

Media statement

5 November 2004

UK Pensions Minister interested in NZ model

From London, UK:

The United Kingdom Pensions Minister, Malcolm Wicks, has today praised the New Zealand superannuation model, and has shown interest in the New Zealand idea of a retirement commissioner.

The comments came in a meeting today with New Zealand retirement commissioner, Diana Crossan, who was invited in London for a Pensions Summit.

Ms Crossan said from London that the UK is going through a painful reassessment of how the State should help people in retirement, similar to that experienced by New Zealand in the 1990s.

A report two weeks ago from the government-appointed Pensions Commission starkly set out how the rapidly ageing population will lead to massive new pension costs, and gave a selection of tough choices such as letting living standards drop for pensioners and raising the pension age.

Diana Crossan said the reality of the situation was now driving the UK to find alternatives, with many people greatly impressed by the New Zealand model.

“New Zealand is the focus of international attention because we have dealt with the “pension issue” before most other developed countries.

“They are particularly interested in ways the State is encouraging people to boost their private provision.

“Politicians and pension experts here are very receptive to the concept of a Commissioner - helping people make better financial decisions throughout life that lead to them better prepared when they stop working. They have also been hugely impressed with the comprehensive nature and innovative approach of the Retirement Commission’s website www.sorted.org.nz,” Ms Crossan said.

In addition to the key meeting with Pensions Minister, Malcolm Wicks, Ms Crossan also met today with staff from the Department for Work and Pensions, HM Treasury and the Pensions Policy Institute.

Tomorrow she meets with the Office for National Statistics, Chairman of the House of Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee, and the Chairman of the All Party Group on Pensions in the House of Commons.

Ends

For more information please contact:

Robyn Cormack

Marketing Communications Manager

Retirement Commission

Tel: 04 494 6243

Mob: 025 242 7936

Email: robyn.cormack@retirement.org.nz