
Upper Hutt City Council celebrating the golden years



Upper Hutt's story...

1. How did it all begin?
2. The journey
3. Seniors Action Forum
4. Highlights from the last 4 years
5. 2008 survey
6. Challenges & successes
7. What have we learnt?



Once upon a time, in a little city not so long ago...

- 2005 – Age Concern started to talking to Community Services: public forum, targeted event for older people
 - Good timing – Community Services in the process of change and development
 - My role was created
 - Involvement with and support from the community
-

The journey...

- 2005 - the first annual public forum on the needs of older people and the Older Adults Extreme Day
- The establishment of SHAW and the Seniors Action Forum
- The Mayor's and councillors' involvement
- 2007 - NZ Positive Ageing Strategy
- Collaboration with other groups and agencies
- Firm and lasting relationships and friendships

Councils can't work in a vacuum – we need to work alongside our communities and value their collective wisdom and support

Seniors Action Forum (SAF)

- Established in 2005 after a public forum
 - Initial stimulus from Age Concern
 - Representation grown – members include senior citizens, community groups, NGOs, govt agencies
 - Over 60 members
 - Strong buy-in from Mayor and councillors
 - Meet on regular basis
-

SAF cont...

- Change in issues raised – now more strategic, longer term
- Channel for advocacy to other govt agencies
- Work in the area of public transport a direct result of the SAF
- SAF sub-groups –
Seniors Week and
other events/projects



Some of the highlights

- Laughter, learning, friendship, progress!
 - Collaborative community engagement events such as Seniors Month (businesses, sports groups, marae & council wide involvement)
 - Public Transport - involvement with GWRC, Valley Flyer and Tranz Metro
 - GOLD (Growing Old Living Dangerously)
 - Hutt Healthy Housing project – interagency project with an initial focus on older people
 - Self Defence for people with reduced mobility
 - Community Information Sheets
 - 2009 public forum
 - Working with Police
 - Other areas of Council e.g. library programme “Tea and Tales”
 - 2008 Upper Hutt survey for older people
-

2008 survey for older people -

Why?

- Wanted to reach more of the community to find out what their needs were
 - Take a multi-faceted approach to consultation
 - Find out what we should be doing and how to prioritise existing resources
 - Find out what other agencies could do to improve outcomes for older people – advocacy
-

The basics

- Four page hard copy questionnaire
 - Distribution: Oct – Dec 2008, public facilities, churches, agencies/groups, leisure groups
 - 748 responses (507 x over 65yrs, 206 x 50-65 yrs)
 - 25% response rate per distributed surveys, 10.5% response rate for over 65 yr olds
-

What we found out

- Biggest issues:
 - ❑ Crime & anti-social behaviour (50%)
 - ❑ Health (46%)
 - ❑ Financial support (29%)
 - ❑ Loneliness (29%)



Other key issues:

- Life satisfaction: 66% very happy and/or satisfied with their lives **but 30% were just “ok” with their lives, 4% not very happy**
 - 12% reported feelings relating to depression – correlation with health and living situation
 - 73% receive income sources other than superannuation
 - **81% only somewhat confident or less than confident that they have enough savings**
-

- 37% in touch with close friends/family that do not live with them every day, 48% in touch at least once a week
- 15% of respondents in touch only once every two weeks or more
- Majority (72%) use their own car for transport
- 16% not able to get out and about as much as would like – main reason: safety concerns, poor health/disability



It's not all doom and gloom

- We also found out very positive information
 - The majority of respondents loved living in Upper Hutt and cited a variety of reasons for this
 - Strong sense of community. Overwhelming majority feel respected in the community
 - Strong connections to Upper Hutt from raising family there and living there for a long time – our most valued residents!
-

Challenges and Successes

- All initiatives were implemented in last 4 years
 - Small council:
 - +ve - less bureaucracy, often faster to implement new projects, close connection to community, creative & collaborative solutions
 - ve – less resources
 - Public expectations vs what councils can actually achieve
 - Sometimes difficult to stimulate other agencies/groups to action – but it's fantastic when it happens!
 - Mandate and parameters for councils to work in areas of health and wellbeing
 - Community pulling together in one direction
-

What have we learnt?

- Can't do it on our own
 - Don't be afraid to make mistakes – great things can grow from mistakes
 - Balance between being responsive and proactive
 - Actively LISTEN to the community to prioritise needs
 - Allow time to build relationships
 - Sense of humour, cups of tea, friendship
 - We are only at the beginning. Keep looking to others for inspiration and keep looking for innovative local solutions
-

Thank you!



Discussion!

- What do you in your local area to build relationships?
 - What are you doing in your area that works?
 - Chew The Fat!!!
-