

# Grey power

Wellington Central

*'We're part of your future'*

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OCT - DEC  
2018

## President's Column

The last few months have been busy for Grey Power here in Wellington.

Your committee has been organising meetings and talking with people frustrated by the rearrangements to our city bus services.

Our one public meeting was led by Hon Chris Finlayson (former Attorney General), where he outlined his views on the current kerfuffle around the appointment of a Justice to the US Supreme Court. Chris laid out the ways in which the American appointment process differed from that here in New Zealand and why we seem to have a better process.

Chris also asked for some feedback on the local problems with the bus routes and the management of the issues by the Wellington Regional Council (WRC).

On this issue I have been invited by the WRC to join their Reference Group, which will monitor

**EDITOR NEEDED:** I am changing my role- we need a new editor for this Newsletter. Please call Elaine Scoble (021 750 772) for info.

their performance and progress on bringing an end to the chaos currently reigning since the roll-out of the new routes and new providers etc.

Unfortunately we had to cancel the meeting at which Dame Annette King was due to speak, owing to her being way-laid in Australia on Government business.

Our final event for the year is our Member's Xmas Luncheon which be held on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November starting at 12.30pm. As in past years this will be held at The Grand, 69 Courtenay Place.

Finally on behalf of the Committee of the Association I would like to wish you a Merry Xmas and Happy New Year.

See you all in 2019.

*Lloyd Falck.*

*President, Grey Power Wellington Central*



## Member's Christmas Luncheon

on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November  
starting at 12.30pm.

at The Grand, 69 Courtenay Place.

Subsidy to members –  
up to \$20 (excluding drink).

RSVP to Caroline by Monday 19<sup>th</sup> Nov,

Ph 384 2646



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## It's true – cats really DO talk to us!

In fact, research from the *University of Georgia* found that cats are just as expressive as dogs. It's just that most of us have no idea what they're trying to say. So, here's a quick lesson in cat communication:

According to the researchers, purring means "Please stay!" Because cats purr when they're happy, AND when they're sick or injured.

So what is your cat trying to say when you get home and they rub against your leg? That's your cat's way of saying, "Welcome home friend!" It's a behaviour cats exhibit in the wild. After a hunt and feeding, cats will come back together and rub against each other as a way of saying, "Ah yes, we are reunited at last!" And they've translated that behaviour from something within their own species to a way to relate with humans.

Finally, if your cat meows – he's trying to get your attention. Because other studies show that adult cats ONLY meow around humans. They don't meow to communicate with their fellow felines - unless they're feral and in heat or fighting.

## Pensioners create web series finding humour in challenges of old age

**Caroline Williams – Stuff**

A group of north Auckland pensioners is creating a web series that mines the rich humour of the stage of life where "shame is left behind".

Whether attending funerals, arguing over card games or competing at the gym, *The Dusketees* addressed the challenges of ageing with humour.

"It develops. We get ideas as we go along," said Carolyn Williamson, who plays Fleur.

The series covered the troubles, love and adventures experienced by the three heroines who live in the same retirement village.

"We are an elderly group and it felt important that we do it within our experience," said Cynthia Green, who portrays Molly. "That's our point of difference."

"We're trying to show the different characters that live in a retirement village," said Christine Doorman, who portrays Dot.

**Read more:**

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/107652922/Pensioners-create-web-series-finding-humour-in-challenges-of-old-age?cid=edm:stuff:dailyheadlines&bid=838263901>

## Grey Power NZ: Some History

Grey Power is a voluntary organisation founded in February 1986 by a group of angry Superannuitants protesting against the imposition of a surcharge on New Zealand Superannuation. First started as the Auckland Superannuitants Association, the founders were very vocal in their anger at the surcharge. At that time, there was a media campaign against the Government of the day, so meetings were well publicised and attracted a media presence which meant the movement quickly spread and further Associations joined up in other areas. The protest gained momentum and the surcharge was abolished.

The individual Grey Power Associations are all duly Incorporated Societies under their own right and together they form the Grey Power New Zealand Federation Inc: the National body of some 74 Associations throughout the country with a combined membership fluctuating up to 90,000 members. The Federation's primary source of funding is by capitation fee, payable by member Associations for each subscription they receive and have added to the central database. Membership subscriptions are taken by the local Associations and many Associations issue regular newsletters, and hold meetings with guest speakers. Quarterly, the Federation publishes and provides to each financial Household, a 24/28 page tabloid type magazine.

Grey Power as a whole is an advocacy group. Grey Power now work in all matters pertaining to NZ Superannuation, as well as in the areas of the Super Gold Card, Aged Care and Retirement Villages, Energy, Health and ACC, International treaties, Law and Order, Emergency Management, Transport, Local Bodies and Housing, Retirement Income and Taxation, Social Services and Telecommunications. These areas of importance are allotted to Board subcommittees as National Advisory Groups. Each "NAGs" responsibility is to progress the aims and objectives of Grey Power.

Grey Power continue to meet and lobby politicians who have the power to determine our future living standards.

## NZ Super

Pensions: here, there, and what's ahead?

How does our pension system compare with those elsewhere? And what changes have there been? Kent Weaver, an international expert on pensions, spoke mid-August 2018 at the Wellington Law School. His summary: lots of change, but most things stay the same. New Zealand has become an outlier for its non-contributory (well, not a direct contribution), universal, and flat rate scheme. Some countries had elements of these but most have moved to a mixture of means testing, contributory, non-flat rate, and other schemes, usually as a result of financial cutbacks.

New Zealand has had no real changes since 2001, so the question is why? Kent suggested there were a few factors. First off was the collective trauma of the 1990s, which politicians are very reluctant to repeat. Then there is MMP, which makes collective action by parties to agree on unpopular measures very difficult, mainly because of the numbers of parties. And of course Grey Power! Kent also talked about there being "windows" for the introduction of

big changes, which NZ has probably missed. There's also the factor that the NZ birth rate has not fallen as much as a lot of countries. Perhaps the biggest barrier to change is the universal and uniform nature of the pension: it creates a big constituency that would fight against cutbacks. Politicians like to deal with crises by doing unpopular stuff in less visible areas (eg the Kiwisaver contribution cutbacks by the last government), and the present system doesn't have many edges.

Possible changes? Kent thought there seemed little official appetite for changing the qualifying period for full pension (currently 10 years) though I do notice there's a proposed Bill to up this figure. My thoughts are that the 1990s trauma will gradually fade from memory, and Winston must leave the stage sooner or later, but even so it will be hard (but not impossible) for any government to make changes in this area.

*By Owen Watson*

See a paper written by Peter Harris CMinstD FRICS in: <https://www.cffc.org.nz/assets/Documents/RI-Review-2013-History-of-NZ-Retirement-Income-Harris.pdf>  
*This is a (very) brief extract from that paper:*

### 4.9 As others see us...

American academic Kent Weaver has produced a "hypothetical report card" on New Zealand's retirement income system.

The highest mark (A) is given to the "administrative effectiveness and cost of NZS". "Exposure to market risk" rates an A-, which is possibly why "poverty prevention" also rates highly at B+.

"Income replacement" is given a C, which in light of the Cullen comments (quoted earlier in the paper), would be seen as a good grade!

The fail grade (D), is "exposure to political risk". This paper argues that on the historical record that risk – at least for the first pillar – has been more theoretical than actual.

On the other hand, the record shows that the political risk around support for second and third pillar savings is very real.

### 5.0 Conclusion

New Zealand's retirement income policy history has steadfastly avoided both compulsory individual contribution and any attempt by the government to replicate in retirement incomes that which people earned during working life. State guarantees of returns to private savings have been limited and are now historical. State subsidies of private savings have never been extensive. "Needs based" policies and programmes—like health, disability and housing support and provision of residential age care facilities – have lifted the pressure on the need to generate more substantial retirement income "in case".

The universal pension has meant that overall, elder poverty is confined, and lower than that of the population as a whole. Inflation and longevity risk have been collectivised, so the regime is relatively advantageous for women.

It is generally seen to be equitable, effective and cost-efficient. The durability of the basic settings implies a high degree of public acceptability. Whether these historic settings are financially sustainable remains the major matter for policy makers to determine.



## Companion Volunteers

Do you have a spare 2-4 hours per week and live in Wellington, Porirua or Kapiti

Mary Potter Hospice has many patients and carers who need your support to live in their homes in their community. You will help to promote and support their quality of life

If you have excellent interpersonal skills, maturity and common sense, a non judgmental and open mind and are able to maintain personal boundaries, conventionality and privacy you could be who we are looking for

### Companionship can include ;

Sitting and talking  
 Reading to the person  
 Playing cards, board games, jigsaw puzzles  
 Writing cards or letters for the person  
 Going out for coffee, library, movie etc  
 And any other activities you both enjoy.

No medical or personal care is required  
 We provide excellent ongoing support and training  
 For more information or application details please contact  
 Karen Roberts  
 karen.roberts@marypotter.org.nz  
 Ph 042372307



[An email received recently](#)

**Subject: Volunteering at Mary Potter Hospice**

Kia ora.

I am the Community Volunteer Lead at Mary Potter Hospice. I am recruiting volunteers to be part of our Companionship Programme. I believe that this may be of interest to some of your members.

Companion volunteers spend 2-4 hours per week visiting our patients in their own home. It is about spending time with the patient but also to give the carer a break. There is no housework, medical care or personal care involved. The Volunteer can do many things - reading to patient, play board games, go out for coffee, help them write emails, etc.

I have some more information that I could send you. See our flyer alongside this email. I look forward to hearing back from you. Nga mihi nui

Karen Roberts,  
 Community Volunteer Lead. Phone: 021 503524

Thanks to contributors of articles in this issue – especially Owen Watson and Helen MacDiarmid, editor of News & Views

### GREY POWER WELLINGTON CENTRAL - NEW MEMBERSHIP or RENEWAL

<b>Name: Mr/Mrs/Miss</b>		<b>Membership Number: (for Renewals)</b>	
<b>Address:</b>		<b>Phone No:</b>	
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		<b>Post Code:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>		<b>Date of Birth: (Optional)</b>	
<b>Subscription for year:</b>	<b>Apr 2018-March 2019</b> (Circle One)	<b>Individual (\$25)</b>	<b>Couple (\$30)</b>
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<b>Donation:</b>	<b>Amount: \$</b>	<b>Total Paid: \$</b>	

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<b>I am interested in helping:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving a lift to a member in my area to meetings</li> <li>• Helping with phoning members reminding them of meetings</li> <li>• Working on the Committee</li> </ul>	<b>Do you want to receive promotional material?</b>  <b>YES / NO</b>
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<b>OFFICE USE:</b>				
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*The subscription for year 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020 will not change from the Current rate of \$25 for a Single membership, and \$30 for a Double membership (living at the same address). Invoices will be sent out towards the end of January 2019.*

