

# Wellington conference: The Getting of Wisdom Pākehā Perspectives

Professor Brian Findsen  
Faculty of Education  
University of Waikato  
New Zealand  
[brian.findsen@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:brian.findsen@waikato.ac.nz)

# Preliminary comments

- Legitimacy of complementary Māori and Pākehā perspectives
- On-going debate in Aotearoa New Zealand on bi-culturalism and multi-culturalism

This session concentrates on the Pākehā side of bi-cultural aspects

- Contention of Jim Dakin: “...adult education in New Zealand is characterised by close adherence to patterns of organisation and methods imported from Britain” (1992: 30)
- *Derivative* and *innovative* modes (Dakin)

# Early social institutions of learning

Early social institutions (some of which more relevant to older adults):

- Mechanics institutes 1840s
- Mutual improvement & literary societies
- Technical education e.g. Schools of mines 1880s
- Workers' Education Association (WEA) 1915 : Trade unionists & university teachers (included "box schemes")
- Community centres e.g. Feilding 1938 : pre-school parent education initially

# Early social institutions of learning

- Community Arts Service 1946
- National Council of Adult Education 1948
- Community education in schools 1970s - still existing but considerably weakened
- Rural Education Activities Programmes (REAPs) 1979
- Continuing Education in universities 1960s/2000s

Moved away from UK model of University Extension to American Centres for Continuing Education (still derivative)

# Older adult education agencies

Vary from agencies intimately engaged with seniors to those with minimal interest

Many “general” adult/tertiary education agencies attractive to seniors e.g.

- university continuing education;
- rural women’s organisations;
- trade unions;
- polytechnics;
- Literacy Aotearoa;
- Te Ataarangi;
- English Language Partners;
- community (neighbourhood) houses

# More recent players

- Environmental groups (e.g Gully restoration; Forest & Bird)
- Local City Councils (e.g. via Citizen's Advice Bureaux)
- District Health Boards (e.g. Elder Abuse)

# Education *with* and *for* older adults

More specific education *with* and *for* older adults:

- Men's sheds – throughout NZ
- Seniornet – advent of ICT and boomers' increasing demands
- University of the Third Age – middle-class capture; low cost and highly collaborative
- 60+ continuing education groups – emergent form Universities' continuing education (NB Cuts to University ACE)
- Age Concern – selected groups throughout NZ; combined education and leisure orientation
- Greypower – primarily overtly political
- Workplaces – training for (older) workers; professional development for managers

Are any of these *innovative*?

# Concluding comments

- Hard to find really innovative agencies but many modifications of international (mainly British) institutions in the light of different cultural context (more *derivative*)
- Increasing trend for older adults to find “education” in agencies not designed specifically for learning but aligned to social movements (e.g. environmental; health-oriented; te reo)
- ICT making virtual membership of education agencies for (older) adults more prevalent

Reference: Dakin, J. (1992). Derivative and innovative modes in New Zealand adult education , *NZ Journal of Adult Learning*, 20 (2) 29-49.