

Grey Power Wanganui N

Affiliated to Grey Power New Zealand (Inc)

www

FEBRUARY 2019

From Acting President Jack

Well isn't this a change. Now everyone in Wanganui can read our newsletters. I hope there is interest for everyone and maybe there might be inspiration for people to join our organisation. Grey Power is a powerful watchdog for interests of older people. We lobby both Local and Government bodies on all sorts of issues. You can see some of these in this newsletter.



We said goodbye to President Sharron at the end of 2018. She and husband Jim, our newsletter editor, have moved to Inglewood. I will fill the gap for Sharron, acting as president until our AGM in May. Jim continues with this issue and Graham taking over for the rest of the year.

We thank both Jim and Sharron for their commitment and management of the changes we have introduced over the last couple of years.

- Jack Ager

Grey Power at a glance

In the mid 1970's Superannuation was the big election issue. The public voted for the present scheme except that it was to be available at age 60 and was 80% of the average wage. That is how it started and for the next 20 years it was regularly chipped away, both amount and qualifying age. By both political parties. Grey Power came into being in the mid-90's to give the superannuitants a voice and put a stop to the devaluation.

Since then our interests have widened to all issues affecting older people.

We are all volunteers but we try to do our best for our members. We send out an 8 page newsletter four times a year, we hold four public meetings a year on matters of interest to older people. We keep a watching brief on matters such as DHB, Policing, Council rates and the like and make submissions where we feel it is warranted.

February Public Meeting

Thursday 28 at 1.30pm

St Andrews Church, Glasgow St
Russell Simpson - CEO Whanganui DHB
Our Hospital

Afternoon tea and food bank contributions as usual

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What are we doing in the newspaper?

Over the last couple of years we have been trying out alternatives with the newsletter. We first went to an eight page newsletter posted to all members. Then we tried an email method of sending out the newsletter and posting to the 600 or so members without email. This resulted in some cost saving but many members like to be able to read the newsletter on paper.

We looked at the way other Grey Power branches distribute their newsletters. Some even have volunteers hand delivering. Manawatu publish theirs in the local newspaper so we decided to give that a go. This is the result. Members outside the RCP circulation area will receive a copy of this by post.

Christmas party enjoyed by all



It was full house at our end of year party on the 29th November last. Members enjoyed the get together at the Laird Park Bowling Club. A fine lunch and entertainment from the Sylvia Tappers. Good to see 'mature' people enjoying themselves with their

dancing and providing enjoyment for us as well. It was also an opportunity for members to farewell Sharron Callaghan and thank her for her time as President. During her eighteen months as president we have had a new website, a revamped constitution,

Social Security Act Section 70

This act affecting overseas pensions is often in the news. If a superannuitant receives an overseas pension, the NZ super is reduced by the amount of that pension. The reasoning is easy to understand. In one way or another (by taxes or direct contributions) the superannuitant has been paying in one country or another but not both at the same time so cannot be entitled to two pensions. However, if the overseas pension

exceeds the NZ Super the excess is debited against the spouse's super even though the spouse has been working in NZ for their whole life.

This is so unjust to the New Zealander, and the loss is not just monetary. There is a loss of independence; both emotional and physical health is affected and it puts a strain on marriages/relationships.

This law is not just unfair, it is also illogical. If the New Zealander went

to live in his/her partner's country they would receive their full New Zealand superannuation with no deductions. A remit was passed at the NZ Grey Power AGM to take some action over this. Bay of Plenty Grey Power has launched a petition on behalf of NZ Grey Power to get some action.

This petition was presented to Parliament on 31st January. We await the outcome.

Is Grey Power Electricity really the cheapest?

Many Grey Power members get the electricity and gas through Grey Power Electricity, a special rate for members which is probably the best rate around. A few members have reported that they had better deals elsewhere.

My experience: After our contract ran out with Genesis we changed to Grey Power Electricity. Basically our daily charge dropped from 33 cents a day to 17.5 and our rate from 28 cents to 25.3 per kwh. After the switch, Genesis rang to find why we had changed. They then offered to match Grey Power Electricity rates although in a different proportion of daily charge and kwh rate, and gave us \$100 to switch back. I asked why they hadn't offered me this rate when I was a loyal customer before... no real answer to that!

Then just last week another retailer called at my door. I showed him a recent account. He quoted me his rates, almost convinced me they were better (it was a bit complicated with gas and internet all part of the deal and the company would give me a 55" Samsung TV or a new fridge or \$700 if we switched to them but we had to sign up that day! I told him to come back in two hours which gave me time to compare the deals. Turned out his prices were no better and definitely worse when considering it would cost me \$200 to break my internet contract with Spark.

Wondered just how much the power really costs when they can afford to give away a \$1200 TV to a customer who pays about \$300 a month for power and internet and could easily leave them two years down the track.

Yes you may be able to find a better deal than Grey Power Electricity but you will have to search hard and probably do a special negotiation.

~ Join Grey Power ~

If you would like to join with over 2000 other Grey Power members in Wanganui you can do so on our website: www.grey-powerwanganui.co.nz
Or phone: Jack: 06 343 1404, or Michael: 027 531 1121

The annual subscription is \$20 single, \$30 double. You will be helping protect and promote the interests of older people, receive four National Grey Power newsletters per year and four local newsletters, receive invitations

to our public meetings and be eligible to join Grey Power Electricity. Probably the cheapest power rates you can find. There is no age limit but our activities and interests are for the over 50's.



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Newsletter

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STV: Single Transferable Vote You only have one vote

In our November newsletter we gave an example of what happens to your vote under STV. In the example the voter had ranked all 15 candidates for the 2016 DHB election. These were the first four on his list.

1. MAIN 2. VINSEN 3. HYLTON 4. ADAMS

What happened to his vote? MAIN got 38% and HYLTON got 62% - and all the others got nothing.

The really important thing to remember is that even though there were seven positions on the Hospital Board each voter gets only one vote. In the example given, MAIN was very popular so she only needed 38% of this voter's vote, VINSEN was not popular enough to be elected so he got nothing and HYLTON was border-line so he needed all the rest of that vote to get elected. How did they know that VINSEN was not popular enough to be elected? The voting papers are counted over and over again. The first time through when only the first preferences are counted VINSEN would have got some of this voter's vote because MAIN didn't need it all to get elected. However after several counts it became obvious that VINSEN was not going to get enough votes overall to be elected so all the remainder of this vote was transferred to HYLTON.



So how many votes does a candidate need to be elected? This is called the quota and is worked out from the number of voters divided by the number of positions plus 1. So if there were 20 000 voters and seven positions to be filled the quota would be 20 000 divided by 8 which is 2 500.

STV for Wanganui District Council Elections

Here there are 12 positions and usually about 18 000 voters. So to get elected a candidate would need 18 000 divided by 13 = 1384 votes. In the 2016 elections using FPP a candidate needed about 6 000 votes to be elected. Of course the reason for the difference is that voters had 12 votes in those elections but under STV only get one vote.

We will use FPP this year but also vote if we want STV in future.

How to vote in a STV election

You decide which candidate you want. Your choice is ranked first on your list. Then you can place another candidate 2nd on your list who is like the first emergency you will vote for if your first choice misses out or if your first choice is so popular that not all of your vote is needed.

So on for later rankings. Those not elected will not get any part of your vote but below your 2nd elected choice it is almost always only a very small percentage. Records show that in STV elections, the candidates who succeed are almost always those that get the greatest number of first preferences.

So why STV?

It is to ensure that significant minorities can have representation. If a candidate has a reasonably strong following in the community and could get 1 384 1st preferences he would succeed, but under FPP would need over 6 000 voters to vote for him.

Want to know more?

The website of a local proponent of STV gives a simple explanation to show how it works: www.votestv.co.nz. Remember when watching this, that each voter has only one vote and almost all of the rankings 3 to 7 are ignored.

You can find more detailed explanations on our web site. www.greypowerwanganui.co.nz (Choose 'about' then 'useful links').

Elderly Regularly Targeted

The elderly seem to be regular targets of unscrupulous people. A couple of recent instances:

First, reported in the newspaper. A woman knocks on the door of an 88 year old lady. She claimed to have washed her windows while the lady was out. Three times she said so was owed \$60 - \$20 for each wash. The elderly lady didn't have that much on hand so gave her all she had: \$50. The woman discovered her windows were still dirty so rang the police. Result: The fraudster had to give back the \$50 and pay \$150.

Second: A ninety-one year old man living in my street. Computer stopped working so he called in a computer repair man to be told his computer was beyond repair and was offered a new one for \$3,000 which the man accepted. An alert neighbour, on hearing the story told him to return the new computer, get his money back along with the old computer. The neighbour took the old computer to another repair man who gave the computer a bit of a clean and it was going again as good as new.

Are the days of gas heating numbered?

There has been speculation in the media that as the Government has stopped further exploration for oil and gas, that the gas we have on stream now will run out and we will have to ditch our gas heaters and change to electric.

Be assured there is no need to worry. Here are the facts.

• There are 26 oil and gas fields in production at present. All will continue. These fields have reserves for about ten years as has been known for many years. Industry uses 96% of current gas production.

• 31 permits are in existence for new exploration. These cover an area of

about 100 000 sq km (about the size of the North Island). These remain and can be taken up by mining companies up to 2030 with production allowed up to 2070 and beyond.

• Only one permit has been granted in the past two years before the ban on new permits. There is no ban against onshore exploration permits. It seems that issuing no further permits is not a huge change. If you are concerned about climate change this ban is a very small step and won't really have any effect on supply for about 50 years. Maybe we should do more. Any oil or gas taken out of the ground will be burnt and contribute greenhouse gas to the atmosphere.

Age Friendly cities: Update

In our last issue we reported that at long last Wanganui District Council is to begin the process of examining all aspects of services and infrastructure in an attempt to gain World Health Organisation accreditation as an 'Age Friendly City'.

Grey Power Wanganui has been asking Council to work towards this goal for several years, providing written proposals and other documentation.

In the meantime other cities have made progress. Hamilton received accreditation last year. New Plymouth became NZ's second city to do so last month after a combined effort of their Positive Aging Forum and the local Grey Power. GP Committee member, Rod Newport, is on the working group here and reports

that meetings have just begun to examine the issues and report to Council on what changes need to be made to make our city

'Age Friendly'.

Contact Rod if you have ideas on making our city 'Age Friendly' (Box 4197).

Age Concern Wanganui has a new manager

At the end of 2018, Manager of Age Concern Wanganui for the past 10 years, Tracy Lynn retired. Age Concern has gone from strength to strength during her tenure. The premises in St Hill Street have been enlarged with more offices and a seminar room. Staffing has increased and contracts negotiated to provide essential services to older people. An accredited visiting service for the lonely, meals on wheels and courses on a variety of topics from deciding when to "hang up the keys" to "sex and relationships in old age". They are very active in sorting out problems of elder abuse. Qualified social workers handle more cases than you would imagine, hundreds a year! Quite a reflection on our society.

We wish Tracy well and welcome new Manager, Michelle Malcolm.

Age Concern: Phone 06 345 1799.

Annual Subscription due March 31

Subscriptions for the year starting

April 1 are:

\$20 single \$30 Double

These rates were set at our last AGM.

You can pay now by depositing your subscription in our bank account: 38-9006-0435305-02.

Make sure you include your name and membership number as part of the deposit.

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