

NZiRA NewZ

Inside this issue:

From the Di-	1
Director's	2
TOWER fellow	2
Book launch	3
Statistical	4
Reminder of coming event	4

The Social Policy Evaluation and Research Committee, or SPEaR, is an interagency committee of New Zealand government agencies with a focus on social policy research and evaluation. SPEaR's key role is to oversee the government's social policy research and evaluation purchase. It is a co-ordination hub for government agencies and the social research and evaluation sector to improve capability, capacity and outcomes.

From the Director

Population ageing is one of the main challenges for social policy in New Zealand. It has implications throughout a wide range of policy domains and calls for cross-departmental initiatives, recognising a broad definition of social well-being and connectedness. In order to achieve the objectives of government strategies, especially the *Positive Ageing Strategy*, those who develop, deliver and evaluate policy require a grounding in and understanding of multi-disciplinary research methods reflecting the need for an holistic approach, based on New Zealand experience.

This is the rationale for NZiRA's the postgraduate symposium which will take place on 21 and 22 October. The symposium for students working on topics related to ageing and the well-being of older people, especially students adopting multi-disciplinary perspectives and methodologies. Such students are currently spread through a variety of institutions, schools and disciplinary bases, for example psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, public policy, management studies, nursing, health science, education, social work, Maori studies and Pacific studies. A conference of this type is consistent with NZiRA's aims to increase and enhance multi-disciplinary research on ageing in New Zealand, promote collaboration among researchers in the area of ageing and to communicate research findings to improve public awareness, practice and policy.

In a broader context, we hope that the workshop will produce a range of beneficial outcomes. It will –

- help build capacity for policy-related research on ageing
- expose participants to multi-disciplinary approaches to research on ageing
- provide a platform for postgraduate students to present their work in a supportive context and to receive constructive feedback
- allow them to network among themselves and make cross-disciplinary contacts
- encourage and support graduate students working on ageing-related topics
- encourage other graduates to consider research in these areas
- expand NZiRA's knowledge of research on ageing now in progress and allow the institute to disseminate the information to public agencies and non-governmental organisations
- give NZiRA an opportunity to spot talent and initiatives worthy support and encouragement.

I am very much looking forward to the symposium and very grateful to the sponsors who have made it possible to offer free registration and assistance towards travel expenses for the presenters— SPEaR, the HOPE Foundation, the NZ Association of Gerontology and the Postgraduate School of Nursing and Midwifery at Victoria University.

The papers from the eighteen presenters at the symposium will be published on the SPEaR web-site as soon as possible after the event www.spear.govt.nz



NZiRA Director Judith Davey

The Director's Diary August-October 2003

- * The two weeks before I left for the UK were taken up with finalising a bid to the Centre for Housing Research entitled "Accommodation Options for Older People in Aotearoa New Zealand". Our main collaborators are Business and Economic Research Ltd. and the bid also included Maori and Pacific investigators, action research and a regional study in Taranaki.
- * I presented a paper at the British Society of Gerontology Conference in Newcastle, on the subject "Older People, Transport and Positive Ageing", which discussed some of the findings of NZiRA's recent contract work. While in Newcastle I met Professor Tom Kirkwood, who will be our TOWER fellow for 2004 (and keynote speaker at the NZAG Conference).
- * Visiting my home town of York, and meeting up with researchers at the Centre for Housing Policy at the University of York, I heard about their research on residents' views of Hartrigg Oaks, the UK's first continuing care retirement community. I was able to visit the development, which looks a lot like our retirement villages. It has a child care centre and an innovative insurance-based method for covering the costs of care.
- * On September 19, I was part of a "think-tank" on *Activity Friendly Environments*, sponsored by Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC), speaking up for older people.
- * The *Age Advantage Forum* was held in Christchurch on 9 and 10 October, hosted by the Canterbury Development Council and the Third Age Foundation. As well as initiating some interesting community consultation, an interactive web-site and chat room were launched at the forum. It also provided a wonderful opportunity for NZiRA to launch its new publication (see p.3).
- * As well as planning for the Postgraduate Symposium and the visit of our 2003 TOWER fellow (see below), a major preoccupation recently has been preparing applications to the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology for research funding. *Enhancing Wellbeing in an Ageing Society* is one of three outcome areas specified for social science funding, so NZiRA, perhaps optimistically, has offered two large programmes of research—one related to mid-life and the other to later-life.

Coming your way? Norah Keating, our 2003 TOWER fellow

Professor Norah Keating from Canada, and her husband, will be in New Zealand from 9 November until 2 December. Here is an outline of their itinerary -

10-16 November	Wellington, Wairarapa and the Kapiti Coast
17-18 November	Christchurch and Rangiora
19-21 November	Dunedin and Alexandra
24 November	Wellington
25 November	New Plymouth
26 November	Hamilton
27 November-	
2 December	Auckland



Among the topics which Norah will be speaking on are—

- * Rural Life – A great way to grow old?
- * Balancing formal and informal care of older people
- * Canadian Research on Ageing
- * Caring for older adults in rural communities - implications for caregivers

New NZiRA Publication

Maximising the Potential of Older Workers arises from the stream of work on mid-life which has been going on in NZiRA for two years. The *Forty Plus/Tau Neke Atū* and the *Education in Mid and Later Life* projects, which predate the establishment of NZiRA, really began the process.

Our new report raises and discusses issues related to change in the New Zealand workforce, especially the ageing of the workforce and the consequences of smaller cohorts of young workers entering it. This is likely to lead to labour and skill shortages unless attitudes towards the employment potential of older workers change. This means not only the attitudes of government and employers, but also of the older workers themselves. The report brings together New Zealand data and research findings on older workers, with selected overseas material. As well as setting the scene for change, the report challenges myths about older workers and explores their strengths and weaknesses. There are chapters on age discrimination and education and training for older workers. While not solely aimed at employers the report suggests how they could make the most of older workers by providing flexible working conditions and phased retirement and by recognising the needs of working carers of dependent older people.

Copies of *Maximising the Potential of Older Workers* are available free of charge from NZiRA and from the Third Age Centre in Cashel Street, Christchurch.

NZiRA Future Proofing New Zealand Series



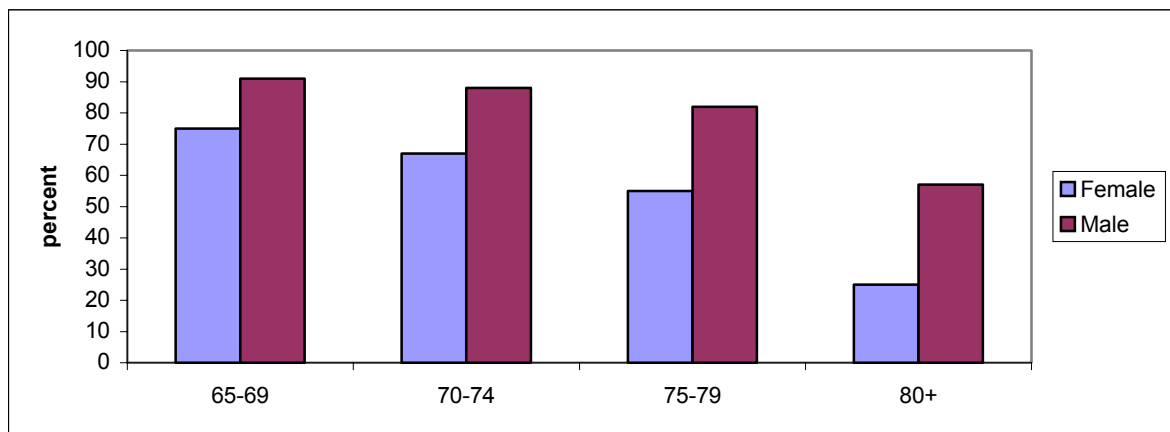
Maximising the Potential of Older Workers

Judith A. Davey and Justine Cornwall

Statistical Snippets

Access to a Car

Issue 8 of NZiRA NewZ discussed the travel patterns of older people and pointed out the importance of private transport. NZiRA is preparing for further work in this area, specifically looking at people who no longer have the use of private transport, because they have lost their driver's licenses, have voluntarily given up driving, because they can no longer afford a car or for other reasons. The proportion of households without a private car increases with the age of the oldest adult. Where the oldest adult is aged 65 to 74, 89% of households have a car, where the oldest adult is 75 to 84 the figure is 78% and where the oldest adult is 85 or over 58% of households have a private car. The figures also vary by household composition. Taking people aged 85 or over - almost all of those living in extended families have access to a car. This falls to 81% where they live in a couple-only household, but only 38% for people 85 plus living alone.



Percentage of People, 65 plus, who hold a Driver's License, by Age and Sex

The proportion of people who hold a driving license falls with age, as shown in the graph above and there are distinct differences between men and women. At 80 plus, 57% of men have a licenses, but only 25% of women. These gender differences are likely to decrease with on-coming cohorts of women, in which much higher proportions of women are drivers. It is important that women keep up their driving skills and confidence, given that a high proportion are likely to be widowed and living alone in their old age.

Having access to a car is important for older people as it provides choice and flexibility and improves physical accessibility. It can be an important symbol of independence and therefore has psychological value. Therefore losing access to private transport can be a threat to quality of life for older people.

Reminder of Coming Event

NZ. Association of Gerontology Conference, *EXPANDING HORIZONS : The Art and Science of Ageing*, 14-16 April, 2004, Christchurch Convention Centre -

Deadline for receipt of abstracts:	1 November 2003
Authors advised of acceptance:	15 December 2003
Final date for registration by presenting author:	1 March 2004

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