



11 March 2022

Tēnā koe

On 3 January 2022, you emailed the office of Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall, Minister for Seniors, requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. The proportion of staff in the Office for Seniors who are over 50 years of age;*
- 2. Information on processes used by the Office over the last three years to consult with those living in retirement/lifestyle villages. This should include specific examples; Papers, discussion documents and any final advice given to you (and previous Ministers) by the Office on ageism in NZ workplaces, including the public service, produced since 1 January 2018.*

On 13 January 2022, your request was transferred to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) in accordance with section 14(b)(ii) of the Act.

On 14 February 2022, the Ministry advised you that more time was required to respond to your request, as consultations necessary to make a decision on the request are such that a proper response to the request cannot reasonably be made within the original time limit. In accordance with section 15(1) and 15A of the Act, you were advised that the Ministry's decision will be with you no later than 8 April 2022.

The Ministry does not record data on the age of its employees, therefore, question one of your request has been refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the Ministry does not hold this information and has no reason to believe it is held by another government department.

The Office for Seniors maintains strong relationships with a wide range of stakeholders across New Zealand. Stakeholders are regularly invited to connect with the Office for Seniors and provide feedback on their work. The Office for Seniors received comment on the Better Later Life Strategy during its development in 2018 and 2019. In developing the strategy, the Office for

Seniors received feedback from a number of retirement village communities and organisations, including from:

- Informal group of residents at Coastal Villas Retirement Village
- Selwyn Oaks Village
- The Retirement Village Residents Association of New Zealand Inc.

A summary of submissions can be found on the Office for Seniors website, as well as the organisations listed above on pages 71-73, at the following link:

- www.officeforseniors.govt.nz/assets/documents/our-work/better-later-life/Better-Later-Life-Strategy/Better-Later-Life-summary-of-submissions-report.pdf.

An additional consultation was undertaken in 2019, where the Office for Seniors received feedback including from:

- Kerikeri Retirement Village Ltd (Charitable Company)
- New Zealand Aged Care Association
- Papamoa Beach Retirement Village

A summary of submissions can be found on the Office for Seniors website, as well as the organisations listed above on pages 49-51, at the following link:

- www.officeforseniors.govt.nz/assets/documents/our-work/better-later-life/Better-Later-Life-Strategy/Better-Later-Life-summary-of-submissions-report.pdf.

The Office for Seniors coordinates regular meetings for the Minister for Seniors with representatives of people living in retirement villages as well as residents. Below is a list of meetings that the Office for Seniors has provided support to the Minister over the past 3 years.

Meetings held in 2019:

- Meeting with Retirement Village Residents Association of New Zealand (RVRANZ), 12:00pm on 23 March 2019
- Visit to Waitakere Gardens Retirement Village, 2:00pm on 1 October 2019
- Dinner with the Retirement Village Association Executive Committee (RVA), 6:00pm on 6 November 2019
- Ministers' speech as the Retirement Villages Stakeholders' Forum 2019, 26 November 2019

Meetings held in 2020:

- Meeting with John Collyns, Executive Director of the Retirement Villages Association, 3 pm on Tuesday 9 June 2020
- Visit to Malvina Major Retirement Village, Wednesday 8 July 2020
- Visit to Huntleigh Apartments and Home (Huntleigh), Friday 17 July 2020.
- Visit to Haumaru Housing's Wilsher Village, Friday 11 September 2020
- Meeting with the Retirement Commissioner, Jane Wrightson, Friday 11 December 2020

Meetings held in 2021:

- Meeting with John Collyns Executive Director of the Retirement Villages Association, 4:00pm on Wednesday 24 February 2021
- Meeting with Retirement Villages Residents Association, 11:30am on Thursday 18 March 2021
- Visit to Summerset's retirement village, Thursday 1 April 2021
- Visit to Malvina Major Retirement Village 3:00pm Thursday 22 April 2021,
- Visit to Parkwood Lodge, 12:00pm to 1:00pm on Friday 23 April 2021
- Visit to Whitby Lakes Retirement Village, 2:00pm Wednesday 28 April 2021
- Ministers' speech at the Retirement Villages Association, Tuesday 25 May 2021
- Meeting with Abbeyfield New Zealand (Abbeyfield NZ) and Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA), 9.30am to 10.00am on Thursday 5 August 2021
- Meeting with John Collyns, Executive Director of the Retirement Villages Association, 12:30pm on Friday 13 August 2021

The Director of the Office for Seniors also attends events throughout the year, giving presentations on our work programme, and meeting with a wide variety of stakeholders, including from the retirement village sector.

The Office for Seniors coordinated the visit for the United Nations (UN) Independent Expert Rosa Kornfeld-Matte on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, which occurred in March 2020. Kornfeld-Matte was officially invited to visit New Zealand to study national legislation, policy, regulatory frameworks, institutions, and practices, in seeking to identify best practices and gaps in the implementation of the existing law. As part of that trip, she met with the Executive Director of the Retirement Villages Association, John Collyns on 2 March 2020. She was scheduled to visit the Hilda Ross Retirement Village on Friday 06 March 2020 to view their independent living, assisted

living, rest home, hospital and dementia care and to talk to management and residents. This visit did not occur as the Village management was concerned about the risk presented by rising cases of COVID-19. The Manager of the Retirement Village Residents Association was invited to participate in one of her Christchurch based meetings on Tuesday 6 March 2020.

The Office for Seniors has maintained regular contact with the retirement village community to ask them about the experiences of older people during the COVID-19 pandemic. The most recent set of calls was conducted in the week ending 26 November 2021 and included a member of the Retirement Villages Association in Auckland.

A member of the Retirement Village Residents Association was also invited to participate in a workshop about social cohesion as part of the Ministry of Social Developments work programme aimed at strengthening social cohesion in New Zealand. A summary of these comments was sent to workshop participants on 3 December 2021.

The Office for Seniors has recently completed the *Attitudes Towards Ageing* survey 2021. This report was commissioned as a repeat of the Attitudes Towards Ageing study undertaken in 2016 to examine changes in attitudes over the past five years. In this survey, 3% of respondents over the age of 60 said they were living in a retirement village. This report is expected to be published on the Office for Seniors website in March 2022.

Please see enclosed the following reports which have been identified in scope of your request:

- REP-17/12/1250 – *Realising the economic potential of older New Zealanders*, dated 16 March 2018.
- REP 18/11/1521 – *Gaps analysis for Development of a new strategy for an ageing population Appendix A and Appendix B*, dated 8 November 2018.
- REP/19/1/028 – *Meeting with Human Rights Commission – Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner*, dated 13 February 2019.
- REP/10/1031 – *Initial indicators for Better Later Life – He Oranga Kaumātua 2019 to 2034*, dated 18 October 2019.
- REP/20/2/155 – *Meeting with the United Nations Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons*, dated 28 February 2020.
- REP/21/3/184 – *Older Workers Employment Action Plan – Process Update*, dated 5 March 2021.
- REP/21/7/800 – *Older People in New Zealand – Data*, dated 20 August 2021.

- REP/21/12/1370 – *Older Workers Employment Action Plan – Summary of public feedback on consultation draft*, drafted 10 December 2021.
- REP/19/8/752 – *Senior Status Report #45 – Geoff Pearman on Global Trends in Age and Work*, dated 16 August 2019.
- REP/19/9/864 – *Senior Status Report #46 – Older Workers Steering Group Meeting*, dated 6 September 2019.
- REP 20/9/969 – *Senior Status Report #59 – Report Summary – The Visit to New Zealand: Report of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons*, dated 4 September 2020.
- REP/21/3/314 – *Senior Status Report #7 – WHO Global Report on Ageism and Executive Report*, dated 8 April 2021.

Report REP 18/9/1307 – *Summary of submissions – Developing a strategy for an ageing population*, dated 14 September 2018, was also identified in scope of your request but has been published online and can be found at the following link:

- www.officeforseniors.govt.nz/assets/documents/our-work/better-later-life/Better-Later-Life-Strategy/Better-Later-Life-summary-of-submissions-report.pdf.

Report REP/21/12/1379 – *Attitudes Towards Ageing Research Report – 2021*, dated 18 February 2022, was also found in scope of your request but will soon be published online at the following link:

- www.officeforseniors.govt.nz/resources-publications/.

As such, this report has been withheld from this response under section 18(d) of the Act as the information will soon be publicly available.

Some information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of natural persons.

Furthermore, information that is not in scope of your request and staff members names have been withheld as 'Out of Scope'.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and

- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachments on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding the process used by the Office of Seniors and the proportion of staff within this office over the age of 50, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui



Diane Turner
Director
Office for Seniors