



New Zealand

Association of Gerontology

Te Ropu Matauranga Kaumatua o Aotearoa

MAY 2011

A Word from the President

The occurrence of extreme tectonic and weather events over recent months seems to cement the notion that nothing is as certain as uncertainty.

I take this opportunity to express deep concern for our NZAG members, their families and colleagues, and the Canterbury community who had the seeming certainty of ordinary, day to day life disrupted in the wake of the Canterbury earthquakes.



Giving space for regrouping and recovery is the reason why the newsletter is coming to you a little later than usual. It was time to put human needs first.

I wish to acknowledge Dee Ferris' commitment to the gerontology community and NZAG in putting together another great newsletter in the midst of uncertain times. It is also timely to remember that:

"After the 22 February earthquake, Canterbury lost over 600 aged care residential beds. Several facilities were destroyed, and approximately 300 residents had to be urgently relocated to other parts of New Zealand. Others were required to share rooms or be accommodated in communal areas within care facilities. As a result, the number of beds becoming available on a day-to-day basis within Canterbury to cater for additional (new) people requiring residential care is very limited. This will probably continue until facilities can be repaired or new facilities built, which is unlikely to occur in the next 12 months"

Source: Canterbury District Health Board. www.eldernet.co.nz

So many aspects of peoples' taken-for-granted community lives are in flux. It is a good time to consider what each of us can do to serve the common good.

NZAG Strategic Change

This is also a time of change for the NZAG. The Association is undergoing a make-over. Branch and Area representatives from throughout New Zealand came together on three occasions over the past year to consider what is needed to ensure NZAG is a forward-looking voluntary organisation. We want to be an organisation that is relevant and vital in our research and practice contexts. In essence, the National Executive, in cooperation with all Branches, articulated the aim to:

- Grow the membership and take care of the members we have;
- Consolidate the NZAG newsletter as a key method for correspondence with members and interested others; and to
- Correspond directly to NZAG from an organisational hub.

Continued on the next page

Aims of the Association

- To stimulate interest and action in all matters concerning the welfare of older people.
- To encourage the training of those caring for older people.
- To act as advisors to interested persons, bodies or groups on aspects of ageing.
- To study ageing in all its forms, and to promote gerontological research.

Actions identified to take the Association forward are to:

- Establish a council structure that will likely have 4 nationally elected members and 4 regionally nominated members;
- Establish a National NZAG membership structure supported by an online database;
- Establish a contract secretariat or part-time office administrator;
- Upgrade the website platform to enable more efficient updates to the site; and to
- Identify multiple target audiences and customise the marketing strategy.

This new executive council will be in place by the time of the NZAG 2012 conference. It will set strategic direction and be responsible for achieving operational goals within budget. It is planned that the new nationally-based council will communicate internally primarily by email, skype and teleconference, or other electronic means; and meet face-to-face for one or more meetings per year. A secretariat would free the executive to focus on the strategic goals by doing day to day administration, routine correspondence with all members, manage financial accounting, provide support backup for regional organisations, and arrange national and/or regional events.

The health of NZAG matters to us and we are committed to making sure the Association thrives for the good of gerontology research and services in New Zealand.

You will hear more through your current Branch as we collectively move toward a new future.



International Visitors

NZAG is extremely privileged to have had the opportunity to dialogue with Professor Jill Manthorpe, Kings College London, during her recent New Zealand visit. Jill gave generously of her time visiting gerontology research centres and meeting with the NZAG Executive and some of its Branches. Jill is currently the Chair of the Editorial Board of Ageing & Society journal. She is also a Senior Investigator with the National Institute of Health Research, informing public policy on the provisions for older adults in the United Kingdom. She has a background of working in the voluntary sector and has chaired and been a Trustee of a number of voluntary sector groups working with older people.

Things to Celebrate

Lastly, I share some news about those working behind the scenes to keep NZAG running. Dr. Justin Keogh leaves New Zealand to take up an exciting new position in Queensland, Australia, necessitating his resignation as a member of the NZAG Executive. Two others recently graduated with Doctorates of Philosophy, Dr. John Parsons, NZAG secretary, and Dr. Stephen Jacobs, NZAG 2012 conference convenor. We celebrate their achievements and future successes.

Dr. Valerie Wright-St Clair

How are older people in Christchurch doing?

Living and working in Christchurch over the last year has had its ups and downs. But when is a good time to pause and reflect on how older people are faring?

Some of us were starting to do this by the end of 2010, but then Boxing Day shook us all again. In January, with 2 colleagues, I submitted a conference abstract for the British Society of Gerontology Conference in July 2011, under the title "Older people in a major earthquake: initial experiences and representations". By mid-February, a group of local Christchurch researchers met to discuss how we might begin to make sense of our learnings since September, and we discussed using a planned April NZAG meeting to discuss this. However, the notes I made from that meeting were still on my desk on 22nd February.

So, now we are in May, can we tempt fate by writing yet another opening line, now better called "continuing reflections and impressions"? Recently, (in the week of April 23) The Press ran a series on older people's issues in the aftermath of the February quake. Some of the headlines make grim reading "Some old folk isolated", "Death rate spikes after quake", and "Choice gone for Christchurch old folk". Another heading uses the term "earthquake victims" above an article which includes

several older people amongst those described as "doing it tough", two months on. Elsewhere, there is a piece talking about "rest home refugees". Over 300 rest home residents were part of an emergency evacuation outside Christchurch; in total about 600 beds have been lost in the Canterbury aged care sector. This language stresses vulnerability, limited autonomy, and a loss of security, which affects older people particularly.

Beyond Christchurch, the Sunday Star Times gave front page billing on April 24, to a rerun of a photograph of a 78 year old man, with bandaged head, and claimed that his image (described as a "Thousand-mile stare") became the enduring image of the quake in media terms. Well down in the text, the "backstory" behind the image becomes clearer. This man was "miffed" to find his photograph used in this way. He was a regular volunteer showing tourists around Christchurch Cathedral, on duty that day. Under other circumstances, he might equally have become a "cover boy" for Active Ageing, contributing his time towards his city in this way.

In The Press series, there are also more positive stories of community and individual resilience, such as the one under the heading “Warmth of a hug and food ease fears”. This describes a church hall being used as a drop in centre for older residents in the neighbourhood to come together for shared food and links with each other. Many of their neighbours have moved out, either short or long term, leaving older people more likely to be “home alone” in their street. For those of us involved in research relating to older people, it is also encouraging to note the recent development of an extensive network of researchers working on different aspects of earthquake effects in terms of health. There are also many community response networks being reinforced by these most recent challenges. The massive public health issues with water, power, sewerage, and winter warmth have carried major messages for all our communities about preparedness, “making do”, safety and mutual support.

The scale of how our lives have been reconfigured through loss and sadness, courage and strength is revealed each day. As the Canterbury NZAG Committee comes out of a kind of de facto hibernation, we are still checking how our members, colleagues and friends are placed. Clearly, picking up where we left off is not an option for many people. Some are exhausted after weeks of crisis management, working in the front lines of community and residential care roles, and taking care of family and friends. Many are only now working through the longer term issues of where and how they will live, as the official recovery phase opens.

Older people are as diverse in their earthquake response as any age group, reminding us to look beyond the headlines and stereotypes which we would all try to avoid “under normal circumstances”. But these last weeks have indeed been anything but normal: extraordinary, random, surreal are all terms I hear regularly. A colleague sent me an email this week, asking simply “How are you doing?”. My response was long, rambling, tangled, messy, full of stories, some questions, second hand references. I realised I might simply have said “It’s complicated”. That’s the trouble with asking a social researcher to describe and interpret what is going on around them. Asking older people in Christchurch how they are doing will raise similar responses. Possibly a common standard would be “I’m doing OK, compared to many others who are having such a tough time”.

So, conversations do need to allow us to get behind the headlines, to understand the wide range of responses and their possible daily variations. Now is the time for listening even more carefully when asking “how can we help?”, as we start to reclaim control over our lives, making plans and decisions within the circumstances surrounding us each day. Now, more than ever, we have respect for the factors over which none of us have control - the ground beneath us, and the ageing journey itself. Our best chance is to develop flexibility, courage and strength to adapt to changing circumstances, with mutual support sensitively tailored to individual needs. How about reaffirming “Positive Ageing”?

*Dr. Sally Keeling,
Canterbury Branch NZAG President*

NZAG Conference 2012

The New Zealand Association of Gerontology is holding its next conference on September 14th and 15th 2012. The theme of the conference is Diversity, and there will be five streams: Older People & Cognition; Carers & Family as Partners; Community Support Services; Active Aging & Participation; and Dying Well / End of Life. There will be five plenary sessions with an invited speaker, one from each stream, and then workshop sessions. The main focus will be on combining research evidence with everyday experience.

The venue for the conference is Waipuna Lodge in Auckland. The members of the organising committee are: Stephen Jacobs (convenor), Valerie Wright-St.Clair, Chris Perkins, Ngaire Kerse, Liz Binns, and Ineke Riley-Stol. The conference committee is supported by Six Hats, represented by Amanda Graham.

The expected dates for symposia and abstract submissions for presenting in the workshops are:

Call for symposia and abstracts opens: 22 June 2011

Closing date for submissions for symposia: 14 December 2011

Closing date for submissions for abstracts: 25 April 2012

Liz Kiata’s recently completed doctoral thesis ‘All in a day’s work: The lifeworld of older people in New Zealand rest homes’ contributes to critical gerontology research by investigating the lived experiences of residents in the everyday world of rest homes. There is a need to understand how frail residents experience ‘age’ and the study adds clarity through elders lived experiences about being aged in rest homes.

Policy initiatives, such as the Positive Ageing Strategy with its emphasis on keeping older people living in the community, largely ignore the life practices of the increasing proportions of frail older people who require long-term residential care. Supplementing and back-grounding interviews with 27 residents are descriptive data, including written interview summaries and survey findings about the relationships and pastimes of 352 residents living in 21 rest homes in two New Zealand cities.

The residents day-to-day use of rest home space, mediated time, self-managed bodies and minds, and negotiated relationships are interpreted. The mythology of the misery of rest home life is challenged, and a more constructive critical gerontology approach is offered.

Findings of this research reveal how meanings around daily work practices are constructed by the residents. These elders participate in daily rest home life, from the sidelines or not at all, as they choose or are able, and this always involves work for the residents. They continue to actively manage satisfactory and fulfilling pastimes and relationships, because in their ordinary, everyday lifeworld it is “all in a day’s work”. Liz’s thesis/dissertation can be viewed online at the University of Auckland Library.

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Book Review - Professional Foodservice 2nd Edition

Duncan, P., and Jensen, J.: Pearson: NZ, 2011, 516 pages, \$95.00, ISBN 978-1-4425-2742-3

Professional Foodservice is a key resource for anyone needing information on a wide range of skill based and management activities within foodservices. It answers questions as diverse as "How many staff will I need?", and "How do I plan a menu for residents with swallowing difficulties?", to "How much raw meat will I need for 50 people?", "What's a good potato for salad?" and "What's norovirus?".

In this second edition of Professional Foodservice, authors Pip Duncan and Julian Jensen have applied their extensive dietetic and foodservice experience to all aspects of managing large-scale residential foodservices. The result is a current, comprehensive reference for today's cook, chef, manager and others wishing to produce quality, cost-effective meals in a residential setting.

This book radiates practical, useful information throughout. Chapters are designed to explain, help readers understand and then apply information. To ensure the reader grasps and can apply the information, topics are discussed in terms of principles, guidelines and/or procedures, forms, checklists, standards, practical strategies and interpretations, illustrations and diagrams. Chapters finish with an extension activity to encourage readers to apply information to their own work and consolidate learning.

Professional Foodservice opens with menus, nutrition and common special diets, and food customs of different cultures within NZ. Menu planners, and those responsible for nutrition care of their client group, will find this section particularly helpful. The food hygiene and safety section is for all levels of food service staff, and describes common food safety hazards, their control and management, and accident prevention and hazard management. The chapter on planning for disasters includes a 3 day

emergency menu and the stock required for 50 people.

The management section will become well thumbed by those responsible for staffing, financial and quality management, and anyone having to replace equipment or the kitchen. A few of its gems are establishing staffing levels, and guidance for writing job descriptions, task lists and rosters. Chapters on financial management and quality include budgeting, practical steps for controlling costs, identifying parameters of quality and how to establish systems for quality improvement. Those faced with kitchen design will find essential facts (space, for instance) tabulated and generic equipment options clearly outlined.

Chapters on major food groups and their large-scale production will be popular with cooks, chefs and menu planners. Many charts describe ingredients, their use and other preparation or production information, as well as quantities required for 10, 25 and 50 serves. The recipe file that follows has a large selection of modern dishes used in NZ residential catering, with a nutritional breakdown for each, and in quantities of 10, 25 and 50. Glossaries of culinary and nutrition terms and a resource list conclude the book.

The information in Professional Foodservice is invaluable. Smart managers will be tempted to buy one copy for their own use, and one for everyone else. Or, they will keep it under their pillow in case it disappears before the job is complete. It's that good.

*Heather Spence, Ph.D., R.D.
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Conferences 2011

June 5 - 8 Toronto, Canada

Festival of international Conferences on Caregiving, Disability, Aging and Technology (FICCDAT)

Web: www.ficcdat.ca/

June 30 - July 1 Barcelona, Spain

1st Intensive Course on Ageing

Web: www.iagg.info

August 3 - 5 Wellington, NZ

New Zealand Home Health Association - Fronting up

Web: www.nzhha.org.nz/conference

September 17 - 18 Tokyo, Japan

8th Conference on Systems Sciences: Health Social Services for Elderly & Disabled, International Perspectives & Lessons in Creating Inclusive Communities for all in the 21st Century

Web: <http://hwelfare.umin.jp/24th/>

October 21 - 23 Ottawa, Canada

Canadian Association of Gerontology 4th Pan American Congress - New Directions for Aging

Web: www.tafeta.ca/cagpanam.html

October 23 - 27 Melbourne, Australia

North Asia/Oceania Regional Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics - Ageing well together: regional perspectives

Web: www.ageing2011.com

November 25 - 27 Taipei, Taiwan

Asia Pacific League of Clinical Gerontology and Geriatrics (APLCGG) - Frailty conference

Web: www.frailty2011.com

Editor's Desk

The next Newsletter will be circulated in August 2011.

Please send contributions for the next issue by 20th July 2011, to:

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for:

- Auckland Branch
- Canterbury Branch
- Wellington Branch
- Waikato Branch
- Sub branches – Palmerston North, Otago, Tauranga

Membership

Any person interested in promoting the aims of the Association can be a member of the NZAG. This may include members of the public, health professionals, care staff, administrators, managers, representatives from organisations involved with the wellbeing of older people, and academics interested in gerontological research. If you are interested in becoming a member, contact: national@gerontology.org.nz

