My last few columns have touched on a key piece of work that we’re in the middle of – creating a new strategy to support seniors to live well. The first phase of the work, finding out what people think and want, is finished.

There’s been good interest and engagement with around 470 submissions from individuals and groups.

Some of the early themes from the submissions are that people want sufficient income to have a good life, they want good health and to keep connections with the people that matter to them. They’ve also said they want to be treated with respect, work if they wish and want it recognised that the older population are diverse. It’s certainly true that not everyone over 65, or 85, is the same or wants the same things.

I don’t think any of those things are a surprise. The challenge is going to be what areas to focus on and what, as a country and government, we do to address the gaps and keep encouraging opportunities.

At the moment I’m thinking about some sort of awards scheme that helps recognise the everyday Senior Kiwis who reinforce the good stereotypes – such as that we’re great carers and givers – and challenge some of the myths that can limit options for seniors.

I also want to address the neglect of the SuperGold card over the last few years. We know over-65s really value it. What we want to do is ensure people know what they can get out of it, and of course work with businesses to stretch the range of discounts and benefits it can provide.

Talk about a “strategy” can sometimes sound a bit vague. But there are certain things like decent housing, a decent income and the chance to be part of society that are a bottom line for our senior citizens. We can support these with a well thought through strategy.

Similarly, and I’m sure it’s relevant to you, that’s why I’m working on a Child Wellbeing Strategy with the Prime Minister. It is about the Government recognising that not every child in New Zealand gets the support it needs to become a good adult.

You all know how important family is. You know the effect a family’s circumstances can have on children, for good and for bad. And how every child wants to be loved, especially by its family.

Most of us are lucky in that our families and some basic government services like the public education and health systems provide all of the things that children need. But we don’t want to have a society where a child’s wellbeing and future – his or her health and safety and education – is down to luck. New Zealand is a country where every child should have a decent chance.

The Child Wellbeing Strategy is about setting a minimum line for what children need and then looking at what government services will make the greatest difference in children’s lives.

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**From Minister Tracey Martin**

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**In this issue**

We celebrate older people as part of International Day of Older Persons on 1 October.

Events were held around the country to celebrate, recognise and thank seniors for the important contributions they make. That included a special photography exhibition in Wellington that showcased some of the amazing stories of older New Zealanders.

Minister for Seniors Tracey Martin gives an update on the consultation for a new strategy for an ageing population.

Around 470 submissions were received and are currently been analysed.

Not sure what help you might be eligible for? Then check out the new online eligibility guide from the Ministry of Social Development.

The guide was launched in June and since then more than 87,000 people have used it.

21 September was World Alzheimers Day with people across the country donning purple to campaign for a better world for people living with dementia.

You can still help by joining up to become a Dementia Friend.

Recently changed your email address? Then make sure you have updated your contact details in MyMSD to keep receiving all the latest news and SuperGold offers straight into your inbox.
Older people were celebrated this week as part of International Day of Older Persons on 1 October.

The awareness day provided the opportunity to acknowledge the contributions older people make to our society and raise awareness of the challenges of ageing.

Events were held around the country to celebrate, recognise and thank seniors for the important contributions they make.

Age Concern New Zealand hosted a special event in Wellington to showcase the work of artist and photographer John Shen who has been working with them on a project to interview and photograph older Kiwis who have rich life stories to tell.

John is currently in his third year studying a BFA in Photography and Painting at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in the United States.

Over the past eight weeks John has travelled over 2,000 kilometres across New Zealand to meet Kiwi’s over 65 from all parts of the country.

By interviewing them as well as photographing each of the wonderful people he’s meet, John hopes to put a face to the social issue of an ageing New Zealand and create images that tell the stories of our older New Zealanders.

He hopes that these stories and images will spark wider discussions of where we’re heading as a country.

Discussions such as how do we make sure that our older New Zealanders maintain as much independence as possible? How do we make sure they receive not only the economic support, medical care and attention that they need but also how might we provide the social and mental needs that they require?

John’s photo essay presentation will be available to view at Ngā Taonga Sound and Vision in Wellington for a week and then on Age Concern New Zealand’s website later in October.

Age Concern New Zealand is also urging all New Zealanders to sign up as Age Concern Dignity Champions and stand up for the human rights of older Kiwis.

Celebrating Older Human Rights Champions is the theme of the 2018 International Day of Older Persons.

For more information, go to the Age Concern website at www.ageconcern.org.nz

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John Shen

Anthony Kuepfer

Rosemary Price

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Follow SuperSeniors on Facebook
www.facebook.com/officeforseniors
Check out the new eligibility guide

Not sure what help you might be eligible for?

Then check out the new online eligibility guide from the Ministry of Social Development.

The ‘Check What You Might Get’ guide was launched in late June and since then more than 87,000 people have used it to find out if they might be able to get help from MSD.

The guide will take you through a series of simple questions about your circumstances, your family, children, income, health, expenses and living situation.

Once you have answered all the questions you will get a list with details of the services you may be able to get, along with an estimate of how much you might qualify for.

You can then view further information about these services and how to apply.

The guide is very user-friendly and will work on any computer or mobile device. It does not keep any of the information you enter.

Need Extra Help?

Some people may be eligible for extra help with their NZ Super, like the Accommodation Supplement, Disability Allowance or Temporary Additional Support. In these situations, the guide is a great first step to understanding what may be available to you, and how to access it.

If you don’t have access to a computer, you can contact the Seniors line on 0800 552 002.

For more information or to access the guide go to http://check.msd.govt.nz

Time to think about a will

Have you sorted your will? If not, now is the time.

With less than half of the New Zealand population currently holding wills, it’s something people need to think about.

Public Trust General Counsel (Retail), Henry Stokes, said September was Wills Month and a reminder for people to think about their future.

“As we go through life, we acquire assets and develop relationships that come with certain responsibilities. Think of these things as the stuff in the ‘room of your life’ and a will as the way to sort and tidy that room when you die,” he said.

“Dying without a will means no clear instructions for how these things are to be sorted. At best, this will mean some second-guessing and deliberating between those left behind. At worst, it can easily lead to squabbling and conflict between family and friends.

“Having an up-to-date will means taking responsibility for the people and things in your life. It means leaving well and doing what’s right for those left behind.”

There’s more to a will than just how you want your house or financial assets to be divided.

It’s also where you can:

• Name a guardian for your children
• Outline your funeral wishes

• Name who will receive particular valuable items as special gifts
• Provide special instructions around the distribution of particular assets
• Detail your preferences for the ongoing care of your pets.

If you have a SuperGold Card you may be eligible for a discount for any legal services. Check the SuperGold directory to find a provider near you at www.supergold.govt.nz

While setting up a will, it’s also important to think about choosing an Enduring Power of Attorney.

Find out more about making a will and what you need to do to set up an Enduring Power of Attorney by visiting the Community Law website at www.communitylaw.org.nz
**Become a Dementia Friend**

Dementia affects thousands of Kiwi’s and is a serious health challenge facing older people.

Internationally, one person is diagnosed every three seconds, and the number of Kiwis living with dementia, currently around 60,000, is expected to triple over the next 30 years as the population ages.

That’s why it’s even more important to take steps now to improve people’s awareness and understanding of dementia. And, importantly, their acceptance and understanding of those who are affected by it.

Alzheimers New Zealand launched Dementia Friends to encourage and help Kiwis better understand dementia and to feel more comfortable about supporting someone living with the condition.

When someone opts to become a Dementia Friend they participate in a short, online enrolment programme that includes a video of three very honest and open New Zealanders telling their personal stories about how they live with dementia.

As part of enrolling, Dementia Friends are also asked to take some kind of action to support someone living with dementia to ‘live their best possible life’.

No action is too big or too small. It can be as simple as wearing the Dementia Friends badge or bracelet that people will receive when they enrol.

Alternatively, it might involve a commitment to visit someone with dementia occasionally, or taking them shopping when they need a hand, or just going for a walk with them.

There is no cost to becoming a Dementia Friend, other than someone’s time.

For more information and to become a Dementia Friend go to [www.alzheimers.org.nz](http://www.alzheimers.org.nz)

World Alzheimers Day was held on 21 September- an annual event.It is part of World Alzheimers Month which ran through September.

-Alister Robertson, Dementia Friend spokesperson-

**World Arthritis Day**

Friday, October 12, marks World Arthritis Day which raises awareness of rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases.

Arthritis is a painful condition that affects over 647,000 New Zealanders.

That figure is set to increase to a million by 2040 as the population ages and obesity numbers rise.

It is a condition that affects people of all ages though older people can be at greater risk of osteoarthritis.

There are more than 140 different forms of arthritis with osteoarthritis, gout arthritis and rheumatoid arthritis the most common forms.

There are a few obvious symptoms to watch out for including:

- Swelling in one or more joints
- Early morning stiffness for more than a few minutes
- Recurring pain or tenderness in one or more joints
- Reduced movement
- Obvious redness or warmth in one or more joints
- Unexplained weight loss, fever or weakness combined with joint pain.

If you are diagnosed there are treatments available.

- Keeping your weight under control
- Physical therapy
- Medication
- Surgery
- Walking sticks and splints can help if your leg joints are affected.

Arthritis New Zealand hosts a number of support groups across the country and also supports exercise classes for people with arthritis.

For more information visit the Arthritis New Zealand website at [www.arthritis.org.nz](http://www.arthritis.org.nz) or call 0800 663 463 and ask to speak to an Arthritis Educator.
The internet helps us stay in contact with friends and family and connects us to the world.

Unfortunately, choosing an internet plan is not as easy as buying something like a fridge. When you buy a fridge you can visit a white ware store to compare makes, models, and pricing. But when you buy an internet connection, there’s no one-stop internet shop, making it hard to make comparisons between providers, plans, technologies, and in-home performance.

That’s why the Commerce Commission, which is New Zealand’s competition and consumer watchdog, is setting up a programme to measure the broadband performance in more than 3,000 New Zealand households.

The aim of the programme is to use the broadband performance data from the volunteers to provide consumers with independent information on broadband performance across providers, plans, and technologies, to help them choose the best broadband for their household.

How can you help?

To make sure we get an accurate picture of how New Zealand’s broadband is performing, we need volunteers from all parts of New Zealand, of all ages, on all types of broadband technologies, plans and providers to take part.

Volunteers that are selected will be provided with a ‘Whitebox’ similar to a modem to plug in at home. The Whitebox performs automated tests on home internet performance at different times of the day. The Whitebox does not record any personal information or browsing history or interfere with your internet service.

For more information or to sign up go to www.comcom.govt.nz/broadbandvolunteer

Beginners Guide to Broadband

We also have a Beginners Guide to Broadband series of quick guides and videos on our website to help you choose your broadband technology, improve your broadband performance and resolve issues with your telecommunications provider. Visit www.comcom.govt.nz to learn more.

Go online at MyMSD

Did you know you can change your contact details, including your email address, online through MyMSD?

Our online service MyMSD is the easy way to keep in touch with the Ministry. It’s faster than calling, cheaper than coming to see us and you can use it when it suits you. You can use it when you need assistance or to tell us when something has changed.

Once you log into MyMSD you can apply online and fill out an application form. You can even apply for NZ Super using MyMSD.

You’ll be guided through your next steps, which could include:

- a list of documents you’ll need to provide
- booking an appointment if needed.

Remember to read and accept your obligations.

Also in MyMSD, you can:

- read your letters
- declare your weekly wages and other income (if you need to)
- view your weekly breakdown of payment and debt details
- make, check, change and cancel transaction-related appointments
- tell us about a relationship change
- stop upcoming payments
- advise of overseas travel
- check your Payment Card balance
- get reminders for expiry dates
- apply for one-off support
- see your Community Service Card details.

Getting started

All you need to get started is your client number. Then use your mobile phone, tablet or computer to head to my.msd.govt.nz to log in for the first time and set up your PIN (that’s all you’ll need to log in next time)

For more information on MyMSD go to my.msd.govt.nz

The Action Plan will identify what the government is committed to achieving in the next five years to support those people providing care for friends or family/whānau members with their everyday living because of a health condition, injury, frailty, or disability.

The role that families and whānau provide in New Zealand is important, and the government is committed to recognising and supporting this contribution.

We are keen to hear from anyone who provides care for a friend or member of their family/whānau. Hearing about your experience, and how caring impacts your life and wellbeing, and what you think would make a difference will help inform the actions government can take to help.

We will be talking to different groups of people around the country to learn about their experiences. We are also carrying out an online survey.


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Do you have a project that could help make your community more age-friendly?

Then apply for our Community Connects grants.

The Community Connects grants help fund projects that promote the inclusion and contribution of older people in community life, and support their community to prepare for an ageing population.

The fund makes one-off grants up to $15,000 as part of an annual budget of $100,000.

The October funding round is now open with applications closing on October 31.

The grants are open to any New Zealand council, community organisation, or registered non-profit organisation.

All applications must be supported by their local council.

The grants are already making a difference in communities across the country with six local councils and community groups receiving grants in the May funding round.

That included Waimakariri District Council, Hurunui District Council, Napier City Council, Carterton District Council, Well-Able (Kapiti Disability Centre) and Eastern Bay Villages (Eastern Bay of Plenty).

For more information on Community Connects, including eligibility criteria, go to [www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz](http://www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz)

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Around 470 written submissions were received as part of the development of the strategy for an ageing population.

Office for Seniors Director, Diane Turner, said the response had been outstanding.

“I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to all who have submitted their encouraging insights, opinions and views,” she said.

“It was clear that New Zealanders are thinking and talking about the implications of our ageing population and what the future should look like. We heard from a variety of age groups including older New Zealanders. It was important to us that we hear the views of seniors today but the seniors of tomorrow as well.”

A total of 12 workshops were hosted around the country by the Office for Seniors including three hui, and workshops with Pasifika and migrant groups.

There were also many other organisations, groups and whānau that held their own workshops and discussions looking at New Zealand’s ageing population.

Currently, the Office for Seniors is at an early stage of analysing the submissions. Some early themes include people wanting to have a good life, good health, social connection, be treated with respect, live in a community that is age-friendly, and work if they wish.

The analysis will feed into the development of a draft strategy. Regular updates on the development of the draft strategy will be available on the Super Seniors website at [www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz](http://www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz)
SuperGold Card special offers

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

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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.

Tell us what you think
We want to keep enhancing the value of the SuperGold Card. We’d welcome your ideas on how we can do that and what discounts you’d find useful.
Please email your suggestions to: information@supergold.govt.nz

Office for Seniors
Te Tari Kaumātua
Administered by the Ministry of Social Development