



Grey Power New Zealand Federation Inc

March 2011

Bulletin

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The reports contained in this Bulletin are as presented at the March 2011 Board meeting or an abridged version by the individual named as author at foot of each article.

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Presidents Report

Since November I have attended Zone meetings, at Zones 3, 5 and 6.

These Meetings are valuable as it is an opportunity to meet with Delegates and to also listen to what topics the Associations are concerned about.

I have also attended the following meetings:

Safe with Age Land Transport Reference Group. Final meeting on the development of the new modules for Safe for Age Courses which will have very little or no Government funding, other than the areas designated as having a priority. The new scheme is to be launched by the Minister at the end of March.

National Health Board Staff function where I was able to meet with Board Members as well as the Staff.

In addition Dick Stark and I have had a meeting with the Director of the National Health Board to discuss concerns that we have with Health matters.

Electricity Authority Board

This meeting was a meeting of Consumer groups of Electricity each having a few minutes to tell the Board their concerns.

I made the following points

Support for the formation of a Domestic Consumers Group to present a Domestic consumers perspective on Electricity

To ensure that the Domestic consumer get the benefits of the reforms to the electricity industry.

To introduce inverse step TRAFFS to ensure an affordable supply to Domestic Consumers

A Central planning body is established to ensure that there is adequate capacity to meet demand.

That the supply situation is not manipulated to cause shortages so as to rack up prices

The competitive market force is not keeping the price of electricity at an affordable price and strong regulation is now required.

All increased prices for electricity must be made on only one day per year eg. 1 April
The Retirement Commissioner.

Lew Rohloff and I met to discuss the way those that were not allowed to join Kiwisaver could be financially disadvantaged when those that have Kiwisaver start to receive payments from the scheme. Kiwisaver is being treated as a private savings scheme and should not reduce the level of National Superannuation payments, for those with Kiwisaver savings.

AGM in Hamilton

The agenda is coming together with most of the invitations to speak now being finalized. I hope that there will be a good attendance of Associations at Hamilton

Membership has again fallen over the past year and as the current economic situation continues to cause price increases to the cost of living now is the time for all Associations to increase the Membership. We must be united in the message that we give to the politicians in the lead up to the Election.

R Reid President

Zone 1 Report

Hello all fellow Brothers & Sisters in Grey Power from the far north Zone for the first bulletin of 2011.

All Associations in this Zone have had a wonderful Christmas break and are working hard once again. We have had our first Zone meeting for the year and because the last Zone meeting last year was before the November Board Meeting I tabled a report on the events that occurred there.

All Associations voiced their disapproval at the attitude and actions of some Board Members. All Associations express strong disapproval when informed that due to unsolicited interference from a board member to the ACC paper that I tabled at the Zone meeting, and which was unanimously passed.

This was to be tabled at the forthcoming Board meeting at which I asked to be relieved of my position as spokesperson for ACC.

Membership wise we are increasing albeit slowly and with the renewal of subscriptions starting to happen all Associations are hoping the attrition rate of non-renewals is a lot lower this time around. Most Associations sought information from last year non-renewals and it was mostly that the people had just forgotten but quite a few said that they were finding increasingly hard to stretch their meagre income to cover everything and so some thing just had to go. Unfortunately our membership renewals happens to be one of them.

This can be placed right at the feet of the Government and with Mr Key saying we are better off with the tax relief program certainly shows to me that he is in 'cuckoo land' and has no real grip of the situation a pensioner is having to survive on.

I am pleased to report that the previous new sub-branch of Whangarei Association has just been allocated full Association status and is now as Otamatea Grey Power Association.

I am in the process of introducing another sub-branch in the mid-north based at Kaikohe.

With the election year upon us we can certainly show our true feelings on the ballot paper.

In the news of late is the arrogant manner that the Government is pushing ahead with the Marine Act against very, very, strong public opinion to the contrary. Mr Key is certainly forgetful of his statement that he would withdraw the bill if public opinion showed the majority was against it. Just how much opposition opinion does he want.

Another red hot potato in the north is the proposed mothballing of the railway between Auckland and Northland. There is another 5 secondary rail lines around the country that they are looking at to

mothball as well so it is not just a Northland problem.

There is an organisation being formed in Whangarei to co-ordinate the opposition to this so if anyone anywhere has any opposition then contact my self as Zone Director Zone 1. Incidentally at the recent Board Meeting it was passed that Grey Power opposes any further mothballing or cutbacks of any main or provincial railway lines.

It makes the mind boggle at the thought of the extra juggernauts on the road that will have to replace these rail services.

Jack Kerr Zone 1 Director

Zone 2 Report

Our first zone meeting for 2011 was held on 16th February.

Membership: All Associations are struggling to maintain their numbers. Across the board the attrition rate from death, illness, relocation or just 'not bothering anymore', is year after year around 10%. North Shore has managed to increase its membership by several hundred by sending personalised invitations to retired non-members. This is effective but expensive and labour-intensive.

One of the disadvantages of having an annual instead of a 12 month membership is that it is difficult to get people to join if 6 or more months are used up.

Vehicle Registration Fees: Thanks to Jack for an excellent analysis of the situation.

The injustice of the present system is undeniable. The zone is totally behind the suggested changes. Parliament will adamantly resist any changes other than increasing the amounts charged under the existing regulations.

General Business at AGMs: While zone representatives recognise that we do not want trivial matters introduced under General Business, they are strongly of the opinion that matters arising during or immediately before the AGM may be of such importance that they should be dealt with under General Business – and that conference should not be controlled in this matter by bureaucratic regulations, i.e. the Prime Minister might decide suddenly at our meeting to use taxpayers/ratepayers loot to

fund a Gay Festival in Haast – or even Auckland.

Rates: Thanks Miles for your ideas on Rates. Rates have never been perfectly fair but they have become progressively more unfair over the past 25 years.

The level of rates on householders is now such that for increasing numbers they are punitive and unsustainable and bear little relation to the services available or used.

At the zone meeting there was majority support for Local Government being funded by a 3% addition to GST. I personally do not support this.

There was also support for Local Government being funded from Income Tax. I do not support this either.

What is clear to me is that no matter how things are funded if money is not spent with wisdom and restraint then there will never be enough. Anyone who could not run an area of Local Government for 70% of the present expenditure and also achieve 25% more would have to be an idiot or a professional politician – or crooked. Or even more likely, all three.

The zone supports the removal of the 'Powers of General Competence' and believes that Local Government expenditure should be confined to a defined number of activities.

Cancellation of the Resource Management Act and its replacement with a common sense Local Government/Planning Act would not only cut the enormous costs to Ratepayers but would also reduce hugely the cost of residential sections.

The use of referenda could also stop some lunatic projects from being proceeded with.

P.S. Our house rates are \$87 a week and we provide our own water and wastewater systems. Yep – a 1200sq ft Lockwood.

Leaky and Rotting Buildings: My heart bleeds for Ann Tolley the Minister of Education. She is losing sleep worrying that there is not enough in the budget to fix her rotting and leaky schools. Gosh – how she must be cursing the National Government in the 90's who changed the tried and true building standards and regulations. Well let's blame it on the Greens!!

In respect of Residential Leaky and Rotting Buildings, John Key a while ago announced that across the board the

Government (tax payers) would pay 25% of fix-up costs, Local Government would pay 25% (ratepayers) and the other 50% would be up to the home owner. Provided of course that the claim was made within 10 years of building completion.

A lot of these buildings seem quite okay for 10 years then somehow water gets into one piece of the defective – Government approved – framing and the rot runs through every contiguous piece of framing.

Look at this scenario. A family or a citizen buys a unit of housing for \$400,000 say. Uses all accumulated savings \$200,000. Borrows \$200,000 from a Bank. One, two or five years later finds it is a Leaky and Rotting Building. Remedial costs \$300,000 or...? Needs to get another \$150,000 mortgage in order to get Government/Local Government share.

Who in their right mind would lend them anything even if they could afford to pay the interest charges on the then \$350,000 that would be owing. Very nifty thinking John Key.

And suppose they were retired and didn't have an existing mortgage. Who would give them any mortgage?

Well they could sell!! Yeah right!!

One thing I'll say for our Government, they take their responsibilities seriously.

Alan McCulloch Zone 2 Director

Zone 3 Report

Zone Three held its last meeting for 2010 in November, with the next scheduled after the March Board meeting.

Guests were our National President, Mr Roy Reid, Vice President Mr Terry King, and Board Member Mrs Violet McCowatt. Also in attendance was Sharon McCowatt, who represented the office and outlined the services available to Associations.

Feedback from zone three associations has been very positive as it enabled them to ask the Board direct questions on Grey Power policy in a number of areas.

The Board was also able to gain an understanding of some issues being faced by the grass root membership.

Constructive comment was given on a number of issues.

Currently, and hopefully in time for the March Board meeting zone three is undertaking a survey on after hour Doctor services available in the Zone.

Mr Doug Wilson of WBOP has a Glaucoma Research fund raising initiative which he has requested the Board to support.

A proposal from MSD that Grey Power Associations list their individual service providers in the Gold Card book was not acceptable to the delegates.

DHB elections were found to be unsatisfactory and unrepresentative of the populations in the various areas covered by the Zone. STV is not well understood and a ward system was felt to be fairer in areas with a large rural component. Zone three will ask the Federation to lobby the Government to change the method of representation on DHBs to one based on a ward system.

Bob Thompson Zone 3 Director

Zone 4 Report

No Report received

Zone 5 Report

Along with Zone 6 we have found ourselves as a region, hosting people young and old from Christchurch.

It is a trying and very sad time for all Christchurch residents and as a Zone we are trying to do all we can to help. The loss of life and a beautiful city so damaged, is a sight we will not forget in a hurry.

Sincere sympathy for all those who have lost loved ones, homes and businesses.

Greymouth Association asked that we thank all those who sent emails, cards and gifts of money and persons who expressed sympathy to our members and families and friends of the men lost in the mining tragedy.

Our Zone Meeting in Westport was as always very interesting and drew as

usual some very interesting topics of interest in General Business.

We have been pushing for a National Data Base for Wills. The fact that many law firms were damaged in the quake and maybe records lost as well, makes this more urgent.

We have requested the Board send to Associations a list of submissions and their content, before they are presented to the Select Committees. This would keep our members informed of one of the important functions of Grey Power. It is a basic part of our lobbying and we should be kept up to date on what Grey Power is doing.

There was criticism about the Minister of Senior Citizens who is never (or hardly) ever available to speak. We need someone more pro-active on our behalf.

Sale of Liquor, Marine & Coastal Area Bill, Widows Benefit, Freedom Campers and the Rates Rebate scheme were also part of our debate.

As a Zone we are against the rise in capitation fees. Last time this was done a great number of members renewed as a single instead of a double membership. It is very hard work trying to obtain new members and revenue.

Energy is also an ongoing cause for concern. Electricity and Petrol – both of which add to the cost of living.

Partial Sale of State Assets was on our agenda. Our Zone is very much against this. Why should we pay again for something we already own. This discussion resulted in a resolution to the Board.

This was only part of our discussions, which as you will see was varied and wide ranging.

Pam Schouten Zone 5 Director

Zone 6 Report

At our recent Zone meeting in late January, we were honoured to have our President Mr Roy Reid in attendance. Also attending was our National Past President Mr

Les Howard. Both were warmly welcomed and contributed significantly to the meeting.

Mr Howard was accompanied by his wife Anne; Les and Anne were acting as observers for the Temuka Association.

Several matters provoked vigorous discussion; chief among them was the 50s plus group.

There was a perception that Grey Power may not be an attractive concept to this group, after much discussion it was felt:

That Grey Power Federation survey associations as follows, in order to gather information to assist in recruiting members aged 50 to 65 years of age.

- 1. What 50+ people know about Grey Power?***
- 2. What they would require Grey Power to do for them.***
- 3. What would motivate them to join Grey Power?***

Another matter that provoked discussion was the likely costs of Federations AGM meetings and in particular the costs of moving away from educational institutions, such as Nga Tawa School for Girls, at Marton, and College House Christchurch. There was also concern that no final costs had been made for the forthcoming AGM scheduled for Hamilton in May. With the longer this information takes to reach Associations, it is placing pressure on some of the smaller Associations as to whether they can attend, and the later they leave it to confirm their attendance the more expensive air fares get, and in even the case of major associations some have intimated the cost may prohibit them having two delegates in attendance as previously they would have had two. Another factor raised was with AGMs being held in leading hotels, the perception by Politicians why is Grey Power complaining about insufficient Superannuation for its members, when they are having AGMs in leading hotels.

Other matters discussed were,

The High Costs of Funerals,

Drs charging to Fax prescriptions to chemists, and further charges at the Chemists for receiving these Faxes.

Asset Sales by the Government. (The meeting agreed that asset sales are a short term decision for very little or no gain.) In a

show of hands, there was absolutely no one in favour of assets sales.

The next Zone meeting will be hosted by the Christchurch Association in June, it will be the first Zone meeting Christchurch will have hosted for many years.

Associations were asked by the Zone director to concentrate on paying attention to outstanding subscriptions this year, while it is good to get new members it was felt nothing was gained by leaking membership out the other end. More contact was needed with these members as to why they were giving up their membership.

Miles Jackson Zone Director.

Zone 7 Report

The Zone Meeting was held in Oamaru on January 18th 2011.

A good attendance contributed to sound discussion on the many topics raised. Among the subjects discussed were:

The feeling that it was better in a lot of instances to contact Portfolio Committees direct rather than put the issue in Remit form. The need for better discipline and respect caused a lengthy discussion and also the need for Court

Officials and Court Judges to review the sentencing procedures.

Lack of common sense Parenting skills also caused prolonged debate

The disadvantages of some Privacy Act demands particularly over Parent/Child relationships.

Home Care Issues. Early Appointment times for rural people. After hours medical treatment.

Age deterioration, concerns over the increased violence happening, the National Health Board being Government appointed and some other domestic issues.

Election of Dick Stark as Zone Director, Les Glassey as Deputy and nominated Roy Reid as National President and Terry King as Vice President.

Dick Stark Zone 7 Director

Superannuation and Taxation

The effect that the increase to the GST rate from 12.5% to 15% on October 1

2010 has been one of the main contributors to the increase in price for food but also to the increase in the CPI index for the December 31 2010 quarter. The index rose by 2.3% in the last quarter and is the biggest rise for a quarterly figure since September 1989 when there was an increase of 3.5%.

The CPI rose by 4% for the year ending 31 December 2010 and this is the base figure used for the April 1 adjustment to National Superannuation. The 4% figure is reduced to 3.75% as the Tobacco component is .25% and has to be deducted by the change to the Act passed last year. The calculation also had a small increase due to the average wage calculation

Rates of superannuation payable on April 1 2011 are;

Rate	“M” tax rate	“S” Tax
Married Couple	\$522.96	\$485.26
Single living alone	\$339.92	\$321.07
Single sharing	\$313.78	\$294.93
Married Couple Unqualified Spouse	\$497.02	\$459.32

Remember that the 2.02% temporary allowance paid for the increase is to be withdrawn on 31 March so that the calculation is based on the rate paid less the temporary allowance on the October 1 less the temporary 2.02% allowance..

The Social Assistance (living alone payments) Amendment Bill currently before Parliament and to become effective on April 1 2011 will have the living alone allowance included in the rate payable for those single living alone and a separate rate for those who share accommodation. There will be no need to apply for the allowance every year as is now required.

Recent discussions within the committee has highlighted the need for the committee to meet (including those outside the Board) to discuss proposed new policy as well as meeting with MSD and some politicians to discuss the statistics used in superannuation calculations..

It has also been suggested that we need to set up a voluntary price monitoring group from all over the country to monitor grocery prices on a monthly basis. There would be a shopping list and this would enable the committee to have reliable figures to work from.

The Labour Party release on the proposal to have no Tax payable on the first \$5000 of income was discussed with the Lobby group last year and if implemented must benefit our Membership

R Reid Superannuation and Taxation Committee.

Health Committee

The Grey Power Health Committee is in the process of preparing a Strategy Document that will be the basic Grey Power Strategy for Election Year and also it will be part of the Health Report to the AGM in Hamilton.

This Strategy after being approved by the Health Committee will be circulated to Associations for their comment and the final Document will be collated before being presented to the AGM.

The increasing number of issues that we are now being asked to help with illustrates the importance of being able to communicate with the various avenues we have established and the continued requests from Health Providers who wish too obtain Consumer opinion.

Grey Power Health is working closely with the newly formed National Health Board and the relationship that has been established will be very beneficial.

Dick Stark Grey Power Health Convenor

Magazine Report

Initial feedback on the March publication has been good.

Unfortunately the December 2010 publication was produced at a loss for Waikato Business Publications Ltd and therefore under the terms of our Contract with this firm, a 20% profit split was not triggered. In 60 days time we will know

the value of the profit split for the March publication.

Based on a request from WBP, the Board has agreed to move the December 2011 publication date forward, and this means the Greypower Magazine will be produced and distributed during November 2011. This change should assist WBP in attracting advertising revenue for the Christmas period.

Terry King, Chairman

Membership

The Membership Committee felt it was more important for Associations to concentrate on early renewal of subscriptions for 2011-12, and attempt to drastically reduce the number who don't renew rather than embark on another promotion such as last year's "Join a Friend" promotion.

It is pleasing to hear a number of Associations have taken up our suggestion to run local promotions with prize draws for those who renew or join before a certain date. We hope these prove successful

2010 saw the "promotion". Over 4000 members either joined or rejoined during the period of the "Join a Friend" promotion. Its success was due to the many Associations that took part with a large number expressing their thanks for us embarking on it.

Wanganui really showed the way, but it was equally a success for the smaller Associations that gained 20, 30 or more new members through it. We must once again thank Talley's very much for their support.

Our Membership Questionnaire gained a fantastic response from Associations and they gave us a very good cross section of information from the biggest Associations to the smallest. WE hope the feedback to Associations is of assistance. Some of the ideas and recommendations were brilliant.

Office Administration

AIL special benefit – AIL have received and paid out claims against our Grey Power policy. Sadly, we have lost members to the quake and my sincere condolences go to their family and friends.

Some associations have expressed what a useful tool this benefit has been for membership drives etc. Any Associations requiring more AIL yellow forms should contact the office.

AIL Insurance

AIL is continuing to get a strong response from Grey Power members and they are endeavouring to make sure everyone receives a Certificate of Coverage.

If members haven't yet received their personal Certificate, they can call AIL **free phone number 0800 894 121** or email AIL directly at (mario@ailnz.co.nz) and it will be personally handled.

It is important for members to know that they are all already covered automatically through their membership - they aren't missing out by not having a personal certificate. In fact, it's probably good for you to know, as branch delegates, that AIL have to date received four separate accident claims from members and all have processed, even though only one of those members returned a card.

If something happens to a member, AIL and Grey Power WILL help.

AIL look forward to seeing you all at the upcoming AGM in Hamilton!

Purging of un-financial and deleted members' details has now taken place. Therefore, only financial members exist on the database until the end of March 2011.

Pens are still available for purchase from the office.

Reviews: The Administration Committee attend to annual reviews as and when they come up:

- **Phone & Toll expenses:** As charged at the last board meeting, I have looked into our contract which was up for annual review and, in conjunction with our personal accounts manager at Telecom and after consultation with

the Administration Committee; we have a new contract in place.

- **Lease:** Our lease has also come up for renewal and I have negotiated the same terms without any increase in rent, although the GST component has gone up, of course.
- **Trademark:** Our trademark comes up for renewal in November this year.
- **Domain Name:** Rolls over upon payment.

Audit: The audit has been conducted, with the auditor attending the office mid February.

Publicity

Christchurch Earthquake – the Grey Power **0800** number is being utilised as a central point of contact for any members needing a hand in Christchurch.

This has been widely advertised in media and social networks and Campbell Live is doing an interview with Miles Jackson, the Zone 6 Director, later in the week.

Social Services

The Cost of Living survey returns are being compiled with results available as soon as practical.

Violet McCowatt, Chair Administration

Local Bodies Report

Your local bodies committee had received two suggestions about a fairer rating system. Prior to going to Politicians with one of these it was felt associations should have some input into these before arriving at any suggested change. To date, there has not been a lot of enthusiasm for either suggested rate change.

What is becoming clear is that our members are continue to be rated on matters that quite frankly are frivolous and not related to core services. Many of the feed back has focussed on the importance of reminding councils to stick to their knitting.

If there is anything that we should be impressing on MPs in election year, is that any law changes that councils have to carry out must not result in additional charges by way of rates, if this is the case, Central government

must compensate councils for the changes .

The ones that stand out is when the last government brought new dog regulation law into being, these charges were a straight charge onto councils, as was prostitution law reform.

We are starting to see the impact the World Cup is having on Councils regarding rates. To get the World Cup held in New Zealand, many rugby union stadia had to be rebuilt. Hence many councils have built Jurassic Park structures at exorbitant costs, which these council are finding that loans to service this bill, are not being met with attendance rates, that were highly inflated at time of seeking the World Cup.

Two councils are already starting to get the backlash of this situation, namely Hamilton City, which the Waikato rugby union owe \$900,000 in back rent on Rugby Park Hamilton, this is on the back of a huge loss on holding street racing there in 2010. Christchurch city council have announced rates may have to fund a \$45 million shortfall for the new AMI Stadium. This amounts to 1% or \$350 on each rate payer..Dwindling rugby crowds and high debt from new stands at AMI Stadium are set to hit Christchurch ratepayers in the pocket. Christchurch City Council-owned venue manager Vbase, with assets of \$225 million, is struggling to service debt of \$75.2m taken on for the development of the Paul Kelly and the new Deans stands at AMI Stadium. Part of the problem is lower revenues from the stadium, where rugby crowds are down 40 per cent on 2008 attendances. This is of concern, because the council has already announced that Earthquake reconstruction in Christchurch is going to mean quite a steep rise in rates, while this is expected, ratepayers will not tolerate a rate rise to fund a rugby tournament that was forecast to lose \$74 million before a ball is kicked.

These stadiums had also been hit by changes to tax laws – removing the ability to take depreciation on buildings with an expected life of more than 50 years.

Miles Jackson, Local Bodies Chair.

Election Strategy

With the government having now set the election date for November, it will be important for Grey Power portfolio chairs to have their election strategy ready for the next

Lobby trip to Parliamentary leaders by the Lobby team at the end of March.

So far we have our strategy on ACC, in pertaining the ACC component of vehicle registration. It is important that we leave our March board meeting with clear and precise request for our Politicians.

Update: At the recent board meeting a discussion was held where it was resolved that Grey Power will concentrate as follows as regarding election strategy

Suggested areas to be utilised for core election strategy projects are:

Cost of Living, Food, water, rates, energy. ACC on motor vehicle licensing and fuel. Health services. Income, poverty levels. Law and Order, effects of alcohol.

Miles Jackson

Retirement Villages (RV)

Securities Trustees and Statutory Supervisors Bill:

Grey Power jointly with Age Concern, also the Associations of residents of Retirement Villages (ARRV) both Auckland and Waikato Regions separately, and the Retirement Villages Association (RVA) – the operator/owners Association – all made submissions to the Select Committee on the Securities Trustees and Statutory Supervisors Bill regarding the licensing of Statutory Supervisors.

All of these submissions stated categorically that there was no need for Statutory Supervisors to come under the auspices of the Securities Commission. The main objection from ourselves is that such licensing would further unnecessarily increase the compliance costs to Village residents with no benefit whatsoever forthcoming to residents. This extra cost effectively be just another level of bureaucracy and an additional cost expense for residents of an estimated \$34 per village resident per year.

It was further considered that Statutory Supervisors should rather be responsible only to an independent Commissioner appointed by Government

and having the required independent authority to ensure that such Statutory Supervisors are totally removed from any influence from Village operator/owners.

Despite this, disappointingly the Select Committee decided to continue and the bill will proceed as is.

Retirement Commissioner's Monitoring with Residents Project.

This project focuses upon "residents of RV's and their understanding of the RV Act, regulations and codes, and their assessment of the effectiveness of those in achieving the objectives of the Act and in protecting their interests."

The writer, together with residents' stakeholders, firstly met with the consultant carrying out the project in November, 2010.

As a consequence of this, the writer arranged for two meetings of residents of Villages within the Auckland area and these were held in February 2011.

It was noticeable, that in the three months between, the consultant had obtained a much clearer picture of the actual, situation arising and the thoughts and feelings of RV residents.

The Commissioner's report on this project is therefore awaited with great interest.

Bill Atkinson

Fifty Plus Portfolio

Draft policy has been sent to portfolio members for corrections, additions, deletions and comments/ now ready to be sent to Associations for comment.

Portfolio members to provide comments re the following as possible starting points for specific projects for investigation:

Late in working life job redundancy: some possible, particular issues within this category.

Requesting the Govt to rescind the 2007 law change to the Social Security Act (1964) which now includes 60-65 year old beneficiaries in stringent work test obligations plus sanctions for non-compliance. This seems timely because recently a summary from the Welfare Working Group recommends that

benefit policy should focus on getting people back into work as soon as possible. The philosophy may be laudable but the practicalities for older workers are not straight forward and it is possible that they may be subject to work test obligations that they cannot carry out, e.g. they may be unable to find employment because of covert ageism, and then they could face sanctions under the Social Security Act.

Requesting the Govt to provide consistent treatment of beneficiaries by experienced and adequately trained Work and Income (NZ) staff.

Requesting the Govt to require employers to make a good case for redundancies to an employment tribunal/ombudsman.

Abatement rates for Beneficiaries and Non-qualified partners of Superannuitants-two possible, issues within this category.

Request the Govt to review its non-qualified partner regime to limit unjust treatment.

Write to the Retirement Commissioner requesting that she informs us of her idea of what would happen to a non-qualifying partner if the Govt accepts the Commission's recommendation to remove the unqualified partner category.

Does this mean that the person who would normally fit this criteria will be classified as unemployed and therefore be subject to the work test obligations and sanctions discussed above?

Development of an information pack for people approaching retirement to inform them of their entitlements and how to obtain them.

The Provision of Information on the transition from full time work to retirement.

The suggestion is that the portfolio could look at the above because they are particular issues which seem realistically to be attainable.

Jan Pentecost 50+ Chair

Lobby Report

The next Lobby trip to Wellington is scheduled for March 21.

Grey Power Federation

AGM

Hamilton

May 6 – 9 2011

**Close off date for registration
Friday 15 April, 2011**

**Send your registration form to
Hamilton**

Remember to deduct your deposit

**Don't forget to advise your
intended travel plans**

**If arriving by Air, give your flight
number and arrival time**

Advise any special needs

**Emergency contact numbers are
Hamilton Grey Power
07 834 0668**

During AGM

**Novotel Tainui
Hamilton**

07 838 1366