

# **Better Later Life – He Oranga Kaumātua 2019 to 2034**

## **Action Plan 2021-2024**

Inside front cover – include greetings as per strategy

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# Foreword

[Mihi to come]

I am very pleased to present the Better Later Life Action Plan. This sets out the Government's priorities and commitments to deliver the *Better Later Life - He Oranga Kaumātua* strategy over the next three years.

The *Better Later Life* strategy launched in 2019 and work to deliver initial actions began immediately. However last year the Government paused work, as we turned our attention to our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and managing New Zealand's economic recovery.

When the pandemic began our concern centred on the health risk to our older people. While few have contracted the disease, COVID-19 had a profound and lasting impact on our older population—including many who lost their jobs, struggled with the increased cost of living, or faced the challenge of social isolation.

As we returned to the Action Plan we recognised the need to bring more focus on action items that would contribute to New Zealand's recovery:

- supporting older workers to use their skills and experience and enabling employers to build a resilient, multigenerational workforce.
- ensuring older people have a wide range of safe, secure and affordable housing options that meet their needs and enable them to age in place.
- enabling older people to embrace technology as the world moves increasingly online – and ensuring those not online can still access the services they need day-to-day.

A major collaborative effort has gone into this plan and I'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to its development.

We are living in extraordinary times. Few could have imagined the scale of change COVID-19 would bring for New Zealand. It has intensified many of the pressing challenges New Zealand faces for our ageing population. Working together, through this plan we will ensure every New Zealander has a better later life.

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Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall  
Minister for Seniors

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Hon Carmel Sepuloni  
Minister for Social Development and Employment

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Hon Poto Williams  
Associate Minister of Housing (Social Housing)

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Hon Dr David Clark  
Minister for the Digital Economy and Communications

## Introduction

*Better Later Life – He Oranga Kaumātua 2019 to 2034* is the Government’s strategy for making the future better for older New Zealanders. Our goal is to recognise older people’s potential and create opportunities for everyone to contribute and be valued.

Significant work has already been undertaken on initial actions we incorporated into the Strategy when it was published.

Since the Strategy was published, the Minister for Seniors set up and chairs a Ministerial Steering Group who meet regularly to oversee the Strategy’s implementation. In February 2020 we developed indicators to track our progress against Strategy outcomes, and we published a baseline that we will report against.

COVID-19 has made significant changes to New Zealanders’ lives. We put together a set of seven indicators to understand its impact on older people. The indicators consider income adequacy, unemployment, benefit receipt, loneliness, elder abuse, discrimination, and housing. We used this information to inform our priorities and guide development of this first Action Plan.

This plan summarises the actions that central government agencies will deliver to support *Better Later Life – He Oranga Kaumātua* in the period 2021 to 2024.

## Approach

We focus on 25 actions that government agencies will deliver in employment, digital inclusion and housing. We will also continue to deliver the 10 initial actions that were published in the Strategy when it was launched.

The Action Plan will continue to evolve over time.

Each action in the Plan is the responsibility of one or more government departments. The approach in this Action Plan is underpinned by the five guiding principles of the Strategy:

1. Valuing people as they age- Te whakaaro nui ki te tangata i ō rātou rā ki te ao
2. Keeping people safe- Te noho haumaruru
3. Recognising diversity and that everyone is unique- Te aronui ki te āhua ake o ia tangata
4. Taking a whole-of-life and whānau-centred approach to ageing- Te whakarangatira i te kaumātuatanga mā ngā tikanga whānau
5. Taking collective responsibility to plan and act for later life -Te mahitahi ki te whakamahere i ōna rā ki te ao

This plan continues to use the following terms as defined in the Strategy:

- We use **older people** mainly to refer to people aged 65+. This recognises the diversity of this age group—that people age differently and have different aspirations and needs.
- Because New Zealand does not have a legal retirement age, we use the phrase **later life** to refer to the years after reaching eligibility for New Zealand Superannuation (NZ Super).
- We use the phrase **older workers** to refer to people aged 50+ who are working or seeking work.

## Resourcing the plan

Budget 2021 allocated \$1.965 million over four years to enable the Office for Seniors to implement *Better Later Life – He Oranga Kaumātua 2019 to 2034*.

With this funding the Office for Seniors will deliver the actions it is responsible for and coordinate and monitor the Action Plan's wider implementation. Other actions will be resourced by the responsible departments within their existing funding. Resourcing requirements may change as actions develop.

# Our priorities

## Employment

As we age our financial security depends on our ability to work, our income and our savings. New Zealanders are working for longer—1 in 4 people over the age of 65 are employed or self-employed. Older workers are a considerable proportion of New Zealand's workforce, with 34 percent of workers over the age of 50.

How we save for our later life depends on our income while we are in paid employment. Much of this saving takes place after the age of 50, but this is also when the impacts of job loss are most pronounced. On average displaced workers over 50 had an 11 percent lower employment rate after five years and 25 percent lower earnings if employed.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many older workers were advised to stay at home and were therefore unable to work, which meant that some sectors could not continue to supply services. Others in the service sector lost their jobs. This disproportionately affected Māori, Pacific people, and women.

Ongoing immigration restrictions have also highlighted the need to better value and utilise the skills and experience that already exist in our workforce and provide opportunities for older people to continue to take part in the workforce.

## Housing

For a small but growing number of older people, accessing secure, safe and affordable long-term housing can present a challenge. This affects the wider financial wellbeing of people for whom NZ Super is their primary source of income.

Since the start of the pandemic, the number of people aged 65+ who receive the accommodation supplement increased by approximately 12,000 – totalling 127,522 in March 2021.

At its worst severe housing deprivation has significant consequences for older people. These individuals may lack access to housing altogether or may only have access to sub-standard accommodation.

Older people and kaumātua should be able to continue to live in their communities or move closer to family and whānau. They need to have access to a broader range of housing options, including intergenerational living and smaller affordable housing, including rentals.

## Digital inclusion

Around a quarter of people aged 65+ do not have internet access, and more than 35% of people aged 75+ are not online. In an increasingly digital world, digital inclusion has become essential for participation in our modern society and economy. As services move online we must make sure those who do not have online access are not left behind.

The move to online services by both government and businesses has picked up pace since March 2020, and there are now fewer physical sites providing services such as banking and postal services. During the COVID-19 "lockdown" people became increasingly reliant on internet access to stay in touch with friends and family.

Digital inclusion is *an end state where everyone has equitable opportunities to take part in society using digital technologies*. It requires that individuals have access to the right devices and internet connections, have the skills to use them, are motivated to do so and trust that they will be safe in the online environment.

# Our priority actions

## Employment

<b>Better Later Life area for action:</b>  <b>Achieving financial security and economic participation</b>		
<b>What we want to achieve:</b> <p>Older workers are treated fairly, recognised for contributing expertise and skills, and have access to training and upskilling.</p> <p>As people age, they can work if they want or need to.</p>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible agency</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Pilot and evaluate an approach to help older entrepreneurs to establish sustainable businesses	Office for Seniors	Pilot completed and evaluated by October 2022
Promote the Mature Workers toolkit	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment Supported by: Office for Seniors	Ongoing
Lead good practice in the employment and support of older workers	Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission	Ongoing
Review COVID-19-response employment measures outcomes	Ministry of Social Development	Ongoing
Advise on employment service eligibility for people over 65	Ministry of Social Development	Initial advice due late 2022
Research age discrimination in the workplace	Office for Seniors	Initial research completed mid-2022
Improve reporting on employment of older workers in the public service	Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission	Public Service Census results published 2021
Develop and implement the Older Workers Employment Action Plan	Office for Seniors Supported by: Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment	Action Plan completed by early 2022

## Digital inclusion

**Better Later Life area for action:**



Enhancing opportunities for social connection

**What we want to achieve:**

As people age, they safely use technology to improve their lives.

People who do not use technology can still access the services they need.

Action	Responsible agency	Timeframe
Coordinate efforts to address digital inclusion, including for older people, as part of developing a Digital Strategy for Aotearoa	Department of Internal Affairs	Consultation on discussion document in 2021
Complete and evaluate the Digital Skills for Seniors programme	Office for Seniors	Completed 2022
Promote the framework for training for older people in digital skills	Office for Seniors	Ongoing
Ensure government services are accessible for people who are not online	Office for Seniors	Ongoing
Encourage service providers to offer digital services for older people	Ministry of Social Development	Ongoing
Seek options to address the affordability of devices and internet connections for older people	Office for Seniors	Initial advice by mid-2022

## Housing

<b>Better Later Life area for action:</b>  <b>Creating diverse housing choices and options</b>		
<b>What we want to achieve:</b> People can age in a place they call home, safely and, where possible, independently.		
Action	Responsible agency	Timeframe
Publish age friendly guidelines for local authorities	Ministry for the Environment Supported by: Office for Seniors	Guidelines published by end of 2021
Promote Residential Tenancies Amendment Act changes	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment Supported by: Office for Seniors	Completed 2022
Promote the uptake of shared living arrangements	Office for Seniors	Initial research completed by mid-2022
Support older people to make informed decisions about housing	Office for Seniors	Existing resources reviewed and updated by mid-2022
Investigate how accessibility of public buildings is addressed in the Building Code	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment	Initial advice by mid-2022
Assess Retirement Commission recommendations on the Retirement Villages Framework	Ministry of Housing and Urban Development	Timeframe to be confirmed
Support Iwi and Māori to manage and develop housing for whānau	Te Puni Kōkiri and Ministry of Housing and Urban Development Supported by: Office for Seniors	Ongoing
Increase the supply of public housing	Ministry of Housing and Urban Development	Ongoing
Prevent and reduce homelessness	Ministry of Housing and Urban Development	Phase one of Homelessness Action Plan completed 2023
Strengthen public housing support for older tenants	Kāinga Ora	Ongoing
Analyse the housing needs for New Zealand's ageing population	Office for Seniors, Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Housing and Urban Development	Analysis completed 2022

## Actions in progress

The following initial actions from the Strategy will be continued as part of the Action Plan:

<b>Better Later Life area for action:</b>		
 Promoting healthy ageing and improving access to services		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Agency</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Implement Healthy Ageing Strategy phase 2 actions	Ministry of Health	Second phase priority actions continue through to 2022
Continue to implement the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016	Office for Disability Issues	Disability Action Plan continues to 2023
Improve support for socially isolated and other vulnerable people	Ministry of Social Development	Initial research completed early 2022
Address the physical and social determinants of health	Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Development	Timeframe to be confirmed
Live Stronger for Longer falls prevention programme	Accident Compensation Corporation	Renewed to at least June 2022

<b>Better Later Life area for action:</b>		
 Enhancing opportunities for social connection		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Agency</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Prevent elder abuse and promote the Elder Abuse Response Service	Ministry of Social Development Supported by: Office for Seniors	Ongoing
Raise awareness of ageism and age discrimination	Office for Seniors	Ongoing
Increase awareness and uptake of enduring powers of attorney (EPA)	Office for Seniors	Ongoing

**Better Later Life area for action:**



**Making environments accessible**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Agency</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Support central and local government planning for population ageing	Office for Seniors	Ongoing
Continue to promote the development of Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand	Office for Seniors	Ongoing

## How we will track progress

The Ministerial Steering Group includes three Ministers whose portfolios align with the three priority areas in the Action Plan. It oversees implementation of the Action Plan. An Officials Steering Group works with the Office for Seniors to coordinate monitoring and reporting of the Action Plan. These groups will meet regularly to track progress on the implementation of the Action Plan, identify and mitigate risks and track progress and adjust priorities.

We will report on progress on the action plan to the Government every two years. These reports will be published on the Office for Seniors website [www.officeforseniors.govt.nz](http://www.officeforseniors.govt.nz)

## Next steps (timeline diagram)

- 2021 – Action Plan implementation begins
- 2022 - Outcome indicators updated
- 2023 – First Action Plan and Outcomes report published
- 2024 – Action Plan concludes
- 2025 – Five-year review of Strategy. Second Action Plan developed.

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