



## ADVOCACY REPORT

From October 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015 the Grey Power advocacy team met with decision-makers in Wellington.

**These lobby visits are very important because, as a component of advocacy, they are part of Grey Power's reason for existing.**

An appointment with the Prime Minister was cancelled because the Grey Power Federation President was unable to attend because of illness - the meeting had been specifically set up so that Terry King, as President, could formally meet the Prime Minister

The Minister of Senior Citizens, Hon Maggie Barry, after requesting time changes, cancelled her appointment with Grey Power immediately prior to the meeting time – this also occurred with an agreed meeting with the Board in November

An appointment request to Marama Fox (Co-leader of the Maori Party) was unanswered and Winston Peters (NZ First Leader) did not respond until immediately prior to the commencement of the advocacy visit when suitable appointment times were already filled therefore no visit occurred.

Due to unavailability in October, the Minister of Health, Ministry of Health and Pharmac offered to meet with the advocacy team in November or early December but it was decided that the cost of a repeat visit to Wellington did not cover the benefit.

### **What was the Objective of the Meetings?**

- To advocate and to access information on behalf of Grey Power members and others regarding appropriate issues which have been received by the Federation Board since the last advocacy trip or which are on-going;

### **Who were the core advocacy team?**

The core team consisted of Miles Jackson (Chair Election Strategy NAG and Jan Pentecost, (Grey Power Advocacy Standing Committee chair & National secretary).

With the exception of Pete Matcham (Research Standing Committee chair) who attended all meetings, the following - Lew Rohloff (Superannuation and Taxation NAG chair), Jo Millar (Health NAG chair) and Trevor Daniell (Local Govt. & Housing NAG chair) attended as Grey Power advisors at meetings relevant to their National Advisory Group (NAG).

## **WHAT WERE THE GAINS, MAYBES AND SHORTFALLS FOR GREY POWER AS A RESULT OF THE VISIT?**

### **1. MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT – Hon Simon Bridges**

#### **Background Information:**

#### **The SuperGold Card off peak public transport scheme**

The SuperGold Card is available to all eligible New Zealanders aged 65 years or over, and those under 65 who receive the New Zealand Superannuation or the Veterans Pension.

The SuperGold Card free off peak public transport scheme enables SuperGold cardholders to travel for free on scheduled urban public transport between 9am and 3:00pm and after 6:30pm Monday to Friday, and all day on Saturday and Sunday.

The number of SuperGold cardholders is increasing on average by around 29,000 net a year. Since its introduction in October 2008 the \$18 million annual cost of funding the scheme has grown, due to the yearly increase in SuperGold cardholders, growing use of public transport, and rising fares. In 2015/16 the annual cost is estimated to be \$28.1 million.

On February 18<sup>th</sup> 2015 in the questions for oral answer session in Parliament (February 18<sup>th</sup> 2015) Hon. Craig Foss said "I am confident that New Zealanders will continue to enjoy the transportation benefits of the SuperGold card" This benefit will, however be subject to a bulk-funded model which will be capped at the equivalent of the funding provided in the 2015 budget (with annual CPI adjustments) for 5 years, so that the scheme remains sustainable. The moratorium has been lifted on new services entering the scheme from 1 September 2015, with criteria being applied for new services and funding for Waiheke Island ferries and other niche services to be capped.

#### Bulk funding for regional councils

It is important to note that any cost overruns would need to be funded by councils, therefore it would encourage cost savings and efficiencies.

#### Moratorium on new services

We are told that the lifting of the moratorium will potentially improve the range of services available to SuperGold cardholders, particularly in rural and provincial areas.

#### Smartcards

SuperGold cardholders will be required to use smartcards as smartcard technology, such as the AT HOP card in Auckland, become available.

Regional councils will inform SuperGold cardholders when they need to obtain the relevant regional smartcard.

This will provide operators, regional councils and Government with more accurate data about the number and length of trips taken, assisting future public transport planning. SuperGold cardholders will be required to purchase their own cards. While this will impose a cost, it is small compared to the ongoing benefits users gain from accessing the scheme. (<http://www.transport.govt.nz/land/supergoldcardtransportfunding/>)

#### **Grey Power is concerned that:**

- A. If the councils cannot cover the eligibility and entitlement criteria the cost of the national scheme will be transferred to regional rate-payers
- B. Bulk funding as a mechanism is part of an ideological theory which attempts to minimise state responsibility for national provision of essential programmes (see Gordon, L. *'The Bulk Funding of Teacher's Salaries: A Case Study in Education Policy*, New Zealand Annual Review of Education, 1, 28-58)

#### **Action: We asked the Minister:**

Q: What is the future of the scheme?

A: "SuperGold card holders will continue to access the Scheme (the Transport Concession Scheme) as they could prior to the review... the Government is implementing bulk funding for the Scheme to encourage regional councils and service operators to find efficiencies that improve the Scheme's sustainability."

Q: If the councils cannot cover the eligibility and entitlement criteria will the cost of the national scheme be transferred to regional rate-payers?

A: It is not our intention to impose the costs of the Scheme onto regional councils..."  
(Minister's response to the Grey Power information/position paper.)

Q: That because bulk funding is part of an ideological theory which attempts to minimise state responsibility for national provision of essential programmes (see Gordon, L. *The Bulk Funding of Teacher's Salaries: A Case Study in Education Policy*, New Zealand Annual Review of Education, 1, 28-58) was the Government removing itself from liability for this scheme.?

A. No concrete answer was provided.

**Grey Power's gain was** the Minister's assurance that the scheme review will not affect SuperGold card holders

**A shortfall** may be the requirement that the SuperGold card will be replaced by different regional smartcards which will not be transferable nationally – seniors will need to purchase the relevant card when visiting other regions.

## **2. MEETING WITH R. STEPHEN – Investigating Officer – Office of the Privacy Commissioner**

### **Background:**

Some Board members and others have questioned the research committee's stance on this issue

### **Grey Power's asked:**

Q: Whether Grey Power membership data which was not collected for the purpose of conducting research could be used for this?

**Grey Power's gain was the following information**, as provided by R. Steven:

"As a result of our discussion we identified a possible solution, using the research provisions in principles 10 and 11 of the Privacy Act and giving members the opportunity to opt out.

**Purpose of collection** - Principle 1 says that personal information must only be collected when:

- The collection is for a lawful purpose, connected with what the agency does; and
- And it is necessary to collect the information for that purpose.

Grey Power wishes to obtain this information to assist in its advocacy. It wishes to understand what its members think about particular issues, which will then influence its policy development. It also wishes to use this information to assist in its lobbying efforts, in particular with central government.

It is our view this is a legitimate and appropriate reason to collect and use personal information.

### **Privacy statement**

Principle 3 of the Privacy Act requires that when an agency collects personal information from the person the information is about, it has to take reasonable steps to make sure that the person knows things like:

- Why it is being collected;
- Who will get the information;

- Whether the person has to give the information or whether this is voluntary;
- What will happen if the information is not provided.

Grey Power provided us with a copy of a privacy policy, which we reviewed. We consider that this privacy statement meets its principle 3 requirements, and it is clear and appropriate.

### **Exceptions which allow information to be used for research**

Principle 10 says that agencies must use personal information for the same purpose for which they obtained that information unless an exception applies. Relevant exceptions are 10(f) and 11(h) of the Act, which says that information can be used if:

- It is used in a form in which the individual concerned is not identified;
- It is used for statistical or research purposes and will not be published in a form that could reasonably be expected to identify the individual concerned.

In this case Grey Power did not collect the contact details of its members for the purpose of sending out surveys. However, it is intending to use the contact details for research, and will not be publishing the information.

Without prejudicing any view's, the Privacy Commissioner may choose to form, it would appear that Grey Power could use these exceptions to conduct its research.

### **The option to opt out**

Legal compliance is one aspect of information use and disclosure, but it is not the only aspect. As discussed, Grey Power said it wishes to act in good faith and with transparency. It wishes to allay any concerns its members may have, and to reassure its members about the benefits of its research.

To help accomplish this, we suggest that it make it clear to its members, by way of the regional offices, that they can opt out of the research if they wish to do so." (Printed with permission from R. Stephen 14/01/16)

## **3. MEETING WITH H. HOHAIA – Government and Community Relations Manager – NZ Post Group**

### **Grey Power asked:**

Q: What is being done to reduce queues in PostShops because the layout of these shops and the long waits can cause difficulties for older people?

A: "Because of the nature of our business (postal and banking) we do get a high volume of elderly and disabled in our branches. We always try to accommodate them as best we can, and whilst our premises are equipped for this (ramps, wheelchair counters, larger meeting rooms in most locations) it's the empowerment of our people to do the right thing that often sets us apart.

We have started to expand concierge services in our busier locations which enables a member of staff to assist those in the branch from the front of house and thereby reduce the queue length. Customer numbers and activity in branch generally has fallen materially over recent years and along with this queue length time. However, we remain focused on reducing this further. There are locations that are more susceptible to queues at peak times, particular around opening times and lunch breaks and we encourage those who have flexibility in their day to come in outside peak times to avoid the longer queues. Our ORM

service (online relationship manager) provides a good personal banking alternative to coming in to the branch for those that have access to internet banking and we are also very happy to assist any of our customers in establishing internet banking alternative methods of bill payments if this is more convenient for them."

Q: Can PostShops stay open longer leading up to Christmas?

A: "Over the Christmas period many of our franchise branches that are located within malls operate extended hours in line with the general mall. Our corporate branches however remain 9am to 5pm (there are some exceptions who operate longer hours, and many that also have Saturday opening hours, though only a small number are open Sundays). During the Christmas period and lead up to this we have a leave freeze in place to ensure we have the maximum number of staff available to manage the additional postal activity, although we continue to see activity in branch reducing year on year. In addition, we have a casual pool of staff who we use extensively over this period to ensure customer impacts by volume are minimised."

**Grey Power's gain:** was information on areas of concern to members.

#### **4. MEETING THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT – Precis of Report provided by the Office for Seniors**

##### **Social Housing update**

- There is significant focus in increasing the number of social housing tenancies. Over the next three years an additional 3,000 places will be required, with 2,000 of those to be located in Auckland
- MSD is actively working with HNZ and community housing providers for opportunities to scale up

##### Emergency housing

- There has been concern from the sector regarding funding of the Emergency Housing sector
- As an initial step, the Government has injected \$2m in funding to support emergency housing in Auckland; the second phase is to review funding for the sector
- MSD is now taking an active role in this area

##### Transfer of housing stock

- MSD are supporting Treasury's work on the transfer of housing stock from HNZ to community housing providers
- The first regions will be Tauranga (1200 houses) and Invercargill (300 houses)
- No decisions have been made as yet
- Purchasing and leasing arrangements have been raised by the sector.
- The need to ensure that government is thinking wider than Auckland was raised. This has been recognised, especially in areas such as Wellington, Christchurch and Tauranga
- MSD released a document at the beginning of this year which provides information to the market on areas of demand for social housing. The IRRS purchasing intentions are available on the website: <http://www.housing.msd.govt.nz/information-for-housing-providers/irrs-tenancies/>
- Discussion included the need to ensure the development of smaller housing stock in the future.

##### **Cross-agency Project: Future Service Delivery to Older New Zealanders**

- Our ageing population and increasing diversity amongst our older population requires us to think about the type of services that older people will need in the future and how they should be delivered

- International experience shows that more integrated service delivery is the most effective and efficient strategy to meet the needs of an ageing population.
- There are opportunities to work across government to get better results for older New Zealanders and to address risks early on to prevent problems becoming entrenched.
- We are working on a number of short-term initiatives for collaborative service delivery:
  - improving access to information on the range of services and support that is available to older New Zealanders (working with Govt.nz);
  - better use of information held by agencies to identify older people at risk of economic and social isolation;
  - using existing points of interaction between older people and government agencies to improve access to a broad range of services and support that older people may need;
  - using major life events (e.g. death of a partner) as a trigger to follow up with potentially vulnerable older people; and
  - more focus on vulnerable people aged 50 to 64 years to improve their prospects for their older years.
- We are also starting to think about more fundamental changes to the way government delivers services and support to older people.
- Drawing on the international experience we are interested in a number of models for better integrating service delivery for older people, including:
  - a single entry point or gateway to services and support;
  - more joined-up assessment and decision processes;
  - multi-disciplinary case management or a single case manager/lead case manager for older people with complex needs;
  - using administrative data to identify older people who potentially have complex and unmet needs; and
  - integrated data and shared funding (across agencies).
- Over the next few months we will be considering some of these models and their appropriateness for New Zealand in the future.
- There was discussion over the definition of 'vulnerable' with the conclusion that this is a complex area with no tidy definition. The focus of this work, social and economic isolation, provides an approximation for vulnerability (in this context).
- GreyPower has offered to provide a link through to the govt website when it is available.

## **Older people's policy**

### **Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA) amendments**

Statutes amendment bill introduced 14 Oct. It was agreed that the PPPR Act and Regulations should be amended so that:

- the EPA forms for personal care and welfare and property are written in plain language, are easier to understand and are available online
- authorised witnesses to the donor's signature to an EPA have a standard written explanation of the effects and implications of entering into an EPA they may give to donors setting up an EPA

- attorneys signing an EPA must certify that they have read and understood the EPA notes on their role
- the witnessing requirements for people appointing each other as their attorney (mutual appointments), allow them to use the same authorised witness where the witness is satisfied that the donor understands any potential risks and is signing of their own free will
- the option to nominate the scope of practice of the health professional to assess the donor's mental capacity is removed from the EPA form
- a donor is given the option, while mentally capable, of revoking an attorney's appointment (rather than the whole EPA) where a successor attorney appointed by the EPA can act
- donors are given the option to revoke all previous EPAs (similar to the standard provision in wills) to prevent multiple EPAs
- the consultation requirement is expanded to include any attorney acting under the EPA, or any other EPA
- the required content of a medical certificate of incapacity is prescribed rather than the form.

### **Progress on the Carers Strategy Action Plan**

We are making good progress on each of the five objectives in the Carers' Strategy Action Plan for 2014 to 2018. Here are the things we have done in 2014/15.

#### **Objective 1: Enable whānau, aiga, family and carers to take a break**

- [Individualised funding - Respite](#) – enables disabled people and their families to have greater choice, control and flexibility over their respite allocations (facility based respite, home support and carer support subsidy). The funding is now available across New Zealand.
- [TimeOut](#) – includes information for carers on planning and self-managing their breaks, and respite options available to carers.
- The National Carer Matching Service – will enable carers to find a suitable relief carer so that they can take a break from their caring duties. The service will be delivered through a website and an 0800 number. It is expected to be in place by 30 September 2015.

#### **Objective 2: Protect the health and wellbeing of whānau, aiga, family and carers**

- [Supporting people to move at home: Practical tips and techniques for carers and support workers](#) – provides information on injury prevention for family carers.
- The Carer Learning and Wellbeing Resource Service – will provide information, resources and support to enhance the health and wellbeing of disabled people and carers. The service will be delivered through face-to-face learning and the resources will be made available online. It is expected to be in place by 30 September 2015.

#### **Objective 3: Provide information whānau, aiga, family and carers need**

- [Newsfeed service](#) on the Carers New Zealand website – provides carers with information updates, and enables them to connect with others for learning, sharing and support.

- [Facebook page for young carers](#) – gives young carers a safe pathway to connect with each other, receive current information, and link to professionals who can support them.
- [Meet-ups toolkit](#) – for carers who prefer to receive learning and support together as a whānau, aiga or family, or as members of a local community, rural or cultural support group. The toolkit encourages carers to hold face-to-face workshops in their communities and networks.

**Objective 4: Improve pathways to paid employment for carers and support for whānau, aiga, family and carers to balance their work, life and caring roles**

- [Flexible working arrangements](#) – covers information on the statutory right to request flexible working arrangements following recent law changes.
- [Work and Care](#) – a workplace intranet concept, Work and Care provides information to raise employer awareness of carers and their role. The 'concept' promotes ways to support carers in the workforce and carers returning to paid employment.

**Objective 5: Increase awareness and understanding of the carer's role**

- Resources for younger carers, older carers and carers of older people – these three resources were developed in consultation with each group to better understand their unique needs. Each resource provides tips on how to manage a carer's role and where to go for information and support. The resources will be posted on the [Carers New Zealand website](#).
- The Carer resources were identified as being of interest to GreyPower members and a potential theme for an upcoming magazine issue. Hard copies of a new resource may also be provided. It was noted that GreyPower have a constructive relationship with Carers' NZ.

**SuperGold Card**

- There was a brief discussion about ideas to make the card more valuable to holders such as smart card capability and the potential for an App offering
- MSD mentioned that we know uptake rates of smart phones are growing fast but it would be good to engage members directly to understand their interest and disposition to an App
- GreyPower offered to share a survey with their members to gather information.

**SuperSeniors Website**

- The new website, [www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz](http://www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz) allows the opportunity to share information of interest to seniors. There is an opportunity for GreyPower to be a contributor to the website with a regular column, as part of our constructive sharing of information.

**OS: Age Friendly Cities**

**Community Connects and Age Friendly Communities**

The Office for Senior (OS) has been working with Seniors groups and local councils in different parts of the country promoting Community Connects – with an aim to build Age Friendly Communities, as a stepping stone towards Age Friendly Cities

- Age Friendly Communities is about:
- Developing communities everyone can live in



- Communities for all ages, cultures and abilities
- Based on WHO Age Friendly Cities Model
- They exist around the world. WHO runs a Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities
- Member cities and communities are committed to promoting healthy and active ageing and a good quality of life for their older residents
- The Network currently includes 287 cities and communities in 33 countries, covering over 113 million people worldwide.
- To belong to the Network, cities and communities commit to a programme that includes a checklist for cities to self-assess their age friendliness, from transport and housing to communication.
- Countries include Australia, Canada, Italy, Ireland, Russia, China, Iran, Spain and the USA.
- Community Connects promotes a community led approach on areas which are most important the local area

**Work to date:**

- OS has been meeting and engaging with groups and councils in areas such as Nelson, Kapiti, New Plymouth, Auckland, Hamilton, Rotorua and Taupo. Christchurch was also discussed as an area of interest and the Director indicated that she would be happy to visit and meet with local GreyPower representatives and discuss the issue of positive ageing and age friendly cities.
- The recently launched SuperSeniors website has information which will be built on over the coming months. <http://superseniors.msd.govt.nz/age-friendly-communities/age-friendly-communities/age-friendly-communities.html>
- A brochure on Social Isolation *Looking after one another*, was released on 1 October 2015 on ways people can be better socially connected. The brochure is available to GreyPower local associations for distribution.
- OS now has designated resource and will be undertaking further work over the next year to look at the AFC model and for practical ways that communities can start applying Age Friendly principles to their local area. OS will also be developing base resources for communities to use.

**Grey Power's gain:** extensive information for members to utilise.

## **5. TPP - MEETING WITH ANDREW LITTLE – Labour Party Leader**

### **Background**

**Grey Power Policy** is to work to ensure that older people in New Zealand are not disadvantaged if the New Zealand Government signs the TPP agreement;

Policy goal # 1 = to provide information, through media releases and other publicity on the effects of the loss of sovereignty to New Zealanders.

Policy goal #2 = to advocate at the highest level for Pharmac's continued ability to obtain readily available, good quality inexpensive medication and medical devices for New Zealanders

Various newspaper articles have suggested that it is difficult to know what Labour's stance is on the recent developments regarding the TPP

### **Grey Power asked:**

Q: What is the Labour Party policy on the TPP agreement?

A: "As the TPP agreement was being negotiated in secret by the National Government, Labour set out five clear bottom lines for our support. These included:

- Protecting Pharmac

- Ensuring New Zealand could restrict the right of offshore speculators to buy our homes and land
- Preventing multinational businesses from successfully suing the New Zealand government when it legislated in citizens' interests

... the Government has been unable to answer questions we have regarding these issues. Early indications suggest many medicines will be more expensive for Pharmac because of extensions to patents on drugs, and that we will not be able to stop speculators from other countries buying New Zealand homes, even though other signatories to the TPP such as Australia, Malaysia and Vietnam do have this restriction allowed.

Labour is proudly pro-free trade however this agreement goes much further than being just about free trade. It is about our right to operate as a sovereign government, to make laws that benefit New Zealanders above big business and to protect our future health care.

We are calling on the Government to ... to hold a full consultation with the New Zealand people. Labour in Government reserves the right to make laws which benefit all New Zealanders. If the TPP agreement prevents us from doing so, then we will fight that, as we must." (Email - A. Little, 27/10/2015)

**Grey Power's gain:** was the knowledge that the main opposition party was sympathetic to Grey Power's concerns about the TPP.

## **6. AGED CARE COMMISSIONER – Meeting with Hon Pesata Sam Lotu-iga – Associate Minister of Health**

**Grey Power policy:** Is to work to ensure the safety and well-being of all older people in care, whether in their own homes or care facilities; Grey Power policy goal is to work with other agencies to establish an aged care commissioner

**Background Information – Inadequate response to elder neglect and concern** is partially the subject of Jayne McKendry's October 2011 paper "*she can't make herself safe so give me that power: statutory powers and Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention Service Coordinators,*" She points out that there are a number of reasons why there may be problems in ensuring the necessary safe-guards are in place. They include:

- A need for increased understanding of the role of EANP services and recognition of staff's expertise by health professionals, Police, banks and other agencies with whom they interact. This would be further supported by increased awareness by these agencies of elder abuse and implementation of policies and procedures to identify and intervene appropriately.
- More consistent training and practice support for EANP Coordinators, including information of options available for resolving the range of situations encountered.
- Increased availability of safe accommodation for older people in abusive living situations.
- More effective monitoring of residential care facilities and more transparent complaints systems which residents feel safe to use.
- Development of a universal culture of respect and dignity in residential care facilities.

<http://www.communityresearch.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/formidable/EANP-stat-powers-report.pdf>

An aged care commissioner to oversee these issues instead of the fragmentation caused by lack of knowledge is essential because each year, EANPS receive over 1,000 referrals about people who may be facing elder abuse or neglect.<sup>1</sup> This is about 4 referrals every day. However we are also aware that reported abuse does not reflect the whole size of the problem. International research shows that only a small proportion of the elder abuse incidents come to the attention of an agency that can be of assistance.<sup>2</sup> In the UK it is reported that 2.6% of older people experience psychological, material financial and physical abuse each year.<sup>3</sup> In New Zealand this would equate to approximately 50 people per day.

Recent research by Age Concern identifies which groups of older people are being abused. It notes that many are women, 40% live alone, 80% of abuse is committed by members of family or whanau, over 40% of abusers are adult children and up to 35% of abusers are primary care givers, including community and care

Age Concern state that two out of every five people abused experience a significant reduction in their independence, loss of confidence and self-esteem. Victims of abuse feel very frightened or anxious and emotionally distressed. In turn, this diminishes health and wellbeing.

Given that by the year 2026 there will be 500,000 New Zealanders over 65 years and over 116,000 over 75 years, and a prevalence of abuse rates at 1-2%, this request is seen as reasonable and should not be ignored.<sup>4</sup>

(Please note the information above is sourced from a discussion paper prepared by the NZ Aged Care Assn and Grey Power NZ Inc. Oct. 2013)

**Grey Power recommends** to the Minister following the 2014 Report on the Positive Ageing Strategy, under Goal Five = the underlying causes of elder abuse and how should we address them, that:

1. An aged care commissioner be appointed to oversee a fool-proof system that ensures no cases of elder abuse fall through the cracks as discussed above.
2. Whilst noting positive government action in providing funding for elder abuse and neglect prevention services, it now investigates the appointment of an aged care commissioner whose responsibilities would include independent advice to the minister and advocacy support for vulnerable people, the management of a complaints process into matters of elder abuse that would not normally be investigated by the police and jurisdiction to investigate matters involving elder abuse where an individual was deemed vulnerable.

The aged care commissioner could also be part of a strategy to address a key underlying cause of elder abuse which is deeply ingrained stigma and discrimination. Ageism can manifest itself in abuse, violence and neglect (a violation of human rights) which many older people are subjected to.<sup>5</sup> All this may require new or amended legislation.

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<sup>1</sup> Age Concern New Zealand, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, 15 June 2012

<sup>2</sup> National Centre on Elder Abuse USA, Iceberg Theory of Elder Abuse: The National Elder Abuse Incidence Study, 1998

<sup>3</sup> National Centre for Social Research, Kings College London, UK Study of Abuse and Neglect of Older People: Prevalence Survey Report, 2007

<sup>4</sup> From the [nzaca.org.nz/publication/.../TheAgedCareCommissionerinNewZealand.d](http://nzaca.org.nz/publication/.../TheAgedCareCommissionerinNewZealand.d).

<sup>5</sup> The statement from the Eighteenth Session of the UN Human Rights Council panel discussion on the realization of health of older persons, Geneva, 16 September 2011

3. The Government supports calls for a UN legally binding human rights treaty that can facilitate efforts to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights, including the safety and security, of older persons.

**Grey Power's gain** – the Associate Minister was receptive to learning more about the reasons why Grey Power believe an aged care commissioner is necessary and it was agreed that the Grey Power Aged Care Sub-committee chair will provide this.

## 7. **HEALTH – Meeting with Dr David Clarke – Labour Associate Health Spokesperson:**

**The issues were** – ring-fencing of DHB funding for aged care, elective surgery and the possible negative health effects if the SuperGold card free travel was curtailed.

### **Background:**

**Grey Power health policy goals** are to request that DHB funding allocated to aged care be ring fenced and to advocate for improved early access to elective surgery through demonstration of a positive benefit/cost ratio.

a) **Ring-fencing:** In 2005 Barbara Stewart (NZ First Health spokesperson) asked the then Labour Government Health Minister Pete Hodgson if he could have ring-fenced the allocated aged care monies of \$71 million – the Minister replied “no ring fencing was not required.” (*Questions for oral answer 22 November 2005*)

### **b) Elective surgery**

The Chair of the Health NAG provided Dr. Clark with examples of the effects on members of non-access to elective surgery e.g. loss of driving licence because of untreated cataracts, falls while awaiting joint surgery, loss of part-time work etc.

NB: As a matter of interest CTU researcher Bill Rosenberg's analysis of the 2015 health budget estimates that our public health system will be \$1 billion worse off than it was 6 years ago. He estimates there will be a funding shortfall of \$245 million for the coming year to cover announced new services, increasing costs, population growth and the effects of the ageing population (see 'NZ's health system \$1 billion worse off than six years ago; \$220 per Kiwi' NZCTU media release 8 June 2015) yet the Minister of Health's statements, e.g. media releases and speeches and the previous Minister's response to Grey Power requests is/has been that the Government have put many extra dollars into health across the board. However, from the evidence Grey Power has received as well as that of the CTU it appears that more work is required by the Govt.

### **c) Possible health effects if the SuperGold card free off-peak travel benefit is removed or reduced**

It was intended that this issue be discussed at this meeting but no in-depth conversation occurred.

#### Background:

There appears to be no NZ research regarding health benefits of free off-peak travel but UK studies have noted benefits:

- a) Aside from early medical appointments i.e. before 9am, 23% of respondents said it would have an impact on attendance at health appointments if they could not access free travel whilst 36% said they would not be affected
- b) Older people who use public transport are less likely to be obese because often they combine public transport with walking.
- c) Older people who use free off-peak transport have increased social inclusion – by reducing the cost barrier older people could meet one another and the release of

funds that would have been used to pay for fares now pays for socially orientated activities such as purchasing a cup of tea with friends. In general the research found that many older people used the public transport to alleviate boredom and loneliness

d) Evidence was also quoted that the transition from being a driver to not being one was eased by the availability of free off-peak transport

e) Less cars on the road also reduces pollution, chance of accidents etc. which obviously impacts on health

(see 'The Benefits of a Policy of Free Bus travel for Older People,' Paper presented to the 13<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Transport Research 15-18 July 2013- Mackett, Roger L.

<http://www.wctrs-society.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/abstracts/rio/selected/1497.pdf>)

**Grey Power asked:**

Q: What is Labour's policy to assist people with poor life quality because of inaccessibility to elective surgery?

A: The focus was more on the necessity to know how the ranking system works and what the economic benefit is to the Ministry of Health- how do we do cost/benefit?

Q: Would Labour ring-fence monies provided to District Health Boards for aged care?

A: "I would need to know how the aged care funding system works – need transparency to access criteria."

Also discussed was the undesirability of locating pensioner housing and housing for those with mental health issues at the same location.

**8. Meeting with KiwiBank - Scott Nixon (Head of Every day banking) & Peace Alefosio (Customer Segment Manager - Youth and Partnerships)**

**Grey Power asked:**

Q: Would KiwiBank consider producing a card detailing their relationship with Grey Power which could be sent to associations to distribute to members?

A: "We will look at what could occur."

Other Business:

- KiwiBank are considering a system for flagging Grey Power customers to make on-line banking easier – then they will work on a face-to-face system.
- An article to be organised for the Grey Power magazine
- The advocacy team were given a tour of KiwiBank's call centre which is huge and is completely operated in New Zealand – no overseas call centre is used.

**9. Meeting with P. Twyford – Labour Opposition Spokesperson on Housing and Transport:**

**Grey Power asked:**

Q: Why are LTO residents not entitled to access to rates rebates if they are eligible when they are required to pay the cost of rates to the retirement village owner and would he support expansion of the Auckland scheme to all councils, it be mandatory for all village owners to provide reversionary certificates and/or a change to the retirement villages act?

A: Labour would probably change the law and include reversionary titles – R. Dyson has written a Bill re LTO

Q: What is Labour's policy on the free off-peak funding issue for SuperGold card travel?

A: Labour agree with the use of the SuperGold card off-peak travel and will defend this –the scheme to be funded from the general transport funds and petrol and congestion taxes are worth considering - need a public debate regarding this. If taxes are to be contemplated reliable, cheap public transport is essential.

Q: Can social housing be leased by housing providers with retention of the current rents?

A: Labour would lease houses to social providers, encourage councils to provide social housing; we want to see more and better state houses.

Labour is critical of the sale of state houses- we believe the Govt. wants a voucher system ideology = transfer of resources.

Labour would extend income-related rents

Grey Power also asked about Labour policy regarding building smaller houses for seniors which are integrated with other types of housing and people; and could Govt. and non-profits work together to lease homes to older people to enable them to down-size. KiwiBuild was discussed?

**Grey Power's gain** - Labour would welcome the opportunity to work with Grey Power on these issues; also on other aged care concerns.

#### 9. **Meeting with Local Government (LGNZ) NZ CEO Malcolm Alexander & his team**

##### **Grey Power asked:**

Q: Would LGNZ support Grey Power in pushing for legislative change or other appropriate changes so that Licence to Occupy residents, in retirement villages, where applicable, can receive a rates rebate?

A: "We would support this in principle." – it was agreed that a joint letter from LGNZ, Grey Power and possibly the Retirement Villages Association (RVA) to the Prime Minister, Minister of Local Govt. Minister of Finance and the Minister of Trade and Social Enterprises be drafted. The Grey Power President to work with LGNZ CEO and possibly RVA National Director.

Q: Which aspects can Grey Power and LGNZ agree and advocate together on regarding the LGNZ 10 point plan and SuperGold card travel?

A: LGNZ will provide a memorandum of understanding (a draft has since been sent to Grey Power)

#### 10. **Meeting with Co-leader Greens Party= James Shaw**

Purpose of the meeting was to introduce Grey Power to the new co-leader and discuss issues of interest to older people including the possibility of a bill regarding an aged care commissioner

##### **Discussion points:**

- Energy, superannuation policies and 2 members' bills – for these please see <https://home.greens.org.nz/policysummary/energy-policy-summary>
- Housing and the Productivity Commission's report to govt. regarding 'Using land for housing – see [www.productivity.govt.nz](http://www.productivity.govt.nz)

**Grey Power's gain:** was the continued agreement of the need for an aged care commissioner and the offer for the Grey Power Federation and the Green Party to work together on relevant issues

##### a. **Meeting with Treasury = Senior Analyst, Andreas Heuser**

##### **Discussion points were:**

a) Treasury's views on the affordability of the current superannuation scheme into the future which are based on the following research documents:

Treasury Paper on KiwiSaver Fund Manager Market Efficiency and Asset Allocation (Sept 2015): <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/research-policy/tp/kiwisaver>

Treasury's 2013 Statement on the Long-Term Fiscal Position -  
<http://www.treasury.govt.nz/government/longterm/fiscalposition/2013>

Background paper on future costs of retirement income policy and ways of addressing them -  
<http://www.treasury.govt.nz/government/longterm/fiscalposition/2013/pdfs/lfts-13-bg-fcrip.pdf>

This paper points out that NZ faces a long-term fiscal challenge because of cost pressures of population ageing, healthcare and increased superannuation payments etc.

The options to meet this challenge as provided by Treasury are to:

- Index personal income tax thresholds to price inflation but not to real wage growth
- Increase the GST rate to 17.5%
- Reduce projected rate of growth in public healthcare spending
- Raise the age of eligibility for NZ Super to 67 and index payments to price inflation

Contrary to Treasury's views Grey Power's policy mission is to maintain a state-funded, universal, non-means tested superannuation scheme payable at age 65 years and it believes there is a concerted campaign by vested interests in the financial sector to convince all that the current universal pay as you go superannuation scheme with an age of eligibility of 65 is not sustainable. However research such as that from the Allianz International Pension Paper, 1/2014 = '2014 Pension Sustainability Index' ranks NZ as the third most sustainable country amongst the following in order of pension sustainability - Australia, Sweden, New Zealand, Norway, Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland, United States, Latvia, United Kingdom, Estonia, Canada, Finland, Russian Federation, Chile, Hong Kong, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Singapore, Mexico, Poland, Ireland, Romania, Germany, Malaysia, Austria, Croatia, South Korea, Bulgaria, Belgium, Hungary, Turkey, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Indonesia, Italy, South Africa, Taiwan, Spain, Greece, Malta, China, Slovenia, India, Japan, Brazil, Thailand, France, Cyprus, Czech Republic.

Peter Harris, a former CTU economist and economic advisor to Michael Cullen has also written at least 3 articles about the sustainability of NZ superannuation and the KASPANZ web-site is interesting.

b) And that the current level of superannuation is insufficient to maintain a person as an active participant in society in accordance with Positive Ageing Strategy. However, Treasury refer us to Bryan Perry's 2013 paper *The material wellbeing of older New Zealanders: background paper for the Retirement Commissioner's 2013 review*. <http://www.cffc.org.nz/assets/Documents/RI-Review-2013-Material-wellbeing-of-older-NZers.pdf> (Andreas commented that this paper refers to the relatively low poverty rates among over 65s in New Zealand)

**b. Meeting with Senior Citizen's Opposition Spokesperson- Hon Ruth Dyson**

**Grey Power asked:**

Q: What are your views on the bulk funding (to Local Authorities) of SuperGold card off-peak travel?

A: There is a need to look at the original papers and see how the funding will be spent between Local Authorities.

(She also commented that, if necessary, she could provide a written question for the Minister)

Q: What do you think about Licence to Occupy retirement village residents' inability to access rates rebates?

A: I have written a Bill on this issue but am not sure yet who will present it

Q: What are your thoughts on age-friendly cities?

A: As far as retirement villages are concerned - I am concerned that there is a social problem because all the residents are the same age group.

L. Rohloff presented his superannuation discussion paper.

**Grey Power gain:**

The invitation from Ruth to meet with Lew to discuss his paper – advocacy chair to be informed of arrangements.

Ruth also organised for J. Pentecost and M. Jackson to attend Russel Norman's valedictory speech to Parliament during the advocacy visit.

*Disclaimer: Although every effort has been made to provide accurate information in this report the author takes no responsibility for unintended inaccuracies*