



# GREYPOWER

TAURANGA WBOP ASSN INC

QUARTER ONE 2026 - AUTUMN



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[www.greypowertga-wbop.org.nz](http://www.greypowertga-wbop.org.nz)

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

We would like to hear your opinions or concerns on subject matter for printing in our magazine.

Letters must include the writer's name, home address and phone number. Letters should not exceed 120 words inclusive. We may not always print all letters we receive. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

**Post to:** the address above or email [tgagreypower@gmail.com](mailto:tgagreypower@gmail.com)

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## President's Word



Welcome to the first magazine of 2026 – a year that held the promise of fixing the economy, housing, health and all manner of other issues. Instead, we may be faced with rising oil prices and financial uncertainty which proves that the one thing you can rely on in life is change!

However, despite the unrest, good things are happening. Our national President, Gayle Chambers has worked at breakneck speed over the last 2 years to lift the profile of Grey Power, so we are now welcomed when we want to speak to members of any of the political parties. But it's so important that we have a high membership because like all forms of lobbying and advocacy – numbers matter.

Last year finished with a lunch for the committee and volunteers at The Bethlehem Shores Café which is very swish but not expensive. The association subsidises the lunch as a thank you. Having a large office, we need a roster of people to keep it manned.

Our magazine was printed in mid December and over 2000 copies were circulated around Tauranga and the Western Bay into cafes, libraries, the airport, the hospital, retirement villages and waiting rooms. It's a big job but it seems to be well received.

We are engaging with the Council to resume our work in upholding the Age Friendly City Strategy to make sure the city and all public areas are more accessible for seniors and therefore all other ages.

We continue to hold monthly coffee morning meetings at 3 locations in Tauranga and BOP and our first meeting this year in Tauranga was with Jono Peet, author and speaker. It was very interesting and entertaining and his book is a great read.

For many years Grey Power has been campaigning to have English recognised as an official language of New Zealand alongside Māori and Sign Language. At last it seems that this will be fixed in '26 by Winston Peters. It was our association that sent a petition with 1000s of signatures to NZ First years ago.

With much preparation and excitement, we hosted the Minister for Seniors and there is a report on her visit on page 4.

Stay safe and be kind, Take care.

*Jennifer Custins* | President

**ADDRESSES:** Please let us know if you have changed your home address, email address or phone number. Make sure you open your emails regularly so you can receive important messages. We still have emails returned to us so make sure you let us know, so you don't miss out.

## MEMBERSHIP FEES

These are due now and you will have received an invoice. Many thanks to those who have already paid.

**Single membership \$30 and couples \$40**

Bank account # **38 9001 0051732 00**  
Tauranga WBOP Grey Power Assn Inc

### TO RENEW

As above but put your name and membership number as a reference on the line for our bank account

### TO JOIN

Go to [www.greypowertga-wbop.org.nz](http://www.greypowertga-wbop.org.nz) and click on JOIN NOW. Use Stripe to make your payment all in one go! Couldn't be easier. OR go to your own internet banking to make the payment and use your phone number as reference or pop into our office with cash – see hours page 2

## NEW MEMBERS JOIN ANY TIME OF THE YEAR FOR 12 MONTHS SUBSCRIPTION

From this year the renewal date for any NEW members joining in 2026 [and subsequent years] will have a full 12 months. Your anniversary each year will be the month that you join. This will create a fairer outcome for those people joining throughout the year. [Example – join 18 June 2026. Renewal date will be June 2027]

There will be NO change for existing members, you will continue to be invoiced as usual, which will be close to 31 March each year.

## FEDERATION MAGAZINE ONLINE

To log in go to

[www.greypower.co.nz](http://www.greypower.co.nz)

and click on Member login, when the box shows, type in your email address and the password **greypower100**

*Great up to date articles and information.*

## COFFEE MORNINGS



All meetings are subject to health and safety guidelines at the time

Please bring friends or family to our meetings - everyone is welcome. Katikati & Tauranga have monthly or bi-monthly speakers

### TAURANGA COFFEE MORNINGS

33 Maitland St, Greerton Senior Citizens Hall. Good access and parking. \$3 donation toward the hall hire and morning tea. 1st Thursday of the month at 10am. **2 April, 7 May, 4 June, 2 July**

### KATIKATI COFFEE MORNINGS

Katikati Community Centre, 45 Beach Road (just past the schools). 3rd Friday of each month. \$2 for members & \$5 for others. **20 March, 17 April, 15 May, 19 June**

### TE PUKE/PAPAMOA COFFEE MORNINGS

New Location: Te Puke Library, 130 Jellicoe Street, Te Puke. 3rd Thursday of each month at 10am. There is free, unlimited parking at the rear of the building. If you're coming from Tauranga direction, you turn LEFT at the roundabout by KFC and follow the road around the back of the mechanics Yard. There are quite a few car parks behind the library, and on the grass opposite. Buy a coffee at the café at Blackbird Records next door. **19 March, 16 April, 14 May, 18 June**

All inquiries please phone the Grey Power office, Tuesday - Thursday 10am to 2pm on 571 2558 or email [tgatauranga@gmail.com](mailto:tgatauranga@gmail.com)

### ALL ARE WELCOME

Please wear a name badge if you have one.

## AGM

**AGM for TAURANGA WBOP GREY POWER ASSN INC. THIS WILL BE HELD AT 10am ON 29TH MAY 2026. The venue and guest speaker to be advised nearer the time.**

## MINISTER FOR SENIOR'S BETTER LATER LIFE ACTION PLAN



We had a wonderful event a couple of weeks ago when our association hosted the Minister for Seniors, the Honourable Casey Costello who came to give her presentation on the Better Later Life Action Plan. We had close to 60 people at St Enoch's Hall on Friday 6 March, made up of our members, visitors from Age Concern, TCC Council staff, several other organisations plus our local MP Sam Uffindell. Minister Costello gave real life examples of why she was so enthusiastic for this revised action plan to be presented and followed through. She made reference to her own parents and how well they were able to access services – or not. With almost 900 thousand of us over 65 and 20% of them in Tauranga, it's important for us to oversee that the plan does make a difference and it needs senior citizens behind all of the changes. She commented that Grey Power was a driving force for advocacy for older people.

One example of the Action Plan is the current driver licence tests which are inconsistent round the country. The Minister acknowledged that losing the ability to drive can lead to isolation and she is going to work with agencies to get better clarity to make it fairer for all.

Also talked about was the need for everyone to have an EPA and although there is a cost involved, urged us all to at least talk to our families about what we want and to understand our rights.

She mentioned affordable housing and was pleased with the 'granny flats' being easier to build and enable more older people to age well at home and perhaps with family. The aged care system was set up 30 years ago [publicly funded but privately delivered] and needs looking at. There should be adequate funding for more to age at home and not end up in hospital as default care. Also, there needs to be an emphasis on helping people to avoid having a fall, as care in hospital for those over 65 years is not good.

The Minister answered questions about the need for the accommodation supplement to be lifted which was last set in 2018. She was pleased that places such as Abbeyfield were being built as community type living and thought maybe some motels could be converted to offer a similar housing model. Another question was about seniors often being asset rich but cash poor and unable to acquire bridging finance to help them move into a smaller home.

I was impressed with the Minister's seemingly genuine enthusiasm for the care of seniors and she patiently stayed to talk and answer questions over morning tea. Our sincere thanks to her and the staff from The Office for Seniors and Ezra Schuster, the Regional Public Service Commissioner who kindly MC'd the event.

Comments from members afterwards showed that they had found the presentation very interesting and were heartened that such a plan was in place for the care of all of us as we age.

*Jennifer Custins*

### GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

Banish tarnish,  
Manage varnish.  
Fix and furnish,  
Sweep and garnish.  
Polish, burnish,  
Then refurbish.  
Feed and nourish,  
Flower and flourish.

*By Stephanie Smith*

## PROPOSED TOTAL MOBILITY CHANGES Risk Undermining Independence for Disabled and Older New Zealanders

Grey Power New Zealand has expressed serious concern over proposed changes to the Total Mobility Scheme, warning that they risk further disadvantaging disabled and older people who already face significant barriers to independence and social participation.

Grey Power New Zealand President Gayle Chambers says the proposals appear to prioritise cost-cutting over the real-world impacts on some of the country's most vulnerable citizens.

"The Total Mobility Scheme is not a luxury. It is a lifeline that enables people of all ages with disabilities to remain independent, connected, and active in their communities," Ms Chambers said.

The scheme currently provides subsidised transport through taxis, community transport services such as Driving Miss Daisy, and other user-pays providers. For many people who cannot drive or use public transport, this support is essential for everyday activities such as shopping, medical appointments, and social engagement.

Under the proposed changes, the current subsidy of up to 75 percent would be reduced to 65 percent, eligibility criteria tightened, and a tiered system introduced that would limit support for high-use customers. "These changes come just days after the release of the New Zealand Disability Strategy, which speaks of inclusion, dignity, and participation," Ms Chambers said. "Yet the

reality for disabled people could be increased isolation, higher personal costs, and reduced access to their communities."

Grey Power is particularly concerned that the proposals target people who already struggle to maintain independence, rather than addressing broader systemic efficiencies. "We urge the government to reconsider these proposals and to engage meaningfully with disabled people, older New Zealanders, and advocacy organisations," Ms Chambers said. "Total Mobility works. It should be strengthened, not weakened."

You are able to make submissions to the government on these changes, the relevant document being at <https://www.transport.govt.nz/consultations/proposals-to-strengthen-total-mobility> While the reduction of the subsidy is not up for discussion, there are other changes worth commenting on.

- The proposal is to make assessments for eligibility more rigorous (you will have to get a medical certificate) and users will have to get reassessed rather than retaining eligibility.
- At present users have a fare cap of \$50, above which they pay. The proposal is to make that \$40 maximum. With Tauranga's hospital being in the middle of a large sprawling city, it makes it very expensive for many if the St John Shuttle bus is not available or you need to go to the airport.

# the good companion

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## WHAT TO DO WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT AT HOME



Oroua River runs high at the rail overbridge RNZ Severe weather this summer left tens of thousands of households without power.

### Here's how to stay safe, keep warm and protect your home and belongings when the power goes out.

#### Call your lines company

Power cuts can last only a few minutes, so wait a while before making the call. But if you are concerned – make the call. You can also check the supplier's website and social media to see if the outage was planned, or if there's an update on when power will be restored. Your Wi-Fi and cordless landline phone will likely be affected in a power cut, so it's best to use your mobile phone for this. If a power outage is putting your health at risk, call 111 or go to a hospital.

#### Turn on the torch – always best to have one on hand – with good batteries.

For many, it may be your phone torch – but try not to use it for long, as it drains the battery, meaning you may not be able to call for help if you need it. Torches and battery-powered lanterns are safer to use in a power cut than candles.

#### Break out the supplies

Make sure you have emergency water supplies for drinking and washing. A spare battery or mobile power pack for your phone, a camp stove or barbecue, and cooking fuel (such as gas) are also helpful items to have in the event of an extended power cut. [Never use these indoors]

#### Clear your home of hazards

Have a quick look around your house and move any items that could be easily tripped on, such as children's toys, from corridors, doorways and high-traffic areas. This will lessen the chances of you injuring yourself in the dark. Powershop recommends placing a camping lamp at the edge of the room by the wall to light your path and says it's especially important that access to the bathroom and the emergency cupboard are clear.

#### Turn electronics off at the wall

Power can surge when it's restored, possibly damaging sensitive electronics. Turn your TV, computer and

stereo off at the wall or make sure you have surge protectors installed. Also turn off your stove elements and heaters – this will ensure they don't come back on without you noticing the electricity has been restored. But it's recommended that you leave an overhead light on so you can see when the power is back on.

#### Keep the fridge closed

Opening the fridge or freezer will let warmer air in – and without electricity, it won't be able to cool down again. If left shut, the fridge will keep food cool for up to six hours, while a freezer will usually keep food frozen for up to 24 hours. If there's food inside that you know you'll need in the short term, consider removing it at the start of the power cut and storing it in a chilly bin or ice box. That way your snacking won't spoil the rest of your supplies. Good idea to eat food that will expire quickly, such as bread and meat, first, and eating canned food last. If any food is spoiled or rotting, throw it away so it doesn't spoil other food.

#### Stay warm

If it's a cold day or night, you can keep warm by closing your doors and windows and pulling the curtains. Water can be boiled on a camp stove to fill hot water bottles. **Remember never to operate a camp stove inside.** Gel warming packs are also good items to have in your emergency kit, as they can keep chilled fingers and toes toasty.

#### Check on your neighbours

If it's safe to go outside, check on your neighbours. This is especially important if you have older or vulnerable people living around you. If it's not safe to go out, give them a call or a text.

#### Listen to the radio

The National Emergency Management Agency (Nema) advises that in times of crisis or civil defence emergency, a battery-powered radio or a car radio remain essential lifelines if power is out and other forms of communication are unavailable. RNZ is New Zealand's statutory civil defence lifeline radio broadcaster, providing vital information and updates as they come to hand.

**NB:** Make sure you know how to manually open your garage door in case you need to use the car. Also have room to open the bonnet to access the car battery. Inside the car you can recharge your phone so make sure you have an adaptor.

With winter approaching it's a good time to check your backup supplies – fresh medication, water and food. All the knitters out there – practice so you can knit in the dark!!

## “FROM DOOMSDAY SCROLLING TO DELIGHT”

### How to Take a Balanced Approach to the News

Internet use can be addictive, and 'doomsday scrolling' can detrimentally affect our mental health and it's something many of us do, but we may not have given it a name until now. Drawn towards the news, we tend to hit on the worst of international and national goings-on. We may, for instance, compulsively search for updates on the Ukraine-Russian war, the Middle East Conflict or obsessively follow deteriorating aspects of the political situation in various countries. We may scroll through numerous sites dedicated to the potential consequences of climate change or simply follow celebrity court cases. However we do it, it leaves little space for the many positive aspects of life, right in front of our eyes.

The media is driven to publish mostly bad news because it's sensational, and as we scroll through its many offerings, our stress levels rise. The more stress we experience, the more hypervigilant we become, and the more we scroll in an effort to be informed about potential dangers. As we absorb doom and gloom, we may find ourselves experiencing the physical sensations of anxiety – head aches, muscle tension, and difficulty sleeping. More importantly, the more we doom-scroll, the more we withdraw from others.

When doomsday scrolling is such a negative activity, how can we seek to cut back on it, or oust it altogether? There are numerous ways to do so, from

keeping your phone out of your bedroom at night, to using an app to monitor your screen time. For those who are addicted to doomsday scrolling, another option can be to switch (or at least incorporate) 'good news' sites into your daily searches. Good news sites are an antidote to real world drama, and they can help reduce stress and encourage us to enjoy the more positive aspects of the world. The following good news sites are worth incorporating into your day:

**The Daily Encourager** is an uplifting home-grown site focusing on everything from health and education to science, technology and business innovation. Some of the stories are especially encouraging as they focus on small endeavours with a big community impact.

**Radio New Zealand's 'Good News' page** is a respite and it will put you in touch with local stories of activism, achievement, sports, and sustainability.

For an international take on what's going right with the world, look no further than **Positive News – Good Journalism** about good things. It covers some of the worlds uplifting news including a section delightfully titled **'What Went Right This Week'** (who can resist a heading like that!).

If following the doom and gloom of war journalism is your thing, it may be time for a switch to Good, Good, Good News 'War & Conflict Good News section'. Because, even in the midst of injustice and conflict, there are stories of resilience and hope – the sort of news that permeates into your everyday life. From GrownUps NZ.

*It's a particularly crucial time for all of us to take care of one another, be kind and find some laughter.*



For more information visit:  
[www.100ksin30days.nz](http://www.100ksin30days.nz)



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## AGED CARE ADVISORY GROUP

Hon Casey Costello  
17 December 2025

Associate Health Minister Casey Costello has today announced appointments to the Aged Care Ministerial Advisory Group, to provide expert advice on long-term reform of the aged care system.

“This group will identify the changes needed to the aged care funding model, in order to build a sustainable system and one that is easier for people to access and navigate,” Ms Costello says.

The group comprises 10 members who have specialist knowledge across aged care and primary care, home and community support services, aged residential care, and funding models.

Former Minister of Health David Cunliffe, who is currently the chair of the faith-based aged care provider Selwyn Foundation, has been appointed Chair of the Group.

The other members are: Brien Cree; Shelley Cunningham; Suzanne Dvorak; Dr Richard Lowe; Murray Penman; Mike Peters; Max Robins; Allan Sargeant; Helen Watson.

The Group will provide an independent report and a set of recommendations around three areas:

- The funding model needed to support sustainable services, particularly a sustainable supply of standard aged care beds
- How the costs of providing aged care could be reasonably shared between those receiving care and the Government
- The changes needed to contracting arrangements and regulatory settings for aged care services, to remove red tape, support cost-effective delivery of services, support service innovation, and increase cohesion and integration between aged care services, wider health services, and Disability Support Services.

The Group is expected to provide advice and recommendations to Ministers by mid-2026. “As I’ve said before, New Zealand has very good

aged care, provided by dedicated people,” Ms Costello says.

“However, a number of reviews have found that our aged-care model is out of date. We are committed to addressing this and building a system that provides the right care in the right place, that is sustainable and will endure as our population ages.

“These are significant policy issues, with major political considerations attached and that’s why an independent group is required,” Ms Costello says. “The goal is that the Group’s recommendations will inform any future government’s policy and funding decisions.

“The Government is committed to a bipartisan approach to addressing these challenges as part of the commitment in the National-NZ First Coalition Agreement.”

### Aged Care Advisory Group

Members have been appointed for a term beginning on 12 January 2026. The group is expected to have completed its work by mid-2026; however, a one-year term has been set to provide flexibility if needed.

The Group will be supported by the Ministry of Health, which will provide a secretariat and other support, and will engage with additional experts as required.

### Aged Care

About 115,000 older New Zealanders use aged care services annually, with about two-thirds of this number using home and community support services.

Aged care is funded by government and some private contributions and some provided privately. These include a range of charities, private businesses and listed companies.

Government spending on aged care is more than \$2.5 billion annually.

Individuals in residential aged care will contribute an estimated \$1.38 billion this financial year.

### WAYS TO USE OLD OR SINGLE SOCKS

Dusting, wrapping fragile items, white board eraser, fill with baking soda and pop inside sports shoes overnight. Can be used as a travel organiser for jewellery or cosmetics. Use to clean windows – excellent results.

## Closure of Post Offices

The planned closure of 142 postal outlets across the country has been met with dismay by many older people, who often use the postal system for sending cards, writing letters to relatives who don’t use computers or sending parcels to grandchildren and such.

In Napier, a resident of Onekawa, with limited mobility, said she is “appalled” that Onekawa, and other local outlets are being closed. “Many of the residents in those areas are pensioners, and frequent users of the “snail mail” system. With the closest one closing she will need to go to further afield which involves using her car.”

Another Napier resident uses the Onekawa branch at least once a week and said its closure would hit her and her 83-year-old mother particularly hard. “I drive, but I’ve got osteoarthritis in both my knees, so I can’t walk far distances,” she says. “My mum walks with a walker. We’re not going to places where there’s no parking and you have to pay in a meter.” “In Onekawa I can zip in, do what I need to do, pick up milk, get veggies, go to the pharmacy. It’s a multi-stop place.”

It is a similar problem in Tauranga with 2 outlets closing in both Cherrywood and Matua forcing lengthy drives into busier areas or a complicated bus trip. This always adversely affects the less able, and the elderly which is not helped by NZ Post saying, “Ensuring access to our services is one of our top priorities, but we acknowledge these changes will be an adjustment for some customers.” For many this will not result in “an adjustment” but just add to their general feeling of frustration and isolation.

NZ Post said feedback on the closures would be considered, and it would respond to the feedback it received. They may respond but not change their decision. What is frustrating is that there is not a simple solution for those affected to continue to connect by a handwritten letter to their friend or family.

It is quite simple to order a courier online to collect anything but first you need a computer, a post bag and it will cost a lot more. The only phone number I could find was 0800 5501502

*NB: At time of going to print all postal services to most of the Middle East are suspended.*

## GOOD ADVICE FOR PEOPLE IN THEIR 70S

1. Guard your peace like your last treasure – distance yourself from anyone who steals your calm, even if it’s family.
2. Move your body every single day – because once movement stops, loss of independence slowly follows.
3. Choose people who make you laugh – joy heals wounds that medicine never can.
4. Release the fear of judgement – everyone is too busy surviving their own struggles.
5. Speak what your heart holds – love, apologies, and gratitude become regrets when left unsaid.
6. Share your wisdom freely – your pain has already paid the price, now let others learn.
7. Capture moments, write stories, leave memories, - everything fades, but the legacy you leave behind doesn’t.

Ref: BeGratefulVibes



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## “ANALOG ACTIVITIES”

Activities that don't involve using a device with a screen are gaining in popularity around the world. People are wanting to engage with real people doing real things that they can't get from endless scrolling on a device.



There is a rather depressing statistic that 1 in 3 people experience loneliness and have become disconnected from everyday life in their community and are not sharing their life experiences or gathering new, real information.

We know much of this is caused by dispersed families or declining health, plus a host of other reasons such as location, changes in society, loss of some basic local services, transport and age. Long ago families and neighbours stayed close to each other for comfort and even survival, looking after animals, cooking, sewing and reading. Slowly much of this was displaced with the advent of travel and television then fast forward to now and every head is bent over a brightly lit screen, checking and checking on updates for often unreal or incorrect information.

There is a debate as to whether some types of social media help housebound seniors to feel more connected but there is still a lack of real personal interaction. It also doesn't involve creating anything new or the pride of showing what you have made or done. Since the pandemic, there has been a growing number of articles on research about age, ageing well, living well and living longer. There seems to be an increasing fascination of how we can extend our lives and be healthy doing it, but I feel the emotional and psychological aspect is often overlooked. It's how we spend those years that is important.

Many of us have reached our senior years having smoked, sunbathed, eaten fatty food, drunk alcohol and snacked on all the wrong food. There were no warnings and so now we have to do the best we can

with what we've got. Some things can't be reversed but there are certainly a range of things we can do to either keep our brains engaged, tone up the muscles we have and eat well.

War of any type is ghastly but over the decades, people have got out their knitting needles, sewing machines and other tools to ease the pain and discomfort of those affected. Hats and scarves for WW2, blankets and baby clothes sent to cold countries such as Bosnia and Kosovo and now for Ukraine. [And unfortunately, maybe for the innocent in the Middle east], There are also busy souls knitting hats and scarves for returned service men and women who have given so much to secure freedom and peace in other countries during times of conflict.

Fortunately, there is now a growing interest in what is being called 'analog or grannie activities'. That means 'no screens'! Just for a moment, put aside any device and turn off the TV and think of all the things you used to do back in the day when you didn't or couldn't pop out to buy a new something. Women would darn socks, take up or let down a hem, knit a cardy, crochet a doily. Men could fix a squeaking door, sand and paint a windowsill, cut up firewood or fix a toy. Families played dominoes, cards, monopoly and numerous other board games.

All these things that we took for granted have actually given us a wide set of skills that can now be turned into hobbies or activities. Things that can be done at home to exercise the mind or reap a sense of achievement, or better still join a group of people who enjoy the same activities. There are so

many opportunities to do something together, make new friends, laugh and talk about life. It could be a knitting group, a book club, play Mah jong or cards or bridge. The Tauranga Libraries are providing more and more programs of things to join and time slots to bring people together and people can now come in and use their collection of board games.

The library is a great place to go for all kinds of activities – not just to read a book. Many libraries are now called Community Hubs as they provide so many different things for people to do and learn.

### Here are some of the new programs for 2026:

- Art class at lunch time 12 to 1pm. *City* hobbies, games, robots and all sorts. *Greerton* 'Just want to have fun'
- Lines & Lyrics *Greerton* poetry discussion and advice.
- Knit and Knatter *Greerton & City* experience not needed *Papamoa & Greerton*
- Drop-in sessions for internet questions – *Greerton & City*

**Fun for everyone and lots to learn.**

**The Heritage and Research Team** takes care of all the special books and archives. They will help you look up new articles in old papers or microfiche. They do care for some objects as well such as medals, maps and items that are literature related. All this is being held at separate locations until the big new library is finished in Willow Street.

People have been so generous over the years, and an example is when the Weekend Sun newspaper was sold to NZME the previous owners gave all the years of printed and digital copies to the Archives. However, at the moment there is a hold on donations until they are settled in the new building. Free classes are held for genealogists to help people work on their family history. Contact the library for details or TCC website.

All round the world, groups, especially younger people, are joining analog groups where they hand in their phone, meet and talk, read a book, knit or do something creative. But mostly they practice the age-old art of conversing with each other and share the gift of laughter – what a treasure that is!

*Jennifer Custins*



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secretary@fol-tauranga.org.nz | 021 192 2279



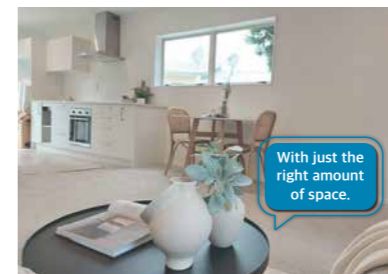
### Open Plan living at Hodgson House - it's simply perfect!

Retirement should be about enjoying every day without life's extra things to worry about. That's why as we get older, we find ourselves downsizing, decluttering and re-evaluating what we need from our homes.

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## BUY NOTHING NEW MONTH UK

Buy Nothing New Month has a worthy mission in challenging rampant consumerism, albeit one that could impact small businesses at a time when they need support. The real challenge, however, is finding contentment with less for the rest of the year and ensuring that the money we do spend goes to businesses that align with our values.

Established by Keep Britain Tidy, its aims are simple enough: save money, embrace a new hobby (that isn't shopping) and, of course, live more sustainably, creating less waste. "While a no-spend mindset can really help the household finances by stopping meaningless spending with large corporations, we should be embracing a 'think where you spend' culture," says Gemma Crawley-Roberts, owner an independent shop in Bedford. Although the thinking behind Buy Nothing New Month is commendable, it does have a knock-on effect for small independent businesses that rely on year-round cash flow.

*Three Positive News staffers were asked to give it a go. Here is how they got on.*

**Tom Pattinson** In the middle of winter there are few events, a near-empty social calendar and a busy work schedule – which meant I barely left the house. Temptation was minimal. While I did have the odd coffee, I made green tea my default drink replacing my standard builder's tea with something I enjoy anyway. The combined effect of no booze and detoxifying green tea left me feeling unexpectedly sprightly, and I'm sure my liver noticed too. I also think I shed a few pounds, even though the gym and I still need re-acquainting.

I now carry a refillable coffee (or green tea) cup and a water bottle everywhere, which has become part of my leaving-the-house checklist – keys, phone, bottle. Takeaway coffees were replaced with bring-your-own teas, and I noticed my monthly credit card bill was also nicely slimmer than it is on a usual month.

My only real crack came just before the end of the month, when I was strong-armed by my four-year-old into buying a kids' magazine, but overall found it all surprisingly less painful than I anticipated.

**Angela Garwood** Full disclosure: I failed quite abysmally. That said, I was curious. Could I do my bit for the environment? Perhaps I could seek joy

elsewhere? Go on more walks, delve into the books I'd already accumulated... and how many cleansers does one person really need? (Four.) These thoughts proved fleeting.

Contrary to my declaration of complete failure, I did have many successful days where I didn't buy anything at all, though largely by default as opposed to restraint. While I'm disappointed in my efforts, I've decided that if I'm going to do this properly, I need accountability; a like-minded friend to go through it with, someone who understands the allure of a giant SALE sign.

It is, of course, an endeavour I'd encourage, an important campaign that fosters mindfulness, challenges our purchasing habits, and asks us to consider the environmental impact of what we buy and how we buy it. It prompts many questions.

What might change if more of us embraced second-hand clothing or simply bought less, more thoughtfully? Campaigns like this get people thinking; and that can only be a good thing.

**Gavin Haines** Look, I failed spectacularly. To be honest, something about Buy Nothing New Month didn't sit quite right with me, despite its good intentions I had a pint of Guinness and packet of crisps in my local pub.

Pub visits aside, I did commendably for the rest of the month without really trying. My looming tax bill and empty bank account were motivating factors for my miserliness. But to be honest, Buy Nothing New Month felt like most months. I realised that I don't generally buy much stuff, and what I do buy is usually second-hand. Vintage shops, charity shops and reclamation yards are my stomping grounds. That's partly out of concern for the planet and my finances, but also because scouring these treasure troves is more fun than stomping around identikit high street shops. The one brand new thing that I did buy was worth breaking the law for. Having left my book on a bus in Amsterdam, I needed a replacement for a long train journey, so I bought a copy of *Until August*. It was so good that I read it again on the way back.

Ref: Positive News

### Editor:

*We could try it here and make a rule that if you must fail, you could at least buy something locally. Give it a go?*

## The following are local service centres where you can call in without an appointment to see a JP free of charge.

**Arataki Community Centre**, Zambuk Way, Mt Maunganui - Mondays & Fridays 10.00 am – noon

**Bethlehem Community Church**, 183 Moffatts Road  
Friday 10am - 12 noon

**Courthouse**, McLean Street  
Monday 1pm - 3pm  
Tuesday 10am - 12 noon  
Wednesday 11am - 1pm  
Thursday 1pm - 3pm  
Friday 1pm - 3pm



**Greerton Library**, 139 Greerton Road, Gate Pa  
Tuesday 2pm - 4pm  
Thursday 2pm - 4pm

**Holy Trinity Anglican Church**, 215 Devonport Road  
Wednesday 12 noon - 2pm

**Katikati Resource Centre**, Beach Road  
Friday 10am - 12 noon

**Mount Maunganui Library**,  
Tuesday 11am - 1pm  
Friday 11.30am - 1.30pm

**Otumoetai/Matua, St Columba Church**,  
502 Otumoetai Road  
Tuesday 10am - 12 noon

**Omokoroa Library and Community Centre**,  
Western Ave  
Tuesday 3.30pm - 4.30pm  
Thursday 10am - 12 noon

**Papamoa Library**, Gravatt Road  
Monday 4.30pm - 6pm  
Wednesday 10am - 12 noon  
Saturday 10am - 12 noon

**Tauranga Multicultural Centre**, Historic Village  
Thursday 11.30am - 1.30pm

**Te Puke Library**, 130 Jellicoe Street  
Thursday 10.30am - 12.30pm

**NEW: Te Puna Service Desk**  
Piriraka Hauora, 3 Lockhead Road, Te Puna  
Wednesday 4.30pm – 6pm

**The Crossing Shopping Mall**,  
2 Taurikura Drive  
Saturday 10am - 12 noon

*Please note Service Centres are closed on public holidays.*



50+ REAL ESTATE  
with Vanessa

When I began working in the 50+ property sector in 2020, I understood that downsizing isn't always as simple as selling one home and buying another. There are far more options available than many people expect, and each comes with its own processes, ownership structures, and considerations.

Over the years I've worked with a wide range of villages and housing options. These include traditional licence-to-occupy retirement villages, homes with freehold and leasehold titles, village share arrangements, and communities where residents own their homes but rent the land beneath them—similar in concept to the tiny-home movement, although the homes themselves are full-sized.

I've also supported families when a loved one needs to move into a higher level of care. This can be an emotional and complex transition, and having someone who understands the options and processes can make it much easier.

Through this experience, I've gathered practical information to help people plan their next step with confidence. I now offer this knowledge as a consultancy service designed for those considering downsizing or exploring future care options. The service includes guidance on housing options within your budget, advice on decluttering and preparing for a move, and assistance visiting suitable villages or homes so you can compare choices more easily. As a Grey Power supporter, I'm offering this service to a limited number of Grey Power members at no charge in exchange for feedback on what information and support you find most helpful.

If your current home is becoming difficult to manage, or you're simply curious about your options, feel free to get in touch for a friendly conversation.

*Vanessa Charman-Moore is a Tauranga 50+ Real Estate Consultant. For more information, see Vanessa's advertisement below or visit*

[www.snrealestate.co.nz](http://www.snrealestate.co.nz)



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## CAR INSURANCE COVER

When you drive, you're constantly checking your surroundings and keeping an eye on other motorists around you and making a mental note of who's speeding up, slowing down or turning.

You rely on other motorists to do the same thing – but accidents still happen.

If someone else makes a mistake and causes an accident, are you also relying on them to have insurance?

### Third party liability cover

All car insurance policies include cover for liability to third parties but in New Zealand car insurance is not compulsory, and there are drivers on the road who have no insurance at all.

So, if you're hit by another driver: will you be covered, and if so, how much for? It depends on your level of cover.

### Comprehensive cover

With Comprehensive cover, you can make a claim immediately for the damage to your car with your insurer.

Even if the other driver has insurance, it's often easier to go through your own insurance company and let them sort out recovery of the costs from the other driver (or their insurer).

### Third party cover

If you have Third Party Only cover, your policy only covers you for damage that you accidentally cause to some else's car or property when using your car – it doesn't generally include cover for damage to your car if it's in a collision.

### Tips for selecting car insurance

If you're not sure which is right for you, think about what will happen if your car is damaged or written off.

1. Have you got enough money to replace or repair your car, or would you need insurance money?
2. Have you got a realistic idea of what your car is worth? What is its market value?
3. How will you get around if your car is being repaired, for anywhere from a few days to a few weeks? Do you need a policy with a rental car benefit?
4. How much would your premium and excess be in comparison to the value of your car?
5. For some customers, Comprehensive cover gives

them peace of mind, but for others a Third Party policy might be the right solution.

As always, make sure you've read your policy carefully, so you know what you're covered for – and keep yourself and others safe on the roads.

### 5 easy steps if you have a collision

1. Take care of yourself and others' safety.
2. If it's safe, take photos immediately while the cars are still in position. Send them to your insurer when you make a claim.
3. If there are independent witnesses, get their details if you can.
4. Take down the other driver's details – name, phone number, registration number and insurance provider.
5. Make sure you provide all the required details when notifying a claim.

*Courtesy: Vero Insurance New Zealand*

## BECOME A SUPPORTER and JOIN GREY POWER

A reminder, that supporting Grey Power as a member is for anyone of any age. Someone in your life may well benefit from the work we do advocating for the rights and wellbeing of everyone as they age.

The strength of any organisation - and its ability to influence politicians - depends on the size and engagement of its membership.

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## A PERSONAL ACCOUNT ON RENEWING A DRIVING LICENCE AT 80

I have to admit that I was a little nervous about this process, I had heard quite a number of accounts about how difficult it could be so I will describe just what the process involved in my application.

As I found out that I could apply for my license any time during the 6 months prior to my birthday in February, and sometimes it took a month to get a doctor's appointment at our local Surgery, I thought it would be wisest to book the appointment in mid October. Sure enough my appointment was for the 24th November. So.....how could I prepare?

Several processes are necessary

1. Your doctor or your doctor's Medical Practice, needed to provide you with a clean bill of health which requires an eyesight test.
2. A declaration that you are medically fit and able to drive safely.

Ideally your doctor will know you well enough to sign this part of the document with an accurate assessment but if he/she hasn't seen you very often you may be asked to fill in a form for a cognitive or mental ability test. In some practices this is a mandatory requirement, and my local practice is one of these.

To prepare for the appointment my husband searched online to find the forms in which were the questions I could be asked for the MINI-

ADDENBROOKE'S COGNITIVE EXAMINATION. He printed hard copies of these 3 possible forms. Most of the questions on the 3 forms were identical but each form included a different name and address. It was necessary for me to learn the 3 addresses off by heart to be sure of remembering them under the stress of the interview. I was asked to say the address out loud at 3 different places in the interview. The first time I knew I was wrong in one detail which I corrected in the repeats later in the interview.

There are other tasks that are also on the form, but it would be best if anyone who is serious about this test gets their own copies of the 3 possible forms.

After passing this 'test' I went to see my doctor who had a couple of pages on the application form to complete about my medical history, He then signed the form (phew)! All that was left for me to do was to visit the AA Office and get my photo taken and a new license was in progress. I was given a temporary license until my new license arrived about a week later.

*Jill Marshall*

**Excellent read** – for those who love a well written story and about someone overcoming adversity, go online to this article – **“How losing my limbs turned me into a different kind of cook”** by Yewande Komolafe which was published in the New York Times - 30 Jan 2026





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## GREY POWER SUPPORTS RESERVE BANK MOVE TO CREATE BANKING HUBS

Grey Power has long advocated against the loss of cheques and decreasing banking services nationally, but particularly in rural areas. The release of the Reserve Bank's Consultation paper on February 24th was a welcome breath of fresh air for all those disadvantaged by the reduction in services from the banking sector over the past decade. NZ has lost around 40% of its bank branches, and many of those remaining work on reduced hours.



Grey Power National President Gayle Chambers stated "While there are significant advantages in embracing the digital age, the ongoing withdrawal of services nationwide has seriously disadvantaged our seniors and those in rural areas. The Reserve Bank is to be congratulated for proposing a solution that could restore greater equity to those who have suffered the most from the diminished social conscience major banks have shown."

Their recommendation to address the issue, is to introduce a cash services standard with a minimum number and defined locations nationwide for ATMs or banking hubs that would allow customers of any bank to make withdrawals, deposits (including coins), and swapping of cash – eg \$50 converted into \$10 notes and \$2 coins. These services would be provided free of charge. There was an immediate outcry from the NZ Banking Association CEO who claimed that customers would carry the cost.

The Reserve Bank estimated the new network of between 1300 and 3000 free-to-use cash service hubs (the number dependant on how much banks are willing to collaborate) could cost \$104 million, or 1% of the bank's annual collective profits – a small price to improve service to all New Zealanders in urban and rural environments.

### Other factors to consider [from Sorted.org.nz]

- There are still many elderly people who cannot use, or forget how to use, tech. Cash, therefore, remains very important to them for everyday items like groceries. "A cashless society makes things very difficult for older [generations]," one financial advisor told me.
- Natural disasters or emergencies can affect internet networks, shutting down EFTPOS and credit capabilities. "Cash is often the only option at that time," an advisor said. "Everyone should have a small amount of cash put aside." How much is a personal decision, but the National Emergency Management Agency suggests it's logical to have enough for three days' worth of food and petrol. It also says small denominations, like \$5 notes, are useful because some businesses may not be able to offer change.
- Putting coins into a piggy bank is often a child's first interaction with money. An advisor said the process can teach children important financial basics about saving money from an early age.

Grey Power urges all members and the general public to participate in the Reserve Bank feedback survey directly on-line (<https://www.rbnz.govt.nz/money-and-cash/access-to-cash>). The survey site contains background papers and information on the proposals in more depth. **Feedback closes on April 10th.**

**David Marshall** | National Vice-President  
Grey Power NZ Federation

## CAT FACTS

The perfect family pet – they sleep for 70% of the day with their most active time at dusk and dawn.

That's 13 – 16 hours of just looking at soft cuteness. Not having to take them for a walk in the rain or freezing cold. Not having to apologise to the neighbours about your dog barking because you got home late.

The only downside is that they are not always as interactive if you need company and they are inclined to want to sleep on the very part of the bed that you want.

Closely related to tigers – in some of their behaviours.

Cats do suffer from 'separation anxiety' and are not backward in expressing their displeasure if you have left them for too long.

You can befriend a cat by blinking slowly when they look at you – it mimics a cat's smile.

Cats can jump up to 6 x their body length and love to jump.

They have very strong legs and flexible spines with an amazing sense of balance. [People have even trained them to tightrope walk].




I took my suit to the drycleaners, and they wanted to charge me \$15.00.

So, I gave my suit to the charity shop next door.

They cleaned and pressed it and put it in the window.

I bought it for \$4.50.

## ONLY A CRIMINAL WILL ASK YOU TO DO THINGS ON YOUR COMPUTER



Every week, millions of dollars are stolen from New Zealanders through scams. The majority of these crimes begin with a simple telephone call. Older people are frequently targeted because scammers know they are polite, trusting, and less likely to hang up or challenge the caller.

What must now be said plainly is that the New Zealand Government has failed to deliver one clear, memorable message that would protect people from most scams. That failure has real and ongoing consequences.

The single message people need to hear is this:  
**only a criminal will ask you to do things on your computer, tablet, or phone.**

Banks, government departments, and legitimate companies will never ask you to install software, click links, move money, or help "fix a problem" while you are on the phone. That behaviour belongs exclusively to criminals.

If this one sentence were broadcast daily through television, radio, newspapers, and online advertising, people would very quickly recognise when they were speaking to a scammer.

The Government's failure to promote this simple, protective message means it is effectively complicit in the continued success of scams against vulnerable New Zealanders. When harm is predictable and preventable, silence has consequences.

Scams thrive on confusion. Clear, repeated messaging saves money, dignity, and peace of mind. One sentence, repeated often, would stop most scams overnight.

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## CHANGES/BENEFITS TO PRESCRIPTIONS

From 1st February, many New Zealanders will benefit from a major improvement in medicine access, with the Government extending the maximum prescription duration from 3 months to 12 months to make managing long-term health conditions easier and more affordable.

### What's changing?

**Currently:** Most prescriptions are limited to 3 months. Patients must return to their prescriber for repeats. From early 2026: Prescribers can issue prescriptions for up to 12 months, if it is safe and appropriate. Medicines will still be dispensed every 3 months from pharmacies. Changes cannot be made without seeing your doctor.

**What it means for you:** Your doctor will decide if a 12-month prescription is appropriate based on your health. You'll still pick up your medicines from a pharmacy at least every 3 months, but you won't need to return to your doctor for a repeat prescription each time.

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## GARDENING FOR AUTUMN

Growing well is all about the health of the soil, so compost and mulch are top of the list. Save all your fruit and veg peelings and leftovers and create a compost bin. Even using a lidded bucket or a big round plastic rubbish bin (with lid), is easy. Just drill a few holes in the bottom. Start off with some soil, a few leaves, kitchen waste, pruning chopped small and so on in layers. Give it a turn with a fork occasionally and there you have free compost that your garden will love. Worms love home made compost so they will find their way in and then enrich the soil when you use it in the garden.

Once you have cleaned up the summer annuals and veggies and refreshed the soil with compost or leaf mould you can plant autumn flowers such as – primula, calendula, pansies, poppies, lobelia, marigold and snapdragons. Add a few herbs for winter soups then cover the soil with a layer of mulch to keep the ground warm and protect it from heavy rain.

Bulbs are popping up already, helped by some cooler nights and shorter daylight hours. It's time from now through to May to plant any new or stored bulbs such as daffodils, ixias, snowflake and freesias. Soon you can pop in some Sweetpea seeds for early spring flowers.

To help with meal costs – plant some broccoli (side sprouter), cabbage, kale and spinach. In sheltered areas peas, broad beans and sugar snap peas seeds can be planted for early spring.

Any of the above can apply in mini form. If you only have a deck or balcony – one bright flower and a favourite vegetable can bring joy.

Happy gardening.

Jennifer



The last of the summer flowering shrubs make a splash of colour and the dahlias are enjoying slightly cooler weather. The tomatoes are also ripening and are delicious in a sandwich.

## SCIENTISTS DISCOVERED A NEW WAY TO STORE DATA

We are living in an information age. From the files on our phones to the digitisation of historic records, the level of data being amassed by modern society is gargantuan and ever-growing. So how and where to preserve it? The cloud is the go-to solution, but there's an issue: storage of digital media requires magnetic tape and hard disks, both of which have a shelf life. Now, scientists based in Cambridge, UK, may have found a solution: storing data in glass. Their system works by turning data into groups of symbols called voxels and then using a laser to encode them into glass.

The team said they could store 4.84TB of data in a 12 sq. cm piece of silica glass and 2 million printed books would reportedly hold about the same amount of information.

The research was welcomed by those working in digital heritage, but some cautioned that significant investment would be required to source adequate volumes of silica glass.

Ref: Positive News

## THE GREATEST GIFT IS TIME

My name's George Harris. I'm 70 years old. If you looked at my life, you'd probably say I did alright. A steady job, a paid-off house, two good kids, and a pension that keeps the lights on and the coffee pot full. But lately, I've learned something no one really tells you about growing older, success can get quiet. I worked as an electrician for 45 years. My hands built things that still stand today – schools, churches, homes full of laughter that I'll never hear. I missed birthdays, barbecues, and more than a few Christmas mornings, but I told myself it was all worth it. I was building a life for my family. Now the house is mine alone. My wife, Helen, passed seven years ago. The walls still remember her voice – her laughter, her singing, the way she used to talk to the plants like they were people. I still find her handwriting on recipe cards tucked into old cookbooks.

Last Sunday, my daughter Emily called, "Dad, mind if we come by for lunch?" I said sure, trying to sound casual – but truth be told, I'd already started setting the table before we hung up. When they arrived, the house came alive again. Her husband carried in the casserole, the kids ran through the hallway, and for a while, it almost felt like the old days. The smell of roasted chicken filled the air, and the sunlight hit the table just right – the way it used to when Helen would serve dinner with her apron still on. But as we sat down, I noticed something –no one was really here. The kids had headphones in. Emily was answering work messages between bites. Her husband scrolled through something on his phone. I looked around the table that had seen fifty years of family dinners – the place where we used to share stories, tell jokes, and argue over who got the last piece of pie –and I couldn't help thinking, When did we forget how to just be together?

So I cleared my throat, "You know," I said quietly, "your mom used to make us turn off the TV during dinner. She said food tastes better when you talk," Emily looked up. "I remember that. She'd hide the remote." I smiled. "She said one day we'd all have a screen in our hands and no time in our hearts." For a minute, nobody spoke. Then, one by one, the phones went down. The headphones came off. And just like that – we found our way back to each other. We talked for hours. About old family trips, the time I tried to make pancakes and nearly set off the smoke alarm, and how Mom once stayed up all night sewing Emily's school costume. We laughed until we cried. And for the first time in a long while, the house felt full again.

Before they left, Emily hugged me tight, "We should do this every Sunday," she said. I smiled. "You should – before the coffee gets cold." And now, every Sunday, they come. No phones. No screens. Just real conversations, good food, and laughter that feels like it's bringing Helen back home, one story at a time.



The Lesson: You can spend your whole life working for the ones you love –but the greatest gift you can give them is time, not things. Put down the phone. Look up. Ask questions. Listen deeply. Because one day, the chairs will still be there, but the voices around them won't. And you'll realize that the best sound in any home...isn't the hum of success. It's the sound of people you love – talking, laughing, and being present.

*Courtesy of Manawatu Assn.*



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[www.bopmemorials.co.nz](http://www.bopmemorials.co.nz)

## TIPS ON PASSING YOUR SENIOR DRIVING MEDICAL ASSESSMENT



After more than 2 years of active advocacy for a more consistent and appropriate assessment of the senior driving renewal process, I still get regular calls from those who are struggling with the way they have been disrespected in the process.

NZTA have made a number of great improvements to their processes for seniors and with the ability to start 6 months prior to your qualifying birthday you can be well prepared and not as stressed by the process at the GP surgery.

President Benjamin Franklin hit the nail on the head when he said, **“By failing to prepare, you’re preparing to fail.”**

### Preparing to Pass Checklist

#### 1. Take a free course

Age Concern run regular **Staying Safe: Refresher Courses for Older Drivers**. The theory-based refresher four-hour course is an opportunity for people to re-familiarise themselves with traffic rules and safe driving practices in a friendly and relaxed environment with other older drivers.

**AA** runs a practical coaching session for Senior Drivers that focuses on the training and practice you need to drive with confidence. While the normal course for those 65+ costs \$70 for members and \$85 for non-members, the course for AA members 74+ is free every 2 years. If you are not as confident as you were with driving, this course is highly recommended. It is also a valuable preparation if your GP refers you for an On-Road Safety Test. (see below)

#### 2. Make an appointment with your GP

Make sure you book your appointment well in advance as you could be referred for specialist evaluation or an on-road driving test, all of which take time and if left too long could mean that your licence lapses. At the same time ask if your GP requires you to complete a cognitive test at the evaluation. Remember licence renewal GP

evaluations are not subsidized and will cost more than your normal GP call (often around \$100).

#### 3. Study the cognitive test if this is mandatory by your GP.

It is always good to be prepared and not surprised when asked to complete a cognitive test. While NZTA does not make cognitive tests mandatory, some GPs have chosen to make every senior sit this test. No NZ GP should be relying on the old SIMARD-MD cognitive test as this has been scientifically discredited. However some are using the Mini-ACE test and you can download the 3 NZ versions from <https://www.nzdementia.org/Tools-and-Guidance/Mini-ACE>. Knowing that is expected can take away some of the stress of such a test.

University of Auckland analysis has concluded: *“Current evidence is mixed on the utility of off-road cognitive assessment for driving performance among ‘healthy’ older adults. Even amongst those with mild to moderate dementia, cognitive tests are poor predictors of driving ability.”* Grey Power is working with NZTA and Ministry of Health to ensure appropriate guidance is given to GPs and that the mandatory use of cognitive tests ceases. In the meantime, if a GP insists on using this tool they have the right to do so. Always have someone accompany you to support you through your licence renewal journey at the medical practice.

#### 4. Your Options if a GP cancels your licence due to failure of a cognitive test.

If you feel you were under pressure and confused with the cognitive test ask if you can resit the test at another time. Most GPs will allow this. If not you may have to seek a second opinion from another GP. Should that GP be satisfied that you are medically fit to drive then NZTA will consider the 2 opposing recommendations and make a decision as to your licence renewal.

If you have a good driving record, but have failed a cognitive test, and want to continue driving ask your GP if you can be referred for an On Road Safety Test (ORST). This is a practical driving assessment usually carried out at your nearest VTNZ site. This assessment is free of charge to all drivers 75+, with the nominal cost of \$21.50 being included in the licence renewal fee.

**David Marshall** | National Vice-President  
Grey Power NZ Federation.

## SHOWER CANARY INVENTION

Matthew Black, co-founder of Shower Canary, talked to Tom Raynel about how to reduce water usage and the challenges of scaling up.

Shower Canary is a product designed to help families reduce time spent in the shower to save money and save the environment. We know what we’re doing, and we know the problem we’re addressing.

What inspired me to start the business? I’m an international airline pilot by trade. I’ve got two teenage boys and after I finished flying, I was around home more and became really concerned about the amount of time that I was spending in the shower.

The water and energy and money that was going straight down the plughole was quite alarming. I had a look around and there was just nothing available that really addressed the problem. It didn’t work physically or it didn’t change behaviour.

At the time I was doing a master’s in renewable energy, as I originally studied engineering, and one of the projects was on energy efficiency. Learning more about hot water and energy consumption, I decided to try to design a product that would actually address the problem and change behaviour in a really friendly way.



Shower Canary sensor measures water use.

How does the product work? The little unit that straps on the wall is a SIM chip, which transfers all the data to the cloud without the need for Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. The sensor just measures whether the water is on or off.

In our app, users can set their shower head flow rate, whether it’s low, medium or high, and then put in their kilowatt per hour charge for their electricity bills. They also put in their water costs as well, as not everyone around New Zealand pays the same amount for their water.

The app does all the calculations and shows you how much each shower is costing you based on that information.

Changing behaviour is important. I’ve got an engineering background, so I understand that side of it. What I didn’t really have a good handle on was the behavioural science side and that’s probably where I’ve done my most learning.

In order to change behaviour in the energy environment, you must do it in a lifetime. You have to show people why they are doing it while they are having the shower. It’s no good to tell them afterwards because they’ve already done it.

I did some work with Watercare and in 2018 when there was a drought in Auckland, they gave away 30,000 little egg timers to stick in the shower. The thought was that it would help people change their habits, but it didn’t do anything because it was asking the user to do it, rather than have it automated. It also helps to show the cost of that shower, because money matters to people. Shower Canary sends alerts to encourage shorter showers.

There are plans to take the product overseas. There are a couple of universities in the UK that are doing a trial with it and I think it’s particularly relevant to water-stressed regions because you can’t create water, desalination is very hard.

I’ve been doing work with the Singapore Government as well because we know they’re trying to get their water usage per person per day down from 165 litres to 130 litres by 2030.

Funding is needed to expand so at the moment we just have to sell and manufacture products and put the money back into the system.

Ref: NZ Herald Jan 2026

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**3 pairs \$36**

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## BE PART OF IMPORTANT RESEARCH

Grey Power Tauranga is supporting a PhD study exploring the factors that may contribute to isolation in later life, as well as what helps older adults stay connected and supported in their communities. This study is being conducted in New Zealand and South Africa to better understand both the risk factors that may increase isolation and the protective factors that help older adults maintain connection and belonging. The researcher, Linda Dennis, is a Clinical Psychologist and PhD candidate, and is seeking 25 people from Tauranga and surrounding districts to take part. Participants need to be living independently, either in their own home or in a retirement village. You do not need to think of yourself as an isolated person to take part. The study is interested in hearing about experiences that may contribute to feeling disconnected, as well as the relationships, activities, services, and personal strengths that help older adults stay connected and protect against isolation. By sharing real-life experiences, participants can help build knowledge that can inform future services, programmes, and community responses aimed at supporting connection and wellbeing in later life. If you are interested in taking part, please contact Grey Power Tauranga on 07 571 2558 or email [tgreypower@gmail.com](mailto:tgreypower@gmail.com). A formal invitation with full details about the study will then be sent to you.

## FINANCIAL ADVICE I WISH I HAD AT AGED 20

1. Live below your means – *don't flex for people who don't pay their bills.*
2. Start investing early – *compound interest is your silent millionaire-maker.*
3. Save before you spend, *not after.*
4. Build an emergency fund – *life happens, be ready.*
5. Credit cards are tools, not free money – *use them wisely.*
6. Learn a high-income skill – *it'll open more doors than a degree alone.*
7. Don't chase trends – *chase value.*
8. Budgeting isn't boring, *being broke is.*
9. Avoid lifestyle inflation – *even when you earn more, don't spend more.*
10. Learn about taxes – *saving on them is just as powerful as earning more.*
11. Start a side hustle – *it teaches you business and adds extra income.*
12. Buy assets, *not liabilities.*
13. Don't compare your financial journey – *focus on your lane.*
14. Money doesn't solve all problems, *but it gives you options.*
15. Your \$20s are for building, not balling.

## ADVOCACY RESPONSIBILITIES IN TAURANGA/WBOP ASSOCIATION

To better spread the workload for committee and off-committee members we wanted to advise whom you should contact if you have issues concerning seniors in our community.

Those taking a lead for different portfolios are listed below: -

Portfolio	Contacts
Age Friendly Communities	Alex Zilionis, Jennifer Custins
Health	David Marshall
Home Care	Jennifer Custins
Housing	Vanessa Charman-Moore, David Marshall
Local Bodies	Alex Zilionis (TGA), David Marshall (WBOP)
Magazine Distribution	Shirley Porter, Alex Zilionis
Magazine Editor	Jennifer Custins
Office Manager & Membership	Sharyn Mudgway
Publicity	Alex Zilionis, Sharyn Mudgway
Residential Care	Jennifer Custins
Retirement Income (NZS)	David Marshall
Retirement Villages	Alex Zilionis
Senior Licence Renewal	David Marshall
Treasurer	Alex Zilionis
Website / Facebook	Vanessa Charman -Moore, Alex Zilionis
Zone Liaison	Jennifer Custins, Jill Marshall

If you are able to help with any of these portfolios, or to speak with any of those responsible please call the Office on 07 571 2558 and they will provide contact details.

## ZUCCHINI, CARROT AND CHEESE FRITTERS



### INGREDIENTS

- 2 large zucchini, grated
- 2 large carrots, grated
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced (optional)
- 2/3 cup finely grated cheddar or other
- 1/2 cup plain flour
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten - size 7
- 2 tbsp rice bran oil
- Tomato relish, to serve
- Salad, to serve

### METHOD

- Step 1 Combine zucchini, carrot, onion, cheddar and flour in a bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Add milk and egg. Mix well.
- Step 2 Heat oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Spoon 1/4 cup batter into pan. Spread out to form a flat round. Repeat to make 3 more fritters. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes, each side, or until well browned. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towel. Cover loosely to keep warm. Repeat with remaining mixture, adding extra oil if needed.
- Step 3 Serve fritters with tomato relish and salad.

## HEALTHIER PINEAPPLE UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE

Author: HFG staff

A better bake that packs beautifully for a fruity mid-morning treat.

Serves: 6

Time to make: 35 mins

Hands-on time: 10 mins

### Ingredients

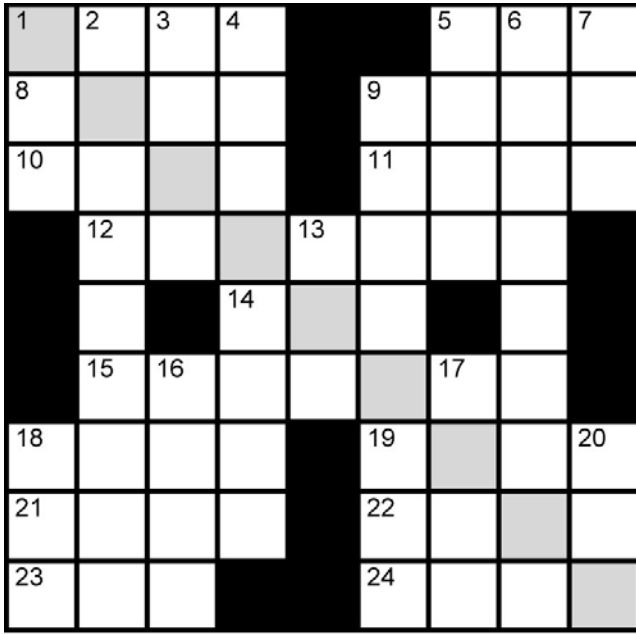
- 1½ cups self-raising flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 150g reduced-fat Greek yogurt
- ½ cup castor sugar
- 3 eggs
- zest and juice 1 lime
- good pinch allspice
- 3 tablespoons agave nectar [or honey or fruit syrup]
- 6 pineapple rings (tinned in juice)

### Instructions

1. Heat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C/gas 4. Line the base and sides of a 23cm diameter cake tin with baking paper.
2. Whisk together the flour, baking powder, yogurt, sugar, eggs, lime zest and juice and allspice.
3. Drizzle the agave nectar over the base of the cake tin. Add the pineapple rings, then top with the cake mixture and smooth over. Bake for 20–25 min until the sponge is springy to touch. While still hot, turn out on to a plate and carefully peel off the baking paper. Cut into slices and serve hot or cold



# Quick Pic

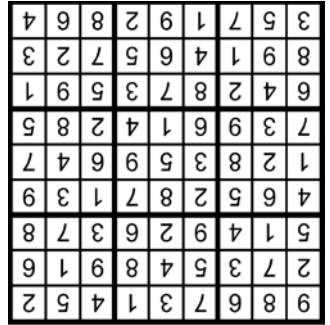
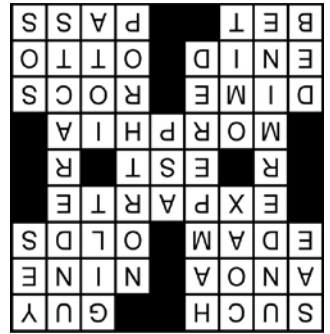


- Across**
- 1. Similar
  - 5. Chap
  - 8. Celebes ox
  - 9. Opening time, maybe
  - 10. \_\_\_ cheese
  - 11. Cutlass, e.g.
  - 12. From one side only
  - 14. "C' \_\_\_ la vie!"
  - 15. Narcotic

- 18. Kind of store
- 19. Enormous birds of myth
- 21. "Idylls of the King" character
- 22. "Beetle Bailey" dog
- 23. "Wanna \_\_\_?"
- 24. Hail Mary, e.g.

**Down**

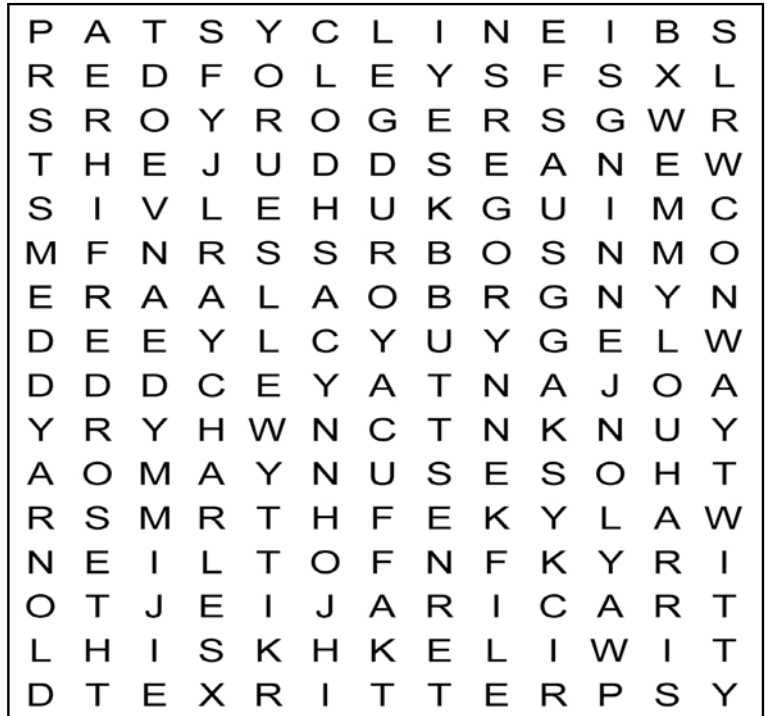
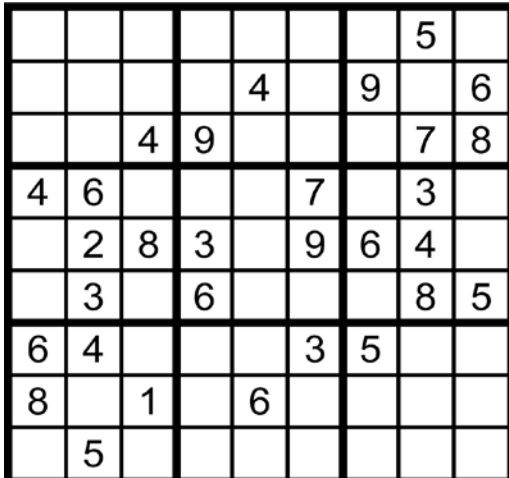
- 1. Ed.'s request
- 2. Sabotage
- 3. Cajole
- 4. Impeded
- 5. Gold-plated
- 6. Restrained stage performances
- 7. "Absolutely!"
- 9. A chemistry Nobel: 1946
- 13. Death on the Nile cause, perhaps
- 16. Leave out
- 17. Bit
- 18. Center of a ball?
- 20. "Help!"



*The crossword headline is a clue to the answer in the shaded diagonal*

- CONWAY TWITTY
- EDDY ARNOLD
- ELVIS
- EMMYLOU HARRIS
- ERNEST TUBB
- FRED ROSE
- HANK SNOW
- JIMMY DEAN
- JOHNNY CASH
- KENNY ROGERS
- KITTY WELLS
- PATSY CLINE
- RAY CHARLES
- RED FOLEY
- RICKY SKAGGS
- ROY ACUFF
- ROY CLARK
- ROY ROGERS
- TEX RITTER
- THE JUDDS
- WAYLON JENNINGS

## SUDOKU



*How to solve sudoku puzzles: No math is required to solve a sudoku. You only need logic and patience. Simply make sure that each 3x3 square region has only one instance of the numbers 1-9. Similarly, each number can only appear once in a column or row in the larger grid. The difficulty on this puzzle is easy.*

## Country Singers