

Grey Power North Canterbury Association (Inc)

The Active Organisation for Those 50+



March 2010 Newsletter: Issue 1

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Up Coming Events:

Texting tuition is on again-If you missed out last year or need a refresher course please come to the **Rangiora High School Office on Tuesday 30th March** at 1.20pm. To register your interest please phone Pauline Jackson 03 310 6563 or the school office 03 311 8888.

An Apology:

In our last newsletter I inadvertently referred to Kate Wilkinson as the MP for Waimakariri this is of course incorrect, she is one of National's list MPs-Clayton Cosgrove is MP for Waimakariri.

Pretty Good Interest?

Also I quoted Grey Power Spokesperson for Electricity, P.Rutledge, re over-estimated power accounts. The example he gave was that of 250,000 customers over-estimated by \$50.00 per month-which amounts to \$12,500.000 funds owed to customers. He said 'tuck that away in a bank and it will earn at least \$1.000.000 on current interest rates. One of our Grey Power members has pointed out that would be a very good return indeed. Perhaps \$625.000 at 5% would be more realistic.

General meeting for first part of 2010 will be held on Tuesdays Mar 2, April 6, May 1, June 1.

Presidents Chat:

Welcome to our first Newsletter for 2010, I trust you have had a lovely holiday and are ready to face the tasks in 2010. It would be fair to say this summer while not too cold has lacked a lot of sun, lets hope the remaining part of it gives us some more sun to ripen those tomatoes, and allow us to go into autumn with a bit of a suntan.

We are now starting to feel the impact of the Governments changes in a number of areas, such as Home help, ACC, etc, and now it seems likely that GST will increase by 2.5% tax from the 1st of October. Grey Power Federation is totally opposed to any increase in GST therefore if it occurs they will be making a strong submission against such action.

While the government has stated that beneficiaries and superannuitants will get a rise to compensate, historically a rise in super has not been enough to cover the big rise in costs that come with a GST tax increase. Having been in the food industry most of my life, I have seen manufacturers increase their prices just before a GST rise, so it is not seen as too bigger rise when GST is increased. So the consumer gets a double whammy.

Another nail in the coffin for those superannuitants who still have a little savings account in their banks is that this government, on 1 April this year is raising the rate of resident withholding tax (RWT) to 21% thus taking another bite at the hard earned savings whilst those

who have incomes in excess of \$70,000 per annum get tax cuts. Is this the policy of a “fair government”?

And to think that superannuitants were not so long ago called the “Greedy Oldies”

At a recent Canterbury Zone meeting (Zone 6) I was appointed Zone Director, which also places me on the board. I attended my first board meeting on the 9th 10th, and 11th of February, where I was welcomed enthusiastically by both our president Mr Les Howard and the other board members; I look forward to working constructively with my fellow board members for the interest of Grey Power both locally and nationally, we certainly have some challenges ahead of ourselves over the next 12 months.

I am also pleased to advise that our hard working secretary Jan, is standing at our National conference in April for secretary for the board, after being approached to accept nomination. I know she has widespread support nationally and we wish her luck. It would be a real coup to have two on the board from our small association.

We continue to bring you interesting speakers at our monthly meetings, and I can confirm that we have the Minister of Senior Citizens (Mr John Carter) for our August meeting and the Opposition Spokesperson (Mr Ross Robertson) for our meeting in May. Both will be accompanied by the respective local MP, in John Carter’s case Ms Kate Wilkinson has accepted our invitation, and for Mr Ross Robertson’s visit Mr Clayton Cosgrove has confirmed his acceptance.

Until our next issue please enjoy the rest of our summer, and early autumn.

Miles Jackson, President.

Points of Interest from General Meetings: As promised in our last newsletter here is a précis of Ron Keating WDC Mayor’s address to our November General Meeting:

- He is open and honest and likes to think he can agree to disagree-we can only do our best.
- His council has put a hold on rapid rate rises-they have cut consultant work and council staff now do much of the work themselves
- Now council makes the decisions and the staff carry them out-staff need clear direction-council tries to give the staff a reasonable work load-they have a great staff who do their best.

He then answered member’s questions sent to him, earlier from members:

Re the council’s strategy to respond to the current and emerging needs and issues of older people in the district.

- The council have a report due back next year=looking at peoples’ needs, e.g. pedestrian crossings
- he was unhappy at the CDHB’s attempts to reduce home care hours for older people-need to keep pressure on the CDHB to look after older people in their own homes.
- there was 14% of the population over 65 yrs old-estimated to go up to 18% in the next 10-15 years.

Re the heavy traffic flow on West Belt.

- there are issues here which was one reason why the town centre public meeting occurred-to get community input
- there has been a complete review of all roading in Rangiora-it is a work in progress-the report is due approx next August –it will be presented to the ratepayers.

Re the special rate for costs for the Dudley Pool project.

- Households within a 5km radius of the pool will pay \$15.00 PA-others will pay \$5.00 this year, \$15.00 next year.
- it costs ratepayers approx \$2m PA for all pools in the district-\$1m comes from entry fees-Dudley Pool due to open in March.
- No proposal for differentiation in entry fees

Questions from the floor:

Re the council's aims in working towards the Govt's Positive Ageing Strategy Objectives.

- The council often has to carry out more and more Govt chores-they can't afford it.
- There are council staff who can explain what they are working towards under the Positive Ageing Strategy.

Re Roading-

- This council has not increased spending on rural metal roads
- Trucking may be part of the cause of roading issues.
- Nothing is to be done to improve the narrow Ashley Bridge.

The council was congratulated on its walkways but a member suggested that the money could have been spent more advantageously around the town. The audience were told that a new toilet block is to be built by the New World. And as far as the future of Rangiora was concerned more shopping/parking required, new house numbers have been controlled by the Urban Development Strategy Committee-8000 new houses predicted.

NB: Grey Power North Canterbury has still to approach the council staff involved with the Positive Ageing Strategy-we will keep you informed. However because this strategy is so important for the continuing well-being of older people, full copies of it will be available at the next general meeting for those who are interested. For those who are unable to attend our meeting please contact jan.pentecost@gmail.com or phone 03 312 9331 for an emailed or posted copy or visit www.osc.govt.nz.

Of interest this Strategy was launched by the Office for Senior Citizens in 2001. Its vision is that NZ will be a place where people can age positively, where older people are highly valued and where they have opportunities to participate in their communities. It provides a framework for government agencies to plan creatively for an ageing population and serves to remind central and local govt to keep positive ageing in mind while they develop their work programmes.

The ten goals are:

1. A secure and adequate income for older people.
2. Equitable, timely, affordable, and accessible health services for older people.
3. Affordable and appropriate housing options for older people.
4. Affordable and accessible transport options for older people.
5. Older people feel safe and secure and can age in the community.
6. A range of culturally appropriate services allows choices for older people
7. Older people living in rural communities are not disadvantaged when accessing services.
8. People of all ages have positive attitudes to ageing and older people.
9. Elimination of ageism and the promotion of flexible work options
10. Increased opportunities for personal growth and community participation

The full document provides a set of objectives and actions under each goal and it is up to us to ensure both central and local govt keep these goals to the forefront in their planning.

- **At our February Meeting** the President welcomed approximately 110 members, new members and visitors. Business = the letter to the Press re the incorrect info in the cartoon published last year – it was agreed 'that the cartoon be bought to the attention of Grey Federation Board again requesting them to write to the Press to clarify Grey Power's non-political stance'. Re Rodney Hide's promise to answer written questions 'that a further email, the third, be sent to Rodney Hide's secretary re local government's responsibilities under the Positive Ageing Strategy as no answer has been received since an acknowledgement and a promise (last year) of a reply,' re the Waimakariri District Council and the Positive Ageing Strategy- It was agreed 'that the secretary write to the WDC asking what they are working towards under the Positive Ageing Strategy, re Super Gold Card free travel- it was agreed 'that the secretary write to the Govt (appropriate Minister) offering thanks for continuing the free travel component of the Super Gold Card scheme,' Re Ross Robertson's letter re ACC-it was agreed that the secretary write to ACC Minister asking for his comments on the 'facts' presented by Mr Robertson.

The secretary gave a brief report on her attendance at the **Community Older Person's Group, (COPs)**

last meeting. This was a planning meeting with the objective of looking at gaps/needs of older people in the Waimakariri District- Grey Power was requested to supply information re the number of people our group had supported last year, what difference we had made to their lives and what would be valuable for our group to focus on for 2010. It was pointed out that Grey Power was not really a day to day hands on service provider group and that we did not keep any statistics on what we actually achieved as such. Our mission was advocacy for older people on a great number of issues. The emphasis this year will be working on a sub-group which is focused on caring for carers.

1. The president reported provided details of the remits endorsed at the Zone meeting -1. = substance abusers paying for their medical treatment themselves-2. electricity costs. He also mentioned his involvement with the 20/20 group-discussion on the many footpath obstructions in Rangiora, parking in the Coldstream Rd cemetery – During cricket games at the Oval cars are parked in the cemetery – it was agreed ‘that the secretary write to the WDC requesting that notice be erected to the effect that only people using the cemetery may park there,’

At 2.30pm the president introduced Carol McGeady whose business ‘Cariboo’ manufactures baby equipment. She showed the audience the power point presentation which the firm uses to advertise its products and she also shared some of her slides.

Her goal is to dominate the world market –all the products are made locally on premises at Fernside- they are made of South Is Pine wood and a lot of the work is done by hand- they also make baby clothing, blankets and wraps -she explained how the their product is sent to other countries including UK,USA, Greece, Singapore and shortly to several other countries including Dubai- she spoke of how she built the brand and explained the difficulties of setting up a global business - her Mother and Father, who are North Canterbury Grey Power members still work with the nursery furniture.

Questions from the floor:

- Why did she choose the name Cariboo? - no real reason it just sounded good.
- How many staff? -12.
- Does the furniture have to be assembled?-Yes.
- What is special about the Cariboo product? - it is safe and looks good.

(Although the speaker’s reports are prepared in good faith and believed to be correct the secretary accepts no liability for the contents).

Other Items of Interest:

KIWIBANK DEPOSIT SCHEME: Mr G Adams, Grey Power Federation Treasurer has provided the following information:

Since its inception towards the end of 2007 the scheme has grown steadily and at the end of 2009 deposits held from Grey Power members stood at approx \$44million in 1100 accounts. Commission earned by the Federation over the period amounted to \$19125 in 2008 and \$38522 in 2009.

From these figures it can be seen that the scheme, which is the only one Kiwibank is a party to, has already provided the Federation with significant additional income. There were settling-in problems at the outset with some representation points being unaware of the scheme but most of these have been overcome and by and large it is working very smoothly.

For existing Kiwibank customers whose accounts are not yet included in the scheme all that is required is for them to fill in a simple form which the Bank provides and thereafter their funds will attract the small commission which is paid to the Federation each quarter. It should be clearly understood that Grey Power members are not persuaded to change their banking allegiance. What we do suggest is that whenever investments mature, and re-investment is being considered, that Kiwibank whose profits remain in New Zealand for the benefit of New Zealanders be given the opportunity to quote for the deposit. The commission paid to the Federation is in addition to the rate paid to the Grey Power member

who receives the full quoted rate. Whilst the level of deposits in the scheme is commendable the number of participating Grey Power members is lower than what we ought to be able to achieve as an organisation with 80,000 members.

Please be aware, that these commissions allow Federation to keep our affiliation fees down, and consequently your subscriptions down, so it's in our interest to where possible bank with Kiwibank.

ELECTRICITY REFORMS: According to the Grey Power Fed energy spokesperson, Peter Rutledge, the electricity reforms announced at the end of last year by Gerry Brownlee will achieve nothing for domestic consumers. He says that the new Electricity Authority requires full authority to regulate the situation otherwise things will worsen. It is necessary, he believes, for an inverse steps tariff to be introduced which would ensure that all domestic consumers get an adequate power supply to their homes at an affordable cost. "It is time to grasp the nettle and rectify the problems of this industry before more people die unnecessarily and children's development is retarded," Peter said.

CHANGES TO PAYMENT OF NZ SUPER AND VETERAN'S PENSION OVERSEAS: These came into effect on Jan 5th. The basic aim of the changes is to permit more flexibility for people to travel and live in more than one country. Thus the new provisions will increase the amount of NZ Super or Vet's pension that people will be able to take with them if they go to reside overseas or if they will be travelling for more than 26 weeks. People who intend to do either ie reside overseas or travel for more than 26 weeks must apply for the payment of their pension overseas before they leave NZ.

SUPER GOLDCARD INFORMATION: the SuperGold Card website is the key source of information for the most up-to-date listings of businesses and their offers and a new directory should now be available from WINZ, CAB and larger public libraries.

One of our members has been unable to get incorrect details rectified on her Super Gold card because of inaction by the card services department if you or anyone else has been in this situation please contact the secretary – details on front page of this newsletter.

LAW, ORDER AND JUSTICE: Roy Reid, Grey Power Fed spokesperson has advised that the new District Court Rules re civil dispute resolution which came into force in November will assist people to resolve disputes more cheaply and easily-a new website www.justice.govt.nz/civil guides people through the process.

GLAUCOMA: Grey Power Nth Canty has a Glaucoma Q's and A's fact sheet-if any member would like a copy please contact the secretary-address etc as above.

A reminder: for those who are interested in the Grey Power Federation's lobby reports etc please visit www.greypower.co.nz

Membership Report: Another year gone. A reminder that subscriptions for this next year are due on 31st March. It is still only \$15 a Single and \$20 for a couple. Please pay the Treasurer- Mrs Pauline Jackson, 20 Melford Close. Rangiora 7400. Our Organisation will be operating a

Membership Promotion scheme. This will run from mid-March until mid-May. For every new member you sign up, you will go into a draw to win \$2500 worth of Travel Vouchers. You must be a financial Member for the 2010-2011 year to participate. Full details will be in the March issue of National Grey Power Magazine.

Beryl and Don Palmer will be retiring as the membership secretaries at the next AGM –if you or some-one you know could help in this capacity please contact any of the persons noted at beginning of newsletter. *D & B. Palmer.*

Grey Power North Canterbury Canterbury Association (Inc) Subscription Form:
Membership Application-Annual Subscription \$15.00 single \$20.00 couples

This is a: Renewal New Member Donation (Please Tick)

First Name(s) _____

Surname Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr _____

Address _____

_____ Post Code: _____

Phone No: _____ Email Address: _____

Membership No if renewing _____

Enclosed \$ _____

- Please put a cross in this box if you **do not** want your details as written above, to be given to any company for the purpose of sending you promotional material about their products.

Please send to Mrs P Jackson
 20 Melford Close
 Rangiora 7400

Grey Power North Canterbury Assn (Inc) meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month (except January) in the RSA Hall Rangiora at 1.30pm-We often have a speaker of interest or entertainment. There is a raffle, bring and buy sales table, a cuppa and fellowship.

Disclaimer: *neither this Association nor any person associated with it accepts any liability for the contents in this newsletter which is prepared in good faith and believed to be correct.*