

Background document

Safer Walking – a background

The Safer Walking Partnership Framework (Framework) was developed by a group of stakeholders brought together by the New Zealand Search and Rescue Secretariat (NZSAR) in response to the growing number of Search and Rescue Operations for people with cognitive impairment who go missing in Aotearoa New Zealand, some with sad outcomes. The purpose of developing the Framework in 2013 was “to enhance connectivity and awareness of the ‘safer walking’ (known by SAR agencies as ‘wander’) sector in order to achieve greater alignment and coordination in the support and provision of services for people with cognitive impairment who potentially and actually get lost or go missing”. Through a person at-risk centric approach, the Safer Walking Partnership Framework seeks to coordinate activities across stakeholder agencies to continually improve coordination, cooperation and collaboration so that the risks to the person at the centre are identified, assessed and mitigated as best they can (reasonably practicable).

Through the work of the stakeholders, different goals were identified and incorporated into the framework, and resources developed to support messaging to individuals, whānau, the community, caregivers and community organisations.

The current framework document can be viewed [here](#). This was reviewed and updated by the stakeholders in 2020.

Why Safer Walking?

Some people living with cognitive impairment in Aotearoa New Zealand are at risk of getting lost or going missing whilst out and about. The messages of the safer walking initiative supports different ideas, tools and strategies that can be tried to reduce the risk, while enabling personal freedom to live a healthy active life in the community.

Who are the stakeholders in the Reference Group?

Numerous organisations have an interest in enabling safer outcomes within their respective organisations and communities. These are made up of different disability organisations, older persons’ organisations, government organisations and industry bodies, and emergency, safety, rescue and prevention services.

New Zealand Land Search and Rescue oversees the initiative and facilitates stakeholder group activities. As a stakeholder group, all entities are collectively responsible for equipping their respective communities with proactive tools to gain independence, maintain personal freedoms and remain socially active.

How do I learn more about Safer Walking?

Check out the website saferwalking.nz.