I’ve had a great time as Minister for Seniors over the last few weeks.

Having launched the nationwide conversation for the Positive Ageing Strategy in June, it has been a real thrill to have attended six of the sessions around New Zealand.

Starting in Gore, then on to Dunedin, I’ve also been to Tawa in Wellington, Auckland, Hamilton and Gisborne.

Working with a variety of stakeholders, the Office of Seniors has managed to pull together a wide range of New Zealanders to begin the process of articulating what we want the future of our more mature citizens to look like.

I wanted to be part of as many of these workshops as possible to hear from people first-hand, and try and ensure that those attending looked beyond the here and now and thought about what we wanted our society and services for seniors to look like in 20 years’ time.

Some of the statements that have made an impression on me have been around the area of employment and work. It was a welcome coincidence that the Employers and Manufacturers Association released their white paper “Act now, Age later” a week before we began the strategy road trip. The two nicely complement each other. The EMA paper recognises that there are too many skills tied up in our mature workers to have them all leave the workplace.

In Gore it became apparent that the word “retirement” should itself be retired. What we are seeing is a transition, often from paid work to unpaid work for the majority of “Generation Grey” – a demographic title suggested by a health professional at that meeting.

But what the EMA is encouraging their members to have is conversations earlier with workers, in their 50s for example, about transitioning to more flexible or part time work. If we begin to think of Superannuation in terms of a “universal-basis income” accessible to those over 65 then we can begin to plan the opportunities to keep them connected to the paid workforce for at least part of their week.

How will that connection in turn help us address the very real concerns around isolation and loneliness? Again, what we know is that regardless of if it is paid or unpaid work (volunteering), the benefits of remaining active and involved in workplaces and organisations cannot be underestimated.

Is that impossible? I don’t think so after the really passionate seniors I have met over the last few weeks. There are exciting times ahead.

If you haven’t yet engaged with the Positive Ageing Strategy go to www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz/ageingpopulation
**Time is running out to have your say**

It’s not too late to have your say on the development of a new strategy to address the needs of our ageing population.

Between 29 June and 24 August we are consulting with people throughout New Zealand to find out what matters to you.

The last strategy was developed in 2001 and since then people are living longer and healthier lives. People of all ages are becoming more concerned about things like housing, secure employment and climate change.

While the new strategy will reflect many known changes and challenges, we want to know what today’s seniors think. We also want to hear from tomorrow’s seniors, people aged in their 40s and 50s now. After all, it’s projected that by 2036 one in four Kiwis will be aged 65 and over.

We want to hear your ideas and concerns. What are your priorities and expectations for how you live now, and how you want to age in the future?

Submissions close on 24 August so there’s still time to tell us your views. If you’d like to be involved, or make a submission, go to our website: [www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz/ageingpopulation](http://www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz/ageingpopulation)

You can also have your say in our online survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/NWLWG23](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NWLWG23)

**Being scam savvy**

It pays to always be on your guard with banking and money matters. Just like your keys and wallet, you need to take care with online banking and be suspicious when people call you up asking for money.

Two very common scams that target elderly people are email and phone ‘phishing’ scams. Typically, customers receive an email from what looks like their bank or telecommunications company or a government agency (like IRD). Customers are asked to confirm personal details, using a fake website.

Don’t click on links within any email if you have the slightest suspicion about its authenticity. Simply delete the email.

If you need to go to your bank’s website, type the address manually into your browser.

Fraudsters also use phishing phone calls to pretend to be these companies. They may ask you to turn on your computer and download software that gives them access to everything on your computer.

Be very cautious about unsolicited phone calls, no matter how plausible the caller sounds.

If in doubt, hang up and call the company back on their publicly listed number.

Nicola Sladden, Banking Ombudsman

**Safety tips and tricks:**

- Use a different password for everything you do and a unique password for your banking (online or not)
- Turn on two-factor authentication with your bank and email host
- Don’t trust cold calls (by phone, email, facebook)
- Keep your computer systems updated
- Don’t share too much information online.

**Targeted by a scammer?**

1. Contact your bank or other financial provider
2. Change your passwords for any online accounts.
Winter Energy Payment

By now you will have had a few of these payments to help keep you warm and your home dry this winter.

The winter energy payment runs through until 29 September this year. This means in your NZ Super payment on 2 October you will get a final Winter Energy Payment of 11 days. The winter energy payment will begin again in May 2019.

Reminder about travelling overseas

If you’re heading away from New Zealand over the winter months you can keep getting your Winter Energy Payment for up to 28 days.

It’s really important you let Work and Income know if you will be away for more than 28 days, otherwise you might be paid too much and they will have to ask for the money back.

The easiest way to let us know is to fill out the online form (or search for ‘overseas travel’ on the Work and Income website). Or call the Seniors line, on 0800 552 002.

If you’re back before the end of September remember to get in touch so your payment can be started again.

Bowel screening programme

The National Bowel Screening Programme is a free programme for men and women aged 60 to 74 and is designed to help detect bowel cancer.

Bowel cancer is New Zealand’s second most common cancer. Around 3000 cases are diagnosed every year and 1200 people die from it.

However, bowel cancer is highly treatable if caught early.

Bowel screening every two years aims to detect cancer in its early stages when it can often be successfully treated.

The National Bowel Screening Programme is currently available in Hutt Valley, Wairarapa, Waitemata, Southern and Counties Manukau DHBs. It is being progressively rolled out around the country and will be available nationwide from mid-2021.

If you are in an area that offers bowel screening, and you are eligible, you will receive an invitation to take part in the national programme.

You will also get a free test kit and instructions on how to use it. The test can be done at home and is simple to do.

The test is called a faecal immunochemical test (FIT). This test can detect tiny traces of blood present in a small sample of your bowel motion (poo) – which may be an early warning sign that something is wrong with your bowel.

More information on the National Bowel Screening Programme can be found at www.timetoscreen.nz/bowel-screening or by calling 0800 924 432.
**Getting NZ Super and working**

People often ask whether they can work and get NZ Super too. The short answer is yes, but there are some things you need to know.

NZ Super isn’t income or asset tested if you’ve reached the qualifying age. This means you can earn other income or have assets and still get your payments. However, income may change your NZ Super payments if you:

- include your partner (if they’re under 65)
- get extra financial help from Work and Income
- have to pay a higher rate of tax.

**Including your partner in your NZ Super if they’re under 65**

If you have a partner who doesn’t qualify for their own NZ Super, you can decide whether to include them in your payments. If you choose to include them, you’ll both get paid but any other income either of you earn may affect how much you get. Work and Income can help you work out the best option.

**Getting extra help**

Some people can get extra help with their NZ Super, like Accommodation Supplement, Disability Allowance or Temporary Additional Support. If you have other income it will change the amount of extra help you get.

**Make sure your tax code is right**

When you have two or more sources of income (such as NZ Super and your earnings from work or investments), the highest is treated as your main income. The other is treated as secondary income and is taxed at a higher rate.

It’s important to check you’re using the right tax code, whatever you’re earning, and review it from time-to-time. There’s useful advice and a calculator on the Tax on your income when you retire page on Inland Revenue’s website [www.ird.govt.nz](http://www.ird.govt.nz).

**New Zealand joins WHO network**

New Zealand has been accepted as an affiliate member of the WHO Global Network of Age friendly Cities and Communities.

Minister for Seniors Tracey Martin made the announcement during the inaugural National Age-friendly Communities Forum in Wellington in June.

Close to 150 people came together for the forum including local council representatives, community groups, organisations and academics.

The Age-friendly Cities and Communities model was developed by the World Health Organization in 2005 to help address the issue of ageing populations.

It is a community driven model with older people a critical voice and key partner along the way.

The key-note speaker at the forum was Christine Young, Director of Community Development for the City of Melville Council, who discussed how age-friendly is being implemented in Western Australia.

Presentations from the event are available on the SuperSeniors website for people interested in age-friendly.


Christine Young, City of Melville Council
Hamilton named age-friendly city

Hamilton is the 600th city to join the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

It is a big achievement for the city, with Hamilton the first New Zealand city to be accepted.

Hamilton has had a long term interest in the voice of older people – in 1993 it established a Council of Elders to provide advice to Hamilton City Council.

In 2015, the renamed Advisory Panel on Older People recommended to Council that Hamilton should consider becoming an age-friendly city.

The recommendation was accepted, and in 2016 the Hamilton Age-Friendly Steering Group was formed.

The Age-friendly Plan incorporated 48 projects which would expand existing activities, or which were new, or should be continued.

In February 2018 the Plan was accepted by the Hamilton City Council, and in May Hamilton was accepted into the WHO network.

Since then several new projects are underway including collecting oral histories from older Māori, and improving the physical environment and transport systems to help better serve older people.

As well, a two-day event, 50 Plus, I’m Loving It, was held in April at Hamilton Gardens to celebrate older people and to better inform them of the activities and benefits available to them in the city.

Get up and dance

Visiting Elmwood Rest Home in Manurewa you might think you’ve entered a dance party.

Every morning around 30 residents in rest home and hospital level care start their day with a boogie - all part of a programme that uses silent disco technology to encourage movement and activity.

The wireless headsets bring music and the instructor’s voice straight into resident’s ears to create a more immersive experience. It also helps reduce distractions and keep residents stay focused.

Not only does it help residents move more, but they have fun doing it.

The results speak for themselves. Residents have improved mobility, better coordination and a reduction in chronic pain.

Physiotherapist Richard Horwood said the health benefits were obvious.

“We’re seeing reductions in acute shoulder and arm pain, fewer falls and increased alertness,” he said.

“Anything that encourages our residents to move more with an element of fun is a good thing.”

For more information on the programme go to www.oceaniahealthcare.co.nz or call 0800 333 688
New Zealanders are living longer. Many are healthy and active as they age. However, meeting the healthcare needs of our ageing population is one of the challenges facing New Zealand’s healthcare system.

All older people should consider what they would like to happen should they no longer be able to communicate their wishes. One action is for them to appoint enduring powers of attorney to act on their behalf regarding care, welfare, and property decisions. They should discuss his or her wishes with the person appointed as attorney so that person is able to advocate on their behalf and make the decisions the older person would have made.

The Health and Disability Commissioner (HDC) frequently sees cases where well-meaning family members tell residential care facilities about the decisions the family member wants made, for example, regarding medications or restraint, while the resident is still competent to make decisions for themselves.

On-going communication between whānau, friends and service providers is invaluable to allow caregivers to be informed about the person’s values and wishes, if the person is unable to express these.

Many complaints to HDC result from poor communication between families and service providers - if concerns are responded to promptly and changes implemented a complaint is less likely.

It’s important that everyone understands what their rights and responsibilities are, particularly in relation to the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers’ Rights.

A free advocacy service is available by phoning 0800 555 050.

For more information go to www.hdc.org.nz

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**International Day of Friendship**

Auckland resident Mary Dyason knows the importance of friendship.

At 65, she finds it hard to leave her home because of health problems but she can always count on a visit from her friend Daphne Rielly.

The friendship is a new one after the pair were brought together as part of The Salvation Army Senior Services Friendship Programme.

Daphne visits each week and the pair talk about life, what’s for dinner, and their favourite TV show, Midsomer Murders.

“They look forward to me coming. Some of my ladies don’t know my name, because they have dementia, but they know my face and who I am,” she said.

“We just sit and talk about whatever. It could be TV, family, what’s worrying them.

“It shows that at any age, no matter how old you are, you can have a great friendship.”

Mary said it was great to have a new friend.

“Having some company and having someone to talk to has been really, really good,” she said.

“I don’t have many people coming to see me so I love these afternoons.”

For more information on the friendship support programme go to www.salvationarmy.org.nz

International Day of Friendship was held on 30 July.
SuperGold Card special offers

Check out the latest special offers for our super seniors through the SuperSeniors website.

Save $400 on the iconic Hollyford Track 3 Day Experience
Normal retail price is $1,990. Quote ‘Gold18’ when booking.
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Disclaimer: The SuperGold Card programme enables independent businesses to offer discounts and benefits to older New Zealanders. The Ministry of Social Development is not associated with any seller and does not guarantee any representation made by a seller and any future dispute will need to be taken up with the seller not the Ministry of Social Development. Offers range in size and nature and cardholders should always check to see if a better offer is available locally.