



PRESS RELEASE - For immediate release- 6/10/2023

United call for action on the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing – New collaboration to focus on creating a uniquely ageless society for NZ

As the General Election approaches, key organisations involved in promoting healthy and respectful ageing and the wellbeing of older people in Aotearoa New Zealand are calling on all political parties to commit to the principles of the United Nation’s Decade of Healthy Ageing and to work collaboratively towards a society where all people can live long and healthy lives.

In the week which began with the UN International Day of Older Persons (1 October) and closes with Ageism Awareness Day (7 October), registered charity The Selwyn Foundation has hosted an inaugural hui in association with Age Concern New Zealand. This brought together many of the influential organisations, including the Grey Power NZ Federation, from across the sector, with a view to collaborating to bring about transformational change, combat ageism and enable New Zealand to become a better place for all of us to grow older.

Drawing together government agencies, charitable trusts, academics and providers of housing, healthcare and social services for older people, the think-tank focussed on how it might promote, develop, and deliver on an Aotearoa New Zealand Decade of Healthy Ageing Action Plan for the long-term benefit of individuals and communities.

The UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030) encourages all parts of the system (including governments, businesses, the community and voluntary sector, universities, philanthropy, and the media) to join together to contribute to ten years of concerted action to improve the lives of older people, their families, and their communities. Its four main areas for action over the decade are to change how we think, feel and act towards age and ageing, to foster the abilities of older people, to deliver integrated care and primary health services responsive to the needs of older people and to provide access to long-term care for older people who need it.

The Federation president, Jan Pentecost, said that:

“These action areas are very high on Grey Power’s advocacy agenda and are incorporated in the Federation’s election strategy which asks politicians what their policies are on many of these issues.”

Cutting across these action areas is the need to reduce social isolation and loneliness and to prevent the abuse of older people.

To achieve the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing vision, the collaboration wants to work with others.

As the Selwyn Foundation’s Chief Executive, Denise Cosgrove says:

“New Zealand’s yet to fully embrace this global opportunity. Therefore, we’re calling for a collaborative, integrated approach to improving the experience of ageing so that all older New Zealanders are respected, their needs prioritised and their ongoing contributions to society valued.

“While the ageing of our population – where one in five of us are going to be older than 65 in the next five years – presents challenges in how Government should best respond in providing funding and services, this longevity also represents huge potential. Our current employment practices, infrastructure, public transport and housing policies can make it hard for us to stay involved and engaged as we age. We can, however, create innovative solutions which would allow us to harness the energy of an ageing population through older people’s contributions as entrepreneurs, workers, carers and volunteers. In addition, this creates real opportunity for economic growth through innovation in the design of products, services and support catering to the needs of people as they age.

“As we work together and advocate on this issue on behalf of our kaumātua kuia/older people, we urge all political parties and the incoming Government to commit to doing more to achieve the vision of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing. The current focus on the age of eligibility for superannuation misses the huge opportunities for New Zealand to be world leaders in creating an ageless society. As a collaboration of organisations known for our focus on older people, we’ve agreed to begin work on developing an integrated strategy for New Zealand – which will look at all aspects of how we live, work and stay healthy as we age and bring a uniquely Aotearoa New Zealand perspective. We invite others with an interest to join us in this.”

Grey Power advocates strenuously on the issues in the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing action plan and the opportunity to be part of the collaboration to strengthen this advocacy is warmly welcomed.

Further information on the UN Decade of Health Ageing Plan of Action 2021-2030 is available at: <https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/decade-of-healthy-ageing/decade-proposal-final-apr2020-en.pdf>

Jan Pentecost

President

Grey Power NZ Federation Inc

PO Box 2721719, Papakura 2244

Phone: 09 299 2113

Email: fed-office@greypower.co.nz

Internet Site: www.greypower.co.nz