

# NZiRA NewZ

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## From the director

For many people mid-August signals the start of the white-baiting season, when the mind turns to seeking out a promising “possie” by the river, pouring over tide tables and looking forward to a tasty feed after many hours of patient toil.

Researchers share parallel experiences, but for them this is the start of the research funding applications season. They must “position” themselves in the “market”; form alliances and look over their shoulders for possible competitors; study in detail the rules and regulations (“investment signals”) of funding bodies. Like the white-baiters, after a long period of anticipation they may achieve a bountiful feast, a few small crumbs (or wriggling fishes) or – more often than we care to contemplate – no returns at all.



**NZiRA Director Judith Davey**

NZiRA is well into planning for research applications this year and is leaving no stone unturned in its quest for public and private sector funders. We believe we have the right stuff and, true to NZiRA’s objectives, we are developing collaborations with other researchers throughout the country. We also think we have some good ideas. These have arisen from our discussions with network members and other contacts out there in the community. NZiRA also aims to be user-oriented and for its research to be relevant and useful in the real world, so your involvement in choosing research topics and designing the projects is essential. Once we have submitted our proposals, collective finger-crossing by all NZiRA supporters might just help!

## Life at 85 plus: A Statistical Review

“Life at 85 plus”, a companion volume to the bibliography “Ageing Aotearoa” will be launched at Parliament by Hon. Lianne Dalziel, Minister for Senior Citizens, on 4 September.

This monograph brings together statistical information, at the national level, on people aged 85 and over in New Zealand, from a wide range of sources. It is packed with facts, figures and graphs, and should be a useful reference for older people, interest groups and voluntary organisations. The final chapter features “Mrs.A” a typical 85-year old New Zealander, who is average in almost every way.

We acknowledge the help of the Office for Senior Citizens (formerly Senior Citizens Unit) in the production of the monograph and the consideration of the Minister in hosting the launch. Please contact NZiRA to obtain a free copy after the release date.

## NZiRA/TOWER Seminar Series 2002

*2020 – What will New Zealand look like when half the population is over 40?*



By the time you receive this newsletter, the seminar series will be under way. We hope for good support and have been working on our publicity. Many thanks to Naomi Trigg for her voluntary efforts. For network members outside Wellington, or unable to get to the seminars, we expect there will be interviews with the speakers on successive Monday afternoons from now on, on the National Programme about 3 pm.

We have added a fifth seminar, by Alan Bollard, Secretary to the Treasury, who will give us some ideas of how we might foot the bill when half the population is over 40.

**Many thanks again to our sponsors - TOWER Ltd., Executive Caterers and Festival Hire**

**Time:** 6 pm (refreshments) 6.30 to 8 pm – presentation, questions and discussion

**Place:** Law School Annexe lecture theatre, (behind) Old Government Buildings, Wellington

### Topics and Speakers

August 19 Elizabeth McLeay,  
Associate Professor of Political Science, Victoria University  
*'Imagining Politics'*

August 26 Ernst Zollner,  
Manager, Urban Development, Wellington City Council  
*'Living in the city'*

September 2 Peter Biggs,  
Managing Director of advertising agency Clemenger BBDO  
and Chair of Creative New Zealand  
*'Shifting the focus?'*

September 9 Trudie McNaughton,  
CEO, Equal Employment Opportunities Trust  
*'Valuing Older Workers'*

September 16 Alan Bollard,  
Secretary to the Treasury  
*"Economic Opportunities and Fiscal Costs"*

*You can hear the speakers chat with Wayne Mowatt on National radio around 3pm each Monday of the series*

## Out and about

### **JIAM Local Government Training Course**

On 11 July, Judith gave a presentation to a group of 40 Japanese local government officials attending a training course in New Zealand. This was organized through Local Government New Zealand and may be an ongoing event. One stream of the programme was concerned with ageing, but Judith was asked to discuss the five main social policy challenges for New Zealand in the future. These were –

- Ageing and provision of adequate retirement income support to a growing older population
- Preparing for ageing by preserving and enhancing the human capital of people now in mid-life.
- Making sure that the unpaid caring work needed for the continuation of society is done
- Growth in income disparities
- Coping with increasing ethnic diversity.

It was quite a challenge, working through an interpreter, which did not allow any divergence from the prepared text. The questions were also challenging, like – “What would have happened if the Labour Government had not undertaken economic reform in the late 1980s?”

### **Work and Education in Mid Life – A meeting called by NZiRA and the Third Age Trust**

On 26 July, at the Canterbury Development Corporation offices in Christchurch, a group of 25 people, representing 14 different organisations, and hailing from Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland, met to discuss work and education in mid-life. The representation, plus expressions of interest from people unable to attend, testifies to significant interest in the topic.

This is based on the argument that considerable benefit could be derived from research on the circumstances of New Zealanders in mid life (roughly 45 to 70), especially with respect to their activities in paid work, education and training. Such research would assist, at the individual level, in giving people better choices in mid-life, tackling age discrimination and improving standards of living for people in their older years. It would have benefits for employers and for the economy in general in making better use of human capital (especially given that half the workforce is now aged 40 or over). It would also contribute positively in policy terms as we tackle the challenges of an ageing population.

NZiRA is now working on proposals for research arising from this meeting, in close collaboration with the other participants. This may be an idea whose time has come!

### **Widows and Widowers' Association**

Our congratulations to the Widow and Widowers Association on their Silver Jubilee. Susan spoke at the AGM/ Conference of this organisation, on Saturday 3 August. There are currently 17 branches around New Zealand which make representations about the needs of widowed people and offer support.

### **News Snippets**

NZiRA has a new full-colour brochure.

The second Applied Research Centre (after NZiRA) to be launched by Victoria University is the Crime and Justice Research Centre. This was launched by the Governor-General on 12 August. We wish CJRC well.

## Creative Ageing

The RSA (Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers & Commerce) in New Zealand, in association with NZiRA, held a workshop on Creative Ageing on 13 July, with about 35 people attending – many of them NZiRA network members. Judith Davey gave the keynote address, leading into small group and general discussion, which was wide ranging and animated. The groups drew up highly imaginative (and creative) diagrams, flow-charts and illustrations to show what Creative Ageing might be and how we might work towards it in our personal and social lives. There were a myriad of suggestions and bright ideas.

Judith's paper and a summary of the workshop output are now under discussion by the RSA and workshop participants. This discussion is taking the form of an internet-based "wiki" – thanks to the sponsorship of Red Spider, an IT engineering firm. Participants in the wiki are able to contribute their ideas to an evolving document and this will ultimately produce suggestions for action, including further meetings.

If you are interested in further information, please contact Anne Wicks - [awicks@clear.net.nz](mailto:awicks@clear.net.nz) or Alison MacDonald – [alimac@ihug.co.nz](mailto:alimac@ihug.co.nz)

## Judith's Statistical Snippets

### *Life at 85 plus -Why should we be interested in the older-old?*

There are three main reasons. Firstly, as I noted in a previous newsletter, within the older population, it is the age group 85 years and over which has the highest growth rates. Population projections indicate that by 2051 there will be 290,000 people aged over 85 years – a six-fold increase over 1999.

Secondly, it is important to differentiate within the population aged 65 and over. This age group easily covers more than one generation. The oldest people alive today were born around 1900; those now aged 65 were born in 1937 and could well be the children of the oldest. Frequently a distinction is made between the "young-old" or "Third Agers", from 65 up to 75 or 80, who tend to be healthy, active and involved in a variety of activities - unpaid work, sport and recreation and family life (including care of grand-children). Assumptions are often made that from age 80 or 85, health and the capacity for independent living will decline, that disability and the need for care will increase – the so-called "Fourth Age".

A third reason for exploring information on very old people links to the social policy implications of population ageing. No estimates have yet been made of the total costs of supporting people 85 plus (or of population ageing in general) to the New Zealand economy. Nor have the benefits been assessed, in terms of their contribution to society. However, the older population undoubtedly makes significant demands on public revenues and these demands can only grow. The two main implications for central government are increased demands for retirement income support and for health and other aged-related care services.

*For more on New Zealanders over 85, don't forget NZiRA's new publication—see the front page*