



*NZiRA News No.33  
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I would like to thank everyone associated with NZiRA during 2007, for their continuing support and goodwill in our work, which is aimed at “Understanding ageing through research and partnerships”. I have very much enjoyed my year at Rutherford House, the collegueship of staff within the wider University, and in particular, my contacts and meetings with people and groups throughout the Wellington community, and beyond. I still struggle to describe my “here and there” working life (somehow neither of the expressions of “half life” or “double life” seem appropriate), as I commute between Wellington and Christchurch on alternate weeks. In fact, during October and November I have spent working time also in Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North (taking part in meetings and including the NZ Gerontology Conference) and have driven throughout rural South Island areas (carrying our research surveys in Area Schools about grandparenting). I also had my first visit to China, to attend the Asia-Oceania Regional Conference of the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics in Beijing. This newsletter shares some highlights of these and other NZiRA activities in the last quarter of 2007, and brings you Seasons Greetings.

*Sally Keeling*

**Each year, the School of Government publishes a summary known as The Year in Review, which presents the NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON AGEING, in the context of the wider research and educational activities from within the School. This year’s entry from NZiRA is summarised below:**

The New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing (NZiRA) has been a part of the School of Government since February 2006. In January 2007, the incoming Director (Dr Sally Keeling) took over on a half-time basis, from Assoc Prof Judith Davey. Dr Davey has continued to work on some NZiRA projects from her Research Fellow’s desk, at the Institute of Policy Studies, during 2007. During the year, Dr Virginia Wilton also completed her work with NZiRA, and we have had two graduates working at NZiRA as Research Associates in the latter part of the year.

**Research Projects during 2007**

**Residential Care Subsidy: Report to Ministry of Social Development.**

**Home Equity Release Report: for the Retirement Commission**

**Health, Work and Retirement:** in association with Massey University, Palmerston North.

**Safety of older people:** “Perceptions and Experiences of Fire Risks among Older People”,  
“Improving the Safety of Older Pedestrians”.

**Maximising the Potential of Older Workers:** Revised and updated edition 2007.

**Grandparents in rural families: mapping the field.**

**Emerging Issues Project: Policy Implications of Ageing**

**Other activities from 2007: Postgraduate Symposium for Emerging Research in Ageing**

The **NZiRA Board**, under the chairmanship of Diana Crossan, has spent time during the year, in shaping strategic directions for NZiRA, with excellent advisory support from Board members from the community, commercial, public and university sectors. In addition, we have been involved during the year with several other research projects at the development and collaboration stages, seeking funding from a variety of sources.

## POSTCARD FROM BEIJING

### INSIGHTS INTO ASIAN CULTURAL CONTEXTS OF AGEING VISIT TO BEIJING RETIREMENT VILLAGE AND GERIATRIC HOSPITAL

- In 1949, av. life expectancy was 40 years
- In 2000, av. life expectancy was 72 years
- In Beijing, now 78 years.
- Rapid socio-economic development, in an ageing society: by 2050, there will be 434 million people in China aged over 60 years, representing 30% of the population
- Long term consequences of the “one child policy”.

Philosophy of the 4 harmonies *As translated from Opening Plenary*

- “man and nation”
- “man and society”
- “man and family”
- “man and inner self”

Aspiration for all people

- ✓ Seeking health, longevity and harmony
- ✓ At the same time, seeking economic development
- ✓ These are not simply dependent on medicine, but on many factors - individual, social and environmental

*From Plenary address by Dr Wu Camping, 86 year old geriatrician.*

## Ageing and Development

Spending a week in Beijing exploring the contexts for ageing populations throughout the Asia-Oceania region, it is inevitable that issues and questions arise about the meaning of development (in its broadest sense) for older people around the world. I was struck on more than one occasion during the Beijing meeting, by hearing speakers refer to the central location of increases in longevity in debates about socio-economic development. In general terms, the Western historic pattern of industrialisation and urbanisation preceding increases in life expectancy is less evident in contemporary Asian societies, where rapid economic growth is occurring at the same time as increasing life expectancy. Also concurrent with this rapid change in health and social circumstances, of people of all ages, there is also increasing divergence: between regions, age groups and cohorts, and populations with a wide variety of ethnic and national origins.

**HelpAge International** is a development agency with a vision of a world in which all older people fulfil their potential to lead dignified, healthy and secure lives. They have led a major worldwide initiative alongside the usual awareness- and fund-raising projects, offering those willing to contribute to a focus on older people in development, to join their "Adopt a grandparent" scheme. HelpAge International is a global network striving for the rights of disadvantaged older people to economic and physical security; healthcare and social services; and support in their caregiving role across the generations. For more information about HelpAge International, please visit their website at: [www.helpage.org](http://www.helpage.org)

**Ageing & Development eNewsletter** is distributed by HelpAge International six times a year to policy makers, programme planners and researchers.

A print edition of Ageing and Development is published twice a year. Some recent headlines are attached. It is also available as a pdf at: [www.helpage.org/resources/regularpublications](http://www.helpage.org/resources/regularpublications)

**HIV&AIDS: GRANDMOTHERS ARE REAL HEROES OF PANDEMIC** In two reports launched on World AIDS Day, HelpAge International estimates that around half of all older people in severely affected areas care for adult children living with HIV and/or children orphaned by AIDS.

**HIV&AIDS: SUPPORTING OLDER PEOPLE'S ROLE** New briefings from Mozambique, South Africa and Sudan describe how HelpAge International's partners are supporting older people's response to the HIV pandemic. <http://www.helpage.org/Researchandpolicy/HIVAIDS/Resources>

**AGE DEMANDS ACTION: GOVERNMENTS MAKE COMMITMENTS** Delegations of older people from 27 countries who met with government ministers on 1 October as part of the global Age Demands Action campaign have received firm commitments on pensions, healthcare and basic needs. [http://www.helpage.org/News/Latestnews/main\\_content/nlIo/@64293](http://www.helpage.org/News/Latestnews/main_content/nlIo/@64293)

**BANGLADESH CYCLONE: RACE TO REACH OLDER SURVIVORS** HelpAge International's partner, the Resource Integration Centre, has identified 65,000 older people and their families in need of assistance. HelpAge International's, emergencies coordinator, Sarah Packwood, was among the first on the ground providing technical support to the relief effort. <http://www.helpage.org/News/Latestnews/x8LE>

**PENSIONS CAMPAIGN: BRITISH PRIME MINISTER WELCOMES CAMPAIGN** The British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, has welcomed Help the Aged and HelpAge International's Pensions not Poverty campaign.

<http://www.helpage.org/News/Latestnews/VBjc>

RIGHTS: OLDER INDIANS FIGHT FOR ACCESS TO BENEFITS HelpAge International's partner HelpAge India has helped more than 14,000 poor older people to access state benefits they had not been receiving because of corruption, inefficiency and poor publicity.

<http://www.helpage.org/News/Latestnews/Va5G>

## **Meanwhile, back in NZ House of Representatives..... NZiRA Director welcomes Flexible Working Hours Legislation**

I was delighted to be present at Parliament on the evening of November 21, to observe the 3rd reading of Sue Kedgely's Bill on flexible working hours, and to acknowledge the longterm process of translating research evidence, international experience, and advocacy from workers' and carers' organisations into significant legislation for New Zealand.

My own involvement with this journey began in 2001, when I attended a symposium at the British Society of Gerontology Conference in Stirling on emerging research in the field of Working Carers. Building on this, Judith Davey and I were successful in obtaining funding from the Future of Work Fund, and in 2004, we produced our report Combining Work and Care. In 2005, Judith made a strong submission to the Select Committee on NZiRA's behalf to ensure that the proposed legislation included those in the workforce who were providing care to older family members. With continued monitoring of the legislation through its parliamentary process, the supporters of this Bill were delighted to celebrate its passage.

Several other organisations issued press releases after the passage of the Bill: "A Step Forward For Families" : The Families Commission says Parliament's passing of the flexible working hours amendment act is a major step toward improving the work / life balance of Kiwi families.

"The Commission's consultation and discussions with more than 3,000 families over the past few years shows many struggle to get a good balance between their work and family life - without it impacting on their income. They want more choices around flexible working arrangements, with their top choice being more freedom over the time they start and finish work," said the Chief Commissioner of the Families Commission, Rajen Prasad.

Dr Prasad says the family-friendly workplaces are needed not just by families with children. As the proportion of younger workers continues to decline in coming years it will be important for employers to retain older staff - and as they transition to retirement they will be looking for flexible work options, he said. Many people also care for their elderly parents or other members of the family, and flexible work arrangements can make their lives a lot easier to manage, he said.

The CTU MEDIA RELEASE of 21 November 2007 says "Time is right for flexible working hours" : "The time is right for workers to have the right to request flexible working hours, and provisions passed into law tonight are an excellent step towards building a culture that recognises workers' responsibilities outside of the workplace," Council of Trade Unions secretary Carol Beaumont said.

When Parliament passed the Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Bill, only ACT and National opposed the move. "Legislation is not in itself the only solution, but it does create a climate and culture of acceptance about the need for

employer openness to requests - as well as a transparent process for employers to refuse requests. At present the law change is restricted to people with care responsibilities. This is a good first step, and we will continue to advocate for all workers to have the right to request flexible hours. We congratulate Sue Kedgley for progressing this bill through the house, and the majority of parties in Parliament who have supported it tonight.”

The Coalition For Quality Flexible Work also sent out a media release on 22 November 2007, saying *Flexible Work Law A Win Win For Everyone*.

“The passage of the Flexible Working Arrangements bill last night was great for women and a win win for both employers and employees,” said Federation of Business and Professional Women spokesperson Angela McLeod. BPW is one of the 50 professional, legal, union and community organisations that are part of the Coalition for Quality Flexible Work, which has campaigned for this legislation for the past 12 months. Coalition member Cee Payne-Harker, who is the Organising Services Manager of the New Zealand Nurses Organisation, said the legislation was a much needed employment right, setting up a legal framework for any employee with caring responsibilities to negotiate flexibility in working hours and other working arrangements. She went on to say access to more flexibility was desperately needed to address nursing shortages and safe staffing issues in our hospitals. “Many of our members have extensive family commitments that make rigid rosters difficult, deterring them from re-entering the nursing profession once they have children. New Zealand has serious labour shortages and employers must find innovative ways to address recruitment and retention issues. Implementing flexible working arrangements is one way to do that.”

## **New Zealand Association of Gerontology Conference Hamilton, November 2007**

### **Ageing – The Everyday Experience**



**The organising committee of the conference was led by Prof Peggy Koopman-Boyden (far right of this picture), and the Programme Convenor was Dr Bevan Grant (3<sup>rd</sup> from right) and all shared in the farewells and thanks at the end of the conference.**

**Prof Mason Durie opened the conference, by addressing “The social and cultural challenges of an ageing society”. In the plenary on the second day, Dr Susan St John asked us all to consider “How much ageing can we afford?”. Then I had great pleasure to introduce the final plenary speaker, Professor David Richmond, who took us all on a highly personal and reflective “Journey through the later years”. The December 2007 Newsletter of the NZ Association of Gerontology will review the conference, and in due course, there will be a release of presentations available to the website: [www.gerontology.org.nz](http://www.gerontology.org.nz)**

**The speaker at the Opening Plenary, Prof Mason Durie, from Massey University, receives thanks and a hand-crafted gift from Prof Peggy Koopman-Boyd.**



**The December 2007 issues of New Dialogue, the magazine of the NZ Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations includes a Focus on Ageing, with contributions from several significant agencies working with older people in New Zealand, including one from NZiRA. [www.nzfvwo.org.nz](http://www.nzfvwo.org.nz)**