



# World Health Organisation Global Network of Age-friendly Communities and Cities Annual report July 2019 to June 2020

## Introduction

The last 12 months have been busy for the Office for Seniors. Our major achievement for 2019 was launching the Better Later Life He Oranga Kaumātua 2019 to 2034 strategy in November. We have started to implement a number of initial actions while an action plan for the strategy is being developed eg, initial indicators have been developed to measure the impact of the strategy, and the impact of COVID-19 on older New Zealanders.

In 2020, we have been working hard to support the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has amplified many of the issues impacting the wellbeing of older New Zealanders such as social isolation and digital exclusion. We are continuing to monitor the impacts of COVID-19 on older people using the newly developed indicators.

The Office for Seniors has made some changes to the Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand programme in the last year. New branding was introduced that better reflects New Zealand's unique context and a Programme Lead role has been created which will help to strengthen our age friendly work. We are currently updating the Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand work programme for the next two years so that it aligns with Better Later Life He Oranga Kaumātua 2019 to 2034 and the action plan, that is currently being developed.

### Supporting Older New Zealanders through the COVID-19 pandemic

Throughout New Zealand's COVID-19 Alert Level 3 and 4 periods, the Office for Seniors increased its communications with older people and activated its network to ensure older peoples' needs were included in welfare responses. Our support activities included:

- sending out weekly special edition e-newsletters (instead the normal bi-monthly e-newsletter) to over 330,000 older people. These contained information about COVID-19 relevant to older people and included links to key websites and phone numbers for support services
- sending weekly emails to over 100 Office for Seniors stakeholders and peak bodies and gathering feedback from the community about key challenges and issues faced by older people. This information was then reported back to the National Crisis Centre Welfare Advisory Group, of which the Director of the Office for Seniors was a member.

- leading the development of and promoting guidance for people at risk of severe illness from COVID-19 due to age, and / or existing and underlying health conditions for each of New Zealand's four COVID-19 alert levels.

The Office for Seniors continues to be involved in working across government to ensure that older New Zealanders are a key consideration in national and regional COVID-19 recovery planning.

Inspire change by showing what can be done and how it can be done

### Promoting the age friendly programme

Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand continues to promote age friendly principles and practices through the Office for Seniors including:

- regularly posting communications on the Office for Senior's website, Facebook and Twitter accounts
- sending a bi-monthly e-newsletter to over 330,000 seniors (these are people receiving New Zealand Superannuation who have provided an email address and subscribers)
- sending a monthly e-newsletter to 690 key Office for Senior's stakeholders
- publishing articles in the Local Government Magazine, national advocacy organisation newsletters and releasing media statements for national and regional outlets.

### Elder abuse awareness

A social media campaign was carried out in June 2020 to raise awareness about elder abuse in conjunction with World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

### Presentations and conferences

The Office for Seniors has presented to and participated in several international, national and local conferences to promote both age friendly and the launch of the new strategy for our ageing population, Better Later Life He Oranga Kaumātua 2019 to 2034. Presentations given over the last year include:

- the Society for Local Government Managers forum, September 2019
- Better Digital Futures – Digital Inclusion Research Forum, October 2019
- Ageing Well Together: Science, Policy and Translation, November 2019
- the Age Friendly Australia National Forum, Western Australia, November 2019
- the Dementia Knowledge Exchange, March 2020.

The Office for Seniors also participated in the Australian National Elder Abuse Conference in July 2019 and organised a day-long 'Better Later Working Lives' forum in November 2019.

## Community Connects Grants

Each year, the Office for Seniors provides up to \$100,000 in grants for local bodies and community organisations to implement age friendly initiatives. Through the Community Connects grants process, and promotion of the age friendly approach in New Zealand, cities and community organisations that have developed age friendly plans are available to provide advice and support to others wishing to become age friendly.

In October 2019, the Office for Seniors awarded funding to one local body and eight community organisations. Examples of projects receiving funding in the last year include:

- a feasibility study to support the implementation of a group to combat loneliness for seniors living in the Clyde/Alexandra district
- the Make Moments Multicultural programme which will deliver art and socialisation workshops for older people who do not have English as a first language.
- an Age friendly Coromandel Community Assessment and establishment of a senior's hub.

The Community Connects Grants have been in place for three years. The Office for Seniors plans to review the grant programme and make recommendations about the future options for providing financial support to local bodies and community organisations for age friendly initiatives.

## Acknowledging progress and celebrating success

The Minister for Seniors acknowledges successful cities by writing to them and by attending key events. In 2019, the Minister for Seniors attended celebrations to launch the Wairarapa Positive Ageing Strategy, and the Waimakariri Age friendly Community Plan. The Office for Seniors also attended the release of Palmerston North's five year strategy to become age friendly.

## Better Later Life He Oranga Kaumātua 2019 to 2034 strategy

Following a two-phase consultation process, the Minister for Seniors launched the [Better Later Life He Oranga Kaumātua strategy 2019 to 2034](#) in November 2019. To achieve the vision of the strategy, 'older New Zealanders lead valued, connected and fulfilling lives' five key areas for action were identified:

- achieving financial security and economic participation
- promoting healthy ageing and improving access to services
- creating diverse housing choices and options
- enhancing opportunities for participation and social connection
- making environments accessible.

The Better Later Life He Oranga Kaumātua strategy included a number of initial actions to help maintain the momentum gained during its development. We have started to implement some of these actions in the last year eg, developing an initial set of wellbeing indicators and implementing a programme to improve older peoples' digital skills.

Other actions outlined in the Better Later Life He Oranga Kaumātua strategy 2019 to 2034 include:

- identifying and progressing opportunities to improve housing options for older people
- encouraging employment of those aged 50+
- continuing to encourage the development of Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Connect cities and communities worldwide

### National Age friendly Advisory Group

The Office for Seniors established a national Age friendly Advisory Group (the advisory group) to help guide the Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand programme. The advisory group's membership includes a variety of stakeholders including representatives from advocacy, research, Māori, and local body groups.

The advisory group met for the first time in July and then in October 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted plans for 2020 advisory group meetings, but the Office for Seniors intends to resume these by the end of 2020.

### Cross government promotion and engagement

At the government level, the Office for Seniors has contributed to many cross-agency papers focusing on diverse issues such as health, urban planning, transport, housing and accessibility. Examples include:

- presenting at the Financial Capability Cross Government meeting in September 2019
- playing a key role advocating for older people throughout the COVID-19 pandemic as part of the National Crisis Management Centre welfare group.

### Engagement with other jurisdictions

The Office for Seniors has developed a good working relationship with colleagues in the Australasian Ageing Policy Network and participates in the group's quarterly teleconference.

New Zealand continues to contribute to regular Global Network of Age friendly Communities and Cities Affiliate meetings each month to share news, lessons learnt, and other ideas with international groups.

## Visit from the UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons

Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, the UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons visited New Zealand in March 2020 to review New Zealand's policies, strategies and practices relevant to older people. Rosa met with high-level government officials, local bodies, and non-government groups to gather information for the review. She completed an [End of Mission Statement](#) and her final findings are due to be presented to the UN Human Rights Council in September 2020.

The Office for Seniors coordinated and supported Rosa's visit. This enabled us to strengthen our cross-government connections with other agencies to promote age friendly approaches for policy development and service delivery. It also helped to strengthen our relationship with local government, non-government organisations, community organisations, and older people.

## Support cities and communities to find evidence-based solutions

### Age friendly toolkit and resources

The Office for Seniors has progressed work on its Age friendly Toolkit which will be published on the Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand webpage by the end of September 2020. Several representatives of local bodies involved in age friendly work provided key contact details that will be shared with others through the online toolkit.

The Office for Seniors commissioned three in-depth case studies using the experiences of communities that have developed age friendly plans. The case studies have been recorded in written and video format. These will be used in age friendly promotional material and as a stand-alone resource available through the Office for Senior's Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand webpage.

### Developing indicators that reflect the wellbeing of older New Zealanders

A set of initial wellbeing indicators to measure the impact of the Better Later Life He Oranga Kaumātua strategy 2019 to 2034, has been developed and is available on the [SuperSeniors website](#). We have subsequently developed a set of indicators to understand the impact of COVID-19 on Older New Zealanders in the medium and long term. These will be available online soon.

### Evaluation of digital literacy training for older people

In 2019, the New Zealand Government provided \$600,000 for a three-year programme, Digital Literacy Training for Seniors. Following a procurement process in 2019, the Office for Seniors awarded contracts to two organisations to provide digital literacy training programmes for older people.

One programme targets older people in the Pasifika community and is able to be delivered in multiple Pasifika languages. The other programme caters for the general older population. These programmes aim to reach 4,675 seniors over three years.

An outcomes framework has been developed and an evaluation is planned to understand what works well to support older people to engage in the online world safely with trust and confidence. This will help to inform the future expansion of the programme.

### Championing academic research to advance age friendly communities in New Zealand

The Office for Seniors continues to support two national Multi-University Collaborative Research Programmes, the Ageing Well and the Building Better Homes, Cities and Towns National Science Challenges.

We are directly involved with two specific projects investigating:

- building solutions for affordable, functional housing in ageing and changing communities which assesses the implications of changing housing tenure among older people
- identifying pathways that lead to social isolation for older Māori and Pacific people and development of a peer-support programme that focuses on social connectedness and wellbeing for Kaumātua.

### Future work for Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand

The Office for Seniors has achieved almost all of the work outlined in its initial age friendly work plan but there are some areas within the original plan that would benefit from a strengthened approach. These include:

- engaging with Māori, Pasifika and other ethnic minorities to see how the WHO age friendly model could be adapted to align with their worldviews
- ensuring that the advisory group meets consistently to share diverse perspectives, inform the workplan and provide advice about programme development
- setting up consistent support for local bodies and community organisations that meets their needs, for example, by establishing a national network, running webinars and annual face to face meetings, and building on age friendly resources for the New Zealand context
- sharing case studies and other examples of good practice on the SuperSeniors website and supporting local bodies and community organisations to share their experiences through the WHO's Age Friendly World
- disseminating research findings, facilitating better connectivity between age friendly researchers and encouraging more age friendly research.

The Office for Seniors is also identifying other opportunities to progress age friendly work in New Zealand and will incorporate these into a refreshed work programme to be implemented over the next two years.