

GSA Government Superannuitants Association **Annuity News**

News about your association and what we are up to, as well as other useful information.
Call the GSA free on 0800 888 472 Visit us at www.gsa.org.nz

Message from the President

It is with great pleasure that I write to you as your new President. After being Chair of the Auckland Branch for five years, on the Board for three years and the last two as Vice President, I feel well prepared to take on the role of President. It is an honour to take on this role to ensure your annuity is protected and to provide support for you, our members.

First, I would like to thank Alan Straker, the previous President, for his positive leadership for the organisation over the last two years. He has worked effectively on your behalf, to ensure that the rights, needs and wellbeing of our members is kept to the forefront in our thinking and planning.

I would also like to thank Tony Gooding for his contribution to the Board. All Board members volunteer their time on behalf of our members, and their contribution is outstanding.

Taking on the role of Vice-President is Alan Peck. He has a wealth of experience with the GSA, having been Executive Officer for four years and then six years on the Board. Alan has been instrumental in modifying the Constitution to meet the requirements of the new Incorporated Societies Act and has also been convenor of the Branch Liaison and Support Committee. I am very much looking forward to using our combined expertise on your behalf.

At the Council meeting in September, all branches voted for those members that they thought would best serve on the Board. There are two new Board members this year – Darryl Bellamy from Bay of Plenty and John Laurenson from Kapiti/Horowhenua. They are joined by returning members John Beckham from Otago, Anne Gover from Southland and Roger Openshaw from Manawatu. We are fortunate to have such an able group of people contributing their skills to our Board. They help to ensure that the GSA is well equipped to face any future challenges.

Lyn Buxton our Executive Officer and Rachel Starkey Office Administrator are an important part of our GSA team providing support not only to all the branches, but also to individuals, such as overseas members, when they have queries regarding their annuity. Their support is greatly appreciated by the Board and branches.

Our branches are located throughout New Zealand, each with a Chairperson and committee. These branches provide vital support to their local regions through social activities and individual advice to members. As volunteers, they dedicate their time and effort to foster a sense of community, promote engagement, and offer guidance tailored to local needs. Their local presence ensures that members feel connected and supported. Our branches serve as the backbone of the organisation, enabling a closer, more responsive network that significantly enhances the well-being and cohesion of members across the country. Their importance cannot be overstated, as they help build a resilient, informed, and compassionate community.

My vision is for a strong, resilient and adaptable GSA – where all members, including spouses and surviving spouse, feel valued, and where every branch is supported to play an active part in delivering our strategic goals. We will continue to provide a collective voice to preserve the integrity of the Government Superannuation Fund and National Provident Fund and protect the rights of government employees past and present who are GSA members. Together we can continue to protect the annuities that you, our members, have earned.

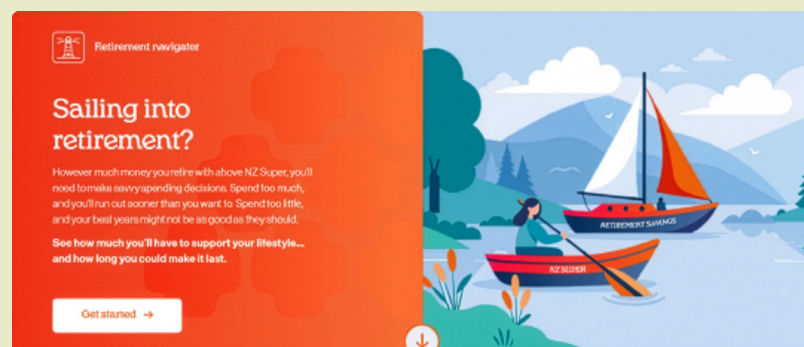
Wishing you all the best for a safe a happy festive season.

Sandie Gusscott





New tool for Retirement Planning



A new tool has been released to help New Zealanders nearing or already in retirement feel more confident about their financial future and how to plan for it.

Launched by Te Ara Ahunga Ora Retirement Commission, the retirement navigator is free to use on sorted.org.nz.

It considers people's invested savings (for example, KiwiSaver) and NZ Super to help users determine the optimal income they can draw down over their retirement. People can see how long their savings might last in different scenarios by adjusting the variables, such as when they expect their retirement to start and their desired lifestyle.

Although intended for those who are nearing or already in retirement, the retirement navigator can be useful to people of any age who wish to examine how they can manage their projected savings.

When it came to rights it all depended on your gender.

The rights of spouses following the death of a superannuitant has a lengthy and sometimes controversial history that owed much to the shifting debate over the place of males and females in New Zealand society. By the 1970s, widows of deceased Government Superannuitants who had been first wives had long been legally entitled to one half of their deceased husband's annuity. It was generally assumed though, that the deceased government superannuitant would be male, and the surviving spouse would be female.

Traditionally speaking there had always been some barriers to this right. One of these barriers was applied to second wives of deceased male superannuitants. During the 1970s marriage patterns were rapidly changing as divorce and de facto relationships became more common. Governments and the public at large, including many GSA members, were extremely resistant to second wives making any claims on their husband's estate. One outraged GSA member in 1979 angrily asserted at an executive meeting [the broad equivalent of today's Board], that the Association should not condone nor accept "de facto marriages of convenience." In his opinion, and in the opinion of many others he had spoken to, such arrangements frequently involved pecuniary gain on the part of the woman. Particular suspicion in this regard was directed at younger women who happened to be spouses of GSA members. Hence, there was general support in the Association at this time for allowing widows who were second wives of deceased superannuitants to make claims on the annuity – but only if they could prove that they were over the age of 55 and legally married.

Males too, faced disadvantages in what was still very much a gendered society. With the number of female government superannuitants on the increase during the 1970s there was resistance to the suggestion that male spouses should receive any part of the annuity upon the death of the female superannuitant, whether they had been legally married or not. This position was traditionally justified on the grounds that men should be financially independent. Hence, they should not live on a woman's earnings, even if they had partners of longstanding in the relationship.

Today, times have changed. Females who are second wives of superannuitants are entitled to up to half of a deceased male's superannuation, even if they are much younger. Male spouses of New Zealand government superannuitants are generally entitled to the same benefits and protections as female spouses, including potential access to survivor benefits and inclusion in the superannuation scheme.

Roger Openshaw



What really makes us happy?

Asking yourself what really makes you happy can cause some brain-strain, thinking about your life and the times when you've been most happy. But getting people to respond to this question is not the best way to measure what really makes us happy. Our memories are often flawed and bitsy and can be very creative – leaving us with perhaps superficial or flavoured answers.

Many may be tempted to answer 'money, material things and achievements' – especially a young generation just setting out on life's journey. But is that what really makes us happy?

In 1938, during the Great Depression, Harvard University began tracking the lives of 268 students in the hope that the longitudinal study would reveal clues as to what contributes towards a healthy and happy life. That study is still going.

Over the last 85 years, the study has expanded to include another study of much poorer men living in Boston, then adding the children of the original recruits, and later women. About 50 of the original students in

the study are still alive. And one of the original recruits went on to be President of the United States – John F. Kennedy.

Harvard now has an ocean of data about all aspects of life. But there is one finding that current Study Director Dr Robert Waldinger says is more important than any other. He says it's the key to a happy life: relationships.

"The surprising finding is that our relationships and how happy we are in our relationships has a powerful influence on our health," he told the Harvard Gazette. "Taking care of your body is important, but tending to your relationships is a form of self-care too."

He says they have learned three big things about relationships. The first is that social connection is very good for us. Being connected into family, friends, and a community result in a happier and physically healthier ageing experience. Loneliness is toxic, and one researcher from the University of Utah, who did a meta-analysis of a large range of similar studies, likens the detrimental health effects of being lonely to smok-

ing half a packet of cigarettes a day or being obese. It's not surprising then that being disconnected from others also makes one more prone to health problems such as heart disease and dementia.

Conversely, the study reported those who are in a close relationship, such as a marriage, tend to keep each other healthier. In fact, other studies have also shown those who are married on average, live longer than those who are not.

The second finding about relationships is that it's not the number of friends we are connected with, but the quality of our relationships that matters. An introvert might only need a couple of close friends, but they will be just as happy and healthy as an extrovert with a very full social calendar. The third finding was that good relationships protect our brains. People who are in secure relationships in their 80s find they can rely on their memories for longer. Loneliness leads to a faster fading memory and a greater risk of developing dementia.

So, what is it then about relationships that makes such a difference? Dr Waldinger believes that relationships are stress regulators. Most of us experience some level of stress most days. Having close relationships means we can talk to someone else, which literally calms us down. Those who are isolated aren't always able to do that and can spend a prolonged period in a stressed state – higher blood pressure and cortisol – resulting in negative health effects.

It's not surprising that research proves that relationships have such a dominant effect not just on our physical wellbeing but also mental health. But that doesn't make maintaining relationships any easier! Relationships need to be cultivated. Much like going to the gym once and then thinking we're set for life, our relationships need work, sometimes every day. While there is a push to get people saving money for their retirement, there should also be a push for people to build and strengthen their social connections to stay healthier longer. Call it social fitness!

Excerpt from Age Concern Wellington Newsletter

Driving licence changes scam



Please note there is a scam circulating about major proposed changes for Driving licence renewals for those aged 65 plus. This is a scam.

Concerned people have raised a news item entitled "New Zealand Driving License Renewal Rule Changes 2025 for Seniors Aged 65+". This article states that NZ is introducing a major overhaul of its licensing system for seniors 65+. Draconian changes are claimed to include 2 yearly renewals, mandatory vision tests, compulsory medical certificates, on-road driving assessments as required by a doctor or licensing staff for example.

NZTA now have a warning about this false information on their website - Renewing for seniors | NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi

Please be assured that this information is **completely false**. The website spreading this information is a scam and people are warned not to respond to any of their communications as they may be trying to get contact details for seniors to potentially exploit with other scams.



A Guide to Members on the Subject of Assignment

The end of the 3G mobile network

Please be aware that the 3G network will be switched off soon. This could affect you if you still use an older mobile phone. It could also affect other devices like medical alarms and burglar alarms.

One NZ has a scheduled switch-off date of 31 December 2025. Spark says its 3G network will be turned off “towards the end of 2025”, the same as 2Degrees.

One area of the superannuation scheme that is often misunderstood is the subject of assignment. The purpose of this document is to provide a brief summary of the ins-and-outs of the Assignment process.

Section 91B of the Government Superannuation Act allows for a member of the Government Superannuation Fund (GSF) to “surrender” up to half of their retiring allowance (annuity) to another person (or persons, providing the assigned total does not exceed 50% of the total allowance). The member surrendering a portion of their retiring allowance is referred to as the “assignor”, and the person(s) receiving the surrendered portion is referred to as the “assignee”. In this information sheet the title “member” is used throughout in preference to “assignor”.

The Act makes no distinction as to who the assignee may be or whether any relationship must exist between the member and the assignee. In other words, up to half of an annuitant’s retiring allowance may be surrendered to any person(s).

Although the member may surrender up to half of their allowance, the amount that is received by the assignee is actuarially calculated based on their life expectancy. If the assignee is younger than the member the amount payable will be less than half of what the member is currently receiving in actual dollar terms. If the assignee is older, the payments may be more. These calculations are done to ensure that the total payments made over the lifetimes of the member and assignee do not significantly increase the long-term liability of the fund.



How it works.

A member wishing to set up an assignment must complete form GS91B, which is available from Datacom.

All applications to set up an assignment are subject to the following overarching provision:

A member must be alive at the specified effective date and alive when the assignment in writing is delivered to Datacom.

These terms are explained as follows:

- Alive when delivered - the election can be emailed or posted. If it was posted and the member dies after it has been posted, but before it has been delivered, it will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If it is evident through postage mark that it was posted prior to member’s death then it will be accepted.
- Alive at specified date - the specified date is the date that the member has elected from which the assignment would take effect. This does not have to be the next allowance payment date.
- It can be the date that the member signed the election. If a member chooses a specified date as the date the election is signed then they were obviously alive at the specified date. The assignment will be paid on the next scheduled payment date.
- If the member elects a specified date in the future then they must be alive at that future date.
- If the member elects the next pension payment date

as their specified date then they must be alive at that next pension payment date.

- No payment is made until the first payday after the election to surrender.
- An assignment is irrevocable, and it cannot be changed once that first payment is made.

Assignments can only be made to an individual person. They cannot be made to a Trust.

The assignment is subject to the annual Cost of Living Adjustment.

Provisions in the event of death.

The provisions relating to death are simple but often misunderstood.

- The assignment lasts for the lifetime of the assignee. It is not affected by the death of the member and nor is it transferable on the death of the assignee.
- Should the member die before the assignee the usual provisions apply, in that, half of the member’s residual retiring allowance will be paid to a surviving spouse or partner. Any assigned portion is not included in this calculation.
- If the assignee is the member’s spouse or partner, which is often the case, they will continue to receive their assignment and, on the death of the member, they will also receive an additional half of the residual retiring allowance previously retained by the member. However, if the assignee dies before the member,

A Guide to Members on the Subject of Assignment

...Continued

the assignment payments cease completely, and the member's retiring allowance is not increased.

- In the circumstances where the member's spouse or partner is not the assignee, they have no claim on the assigned portion of the retiring allowance on the death of the member.

Examples.

Here are two possible scenarios. For simplicity, these examples assume that the assignee is the spouse or partner of the member.

- Example 1: A member may decide to assign half of their retiring allowance to a spouse or partner. Should the assignee die before the member, their half ceases to be paid. The member retains their half of the total retiring allowance and has no claims on the previously assigned portion. Should the member die first, the assignee will continue to receive the half previously assigned and they will also receive half of the residual retiring allowance that the member was receiving. In other words, the spouse or partner will end up with around three quarters of the total allowance (actuarially calculated) until they die.
- Example 2: A member may decide to assign one third of their retiring allowance to a spouse or partner, leaving the member with two thirds. Should the spouse or partner die before the member, their one third ceases to be paid. The member retains two thirds of the retiring allowance. Should the member die first, the spouse or partner will continue to receive the one third previously assigned and they will also receive half of the member's residual retiring allowance (which is two thirds of the original retiring allowance) leaving them with around two thirds of the original allowance. In this example, regardless of whoever dies first, the survivor will receive roughly two thirds of the original retiring allowance.

Those are just two examples that involve assignment to a spouse or partner. Because a member can assign up to half of their retiring allowance to any person(s), the possibilities are numerous and the outcomes will vary accordingly. It should also be noted that any assignment made will be to a specific individual. Any subsequent change in relationships will not change the assignment.

Other Arrangements

Some confusion occasionally arises when comparing assignments with other arrangements made, such as agreements under the relationship/matrimonial property legislation. Normally these arrangements cease on the death of one or other party to the arrangement. These alternative arrangements can be very different from the provisions of the Superannuation Act, but in themselves they do not affect the provisions of the Act.

Advice

The GSA does not provide individual advice on assignment, because circumstances differ. Any member contemplating setting up an assignment is encouraged to seek independent financial advice.

Any decision made under the assignment provisions cannot be reversed.

Alan Peck

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA)?

An EPA is a legal document that lets you pick someone to make decisions for you if you become unable to make them yourself.

This person is called an attorney. They don't need to be a lawyer to become your attorney.

Why do I need an EPA

If something happens to you and you do not have an EPA, your family – even your spouse or partner – would have to apply to the Family Court to be able to make decisions on your behalf.

This can be a stressful and expensive process. Having an EPA means your wishes are more likely to be respected because you have chosen people you trust in advance who will make decisions in your best interest.

A good time to complete your EPA is when you're either making or updating your will or engaging with a legal professional on another issue such as buying a house. Other significant life events that are good opportunities to complete an EPA could be:

- When your relationship changes
- Diagnosis of a long-term illness or disability that impacts capacity

It is strongly recommended that everyone – regardless of age or health – should think seriously about getting an EPA.

What does an EPA cover

There are two types of EPA

- Property
- Personal care and welfare

Property EPA

A property EPA covers decisions relating to your financial assets, for example:

- arranging benefits
- paying bills
- buying and selling assets
- taking care of bank accounts.

A property EPA can come into effect before you lose the ability to make decisions for yourself, for example, if you are moving into assisted living and would like a loved one to manage selling your house on your behalf.

You can choose more than one attorney for this EPA.

Personal care and welfare EPA

A personal care and welfare EPA covers decisions relating to health and wellbeing, for example:

- medical treatment
- health and welfare
- where you live.

You can have only one attorney for this EPA.

Who can be an attorney

People often choose a family member or close friend as an attorney, but ideally it should be someone who:

- knows you well
- you trust to make decisions for you
- is willing and able to take on the responsibility of being an attorney
- clearly understands what the role requires.

Branch Christmas Functions

Branch	Date
Auckland	3-Dec-25
Bay of Plenty	26-Nov-25
Canterbury Westland	2-Dec-25
Gisborne	4-Dec-25
Hawkes Bay	27-Nov-25
Horowhenua/Kapiti	20-Nov-25
Lake Taupo	29-May-25
Manawatū	25-Nov-25
Marlborough	24-Nov-25
Nelson	9-Dec-25
Northland	19-Nov-25
Otago	26 -Nov-25
Rotorua	21-Nov-25
South Canterbury	20-Nov-25
Southland	8-Dec-25
Taranaki	26-Nov-25
Waikato KC	21-Nov-25
Whanganui	20-Nov-25
Wellington	18-Nov-25

BRANCH ACTIVITIES

For more information about meetings and social functions, see your branch newsletter located in your branch web page www.gsa.org.nz (click branches on the top menu), or phone your branch secretary on 0800 888 472. We would love to see you there.



Surviving Spouse

Do you know a surviving spouse of a GSA member?

Are they a member of the GSA?

They **do not** automatically become a member of the GSA once their partner passes away.

Encourage them to contact their local branch or national office, and we can set up their GSA Membership.

Their membership Matters

Please provide your e-mail address, if possible!

Postage costs are one of our biggest costs for GSA. If you would like to receive the Annuity News and your Branch newsletter by email rather than post, contact Rachel our Office Administrator by email at national@gsa.org.nz, and she will arrange this for you.

GSA freephone 0800 888 472

Annuity administration:

Datacom (GSF): phone 0800 654731, or email gsf@fundadmin.nz

Datacom (NPF): phone 0800 628 776 or email npfenquiries@fundadmin.nz

Do we have your correct details?

If your details have changed, please phone 0800 888 472, send us an email or go to the members' section of our web site at www.gsa.org.nz to log in and fill out your details. You will need your GSA password to access the member's section. Contact national@gsa.org.nz for your password if you don't have it handy.

REMEMBER TO TELL DATACOM!



Working for You

Since 1920

GSA Government
Superannuitants
Association

Annuity News is published by The Government Superannuitants Association of New Zealand Inc.

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