



MINISTRY OF
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

Date: 8 June 2011

Security Level: **IN CONFIDENCE**

Report to: Minister for Senior Citizens

BRIEFING ON MATTERS REQUIRING YOUR ATTENTION AS MINISTER FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Executive Summary

- 1 This briefing sets out the matters that fall within your portfolio as Minister for Senior Citizens.
- 2 I have divided the matters that this briefing covers into seven categories:
 - Overview of the Ministry of Social Development
 - Media
 - Upcoming Events
 - Matters in the House
 - Papers and Correspondence
 - Work Programme
 - Other Senior-related Information of Interest.
- 3 In relation to each category I have provided you with information on:
 - the nature of the issue
 - what action is required and when that action needs to be taken
 - what the Ministry has done or will be doing about the issue.
- 4 I am available to meet with you or your staff on any matter while you are the Minister for Senior Citizens. I have asked Sue Mackwell, Deputy Chief Executive, to be the primary contact for any issues or queries your Office might have.

Peter Hughes
Chief Executive

8 JUNE, 2011

Date

Overview of the Ministry of Social Development

Ministry of Social Development

- 1 The Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) is organised around 10 groups and service lines, each led by a Deputy Chief Executive (DCE) and located within one of three functional clusters – service delivery, policy and corporate. A Ministry Organisational Chart is included as Appendix A to this briefing.
- 2 The Ministry is the Government's lead provider of policy advice and services in respect of children and young people, working age people, older people, and families and whānau and communities.
- 3 Our service lines provide services and assistance to more than 1.1 million individual New Zealanders and 110,000 families/whānau.
- 4 We provide integrated support to over 560,000 older New Zealanders. More information on these services is provided in Appendix B.
- 5 To meet the Government priority that older people are respected and valued, the Ministry has three inter-related functions focusing on senior citizens. These are policy development, sector engagement and services for seniors.

Policy Development

- 6 We contribute to whole-of-government policy development in a number of areas to support positive ageing and the wellbeing of older New Zealanders. These areas include retirement income, employment, housing, transport, ageing in the community, disability support, community and voluntary sector involvement, and the protection of older peoples' rights and interests.
- 7 Current policy work includes advice to government on:
 - New Zealand Superannuation
 - elder abuse and neglect prevention (in conjunction with the Ministry's Family and Community Services)
 - New Zealand's international social security agreements and superannuation portability arrangements
 - ways to reduce barriers to employment among older people.
- 8 More information on policy work relating to senior citizens is provided in Appendix C.
- 9 The policy team works closely with the Office for Senior Citizens, and Senior Services, on a joined-up work programme to meet the Minister for Senior Citizens' priorities.

Sector Engagement

- 10 We engage with the sector through the Office for Senior Citizens, which was established in 1990 to act as a focal point for older people's issues within government.
- 11 The Office for Senior Citizens is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy (the Strategy). The Strategy provides a whole-of-government approach to improving the wellbeing of today's older people and of older people in the future.

Its goal is to ensure that older people are valued as important members of society, that they have the right to dignity and security in their senior years, and that they have opportunities to use their skills, knowledge and experiences to contribute to society.

- 12 The Office for Senior Citizens is located within the Ministry's Policy group, along with other units with a whole-of-government brief.
- 13 The Office for Senior Citizens has a staff of four, including the Director, Natalie Lavery.

Services for Seniors

- 14 Until recently, the Ministry's services for seniors were spread among various business units including Work and Income, International Services, the Card Centre, Veteran's Pension Centre and Residential Support Centre.
- 15 In March 2010, services to seniors were brought into a single organisational structure. This enabled us to:
 - streamline and simplify a number of processes for senior clients and staff, including processes to verify information
 - introduce an online application process for New Zealand Superannuation
 - give senior clients access to a broader range of services through one contact point.
- 16 We currently provide integrated support to older people through 84 senior service centres across 10 regions to administer the following services:
 - New Zealand Superannuation and additional income support
 - Veteran's Pension
 - International Payments
 - Community Services Card
 - SuperGold Card
 - Residential Subsidies.
- 17 Further information on these services is provided in Appendix B.
- 18 I would be happy to organise a site visit for you to see the services we provide to support seniors.

Media

- 19 As at 8 June 2011, there are no media issues that require your response.
- 20 As at 8 June 2011, there are no Ministerial announcements scheduled in the near future.

Recent Ministerial Announcements

- 21 On 2 June 2011, Minister Carter released a statement relating to SuperGold Card Reciprocal Arrangements with Australia. This is attached as Appendix D.
- 22 At the time of the release, no agreements had been formally signed.
- 23 On 3 June 2011, the Office of the Minister for Senior Citizens received a scanned copy of the formally signed agreement from Premier Giddings, on behalf of the Tasmanian government.
- 24 We expect the remaining agreements to be formally signed over the coming months. This may generate future media opportunities.
- 25 More information on SuperGold Card Reciprocal Arrangements with Australia is provided in Appendix C.

Media Issues

- 26 The Ministry's Media team produce a daily Media Log. This includes all inquiries received on that day, a list of issues being addressed, upcoming launches and events, and information that has previously been released but that has not yet resulted in a television piece, radio item and/or newspaper article. We will provide a copy of the Media Log to your Media Advisor and your Office by 5pm each day.
- 27 In addition, the Media Team produce a calendar, detailing upcoming events, speeches and publications both internal and external that in some way touch upon the work of the Ministry. This calendar will be provided to your Office once a week. Each item on the calendar has a key point of contact included, should your Office require further information. This calendar indicates potential media risks, and events that you may wish to attend, or consider in relation to media statements you wish to make.

Other Media Issues

- 28 A number of media issues have been raised in portfolios which intersect with yours.

Access to course-related costs

- 29 In Budget 2011, the Minister of Education announced that students aged 55 years and over will have their student loan eligibility restricted to tuition fees only.

Grandparents raising grandchildren

- 30 The Minister of Social Development and Employment arranged a package of support for children in care.
- 31 Following the announcement, the Grandparents raising Grandchildren Trust expressed their view that more needs to be done for family carers.

SuperGold Card 'fraud'

- 32 At present, SuperGold Cards do not currently have photo identification. There have been allegations that card holders have given their cards to their younger friends to allow them to access the benefits.

- 33 Reaction has been mixed, but concern has mainly focused on the level of discounts offered through the SuperGold Card scheme.

No Surprises Approach

- 34 We will provide you with details of all information we intend to release, including responses to requests for information under the Official Information Act, media releases and research and evaluation reports.
- 35 When there is an Official Information Act or media release that you need to aware of, I will ensure that it is drawn to your attention as early as possible.

Official Information Act releases

- 36 There are no current Official Information Act releases that relate to the Senior Citizens portfolio.

Upcoming Events

Intergenerational Symposium, 9 June 2011

- 37 The Intergenerational Symposium is a joint initiative between the Office for Senior Citizens and the Ministry of Youth Development. The event will be held in Wellington in the Ministry's auditorium, level 3 of the Bowen State Building, on 9 June 2011.
- 38 The aim of the symposium is to provide an opportunity for young and older people to discuss intergenerational perspectives on a number of topics. The participants are six older people from the Volunteer Community Co-ordinators and six younger people from the Ministry of Youth Development's Aotearoa Youth Voices network.
- 39 Feedback on the day and the participants' views will be sent to you and the Minister for Youth Affairs.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, 15 June 2011

- 40 World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (the Day) provides an important opportunity to raise public awareness about various aspects of elder abuse and neglect prevention in New Zealand. Forums, workshops and open days are planned across the country for the Day and the weeks leading up to it.
- 41 In New Zealand, Age Concern New Zealand sets the theme, and provides posters and promotional material on its website, including information about regional activities associated with the Day.
- 42 Each year, the Ministry suggests opportunities for the Minister's involvement in activities for the Day. The Ministry also plays a role by promoting the Day and raising awareness of the issue throughout the Ministry.
- 43 If you wish to be involved in promoting Elder Abuse Awareness Day by attending an event, we can provide options for your consideration.

Matters in the House

Estimates Hearing

- 44 The Minister for Senior Citizens is scheduled to appear before the Social Services Committee regarding the Vote Senior Citizens Estimates on 15 June 2011, between 11.15am and 11.45am.
- 45 On 20 May 2011, the Minister provided responses to the 17 questions in the 2011/12 Standard Estimates Questionnaire and a copy of the 2011/12 Output Plan for Vote Senior Citizens to you in your former role as the Chairperson of the Finance and Expenditure Committee.
- 46 We are expecting to receive 50 to 70 written questions for the Vote Senior Citizens examination after the Committee meeting today.
- 47 We will provide briefings on Vote Senior Citizens portfolio items and wider portfolio issues to your Office on 10 June 2011.

Questions for Oral answer

- 48 Between now and the election, the House is sitting as follows:

Month	Dates the House is sitting
June	8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22 and 23
July	5, 6, 7, 12, 13 and 14
August	2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17 and 18
September	6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 27, 28 and 29
October	4, 5, 6, 25, 26 and 27
November	1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16 and 17

- 49 There have been very few Oral Questions relating to the Senior Citizens Portfolio. The last one was received on 27 May 2010.
- 50 The Director of the Chief Executive's Office, Debbie Power, manages the Ministry's co-ordination and support to Ministers in answering Oral Parliamentary Questions. If you do receive an Oral Question, we are available to work with your Office to provide you with:
- a reply to the primary question
 - additional information as requested that may inform your response
 - supplementary information as requested
 - access to senior Ministry staff who are able to provide detailed information about the topic.

Questions for Written Answer

- 51 Over the last two months the Minister for Senior Citizens has answered four Written Parliamentary Questions across this portfolio.
- 52 At present, there are two Written Parliamentary Questions due for the Minister's signature in the week beginning 6 June.
- 53 For Written Parliamentary Questions we will provide your Office with:
- a suggested response
 - additional information that can be included in the response (for fuller replies)
 - contextual information that may include responses to previous similar questions, an explanation of the response, analysis of any data, relevant media coverage and any related matters.
- 54 All draft answers provided to your Office will be approved by a General Manager or more senior manager.

Papers and Correspondence

Cabinet Papers

Minister for Senior Citizens-led Cabinet Papers

- 55 At present, there are no Cabinet papers being prepared for your lead.

Other Ministers' Cabinet Papers

- 56 You may be asked to provide input into Cabinet papers from other Ministers. I will ensure you are well briefed in any instance where this happens.

Ministerial Correspondence

- 57 In April 2011, Minister Carter signed out 17 pieces of Ministerial correspondence that fell within the Senior Citizens portfolio. This was higher than usual as there were a total of 39 in the 2010/2011 year to the end of April.

Work Programme

- 58 The Ministry has a number of work priorities in relation to Senior Citizens at present. These include:
- Business of Ageing
 - SuperGold Card reciprocal arrangements with Australia
 - Positive Ageing priorities
 - Voluntary Community Co-ordinators (VCC) programme.

- 59 The Business of Ageing report encourages awareness of the economic potential of older New Zealanders. You may wish to develop a programme of action to advance the key messages of this report.
- 60 Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention is another area of work which presents opportunities for further development.
- 61 I have provided you with further information on the work programme in Appendix C.

Other Senior-related Information of Interest

Social Development Portfolio

- 62 There are currently four items on the Ministry's work programme relating to older New Zealanders that are under the Social Development portfolio and are the responsibility of the Minister for Social Development and Employment. These are:
- Budget 2011 changes to the Disability Allowance for medical alarms
 - Budget 2011 changes to the Disability Allowance for unsubsidised pharmaceuticals
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| Withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Official Information Act 1982 |
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 - Social Assistance (Living Alone Payment) Amendment Bill.

Budget 2011 changes to Disability Allowance for medical alarms

- 63 More than 54,000 people are in receipt of a Disability Allowance for medical alarms, with an average weekly amount claimed of just under \$20. There are 44 different suppliers in the market with the five largest accounting for 80 per cent of the alarms.
- 64 Senior Services is developing a new supplier approval process to implement more competitive pricing for medical alarms. This ensures we are providing cost-effective assistance for those who need it.
- 65 These changes come in to effect over the next year.

Budget 2011 changes to Disability Allowance for unsubsidised pharmaceuticals and certain alternative treatments

- 66 The Government intends to remove certain pharmaceuticals and alternative treatments that are allowable costs for assessing the Disability Allowance.
- 67 More than 204,500 people in receipt of the Disability Allowance are claiming for subsidised and non-subsidised medications. Government funded assistance for unsubsidised or partially subsidised medications undermines the role of Pharmac in managing the publically funded pharmaceutical spend effectively. This change acknowledges that Pharmac has the expertise to assess which pharmaceuticals should be subsidised.
- 68 More than 24,000 people in receipt of the Disability Allowance are claiming for alternative treatments. The alternative treatments include acupuncture, homeopathy, osteopathy, vitamins and gym membership. The Government is considering funding proven alternative treatments only.

69 These changes come into effect on 1 July 2012.

Withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Official Information Act 1982

Social Assistance (Living Alone Payment) Amendment Bill

- 73 The Social Assistance (Living Alone Payments) Amendment Bill (the Bill) is awaiting its second reading in the House.
- 74 The Bill amends the New Zealand Superannuation and Retirement Income Act 2001 and Part 6 of the War Pensions Act 1954. The amendment affects single recipients of New Zealand Superannuation or a Veteran's Pension who are eligible for further assistance in recognition of the extra costs of maintaining a household on their own.
- 75 The main change means recently bereaved spouses who are now living alone no longer have to complete an application for a separate benefit, or be limited to the maximum 28 days that the extra payment can be backdated.
- 76 After the change, if a spouse contacts us at any time by phone, email, or a visit to an office, they can get the extra payment from the date they became entitled.
- 77 There will be no change to the total payment received by an eligible single superannuitant (or veteran's pensioner) who lives alone.

Key Stakeholders

- 78 The key stakeholders for the Senior Citizens portfolio are Age Concern New Zealand, Grey Power Federation, the Retirement Commissioner and Business New Zealand.
- 79 Age Concern New Zealand is the collective national office that supports, engages and promotes the organisation's development and quality best practice. They advocate nationally and internationally on policy and issues relevant to older people and ageing. They work to serve the needs of older people by offering nationally contracted services, education, resources and national leadership. The National President is Liz Baxendine.
- 80 Grey Power Federation is a lobby organisation promoting the welfare and wellbeing of all New Zealanders aged 50 years and over. The National President is Roy Reid.
- 81 I expect Age Concern New Zealand and Grey Power Federation will request a meeting with you, following your appointment.
- 82 The Retirement Commissioner helps New Zealanders prepare financially for retirement through education, information and promotion. The Commission also has a role in protecting

the interests of residents and intending residents of retirement villages by monitoring the Retirement Villages Act 2003. The current Retirement Commissioner is Diana Crossan.

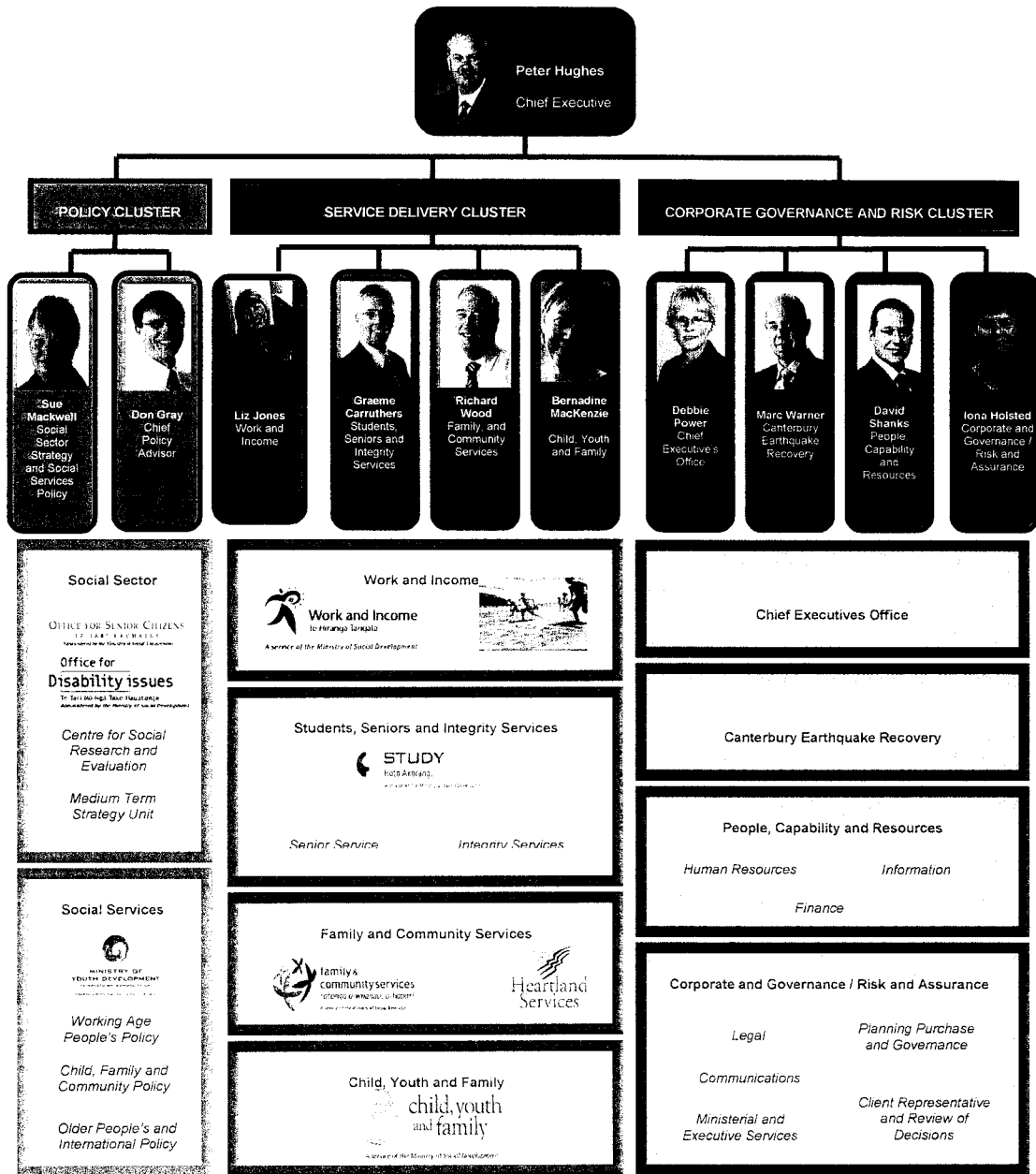
- 83 Business New Zealand is the largest advocacy group for enterprise, and champions policies promoting sustainable growth through free enterprise. The Chief Executive Officer is Phil O'Reilly.

Withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Official Information Act 1982

Senior Citizens Agency Meeting

- 86 As Minister for Senior Citizens, Minister Carter met with senior Ministry Officials on a fortnightly basis (with the exception of weeks in which the House was in recess). I attended those meetings.
- 87 Those meetings were scheduled to discuss any issues Minister Carter wanted information on, and for us to bring matters to his attention that we believed would be of interest to him.
- 88 Should you wish to have regular meetings with Senior Ministry Officials, I can arrange for these to be organised.
- 89 In addition to these meetings, I am available to meet with you on any matter while you are the Minister for Senior Citizens. I have asked Sue Mackwell, Deputy Chief Executive, to be the primary contact for any issues or queries your Office might have.

Appendix A: MSD Organisational Chart



Appendix B: Services provided by the Ministry

Senior Services provides integrated support to older people through the administration of the following services:

New Zealand Superannuation and additional income support

- 1 We provide services in 84 senior services centres, located within Work and Income offices. The service is centrally supported by an 0800 Seniors line.
- 2 At the end of April 2011, there were 567,394 people in receipt of New Zealand Superannuation.

Veteran's Pension

- 3 Veteran's Pension payments are similar to New Zealand Superannuation payments. Senior Services administer these payments through a central processing unit. Veterans' Affairs New Zealand provides all other services to veterans. We have a very good working relationship with Veterans' Affairs New Zealand that helps ensure veterans are well supported.
- 4 At the end of April 2011, there were 10,191 people in receipt of Veteran's Pension.

International payments

- 5 We have a specialised unit that processes and administers eight bilateral social security agreements and other portability provisions for payment of New Zealand benefits and pensions overseas.
- 6 This unit provides administration of the direct deduction of overseas social security payments, mostly pensions, from 62,482 clients from 62 countries (as at the end of April 2011). This equates to \$248.7m collected as revenue to the Crown each year.
- 7 At the end of April 2011, there were 28,824 clients receiving payments overseas.

Community Services Card

- 8 We provide centralised production and administration of the Community Services Card on behalf of the Ministry of Health. This includes an 0800 contact line for both clients and service providers.
- 9 At the end of April 2011, there were 291,655 people aged 65 years and over with a Community Services Card.

SuperGold Card

- 10 Senior Services produce and administer the SuperGold Card programme, which recognises the contributions older people have made, and continue to make, to society. The programme provides older New Zealanders' access to a range of commercial discounts and concessions.
- 11 We continue to work with our SuperGold Card business partners to offer new discounts for card holders, and to attract new business partners to the programme.

- 12 The major government-funded SuperGold Card concession is free off-peak travel on public transport for card holders. The Ministry of Transport funds the concession and it is administered by the New Zealand Transport Agency.
- 13 At the end of April 2011, 570,711 people had SuperGold Cards and there were 1,338 business partners, in 5,625 outlets throughout New Zealand, providing discounts.

Residential Subsidies

- 14 Senior Services has a centralised processing unit located in Whangarei. This unit undertakes the Residential Care Subsidy Financial Means Assessment on behalf of the Ministry of Health to determine the level of personal contribution individuals make for their care.
- 15 At the end of April 2011, 19,242 people were in receipt of the Residential Care Subsidy.
- 16 Senior Services also administers the benefit contributions for clients funded by Residential Support Subsidy (drug and alcohol, psychiatric, intellectually handicapped and physically disabled) and advises the Ministry of Health on a client's financial eligibility for the Residential Support Subsidy.
- 17 At the end of April 2011, 9,216 people were in receipt of the Residential Support Subsidy.
- 18 The Ministry of Health lead the policy on payment of these subsidies.

Senior Services priorities

- 19 Our priorities for the next 12 months include:
- continued streamlining and simplification of processes for clients and staff, including improvements to online applications for New Zealand Superannuation
 - targeted outbound calling to vulnerable older people and home visiting follow-up where need is identified, which will include connecting clients to other agency services where appropriate
 - increasing the number of SuperGold Card business partners providing more discounts and concessions to cardholders in more locations throughout New Zealand.

Appendix C: Work Programme

Minister's Key Priorities

- 1 Minister Carter championed three key positive ageing priority areas for the period 2008-2011:
 - employment of mature workers
 - changing attitudes about ageing
 - protecting the rights and interests of older people by raising awareness of elder abuse and neglect prevention.
- 2 These priorities have guided the Work Programme detailed below.

Business of Ageing Report

- 3 On 2 May 2011, the Minister for Senior Citizens launched *The Business of Ageing: Realising the economic potential of older people in New Zealand: 2011–2051* to an audience of business leaders.
- 4 This report presents new research undertaken by the Ministry outlining how utilising the skills, knowledge and economic power of older people would benefit New Zealand's economic competitiveness over the next 40 years. The research identifies two main opportunities:
 - increasing the number of older people who choose to remain active in the workforce
 - tapping into the growing consumer market.
- 5 The findings challenge New Zealand employers to rethink their attitudes to older people and the nature of work, and identify the consequences for the New Zealand economy if valuable population groups are excluded from achieving their full productive potential. It also outlines the growing strength of the mature consumer market.
- 6 The report has had widespread coverage across national, regional and specialist media. Over 600 copies of the report have been downloaded. It has been mentioned in Parliamentary speeches; Age Concern New Zealand and the New Zealand Labour Party have released media statements in response; and the Retirement Commissioner and Equal Employment Opportunities Trust have endorsed its message.
- 7 We will continue to promote the report, including working with our SuperGold Card business partners and our regional employers' networks to explore opportunities to continue to disseminate the messages in the report.
- 8 The report is attached for your information.

SuperGold Card Reciprocal Arrangements with Australia

- 9 The Ministry is working with Australian States and Territories on reciprocal arrangements with our SuperGold Card programme.
- 10 Each of the Australian states has agreed in principle to a trans-Tasman reciprocal arrangement that would enable:
 - Seniors Card holders visiting New Zealand to access commercial discounts offered to SuperGold cardholders

- SuperGold cardholders visiting Australia to access commercial discounts offered to Senior Card holders.
- 11 The reciprocal arrangements only cover commercial discounts for those businesses that opt in. For budgetary and equity reasons, the initiative will not cover free off-peak public transport and other federal, national or state government-funded initiatives in either country.
 - 12 Minister Carter has sent letters to each Australian State and Territory minister with portfolio responsibilities for older people. Confirmation of the arrangements is proceeding through an exchange of letters process.
 - 13 As discussed in paragraphs 21-24 of the briefing, Minister Carter released a statement relating to SuperGold Card Reciprocal Arrangements with Australia on 2 June 2011.
 - 14 On 3 June 2011, the Office of the Minister for Senior Citizens received a scanned copy of the formally signed agreement from Premier Giddings, on behalf of the Tasmanian government.

Voluntary Community Co-ordinators (VCC) Programme

- 15 The VCC programme is a network of about 40 volunteers. Each VCC is nominated by a local Incorporated Society with an interest in older people. The VCCs work with the Office for Senior Citizens to carry out projects on behalf of the Minister for Senior Citizens.
- 16 The link between the Minister for Senior Citizens and older people throughout New Zealand is a significant and unique feature of the VCC programme. This is possible because the VCCs' networks allow them to bring a community perspective quickly and effectively to contribute to the work of the Office for Senior Citizens.
- 17 The VCCs are part of local networks of people from different cultures and backgrounds, from rural and urban areas and community organisations.
- 18 Each year, the VCCs are invited to carry out projects when matters arise that requires wide community input or when there is information to feed back to communities.

Changing Attitudes about Ageing

- 19 The Office for Senior Citizens updated the Link Age educational resource and made it available online. It encourages intergenerational programmes in primary and intermediate schools in New Zealand. Link Age initiatives connect young and older people together, resulting in benefits for all.

Raising Awareness of Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention

- 20 The Ministry developed guidelines for Senior Services and Work and Income staff to raise their awareness of elder abuse and neglect prevention. The Ministry works with Age Concern New Zealand to promote Elder Abuse Awareness Day on 15 June.

Positive Ageing Reporting

- 21 On 31 March 2011, positive ageing reporting moved from paper-based to web-based. This new way of reporting focuses on the outcomes to progress the ten goals of the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy and improve the wellbeing of older New Zealanders.

- 22 The web pages (<http://positiveageing.msd.govt.nz>) are hosted on the Ministry's website. This enables a clear link between positive ageing and the Ministry's services to seniors.
- 23 The shift to web-based reporting provides timely information on:
- what agencies are doing
 - the demographic profile of older New Zealanders
 - social indicators that measure the progress over time for each goal
 - how the initiatives are contributing to older people's wellbeing and where we need to focus more effort.

Appendix D: 2 June 2011 Media Statement “New Zealand and Australia seniors to share discounts”

New Zealand and Australian seniors to share discounts

Discounts for seniors are set to go trans-Tasman with Senior Citizens Minister John Carter announcing reciprocal arrangements for the SuperGold Card with Australian state and territorial governments.

“Under this initiative, both New Zealand’s SuperGold and Australia’s state and territory Seniors card holders will be able to get discounts when travelling in Australia and New Zealand”, said Mr Carter.

“The over 65s are a fast growing population who are travelling more, with over 100,000 Kiwi seniors heading to Australia each year. The discounts will help their tourist dollar go further.”

“70,000 Australian seniors head for our shores each year and spend over \$131 million while they are here. The arrangement will encourage more Aussies to head over and bolster our tourism industry.”

“With all the travel our citizens do between our two countries, I can see this as a great opportunity to grow seniors tourism and build on the ANZAC spirit.”

There are over 1,300 New Zealand SuperGold business partners with 5,600 outlets nationwide. The discounts offered through the scheme will be met by the businesses involved who will voluntarily opt into the agreement.

The arrangement will not include state or nationally funded initiatives such as the free off-peak travel available to SuperGold Card users in New Zealand.

The Ministry of Social Development and its Australian counterparts will be encouraging businesses to provide discounts and special offers to cardholders travelling in Australia and New Zealand.

Mr Carter says he is looking forward to the arrangements being progressed over the next few months.

For more information contact Rebecca Tane 021 243 3141 or 04 817 6859