



GREY POWER MARLBOROUGH

Advocating for people 50 +

From the President's Desk

I have just returned from a conference hosted by Alzheimer's New Zealand entitled Repositioning Dementia: What's next? Delegates attending were from organisations that had an interest in this area, people living with dementia and their families/whanau. About 200 people attended in person with over 130 people globally on-line. The Honourable Associate Minister of Health, Casey Costello, spoke passionately about people living with dementia and their need to have full lives. From a clinical perspective Andy Inder, Health NZ/Te Whatu Ora's Director of Ageing Well stated that 50 percent of dementia cases in

New Zealand can be prevented by having good hearing, good eyesight and good physical health. These two speakers were very interesting but what pulled at my heart strings were the real stories from people living with dementia every day, whether they be the cognitive impaired person or their family/whanau. Several people spoke about their journeys with dementia and below is what they needed to live their best possible lives:

- To enable them to be part of decisions that affect their day-to-day lives.
- To have someone that can navigate

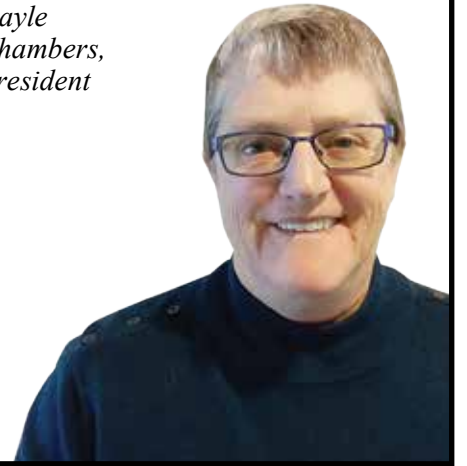
arranging the consistent care and entitlements they need.

- Being able to socialize with others who have dementia and know the daily struggles they face every day.
- Acceptance from families/whanau/friends/acquaintances regarding their disability.
- Being supported to continue doing the things they enjoy; maybe going for a walk or playing tennis.
- Equitable and sufficient resources to allow them to stay at home.
- Still be a person in their own right.

I will end by saying "when you know one person with dementia, you know one person with dementia" - no two

people will have the same issues on their dementia journey. Love them for who they are now, not who they used to be.

Gayle Chambers, President



Aged Care Commissioner Report (abridged update)

Since the publication of the Aged Care Commissioner report earlier this year, I, and members of my team, have continued monitoring issues with older people's health and disability care, as part of my role to drive quality improvements in those services. This is a quick update on some of the activities the team and I have been working on over the past quarter.

Monitoring our recommendations

Since the release of the report, we have developed an approach to help monitor progress on the report's recommendations. Metrics for monitoring are grouped into three areas of focus. The first group of metrics apply to long term and strategic recommendations, which

will require systemic changes over time. The second group of metrics apply to influencing health and disability reforms. The third group relate to short- to medium-term recommendations, including a focus on public health measures to delay the onset of dementia and improving hospital discharge planning. We will publish an update on progress on our recommendations, aligned to these metrics, in 2025.

Subsidies for hearing aids

A big thank you to Matthew Coulson, who spent several months with the team as a policy intern funded by the Aging Fellowship at Columbia University. Matthew's work and his paper on hearing aid subsidies will provide us with an

evidence-base to track our recommendation to increase hearing aid subsidies. Insights from Matthew's research will be shared at upcoming events with sector colleagues.

Aged Care Commissioner submissions

We have made several submissions over the past few months on reviews relevant to the health and disability needs of older people.

- Social Services Select Committee. At the end of May, I presented to the Select Committee and answered questions about workforce issues and elder abuse, among other topics.
- Law Commission | Te Aka Matua o te Ture. The team has provided a

submission on the review of adult decision-making capacity law to ensure an age-friendly lens.

- Health Committee inquiry into the aged care sector's current and future capacity to provide support services for people experiencing neurological cognitive disorders.
- Review of the Retirement Villages Act. I have engaged with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, and other relevant sector stakeholders, on the review of the Act, to highlight the health and disability needs of older people living in retirement villages.

Carolyn Cooper, Aged Care Commissioner, September 2024.

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We are delighted to be bringing you the

GREY POWER MARLBOROUGH

monthly newsletter.

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Health Notes

Diabetes Funding Update

Diabetes New Zealand has welcomed the news that Pharmac will fund continuous glucose monitors (CGM), insulin pumps and insulin consumables for people living with Type 1 diabetes from 1 October. "Free access to these devices will not only be life changing for thousands of New Zealanders living with Type 1 diabetes, it will also be lifesaving," says Heather Verry, CEO of Diabetes New Zealand. "We know that for our Type 1 community, this is more than just vital technology - it's a lifeline for better health and greater freedom. Quite simply, it's a game-changer." For more information; www.diabetes.org.nz.



Avoid Listeriosis

Listeria is an ever-present environmental bacterium. It thrives in growing conditions where food is produced and stored, and therefore becomes foodborne. Listeria is one of just two bacteria causing foodborne illness that can grow on refrigerated food, and listeriosis is the only reported disease that is fully attributed to consumption of contaminated food. Higher risk foods include deli meats, soft cheeses, and cold smoked seafood.

If contracted, listeriosis can be very serious, causing a high rate of

hospitalisation especially among older people. Symptoms usually take 2-3 weeks to appear and can include fever, muscle pain, fatigue, headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance and seizures.

Listeriosis can be prevented, and there are some simple steps you can take at home to avoid contracting listeriosis:

- cook food thoroughly
- only eat fruit and vegetables that have been washed and dried thoroughly
- only eat food that was recently prepared
- refrigerate leftovers quickly
- preheat food to steaming hot (more than 70°C) before eating
- avoid leftovers that won't be reheated
- wash and dry your hands thoroughly and follow good food hygiene practices.

To read more about Listeriosis and for more advice from the from New Zealand Food Safety go to www.mpi.govt.nz/listeria.

Shingles

What is it? From Health New Zealand: Shingles is a painful rash that usually develops on one side of the face, body or head. The rash is usually in a stripe on the left or the right side of the body. Sometimes people with weakened immune systems have a rash that spreads across more areas of the body. Before the rash develops, people often have pain, itching or tingling in the area where the rash will be.

What causes it? Anyone who had chickenpox is at risk of developing shingles. Shingles is caused by the varicella-zoster virus - the same virus that causes chickenpox. After

you've had chickenpox, the virus stays in your body for the rest of your life. Years later, the virus may reactivate as shingles. Shingles isn't life-threatening, but it can be an extremely painful and stressful experience with some nasty side-effects. Also, as our natural immunisation declines with age, seniors are particularly vulnerable.

What does it feel like? Says Steve, one of our members in his seventies after a recent bout; "It all started one evening with what seemed a simple rash across my stomach and back and thought it was probably something I had picked up whilst gardening - just an irritation. Next morning however blisters appeared, and things were happening quickly. Only one side of my stomach and back were affected and I thought - oh no, shingles. A quick Google seemed to verify the symptoms, and a doctor visit confirmed it.

"Now aided with a prescription, I thought within a couple of days of mild discomfort it would be done, and I'd be back to normal. Not to be though, and it was then that something the doctor had mentioned returned to my mind that one of the side effects of shingles is associated nerve issues, in my case neuralgia. So now, after several months my neuralgia pain varies immensely but it is always there, whether just mild irritation or full-on stabbing pain. So, mindful that we can all learn something new, please take my advice and get vaccinated."

Says Health New Zealand - **The best protection against shingles is immunisation**, so contact your Health provider for details.

Office Snippets

Work is starting on Discount Book 2025. We are always looking for extra businesses to join, and particularly welcome businesses outside Blenheim for our non-Blenheim based members to use. Picton, for example, has several hundred members. Please get in touch with the office for more information: office@greypowermarlborough.co.nz or 03 578 4950.

We have been following up some members for **overdue subscriptions**. Please let us know if you decide not to renew your membership. With so many of our members taking advantage of Grey Power Electricity's discounted rates, and emails sometimes going to Spam folders or email addresses changing, **we are unable to assume that non-payment means non-renewal**.

Please remember to let the office know if any of your **contact details** have changed.

A reminder that we have hearing aid batteries, sizes A10, A13 and A312 for sale in the office, \$6 per card of 6 batteries.

Events:

CPR with Hato Hone St John, Monday 7 October, 10.30am at Blenheim Library

CPR with Hato Hone St John, Tuesday 8 October, 1.30pm at Picton Library

Several members have been enquiring about driving tests for older drivers. A fact sheet is available at www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/factsheets/57/docs/57-older-drivers.pdf and copies are available in the office, along with some brochures on Senior Drivers from NZTA.

Grey Power Electricity have new discounts available for their customers for car and pet insurance. Ask at the office, or view online at www.greypowerelectricity.co.nz/insurance.

We encourage you to look through your **Discount Book**, there are some great savings to be had! Each month we would like to acknowledge the support shown to our members by some of the businesses: **Harcourts Marlborough Real Estate, Health 2000 Blenheim, Laser Plumbing Blenheim, Lynfords Furniture, Marlborough MS & Parkinsons Society, Marlborough Plumbing & Heating, Mayfield Motorworld, McKendry Mazda Motors, McRaes Fashion, Debbie at Mike Pero Real Estate, Noel Templeton Optometrists, Not Tech Savvy.**

Care Marlborough present *The Art of Wellbeing Exhibition*, 8-20 October, at the Marlborough Art Society, 204 High Street, Blenheim

"A Night at the Races" Dragon Boat fundraiser, Saturday 19 October. Tickets available from Mitchell Sports

DROP-IN DAY

SeniorNet Marlborough Sounds will be holding its Drop-in session to sort any technology problems you may be having.

Bring your device along, or come with a question to ask, and we'll sort them out.

21st October from 1pm
LINKWATER HALL

Following this Drop-in session, at 4pm, we will hold this year's AGM in the Hall.

This will include a discussion on our Group's future.

Come along for the Drop-in, the AGM, or both.

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