



NZiRA News No.30 – April 2007

From the Director

It certainly feels as if working at NZiRA on alternate weeks makes the months fly by twice as fast, so that a monthly newsletter keeps the pace up – and perhaps April seems particularly short with the breaks involved in Easter and Anzac Day. I can also say that the “Time flies when you are having fun” adage is ringing true, as I am continuing to enjoy making contact with people in the NZiRA network, and updating myself with interesting developments in the field of research in ageing. April has also allowed me to spend time at two significant conferences, where the presentations and discussions can be both formal and informal.

The two conferences I attended, were firstly “Investing in Social Success” in early April, the Social Policy, Research and Evaluation Conference, 2007. Then a week later, I went to the second Caring for the Carers Summit, held at Te Papa. Each afforded extensive opportunities for plenary sessions, small group workshops and presentations, and of course multiple “conversational cuppas”. However much we live and work in an electronic age, I am constantly reminded of the importance of face-to-face contact, to capture the personal engagement of researchers, practitioners and policy-makers in our shared interest in making New Zealand a good place to grow up, and to grow old.

April has also seen the announcement of major research funding in the field of ageing, from the Foundation for Research Science and Technology, (see page 3 of this newsletter). NZiRA has also been busy with developing new projects, and planning for events in May and June, so this newsletter is a reminder for those planning to hear Prof Parker’s presentations outlined in our March newsletter, and for students and newcomers to research in ageing, to participate in the June postgraduate symposium.

NOTICES

Postgraduate Symposium for Emerging Researchers in Ageing

As announced in the March Newsletter, NZiRA is hosting the 3rd of these national meetings for postgraduate students at the School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington, on June 5-6, 2007. The invitation and call for papers is now open, and can be obtained both from the website, or by emailing to virginia.wilton@vuw.ac.nz. Offers of papers should be received by NZiRA by **6 May**. Confirmed acceptance of papers will be notified by May 14. Registration for the conference will be free, but must be made by **28 May, 2007**.

We are delighted to acknowledge several sponsors who have committed resources to support this symposium, and in particular to be able to offer grants to postgraduates attending. Participants will be able to seek a grant to assist with travel and expenses by completing a claim form at the symposium.

Sponsorship is coming from the following key supporters of NZiRA's work in fostering effective networks of graduate students engaged in research relevant to ageing:

- ✓ The BRCSS Network: Building Research Capability in the Social Sciences
- ✓ Office for Senior Citizens, and Ministry of Social Development
- ✓ New Zealand Association of Gerontology
- ✓ The HOPE Foundation for Research on Ageing

NZiRA website

From early May, visit www.vuw.ac.nz/nzira to follow activities at NZiRA. Later in May, two new reports will be uploaded to the website:

Maximising the Potential of Older Workers was first published in 2003, by Judith Davey and Justine Cornwall, through NZiRA. An updated 2007 version has been prepared by Judith Davey, and will be available on the NZiRA website as a PDF file.

Improving the Safety of Older Pedestrians, by Virginia Wilton and Judith Davey is a report prepared for the John Bailey Road Safety Research Fund.

Prof Stuart Parker's Presentations

Thursday 3 May: Auckland

Health Services for our Future Selves: Developing Health Services for Older People in the 21st Century. 6 – 7 pm: School of Engineering Theatre, University of Auckland.

Wednesday 9 May: Wellington

Health Services for our Future Selves: Developing Health Services for Older People in the 21st Century. 12.30- 1.30 pm: Government Building, Lecture Theatre 1

New Zealand Association of Gerontology (Wellington Branch)

"Discharging older people from inpatient hospital care"

5.30 – 7 pm: Rutherford House, Lecture Theatre 1

Thursday 10 May: Christchurch

"Discharging older people from inpatient hospital care"

12.30- 1.30 pm: Grand Round, Princess Margaret Hospital, 5th Floor Lecture Theatre.

5.30 – 7 pm: "Discharging older people from inpatient hospital care"

New Zealand Association of Gerontology (Canterbury Branch)

Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind, Training Room, 96 Bristol St., St Albans.

National Gerontology Conference

The call for papers for the NZAG Conference to be held at the University of Waikato, November 14-16, 2007 is now open. For details, please go to <http://www.gerontology.org.nz/conference.html>

Announcing Research Grants in Ageing

The following is extracted from the website for The Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (<http://www.frst.govt.nz>)

In early April, The Foundation for Research, Science and Technology announced investment of almost \$13 million in research projects that focus on improving future living standards and work opportunities for New Zealanders. The five research projects sharing a total of \$12,903 million centre on important social issues of positive ageing and employment, with research extending between three and five years.

Foundation Chief Executive Murray Bain says the investment in independent research delivers new knowledge, focused on social issues of importance to New Zealanders. Mr Bain says the research is vital to improve New Zealand's economic, social and environmental benefits and delivers accurate, reliable information with the potential to offer sound solutions to emerging social situations. "The projects are addressing significant areas of community concern and will generate new evidence to underpin future policies and decision making," he says.

Massey University receives \$750,000 a year for five years for a longitudinal study which examines factors required for positive ageing and older people's contribution to society. The research is in partnership with the New Zealand Family Centre and in collaboration with the New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing, bringing together some of New Zealand's top researchers on the effects of ageing.

Longitudinal Study of Ageing – Massey University in partnership with the Family Centre

The research objective is to establish a nationally representative longitudinal study of the factors that contribute to positive ageing in New Zealand. The results will be compared with those of similar studies in Australia, UK, the USA and Europe and will be used to inform public policy and practice. Positive ageing will be conceptualised in terms of wellbeing and Quality of Life (QoL), a key indicator used by WHO to assess the effects of demographic, political, social and economic change. The aims of the longitudinal study are to make observations and test hypotheses about the contributions to ageing people's QoL within four broad areas:

- Economic participation (e.g. meaning of work, employment, retirement)
- Social participation (e.g. family support, social capital, civic participation)
- Intergenerational transfers (e.g. family care, income, wealth and knowledge)
- Resilience and health (e.g. control, coping, physical, emotional, cognitive).

Dr Fiona Alpass and Dr Christine Stephens from the School of Psychology, along with Eljon Fitzgerald and Brendan Stevenson from the Research Centre for Māori Health and Development, have formed a partnership with The Family Centre Social Policy Research Unit (FCSPRU) in Wellington (Charles Waldegrave and Dr Peter King) and a collaborating relationship with the New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing (NZiRA) at Victoria University (Associate Professor Judith Davey) for the purposes of this research.

Investment of \$450,000 annually, also for five years, goes to CRESA, under the leadership of Kay Saville-Smith, for studies to identify services and programmes to improve opportunities for older people to remain in their own homes:

Ageing in Place – Centre for Research Evaluation and Social Assessment.

Dwellings in poor repair are cold, uncomfortable, unsafe, and are associated with fuel poverty, ill-health, neighbourhood decline, dependency and negative environmental impacts. Older people are disproportionately exposed to dwellings in poor condition and find it difficult to cope with houses that are poorly repaired, cold, and expensive to run. They become unhealthy, stressed and at risk of injury. Dilapidated housing and the burden of maintenance and repair have been identified as major factors in prompting older people to leave their communities. The aim of the research is to ensure that older people can keep living comfortable and productive lives in their homes and communities by developing services and products that will ensure that the houses older people live in are kept in good repair.

From the Director's Diary, April 2007.

2 April: Attended Research Colloquium, sponsored by BRCSS – Building Research Capability in the Social Sciences: a “side-event” to the Social Policy Research and Evaluation Conference. Presentations from graduate students in five sessions:

- 1. Sustainable urbanism - paradox, power and provision**
- 2. Health and housing – TB, asthma and a DIY culture**
- 3. Transnational lives – Tongans, Koreans, and partners**
- 4. Pasifika social science – knowledge, health and social work**
- 5. Communities of organization and knowledge.**

4 April: Attended launch of new contestable research fund from NZ Families Commission.

12-13 April: At the CarersNZ Summit, the Hon Ruth Dyson announces the development of a Carers Strategy for New Zealand; later in the month, I took part in several meetings with people from MSD and from the community sector interested in research development surrounding the Carers Strategy.

24 April: Attended seminar given by David Coats, co-Director of The Work Foundation – visit <http://www.workfoundation.com> for their series of publications on aspects of the “future of work” and “the ageing workforce”.