

NZiRA NewZ

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From the director

As the first year of NZiRA's formal existence draws to an end and as I draft the first Annual Report, it is a time to appreciate and to thank everyone who has helped to make 2002 a very auspicious beginning for the institute. I thank the Advisory Board for their support, for their ideas and their work behind the scenes to make NZiRA's activities so successful. I thank my colleagues at the university for their contribution and for always having a sympathetic ear. Susan Gee has been the first and foremost among these, and she has been well and truly missed of late, although I understand that NZiRA cannot possibly compete for her attention with a very small boy called Benjamin! During the year, Josie Roberts, Sue Missen and Katie Nimmo have acted as research assistants on several projects and have been wonderful people to have around as well as most efficient researchers.



NZiRA Director Judith Davey

Thank you to all NZiRA's friends, supporters and network members for your support and interest – we need you all and without you the institute would be meaningless. Have a very happy holiday and a refreshing summer break. Celebrate Christmas, New Year, Summer Solstice or whatever you wish. NZiRA will be back in 2003 with another programme in tune with its objectives to promote research and understanding about ageing, to inform public awareness, practice, and policy. We have plans for another TOWER fellowship, a seminar series, research projects and publications.

Watch this space!

Judith Davey

NZiRA/TOWER Seminar Series 2002



We have had numerous enquiries about the presentations. Summaries of the five seminars are now available on the NZiRA web-site – www.vuw.ac.nz/ageing-institute - along with Trudie McNaughton's and Grant Scobie's Powerpoint slides. Thanks to these speakers for making their presentations available and to Di Oliver- Zahl for her seminar notes.

The Director's Visit to Australia, Oct, Nov

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

Judith Davey presented two papers at the conference - *University Study in Retirement – How can it contribute to quality of life?* in the Education, Employment and Training stream, and - *Ageing in Place – What factors influence the ability of older people to remain in their own homes?* - in the Policy stream. These were well received and produced several requests for further information. The conference provided an opportunity to publicise the work of NZiRA and to distribute its publications. There was a stream of papers on older workers, which were of interest, given NZiRA's developing interest in mid-life issues.



Material from the IFA Conference will be extremely useful in the ongoing work of NZiRA. Plenary sessions included speakers from the International Federation on Ageing, WHO and World Bank as well as state and federal ministers, senior academics and leaders of international and national NGOs. The Perth Conference was also extremely useful for making contact with researchers in Australia.

Visits in Australian state capitals

PERTH

As well as the IFA Conference, Perth provided the opportunity to meet Dr. Penny Flett, CEO of Brightwater, a non-profit group providing residential and community-based care for elderly people and those with disabilities, in 18 different locations in metropolitan Perth. This developed from the Homes of Peace, established in 1902, and exemplifies the change from large institutions to decentralized and diversified service provision with strong community connections.

Judith also met with Rhonda Parker, CEO of the Positive Ageing Foundation of Australia, which developed from the Positive Ageing Centre and is now expanding nation-wide and undertaking international work with the WHO. The foundation has a research agenda, using a panel of over 4500 volunteer participants, and supports community projects such as internet lounges for seniors, intergenerational, recreation and exercise programmes. Many of these ideas could be useful in the New Zealand context.

ADELAIDE

The Centre for Ageing Studies is a joint enterprise of Flinders University and the University of South Australia. This is exemplified in the position of Professor Gary Andrews, who is Director of CAS and also the first professor of ageing at the University of South Australia. Judith had discussions with Professor Andrews, with Professor Mary Luszcz, the deputy director, and other staff of the centre. She spoke at a seminar hosted by the South Australian Healthy Ageing Cluster and attended a further meeting - *Beyond the Blues: New Developments in Managing Depression for Older People*, arranged by the South Australia /Northern Territory branch of the Australian Association of Gerontology. Dr. Rob Ranzijn is president of the branch and supported New Zealand/Australian collaboration for the next AAG conference in Tasmania in 2003.

MELBOURNE

While in Melbourne Judith spent some time at the National Ageing Research Institute, which is associated with the University of Melbourne and met the new Director, Professor Allan McLean, the Deputy-Director Associate Professor Zeinab Khalil and members of the board. It was, coincidentally, the occasion of NARI's 25th AGM. Judith also had discussions with the public health group, led by Dr. Keith Hill, and gave a seminar to institute staff and invited guests.

The Lincoln Gerontology Centre at La Trobe University has interests similar to those of NZiRA, examining the social and economic implications of population ageing. The staff are mainly psychologists and social scientists, with interests in service evaluation - Associate Professor Peter Foreman, Director of the LGC; employment of older workers - Dr. Libby Brooks; health and well-being impacts of retirement - Dr. Yvonne Wells and centenarians and super-centenarians - Dr. John McCormack.

A further very useful contact in Melbourne was Anna Howe, now an international consultant on aged care and ageing issues. On the basis of her experience, she offered valuable advice on the development of NZiRA and also encouraged New Zealand /Australian cooperation through conferences and joint research.

BRISBANE

Professor Helen Bartlett, Director of the Australasian Centre on Ageing at the University of Queensland facilitated meetings in Brisbane with university staff, state government officials and people from non-governmental organizations. At the ACA itself, Judith Davey was able to discuss research with Helen Bartlett (the influence of research on policy-making, social isolation), with Dr. Cheryl Tilse and Dr. Deborah Setterland (asset management and financial abuse of older people) as well as meeting other staff members.

The Queensland Government maintains a Seniors Interests Unit within the Department of Families. The Manager, Peta Jervis and Policy Officer, Cheryl Hastie, explained the work of the unit and Cheryl's work on rental retirement villages, a new development about which there is some concern.

Recent changes in the NGO sector in Australia are exemplified by the coming-together of the Councils on the Ageing (in each state) and the National Seniors Association. Judith discussed the implications of this at a meeting with Ruth Batty of the NSA and Mark Tucker-Evans Executive Director of COTA (Queensland). This merger will produce a formidable lobby for older people with respect to state and commonwealth governments as well as the potential for extended service provision and concessions. Yvonne Zardani, state secretary of the Pensioners and Superannuants' League expanded on her organisation's grass-roots activity and political lobbying.

SYDNEY

Professor John McCallum, Dean of Social and Health Sciences at the University of Western Sydney greatly assisted the Director's visits by arranging a lunch-time meeting with a variety of contacts. As a pleasant surprise this included Dr. Sally Keeling, in-coming President of the New Zealand Association of Gerontology (through Barbara Squires, current President of the Australian Association of Gerontology). Later Judith gave a seminar, arranged by Professor McCallum at UWS. This was attended by university staff from a range of disciplines, including engineering and aviation, as well as economics and the social sciences, and also visitors from as far afield as Canberra. The UWS also has a Centre for Elder Law. Sue Field is the Senior Research Assistant from the centre, based in Brisbane.

Australia continued

(Continued from page 3)

Macquarie University is setting up a centre for research on social inclusion. Dr. Michael Fine of the Department of Sociology is to be the deputy director, and also has research interests in social policy, social service provision and aged care. Dr. Fine and his colleagues are keen to promote collaboration with NZiRA. In Sydney, Judith also met with Emeritus Professor Sol Encel of the Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales, who is continuing his research on older workers and is himself a bright example for older academics.

These observations and discussions in Australia will continue to inform the activities of NZiRA. There is no doubt that some of the contacts made will blossom into research collaboration and trans-Tasman academic activities. If network members have special interests linked to the issues raised in this account, please e-mail Judith Davey.

Acknowledgements

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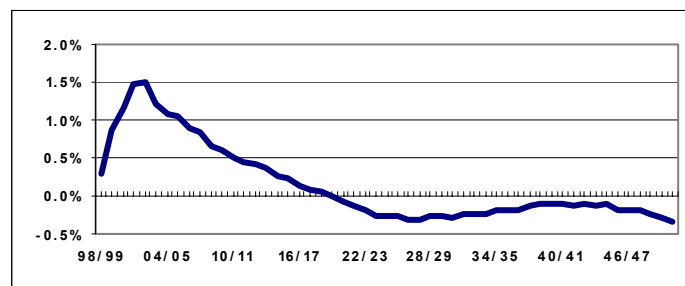
Other contacts, meetings and speaking

In addition to the speaking opportunities in Australia, the Director contributed a paper to a Ministry of Health health of older people provider workshop on December 3.

Statistical Snippets – Labour Shortages a concern?

In less than 20 years time, based on present assumptions about population change and participation in work, growth in the New Zealand labour force is expected to be negative. Figure 1 shows the trend as calculated by Treasury. Already we are facing labour and skill shortages.

Figure 1: Change in the New Zealand Labour Force, 1998-2049



Source: The Treasury

But, looking to past and current trends, there is a clear pattern of falling male participation (unemployed counted as part of labour force) and growing female participation in the age groups 40 plus, although female rates are well below those for men (Figure 2). In every age group from 40 onwards there is a lower proportion of men in the labour force now than was the case in 1961. Several questions arise. What is the situation of the growing proportion of men in mid and later life who are not in the workforce? Have they been discouraged by age discrimination, lack of re-training and further education opportunities and negative attitudes towards older workers? Why do people retire earlier when they are living longer? And, crucially, what part can be played by older workers in meeting the challenge of labour shortages?

Rather than suggesting that immigration or an increased birth-rate will provide the “fix”, a more promising option is to improve the human capacity we already have by maximizing the potential of older workers.

Figure 2: Participation in the Paid Labour Force – Ages 40 plus – Male and Female, 1961, 1981, 2001

