

NZiRA NewZ

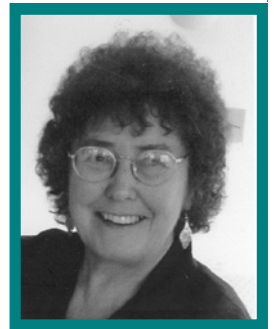
From the Director

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On 25 February the Ministry of Social Development held a one-day meeting entitled *Research on Ageing – Capabilities, Structures and Priorities*. This was attended by government policy analysts and researchers, academic and independent researchers as well as representatives from voluntary organisations and interest groups. I was especially interested in the capacity-building theme and presented a paper entitled *How can we ensure that research capacity will be sufficient and appropriate to meet the challenges of an ageing population?* This concentrated on research capacity in the social sciences and here are some of the points I made.

- The complexity of ageing and its implications calls for multi-disciplinary approaches to research and policy-making. Bio-medical research on ageing is very important, but needs to be linked to social research with a full appreciation of the social and economic implications of medical interventions and service provision.
- Social research on ageing shares the characteristics of all social research in this country. It is under-funded and fragmented, only recently have multi-disciplinary approaches been seriously adopted and team research developed. Most of the social science research capacity is concentrated in the universities and somewhat hampered by disciplinary and administrative boundaries.
- Research on ageing is affected by the dispersal of researchers over a wide variety of disciplinary areas. NZiRA's Postgraduate Symposium in 2003 attracted students working on ageing-related topics in psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, public policy, management studies, nursing, health science, education, social work and women's studies. This diversity makes it more difficult for researchers to collaborate and network and also for research capacity to be mapped and fostered. The successful symposium in 2003 and the further meeting planned for June 2005 present rare opportunities for such networking and interchanges.
- Another current issue is the relatively unattractiveness of ageing as an area for research among young researchers. Contributors to the NZiRA Postgraduate Symposium tended to be women in mid-career, most with work experience in social or health services, rather than young graduates. A PhD scholarship offered at Victoria for research on Ageing and Social Policy in 2003 attracted only two applicants, possibly because people in mid-career are not attracted to the idea of a full-time research commitment. This suggests that there are recruitment challenges when looking to the future of research on ageing in this country. (But we are offering another scholarship this year – see below).
- In addition, current researchers in the field of ageing (like the academic workforce as a whole) have a high average age, so we can ask – who will be available for research on ageing in, say, ten years time, when the baby boom generation will be entering old age and when ageing will surely be a much more salient policy issue than it is now?



**NZiRA Director
Judith Davey**

—Judith Davey

Visit of Jenny Gierveld

Professor Jenny Gierveld, from the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam and Honorary Fellow of the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute in The Hague, will be visiting New Zealand in May, sponsored by BRCCS (Building Research Capacity in the Social Sciences). She will give presentations in Hamilton and in Wellington

Tuesday 17 May, 5.30 to 6.45 pm in Room MSB1.01, Waikato Management School, University of Waikato

Longevity and care / the relationship between older parents and adult children

This meeting is sponsored by the Waikato Branch of the Gerontology Association and the Population Studies Centre, University of Waikato, Contact Dr Sarah Hillcoat-Nalletamby. Phone 07 838 4523 or nalletam@waikato.ac.nz

Wednesday 25 May, 4.30 to 6.30 pm, Lecture Theatre 1, behind the VUW Law School (Old Government Building), Lambton Quay, Wellington

Loneliness or social integration? The social well-being of older people

This is a public lecture hosted by NZIRA. Refreshments will be available at 4.30, with the presentation beginning at 5 pm. **All are welcome, no registration required.**

Prof. Gierveld will address the questions – What is loneliness? How many people are lonely and how do we know if someone is lonely? How does loneliness or connectedness relate to social networks?

2005 TOWER Fellowship Programme

Dr. Mary Davies, recently retired Director of the Pre-Retirement Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was our 2005 TOWER Fellow. As usual for such visits, she had a very full programme and I am sure all those who heard her speak found her presentations relevant, stimulating and full of practical humanity.

Mary, and her husband Brian, arrived in New Zealand at Easter and were able to tour in the South Island (and recover from their trip) before opening their official programme in Dunedin. This was followed by visits to Christchurch, Wellington, Hamilton, Auckland and Palmerston North. Mary gave nine public lectures as well as numerous presentations to government, business and voluntary sector audiences, ranging from the Christchurch Third Age Forum and the Alzheimer's Society to the EEO Trust, Retirement Commission, and Treasury. She addressed four branches of the New Zealand Associated of Gerontology and five audiences from the Human Resources Institute of New Zealand. This was in addition to radio and TV interviews and there were several write-ups in major newspapers. The breadth of coverage reflected Mary's ability to discuss three major topics, which are summarised here. Illustrations from these talks are on the NZIRA web site www.nzira.ac.nz.



Synopses of Mary Davies' Presentations in New Zealand

Managing an Ageing Workforce

A review of changes in the workforce and the challenges posed by population ageing. Mary examined the push and pull factors which influence the decisions which people make about labour force participation in mid-life and retirement, and what the significant workplace factors are. Mary lists key steps for employers to create a vibrant age-diverse labour force (see page 4).

Work in later life – Turning a threat into an opportunity

Changes in the workforce posed by population ageing may constitute threats or opportunities - for employees, for employers, and for society. Mary outlined the opportunities inherent at all these levels, describing new approaches to performance appraisal, management of change, career planning and advice about retirement. In order to turn threats into opportunities both the jobs and the workers need to adapt.

Older People, Sexuality and Disability

In order to understand issues surrounding sexuality and disability in later life, Mary believes we need adequate knowledge of the facts as opposed to myths and fantasies. We need to recognise the importance of sexuality, sensuality and sexual identity. What are the barriers to sexual fulfilment for older people and how they can be overcome? In approaching this we also need to examine our own attitudes on aspects of sexuality and older people.

We are extremely grateful to Mary for her cheerfulness, willingness to undertake an onerous programme and her capacity to link with a variety of audiences, providing relevant advice while appreciating the local context.

Unfortunately, TOWER have been unable to extend their fellowship sponsorship beyond the initial five year, which is now at an end. NZiRA will be seeking alternative sources of funds for this very useful and popular programme, but any suggestions from network members would be greatly appreciated.

Victoria University of Wellington - Vice-Chancellor's Strategic Research Ph.D. Scholarships 2005

Population Ageing in New Zealand – Implications for Social Policy

Victoria University of Wellington invites applications from PhD candidates for the Vice-Chancellor's Strategic Research Scholarships. One of these sixteen research topics covered by the scholarships is **Population Ageing in New Zealand – Implications for Social Policy**. The scholarship is valued at \$20,000 and including a fees waiver. Applicants are expected to have a first class honours degree (or equivalent) and skills and research experience appropriate for the topic. The deadline for applications is **18 July 2005**. Further administrative details are available from: www.vuw.ac.nz/scholarships; Scholarships-office@vuw.ac.nz

The scholar accepted for this award will be able to focus on a selected aspect of ageing and its implications, using disciplinary tools and approaches derived from previous study in Social Policy, Sociology, Public Policy or another appropriate social science. The topic selected should fit into one of the two main streams of research being undertaken in NZiRA [www.vuw.ac.nz/ageing-institute], focusing on either Mid-Life or Later Life.

Contact details: Associate Professor Judith A. Davey. Judith.Davey@vuw.ac.nz
Telephone +64 4 463 6746

This is an opportunity for a postgraduate to fund Ph.D research on ageing. We hope that this chance will not slip away, as happened in 2003, when there were very few applications and none met the university's requirements in terms of previous academic attainment. This is a competitive process and only ten out of the sixteen selected topics will be funded.

Please help us to put the word around and produce some excellent candidates.

A new NZiRA Report

Davey, Judith A. (2005) The Prospects and Potential of Home Equity Release in New Zealand; Update to 2005. Office of the Retirement Commissioner, www.retirement.org.nz (click on Retirement Income Research Centre to find the full report and forum presentation).

Final Call for Papers

Symposium for Postgraduates working on topics relevant to Ageing June 21 and 22, 2005, Victoria University of Wellington

Offers of papers must be received by NZiRA by 13 May, 2005

Offers of papers should include an abstract of up to 250 words and a one-page statement including the title and brief outline of your thesis topic (including the stage you have reached), your departmental /school/institutional affiliation and full contact details.

Registration for the conference will be free, but must be made by 1 June. Registration forms are available from NZiRA and through the NZiRA web-site www.nzira.ac.nz

From the papers offered a two-day programme will be selected to represent a range of topics, approaches and research methodologies. Sponsorship has been obtained from the Ministry of Social Development and the NZ Association of Gerontology .

Please publicise this event, which fits into the MSD's capacity-building efforts

At the end of the first day of the symposium *Aotearoa Ageing: A bibliography of New Zealand Research on Ageing, Update 2001-2005*, will be launched. Production of this valuable tool for local research is being sponsored by the Ministry of Social Development.

Some Wisdom from Mary Davies

Work adaptation

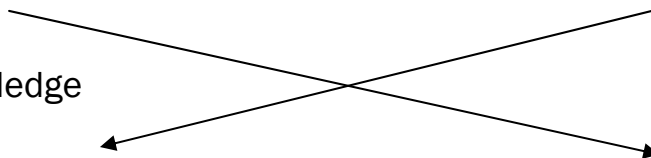
The continuous and dynamic process by which an individual seeks to establish a complementary reciprocal relationship or 'fit' with his or her job.

JOB

EMPLOYEE

Knowledge
Skills
Abilities

Needs
Values
Interests



Key steps for employers to create a vibrant age diverse labour force

- Ensure employees can manage change especially at 50+
- Monitor the participation levels of various age cohorts in education and training
- Offer career advice including preparation for retirement
- Recognise the need for 'time sovereignty' and accommodate individual patterns of work to suit changing personal circumstances
- Demonstrate that older employees are valued and appreciated