



24th August 2018

Strategy for an Ageing Population
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Re: Developing a new strategy to prepare for an aging population

We want to congratulate the government on starting a conversation around Positive Ageing.

We have canvassed our membership to respond to your questionnaire and have compiled responses along with a summary. These are views from Kaitaia, Doubtless Bay, Warkworth, Waikato, Gisborne, Central Hawkes Bay, Hawera and Franklin – These clubs represent a diverse geographical area as well as a broad range of ages. But many of the questions showed a common theme.

We hope that our comments are of use to you.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1: Valuing our older people and keeping them connected

1:1 Older Maori people

- Usually expect to be supported/cared for by whanau (traditional way). With added pressure for family members to work outside the home this can now be difficult.
- An increase in home support and services may be needed.
- Should ideally be carried out by Maori providers
- Service plan must always involve the person themselves, their whanau, as well as appropriate service providers.
- Continue consultation with Iwi and the Maori health sector
- Iwi support/Maori specific targeted programmes



- Take into consideration the lower age for illness of this population
- Consider the Te Whare Tapa Wha model of health and addressing all these factors
- Consider the role of female Maori elders supporting their families

1:2 Responding effectively to diversity

- Embrace it.
- Need to educate general population
- Ensure that an individual's personal and cultural needs are respected and met
- Keep consultation wide ranging and recognise the now diverse ethnic population in NZ and different expectations and roles of those in older age, as well as gender specific differences in what is meaningful to them
- Begin education early (primary school) on diversity

1:3 Make sure people continue to feel valued as they age

- Able to be employed for as long as they wish, and their health permits
- Do not marginalize them
- Value their experience and opinions
- Provide opportunities for continued learning e.g. computer skills, "man sheds", etc.
- Assist them to meet their full potential. This would depend on individual needs, locality, financial circumstances and health.
- Rural people may require extra support e.g. transport to meet social needs, health needs, and to stay connected with others.
- Show value of elders and older people by using their skills to teach and support the young – mixing older care with younger care – rest homes/day care
- Fund community initiatives that older people can participate in and pass on their knowledge
- Engage them as government volunteers



1:4 Ensure older people are respected and receive the support they need

- All people should be treated with respect
- Value their opinions
- Listen to what they say and what they are requesting
- Ensure adequate numbers of health professionals and trained support staff are available to meet the required need.
- Make sure services offered meet the needs
- Adequate trained social workers to visit/follow dependent elderly people to limit possible elder abuse by family members and others
- Adequate information re/advertising of, services available to the elderly
- Education (i)of the elderly to inform them of available options and services and (ii) of the public including school children
- Education on respect in primary schools
- Multiple avenues to access support – self referral, primary care, community organisation, self-management through technology – MYMSD etc.
- Triage services
- Diversity of choice for support
- 'Day care' centres such as the Pakeke Centre help with keeping busy and mentally agile and help with loneliness. More of this type of communal centres where older people can meet, network and take part in activities would be very helpful
- It was noted that there are some great services and support options in our community but sometimes it's difficult to get "into the system" and there is also lots of variation between different areas as to what sort of support and services are available
- Businesses, government departments etc. increasingly relying on communicating via email rather than post or telephone - many older people are not computer literate and this type of communication does not work for them

1:5 What helps older people stay connected

- Having transport services available to go to social events and visit friends, hospital and other appointments, grocery shopping etc.



- Having a computer and skills to use the social networks
- Telephone connection
- Social clubs/activities of various sorts – stimulates the brain and reduces isolation and reduces depression due to socialisation
- Ensuring hearing aids are provided as necessary
- Ensuring glasses provided as necessary
- Maintaining reasonably good general health
- Adequate finances
- Good health
- Ensure they have a purpose and passion that engages them in the community and with others
- Diversity of choice in community organisations and avenues where they can engage
- As discussed later – financial setup and support so they have the funds to participate – especially women who may be heading into older age with less resources or are on their own for longer

1:6 Help seniors to access new technologies

- Provide equipment with easy to read/see letters and numbers
- Subsidise cost of computers, tablets, 'phones etc. if necessary
- Non-threatening education
- Providing appropriate instructors trained in teaching people with disabilities
- Encourage family to visit – learn from the grandchildren
- Finance services such as Senior Net
- Advertise services available in newspapers and other ways that seniors may be more likely to use
- Set up supervised activities involving school children groups for seniors without families
- Continue to support initiatives like Senior Net and courses to increase their skills in this area and from earlier than “older” age so they are prepared to keep working if need to and can engage in roles just as easily as younger workers.



1:7 Strengthening older people's ability to adapt to life changes and unexpected shocks

- Knowledge – provide education opportunities
- Pre-planning for retirement, especially financial planning
- Downsizing to appropriate accommodation
- Access to GPs, other health providers and clinics/hospitals
- Able to have good nutrition and a reasonably healthy lifestyle
- Having a pet. Subsidised vet fees if necessary for seniors without family, living alone
- Having a strong social and/or family network
- Being involved with community activities
- Providing trained, appropriate holistic support and care
- Adequate trained support
- Older women may need more support especially if they cannot drive or have never managed the household finances
- Increased support for existing social and community organisations so that people have the support prior to any issues/changes and they have someone to call on
- Support quick development of community hubs after earthquake and disasters and continue to support these during recovery – after Christchurch earthquakes there was a sense of community early on, but this quickly faded as there were no options for participation and this led to loneliness and decreased engagement
- Links to homecare organisations which are often already in place but giving them the additional support to extend services if needed in times of change or help older people get emergency preparedness stuff ready and maintained

2. Improving employment for older people

2:1 Supporting older people to stay in work

- Adaptable, flexible hours - especially for women as they might be caring for younger generations or unwell parents/partners
- Reduced hours
- Providing transport if necessary



- Education of employees
- Use of mentors
- Matching skills to jobs
- Welcoming workplace
- Career development or transition training options as they get older
- Training options for women to advance or make money/put away for retirement
- Education to employers to change the culture and view on older workers
- Restart options and support for workers – especially females wishing to re-enter the workforce after either a break or time away from work

2:2 Changes employers can make

- No age discrimination.
- Positive attitude to senior staff
- Providing appropriate environment e.g.: adequate light, appropriate office furniture, accessible toilets
- Providing transport, maybe at small charge to user
- Opportunities for ongoing training and development
- Better support: providing retraining and ongoing training opportunities for older people
- Changes: The shortage of workers is going to force employers to offer work to more senior workers. Some business, notably hospitals have moved to 12-hour shifts - this does not suit some older staff. Employers will need to be more flexible if they wish to retain their more mature workers
- A lot of older people are now working past 'retirement age', cleaning, serving at McDonalds, caregivers, business, professionals, tradespeople - all over. Many are now choosing to keep working for social or other reasons, although some will have no choice in the matter for financial reasons.

3 Preparing for the future

3:1 Expectations and aspirations for life in retirement



- Enough money to live in healthy, warm housing and meet day to day maintenance, transport needs
- Able to be independent for as long as possible
- Able to enjoy a reasonable standard of living – being able to afford social activities, keeping a pet, having a short break away now and again
- Being able to visit family or have them visit you
- Being in reasonably good health
- Affordable retirement housing / smaller affordable rental property for singles
- Safe environment

3:2 What would help people plan for their older years:

- Being able to save money prior to reaching retirement age
- Education available in the workplace and in the community on retirement/long-term planning
- Accessing good health care and being able to afford dental care prior to and after retirement.
- Access to professional advisors, especially financial advisors – very important for women who have not worked outside the home, or not managed the household finances
- Making an Advanced Care Plan
- Making a Will stating preferences
- Better education early so they understand the need – High School and ongoing
- More popular media shows like Nigel Latta's Money Shows as this is real world information and reaches a large audience who may not look up a website or material
- Continue subsidies to support contributions to retirement savings and advertise
- Better support: providing retraining and ongoing training opportunities for older people
- KiwiSaver should be compulsory
- Compulsory tax for retirement fund only
- Wages need to reflect affordability to save for retirement



- Allow elderly to take their pets to retirement villages and rest homes
- Have Early Childhood Centres next to retirement homes

4 Being safe and feeling supported

4:1 What would reduce older people's risk of abuse and harm

- Paid employment available for family members – less risk of financial abuse
- More trained Social Workers
- Better Mental Health support systems
- Education of seniors - older people are aware of assistance available to them
- Education of families – families are aware of support and assistance available to them
- Seniors can access health care providers, GPs etc., to maintain good health as long as possible
- Adequate residential care facilities available in local areas to meet increasing older populations, especially in rural areas
- Adequate home support services to meet the needs, especially in rural areas – should be accessible and affordable
- Easy and affordable access to counselling services
- Thorough training of health professionals in recognizing signs of possible abuse
- Voluntary support: Supermarkets could provide shoppers with help. Build relationships, fostering neighborhood support networks, being connected
- Self-help organizations among the older generation
- Increased social connectedness – with the more people in their lives the more likely someone will see any issues and prevent abuse
- Monitoring and listening to issues
- Senior education on financial management, power of attorney etc. so they are well informed
- Better support: providing retraining and ongoing training opportunities for older people
- Review policies at retirement centres regarding ratio of nurses and staff to clients
- Have a trained Age Concern person available to each person



4:2 How can older people be supported to continue to make their own decisions and prepare for the future

- Have their decisions respected and supported by family
- Family and friends and carers actively encourage older people to make decisions, and do as much as possible for themselves – encourage interaction and not to hibernate at home
- Develop or use already developed tools to assist people to remain independent in their own homes - could encompass use of special equipment, kitchen aids, “reminder” lists
- Access to trained Occupational Therapists
- Access to all required professional services
- Early education on preparing for the future
- Education on Power of Attorney and nomination early so that if things change dramatically and quickly – all in place. Especially important for women as they often live longer than men
- Offer information on advanced care plans
- Visits by children to tap into wealth of knowledge

5 Housing

5:1 What could improve the position of older renters in NZ

- More subsidized/controlled rent senior housing units available
- Some form of rent control
- WOF for rental houses to make sure they are safe
- Improve the position of older renters in NZ by offering smaller one-bedroom affordable homes
- Heating subsidy paid direct to the Power Co. Targeted funding to Utilities
- Revise the criteria around grants, bonds etc. to older people via Social Services
- Security doors, curtains, appropriate floor coverings should be mandatory
- Good community transport so that they can get to the places they need to go and don't need to live in a specific location – better access to services means increased use and prevention
- Social housing or supported housing for older people / communal living houses



- More people likely to be long term renters – can't afford house or cannot access a loan later in life. Setup longer term leases like overseas to ensure security
- Subsidies for adaptable housing builds so that housing can be easily and more cheaply adapted as people age or have disability issues
- Developers to build smaller 1-2-bedroom houses – cheaper to rent, heat and maintain
- Encourage environmentally friendly housing builds so cheaper to run and heat
- Share housing options for older people – especially women – not necessarily rest home but community flats for older women (communal living)
- Multistage retirement villages

5:2 Enabling older NZers to be more secure in their homes and communities

- Extend "Healthy Homes" initiative
- More subsidized home help, both inside and outside the house
- Security lighting
- Having a working telephone
- Getting to know one's neighbours
- Becoming involved in community groups and activities
- Greater police presence on the streets, especially in rural areas
- Being able to access assistance for house maintenance at a reasonable cost
- Well maintained and accessible footpaths
- Wheelchair friendly facilities
- Community networks
- Encourage environmentally friendly housing builds so cheaper to run and heat
- Long term rental options
- Home maintenance services to keep housing healthy
- Better support: providing retraining and ongoing training opportunities for older people
- Runanga based assistance



6 Missing Issues

6:1 Rural versus Urban needs

- Rural seniors more at risk of isolation, difficulty in accessing services, difficulty in getting required services provided
- Lack of public transport is a big problem for many older people
- Senior Gold Card of little use in many rural settings
- Lack of information about what rural services are available – better advertising in local papers

6:2 Subsidized dental care for seniors

- Poor dental health has been proven to negatively impact on the general health
- Many seniors cannot afford dental care
- It would be cost effective for the healthcare system to subsidize dental care for poorer seniors – reducing bed occupancy in hospitals and possibly residential care facilities

6:3 Other Funding

- Support for looking after grandchildren when they have either needed to or as a support for working women. More younger women are likely to work and work more so sometimes care burden is placed on grandparent
- Variations between public and private hospital/medical treatments between different parts of NZ. Centralising medical treatment is fine for people who drive but is hopeless for older people who do not drive or have lost their licences to drive

Summary:

There is a saying “That 80 is the new 60”.

The figures support the average age of a life span for a woman is increasing and sits at around 83 years young whilst a man’s average is 79. For most aged persons it is a sense of worth that is important through continued employment opportunities, community voluntary hours or just the opportunity to have human contact on a regular basis. We reference BPW NZ Policies regarding EEO/Equal Pay, Housing and Elder Abuse. We look forward to seeing a draft document in the near future.



Our Organisation

The International Federation of Business and Professional Women is a global organisation with representatives in over 100 countries, including BPW NZ. Our organisation's aims are to link professional and business women throughout the world so that they may provide support to each other, lobby for change and to promote the ongoing advancement of women and girls. We work for equal opportunities and status for all women in economic, civil and political life and the removal of discrimination in all countries. We promote our aims and organise our operating structure without distinction as to race, language or religion.

We hope that our comments are of use to you.

On behalf of

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