



***NZiRA News No. 37
NOVEMBER 2008***

Forthcoming events: Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch.....

**NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION OF GERONTOLOGY
WELLINGTON BRANCH**

wellington@gerontology.org.nz

**Investigating the longer-term impacts of Re-
ablement/ restorative services**

**Dr Hilary Arksey, Senior Research Fellow from the Social Policy Research Unit,
University of York, UK will give this talk about UK and NZ experiences in home
care delivery as part of her time as NZiRA Visitor in Wellington in the week of
November 17-21, 2008.**

**Rutherford House, Lecture Theatre 3
RHLT3 5.30 – 7 pm**

**Retirement Policy and Research Centre
BREAKFAST BRIEFING**

**Tuesday 2nd December 7.15-8.45am
PLACE Decima Glenn Room
Level 3, Owen G. Glenn Building
The University of Auckland Business School
12 Grafton Rd, Auckland**

The paradox of plenty

Retirement savers around the world are required to make more and more complex decisions over their lifecycle. Whether to participate? How much to contribute? Which superannuation fund? Which investment option? When to retire? Which type of retirement benefit? Whether and how to seek financial advice?

International guest Hazel Bateman, Associate Professor of Economics and Director of the Centre for Pensions and Superannuation at the University of New South Wales, will speak about the paradox of plenty: "Too Many Choices".

Enquires and RSVP to Tressy Menezes
Research Administrator & PA to Assoc Dean: Research, Postgraduate and Research Office
Level 1, Room 141 Owen Glenn Bldg, University of Auckland.
Tel: 373 7599 extn: 82628 Email: t.menezes@auckland.ac.nz

**NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION OF GERONTOLOGY
Canterbury Branch**

Monday 24th November, 2008

Nurse Maude Ballroom, MacDougall Ave, Merivale, Christchurch

5.30 pm: Refreshments served
6.00 - 7.00 pm: Speaker – Max Reid

Changing Policy and Practice:
Older Persons' Health and Housing –
A Conversation Waiting to Happen?

NZiRA and lifelong learning

Congratulations to graduate students who have completed their projects during 2008. Two women have sent contributions to this NZiRA newsletter, reflecting on their PhD experience. The first is a researcher who notes the formative role that the 2005 NZiRA postgraduate symposium played in her experience as a doctoral student, while the second contribution comes from a student who embarked on her doctoral study at time traditionally known as "retirement". Both show that research engagement is both a professional and personal pathway, where both the journey and the destination have their challenges and rewards.

Plans are currently underway for NZiRA to host a 2009 Postgraduate Symposium, once sponsorship funds are secured. Two other attendees at previous NZiRA symposia have also completed their Masters projects during 2008, and details of their work are also listed below.

The Experience of Being an Emerging Researcher

Valerie Wright-St Clair, PhD 9 November 2008

NZiRA includes in its aims to 'increase and enhance multi-disciplinary research on human ageing, particularly within the New Zealand context,' and to 'promote collaboration amongst researchers in the area of ageing.' One of the things NZiRA does to achieve these aims is host a symposium every two years for emerging researchers who have an interest in later life issues.

Having just reached the end of my doctoral journey, I am able to pause and look back over the past 3 and a half years and wonder at all the turns and paths I took along the way. One event stands out for me as being particularly formative. Early on in my journey I had the opportunity to attend, and present, at the NZiRA Emerging Researchers' Symposium for Postgraduate Students. A number of experienced researchers and academics also attended as a way of supporting and encouraging us as postgraduate students within the field of ageing and the well-being of older people in New Zealand.

It was mid-June 2005 and although I had a general notion of what my research question was, I was still trying to get to the essence of what I was 'really' asking. Initially, in the midst of the other emerging researchers, all of whom seemed to be much further along than I was, I felt quite hesitant at revealing my uncertainties. As it turned out, the timing was perfect. My questions drew more questions and ideas from others and suddenly the way ahead became clearer. Being at the NZiRA symposium early in my doctoral journey was an amazingly fruitful way of clarifying my thoughts and beginning to build a network of fellow students and experienced researchers.

I wish to thank NZiRA for offering the symposia and for enabling the development of the research network.

Valerie's Doctoral thesis: 'Being Aged' in the Everyday: Uncovering the meaning through elders' stories is now available at <http://hdl.handle.net/2292/3080>

Taking on doctoral study as an "older" student -- Judy Whitcombe

When you announce to your family and friends that you are thinking of doing a PhD you get looks of amazement. Why do we fly in the face of doubters and go ahead anyway? Why even think about a PhD at your time of life? For a younger person who has knocked off a bachelors and masters, the doctorate is a logical progression and opens doors to university positions, research opportunities and travel. But for post-experience people with a long working career and often holding a senior position, is a PhD a good career move to make at this time?

But then is a PhD decision solely a career move? For many older students further study is an opportunity to delve into an area that they have been interested in for many years. For others, who have left secondary school to go straight to paid employment (especially women for whom marriage and a family was then the goal), academic study can come later in life. There is a need to prove that 'you can do it'.

The University statute states that the course is three years full-time. Full-time is deemed to be a minimum of 30 hours per week on average over the year, excluding statutory holiday periods. Anything less than this is half-time. The thesis is to be presented within four years from the date of registration for full-timers and within six years for the part-timers. That is a lot of commitment.

Initially I had planned a doctorate as a “retirement project”, except that I didn’t retire at age 65 and indeed continued full-time work until I was 69. My doctorate in Public Policy has taken 2 years part-time and 2 years full-time – since I “officially” retired. Certainly returning to academic study after a break of many years is not always easy, however from my perspective the experience has been both challenging and rewarding.

The process has been likened to mountain climbing – organisation and planning, not giving up when the weather closes in, and finding that there is always another challenge when you think that you are almost there. Then there is the Ed Hillary moment when you can say that you have “knocked the bastard off”.

Under the Personal Growth and Participation Goal of the Positive Ageing Strategy is the objective “support lifelong learning” which is promoted by the Ministry of Education and the Tertiary Education Commission. Certainly the numbers of “older” students undertaking tertiary study at all levels are increasing. Here “older” is deemed to be over 40. It is hoped that the statistics continue to show a rise in the number of older students undertaking further study and that they can enjoy the experience.

Recent Masters Theses available on application to the Library, Victoria University of Wellington.

Max Reid: Supported independent accommodation for Older New Zealanders: A Review of Current Policy and Innovative Practice, MA (Social Policy) School of Social and Cultural Studies

W.T Murdoch: Baby Boomers and Housing Inheritance, MA (Applied) in Social Science Research.

**Summer Studentship BRCSS: Waikato University -
The Value of Education for Older People
10 weeks’ fulltime work Dec 2008-Jan-Feb 2009.
Enquiries to pkb@waikato.ac.nz**

ABSOLUTELY POSITIVELY AGEING WELLINGTON?

In a previous NZiRA newsletter, there was a report from local authorities recently considering how well their cities offer “a great place to grow old.” Wellington City Council conducted an online survey recently and results are now available at <http://www.wellington.govt.nz/haveyoursay/yourviews/reports/details/2008-09.html>

While the 337 participants were self-selected, and do not represent the Wellington population generally, their responses offer some interesting commentary on perceptions and expectations of living in Wellington, and how these expectations may or may not be met into the future. Of particular interest, is the negative responses of the retired participants to questions about flexible work options to enable them to work as long as they choose.

Marking International Day of Older People 2008

During my visit to Japan in September - see the final 3 pages of this newsletter - Respect the Aged Day was held. In report in The Press, Christchurch, Japan's life expectancy figures were noted, and its rating as "the oldest population in the world".

UK Older People's Day: Full of life UK was held on October 1, to celebrate the contributions of older people in society



Full of Life is a celebration of the opportunities, achievements, and aspirations of older people and their contribution to our society and economy.

As part of Full of Life, UK Older People's Day is a chance to tackle outdated stereotypes on ageing and strengthen local communities.

People of all ages turned out on 1 October 2008 to celebrate the difference older people are making across the UK. From allotment projects to tea dances, exercise classes to achievement awards, around 900 local events took place. Many organisations were involved this year and ensured it was a great success.

Further information: To find more information for over 50s, visit the Over 50s section of the Directgov website. Full of Life is on the website for the Dept for Work and Pensions UK.

**2009 International Conference on Aging and Spirituality
August 30 to September 2, Auckland**

Call for papers (closes Dec 31 2008) and Registration (early bird closes May 31 2009) – available now at

www.selwyncare.org.nz/scas

Selwyn Centre for Aging and Spirituality

Visit to Japan



At the home of Professor & Mrs Takayama in Kagoshima

Acknowledgements:

Japan Foundation for Aging and Health for the award of the Fellowship which funded and supported my visit.

Victoria University of Wellington & University of Otago, Christchurch, for study leave granted for this visit.

Visit to Japan 13- 26 September, 2008

Previous recipients of this Fellowship in recent years have been Prof Helen Bartlett, then at the University of Queensland; Professor Cecilia Henning, University of Jonkoping, Sweden; Professor Mary McCall, St Mary's College of California, and

Prof Ariela Lowenstein, University of Haifa, Israel.

Their new book Culture, Care and Community Empowerment: International Applications of Theory and Methods is in press, through a Japanese publisher.

Hosts: Prof Tadao Takayama, Kagoshima International University, &

Prof Tokie Anme, University of Tsukuba

All work and no play.....

On my last day in Tokyo, my host, Tokie Anme and her father (second from left in this photo) took me to visit a community seniors' group, where I was introduced to the finer points of the game of Ground Golf. On the field behind us in this photo, a total of about 80 seniors in teams of four were completing their morning's game. The wooden mallet is used for all shots, so the equipment cost is significantly less than traditional golf.



With Mr Anme visiting Ground Golf

Ground golf is something of a hybrid, sharing some features with traditional golf, and some with croquet. There was a side field where a small group of seniors were playing croquet (known in Japan as "Gate Ball").

Sharing recreation and hospitality with colleagues, friends and family of my generous hosts made my time in Japan especially memorable. My camera record shows I found great delight in all of my visits; every meal was beautifully presented, and drew me into trying many new taste experiences.

Travelling on public transport in Tokyo – always gently escorted and guided by my hosts – leaves me in awe of the scale of organization required to serve such a huge city of millions with efficiency and cleanliness.

Casual and formal discussions with everyone I met quickly turned to interest in the lives of older people, and how society can handle population ageing.

Kagoshima International University

At this University, I was invited to give a seminar to the Graduate Class under the title of "**Community empowerment of older New Zealanders – research, practice and commentary**". The students here are social work practitioners, many of whom are engaged in advanced professional development in a variety of community settings, including work with older people.

Kagoshima is situated about one hour's flight to the south of Tokyo, on the southern end of the island of Kyushu, in the region known as Satsuma. It is an extremely scenic area, with sub-tropical vegetation, wonderful beaches, and conical volcanic offshore islands. These features were temporarily obscured on the day of our arrival by a typhoon lashing the south coast!



In the International Office, Kagoshima University: L to R – Dr Tokie Anme, Dr Sally Keeling, Dr David McMurray and Prof Tadao Takayama.

University of Tsukuba

After my talk to this group of Graduate students, we shared a feast, including an elaborately decorated cake, being cut in ceremonial style in the picture below. I was proud to accept the gift of a beautiful kimono, as worn in these photographs.



With the student group
at Tsukuba University

Personal Highlights

*Japanese bath-house
at the Ibusuki Resort*

*Visiting the markets and
shrines much frequented
by older people in
various Tokyo districts*

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There were two public holidays during my fortnight in Japan, and I very much appreciated the opportunity to be guided by Dr Anme and some of her colleagues and students to visit gardens, and places of interest in Tokyo, and in the Tsukuba district. Having a personal interpreter with me was clearly a huge asset in terms of being able to appreciate these 'tourist' activities. I was also impressed by the roles played by senior volunteer guides, at several museums and historic sites. For example, at the Tokyo Open Air Architectural Museum, we talked with older people who were working in the shops, houses and gardens, clearly enjoying the opportunity to retain and talk about traditional crafts, domestic and industrial practices.

