

# Greetings from the Health & Ageing Research Team

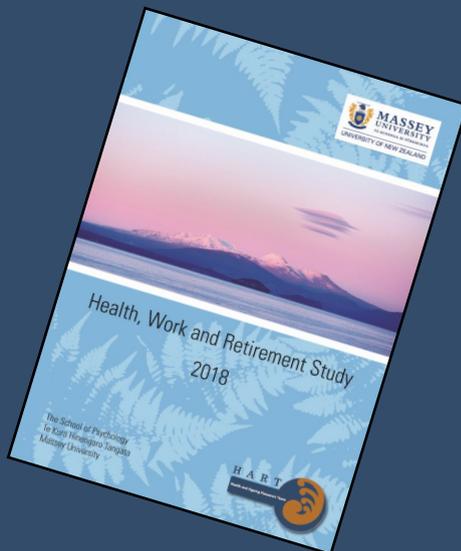
A message from Professor Fiona Alpass and Professor Christine Stephens, HWR Co-Principal Investigators

Thank you for your participation in the Health, Work and Retirement (HWR) study. The HWR study is the largest and longest running longitudinal national study of ageing in older adults in Australasia. Your continued commitment to this landmark study is greatly appreciated. Our current research programme seeks to answer a crucial question for an ageing population: How can government, organisations and workers support older New Zealanders who want to remain in, or re-enter the workforce? A key focus is on older workers themselves, to identify their aspirations, attitudes, motivations around work, and the life course factors that impact on workforce participation across time.

Information collected in the 2018 questionnaire about experiences of workforce engagement is now being analysed and disseminated.

In this newsletter, we share some of our recent activities and findings from the HWR. We are now preparing for the 2020 survey so we will be back in touch next year.

Once again, thank you for your participation – the HWR study would not be possible without you.



## Response rates for 2018

For the existing cohort (those of you who have been with us prior to 2018), 4,368 surveys were posted in 2018, and of those 3,364 were returned - that's a 77% response rate! We have over 1,400 participants still with us since the first surveys were posted in 2006, many of whom have completed all seven surveys.

## Online surveys for 2018 participants

In 2018, 3,596 new participants, aged 55-56, were randomly selected from the electoral roll and invited to participate in the HWR study for the first time. To assess whether participants were interested in completing the 2018 survey online, this group were first invited to complete the survey online, before being sent a survey booklet via the post. While only 5.5% of persons invited to participate completed the survey online over a 12 week period, an additional 11.5% responded to the postal survey. As representing the views of the diverse population of New Zealanders is important to the study, in light of the low response rate to the online survey option, the 2020 survey will be conducted only in our postal survey format.

SEE PAGE 4 FOR DETAILS ABOUT OUR PHOTO COMPETITION AND PRIZE VOUCHER DRAW



## HART Newsletter October, 2019

To view findings since the HWR study began in 2006, please browse our website - [hart.massey.ac.nz](http://hart.massey.ac.nz). There you can view copies of previous newsletters, reports, surveys, and publications and see where the HART (Health, and Ageing Research Team) have attended and presented at meetings and conferences.

Since the 2018 newsletter, our researchers have travelled to Dubrovnik, Boston, Taipei, Geneva, Sydney, Gothenburg and Manchester (UK). Our researchers also continue to regularly collaborate with an international network of colleagues.



Principal Investigators Professors  
Fiona Alpass and Christine Stephens

## We are spreading the word

We are taking advantage of social media to spread the word about the Health and Ageing Research Team's activities and findings. We now follow 280, and have 240 followers on [Twitter @MasseyHART](https://twitter.com/MasseyHART) to alert on publications, presentations and reports from the study.

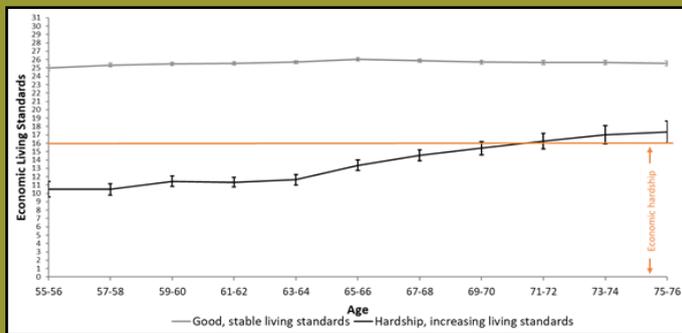
We also maintain close ties with various stakeholders, including the NZ government ministries and health providers, local government, the Commission for Financial Capability (CFFC), and the many organisations who work in ageing.



@MasseyHART

## 2019 Review of Retirement Income Policies

HWR participants have provided data on their experiences of physical and mental health and standard of living, as they approach and pass the age of pension eligibility. In 2019 this unique collection of information allowed us to contribute a background paper for the Commission for Financial Capability's (CFFC) Review of Retirement Income Policies. Findings indicate that a majority of New Zealanders experience good living standards in the years prior to pension eligibility. However, a significant portion experience hardship prior to age 65. Average economic living standards with age for these groups are shown in the graph. In terms of health, those with good living standards also experienced good health with age, although physical health declined slowly over time. In contrast, those in hardship also experienced poor physical and mental health, although their living standards and mental health improved over time. These findings suggest that acknowledging the diversity in resources among older adults is key to the development of equitable retirement income policies.



You can find the full report on the CFFC website - [Reviews & Reports > 2019 Review of Retirement Income Policies > Research Reports and Summaries > The big picture](#)

### Webinar: Attitudes and Motivations of Older Workers

In May 2019 the HART hosted the first of a series of biennial webinars which aim to keep research stakeholders up to date on the progress of our research. This presentation addressed attitudes and motivations of older workers and their roles in reducing hours and withdrawal from the workforce. This was attended by representatives from the Commission for Financial Capability, MSD, Ministry for Women, NZ Defence Force, the Employers' and Manufacturers' Association Northern Inc, Regional Councils, Age Concern, Grey Power and the Queensland government. Findings identify the financial need to continue working is a key driver of continued workforce participation for older adults, but also highlights the role of job satisfaction among part-time workers, a group who continue to work into older age.

A video of the webinar is available on the HART website - <https://hart.massey.ac.nz/> [Maximising workforce participation for older New Zealanders > Webinar and newsletter series](#)



Mr Geoff Pearman



Dr Jason Mika

### Research Focus: Interviews with Older New Zealanders and Kaumātua Entrepreneurs

Those who indicated in the 2018 survey that they had or were interested in starting a business after age 50, are being contacted by researchers who are interested in hearing about the motivations and challenges of entrepreneurship. Researchers, Mr Geoff Pearman, Dr Judith Davey and Dr Jason Mika are leading these interviews.



Dr Judith Davey

This project will continue into mid-2020, and a summary of the results will be provided in the next newsletter.

### Negotiating Paid Work and Informal Care:

This new research programme on workforce participation for older people recognises that for many older people, paid work is not their only contribution to society. Many care regularly for others, often for many hours a week. This study will allow researchers to learn about the experience of combining informal care and paid work. Participants (some drawn from the HWR study) will be interviewed every six months for two years to understand the challenges and benefits of combining paid work and care, and the supports that enable them to continue combining work and care. Some participants are caring for parents, and some for adult children with complex needs. The first interviews have provided insight into the management of their daily lives. The next wave will enable researchers to understand how and why things have changed, either for the care recipient, the carers, or for the carers' paid work.

This research project will enable these researchers to make recommendations for policy to support working carers as they age.



We are delighted to announce that Penelope (Penny) Poutu has agreed to join our Māori Advisory Group (MAG). Penny is of Ngāti Maniapoto descent, and has spent 25 years working in the immersion Māori language teaching area, and now works in the 'Whānau Ora' space. Penny joins our other members, Dr John Waldon, Mr Ruma Karaitiana, Dr Natasha Tassell-Matamua and Mr Roland Fitzgerald.

During the planning and design of our surveys, the MAG members meet with HART to advise on any cultural matters that HART needs to take into consideration.

## Visits from International Collaborators



**Prof. Norah Keating** is a family gerontologist and a member of our international advisory group. She is the Director of Global Social Issues on Ageing (GSIA), Co-Director of Research on Ageing, Policies and Practice (RAPP) at University of Alberta, Professor of Rural Ageing, Swansea University and Extraordinary Professor, North-West University, South Africa. Dr Keating visited the HART lab in February and presented a public seminar on her current research. Her presentation entitled “Toward a good old age? Life course pathways of family care” discussed patterns of family care across the life course and their association with material resources and social connections in later life.

The intersections between family care work and employment were highlighted to illustrate pressure points that can tip people into late life poverty and isolation.

**Dr Jeroen Spijker**, Centre for Demographic Studies, Autonomous University of Barcelona Campus, Spain, is a member of our international advisory group for the Older Workers’ project. Dr Spijker visited our lab in July to collaborate on two journal articles on the issues facing older adults who combine work and caregiving responsibilities. He also presented a seminar on the provision of aged care in Spain and the impact of demographic changes on the future needs and practices associated with the care of older Spaniards.



**Dr Michelle Kelly**, University of Newcastle, Australia, visited the HART lab in May 2019 and presented a paper on social cognition and dementia, highlighting recent work in the development of a social cognition screening tool for those with a diagnosis of dementia, as well as novel and objective ways of measuring empathy.

Michelle currently researches how the brain changes occurring with dementia or traumatic brain injury (TBI), impact a person’s behaviour.

## Our Health and Ageing Research

**Loneliness Survey on Kapiti Coast:** Age Concern Kapiti have been funded to investigate people’s experiences of loneliness and their needs on the Kapiti Coast. HART researchers assisted by running a postal survey to investigate how loneliness levels are related to neighbourhood environments. Of the 2,300 questionnaires posted, 917 people (40%) responded. Our very initial results show that around 30% reported feeling lonely some of the time or all of the time, which is cause for concern. Further analysis will highlight some areas for action.

The participants additionally provided some very interesting and helpful comments about the survey, and their own experiences. Comments included issues that contribute to loneliness such as poverty and shyness, and advice for others about how to keep up social relationships.

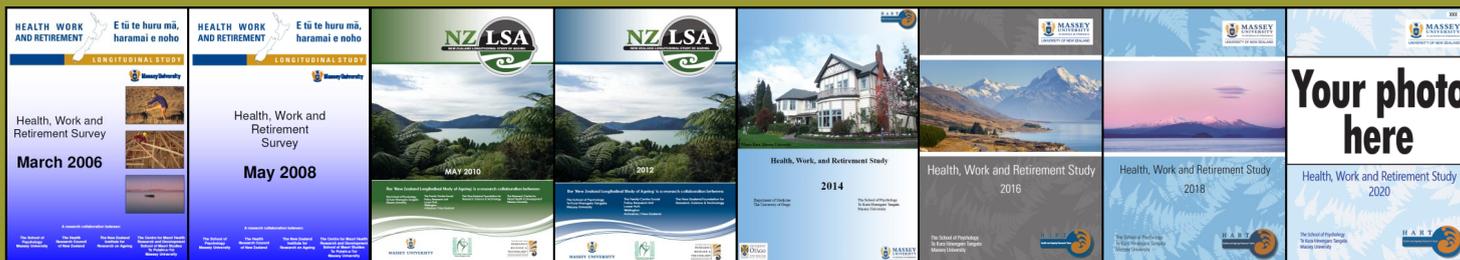
The results of the survey will contribute to Age Concern’s program to reduce loneliness on the Kapiti Coast.



**Richard Bennetts’** MA thesis (supervised by Dr Joanne Taylor), involves exploring the impact of driving cessation on health, wellbeing and quality of life in older people. Previous research has focused on negative outcomes such as health decline, institutionalisation and mortality. However, outcomes may be more diverse than existing literature suggests. Richard’s research analyses the 2016 wave of the HWR study and aims to ascertain which groups experience positive health, wellbeing, and quality of life following driving cessation, and what might characterise these groups. While people often associated driving cessation in later life with negative outcomes, Richard’s results indicate a wide range of experiences of health, wellbeing and quality of life.

This research will contribute to more nuanced understandings of the range of ways in which older people manage the process of driving cessation.

## Photo competition: your photo could be the cover of our next survey in 2020!



### Win a \$200 supermarket voucher!

Our survey cover has evolved over the years, and this year we would like to invite you to submit your own photo to be the front cover of the 2020 survey. The photo should fit the theme of New Zealand mountains and rivers, without featuring people. Photos should be approximately 8 megapixels, as a digital file, and in landscape orientation. These days any good smart phone will take a photo that we can work with.

Please submit your entry to [hart@massey.ac.nz](mailto:hart@massey.ac.nz) by 31 January 2020.

The winning entry will be decided by our Head of School, Assoc. Professor Ross Flett and our two Deputy Heads of School, Dr Natasha Tassell-Matamua and Dr Stephen Hill. We will contact the winner in early 2020, and the winner will be announced in the 2020 newsletter.

### Go into the draw to win a \$50 supermarket voucher! Just by completing the 2020 survey!

Just by returning the 2020 HWR survey, participants will go in the draw to win a \$50 voucher! A new winner will be drawn every six months. More details will be provided with your survey in June 2020, so keep an eye on your letterbox.

So that we can stay in contact with participants and prize winners, it is important that we have your current up to date contact details. See the bottom of page five for information on how to update your details, should they change.



## Health Equity Across the Life Course



Associate Professor Mary Breheny discusses the findings of her team's longitudinal research around health in later life being closely related to childhood socioeconomic status. The media often focus on older people as a distinct group, whose needs must be balanced against the needs of younger groups. As a result, suggestions for healthy ageing tend to focus on promoting healthy choices among people who have already aged. But we do know that there are marked differences in health and wellbeing among people of an older age, which may reflect health risks in younger years, such as poor housing, workplace conditions, family experiences, and lack of access to resources and opportunities.

**Dr Mary Breheny** The team's research programme will be examining how these differences in outcomes in older people, are shaped by their early life experiences.

You can read an opinion piece on this topic from Dr Breheny here: <https://healthcentral.nz/opinion-mary-breheny-health-equity-in-older-age/>

## Age Concern Health Promotion Forum in Wellington



Dr Ágnes Szabó

In April, Dr Ágnes Szabó was invited to be the keynote speaker. Her presentation focussed on how environmental factors (such as housing and neighbourhoods) can support or undermine the health of older adults. Dr Szabó discussed HWR research demonstrating that older adults who own their homes and live in good quality housing that is easy to maintain and meets their social needs, report better health and wellbeing as they age.

Living in neighbourhoods that are accessible and safe, and where neighbours can trust and rely on each other, is beneficial for older adults' health and wellbeing.

## Childhood Deprivation and Late Life Health

Professor Christine Stephens, Associate Professor Mary Breheny and Dr Ágnes Szabó investigated the lifetime effects of childhood deprivation, education, and adult wealth on health in older age. This study used data from older participants who had been HWR participants since 2006, and who had taken part in interviews covering their early life experiences. Each of the 1,133 participants who had been part of the HWR since 2006 were contacted and asked if they would like to participate in a telephone interview, about their early life experiences. Of these, 787 (69%) completed an interview. Professor Stephens concludes “children who experienced lower socioeconomic status generally had poorer health in older age. Although physical health does decline, childhood deprivation was mainly related to health as people entered old age, not to the rate of decline.” The researchers recommend attention to the whole life course, including childhood, to promote healthy ageing for all. Professor Stephens presented this work at the European Health Psychology Society in Croatia in the first week of September.

## Late Life Migration and Quality of Life for Older Chinese Immigrants

Dr Polly Yeung and Dr Joanne Allen were awarded a Massey University Research Fund Grant to undertake a research project in collaboration with the CNNS Foundation (formerly the Chinese New Settlers' Services Trust) in Auckland. This research explored older Chinese immigrants' experiences of wellbeing, retirement, social support and aspirations as they age. Methods included interviews with professionals supporting older Chinese immigrants, as well as interviews and a survey of older Chinese immigrants.

The research will also inform process for engaging this community in future public health research with an aim to improving knowledge about health and wellbeing outcomes in this growing section of the New Zealand population.



Dr Polly Yeung

## Why Giving Technology A Go Really Matters

Dr Juliana Mansvelt (HART researcher), Professor Jonathan Elms and Dr Sarah Dodds (Centre for Advanced Retail Studies, Massey University, Albany Campus) explored experiences around internet use and shopping. From the twenty older New Zealanders interviewed, they discovered that participants' confidence around using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) was significant in influencing their consumption of goods and services via the internet. The majority expressed a desire to 'keep up' with the times, changing technologies and their peers. Motivation to engage with ICT highlighted concerns about making mistakes, the trustworthiness of online banking and retail systems and the perceived risks of scamming. This has implications for those organisations which seek to encourage older people's use of ICT.

Providing assistance which centres on the practices and interests in older peoples' lives (such as staying in contact with friends and whānau, genealogy, buying from online auction sites) rather than on particular computer programmes, would likely promote engagement in ICT.

While competency in ICT use varied greatly, all participants felt that just giving technologies 'a go', was vital to developing their skills and confidence.

## Digital Scanning, Archiving and Destruction

With the 2018 HWR survey, we undertook a project to begin digitally scanning and archiving survey data. The scanning process allows researchers to capture all numerical data without the need for manual input, saving time and creating a copy of the survey for digital archiving. Following the success of the 2018 trial, future HWR surveys will also use this digital scanning technology.

If you have moved, changed your name or postal address, or if you would like to update your phone number or email address provided to the HART, please let us know: call **0800 100 134**, email **hart@massey.ac.nz**, or visit **hart.massey.ac.nz** and click on “**Form to update your contact details**”

# Getting the Word Out on Ageing in Aotearoa

## Environments for Health Equity in Older Age: Taking a Life Course Perspective



Dr Christine Stephens, Dr Agnes Szabo and Dr Mary Breheny presented a symposium at the *International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE)* in Rotorua. The MOH draft Healthy Ageing Strategy includes a life course approach which recognises the lifelong influences on people's health including health in childhood, lifetime risks such as poor housing, workplace discrimination and family violence, and access to resources and opportunities. Our HWR findings contributed to the development of this approach to healthy ageing in Aotearoa. Specific life course factors such as child poverty, alcohol use and housing quality were highlighted. The symposium sparked particular interest among representatives from NGOs, such as Age Concern, who often have difficulty accessing research findings.

## Impact of the 2010-2011 Canterbury Earthquakes

Presented to the *2018 Gerontological Society of America* conference in Boston, Dr Joanne Allen's research on health outcomes among Christchurch residents pre-post the 2010-2011 earthquake series, showed that adults who were in good health before the earthquakes reported little change in health after the disaster. However, those who were in poor health prior to the events reported greater distress and negative impact on their lives due to the disaster. This suggests that pre-disaster vulnerability is an important factor in how well older people are able to cope with disasters.



Drs Szabo and Allen



Ms Koreshi

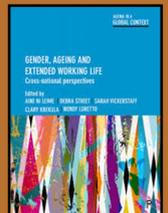
**Shanika Koreshi** (a PhD student in the HART), recently attended a meeting in Sydney, convened by The Sustainable Care Research team from the University of Sheffield. This meeting was hosted by the Centre of Excellence in Population Ageing Research, University of Sydney and the Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales. The meeting brought together international team members for intensive workshops to share information about research; discussing concepts, theories, methods and latest findings related to sustainable care for carers and care recipients.

Ms Koreshi is now a member of the Sustainable Care early career research and PhD network.



Dr Fiona Alpass

**Fiona Alpass and Judith Davey** are international partners on the COST (Cooperation in Science and Technology) Action IS1409, "Gender, Health and Extended Working Life in Western Countries", a European-funded research network with over 100 researchers from 34 countries. Professors Fiona Alpass and Christine Stephens attended the final *COST Action conference* in Galway in November 2018 where Fiona presented a keynote address entitled "Extending working lives policy in New Zealand". In 2019, Fiona and Judith published a chapter for a COST Action book entitled 'Extended Working Life Policies – International Gender and Health Perspectives', published by Policy Press.



**Members of the HART team** presented at the *International Association of Gerontology European Region Congress* in Gothenburg, Sweden in May 2019. Dr Andy Towers chaired a session (which included papers by Dr Towers and Dr Szabó, entitled "International Trends in Older Adult Quality of Life: Using Longitudinal Studies of Ageing around the World to Identify Predictors of Stability and Change in CASP Quality of Life scores." This new research included findings from the HWR study on changes in quality of life as people age, alcohol use patterns over the life span, and workability. Professor Alpass also presented a paper, on the predictors of work ability in older New Zealanders.



Dr Andy Towers

**Research on Older New Zealanders' Patterns of Alcohol Use** has recently been in the news. HWR data showed some of us: (a) are drinking more on average than many of our international counterparts, (b) have been hazardous drinkers for much of our lives, and (c) may be at significant risk from alcohol use. Funded by the Health Promotion Authority (HPA), this research culminated in a recent editorial for the *New Zealand Medical Journal*, highlighting the levels of hazardous drinking among older adults, and the lack of awareness and preparedness for this issue.