) sets out the government's priorities for an ageing population which focus on employment, housing and digital inclusion.

[The Office for Seniors](#) (the Office) leads the BLL Strategy and is responsible for Aotearoa New Zealand's affiliate membership of the Global Network. It provides advice on issues facing older people and supports the Minister for Seniors in advocating for older people.

The Office leads the national Age Friendly Programme and supports local and national led action to address population ageing. Through the Age Friendly Programme we are:

- building a national network of age friendly communities to share knowledge and research
- providing resources to guide age friendly community development
- supporting age friendly projects through a small grants scheme.

The Office also supports communities to become age friendly through funding initiatives such as the Digital Inclusion Programme, Senior Enterprise Programme and the Homeshare pilot.

The Office's age friendly work includes engaging with other government departments and advocating across central government to influence policies and programmes that enable age friendly communities.

The Office also has a substantial work programme that contributes to raising awareness and building community networks to prevent, identify and respond to elder abuse. In 2022, the Office provided 11 community organisations with grants to address the violence prevention needs in their communities. Funding was extended in 2023 for seven of those organisations, who were demonstrating learning and impact.

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 2022 to 30 June 2023 are listed under each of the BLL Strategy and BLL Action Plan action areas.



Employment

- Progress has been made on the 11 actions detailed in the [Older Workers Employment Action Plan](#). These include:
 - reviewing and updating the Mature Workers Toolkit which is being renamed the Older Workers Employment Toolkit
 - presenting a deep dive on the ageing workforce to the Future of Work Forum Governance Group to involve the three social partners (Government, the unions and BusinessNZ) to work together to develop solutions
 - removing barriers for older workers to finding work and staying employed, such as extending the Ministry of Social Development's training products to people over the age of 65. An example of this is the extension of the Flexi-wage to job seekers over the age of 65, which includes wage subsidies and access to in-work support and training.
- The Office has contracted research looking at older Māori and work. The research has been completed and a report is due to be published in August 2023.
- The Office established the [Senior Enterprise Programme](#). To test different models, five providers have been contracted, from March 2023, to support a target of 80 people aged 50+, to develop the skills, confidence and networks to start their own business in later life. The pilots have different delivery models e.g. online or in-person, are national or regionally based and some target specific groups of people such as Māori or Pacific people. An evaluation framework is being developed to assess the success of the projects.



Housing

- To promote a wider choice of housing options for older people, the Office launched a [Homeshare pilot](#) with Age Concern Auckland in April 2023 to support 50 older people into shared living arrangements and to help address living affordability issues. Homeshare is an agency-coordinated, shared housing option where an older homeowner accommodates another adult (aged 18+) to live with them in exchange for support around the house. The match is supported throughout by a dedicated agency. Homesharing makes it viable for people to remain in their own homes and stay connected with their community.
- The Minister for Seniors has been invited by the Minister for the Environment to comment on initial applications for expedited resource consent for new developments, such as retirement villages, through the [COVID-19 \(Fast-track Consenting\) Act 2020 process](#). This has provided an opportunity to apply the principles of an age friendly approach to urban development.
- The Office and Ministry of Social Development have conducted desk-based research into the current state of existing and recently divested Council housing for older people, present council housing tenants and those impacted by divestments.
- 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. We are supporting work by them in conjunction with [CRESA](#) (Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment) looking at small homes, reviewing both the market for them and testing approaches to make them more available for people throughout their life course.
- The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) has started a project looking at accessibility within the Building Act and Code.
- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MHUD) are starting work on a legislative review of the Retirement Villages Act 2003, and will be releasing a discussion paper in September 2023.



Digital Inclusion

- The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) has released the Digital Strategy which includes digital inclusion (and replaces the Digital Inclusion Blueprint). The Office will contribute to the delivery of the new strategy.
- The Office set up the Digital Inclusion Action Group for Older People, a network of providers who deliver digital skills training to older people. The group met to discuss the expansion of the digital inclusion programme.
- The Office for Seniors has expanded the [Digital Inclusion](#) programme by contracting 6 providers to deliver digital literacy training over the next three years to 5,000 older people reaching disadvantaged groups such as older Māori, Pacific and Asian learners. The Office has partnered with [Pasefika Proud](#) and Ministry of Social Development to provide additional funding and the [Ministry for Pacific Peoples](#) who are providing 450 digital devices to Pacific people. There will be a formal evaluation of the programme.
- The Office presented at TechWeek in May 2023 to talk about connecting older pacific people to the digital world.
- The Office presented at the 16th International Federation on Ageing conference in Bangkok on digital inclusion initiatives.



Participation and Social Inclusion

- The Office connects with:
 - approximately 470,000 older people through the bi-monthly Seniors' newsletter to keep them up to date with important information
 - over 1300 community and other partners through its monthly Stakeholder Newsletter and other engagement channels.
- The Office is contributing to work to raise awareness of, prevent and respond to elder abuse alongside Te Puna Aonui (the Joint Venture for Family Violence and Sexual Violence) and the Ministry of Social Development. This includes:
 - Leading an [Elder Abuse Awareness Campaign](#) to coincide with World Elder Abuse Awareness Day but expanded to cover the month of June 2023.
 - Monitoring the progress of 11 organisations provided with grants (up to \$25,000 each) through the [Elder Abuse Prevention Fund](#), to implement innovative projects that prevent elder abuse. Distributing an additional \$155,000 of funding to enable seven of the projects to be extended until June 2024.
 - Piloting elder abuse networks in three regions of New Zealand. These networks build communities' ability to identify, respond and prevent elder abuse by resourcing them to increase their knowledge about elder abuse, share learnings and enhance collaboration. Each pilot is co-designed with older people.
- The Office is supporting the Ageing Well National Science Challenge through involvement with a number of the research projects in an advisory capacity.



Healthy ageing and access to 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. Phase 2 has focused on:
 - aged care service and funding model review
 - addressing the nurses pay gap
 - implementation of the dementia action plan
 - extending funding eligibility for paid family care
- The Social Wellbeing Agency, Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Health undertook a joint research project on the needs of older people (65+) in health, housing, finance, social connection and access. Published in June 2023 the report [Older people experiencing vulnerability and multiple disadvantage in New Zealand](#): raises some important policy considerations, especially around how services can be future proofed and improved across the areas of health care, housing, and income support to better meet the complex needs of older people. The Accident Compensation Corporation made progress with their Live Stronger for Longer falls prevention programme launching the [Nymbi](#) app. Nymbi is designed to help people 50 years and older, stay on their feet, combining simple body movements with brain games to challenge both the brain and body.
- The Aged Care Commissioner provides oversight of the aged-care sector. They advocate for quality health and disability services on behalf of older people, wherever and whenever they are needed – in their home, primary care, community care, care home or public/private hospitals. They are designing a framework for monitoring and reporting on the performance of the aged care sector.
- The Office and the Ministry of Health are working together to develop Aotearoa New Zealand's response to the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing, which will include work progressed through BLL and the Healthy Ageing Strategy. An important part of our response is raising awareness about the Decade in Aotearoa and creating opportunities for others to be involved. We have had initial discussions with representatives from the WHO on trialling the measurement and indicator framework being developed by them.



Making environments accessible

- The Government established [Whaikaha, the Ministry of Disabled People](#) on 1 July 2022. The new ministry is taking a whole-of-life approach to disability rather than viewing it as a health issue and seeks to work in partnership addressing the systemic issues that impact disabled people, including older people with disabilities.
- The Minister for Disability Issues is leading the work on the [Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill](#), which has reached Select Committee stage with a report on any changes required due by 22 June 2023.
- The Office continues to engage across government to help agencies consider the 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
 - restructuring New Zealand's Health and Disability System
 - the New Zealand Law Commission's Review of Adult Decision-Making Capacity
 - contributing to the development of an Aotearoa New Zealand's Play and Physical Activity Action Plan in response to the WHO Global Action Plan on Physical Activity
- The Office continues to support local age friendly approaches through its Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand Programme. In 2022/23 we have:
 - almost doubled the membership of our [Age friendly Network](#) for local councils to 28 communities. We have held quarterly meetings to share knowledge, experience and research from within New Zealand and overseas.
 - increased funding by 50% to provide \$150,000 of [Age friendly Fund](#) grants of up to \$15,000 each to support 12 community-led age friendly plans and projects. Projects funded include intergenerational projects that facilitate the exchange of knowledge such as high school students assisting older people to write their memoirs and weaving sessions restoring mats to share knowledge with the younger generation and increase intergenerational engagement within the community.

- worked on developing an age friendly research agenda. The AUT Centre for Active Ageing expects to provide the Office with a literature review of age friendly interventions by 30 June 2023.
- been looking at developing age friendly emergency management guidance for local and regional authorities and Civil Defence organisations. The scope and approach of the work is being reviewed in consultation with stakeholders and lessons learnt through numerous recent emergency events.
- publicised the [Creating an Age friendly Business Programme](#) to 830,000 recipients of the Government's small business newsletter administered by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

Future development

Over the next 12 months, the Office will be working across government and with communities to create a new BLL Action Plan for 2024 onwards. The priorities for this work will be impacted by the outcome of the New Zealand general election on 14 October 2023.

The Office will also continue to co-ordinate implementing a range of actions to continue to create an age friendly Aotearoa through the current BLL Action Plan. This will include:

- 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.
- developing a guide on how to plan for emergency management taking into account the needs of older people.
- the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development will be reviewing the Retirement Villages Act 2003 and intend to produce a discussion document in September 2023 on recommended changes.

Karen Piercy

Programme Lead

Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand

Diane Turner

Director