

SuperBlues active on Retirement issues

A just and civil society cares for its elderly and respects the contribution they have made to society over their lifetime – a mantra of political life that aligns with National’s principles of social investment.

For that reason, SuperBlues are taking up the issues surrounding the provision of older person’s services, which are fragmented across many Government agencies. We propose delivering a comprehensive strategy for improved coordinated and more effective health, residential housing, income, transport, and social welfare services. These all fall under the cost-of-living umbrella.

Chair Colleen Singleton says many of our current services for older people are inadequate to meet the needs of an ongoing and, at times, poorly resourced, older population. The services available are fragmented and lack co-ordination across the sectors identified.

As the number of older people increases, without action these inadequacies are expected to grow significantly. Statistics show that about 40 percent of people over sixty-five have NZ superannuation as their only income. A review of the accommodation supplement is urgently required so that all superannuitants with little other income and limited assets are treated equally.

Currently, poor use is made of some vacant accommodation in the retirement village

sector. It is vacant for extended periods and that market is not accessible for about 40 percent of older people.

Previous work by SuperBlues identified the need for capital to be available to assure long-term access to aged residential care, including specialist hospital level care for dementia and other patients. This is particularly pertinent for charitable, papakāinga and faith-based organisations. These often have land available, but limited access to capital for development.

Colleen says that with the resignation of the Aged Care Commissioner a first step should be an urgent review of the role and functions of the position. Advising on and overseeing the development of a strategy for older people would be a better use of the talents of potential candidates for the position than the Commissioner primarily dealing with complaints in the Office of the Health and Disability Commissioner.

With a broadened role the incumbent could work closely with the Retirement Commissioner to monitor and provide advice to the Government on policy and regulation relating to services impacting on the quality of life for older people.

Our goal is debate within Party/Caucus policy groups and to gain attention at the National conference in Christchurch in August.

Salute to a stalwart

Former President Peter Goodfellow has championed National for a great deal longer than the 13 years he served as President. Prior to taking over the marketing role of the Auckland division early this century from Remuera journalist and SuperBlue Anne Hargreaves, he was well known as a staunch supporter of National policies by the political wing's strategist, Foreign Minister Murray McCully.

Championed by McCully to Sir John Key as leader, the Auckland businessman was quickly supported by Sir John into the leadership of the party. Fund raising went to new levels. Relationships between the party and the political wing were strengthened with the needs of Parliamentarians getting close attention.

Through the tough years of three-Party leaders in quick succession following the retirement of Sir

John's successor, the then Hon Bill English, Peter kept the Party administrative reins tight. He saw off a challenge from former Speaker Sir David Carter in 2021 but resigned from the position in August the following year. Fellow board members wanted the benefit of his experience, and he continued as a board member.

Peter has indicated he will not be available for re-election at this August's annual conference of the Party. SuperBlues have valued his support and encouragement.

Chair Colleen Singleton says Peter has seen the Party through many highs and lows and earned much praise for the close relationship that exists between the Party and the political wing. Thank you, Peter, for your years of service. We wish you well going forward.

Telephone champions

Deputy Chair James Austin is calling in his telephone champions whose work in byelections and general elections has been of considerable value to electorates around the country. "We are underway again on Fridays from 10am to 3pm" he says. "It is work and social – we have fun. From the National Centre we call electorates

where help is needed by contacting those we know are 'our people.' We take membership renewals; support fund raising and arrange help for members getting to the polls. Our people are champions at listening and in the roles they fulfill on the Party's behalf."

Congratulations

Grant Knight resigned as SuperBlues National Executive Secretary in March 2025. He was then elected Chair of the Northern Region. Grant was an outstanding secretary, and we will miss his wise counsel. We wish Grant well in his new, and busy, Party role. Congratulations also to Frances Hughes on her recent appointment to the Health New Zealand Board. Frances was the National candidate in Mana at the 2023 election. Dr Frances Hughes, CNZM, is a registered nurse with more than 30 years' experience, holding senior positions in several countries. Her positions have included the Chief Nurse of

New Zealand at the Ministry of Health and Chief Executive Officer at the International Council of Nurses.

We welcome Marion Clark, from Wellington Central, who has replaced Grant as Secretary. Marion was highly active supporting Frances Hughes during the 2023 election. Tim Skinner, Remutaka, has taken up the role of SuperBlues Coordinator for the LNI Region. Tim is well known for his long service within the Party and is a stalwart with the lawnmower at National House.

Portfolio reports:

For SuperBlues who like to keep closely abreast of what the Ministerial team is up to, the Teams meetings chaired by Bay of Plenty MP Tom Rutherford are a must. Often more than one hundred participants hear reports from Ministers and take part in the Q&A session. Our Ministers

are very generous with their time. If you do not receive the invitation to attend these Team meetings please contact your Electorate Chair or Regional Coordinator to be added to the invitation list.



SuperBlues Te Atatu celebrated a highly successful fundraiser.



Maungakiekie SuperBlues attracted a top draw trio of MPs – Minister of Finance, Nicola Willis, Attorney-General Paul Goldsmith and wunder-kind National winner of Mt Roskill, Carlos Cheung.