



**Grey Power New Zealand  
Federation Inc**

**February 2012**

**Bulletin**

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*The reports contained in this Bulletin are as presented at the February 2012 Board meeting or an abridged version by the individual named as author at the head of each article. The only change made from the original submissions is correction to typo's where found and change of type face to conform to the overall Bulletin format.*

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## Presidents Report

### Roy Reid, President Grey Power

Welcome to the start of another year that promises to be a busy one for Grey Power.

The Special General Meeting held by Western Bay of Plenty Association was well attended with many Members unable to gain entry to the hall. The members voted overwhelmingly to remain as an Association within the Federation and passed a motion of no confidence in the existing Committee. Since that meeting an interim committee has been set up to continue the work in their area.

A newspaper report of the meeting stated that I had many torn up Membership cards thrown at me and this is untrue. One lady who supported the former Committee gave me her card and her husband then apologised for her behaviour. He had resigned a few days earlier but was rejoining that day.

I have received many messages of support for informing the Membership of what was happening to create the breakaway from Grey Power.

As reported to the last Board meeting Russell Norman had asked for support in organising a Citizens Initiated Referendum against the sale of state owned assets.

A meeting was held in Wellington on 16 February with twelve organisations plus five Members of Parliament and a person representing the Mana Party.

All groups were opposed to the Sale of State owned assets and want to be involved in running a campaign to promote a Citizens Initiated Referendum, being run by a broad-based community led but not Political Party led group. R Norman and G Robertson are to consult the Clerk of the House of Representatives to discuss suitable wording for the Referendum Question.

For the next meeting groups are asked to give an estimate of the number of signatures that they feel that the group could collect. More definite decisions need to be made at the next meeting before going Public.

I have attended meetings of Zones 2, 3, 5 and 6 when David Moffett has presented his presentation on the proposed Strategic Plan. I have been encouraged by the way the Delegates attending have responded and made suggestions on the presentation.

A Board workshop on Tuesday afternoon will be held on the Strategic Plan.

The Government has now released the financial support package

For those over age 75 to receive financial help to enable them to receive a Digital signal on the change over from Analogue to Digital signal. The changeover will be staggered starting with the West Coast of the South Island and Hawkes Bay on 30 September 2012 with the rest of the country having staggered change over dates with the last one to be completed on 1 December 2013.

The Financial package is not available until six months prior to the change over date. The Consumer reference group had no input into the package before it was released by the Government. Anyone who already can receive a digital signal will get NO financial support.

There will be many Members under age 75 disadvantaged by not being eligible due to age and lack of finance to fund the change-over.

There is concern that the Membership continues to fall and until we can restore unity at all levels of our organisation we will not gain the number of Members that we need to function. Membership comes by the Associations being seen to be working well as well as this Board. It is now time to address the issues and move forward as a united Federation, if we do not then sadly we will fail to achieve the objectives of Grey Power.

## Zone 1

### Jack Kerr, Zone 1 Director

Zone 1 is progressing along satisfactorily with the national problems of each Association trying to increase membership and all are trying to get further candidates for their committees.

We have, not as yet, had a Zone meeting and tried to arrange one at very short notice in order to have a visit from the modernisation working party but with members still on leave and others not being able to be contacted this proved difficult and has had to be left to March.

I myself heard David Moffett at the Board meeting and with a bit of fine tuning I liked what I heard so let's hope we all get behind it and not be negative.

All Associations have held their first meeting for the year and all seems well which is good news for me.

We are looking forward to what is expected to be a very exciting year and a very progressive one for the Federation which in turn will rebound on all Associations with increased membership.

## Zone 2

No Report Received.

## Zone 3

### **Bruce Purchase, Zone 3 Director**

For Zone 3 the focus is attracting new members. Should we be actively looking at 50 or 55 plus to join us? And if so, your ideas to help us all. Some ideas to attract new Members are rates equity and relief, energy savings for example Tiny Mighty River Power for those who have picked up on it.

At our February Zone meeting we had the pleasure of President Roy Reid and Vice President Terry King who gave all those present time to put personal questions on issues as they saw them.

The David Moffett presentation given to the 61 delegates and observers from Zone 3 was well received. I felt it was an engaging display with active and positive participation by those present made the whole exercise well worth the effort. I understand this has also proved to have been likewise with the other Zone's presentations put on by David throughout the rest of the Country.

The update made for the February Board meeting where the rest of the Board and I thought this is the sort of idea's we need to be looking at. I cannot stress hard enough to you the members that this is the time for your input, so please at least try to get as many delegates as possible to this year's AGM. This AGM could be one the most important for Grey Power.

## Zone 4

No Report Received.

## Zone 5

### **Pam Schouten, Zone 5 Director**

All Associations in attendance with the exception of Motueka.

Local Body Amalgamation. This topic should be discussed at local Grey Power Meetings as rate payer feedback is necessary. Nelson Assn is hosting two meetings and Golden Bay is also hosting one.

Eftpos cards/Aged Care. We are still hearing of problems in this area. Most of the Organisations who deal with sector have strict guidelines in place and make sure they are adhered to. Unfortunately it is mostly family members or friends who are the perpetrators.

Youth Unemployment. The issue of 65years and over taking jobs from youth was discussed. Roy Reid read his reply to this issue to the meeting. He was congratulated on the content.

Age of retirement was discussed and the ramifications of raising the age and the Maori request that it be lowered for Maori.

Digital TV. Allowances for the change over were discussed.

AIL. There has been a problem with the AIL representatives on the West Coast. They have been withdrawn for further training..

The ongoing problem of Hospital discharges was discussed. The time of discharge. The fact that it was usually a Friday, with no help or contact until at least Monday. These organisations should be working 7 days a week. People are not unwell to order. They should be there when the patient arrives home. They should give clear concise instruction, a 24 hour contact number for help if required and then come back and do the paper work.

A&E also discharge patients are ungodly hours. If you are elderly and alone, transport and no money with you could be a problem. Again there should be a person to accompany them home and give the relevant information. A cup of tea in both cases wouldn't do any harm as well

All Associations are working hard on membership. Most are holding their own, but only with a great deal of creative thinking and hard work.

Marlborough's news letters in the local free paper work well. The advantage of this is, it is distributed to everyone in the community and not just Grey Power Members.

Congratulations to Hokitika on obtaining 500 members.

The down loading of members onto the National Data Base was again discussed. This, either by direct input or memory stick. Zone 5 Associations cannot see why this has to be done twice. It creates twice the opportunity for errors.

On Monday morning David Moffat gave his presentation to the Associations present.

It was in the main, well received and the input from various members, interesting.

Thanks to Jan Pentecost, Miles Jackson, Terry King and David for attending the Meeting.

### Zone 6

#### Miles Jackson, Zone 6 Director

Our Zone meeting was recently held in Rangiora. The Zone Director welcomed delegates, observers and official visitors including Grey Power Federation President, R. Reid, Vice-President, T. King and Past President and Life Member L. Howard.

A record of 23 observers and 12 delegates held a very productive meeting. Nine local observers/ members from North Canterbury joined the meeting after lunch to hear the presentation by the independent Chairman of the Structure Working party Mr David Moffett.

A good discussion took place on membership, and most associations (with the exception of Christchurch) are maintaining their membership, and in fact Temuka have increased membership on a year ago. Christchurch and to a lesser extent North Canterbury (Kaiapoi) are still rebuilding membership after the earthquakes, many members in the Eastern part of Christchurch city (Red Zone) have vacated their homes.

#### From the Zone meeting.

Ashburton's evening meeting for the 50+ group –not overly successful- good support from employers when they were notified of the meeting.

General discussion on membership- it was generally agreed that a partnership between the Federation Board and Assns was necessary- suggestions = flyers in local markets, media exposure through local newspapers, good speakers at general meetings.

Other matters discussed were as follows.

1. Grey Power Magazine official membership form- T. King Federation Magazine Portfolio chair explained that the placement of material in the magazine was the editor's responsibility but he will look at this issue- Associations may submit articles to the magazine to be published subject to availability of space.

2. Cheque signatures-problem with a difference between the name of the cheque holder and their signature discussed-as was the

question of how some older people will manage when the cheque system is withdrawn.

3. Membership forms- it was agreed that Assn membership forms should request an email address if the member has one.

'That age band boxes be printed on membership application forms in 10 year bands- 50-60yrs, 60-70yrs, 70-80yrs and 80 plus. This is optional.'

4. Election of Zone Director- M. Jackson elected unopposed.

6. Election of Deputy Zone Director Shirley Gilmer elected.

7. Land Transport cost-cutting: Grey Power President R. Reid explained that in some areas offices are closing and he wants to be informed where this is happening-it may be a country-wide trend.

8. 2011 AGM- R. Reid requested ideas for topics for a forum for the AGM.

9. Local Bodies- discussion occurred on the Minister, N. Smith's call for local councils etc to reduce spending-possible precursor to amalgamations –perhaps only 2 super councils in the South Island.

10. Sale of SOEs- That Zone 6 Grey Power opposes the mixed public/private ownership model for our electricity industry. That Zone 6 requests the Energy Committee to present a submission to Treasury opposing removal of the 4 SOE's from the SOE Act

11. Right-hand driving rule: M. Jackson advised Associations to invite speakers to inform members of this rule change.

**Note**-since this meeting most associations have arranged for Speakers from Road Safety (Cant)

12. Food Bill- D. Moffett advised that there appears to be miss-information re this-sales tables etc will not be affected. L. Howard has information on how to read a bar-code.

13. Remits to AGM- discussion on timing to give Associations time to attend to remits before Christmas- remits can be sent to Federation any time of the year.

14. Remit for 2012 Federation AGM -Moved Temuka/Second North Canterbury

That voting figures for Boards and Federation general meetings be published in minutes of respective meetings.

15. Election Strategy- Chair requested feedback re 2011 Federation election strategy-comment = that just because the elections are over the issues must still be pursued- through advocacy visits.



16. Minister Senior Citizens- Moved Timaru-D. Fitzgerald/Second Ashburton-J. Jaine: 'That Zone 6 write to the Federation Board requesting that the Minister of Senior Citizens be inside Cabinet because senior citizens are a large, important cohort.' Carried

## Zone 7

### Les Glassey, Zone 7 Director

Have you remembered the Grey Power AGM 2012 to be held at the Ascot Park Hotel in Invercargill ?

Some Associations have not registered yet. Remember the closing date is March 14th. Come and enjoy the southern hospitality and a good programme is being organised.

NOTE - your registration cost covers accommodation, meals, venue, - Mon - Wed plus the shuttle bus from the airport to the hotel.

Please make cheques payable to Grey Power AGM 2012 and send to -

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42 Carlyle St  
Mataura 9712.  
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## Portfolio Reports

### The 50 Plus Portfolio

As this is the last Board meeting before the 2012 AGM it seems relevant to review the portfolio's work to date.

#### Gains include:

An assurance from the Minister of Social Development that older sickness and invalid beneficiaries will not be subject to work test obligations and therefore their associated sanctions.

An assurance from the Minister of Social Development that policy would be reinforced re assistance for disabled Work & Income clients- instructions from WINZ were provided to the member who contacted us re this and the results were noted in the advocacy report.

Agreement from the Retirement Commissioner that people between the ages of 60-65 years who have been made redundant receive a transition benefit (not work tested) until they reach retirement age.

Support from the NZ University Student's Association re the government's possible ageist action in removing access to student loans for living costs and course-related costs for over 55yr olds. This seems to contradict the MSD's own research 'The Business of Ageing' which points out that older people will and do remain in the workforce longer and may require to re-skill or re-train.

Support from the Council of Trade Unions re the above

Collation of research articles regarding ageism in the workforce and negative treatment of people by Work Income. This has included looking at NZ, Australian and research from other countries. (This research is available to others who are interested.)

Completion and circulation to Associations of the 50+ policy

#### On-going work includes:

Further lobbying at the Ministry of Social Development re negative treatment of some older beneficiaries

Lobbying the Minister of Tertiary Studies of re the removal of access to student loans for those over 55 yrs.

Further contact with CTU and NZ University Student's Association re the above.

Information re older people's entitlements, transition from work to retirement etc - to work with other organisations on this.

Soliciting issues requiring advocacy from members/ Associations

## Remit & Rules Portfolio

### Jack Kerr, Chair Remit & Rule portfolio

Once again it is the time that remits submission for the 2012 A GM has closed and the Remit Committee has met and discussed them.

I must admit, that despite of our best efforts, following a request from the delegates at the 2011 AGM in providing a simpler way of submitting remits it was diabolical the way some remits were submitted.

This is causing hours of extra work for the committee and when you are working to a deadline it makes it very hard. However, in the interests of our members the committee will get it all in order for the AGM.

Some remits had to have minor alterations to make them acceptable and these

have been returned to the relevant Zone Director to organise and return to the Federation Office.

Other than that there is very little news, except that the Modernisation Working party will be working on a new constitution and I sincerely hope it is a lot better than the one we have got.

### ACC Portfolio

#### Jack Kerr, Chair ACC Portfolio.

With the election late last year it has been a very quiet time for ACC without very much coming from the Government. The Hon. Judy Collins is the new ACC Minister and I will accept that it would take time to settle but I finally got an answer to a letter written to Hon Nick Smith on 5<sup>th</sup> September which contained several questions pertaining to the 6% threshold on deafness and the contents of the reply were not encouraging to say the least.

The federation through this committee has had several cases to deal with and because of the privacy act no names or anything able to identify any person can be put in print so it suffice to say there has been a few successes through representation and some persons have receive treatment that had previously been refused. Unfortunately I cannot say we have had a 100% success which I would have liked and was aiming for but I am pleased with the results.

There have been a couple of cases where the person requiring treatment have been very negative and have not supplied information that has been requested, but have given me their own opinion and description of ACC case Officers which is not helpful at all. After discussion with the President and outlining the faults to him it was decided that unless these persons provide the information as requested assistance will cease. Any person who wishes to have our assistance will be asked to fill out an indemnity form [supplied by the Portfolio Committee] and if they do not then the help stops there. If they do then they must be prepared to give factual replies to any information requested of them.

Here is hoping that this year I will have nothing to do as no member will have any accidents. I live in hope.

### Law and Order

#### Bruce Purchase, Chair Law and Order

Law and Order there are many things that need looking at. As an example, take the New Zealand Justice News and New Zealand Court of Appeal 18 Pages see { [www.kiwisfirst.com/](http://www.kiwisfirst.com/) }

#### Some of the Headings are as follows

- 1 N.Z. Courts Still Secret But Corruption Less Accepted
- 2 Conduct Commissioner Choked Chained
- 3 Fraud in Court
- 4 Supreme Court Press Release Promoting the False Factual and Legal Position
- 5 True Fiction Where
- 6 Déjà Vu All Over Again
- 7 Judges Put Aside Bias When dealing With Business Partners & Family "This should not happen ". "They Should Step Aside Because They Have A Conflict of Interest"
- 8 Chief Judge Subject of Misconduct Complaint
- 9 Black Robes White Lies

The lobby group should take a copy of this NZ justice news to the Minister of Justice and ask him to please explain how this can be in New Zealand

#### Letters from Zones.

- 1 Auckland query re over 65's should or should not do Jury service

The jury service system will allow any person of adult age as long as they are fit and can hear and see. It is the individual's personal choice if they should or should not serve on a jury.

- 2 Alcohol and the media. The advertising of cigarettes is banned from the media and it was never proved that smoking was a hazard to driving.

However, alcohol does impair the skill of the driver and logic therefore says the advertising of alcohol should similarly be banned. The legal age for purchase and consumption of alcohol should be raised to 20 years. Public display advertising at Motorsport or Horse racing events should likewise be banned.

- 3 Auckland that Grey Power continue to lobby Government to reduce alcohol harm by adopting effective, well researched policies as below.

[a] Lowering the blood alcohol level for all drivers from 0.08 to 0.05

[b] Raising the drinking age and also age of purchase at bottle stores to 20 years

[c] Making Local Bodies [e.g. Local Boards] Alcohol Plans mandatory, not just voluntary as now

[d] Severely restricting alcohol advertising and sponsorship with a view to a complete ban as

recommended by the Law Commission

[e] Limit hours of operation for sale of alcohol from Supermarkets and other outlets

[f] Limit drinking of alcohol in public places such clubs and pubs spilling onto the street

## Magazine

### Terry King, Chair Magazine

By now country wide distribution of the March 2012 publication should be well under way.

A minor issue occurred during the production/distribution process of the November Magazine.

Spoke to the Production Manager concerning the problem which involved ripped and blank labels on some Magazines during the production process.

We are looking forward to a better outcome for the March publication.

The profit split arrangement between the Magazine Publisher and Federation is working very well and the Board is pleased with the November payment result.

## Local Bodies

### Miles Jackson, Chair Local Bodies

The new Minister for local Government Nick Smith, in a recent speech to Nelson Rotarians, said what most of us have been saying for a number of years, "Current local body rates rises across New Zealand are "unsustainable" and a burden on households and businesses".

He went on to warn local government mayors and chief executives on getting better value for ratepayers. He said rates have been rising by 6.8% per cent a year for a decade, more than twice the rate of inflation and more than any other cost in the consumer price index. He went on to say Government might reintroduce debt limits on councils.

It would be my suggestion that associations should get the Minister Nick Smith along to your members meetings, and let him know personally how it is impacting on your members,

Also it would be an opportunity for members to put their feelings forward as regards, amalgamation, as it is my belief that this government will step this up in this term of government, already Nelson City and Nelson regional council are holding a referendum on this in March.

In my own association, when some questions were asked to members their thoughts on amalgamation, most were concerned at the loss of contact with their local council in a bigger set-up, the other concerning factor, was there was no likely proof that costs would come down in council expenditure, in spite as this usually being used as catalyst for amalgamation.

**Rates rebate scheme:** It has come to my notice that some members that when logging into the (DIA) Department of Internal Affairs Rates Rebate Entitlement Calculator [www.dia.govt.nz/web/submitforms](http://www.dia.govt.nz/web/submitforms).

and entering all their income for the year 2010/11 and then taking the information along to their local councils rates rebate officer, the council amount is lesser than Department of Internal Affairs amount, seemingly different councils have a different formula set in their computers as opposed to the DIA. A local member was short paid by \$28.40 although both used the same income information, if this is happening across the board, please give me the information, and I am happy to take it up with the minister on our next advocacy trip.

In conclusion as I have said before, I welcome any constructive input discussion on local body matters.

## Energy

### Allen Davies, Chair Energy Portfolio

Since the last Board meeting in December 2011, there has been little activity on the Energy front during the summer holiday period on my part.

Although several DEUN members have been active in discussing forming that organisation into an Incorporated Society, I have since been advised that it was decided that this course of action not proceed.



As a reminder to Grey Power members DEUN is the Domestic Energy Users Network of which Grey Power is one of the founding members and we have two of our members, Molly Melhuish and Peter Rutledge actively involved.

Another Energy portfolio member Keith Allum has been looking into installing an array of Photo Voltaic cells on his house with view to recovering the cost of these over an eight year period. This will be done firstly by reducing his use of electricity from his electricity retailer and secondly by exporting electricity to the same retailer when he is not consuming it himself.

This is a concept that I believe will become more than acceptable to many more of us as the cost of these Photo Voltaic cells further reduces.

As you will be aware Grey Power continues to voice its opposition to the government's intention to sell up to 49% of several strategic assets. To this end I did send in a submission on behalf of Grey Power to the Treasury in regard to asset sales through the only avenue open. This was of course the only submission process on which they were seeking input and was to do with the need or otherwise for a clause on the Treaty of Waitangi in the proposed legislation.

Over the holiday period there was some material that came through to me in regard to proposed changes in the Gas industry, this I forwarded on to Keith Allum for him to look at and suggest any submission that he felt may be necessary from Grey Power. His advice was that he did not see that any comment was needed.

## Health

### **Pam Schouten, Chair Health Portfolio**

It has been a year full of challenges, especially relating to things medical, but friends and contacts have been made, that will be useful to our organisation.

Our liaison with the National Health Board is invaluable and this should be rigorously maintained.

I foresee the biggest challenge is in the area of Aged Care.

Lack of staff, wages, training, and the numbers of elderly increasing year by year is going to implode at some point.

This sector is seen by the business community, as a blue chip investment and I

believe share holder profits will outweigh care and attention.

We will need to work hard with this sector, to make them realise that compassion and care should be taken into account as well. There may be some interest in the Insurance Industry, in making policies available to pay for some rest home care at some age in life.

This may well be a way around the problem. They have funeral insurance why not expand this.

The New Zealand Standards draft for "Home Help and Home Care" have been voted on, so hopefully these will be in force by the end of March. This in itself was a great deal of work.

I would like to thank Jo Millar for all her help and support, her knowledge has been a great help.

Thanks also to the others on the Health Committee and to the Board Members ,whose knowledge when consulted ,has stopped me putting my foot in my mouth. Please remember Grey Power is its membership. Without them we would not survive. We all put in a great deal of volunteer time and this should not be wasted by issues that waste time and our focus.

## Retirement Villages (RV)s

### **Bill Atkinson, Chair Retirement Villages**

**Variation to the Code:** Joint submissions were made in December, on behalf of Grey Power and Age Concern to both the Retirement Commissioner and the Department of Building & Housing. One interim variation was to give greater protection to RV residents in the event of a disaster such as the Christchurch earthquakes, whilst a Working Party would investigate greater and more detailed protection for any future such happenings.

Associations were canvassed requesting to make comments upon the variations to assist with the submission composition. Only two replies were received, and sadly these were of no assistance; this, despite the RV portfolio often receiving referrals from Associations when a member who is a RV resident requires advice or assistance. There must be expected to be a two-way flow for the good of both sides!

**"Red Zone offer extended to RV residents"**: were the headline of a statement issued by the Canterbury Earthquake and

Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee, shown on the Beehive website on 27 January 2012. It commences by announcing “The extension of the Government’s buy-out offer to residents of rest homes and retirement villages in Christchurch’s residential red zone.” It continually refers to RV residents being effectively a special and unique case and the intention to assist them. “A letter of offer to each resident will follow shortly.” No letters have so far been received.

Some days after appearing, the statement was “mysteriously” withdrawn from the website, and media reports began to doubt the intent of Government. To ascertain the correct situation, the writer contacted Lianne Dalziel, Opposition Shadow to Gerry Brownlee and Christchurch MP, and on 16 February Lianne asked a verbal question in “the house”. The answer horrified Lianne and the writer, stating effectively that the buyout would be with the owners and any further financial benefit for residents would be between the owners and the residents.

It went on to indicate that the owner of Kate Sheppard Gardens’ Village had already “effected exit payments with -- it’s residents – and that it is currently – a matter between the residents and the owner. But by and large the owner has settled with his residents?”

The actual settlement by Kate Sheppard with the residents is according to their legal agreement, namely that they will have received back whatever they originally paid to obtain a lifetime guarantee to live in a unit at the village Less the Management Deferred Fee of anything from 20 to 30%. For those at the lower end of the MDF, those who took up residency prior to 26 September 2006, there would also be a deduction for the cost of refurbishing the unit to an as-new condition.

Therefore everyone would have received back whatever they initially paid for their Occupation Right Agreement Less 30% or a total of no greater than 70% of their initial payment.

As some Grey Power members had lived in the village for 17 or more years, the cost of buying in to a similar unit in another village at the time of payout had risen by 125 to 150%. This means that the member referred to would have to find an additional 250% of the monies received back to become a resident of another village for life. Having been retired for 20 years, this was a financial impossibility.

So, despite the strong indication of a buy-out for residents, it seems to be most certainly nothing of the kind. In the case of Kate Sheppard Gardens Village, it is only the owner who is to benefit.

It means that the Government is therefore to buy-out only to the owner of the village and not the residents. This the writer clearly sees as meaning that the Government is opening itself to a multitude of claims from every business in the various Christchurch red zones to be treated exactly the same as the business owner of the RV’s .

The Christchurch village residents and the writer were initially overjoyed – on cloud nine - at the indicated meaning of the statement of 27 January. The residents, having suffered through two disastrous earthquakes and over 500 after-shocks, and made homeless as a result, have gone through a switchback ride and finally dismay, as has the writer, at realising that despite an effective promise that they are to be part of a buy-out similar to that of red zone house-owners, they are dependent upon the generosity of the owners and so may not receive anything extra?

**Not once has the Minister or any other Government representative had the decency to say sorry during the 5 or 6 weeks since the misleading statement was made.**

There have been a number of attempts to contact the Minister and an offer has been made to him by letter and then through his office staff for Grey Power to meet with him to ascertain the actual position so that we can pass this on to our members; however he seems to have “gone to ground?”

This situation is by no means yet settled, and you will be kept informed.

### Office Administration

#### Violet McCowatt, Chair Administration

**AIL special benefit** –We have received a query about AIL relating to whether we provide AIL with member information. Associations should be assured that AIL receive only the information contained on the yellow card that the member has filled out and sent to them.

**Purging of un-financial and deleted members’ details** has occurred – only financial members now exist on the database.

**Duty Free Discount** – DFS are offering Grey Power overseas travellers online

discount for duty free purchases, (other than Wellington) and we are advised by members that have used it, that there are good savings to be made. A commission is paid to Grey Power Federation for such purchases so I urge all Associations to remind their membership of this service.

**NZ Post** - at the recent board meeting a NZ Post spokesperson, P. Fa'afiu, informed us that they would be doing away with many of the post boxes. I had the thought that mail could be posted/collected at the Grey Power offices for taking by Grey Power to a central Post Box. This may be a good service and may be a way of getting new members. We are keen to find out what Associations feel about this idea.

**0800 number-** Associations were asked if they wanted the 0800 and it was removed from the local books of any that didn't want it. The decision of retention rests on the shoulders of the Associations.

**Administration Costs** – Wages for 2011 were \$82,532-00. As a comparison, for your information, wages for 1997(13 years ago) were 89,904-00 and for 1998 (14 years ago) wages were 83,753-00 so I am thrilled to announce that we have already made savings on wages since I took over the office administrator role in 1999.

**Auditors-** I am surprised by the implication that our previous auditor was unprofessional. My experience was that I found him very professional. He not only did an audit of the annual accounts as our current auditors do but he also, rightfully, insisted on annually conducting an audit of office procedures.

### Social Services

#### Violet McCowatt, Chair Social Services

##### MSD & Work and Income:

**Services** - I am still working with the MSD on the pamphlets "Services for Seniors" and am hopeful they will be available shortly. I have been receiving a lot of calls from people having trouble getting the right information from Work and Income and seem to feel that a lot of staff are lacking training and I will be making approaches to the minister regarding this.

**Hospital stays** - There seems to be a bit of confusion about how long someone can be in hospital before their benefit stops and I have been to the MSD who advise me it is 13 weeks and I have sent all Associations an email regarding this.

**Medical Alarms** – everybody with a Medical Alarm will receive a letter advising them of the upcoming changes. Providers have been cut to 9 (down from around 100) and any firm wishing to become a provider has to undergo an audit. I will advise more information as it comes to hand.

### Press Releases

#### Super is Paid while in Hospital

MSD advise that the rate of New Zealand Superannuation payable to a person who is in hospital for a period of 13 weeks or less is not reduced. Once a person has been in hospital for more than 13 weeks, their rate of payment is reduced.

The current rate for people in this situation is \$41.64 per week.