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Administered by the Ministry of Social Development

# **Community Connects programme review**

May 2018 to December 2020

APRIL 2021

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# Executive Summary

The [Community Connects programme](#) (Community Connects) is a small grants programme run by the Office for Seniors (the Office). It supports local councils, NGOs and community groups to develop age friendly strategies or implement age friendly projects in support of an age friendly plan. When the Office started Community Connects in 2015, it provided funding to NGOs to deliver programmes to reduce the loneliness and social isolation of older people across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Community Connects was reviewed in 2018 and this resulted in several changes to align Community Connects with the [Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand programme](#) (the Age friendly programme). The changes aimed to strengthen the uptake of the World Health Organization's (WHO's) [Age friendly Cities and Communities framework](#)<sup>1</sup>, and to improve the support available for age friendly projects across Aotearoa New Zealand.

In February 2021, the Office completed a reiew of Community Connects to see whether it was meeting its objectives and to identify opportunities for improvement (the review). The review also fulfilled a commitment to assess the broader performance of Community Connects following the changes made to it in 2018.

The scope of the review includes all of the Community Connects grants made from May 2018 to December 2020. During this period a total of 34 grants were awarded to local councils, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and community groups for local age friendly plans and projects.

The annual grants provided through Community Connects have made a valauble contribution to making Aotearoa New Zealand age friendly. Based on feedback from grant recipients and information gathered from Community Connects records, the review found that the grants have generally met the objective of helping councils and communities to get started or to implement age friendly projects in support of a plan.

The review makes four recommendations including continuing Community Connects with a focus on making changes to ensure that it is accessible and attractive to Kaupapa Māori organisations. It is also recommended that the Office explore ways to increase the impact of Community Connects within available funding.

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<sup>1</sup> This framework is outlined in detail in WHO's publication, [Global Age friendly Cities: A Guide.](#)

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of a review of Community Connects from May 2018 to December 2020. The review was undertaken by the Office in January and February 2021. It fulfilled a commitment to assess the broader performance of Community Connects following changes made to the grants programme in 2018.
- 1.2 Several recommendations that support continuing Community Connects have been made based on the findings from the review.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 About Community Connects

Community Connects is a small grants programme that supports local councils, NGOs and community groups to develop age friendly strategies or implement age friendly projects in support of an age friendly plan.

The objectives of Community Connects are to:

- improve planning for population ageing
- incorporate ageing objectives into council documents such as Long-term Plans
- identify and implement local solutions to create age friendly communities
- develop a whole of council and community approach to population ageing
- work in partnership with local stakeholders to achieve these objectives
- increase the sustainability of age friendly community approaches through leveraging support from other funding sources.

There is \$100,000 per year available for Community Connects from the Office's appropriation and organisations can apply for a grant of \$5,000 to \$15,000. Each year the demand for grants exceeds the total funding available and a contestable process is used to select recipients. See the *Community Connects Grant Guidelines* in Appendix 1 for more information about grant processes, eligibility and evaluation criteria.

## **2.2 Community Connects supports the Office's Age friendly programme**

Community Connects is an important part of the Office's Age friendly programme which helps to fulfil Aotearoa New Zealand's obligations as an affiliate member of [WHO's Global Network for Age friendly Cities and Communities](#)<sup>2</sup> to inspire, connect and support communities to become age friendly.

The Age friendly programme is managed by one dedicated full-time staff member in the Office. A range of support is offered to communities through the Age friendly programme. In addition to Community Connects, the Office gives advice and feedback to local councils, NGOs and raises awareness of the Age friendly programme through its networks and other national channels.

The Office also develops and publishes resources to guide age friendly work in the Aotearoa New Zealand context. Recent resources published online by the Office include [the Age friendly Aotearoa New Zealand Toolkit](#) and the [Age friendly Business Toolkit, Framework and Implementation guide](#) co-created with the Gore District in 2020.

## **2.3 Community Connects was reviewed in 2018 resulting in changes to align it with the Age friendly programme**

When the Office started Community Connects in 2015, it provided funding to NGOs to deliver programmes to reduce the loneliness and social isolation of older people across Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Office reviewed Community Connects in 2018 resulting in several changes to align it with the Age friendly programme. In particular, the changes aimed to strengthen the uptake of the WHO's Age friendly Cities and Communities Framework and to improve the support available for age friendly projects across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Changes included updating the scope and objectives of Community Connects and streamlining the application, assessment, and decision-making processes to make them easier and more transparent. The eligibility criteria for applicants was also broadened to include local councils and community groups as well as NGOs. At this time, the name of Community Connects was not changed to reflect its updated objectives and alignment with the Age friendly programme.

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<sup>2</sup> The WHO Global Network fosters worldwide learning and sharing between member cities and communities that have committed to becoming age friendly. As of April 2021, there are over 1100 member cities and communities and 15 affiliates. Affiliates are national or regional/state governments, civil society or research organisations, national or transnational networks in WHO Member States working to promote the WHO's Age friendly Cities and Communities Framework at the local, regional, national or international level.

### **3. Objectives and scope of the review**

- 3.1 This review, carried out by the Office in 2021, aimed to identify:
- whether Community Connects is meeting its objectives
  - the aspects of Community Connects that are working well
  - whether Community Connects should be continued
  - the opportunities that exist to improve Community Connects in the future.
- 3.2 The review covered the period from May 2018 to December 2020 and included:
- grants awarded through Community Connects
  - the Community Connects grant processes
  - the outcomes of Community Connects grants.
- 3.3 The scope of the review did not include:
- the processes and outcomes of Community Connects pre-2018
  - a broader review of community development and wellbeing grants and other funding available to communities
  - audit, formal evaluation, and detailed financial analysis of Community Connects.
- 3.4 The reviews findings are based on information provided by organisations that applied for grants between May 2018 and December 2020.
- 3.5 Information for the review was also gathered from Community Connects application processes, contract monitoring and reporting documents, and feedback sought from grant recipients in January and February 2021.

### **4. Aspects of Community Connects that worked well**

#### **4.1 Summary of themes emerging from the review**

Across the 34 initiatives funded, some common themes emerged that align with the wider age friendly objectives of Community Connects:

- Community Connects has supported local responses that help to create more age friendly communities (Section 4.2).
- Community Connects has supported local councils to improve their policy response to an ageing population (Section 4.3).

- Older people and organisations across Aotearoa New Zealand have been enabled to lead and collaborate on age friendly projects (Section 4.4).
- Projects funded by Community Connects have been adaptable and sustainable (Section 4.5).
- The Office has built relationships with recipients and other community groups through Community Connects (Section 4.6).

## **4.2 Community Connects has supported local responses that help to create more age friendly communities**

This is demonstrated by the following findings of the review:

### **4.2.1 Community Connects has enabled older people to be involved in developing local age friendly solutions**

Community Connects grants have supported 11 local councils and 4 NGOs and community groups to lead the development of age friendly strategies. Grants from Community Connects also supported the implementation of 19 community-led projects to help give effect to local age friendly strategies.

Appendix 2 contains a full list of the 34 successful grant recipients and a short description of each project funded between May 2018 and December 2020. Further information and several short case studies included in this report also demonstrate how Community Connects has helped to enable councils, NGOs and other community groups to make their communities more age friendly.

### **4.2.2 Community Connects has supported local councils to improve their policy response to an ageing population**

Based on feedback from councils that received Community Connects grants from May 2018 to December 2020, developing age friendly strategies and plans has prompted them to think about how they can make changes to their policies and processes to improve the participation of older people in community life.

Practical changes that councils have made to their policies and processes as a result of developing age friendly strategies include:

- creating age friendly advisory groups to oversee the development of age friendly actions and to feed into council planning and other work

- engaging directly with diverse older people as part of updating Long-term Plans and including the needs of older people in other council planning work
- creating processes to prioritise and upgrade footpaths and other infrastructure based on where high numbers of older people live
- creating feedback mechanisms that enable older people to raise issues and contribute to council work.

Local councils are currently in the process of reviewing their Long-term Plans and updates of these are expected to be complete by mid-2021. Council staff that have worked on age friendly strategies expect these to include objectives that help to support local age friendly action.

### **THREE COUNCILS ONE AGE FRIENDLY VISION**

Launched in August 2019, [the Wairarapa Region Positive Ageing strategy](#) outlines the way that Wairarapa's three local councils will work together to improve and integrate their work for older people.

Appointing a coordinator to work on behalf of all three councils has been key to getting the strategy's plan implemented. Some of the actions implemented across the three councils include:

- mapping locations relevant to older people for each council across South Wairarapa and Masterton and using these as part of the footpath repair prioritisation process
- reviewing and upgrading the three council websites to improve accessibility
- improving older people's involvement in decision making processes such as engaging them in the Long-term planning process through in-person workshops.



### **4.3 Community Connects has enabled older people and organisations across Aotearoa New Zealand to lead and collaborate on age friendly projects**

This is demonstrated by the following findings of the review:

#### **4.41 Community Connects has enabled older people to be involved in developing local age friendly solutions**

Based on feedback from local councils receiving grants and feedback from older people included in recipients' final reports, developing and implementing ageing strategies has helped to:

- empower older people to engage in council processes and take on community leadership roles. They are doing this through providing feedback, sharing their expertise, skills and knowledge, and overseeing ongoing work through steering committees and advisory groups
- develop stronger community partnerships and to improve the visibility and connection of different groups supporting older people
- identify actions already underway and provided an opportunity to celebrate what is being achieved, identify key activities to strengthen, and to come up with ideas for new initiatives
- make sure that discussion leads to action through creating accountability documents that are visible to those involved and to the wider community.

#### **4.42 Community Connects grant recipients have collaborated with community partners to implement their age friendly projects**

As part of the application process, organisations had to provide a letter of support from their local council as well as demonstrate how they would work with older people and other community partners. The final reports from the projects funded showed that organisations receiving grants worked closely with a wide range of stakeholders as planned.

When feeding back to the Office about their projects, local councils, NGOs and community groups identified that collaboration had supported the sustainability of their

projects. According to these groups, by having existing relationships and making new connections, they were able to get buy-in from partners when developing projects and this helped to raise the profile of their work.

### **AGE FRIENDLY COLLABORATION IN NAPIER**

The [Older Person's External Residential Tool \(OPERAT\)](#) helps to assess the accessibility of residential areas for older people and can be used to inform planning of built environments to ensure they are friendly for all ages.

In 2018, Napier City Council, Massey University and a group of older people trialled the use of the OPERAT to see how it would work in an Aotearoa New Zealand context.

Diverse groups of volunteers including members of Napier Community Patrol, the Māori Women's Welfare League and Age Concern Napier were trained to use the OPERAT and assessed different neighbourhood environments in the Napier district.

The assessments were used to inform council planning processes and Napier's Positive Ageing Strategy. Participant feedback also helped to inform research about how to adapt the OPERAT for use in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Volunteers made new social connections, and many said that the experience empowered them to get involved with age friendly initiatives and advisory groups in the city.

#### **4.4.3 Community Connects has reached a range of communities to support the implementation of local age friendly solutions**

Community Connects grant funding for locally led solutions has helped councils and other organisations implement projects that contribute to creating age friendly communities across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Between May 2018 and December 2020, 34 grants were awarded to support age friendly projects from a total of 131 applications. During this period, Community Connects grants have provided support to local councils, NGOs and community groups across 25 different territorial authorities.

Providing funding for age friendly projects across different contexts has enabled a range of initiatives to be tested in

different situations. This is demonstrated by the range of age friendly projects outlined in Appendix 2.

The range of different locations reached by Community Connects is demonstrated by the distribution of grants across different Local Government New Zealand sub sectors<sup>3</sup> as follows:

- Auckland - 5 projects
- Other metropolitan - 9 projects
- Provincial - 16 projects
- Rural - 4 projects

Appendix 3 contains a map of these locations.

#### **4.4 Projects funded by Community Connects have been sustainable and adaptable**

This is demonstrated by the following findings of the review:

##### **4.4.1 Almost all projects were able to continue after the first 12 months of funding**

As part of the application process, organisations had to describe how they planned to sustain their project after the initial 12-month funding term. This was assessed by the evaluation panel when scoring proposals. As part of the feedback gathered for the review, the Office followed up with the 2018 to 2020 grant recipients to see what had happened since completing their final reports and found:

- that there are four community-led projects that received grants in the 2020 funding round, and these are still being implemented
- that 12 out of 15 grant recipients that had completed the first 12 months of their work had been able to continue with their projects beyond the initial year.

All 12 of the organisations continuing their projects identified that it can be challenging to secure ongoing funding for their age friendly work but there are some factors that have helped them to continue.

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<sup>3</sup> Local Government New Zealand's sub-sectors: Auckland (separate due to its large size), Metropolitan (populations exceeding 90,000), Provincial (populations between 20,000 and 90,000), Rural (populations below 20,000). See <http://www.lgnz.co.nz/about-lgnz/membership-representation/sector-groups/>.

Common themes from recipients' feedback about sustaining age friendly projects includes:

- leveraging existing community relationships and networks
- making a long-term commitment to work with project partners
- having appropriate governance processes and strong leadership, including leaders with community influence
- having had previous experience in setting up community led initiatives and well-established processes and policies to evaluate and plan projects
- using a strengths-based community development approach that uses resources from within the community to support the goals of the project
- having ongoing funding streams available as well as a strong volunteer base/in-kind resources and capability.

This aligns with the findings of the Auckland University of Technology [Age-friendly Community Evaluation report](#) about three age friendly community pilot programmes<sup>4</sup>.

### **SUSTAINABLE AGE FRIENDLY TRANSPORT**

Nelson Tasman Community Transport Trust (NTCCT) worked with the community to develop the Wakefield Community Bus service. This has become a life-line for some older residents in the district and helps younger people get around in school holidays.

Costs have been kept low by leasing a vehicle from a local retirement village and using volunteer drivers. Passengers pay a small fare which almost covers ongoing operating costs.

Based on the success of the Wakefield Community Bus, NTCTT have worked with other communities to develop age friendly transport services. In Mapua, Mapua Willing Wheels service has been created. This is an on-demand service run by a coordinator and uses local volunteers driving their own cars. In Motueka, a coordinator is preparing to introduce a community bus service which should be up and running by mid-2021.

In all these examples, extra funding has also been secured to ensure the services are ongoing.

<sup>4</sup> Age Friendly Community Evaluation. Report prepared for the Office for Seniors, (2018). Auckland University of Technology. Neville, S., Adams, J, Napier, S., Shannon, S.

#### **4.4.2 Organisations had to adapt during the COVID-19 pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the time frames and approaches to projects funded through Community Connects. Feedback from organisations was that the pandemic prevented them engaging in-person during 2020 due to physical distancing restrictions. In some cases, alternative engagement strategies were used, such as using online methods. This was only an option for some older participants with many having reduced access to online engagement channels. Many older people, especially Māori and Pacific People also place a high value on in-person engagement.

The pandemic also saw organisations having to adapt their projects to respond to the changing needs of older people. One example of this is contained in the following short case study that describes how Age Concern Auckland adapted their project to help older people during various COVID-19 alert levels.

#### **AN AGE FRIENDLY COVID RESPONSE**

In 2020 Age Concern Auckland started its Social Connection Local Area Coordination Programme to help connect older people with others in their local communities.

Rather than stalling the development of this project, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the set-up of local area networks through the power of community-led development.

Volunteers were mobilised to support older people locally using a network organised in a hub and spoke model. A local coordinator facilitates and matches volunteers to support and engage isolated older people within their own community.

As Aotearoa New Zealand went into COVID Alert Level 4 in March 2020, networks were scaled up rapidly. An extra 250 volunteers were recruited (on top of the existing pool of 600) to support local older people with a variety of needs. NZ Police also responded and collaborated with Age Concern Auckland to vet the new volunteers within 24 hours.

#### **4.5 The Office has built relationships with recipients and other community organisations through Community Connects**

This is demonstrated by the following findings of the review:

##### **4.5.1 Community Connects has enhanced the Office's engagement with local councils and community organisations interested in age friendly**

The Office ran five funding rounds and received 131 applications for Community Connects grants between May 2018 and December 2020. This has enabled it to link with a range of local councils, NGOs and community groups across Aotearoa New Zealand. The queries received about Community Connects and feedback from potential applicants have also contributed to raising awareness about the support available through Community Connects and the Age friendly programme.

Applicants were required to discuss their proposals with the Office before submitting an application. Although not all organisations that expressed interest in Community Connects ended up making an application (usually because their project wasn't going to meet the criteria of the Community Connects grants), the Office was able to learn more about some of the work happening in different locations and offer advice and encouragement.

Through its networks, the Office was also able to link community groups interested in developing age friendly projects with other like minded organisations in their area and/or to groups in other locations who had worked on similar initiatives.

##### **4.5.2 Applicants and recipients of Community Connects grants found the Office's feedback valuable**

Feedback received from applicants and recipients as part of a survey completed at the end of each funding round, showed that organisations found the Office's feedback and advice about their proposals valuable.

Further feedback, gathered from grant recipients in their final reports and as part of the review, indicated that ongoing support and advice from the Office about implementing projects was also useful. In particular, providing encouragement, feedback about draft plans and strategies, and continuing to link organisations with others

doing similar work was thought to give an extra boost on top of receiving financial support.

Grant recipients also identified additional sources of in-kind support from other agencies that added value to their projects. This included local Department of Internal Affairs community development advisors and local council community development staff. These sources of support were particularly useful as the people providing advice and feedback had an understanding of the local context. They were also able to link age friendly projects with other community development work underway.

#### **4.5.3 The process of applying for grants is simple and easy to follow**

Based on feedback gathered from applicants and recipients at the end of each funding round from 2018 to 2020, grant processes were generally straightforward and easy to follow.

As part of the application process, the Office offered to provide feedback and advice to applicants to assist them with completing their applications. This enabled organisations with fewer resources and that were less familiar with applying for funding to receive support to improve the quality of their proposals.

The Office does not have visibility of organisations that have not applied to Community Connects for a grant or expressed interest in this funding. This means that the process may have presented barriers for other organisations that the Office is not aware of.

#### **4.5.4 The demand for funding exceeds the Office's budget for Community Connects**

Each year, the Office receives more grant applications than the \$100,000 annual Community Connects budget can fund. The demand for grants is expected to increase over the coming years as interest in age friendly projects increases with Aotearoa New Zealand's ageing population.

Increased demand for funding from philanthropic and other sources is also expected to increase in general due to the increasing social needs of many communities post-COVID. Feedback from community groups and NGOs is that they are experiencing additional pressures as a result of these increased needs. This is compounded by the financial strain

some NGOs and community groups have been experiencing since the start of COVID-19 pandemic.

NGOs and community groups have also told us that they are finding it harder to obtain funding for their projects since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is despite new funding opportunities, such as the Ministry for Social Development's Community Capability and Resilience fund, set up to help communities to rebuild and recover from COVID-19.

## **5. Opportunities to improve Community Connects**

5.1 Although several aspects of Community Connects have been working well, the review identified the following opportunities for improvement:

- The impact and sustainability of age friendly projects funded through Community Connects could be enhanced (Section 5.2).
- The 12-month time frame for project delivery may create a barrier to engaging with diverse communities (Section 5.3).
- There is an opportunity to improve the reach of Community Connects to Kaupapa Māori organisations (Section 5.4).

### **5.2 The impact and sustainability of age friendly projects funded through Community Connects could be enhanced**

Based on the feedback gathered from grant recipients and final project reports, the review showed that Community Connects had supported groups to implement age friendly initiatives and almost all projects had continued beyond their first year. However, grants had generally not been large enough to provide a single major source of project funding.

According to grant recipients, seeking funding from multiple sources can be challenging as many of them are small organisations and/or run on limited resources. They told us that when applying for funding, the time spent applying for multiple grants and meeting different reporting requirements diverts small organisations' available resources away from project delivery.

Recipients also advised that they sometimes need to shape their programmes to meet funding criteria rather than community identified needs. When the criteria of multiple funding sources are not well aligned, project development can also be challenging. This was a general issue that was not specific to Community Connects but



it has the potential to impact on the effectiveness and impact of age friendly initiatives when multiple sources of funding are needed to deliver projects.

### **5.3 The 12-month term for Community Connects grants may create a barrier to engaging with diverse communities**

Although most projects were completed within the 12-month grant term, grant recipients thought that this was a relatively short time frame that limited their ability to engage with diverse groups of older people in their communities. This was more of an issue for organisations developing age friendly strategies. Groups that did complete their age friendly strategies within the 12-month term advised that it took up to a further 12 months to agree actions and to start seeing these actions implemented.

### **5.4 There is an opportunity to improve the reach of Community Connects to Kaupapa Māori organisations**

Grants have reached a range of organisations across Aotearoa New Zealand including providing funding for four age friendly projects for older people from ethnic communities and for two projects for older Pacific People.

Out of 131 applications, 9 Kaupapa Māori organisations applied for funding for grants from Community Connects. Of the nine applications from Kaupapa Māori organisations, Community Connects records show that the proposed projects were not eligible as the funding requested was for capital investment or equipment.

Although grants have not reached Kaupapa Māori organisations, some recipients have worked with local iwi and hapū, and/or have taken a bicultural approach to their work. These groups include Eastern Bay Villages - Te Kokuru Manaakitanga in Whakatāne, and Parksyde Trust which plans to partner with Te Arawa to create an Age friendly Rotorua strategy in 2021. Horowhenua District plans to publish a Te Reo Māori version of its age friendly strategy alongside the English language version in 2021.

## TANGATA WHENUA – TANGATA TIRITI

[The Eastern Bay Villages - Te Kokoru Manaakitanga](#) community development organisation (EBV), set up in 2018, uses a two whare (Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti) model with Māori and Pākehā co-chairs and coordinators.

The organisation aims to build the strength of a connected community and build reciprocal relationships. In this community led group everyone shares their skills and time and projects benefit the whole community.

EBV's networks have grown with a membership of over 130 people after two years. Some of the projects being developed by members include:

- setting up a non-profit affordable whānau-led eco-friendly funeral service
- working with the Nutrition Foundation providing JustCook programmes for seniors/pakeke in communities and on marae
- creating an advocacy group to support people, for example, at medical appointments and when applying for mobility scooters.

## 6. Summary

### 5.5 Community Connects aligns with its age friendly objectives

Based on the findings of the review, Community Connects has strengthened the support available for age friendly projects within its current scope and budget. Several aspects of Community Connects have worked well and it has helped to achieve its age friendly objectives to:

- improve planning for population ageing
- incorporate ageing objectives into council documents such as Long-Term Plans
- identify and implement local solutions to create age friendly communities
- develop a whole of council and community approach to population ageing
- work in partnership with local stakeholders to achieve these objectives

- increase sustainability of age friendly community approaches through leveraging support from other funding sources.

## **5.6 Aspects of Community Connects that have worked well**

Common themes emerging from the review include that:

- Community Connects has supported local responses that help to create more age friendly communities (Section 4.2)
- Community Connects has supported local councils to improve their policy response to an ageing population (Section 4.3)
- Community Connects has enabled older people and organisations across Aotearoa New Zealand to lead and collaborate on age friendly projects (Section 4.4)
- projects funded by Community Connects have demonstrated resilience and have endured (Section 4.5)
- the Office has engaged and built relationships with recipients and other community groups through Community Connects (Section 4.6).

## **5.7 Opportunities to improve Community Connects**

Although Community Connects is generally supporting the implementation of local community led age friendly projects, the review identified that there are some opportunities for improvement:

- The impact and sustainability of age friendly projects funded through Community Connects could be enhanced (Section 5.2).
- The 12-month term for Community Connects grants may create a barrier to engaging with diverse communities (Section 5.3).
- The accessibility and attractiveness of Community Connects grants could be increased for Kaupapa Māori organisations (Section 5.4).

## 7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Based on the findings of the review, it is recommended that the Office:
- continues to help to support and promote the uptake of the WHO's Age friendly Communities and Cities Framework across Aotearoa New Zealand through Community Connects
  - changes the name of Community Connects to the Age friendly Fund to explicitly link the grants with the Age friendly programme
  - identifies and implements ways to make Community Connects more accessible and attractive to Kaupapa Māori organisations
  - reviews the criteria and parameters of the grants to maximize the impact and reach of Community Connects within available funding.
- 7.2 There are several other aspects of Community Connects that the Office would like to develop to improve the reach and impact of grants. The review supports developing the following aspects of the grants: exploring opportunities to partner with other agencies to leverage funding, reviewing the maximum funding amount available per grant (subject to funding availability), increasing the time allowed to complete projects and increasing the resources and total funding available for Community Connects.

# Appendix 1 - Community Connects Grant Guidelines

## COMMUNITY CONNECTS GRANT: GUIDELINES OCTOBER 2020

The Community Connects grant aims to assist councils and communities to plan or to implement Age-friendly communities in accordance with the *World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Age Friendly Cities: A Guide*. The fund targets projects that support their community to prepare for an ageing population and that promote the inclusion and contribution of older people in community life.

We offer grants up to \$15,000, from an annual budget of \$100,000. If funds are not disbursed in one round there may be a further grant round in the same financial year.

The final date for applications for this year is Friday 9 October 2020.

*The Community Connects grant application form is available at [www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz](http://www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz). For more information or assistance, contact us at [Community\\_Connects@msd.govt.nz](mailto:Community_Connects@msd.govt.nz).*

### AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

An Age-friendly community anticipates and responds to the needs of its ageing population and promotes the inclusion and contribution of older people in all areas of community life.

The funding is a starting point to become a more age-friendly community, town or city. The process of becoming age-friendly usually includes:

- getting started – set up a steering group and deciding your area of focus
- assessing how age-friendly your community is
- working in partnership with local stakeholders to develop an age-friendly strategy or plan
- implementing projects that fit with the action plan
- evaluating progress – seeing how far you've progressed and learning from your experiences.

The Community Connects grant's objectives are to help councils and communities to get started or to implement projects in support of a plan. Examples of activities that could be funded include:

- planning for population ageing
- incorporating ageing objectives into existing council plans and documents
- improving the accessibility of community facilities to increase their use by older people
- developing a whole-of-council and community approach to population ageing
- increasing the sustainability of Age-friendly community approaches
- testing and implementing local solutions to create age-friendly communities.

The things that make each community age-friendly must be informed by the older people who live there – so we want to see how older people will be involved in the project.

## COMMUNITY CONNECTS GRANTS – WHO CAN APPLY?

Councils, community organisations, and registered non-profit organisations can apply for a Community Connects grant.

- The organisation must be a legal entity in New Zealand.
- Applications from organisations other than a Council must demonstrate they have support of their City or District Council, and how the application aligns with Council priorities. This is intended to ensure that there is engagement between the parties so that there is both top-down and bottom-up support for the project.
- The person who makes the application must be authorised to do so on behalf of their organisation.
- The organisation must not have received a Community Connects grant in the past two years.
- The applicant must not have any outstanding financial accountability, service delivery or performance issues for funding previously provided by the Ministry of Social Development.

*Businesses and individuals are not eligible for a Community Connects grant.*

## GRANTS AVAILABLE

You can apply for a one-off grant of up to \$15,000 (GST exclusive).

Requests for over \$10,000 must involve a larger scale project or a regional Age-friendly Community consultation and development of an action plan.

Smaller scale community projects may apply for a contribution of \$5,000 to \$10,000 (GST exclusive).

You should demonstrate whether you have any funding or in-kind contributions from other sources. (These should also be clearly identified in your application's budget and any reports).

## ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

You can apply for funding to either:

- A. start development of an Age-friendly Communities Plan, or
- B. implement an Age-friendly Community project.

## A: PLANNING FOR AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

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We want to support councils and communities to engage with key stakeholders, including older people, to identify local priorities and develop plans to address them. Projects can include:

- developing a local Age-friendly assessment or action plan
- creating specific plans and/or policies that address one or more of the eight age-friendly community themes (see WHO's Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide)
- engaging older people in planning activities
- adding an Age-friendly lens to existing plans or policies, such as: official Community Plans, Integrated Community Sustainability Plans, or community or neighbourhood plans
  - design guidelines, for example for:
    - community planning processes related to social determinants of health (e.g. affordable housing, homelessness, etc.)
    - development of community health plans.

## B: IMPLEMENTATION OF AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY PROJECTS

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We want to support Councils and communities to implement projects that enable seniors to age in place and facilitate the creation of Age-friendly communities. We wish to encourage projects that become self-sustaining over time and become part of the fabric of the community. Pilots, feasibility studies and innovative projects can also be considered.

Applicants applying for funding to implement an age-friendly project must demonstrate how the project relates to an Age-friendly assessment or action plan. If a council does not have a specific Age-friendly strategy or policy, it should be clear how the project relates to relevant existing priorities. Projects may include but are not limited to:

- increasing community accessibility (transportation, housing, services)
- development of kaupapa Māori, or other population or culturally specific approaches to creating age-friendly communities
- recreation and healthy living activities and/or referral and support to connect seniors with recreation and healthy living services
- community gardens and healthy eating
- health literacy and promotion (e.g. workshops, guides, etc)
- intergenerational projects
- promotion of Age-friendly business practices
- reducing social isolation / loneliness.

*All funded activities should be completed within twelve months of the Letter of Grant being signed. Projects should not be scheduled to start before January 2021 to allow Letters of Grant to be agreed.*

The following activities are **not** eligible for funding:

- projects that do not demonstrate benefits for older people and their participation in the community
- existing programmes, projects, products or services
- activities that are legislative responsibility of a council
- recurrent or retrospective funds – this includes enhancements to existing work or programmes, the reimbursement of costs already incurred or expended, and any projects or activities or expenditure that has taken place prior to the application being approved.
- any salaries or wages for permanent or existing staff
- recurring maintenance or operational costs of existing programs or facilities
- international travel
- professional development activities
- activities that involve commercial ventures for personal gain or fundraising activities
- the purchase of vehicles or similar depreciable assets
- general on-going operational expenses
- funding solely for the purposes of designing/planning work or concept plans
- projects that are funded by or duplicate an existing government programme or service
- fundraising activities
- new capital works or upgrades to existing infrastructure such as construction costs, building repairs or alterations.



## EVALUATION

Applications will be evaluated by an internal independent panel. The Evaluation Panel will assess projects against the criteria in the table below. We may grant all or some of the funding requested, based on a project assessment, and on availability of funds.

CRITERIA	WEIGHTING
<p><b>Focus and Impact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the identified need in the community, and how does your initiative or community project address it?</li> <li>• Has the application demonstrated the potential for a lasting impact on communities resulting from the project / initiative?</li> <li>• What is the geographic area covered by the project and number of people involved?</li> </ul>	20%
<p><b>Quality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a clear plan to assess the impact and success of the project, ie how will you evaluate the effects and outcomes?</li> <li>• How will the project be sustained over time?</li> </ul>	10%
<p><b>Engagement/Partnership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe how older people will be involved in the project, and how diversity of opinion is ensured or if particular groups will be targeted</li> <li>• Describe how the project will work cooperatively with groups that have a stake in addressing the issue, including community organisations, associations and council.</li> <li>• Identify any partners in the project and describe their role and contribution</li> </ul>	30%
<p><b>Project Activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a clear description of the work that will be undertaken including what will be done, how, by who and when</li> <li>• Have you shown that your proposed project is timely and likely to succeed?</li> <li>• Have you shown that your organisation has sufficient capacity to support the project?</li> <li>• What will happen when the project funding ends?</li> </ul>	30%
<p><b>Financial Feasibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The budget is realistic in terms of proposed activities and planned results, and demonstrates efficient use of resources.</li> <li>• Identification of any financial or in-kind support provided by other partners?</li> </ul>	10%

## C. INNOVATION

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Providers may have new and innovative ways to deliver against the programme objectives. We will accept alternative proposals on this basis.

### THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications must be made using the Community Connects application form available at [www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz](http://www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz)

To help you put together a strong application, please contact the Office for Seniors about your project *before* you finalise your application, in case there are any aspects that need to be clarified. Contact: [Community\\_Connects@msd.govt.nz](mailto:Community_Connects@msd.govt.nz).

Email your completed form together with any attachments to [Community\\_Connects@msd.govt.nz](mailto:Community_Connects@msd.govt.nz). Please provide a list in your cover e-mail of all the documents that are attached, so we can make sure we have all the paperwork.

The closing date for applications is 16 October 2020 .

### DUE DILIGENCE

Successful applications will be subject to due diligence, including:

- a. verification of legal entity status
- b. identification of any outstanding approvals, remedial actions or other areas of concern (for those organisations already contracted to MSD)
- c. past performance (where relevant)
- d. reference checks may be requested where projects are undertaken by providers not known to MSD.

### NOTICE OF DECISION

All applicants will receive written notice of the Evaluation Committee's decision as well as the terms and conditions of any grant awarded. Grants over \$10,000 are awarded in two payments: 70% at the approval of the project and 30% when the project is complete and the Office for Seniors has received the required final report and financial summary.

Grants will be announced at the beginning of December 2020

*We may showcase projects that receive grants on the SuperSeniors website and in materials to promote planning and implementation for population ageing.*

## GRANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Approved applicants will be responsible for:

- undertaking the identified actions in their project plan
- providing administrative support for workshops and community consultation
- proper fiscal management, including acceptable accounting records
- providing quarterly updates and final reports funding the publication of their Age-friendly communities final report
- circulating the report and/or communicating the findings to their communities.

The final report must include a summary of the activities undertaken, outline of the outcomes achieved, and an income and expenditure statement. Information gathered from all reports will be used to evaluate the Community Connects Grants Programme, to satisfy the Office for Seniors reporting requirements and for promotional purposes by the Office for Seniors.

## CHANGES TO FUNDED ACTIVITIES

Once grants are made, any changes or variation to planned activities must be approved by the Office for Seniors.

## EXTENSIONS

All funded activities must take place within twelve months of the Letter of Grant being signed. Requests for extensions must be in writing and approved by the Office for Seniors.

## PERSONAL INFORMATION

Any personal information you provide will be managed in accordance with the Privacy Act 1993. You can request access to your personal information from the Office for Seniors.

## Appendix 2 - Summary of Community Connects grants

### May 2018 funding round

Applicant	Project description	Funding
Carterton District Council	Carterton District Council is co-ordinating with South Wairarapa and Masterton District Councils to create a Positive Ageing Strategy for the whole Wairarapa district. The project includes background analysis, needs assessments and community consultation and will be used to develop an age-friendly strategy and action plan.	\$15,000
Te Kokoru Manaakitanga Eastern Bay Villages	This project links residents from the Whakatāne district to share ideas, host hui and develop policies. The project will prepare a report on ways to reduce vulnerability and isolation in rural Māori communities and finding culturally appropriate ways to address these issues for different organisations and their communities.	\$15,000
Hurunui District Council	Assessing current and future needs and understanding the issues affecting older people. It will engage with older people and organisations to gather ideas on what the Council can do to create age-friendly communities and create a plan to present to the council with actions.	\$12,900
Napier City Council	Napier is one of six cities trialling the use of OPERAT (Older People's External Residential Assessment Tool). The council will train and support older people to use the tool to assess their local neighbourhoods. It will test the suitability of the tool for use in New Zealand, and identify areas where local improvements could be made, and help implement the plan for the Napier Positive Ageing Strategy.	\$8,325
Waimakariri District Council	Supporting the development of a Waimakariri Age-friendly Community Plan. The project will establish a Steering Group to co-create an engagement plan to gather views of older people in the community. The council has prepared a	\$11,997

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project description</b>	<b>Funding</b>
	discussion document to stimulate discussion in the community. The project will assess current council activities and identify priority issues and gaps. Information will be used to develop an Age-friendly Community Plan.	
Well-Able	A community-based group working to design and develop resources for pre- and primary school children to build empathy and understanding of the needs of older people in the Kāpiti community. The resources will be tested in schools and with older people.	\$6,750

### October 2018 funding round

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project description</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Taupō District Council	The Council is developing an Age-friendly Communities Strategy. The first step is to develop a project plan to engage and work with the different communities in the Taupō district.	\$12,000
Wesley Community Action	This project will design and develop an Ageing Well Network for the Hutt Valley. It will involve establishing a core design group, workshops with community stakeholders, and creation of a stepped implementation plan to start an ageing well network. The intent is to create a model that can be shared across New Zealand.	\$15,000
Enliven Woburn	This project will pilot a volunteer buddy programme to support Hutt Valley community members experiencing early to moderate dementia, and their family members. The project will train and up-skill the volunteer work force and pool the resources currently available in different parts of the community, helping to address the risk of social isolation for people with dementia and their families.	\$5,000

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project description</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Nelson City Council	Running a project to investigate the experiences and challenges of ageing from the perspective of five different groups in Nelson: Māori, Pasifika, former refugees, older migrants and LGBTI. This work will inform the development of the wider Nelson Age-friendly Strategy.	\$12,600

### May 2019 funding round

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project description</b>	<b>Funding</b>
CNSST	Carrying out targeted consultations with Chinese communities in Auckland to help develop an age-friendly action plan.	\$15,000
Hauraki District Council	Developing a feasibility study to establish an intergenerational and age-friendly social support hub for older people in Waihi.	\$5,000
Horowhenua District Council	Developing an Age-friendly Communities strategy and review of Horowhenua District Council's Positive Ageing Action Plan.	\$15,000
Howick Baptist Virtual Villages East	Developing a virtual-village model to build an age-friendly community for the seniors of Howick and surrounding areas.	\$10,000
Kāpiti Coast Grey Power	Engaging with the four unique communities in the Kāpiti Coast area to identify and prioritise age-friendly actions.	\$10,000
Nelson Tasman Community Transport Trust	Researching the transport needs for the older people in the Tasman district, and trialling a community bus service to inform the development of an effective community transport service model.	\$10,870
New Plymouth Age-Friendly Trust	Engaging with key stakeholders in rural and remote areas of the district to identify and agree on the key priority areas for the Age Friendly	\$12,000

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project description</b>	<b>Funding</b>
	New Plymouth Action Plan and to oversee implementation.	
Toa Pacific	Facilitating an introduction to older Pacific people engaging and connecting with a range of age-friendly community-led and council activities, to help reduce social isolation and loneliness.	\$10,000

### **October 2019 funding round**

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project description</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Age Concern Auckland	Piloting a social connection programme (that could be expanded if successful) making Auckland more age friendly via Social Connections Local Area Co-ordination. Building strong networks of local volunteers to support and assist isolated older people in their community.	\$15,000
Age Concern Wellington	Connect! An initiative to reduce isolation among older people and strengthen communities through increasing participation and engagement. Piloting use of the existing volunteer network to support older people into new activities and networks. Creating relationships with older people then linking them through to existing clubs and opportunities in their area.	\$15,000
Alexandra Community House	A Feasibility Study to develop a model to address isolation and loneliness in Alexandra. Work includes a community survey to identify community issues and priorities to support development of a virtual village.	\$10,000
Alzheimer's Otago	Raising awareness of dementia to the public and supporting local businesses/organisations to become dementia friendly and trialling a third tier Dementia Friendly Recognition Programme as an	\$15,000

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project description</b>	<b>Funding</b>
	entry level award for businesses interested in supporting people with dementia.	
Connect the Dots	To develop and pilot free community art workshops in Māori, Pacific and Asian languages for people with dementia to provide social connection and meaningful activity.	\$8,700
Coromandel Independent Living Trust	This Project will engage with older people and key local stakeholders to form a steering group to develop and carry out a community age-friendly assessment in the Coromandel Colville ward. It will be guided by the WHO framework and form a seniors hub (networking group)	\$10,000
Dementia Wellington	Living well with Dementia - a pilot programme to enable people with dementia and their carers to remain connected and engaged with their community	\$9,000
Hutt Timebank	Supporting older people with transport needs and social connection using a time banking model.	\$7,200
Waitaki District Council	to develop a Waitaki District action plan to address the needs of older community members identified in the 2017 Senior Wellbeing survey.	\$9,940

### **October 2020 funding round**

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project description</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Alzheimer's Marlborough	Dementia Friendly Marlborough project Work with local businesses to adopt the Dementia Friends or Dementia Friendly Recognition programme	\$15,000
Parkside Trust Rotorua	Age Friendly Rotorua Strategy Work with key partners to develop a Rotorua Community Age Friendly strategy	\$15,000



<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project description</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Tauranga City Council	Successful Ageing in a Post COVID environment. Two-phase project to update the Tauranga City Council Age Friendly Plan and research project.	\$9,500
The Family Centre	Pacific Communities Age Friendly Plan. Developing an Age Friendly Plan for Pasifika Seniors in Hutt Valley and Wainuiomata	\$15,000
Waikato Indian Senior Citizen's Association	Day time activity programme. Setting up a regular social connection programme for older Indian community members	\$10,000
Rotorua Multicultural Council	Involving senior migrants in recreation and healthy living services in Rotorua. Develop programmes for ethnic seniors for digital skills social connection and integration.	\$7,050
Nelson Tasman Age Concern	Age Concern Nelson Tasman Rural Connection Plan. Develop and deliver an action plan to increase social connections for older people in rural parts of the Tasman district.	\$15,000

## Appendix 3 - Geographic distribution of Community Connects grants

Number of applications and grants by location from May 2018 to December 2020

Location	Number of applications received	Number of grants awarded
Northland and Far North	6	0
Auckland	19	5
Coromandel/Hauraki	5	2
Bay of Plenty (including Tauranga, Whakatāne, Rotorua)	18	4
Te Tairāwhiti (East Coast and Gisborne)	6	0
Waikato/King Country/Taranaki	7	2
Turangi/Taupō	3	1
Hawkes Bay	6	1
Horowhenua, Manawatu, Whanganui	5	1
Wairarapa	2	1
Wellington, Hutt Valley, Kāpiti	19	8
Nelson, Marlborough, Tasman	8	4
Westland and West Coast	4	0
Canterbury	11	2
Otago	7	3
Southland	5	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>34</b>

## Geographic distribution of Community Connects projects by Local Government New Zealand sub sectors



