



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

Senior Services Newsletter



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Merv Dacre

Inside this issue:

Apply online for NZ Superannuation	1
SuperGold Card updates	2
Collecting email addresses	2
Support centre opening hours change	2
Service improvement projects	3
Healthy brain, Healthy body	3
Ask a question	4
Budget 2010	4
Future Focus changes	4

A word from Merv

Welcome to our third Senior Services newsletter developed for non-government organisations working in the seniors community.

In this newsletter read about: applying online for NZ Superannuation; SuperGold's new business partners; changes in our Support Centre opening hours; sending us your email address so we can keep in touch; linking into upcoming budget changes; information on

dementia or Alzheimer's disease; and getting answers to your questions online.

Happy reading and feel free to give us feedback by emailing us at: seniors@msd.govt.nz

Regards,

Merv Dacre, General Manager

Apply online for NZ Superannuation



If you are turning 65 you can now take the first steps in applying for New Zealand Superannuation from the comfort of your own home, by applying online.

Carol Lankshear (pictured) was one of the first people to use the new online application form, a week before she turned 65 in May.

"It was much easier than I expected and really cool that I could do it from home," says Carol.

Carol works for Senior Services at the Ministry of Social Development.

"I'm like a lot of people my age in that I'm still working full-time, so being able to do the form online is really convenient. I'd previously thought I'd need to take a day off work to get my super sorted out."

Completing the application form online provides people with personalised information about what they may be able to get, what to do next and what supporting documents they need to provide.



You can find the application form, and other seniors-related information, online at the Senior Services website, www.seniors.msd.govt.nz

SuperGold Card removes expiry dates and welcomes new business partners



SuperGold Cards (without Community Services Card (CSC) entitlement) which are issued to new cardholders no longer have an

expiry date.

“The removal of the expiry date will help us better manage the number of cards in circulation by removing the need to reissue replacement cards every three years,” says Tim Bryers, Key Account Manager SuperGold Card.

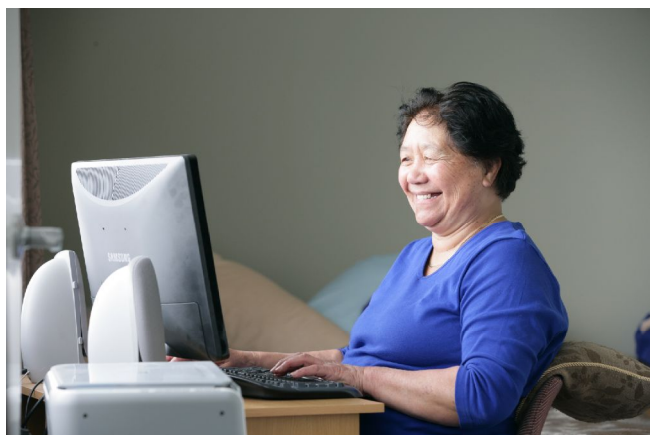
‘Combo Cards’ which double as both a Community Services Card and a SuperGold Card (indicated with CSC on the back of the card) will continue to have an expiry date as entitlement can change over time and people are reassessed

for eligibility to the CSC at least every three years. The wording ‘NOT TRANSFERABLE’ has been added to all new cards to reinforce with SuperGold Card holders that cards are for their personal use only.

News flash!!! During the past three months 77 new business partners joined the SuperGold Card programme including Burger King (72 outlets nationwide), Breakers Café and Bar chain (10 outlets nationwide), and Travelex (excluding airport outlets) nationwide.

As at the end of July there were 1,229 business partners representing 5,418 outlets. You can find the most up to date listings of SuperGold Card partners at www.supergold.govt.nz

Collecting email addresses



Today’s seniors are increasingly computer literate and tell us they want easy access to information about the services and assistance available for older people.

Email is a simple and convenient way for seniors

to contact us and for us to get relevant information to many of our clients, such as SuperGold Card updates.

We are focusing on collecting email addresses to make sure our future email communications reach as many of our seniors as possible.

If you would like to receive seniors-related information then email the following information to us at: seniors@msd.govt.nz

- Name
- Address
- Client number (found on the back of your SuperGold card)
- Email address.

A change to our support centre opening hours

The Senior Services Support Centre has changed its opening hours from 12 July. It is now open for calls from 8am - 5pm Monday to Friday.

The Support Centre is no longer open on Saturday. The change in opening hours means that we

now have more staff available when demand is highest.

For enquiries about NZ Superannuation and other assistance for those 65 plus freephone 0800 552 002 or email: seniors@msd.govt.nz

Service improvements project

A project team within Senior Services has been looking at streamlining the processes for seniors.

This includes simplifying the application process for NZ Superannuation by removing some administrative compliance, making better use of information already held by the Ministry and other government agencies, and reviewing the way we manage work.

We want contact with people to be easy and positive and our goal is to have application and review processes that are simple and straight forward.

Since our last newsletter, the project team has identified a number of exciting improvements.

You can expect to see more details in upcoming newsletters.

Healthy brain, Healthy body

Submitted by Cass Alexander, Alzheimers New Zealand



Age is the most well accepted risk for developing dementia or Alzheimer's disease.

One in 100 New Zealanders in their sixties has dementia, while nearly 25% of people aged 85 and over are diagnosed. Early onset (pre-aged 65) dementia affects one in 1,000 people.

Over 12,300 people are diagnosed per year while the rate of the disease doubles every 20 years. Despite these sobering facts, lifestyle changes can help reduce your chances and you can make these changes at any age.

Keep fit – research has proven moderate regular exercise reduces the chance of developing dementia. For people with the disease it can improve general well-being, cognitive function and sleep.

Get social – spending time with friends and family helps reduce isolation and depression, both risk factors for dementia.

Meet friends for coffee; join a walking or dancing group or network online. Alzheimers New Zealand has its own Facebook page, www.facebook.com/alzheimersnewzealand

Eat well – recent research says eating a Mediterranean diet rich in fruit, vegetables and omega 3 acids found in fish, avocado, healthy oils and nuts helps reduce dementia.

Train the brain – keeping your brain active at all stages of your life is important. Engage in a new hobby or language, do crosswords or Sudoku, play bridge or other tactical games, read or play brain games on the internet.

Alzheimers New Zealand's 23 local organisations support people with dementia and their carers, family/whānau and community through support, care, education, advocacy and awareness.

To contact your Alzheimers New Zealand organisation for information or support, please call 0800 004 001 or go to www.alzheimers.org.nz.



Ask a Question on the Senior Services website



If you have a question and need an answer then use our Ask a Question tool on the Senior Services website: www.seniors.msd.govt.nz

The quickest way to get an answer to your question is to search our *Find Answers* page.

Select the *Subject* your question relates to and enter key words in the *Search by Keyword* field.

Then select the *Search* button. The answers that best match your key words will be listed in the *Summary* window.

If you have searched *Find Answers* and can't find a suitable answer you can email us your question on the *Ask a Question* tab.

Budget 2010

From 1 October 2010, personal income tax rates will reduce and GST will increase from 12.5% to 15%.

A Temporary GST Assistance payment is being introduced and will be paid in addition to NZ Superannuation and Veteran's Pension at 2.02% of the full net rate of New Zealand Superannuation and Veteran's Pension (note that these payments will also increase as a result of the per-

sonal tax cuts). For more detailed Budget 2010 information visit the Ministry of Social Development website at:

<http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/factsheets/budget/2010/tax-package-overview.html>

Or the Inland Revenue website at: <http://www.ird.govt.nz/changes/>

Future Focus changes



Future Focus is a package of welfare reforms designed to get working-age people back into work as quickly as possible. It comes into effect

from 27 September 2010 and includes changes to abatements, hardship assistance and childcare assistance that may affect some seniors.

Abatement thresholds will be increased for people on New Zealand Superannuation and Veteran's Pensions with non-qualifying spouses who claim the married rate. This will ensure that seniors are better off from any part-time work they do.

There's also a new approach to hardship payments – the one off payments for essential and

immediate costs including power, food and clothing. The new approach is about making sure that people, including seniors, who apply for these payments get the support they require.

Childcare Assistance provides financial support for childcare and out of school care. Childcare Assistance has become less targeted over the last five years but under Future Focus the thresholds will return to 2008 levels. Again, some seniors may be affected by these changes.

For more detailed information about Future Focus visit the Ministry of Social Development website at:

<http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/factsheets/future-focus/index.html>