

SAFE COMMUNITIES ASHBURTON DISTRICT

SIX MONTH REPORT:

1 JULY – 31 DECEMBER, 2019



Our Vision: Ashburton District, our place, a safe place to live, work and play, free from preventable injury and harm

What is a “Safe Community”?

The Safe Community model creates an infrastructure in local communities to increase action on injury prevention and safety promotion through local collaboration. Working together provides the opportunity to take a district-wide, strategic overview of community safety issues in the District and enables greater reach and a collective “weight” to respond to them.

Background

In early 2018, the Ashburton District Council asked Safer Ashburton to lead the development of an application to the Safe Communities Foundation of New Zealand for the accreditation of Ashburton District as a Safe Community.

The Safer Ashburton General Manager, Kevin Clifford and the Ashburton District Mayor, Donna Favel, facilitated a community meeting on 23 March, with multiple stakeholders (32 representatives). There was strong Council support, with the Mayor and five councillors in attendance. Laurie Gabites from the Safe Communities Foundation of New Zealand gave a presentation on how to apply for accreditation and Kevin Clifford presented on the history and activities of Safer Ashburton.

The group brainstormed six key priority areas to be the focus of the Safe Community accreditation application. They were:

- Rural Safety
- Falls in Older People
- Road Safety
- The Environment (built and natural)
- Alcohol, Drugs and Community Safety (early intervention/prevention)
- Harm Reduction/Prevention (family harm; suicide prevention)

Ashburton District is “safe” but it can be safer. District data tells us that falls in older people, leading to both fatal and non-fatal injury; road crashes; theft and burglary; family harm; and suicide are key safety concerns for Ashburton District.

Achievements: 1 July to 31 December, 2019

Introduction

Since achieving accreditation as a Safe Community from the Safe Communities Foundation of New Zealand on 29 May, 2019, the Safe Communities Ashburton Steering Group of 27 agencies has focussed on the implementation of the 2019-2020 Business Plan, which is Year One of the Five Year Safe Communities Ashburton District Strategic Plan (2019-2024).

The Steering Group has moved to meeting bi-monthly and receives reports from the Working Groups established to develop the Business Plan projects.

The Steering Group recognises the work of other networks focussing on community safety (for example, the Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee) and will not take a leadership role in these areas.

Key achievements:

- **“Safety Village”**, Ashburton A and P Show, 1st and 2nd November, 2019. 12 agencies took part, collaborating to gain a high profile for safety and safety messages. Positive feedback received from both the community and participating agencies. To be repeated in 2020.
- **Community Transport** – this project aims to reduce rural isolation/increase personal safety, by looking at the need for a low cost community van service to bring people living in the more rural/remote areas of the District into Ashburton Township for medical appointments, shopping etc. An online community survey to ascertain the need for such a service received 61 responses. A collaboration with Environment Canterbury (ECAN) in 2020 will see the establishment of a Community Vehicle Trust, which will be eligible for funding grants from ECAN and other local funders. The Trust will manage the project, including administration, the recruitment of volunteer drivers, vehicle maintenance and seeking ongoing funding.
- **Community Information** – a collaboration between the Citizens Advice Bureau National Office and Community House Mid Canterbury, with support from Safe Communities Ashburton District. To establish a CAB branch for the District, so that residents have access to quality, up to date information to help keep themselves and their families safe, be involved in the community via clubs and activities, etc. Ultimately the CAB branch will be managed by an incorporated society and board and will become a full CAB branch.
- **Falls Prevention for Older People** – initial research and the establishment of a Falls Prevention Network
- **Parenting Programmes** – research and some initial discussion on a project to Investigate community awareness of parenting programmes, agency capacity to meet demand and possible need for additional programmes

- **Promotion** – Safe Communities Ashburton District website established (www.safecommunitiesashburton.org.nz) and promotions via the Safer Mid Canterbury Facebook page.
- **Funding** – the project was fortunate to receive partner funding from the Accident Compensation Commission (ACC) for a 5-year period.

Key Projects to be undertaken January to June, 2020

Projects to be undertaken in the first six months of 2020 include:

- Development of “mini” Safe Community Plans for Methven and Rakaia which reflect local community safety concerns.
- Promotion of falls prevention messages and strength and balance classes as part of the Age Concern Ashburton Positive Ageing Expo (March).
- Discussion with key agencies on a possible burglary/theft awareness campaign.
- Research into the need for increased services for family harm in the District.
- A community forum (April) to inform the community about Safe Communities Ashburton District activities/achievements and to seek feedback on any safety issues/concerns.

Concluding Remarks

Ashburton District has developed a robust coalition of government and community stakeholders, working across a range of sectors, under the Safe Community “umbrella”.

Working collaboratively and the sharing of skills, knowledge, resources, information, ideas and experience between local community safety agencies will increase community safety in Ashburton District over time.

Best practice is also available through the Safe Communities Foundation of New Zealand and Pan Pacific Safe Communities Networks.

And strong evaluation methods will demonstrate which programmes and initiatives are making a difference to injury and crime statistics.

The success of the Safe Community model around New Zealand has been proven to depend on the employment of a skilled co-ordinator. The Safe Community Foundation of New Zealand commented on the Ashburton project that “.....*the ability of the Safe Communities Co-ordinator to be the connector and catalyst for change will be a key pivotal component moving forward*”.

Thanks to the Ashburton District Council and ACC for their support of this project.