

30/05/2024

Ministry of Justice

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on recommendations from New Zealand's fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

Age Concern New Zealand He Manaakitanga Kaumātua is a trusted charity working in local communities throughout Aotearoa to support older people, their friends and whānau. Our values – Dignity, Wellbeing, Equity, and Respect for older people are our guiding lights and underpin everything we do. We work towards an Aotearoa in which every older person feels connected, has positives choices and can age well.

We strongly support recommendation 6.42 to ensure that older people are adequately represented in the inter-ministerial human rights mechanisms.

Many older people live on fixed incomes with little opportunity to increase that income to meet rising costs. Age Concern New Zealand supports retaining the age of eligibility for Superannuation at 65 and the enhancement of supplementary assistance to mitigate the financial challenges faced by seniors living on fixed incomes. We support recommendation 6.118 to strengthen welfare measures for low-income households.

Age Concern New Zealand supports recommendations 6.119 – 6.123 to address existing inequities and disparities in areas such as health. If current health inequities are not addressed, there is risk of exacerbating unequal health outcomes for older people, high potential for burnout for family caregivers, and a surge in social and healthcare costs.

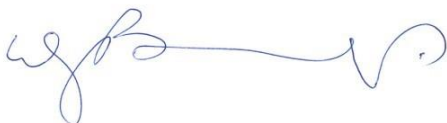
Te Ara Ahunga Ora Retirement Commission have identified pay gaps as a factor that influences people's ability to save for retirement. The Commission identified significant ethnic, and gender pay gaps, with Pacific women earning the least, followed by Māori wāhine. The Commission have recommended that gender and ethnic pay gaps be addressed to improve retirement outcomes for women. Therefore, we support recommendations 6.112-6.114.

We urge the government to recognise the significance of affordable and accessible housing for older New Zealanders. We believe that the government needs to play a lead role in expanding housing choices, develop strategies to increase homeownership rates for Māori and Pacific people, ensuring local planning promotes age-friendly environments, mandate universal design and standards in building regulations, and embed security of tenure in legislation. Therefore, we support recommendations 6.123 – 6.131.

Improvements of on-going funding to diverse community-based elder abuse intervention services has been important to increase safety of older people and support their recovery from harm. Mechanisms to detect, report and prevent abuse of older people require more emphasis on awareness raising of the impact of elder abuse across generations and communities. As most abuse of older adults is hidden within complex family dynamics, both policies and funding are needed for public and workforce continuing education (6.211, 6.212).

New Zealand government support of the UN Declarations on the Rights both of Indigenous Peoples, and of Persons with Disabilities, has benefitted more appropriate focus on kaumātua (older Māori) and disabled older people's right too. New Zealand support for the ongoing efforts of older people's organisations to advocate for a UN convention for older persons rights would: strengthen guidelines for policy and practice, as well as reduce discrimination of older people who identify with any diverse cultural and/or rainbow communities. (6.214, 6.217 – 6.19, 6.21-6.244, 6.247-6.248)

Nāku noa, nā



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