

# ROTORUA GREY POWER

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SUMMER ISSUE 2021



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## GREY POWER ROTORUA

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### Office Hours:

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Vacant

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#### OUTINGS COORDINATOR:

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#### OFFICE ROSTER COORDINATOR:

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#### COMMITTEE:

Gerald Hanson / Reynold Macpherson /

Michelle Nahu / Jim Adams / Lyn Walker

If there are issues you would like Grey Power Rotorua to take up on your behalf, let your Committee know by phone or contact us via our

website [www.greypowerrotorua.org.nz](http://www.greypowerrotorua.org.nz)

or email [greypower.rotorua@gmail.com](mailto:greypower.rotorua@gmail.com)

**REMEMBER Grey Power Rotorua when you change your contact details**

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## ARE YOU A RETIRED ACCOUNTANT?

**COULD YOU VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME ONLY ONCE A YEAR? THEN**



**TO REVIEW OUR FINANCIALS FOR YOUR 2022 AGM**

**Please contact the GPR office with your details. Thank You.**

## COVID-19 MYTHBUSTING

Vaccine-related hospitalisations are being hushed up.

Vaccines affect womens' menstrual cycles and fertility.

Vaccines can harm children.

Vaccines cause magnetism.

Natural remedies and immunity are more effective

against Covid.

Covid-19 vaccines can alter your DNA,

It is unknown if the vaccine causes cancer.

Vaccines are experimental and can't be trusted.

Vaccine companies are exempt from all liability.

The only reason given to take the vaccine is it might

reduce symptoms.

**THE SIMPLE TWO LETTER ANSWER TO ALL OF THE ABOVE IS NO**

The full article is on pages 6 & 7 of the Daily Post Sept 30.



## What's under the Ed's Cap?

Gosh it was only September when the Spring magazine was mailed out to you. A slight delay with a thing called LockDown Level 3. How are you all coping this time around? Are you co-vinated yet?

We have had to cancel a number of events but have listed new items in our enclosed Events Calendar. Fingers crossed, eh!

Due to ill health and personal reasons we have lost 4 of our 2021 committee. So there's still room for you to step forward. Grey Power Rotorua has put forward a remit and hopes to be fortunate to be on the RLC Representation Committee. We are still based in the building behind 1333 Eruera Street.

If you would like to donate an item for our free raffle or something larger to auction for our End of Year Luncheon, please drop it into the office no later than Tuesday 23rd Nov. We will not be holding a Garage Sale this year as we have too few volunteers on board to action it.

### Question Time:

What would you like to have a forum on in 2022?

What is the main reason that you joined Grey Power apart from cheaper electricity?

Where would you suggest that one of the monthly outings go to?

What would you like us to advocate on locally?

Should we hold informal coffee meetings monthly?

Would you like to contribute an item of interest in your magazine?

Keep safe and sane.

**Gerald Hanson** | ANZIM. BGE

Editor and temporary Grey Power Rotorua Chairman  
[geraldhanson.gpr@gmail.com](mailto:geraldhanson.gpr@gmail.com)

## MAMAKU BLUE

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**PRESENT THIS ADVERT** to receive a 2 for 1 deal on a stack of pancakes (1 person per voucher, not available with any other special)

**For this and much more, come and see us**

Back in the later years of WW2, having reached the ripe old age of 13, I started to look for better forms of transport than my rusty, trusty bicycle, I had, by this time, been driving the tractor on the fields and had twice taken it to the village, a distance of four miles, one of our tractors, a Fordson, still had plenty of tread left, the other tractor had steel lugs and we were not supposed to go far on the roads with it. Enter my first motorcycle, an ageing New Imperial 125! It stayed with me through college and although it's top speed was not much more than 50 mph it was infinitely better than a bike!

In Canada, where I moved to a couple of years later, I had several borrowed vehicles but decided one day that I wanted a car of my own, my first car I could call my own. Armed with my meagre savings (\$30, a lot in those days) I went into a used car dealers in Woodstock, Ontario and asked what I could buy for that princely sum! I left, a good half hour later, with a Ford Model A circa 1932! It was probably the best 'fun' car I ever owned!. You had to crank it to start, in the winter I drained the radiator every night and filled it with boiling water next morning! It had a manifold heater which threw out heat above 30 mph (top speed 30 mph!) so a blanket was needed in the winter, the windscreen wipers were manual and the windscreen had to be pushed open in snow storms! One had to reverse up steep hills as that was the strongest gear, and using the hand throttle you could get out and push to help! I frequently had ten or twelve friends as passengers, and once got as far as Niagara with that many on board! I sold it exactly one year later for \$30!

I am keen to know what our many readers owned as young men and women, what was your first mode of transport! Let us know-with all the fun and games included!



69 Lake Road, Ohinemutu, Rotorua

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## Grey Power Rotorua

1333 Eruera Street, Ph: 346 1739

office hours: from 11am - 2pm,

Tuesday to Thursday

email: greypower.rotorua@gmail.com

web: greypowerrotorua.org.nz

## Calendar of events coming up:

**All events are subject to cancellation at short notice due to Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time**

**Call Wieland on 07 985 4146 with any questions**

### 18 October 2021, 9:30 am

A guided tour through well established gardens, the 120-year old farmhouse and the mushroom farm in Kaingaroa. Meeting at Parksyde Community Centre, 7/9 Tarewa Place. We meet at 09:30am and carpool at 10am sharp. \$10 per person includes Devonshire Tea.

### 1 November 2021, 1pm – 3pm

The “Next Generation Internet” presentation, followed by question & answers and refreshments. Linton Park Community Centre, 16 Kamahi Place, Pukehangi. This is our last Forum for the year.

### 15 November 2021, 9:30am

Meeting at Parksyde as above and the same time. No destination has been decided on yet. This is the last outing for the year.

### 27 November 2021, 12:00 noon

End of Year Lunch.

See page 5 or website for details.



“Did you know there’s a miniature woman tied to the train tracks who looks remarkably like me?”

## Low Use electricity pricing plans

The Grey Power NZ Federation has come out strongly against a government decision to phase out low use electricity pricing plans because, apart from the promise of some industry provided support, no other alternatives to assist those experiencing energy hardship have been announced.

Energy and Resources Minister Megan Woods has announced that the current plan which allows for reduced charges for people using low amounts of electricity will be phased out over five years starting in April 2022.

Federation Energy National Advisory Group chair Bern Sommerfeld said the minister had made a fundamental error in assuming that getting rid of low-use electricity plans would create a fairer playing field for all New Zealanders and encourage a switch to electric technologies. “It will do exactly the opposite. Many on fixed incomes will have little or no ability to meet the increased power charges and it will be difficult for older people and families on low incomes to switch to new technologies.

Sommerfeld also said it was a nonsense for the minister to suggest that households on standard-use plans are charged more to make up for the under-recovery of fixed charges from those on the lower rates. “Many business enterprises have concession rates for pensioners and those on fixed low incomes and these are factored into business plans all across the commercial sector. Electricity is no different with its low use pricing plan. The industry could also deduct a few percentage points off the massive profits it makes each year and treat the provision of electricity as an essential service, as it used to be, instead of a profit-making commodity.

Sommerfeld said the whole electricity industry was in dire need of a complete overhaul and had been since the major restructuring of the 1980s. “We have already seen this recently on one of the coldest nights of the year, when many households were affected by power outages and some generating facilities were not in operation. There are many things the Government should and could be doing to sort the mess out but targeting senior citizens and those on fixed low incomes is unfair and unwarranted.”

The Federation president, Jan Pentecost, added that: “Many older people are incredibly anxious at this time due to the negative effects of Covid, the recent loss of banking facilities and cheques and so, and now the loss of cheaper power unless there is sufficient support forthcoming for low - income households adds to this anxiety.”

Jan Pentecost | President  
Grey Power NZ Federation Inc

**GREY POWER ROTORUA INC INVITE MEMBERS**  
**to your End of Year Buffet Luncheon**  
**on the 27th November, 12:00 pm**  
**at The Commercial Travellers Club, 26 Moncur Dr**  
**The 2 course buffet costs \$30.00 person**  
**tea or coffee. The Bar will be open.**  
**Live Entertainment, Free Raffles, Auction**  
**and of course, good companionship.**  
**Tickets are available at our office from 26 Oct**  
**or internet banking quoting member no. & lunch**  
**as your reference and pick up at the venue.**

**Depending on the Covid restrictions in place at the time, if any,**  
**this Event may need to be postponed until the New Year.**

**No matter who you are,**  
**or what you are going through,**  
**Samaritans are here to listen.**



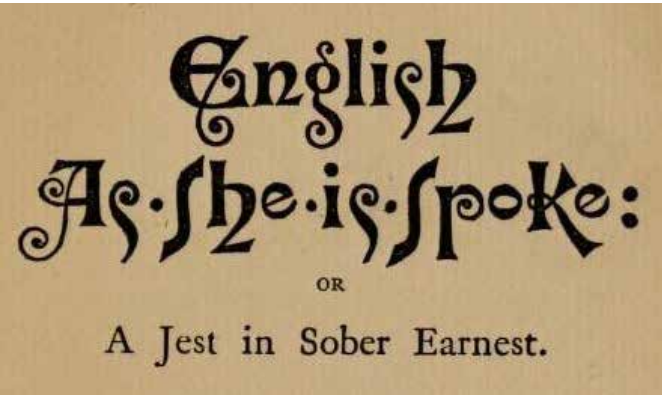
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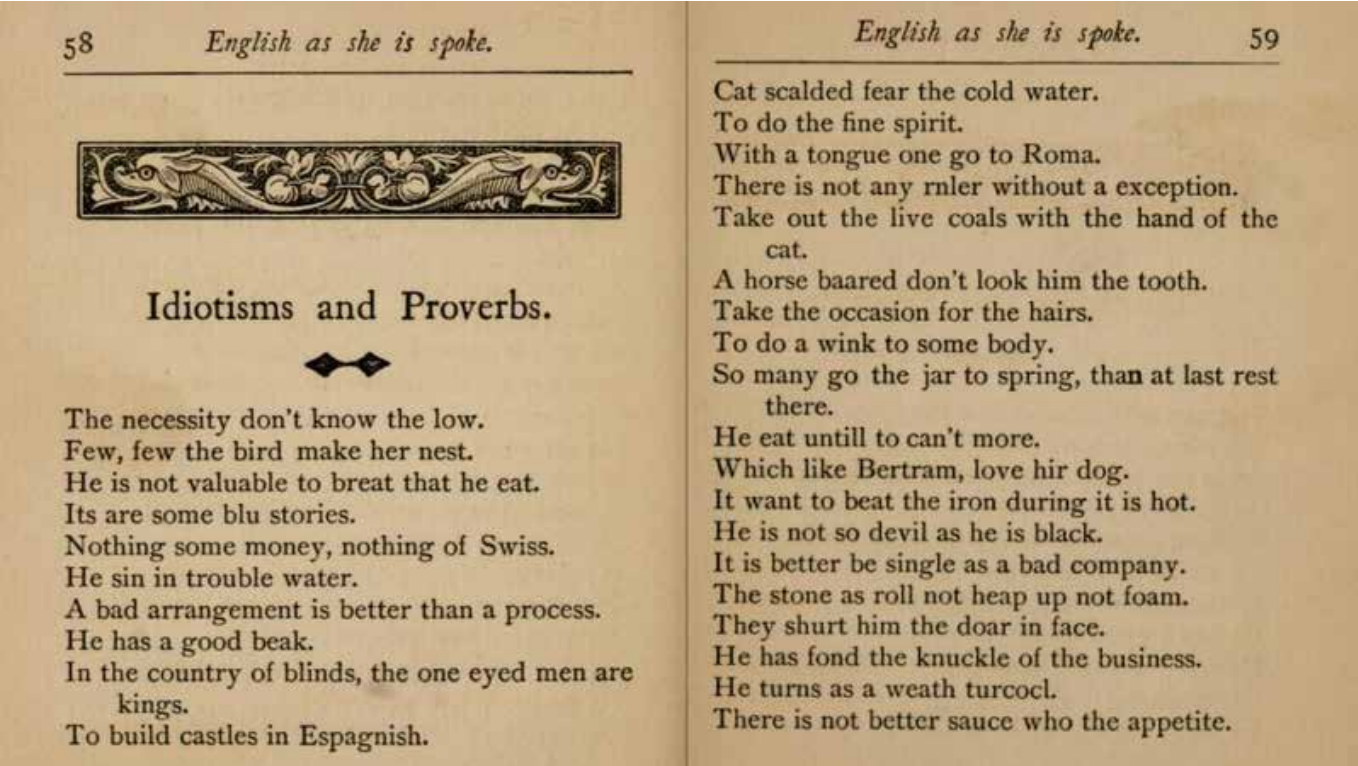
A recycling tip for you  
and your mates,  
keep bottle caps and lids  
out of the blue crate







IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 19th century, a relatively unknown author named Pedro Carolino rapidly gained intercontinental popularity over a small Portuguese-to-English phrasebook. English as She Is Spoke (or O novo guia da conversação em portuguez e inglez) was originally intended to help Portuguese speakers dabble in the English tongue, but was penned by a man who spoke little to no English himself. And, instead of helping Portuguese speakers learn a second language, it became a cult classic for fans of inept and unintentional humor.



I had a sister, OK, most people have a sister, but my sister was also a tutor, a guide, an advisor, and the one person who taught me ‘Never take advice from a researcher!’ Yes, my sister, two whole years my elder, was a serious researcher!

In the garden my sister’s curiosity was incredible, “what does that taste like?” She would ask, thrusting a leaf picked from some unknown plant into my mouth. “Can you chew that?” Again, some unfortunate insect which I was expected to devour!

Her willingness to exploit my weakness extended itself to the dining room table where any new meat or vegetable had to undergo ‘tasting’ by younger brother before she would try it – anything she liked was found to be ‘not good for boys’ and taken from my plate to hers! Likewise, overcooked cabbage (everybody overcooked cabbage back then!) was said to be extremely good for young brother!

Boxing, with elder brother’s gloves, was also a favourite pastime of dear sisters! Yep, guess who? Strangely enough we became lifelong friends, I miss her terribly.

What wonderful relationships did you all have with sisters and brothers? Let us know!

So, it looks as if we, the pensioners of New Zealand, asre so well off that we don’t even get a mention when it ocmes to an increase in benefits.

I never knew that pensioners’ living costs never went up, while all other beneficiaries were unable to pay their way.

We also have to pay rent, rates, power, water, food, petrol and all other living costs.

It’s time for the Invisible Grey People to show that we do exist, and the beswt way to do that will be at the polling booths come next election.

Terry Molvik | Papamoa.

## Scams Are Deceptive

Recently there has been great concern with a text scan that has been appearing. This is a good time to go over our awareness of scams attacking the community.

In the latest scam the scammer sends a text message to your mobile phone about a parcel awaiting to be delivered and asks you to click on a link to check the delivery. That link is a malicious scam to get you to open your phone to downloading an app that collects banking and other data for the scammer from your phone. This can result in the scammer accessing your bank accounts and credit cards with you losing money as a result.

If you receive a text about a parcel delivery, DO NOT CLICK ON THE LINK. Delivery notifications usually come from your supplier on a website not a text link. Everyone has the main way of stopping scammers by saying “NO!” But there is a need to prepare for scams.

Scams are deceptive, uninvited contacts or promises designed to trick you into giving away your money or your personal information.

Personal scammers target people who are vulnerable in a number of ways such as being compassionate for others or lonely. Often if people are scammed they do not want to admit to anything happening because of their vulnerability.

Internet and telephone scammers often work on people’s greed or a picture is presented to raise a person’s anxiety over something.

What scammers do is immoral because they target vulnerable people but not necessarily illegal. Unless there have been laws broken the Police are limited in what they can do. Also the Police need to have a complaint laid by the victim.

However individuals can do something about preventing scamming occurring. They can wise up on scams around. They can investigate before being lured into a “too good to be true” schemes. They can maintain contact, relationship and friendship with elderly family and friends.

If you are offered a “too good to be true” scheme treat it just as that, too good to be true. If a quick return or promises of large value gains are made don’t be tempted to do anything. Be patient, check it out, don’t be pressured to act quickly.

There are websites available to check out scams, in NZ the Consumer Affairs has a dedicated area

of their website listing known scams: <http://www.consumeraffairs.govt.nz/scams> as has the Department of Internal Affairs at <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Spam-About-Scams-and-Phishing>

If you wish to report a scam the Internal Affairs has a website to report them: <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Spam-Complain-About-Spam>

However if you don’t have access to the internet please feel free to contact the Neighbourhood Support office, 349-9470, or by email to [nsrotorua@gmail.com](mailto:nsrotorua@gmail.com) and we can check out a potential scam by checking the above websites and also by working with the Police.

For those in our community who don’t have close contact from family or friends be a good neighbour and keep an eye out for them. Often it is those people who are fed a sob story by a scammer, feeding on their vulnerability. Family and friends should ensure people feel cared for by regularly keeping in touch with them so that some of that loneliness/isolation can be removed.

**Basic rules for everyone to follow are:**  
**Never be pressured to do anything**  
**Never give out personal information, treat it like money**  
**Never give out passwords**

## BACKLASH GROWS AGAINST 3-WATERS SERVICE DELIVERY PROGRAMME



There is strong level of opposition across the country to the Government’s proposed Three Waters service delivery programme. Comments from councillors show very serious concerns. In some quarters there appears to be a suspicion that the Government is not being completely open about everything it is seeking to achieve



# Rotorua Multicultural Council

## Women’s Wellbeing Programme

Two of the objectives of the Rotorua Multicultural Council are to support new migrants while they settle in Rotorua and to help them to understand the special place of Māori in New Zealand society. One of the ways in which these objectives are achieved is through the Women’s Wellbeing Programmes.

When migrants arrive in Rotorua, they know very little about the services that are available to them and their families and they do not have a network of friends, family and neighbours to introduce them to places such as the Library or the Citizens Advice Bureau.

The free 10-week Women’s Wellbeing Programme of the Rotorua Multicultural Council is offered in sessions of an hour and a half just after lunch, once per week. For the first session the women meet at the Rotorua Library for introductions and to talk about their needs and expectations. They are then taken on a tour of the Library, shown the various collections, informed about services such as the sessions for pre-schoolers, the free book delivery service, the eAudiobooks, and the free computing and internet services, and given the opportunity to become a member of the Library.

For the following eight weeks the women meet at venues in and around Rotorua where they learn about what is available to residents.

The relationship between the Police and citizens in the home countries of the migrants can be very different from how we know it in New Zealand. The migrant women are taken inside the Rotorua Police Station where officers talk to them about the services that are available there, encouraging them to get in touch if they have any concerns about their safety or family violence.

Migrants who are job hunting in Rotorua are encouraged to volunteer as an excellent way of learning about workplaces and communication among colleagues. At the Citizens Advice Bureau, they find out that this is the place to come if they have questions about tenancies, visas, employment relations, and much more. They are also given a directory of volunteering opportunities.

On a visit to Ohinemutu they learn about local Māori history and customs and visit the beautiful St Faith’s Church. At the Salvation Army they find out about the food bank and social services provided here, and they are shown around the Family Store where some of them have ended up as volunteers.

English Language Partners and the Rotorua Arts Village provide many activities and programmes of interest to the women. They are also given a workshop on how to write a CV and how to prepare for a typically New Zealand job

interview which can be very different from interviews in their home countries.

At times when Rotorua is at Covid-19 Alert Level 1, they visit the Rotorua Hospital for a talk on cervical smears and introductions to the children’s play area, the emergency department, and the Chaplain.

Rotorua’s residents take our mountain biking and forest walking tracks for granted but it is a real eye opener for the migrant women to visit the Forest Information Centre and Rotorua Trails Trust, and then be taken on a guided forest walk through the redwoods.

The programmes can vary depending on the availability of hosts. Migrants find the accessibility of Mayor Steve Chadwick and Member of Parliament Todd McClay amazing; few of them would have met such dignitaries in their home countries.

Among the participants in the programme are the wives of skilled migrants and international students. The programme is funded by Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology and organised by Leidy Monsalves, the Administrator of the Rotorua Multicultural Council. The idea for the programme came from the Women’s Council of the NZ Federation of Multicultural Councils and was based on the input from migrant women from around New Zealand. The goals of the programme are to enable migrant women to say, at the end of the programme: I am learning to become a Kiwi; my family’s needs are met; I am part of a community network; and my voice is heard.

Do you know someone who would benefit from this programme? Please get in touch with LeidyM.rmc@gmail.com



Trying on a stab proof vest and handcuffs at the Rotorua Police Station.



On a visit to Ohinemutu

Todd McClay  
Member of Parliament for Rotorua

## You’re about to lose Your Waters.

Opposition to the government’s ‘Three Waters’ plan has been vocal, and is only growing louder. So what is Three Waters, and why does it matter?

The deeply flawed Three Waters model would create four multi-regional water entities in place of the councils currently overseeing improvement of our drinking water, wastewater and stormwater services. This is a centralisation and control approach by the government. It bundles these assets into regional mega-entities, with the result that community ownership and empowerment is held at arms’ length.

Currently, these water facilities are governed by elected councils, and rate-payers have paid for decades to own their own water assets. But this plan would strip the ownership from individual communities, and erode local democracy and ratepayer accountability. The entities would be run by appointees and bureaucrats who are hundreds of kilometres away. The ownership rights of councils would be unclear, and councils would have only token representation in appointing decision makers. The result would be that all water services would be less accessible and accountable to their customers.

Furthermore, the benefits that have been outlined are actually unrealistic in practice, and communities who have a good water service that is performing well will likely end up subsidising other regions who don’t have as good a service. This is far less preferable to local councils actually stepping up and developing good plans to respond to the needs of their own region.

In just over two days, almost 25,000 New Zealanders signed National’s petition to stop the Three Waters asset grab. A majority of councils don’t support the reforms, and many have called for a pause. But the government has ignored their pleas, and has no stated plans to halt the reforms. At this stage it seems that the Three Waters reforms will be forced on councils.

National fully supports smart solutions to respond to infra-structure challenges, but we don’t see this plan as a smart solution. Rather, it’s a takeover of community assets. We propose, instead, that we keep local assets in local control, and that we protect

community decision-making. Keeping the ‘local’ in local government is critical. The Three Waters plan needs to be ditched.

Hon Todd McClay  
**Member of Parliament for Rotorua**  
Authorised by T McClay, Parliament Buildings, Wellington

**Hon Todd McClay**  
MP for Rotorua

**I hold constituent clinics every week, and I am here to help.**

1301 Amohau Street • 07 348 5871  
rotoruaamp@parliament.govt.nz  
toddmcclaympforrotorua  
toddmcclay.co.nz

**National**  
Authorised by Todd McClay, Parliament Buildings, Wgtn.





Our friendly club aims to foster and share the love of Country Music with people of all ages, we meet on the 1st Wednesday from 1pm-3pm and the 3rd Sunday of the month from 1pm–4.30pm at the Rotorua Bowling Club next to the Blue Baths in the Government Gardens.

\$5.00 door charge for non-members.

**For more information go to Geyserland Country Music Club Facebook page or contact Dallas 350 2048 or Bruce 027 446 5800.**

## DOING NOTHING OFTEN LEADS TO THE VERY BEST OF SOMETHING

- Winnie the Pooh -

When was the last time that you did absolutely nothing? Can’t remember? You’re not alone but being able to completely switch off – to still our minds and hands and just be – can have wonderful benefits.

By *Angelique Kasmara*



**Consumer NZ seeks Commerce Commission probe on 'misleading' retirement village claims**

Anne Gibson - 15 Sep, 2021

Consumer NZ has today lodged a complaint with the Commerce Commission, about what it said were "misleading" retirement village claims.

Jon Duffy, Consumer NZ chief executive, said a major selling point for many retirement villages was the rest home facilities they provide if a resident can no longer live independently.

Advertising and marketing create an impression that care was guaranteed, he said.

That's not the case because it's district health boards - not retirement village owner/operators - who often decide if someone can go into a hospital in a village, he said.

Retirement village contracts reviewed by Consumer NZ found they failed to give any assurance that aged care would be available when needed.

"Contracts typically state residents may be given priority for access to care beds but there's no guarantee you'll get a bed if you need it," Duffy said. Village claims risk misleading consumers about the availability of care services so the entity has sought a probe under the Fair Trading Act.

The availability of aged care facilities was a significant factor for many people making the move to a retirement village, Consumer's research showed. A 2020 survey of village residents found half of respondents said access to aged care services was a key factor in their decision to move into their village. "Consumers should be able to rely on claims made in villages' advertising. However, residents are being placed in situations where villages' promises of healthcare aren't being fulfilled," Duffy said. If a care bed wasn't available when needed, the resident would have to leave their village.

Villages' failure to provide promised care services was raised several times by residents who participated in Consumer NZ's survey. John Collyns, executive director of the Retirement Villages Association - the lobby group for owner/operators - called Consumer NZ misguided. "The sector has always sought to work constructively with Consumer and we're puzzled why they believe it is necessary to take this drastic step.

"Our members are committed to meeting the requirements of the Fair Trading Act and while retirement village residents are offered priority for care should they need it, to the best of our knowledge

operators do not guarantee a bed. The move to care obviously depends on a bed being available and operators know there is a high demand for care beds," Collyns said.

"Operators work hard to make beds available to residents in their own village, either immediately or within a short window. "For most residents, the transition to care is straightforward and planned, however it is more challenging if a resident has a sudden medical episode that requires urgent transfer to care," Collyns said.

Consumer NZ said respondents' survey comments said:

- "The promised aged care facility that was pivotal in my decision to agree to move to this village has not been built and is unlikely to eventuate."
- "Continuity of care may be advertised but is questionable ... due to beds available!"
- "Sales managers give certain impressions and statements that later turn out not to be true. For example, I was told a care facility would happen if the residents wanted it. This was not true. It is not going to happen regardless."
- "Overpromised on completion of care centre 2018 – still years away. Many changes to the original plan we were shown."
- "I had asked if there would be hospital care, told yes at time, now told no."

A Government minister also wants better contracts and a better complaints system so residents can air grievances and clearer contracts in the fast-growing multibillion-dollar retirement village sector. Poto Williams, Associate Minister of Housing (Public Housing), says these aspects should be changed. "There are some changes the industry could start to make themselves around strengthening the complaints processes and reviewing contracts to ensure residents are fairly treated," Williams told the Herald.

It was up to the owner/operators of New Zealand's dozens of villages to act because the Government had "no immediate plans" to reform the law, she said. Williams was commenting before the release of a report on submissions on a call for major changes in a white paper from the Commission For Financial Capability.

The commission received 3000 submissions when it said many aspects of villages should change to make it fairer for residents and beneficiaries of family estates.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/consumer-nz-seeks-commerce-commission-probe-on-misleading-retirement-village-claims/B6P6OBL5MSVAQTLWK5TVDUCDMY/?>

**LOOK UP - LOOK DOWN - BE AWARE OF WHERE YOU ARE**

We are certainly in a situation that is unusual and strange for us ... with changes in our lives that can be confusing. What is stable is the NATURE around us. We are Blessed with an incredibly beautiful country. WE CAN AT LEAST CONTINUE TO ADORE IT.

Go out for a walk or a drive and stop and look around. Most of us have a phone capable of taking photos or a camera that could do with a dust off. Use them to record what you see. If you need a brush up with technique there is a Photo Group with University of the Third Age (U3A) in Rotorua. Phone Lyn Lang 021 266 0201

**You may get hooked and find a new interest and awakening. WOW.**



**Leave your loved ones fond memories .... not your funeral costs**



For over 38 years the **Catholic Development Fund (CDF)** of the Catholic Diocese of Hamilton is where Catholics and others can invest funds in fees free term deposit and savings (including funeral savings) accounts. Allowing them to support the religious, educational and charitable objectives of the Bishop, local communities and the wider Church..

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*editorial supplied by Catholic Diocese of Hamilton*

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51 Grey Street, Hamilton East

**Important Notice:** please read

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editorial supplied by The Law Shop

Elder wants re-think on Aotearoa push

A Ngai Tahu elder has called for a rethink on a movement to change New Zealand's official name to Aotearoa, a name which he said originally referred solely to the North Island. He said using Aotearoa for New Zealand risks overlooking the South Island.

A call to change the nation's name has been brought to the fore by the Maori Party launching a petition which not only called for renaming our country but also called for giving Maori names to towns, cities and other places.

Otago marae kaumatua Edward Ellison said while he agreed with the Maori Party's initiative in principle, it would be "a rash move to rush forward in a change of that substance and nature".

We believe there should be absolutely no change to our country's name without a referendum.

We know, because we commissioned a poll to find out, that the great majority of New Zealanders want no change in our country's name.

Our country has been called New Zealand since 1642 - indeed, there was no name for the country that we now call New Zealand prior to that.

Our petition calling on the Prime Minister to delete any reference in official communication to any name for our nation other than New Zealand has gathered more than 18,000 signature.

www.hobsonspledge.nz

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Did You Know?

In Finland, civic fines, such as speeding ticket fines, are scaled relative to the wealth of the offender so that a speeding ticket stings equally whether you're a starving student or a millionaire.

Once There Were Wolves

by Charlotte McConaghy

‘Not long ago, in the grand scheme of things, this forest was not small and sparse but strong and bursting with life. Lush with rowan trees, aspen, birch, juniper and oak. It stretched itself across a vast swathe of land, colouring Scotlands now bare hills, providing food and shelter to all manner of untamed thing. And within these roots and trunks and canopies, there ran wolves. Today, wolves once again walk upon this ground, which has not seen their kind in hundreds of years. Does something in their bodies remember this land, as it remembers them? It knows them well; it has been waiting for them to wake it from its long slumber.’

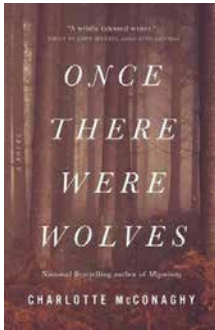
Charlotte McConaghy's writing is really something special. This story immediately transports the reader to the remote, wild landscape of the Scottish highlands.

Inti is managing a project to reintroduce wolves into Scotland, centuries after they were hunted to extinction there. Her team's aim is to rewild the land and restore balance to the ecosystem so that native forest has a chance to grow again. Inti has a twin sister - Aggie - who has undergone a traumatic event and won't leave the house, so she cares for her, and together they have a secret language they invented as children. During their childhood, they travelled between two very different parents - a father who left civilisation to live sustainably in the remote forest, he taught them of the communication and beauty of trees. Their mother solved crime in the city and believed the worst of people, having seen what they are capable of. Inti has a rare condition - 'mirror touch synaesthesia', where her brain recreates the sensory experiences of all she sees, both animals and humans. She can feel intimately both the physical suffering and pleasure of others, and has to guard herself from feeling too much.

Inti comes up against hostility and resistance from the local farmers who feel their livestock is threatened by the wolves, and then one of them turns up dead in the forest. She is determined to prove it wasn't her wolves that killed him, and everyone begins to look suspicious, even the chief of police whom Inti is falling in love with against her better judgement. As the novel progresses, her past with Aggie is slowly revealed, and Inti leans, very gradually, the importance of not closing her heart off to the world and to love, as well as being able to let go. I became utterly immersed in the world of the wolves, as well as the beauty of the landscape that is described - the author's distress over the ravages of climate change and the human impact on the natural world is evident throughout.

A hauntingly beautiful, compelling and evocative read.

Jemma (McLeods Booksellers Ltd)



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