

Chair, Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

## **Release of a draft strategy for New Zealand's ageing population for consultation**

### **Proposal**

1. This paper seeks Cabinet agreement to release the attached draft strategy, *Better Later Life – 2019 to 2034* (the draft strategy) for public consultation.

### **Executive Summary**

2. In February 2018 Cabinet agreed to the development of a new strategy for New Zealand's ageing population [CAB-18-MIN-0039 refers]. In May 2018, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee agreed that a full public engagement process be followed to develop the new strategy, with two phases of stakeholder engagement over the period June 2018 to February 2019 [SWC-18-MIN-0062 refers].
3. The purpose of the new strategy is to replace the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy 2001 (PAS). The PAS was ground-breaking when first introduced, but since then the context has changed significantly.
4. A discussion document was developed that outlined the current landscape for older New Zealanders and highlighted future opportunities and challenges. An initial phase of public consultation on the discussion document was undertaken over an eight-week period between June and August 2018.
5. The top four themes to emerge during the analysis of submissions on the discussion document were housing, health, financial security and work. Many of these and other themes raised in the consultation are cross-cutting and complex. For example, affordability and accessibility came up in relation to financial security, housing and health. To effectively address these themes, the new strategy will need to indicate the cross-government work that will be required.
6. The draft strategy acknowledges other relevant government strategies and work programmes, and provides a broad perspective across the challenges and opportunities faced by current and future older New Zealanders. The draft strategy also highlights a range of areas that are not covered as extensively by existing strategies or work streams, and indicates overarching, unifying themes.
7. The draft strategy for the second round of public engagement is attached to this paper (see Appendix 1). If the Committee agrees, the draft strategy will be released for consultation in late March/early April 2019. This will help officials test and refine it with New Zealanders, and make sure it is fit for purpose.

8. There are five principles underpinning the draft strategy:
  - Valuing people as they age
  - Keeping people safe
  - Recognising diversity and that everyone is unique
  - Taking a whole-of-life and whānau-centred approach to ageing
  - Taking collective responsibility to plan and act for later life
9. The draft strategy is based around five key areas for action:
  - Preparing for financial and economic security
  - Improving access to health and social services
  - Providing housing choices and options so people can age in the community
  - Enhancing opportunities for social connection and participation
  - Providing accessible built environments so people can participate in their community
10. An action plan to implement the strategy will be developed over the next two years. To maintain momentum, I have included a set of possible initial priorities under each outcome area, some of which are already or soon to be underway.
11. Following public consultation on the draft strategy, I plan to report back to Cabinet in August/September 2019 with the results of the consultation and a final draft of the strategy for release.

## **Background**

12. In February 2018 Cabinet agreed to the development of a new strategy for New Zealand's ageing population [CAB-18-MIN-0039]. The purpose of this new strategy is to replace the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy 2001 (PAS).
13. The PAS was ground-breaking when first introduced, but since then much has changed. Population ageing, technological advances, increasing diversity, housing affordability issues and climate change are all more prominent now than they were in the early 2000s.
14. In May 2018 the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee agreed that:
  - a new strategy be developed over the period June 2018 to March 2019
  - a full public engagement process be followed to develop the new strategy, with two phases of stakeholder engagement over the period June 2018 to February 2019 to first assist with the development of, and then to refine, the new strategy [SWC-18-MIN-0062].

## **We need a new strategy for New Zealand's ageing population**

15. As with other OECD nations, New Zealand's population is ageing. By 2034 we expect that there will be over 1.2 million people 65 and over, almost a quarter of our population, and nearly 180,000 people aged 85 and over. The fact people are living longer is something to celebrate, and something that we all need to prepare for.

16. Our ageing population is becoming increasingly diverse. Our family structures are changing, and we each bring a vast array of life experiences with us. Technological advances are swiftly changing the ways we interact with each other, the ways we work, and the ways in which services can be delivered.
17. The Positive Ageing Strategy 2001 focused on those aged 65+. The new draft strategy also focuses on those aged 65+, as well as considering the next generation of older people currently aged 50 – 64 and how they are preparing for their later life. This recognises that our experiences earlier in life influence how well we live as we age and that those in their 50s today will be 65+ by the end of this strategy.
18. We need a road map to focus our energy and efforts for the future. The new strategy will act as a mechanism to guide change and action. Central and local government, non-government organisations, communities, families, whānau and individuals will be enabled to take action to prepare for our ageing population.

### **Housing, health, financial security and work emerged as key issues through the consultation**

19. A discussion document which outlined the current situation for older New Zealanders and highlighted future opportunities and challenges was developed in the first half of 2018. An initial phase of public consultation on the discussion document was undertaken over an eight-week period between June and August 2018.
20. As part of the consultation, 12 stakeholder workshops and hui were held around New Zealand. This included three thematic workshops in Auckland focusing on Pacific people, migrants, and older workers, as well as three hui with Māori from around New Zealand. I attended a number of these workshops to hear people's concerns first-hand. Other groups and organisations hosted a further 28 workshops and meetings. In total, approximately 1,000 people attended workshops, hui and whānau conversations to discuss their views of what should be included in the new strategy.
21. There was a high level of interest and engagement in the discussion document, and a total of 469 submissions from individuals, couples, whānau, groups and organisations was received. The majority of these came from individuals, with 98 submissions from groups and organisations. The quality and depth of information provided in the submissions meant that it has taken longer to develop the draft strategy than expected. The timeline for the development of the new strategy has now been reviewed and is provided in the proposed implementation section of this paper.
22. My officials analysed the submissions and information gathered at the workshops and hui. From this analysis, a number of key themes were identified. The top four themes to emerge were housing, health, financial security and work. Further information on the top themes can be found in Appendix 2. A full summary of submissions has been released and is available online.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.superseniors.ms.govt.nz/documents/ageing-population-consultation/summary-of-submissions-report.pdf>

## **We need cross-government action to effectively address these issues**

23. Many of the issues raised in the consultation are cross-cutting and complex. For example, affordability and accessibility came up in relation to financial security, housing and health. The draft strategy highlights the importance of working collaboratively across government in order to effectively address these issues.
24. A number of government strategies seek to address issues that affect older people and their whānau, including:
  - the *New Zealand Disability Strategy (2016)*, *Healthy Ageing Strategy (2016)*, *New Zealand Carers' Strategy (2008)* and the draft *Careers System Strategy*.
25. There are also a range of relevant cross-agency work streams including:
  - housing, employment, mental wellbeing, social wellbeing, family violence and sexual violence, and digital inclusion.
26. The draft strategy does not revisit the key themes and priorities in these other strategies and work streams. Rather, it aims to give a broad perspective across the range of challenges and opportunities faced by current and future older New Zealanders. It recognises the importance of starting early by focusing on people in the 50 – 64 age group, the upcoming cohort of older people.
27. The draft strategy aims to provide a common platform for central and local government to develop and implement policies and meet agreed goals. This will enable a coherent and consistent approach across government to support our ageing population. This common platform will also enable non-government organisations, businesses and communities to more easily work together to achieve better outcomes for older New Zealanders.
28. The draft strategy also aligns with the Government's priorities, in particular:

*Improving the wellbeing of New Zealanders and their families by:*

  - *ensuring everyone who is able to, is earning, learning, caring or volunteering*
  - *supporting healthier, safer and more connected communities.*
29. Following the public consultation in 2018, officials worked with other agencies to determine specific areas where work is already underway to address the issues identified. Early priorities and actions were also identified and discussed with other agencies, and are highlighted in the 'Initial priorities' section of this paper.

### *Out of scope*

30. The draft strategy does not focus on macro level financial policy, superannuation, KiwiSaver, or tax settings. Nor does it address sector-based ageing workforce issues. These issues need to be considered by the sectors themselves, sometimes in conjunction with other government agencies.

## Contents of the draft strategy

31. The draft strategy is designed to highlight the value of our ageing population and drive action to ensure that all New Zealanders recognise their potential and create opportunities for everyone to participate, contribute and be valued as they age.
32. The strategy will be guided by the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi: partnership, protection and participation. The strategy identifies ways to meet the needs and aspirations of Kaumātua Māori based on research and feedback received. In addition, the final version of the draft strategy for public release will include Te Reo translations of headings.

### *Vision*

33. The proposed vision of the strategy is *Older New Zealanders lead valued, connected and fulfilling lives*. This reflects what we heard throughout the consultation and recognises that, while people come from a range of backgrounds and life experiences, there are some fundamental things we all have in common.

### *There are five guiding principles*

34. Underpinning the draft strategy are five principles. These principles will guide our approach to responding to New Zealand's ageing population.
  - *Valuing people as they age*. Older people should be treated with respect and dignity, and their past and current contributions to society, their communities, families and whānau should be recognised and valued. Older people have the right to make decisions, and have their voices heard.
  - *Keeping people safe*. Older people should be safe, and be able to live free from abuse and neglect.
  - *Recognising diversity and that everyone is unique*. The strategy recognises that people are diverse with differing needs and aspirations. This includes the need for equitable access to services.
  - *Taking a whole-of-life and whānau-centred approach to ageing*. A whole-of-life approach acknowledges that how people age is influenced by their life experiences, genetics, how well they live and have been able to prepare for ageing. It also recognises the benefits of working with whānau, rather than just the individual in isolation.
  - *Taking collective responsibility to plan and act for later life*. The strategy recognises that everyone has a role to plan and act towards a better future for older people in New Zealand.

### *The strategy is based around five key areas for action*

35. The strategy focuses on five key areas related to the themes that came through in the consultation.
36. These key areas need to be addressed so older New Zealanders can have better later lives, and New Zealand can better prepare for our ageing population.
- *Preparing for financial and economic security.* Economic and financial security strongly link to wellbeing. The strategy acknowledges the benefits of work and that we all need to prepare financially for retirement.
  - *Improving access to health and social services.* The strategy recognises that people need to be able to access services that are appropriate and relevant to them. Services need to recognise people's diverse needs.
  - *Providing housing choices and options so people can age in the community.* New Zealand's ageing population will require a range of housing options to meet people's preferences, needs and circumstances. The strategy points to further work in this area.
  - *Enhancing opportunities for social connection and participation.* Social connection is critical for wellbeing as people grow older. The strategy recognises the need to support people to stay connected and participate in their community in the way that they choose.
  - *Providing accessible built environments so people can participate in their community.* The strategy recognises that built environments that are accessible are a key factor in enabling older people to participate in their communities. The value of initiatives such as the World Health Organization's Age-friendly Cities and Communities programme<sup>2</sup> and the Ministry for Social Development and Office for Disability Issues' accessibility work programme [CAB-18-MIN-0591 refers] –include the cab ref here.

### **Possible initial priorities**

37. There is already a range of work underway across government that will support the strategy's outcomes. This includes, for example, work to progress my current priorities: proposed enhancements to the SuperGold Card, combatting elder abuse, supporting older people in the workforce, and providing housing options appropriate for older people.
38. A detailed action plan to implement the strategy will be developed over the two years following the launch of the strategy. To maintain momentum in the meantime, I have identified some areas that I would like to prioritise across the different outcome areas that are included in the draft strategy.
39. The proposed priorities include some key government initiatives already underway, as well as some proposed new initiatives where it is in a position to start making a significant impact on later lives. s 9(2)(f)(iv)  
Some of the priorities focus particularly on vulnerable people, such as those subject

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization, 2007. *Global Age-friendly Cities: A guide*. Retrieved from [http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global\\_age\\_friendly\\_cities\\_Guide\\_English.pdf](http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf)

to elder abuse, those with insecurity of rental tenure and those who are socially isolated.

40. Several priorities have broader benefits for all older New Zealanders, such as the continued implementation of the Age-friendly Cities and Communities programme and encouraging positive attitudes to older people. The proposed priorities are outlined below, and likely lead agencies are noted after each priority.

*Preparing for financial and economic security*

- Encourage workplaces to employ people over the age of 50 and provide guidance to employers on supporting older workers to contribute their potential. Reducing barriers to older workers' employment and enabling them to reach their potential will both benefit the individual and help address skills shortages. [Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment]
- The State Sector to role model good practice in the employment and support of an ageing workforce. There is an opportunity to trial new approaches that could be used outside of government in the longer term, while making a difference to a large number of State Sector employees. [State Services Commission]
- Identify opportunities to further enhance of the SuperGold Card to improve awareness and access to discounts. [Ministry for Social Development]

*Improving access to health and social services*

- Continue to implement the Healthy Ageing Strategy (2016) and the NZ Disability Strategy (2016). [Ministry of Health and Office for Disability Issues, respectively]
- Work across government and social sector agencies to improve access and coordinate assistance to socially isolated and other vulnerable older people and develop initiatives that better address the physical and social determinants of health. [Ministry of Health<sup>3</sup>] [note this is a priority under the social connection area as well]

*Providing housing choices and options so people can age in the community*

- Reform the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 to improve the security and stability of tenure, promote good-faith relationships in the rental environment, and ensure there are appropriate protections in place for both landlords and tenants. [Ministry of Housing and Urban Development]
- Increase the supply of public housing. [Ministry of Housing and Urban Development]
- Strengthen Housing New Zealand's focus on tenants' needs and ensure older people in public housing feel secure and supported. [Ministry of Housing and Urban Development]
- Reduce homelessness and support people who are at risk of homelessness. [Ministry of Housing and Urban Development]
- Establish a cross-government working group to identify and progress options to improve housing options for older people and better enable older people to live

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<sup>3</sup> Healthy Ageing Strategy 2016

in age- and disability-friendly homes.<sup>4</sup> [Ministry of Housing and Urban Development]

#### *Enhancing opportunities for social connection and participation*

- Combat elder abuse by raising awareness and reducing its prevalence. Elder abuse has a significant adverse impact on the wellbeing of older people. Its incidence is likely to increase as the population ages, and reporting may increase as people become more aware of this issue. [Joint Venture – Family Violence and Sexual Violence, Ministry of Social Development]
- Improve digital skills and inclusion of older people to ensure they are not excluded from the benefits of a technological world. Older people, especially those on low incomes, are less likely to use the internet than younger people and services are increasingly being provided electronically. [Ministry of Education/Department of Internal Affairs]
- Encourage positive attitudes to older people and raise awareness of age discrimination. While many people say they respect older people, some see them as a burden and there are opportunities to portray them more positively. [Office for Seniors]
- Work across government and social sector agencies to improve access and coordinate assistance to socially isolated and other vulnerable older people and develop initiatives that better address the physical and social determinants of health. [Ministry of Health<sup>5</sup>]

#### *Providing accessible built environments so people can participate in their community*

- Encourage local authorities to continue to plan for, and take action to respond to, an ageing population. Some councils already recognise that an ageing population will change the demands placed on services and infrastructure and affect councils' ability to fund these through rates. [Department of Internal Affairs]
- Continue to encourage the development of the Age-friendly Cities and Communities programme. This programme aims to facilitate the inclusion of older people in the community and include their perspectives and needs. [Office for Seniors]

41. It is important that we measure our progress towards implementing the strategy. Officials will develop an outcomes framework that will be released alongside the action plan (see Table 1, paragraph 45).

### **Risks**

42. I note that there are significant expectations of the strategy from a range of engaged stakeholders who want to see action. I have chosen to include a small number of initial priorities, many of which are already underway, that will have an impact across the five areas. Another key feature of these priorities is that action can be taken at all levels, from individuals through to government agencies.

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<sup>4</sup> Healthy Ageing Strategy 2016

<sup>5</sup> Healthy Ageing Strategy 2016



43.

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

### Proposed implementation

44. If authorised by Cabinet, I propose that the second phase of consultation be launched with the release of the draft strategy in March/April 2019.
45. Following consultation I plan to report back to Cabinet with the results of the consultation and a final draft of the strategy with initial priority actions. The plan for engagement and key next steps are outlined in the table below.

*Table 1: Timeline for development of the new strategy*

<i>Late March/early April 2019</i>	Public release of the draft strategy.
<i>April – May 2019</i>	Consultation on the draft strategy. Distribution of the draft strategy to stakeholders. Engagement and feedback on the draft strategy.
<i>June – July 2019</i>	Revision of the draft strategy.
<i>August – September 2019</i>	Seek Cabinet approval to launch the new strategy.
<i>1 October 2019</i>	Launch of the new strategy, and initial priority areas and actions, on the International Day of Older Persons.
<i>February 2021</i>	Launch of action plan and release of outcomes framework.

### Consultation

46. Consultation has been undertaken with the Ministries of: Social Development, Business, Innovation and Employment, Justice, Education, Housing and Urban Development, Health, Transport, and Foreign Affairs and Trade; the Ministries for: the Environment, Women, Pacific Peoples, and Primary Industries; the Departments of: Corrections, and Internal Affairs; the Office for Disability Issues; Inland Revenue; Te Puni Kōkiri; New Zealand Transport Agency; the Office of Ethnic Communities; the New Zealand Police; Veterans' Affairs; Accident Compensation Corporation; the Treasury; Stats NZ; the State Services Commission; the Tertiary Education Commission; and Housing New Zealand Corporation.
47. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has been informed.

## Financial Implications

48. There are no direct financial implications arising from this paper. The costs of the consultation and any other costs associated with the development of the new strategy will be met within baseline.

49. s 9(2)(f)(iv)

## Legislative Implications

50. There are no legislative implications arising from this paper.

## Impact Analysis

51. A regulatory impact analysis is not required.

## Human Rights

52. The proposals in this paper are consistent with the *New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990* and the *Human Rights Act 1993*.

## Gender Implications

53. Men and women have different experiences of ageing. Women make up a larger proportion of the population aged 65+, and older women are more likely than older men to live with some form of disability. Women are at higher risk of poverty in later life for a number of reasons, including:

- greater participation than men in unpaid work (such as parenting, caring and volunteering) than paid work throughout their lives
- the gender pay gap
- the need to make savings last longer due to longer life expectancy.

54. Women can be penalised again in old age when attitudes about women are compounded with ageism. Non-European women face additional risk of prejudice.

55. Women are a diverse group and future older women will have significant differences to the current older demographic. These differences include changing family structures, greater ethnic diversity, and greater time in the paid workforce. The new strategy has considered gender in order to ensure the needs of older women are met.

## Disability Perspective

56. Disability increases with age and the Stats NZ Disability Survey: 2013 found that nearly 60 percent of people aged over 65 have some form of disability. The issues facing older people who experience a disability or have a chronic health condition will be important considerations in the development of the new strategy.

57. The Office for Disability Issues has provided input into the development of the draft strategy and will ensure that when implemented it will align with the objectives of the *New Zealand Disability Strategy (2016)* and the accessibility work programme [CAB-18-MIN-0591].

### **Publicity**

58. I propose a proactive and transparent approach to assist in managing interest from stakeholders and the media in the finalisation of the new strategy. In line with this approach, I intend to make this paper and the draft strategy, once finalised, publicly available online.
59. Supplementary resources will be released along with the draft strategy, including the one-page view and a brief summary to support the consultation.
60. The Office for Seniors will manage stakeholder and media enquiries, and public announcements on the draft strategy, in co-ordination with my office.

### **Proactive Release**

61. I propose to proactively release this paper following the release of the draft strategy for consultation. At this stage the planned date for release of the draft strategy falls within the 30 day period for proactive release. If the release of the draft strategy is delayed, it would also be necessary to delay the release of the Cabinet paper.

### **Recommendations**

62. It is recommended that the Committee:
1. **agree** to the release of the attached draft strategy for New Zealand's ageing population for the proposed second phase of public consultation
  2. **authorise** the Minister for Seniors to make minor editorial, design and formatting changes to the draft strategy as required prior to its public release
  3. **note** that the Minister for Seniors will report back to the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee by September 2019 to seek its agreement to the finalisation and launch of the new strategy and to the process for the development of an action plan for the new strategy.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Tracey Martin

Minister for Seniors