

Seniors Policy

The Green Party will ensure that seniors¹ are integral to all aspects of society for as long as we are able and willing. We will be supported to remain independent, and connected with our friends, families, and communities. We wish to be good ancestors, including transitioning to an economy that respects the wellbeing of people and planet. Our wisdom and experience will be respected and honoured, and our contributions and views will be sought after. If we become frail or reliant on others, our diverse cultural values, views, and preferences will continue to be protected. The services, facilities, and supports we use will be equitable; and responsive to and respectful of our diverse needs. Toward the end of our lives we will not have to be concerned about paying our way, and we will have a choice about how and where we live, and how we die; free from ableism and coercion.

Vision

Seniors thrive, in all our diversity, and with dignity and autonomy, in vibrant intergenerational communities.

Values and Principles

Kei tēnā, kei tēnā, kei tēnā ano. Tōnā ake ahua, Tōnā ake mauri, Tōnā ake mana.²

- *Manaakitanga*: Our dignity must be upheld and respected at all times in all situations.
- *Rangatiratanga*: We are competent and act on accumulated wisdom in our decision-making and life choices. Our independence must be facilitated for as long as possible.
- *Whakawhanaungatanga*: We have much to offer and must be actively supported in sharing our knowledge and insights. We have the right to an ageing experience in which we are valued and connected within our families and communities.

Strategic Priorities

The Green Party's strategic goals include:

"A more connected, compassionate, and equal Aotearoa".

Actions in this policy that will help achieve this include:

- Providing coordinated, flexible, needs-based, culturally safe, wraparound services. (1.1.2)
- Establishing a dedicated long-term strategy for the health needs of an ageing population. (1.2.3)

¹ In this policy, "we" refers to *seniors*: people who have reached a stage of life where their experience is respected, their mana is honoured, and they accept and appreciate the process of ageing.

² This whakatauki means: Each and everyone has their own uniqueness, life essence and presence.

- Requiring residential services, rest homes and retirement villages to meet set standards for: ratio of staff to seniors; accessibility; affordability; and the wellbeing of seniors. (1.4.1)
- Ensuring that every senior has enough money to address their daily living, health, and wellbeing needs. (2.2.1)
- Respecting and facilitating our efforts to be good ancestors, including by transitioning to an economy that supports the well-being of people and planet. (2.4.3)
- Providing community spaces, facilities, programmes, education, and volunteering opportunities that are accessible to seniors. (3.1.1)

Policy Positions

1. Manaakitanga

Issues

Some seniors experience multiple barriers to wellbeing, and lack sufficient support to navigate them. Ageing impacts these groups in the community in different and significant ways that profoundly impact their quality of life. As we age, our healthcare needs increase. There are also significant inequities and, on average, Māori and disabled seniors have a lower life expectancy. There is an increasing demand for emergency, rental, and residential accommodation suitable for seniors, and the aged residential care sector is in crisis. These challenges are worsened by structural ageism and pervasive, hidden elder abuse by family members and carers.

Actions

- 1.1. Ensure all services, facilities, and supports used by seniors are equitable, responsive to, and respectful of our diverse needs, including by:
 - 1.1.1. Resourcing kaumātua programmes provided by iwi, hapū, and kaupapa Māori providers; and
 - 1.1.2. Providing coordinated, flexible, needs-based, and culturally safe wraparound services.
- 1.2. Ensure dignified access to health assessment, care, and support services, as required and consented to, including by:
 - 1.2.1. Providing free and accessible diagnosis, treatment, and management for all functional losses, illnesses, and injuries;
 - 1.2.2. Adopting a coordinated approach to specialised health services, including home support and mobile care teams;
 - 1.2.3. Establishing a dedicated long-term strategy for the health needs of an ageing population;
 - 1.2.4. Improving data collection, diagnosis, family- and community-based care, and support services for conditions common to seniors;
 - 1.2.5. Providing a safe ratio of specialist gerontology services for the number of seniors who require that targeted support; and
 - 1.2.6. Providing equitable access to high-quality palliative care services.
- 1.3. Ensure we have access to safe, warm, and sustainable housing, including by:

- 1.3.1. Equitably resourcing home modifications and community-based services that enable us to live where we choose;
- 1.3.2. Requiring rental housing to be fully accessible and supporting long-term secure tenancies; and
- 1.3.3. Increasing the availability of public housing that is suitable for seniors.
- 1.4. Ensure equitable access to high-quality aged care services, including by:
 - 1.4.1. Requiring residential services, rest homes, and retirement villages to meet set standards for: ratio of staff to seniors; accessibility; affordability; and the wellbeing of seniors;
 - 1.4.2. Requiring and resourcing cultural safety training and practices in aged care facilities in Māori, Pasifika, and other relevant cultures; and
 - 1.4.3. Enabling the development of community-based, kaupapa Māori retirement villages.
- 1.5. Protect us from ageism, including by:
 - 1.5.1. Resourcing positive media coverage and awareness campaigns about the impacts of ageing and maturing; and
 - 1.5.2. Resourcing awareness, prevention, and support services that protect us from elder abuse and neglect.
- 1.6. Support us in difficult times, including by:
 - 1.6.1. Collaborating with us to prepare, support, and inform us before, during, and after emergencies; and
 - 1.6.2. Providing affordable and equitable access to legal information and legal aid.

See also our [Health Policy](#), [Accident Compensation Policy](#), [Housing and Sustainable Communities Policy](#), [Transport Policy](#), [Media Policy](#), [Emergency Management Policy](#), and [Justice Policy](#).

2. Rangatiratanga

Issues

Many seniors, especially Māori, Pasifika, Rainbow, disabled people, and women, face financial hardship. This restricts our participation in community life. Seniors' needs and wishes are too often ignored, including through coercion and exclusion from decision-making.

Actions

- 2.1. Facilitate, support, and celebrate our resilience and self-reliance in daily life, including by:
 - 2.1.1. Providing us with the same level of choice as anyone else over how, when, and by whom support and services are delivered;
 - 2.1.2. Providing us with free public transport and affordable door-to-door transport as needed; and
 - 2.1.3. Resourcing targeted, Rainbow-led support for Rainbow seniors.
- 2.2. Protect our financial wellbeing, security, and independence, including by:
 - 2.2.1. Ensuring that every senior has enough money to address their daily living, health, and wellbeing needs; and

- 2.2.2. Upholding our rights to work for as long as we wish and are able.
- 2.3. Enable us to make our own life decisions, including by:
 - 2.3.1. Providing advocacy, representation, and supported decision-making services that are free and optional;
 - 2.3.2. Ensuring that our legal instructions, including for medical care, are easy to establish and respected in practice; and
 - 2.3.3. Protecting us from coercion and ableism in relation to end-of-life choice, care, and assistance.
- 2.4. Respect and facilitate our efforts to be good ancestors, including by:
 - 2.4.1. Protecting our languages, our spiritual and cultural aspirations, and our connection to whenua;
 - 2.4.2. Addressing climate change and restoring and protecting natural ecosystems; and
 - 2.4.3. Transitioning to an economy that supports the wellbeing of people and planet.
- 2.5. Ensure that our voices shape policies, and governance decisions that affect us, including by:
 - 2.5.1. Enabling Māori leaders to identify, advise on, and/or deliver opportunities for kaumātua Māori.

See also our [Livelihoods Policy](#), [Workforce Policy](#), [Arts, Culture and Heritage Policy](#), [Climate Change Policy](#), [Biodiversity and Environmental Regeneration Policy](#), [Government in the Economy Policy](#), and [Governance Policy](#).

3. Whakawhanaungatanga

Issues

Loneliness and isolation can easily and often accompany ageing. Loneliness can worsen physical and mental health (e.g. malnourishment, depression) and make daily tasks harder.

Actions

- 3.1. Celebrate and utilise our capacity to be active, contributing, engaged, and included in the community, including by:
 - 3.1.1. Providing community spaces, facilities, programmes, education, and volunteering opportunities that are accessible to seniors;
 - 3.1.2. Facilitating our connections to services and events, both face-to-face and online; and
 - 3.1.3. Resourcing the sharing and recording of experiences, to supplement oral histories as appropriate.
- 3.2. Support intergenerational and community living, including by:
 - 3.2.1. Enabling and providing intergenerational housing, including papakāinga;
 - 3.2.2. Providing financial support for us when we choose to care for our whānau, and for our whānau when we choose to live with them; and
 - 3.2.3. Resourcing mentorship and cultural exchange programmes between kaumātua and rangatahi.

- 3.3. Support us to build strong connections within our communities, including by:
 - 3.3.1. Investing in kaumātua-led research to understand isolation from a Te Ao Māori perspective;
 - 3.3.2. Developing and implementing a national loneliness reduction strategy;
 - 3.3.3. Provide targeted support when we are isolated, including those of us in hard-to-reach groups; and
 - 3.3.4. Supporting us to upskill and access digital opportunities to connect.
- 3.4. Ensure that our caregivers can sustain high-quality care, of us and themselves, including by:
 - 3.4.1. Updating and implementing the Mahi Aroha Carers Strategy Action Plan to include the needs of grandparents raising mokopuna; and
 - 3.4.2. Increasing and simplifying financial, respite, and other supports for carers.

See also our [Community and the Economy Policy](#), [Transport Policy](#), [Education Policy](#), [Food Policy](#), [Recreation and Sport Policy](#), and [Digital Policy](#).