

GREY POWER *Insight*

August 2024 Grey Power Hutt City Association greypowerhuttcity@gmail.com

Next meeting

Ginny Andersen, Labour list MP for Hutt South will be our guest speaker on Friday 16th Aug.

New Editor for Insight

Our previous editor, Dave Stonyer has unfortunately resigned, but we are pleased to welcome back Fiona Day. Fiona will be producing our full newsletter on a bi-monthly basis to her normal high quality, but I will be interspersing these with a short, single page catch up on what's been happening on the political front both locally and nationally in so far as it affects older people. Plus of course any other information on issues that affect us. We know that for those of you that can't get to our monthly meetings, our newsletter is the only way we can let you know what we are doing on your behalf, so please let us know of any issues you would like us to cover.

What's been happening locally?

Your committee has made a submission on the Hutt City Representation review, maintaining our previous position that equity of representation is the most important factor. So, we have supported the review panel's recommendations. We acknowledged that a more direct consultation is necessary but that the current Community board set up is both inequitable and ineffective, so we have also supported the Panels' suggestion for a more representative approach.



What's been happening nationally – Pete's Cogitations

Of the current national issues, the one that probably concerns older people most is access to health services.

To be fair it's a no-win situation for any Government. Vote Health is a bottomless pit. Our expectation of health service delivery always exceeds the money allocated, and the cost of delivering new and improved health services continues to grow with no sign of slowing down. We are now being told by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Health that spending on health is out of control. Well, the most effective way of cutting the cost of health services has always been to reduce demand. It means taking a 'Whole of Government' approach; not having rigid and Ministry specific budgets. Something you would have expected a Prime Minister that touts his business credentials would

appreciate. So here are my suggestions for policies that are proven to reduce health costs and overall Govt. expenditure.

1. Ban the sale of all tobacco products. Addicts can get their fix on prescription the same as other drugs,
Oh, we were well on our way to that, but the Associate Minister of Health reversed it, so more dairies can sell cigarettes.
2. Reduce hospital and primary health costs from traffic accidents by lowering speed limits. This cuts the number and severity of crashes (plus a lot of other economic benefits.)
Oh, that was happening, but the Minister of Transport wants it stopped because driving slower isn't 'fun'!
3. Reduce chronic sickness especially in young children and older people by increasing mandatory insulation in homes so that people can afford to heat them.
Oh, that was happening, but the Minister for Building wants to reverse it because it increases the cost of houses. (see below as well).
4. Reduce a whole range of 'lifestyle' diseases and associated elective surgery by changing the way we get about our towns and cities so older people, children and the disabled feel safe from traffic; and incidentally increasing retail spending.
Oh, that was going to happen, but it's all been stopped by the Minister of Transport because it takes money that could be spent on bigger roads for more cars.
5. Remove layers of Governance in the Health system.
Oh we can't do that, they've already resigned in protest at inadequate funding.
6. Make sure that funding for drugs is spent in the most cost effective manner.
Oh, we can't do that, that would mean the Government couldn't deliver on its election promises.
7. Stop spending above budget on Health staff.
Oh, that was on more nurses. Oh, and by the way, there is still a national shortage.

A stitch in time saves nine; Don't spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar. Just two well-know folk idioms that the Government would do well to remember.



Thick as two short planks award – Tauranga builders

Apparently Building and Construction Minister, Chris Penk is citing feedback from 'builders and developers in Tauranga' that our standard home insulation is 'creating overheating issues' as a reason to roll back our already inadequate standards.

Remember the old ad featuring an Aussie, bemused that his Chilly Bin kept hot things hot and cold things cold? "How does it know?"

Minister Penk's complainants should watch that ad. They clearly can't cope with basic physics! With that level of basic ignorance in the industry is it any wonder that our houses fall to pieces, leak like sieves and cause major health issues.