

**SeniorNet (Pakuranga) Inc**

12 Ben Lomond Crescent, Pakuranga Auckland 2010

Telephone 09 576 4500

Established in 1996 especially for Pakuranga, Howick and Botany residents

## MAY 2026



This issue:

- ◆ Next meeting
- ◆ Help Days
- ◆ New members
- ◆ Bits and Bytes
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- ◆ Your Committee
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- ◆ Dawn's Ramblings

### MAY HELP DAYS

Tuesday	5th	1pm
Wednesday	13th	10am
Monday	18th	1pm
Thursday	28th	10am



Our next Meeting,

**Friday 1st May**

at 10.00am

St Andrews Church Centre  
Corner Ridge Rd and Vincent St

The main entrance is in Vincent Street with parking in the grounds and disabled parking near the basement entrance.



*Visitors welcome*

This month Kate will be our early speaker and another Kate from Howick Business Association will be our main speaker. She will talk about Howick Village and the Market Day and how all this is funded.



**3 NEW MEMBERS**

Sophia Russell  
Maureen Thorpe  
Sharyn Palmer



## The future of SeniorNet Federation of New Zealand

The SeniorNet Federation is holding its AGM and a series of seminars in Hamilton on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of May. I will attend as our voting representative. The Federation was established about 15 years ago when the then Telecom ceased sponsorship of Grant Sidaway, who had been selected from its own staff in 1995 to promote the idea of SeniorNet throughout New Zealand. It was based on like organisations in Australia and USA. Grant was very successful and became the coordination point for SeniorNet nationwide interests but was unable to attract additional sponsors as a single person. At the conclusion of the Telecom sponsorship Grant realised that a formal organisation would be required for the future and promoted the Federation as an Incorporated Society with each member being a local SeniorNet holding one vote for a committee to progress the federation's interests. As a formal organisation, with wide New Zealand coverage, government and some businesses provide support and sponsorship.

At the 2026 AGM and symposium one of the major items to be addressed is the future of the Federation. As with many voluntary organisations membership has declined, and the sponsors are questioning our "value" to them. In turn the Federation is questioning its value to members.

Our contribution to the Federation is \$3 annually per member on our roll (about \$750) as well as the non-financial support of participation via committee representation. The Federation committee is a Chairperson and four members nominated from the South Island, Wellington up to but not including Taupo, Waikato to the Bombay Hills and the Upper North. Already Waikato has not nominated a committee representative for 2026. This committee endeavours to meet online and keep actual travel to a minimum.

It continues the common focus for all local SeniorNets that existed when Grant Sidaway filled that role but as a legal entity is the only way that large organisations will take on sponsorship.

It owns the SeniorNet Trademark in New Zealand.

Our support from the Federation has been substantial in getting our new Incorporated Societies registration actioned. It funds part of the AGM and Symposium as well as the regional meetings arranged by the four federation reps.

It funds and manages a web site that many prospective new members use to ask questions and locate us. It has a resource of training material contributed by each local SeniorNet.

It developed and funds SeniorHangouts, the online meeting location for interest groups and training.

Financially we get:

- Public Liability Insurance fully funded.
- Property Insurance at group rates, saving us about \$1000 per annum.
- Learner Hour support for the Help and Courses we run contributing about \$900 per annum.

I welcome any of your views on the Federations value, sent to [brian@senpak.nz](mailto:brian@senpak.nz) so these can be incorporated into the Futures workshop in May. It has accumulated funds to carry on for some years but may reach crisis point if any more committee places are unfilled.

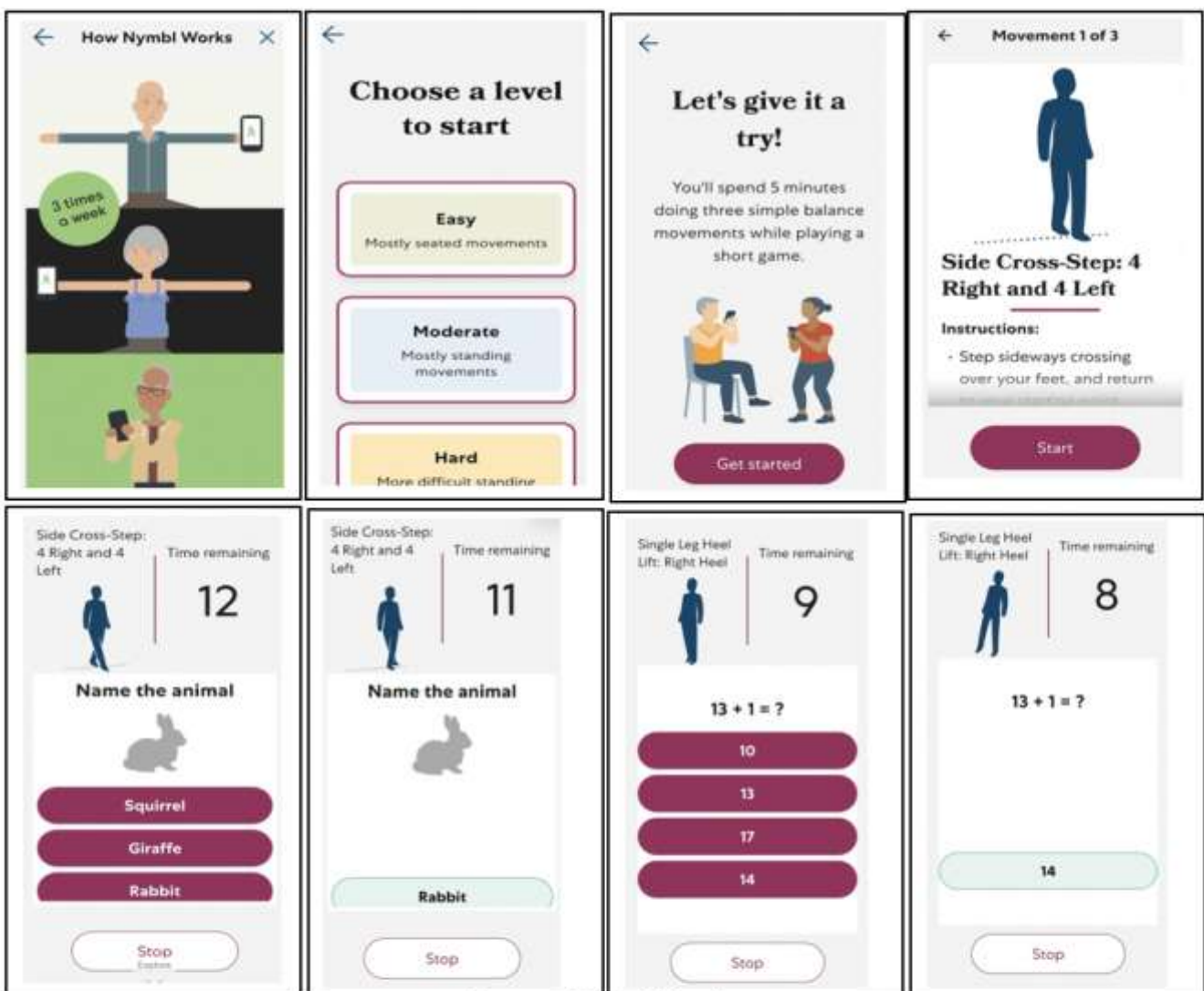


## Let's get Nymbi



**Nymbi**, is the number one app for **Better Balance and Healthy Ageing**. A common myth is that balance mostly relies on strength, but balance is more about your brain. Most falls happen when we're distracted. That's why **Nymbi**, focusses on the brain aspect of balance by having you play fun brain games while doing light movements. This approach is called dual tasking. Dual tasking means moving while using your brain. This reconnects your brain and body to help you avoid future falls. When you're doing your movements, don't worry too much about your form.

It does not need to be perfect. The key is moving while focusing on the game on your phone or tablet. Beyond physical benefits, the platform aims to enhance **quality of life** by reducing the fear of falling and providing health plans with a scalable way to improve member satisfaction and retention. In **New Zealand ACC** offers the **Nymbi** app for free to seniors to promote long-term independence.



### Progress Through Levels:

Nymbi has six seated levels. To move to the next level, you must complete at least three sessions within a seven-day period, with at least 80% of each session completed.

**Reach the Top Seated Level:** Once you reach the highest seated level (Level 6), Nymbi initiates a safeguard for high-risk users to prevent "inadvertent graduation" to standing exercises.

**The Checkpoint:** When you reach this peak, you will be sent a support email asking if you feel confident enough to move on to standing exercises or if you would prefer to remain seated.

**Manual Override:** Depending on your response via email or phone, you will either cycle through the seated levels again or be manually promoted by customer support to the first standing level,

## Kate's Take continued ...

### Research shows how Nymbi can help reduce falls

ACC injury prevention leader James Whitaker says Nymbi can play a key role in improving the balance of older New Zealanders.

"By investing 10 minutes a day, a few times a week, in the comfort of your own home, you can improve your balance and maintain your independence and confidence," he says.

"Research shows falls often happen when a person is distracted. It also shows using Nymbi can improve a person's balance by up to 30 per cent.

ACC ran a pilot for Nymbi from August 2020 to September 2021. More than 15,000 people aged 55 years and over registered with the trial.

Those initial Nymbi users completed around 300,000 training sessions and over 100,000 education sessions. Nearly 90 per cent of users said they were likely to recommend the Nymbi balance training programme to a friend.

Further research shows 71 per cent of Nymbi users who used the app for 21 days have improved their 30-second sit-to-stand balance test".

### **Why is the 30-Second Sit-to-Stand Test so important?**

It is a common clinical assessment used to measure lower-body strength and endurance. It is particularly prevalent in physical therapy and geriatric care because it mimics a functional movement people perform every day.

### **How the Test is Performed?**

The setup is simple and requires only a chair (with a flat back and no armrests) and a timer.

- **Starting Position:** The individual sits in the middle of the chair with feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart. Arms are crossed over chest. (Place the chair against a wall to prevent it slipping).
- **The Action:** On the signal "Go," the person rises to a full standing position and then sits back down completely.
- **The Goal:** Complete as many full stands as possible within 30 seconds.
- **Scoring:** If the person is more than halfway up when the timer stops, it counts as a full stand.



Physiopedia

### **30 SECOND SIT TO STAND BALANCE TEST**

Women	Age Group	Men
AVERAGE SCORE		AVERAGE SCORE
12	60-64	14
11	65-69	12
10	70-74	12
10	75-79	11
9	80-84	10
8	85-89	8
4	90-94	7

### **What the Results Indicate**

The test is a reliable proxy for several key health markers:

- **Functional Lower-Body Strength:** It specifically targets the quadriceps, glutes, and hamstrings.
- **Balance and Stability:** Because the test requires rapid transitions without using arms for support, it highlights the body's ability to maintain equilibrium.
- **Fall Risk:** Scores that fall below age-matched norms are often used as a primary indicator of a higher risk for falls.
- **Cardiovascular Response:** While primarily a strength test, the repetitive nature over 30 seconds can offer a glimpse into muscular endurance.

In 2022, around 172,000 people aged 65 and over had a fall-related ACC claim. That's 22 per cent of that age group. Every year, one in three people over 65 injure themselves in a fall, rising to one in two once they reach 80. Often falls occur during night time trips to the bathroom. Nymbi also has a section on bladder control to help reduce those night time disturbances in "The Wee Small Hours of the Morning".

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## Kate's Take continued ...

### KEEPING THE PEACE



Senior Constable  
Craig Hammonds

A big thank you to Senior Constable Craig Hammonds for his enthusiastic and engaging talk about his work as a police officer over the past 20 years. He provided a brief overview of his early days in the force and the various roles he has undertaken throughout his career.

He began as a frontline responder, one of the officers who attend emergencies when you dial 111. In this role, he dealt with a wide range of incidents, including car crashes and domestic situations. Craig later served as a community constable in Pakuranga, worked in the Traffic Department, and was a security officer for former Prime Minister John Key. He spent a short time in Beachlands and is now one of six community police officers based in Howick, all dedicated to serving the local community.

The sergeant at the Cook Street Police Station has served as a police officer for over 40 years, while the other members of the team each have at least 18 years' experience. This provides a significant depth of knowledge and expertise to draw upon.

The Howick Police Station can be found at 76 Cook St, Howick and is open for drop-in visits on a Monday and Thursday, from 8am to 4pm.



Howick Police Station, 76 Cook St

Craig noted that he is often asked whether Howick is a safe place to live. He reassured us that, overall, it is, but emphasised the importance of remaining vigilant and keeping doors locked, as many thefts are opportunistic.

He advised not leaving garage doors open and ensuring that, even when at home, back doors are locked and any open windows are secured with restrictors, particularly when working in another part of the property.

As many of us are at home during the day, he encouraged us to stay alert to anything out of the ordinary. If you witness a crime in progress, call 111. For non-urgent concerns, such as suspicious behaviour or unusual vehicles, note details like number plates and report them to Police on 105.

You can dial \*555 free from a mobile phone to report road incidents that are urgent but not life-threatening, such as non-injury crashes, traffic congestion, breakdowns, or obstructions on the highway. Your call will go through to a Police Communications Centre. It will be treated as a lower priority than 111 calls.

It's important to note that \*555 only works from a mobile phone, not a landline. You can also use this number to report non-urgent cases of poor driving where you do not wish the driver to be prosecuted. To help Police process your report, be ready to provide the vehicle's registration number, as well as its make and colour.



Craig also recommended the free mobile app Snap Send Solve. Available in both Australia and New Zealand, the app allows residents to quickly report local non-emergency problems, such as potholes, graffiti, or broken streetlights, to the appropriate authority.

The app acts as a convenient middleman, so you don't need to work out whether the issue belongs to the local council, a water utility, or a telecommunications company. It directs the report to the right place for you.

### The app breaks the reporting process down into 3 simple steps—just as the name suggests:

**Snap:** Take a photo of the issue on your smartphone. The app automatically uses GPS to capture the location.

**Send:** Choose the type of problem (for example, a damaged footpath or rubbish). The app works out which organisation is responsible and sends them your report, including the photo, location, and your contact details.

**Solve:** The authority receives the report, logs it, and follows it up. You can track its progress in the app and will often be notified when the issue has been resolved.

Even if you are unsure of the exact address, the app uses GPS or photo data to locate the problem. It works with councils throughout Australia and New Zealand, along with major providers such as telecommunications, water, and power companies.

If you are short on time or do not have a signal, you can simply take the photo and complete the report later from home.

## Kate's Take continued ...

Craig also warned us to be alert to mobile phone scams, which are becoming increasingly common.

### Text/Message scams include:

**Parcel delivery scams:** Messages claiming a courier missed a delivery, asking you to click a link or pay a fee.

**Toll payment scams:** Texts stating you have unpaid tolls—always verify via the official website.

**Banking/fraud alerts:** Messages pretending to be from your bank about “unusual activity,” directing you to a fake login page.

**Government/IRD scams:** Fraudsters posing as government agencies, claiming you owe money or face penalties.

**Voicemail scams:** Messages with links to “unread voicemail” that actually install malware—delete without clicking.

### Phone call scams include:

**Bank impersonation:** Callers claiming fraudulent activity and asking for PINs or transfers to a “safe account.” Banks will never ask for your PIN or password.

**Tech support scams:** Callers posing as well-known companies, claiming your device has issues and requesting remote access.

**“One ring” scams:** Missed calls from international numbers designed to prompt costly call-backs.

**Emergency scams:** Callers pretending to be family members in urgent need of money.

### Common warning signs:

**A sense of urgency or pressure** to act immediately.

**Requests for unusual payment methods** (e.g. gift cards, wire transfers, cryptocurrency).

**Unsolicited contact** asking for personal information.

**Too good to be true offers** -prizes or money you didn't enter to win.

## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

**Hang up and verify:** If you receive a suspicious call, end it and contact the organisation directly using an official number from their website or your bank card.

**Check contact details:** Look closely at phone numbers and email addresses for anything unusual, including unfamiliar international codes.

**Avoid clicking links:** Do not click on links in unexpected texts or emails.

**Report it:** Report scam calls and messages to your mobile provider or to official agencies such as CERT NZ or Netsafe.

### Equipment carried on vest and belt of a Community Constable

**Core Duty Gear (On Person).** With stab proof inserts the vest weighs 15Kgs.

**Radio:** Tait P25 digital encrypted radio for communication with district command centres.

**Smartphone:** Apple iPhones running police-specific applications.

**Body-Worn Camera:** Used to capture evidence and enhance transparency.

**Taser:** Electronic incapacitation device. The present taser devices have two shots.

**Defensive Tools:** Pepper spray (OC spray) and a baton.

**Restraints:** Handcuffs, Craig carries two pairs one to his front one to his back

**Body Armour:** Stab-resistant vests are worn, often featuring high-visibility panels.

**Torch:** High-powered LED torch for low-light situations.

**Other:** Keys, gloves, and basic first aid items.

Craig also gave us information in the event that we find an emergency responder behind us on the road. Move to the left and only edge out into a controlled red light junction if it is safe to do so with your hazard lights on.



Paraphernalia carried by police on their person

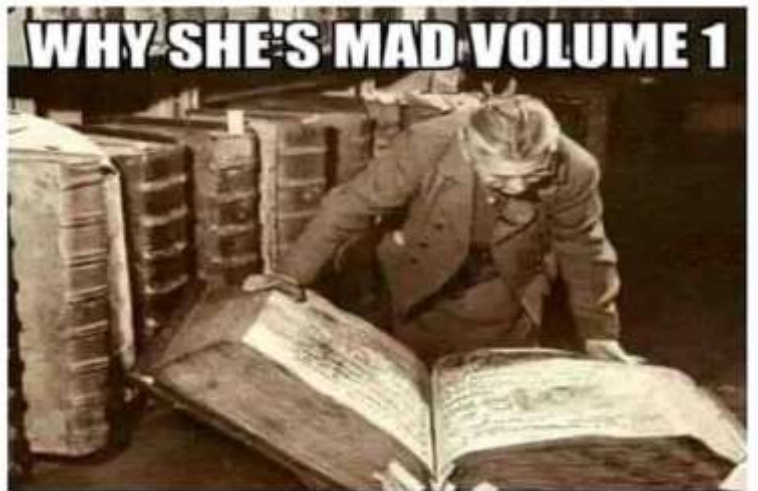
Taser

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**COMMITTEE**

- Chairman** Brian Erikson  
[brian@senspak.nz](mailto:brian@senspak.nz)
- Treasurer** Mervyn Coward  
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- Secretary** Dawn Howarth  
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- Newsletter Editor** Dawn Howarth  
[dawn@senspak.nz](mailto:dawn@senspak.nz)

**She said she missed me. Normally that would be good, but she's reloading.**



There really was a time



when men drove in peace



## COURSE TIMETABLES, HELP DAYS AND COURSE BOOKING INFORMATION

To view all SeniorNet courses and timetable, click here

<http://www.senpak.nz/courses/>

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Tuesday	5th	1pm
Wednesday	13th	10am
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NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY



A Letter to the Editor in the NZ Herald this week:

#### ***Diesel and Water***

***I bought diesel at BP Kapiti on the weekend for \$3.74 a litre.***

***I also bought a 750ml bottle of Pump water for \$3.99.***

***It's a topsy-turvy world.***

***The price of gas is almost as much as water.***

***Jules Riding, Waikanae***

How shocking and true is that !

## Ramblings

Dawn Howarth

Another busy month has flown by. I saw a sticker recently that said "*The older you get the more you appreciate being at home doing absolutely nothing.*" Oh how I agree with that and Oh how I wish I could try it out. I should be grateful I am fit and healthy enough to be busy. In fact one day this week I was wide awake really early (5am) and decided to get up at 6am and read the paper at leisure. So I dressed, made breakfast and sat down with the Herald for a good long read. Then when I looked at my watch and it was 20past so I rushed around, grabbed my gear and raced over to the pool for my 9am aquarobics class. The trouble was when I arrived I discovered it was only 7.30, I was an hour early. So for the first time in probably 15 years, I swam 40 lengths (1 kilometre) before my class started. I was so surprised, I didn't think I could do that any more. My regular 6-8 lengths usually puffs me out. Believe me I was chuffed, then I did my class and that night I had the best sleep I have had in years. Maybe exercise is the best sleeping pill.

Keep smiling, keep coming to our meetings and sweet dreams to you all.

WAIVER: Some of our members voluntarily and willingly give help and advice to other members on matters relating to computers, associated equipment and software. This includes information contained in the columns of this newsletter and other publications including our SeniorNet Website. This help or advice is taken solely at the recipient's risk and imposes no responsibility or liability of any kind, either on those providing such help or advice, or the newsletter Editors or SeniorNet (Pakuranga) Inc.