

# Abbeyfield

## New Zealand

ABBEYFIELD NEW ZEALAND SOCIETIES NEWSLETTER

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### Message from the Chairman

*In December I was Guest Speaker at the Abbeyfield Australia AGM and shared with Abbeyfield members across the great country of Australia what was happening in the expanding of Abbeyfield in New Zealand.*

*Conferences can provide some real food for thought and I wish to share with you a presentation by Neil Dickens, the Chairman of Abbeyfield Mt Gambier, entitled:*

#### **Where to from here? – Revisiting the Abbeyfield model!**

*Neil said "I will define the Abbeyfield model as I see it.*

*In simple terms the Abbeyfield Model is to supply accommodation for active aged people who are capable of independent living, supported by a Housekeeper/Cook who supplies two main meals a day and keeps the common area of the house clean and tidy. The rent from the 10 residents is sufficient to make the house financially viable. The house is managed by a volunteer committee.*

*We have operated as a committee for 24 years and the management of the House has been over a period of 17 years. We have been able to maintain stable committee membership and stable staff since establishment. We opened the House free from debt and have mostly maintained a full house. In economic terms of the Abbeyfield model of staff residents rations the model, as is, has allowed us to maintain financial viability.*

*However, there have been two major changes in the dynamics of our house. These raise management problems which will affect the long term viability of our house.*

*(1) The increasing age of our residents and their increasing frailty. Seventeen years ago the average age of our residents was about 75. They were all capable of "independent living". Now the average age is 85, with a number in their nineties and for some the current definition of "independent living" is questionable. Many of the residents have been long term and Abbeyfield is their home, and I emphasise that Abbeyfield is their home.*

*(2) The second change is changing Government policies, which broadly speaking, is to encourage people to stay in their own homes. I personally have no problem with this policy and it is easy for us to forget the majority of elderly do in fact continue to live in their own homes. In a positive way, Government policies are administered to provide rest home care and assistance packages but such packages can be in short supply— (NB: Abbeyfield in NZ is not a rest home provider and does not access accommodation packages).*

*The more dependent our Abbeyfield residents become it can build pressure on staff and management. In particular the Housekeeper who feels obligated to take on duties beyond those described in the job description. As our Housekeeper has been employed for the whole life of our house, we can see how her role has changed and responsibilities increased as our new applicants are in their late eighties and our existing residents' continue to age. Can our present model be changed?"*

*Here in New Zealand we can ask "Should we be changing our model to reflect today's reality? And if so, how?"*

JB Munro  
Chairman

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**Abbeyfield houses provide companionship with independence for older people**

## Obituary: Richard Carr-Gomm

*Richard Carr-Gomm, often referred to as "The Father of Abbeyfield" passed away in Batheaston, Somerset on 27 October 2008.*

*He was born in Warwickshire in 1922 and was preparing to go to university at Oxford when World War II broke out. Volunteering for the Army, he first served with the Royal Berkshires and then an officer with the Coldstream Guards, a traditional regiment of the Carr-Gomms. He was wounded twice and won the Croix de Guerre with Silver Star. Resigning his Coldstream Guards commission to work with older people, this led to Richard's understanding that many older people lived in isolation. He purchased a house and became the housekeeper to some older people, thereby unofficially really starting the first Abbeyfield House.*

*The housing idea attracted attention and by 1963 the Abbeyfield Society was an organised charity of around 200 houses. He also founded two more charities, the Carr-Gomm Society and the Morpeth Society. It is reported that the Abbeyfield Houses have had some more unusual residents - Stalin's daughter, Svetlana, and King Freddie of Uganda.*

*Richard visited New Zealand for the Abbeyfield International Conference in Nelson and was very impressed with the New Zealand initiatives.*

*He received an OBE in 1984. Sadly, in 2007 his beloved wife Susan, who had supported him for 50 years, suddenly passed away. They are survived by their two sons and three daughters to whom we extend our deepest condolences, and thank them for sharing their parents with the Abbeyfield family for so many years.*

## ***A February round up from Abbeyfield Roslyn House, Palmerston North***

### ***From resident Ken Bowden***

It is hard to believe we have now been residing in Roslyn House for nine months! Time certainly passes by quickly. During this time we lost two residents but gained three with another hopefully due to join us in a few weeks. It is good to welcome new folk and help them to adapt to new living circumstances. Although our personalities and interests differ in many ways, we still seem to mix well together. It is great for residents to receive many visits from friends and relatives who often bring young children with them. This is great. It is also good to note that our committee members often pop in, so maintaining a close personal interest in the wellbeing of residents and house keepers.

During this period of residence, we have had an open house, a display of personal memorabilia, a formal dinner as well as a few outings to the Esplanade Victoria Cafe for a coffee and time out together. We also had a get together with family and friends when trimming the trees before Christmas. New special occasions are planned during the year ahead. The food continues to be good and occasionally on a Friday evening, we have take out fish and chips on a tray. Friday evenings are DVD evenings when most of us enjoy a couple of hours watching a movie together. It is good to see the progress made in landscaping the property and to note that more than 1.2km of drip irrigation pipe has been laid. Amazing work! I am sure that once the grass seeding is complete we will soon have a lush green carpet of lawn to enhance the look of our home.

### ***From resident Nancy Smith***

I know my neighbours!! everyone. I can stop and chat and spend time. This new concept is lovely. When I was living alone I would have to go out to see people for a chat or just a wave. We have been here six months. I always find plenty to do and am never lonely. We have had a dinner party with our committee, shared birthdays. At Christmas the families and children came and trimmed the Christmas tree with us. Had a Christmas dinner and hung stockings on each door. Then had holidays with our families. Our grounds are now getting ready to sow lawns and gardens. we are nearly full now. Our committee have worked hard for us and join us many times.



We have fitted in well and still enjoy each other's company, and am looking forward to starting a new year.

Happy New Year to all Abbeyfields.

### ***From Carolyn Hayes, Chair, Abbeyfield Palmerston North***

We are nine months old and about to welcome our 8th resident, so I'm sure we'll reach our goal of being a full house by the end of our first twelve months. The house is an extremely happy one; verified by past International Chairman John Turnbull and his wife Ann. They were guests for lunch recently and were made most welcome by the residents.

On the sad death of our Founder, Richard Carr-Gomm, we held a memorial service and planted a pink rhododendron in his memory in the front garden.

Our lawn is now a carpet of green! Yet to have it's first mow, helped by heavy rain but warm temperatures over the last week. A huge thank you to the members of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, who prepared the land, to members of Fitzherbert Lions who, together with my brother-in-law Tony, have raked and sowed the grass seed. Tony also supplied and laid all the irrigation piping, with the able assistance of Fitzherbert Lions.

A pathway to the clothesline is next on the list followed by, a second clothesline to be installed, safety railing around the laundry ramp, the front fence, side fence and housekeepers clothesline. Then I guess we'll create the next list of chores. This coming weekend the residents are putting on an international afternoon tea. They are always up to something, and plan to do some baking for the local Arohanui Hospice. This gesture to be generous to someone else comes from so many people being generous to Abbeyfield Roslyn House; produce and all sorts continually being donated to the house.

Relief housekeeper, Dawn, is now on maternity leave, so everyone is excitedly awaiting the birth of her second child. Meantime we will have June stepping in to relieve Dawn until her return.

We'd like to challenge all New Zealand Abbeyfield houses to contribute to the NZ newsletter - let's know your stories each newsletter!



A man was telling his neighbour, "I just bought a new hearing aid. It cost me \$4,000, but it's state of the art. It's perfect."

"Really," answered the neighbour. "What kind is it?"  
"Twelve thirty."



*Just As A Reminder ... annual subscriptions are due*

### ***Abbeyfield Kaeo House Opening***

Wednesday, 29 October 2008 dawned crisp and fine in Kaeo. A perfect day in promise for the official opening of the 11th Abbeyfield house in New Zealand. A team of volunteers and the residents, led by staff of Te Rununga O Whaingaroa had began early preparing for the celebration - raising marquees, tidying the site and cooking ... cooking ... cooking .... !!!



By mid morning the official guests were congregating at the roadside,



admiring the clean lines and innovative design of the five-resident complex that had been developed by the Rununga on the hillside above the tiny Kaeo village. Well clear of the flood plain that has caused so much anguish in the district during the past three years.

Responding to a welcoming karanga, the official party was led onto the site by Cabinet Minister Shane Jones and Abbeyfield New Zealand Chairman JB Munro. After negotiating a spirited challenge by two young warriors the official party took their places. The Abbeyfield party included Board members, the General Secretary and volunteers from Auckland and Whangarei. Then came the mihi whakatau or official speeches in Maori and

spirited responses from Shane Jones and JB Munro, followed by the hongi. Shane was then invited to officially open the house and visitors and guests were able to inspect the facilities, including a resident's studio which was generously made available.



*Shane Jones (MP), Raiha Fredrickson (Rununga Operations Manager) and Donald Beasley (Abbeyfield Life Member and long time supporter)*

Then came the highlight of the day for many – kai. A magnificent spread was provided centered on local produce. The crayfish, oysters and pork were especially appreciated by your reporter. Eventually, replete, the residents



retreated for a nap and the visitors meandered back to their cars for the journey home, but not before Shane Jones managed some vigorous politicking (the General Election followed a few days later).

The local people and the Rununga can be very proud of the successful way they have negotiated the myriad problems that beset every Abbeyfield project. The result is a magnificent addition to the social housing provided in the region.

## ***2008 Abbeyfield International Conference Report, Toronto, Canada***

The Tenth Global Conference of Abbeyfield International was held at the Primrose Hotel, Toronto from 18 to 21 October 2008. It was attended by 85 delegates of 12 of AI's 16 member countries around the world - from Europe to Japan, Canada and the USA, to South Africa, New Zealand and Australia.

### **Objectives of the Meeting**

- To review where the Abbeyfield movement stands in providing housing, support and care for older people around the world.
- To consider the role of the AI office in supporting member national societies and promoting international development.
- To focus on Abbeyfield development in North America, and the opportunities offered by the 'Resident Funding' model To consider alternative ideas within national societies for the creation and funding of new houses and local societies.
- To attract interested people of influence and means to join the movement (eg: bankers, funders, donors, governments etc).
- To provide an opportunity for existing and prospective Abbeyfielders, particularly those in Canada, to share experiences.

### **Meeting Highlights**

#### **"Outsider Views of Expert Opinion"**

Delegates benefited from expert outsiders' views on future trends in ageing, and how these might impact the Abbeyfield movement. They heard the latest research on trends in global volunteering and how these related to the Abbeyfield experience.

#### **Information Exchange**

Delegates were able to network and exchange information on new initiatives, in particular 'the Resident Funding Model' methodology with which new houses can be funded from residents' contributions by purchasing a stake in the property. They enjoyed a forum for discussion of the challenges and issues that lie ahead, particularly the opportunity to debate the future of Abbeyfield International in the context of its proposed merger with The Abbeyfield Society, and what that might mean for growth opportunities of Abbeyfield around the world.

#### **Expansion Plans**

The Conference was proud to hear of recent house openings in Japan, Mexico and New Zealand, and further expansion planned in South Africa, the Philippines and Italy.

#### **Commitment to the Future**

The worldwide community reaffirmed its commitment to the Abbeyfield principles, and in particular to the expansion of the work carried out by the AI office, enhanced by the possibility of the merger with The Abbeyfield Society. Delegates expressed a desire to meet again within the next three years. There were many sources of inspiration - but most of all they were inspired by each other!

## **Seminars, Training and Annual General Meeting - July 2009, Nelson**

**Thursday, 9 July 2009**

Seminar introducing the PIMA  
(Programme for the Internal Monitoring of Abbeyfield)

**Friday, 10 July 2009**

A PIMA review of the local Abbeyfield Nelson houses.

**Saturday, 11 July 2009**

Abbeyfield New Zealand Annual General Meeting

**Sunday, 12 July 2009**

Review of the PIMA for further refinement and "roll out" across all regions.



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*Closing deadline  
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