

## SAFE COMMUNITIES ASHBURTON DISTRICT

### SIX MONTH REPORT:

1 JULY – 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 2022



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

*Keeping ourselves, our families and our communities safe*

## The Ashburton District Safe Community Programme

The Safe Community programme for Ashburton District works to increase action on injury prevention and safety promotion through **local collaborations**. 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.

A Co-ordinator is employed 20 hours a week by Safer Mid Canterbury to work with the Steering Group and roll out projects in the Business Plan.

Working Groups are developed for projects, which agencies “self-select” to join if they have an interest. This also enables a large number of 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.

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

## **Key Achievements: 1 July – 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2022**

### **Introductory remarks**

The last six months have seen the roll out of the first half of the fourth year of the Safe Communities Ashburton District Strategic Plan (2019-2024).

The programme of activities continued to be impacted by Covid early in this period, with reduced numbers of older people participating in falls prevention/strength and balance classes and people not wanting to travel, impacting on use of the Mid Canterbury Connector community transport service.

In some projects, agency staff experienced illness and self-isolation (more than once) and in some cases were focussed on or reassigned to Covid-related activities or covering absent colleagues, meaning planned collaborations could not go ahead.

From October onwards, numbers using the Connector community transport service began to increase and planned collaborations such as the Safety Village at the A and P Show and the Mid Canterbury Falls Prevention Network were able to go ahead.

July/August saw a new campaign raising community awareness of scams and fraud and in September the opportunity to promote ski safety to three local schools arose from a national ACC promotion on Mt Hutt ski field.

Interesting research presented to the Mid Canterbury Community Vehicle Trust at its November AGM by Environment Canterbury, detailed the value of community transport services in reducing the costs associated with social isolation and loneliness. Although no research on this topic has been done in New Zealand, one UK study in 2016 estimated that local community transport services helped generate cost savings of between 400 million and 1.1 billion pounds a year, by providing easier and earlier access to health and social services and opportunities to socialise.

Safety messages continued to be promoted via the monthly Safe Communities column in the Ashburton Courier newspaper and on Facebook.

### **Project updates/information for individual projects:**

- **Scams/Fraud Awareness Campaign** - A new collaboration between Mid Canterbury Neighbourhood Support, Mid Canterbury CAB, Ashburton Public Library, Police, Digital Waitaha and Safe Communities, which arose from concern over the number of scams/fraud in the community, especially targeting older adults. A 6 -week awareness campaign was run in the Ashburton Courier newspaper over July and August, 2022. The campaign covered

phone scams, buying online scams, romance scams, phishing scams and information on local courses/sessions on digital safety provided by Digital Waitaha and the Ashburton Public Library. During that time there were also displays, community talks by Mid Canterbury Neighbourhood Support and information made available for pick up at the Library and from the CAB at Community House. CAB reported that 400 copies of “The Little Black Book of Scams” were distributed to the community during the campaign.

The emphasis of the campaign was on encouraging people who think they have been scammed to seek help and report it, as often there is a degree of embarrassment about being the victim of a scam. Local sources of advice and assistance (Neighbourhood Support, CAB, Library, Digital Waitaha) were promoted, to make it easier for people to discuss what had happened and find out where to report it.

Evaluation of the campaign found that more regular (monthly) community awareness/education in future will have more impact than an annual promotion, so discussions are underway to plan this approach.

- **Snow Safety** – a replica of the Rodin statue “The Thinker” was located on Mt Hutt ski field by ACC, as part of its national “have a hmmm” campaign. Before it was removed for storage in Wellington in September, the statue was toured around three local schools, promoting ski safety messages. A total of 392 children attended the safety sessions, which were run by the ACC Injury Prevention Co-ordinator, with great engagement with the safety messages. A colouring competition was given to the children, with Mt Hutt ski field providing a free ski lesson to the winner. Thought is now being given as to how to develop this promotion for the next ski season.
- **Safety Village, Ashburton A and P Show, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021**– Significant time was spent planning and co-ordinating the Safety Village. It was great to be back at the A and P Show, the last time (pre-Covid) being 2019. Eleven agencies took part, promoting a wide variety of safety messages. Feedback from the community and uptake of safety messages was very positive, and all agencies are keen to return next year.
- **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, etc.



During this period:

- Up until October, the service continued to be impacted by Covid, with older passengers in particular reluctant to go out and about in the community
- From October numbers have continued to grow. Statistics for the 6-month period July to December, 2022 were:

- Passengers transported – 60 (39 for the period 1 July, 2021 to 30 June, 2022)
  - Km travelled – 7581 (7031)
  - Volunteer driver hours – 138.7 (136)
  - Other volunteer hours (trustees) - 19.5 (57)
- The Mid Canterbury Community Vehicle Trust focussed on promoting the service and recruiting more volunteer drivers
- The Mid Canterbury Community Trust held its second AGM on 22<sup>rd</sup> November. All trustees committed to a further term, and two new trustees were elected
- **Falls Prevention for Older People** - After a hiatus in activity due to Covid, the Mid Canterbury Falls Prevention Network met on 6<sup>th</sup> September and again on the 29<sup>th</sup> November, to look at collaborative projects. As numbers in some strength and balance classes around the District have fallen due to Covid, a newspaper feature is being planned for 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2023, to coincide with the Age Concern Ashburton Positive Ageing Expo on 9<sup>th</sup> March, where the Network will have a stand.
- **District Parenting Survey –**
  - A survey of parents/caregivers and parenting agencies was carried out over November/December, 2021 as part of a collaboration between ACADS, Plunket, SEEDS (Safer Mid Canterbury), Community and Public Health and Safe Communities. The survey aimed to identify the positives of parenting 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
  - Many parents found Ashburton to be a great place to bring up children. Key findings around improving parenting support were the need for better navigation resources for parents seeking information and support; active promotion of services; more availability of services and shorter wait times; and more support for new parents. Education sessions run around the District were supported by parents, in particular on the topics of parenting skills; health relationships; health and work/life balance; managing finances and digital safety
  - A February 2023 workshop is now being planned to recap the research, present the Action Plan developed from the findings and to consider the establishment of a Mid Canterbury Parenting Agency Network, which would collectively implement the Action Plan and meet to share information and discuss and advocate for service gaps/needs
- **Cycle/Scooter Safety** – information on off road cycle/scooter/road rules tracks was provided to the Ashburton Rotary Club, which has approached Ashburton District Council offering to be part of the project
- **Safety Promotion** - The Ashburton Courier newspaper’s 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. Social media (Facebook) has also been used to promote various activities over the year

- **Cessation of the Safe Communities Foundation of New Zealand** – the Foundation wound up in December, 2021 after 17 years of activity. A Transition Working Group of Safe Communities representatives has been working through a process of identifying what Foundation roles and activities are valuable and need to be continued, and what other activities could add value to the Safe Communities network and to key stakeholders. A new model for a national organisation has been developed from feedback from local Safe Communities and four national bodies with similar objectives approached to see if they would be interested in aligning with and offering a “home” to a new national Safe Communities organisation

### **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 scams/fraud).

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