



AGE
CONCERN
PALMERSTON
NORTH & DISTRICTS

He Manaakitanga
Kaumātua Aotearoa

Age Concern Palmerston North & Districts

Alzheimers Society Manawatū | Life without a car | What's On?
Rethinking Play | Farewell Fern | University of the Third Age



Message from our Manager

Welcome to the Winter magazine from Age Concern Palmerston North and Districts.

As we head towards the middle of the year, the country is well and truly in election mode. As a member of Age Concern New Zealand, we have contributed to position statements for all political parties to consider. Age Concern asks all our potential representatives to recognise that:

- *ageism is a pervasive and harmful force underpinning much of the commentary on older people and ageing, and that this narrative must be actively challenged and changed.*
- *Aotearoa New Zealand is in a long-term housing crisis and urgent reform is needed along with cross-party housing policies to ensure that renting or home ownership is viable for all, across generations.*
- *many older people live on fixed incomes with little opportunity to increase their income to meet rising costs.*
- *reducing the impact of loneliness and social isolation on individuals and communities requires investment in proven interventions, resourcing of community transport options and education on the health impacts and risks.*

- *a long-term cross-party strategy is needed for health services to ensure the right care at the right time and in the right place.*
- *there is a need for investment in all aspects of Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention Services – education, intervention, community support*

All these issues are front-of-mind for everyone at Age Concern and underpin the services we provide. In this issue you can read reflections from Fern Brooking as she retires after almost 12 years as Social Connection Coordinator. It is good to reflect on how far we have come as an organisation, and helpful to have the issues facing our community central to our political conversation.

Thanks to those of you who have been in touch with feedback and suggestions (and please see the feedback form in this magazine if you have more to share!). You are always welcome to email or phone to introduce yourself or have a chat. My email is

Julie.macdonald@ageconcernpn.org.nz and the number at Age Concern is 06 355 2832.

Puanga Matariki is a time to remember those no longer with us, reflect on the year that has gone, and plan for the year to come. I hope winter is kind to you and that you find some food for thought and inspiration in our magazine.



Julie Macdonald - Manager

Thank you to our funders & supporters



Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand



Cover Image

Rangiwahia Hut Lookout - ManawatuNZ.co.nz

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of Age Concern Palmerston North & Districts. The inclusion of any product or service does not mean that Age Concern Palmerston North & Districts advocates or endorses it.

Fun Day Friday

Age Concern Palmerston North and Districts first Live Stronger for Longer (LS4L) promotion event, known as Fun Day Friday, got off to a great start on Friday the 13th of March at Barber Hall, Central Energy Trust Arena. It was 29 degrees that day in Palmerston North, with thunderstorms threatening, so everyone did well despite the heat!

The afternoon had a relaxed and friendly feel, with plenty of laughs, conversation, and opportunities to get moving. The Shake Rattle 'n' Roll ACC-approved taster class and Bocce gave everyone a chance to try something new in a way that felt easy, enjoyable, and accessible.



Participants joined in at their own pace, whether standing or seated. Some took part in both activities, while others were happy sticking with one. Either way, everyone was included and encouraged.

The social side of the day was just as important. Over cold drinks and snacks, participants had time to chat, connect, and enjoy being part of a welcoming environment. For some, it was a chance to get out of the house and meet new people, which was just as valuable as the activities themselves.



Feedback from participants reflected how much the day was enjoyed:

"I really enjoyed the activities and meeting new people".

"The organisers were very friendly, calm, and inviting".

"I was quite happy with the event overall".

All in all, it was a great first event, spreading awareness of Community Strength and Balance, Falls Prevention, and Live Stronger for Longer. It was a simple reminder that staying active can be enjoyable and something to look forward to.

There are two more events planned for the year, with the next one on Friday the 4th of September, and the last event for the year taking place on Friday the 27th of November. If you're interested in registering for any of these events, please contact info@ageconcernpn.org.nz or phone 06 355 2832. We'd love to see you come along and be a part of these fun events.

Help with getting around

Staying connected with friends and whānau is an important part of maintaining independence and is good for our wellbeing. How hard or easy it is to get around can have a major impact on our quality of life.

Several times each year Age Concern runs **Staying Safe** driver refresher courses in our region. If you would like us to let you know when we are planning the next one, please give us a call on **06 355 2832**, or keep an eye on our Facebook page.

For many people, however, driving is not an option. It may be that you used to drive and don't any longer, or you may prefer to take public transport or cycle. At our last gathering at Age Concern, participants arrived by taxi, private car, bicycle, mobility scooter, and on foot!



If you want to know more about your transport options, Age Concern has a useful booklet called **Life without a Car. Transport options for seniors**. This booklet has information about the Total Mobility Scheme, Mobility Parking, SuperGold card discounts, and some general tips for managing day to day tasks when driving is not an option. If you'd like a copy of this booklet please pop into our office to pick one up, or phone and ask us to post it out to you.

Older Persons Rainbow Support Group

Kirsty Henderson (She/Her) the Community Outreach Coordinator for MaLGRA is working towards establishing a Rainbow Support Group for older people aged 50 and over.

This group will provide a safe, welcoming, and inclusive space where LGBTQIA+ individuals can come together, share their experiences, and support one another.

To express your interest or offer suggestions on venues and meeting times please email outreach@malgra.org.nz

MaLGRA

Manawātū Lesbian and Gay Rights Association

Hancock Community House
King Street, Palmerston North



Farewell Fern

Kia ora all

This my way of saying 'goodbye and thank you' to all the people I have been fortunate to encounter while employed with Age Concern in Palmerston North.

My journey with Age Concern started in 2014. We were under the umbrella of Age Concern NZ and dependant on them for financial support. Our 'office', at that time in Waldegrave Street, consisted of one large room. We had two staff, the Manager and myself. My job was Visiting Service Co-ordinator. Some of those volunteers I recruited are still visiting clients today. The office was fairly rudimentary – we had a black and white printer that over-heated if tasked with printing more than 10 pages at a time.

I have some fond memories of those days – such as the Manager making big pots of pumpkin soup for our volunteer events. At Christmas one year, we were fortunate to have Julia Wallace Retirement Village hosting our Christmas luncheon for the Volunteer Visitors. We also had a volunteer who made individual Christmas cakes for distribution to our clients.

By 2018 Age Concern NZ had supported Age Concern /Palmerston North/Manawatū to become an independent body within the Manawatū Community. A committee was established and our services started to expand. Some of those original Committee Members remain on the board supporting Age Concern Palmerston North and Districts today.



There have been many changes and much growth over the years. One standout initiative was the roll out nationally of Steady As You Go exercise groups. The first of these groups to be held locally commenced in Rangiora Avenue in 2018. It was extremely well supported. From there we offered more groups in other suburbs with good uptake from older citizens living in those areas. Volunteer co-ordinators from within these communities were instrumental in keeping their groups going. Today, many of the same people remain involved with the Steady As You Go groups. It took a lot of effort and time to nurture these groups, but the continued community involvement has convinced me of the value of the initiative.

Covid was a difficult time for our services,

as of course it was for everyone. I remember working from home, and conducting much of my work via the phone. This included supporting clients of the Visiting Service and the volunteers. The volunteers, in turn, kept in regular contact via phone calls, with 'their' clients. There was high demand and need for food. Our Manager braved the supermarket's long queues to do shopping for clients and deliver this to doorsteps.

At other times what people wanted from phone contact was someone just to listen to them. I had quite a few calls with distressed relatives, expressing how sad and helpless they felt not being able to visit their relative in a rest home. Sometimes these calls were about the difficulties family members were experiencing trying to decide who among them would get to visit their sick relative. The effects of Covid impacted negatively on the provision of service by Age Concern, particularly the Visiting Service and exercise groups. It took a long time to recover from this.

Gradually the number of staff at our Age Concern office expanded – to the point where we were bursting at the seams working from that one room in Waldegrave Street. In 2022 we secured new premises. It was uplifting to move to this new and current office in Broadway Avenue. It feels so airy and light with windows aplenty and a nice place to work from.

Our office has proved to be the ideal place to launch our in-house community groups from. One of these groups is Tea and Talks; a group that has grown from

strength to strength. Tea and Talks provides a space where older people can get together in a social setting, to chat and have a 'cup of tea' together. Helping to make this group a success has been the willingness of local health organisations to accept an invitation to meet with the group. They give their time to talk about their work and topics of relevance to older adults. For example, we have had Eyes on Broadway, highlighting the importance of regular eye checks to rule out eye conditions such as glaucoma. It has been a privilege for me to meet the many people who have come to this group over a five year period – both speakers and participants. It has been uplifting to see friendships develop and grow from that group setting.

It has been quite a journey with ups and downs along the way. My work was not done in isolation of course, and I have enjoyed working alongside a lot of good people, both paid and voluntary. I have been fortunate to meet some wonderful people and have enjoyed my time working in the community.

Having good staff team support has certainly been encouraging and I thank you all for sticking by me. I wish Age Concern all the best.

Fern Brooking



Our community - Who do we serve?

Age Concern Palmerston North and Districts serves Palmerston North City and Manawatū District, although we also offer some programmes and services further afield.

In the Summer 2025 magazine we looked at the age breakdown our region's population. Older people made up almost 17% of our usually-resident population at the 2023 Census, which is well over 20,000 people.

In the Autumn 2026 magazine we found that around three quarters of older people in our region either own or partly own their own home. Around 20% of older people rent, 4% live in retirement villages, and just under 6% live in rest home care.

In this issue of our magazine, we are going to consider the 2023 Census and other sources to find out more about how older people spend their time. The two aspects we're going to examine are the forms of exercise preferred by older people, and the extent of paid and unpaid work. There aren't always reliable sources of data about participation in other things, such as arts and cultural activities, or other hobbies, but these topics fill in at least some of the picture.

Active recreation

Ihi Aotearoa Sport New Zealand uses the Active NZ Survey and Census data to provide insights into the types of active recreation undertaken by older people.

They divide the older population into 'young retirees' (65 – 74 years) and 'older retirees' (75+ years).

For 'young retirees' in Palmerston North City and Manawatū District, the top five forms of activity are:

- #1 Walking
- #2 Gardening
- #3 Using individual exercise equipment
- #4 E-biking
- #5 Swimming

Walking is by far the most popular activity and the only one in this list to be reported by more than half of this population group.

For 'older retirees' the research suggests that walking is again the most popular form of activity, although for fewer people than in the 'young retirees' group. For 'older retirees' in Palmerston North City and Manawatū District, the top five forms of activity are:

- #1 Walking
- #2 Gardening
- #3 Using individual exercise equipment
- #4 Group exercise
- #5 Outdoor bowls

Interestingly, 'no activity' is reported by around 25% of 'young retirees' and more than 40% of 'older retirees'. 'No activity' would therefore come in at 3rd on each of the lists above – more popular than gardening, but ahead of using exercise equipment, e-biking, swimming, and group exercises.

If you're interested in finding out more about activity trends around the country, then go to <https://sportnz.org.nz/resources/insights-tool/>

Unpaid work

According to the 2023 Census, most older people (88.5%) in Manawatū District and Palmerston North City do unpaid activities, including household chores, gardening, or doing repairs for their own

household. Outside of the home, 15.9% of this older population do other helping or voluntary work for organisations, groups, and mārae. Older people are more likely to do this kind of volunteering than are members of other age groups.

Figure 1 shows that a significant proportion of this older population provide unpaid care for children, other members of their household, or other people who live outside of their household.

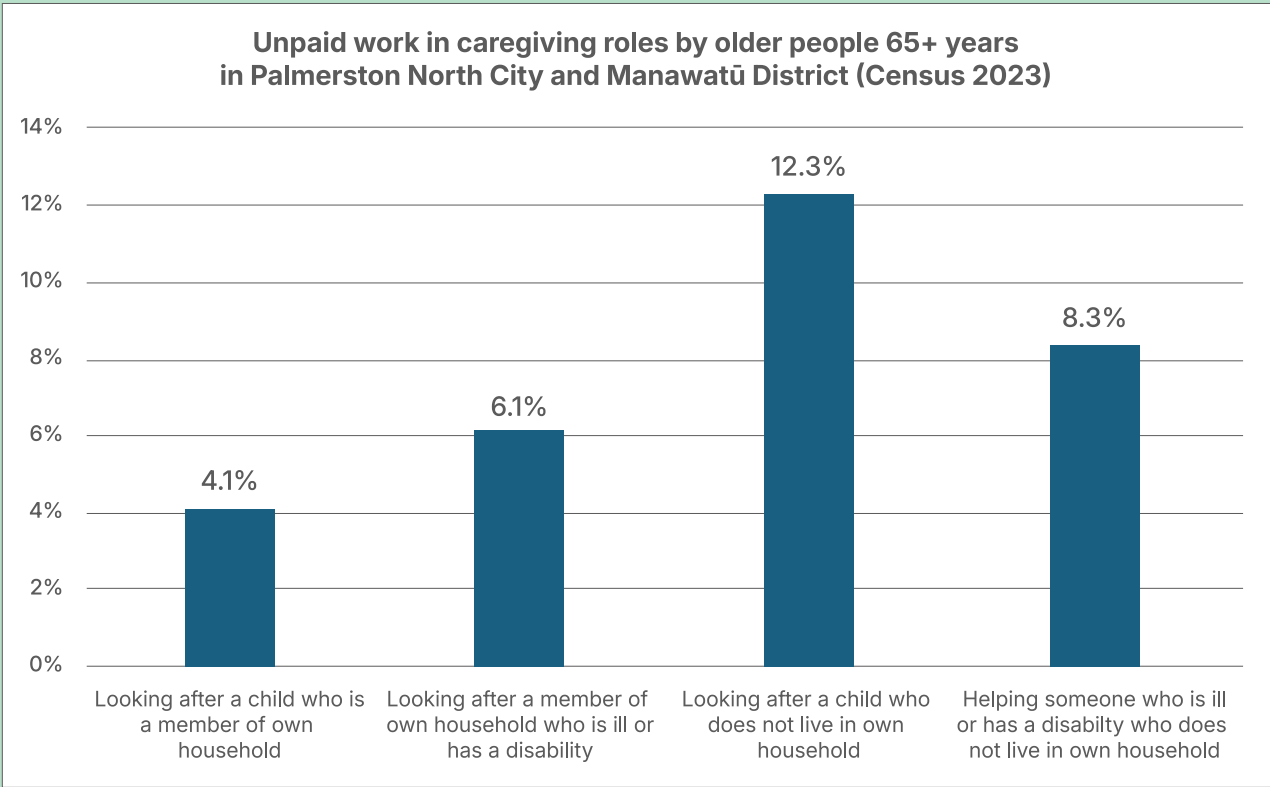


Figure 1

Paid work

In Palmerston North City and Manawatū District 13.6% of the 65+ years population still work full-time, and 10.9% work part-time. Figure 2 on the following page shows that men are more likely to remain in full-time employment after the age of 65 years, but participation in part-time employment is roughly the same for women and men.

As we'd expect, participation in paid employment decreases as the population ages. While 30.1% of people aged 65-69 years still work full-time, by the age of 80+ years only a very small number (108, or 2.1%) in our region do so.



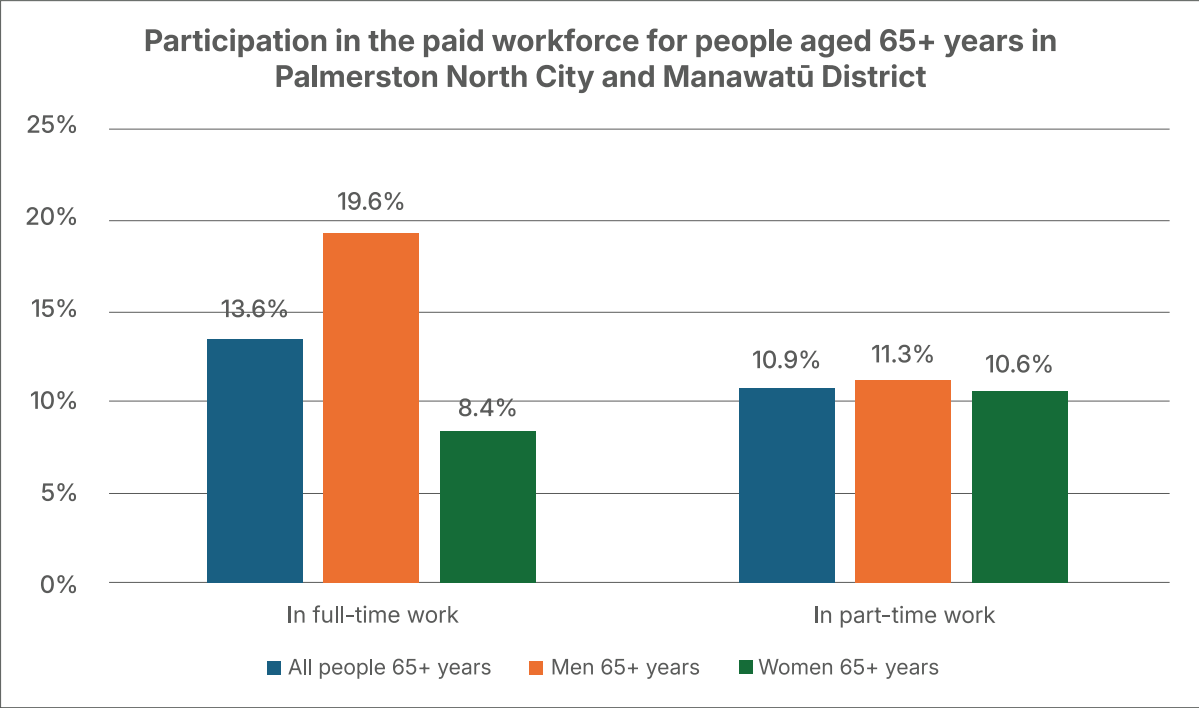


Figure 2

Figure 3 below shows that there is a sharp decrease in full-time employment between 65-69 years and 70-74 years. However, the proportion of people working part-time decreases less markedly between these age groups, with more than 12% of people still working full or part-time at ages 70-74 years.

Conclusion

This series has shown us how varied the lives of people in our region aged 65+ years really are. Some continue in full-time or part-time paid employment for decades after the age of 65. Many older people contribute unpaid time to community causes and caregiving.

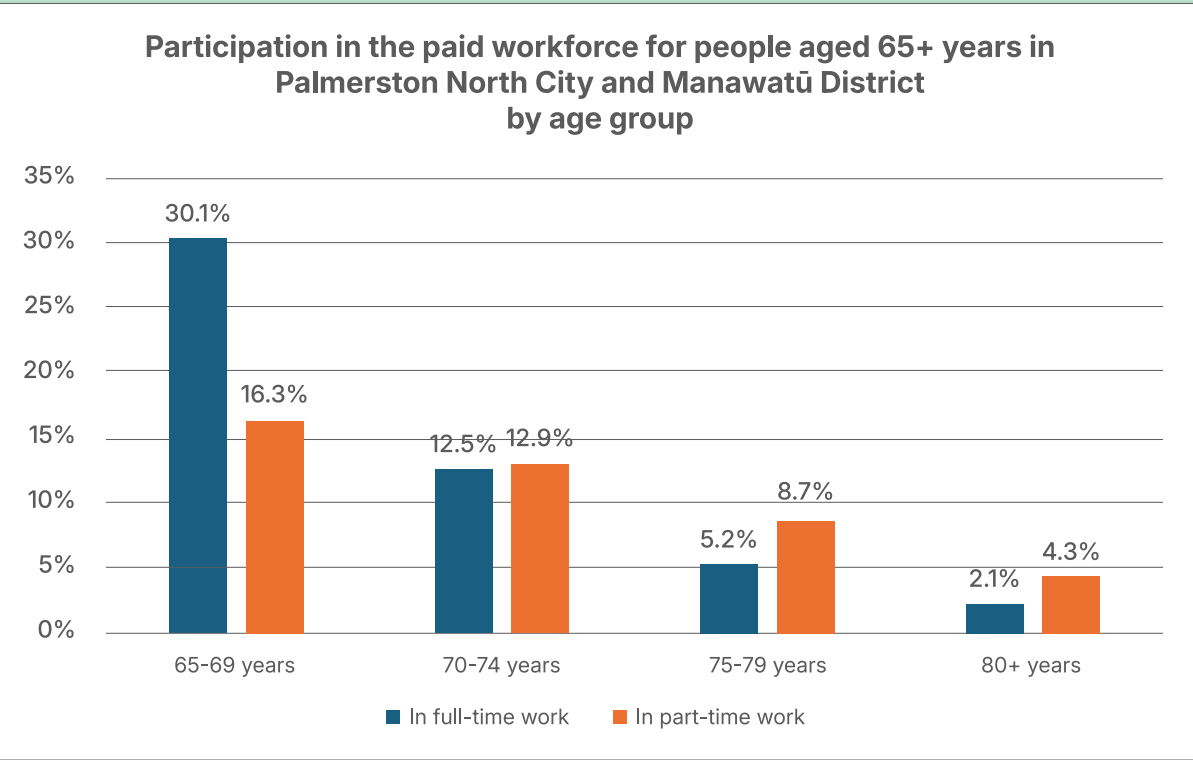


Figure 3

Being able to do these things is no-doubt helped by participation in a variety of activities, whether it is walking, doing a dance class, or playing bowls.

If you are interested in finding out more about anything to do with the nature of the population in Manawātū District and Palmerston North City served by Age Concern, please contact Julie.macdonald@ageconcernpn.org.nz or give me a call on 06 355 2832.

Sources:

Stats New Zealand Census 2023

Ihi Aotearoa Sport New Zealand



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Office Hours:

9am - 4pm, Monday to Friday
Closed Public Holidays

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Alzheimers *Manawatū*

Who we are

Alzheimers Manawatū is a charity that transforms the lives of people affected by dementia by providing day programmes, Carer Support Groups and public education about the disease that affects around 83,000 Kiwis. By 2050, this number could nearly double to almost 170,000.

Where we are

Based in Palmerston North, we cover the Manawatū, Horowhenua and Tararua regions.

Our mission

Alzheimers Manawatū seeks to 'make life better' for those individuals, carers, families/whānau affected by dementia.

We help people affected by dementia by providing:

Day programmes at four Marion Kennedy Clubs in Palmerston North, Feilding, Levin, and Dannevirke. These provide people with dementia the opportunity to socially interact with others within a varied and stimulating programme which is managed by trained staff and gives their families-turned-carers respite.

Monthly Carer Support Groups in Palmerston North, Levin, Dannevirke, and Feilding. Families-turned-carers have time to discuss challenges they are facing and get advice from other carers, guest speakers and a Dementia Adviser. Their family members do not need to be an MKC member for them to connect with a Carer Support Group.

New evening Carer Support Group. Alzheimers Manawatū's first evening Carer Support Group started in May and is on every third Wednesday of the month from 5.30pm to 7pm at 642 Featherston St, Palmerston North. This timeslot will make it easier for families who care for someone with dementia whilst working, to get support from guest speakers, other carers and a Dementia Advisor.



Dementia Advisors

- Assess people with dementia in their homes to see if they are suitable for our Marion Kennedy Clubs.
- Support families.
- Educate the general public about dementia through question and answer events.

People with dementia are assessed initially and then reviewed every six months once they become an MKC member.

They are assessed on:

- Whether their level of cognitive decline is affecting their engagement in cognitive, physical and social activities.
- Whether they are still independently toileting, eating, and mobilising.

People with dementia may eventually need more support and need to go into care. At that stage they will no longer be able to attend a Marion Kennedy Club and Memory Cafes may be more suitable for their families.

To RSVP for our Dementia Q&A events please contact our Dementia Advisor Andrea Hodgetts via email AndreaH@alz-man.org.nz or phone 027 357 9560.



Alzheimers Manawatū

Marion Kennedy Centre

To learn more about Alzheimers Manawatū please subscribe to our quarterly newsletter by emailing grants@alz-man.org.nz. Our current newsletter is on our homepage at alzheimersmanawatu.org

Phone: 06 357 9539

Email: manawatu@alz-man.org.nz

Palmerston North Office

642 Featherston Street

Palmerston North MKC

Operates Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

10am - 3pm

3 Elliot Street, Palmerston North

Feilding MKC

Operates Monday and Friday

10am - 3pm

14 Bowen Street, Feilding

Levin MKC

Operates Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday

10am - 3pm

Cnr of Power & Parker Street, Levin

Dannevirke MKC

Operates Thursday

10am - 1pm

Beside the Carnegie Hall

Allardice Street, Dannevirke

Contact us for more info
P: 06 355 2832
E: info@ageconcernpn.org.nz
4/251 Broadway Ave
Palmerston North

What's on at Age Concern?

Palmerston North & Districts



June

- 02 TUE** **Men's Group Pub Lunch**
1.30pm - 3.30pm | The Hilltop, Palmerston North
- 03 WED** **In Knit Together - Knitting/craft group**
1pm - 3pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 04 THU** **Tech drop-in - Digital literacy sessions**
9.30am - 12pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 09 TUE** **Tea & Talks - Alzheimers Manawatū**
1pm - 3pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 12 FRI** **Staying Safe Driver Refresher - Palmerston North**
10am - 2pm | Call or email to register
- 16 TUE** **Men's Group - Easie Living**
1.30pm - 3.30pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 17 WED** **Elder Abuse Awareness - Community Connector**
12.30pm - 2pm | Feilding Library
- 17 WED** **In Knit Together - Knitting/craft group**
1pm - 3pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 18 THU** **Tech drop-in - Digital literacy sessions**
9.30am - 12pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 23 TUE** **Tea & Talks - Diabetes Trust**
1pm - 3pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- WEEKLY MONDAY** **Kōrero & Kai - Social connection in Halcombe**
11am - 1.30pm | Halcombe Community Hall
- WEEKLY TUE & WED** **Shake, Rattle 'n' Roll - Dance exercise class**
1.30pm - 2.30pm | Community Leisure Centre, PN
- WEEKLY MON - FRI** **Steady As You Go - Strength & Balance classes**
See back page for all times and locations

July

- 01 WED** **In Knit Together - Knitting/craft group**
1pm - 3pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 02 THU** **Tech drop-in - Digital literacy sessions**
9.30am - 12pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 07 TUE** **Men's Group**
1.30pm - 3.30pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 14 TUE** **Tea & Talks - Easie Living**
1pm - 3pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 15 WED** **In Knit Together - Knitting/craft group**
1pm - 3pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 16 THU** **Tech drop-in - Digital literacy sessions**
9.30am - 12pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 21 TUE** **Men's Group**
1.30pm - 3.30pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 28 TUE** **Tea & Talks - Age Friendly PN**
1pm - 3pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 30 THU** **Tech drop-in - Digital literacy sessions**
9.30am - 12pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- WEEKLY MONDAY** **Kōrero & Kai - Social connection in Halcombe**
11am - 1.30pm | Halcombe Community Hall
- WEEKLY TUE & WED** **Shake, Rattle 'n' Roll - Dance exercise class**
1.30pm - 2.30pm | Community Leisure Centre, PN
- WEEKLY MON - FRI** **Steady As You Go - Strength & Balance classes**
See back page for all times and locations

August

- 04 TUE** **Men's Group - Pub Lunch**
1.30pm - 3.30pm | The Hilltop, Palmerston North
- 05 WED** **In Knit Together - Knitting/craft group**
1pm - 3pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 11 TUE** **Tea & Talks - PNCC Emergency Management**
1pm - 3pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 13 THU** **Tech drop-in - Digital literacy sessions**
9.30am - 12pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 18 TUE** **Men's Group**
1.30pm - 3.30pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 19 WED** **In Knit Together - Knitting/craft group**
1pm - 3pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 25 TUE** **Tea & Talks**
1pm - 3pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- 27 THU** **Tech drop-in - Digital literacy sessions**
9.30am - 12pm | Age Concern Meeting Rooms
- WEEKLY MONDAY** **Kōrero & Kai - Social connection in Halcombe**
11am - 1.30pm | Halcombe Community Hall
- WEEKLY TUE & WED** **Shake, Rattle 'n' Roll - Dance exercise class**
1.30pm - 2.30pm | Community Leisure Centre, PN
- WEEKLY MON - FRI** **Steady As You Go - Strength & Balance classes**
See back page for all times and locations



The U3A in Manawatū

Do you want to make new friends and keep your mind active? The U3A is an organisation for retired people who meet together for lifelong learning and social encounters.

The name U3A – University of the Third Age – reflects the origins of this international movement, which began in France in 1973. In New Zealand, the U3A has no connection with any university, but it is still for people who have passed through the first two “ages” of education and career or parenting into the third age of retirement. The many branches (about 88 in New Zealand) operate independently, and there has been a U3A in Palmerston North since 2000.

You may have noticed our free public seminar series each autumn and spring, currently held in the public library. We engage expert speakers on four successive Wednesday afternoons. Recent topics have included Linguistics and Languages, Making a Difference: the Power of Volunteering in the Manawatū, Manawatū Memories (about local museums and archives), Entertainment (theatre and music), Approaching the End of Life, Responding to Hazards, and Food and Society.

Our members belong to one or more small, informal “learning groups” dedicated to a wide variety of topics. Most meet monthly in the morning or afternoon to discuss books (fiction, non-fiction, biography), Ibsen’s plays,

poetry, philosophy, religion, current affairs, geopolitics, science and technology, NZ history, oral history, railways, travel, and TED talks (online). There are also groups for opera, operetta (Gilbert & Sullivan), classical music, comedy, art appreciation, film, cryptic crosswords, gardening, photography, sketching, book-making, 10-pin bowling, dining, ageing well, international communication, storytelling, and writing memoirs. We are always open to forming new groups if someone would like to share their particular interests.



Depending on group size, we meet in hired premises or people’s homes. The annual subscription is \$15 (\$25 for couples) and some groups ask for a few dollars each meeting to cover tea and coffee or venue hire.

For more information and to enrol, check out our website <https://www.u3amanawatu.org.nz/> or contact me, Chris van der Krogt by phone **021 122 4701** or email u3amanawatu@gmail.com

Rethinking Play and why it still matters at every age

When we hear the word “play,” most of us picture small children and playgrounds. We might imagine swings, slides, scraped knees, and a bit of mischievous chaos. For many of us, it’s something we associate with our early years, and ultimately something we all outgrow.

But what if we’ve got that wrong? What if play isn’t something we leave behind, but something that stays with us at every age and stage of life?

Through our work as Play Advocates at Sport Manawatū and Palmerston North City Council (PNCC), we spend a lot of time thinking about play in relation to community wellbeing. One thing we’ve noticed is that as we get older, we lose that close association with play, and many of us would hesitate to say we ‘play’ as adults. Yet some might be surprised to realise that we never really stop playing no matter our age.

One of the ways we try to shift perceptions around play is by keeping its definition simple. We say that play is the things we choose to do to be active and because they’re fun. When we frame it like that, people realise that play is still very much part of their lives. In fact, research increasingly shows how important play is as we age.

Beyond our childhood years of playgrounds and scraped knees, play will

start to look different. It might be a game of bowls or walking netball with friends (did you know that’s a thing?). For others, it might be gardening, dancing, doing a puzzle, or heading out for a bike ride with someone you enjoy spending time with. It might be quiet and creative, or social and energetic. What matters isn’t the activity itself, but how it makes you feel.

The challenge is that as we get older, many of us haven’t been encouraged to think about play this way, or to make it a priority. For older generations especially, play can feel a bit frivolous alongside the responsibilities that come with different stages of life. Over time, we tend to take the fun out of it and give it a different name, like “fitness” or “exercise.” This can create a sense of obligation, another thing to add to our already busy to-do lists. In that context, play can seem unnecessary or unimportant, rather than something worth prioritising.

But there’s a growing body of evidence showing that activities that are enjoyable, social, and mentally engaging support our wellbeing as we age. They help keep us moving, keep our minds active, and keep us connected to others, all of which play a significant role in healthy ageing.

We’re also interested in how play can bring people together across generations. We all know that young people are natural play champions. They instinctively bring play into whatever they do, given even half the chance. Intergenerational play can create wonderful opportunities for those of us who may have forgotten the value of having fun. There’s something special about shared moments between

continued over the page

young and old. Whether it's a game, a walk, or simply time spent together, those experiences build connection in a way that's hard to replicate.

Here in Palmerston North, we've been thinking about what all of this looks like in practice. There are many opportunities to explore, and one recent example we're proud of is the Active Age Games event, which we support alongside the Clearview Parks Lions Club. It's a day where rest homes, retirement villages, and age-friendly community groups come together for a bit of friendly competition. The activities are simple, with rounds of balloon keepy-uppy, jigsaw challenges, hula hooping, and indoor bowls.

On paper, it might sound a bit silly, but what happens on the day tells a different story. Some people arrive ready from the get-go, while others are unsure or even put off by the idea of playing "childish" games for a day. But as we enter our third year of this event, one of the highlights for us is seeing the transformation over the course of the event. The laughter and fun really do something good for the soul. By the end of the day, those who were sceptical are often the ones finishing with the biggest grins on their faces. As one gentleman put it at last year's event, "Even us oldies should get to have some fun."

It's a good reminder that fun doesn't have an age limit, and that play doesn't just happen on its own. The spaces and opportunities around us matter.

At Sport Manawatū and PNCC, we acknowledge that if we want people to feel motivated to get out and have fun being active, we need to make it easy for our communities. We recognise that, for

our older communities, this needs to happen in many different ways.

This should include things like ensuring our city has mobility-friendly footpaths and walkways, places to sit and rest when we're out and about, and public spaces and activities that are safe and user-friendly. Something we work hard to remind our colleagues and community partners of, is that making things "age-friendly" often doesn't require significant investment, but rather small tweaks in design and planning.

What is considered good for our older community is also good for disabled people, parents with young children, and ultimately everyone. It means creating opportunities where people of all ages and abilities feel included.

So maybe our invitation is simple.

Take a moment to think about what play already looks like for you. Where are those moments of fun and connection? And where might there be space for a bit more of that? It doesn't have to involve big changes. It might be saying yes to something new, reconnecting with something you used to enjoy, or making time for the things that feel good.

Just as importantly, we encourage people to become play champions in their own communities, people who notice what's stopping others from having fun and being active, and who work with others to create something better.

Because play isn't something we eventually grow out of, it's something we carry with us at every age.

Easy play ideas you can try at home

- **Listen & move to music** - Play a favourite song and tap your feet, clap, or gently move your arms while seated.
- **Do a daily puzzle** - Crosswords, word searches, Sudoku, or jigsaws with large pieces all count as play.
- **Play cards or board games** - Solitaire, patience, rummy, dominoes, or a simple board game with a friend or whānau.
- **Gentle chair stretches** - While seated, slowly roll your shoulders, lift your arms, or stretch your legs. Only what feels comfortable.
- **Creative time** - Colouring, drawing, knitting, sewing, painting, or doing a small craft project.
- **Read for pleasure** - A book, magazine, newspaper, or even listening to an audiobook or radio story.
- **Mind games** - Name things that start with a certain letter, recall capital cities, or test yourself with trivia.
- **Nature watching** - Sit near a window or outside and watch birds, clouds, or plants. Notice colours, shapes, and movement.
- **Write a little** - A journal entry, a letter, a poem, or a few thoughts about your day.
- **Light-hearted challenges** - Try doing one small thing differently each day; a new TV programme, recipe, or walking route.



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Kia ora.

My name is Chris Love, and I am the coordinator for RECAP - a charitable organisation which operates in Ashurst/Pohangina. RECAP stands for The Society for the Resilience and Engagement of the Community of Ashhurst and Pohangina. The group's first meeting was held on February 1st 2010.

RECAP is a volunteer-led group for people who want to build a stronger sense of community, care for the living environment and develop new skills that can help make this region more sustainable, resilient, and self-reliant.

We have a board of seven, a team of around 20 regular volunteers, and a number of casual volunteers for varied working bees, like Harvey pictured above.

Our current projects include:

- The regeneration of McCrae's Bush (a native bush/wetlands remnant). We support a small team of volunteers who weed invasives and care for the native plants. This group of mainly retirees have built a strong bond over their shared interest in caring for the environment, and this work provides both connection and physical activity spent in nature. As with most of our project's volunteer groups - a meet up after the morning's work at the local cafe is as important as the work itself.
- The Olsson Community Orchard (in a clearing within McCrae's Bush). A teaching orchard with fruit accessible to the public.
- We care for the garden area on library grounds in Ashhurst, which includes fruit trees, perennial flowers and





vegetable beds. We have a lovely group of people who weed this area most weeks - always enjoying a cuppa/cake/catch up afterwards.

- The RECAP Seed Library (within the Ashhurst Library). Anyone is free to take three free packets of seeds per month to support home gardeners.
- The Ashhurst Sharing Shelf. A space to share excess produce and gardening items.
- A monthly Crop Swap. A friendly social event where you can gift and take items (such as excess produce and gardening related goods) freely.
- A rescued food distribution service (Community Kai). This operates in the 'social supermarket' model where customers can select what they need from a range donated from varied suppliers. We have a small team of volunteers here who work like a well-oiled machine to deliver this service to the community.
- A traditional Māori medicinal garden (māra rongoā) located along a public walkway next to our local health centre.
- We run a twice weekly garden club at Ashhurst School for juniors and seniors, teaching tamariki how to grow food.
- We hold workshops and seminars on topics based in resilience and sustainability.

- And we run children's environmental activities at the Ashhurst library during the holidays.

We operate with funding from PNCC, Lotteries, Public Trust and ECCT (as well as a variety of other funders for projects).

Volunteers are our beating heart. We enjoy strong support from our community, who work together to enrich our village. Our small groups of regular volunteers have built relationships which transcend demographics; providing connection, support and purpose.

If you would like to subscribe to our newsletter, or to volunteer please contact us at info@recap.org.nz or visit www.recap.org.nz for more.



Cardiovascular system

This article is by Healthify He Puna Waiora. It is the second in a series about 'normal' ageing and when you should seek medical advice.

As you get older your body changes, which affects your body systems and organs.

These changes happen because of damage to your cells which builds up over time. Gradually your ability to do things mentally and physically slows down and your risk of illnesses gets higher. These changes are not only to do with your age in years, but also the places you've lived and the people and events in your life.

Here's what's happening in different parts of your body as you age, and what you can do to stay fit and healthy for longer.

Cardiovascular system

Your blood vessels become less stretchy, meaning your heart has to work harder to pump the blood through them. This can lead to high blood pressure.

The way your cardiovascular system adjusts to changes in activity and body position may not work as well as you get older. Your heart doesn't speed up as much when you exercise. You're more likely to have a low heart rate (bradycardia) or a large drop in blood pressure when you stand up (postural hypotension).

It will help if you:

- stay physically active every day
- eat a healthy diet
- don't smoke
- manage your stress
- get enough sleep

Cardiovascular and heart disease

Cardiovascular disease is the term for all types of diseases that affect your heart or blood vessels. This includes coronary artery disease (clogged arteries), which can cause heart attacks, stroke, congenital heart defects and peripheral artery disease.

'Heart disease' (mate manawa) is a catch-all phrase for a variety of conditions that affect your heart's structure and function. All heart diseases are cardiovascular diseases, but not all cardiovascular diseases are heart disease.

Heart disease is the number one cause of death in New Zealand. It is also a major cause of disability. For that reason, we all need to take our heart health seriously.



Two common types of cardiovascular disease are:

1) Stroke

A stroke (he mate ikura roro) happens when the blood supply to your brain stops suddenly. The signs and symptoms of stroke usually come on suddenly. The type of signs experienced will depend on what area of the brain is affected.

Common first signs of stroke include one or more of the following:

- **Face:** sudden drooping, weakness and/or numbness of face
- **Arm:** sudden weakness of the arm (and/or leg)
- **Speech:** difficulty speaking, words jumbled or lost voice.

The **T** in **F.A.S.T.** represents the need to take action – if you think somebody might be having a stroke, call 111 immediately.

2) Heart failure

Heart failure (manawa ngoikore) is when your heart can't pump blood properly around your body. It's also known as congestive heart failure or heart dysfunction.

- Heart failure means your heart's pumping action is getting weaker. It doesn't mean your heart is about to stop.
- There are many conditions that can cause heart failure.
- Symptoms develop slowly and can vary. They include shortness of breath, swelling of your ankles, legs or tummy, tiredness, and being less able to exercise.

- Symptoms can get worse and become particularly severe during a flare-up (exacerbation).
- Heart failure can't be cured, but there are treatments to help manage it.
- There are many things that you, your whānau and your healthcare team, can do to help you feel better and stay well for as long as possible.

See your healthcare provider or go to the nearest emergency department if you or someone you care for has heart failure and experiences the following:

- sudden chest pain that lasts more than a few minutes
- sweating and weakness
- more shortness of breath than usual despite following action plan steps
- feeling very unwell
- dizziness, fainting or blackouts
- fever (a high temperature – above 38°C)
- increased swelling of ankles or abdomen (tummy)
- coughing for no reason.

If you have any concerns about your health, talk to your healthcare provider.

More information about this topic and other aspects of ageing can be found at:

<https://healthify.nz/health-a-z/h/heart-disease>

and

<https://healthify.nz/health-a-z/a/ageing-what-is-normal>

Wellness Walkers: Strength, Connection, and Longevity in Motion

Participants from strength and balance classes, run by Longevity Fitness, are taking their wellbeing one step further—literally. What began as a shared commitment to improving strength, mobility, and confidence has now grown into a participant-led walking group proudly named 'Wellness Walkers'.

This initiative is a powerful example of what can happen when older adults are supported not only in physical training, but also in building confidence, independence, and community. By coming together outside of structured classes, members are reinforcing the habits that contribute to long-term health and vitality.



Walking is one of the most accessible and effective forms of exercise, particularly for older adults. Regular walking supports cardiovascular health, maintains joint mobility, improves balance, and can help reduce the risk of falls—an important consideration as we age. Just as importantly, it contributes to mental wellbeing by reducing stress, boosting mood, and enhancing overall quality of life. However, the benefits of the Wellness Walkers group extend beyond physical health. Social connection plays a crucial role in healthy ageing, and this group provides a welcoming, supportive space where participants can share conversation, laughter, and a sense of belonging.

Research consistently shows that strong social ties are linked to increased longevity and reduced risk of cognitive decline—making initiatives like this incredibly valuable. In the context of growing global interest in longevity health, which focuses on extending not just lifespan but healthspan, the Wellness Walkers are a shining example of this concept in action. They are not just



adding years to life, but life to years. This grassroots initiative also highlights something deeply important: empowerment.

These participants have taken ownership of their wellbeing journey, creating something sustainable, inclusive, and inspiring for others in the community. If you or someone you know would like to join the Wellness Walkers at 9.15am on Monday mornings, and be part of this positive and uplifting group, you are warmly invited to get in touch, by texting Jackie on **027 4717 738**.

Step by step, this group is proving that it's never too late to move more, connect more, and live well.

Nicola Mischefski - NZC in Exercise
Longevity Fitness, Palmerston North



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We'd love to hear from you - please share your feedback with us.

We want to learn more about our Age Concern community and hope you can take the time to email **info@ageconcernpn.org.nz** with your feedback, or fill in this form and return to us (either in person or through the post).

Name: _____

How would you like to receive this magazine?

☐ By email (please provide your email address)

☐ In the post (please provide your postal address)

What sorts of things would you like to be included in our future magazines?

Post to: Age Concern Palmerston North & Districts, PO Box 5063, Palmerston North 4441

Drop in to: 4/251 Broadway Ave,
Palmerston North 4414
(Entrance on Vivian Street)

Tech drop-in

Digital literacy sessions

Thursday
4th & 18th June
2nd, 16th & 30th July
13th & 27th August

Call in anytime between
9:30am - 12:00pm



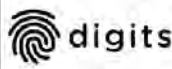
Come along to our casual drop-in sessions for one-on-one support with your mobile phone, laptop, or tablet.

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Age Concern Meeting Room
4/251 Broadway Ave
Palmerston North

P: 06 355 2832
E: info@ageconcernpn.org.nz



Fiddler on the Roof SR.

Auditions:
Tuesday 30th June
Thursday 2nd July



hello@centrepoin.co.nz

centrepoinTHEATRE

Support our work by becoming a friend of Age Concern Palmerston North & Districts

In 2024 our organization changed from being an Incorporated Society to a Charitable Trust. This means supporters are no longer required to join as 'Members', but instead can choose to support our activities through a donation. If you would like to be a 'Friend' of Age Concern in this way, then we would appreciate your donation in support of our activities.

We are a registered charity and donations of \$5 and over are eligible for a tax credit through myIR or by submitting a Tax credit claim form (IR526) to Inland Revenue.

Age Concern Palmerston North & Districts

(Registered charity no. CC57368)

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MONDAY

11am - 12pm | Halcombe

Halcombe Memorial Hall, 77 Willoughby St

TUESDAY

10am - 11am | Rongotea

Te Kawau Memorial Recreation Centre, 1 Wye St

10:30am - 11:30am | Feilding

St John Community Hall, 33 Bowen St

11am - 12pm | Square Edge

Level 1: Evelyn Rawlins Room, 47 The Square, Palmerston North

WEDNESDAY

10:30am - 11:30am | Rangiora Community Centre

102 Rangiora Ave, Palmerston North

THURSDAY

9:30am - 10:30am | Awapuni Community Centre

22 Newbury St, Palmerston North

10am - 11am | Baptist Church

190 Church St, Palmerston North

10am - 11am | Ashhurst

Otangaki Lodge, 69 Oxford St

1:30pm - 2:30pm | St Albans Church

339 Albert St, Palmerston North

FRIDAY

10am - 11am | Senior Citizens Hall

309 Main St, Palmerston North

10:30am - 11:30am | Manawatu Multicultural Council

Hancock House, 77-85 King St, Palmerston North

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