

TAURANGA & WBOP

GREY POWER

MAGAZINE FOR THE OVER 50s

ISSUE ONE 2024



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www.greypowertga-wbop.org.nz

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

We would like to hear your opinions or concerns on subject matter for printing in our magazine.

Letters must include the writers name, home address and phone number.

Letters should not exceed 120 words inclusive.

We may not always print all letters we receive. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

Post to: the address above or email

tgagreypower@gmail.com

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President's Word



A huge thank you to those who wrote submissions to TCC regarding the proposed rent increase. There is an update later in the magazine.

The new coalition government have settled in with some rather disappointing decisions (in my opinion). One being the reluctance to forge ahead with the Smoke Free 2025 campaign and it doesn't appear that there will be much of a clamp down in vape shops. If you do the maths – we never had separate shops to sell cigarettes and if the number of people smoking has reduced, then a whole lot of people, mostly children, are taking up vaping. It costs money and it's anything but healthy. The country may well make more money but will it be at the expense of people's health.

I don't profess to being an expert but there is a lot to suggest that NZ could vastly increase its income by selling what it invents in the IT, medical, science and other fields.

Anyone who is asked, will say 'yes NZ is a beautiful country,' but in some areas we are letting it down. We're still filling up landfills with rubbish, have waterways that are no longer clean enough to paddle in, let alone swim, trucks and cars still billowing out clouds of CO2 emissions. We need to do better and I'm confident that the younger generations are more aware of the world around them and will make some smarter moves.

Our committee had a workshop meeting in January to put some ideas on the table about what we want to achieve and how we do that. The financial increases such as rent and operating expenses have impacted us and the only way to absorb these costs is to increase our membership numbers. We are here to help, so what are some of the issues that adversely affect you or you have seen in your community? Do let us know by contacting the office by phone or email. Or are you able to volunteer some of your time to being on our committee?

Local elections are due for Tauranga in July this year and we will be asking hard questions of the candidates about their proposals and views on the care of older citizens, housing, safety, rates and the city rebuild. Will the new library go ahead so there is a more accessible place for people to learn, read and enjoy a wealth of other activities? Also on the subject of TCC, I read a long opinion piece about the future of our roading network by Brendan Bisley (ex TCC staff) www.sunlive.co.nz "Making the road network in Tauranga work." He laid out in simple language the immense and prohibitive cost and length of time it would take to rectify the congestion problems we now have from population growth. It does affect every one of us. Even if you don't drive, the cost of employing a trades person has risen as they spend so long sitting in traffic. So, I am on board now with the concept of catching a bus or car sharing.

With Easter at the end of the month, I hope the weather is kind to us and everyone can enjoy activities and time with friends and family.

Take care

Jennifer & the Team

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS TAURANGA & WBOP

The financial year
is from 1 April to 31 March

Single \$25 and \$35 double

Please renew for the
2024/25 year

To renew – use your membership number and name as a reference.

To join – go to our website

www.greypowertga-wbop.org.nz

Click NEW and fill in the form. Use your internet banking to make the payment using your name and phone number as reference. If you have problems using online banking ask a friend or family member to make the payment and then give them cash. You can pay cash at a Kiwibank branch or come to the office but we do not have EFTPOS. Office hours

9.30am – 2.30pm Tuesday - Thursday.

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ONLINE PAYMENTS - Please do not pay your power bill to the association. In your payees list, start one with 'GP Member and the other with 'Power GP' for example. Reversing payments takes time and your power may then be overdue.

COFFEE MORNINGS



All meetings are subject to health and safety guidelines at the time

Everyone is welcome to come along for discussion or a chat. Tauranga & Katikati have speakers monthly or bi-monthly.

TAURANGA COFFEE MORNINGS

The Raft Cafe, Chapel St, (near Briscoes)

1st Thursday of the month at 10am.

Dates: 4 April, 2 May, 6 June, 4 July

More speakers this year.

April, 'My trip to Japan' by Shirley, May - TBA.

KATIKATI COFFEE MORNINGS

Katikati Community Centre, 45 Beach Road (just past the schools).

Now 3rd Friday of each month.

\$2 for members & \$5 for others.

Dates: 19 April, 17 May, 21 June, 19 July

PAPAMOA COFFEE MORNINGS

3rd Thursday of each month at 10am.

We will continue meeting at Pacifica Cafe, Tara Rd.

Dates: - 18 April, 16 May, 20 June, 18 July

All inquiries please phone the Grey Power office, Tuesday - Thursday on 571 2558.

ALL ARE WELCOME – Please wear a name badge if you have one.

Changing how you get the Grey Power Federation magazine

[This refers to the larger quarterly magazine that is posted out, not this publication]

The rising cost of postage and printing has dramatically impacted the cost of producing and mailing the Grey Power Federation quarterly magazines. This year postage will potentially be around \$180,000 and this consumes over 60% of the fees from the membership, leaving far less for Grey Power's core business of advocating for older people. For those members who are internet users, we would like to encourage you to consider receiving your Grey Power Federation magazine online by filling in a form at <https://greypowermag.co.nz/subscribe/>. You will be advised by email when a new issue is available, but you can visit the site at any time in between to keep informed. You will need your Grey Power membership card number

You can always revert to the printed edition.

Ref: Federation

GREY POWER ZONE 3 MEETINGS

Four times a year our President, Jennifer Custins, travels to Matamata to attend the Zone 3 meeting at the Matamata Club. She's accompanied by a committee member and together they represent our association at this meeting of representatives from many of the Grey Power associations in our Zone or region. Zone 3 area extends from the south of the Bombay Hills to Taupo and east to Gisborne and includes the Coromandel Peninsula. There are approximately twenty associations in this area.

The meeting is from 10am till 2pm with a break for a healthy, delicious lunch which is provided by the caterer at the Club. The Zone Director, Gerald Hanson, chairs the meetings assisted by Heather Williamson, the Zone Secretary and Treasurer. Our Zone Representative on the Federation Board, Raymond Mudford, reports on the latest Federation Board meeting discussions and lobbying activities.

I was the committee member who accompanied Jennifer to the first Zone 3 meeting for 2024 in February. This article is a reflection of my experiences while spending a day in the company of committed Grey Power members from a variety of backgrounds and places.

Traditionally the delegates from each association sit at tables in a U shape with the Zone leaders sitting at the open end. This time the tables were dotted about with 4 people at each table. This arrangement resulted in increased interaction between delegates and lively discussion when we were given 10 minutes to discuss 'How to improve Grey Power'. Some of those suggestions were

- An effective logo – do people see the owl as of significance as it was 38 years ago
- Condense the list of subjects that the board are tasked with
- Redress the Remit System – the Remit Committee should only be given remits which will actually cause necessary change to living conditions for seniors.
- Streamline the membership process – are the cards necessary.

Raymond gave a report on topics discussed in the recent Federation Board meeting which included increases in daily expenses, postal increases and service changes, Federation website improvements, developing standard member and sponsor ship brochures as well as constitution changes.

Our association proposed a remit for the Federation AGM in June that the Federation evaluate the potential

benefits of lobbying Local Bodies and/or Government 'to ensure that a simple Rates Postponement Scheme is available to every ratepayer 65 years of age or older.' Other associations were encouraged to consider writing remits to be circulated by email for approval before the end of March.

After lunch each association was given 2 minutes to report on their activities. It's amazing the variety of activities that are shared during this time - regular meetings with a guest speaker or a regular raffle, or the social interaction that happens over a drink and food, plus community social get togethers providing support to people in need, often are a result of the local Grey Power association meetings or member friendships.

Overall, I would describe my day as a unique experience which reflected the desire of Grey Power members to serve their communities!

Jill Marshall

POSTAGE THANK YOU

Over the last 4 years we have been fortunate enough to be able to post out all our magazines and correspondence at half the current NZ Post fee.

This was due to the help of Toby & Bev Tagg who own Paper Plus in Grey Street and have donated thousands of envelopes to our association and other not-for-profit organisations for the past ten years. Sadly, Toby & Bev have decided to close Paper Plus and this will be a huge loss to so many. There is a Kiwibank and NZ Post at the rear of the shop and that was very handy for us and many others to use, as well as the displays and shelves of wonderful books and stationery.

Together with the donation of the envelopes, Tauranga Stamp Club run a Charity Postage Scheme and painstakingly stick unwanted older stamps onto the envelopes and sell them to us for half the stamp value. With the cost of everything rising, this has been a massive help to enable us to stay connected to members by mail.

The great news is – the Stamp Club have managed to do a similar deal with The Warehouse Stationery Store in Cameron Road regarding the envelopes.

Just a huge thank you to both organisations that go the extra mile to help in their communities.

Jennifer Custins

LATEST MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS



In 1962, Des Harrison first began selling carpet and furniture from his store in

Whangarei. In 1983, his three sons John, Patrick and Phil joined the family business. Harrisons were the pioneers of a mobile in-home carpet service, launching nationwide in 1992. Since then, they have overseen the company diversify and grow, adding Harrisons Curtains & Blinds and Harrisons Solar to the company portfolio.

Harrisons are offering all Grey Power members 20% off carpet and hard flooring; 30% off Curtains & Blinds; and 20% off Solar Panels. Plus you can get Flybuys with every purchase. If there are special offer available, you will always receive the lowest price as a Grey Power customer.

When you work with Harrisons, you work with local business owners who live in your area and they bring the showroom to your home – all in one convenient visit to you.

Contact Harrisons on 0800 103 001 – don't forget to say that you are a Grey Power member to receive your discount. Their website is <https://www.harrisons.nz/>

Atopis® Skincare



Atopis® Skin Health have partnered with Grey Power Federation to provide our membership a 20% discount on their

exclusive skincare range. This is a New Zealand product developed by cell biologist and founder Dr Iona Weir.

The Myrecil® Ingredient, has unique benefits for “skin that has lived”, promoting your body's own natural hyaluronic acid production and reversing the Skin Damage Cycle. That's why so many of our loyal customers are 55+, and why Grey Power has chosen to partner with Atopis®.

Access the website at www.atopis.co.nz and use the code GP20 for your discount. Your first order even attracts an additional 15% discount!

Keep up to date with the latest offers from our growing number of partners by referring to the Federation Website. <https://www.greypower.co.nz/the-benefits>

Please support our partners so they know that Grey Power members appreciate the services they offer.

David Marshall



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“AGE FRIENDLY CITY”

For the average person who reaches the grand age of 50, it takes just a little bit more care and effort to navigate steep steps, uneven paths, heavy doors and very low seating. Another 20 years on, these things can become a hazard and being able to access places safely is one of the most vital things to staying safe and independent as we age.

One such access way caught the attention of one of our committee members and he contacted the Tauranga City Council (TCC) about it. This was to do with a beach access – it had become downright dangerous for anyone but a fit and able young person! In fact, they had erected a sign, warning beach goers of this necessity! “Good level of fitness and balance required!” To the council’s credit, two staff members came out to meet us and have a look at the problem of the disintegrating path. Various parts of the Mount have a high population of seniors who are keen to risk their lives crossing a busy main road so they can stretch their legs walking along the beach, breath in the fresh salt air, have a chat with other walkers, collect a few shells and ‘safely’ return to their homes. Some of these energetic souls are in their 90’s and don’t want to feel that less will be done to address the problem because of their age. Their comments are “don’t brush us aside”, we have worked hard, paid our taxes, vote in elections, volunteer in the community and should be taken into consideration when councils are divvying up what money is being spent on public places. We are hopeful that remedial work will be done on the beach access in due time. If you have seen difficult or dangerous access ways, do let our office know.

Tauranga was the first city in NZ to adopt the Age Friendly City Strategy in 2013 as set out by the WHO and by and large the council has made an effort to meet many of those goals, particularly when developing new areas such as parks and public spaces. One such example is Kulim Park which now provides a balance of shade, suitable seating and accessible pathways. It even has an Elder Gym, if you feel like toning your muscles. It will be interesting to see the end result of the mini park area in Elizabeth Street, beside the rebuilt Farmers building. The design was very much based on the Age Friendly City (AFC) Strategy and I did see the plans and the Forum strongly indicated the need for more ‘grannie’ type seating. ‘Grannie’ seating is when it is high enough for someone with hip problems or other mobility issues and there are arms so you can lever yourself up easily. The work has dragged on for 4 or 5 years now but there are some

mature trees and a lot of activity so it might be finished soon and now I see there are two patches of grass and a couple of benches! All offset by orange fencing and cones.

TCC has a vision for Tauranga to be an Age Friendly City that enables people to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of community and city life as they age. This would provide opportunities for older people to participate fully in city life (termed ‘active ageing’) and live independently for as long as possible in their own home and community (termed ‘ageing-in-place’). The strategy aims to make Tauranga a vibrant and liveable city in which people can live, learn, work and play. The concept is that if places are accessible for frail older people, then it will be equally comfortable for people of all ages, including those less able, children and mothers with babies.

A Positive Ageing Advisory Forum (PAAF) is in the process of being re-established. PAAF will undertake an advocacy and monitoring role in relation to the implementation of the Age-Friendly City Strategy, as Council works toward supporting Tauranga’s growing older population.

It’s unfortunate that it’s just money that stands in the way of having perfectly safe and accessible places but it is heartening that some in the private sector have come on board and made many positive changes. For example, the lovely wide, clearly marked mobility car parks making it easier and safer for people to unload equipment and get to the pavement. Those with disabilities have worked tirelessly to have safer kerbing so as to be able to use wheel chairs and mobility scooters without fear of tipping over or being forced to make a big detour. However, there are still areas where access to some buildings is almost prohibitive and need ramps or wider entrances.

I had an interesting summer break, being involved as a volunteer for the children’s ‘Summer Reading Program’ for 3 – 15 year olds run by TCC libraries and Friends of the Library. This involved visiting 3 of our 4 libraries and I was amazed at the variety of seating options, in particular for myself as an older person who happens to have a back injury. Overly low seating, very hard seating, seating with no arms or back rests. One library was much better than the others – it had a special low counter at one of the checkouts with a comfy chair! Library staff and management as well as Friends of the Library are confident that the new city library will meet all the necessary requirements to make this the most comfortable and accessible library where anyone in the community can go to work, learn and play.

Reading some of the promotional material put out by TCC about cycleways and reducing car lanes in a bid to encourage commuters to use buses or bicycles, indicates that as a result we will have quieter, less busy roads for us oldies to use. The catch is, most of the shops that we used to visit have gone and those that are left offer no parking. So, for most of us, it's off to the shopping malls instead! I do, however, believe that after I am gone in 10 or 12 years time people will be enjoying a very different city and hopefully much of the region will have emerged from construction sites and orange cones!

Jennifer Custins

Beware annual credit card subscriptions

If you make annual payments through your credit card, just be aware they can go on forever.

A Kapiti Coast Grey Power member reports was told by a company he dealt with that his credit card details had expired and he needed to update them. Thinking he would use this opportunity to let the service lapse, he did nothing. So imagine his shock when the payment appeared on his credit card statement.

On querying with the company how they got his updated details they replied: Actually your terms with the credit card company allows this. The account does not expire of course, and the bank typically sends the replacement about one month ahead of the expiration date. Also, continuing subscriptions are handled differently than individual transactions. If the merchant has coded the transaction as a recurring type of payment, they can continue to charge the account without obtaining new authorizations and expiration dates from the customer.

The member checked it with his bank ... and yes the bank does update credit card details on annual subscriptions.

You have to change how you pay annually, but if you're unsure about how to do this, the bank suggests you contact your branch.



BENEFITS OF AN EPA

Not having a power of attorney can have upsetting consequences and could mean a longer hospital stay. Older people have had to wait up to five weeks in hospital beds due to not having the legal representation to be discharged.

Not having an enduring power of attorney (EPA) in place can prevent older people from being able to easily move into a residential care home from hospital.

If a family member suddenly loses capacity, an application for a welfare guardian has to be put through the Family Court, and this legal process can be "time-consuming".

It could also mean patients in hospital have to continue paying rent or electricity bills, because no one has the power to end living arrangement agreements for them. A personal care and welfare EPA allows a person to make choices for another when they are deemed to lack the capacity to make rational decisions. There is a cost but ask round for the best price – shouldn't be more than \$450, as a guideline.



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HELPING REDUCE THE IMPACT OF RISING RATE INCREASES

With cost of living increases those on NZ Super who own their own home can feel squeezed when property rates continue to escalate more than the annual increase in NZS.

So, what help is available for those living in Tauranga and the WBOP?

1. Rates Rebate

This is available to all homeowners throughout NZ, to assist those on low annual incomes. This includes those living on NZS as their prime source of income.

For the current rating year (1 July 2023-30 June 2024) you may be entitled to a rebate of up to \$750. Your eligibility is based on all sources of income – eg NZS, interest, other pensions, business income, accommodation supplements etc received in the household in the prior financial year. (Apr 1 2022- 31 March 2023). Forms available from your council or on-line at: Rates-Rebates-application-form-2023-2024-website-version-20230607.pdf (www.govt.nz)

Applications must be submitted no later than July 1st 2024.

2. Rates Postponement for homeowners aged over 65 years.

This scheme is available to all homeowners aged

over 65 within the WBOP District Council. TCC, along with many other NZ Councils, unfortunately does not offer this service to Seniors.

This scheme allows you to postpone a portion, or all your rates for a fixed period of time, or to stop paying them entirely and leave them for your estate to take care of. Repayment can be made at any time without penalty.

Council, and Grey Power, strongly advise that you meet with an individual adviser prior to committing to this option, as there are fees and interest charges added to the debt. However, for many retirees this offers an opportunity to remove the burden of rates from the cost of living and to remain within their community in their own home.

Brochures and the very simple application forms are available from WBOPDC or on line at 2023 - Rates postponement application - 65 and over - Form.pdf (westernbay.govt.nz)

3. Rates Postponement Scheme for those in Financial Hardship

Both TCC and WBOP DC offer this scheme for those in financial hardship, regardless of age. The process is more complex than the scheme for seniors, and the requirements are different for each Council. For more information look on the relevant Council website or ask staff at their service centres.

David Marshall



Neighbours Aotearoa (formerly Neighbours Day Aotearoa) is a community development initiative dedicated to growing, connecting and strengthening neighbourhoods across the country. It is a place-based and local approach – neighbours linking up in their local communities. Each year in March we encourage everybody to do something small - or large! - that lets you know a neighbour that bit better. Neighbours Aotearoa <kiaora@neighboursaotearoa.nz>

Checking your medication is easy, and could just save your life.

Expert opinion from University of Otago by Jo Hilder



The older New Zealand's population gets, the more important it is for people to have their medication checked and changed

Opinion: Medicine reviews ensure people who are on long-term medications are still taking the right thing, at the right time. Not only do they allow people to continue living healthy lives, but they can also give loved one's peace of mind.

The consequences of no longer taking the correct medication can be detrimental. Previous work by the University of Otago found three quarters of patients who had multiple health conditions were prescribed four or more medications. International studies show taking multiple medications can lead to an increase in adverse health events.

That's why it is important to reduce the number of medications people take, where possible. Book a medicine review with a GP and let your practice know why you want the appointment. Some practices are also able to offer pharmacist-led medicine reviews. People on multiple medications should have regular reviews, especially older adults. Things may have changed since they were first prescribed a medicine, they might have a new health condition, lost or gained weight, or developed a side effect.

Though GPs and pharmacists have long been aware of the need to review medicines as people age, they may find aging a delicate topic to raise. There are clinical guidelines about reviewing medication, including reducing the number of medicines (deprescription), but there is little or no guidance on the best ways to communicate.

My research on how people talk to each other during medicine reviews shows there are things doctors, pharmacists and patients can do to make medicine reviews really effective.

Ensuring you are on the right medication is easy, and could just save your life.

Jo Hilder is a senior research fellow in the Department of Primary Health Care and General Practice at the University of Otago, Wellington. She is also a member of the ARCH group which conducts research.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR NEW ZEALANDERS

Since its inception Grey Power Federation has been an active supporter of Access Alliance and Access Matters Aotearoa and we actively support their efforts to have effective accessibility legislation so that every New Zealander is able to participate fully in their daily lives, regardless of age and whether or not they have a disability. On a daily basis a quarter of New Zealand's population struggles with basic activities due to access barriers even in the workplace.

The Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill was passed in 2022. However, because of defects in the legislation the Access Matters' campaign to amend it received over 15,000 signatures on its previous petition. As a result of that and everyone else's efforts the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill was put on hold until after the 2023 election so it could be reviewed and rewritten.

The Bill is currently on pause indefinitely. The new Government needs to know that a redraft is urgent and important to their constituents and that the nation wants strong and effective accessibility legislation for all its citizens.

A petition is a great way to get improved accessibility legislation in front of a cross-party Parliamentary Committee, and to gain the attention of all our politicians. A new petition is available online, asking for the withdrawal of the current Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill, and for a new Bill to be drafted that includes minimum standards, a regulator and an enforcement mechanism. We ask you to sign the online petition and also encourage your family and friends to sign it too.

The link for the online petition is:

<https://www.change.org/p/petition-for-drafting-a-new-accessibility-for-new-zealanders-bill>

Sandy Feringa | Fed board

RENT UPDATE

What a distraction it was just weeks before closing for Christmas. We were notified that there was to be a proposal to raise our rent to an unprecedented level. Not just us but all the Historic Village tenants. Meetings were hurriedly called and anxious tenants talked and discussed how they could possibly manage. The Village is home to several small community charities and not-for-profit organisations that do great work often on a shoe-string – not because they are not good business people but times have been really tough since Covid struck.

The anomaly is that because of the resulting high cost of living there is even more need out there for all of these services – our own included.

Everyone rushed to write heartfelt, alarmed, tearful and outraged submissions to the Council then tried to put the whole scary, uncertain future to the side for a month. The second blow came when we were instructed to pay a huge monthly increase in our fixed outgoings starting 1 Jan '24.



On the 14/15 February, everyone who had nerves of steel, read their submission in front of the Commissioners. Just 3 weeks later they deliberated/debated our sorry plight for a good 5 minutes but our feeling is that they and the Village manager agreed that the proposed increase was justified. More money had to come from somewhere so why not the cash strapped

community organisations? If it is a done deal, the increase will go ahead from July 1st this year. We are waiting for the formal notice to arrive.

We desperately need more people to join Grey Power so as to be able to carry on our work, fighting for the rights and wellbeing for predominately those over 50 and our work to protect National Super and lobby for better and more affordable health and housing is important. We will also forge a relationship with another Minister for Seniors so that we are not forgotten. Will she fight to keep the cost of prescriptions at nil for seniors? Will she listen when we tell her that managing solely on Super and paying huge rents or rates is no longer possible for some and they will go without food and/or heating? We hope she will listen and help those in need.

Jennifer Custins

AIR-CLEANING PLANTS

Grow the following plants in your home to breathe easier. Rubber plant, Aloe Vera, Peace Lily, Ficus and Spider Plant are good examples.

Spider Plant is native to Africa and removes smog, formaldehyde, benzene and xylene—found in auto exhaust, synthetic perfume and paint. A NASA study found this plant can remove 96 percent of the carbon monoxide and 99 percent of the nitrogen dioxide within a sealed chamber. This resilient plant thrives in a variety of environments but prefers medium to bright light, so avoid extended amounts of direct sun. Spider plant is very easy to grow and care for. It doesn't need a lot of attention, and is terrific for busy people who don't have time for gardening.



Appearance and characteristics of spider plants

Spider plant grows from a fleshy root known as a tuber. Each plant is capable of producing multiple tubers and have white central striping or white margins on each blade.

Spider plant's flowers are small, white-green and in clusters on arching stems that grow 75cm or longer. The tip of each stem produces a small bunch of leaves and these are the 'spiderettes' or 'chickens' of the mother plant. Simply cut off some of the plantlets and pot them up or put them in a glass or bowl of water. They'll grow roots in no time!

TAURANGA COFFEE MEETING REPORT

We were delighted to have Margaret Wilson as our speaker this month. She has travelled extensively and been involved in garden centres for about 40 years. She also writes a gardening article for the Weekend Sun.

She started off by giving some good advice about bulbs – plant now and plant the same type and colour as a group to make a good show. Check that all the bulbs in a packet are hard and healthy. It's a good idea to pop bulbs into a pot or basket and insert into the ground then when they have finished flowering dig them up and put under a tree in the cool for the summer. Tulips in the North Island need to be put in a paper bag in the fridge now for about 6 weeks and then plant them much deeper into the ground or pot.

Margaret then went on to talk about the The Poison Garden at the Alnwick Garden in Northumberland, England, which is home to more than 100 toxic, intoxicating and narcotic plants. Visitors are instructed that they must not touch, taste, or smell any of the plants. Some common examples that we find here are laburnum 'Golden Rain Tree', rhododendrons – particularly to animals, yew trees – were always planted at the gates of churches to ward off witches; wear gloves when pruning. Hellebores – wear gloves when handling the roots. All the other obvious plants such as belladonna, opium poppy, hemlock, laurel and monkshood should be handled with care and none should be ingested.

Their website says: "Probably the most poisonous plant we actually have here is the castor bean or castor oil plant which contains the toxin, ricin." Smith said, "The Guinness Book of World Records considers that to be the world's most poisonous plant."

I'm now alarmed that these trees are seen growing beside our roads, noticeable because of their large reddish leaves.

In fact, some of the deadliest plants in the Poison Garden are the source of great cures, like the yew, which is used in the treatment of breast cancer. And other plants, if processed correctly produce beneficial medicines. Perhaps not surprisingly, the garden is part of a drugs education programme.

Several questions were asked and answered and Margaret was thanked for her presentation.

Jennifer

Stave off loneliness: make an effort to make friends



The Aged Care Commissioner is urging elderly New Zealanders to get out and about.

Carolyn Cooper said social isolation and loneliness had a range of mental and physical impacts – such as a substantial increase in the likelihood of dementia, coronary artery disease, and strokes.

She said loneliness was particularly common in the older population and urged elderly people to take initiative and make new connections.

"It's useful to be aware of what's happening in your community. There'll be a number of opportunities for social activities."

Organisations such as Age Concern, libraries, Volunteer groups, and Grey Power had social connection programmes for people who did not know where to start.

Try new hobbies and make friends. "I know it's hard to do as you age, but it's really worth it for your health to find something you enjoy with people you get on with."



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If you are local & unable to visit one of our showrooms & would like one of our team to visit you, please call us to make a time for a home visit.

Plan for retirement

There are many pitfalls and surprises to watch out for when planning a happy retirement.



1. Not planning for retirement early enough in life

Many Kiwis make the mistake of procrastinating on their retirement planning, or assuming they don't have enough to bother planning with. It's essential to get proactive at least five years before retirement, and ideally 10 to 15 years beforehand, so you have the opportunity to harness the power of compound investing.

2. Not developing interests outside work

Retirement isn't just about hanging up the work boots; it's a chance to enjoy a whole new phase of life and lean into the things that bring you real joy in life.

The years leading up to retirement, the prime time of your life, is the ideal time to build a portfolio of things that you are passionate about, new pursuits or hobbies, epic holiday plans, a greater focus on your health, purposeful work projects and quality time with family and friends.

Focusing solely on your career or job right up to retirement can lead to a feeling of relevance deprivation after retirement. And that is avoidable.

3. Retiring too early

So many people jump the gun on retirement, underestimating the financial and psychological impacts. Retiring early might seem enticing, but it often leads to financial strain and boredom. Quite frequently these people find their way back into the workforce later.

Experiment with part-time work and part-time retirement.

4. Underestimating their real cost of living

We all like to tell ourselves that we're spending less

than we are. But it's not until we build a budget from our actual bills and expenses and project forward that we can recognise just how much we need to cover our desired living expenses in retirement.

Practice living on your projected retirement budget – and see how you go for a month.

5. Withdrawing all their superannuation when they retire for dumb reasons

The fundamental purpose of private superannuation, such as KiwiSaver, is to serve as a financial nest egg, ensuring a dependable income stream throughout retirement.

Drawing it all out as a lump sum runs counter to the very essence of superannuation's designed purpose, and it certainly sees those people missing out on a lifetime of earnings unless they have a real strategy behind their decision.

6. Dragging debts into retirement

One of the most common questions is: "What do I do about my mortgage when I retire?" Debt is designed for a time in life when you have the income to pay it down.

It's much better to take proactive steps to demolish your debt in the years leading up to retirement. Plan your retirement date after the debts are cleared.

The best way to avoid mistakes is to get some advice when you do your retirement planning. It's often worth it.

Bec Wilson is the author of the bestselling book *How to Have an Epic Retirement* and host of the new podcast *Prime Time with Bec Wilson*. She writes a weekly newsletter at epicretirement.net.

Travellers urged to vaccinate

Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora advises Kiwis travelling overseas to make sure they are fully immunised against measles. Cases have cropped up in Australia, the United Kingdom, across the Middle East and Asia, and parts of the United States.

The Measles, Mumps Rubella (MMR) vaccine is free for everyone aged 18 and under, and for others who are eligible for free New Zealand healthcare.

More information at <http://tinyurl.com/ypeudaj>

GOOD NEWS

At the beginning of the month, we had the opportunity to be part of a stand at the Seniors Travel Expo at Bay Park. Our committee member, Vanessa had a stand for her business, Senior's Real Estate, and had Grey Power brochures and magazines on her table.

Vanessa invited us to keep her company as the two days on a stand is quite a long haul for one person. We had a great time talking to people and handing out dozens of magazines and some of our shiny new brochures. It was surprising how many people visiting the Expo, were already members but we are very hopeful that we may have secured some new members as a result of us being there.

One of the draw cards for visitors was the opportunity to enter Vanessa's prize draw which included 5 free memberships to Grey Power for a year. Congratulations to the winners.

We are very thankful that Vanessa invited us and really hope she secures a listing for her business. She always goes the extra mile to help seniors to work out how to declutter and downsize to a smaller more manageable home.

There is a chronic shortage of smaller homes for people to buy, almost in any price range, which sometimes has the effect of nudging people into retirement villages, which is not always an affordable option for some. However, Vanessa seems to be able to find the right home or the best compromise.

Jennifer



Grey Power brochure and magazines can be seen on the table on the right



There is talk that New Zealand is into the next property cycle with March bringing an upturn in listings and quickly following that, sales. I think it's fair to say that the last five years since I started in real estate has been a roller-coaster ride with Covid lockdowns, followed by rapid house price increases, followed by a steady market decline over several years. It's comforting to think we may be entering a more "normal" market.

At the end of March, I exhibited at the Tauranga Seniors & Travel Expo for the first time. Grey Power attended with me to give out Grey Power brochures and continue to grow its strong membership in Tauranga. It was enjoyable chatting to visitors about the best downsizing locations in Tauranga as well as the best processes to follow when downsizing. Sometimes the best option is to stay in your own home, making use of a number of home-help options as well as making your current home "age-friendly" with ramps, hand-rails, easy-turn door handles and taps, and many other gadgets that make life easier as we age.

If you are finding your garden too big or your stairs too steep then please feel welcome to arrange a meeting with me to get some downsizing ideas and a free property appraisal to get you started.

Vanessa Charman-Moore is a Tauranga Seniors Real Estate specialist. For more information, see Vanessa's advertisement below or visit www.seniorsrealestate.co.nz

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SAFETY CHECK FOR WINTER

With autumn just around the corner and daylight hours getting shorter, it's a good time to attend to outdoor safety and security issues so we stay safe when we're out and about through the cooler months of the year.

Slip hazards outside - Paths and decks can be hazardous when their surfaces become slippery. Water-blast hard surfaces such as wooden decking, and concrete and brick paths.

Uneven surfaces - Lumps and bumps in lawns or soft surface paths are a trip hazard. Grab the spade or shovel and chip and level grassed areas.

Access ways - One of the most used after-dark access ways is from your vehicle parking spot to the door of your home if you don't have internal access. Keep it clear of any objects such as planters, garden ornaments, or foliage. Even in the garage make sure the path to the door is clear.

Lighting - Outdoor lighting illuminates' paths for you and guests, and is also a deterrent to those you don't want on your property. Check outdoor lights are operating, and bulbs are clean. If you don't already have sensor lights, consider getting them installed.

At the door - Your door is a gateway to friends and family, but also to strangers. Don't open it to those you don't know and trust. If you don't already have a security screen door, consider having one fitted. At the very least, have a security chain fitted and check that the front and back door locks are robust.

Tradies - When engaging trades people, stick with a company you have used in the past, ask for the name of the staff member who will be calling, and their approximate arrival time. When they arrive, ask to see their card before you invite them into your house.

Loose items - When you're done with garden chairs, and any other loose items in your yard, pop them away in the garage or secure them - autumn gales, they can cause them to take flight and damage walls and windows.

Emergency kit - Pop a kit into the boot of your car which includes a neon safety vest (in case you have to check the exterior of the car at night), torch, warm rug, snacks, and water. Also have a phone charger cable plugged into the cigarette lighter.

Ref: Grownups online

JOY OF KNITTING & CRAFTS

I want to thank whoever it was who allowed me to grow up in the 50s and 60s when everyone did some sort of craft – knitting, spinning, weaving to sewing and embroidery to mending and darning – we did it all.

Now in my later years I have been able to knit and sew again – nothing fancy but it is quite therapeutic to sit back, watch the tellie, read a book and knit. I do urge anyone who has these skills to pass them on to any young people so they too will have that knowledge tucked away to come back to when they are either old or less mobile. Apart from that there is a sense of achievement by making little clothes for their grandchildren or donating them.

I have been busy knitting up old left over balls of wool that families have given me when their relatives are no longer able to knit. To keep it simple, I started on squares as I only had a ball or two of the same colour. I thought I would make up something the size of a pet blanket but oh dear, it's become quite addictive, so I can now be seen rummaging round in op-shops looking for more donated balls of wool. At this rate it could be a king-sized blanket! Awful clashing colours and a mixture of yarns but one day it will be my gift to someone.

Jennifer

Tauranga City Council Elections are July 20th

Tauranga City has had a Commission since February 2021. This July we have the opportunity to elect a new Council to lead our city. It is important that you vote wisely by taking the time to get to know the candidates to ensure they have the ability to do the job well. Tauranga faces enormous challenges as a city. We need people who have the right skills to intelligently and professionally navigate this complex environment and make prudent decisions, restoring a culture of respect and trust. I would love to lead the new Council as your Mayor, create that culture and do this work for us!

I am committed to building an age friendly city, working closely with the Office for Seniors, so our older residents can lead valued, connected and fulfilling lives. I am also committed to ensuring there are more affordable housing choices, and better, more accessible public transport.

Please reach out. I would be delighted and welcome the opportunity to meet with you and hear what is most important to you.

Tina Salisbury [JP] - Former Deputy Mayor and 2024 Mayoral Candidate
Authorised by Tina Salisbury • tina@salisbury.org.nz • 021 777453.

LOOSE ENDS

A US-based project arranges for handwork projects uncompleted by people before they died to be finished by fellow crafters. It eases grief, and inspires community and generosity, say the women behind it.

When Jennifer Simonic and Masey Kaplan stepped in to support a grieving friend who had lost her mother, they discovered two unfinished blankets while sorting through her things. Each took one away to finish it off.

Inspired, they launched Loose Ends in September 2022. The not-for-profit project connects skilled volunteers – known as ‘finishers’ – with people who have found unfinished knitting or crochet projects that their loved ones have left incomplete when they died. The idea is simple, say the pair, but often a profoundly healing experience for those who submit items. “When a maker dies mid-project, this tangible, handmade expression of love could get lost, donated or thrown out,” says Kaplan. “Our volunteers’ goals are to finish these projects as intended and give them back to be cherished.”

There are now around 17,000 finishers in 60 countries. Sometimes, the projects are incomplete due to the original crafter’s worsening disability. While not always possible, Simonic and Kaplan try to match people with finishers who live locally. Some find it hard to send such sentimental items in the post, but it also reduces the project’s carbon footprint and shipping costs.

“That feeling of somebody in their community doing something generous for them just adds an extra layer of love into the whole thing,” says Kaplan. “Some really lovely friendships have been born out of it as well.”

By *Nicola Stawson*



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READING AND CHILDREN

As a bit of light relief from my Grey Power duties and the older generation, during my holiday break I was helping with a children’s reading program. I don’t normally have any involvement with people under 45 so this was a terrifying experience for me. I was police checked – bit scary – but it appears I was safe enough to work with youngsters.

Tauranga City Libraries together with Friends of the Library [FOL] organize a summer holiday reading program to encourage children to keep reading books over the school break.

What an experience – I listened to 4 year olds whispering to me about what they had read – shy and wriggling, wanting to finish and scamper off. But there were 6-9-14 year olds who were very coherent and keen to tell me about the book they had been reading. What I found staggering was the overwhelming number who were reading about ghosts and monsters and quite awful content that would have kept me awake at night!

The lure for the children to participate in the program is the party at Memorial Park and a free book courtesy of the library. The Friends of the Library applies for funding each year so the library can buy enough books for all the children who participated fully in the program. FOL members volunteered through the holiday and several of us handed out 500+ books to eager children on a hot sunny day in the park. A thousand people attended the party where there were games and displays.

I want to pay tribute to the librarians who put an enormous amount of work and enthusiasm into setting up their libraries and supervising the program. FOL are keen supporters of any projects to help and encourage children and everyone in the community to read books.

Jennifer



For all people keen to promote and support our library services

BECOME A FRIEND

Join **Friends of the Tauranga City Libraries**

Receive **Bookline**, a regular newsletter about events and library meetings.
Attend **General meetings** monthly; social, informative, with guest speakers.
Join our **Book Groups** held monthly at Greerton and Papamoa libraries.

secretary@fol-tauranga.org.nz | 021 192 2279

COST OF GROWING OLDER

The Retirement Commission has released a new study looking at the often-unforeseen financial impacts of health conditions as people age. In-depth interviews were conducted with older people grappling with disabilities or experiencing difficulties with a physical condition since turning 65 ... and the additional expenses they face.

Research Lead Dr Jo Gamble says becoming less able in some way as one ages is a natural part of human experience and needs to be planned for. Of the approximately 842,100 people aged 65+ in New Zealand in 2022, 129,522 people received the disability allowance (15%). However, Dr Gamble says because the allowance is means tested this is low - given 59% of over 65s are considered disabled. "People reported that the barriers to accessing it include lack of awareness about the allowance, unfamiliarity with Work and Income/MSD, pride in being self-sufficient, shame in feeling incapable, and lack of proactivity by GPs/health professionals."

Retirement Commissioner Jane Wrightson says that they are committed to broadening understanding of what impacts New Zealanders, heading into retirement. "This research is also a nudge to those able to plan their retirement income to factor in increased health costs. And to MSD and health professionals to understand and clearly explain the financial assistance that can be available," she says.

.....

Other hurdles older people are having to grapple with, are that more Post Shops and bank branches are closing. The latest are Paper Plus in Grey Street and the Post Shop in Papamoa – both include the post and a KiwiBank branch.

Another problem is that more utility companies are refusing to send out paper invoices. I'm at a loss to figure out any resolution to this for many seniors do not have internet connections or necessarily have a printer to make a copy. Again, those with family and close friends may fare better but it can be quite stressful for people who have always been very independent.

However, there is a new facility at the city library and the Mt Hub – a large touch screen 'payment kiosk' that is reported to be user friendly. Rates, dog rego, fines and so on can be paid with debt or credit card. It's to reduce the time people have to wait in queues at the information counter.

POSITIVE NEWS ROUND THE WORLD

First, to the EU, where emissions have fallen to levels not seen since The Beatles topped the charts. The bloc's economy may be flat, but it isn't at 1960s levels. Meanwhile, data from China showed that the main driver of the country's economy last year was ... yup, its the burgeoning clean energy sector. The west has some catching up to do.

In other news, a blood test for brain cancer was hailed a "breakthrough", New Zealand became the first country to ban 'forever chemicals' in cosmetics, and a female-led current affairs show prepared for launch in Somalia, one of the world's least gender equal countries.

Positive News readers were asked: what habits do you swear by?

Curiosity

Having recently retired, I'm finding that continuing to learn is so important for my mental health. I've taken free online courses, learned to play a musical instrument, learned to draw better and even paint. It's not about how good I get. It's about experiencing new things. – Cat, Canada

Self-compassion

Even if I'm having a bad day – made a mistake or did something I wasn't proud of – I remind myself that I'm a good person and I'm doing my best– Marisa, UK

Reading

Books are like a new world to go into when the pressure of the world we live in gets to you. Not only does it help relieve my stress, but I find that a lot of the main characters persevere through their story and teach us to do the same.– Imogen, UK



'[Gratitude] helps me to remain aware that my life is full of beautiful gifts every day.'

Gardening

The connection with nature throughout the year grounds me, and reminds me that whatever craziness there is in the wider world, there is a sense of quiet continuity and hope.– J Gordon, UK

Ref: Positive News

MEMORY TESTS AND DRIVING ABILITY – A COP OUT?



In our last issue we reported on one of our member's frustrations at being given a memory test to assess their ability to drive a car. I agree – a memory test should not determine whether or not a person over the age of 75 is capable of driving.

Recently at a Grey Power morning tea in Katikati I met a very gracious lady in her early 80's who had failed a memory test. Her GP advised her that she needed to make an appointment for an on-road safety test through AA. This required her to drive to VTNZ in Mount Manganui to take the test. She does not want to drive into Tauranga on SH2 with all the roadworks and traffic. She only wants her licence to maintain her mobility around Katikati. Now she is considering giving up her independence.

An approach to AA revealed that the testing is controlled by NZTA and that there are no alternatives for taking the test in other sites in the Western Bay of Plenty. An AA spokesperson did agree that if someone was classified as requiring an on-road safety test then making them drive over 40km on busy roads was probably not responsible. They agreed to lobby NZTA for an assessor to come to Katikati on a regular basis. We look forward to hearing of positive outcomes in the near future, as there are others in a similar predicament.

So, what is the background to the memory tests? Family GPs are placed in the invidious situation of having to be the arbiters of whether or not an older person should be classified as medically competent to have their licence renewed. Clearly, we do not want incompetent drivers to be out on our roads as a danger to themselves and other drivers. GPs have few objective tools to determine driving competency. To try and treat all older patients the same way with an objective test, many of our GPs nationally have resorted

to using a tool like the MoCA or SIMARD-MD test.

MoCA, or the Montreal Cognitive Assessment, is a well validated tool that is used by health professionals to detect mild cognitive impairment. It is not, however a test of a person's driving ability. The SIMARD-MD was designed to identify cognitively-impaired drivers whose driving skills may have declined to an unsafe level. However, subsequent studies have shown that it is not an effective driver screening tool for determining Fitness-To-Drive (Can Geriatr J. 2021 Mar; 24(1): 14–21) and the RANZ College of Psychiatrists confirmed this fact to Grey Power in a letter in March 2022. So, it appears that there are no good evidence-based solutions to assess a patient's driving ability available to our GPs at this time.

Having driving instructors/assessors available more widely to provide unbiased advice before seeking a medical opinion on driving ability may be a better way forward in the future. In this way seniors could voluntarily have an independent assessment of their driving ability before facing the terror of the dreaded memory test. Your ideas on potential solutions to this challenging issue would be welcomed. Also, let us know your stories if this has been an issue for you when trying to renew your driving licence.

David Marshall

'Get set up for Safety'

Netsafe are thrilled to introduce their latest initiative – 'Get set up for Safety' guides tailored specifically for older adults in New Zealand.

With generous support from Chorus, they have developed a variety of user-friendly resources on topics such as connecting safely on social media, how to spot a scam, securing your devices plus safer shopping, banking and investing online. Visit their website to explore the full collection of 'Get set up for Safety' resources, including printable booklets and pamphlets, plus a series of instructional videos.

While there is a significant amount of information within the resources, they are designed to be kept on hand as a reference. In addition to safety and security advice that applies to everyone, there are some basic 'how-to' instructions aimed at those older adults who are not confident using digital technology.

<https://netsafe.org.nz/olderpeople/>

Introducing the new Minister for Seniors



The new Minister for Seniors, Casey Costello, was sworn in just before Christmas and introduced in the December Office for Seniors newsletter.

She is quoted: "As the coalition agreement

between New Zealand First and National outlined, this portfolio is important to us and we are committed to delivering ... Over the next few months you will hear more about the work that will be undertaken and how I propose this will be achieved."

Here's what the agreement says:

- Keep the superannuation age at 65
- Amend the Building Act and the Resource Consent system to make it easier to build granny flats or other small structures up to 60sqm requiring only an engineer's report
- Progress the review of the Retirement Villages Act
- Upgrade the Super Gold Card and Veterans Card to maximise its potential benefit for all Super Gold Card and Veteran Card holders
- Investigate the funding formula for new residential care beds
- Engage openly and constructively with the aged-care sector
- Undertake a select committee inquiry into aged care provision to include supporting people with early onset conditions and what asset thresholds are appropriate in 2023/24
- Explore options to build on the Local Government Rates Rebate Scheme for Super Gold Card holders
- Work on establishing bipartisan agreement to fund both care and dementia beds that New Zealand needs now and with a focus on the long term needs by 2040
- Liaise with retirement village owners and occupiers to seek a mutually agreed way forward to safeguard the interests of the 50,000 plus New Zealanders living in retirement villages

The Office for Seniors briefing to the Incoming Minister (BIM) is <http://tinyurl.com/yb73t2m2>.



JOIN OUR VOLUNTEER TEAM!

WE NEED CHARITY SHOP VOLUNTEERS

Come join our friendly charity shop team and help us raise money for hospice care. No experience is needed, various positions available.

Visit waipunahospice.org.nz/volunteer or call 07 552 4380 ext 219 for more information.



SPECIALIST RECYCLING AT ENVIROHUB

There are so many items that can be recycled, but not via your kerbside bins. Envirohub wants to support you to divert this from landfill by collecting and recycling some of these items.

Currently we collect for recycling:

- Plastic number 2 and 5 Bottle Lids
- Aluminium pull tabs, wine bottle & beer bottle lids, Nespresso Coffee Pods and other small items



- Colgate Oral Care products
- All types of printer and toner ink cartridges
- Batteries – AA, AAA, C, D, 6V, 9V Button Cell Batteries & handheld size batteries
- Nescafe Dolce Gusto pods
- Fairy & Ambi Pur containers and packaging
- Garnier Products – Skincare tubes, bottles & caps, face mask packaging
- Glad Food Storage – Snack, sandwich bags, and glad wrap.
- Recycle a Device – laptops, and devices under 10 years old with chargers. These will be refurbished and donated to the community.
- VapeCycle – Vape devices and pods from the following brands: Vapo, Solo, Alt., Vex, and Haiz.

Want to find out more or for us to be a collection point for your recycling process?

Bring your items to our office or drop them off at Envirohub, Glasgow St, [off lower Elizabeth St]

Socks too tight?

We sell soft topped bamboo and cotton socks

3 pairs \$36

diabeticsocks.co.nz

The following are local service centres where you can call in without an appointment to see a JP free of charge.

Arataki Community Centre, Zambuk Way,
Mt Maunganui - Mondays & Fridays 10.00 am – noon

Bethlehem Community Church, 183 Moffatts Road
Friday 10am - 12 noon

Courthouse, McLean Street
Monday 1pm - 3pm
Tuesday 10am - 12 noon
Wednesday 11am - 1pm
Thursday 1pm - 3pm
Friday 1pm - 3pm



Greerton Library, 139 Greerton Road, Gate Pa
Tuesday 2pm - 4pm
Thursday 2pm - 4pm

Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 215 Devonport Road
Wednesday 12 noon - 2pm

Katikati Resource Centre, Beach Road
Friday 10am - 12 noon

Mount Maunganui Library,
Tuesday 11am - 1pm
Friday 11.30am - 1.30pm

Otumoetai/Matua, St Columba Church,
502 Otumoetai Road
Tuesday 10am - 12 noon

Omokoroa Library and Community Centre,
Western Ave
Thursday 10am - 12 noon

Papamoa Library, Gravatt Road
Monday 5pm - 6pm
Wednesday 10am - 12 noon
Saturday 10am - 12 noon

Tauranga Multicultural Centre, Historic Village
Thursday 11.30am - 1.30pm

Te Puke Library, 130 Jellicoe Street
Thursday 10.30am - 12.30pm

The Crossing Shopping Mall,
2 Taurikura Drive
Saturday 10am - 12 noon

Welcome Bay Community Centre,
242 Welcome Bay Road,
Wednesdays 1pm - 3pm

Please note Service Centres are closed on public holidays.

Cervical screening is important

Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable. Regular cervical screening and human papillomavirus (HPV) immunisation are the best ways to protect yourself.

Screening allows for early detection, follow-up testing and treatment. It finds early warning signs before they become cancer.

Find out about HPV and cervical cancer at <https://www.timetoscreen.nz/about-this-site/contact-us/>, email screening@health.govt.nz or phone **0800 729 729**

BOWEL CANCER SCREENING

Bowel cancer is one of Aotearoa's most common and second highest cause of death by cancer. Early detection is important, and screen testing aims to save lives by finding the cancer at an early stage, when it can most often be treated.

Free, at-home tests are available to eligible people. For more about the test, on who is eligible and local initiatives <http://tinyurl.com/3mmmmrc8> - which includes videos in 11 different languages - or phone **0800 924 432** or email info@bowelscreening.health.nz



Free shingles vaccine eligibility

The shingles vaccination is free for 12 months after your 65th birthday. You need two doses, two to six months apart. The second dose will be free, even if you've turned 66. If you're eligible, you can get the vaccination from your nurse, doctor, healthcare provider, and some pharmacies.

One night, a Viking named Rudolph the Red was looking out of the window and said: "It's going to rain." His wife asked: "How do you know?"

"Because," he said, "Rudolph the Red knows rain, dear."

Prostate warning signs

Every man "of a certain age" has experienced the urge. You suddenly feel a strong pressure in your bladder and the need to urinate becomes an inevitable rush to a lavatory. Such urges can happen at night, disrupting vital sleep.

This rush is something that King Charles III, admitted to a London hospital in January, might have encountered prior to his decision to undergo prostate surgery.



Your kidneys produce urine. The liquid waste then travels down ducts called ureters to the bladder. In a male, the urethra runs through a part of the reproductive system called the prostate. Its function is to produce nourishing fluid that transports sperm.

As the body ages, factors such as family history, lifestyle and hormonal changes can cause the prostate to enlarge. This common condition, known as benign prostatic hyperplasia, varies in severity, and is often noticeable around age 50.

It's important to note that benign prostatic hyperplasia is not associated with prostate cancer and does not increase your cancer risk. However, it can make prostate cancer screening more challenging.

Therefore, regular check-ups including a digital rectal exam and discussions with your health care provider are crucial. If you notice changes in urination, consult your doctor.

Prostates can range in size from a walnut to larger than a baseball. All prostates grow, but not all prostates cause symptoms. A mildly enlarged prostate can cause noticeable symptoms such as a weaker stream when urinating or increased frequency, especially at night. A significantly enlarged one might not cause any symptoms.

King Charles' need for improvement in quality of life highlights the importance of paying attention to these symptoms.

This article was edited from a contribution to CNN from Dr. Jamin Brahmbhatt, a urologist. For the full article, including a discussion on effective medical and surgical options: <http://tinyurl.com/mr34jb7a>



How big is the risk of Covid and flu coinfection?

With both Covid and flu viruses circulating at high levels, how likely it is for someone to get both at the same time?

Fortunately, it appears to be rare.

Last year, the US Center for Disease Control (CDC) tracked coinfections in the U.S. and found just 3% of people hospitalised with the flu also tested positive for Covid.

This phenomenon, called viral interference, is where infection with one virus ramps up the body's immune system and can make it less likely to get infected with another.

Not being able to shake a lingering cough or runny nose is not necessarily unusual. Even a normal bout of respiratory infection can take several weeks to recover from.

Does it matter whether you're sick with Covid or flu?

It might. For example, it could make a difference in how quickly someone gets back to a regular routine.

With Covid, Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora recommends isolating for five days after a positive test or from symptom onset.


With flu, people are considered most contagious for the first three days of their illness and the authority recommends staying home until at least 24 hours after fever is gone.

Also, knowing which of the two viruses you are fighting can be important for people at high risk of having a bad infection. For people who are 65 or older, pregnant or immunocompromised, the antiviral Paxlovid can help protect against hospitalisation if taken in the first few days of a Covid illness.

If it's flu, a doctor can prescribe the antiviral Tamiflu.

For everybody else who is not at high risk of severe disease, the advice is simple — stay home if you're sick.

For the full article go to NBC Health at <http://tinyurl.com/yyxdrub>



Free Rapid Antigen Tests until June

Health Minister Dr Shane Reti, has announced that additional supplies of COVID-19 rapid antigen tests (RATs) will enable continued free testing through to the end of June. They will be available through the established national distribution network providers of health providers and some pharmacies, as listed on <https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/>.

Information about COVID-19, testing, treatments and support for urgent costs is at <http://tinyurl.com/32jxhtvd>



My Health Record is live

My Health Record is a secure website that gives people access to their immunisation records and COVID-19 test results. It also provides parents with children under 12 years old the option to link to their children's immunisation records.

Over time, Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora will make more information available, such as current and past medications, lab results and community services and high use card entitlements.

To sign up, go to: <https://identity.health.nz/>

HEALTH AND DISABILITY ADVOCACY

Health and Disability Advocacy is a free service that operates independently from all health and disability service providers, Government agencies and HDC.

Advocates should be able to help if you want to know more about your rights, get questions answered, or make a complaint. The service will:

- Help you understand your rights
- Listen to your concerns
- Talk through your options
- Help you to formulate and make a complaint
- Support you while you resolve your issue

Freephone: 0800 555 050

or Email: advocacy@advocacy.org.nz

Lifeline/Samaritans celebrates 50 years serving the community

In the last year alone, Lifeline/Samaritans volunteers have fielded more than 5,500 phone calls from people in need. And they've been there for those people for 50 years.

Some callers are lonely or heartbroken, some are stressed about relationships or jobs, and many others are struggling with their mental health.

Retiree Joan, who volunteered with the organisation since the early 1990s, has been there. "I was a widow, and volunteered because I wanted to help support others," she said. "The biggest problems back then were unemployment, AIDS and suicide." "The meatworks had closed down and the forestry industry had changed hands – people were suddenly out of work." At the same time, mental health institutions were also shutting up, leaving the community's most vulnerable people having to find their own way.

Another volunteer, Meg, has more than 40 years' experience - originally in Wellington and now with Lifeline/Samaritans. "I saw a sign about Samaritans when I was sixteen, I applied but they told me to come back when I was older, so I did. I believe that society is only as strong as they treat the most vulnerable". At its heart, Lifeline/Samaritans was there to make people feel heard, she said. "We want them to have a space where they were able to express their fears, anxieties, and their joy." "We want them to feel safer." Anyone who had thought about volunteering from home with Lifeline/Samaritans should give it a go, she said.

Lifeline/Samaritans has an online training course starting soon.

If you interested in volunteering, enquire today:

www.samaritans.org.nz/volunteer-form

Lifeline/Samaritans Grab Facts

- Lifeline/Samaritans is a charity organisation whose vision is that fewer people die by suicide.
- Lifeline/Samaritans covers Bay of Plenty, Hawke's Bay, Gisborne and Waikato.
- It operates a 24/7 helpline to anyone who needs to talk on 0800 72 66 66.
- It is confidential, non-judgemental and non-religious.
- There are currently 45 volunteers who work from home, and there are 3 training intakes per year to recruit new volunteers to operate the helpline.

A chance to save lives

If you have thought about giving blood or plasma, now is the time to check you are eligible.

The New Zealand Blood Service increased the upper age limit for first-time blood and plasma donors to 71. Existing donors are able to keep donating until the age of 81.

**To donate you also need to be
At least 150cm tall
Weigh at least 50kg**

More than 5,000 donations are needed every week to meet demand, but less than four percent of the eligible New Zealand population donates. The service often has free appointments during the day, as many people prefer to donate in the evening. If you have flexibility in your day – perhaps you could consider becoming a donor?

When giving blood, approximately 470mL is collected. The entire process, from when you sign in, to the time you leave, takes about an hour. The actual time spent on the bed is five to 10 minutes.

Blood can be donated every 84 days, up to four times a year. Each time you donate, your blood is separated into three components, red cells, platelets and plasma.

Red cells are used during surgery or to treat people with anaemia. Platelets help those with severe bleeding or leukaemia.

Plasma makes up over half the volume of blood and is packed full of proteins and antibodies. It can be used to make up to 11 lifesaving treatments.

Plasma-only donations are also an option. Plasma can be donated every two weeks. The entire process, from signing in, to the time you leave, takes about 90 minutes.

Two to three times more plasma can be collected compared to a blood donation when using this method.

For those of you who were unable to give blood or plasma because you lived in the United Kingdom, France or the Republic of Ireland between 1980 and 1996, this restriction will soon be lifted.

If you have questions about your eligibility to donate, call 0800 448 325 and ask to speak with a nurse. To find out more information, including if you're eligible to donate blood or plasma, visit nzblood.co.nz

CLASSIC CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP

Allow 3 hrs for 6 people



Ingredients

1.3kg chicken, neck reserved
3.3lt water
4 carrots—chopped,
4 celery ribs—chopped
1 unpeeled onion, quartered
1 large unpeeled garlic clove, smashed
1 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
1 large fresh bay leaf
6 parsley sprigs
2 thyme sprigs
Salt
250gm thin egg noodles
1/4 cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

Directions

Step 1

In a stockpot, combine the chicken and neck, water, chopped carrots and celery, onion, garlic, peppercorns and herbs; bring to a boil. Cover partially and simmer over low heat for 30 minutes. Transfer the chicken to a plate. Discard the skin. Pull the meat off the bones, cut into 1/2-inch/2cm pieces and refrigerate.

Step 2

Return bones to the pot. Simmer for about 1 hour. Strain the broth into a bowl and rinse out the pot. Return the broth to the pot and boil until reduced to 8 cups, 30 minutes. Season with salt.

Step 3

Add the sliced carrots and celery or other veges to the broth, cover and simmer until just tender, 12 minutes. In a saucepan of boiling salted water, cook the noodles; drain and cool under running water. Add the noodles, chicken and parsley to the pot and bring to a simmer. Ladle the soup into bowls and serve hot.

EASY APPLE PIE



Ingredients

250 g very soft butter (but not melted)
¾ cup caster sugar
1 egg
1 tsp vanilla essence
grated zest of 1 orange
2 ½ cups flour
2 ½ tsp baking powder
770 g tin of sliced apples or 770g fresh apples

Method

Step 1: Preheat oven to 190°C.

Step 2: In a bowl or food processor beat together the butter, caster sugar, egg, vanilla essence and orange rind until creamy and well mixed.

Step 3: Add the flour and baking powder and stir or pulse to mix well.

Step 4: Spread 2/3rds into the base of a well-greased and floured 23cm loose bottom cake tin.

Step 5: Spread over the diced apple.

Step 6: With floured hands dot the remaining dough over the top.

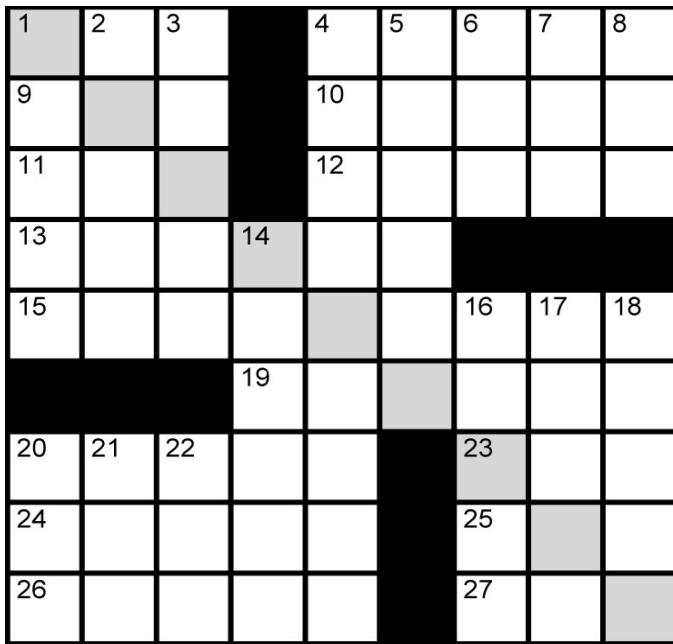
Step 7: Bake for 40 minutes until top is golden and pastry cooked.

Step 8: When cool, serve with yoghurt or cream.

Tips

Swap apples for pears for an equally delicious dish!

Chilling Wall



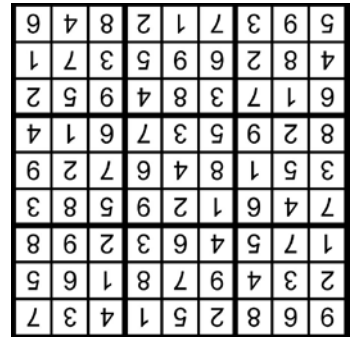
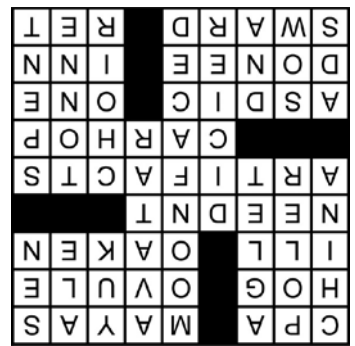
Across

- 1. Tax prep. expert
- 4. Yucatán natives
- 9. Hoard
- 10. Reproductive cell
- 11. Not well
- 12. Like some buckets
- 13. "You ___ bother!"
- 15. Archaeologists' finds
- 19. Drive-in employee
- 20. Early form of sonar used to detect submarines

- 23. Small bill
- 24. Gift recipient
- 25. Bed-and-breakfast
- 26. Grassy area
- 27. No longer working: Abbr.

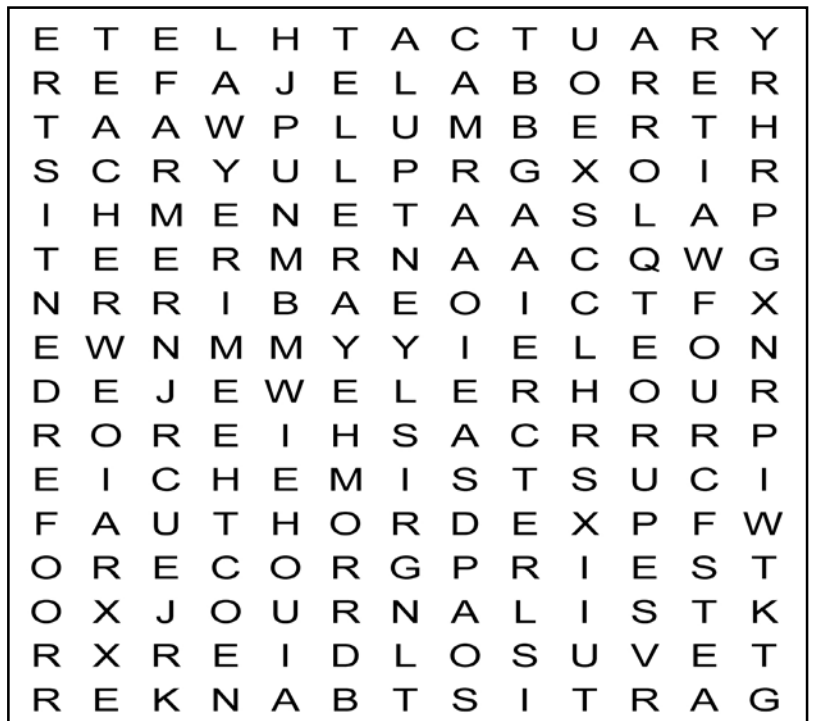
Down

- 1. Fine dinnerware
- 2. Gondolier, e.g.
- 3. Lace tip
- 4. Look caused by Cushing's syndrome, sometimes
- 5. Hindu incarnation
- 6. Big laugh
- 7. Pub pint
- 8. Member of Cong.
- 14. More risky
- 16. Church singers
- 17. 1,000 kilograms
- 18. Tuckered out
- 20. Magazine revenue source
- 21. Boar's mate
- 22. Some trial evidence



The crossword headline is a clue to the answer in the shaded diagonal

OCCUPATIONS



How to solve sudoku puzzles: No math is required to solve a sudoku. You only need logic and patience. Simply make sure that each 3x3 square region has only one instance of the numbers 1-9. Similarly, each number can only appear once in a column or row in the larger grid. *The difficulty on this puzzle is easy.*

- ACTOR
- ACTUARY
- ARTIST
- ATHLETE
- AUTHOR
- BANKER
- CASHIER
- CHEF
- CHEMIST
- DENTIST
- DOCTOR
- FARMER
- FIREMAN
- FURRIER
- GROCER
- JEWELER
- JOURNALIST
- LABORER
- LAWYER
- MANAGER
- MINER
- NURSE
- PILOT
- PLUMBER
- PRIEST
- ROOFER
- SOLDIER
- TAILOR
- TEACHER
- TELLER
- VET
- WAITER

SUDOKU

