

Media release

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Research shows ageing population will bring opportunities for NZ

New research findings released this week about the impact of the ageing population shows that it will bring opportunities as well as challenges for New Zealand says Retirement Commissioner Diana Crossan.

The research found that encouraging people to work post-65 would have positive benefits for the workplace; demand for healthcare would outstrip supply; and friends, rather than families would play a bigger part in providing care for future older New Zealanders.

The research, summarised in a book launched today, analyses the impact of New Zealand's ageing population. *Opportunities and Risk: The Implications of Population Aging*, was a joint initiative by the Ministry of Social Development, the Retirement Commission and other government agencies. The report was published by Victoria University's Institute of Policy Studies.

"While the ageing population will place significant pressures on New Zealand, this research acknowledges the opportunities that it will bring too, particularly for workplaces which will benefit from the growing number of older working New Zealanders," said Ms Crossan.

"Older workers are of great value in the workplace because of their depth of experience and loyalty. As well as passing on skills and knowledge to younger staff, they help make a workplace more stable."

Ms Crossan said the other benefit resulting from older New Zealanders working longer was that it would help plug the skills shortage as the working population supports a significantly larger dependent population. This ratio is expected to reach its peak in 2050.

Ms Crossan also said that the research would also help future governments refine and adjust current policies to minimise the impact of the ageing population and would be an important input into the Retirement Commission's 2007 Retirement Income Policy Review.

Other research findings included:

- The "greying" of New Zealand means older voters will have much more influence on government spending than at present;
- Younger generations of New Zealanders may be less wealthy than their parents;
- New government policies, for example easing our immigration policy, will be required to counteract the reduction in the labour force; and

Opportunities and Risk: The Implications of Population Aging is available on the Retirement Commission's website www.retirement.org.nz.

Ends.

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