

NZiRA NewZ

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From the director

A New Year and the beginning of NZiRA's second year of existence as an Applied Research Centre of Victoria University! Despite the cliché, it is a time for looking back and for looking forward. You will all have seen our 2002 Annual Report by now, having received it by e-mail or through the post or having seen it on the web site (www.ac.nz/ageing-institute). Looking back even further, we remember the initial "launch" of what can now be seen as the campaign for NZiRA, in 2000, and the part played by Professor Ng and others. We feel proud of what we have accomplished and grateful to all those who have supported us. Among the latter have been the Hon Lianne Dalziel as Minister for Senior Citizens and Colin Blair as Retirement Commissioner. The new year has seen the appointment of the Hon Ruth Dyson as the new Minister for Senior Citizens and we look forward to working with her as closely and as successfully as with her predecessor. We wish both ministers well in their new roles. Diana Crossan has taken over from Colin Blair this month as the new Retirement Commissioner. We wish her also every success. Her office is another key contact for NZiRA, which we hope to sustain and develop further. I attended a farewell for Colin and was impressed at the accounts of all he has accomplished in a very difficult area of policy work, especially in terms of changing attitudes about retirement and ageing.



NZiRA Director Judith Davey

Our programme for 2003 is set out in this newsletter. In addition we will probably see changes in our Advisory Board membership as terms roll over and circumstances change. I hope it is not too late to wish all our NZiRA network members a very happy and successful 2003.

Judith Davey

TOWER fellow 2003



We are very happy to announce that the 2003 TOWER fellow will be Dr. Norah Keating, from the University of Alberta, Edmonton. Dr. Keating is a family gerontologist whose research is in family care giving and policies to support informal caregivers. She also has a longstanding interest in ageing in rural areas. We hope that this will be one of the themes of her presentations in New Zealand. She is actively involved in professional gerontology organizations and in policy consultations with Canadian federal government departments and other stakeholder agencies. She has degrees in psychology and family studies. Dr. Keating's visit will be in November.

Remember that summaries of the 2002 seminars are available on the NZiRA web-site – www.vuw.ac.nz/ageing-institute.

NZiRA/TOWER Seminar Series 2003 - Being Positive about Ageing

We are extremely grateful to TOWER for their ongoing sponsorship for another seminar series, which will take place in Wellington in May and June. This time we are looking at lunchtime sessions, but again in a downtown venue. The theme will be the positive aspects of ageing, with the exact title yet to be finalised. The seminars will look at the positive roles of older people in society as workers, volunteers, mentors, grand-parents, creative artists, sports-people and so on. We welcome suggestions for speakers.

Publication Programme



We are looking forward to several publications associated with NZiRA this year, including –

Two Decades of Social Change – From Birth to Death V, by Judith Davey, to be published by the Institute of Policy Studies. This is the latest in a series of social monitoring volumes, using a life-cycle framework. It will analyse social change in New Zealand over the 1981-2001 period based on national-level statistical series, especially the Cen-

sus of Population.

Living and Learning, edited by Judith Davey, Jenny Neale and Kay Morris Matthews, to be published by Victoria University Press. Each chapter presents the findings of an in-depth study of a group of people aged 40 and over who have been students at Victoria University. The groups include nurses, teachers, early school leavers, Maori and people over 60. This is the final stage of the *Education in Mid and Later Life* research project, which also produced the monograph *Going for it! Older Students at Victoria University*.

A monograph on *Work and Education in Mid Life*, to summarise the current situation in New Zealand, possible policy options and action to be taken.

Research Projects

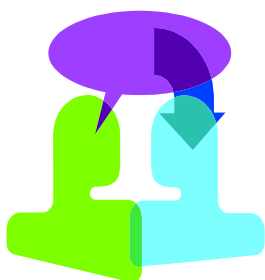
This year we will continue our work on mid-life, looking at work and education. Human capital issues are crucial in an ageing population, given the need to support a growing very old population and the emergence of skills and labour shortages. Education and training have an important part to play in this. We look forward to further collaboration with the Canterbury Development Council and another round table meeting of interested people and organizations, following up on the one held in July 2002. We also expect to be working on transport and housing issues. Writing research proposals continues to take up a lot of time, but we are not missing any opportunities and are hoping for success. Another challenge for NZiRA this year will be to raise the priority which research funding bodies give to population ageing and its implications.

NZiRA Postgraduate Scholarships

An excellent way of increasing the capacity for research on ageing is to offer earmarked scholarships for postgraduate study leading to Masters' degrees and PhDs. These would offer opportunities for graduates and people with career experience who already have interests in the field and also encourage people to choose topics related to ageing. NZiRA can provide a congenial and supportive "home" for research students with these interests. We will be campaigning this year for such scholarships and welcome suggestions from network members on potential donors and sources of funding. Such scholarships also provide the opportunity to encourage research in specific areas of interest to the sponsor/donor organizations or individuals. A Masters scholarship should be worth around \$12,000 per annum and a PhD scholarship \$18,000 per annum.

Other contacts, meetings and talks

The Director will be making presentations in several venues early this year, including –



- The Future of Work Workshop, run by the Department of Labour in March
- A Positive Ageing Forum in New Plymouth in March
- The Social Policy Research and Evaluation Conference, run by the Ministry of Social Development in April
- The Retirement Villages Association Conference in May

A new look for the NZiRA web site

Keep an eye on our web site! We hope you will enjoy the new look and easier links. Thank you for your patience in waiting for improvements and updates. Please keep those membership registrations, calendar entries and news about research rolling in.

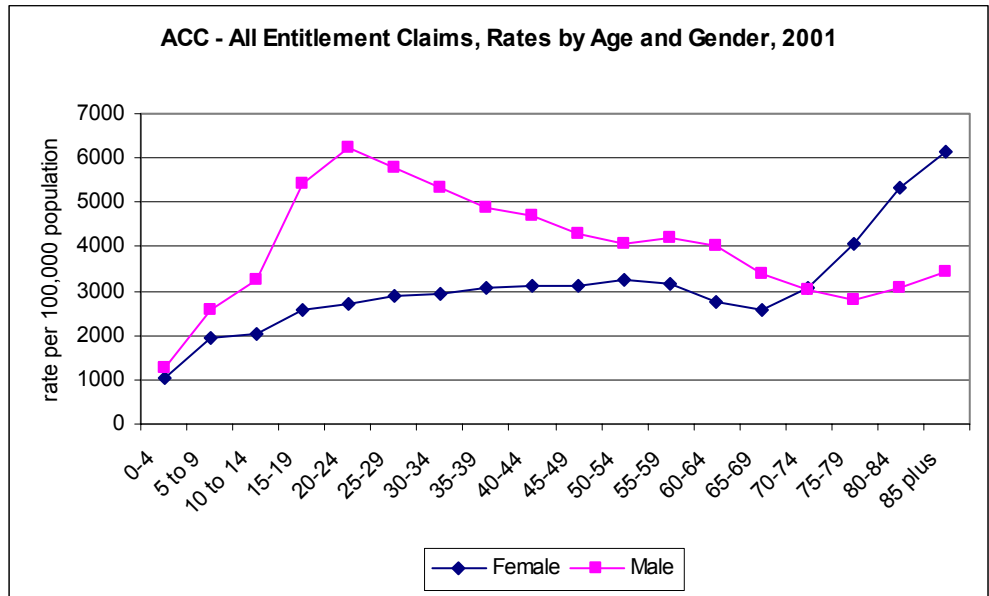
Statistical Snippets – Looking at Accidents and their causes

Accidents of various sorts are a major cause of death and injury. They not only produce immeasurable suffering and grief, but also result in high medical and hospital costs. But a very high proportion of accidents are preventable. We hear a lot about road accidents involving young people, which are certainly tragic, but to gain the full picture we need to look across all the age groups and also apply gender analysis to the accident statistics. One source of data is the ACC, and the following graph shows the rates per 100,000 population for "all entitlement claims" which can be used as an indicator of the incidence of accidents. Male rates are higher than those

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for females in all ages up to 70 to 74. The peak in the male rate at 20 to 24 is very clear. But it is almost matched by the rate for women aged 85 plus. Other information on hospital admissions following accidents confirms these patterns. The significance of falls and other accidents in the home in old age is very clear.



What we are seeing here is the result of several social trends coming together. Women have a longer average life expectancy than men and predominate in the older age groups. They tend to marry men older than themselves and these two factors together result in many older women being widowed and living alone. This is especially the case for Pakeha women. Very old women living alone are especially vulnerable to accidents. It may be as simple as trying to change a light bulb. A fall from a step stool may lead to a major crisis where an older person living alone does not immediately receive help. If that person had been living with others, firstly they may not have been called upon to change the light bulb at all, but if they did fall they would be more likely to receive immediate attention. The accident figures are something to be borne in mind alongside calls for ageing in place.