

NZiRA NewZ

Inside this issue:

From the director	1
Deputy director	1
Seminar series	2
Life at 85 Plus	2
Out and about	3
Statistical snippets	4

From the director

At the time I last wrote for the NZiRA newsletter, we were beginning in earnest to prepare research proposals for funding rounds closing round about now. The time is past when researchers could immerse themselves in their offices and emerge with completed proposals. In these days of multi-disciplinary and collaborative work, the proposal round involves a period of intensive networking as researchers seek partners and groups form and re-form. In addition, proposals need to demonstrate the “buy-in” of “end-users”, as the jargon goes. This requires another round of networking to seek support and comment. One colleague likened it all to a “dance”. If so, it seems as though we have been trying to bring together a somewhat chaotic eightsome reel! The writing of the proposal itself becomes a relatively minor part of the process. There is also a mass of bureaucratic procedures to cope with. In one of our proposals – 23 pages long – only 400 words were devoted to what the actual research would be!



NZiRA Director Judith Davey

However, in many ways NZiRA is well placed for the networking process. Consistent with its aims to increase and enhance multidisciplinary research, promote collaboration and communicate research findings, the institute has developed an excellent network of contacts, which is now standing it in good stead. We certainly appreciate the interest and support of network members and enjoy hearing from you.

At the end of October I will be seeking new contacts, and hopefully research collaborators, in Australia. After attending the “Maturity Matters” International Federation on Ageing Conference in Perth, I will be calling at Adelaide, Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney and visiting research centres working on ageing there. I look forward to reporting back to you in the next NZiRA news.

A major project for the Deputy Director



Susan is taking maternity leave and her baby is due on October 23. However, she will not be excused from contributing to research proposals just yet! She has continued to work tirelessly and cheerfully for the institute throughout her pregnancy and seriously deserves a rest. We wish Susan and John all the best for the new arrival – the NZiRA network expands yet again!

NZiRA/TOWER Seminar Series

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

The seminar series was a great success and well received, from what we have heard. This was despite some changes to the original schedule of speakers. Each Monday afternoon just prior to the seminars, the speakers were interviewed on Wayne Mowat's National Programme radio show "In Touch with New Zealand". Some of you may have heard the broadcasts. They were a way of extending the messages of the seminars well beyond those who could attend in the evening. On the Monday following the last seminar Judith Davey was interviewed and talked about NZiRA and its activities and implications for the future in an ageing society.



We are delighted by the news that TOWER are willing to extend their sponsorship to the 2003 series, so we can go ahead with our planning. A suggested topic is –

What's Positive about Ageing?

This would highlight the positive aspects of growing older such as starting new ventures (from a position of greater experience), re-skilling or changing careers, taking up voluntary work, becoming a grandparent, step-grandparent or great-grand-parenting, not to mention hopefully having more time for reflection, reminiscence, recreation and life review.

We welcome comments and ideas from network members about the next seminar series. Are there other topics of interest? Other speakers you would like to hear? How was the venue, time of day, length of the series, for you? What might encourage greater attendance? How could we extend to new audiences?

Summaries of the five seminar presentations will be available very soon on the NZiRA web-site, if you would like to be reminded of the content or if you missed some or all of them.

Many thanks again to our 2002 sponsors - TOWER Ltd., Executive Caterers and Festival Hire – and also to our wonderful speakers, especially those who substituted at short notice.

Life at 85 plus: A Statistical Review

"Life at 85 plus: A Statistical Review", a companion volume to the bibliography "Ageing Aotearoa" was launched in the Great Hall at Parliament by Hon. Lianne Dalziel, Minister for Senior Citizens, on 4 September. We are very grateful to the Minister for this service and for hosting the launch.

We acknowledge the help of the Office for Senior Citizens (formerly Senior Citizens Unit) in the production of the monograph, so that we are able to distribute copies at no charge.

Since then there has been a steady demand for copies of "Life at 85 plus", but we still have plenty in stock, so please let us know if you need more or can think of people or organizations to whom it would be of interest. We can also supply copies of the bibliography.

We hope soon to have on-line book ordering through the NZiRA web-site.

The NZiRA / TOWER seminar series will be back in 2003!

Out and about

Disability Support Services and Health of Older People Scoping Study

Judith has been a member of an advisory group for a scoping study on what the devolution of disability support services would mean for District Health Boards, especially for services for older people with disabilities in their districts. The Wellington School of Medicine and Health Sciences Public Health Consultancy was commissioned to carry this out on behalf of a consortium of 14 DHBs. This report of the study identifies issues that are likely to arise from the devolution of planning and funding for DSS and identifies what further work may be needed to prepare DHBs for devolution.

Hutt Valley District Health Board, Health of Older People Strategy Planning Day, September 18

The purpose of the day was to focus on the needs of the older population in the Hutt Valley DHB's region, and how it might plan for the future. Judith was one of the introductory speakers and talked about the work of NZiRA and the findings of "Life at 85 plus".

This sort of contact not only raises the profile of NZiRA but is also a valuable two-way learning experience, allowing researchers to get to know more about the experience of those working at the grass roots.

International Federation on Ageing Conference - "Maturity Matters" Perth, October 27-30

Judith will be presenting two papers at this conference. Here are the abstracts –

University Study in Retirement – How can it contribute to quality of life?

The emphasis on Positive Ageing is part of a movement to counter disengagement theories and negative views of ageing and later life. Hence a considerable amount of effort, both in the research and policy sectors, has been directed towards asking how the quality of older peoples' lives can be enhanced. Related to this is the maintenance of positive self-identity, balancing continuity with the successful transition to new social roles in later life. Identity, quality of life and well-being are all difficult to define and measure, but it is important that more is known about these concepts from the perspective of older people themselves.

These ideas were explored in interviews with 21 retired people aged 60 or over who were registered as students at Victoria University of Wellington in late 1999. The study is part of the *Education in Mid and Later Life* research project which included all students aged 40-plus at the university and produced a database of information from nearly 1000 replies. The interviews, supplemented by information from the wider survey, provided information on how university study fitted into retirement and what impact it had on quality of life, well-being and identity. The results show that educational participation can indeed contribute to the enhancement of life after retirement.

Ageing in Place – What factors influence the ability of older people to remain in their own homes?

The promotion of independence and ageing "in place" are central to the concept of Positive Ageing. Even in very late life, the majority of people live in their own homes, and want to remain there for as long as possible. Entry into residential care is frequently equated with loss of independence - defined in a variety of ways. Ageing "in place" is also fundamental for policy and practice regarding older people in many countries, in-

Out and about continued

(Continued from page 3)

cluding New Zealand, as recognised in the government's Positive Ageing Strategy. However, we need to know more about the factors that determine the ability of older people to maintain their independence and exercise choice in their lifestyles.

A step towards this understanding is to draw up a social and economic profile of very old people in their own homes, comparing them to other relevant groups. The paper shows how New Zealanders aged 85 and over, living in their own homes, differ from those aged 65 to 74 and 75 to 84 and from people of the same age living in residential care. Comparisons are made with the situation of older people in Britain and Australia. This type of analysis allows us to explore concepts such as well-being, quality of life, independence and the determinants of positive ageing and is relevant to both policy development and to planning for an ageing society by public, private and voluntary sector bodies.

Judith's Statistical Snippets – Regional

Can you guess which territorial authorities in New Zealand have the highest concentrations of people aged 65 and over? As shown in the table below, they are either the retirement districts for Auckland and Wellington or farming areas in the south of the South Island.

Territorial authorities with the largest percentages of older people: 2001

Territorial authority	Percent of population 65+
Kapiti Coast District	22.5
Thames-Coromandel District	19.5
Waitaki District	19.2
Horowhenua District	18.8
Waimate District	17.7
Timaru District	17.7
Central Otago District	17.4
Tauranga District	17.3
Ashburton District	16.7
Wanganui District	16.1

Source: Statistics New Zealand, Census of Population and Dwellings 2001

The number of older people living in each District Health Board region varies considerably, reflecting the relative population size in the board regions, with Canterbury DHB having the highest number of people aged 65 and over (58,200), closely followed by Waitemata (48,700), Auckland (39,500), Waikato (37,500), and Counties-Manukau (34,500).

There is considerable variation between District Health Boards in the percentage of people aged 85 and over who are living in institutional accommodation. The New Zealand figure is 28.6%, but the highest rates are for Taranaki, Canterbury and Auckland – all over 32%. The lowest are for Tairāwhiti and Waitemata, - under 25%. It makes you wonder what lies behind these differences.