



Here Is The Goss



Northland Grey Power Associations' Newsletter

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A CUTE APPENDIX

I have been staring at blank pages for a week, wondering what I am going to use to fill them. Some of them. Any of them...

I have received the same amount of content I generally receive from your Associations, both words and images. It could all be fitted in the space between this paragraph and the one above it. (Not quite true: I have a notice to post for Whangārei.)

I have come across Press Releases and Memos from the Federation Board or Federation Office: all of those tend to posted to our website:

<https://greypowernorthland.wordpress.com/blog/>

and those of you who subscribe to that will have seen them. Most of the important things from the Federation will be covered in the "Grey Power Magazine", which has just been published, so I would be flogging a dead horse to revisit them here.

And I have been out of circulation for much of the last month. I felt crook driving to Wellington for the August Board Meeting. Federation Board Meetings now involve the Zone Facilitators (new title since the 2026 AGM, slightly expanded role) attending on the second day, which is largely given over to operational concerns. The first and third days are when the high, pointy-headed yins get on with governance without us.

I was crooker the day of the meeting, and went on getting more so, to the extent that ten days after the first niggles I wound up at Whangārei Hospital ED about to become divorced from my appendix, which had apparently had enough of me after 78 years. And, yes, Matilda, the next day I wound up outside the door of the hospital as another elderly person discharged without any way home. "Excuse me? A little help here, please? I had surgery yesterday, and I'm not sure I should walk 75 kilometres home this soon after that." So if anybody has been wondering, yes, they still do that, and if I was a woman and it was close to midnight and it happened to me I would be terrified. They gotta stop it!

In my case, I "knew a bloke", so now I owe my cousin a favour for dropping everything in his afternoon to transport me back to Kaikohe. (Turned out to be a fun ride - couple of elderly teenagers in a little blue Chinese car ripping up Mangakahia Road, telling lies to each other and hooting with laughter.)

I'll do better next issue.

Grey Power Whangārei Electoral Candidate Meeting

The following local candidates standing for upcoming General Elections have agreed to talk at our Grey Power meeting at the Kamo club, Meldrum Street, on 7th October at 1.15pm. Each candidate will speak for 10mins followed by a Q & A session. There will be refreshments provided afterwards.

Vince Cocurullo NZ First candidate

Gary Payinda Labour candidate

Lloyd Budd National candidate

Once upon a not-so-long-time-ago every member household used to receive a copy of "Grey Power Magazine" in the letter box.

Then the cost of postage went, well, POSTAL! And mailing the magazine to everybody was not sustainable.

The Magazine is now available both online and in print. You can subscribe to receive it in either form, but there is an annual payment of (currently) \$10.00 to receive it in print form. Now, you may want to grizzle about that, but check the cost of posting anything nowadays and you will realise it is a pretty good deal.

To subscribe to receive the magazine in your inbox go to this link and follow the instructions:

<https://greypowermag.co.nz/subscribe/>

That is reasonably plain and simple.

Mebbe not so simple if you want it delivered, printed, to your letterbox. I thought I had seen a clear and concise set of "Howtos"

for going about this put together by the Fed Office Coordinator, Johnathan, which I was going to paste in here. For the life of me I cannot find it. However, it does involve internet access, and the greatest number of people that would prefer a print copy do NOT have that. **So, best and simplest advice? Give your Membership Secretary \$10.00 cash and ask them to arrange it for you.**

That's not going to win me any prizes from them!



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SYSTEMS FIX IN PIPELINE?

The Aged Care Advisory Group's recent report: A Place to Grow Old: Securing the Future of Aged Care includes 40 recommendations across six areas of reform. Many issues have been raised repeatedly by Grey Power. This new document again tackles failings in aged health care with the hope that most will be remedied.

Every New Zealander deserves to age well with dignity and choice.

Those words from David Cunliffe, Aged Care Advisory Group chairman on its recent report, sums up what Grey Power strives for every day.

"But that won't happen unless we fix the existing system, which is fragmented, hard to access, and underfunded. While many older people receive good care, we have a system that is outdated and unaffordable."

"The cracks are starting to show in bed shortages, some services closing their doors, and some carers unable to cope. As our population ages, those pressures will only multiply, and costs are expected to nearly double in the next 20 years." Turn to P5

Grey Power welcomes aged care reform plan

The Aged Care Ministerial Advisory Group has released an independent report, A Place to Grow Old: Securing the Future of Aged Care. It recommends major reform to provide a more integrated care system for older New Zealanders and their families. Grey Power speaks out on the proposals.

Grey Power New Zealand has welcomed the aged care report, saying the report provides an important opportunity to build a system to give NZ seniors the care, dignity and security they deserve. Grey Power president, David Marshall says it correctly recognises New Zealand's aged-care system needs fundamental reform as the population ages and more people require support to live independently.

"We strongly support this vision of a more integrated system, better support for people to age in place, improved support for carers and a stronger, more sustainable aged-care workforce," he says.

"Older New Zealanders should be able to access required care without having to navigate a confusing system." Grey Power supports proposals to strengthen home-based care, improve respite and support for family carers, expand rehabilitation services, improve information sharing and strengthen the aged-care workforce.

It also backs establishing an independent Aged Care Pricing Authority to provide greater transparency and help ensure funding decisions bet-



NZ's ageing population and reliance on care services are growing at an alarming rate

ter reflect the real cost of providing quality care. Older people must not become the funding solution.

Grey Power is concerned about proposals to significantly increase the financial contribution expected from older people receiving care.

The report proposes lowering the asset threshold for residential care contributions to \$100,000 and introducing stepped contributions for peo-

ple with higher assets. It also proposes greater income-based contributions towards some care costs.

Where a couple with one partner in residential care elects to exclude the family home from asset testing, the report proposes limiting the value of the home that can be excluded, with any value above that threshold included in the asset test.

Turn to Page 5

September is Willie Month

Kiwis have spoken. The legacy they want is a local one.

Research tells us 88% of New Zealanders give locally. No one is better placed to make that happen than your local Community Foundation.

www.communityfoundations.org.nz

Source: Giving in Aotearoa NZ, 2019, 2020

Branch services

August 2026

Grey Power Federation has approached the New Zealand Banking Association to ask that banks enable customers to make appointments, that they provide private seated areas for any in-depth or sensitive banking matters, and that customers be able to deal with the same staff member each time.

Our retail members have provided the following responses:

ANZ

ANZ is committed to providing accessible, responsive and customer-focused banking services, and we recognise the importance of supporting customers who may require additional assistance, privacy, or continuity of service.

Our approach is to meet customers' needs as quickly and effectively as possible. In many cases when a customer visits a branch or phones our contact centre we aim to resolve their enquiry on the spot, avoiding the need for a subsequent branch visit wherever possible.

For more complex, specialised or sensitive matters customers are able to book appointments and we encourage this if it will help ensure the customer receives the appropriate support and sufficient time to discuss their needs.

While we understand the value many customers place on dealing with the same staff member, we are not always able to guarantee continuity with a specific individual. This is particularly the case in our metropolitan locations, where staff regularly move between branches or transition to different roles.

To ensure customers receive a consistent experience, we focus on equipping all staff with the skills, training and resources to assist customers across a broad range of banking needs.

ANZ also provides training and support for staff to help them assist a wide range of vulnerable customers, including older New Zealanders.

All ANZ branches have seated areas available for customers who require additional time or discretion to discuss sensitive or complex banking matters. Our teams will always seek to use the most appropriate space available to support customer comfort and confidentiality.



We appreciate Grey Power's advocacy on behalf of older New Zealanders and remain committed to continually improving the accessibility and quality of our customer service experience.

Contact: Ngaio King, Ngaio.King@anz.com

ASB

Customers can book appointments with ASB by calling our contact centre, visiting an ASB branch, or via the ASB Mobile app or FastNet Classic internet banking. For further information, visit [ASB Appointments](#) or contact ASB on 0800 803 804.

When booking an appointment through a branch or our contact centre, customers can let us know if they require a quiet space, a wheelchair-friendly space, a New Zealand Sign Language interpreter, or if they will be bringing a support person. This helps us prepare in advance and provide appropriate support where possible.

Many of our branches also have private seated areas available for more detailed or sensitive conversations.

We understand some customers may prefer to deal with the same staff member over time, particularly when discussing sensitive or complex matters. While we are unable to guarantee access to a specific staff member, we aim to provide a consistent experience and make interactions as seamless as possible, regardless of which team member is available.

Contact: Imogen Ottow, Imogen.Ottow@asb.co.nz

BNZ

All branches have private meeting rooms so, regardless of whether a customer walks in or books an appointment, we are able to accommodate customers where privacy is of great importance to them.

The benefit of booking an appointment is that the bank has the right banker, with the right level of expertise, ready to assist the customer.

Contact: Barbara Horne, Barbara.Horne@bnz.co.nz

Co-operative Bank

While there is clear value for some customers, particularly where extra care is needed, in building a relationship with a trusted staff member, it is not practical or sustainable for the bank to guarantee that customers will see the same team member at every visit. Factors such as leave, part-time work, training, vacancies, and staff specialisation mean this would not always be possible, nor necessarily in the customer's best interests. Instead, our focus is



on ensuring any staff member can provide a seamless and supportive experience through the maintaining of effective customer notes and understanding where additional care may be needed for that individual customer.

In terms of privacy, our branches already have the ability to offer offices, or other private spaces when discussing sensitive matters, and we believe this could be strengthened through more consistent and proactive offers of private meeting options.

Ultimately, the goal should be to ensure customers feel supported, respected, and able to discuss their circumstances privately, regardless of which team member they are dealing with.

Contact: Richard Wiley, RichardWiley@co-operativebank.co.nz

Kiwibank

There are currently three ways a customer can book in an appointment with a branch or staff member:

- 1) By visiting a branch and booking the appointment with a staff member directly
- 2) By calling our contact centre – our call centre staff will fill out an appointment booking form which confirms the branch, time, purpose of meeting, and you can stipulate which staff member is preferred for the in-person appointment
- 3) By secure mail. This is available in the Kiwibank app and in internet banking. Customers can request an appointment by secure mail with their preferred branch and the staff member who picks up the secure mail will arrange that for the customer.

Note that where a specific staff member is preferred, the ability to meet that request is obviously dependent on that staff member working that day, so rostered days off, sick leave and holidays can impact this.

Another thing that customers can do, particularly if they are older, is to request that they are identified in our systems as requiring “special care”. We can then note other special requirements, for example, requiring a quiet room for appointments. We only load the flag at the customer’s request, or with their agreement if the staff member suggests it.

SBS Bank

SBS currently supports members requesting appointments, including appointments with individual staff members either via the branch or by calling our contact centre, which is open seven days a week.



All our branch locations have private meeting areas, including the branch manager's office, for any in-depth or sensitive banking matters.

Contact: Mandy Oosterbroek, Mandy.Oosterbroek@sbsbank.co.nz

TSB

TSB works to provide suitable support for our elderly customers. This includes the ability to make appointments in branches via phone or online, and our branches are equipped with areas that customers can sit down for their appointments.

Customers are able to contact the branch and ask to speak to the staff member they are familiar with, or check when they are available to book an appointment.

Contact: Sarah Inglis, Sarah.Inglis@tsb.co.nz

Westpac

At Westpac NZ inclusion is at the heart of how we care for our customers and community.

We are committed to making the banking experience of our older customers as easy as possible and are proud to be Aotearoa's first dementia-friendly bank.

Our book a banker service helps ensure people can speak to the same person on the phone, and they can always come into the branch to make a face-to-face appointment. From time to time there may be people on leave, or who have left Westpac, so customers may not be able to see the same person every time, but we understand this is important to our older customers and will do our best to accommodate this.

In our branches, we endeavour to meet the needs of our customers by having quiet or private space when needed, and offering iSign appointments for those who are hard of hearing.

Contact: Emma Heaps, Emma.Heaps@westpac.co.nz

And the joke is on Bwucie. I checked above to see what my bank, SBS said; sounds fine.

Except we used to live 356 kilometres (four and a half hours) from our local branch, and without letting us know, they closed it and moved our account to their Don St Head Office, so our trip to the branch now is 1863 kilometres and twenty-seven hours.

*Bwucie chugging
south from
Kaikohe to
Invercargill*

