Introducing the Minister for Seniors, Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall

How do you feel about your new role?
It was a complete surprise to get appointed to cabinet as that doesn’t happen to many new MPs, so I’m both humbled and honoured to be the Minister for Seniors. If I’m completely honest I’d say I’m a little nervous too – simply because I’m now representing an incredibly large and important group of New Zealanders and I really want to do a good job. There are some strong connections between my portfolio responsibilities though, especially between Seniors and Associate Health, so that should help.

What are the main seniors issues you are looking forward to working on?
In the short term I’m looking forward to getting out and talking to as many people involved in the sector as possible to find out what they think and want. But the Government’s priorities in this space are progressing the Better Later Life strategy, dementia and having an Aged Care Commissioner.

What is your long-term vision for New Zealand’s seniors and ageing population?
I support the goals in the new strategy, Better Later Life – He Oranga Kaumātua. All New Zealanders should be able to live and age well.
But my view is also shaped by my personal experience. I’ve worked a number of years in hospitals and that involves seeing people at a difficult time in their lives – and it provides insight into so much more: their families; housing; finances; and their care and support. We have to recognise that some people need more and different help than others, and age definitely shouldn’t be a barrier in providing that.
I’m also well aware that ‘seniors’ aren’t a group of people who are all the same. Like all our population our over-65s are increasingly diverse and government policies and services need to recognise that.

What is your message for the holiday season?
Every time Christmas rolls around is special, because it’s about spending time with those dear to us, but this year that’s particularly true. I just hope everyone gets to be with friends and family over this time and we can look forward to a much better 2021.

In this issue
The Minister for Seniors, Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall, talks about how she feels about her new role, what she is looking forward to working on and her vision for our ageing population.
Is cost a barrier for you, or someone you know, for having a broadband connection at home?
Skinny Jump are providing low-cost prepaid broadband service for those most likely to be digitally excluded.
The Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner talks about the challenges for older workers in the job market.
It’s never too late to start being SunSmart, find out more about how you can protect your skin and eyes from the sun’s damaging rays this summer.
We catch up with one of our Community Connects grant recipients, Eastern Bay Villages, about the progress they have made since receiving the grant and the difference they are making in their community.
People of all ages should think about setting up an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA). We have a story that tells you why an EPA is so important.
International Volunteer Day

International Volunteer Day, which is held on 5 December, is a special opportunity to celebrate the amazing contributions of volunteers across the country.

One particularly committed volunteer is 75-year-old Henny Vervaart, who has been volunteering for Alzheimer’s Marlborough for 18 years.

“I was motivated to give something back to the local community who supported me so well when I was in business, which is why I decided to volunteer,” he said.

“I’m a regular volunteer driver, which I really enjoy. I particularly love having regular contact with our clients and staff and catching up with everyone. As well as driving the van, I’m also responsible for maintaining our wonderful facility in Blenheim,”

“Nowadays, my nickname is ‘Mr Fix It Man’. No job is too big or too small! I’m as happy washing dishes or cleaning the oven as I am throwing bales of pea straw onto the tray of a truck,” he said.

Henny recently received a special honour for his dedication as a volunteer and years of service.

“This year, I was humbled to be a runner up in the category for Long Service Outstanding Achievement in the Minister of Health Volunteer Awards, and to receive a Life Membership Award from Alzheimer’s Marlborough,” he said.

“Volunteering gives me a real sense of satisfaction and over the years I’ve come to appreciate just how much Alzheimer’s Marlborough values its volunteers.”

Alzheimer’s NZ Chief Executive, Catherine Hall has also recognised all their valuable volunteers.

“Alzheimer’s NZ and local Alzheimer organisations from Whangarei to Invercargill could not exist without volunteers. We are so grateful for the exceptional contribution of all the volunteers helping to support people living with dementia in their local communities, and with the work we’re doing to represent people living with dementia nationally,” she said. Thank you to all the incredible volunteers across the country. If you don’t already volunteer and are interested in lending a hand to Alzheimer’s NZ, or any other organisation, reach out!

For more information on volunteering you can also go to the Volunteering New Zealand website www.volunteeringnz.org.nz

Skinny Jump

Skinny Jump

Skinny Jump specifically focuses on providing service to groups that the Government has identified as being most at risk of digital exclusion, which includes seniors.

Skinny Jump is flexible prepaid broadband: Only $5 for 30GB of data, no contracts or credit checks, and the modem comes free of charge. Just top up as you go. You can get up to a maximum of 150GB every month (and it will only cost you $25).

Skinny Jump is a not-for-profit service and they don’t use your information to promote or sell other products either.

For a lot of people cost is a major barrier to having internet access. Skinny is helping more kiwi homes access the digital world through their Skinny Jump low-cost prepaid broadband service.

If this sounds like something you might be interested in, or you know someone in this position, you can find out the areas where Skinny Jump is available through the Skinny Jump website www.skinny.co.nz/jump/about

You can only sign up for Skinny Jump through one of their local partners that includes public libraries and other community organisations. You can find out about how to contact your local partner and make an appointment to sign up through the Skinny Jump website www.skinny.co.nz/jump/about

Another barrier to using the internet is learning how to use technology. Digital Inclusion Alliance Aotearoa (DIAA) is one of Skinny’s partners for delivering Skinny Jump and is also one of the Office for Seniors funded providers for delivering digital literacy training for seniors. Their Better Digital Futures programme supports seniors to learn new skills and build confidence with computers and the internet. If you are interested in learning more or know someone you think could benefit from this training, go to their website www.steppingup.nz

Skinny Jump

Henny Vervaart
Many have dedicated lifetimes to caring for loved ones and households, but some have also lost out due to discriminatory barriers to fair and equal pay during their working life.

I encourage everyone to seek out the free apprenticeships, no age cap, funded by the Government, and complain if they are denied the initiative. Do not write yourself off – we learn and embark on new paths all the time. Seize the opportunity!

In the report released by the Human Rights Commission, Ko O Tika, ko To Reo Your Rights, Your Voice, in October 2020 we are calling on the Government to establish a human rights commissioner for Older Persons to enhance the call for equal employment opportunities for older workers. We need a concerted effort from the Government, employers, unions, and communities to advance this goal.

Business NZ has developed a mature workers toolkit to help businesses hire, develop, and retain talent. Employers must have transition planning to help keep the valuable talents and loyalty of older workers engaged.

Our older workers continue to contribute to the wealth and prosperity of our families, communities, and nation. We all count if we are to recover as a nation from this crisis.

Be SunSmart this Summer

In Summer, when ultraviolet (UV) radiation levels are particularly high in New Zealand, it’s especially important to be SunSmart.

It is possible to get sunburnt in a very short time, so if you are down at the beach, out in the garden, or just popping down to the shop, whenever you are outdoors, Slip, Slop, Slap and Wrap to protect your skin and eyes.

Slip
Slip on a shirt with long sleeves. Fabrics with a tighter weave and darker colours will give you better protection from the sun. Slip into the shade of an umbrella or a leafy tree.

Slop
Slop on plenty of sunscreen of at least SPF 30. Apply 20 minutes before going outside and reapply every two hours and especially after being in water or sweating.

Slap
Slap on a hat with a wide brim or a cap with flaps. More people are sunburnt on the face and neck than any other part of the body.

Wrap
Wrap on some sunglasses. Choose close fitting, wrap around style sunglasses. Not all sunglasses protect against UV radiation, so always check the label for the sun protection rating.

Sunburn at any age should be avoided. Around 70% of melanoma cases occur in people aged 50 years and older and UV damage adds up over our lifetime, but it’s never too late to start being SunSmart to prevent further damage.

For more information go to the SunSmart website www.sunsmart.org.nz
Kiwi Access Card

Have you heard of the Kiwi Access Card? It is designed to give those without access to a valid passport or driver licence a convenient way to prove their identity and age. The card is recognized across New Zealand, it can fit neatly in a wallet and features the cardholder’s photo on the front.

Even if you are well past the stage in life of getting asked for ID to access age restricted goods and services, there are still some important things that you may need proof of identity for, such as opening a bank account. The Kiwi Access Card can make this a lot easier.

It is also helpful for those who are blind or have low vision as the Kiwi Access Card includes braille features for safety and security.

The Kiwi Access Card costs $55 including GST and is valid for 10 years from the issue date.

How to apply

You can pick up the application form from a participating NZ Post Shop or AA Centre, or download the form from the Kiwi Access website www.kiwiaccess.co.nz

Once you apply it will take roughly 2 weeks to receive your Kiwi Access Card.

For more information, go to the Kiwi Access website www.kiwiaccess.co.nz or email info@kiwiaccess.co.nz between 9am-5pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).
**Phishing season – advice from CERT NZ**

The festive season brings a flurry of online shopping and deliveries, it also brings opportunities for scammers to try and trick us into sharing our personal and financial information.

One of the most common ways they do this is known as phishing, and it's often carried out through email. A phishing email is where a scammer sends an email pretending to be from a well-known organisation or business. The email will likely ask the recipient to either click on a link or attachment, or enter personal and financial information.

A common phishing email in the lead up the holiday season is the ‘parcel delivery’ scam. They appear to come from well-recognised freight, courier or postal companies, and claim the recipient has a pending parcel delivery. The message asks the recipient to click a link or attachment to accept delivery, except it's false. It's a trick to get us to enter personal information or make a payment to have the non-existent parcel delivered.

**Things to check**
It’s exciting to be notified of a delivery, but it pays to check a couple of things.

- If you’re not expecting a delivery, don’t click the link or open the attachment.
- Call the courier company to check the delivery notice is legitimate.

**How to protect yourself**
Phishing can be hard to detect, but easy to fall for. CERT NZ recommends these simple steps to help keep secure.

- Use unique passwords for all your online accounts. This means if you’ve shared your login information, only that account is exposed, and you only have to change that one password.
- Add two-factor authentication to your online accounts, like your bank and email. It adds an extra layer of security. That way, if a scammer gets your login details, they still can’t access your account.

Go to the CERT NZ website [www.CERT.govt.nz](http://www.CERT.govt.nz) for more information.

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**International Day of People with Disabilities**

Did you know that 24% of New Zealand’s population has a disability? That number jumps even higher when age is accounted for. The 2013 Household Disability Survey shows that 21% of adults under 65 were disabled compared to 59% of those 65 or over. This means that the International Day of People with Disabilities, happening this year on December 3, is particularly relevant to seniors.

The day aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development, and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

The 2020 theme ‘Not all Disabilities are Visible’ also focuses on spreading awareness and understanding of disabilities that are not immediately apparent, such as mental illness, chronic pain or fatigue, sight or hearing impairments, diabetes, brain injuries, neurological disorders, learning differences and cognitive dysfunctions, among others.

For many disabled people, no matter their age, accessibility of buildings, information, events, transport, services and products is a challenge.

Important work is underway within government, and in partnership with an alliance of non-government organisations the Access Alliance, including the seniors community, on how legislation, information and advice will accelerate accessibility in New Zealand.

Find out more about International Day of People with Disabilities online at [idpwd.org](http://idpwd.org)
An Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA) is a legal document that will allow you to select who will be responsible for making important decisions on your behalf, if you are not able to because of sickness or an injury. An EPA can provide you with peace of mind ahead of time that your wishes will be followed.

**There are two types of EPA**

A Property EPA covers decisions about money and assets and can be put into effect at any time. More than one attorney can be chosen to act for you for this EPA.

A Personal Care and Welfare EPA covers decisions about your health, accommodation and care. It comes into effect only if a medical professional or Family Court decides a person is ‘mentally incapable’. Only one attorney can be selected for this EPA.

**How do I get an EPA?**

When you’ve decided who you’d like as your attorney and what you want them to do, you need to arrange for a lawyer to be your witness. They will make sure you understand all your options, what the EPA document means, and that it meets all legal requirements.

Creating an EPA does cost money but there are ways to bring down the cost. Some lawyers and other legal professionals offer a SuperGold Card discount so make sure you ask. They may also let you pay the cost off over time.

For more information on getting an EPA go to the SuperSeniors website [www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz](http://www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz).

Most senior drivers are experienced, safe drivers who are great role models for younger drivers, but as we get older, health changes can impact our ability to drive.

When you turn 65, the process for renewing your drivers’ licence changes. The 10-year renewal period shortens as you’ll be asked to renew your licence with a medical certificate when you turn 75. For example, if you renewed your licence at 67, it will only be valid for 8 years as you will need to renew it again when you turn 75.

You will receive a driver licence reminder in the mail before your 75th birthday. You’ll be asked to complete a driver licence application form and book an appointment with your local health centre to get a medical check-up to make sure you’re still safe behind the wheel.

Your doctor or nurse will advise whether you’re medically fit to drive. If you are ok to drive or drive with some conditions, you then take your application with the medical certificate to your local driver licencing agent to apply for your new licence.

It can be upsetting if you find out you’re not fit to drive. Keeping mobile is important for everyone. The good news is there are several options available to help you get around including public transport, which is free during off peak times with your SuperGold card.

You can find about more about the driver licence process for seniors at the NZTA website [www.nzta.govt.nz](http://www.nzta.govt.nz).
SuperGold Card special offers

Check out the latest special offers for our super seniors through the SuperGold website.

Save $10 when you spend $30

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*Example deals only, change daily*

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Valid for bookings in December. Travel February/March 2021. Terms and conditions apply.

30% off retail price

Conditions: The 30% off discount is taken off the retail price and excludes Everyday Low Price Products and Offers.
Disclaimer: The SuperGold Card programme enables independent businesses to offer discounts and benefits to older New Zealanders. The Ministry of Social Development is not associated with any seller and does not guarantee any representation made by a seller and any future dispute will need to be taken up with the seller not the Ministry of Social Development. Offers range in size and nature and cardholders should always check to see if a better offer is available locally.