



# Newsletter

March 2021

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## A positive outlook!

While we are not out of the woods yet with the "C" virus, there is greater hope with vaccines becoming available.

Grey Power's outlook is also looking positive following the election of the new President Jan Pentecost and new members on the Federation Board. Holding board meetings in Wellington is also a promising cost saving development. This location also allows more contact with the Government for lobbying on key issues.

Our previous Zone Chairman Lew Findlay, a key mover and shaker in these changes, is currently our Zone Representative on the board. He also has a watching brief on the Federation's financial matters and commercial agreements so we look forward to Lew bringing discounted services to Grey Power, particularly after Kiwibank stopped the royalty funding that the Federation had enjoyed over the last few years.

The 2021 Federation AGM will be held in Nelson this year with Colleen Singleton and David Cuthbert selected as delegates. The 2022 Fed AGM will be held in Wellington. I think it makes sense to continue with this location as it's so central.

I believe that recent changes have led to a more productive atmosphere. At the last two Zone meetings in Palmerston North I noticed, for the first time in memory, there was no bickering about the board and the Federation and greater focus on the work we need to do.

For Wellington Central we have meetings for members with an interesting selection of speakers lined up. Check on Page 3 for details.

On 1 April, 830,000 New Zealand Superannuitants will receive a 3.1 percent increase along with some other benefits. If you are aware of issues where there are remaining hardships that need to be addressed, please help Grey Power to raise them.

Regarding the Wellington committee and the upcoming AGM on 24 April, some committee members will not be standing this year for personal reasons while others are retiring from their roles. This leaves all positions open for nomination and selection. Since Lloyd, our President, is at home recovering from a medical procedure I have stood in as the report writer. We wish him well for a speedy recovery.

Wellington people, think about what you could do for Grey Power. If you want to safeguard and protect the entitlements and benefits for our age group, join our

## AGM and talk

Saturday 24 April 2-4pm (Daran Ponter, Regional Council chair) & AGM

Hear about what's happening with the buses, water issues, green spaces, and all the things the Regional Council runs. There should be room for questions.

At Tararua Tramping Club, 4 Moncrieff Street, Mount Victoria, Wellington 6011



committee and/or stand for the position of President, Vice President, Treasurer or Secretary.

If you are interested in Health, Council liaison, local transport, lobbying local and central government or other key issues affecting us, join our committee. Please send names or nominations to our email address: greypowerwellington@gmail.com or phone me on 027 4321 801.

Take care and be safe.

Bruce McLachlan VP

P.S In our last newsletter, I mentioned my two granddaughters aged 6 and 8 in Madison Wisconsin had been off school for almost a year because of the pandemic. I'm happy to report that they start back at school this March.

## **It takes a village to raise a millionaire**

The rules under which retirement villages operate are mostly laid down in law, which is now under review. The Consumers Association, the Retirement Commissioner, and the Retirement Village Residents Association have all put in their submissions. At the time of writing the Retirement Villages Association (RVA, the industry body) and the Grey Power Federation are still in

preparation. However, the RVA has put out a press release condemning the Consumers Association suggestions, and saying all that is needed is a few tweaks to the status quo.

The Consumers Association says:

- The financial model is that you pay for a licence to occupy rather than ownership; the licence can be resold but the village takes a cut, usually taking any capital gain. You also pay a weekly fee. The capital gains grab is one of the main complaints by village residents.
- Your liability to pay for repairs for things that go wrong in your unit, despite you not owning them.
- Getting the money if you want the unit to be sold: there is no constraint on how long villages can wait before selling your unit. This is a problem if you want to move to another village.
- Controls on your rights: Many villages have restrictions that would not hold if you had your own home, for example on people staying, and forbidding objections to any building works.
- Contracts are weighted against residents,

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**Subs are now due. Please do not pay by cheque as Kiwibank no longer accepts them. Pay into our account 38-9008-0407615-00.**

and more regulation is required.

In the meantime, Consumer has provided a checklist to assess prospective villages.

The Retirement Commissioner is saying that a review is needed by the Ministry of Housing, including improving the resale and buyback process, stopping weekly fees being required after termination, and improving the complaints process.

Currently money is flooding into the sector from investors (“Rest home businesses are hot property”, Dom Post 13 March) so maybe there will be a lot more competition for your licence dollar. However, profits increase the shorter the stay in villages; the incentives seem perverse, to say the least.

Owen Watson

## **On the buses, trains, cars . . .**

Along with community and industry groups I recently joined a virtual meeting organised by the Greater Wellington Regional Council about transport strategies. We looked at the 40 priorities of the transport group to discuss what were the most important. Due to the Zoom format we did not achieve the full agenda, but the facilitators were happy that the breakout groups covered all the topics and gave sufficient direction.

The overall goal is provision for all forms of transport – walking, cycling, buses, rail, light rail, with a reduction in use of private vehicles. Topics included:

- The need for an airport bus running to the Hutt Valley
- Bus services included discussion about cancelled buses and the need for more buses as many are crowded. Unfortunately, people appear to have given up on agitating for the return of lost bus routes, e.g. the Karori to the hospital route.
- The need for a national transport card with gold card and other discounts embedded.
- Accessibility to public transport is for all

transport users, not just for disabled or older people

- Footpath topics included hindrances such as shop signs (particularly near bus stops), e-scooters, bike speeds and footpath maintenance.
- Railway stations: the need for upgrading with toilets and waiting rooms open during hours of service. Escalators or similar needed as an alternative to steps or a steep path.
- Better connections: from Wellington railway station across the city and to suburbs, improved services needed to Palmerston North and Wairarapa and rolling stock kept fit for purpose.

Individual or group submissions on the documents are requested as soon as possible.

Access the Summary of the draft Regional Public Transport Plan at: <https://haveyoursay.gw.govt.nz/65300/widgets/324070/documents/193795>

Access the Summary of the draft Wellington Regional Land Transport Plan 2021 at: <https://haveyoursay.gw.govt.nz/65300/widgets/324070/documents/193793>

Colleen Singleton  
Wellington Central Grey Power  
Committee Member

## **Grey Power events & speakers**

All at Tararua Tramping Club, 4 Moncrieff Street, Mount Victoria, Wellington 6011  
Thursday 25 March 10am-12 (Diane Turner, Office for Seniors)

Saturday 24 April 2-4pm (Daran Ponter, Regional Council chair) & AGM

Wednesday 18 August 10am (Jan Pentecost, Grey Power Federation president)

We are also trying to arrange talks in June and October by MPs Grant Robertson and Nicola Willis.



## Zoning in

We are in Grey Power Zone 4 (lower North Island) and hold frequent meetings with others in the region about Grey Power issues.

Grey Power Federation President Jan Pentecost is leading a solution-focused Board: this is very refreshing. Zone 4's Board members, Pete Matcham (Lower Hutt) and Lew Findlay (Manawatu), are looking at ways to make change and achieve outcomes rather than hindering progress.

As an Association we await a document detailing Grey Power's strategic direction. We believe that all Associations in Zone 4 are ready to work toward achievable goals.

The Federation's documentation will be reviewed including its constitution, by-laws, policies, operational manuals, etc. This will take time. The provisions in the updated Incorporated Societies Act will need to be taken into account.

Pete Matcham wants to hear from members about communications generally, including the use of social media. Please email comments to [national.vicepresident@greypower.co.nz](mailto:national.vicepresident@greypower.co.nz)

Questions about effective communication we'd like your answers to:

Who are our key audiences?

What is working well now?

What needs improving?

Is there anything that we are doing that isn't necessary?

What could we be doing that we are not?

What is/are the main barriers to reaching our audiences?

What is the most critical component for effective communication?

What is the most effective channel for communication with each of our audiences that you have identified and why?

When the Federation's documentation is updated and strategies are finalised the public will have a renewed faith in the value of Grey

Power and our membership should grow.

Next Zone 4 meetings to be held in Palmerston North:

27 May 2021 – membership workshop

26 August 2021

25 November 2021

Bruce McLachlan, Vice President

Colleen Singleton, Committee member

## ID requirements at NZ Post

NZ Post is making changes to in-store applications for Mail Redirection and Mail Hold services. They had previously allowed individuals to use their SuperGold Card and/or Community Services Card to verify their ID, but they have been advised by both the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Health that these cards do not meet the appropriate legal identification requirements. From 11th February, individuals can still use a Driver's Licence, Passport, a Certificate of Identity (issued under the Passports Act), or Kiwi Access Card (formerly known as HANZ 18+ Card) to verify their ID when applying instore for the Mail Redirection and Mail Hold service. Please note that NZ Post will accept approved IDs that have expired as a form of ID.

Age Concern Wellington

## Covid-19 vaccine scam

Although the the Government has announced that the Covid-19 vaccine will be offered free of charge, we have been made aware of a phone call scam about the vaccine being for sale. The scammer calls to advise the vaccine is available for \$49.99.

This is a way to automate getting people on the line for a scammer to then get their credit card details, gain access to their computer or exploit them in some other way.

Report any scams to Netsafe (0508 638 723)

Age Concern