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**REPORT 4**  
(1215/52/IM)

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## **LEISURE CARD AND OVER 65'S**

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### **1. Purpose of Report**

To report back on the usage of the Council's swimming pools by persons over 65 (superannuitants) from 1 February to 30 April 2009 and to obtain approval to extend further the eligibility of the Passport to Leisure Scheme (the scheme) to this group.

### **2. Executive Summary**

On 11 December 2008, officers recommended to the Strategy and Policy Committee that the Passport to Leisure Scheme be extended to include all superannuitants, Green Prescription referrals, mental health consumers, people with physical disabilities, refugees and asylum seekers on the basis that the scheme would be restricted to Wellington City residents and ratepayers.

Council resolved to extend the scheme to include all the groups recommended with the exception of superannuitants that were not eligible for the Community Services Card (CSC). Council further resolved that officers monitor superannuitants' usage of the Council's facilities for three months to determine the impact of extending the scheme to include all in this group.

Research was undertaken from 1 February to 30 April 2009. The results from this research indicate that the financial impact of widening access to the scheme for all superannuitants would be insignificant when compared to the good will achieved through acknowledging older adults' contribution to the community and ability to engage further with this target group.

### **3. Recommendations**

Officers recommend that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*

*Recommend to Council that:*

- 2. Eligibility to the Passport to Leisure Scheme be extended to include all superannuitants.*
- 3. It agrees to authorise the Chief Executive Officer to carry out all further steps required to enable superannuitants to be eligible to the Passport to Leisure Scheme.*

## **4. Background**

In 1992 the Council extended the superannuitant pink card concession scheme to include residents receiving social welfare benefits and called the scheme Passport to Leisure. Initially, cardholders received a 50% discount to the Council's swimming pools and over time other facilities and programmes were included in the scheme.

In June 2005 superannuitants who were not eligible for a CSC but were the original beneficiaries of the Council's concessions were excluded from the scheme and the CSC was retained as the only eligibility criteria. This decision was made on the basis that the CSC was the only means tested way of determining price as a barrier to participation. The decision was met with strong opposition from ineligible superannuitants and community groups such as Age Concern and Grey Power.

In December 2008 it was recommended that the scheme be again extended to include all superannuitants, Green Prescription referrals, mental health consumers, people with physical disabilities, refugees and asylum seekers, with the scheme being restricted to Wellington City residents and ratepayers.

The recommendation that the scheme include all superannuitants was based on an acknowledgement of the valuable contribution made in the community by our resident senior citizens and to encourage an increase in physical activity amongst this group. In order to revitalise the scheme it was proposed that a Leisure Card be introduced which would become the means of accessing the concessions available.

At its meeting of 17 December 2008 Council resolved to extend the scheme to include all the groups with the exception of superannuitants that were not eligible for the CSC and requested that officers monitor usage of facilities by superannuitants for three months to determine the impact of extending the scheme to include all in this group.

In particular, Council were concerned with the projected increase in the total number of superannuitants in the city over the next 20 years, how this may impact on the swimming pools specifically given the capacity issues that were already being experienced at peak times, and what the likely impact of extending the scheme would have on revenue.

On this basis, officers undertook a Super Gold Card information gathering exercise over a three month period to determine how many superannuitants visited the Council's pool facilities.

## **5. Discussion**

Extending the scheme to superannuitants is an opportunity for the Council to positively acknowledge the valuable contribution this group have made to the

community and is consistent with the Council's Social and Recreation Strategy as well as the Ministry of Social Development's Supergold Card.

### 5.1 Research undertaken from 1 February to 30 April 2009

The research carried out over three months at Wellington City Pools showed a total of 1,007 visits by superannuitants. This represented less than 0.3% of total pool visits over the same period (367,371 visits). Of the 1,007 visits, 283 (28%) were by Supergold Card users with a CSC endorsement.

Statistics New Zealand Census data shows that there are approximately 16,000 over 65s living in Wellington, 11,000 of whom qualify for a CSC.

**Table 1:** Number of visits recorded by pool

Pool	February 09	March 09	April 09	Total
Freyberg	68	117	89	274
Thorndon	53	49	Closed	102
WRAC	121	91	122	334
Keith Spry	21	32	34	87
Karori	57	25	28	110
Tawa	20	43	37	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>1007</b>

*Note: Data collected at swimming pool reception areas via self-disclosure from customers and questioning from staff.*

**Table 2:** Number of visits to pools recorded by day and time

Weekday	6-8am	8-10am	10-12 noon	12-2pm	2-4pm	4-6pm	6-10pm	Total CSC holders	Total
Monday	6	77	70	15	2	4	4	35	<b>178</b>
Tuesday	15	103	87	30	15	3	7	78	<b>260</b>
Wednesday	10	45	52	15	10	3	6	32	<b>141</b>
Thursday	17	68	45	14	4	0	8	58	<b>156</b>
Friday	8	52	54	20	10	6	6	57	<b>156</b>
Saturday	4	10	14	7	2	5	3	9	<b>45</b>
Sunday	18	15	7	18	6	2	5	14	<b>71</b>
	<b>78</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>1,007</b>

The majority (76%) of visits by superannuitants were during off-peak times.

### 5.2 Impacts of widening the scheme

#### 5.2.1 Pool Usage

Widening the scheme to include all superannuitants could be expected to result in increased visits by this age group. However even a significant increase would have a minimal impact on overall pool usage, particularly given that the majority of visits are likely to be during off peak times.

The issue of this group's use of off peak times is an important one. While the swimming pools currently have capacity issues at peak times there remains significant spare capacity of pool space during off peak times. This group therefore offers an opportunity for development and growth in this part of our overall programme.

As noted above, superannuitants represent a very low percentage of overall pool users (0.3%). This equates to approximately 4,000 visits by superannuitants out of a total of 1.4 million visits made annually. Even if pool usage by superannuitants were to double, this group would still only represent 0.6% of pool users.

**Table 3:** Attendance impact – average per pool / per week by time of day

<b>Increase in visits</b>	<b>6-8am</b>	<b>8-10am</b>	<b>10-12 noon</b>	<b>12-2pm</b>	<b>2-4pm</b>	<b>4-6pm</b>	<b>6-10pm</b>	<b>Weekly total</b>
No increase	1	6	5	2	1	0	1	16
10% Increase	1	7	6	2	1	0	1	18
20% Increase	2	7	7	2	1	0	1	21
50% Increase	2	9	8	3	1	1	1	25
100% Increase	3	12	11	4	2	1	1	34
200% Increase	4	19	16	6	2	1	2	50
300% Increase	5	25	22	8	3	2	3	67
400% Increase	7	31	27	10	4	2	3	84

### 5.2.2 Financial Impact

The financial impact of widening the scheme would be insignificant based on current visits being made by superannuitants. Any increase in visits would offset the loss of revenue.

The 50% discount offered under the scheme translates to a pool entry fee of \$2.50. If all superannuitants in the research period had been offered the same discount, this would have reduced revenue by \$1,810.

**Table 4:** Predicting annual revenue impacts (based on current entry fees)

<b>Increase in visits</b>	<b>Visits per year</b>	<b>Revenue impact for pools per year</b>
No increase	4,028	-\$7,240.00
10% increase	4,432	-\$6,232.00
20% increase	4,832	-\$5,228.00
50% increase	6,044	-\$2,200.00
100% increase	8,056	\$2,832.00
200% increase	12,084	\$12,900.00
300% increase	16,112	\$22,970.00
400% increase	20,140	\$33,040.00

## **6. Conclusion**

Given prevailing trends in demographics, the rate of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease from increasingly sedentary lifestyles, it is essential that the recreation and leisure activities offered remain as accessible and affordable as possible. The Council has an opportunity to take the lead in forming partnerships to help mitigate these trends by working across the recreation and health sectors.

Maximising the use of membership cards and relevant software, particularly for this growing segment of the population, the Council will be gaining information and developing relationships that will allow it to produce programmes that best serve these customers.

It is recommended that the Strategy and Policy Committee agree to recommend to Council that the eligibility of the Passport to Leisure Scheme be extended to include all superannuitants.

Contact Officer: *Julian Todd, Acting Manager Recreation Wellington*

## **Supporting Information**

### **1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome**

*The recommendations within this report are consistent with the Council's Strategic outcome 6.3 More actively engaged – 'Wellington residents will be actively engaged in their communities and in recreation and leisure activities.*

### **2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact**

*The project is contained in the Long Term Council and Community Plans Social and Recreation Strategy. – Recreation Facilities and Programmes (6.3.1 Access Support – Project C419 Passport to Leisure). Through the Passport to Leisure programme, we provide those in the community for whom price may be a barrier to participation, discounted access to recreation centres, swimming pools, libraries and recreation programmes*

### **3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations**

*No Treaty of Waitangi issues or opportunities have been identified through the review process.*

### **4) Decision-Making**

*This is not a significant decision as defined under the Council's Significance Policy.*

### **5) Consultation**

#### **a) General Consultation**

*All affected parties have been identified. The effects of this work are confined to those persons over the age of 65 and are residents of Wellington City.*

#### **b) Consultation with Maori**

*Example: Mana whenua have been provided with a draft of the policy. Their comments were limited to the timing of the project. These concerns have been noted and are covered in section 3 of the report.*

### **6) Legal Implications**

*Mana whenua impacts have been considered viewed as being positive for Maori.*

### **7) Consistency with existing policy**

*The recommendations within this report are consistent with the Social and Recreation Strategy and Older Persons Policy.*