

ISSUE 1 // OCTOBER 2020

Lifetime

RETIREMENT INCOME

What is a Lifetime Income?

It is a worry-free
retirement income,
for life.

Investing through a pandemic

Less house, more lifestyle

Travel ideas post COVID-19



Living with uncertainty

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Uncertainty. It's been the watchword of the last few months. First, it was uncertainty as to what would happen next with COVID-19: how bad would it get here? How would we function while rarely leaving our homes or seeing our extended family? Have we bought enough toilet paper?

Now the uncertainty is around how long will the virus affect our lives; when our borders might reopen, so those mothballed travel plans can be dusted off; and what exactly does the pandemic mean for the economy, the value of our investments and our house prices?

We certainly don't have all the answers, but we do know a bit about uncertainty. It's what our business is based on. Questions like – how long will I live for? How much money do I need to see me through my retirement years? And, how do I make the most of my retirement nest egg? are questions we grapple with every day, as we work to minimise the uncertainty of retirement finances for others, by providing people with a guaranteed income for life.

This publication, in its inaugural edition, is aimed at offering information that might help alleviate a few uncertainties for you. If you're wondering how much you're likely to spend each week in retirement, then check out the feature on research from Massey University, which can give you some ideas, whether you live in a big city or in the provinces.

If you've already retired and are worried about how the pandemic

is going to affect your finances, financial adviser Liz Koh offers her tips on investing through a pandemic and some good news on whether or not you should be spending. Fellow financial adviser Martin Hawes offers his thoughts on making the most of the money in your home.

Or, if you're just sick of seeing your same four walls, have a look at our piece on motorhome travel which is sure to get your engine running. We've also got tips for staying healthy and advice from ElderNet on choosing a retirement village if you're considering that for your next move.

Meanwhile, some of us may be running a bit short of inspiration after the challenges of 2020, so we've talked to a couple of individuals who are squeezing the most out of their lives and their retirement, and for whom COVID-19 stands little chance of slowing them down. We've also got snapshots of retirees helping themselves and others through interesting and varied volunteering roles in things like food rescue and as part of the MenzShed movement.

Eleanor Roosevelt had it right when she said: "If life were predictable it would cease to be life and be without flavour." We hope you find plenty of flavour and joy in the years ahead regardless of the pandemic and the uncertainties it brings. 🌱

WORDS BY **RALPH STEWART**



Founder and Managing Director of Lifetime Retirement Income.



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Lifetime Asset Management Ltd is the issuer and manager of the Lifetime Income Fund. A Product Disclosure Statement is available at lifetimeincome.co.nz.



Mind the (income) gap

When it comes to thinking about retirement these days it's all about minding the gap – the income gap that is.

The latest research from Massey University on retirement spending shows that all the household categories studied were spending more than they brought in from New Zealand Superannuation (**NZ Super**). This was regardless of whether they lived a 'no frills' lifestyle in the provinces, or a more lavish life in a big city, according to the *Westpac Massey Fin-Ed Centre's New Zealand Retirement Expenditure Guidelines 2019*. That spending gap could be as much as \$800 a week.

The good news was the blow was softened ever-so-slightly by low inflation keeping the cost of what we buy from going up too much

compared to last year. Inflation (as measured by the Consumer Price Index) was 1.5 percent for the year to March 2019. Meanwhile, NZ Super went up 2.56 percent (to April 2019). A small win.

But despite that little bit of bright side the difference between what many people spent in retirement, and their NZ Super from the government, is still a yawning gap.

Let's look a bit closer at the report. It focused on one and two-person retired households in New Zealand, dividing them into 'no frills' – those with a basic standard of living that includes few, if any, luxuries; and the 'choices' households – with a more

comfortable standard of living, so buying some luxuries or treats. These two groups were then separated into metro (Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch) and provincial areas and their spending habits compared.

As the chart below shows, all the households in the study were spending more than they received from NZ Super. Even the one-person, no frills homes in provincial areas – the lowest spenders of all – were spending over \$160 a week more than they were getting from the government. At the other end of the scale, a two-person 'choices' home in a metro area was spending over \$800 more each week than NZ Super provided them. Not exactly small change.

The New Zealand retirement expenditure guidelines as at 30th June 2019

Source: Westpac Massey Fin-Ed Centre's New Zealand Retirement Expenditure Guidelines 2019

	ONE-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS		TWO-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS	
WEEKLY NZ SUPER RATES	\$411.15		\$632.54	
After tax				
Total Weekly Expenditure	Metro	Provincial	Metro	Provincial
No Frills budget	\$602.11	\$574.35	\$898.73	\$639.90
Choices budget	\$1190.37	\$830.54	\$1436.00	\$1135.70

Estimated savings requirement to fund the differences between expenditure and NZ Superannuation¹

		WEEKLY DIFFERENCE	LUMP SUM REQUIRED ²	WEEKLY SAVINGS FROM AGE 50 ³	WEEKLY SAVINGS FROM AGE 25 ⁴
One-person households	No Frills – Metro	\$190.96	\$187,000	\$230	\$74
	No Frills – Provincial	\$163.20	\$160,000	\$196	\$64
	Choices – Metro	\$779.22	\$764,000	\$937	\$304
	Choices – Provincial	\$419.39	\$411,000	\$504	\$163
Two-person households	No Frills – Metro	\$266.19	\$261,000	\$320	\$104
	No Frills – Provincial	\$7.36	\$7,000	\$8	\$3
	Choices – Metro	\$803.46	\$787,000	\$966	\$313
	Choices – Provincial	\$503.16	\$493,000	\$605	\$196

Source: Westpac Massey Fin-Ed Centre's New Zealand Retirement Expenditure Guidelines 2019.

¹ The lump sums in the left table were calculated using the Sorted calculator available at <https://sorted.org.nz/tools/retirement-planner>. The actual length of retirement to be planned for will vary for each person, depending on the age of retirement and life expectancy. To help work this out, use the retirement planner at sorted.org.nz. We assumed retirement at age 65 with a life expectancy of 90 (for both in couples). ² The Total Savings Required is rounded to the nearest \$000. ³ For a 50-year old individual/couple. ⁴ For a 25-year old individual/couple.

Bridging the gap

What is clear is that NZ Super alone is just not enough. Retirees need to have a clear plan in place as to how they will supplement this – otherwise even a no-frills life in Eketahuna could be out of reach. That means finding other forms of income in retirement. But just how big is the savings gap that we need to mind in order to create that income?

The table above shows the amount of extra savings needed to bridge the gap between NZ Super and the spending reality for many retired households. It shows the amount you would need to put away, by retirement age, if you had no other income than NZ Super.

So, someone in a one-person no frills household in a provincial area would need to have \$160,000 set aside to see them through. That equates to putting away \$196 a week from age 50, or \$64 a week from age 25.

At the other end of the scale, a two-person household wanting a 'choices' lifestyle in a city, would need to build up a nest egg of \$787,000. That's \$966 a week savings from age 50 or \$313 from age 25.

KiwiSaver can help you build up the retirement nest egg needed to supplement your NZ Super, as can accessing the money tied up in your home if you own one – such as through downsizing. The report points out there are other options too. This includes having an additional

external income in retirement – continuing with part-time work for instance.


Report author Dr Claire Matthews from the Massey Business School says people need to consider their retirement options carefully.

"While the lump sum required to fund the difference in spending over NZ Super can seem daunting, it can be reduced by continuing to work either full or part-time, or by delaying retirement for a couple of years," she says.

"If you delayed your retirement for two years, continued working and saved all your NZ Super payments, it would make a significant impact to your retirement nest egg," she says. **Cont. page 6** ►

◀ Cont. from page 5

What goes down, can keep things down

The flipside of low inflation keeping costs from going up too much, as discussed earlier, is that it also creates challenges for savers – particularly keenly felt by those close to, or in retirement who don't want to take too much risk with the precious nest egg they have taken so long to build up. Low inflation keeps term deposit rates down, so the income from having your money in the bank is less – by the time tax and inflation is accounted for, you may be getting next to nothing. The report says the need to achieve an appropriate return without taking too much risk is vital for those retirees trying to bridge the income gap – a tricky balance to find in the more uncertain COVID-19 world. 

Ways to help mind the gap

1



Sign up for a SuperGold Card

Make the most of the money you've got with the myriad of discounts on offer for those aged 65+ (see www.supergold.govt.nz).

2



Check out your benefit options

Some seniors may be eligible for extra help from the government on top of NZ Super for things like emergencies, health problems or essential needs. Check out the tax, benefits and finance section at www.govt.nz for more.

3



Budget

Sorted.org.nz can help you budget and there are several community services that can help too – check out www.govt.nz for more on this.

4



Get good advice

Getting advice from a professional adviser can be invaluable. The Sorted.org.nz's "Getting Advice" guide can help you find someone. Or check out our feature on page 14.

Liz Koh: Investing through a pandemic 101

The world of investing can seem confusing at the best of times, let alone in a world reeling from the impact of an international pandemic, the effects of which are likely to last long after the virus has gone.

The good news is that according to financial adviser Liz Koh, the investment rules for retirees don't really change, pandemic or not. Here's what she suggests for setting yourself up well in retirement, regardless of what pandemonium the pandemic might cause.



Liz Koh's 5 tips for retirees

1.

Make sure you have enough money in the bank (in cash and term deposits) to cover your income top-up and lump sum spending for the next five years. That way you don't need to touch your other investments.

2.

Don't try and live on your investment return. These days, retirees need to use their capital as well as the return on the capital. Add up the sum total of your investments and work out how much of the total you would like to have left when you are in your nineties. The difference between these two numbers is how much you get to spend or give away during your retirement. Then plan when you are going to spend it and on what.

3.

Money that you don't need to spend for five years or more should be invested in a diversified portfolio which, by its nature, will go up and down in value but with a higher annualised return than bank deposits. While we have seen drops in value recently, your portfolio will recover in time, providing it is diversified. Diversification is the key to reducing risk. If you are diversified and you have enough money in the bank to last five years, then you should have nothing to worry about when the market drops.

4.

Remember that there is a difference between a loss and a drop in value. A drop in value becomes a loss when you sell at a low price. Whatever happens to prices, you still have the same quantity of investment units (shares, or units in a managed fund). The value will be restored when the unit price rises. If you sell some units when prices drop, you may make a loss on the units you sell and you will also have less units in hand when prices start to rise again so you will miss out on some gains.



5.

For your income top-up, the Lifetime Retirement Income works extremely well in times of volatility. You have a guaranteed payment each fortnight regardless of what happens to investment markets, so you have certainty and peace of mind. This product was designed for volatile circumstances such as those we have seen recently. 🌱

See Liz Koh's disclosure statement on page 13.

What is a Lifetime Income?

When you stop working, so does the pay cheque, so how do you worry less about paying the bills and spend more time enjoying your time with friends and family?

For many retirees hitting retirement is the wealthiest they will ever be, outside of owning their own home. While that's good news when heading into retirement, it's also challenging.

What do you do with that money to ensure it lasts your entire retirement and is protected from market downturns? Take on too much risk and you could lose some, or all, of your savings just as you need it, should markets start to slide. And COVID-19 has certainly introduced greater levels of uncertainty and volatility into investing. Or be safe and deposit it with your bank and live off the low returns. But let's be fair, term deposit rates at the bank aren't much to write home about these days. Therein lies the quandary.

That's where New Zealand's own Lifetime Income product can be useful, says Ralph Stewart, the Founder and Managing Director of Lifetime Retirement Income. Lifetime Income provides you with a guaranteed income each fortnight, useful for bridging that pesky gap between New Zealand Superannuation (**NZ Super**) and the cost reality of retirement. It does this by converting a lump sum (capital) into an income that will last your lifetime.

"If you live in Auckland and you want to have more than a subsistence lifestyle, you need another \$300 a fortnight on top of NZ Super to be able to go to the RSA every Friday and keep the car on the road," says Stewart.

"So, we do that bit – it's a simple, convenient supplement, paid fortnightly the same day as NZ Super, tax paid, fees paid, and you don't have to worry about running out of money."

A Lifetime Income is basically just like a paycheck, but without the work or the worry, for the duration of your retirement in return for a lump sum payment. The bigger the lump sum, the bigger the fortnightly payment. It is that simple.

There are many upsides to a Lifetime Income, which uses your capital and your returns to pay you fortnightly, (or monthly), income payments. Upsides include paying you an income, even when your capital runs out. In fact, that income is exactly the same amount as before your lump sum ran out. So, no more worrying about outliving your money.

But what if you invest in Lifetime Income and all of a sudden need money? You can withdraw your account balance the very next day,

no questions asked and no penalties. With Lifetime Income the account balance is always available as it is still your money. This also means when you pass away the account balance is returned to your estate.

Another bonus with Lifetime Income is it is paid the same week as NZ Super, but don't worry it doesn't affect your NZ Super payments. Your income is also tax exempt. You do pay tax on your returns but in a tax efficient way.

Stewart set up Lifetime Retirement Income, opening its doors in 2015. It's now New Zealand's largest insured retirement income specialist.

He says a Lifetime Income is all about certainty and solves two problems for retirees.

"Retired people don't know what the returns are going to be next year, so they don't know what their income is going to be, and they don't know how long they're going to live for. A Lifetime Income removes both of these from the equation," Stewart says.

"It's particularly relevant just now, when we're seeing so much uncertainty in the financial markets," he says.

Stewart has 30 years' experience in the New Zealand financial services

“Retired people don’t know what the returns are going to be next year, so they don’t know what their income is going to be, and they don’t know how long they’re going to live for. A Lifetime Income removes both of these from the equation,”

Ralph Stewart, Founder of Lifetime Retirement Income

industry, including having been general manager of insurance company Tower and CEO of the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC). But it was during his time as CEO of French insurer AXA in New Zealand that he learned about the retirement income market while studying the US and European markets, where their priority wasn’t saving for retirement, but helping.

Other well-known New Zealanders were keen to be involved too, including former New Zealand Retirement Commissioner and CEO of Wellington Free Ambulance, Dame Diana Crossan, who is currently Lifetime Retirement Income’s chairperson.

“I knew that we needed more retirement income products for the population. When Ralph asked me if I was interested, I said I absolutely was, because I saw the need,” Crossan says.

She adds that during her time as Retirement Commissioner the big focus had been on financial literacy, and issues around saving for retirement, where there was a real need.

“We didn’t focus as much as we might of on what happens when you get to retirement. So, I was delighted to have another opportunity to help at that

end. Now that we’ve got KiwiSaver, now that we’ve got people saving for their retirement, how do they manage it once they get there?

“People arrive at retirement with some funds that they’ve saved, and they’ve got far too many good things to do with their lives than worry about their money,” she says.

Other well-known New Zealanders on the board include financial commentator and adviser Martin Hawes.

Lifetime Retirement Income have more products in the pipeline too, with plans to introduce a product allowing people to use the investment in their home to create a retirement income, along with a more targeted annuity product for those aged 80 plus. 🌱



RALPH STEWART

Founder and Managing Director of Lifetime Retirement Income.



DAME DIANA CROSSAN

Former New Zealand Retirement Commissioner and CEO of Wellington Free Ambulance. Currently Lifetime Retirement Income’s chairperson.





Less house, more lifestyle

“We only need two or three bedrooms: one for us and one for when the grandchildren come. Maybe one more in case we get the whole tribe. We don’t need all the space that we have now, and we certainly don’t need all that lawn. Let’s see what we can get for this place and what we would need to buy something smaller.”

That little monologue has been going on all over the country: a boomer discussion of housing needs. Ask real estate agents and they will tell you that three-bedroom houses are in demand.

Of course, behind the conversation is money. Sure, the house is bigger than the couple needs, there is a

lot of unnecessary vacuuming and gardening, but the big idea is that a smaller house will free up some cash. Sell up and move and maybe we will be able to afford that little boat or Hawaiian holiday.

There is a cresting wave of baby boomers moving into retirement right now and as the wave starts

to break, home downsizing is happening. The COVID-19 crisis will slow this wave down for a while, but it will not stop it.

For most people, their house is their biggest investment. Many have a lot of money in their home and not so much in investments that will give them an income. As they

look at what they have and start to make plans, the house is a big and obvious asset to consider: less house means more lifestyle.

There are, of course, different ways that you can acquire income from the capital you have locked up in your house. Selling up is just one option: you could use a home equity release product – i.e. re-mortgaging the house to draw down some cash. There is an increasing number of people choosing to use home equity release to free up cash and that allows them to stay in the house they have loved for many years.

Alternatively, you could rent out a part of the big house. This may be a long-term arrangement, or it could be short-term (Airbnb or similar). Many people find that the cash they receive from this approach bridges the gap between NZ Super and their lifestyle spending very nicely, even though it can take away privacy.

For many, downsizing is the best way forward because it gives a smaller, more manageable house and some cash. Nevertheless, attractive though it is, downsizing is not without traps.

First you must understand both the market you are selling into and buying from. A clear idea of how much you will realise for your house, and what you will need to spend on a new house, is critical. When selling, remember that real estate appraisals are often optimistic, and when buying, a prevalence of “deadline sale” and “price by

negotiation” sales around, means it can be difficult to know exactly what you might have to spend.

Moreover, do not forget the cost of shifting. Real estate and legal fees, removal costs and, perhaps, some required work on the new house to make it feel like home, can add up to real money. I know many instances of people who downsize but find they end up not much better off: maybe they got less than expected for their house, paid more than expected for the new house or did not properly account for costs (or perhaps an unfortunate combination of all three).

Be especially careful if you are downsizing by moving to another town. You will not know the market in the new town, nor know locations or house types to avoid. Moreover, many older people find it hard to make new friends and connect with a new community.

Your house is probably your biggest asset. It can give you capital to go forth and make the most of your 20 Good Summers. However, there are plenty of tricks and traps – plan what you will do with your house carefully and plan early.

Disclosure: I have recently sold my 270 square metre four-bedroom house and bought a 190 square metre three bedroom one. 🌱

WORDS BY **MARTIN HAWES**



Martin Hawes is a director and shareholder of Lifetime Retirement Income and holds a Lifetime annuity. He is also chair of the Summer Investment Committee and author of the book 20 Good Summers. Martin is an Authorised Financial Adviser and a disclosure statement is available on request and free of charge at www.martinhawes.com. This article is general in nature and not personalised advice.



Permission to spend

One of the biggest challenges for retirees is how to plan the use of their retirement nest egg.

Accumulating savings and investments during your working life is hard work. It requires discipline and sacrifice to set aside funds for later in life and there is a sense of immense relief in getting to retirement with a decent lump sum set aside. However, the hardest part is yet to come. Because retirement money is so hard won, it can be nerve-racking trying to decide what to do with it. Indeed, underspending can end up being as much of a risk as running out of money in retirement.

A key issue to be decided is whether to gradually run-down retirement capital over time or just live off the income from it, so the capital is still intact at the end of life. These days, most people are not concerned at all about leaving money for family. The general view is that the kids can have the house and whatever is left in the bank or investments. After all, isn't it up to each generation to make their own way in life?

However, the uncertainties and anxieties of managing money combined with the lack of planning mean that many retirees underspend during their retirement. That is, they die with more money invested than they intended to have at that time.

In times gone by, it was common for parents to leave houses, farms and

businesses to children to preserve family wealth. These days, with investment returns low and people living longer, it is increasingly difficult to eke out a living in retirement just by using the income from investments. Retired investors often overlook the fact that investment return is made up of both income and capital gain. Both can and should be used to supplement income. Investing in assets which produce income but no capital gain, such as term deposits and bonds, inevitably mean lower returns and more tax. Capital gain comes from growth assets such as shares and is accessed for income by selling part of a holding or portfolio. It is important to track the total return (income and capital gain) on an investment portfolio so you can make informed decisions about how much to take from that portfolio.

Choosing to use some of the investment capital has a significant impact on the amount of capital needed to produce the amount of retirement income required. For example, assuming an investment return of two percent after inflation and tax, you would need investment capital of \$500,000 to produce an annual income of \$10,000 while leaving your capital intact. However, if we assume capital is run down over a period of 30 years, you only need

around \$228,000.

Spending your capital doesn't mean being wasteful with what you have. There is a balance to be struck between frugality and lavishness.

There are some people who have no qualms at all about spending every cent they have and perhaps every cent they can borrow. Most of us, though, feel at least a twinge of guilt when we spend money on expensive or nonessential items. There's a little inner voice reminding us that we can't really afford it or that we should be storing money in case we need it later. Feelings of guilt come from a combination of things we have learnt or observed in our childhood, our own life experiences and pressure from others. While there are some people who you might call compulsive spenders, there are others at the opposite end of the spectrum who you might call compulsive savers. They are so focussed on saving for the future that they miss out on enjoying life in the present. Such people are usually overly concerned about financial security. They are pessimistic and fearful and prepare themselves for the worst.

Managing money in retirement is all about planning when it is to be spent and investing it for a good return until such time as it used.



As you reach retirement, the two key questions you need to ask yourself are:

1
Who is going to spend my money? (Will it be you, your children or someone else?)

2
When will the money be spent? (Bearing in mind that you may live for 30 years in retirement)

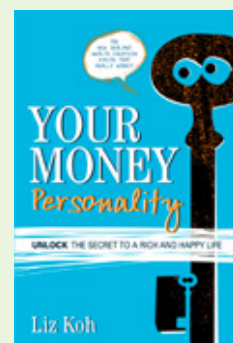
The truth is that money only has value when it is spent, and if you don't spend your money your children and grandchildren certainly

will. So, don't feel guilty about using up your hard earned nest egg. You have permission to spend! 🌱

WORDS BY **LIZ KOH**



Liz Koh is an Authorised Financial Adviser and author of *Your Money Personality: Unlock the Secret to a Rich and Happy Life*, Awa Press. The advice given here is general and does not constitute specific advice to any person. A disclosure statement can be obtained free of charge by calling **0800 273 847**.



The insider's guide to choosing a financial adviser

A transformation is currently taking place within the financial advice industry in New Zealand. A whole new set of rules and regulations are coming into play early next year, changing the way financial advice is delivered.

Plans for this new advice regime were announced last year by Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs Kris Kaafoi. He said the government wanted New Zealanders to be able to access good quality financial advice, because it can make a huge difference to people's financial position and the quality of life they can enjoy.

Under the new regime, anyone giving financial advice to retail clients will be required to hold a licence and adhere to a new code of professional conduct. Gone are the days when just a handful of advisers – known as Authorised Financial Advisers or AFAs – were required to meet high levels of professional standards, while the majority of advisers had minimal specialist financial qualifications, didn't have to provide full disclosure of their remuneration and conflicts of interest, nor follow a code of conduct.

New disclosure requirements are also being drafted, to ensure consumers have more, and clearer, information when choosing an adviser.

Deciding on the right adviser for you is an important decision. Getting the right one can provide huge benefits in terms of your financial planning, wealth, and life options.

David Greenslade knows a thing or two about financial advisers. He has been involved in the industry for more than 30 years, including setting up two advisory companies of his own. Now he educates and audits advisers through his company Strategi.

Greenslade says under the new regime all advisers will have to meet minimum standards of competence, knowledge, and skill and must prioritise clients' interests.

"Financial advisers will be covered under the same legislation as fund managers, banks, and insurers. The legislation is about good conduct and ensuring financial advice is suitable for the needs of clients", he says.

"Gone will be the complexity of language and concepts. Under the new regime, advice needs to be communicated in a clear and concise way, so clients understand it."

Greenslade says retirement can be scary particularly if it is not correctly planned. A financial adviser can help build a plan for this important stage of life.

He says there are a variety of reasons why having a financial adviser onboard can be beneficial:

- They can take a holistic view of your life, what you want to do, and help you dispassionately draft a financial plan.
- They have access to a wide range of financial products, so can identify the most appropriate financial solution for you.
- Financial products can be complex and confusing. A good financial adviser can distil the information into bite-sized chunks, so it is easy to make sense of and understand. This gives you greater confidence to invest wisely and use products other than the traditional term deposits and cash in the bank.

"Think of your adviser as being your 'trusted librarian', they have access to large quantities of information and experience which they can quickly pull together to save you hours of work," Greenslade says.

"They also deal with lots of clients just like you, so they can apply their experience to help you avoid many of the pitfalls of retirement and investing." 🌱



DAVID GREENSLADE

Owner of Strategi Group, a provider of education and compliance services to the financial services industry.

What to consider when choosing a good financial adviser

If you're looking for basic tips on how to choose a good adviser, the Financial Markets Authority has great information available on its website (www.fma.govt.nz) to get you started. Look under the 'investors' tab.

But Greenslade says that in his experience, there are five key considerations that are often overlooked or not included in published checklists.

Here are his insider tips, and questions to ask, to help choose the right financial adviser for you.



Can I relate to the adviser?

Do they take the time to really understand me and what I want to do? Is the understanding superficial – is it just about learning enough to sell me a product, or is it really genuine? Do they want to know about me and my family as people to have a long term relationship with?



Can I trust the adviser?

Can I really trust what they say and write? Are the recommendations genuinely in my best interests and do they show me why that is the case? What do they do, beyond the words and flashy websites and brochures, to really demonstrate they understand trust and meaningful relationships?



Does the adviser deal with people just like me?

Does the adviser know the sorts of issues I'm facing and what I want to do? Have they successfully helped others in the same situation? Is the adviser sufficiently experienced to help guide me to achieving my goals and do they know where the pitfalls are, and can they steer me around them?



Does the adviser make sense?

Is the advice provided in a way I can understand and act upon? Is the advice clear, concise and does it make sense? Does the adviser take the time to explain it in bite-sized chunks, then check in with me to make sure I'm comfortable with it?



Will we have the tough conversations?

Will the adviser challenge my thinking, tell me when I'm wrong, and care enough – and be organised enough – to keep me on track? When I deviate from our agreed path, does he or she bring me back to the plan? Do they care enough about me and my future to have the tough conversations with me? These conversations should 'tell it as it is' without any sugar coating.



Choosing a retirement village?

Consider these things first

Moving into a retirement village can be a significant life change - and one you want to get right. Eldernet have offered their tips for making a successful transition to village life.

Do some groundwork

Your initial investigations into choosing a retirement village should include checking if the village is registered, which you can do at the Companies Office website (www.companiesoffice.govt.nz), under 'All registers'. Being part of a registered village gives you additional legal protection under the Retirement Villages Act 2003. It is also a good idea to find out more about the ownership of the village, the experience and/or financial stability of the owners, and the philosophy towards village culture. Evaluate how these things may affect you. Also ask if there are any plans for expansion. If there are, then where, how long until completion, and how disruptive will construction be?



The village and the unit

Villages vary greatly – from those with very few units to some with hundreds. There can be newer or older villages and they can encompass different types of units. Is the unit you are considering the right size and layout for you? If not, can you modify it in any way? Can you accommodate guests, and for how long? What about parking options? Consider the location – is it close to family and friends or services that are important to you?

The community facilities available at each village can vary too, with some offering a wide array of services such as a swimming pool, bowling green and cafes. Others might only have a basic village meeting room. Are the on-site amenities and services useful to you? Can visitors use the amenities? What about the planned activities – are they of interest to you and are there any costs associated with them?

Practicalities of village living

Try to visit more than one village to get a feel for how each has its own 'culture'. Meet the people you will likely have contact with inside the village – this may include the village owner, the village manager and other residents. Make sure you visit a village more than once before you finally decide on the right one. Consider things like how communal living may impact on your privacy. Do you know the rules of the village? How are they made and changed? How are residents' concerns or complaints addressed? How does the village keep residents informed about village matters?

Most people are quite independent when they move into a village. It's likely the village management will regard and treat you as such. But circumstances may change and as a result you may want some assistance. Are there options on site for increased support? Is there an option to stay in your unit if this happens? What home support options are available to you and how do you access them? Can you access funded home care instead of the providers' options? (Check your contract).





Aged care is considered an essential service and so entering a village was still possible (with isolation) even at Alert Level 4.

Financial and legal

Before you get your heart set on any particular village or unit, spend plenty of time examining all the legal and financial arrangements, as they all vary.

Although the terms 'buy and purchase' are used, as there is an exchange of capital sum (the capital contribution), you are usually paying only for the right to live in the village. The terms and conditions of this are explained in an Occupation Right Agreement (ORA), a legally binding agreement that must be given to intending residents. If you intend to 'purchase', the village operator will supply you with other documents too. These should include the Code of Residents' Rights, Retirement Village Code of Practice 2008 and subsequent variations, and the Disclosure Statement.

Ensure you find out about all the relevant costs. What are the initial costs of the unit you are interested in? How much are the regular fees? What are they for? How often are they increased and by what rate? You also need to find out if there are any other costs you need to



factor into your budget and what the village insurance covers. And what would happen if you ran out of money?

Because 'buying' into a retirement village is such a complex legal arrangement it is important to get specialist, independent legal advice before 'purchasing' – make sure the lawyer you use is experienced in retirement villages.

Visit retirementvillages.co.nz to download a full checklist to help you enjoy your village experience. 📄

WORDS BY **ELDERNET**



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Outliving your bucket list

We must be doing something right, because we're living longer than ever before - more than a decade more than we did 70 years ago, the latest figures from Stats NZ show.

Living longer is great news for ticking off your bucket list. But slightly more challenging for your retirement budget, which has to stretch over an ever increasing period.

Let's look at the figures released from Stats NZ earlier this year. The median lifespan for people who passed away in 2019 was about 13 years longer than those who died in the late 1940s - sitting at 78 years for men and 83 years for women. Meanwhile, the life expectancy of people born now is more like 80 years on average for men and 83.5 years for women.

"Even in the past 20 years, the median lifespans for both men and women, have increased by a couple of years," Tehseen Islam of Stats NZ says.

That means a lot more time in retirement. Indeed, a 2015 paper put out by the New Zealand Society of Actuaries suggests that you could spend nearly a third of your life in retirement. If you get to age 65, there is a good chance you could make it to well into your nineties.

The paper, entitled *Income Streaming in Retirement: Options for New Zealand*, notes some interesting

statistics. Focusing on the 'median' scenario for women born in 1950 who reached age 65 in 2015, the average lifespan was expected to be 89 years. However, the most common age at death was actually put at 92. One in five of these women was expected to live until at least 95. For men, the average lifespan was 86 years, but the most common age at death was expected to be 89. One in five men from this cohort is expected to live to at least age 93.

And it appears the speed at which our lifespan has been growing has been catching us out.

A 2014 working paper commissioned by the then Commission for Financial Literacy and Retirement Income, noted that the pace life expectancy had increased in developed countries in recent decades, had come as a surprise to demographers around the world.

It's author, Alison O'Connell, questioned whether policy makers and individuals understand the extent of past and likely future lifespan increase. The working paper also highlighted how the proportion of people's life spent aged over 65 has increased and


will continue increasing.

"Today's (2014) new superannuitants stand to receive New Zealand Superannuation for over 20 years (men) and over 23 years (women). Successive cohorts are expected to live increasingly longer, so that today's 25-year-old men live for over 25 years and women over 27 years after age 65," the paper says.

It's something known as 'longevity risk'. In basic terms, it's the risk you might live longer than expected and outlive the money you have for retirement.

The working paper says 65 percent of adult New Zealanders underestimate how long they are likely to live. Men underestimate by more than five years on average and women by over seven years.

All this creates a risk for individuals' pre-retirement financial planning as well as public policy.

So, if you're working on your retirement bucket list at the moment - add a couple of things on, you may well have the time. But perhaps dig out your budget and investment plan while you're at it. 

Meet the team: The man at the end of the phone

If you ring Lifetime Retirement Income, it's probably Rob Domanski that you'll find chatting with you at the other end of the phone.

A born and bred Wellingtonian, Rob's spent most of his life in the capital, apart from a five-year stint in the Waikato as an area manager for investment advice company AMP. Like Wellington, working in financial services has been a huge part of his life – in fact he describes it as “in his DNA”, having worked for the Public Trust and currency management firm ACM amongst others, before finding his place at Lifetime.

Being a Wellingtonian through and through, Rob's a long suffering and proud Hurricanes supporter – so you might want to tease him about that when you call. Luckily, he describes his ‘superpower’ as having positive energy, so he's optimistic and can take some ribbing.

“Being a Hurricanes supporter has helped me build mental resilience and...hope! I also like getting out fishing and in the outdoors in general. I'm restoring a 1971 Mercedes 350 SL convertible and I enjoy the occasional ‘wee dram’ from the Scottish Highlands or in winter from the Isles.”

Rob's typical workday involves answering queries from potential investors, as well as financial advisers, and following up on information requests and quotations. He says he had been following Lifetime Retirement Income's creation and knew he wanted to be involved. Having spent his career helping people build up wealth for retirement, he was keen to close the loop and help them have peace of mind about their income at the other end.

“I'm pretty passionate about that. That's why I wanted to get involved. I really enjoy helping people understand how we can help them make their income worry-free in retirement,” he says.

“Lifetime brought variable annuities to New Zealand around five years ago. Our biggest challenge is letting people know we exist and educating them on how our Lifetime Income product works.”

Lifetime Income's security of income is really coming into its own now that term deposits can't provide the extra income for retirees that they used to, he says.

“This had been a huge gap in the financial services landscape for years before Lifetime came along,” he says.

His biggest kick comes from dealing with investors who make additional investments or refer Lifetime to their family and friends – something he says happens a lot.

“I also got a big kick during lockdown when I took several calls from investors thanking us for providing a regular, stable income at a time of turbulent investment markets and falling term deposit rates. This is the essence of what Lifetime is all about – providing certainty of outcome by providing an income that can't fall or be outlived.”

You can tell a lot by who someone would invite to their dream dinner party. For Rob, it's Nelson Mandela, on the basis that after 27 years in prison he was able to forgive and unite a nation; Peter Jackson for being a creative genius and amazing storyteller (and proud Wellingtonian); and Peter Beck – who Rob describes as a tenacious dreamer and innovator, who launched New Zealand into space. All three are innovators in their own way – much like Lifetime. 🌱



Hitting the road after COVID-19

There's never been a more appropriate time for planning a trip in our own backyard.

The effects of COVID-19 are still being widely felt, with tourism one of the industries most heavily affected. So, while we may not be able to look at overseas holidays for the time being, that doesn't mean we have to miss out when we get those itchy feet, particularly when we can hit the road domestically again and support our local tourist destinations.

Luckily, we live in a country packed with diversity, beauty and incredible opportunities for travel and tourism – and many businesses in that sector need our custom and support now too. But what is the best way to get out there and experience the beautiful backyard we share in a way that suits our individual circumstances and preferences?


One answer to this is by motorhome. Hitting the road with your accommodation in tow can be both liberating and economical, bringing with it the advantages of freedom and flexibility. It's also a popular choice for senior travellers and retirees, who not only find it the perfect blend of adventure and home comfort, but also enjoy the ability to avoid the crowds at peak holiday spots thanks to possessing the well-earned luxury of free time.

There's definitely something magic about pulling up in a stunning location for an evening, cooking a meal and watching the sunset,

before waking up and deciding whether to stay longer or move on. No packing bags and checking out, no fees for changing your mind, no hit-and-miss hotel breakfast buffets or local amenities of varying quality or price. You simply have everything you need at your fingertips to be able to holiday your way.

Getting organised

While some people choose to own a motorhome in their retirement, it's also easy to rent one. There are a number of reputable companies in New Zealand and their fleet standards are generally very high, with well-appointed, clean and tidy vehicles available, fitted out with everything you might need for a great holiday, even down to the bedding. Usually, just a regular New Zealand driver's licence is needed for hireage and decent insurance options are either included or available. Companies generally charge a daily rate with a pre-kilometre fee which can vary from high to low season. But whenever you choose to go, the price of your holiday will almost always compare favourably with the cost of other types of trip, thanks to removing things like flights, hotels, transfers and meals out. You can even pick up the motorhome in one centre and drop it off in another as many companies have multiple depots.

So once you've organised the motorhome, where to go? New Zealand will have you spoilt for choice. Depending on which island you're in, how far you want to travel and for how long, there are multitudes of options. These can also depend on whether you want to 'freedom camp' or not. Aotearoa has a good network of free overnight parking places for motorhomes, but there are some fairly stringent requirements around this. Stay durations vary according to local authorities' rules, and vehicles have to be officially certified as self-contained, with fines for those who flout this. Freedom camp spots are also often frequented by younger backpackers and travellers, so if you aren't comfortable being in close proximity to others, avoiding the most popular spots might be best. Other options include Department of Conservation or regional park campsites, or stay at commercial campsites, where you can rent a powered site and use the facilities. Apps and websites such as Campermate, Rankers Camping and Campable are a good source of information, as are local information centres. 

WORDS BY **SADIE BECKMAN**

Trip suggestions

While the options are almost limitless, here are just a handful of suggestions to consider when planning a motorhome holiday.

NORTH ISLAND

Auckland to Bay of Islands and Northland

Once you leave the city and head north, there is so much to explore. From the lapis-coloured sea and beautiful coves of the Bay of Islands to the ruggedly beautiful far north and Ninety Mile Beach, the top of our country has much to offer.

Coromandel Peninsula

While there are some winding sections of road to deal with, the Coromandel is full of hidden gems and stunning scenery. Popular Hot Water Beach, with its sub-sand geothermal springs, and the stunning Cathedral Cove are perhaps the most well-known, but there is plenty more to see and discover.

Rotorua, Taupō and the Central North Island

Dramatic geothermal areas, the country's largest lake, mountains, volcanoes and a desert are all packed into this incredible part of New Zealand. You can choose to take on some of the most adventurous activities in the country, or simply relax and check out the incredible scenery. There is plenty of provision for motorhomes in many areas, with Taupō the main tourist drawcard.

Wellington and Wairarapa

The "coolest little capital" is known as the seat of culture and art as well as government and business. Motorhome parking is best outside of the city though, with good public transport options available. Wider Wellington has plenty to explore, including the Kāpiti Coast with access to Kāpiti Island nature sanctuary to the north west, and the temperate, green, agriculture and wine-growing region of Wairarapa over the hills to the north-east.

SOUTH ISLAND

Nelson, Marlborough and the Top of the South

Famed for the highest average sunshine hours in New Zealand this region is a beautiful place to explore. From historic Nelson to Marlborough's vineyards, the beautiful coastline and the gateway to the stunning Abel Tasman National Park, there is so much to see and do, any time of year.

Raikōura to Hanmer Springs

Marine wildlife, including whales and dolphins, are a common sight at Raikōura thanks to the unique submarine geography, while Hanmer Springs offers the largest thermal pools complex in the country, perfect for a soak after the winding drive to get there.

West Coast

Lauded as likely to be the most jaw-dropping drive you'll ever take, the scenery in this area is simply incredible. The Fox and Franz Josef glaciers are some of the largest in the country and descend from the Southern Alps almost to sea level, slow-moving rivers of ice that pass through verdant native forest. The West Coast also boasts the incredible rock formations at Punakāiki, known as the 'Pancake Rocks', beautiful Mt Aspiring National Park and the picturesque towns of Hokitika and Greymouth.

Queenstown to Fiordland

During peak season, Queenstown and nearby Wanaka have traditionally been packed with international and snow tourists and off-peak was the ideal time for a motorhome trip. But following the COVID-19 pandemic, this area is facing a much more uncertain future, although many New Zealanders have been making the most of the opportunity to visit while the borders are closed. Queenstown has wonderful shops and restaurants, but what really sets this region apart is the surrounding mountain scenery. Take the gondola behind the town to the high hillside above and marvel at a backdrop that is so awe-inspiring it's hard to believe what you are looking at is actually real. This feeling continues further south at World Heritage-listed Fiordland, where Milford and Doubtful Sounds are two of the fourteen spectacular fiords that span 215 kilometres of coastline.



RETIRING WELL

Sailing through retirement

Sambrene Chandler has been feeling the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on her life, or more specifically, on her retirement. But it's far from getting her down.

She's smarting just a little as she had to cancel a trip to Cuba she had been looking forward to. The gym she normally worked out at several times a week was closed during lockdown and the yoga class she attended was suspended too. Fortunately her casual job at the New Zealand Portrait Gallery in Wellington continued on during lockdown although she was reassigned to coordinate a research project, rather than attend the gallery itself.

With life now returned to more normality, Sambrene, 72, realises how fortunate she is.

"Travel, theatre and movies are what I'm interested in. I'm not really interested in clothes or having the latest kitchen gadget," she says.

She's had a lot more time for those passions now she's no longer a fulltime nurse. At age 62 she decided it was time she went back to England, where she spent many of her formative years growing up. Realising she had earned enough Qantas points to get to London thanks to a stint nursing in Karratha and then Perth in Australia as a diabetes specialist, she packed her bags.

Signing up with a live-in care provider, Sam rented out the Newtown home she bought in 2006 and began care work around England.

"Travel, theatre and movies are what I'm interested in. I'm not really interested in clothes or having the latest kitchen gadget,"

Sambrene Chandler


"I would work for two months and then have two weeks off, organising my travel around what was on in the West End or Stratford-upon-Avon," says Sam, a former President of the Wellington District Theatre Federation and Stagecraft Wellington.

While in the UK she also started volunteering with the Jubilee Sailing Trust, which offers those less able the opportunity to sail around the globe.

"You might think you've got problems, but if someone's blind and they can go on a trip like that, it puts it in perspective," she says.

Her time sailing included three voyages on the tall ship Lord Nelson during its round the world tour of 2012-2014, one working as cook's assistant.

Now back in Wellington she has enjoyed sharing her Newtown home with a flatmate, which helped supplement her NZ Superannuation and Lifetime Income payments, but with the flatmate considering moving on, she plans to adopt a greyhound.

"I'm just so lucky with my life and health – I have a positive attitude to living and try to keep fit. Thankfully my mental health is good. I have fantastic friends, three wonderful grandchildren and I'm proud of my daughter. My parents taught me to budget and save, and I will always be so grateful to them." 





RETIRING WELL

‘Retyring’ - reshod for a new life

Lower Hutt retiree Malcolm Bell doesn’t use the ‘retirement’ word, he prefers ‘retyrement’ as he considers himself reshod with a new life at his disposal.

Turning 70 this year, Malcolm officially ‘retyred’ in 2017, but after a two-year break has been back working 10 – 15 hours a week. Luckily, this continued through the lockdown.

‘Retyrement’ to Malcolm means doing just what he wants to do, and it turns out that’s quite a lot. When I call, he’s about to head into a meeting with a local secondary school principal as part of contract work he is undertaking for the Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce. He’s helping young people better transition from education to employment, quite a challenge in the COVID-19 environment.

A former teacher with a 48-year career in education and politics, his career included working as a senior adviser to seven successive education ministers.

“The saying goes ‘I don’t know how I had time for work once I retired’ and that’s certainly our case. But we’re not frantic, we’re not flat out. It’s being able to take on work that you want to do. You don’t have to do the sh..t stuff.”

Malcolm Bell

Then there’s the Hutt River Valley Rotary Club – he’s the incoming president, and the Education Leaders’ Forum he helps organise on a voluntary basis. Later he mentions Co=Gen, a programme he is forming with a fellow ‘retyree’ – coaching 21 to 34-year-olds on the cusp of middle management.

“One of the best things about retyrement is the alarm clock not going off at 5.45am. There is no train to catch or drive into town,” he says.

Now he gets to read the newspaper from cover to cover and take a walk with his wife each day. They often pick up the grandchildren from school and spend time with them.

“The saying goes ‘I don’t know how I had time for work once I retired’ and that’s certainly our case. But we’re not frantic, we’re not flat out. It’s being able to take on work that you want to do. You don’t have to do the sh..t stuff,” he says.

Malcolm and his wife retired at the same time.

“We decided that while we still had both our knees and our hips, and most of our brain, that we would retire. We wanted some “us time” to enjoy the fruits of our working years and to travel – which we did, and we’ve got a place in Taupō which we escape to.

“We’ve had a ball and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and we’ll continue to do so,” he says. “I’ve been learning all my life and I’m still learning now. Now I can spend time imparting some of that knowledge to others. I think it’s a really nice place for retirees to be.” 🌿

Dancing through retirement

When you think of ballet, you probably don't think of women in their 60s, 70s and even 80s doing pirouettes and demi-pliés. But the Auckland Academy of Adult Ballet's 'Senior Swans' class upturns the notion of what ballet can be – and for whom.

PHOTOS BY **PETER JENNINGS**
AND DANCE FOR LIFE ACADEMY

In 2016, the academy's founder Kathleen Curwen-Walker began the class primarily for people 60 and over. Its twice-weekly classes have proved popular, with around 30 members (so far that's all women, though 'Senior Drakes' would be welcome). Sometimes they wear tutus. Sometimes they dance in small academy showcases.

To avoid injury, demi-pliés replace pliés, pirouettes are done slowly, and jumps are out. But these women are certainly breaking a sweat and concentrating hard on honing movements under Curwen-Walker's directions. She's a warm woman who hugs newbies, but they know no slacking is allowed.

The Senior Swans are reaping health benefits. Seniors ballet – also found in Australia, the UK and US – is, when slightly modified, a workout that is low impact on the joints but has a huge impact in other areas. Studies show that dance helps older people with their posture, strength, flexibility, balance, coordination, and bone density, and helps to prevent falls. "Learning new movements enhances cognitive function and mental clarity," Curwen-Walker says. Trying a new activity that is

creative, and/or demands intense concentration, forges new neural pathways, which help ward off age-related cognitive decline.

Ballet is also expressive – even artistic – particularly through port de bras (arm positionings and movements). Plus, as a group activity, ballet classes can help prevent social isolation, and improve confidence. Dance isn't your only option. Something like tai chi or yoga classes can have the same effects.

Healthy ageing is about improving and maintaining quality of life, says Dr Ngaire Kerse, who has spent decades researching physical exercise in ageing. The University of Auckland's Professor of General Practice and Primary Health Care, and its inaugural Joyce Cook Chair in Ageing Well, Kerse is also a practising GP. She loves the idea of the Senior Swans. "Don't underestimate what older people can do – for instance, the Hip Hop-eration Crew." The New Zealand group of senior citizens performed in the 2013 World Hip Hop Dance Championships in Las Vegas.

Kerse runs the research programme Ageing Well through Eating, Sleeping, Socialising and Mobility (AWESSOM).



Ways to keep moving in retirement

Begun in 2018, AWESSoM has gained funding until 2024 through the Health and Wellbeing in Ageing research area of the government-funded Ageing Well National Science Challenge (a national research collaboration).

Through different research-based programmes that target specific groups, such as rest-home residents, AWESSoM aims to maximise the function, wellbeing and independence of older people – and to help delay and prevent mental and physical decline. It's all about assisting ageing people to take practical steps to improve mobility, fitness, eating, exercise, oral health, cognition, sleep, and socialising.

A key component of AWESSoM is The LifeCurve App, which was developed in the UK, and is being adapted by AWESSoM to New Zealand contexts. A trial is underway in a partnership between AWESSoM and the Bay of Plenty District Health Board, which is providing the app to ageing people using its services.

The engaging, easy-to-navigate app asks users questions about what they do and don't do, in order to assess their functionality and difficulties. "For instance," Kerse

says, "'Can you walk a mile,' and 'Do you do all your housework?'"

Depending on people's answers, the app tells them where they are on a spectrum of function. Should they need help with mobility, the app suggests things such as ACC Live Stronger for Longer classes (www.livestronger.org.nz).

"Exercise and mobility will be particularly important after COVID-19," Kerse says, "because older people will be deconditioned and need help to regain their former levels of physical function".

Social and physical activities often go hand in hand (as with the Senior Swans), helping improve mobility and prevent loneliness. If a person's answers suggest they aren't doing many social activities, the app may link the person to a "social connector" (a role being developed by Age Concern).

Eventually, the app may roll out nationwide. Meanwhile, Kerse suggests writing down your goals and achievements. "It's never too late to start." 🌱

WORDS BY **SARAH LANG**



Aerobic

Aim for at least 30 minutes of aerobic activity five days a week, such as brisk walking, dancing and swimming.

Resistance

Aim for two sessions of resistance activities a week, such as carrying shopping, or sitting down and standing up repeatedly.

Flexibility and balance

Aim for three sessions of flexibility and balance activities a week. Flexibility activities could be tai chi, stretching, gardening, yoga. Balance activities could be bowls or dance classes.

GIVING BACK

The nuts and bolts of men's health: MenzShed Kāpiti

It may be a damp, cloudy Tuesday morning but MenzShed Kāpiti is teeming with activity.

The 'rat pack' is down one end of the Waikanae-based shed, building pest traps – lately they've been building stoat tunnels for the Department of Conservation. Another team are refurbishing a bench. Santa's sleigh sits out the front – built here and now parked after a hectic round of local Christmas events. Outside a prosperous vegetable garden grows produce for the local Foodbank

Project convenor Alan Muxlow whistles up the troops to outline the projects on today – between 40 and 60 members turn up to these sessions. There's work to be done on the new Cancer Society Support Centre building in Kāpiti, which the guys helped prepare for opening. There are hands needed building a new amenity block for their own MenzShed site. Jokes abound before they get started too.

"We're all about the health and well-being of the members," says treasurer Peter Blackler.

"We provide somewhere for them to come that's non-threatening, where they can have a laugh and be with like-minded guys. For men who might have lost their partners, MenzShed can provide important companionship," he says. A band has even formed from amongst the group – The Shedmen.


Kāpiti is one of 118 such sheds nationwide, with 18 more in development.

The organisation appeals to those who may have downsized their workshops, those interested in sharing their skills, or just keen to learn. Last year the Kāpiti group alone put in 12,500 hours of work – most of which went into community projects, Blacker says.

Foundation member Nigel Clough kicked the Kāpiti group off in 2010 and is particularly proud of work they have done with local children, introducing those that might not consider academic learning their thing to the world of tools and building.

"They arrive scared, quiet little people and they leave the place all smiling, happy and laughing," he says.

Alan Muxlow says the health side of the group is an important aspect of what they do – and having a safe, open environment to talk to each other about health issues is beneficial. He enjoys the comradery and joking around.

"If we're not having fun, then we've got to change something," Muxlow says. 



Top: Members hard at work. Bottom: Special stoat traps for Wellington Islands. Photo by Nigel Clough, MenzShed Kāpiti.

Putting the Kaibosh on food waste

When Peter Small retired to an inner-city Wellington apartment there was some apprehension about just how he was going to fill in his days.

He had never lived in a city before, having come to Wellington from a farm in Kaikoura, followed by a stint in the Marlborough Sounds. He was fit and used to being very active.

The solution came when a friend suggested he might like to try volunteering with Kaibosh, New Zealand's first 'food rescue' organisation and he's never looked back.

"The big thing really is what it does for the community," Peter says.

"We're collecting all this food which would otherwise go to landfill. It's quite amazing the amount of food that gets lost and then also the fact that it gets retrieved."

Started in 2008 with a vision of zero food poverty and zero food waste, Kaibosh rescues quality surplus food from local businesses and redistributes it to those in need – namely charities and community groups. In Wellington, Peter knows his work helps organisations like the Women's Refuge, the Wellington Night Shelter, City Mission and the Salvation Army, amongst many others.

Kaibosh aims to help such groups use their precious resources for their core services, rather than having to buy food for their clients.

One morning a week, Peter accompanies the Kaibosh driver around the city collecting donations from supermarkets and other food outlets. They then take the kai back to their base for others to sort before it is redistributed to those in need.

"The most we've picked up in any one morning is 80 banana boxes," Peter says.

Kaibosh is growing – with branches in Wellington city and the Hutt Valley along with a new one recently opened in Kāpiti-Horowhenua. It has more than 225 volunteers involved, with volunteer roles typically involving just two hours per fortnight, designed to fit around people's schedule.

"It's not an arduous job but it's very helpful and good for the community," Peter says.

"Now I haven't got a lawn to mow, a garden to weed, I can't use my chainsaw or anything like that, it's nice to get out in the fresh air and be energetic. Better to wear out than rust out," he says. 🌱



Right: Peter Small. Photo by Christel Price, Kaibosh.

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