

Senior Services



DECEMBER 2011



A word from Merv

It's a cliché but it really seems like the years are going by more quickly as we get older!

For me, the lead up to Christmas is a time to reflect on the last twelve months. Top of mind has been the needs of the people of Christchurch and how we were able to, and continue to, support our clients there.

As well as contacting over 23,000 clients by phone many of our staff travelled to Christchurch to assist in the Service Centres and Welfare Centres and to work alongside other government and non-government organisations.

I know that having the opportunity to help was hugely satisfying for our staff and the feedback that we received from clients was very rewarding. We know many of our Christchurch clients and staff continue to live and work in adverse conditions.

This year has seen us further streamlining processes for our clients. We have removed administrative compliance; made better use

of information already held by the Ministry and other government agencies and reviewed the way we process work. With over 100,000 people estimated to move into the 65+ age group every five years we need to ensure our information and services remain flexible, responsive and easy to use.

Applying online for New Zealand Superannuation is proving very popular with over 26 per cent of NZ Super applications being submitted online for the year ending October 2011. This figure can only continue to grow as more seniors use technology.

This year Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia, ACT, Western Australia, Northern Territory and New South Wales have signed reciprocal arrangements with the SuperGold Card programme. We expect to finalise the remaining arrangement with Queensland shortly.

Thank you for all your support and willingness to work alongside us over the last 12 months. I wish you and your families a very happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Merv Dacre
Senior Services General Manager



MINISTRY OF
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora



2011 has been a very busy SuperGold year



2011 saw SuperGold Card holders making the most of our online and email channels to receive updates about:

- seniors-specific information such as the trans-Tasman arrangement and the *My account* function
- our SuperGold special offers from TV Guide, Triton Hearing, Direct Wines, Sky Tower and Gitaway Vacations
- business partner information which at the end of September sits at 1,418 partners representing 5,733 outlets.

TelstraClear is the latest business to offer a SuperGold discount. TelstraClear has developed a SuperGold prepaid phone card which offers a 50% free credit on first recharge and 20% free credit on all further recharges.

For information on these and other offers please read our December SuperGold email update at: www.supergold.govt.nz

To sign up or find out more about SuperGold special offers, clients can:

- visit SuperGold online and view the December newsletter and special offers at: www.supergold.govt.nz
- receive email updates on the latest offers by sending their name, address, email address and client number (on the back of the card) to: seniors@msd.govt.nz



Older people to play an important role in future New Zealand society

More older people will participate in the paid workforce, older people's contribution to tax revenue will increase and the economic value of older people's paid, unpaid and voluntary work will increase.

These are some of the findings from the *Business of Ageing* Report released earlier this year which presents the results of new research on the projected future economic contribution of the growing older population.

Other research highlights are:

- 7-10 per cent of the total labour force is projected to be aged 65 and over by 2051 - up from 3-4 per cent in 2011
- older New Zealanders' earnings from paid employment are projected to rise from just over \$1 billion in 2011 to about \$10 billion by 2051
- the amount of tax paid on older New Zealanders' earnings from employment is projected to increase from about \$200 million in 2011 to about \$1.8 billion in 2051
- the value of unpaid and voluntary work by older people could rise from an estimated \$5-6 billion in 2011 to over \$22 billion by 2051
- older consumers are expected to spend over \$45 billion in 2051, compared to just over \$10 billion in 2011.

Read more about the *Business of Ageing* Report on the Ministry's website at: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/research/business-of-ageing/index.html



NGOs invited to list in directory

NGOs and organisations that support seniors are encouraged to list their details on the Family and Community Services' Family Services Directory.

There are a number of organisations that support senior citizens already listed on the directory.

The information includes contact details and service/programme details, including any costs.

The Family Services Directory is free to list information, is a great way to connect you and the people you want to help, can raise an organisation's profile and is online and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Read about the Family Services Directory at: <http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory>



Promoting email updates from Senior Services

Email is a quick and easy way for seniors to contact Senior Services and keep all of their details private and confidential.

We are using email to keep seniors regularly informed about SuperGold updates and new offers, seniors-related information and new initiatives from MSD.

NGOs are encouraged to promote this service if it can benefit their senior clients and members.

To receive email updates senior clients can send their name, address, email address, and client number (on the back of their SuperGold Card) to seniors@msd.govt.nz



Increasing numbers of seniors applying online for NZ Super

If you know of people coming up to 65 please remind them that they can apply for NZ Super online.

The online application form provides people with personalised information about:

- what they may be able to get
- what to do next
- what supporting documents they need to provide.

For some people this means they will not need to have an interview.

The application form, and other seniors-related information, can be found on our website: www.seniors.msd.govt.nz



Canterbury earthquake and/or Earthquake Commission payments and eligibility to certain entitlements

Government payments for purchase of property in the Canterbury red zone are exempt as an asset or income when determining entitlement to some types of assistance, such as Accommodation Supplement and Residential Care Subsidy.

The exemption applies for 12 months from the date the payment is received. This exemption is included in the Social Security (Income and Cash Assets Exemptions) Regulations 2011 which came into effect from 22 September 2011.

It also exempts the payments, and any income earned from any investment of the payment for 12 months after the payment is received.



Celebrating International Day of Older Persons

Senior Services staff around the country embraced the opportunity to recognize the contributions of older persons. The following is a selection of these activities.

Paeroa



Paeroa - "a desirable place for seniors" was the theme of the day in Paeroa. The focus was on ensuring people were aware of what's available and keeping connected.

Whitianga



Seniors enjoyed a day of entertainment and activities, including demonstrations by the local Tai Chi club and the Young Dance club.

Auckland, Mt Albert



Lynfield College's Big Band in action

Eat, drink and be merry was the order of the day in Mt Albert. Lynfield College students served morning tea, and entertainment was provided by the Lynfield College Big Band.

Havelock North



Staff took part in a number of events, and Minister Foss and Hastings Mayor Lawrence Yule attended events held over several days.

Wellington National Office



An exhibition from the 2011 Age Concern Patron's Award photo competition was held in the Ministry's National Office foyer.

Christchurch



Around 2,500 people attended the Seniors Expo held at Papanui High School with lots of agencies involved. Text message tutorials and advice on lodging claims with EQC were popular with attendees.



Computer expert adds capacity

Volunteer profile submitted by Volunteer Wellington.

Writer and photographer Diem-Trinh Le.



Chris Streatfield's voluntary work spanned a number of decades before he came to New Zealand in 1998.

In his list of involvements you'll find newspapers, several collectives and co-operatives, a women-in-manual-trades organisation, and some years working with the International Civil Servants Association in Geneva.

Early years were spent in the construction industry, where he was a builder and engineer. At the age of 40, when his doctor recommended "I either give up building or end up in a wheelchair", Chris switched to IT.

In line with his continuing interest in new information he studied seriously, obtaining a degree in computer science.

As volunteering has always been such an important part of his life, Volunteer Wellington was a natural stepping-stone a couple of years after arriving in New Zealand.

A stint as an interviewer gave Chris the background knowledge and understanding to move into a role where his passion, interest and skills were "more at home" looking after Volunteer Wellington's computers – and subsequent need for a database and website.

"I love to work with computers and my role with Volunteer Wellington as IT specialist gives me the opportunity to be challenged and to respond to challenges."

Since that initial volunteering assignment, many other community groups have claimed a piece of Chris's technical expertise – and energetic generosity.

The Safe Food Campaign, YWCA, Te Omanga Hospice, Literacy Aotearoa, Volunteering New Zealand, Motor Neurone Disease Association, the Tokelau Island Government and several other volunteer centres around the country, have had websites developed and maintained by Chris.

And once an IT dialogue begins, questions – especially from the uninitiated – flow thick and fast!

"The voluntary sector is extremely challenging due to lack of technological knowledge and lack of money."

Chris Streatfield continues to offer his skills and knowledge where there is need and parlous financial situations. Capacity building and professional IT systems are the result.

Perhaps the saying 'a man who loves his job never has to work a single day in his life' is true of Chris, who has recently added something new to his curriculum vitae: rescued penguins in Wellington now have a spa pool to swim in before being released, thanks to his work with the Native Bird Rescue Wellington Trust.

It's back to a spot of building, in between the IT work.

For more information about volunteering visit:

www.volunteernz.org.nz

www.volunteerwellington.org.nz

www.seniors.msd.govt.nz



Sleep, ageing and dementia

Article submitted by Rosie Gibson.

Massey University doctoral candidate Rosie Gibson is researching ways to improve sleep for people affected by dementia. Through working with those with dementia and their caregivers, Rosie hopes to better understand and help manage dementia-related sleep problems for those living in the community.



Sleep is important for all of us. But as we get older it often becomes problematic due to more shallow and fragmented sleep, early morning awakenings or daytime sleepiness.

Sleep disorders including snoring, insomnia or restless legs, also become more common as we get older. For those affected by dementia (such as with Alzheimer's disease), sleep often becomes more fragmented, and sleep timing more unusual than in healthy ageing. Some also experience confused awakenings in the night. Such sleep disruptions may contribute to some waking symptoms of dementia.

Family caregivers may also have disrupted sleep due to providing support in the night, or increased trouble getting back to sleep after an awakening.

When we are sleep deprived not only do we feel tired in the day but our mood, memory and daytime functioning can also be affected.

These changes can contribute to other medical conditions as well as increasing the risk of incidents such as falls and car accidents.

So a good night's sleep could be particularly important for the memory, functioning and coping of people with dementia as well as caregivers.

Some sleep hints and tips

Try to maintain a regular routine seven days a week.

Avoid eating or drinking too much before bed (but also avoid going to bed hungry).

Avoid alcohol, cigarettes or caffeine before bedtime.

Have a relaxing pre-sleep routine to help mind and body relax and fall asleep.

Keep the bedroom a "safe sleep" zone. This can be done through:

- making sure there is appropriate lighting for sleep and safety
- blocking out disturbing noise
- avoiding watching TV, or listening to radio in bed
- making the bed nice and comfortable
- checking your bedroom is a comfortable temperature

Sleep tips source: National Sleep Foundation

Do you or your partner have dementia and trouble sleeping?

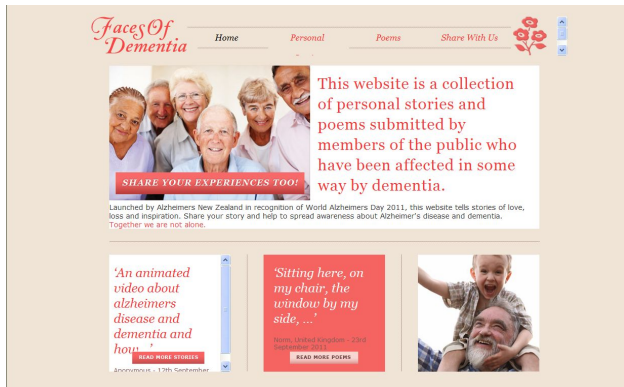
If so, you might be interested in taking part in Rosie's sleep project. She aims to better understand and improve the sleep of people with dementia and their family carers. Rosie is looking for couples who are aged 65 or over and living in the Wellington region (including Hutt Valley and Kapiti Coast). The study all takes place in the home and involves simple sleep monitoring, questionnaires and trying routine activities to help with sleep. Through this type of research, ways to help manage dementia can be improved. To find out more about this exciting study, please contact Rosie Gibson:

Free phone: 0800 SNOOZE (766693)
 Phone: 04 3800635
 Email: r.gibson@massey.ac.nz
 Post: Sleep/Wake Research Centre,
 Massey University, Private Bag 756,
 Wellington.



Alzheimers New Zealand launches website to show the true faces of dementia

Article submitted by Kimberley Ebbett, Alzheimers New Zealand.



It's frustrating for all those who just cannot see,

why I dither and muddle, and can't get myself free,

to be lucid and sharp, and efficient when pressed,

and to cope like I used to when put to the test.

If they think that I just don't try hard enough now,

and don't WANT to try, or just don't care how,

they should stand at my back and THEN try to see,

how much more frustrating it all seems for ME.

The above poem was written by a woman with Alzheimer's disease.

It expresses the frustration that people with dementia can feel when others cannot understand the difficulties they experience with everyday living.

Dementia is the fourth leading cause of death in New Zealand. Currently over 44,000 people are living with dementia in New Zealand; by 2026 this number will double, and continue to double every 20 years.

However; it is not these sobering statistics that first come to mind when talking about dementia, but the devastating effects the disease can have on an individual, their family and carers.

This is why Alzheimers New Zealand has launched a website for World Alzheimer's Day 21 September, the annual global campaign to raise awareness for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, to show the 'true' faces of dementia.

The website tells personal stories and poems of experience with the disease written by people who have all been affected by dementia.

Alzheimers New Zealand national communications advisor, Kimberley Ebbett says: "We hope the website will act as tribute to the 'true' faces of dementia and will go some way towards increasing public awareness of the challenges someone with dementia may face.

"The website also is a forum to share positive experiences and ways of coping with what can sometimes be a cruel and debilitating disease."

To visit the website or submit your story, go to: <http://facesofdementia.alzheimers.org.nz>

For further information please contact:

Kimberley Ebbett
Communications Advisor
Alzheimers New Zealand
Ph: 04 381 23 63
Cell: 027 619 1911