

SAFE COMMUNITIES ASHBURTON DISTRICT

SIX MONTH REPORT:

1 JULY- 31st DECEMBER, 2021



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

Ashburton District is “safe” but it can be safer. Analysis of district data, research and community consultation tells us that falls in older people, leading to both fatal and non-fatal injury; road crashes; theft and burglary and family harm are key safety concerns for Ashburton District. Key priority areas identified for Ashburton District are:

- Rural Safety/Social Isolation
- Falls in Older People
- Road Safety
- Alcohol, Drugs and Community Safety (early intervention/prevention)
- Harm Reduction/Prevention (e.g. theft/burglary)
- Social/Community Wellbeing

The Safe Communities Steering Group of 27 agencies is chaired by Deputy Mayor, Liz McMillan, and works to a Strategic Plan (2019-2024) and an annual Business Plan, to address the key priority areas identified for Ashburton District.

Working Groups are developed for projects, which agencies “self-select” to join if they have an interest. This also enables other agencies/interested parties which are not members of the Steering Group to join the Working Groups.

The Steering Group meets bi-monthly and receives reports from the Working Groups. A Safe Communities Co-ordinator is employed 20 hours per week to co-ordinate the Steering Group and to develop and co-ordinate projects.

The Steering Group recognises the work of other networks focussing on community safety (for example, the Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee; the Mid Canterbury Suicide Prevention Network) and works collaboratively with them.

Key Achievements: 1 July - 31st December, 2021

(Year 3 of the 5-Year Strategic Plan, 2019-2024)

- **Rural Safety/Isolation: “Mid Canterbury Connector” Community Transport Service**

This project aims to reduce rural and social isolation by looking at the need for a low cost community transport service, driven by volunteers, to bring people living in the more rural/remote areas of the District into Ashburton Township for medical appointments, doing business with Council, seeing friends and family, shopping etc.



During this period:

- After community consultation, the service moved in October from operating only two fixed routes, two days a week, to an on-demand service, Monday to Friday between 9am and 4.30pm
- Funding was received from Environment Canterbury/NZTA towards the operation/maintenance of a vehicle
- The Mid Canterbury Community Trust held its first AGM on 23rd November. One trustee stood down, all other trustees committed to a further term, and two new trustees were elected
- Passenger numbers continue to be impacted by Covid-19

- **Falls Prevention for Older People**

During this period:

- Post the July/August 2021 lockdown, attendance at Mid Canterbury strength and balance classes dropped from a total attendance of 59% (attendance versus capacity) to 41.9%
- The Falls Prevention Network therefore promoted getting out to classes under Level 2 via a feature page in the Ashburton Courier newspaper on the 4th November,

including an article on a local lady gaining much benefit from attendance at classes at the EA Networks Centre

- **Preventing Theft/Burglary**

Mid Canterbury Neighbourhood Support, Police and Safe Communities collaborated on a campaign over November/December to make the community more aware of how to prevent theft/burglary from residential properties and vehicles, and theft of tools:

- A six-week information/awareness promotion was undertaken in the Ashburton Courier newspaper, focussing on different aspects of the campaign
- Three handouts were developed and widely distributed, with tips on keeping property, vehicles and tools safe
- A number of talks were provided to community groups by the Mid Canterbury Neighbourhood Support Co-ordinator and Police
- Neighbourhood Support groups were provided with home marking kits to identify items of value in case of burglary. In the month of December, nine kits were being used in the community and twenty-five homes had marked their valuables.
- A partnership was established with the Ashburton Menzshed to provide a tools engraving service for tradies, to assist with easy identification and return if tools are stolen and recovered by the Police. For its first month of offering the tools engraving service in December, the Menzshed engraved approximately twenty tools

- **Parenting:**

- A collaboration with ACC, the SEEDS family support/parenting programme (Safer Mid Canterbury) and Plunket was established to develop a **child unintentional injury awareness/education programme for parents/caregivers on dangers around the home and how to prevent them**, utilising the Safekids Aotearoa Toolkit and other resources
- **A survey of parents/caregivers and parenting** agencies was carried out over November/December, as part of a collaboration between ACADS, Hakatere Marae, Plunket, Waitaha Health, SEEDS (Safer Mid Canterbury), Community and Public Health and Safe Communities. The survey aimed to identify the positives of parenting support in Ashburton District, as well as any gaps in services/support which might need to be addressed. 115 parents and 20 professionals responded to the survey. The research is currently being written up and will be discussed by the partner agencies in February

- **Road Safety - Motorcycle Safety** – Ashburton District Council, ACC and Safe Communities collaborated as part of Motorcycle Awareness Month in October and promoted the Ride Forever programme in both local newspapers
- **Caring for Communities Social/Community Recovery Group**
 - In June, 2020 the Safe Communities programme assumed co-ordination of this project, which had been established as the Ashburton District Council's Welfare Response Group during the lockdown
 - Funding was received from Advance Ashburton to conduct a small piece of follow-up social research in July/August, 2021, to ascertain progress with achieving the group's Action Plan, how the not for profit sector is faring in the wake of possible pressures from Covid-19 (client numbers, funding, etc) and to look at the future of the Caring for Communities Group.
 - The research recommended that the group consider becoming independent of the Safe Communities programme, move to a wellbeing rather than a welfare focus, and address significant social and community issues such as the lack of social/emergency housing in the District.
 - The group will meet in March/April, 2022 to discuss its future. Meantime it formally ceased its function as a Covid-19 welfare response group in November, 2021
- **Safety Village, Ashburton A and P Show 2021**– planning was undertaken for this event, but the Safety Village did not go ahead, as the Show was restricted to a non-spectator event due to Level 2 restrictions
- **Safety Promotion** - The Ashburton Courier newspaper free, monthly Safe Communities column continued during this time, with spaces offered to Safe Communities member agencies. This has been a great way for community agencies to promote their safety messages and services and for the Safe Communities programme to be profiled in the local media.
- **Safe Communities Foundation of New Zealand Governance Survey** – 14 members of the Safe Communities Steering Group completed this survey, conducted by the Safe Communities Foundation of New Zealand. The survey report provides a picture of how well the governance group is functioning, in particular how well the group is combining members' knowledge, skills and resources, so that the group can accomplish more together than on their own (collaboration). The Steering Group had a very strong performance, with 5/5 scores rated strong in terms of collaboration; leadership; members believing the group has legitimacy and credibility; and satisfaction with the way the group is developing and implementing its plans.
- **Cessation of the Safe Communities Foundation of New Zealand** – the Foundation wound up in December after 17 years of activity, due to funding issues. A national working

group of Safe Communities representatives is working through a process of identifying what Foundation roles and activities need to be continued, and what other activities could add value to the Safe Communities network around New Zealand. It is expected that a new entity will be developed to continue and expand upon the work of the Foundation

- **New 2022-2023 Projects were identified (refer Safe Communities Business Case and Business Plan, 1 July, 2022-30 June, 2023)**, following a planning session held by the Safe Communities Steering Group on 28th January, where crime/injury data and local and national safety issues and concerns were discussed.

Existing projects such as the Falls Prevention promotions were discussed as to their value and therefore inclusion again in the 2022-23 Plan. And new projects identified for further research and development include:

- Implementation of safety initiatives identified from the District Parenting Research
- A ski safety programme for schools in association with Mt Hutt and Selwyn District skifields and ACC
- A campaign on scams and how to identify and avoid them (partnership with Police, CAB and Neighbourhood Support)
- A focus on workplace wellbeing, particularly in light of Covid-19 impacts on the labour market and workforce (possible partnership with Lives Worth Living programme and Council's Economic Development team)
- Promotion of national water safety messages in light of recent drowning statistics
- A collaboration with the Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee on a campaign on road crashes due to alcohol impairment, and focussing on 20-29 year olds

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. It also enables the group to be responsive to local and national safety issues and concerns as they emerge (for example national Summer drowning statistics).

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