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## grandparents in rural families young people's perspectives

SALLY KEELING, KATHY GLASGOW & CAROLYN MORRIS  
NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON AGEING  
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

This project is based on significant background literature review work in rural ageing, both in New Zealand and comparatively, and begins to explore relationships between grandchildren and their grandparents. Grandparenting merits critical research exploration, as roles and practices are likely to vary in different social settings and across the life course of each generation and cohort. The rationale for the study is based on the paucity of research data addressing the particular linked dynamics of ageing in rural families through the lens of young people's experiences. This study is designed to map the perspectives of a sample of young people who have spent a good part of their formative years living in rural communities in the South Island.

Conceptual frameworks are drawn from studies of demographic trends and grandparenthood, and from comparative research on grandparental roles and their importance for families.

### Methods

The process of contacting all area (rural) schools in the South Island of New Zealand is outlined, along with the developmental approach taken to design methods which were practically and ethically appropriate to research with young people in an educational setting. Schools were invited to take part in a monitored research activity in the classroom of Years 7 and 8 students. In phase one of the research, information was obtained about the school and community context via a questionnaire to school principals. In phase two, five schools participated in a classroom research activity using a survey designed, developed and administered by the researchers, working with a classroom teacher. The survey included basic demographic items to be completed by the young people (age, gender, family and household size, length of attendance at the school). The young people were then asked to describe their relationships and current/past contacts with people they refer to as grandparents.

### Research findings

The 98 young people in five schools who completed the survey provided information on 380 grandparents, of whom 73 were no longer alive. Young people in rural South Island schools report a variety of relationships with their grandparents, describing the nature of their relationships, frequency and type of contacts and range of shared activities. Half of the students' grandparents live close or reasonably close (within 90 minutes travel time) to their grandchildren. Most of the young people provided information on three or four grandparents, with no apparently significant differences between their maternal and paternal grandparental relationships. Relationships with one or more great-grandparents also feature in this study.

Most of the young people in this study lived in nuclear family households with two parents and one or two siblings. However, diverse family relationships were apparent, including blended families with step-grandparents and step-siblings, with re-partnering occurring at both the parental and grandparental level. This diversity poses challenges for family functioning and communications, as well as for researchers.

An analysis of the patterns of naming and terms of address for grandparents is made, showing that the most commonly used names for grandfather is Grandad (used by 25 percent). For grandmother, Nana and Grandma are almost equally common (used by 15 percent and 11 percent respectively). Personal names are used in a small number of cases (eight percent), and in combination with a grandparent title in 13 percent of cases.

Around 40 percent of the students have contact daily or weekly with a grandparent. One-third 'regularly do things together' with a grandparent, and one-fifth say they have a 'special relationship' with a grandparent. Fewer than 10 percent mention a grandparent whom they 'don't really know'. In terms of the content and quality of their relationships with grandparents, the majority provided descriptive detail of the typical activities they share on an 'everyday' basis. A small group (18 percent of responses) mentioned aspects of relationships which are interpreted as 'marginal-limited', while a smaller group (12 percent of

responses) gave examples of relationships interpreted as 'special-positive'.

Many grandchildren valued their relationships with their grandparents, including grandparents who had died. There is positive commentary on the fun and enjoyment grandparents and grandchildren share, but there is also sadness in acknowledging that these opportunities for mutual sharing can be limited. Declining health and death of a grandparent, or distance in both time and place, are acknowledged as limiting the opportunities for relationships and contacts to grow over time, as young people also develop.

## Discussion

This study shows that it is possible to obtain interesting descriptive data from young people in classroom settings using the methods involved in this study. Further comparative work would provide more extended coverage of the field of young people's experience of their links and relationships with their grandparents. This would require introducing more potential variation in the patterns and meanings behind these relationships. In this regard, involving students from

intermediate schools in selected urban and provincial centres in New Zealand, within and beyond the South Island, and students from more diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, would be valuable next steps.

## Conclusion

This study provides descriptive data from a group of young people from South Island rural schools using sound and potentially replicable methods of data collection. One major contribution is the focus on younger people's perspectives to complement the growing interest in understanding the roles and contributions made by grandparents to New Zealand families. In the process, further potential lines of enquiry are developed to extend aspects of variation in grandparental relationships. By controlling the age group of grandchild and place of residence, this study provides insights into some aspects of this variation. These include further exploration of geographic proximity, gendered experiences, the significance of blended and emerging family forms and ethnic and cultural diversity.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

This project takes a case study approach in order to contribute both empirical and conceptual understandings to the intersection of two fields of family studies (rural families and ageing). These are fields where there is limited data available, in New Zealand or internationally. It explores the experiences of relationships with grandparents from the perspective of young people at a particularly 'intermediate' stage in their life course. This contrasts with most studies of grandparenthood, which take the point of view of the older people involved.

### 1.1 Rationale for this study

As many international researchers in ageing and family studies have shown, relationships between grandparents and grandchildren are an integral part of family life (Dench & Ogg, 2002; Harper, 2004, 2006; Thompson, 1994). There has, however, been limited empirical demonstration of what this means for New Zealand families in either urban or rural communities, although some recent work is beginning to fill this gap (Age Concern New Zealand, 1997; Armstrong, 2007; Breheny & Stephens, 2007; Bulic, 2004; Hillcoat-Nalletamby, 2006; Keeling, 2001, 2007; Missen, 2002; Wilton & Davey, 2005, 2006).

Grandparenting involves a series of complex two-way relationships. This merits critical research exploration in a variety of family settings, as the roles and practices of grandparents are likely to vary in different social settings, and across the life course of each generation and cohort.

Population ageing sets up particular challenges for families, communities and society at large, and it is not clear how the transformation of New Zealand's rural communities is playing out in respect of this dynamic set of social and family changes (Boston & Davey, 2006; Koopman Boyden, Baxendine, & Pool, 2006). What has been the impact of increased life expectancy on intergenerational relationships? How has a growing proportion of older people in communities impacted on rural families?

This project aims to advance understandings of New Zealand grandparenting in two ways. Firstly, it takes the perspectives of grandchildren (in this instance 11- to 13-year-olds), rather than grandparents, as is more common. Secondly, it is located in rural New Zealand, thus opening up aspects of rural family life which are commonly mythologised (Wenger, 2001a, b). Typically this 'mythology of rural families' idealises family solidarity and generational interdependence and contrasts this image with urban communities involving family dispersal. Through this study, understanding of the linked dynamics of growing up and growing old in rural families may be advanced (Harper, 2006, pp 125-206).

The central concepts this research brings together, grandparenting and rurality, are relatively 'lumped categories', and with the focus offered by the particular methodology of this project, it is possible to begin to unpack these categories.

For instance, the roles of grandparent and grandchild can each span a period of up to 40 years in terms of potential intergenerational links. Someone who becomes a grandparent at age 50 is likely to experience many ways of being a grandparent over the ensuing 40 years, and will possibly live to experience their own children becoming grandparents. Reciprocally, by age 12 a young person is potentially able to reflect on their experience as a grandchild to that point in their life. They are likely to have had meaningful contact with possibly four grandparents. At the same time, they are likely to be on the brink of a significantly modified set of family relationships as adolescence and increasing autonomy from familial ties becomes the focus of the next phase of their life. By the age of say 20-25, the perspective of this same grandchild in relation to the same grandparent(s) will offer a significantly different picture of intergenerational ties. However, this long period of grandparenting is likely to change in conjunction with other demographic changes.

The notion of rurality also deserves careful empirical exploration in terms of how family relationships are lived out in particular small towns, farming communities and remote rural communities in New Zealand today, particularly in the South Island. While some limited

review and empirical work has been done on aspects of rural ageing in New Zealand communities (Lidgard, 2006), none has focused on grandparental and family ties, or taken the perspectives of young people as an entry point for description. Thus, the impetus for this study arose out of the paucity of current research in two particular areas: grandparenting in rural New Zealand families and young people's perspectives.

Study questions: This case study therefore aims to bring together two linked research questions:

- a) How do 11- and 12-year-olds in selected rural schools perceive and experience their links to grandparents?
- b) Taking these young rural people as a point of reference, how can the intersection of family life, rurality and population ageing be explored?

This small empirical case study is designed to map the perspectives of a sample of young people who have spent a good part of their formative years living in rural communities in the South Island.

## 2. BACKGROUND

As noted in the introduction, part of the rationale for this study lies in the limited local or comparative research focusing on young people’s perspectives as grandchildren. The paucity of local community-based studies of how population ageing is experienced in rural communities, and at a personal level, was a further driver. However, there are other fields where there is a growing research literature, at both a macro-population level and in comparative contexts. These fields include demographic trends and grandparenthood, and the importance for families of understanding the variety of roles and relationships surrounding grandparenthood.

### 2.1 Demographic trends and grandparenthood

Grandparenthood is a common experience, because most grandparents have multiple grandchildren, and most grandchildren have more than one grandparent (Wilton & Davey, 2006). Thus, any generalisations about being a grandparent are fraught with the glossing of significant differences and varieties in grandparent-grandchild relationships. These differences may be based on gender, age of the respective parties, geography, the nature and duration of the reciprocal relationship and potential lineal (genealogical) or cultural expectations. Additional factors of complexity will relate to patterns of residence and to changing features of household composition, and to family dynamics surrounding partnering and marriage relationships at both the parental and grandparental levels.

Families in any society are embedded in a complex of social structural features, and the extensive historical analysis of these features provided by Pool, Dharmalingam, & Sceats (2007) offers an important backdrop to this study. Theirs is a macro-presentation of social change surrounding New Zealand families since 1840, outlining the complex dynamics between urban centres and rural areas in terms of population trends and shifts over 160 years. Their analysis highlights how the likelihood of having grandchildren relates to fertility rates in two generations, life expectancy and parental age when children are born. The authors detail the significant shifts in the age of first motherhood in New Zealand, and the consequences this may have on the development of grandparental relationships. Pool et al (2007) note: “Paradoxically, increases in extended longevity should have privileged

this opportunity” (p 382). However, with declines in family size and delayed childbearing, many people entering retirement may never have the opportunity to experience being a grandparent.

Census data do not generally indicate whether people ever had children. However, some information is available from the *Living Standards of Older New Zealanders* study, which covers a representative sample of 3,060 people aged 65 and over (Fergusson et al, 2001). Based on this work, Wilton and Davey (2005, pp 3-6) show that over 90 percent of older people have raised children, about half of them having had families of two or three. Respondents aged 85 and over were less likely to have had large families. People in their late 80s and 90s in 2001 were in the child bearing ages during the 1930s, when birth rates were low, whereas people aged around 70 in 2001 were having their children during the ‘baby boom’ era.

Wilton and Davey go on to say in their 2005 work that grandparenthood is generally a mid-life transition, although the age at which people become grandparents may differ by ethnicity. For example, if a non-Māori woman born in 1945 gave birth to her first child at the median age of 24, this would have been in 1969 (Pool & Johnstone, 1999). If her daughter, born in the same year, gave birth to her first child at the median age for her cohort (27), this would be in 1996, and her mother would become a grandmother at age 51. Her husband would, again on average, be three years older and would become a grandfather at age 54. For a Māori woman, the same scenario suggests that she would become a grandmother at age 44, and her husband a grandfather at 47, taking into account earlier childbearing. These assumptions may not apply to re-partnered grandparents where different age patterns may be evident. However, as Wilton and Davey stress, these are only estimates based on averages, and much better information is needed for adequate analysis.

Given such estimates, Wilton and Davey (2005, p4) claim that four general points made by Szinovacz (1998) are currently likely to be the case in New Zealand:

- At the onset of grandparenthood, current grandparents were typically married and employed, therefore had competing roles.
- Current grandparents, particularly those with young grandchildren, are likely to have living parents

and therefore may have to balance elder care and grandchild care responsibilities, even if for a short period of time.

- The interval between the births of the first and last grandchild is quite long, therefore grandchildren's contact with grandparents varies according to the cumulative effects of the grandchildren's birth order and the grandparent's gender and ethnicity.
- Nearly two-thirds of women experience the birth of great-grandchildren but men are unlikely to survive to their grandchildren's adulthood. While the majority of families will experience four living generations at some point, the duration of four-generation families is quite short for most families.

Translating these generalisations into the perspective of grandchildren, by the end of childhood (ages 11-13) young people are likely to have some grandparents who are married and employed, and some who have died. The parents of these young people could be aged possibly 35-50, and their parents could be aged 55-70; some of their grandparents may also be aged 75-90. Being a grandchild will mean many different things, even to a group of young people of the same age and in broadly similar living situations. While grandparenthood may well be a near universal experience for those with adult children, the experience itself is varied, depending on the age of the grandparent at the birth of their first (and last) grandchild, their gender, ethnicity and other roles.

Ethnicity and associated cultural patterning of the life course is likely to be a highly significant variable, and one undergoing continuing change in the New Zealand situation. Life expectancy at age 65, for Māori and non-Māori, increased markedly in the latter 50 years of the century (between 1950-52 and 2000-02), reaching 16.7 years for the total New Zealand male population, and 20 years for the female population, with the Māori figures being 12.7 years for males, and 15.1 for females respectively (Demographic Trends 2004, Statistics New Zealand, cited in Wilton & Davey, 2005, p5).

Increased life expectancy and growing numbers of older people in the family has produced what Zodgekar (2000, p100) calls the "two-generation geriatric family" – that is, children reaching old age while their parents are still alive. The emergence of two generations of older people within a family will cause changes in the opportunities for contact, and in networks of mutual

support among family members, mediated of course by location (Zodgekar, 2000, p104).

Research in New Zealand family studies, particularly when it concerns the education and living environment of young people, needs to clarify carefully how the understandings of 'household' and 'family' intersect in everyday life. Only a small proportion of New Zealanders in the age groups likely to be grandparents live with family members other than their spouses or their children and grandchildren (Davey, 2003). Conversely, few young people aged between 11 and 13 years live in households with people other than 'nuclear family members'.

However, this varies by ethnicity. While the proportion of Māori living in multigenerational and extended family households remains under a quarter from age 40 onwards, the proportion increases with age for Pacific and Asian people, rising to over half from age 60 onwards. Thus in these communities grandparents are frequently living in households with their grandchildren, but this is rare for Pākehā. It is not known what impact living in a multigenerational household has on grandchildren's involvement with grandparents (Wilton & Davey, 2005, p6).

## 2.2 Grandparents – roles, identity and importance for families

The international literature on grandparents is consistent in seeking generalisations on the roles of grandparents, which Wilton and Davey (2005, p7) summarise as relating to:

- centrality – the degree to which the role of grandparent was central to their life
- valued elder – a traditional concept of the wise and esteemed elder
- indulgence – an attitude of lenience and tolerance towards grandchildren
- immortality – feelings of immortality through descendants
- re-involvement with the past – grandparenthood as a means of life review.

Commonly, such analysis has identified the grandparent role from a family standpoint. Bengston (1985) identified four symbolic roles of grandparenthood:

- being there
- the national guard or family watchdog
- arbitrators
- active participants in the family's social construction of its history.

Wilton and Davey (2005, p8) go on to review the work of writers who have taken the perspective of grandchildren, acknowledging Kornhaber and Woodward cited in Block (2000), who listed numerous roles for grandparents:

- historians: giving a sense of family history for grandchildren
- mentors: providing knowledge and wisdom
- role models: those who help to socialise grandchildren
- wizards: grandparents who use their imaginations to amuse grandchildren; or
- nurturers: grandparents who become an integral part of grandchildren's social support system.

Wilton and Davey (2005, p9) then further investigated these roles in order to identify particular gender expectations and experiences which differentiate grandmothers from grandfathers. On all of the following dimensions, gender variation was noted in the classic work of Neugarten and Weinstein (1964):

- Formal: The grandparent follows prescribed roles and maintains clear lines between parenting and grandparenting.
- Fun-seeker: The grandparent has an informal style of playful companionship for the mutual benefit of grandparent and grandchild.
- Surrogate parent: The grandparent takes on caretaking responsibilities for their grandchildren.
- Reservoir of family wisdom: The grandparent as the source of knowledge and special skills.
- Distant figure: The grandparent has little emotional or social investment in their grandchildren.

Researchers coming from an anthropological perspective draw on the concepts of 'style' and 'strategy' to consider how cultural expectations and experience of behaviour also influence the ways grandparent-grandchild relationships are played out in

several Pacific societies (Armstrong & Flinn, 2007). In this volume, both Armstrong (2007) and Keeling (2007) add New Zealand empirical data on the experience of New Zealand grandparents. Keeling's work in particular demonstrates that the age of the grandparent colours the experience of being a grandparent, as her interviews with people aged 80-90 in a New Zealand community address both being a grandparent of young adults as well as being a great-grandparent.

Other New Zealand qualitative research with grandparents has further extended understandings of being a grandparent. For example, Missen (2002) applied Bengston's categorisation to Pākehā grandparents in her focus groups. The roles identified by her participants included:

- negotiators
- family stabilisers
- supporters and listeners
- confidants for grandchildren
- role models.

Armstrong has examined whether the role of grandmother is associated with social age in New Zealand (Armstrong 2003, & 2007). She examined the perspectives of New Zealand grandmothers from four ethnic groups and found that, for the 30 women interviewed, becoming a grandmother was a central marker in their definitions of 'old'. The current study opens up the opportunity to explore underlying attitudes of young people to 'old age' through their experiences of relationships with their grandparents.

## 2.3 Locating and developing this study

Most generalisations on grandparenting are based on the perspective of the grandparents rather than that of the grandchildren. In part, this study was prompted by a desire to explore how the experience of being a grandchild might emerge as patterns within a specific age group of younger New Zealanders. As with many features of social life, reciprocal role relationships develop between individuals, and to understand these relationships the 'point of view' from each side needs to be explored. As social researchers, our focus is on both the patterns and shared meanings which shape and colour these relationships at both an individual and a societal level.

As researchers, pragmatic as well as conceptual factors were significant when considering how to access a specific age group of young people and explore their experiences as grandchildren. In terms of the feasibility of working effectively with young people in a supportive research setting, the age group known as Years 7 and 8 in the New Zealand education system (previously known as Forms 1 and 2) seemed well-suited to this purpose. These years are known as the 'intermediate years' in both educational and developmental terms. These are young people at a crossroads in their life course: they are likely to be old enough to have some capacity to reflect on their 'childhood and family life' while young enough to avoid the kind of distancing from family relationships which typically develops in the high school and teenage years.

In many urban areas in New Zealand, intermediate schools cater specifically for these two years, while secondary schools cater for the five years from Years 9-13. Additionally, there are a very small number of 'full primary schools' in urban New Zealand communities (catering from Years 1 through to 8), and an equally small number of colleges that integrate intermediate with secondary schooling (catering for Years 7-13, known previously as Forms 1-7).

In rural New Zealand, however, a network of area schools caters for all levels of students, that is, primary,

intermediate and secondary (Years 1-13). Area schools are community-based and retain a unique character closely aligned to the particular features of the rural communities they serve. Area schools therefore offer both a convenient definition of rurality and an environment which offers continuity across the 13 years of public education, well-suited for the location of this study.

This location is also consistent with Goals 7 and 8 of the *Positive Ageing Strategy* (Dalziel, 2001; Office for Senior Citizens, 2006), which identifies the significance of recognising the different characteristics of communities in rural and remote locations, in terms of the context provided for positive ageing. In educational terms, the area school system offers parallel recognition of how the state schooling system has been adapted to suit the characteristics of rural students.

This background section has outlined some conceptual frameworks in fields relevant to the location and development of this study: demographic trends and grandparenthood, and grandparental roles and their importance for families. While the study's research questions are not focused directly on the broader field of enquiry concerning ageing in rural families, the choice of location itself is intended to offer some exploratory understandings.



### 3. METHODS

The study was submitted to the Human Ethics Committee, Victoria University of Wellington and approved by the Pipitea Campus Committee in late 2007. Aspects of the various levels of consent (schools, parents and students) were carefully considered in the ethical application process and in negotiation with the schools taking part in the classroom activity involving administration of the survey. The outcomes of this ethical research approach are available through the series of documents in Appendices 1 and 2.

The following steps in the research approach were taken to find the five schools that took part in the data collection for this study.

#### 3.1 Approach

Area schools in the South Island provide a convenient access point to explore the intersection of family life, rurality and population ageing. There are 33 area schools in New Zealand, with half (16) of them in the South Island. For the purposes of this project, the classification of area school provides a straightforward definition of rurality, and relatively full coverage of the cohort of young people in a defined district in the Years 7 and 8 classes.

1. We wrote to all 16 of the South Island area schools, with an information sheet on the study and a school questionnaire to obtain basic demographic data on each school (Appendix 1). The school questionnaire (Appendix 1D) included questions requesting roll, class size of each year group (including Years 7 and 8), an estimate of the number of families currently with students at the school, geographic catchment area and any pattern of continuity of family participation at the school (eg estimate of families in district who send children out of district for primary and/or secondary years). At this time, we sought an indication of willingness to take part in the student research exercise, with an estimate of an available date for the school research visit. We also asked the principal to nominate the teacher whom we could contact for further development and administration of the classroom questionnaire (Appendix 1B and 1C).
2. Following receipt and collation of the above information, we planned to select a sample of five schools to give full South Island coverage. The selection was intended to include one school from each of the Southland, Westland, Otago, Canterbury and Nelson-Marlborough regions to proceed to the next stage of the research.
3. The design and development of the data collection method to be used in the classroom-based exercise (this was referred to as Stage 2 of the study in our correspondence with the schools) at each of the five participating schools was developed by the researchers, in collaboration with the class teachers at the selected school sites.
4. Once the school liaison process, information sheets and data collection schedules were approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Ethics Committee, the lead researcher visited each site, early in Term 4, 2007 and, together with each class teacher, administered the questionnaire in a class session.
5. The data collected during the school site visits were collated and entered into Excel spreadsheets at New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing. A summary analysis of data from each of the five schools was sent back to the schools later in Term 4. Following further analysis, this final report was prepared by the research team.

This was the outline of the research approach and sequence which was included in the proposal and in the approach to the Ethics Committee. In reality, the planning, design and ethical review was iterative and developmental, as in many ways this proved to be an important aspect of finding effective ways of working collaboratively with schools and with young people in a field such as this. Ethical approval was given in two stages, so that the approach to schools was made first. From this approach, only those schools willing to be involved in both stages returned the principals' questionnaire, so this narrowed the scope of the next phase of consultation. Fortunately, these five who were the first to volunteer did provide good regional cover across the South Island. Two further schools indicated that they would be willing to be involved as 'reserves', but this offer was later declined once confirmed arrangements were made with the initial five schools.

Feedback from non-participating principals indicated that the primary reason for not taking part was lack of time, requiring prioritisation of activities and other commitments (including attendance at a South Island school principals' conference, ERO visits, NZQA-related activity, "lots of work required by Ministry of Education and the like", and in one case, participation in another research activity). One non-participating principal expressed reservation about asking students questions about their family and was concerned that parents "in a small community" may be reluctant to agree. This principal requested, and was provided with, additional details on likely questions to be asked of students, and given further information about the university's ethical review process.

There was extensive consultation with the five participating principals and teachers regarding methods, in particular the recruitment and involvement of teachers and students. Practical matters such as timing issues, information needs and school term dates were important considerations. Schools also had differing views regarding the appropriate methods for seeking parents' and students' informed consent. Feedback from participating principals indicated they anticipated few concerns from parents, teachers or students. Several wished to receive information that would be suitable for sending out to parents. Principals indicated they would not need to consult with their school board, but most indicated they would first consult their teachers and that participation depended upon the willingness of the teacher to take part.

The Ethics Committee itself required that parents be given the opportunity to indicate that they wished their child to 'opt out' of the student classroom activity. Three information sheets were developed to explain these consent processes, one for principals and teachers (Appendix 1B), one for parents (Appendix 2A) and one for students (Appendix 2B). The parents' consent form required parents to return the form only if they did not want their child to be involved. Parents were invited to discuss the proposed classroom research activity with their child as part of the informed consent process. Parents and students were given an 'opt out' option and an assurance that an alternative activity would be arranged for the student if they decided not to participate in the classroom research activity. The

information sheet for students was developed in an age-appropriate language style and read to the class prior to the class activity.

A research pack containing all the materials relating to the classroom activity was sent ahead of the research visit, and good liaison was maintained about details and timing of each research visit. During the research visits to the schools and classrooms it was found that one or two teachers had discussed the proposed research with the students prior to the day, and used the activity as a learning opportunity for their students. None of the teachers mentioned any problems or concerns from either parents or students about participation in the research activity in class time. Any absences on the day were explained as not related to the research project.

Principals from each of the five schools nominated one teacher who agreed for their class to take part in the classroom research exercise, with one principal electing to involve two classes. This provided a total sample of six classes of Years 7 and 8 pupils, resulting in 98 participating students – around half of the total population of Years 7 and 8 pupils in the five participating schools (Table 1).

The classroom activity generally took about 45 minutes to complete, including some initial discussion and an opportunity for the students to ask the researcher about the project. Two classroom teachers also asked the researcher to give a brief explanation to the students about university social science research and research careers. They felt that their students had very limited opportunities to be involved in projects like this and saw this as a way of broadening their horizons.

The classroom activity was jointly led in most situations by the researcher and the classroom teacher; both were available to work with individual students as they worked their way through the survey form. In one or two cases, the researcher or the teacher actually completed parts of the form, by writing points of clarification, if the student felt their experience did not quite fit the coded categories or the format of the chart.

Each of the five schools involved in the project gave the researcher a warm welcome, and made the research visit extremely valuable in expanding understandings of families in rural areas. The students engaged effectively and with interest in the classroom activity.

The researcher reviewed and checked the completed survey forms immediately afterwards to ensure that they were legible, and wrote a class and number identifier on each completed form so that data entry in school and class batches could be managed while protecting privacy and confidentiality.

The process of contacting all area schools in the South Island of New Zealand has now been outlined, along with the developmental approach taken to design methods which were practically and ethically appropriate to research work with young people in an educational setting. Schools were invited to take part in a monitored research activity in the classroom of Years

7 and 8 students. Initial information was obtained about the school and community context of the five schools that agreed to take part in the second phase of data collection. This entailed a classroom activity using a survey designed, developed and administered by the researchers, working with the classroom teachers in each of the five participating area schools. The survey included basic demographic items to be completed by the young people (age, gender, family and household size, length of attendance at the school). The young people were then asked to describe their relationships and current/past contacts with people they refer to as grandparents.

## 4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Data from this study are presented at three levels, following the research approach outlined earlier, relating to schools, students and grandparents. These levels follow the research process through from initial contact with five South Island area schools, to the classroom exercise involving students in Years 7 and 8, who in turn provided information on their relationships with their grandparents. The primary study participants are the students who completed the classroom exercise, so data from the collation and analysis of these surveys are at the centre of this section.

### 4.1 Schools

The findings presented by school contribute to understanding the circumstances of the schools and their communities and corroborate information on the living situations of the students and their families. The school data are not intended to suggest that the school *per se* is integral to the grandparent-grandchild relationship, but that both the schools and the families who use them share a geographic and social setting.

The pack sent to principals of the 16 area schools inviting participation in this study included a cover letter, an information sheet with a consent form and a questionnaire (Appendix 1). The school questionnaire (Appendix 1D) sought to describe the scope and character of these schools, so that the selected five sites could be put into a wider context of South Island rural community schools. The findings presented here are based on the responses from the five schools that volunteered to be involved in the classroom exercise.

The Area Schools' website was consulted to obtain access to contact details of the 33 schools nationally and to establish the primary research database for the 16 South Island schools (Area Schools, 2007). Contact was also made by email with the Area Schools Association, which offered general support and advice and confirmed that, following ethical approval, direct correspondence with the South Island principals could proceed.

The decision to restrict the study in the first instance to South Island schools was made at the time of developing the proposal and seeking funding from the Families Commission Blue Skies Fund. This kept

the scope, time and resources within the available timescale and funding. In research terms, this decision also strengthened the sampling by limiting the potential for wider regional and cultural variation in our participating schools.

**TABLE 1: Schools taking part in this study**

School	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
School roll 2007	127	237	477	192	128	<b>1,161</b>
Staff size, as FTE*	13.5	19.7	34.2	18	10.8	
Years 1-6 roll	60	90	247	105	72	
Years 7-8 roll	17	48	61	36	23	<b>185</b>
Years 9-13 roll	50	99	169	51	33	
<b>No of families</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>688</b>

\*FTE: Full-time equivalent

The five participating schools thus provide local education for over 1,100 students, from a total number of 688 families. Schools are required to keep this 'family total' as part of their regular returns on roll numbers. Students in the Years 7-8 classes (a total of 185 in the five schools) make up approximately 16 percent of that total student roll. We also asked the principals for information on the staff size, in terms of both actual personnel, and as full-time equivalents (FTE). However, this information is difficult to summarise and compare (and is thus omitted from Table 1), as it is related to the different staffing ratios and arrangements in the two components of primary and secondary education, and particularly to subject offerings in the senior school.

The following sections report on how the principals described their school and community in five specific fields: their catchment area; the degree of continuity within their school population over time; their perceptions of recent and current change in their local area; their perception of population ageing and community change; and their awareness of the Greats and Grands Week, planned for October 2007 throughout New Zealand schools. The purpose behind this descriptive material is to offer some sense of the setting for this study despite being unable to use identifiable images – our assumption is that urban readers may not be aware of the particulars of the kinds of communities in which these schools are situated.

We are also conscious of the ethical consideration required in ‘masking the identity’ of the particular communities as part of protecting the anonymity of students and teachers.

## 4.2 Catchment

Each principal used slightly different terms to describe their catchment area, and specific identifying features of the local context have been removed throughout this section. Some responses referred to particular geographic features, while others mentioned proximity to both their nearest primary and secondary schools adjacent to their area. Others used transport routes to indicate ease of access for students:

“Catchment of the school is approximately 18km west, 20km north, 14km east and 15km south of the township. We have five bus runs with about one-third of our students travelling to school by bus.”

“Our catchment comprises the watershed of the river, from its upper reaches to the township, and also the valley and surrounding districts.”

Compass-type measures were used by two principals to describe their catchment, expressed as: “197.19km<sup>2</sup> area of catchment (20km radius)” and “35km north; 40km south; 35km east”. The principal of another school said “School bus stops at 30km, but parents bring students to bus stop from further afield, eg town (45km away). Nearest secondary school is 75km away.”

## 4.3 Continuity

The five schools vary significantly in terms of the level of continuity for their pupils, at the end of primary schooling, and for higher secondary schooling. This factor contributes in particular to the selection of the Years 7 and 8 classes to take part in this study. At these levels, the students continue to spend a significant part of each school day with their ‘homeroom teacher’, while from Year 9 their timetable more commonly involves more teachers working with them in single subject areas. The largest school reports higher continuity at the Years 8-9 transition, with smaller schools commenting on the different factors influencing continuity. Some commented under this heading on the wider concept of ‘transience’, meaning the rate of general turnover within their school roll, recognising this

as a further dimension of stability in the school-family relationship, which has some bearing on the study:

“The majority of our students stay here for their secondary education. A small number leave to go to boarding school or the larger secondary school (in town 30km away). We have quite a high rate of transience with a turnover of around 15 percent per annum. The school is growing at the present time.”

“Approximately a fifth of the children go out of the district for secondary education. Some of this is due to isolation ... and some due to family tradition.”

“Twenty-five to 33 percent of families/students exit at the end of Year 8.”

“One family is into its eighth generation of students at the school. Good retention for primary, but a proportion of mostly farming families send their children to boarding school from Year 9. This does vary from year to year.”

“Most families would involve themselves in the two primary options available to them, ie area school, Catholic integrated school. Five to 10 percent Year 11 and above would move to other centres for senior secondary education.”

“Very few send students away – about two per year [two percent] and these tend to be students coming from more extreme parts of our catchment.”

## 4.4 Change in local area

Under this heading, principals were able to offer a useful commentary on how they saw their school’s relationship to the wider context of the local rural area. All but one of the participating principals had been in their position and living within their school’s community, for at least the last five years. The one relative newcomer had made a point of actively learning about the local community and the role of his school. Some made local community guides available to us, and during the research visits there were several opportunities for informal fieldwork and corroborating observations, and conversations with members of the local community:

“Roll is increasing after a period of being static. Dairy conversions have been a rural feature in the last five years – increasing the number of

people working on farms. Rural subdivision is also attracting people to the area, as is the growth of housing in the town. A lot of English immigrants have moved into the district along with young families. Services and attractions are making this town a destination point rather than a 'passing through' town."

"The pre-lamb shearing brings some children to the school for short periods. Dairy farming – 1st June. The roll fluctuates at this time due to the changes in employment. During the past few years there has been a marked increase in the number of solo-parent families and re-organised families."

"Value of properties rising. Less transient population, 40 percent to 25-30 percent. 'Baby boom' soon to hit."

"Steady roll decline by nearly 50 percent in past decade. Combination of more expensive housing, larger and more mechanised farms, fewer casual jobs, young people waiting longer to have families."

"Highly transitional school. Very mobile population: Dairying and mining industries. Roll decline anticipated as the population ages."

"Roll very even since 2001 – around 110-120 pupils. Larger farms (amalgamation). More workers' children than farm owners' children."

#### **4.5 Population ageing and community change**

There was some overlap between the previous section and this one, as principals referred to their wider observations about how they saw an ageing population impacting on their community, and indirectly on their school. In their comments, there is a clear recognition of general economic and employment factors, as well as those particular to their rural region. Housing, transport and access to and availability of health and other services also affect rural families at all stages of life. All principals themselves live locally and are aware of these factors in their own lives as well as through their professional roles.

During the research site visits, conversations in the school staffrooms also expanded and elaborated on the insights and information provided by the principals, but these comments are taken directly from the principals' questionnaires:

"A rest home opened some years ago. A small hospital and a medical centre run by a local trust provide medical care. A number of people from farms retire to the township. A wide variety of health and other agencies are co-ordinated through an active community trust organisation. A lack of transport to [larger centres] hinders the opportunities of some older people to live here."

"A small number of elderly people retire out of the district. The [district] has a widespread and sparse population of some 1800, of whom 850 live in [town], the administrative and service centre of the region. The main sources of employment are agriculture and the provision of services to the farming community. All socio-economic levels and age groups are represented. A residential home for the elderly, pensioner flats owned by the district council and a tradition of 'moving into town' by those retiring from farming means that the 60+ age group is heavily represented also. During the past few years, there has been a marked increase in the number of solo-parent and re-organised families. Three to four percent of the total population identify as Māori... As the service centre for the region, [town] provides a high standard of health facilities, including hospital, doctor and dentist."

"We are seen as a town to which people might 'retire' – therefore our population is ageing."

"One reason for more expensive housing is retired people, often from overseas, buying property which is often only lived in for part of the year. Young people possibly more inclined to leave the area once finished school."

"The community has a high number of retired people already. This trend will continue. The relative isolation tends to ensure that the aged stay rather than move to acquire health and social services."

"This region is not seen as a retirement area. Doctor one day per week, one shop, one garage, one hotel."



## 4.6 Greats and Grands awareness

At the time of developing this study, contact was made with the Office for Senior Citizens, in the Ministry of Social Development (Dalziel, 2001; Office for Senior Citizens, 2006, p135). For several years now, the office has run an annual promotion in schools to encourage intergenerational activities and to assist schools to find ways to involve grandparents in educational programmes. We were interested to find out the extent to which area schools were taking part in this programme and, if so, what age groups might be particularly engaged in this way. A question was therefore included in the principal's questionnaire to see whether this might be relevant to our research objectives, or potentially conflicting. One principal, while saying he was "not aware of Greats and Grands month", commented on the fact that his own attitude could be described as 'forever young'. Others commented in ways which suggested that any involvement with this initiative was usually related to much younger classes, and not generally taken up at the Years 7 and 8 levels:

"Not aware of Greats and Grands month but do a Grandparents' day earlier in the year. Year 1 pupils also visit an old persons' home. Have own activities on ageing on an ongoing basis."

"Have got the material [on Greats and Grands month]. Not sure yet [if will participate] and may combine with your research."

"Not aware. Have not participated before and no plans to. October is when they have their show day – and is busy enough!"

"Aware and have taken part every year for the last three years. Grandparents of junior classes are invited in for 'old-fashioned games', assembly and afternoon tea."

## 4.7 Students

At the centre of this study are the data obtained from the students, aged between 11 and 13, who completed the classroom-based survey administered during

October 2007 (Appendix 2C). There is a supplementary series of tables at Appendix 3, which includes raw numbers, and detailed data on most of these factors presented at a summary level in this section. Our understanding of how these 98 students came to be our study participants is that these were the students in the class of the teacher-volunteer on the day of the research visit. Some schools had some Year 7 students in a combined class with Year 6 pupils, so they were not available for the study. Others had some students or classes not available on the day (due to a timetable clash with a subject such as home economics, or a sporting commitment for some individuals). There were one or two absences due to illness but no students (or parents) asked to withdraw or undertake an alternative activity in the classroom at the time of the survey.

Table 2A shows the numbers of students in each school, and summarises the composition of the participant group. Students were split in almost even numbers between male and female, but there were more Year 7 students (53) than Year 8 students (45). The average age of the participating student group was 12 years, with a range from 11-13 years, with one student aged 14. Four of the five schools involved both Year 7 and Year 8 students, often because this was a mixed-year group in the classroom of the teacher who agreed to take part. School 4 involved both of its Year 7 and Year 8 classes, with the survey being administered in each room with the respective teachers during the research visit.

The survey (Appendix 2C: Classroom activity) sought information about wider family participation in the rural community and in the school, asking how long each student had attended this school. As Table 2A shows, School 1 showed more continuity with the average years of school attendance being seven years, while School 3 had the lowest continuity measure for their students with an average of four years' attendance. As noted earlier, these schools do note that transience of the population is a factor which contradicts the impression of stability in rural schools, and any 'roll count' is clearly a snapshot in time. A small number

of students asked in the classroom session how they should record their years at the school, in situations where they had attended this school in two separate periods, with a break in their time at the school. In such cases, they recorded this, following discussion in the class, as for example, 1 + 3 years.

**TABLE 2A: Description of students in research**

School	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
<b>Number of students in research</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>98</b>
Male students	8	7	7	18	10	<b>50</b>
Female students	8	6	8	15	11	<b>48</b>
Year 7s	10	13	4	17	9	<b>53</b>
Year 8s	6	0	11	16	12	<b>45</b>
Average years at this school	7	4.5	4	5.5	5	-
Average household size	5	4	4	5	5	-

The classroom activity (Appendix 2C) began with a series of questions about the students. First we sought information on household size and composition of the “house where you live most of the time during the school week”. Then there was a set of questions designed to gauge how much variation there might be in terms of regular household mobility for these young people, in cases of joint or shared custody and living arrangements. We were also interested to understand the extent to which the households of these students were adapting to rural locations, in terms of transport options and possible weekly boarding arrangements.

In the results, very limited variation is apparent, with only five students indicating that they did not “usually live in the same house each day”. One student explained that his family lived in a “housebus” and they sometimes move their location. The other four variations were described in different ways. In the first

two situations, grandparents are also mentioned as part of the pattern of residence. One of these students said he spends half of each week and a weekend with each parent, and his “grandma and grandad live right next door to dad’s’.” Another said: “On the weekend I sometimes go to grandma and grandpa.” Both of the other students said they moved only between their parents: “I stay at my dad’s on some weekends”, and “I spend the school week at my mother’s and every fortnight go to my father’s for a weekend.”

The information on average household size summarises a general pattern of nuclear family households, with the student respondents indicating that they live with their parents and one or two siblings also still living at home. Two students reported that they live with their father and stepmother most of the time, while 10 described the reverse situation, living with their mother and stepfather. Seven students indicated that they lived with their father as a solo father, and nine students lived with their mother as a solo mother. There were five mentions of step-siblings being co-resident in these households. Although there were no mentions of a co-resident grandparent, one student indicated grandparents lived ‘with’ them a “one-minute walk from our house” and two other students mentioned grandparents living ‘next door’. Only one student mentioned ‘another relative’ as a member of their usual household, and there were no mentions of an unrelated adult or child in these households.

Table 2B shows how many of the participating students have siblings at this or another school. Out of the total sample of 98 students, 81 have siblings attending school. About one-fifth of the student participants have siblings who attend a school other than their area school. Most of these are older siblings who are out of the area, boarding at secondary level. Over two-thirds do have siblings who attend the area school, spread in classes both senior and junior to the Years 7 and 8 participant group. Only two sibling-participants took part in the survey.

**TABLE 2B: Students' siblings**

School	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
% have siblings at this school (yes)	88	46	67	76	62	<b>69%</b>
% have siblings at other school (yes)	19	0	27	15	43	<b>21%</b>

The survey was also designed to help identify the students as family and household members within their community and to build an understanding of their geographic proximity to the area school they attended. The responses to questions covering how the students travelled to school, and the length of their travel time, are reported in Tables 3A, 3B and 3C. Collectively, these tables indicate the level of isolation of the families in relation to the school location in each area. Just over half the students travel to school by bus, and over a quarter walk to school. In each school, there are some children who apparently live very close, and over half the students across all five schools are travelling for 10 minutes or less to reach school. Nearly 40 percent (Table 3C) travel for up to half an hour to reach school, and the range of maximum travel time across all five schools is between 45 and 60 minutes, although only eight percent say they are in this group of longer travel time.

**TABLE 3A: How students get to school (transport type)**

School	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
% travel by bus	88	15.5	47	45.5	71	<b>54%</b>
% travel by car	6	15.5	20	18	5	<b>13%</b>
% travel by cycle	0	23	6	0	5	<b>5%</b>
% walking	6	46	27	36.5	19	<b>28%</b>
<b>Total students</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**TABLE 3B: Students' travel time**

School	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
Average travel time to school (minutes)	17	15	21	13	21	<b>17</b>
Range of travel time (min/max minutes)	2-45	1-60	5-60	5-60	5-45	<b>2-60</b>

**TABLE 3C: Student travel by school (% of students by time taken)**

School	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
% of students travelling for 10 minutes or less	38	85	47	64	28.5	<b>52%</b>
% of students travelling 11-30 minutes	56	0	33	30	57	<b>37%</b>
% of students travelling >30 minutes	6	15	20	3	5	<b>8%</b>
% other or no data	0	0	0	3	9.5	<b>3%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 4.8 Grandparents

The survey asked for a list of “all those people you consider to be your grandparents, so that we can see how many there are and what you call them”. Table 4 presents this information, by school. It also illustrates at a summary level that of the 380 grandparents mentioned, nearly 20 percent (73) were no longer living. At this level of identification of grandparents, each student mentioned between three

and four grandparents; however, the range was much wider, with students mentioning from one to seven grandparents on their list.

During most visits to the classrooms, before completing the survey there was discussion with the students, the teacher and the researcher about how students could deal with those grandparents who were no longer alive.

It was clear from the coding sheet that there was room for the students to note that a particular grandparent had died, as well as to provide as much information as they wished about that grandparent. In other words, if the student felt they 'counted' this grandparent, they could include them in their survey by providing as much (or as little) information as they felt comfortable with. It was explained that the survey wished to record the students' understanding of their contact and relationships with their grandparents.

**TABLE 4: Students and their grandparents**

School	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
<b>Number of students in research</b>	16	13	15	33	21	<b>98</b>
<b>Total number of grandparents/greats mentioned</b>	70	42	62	127	79	<b>380</b>
Deceased grandparents mentioned	18	9	9	20	17	73
Living grandparents mentioned	52	33	53	107	62	307

For some students, particularly those who chose to list and record only one or two grandparents on their chart, it is likely that their other biological grandparents had

died and this student felt they had no reason to 'count them'. If they could provide some information even about a grandparent who had died before they were born, then it was stressed that this was useful to note. One student had spoken quietly to her teacher before the research visit to ask if she could include information on her relationship with her grandmother who had died only a few months earlier. She was reassured that this would be able to be accommodated in the survey. During the activity, she was slightly tearful but open with other students and the researcher, saying that she was 'OK' about remembering and thinking about when her grandmother was alive.

Another student had travelled during the year to the unveiling of a grandparent's headstone in the North Island. He too was open about referring to this as a 'special family event' during which he had learnt more about his grandparents' lives, although he had not 'known' them personally during his own childhood.

#### 4.8.1 Grandparents' names

Before the survey moved into the chart format, we asked each student to "list all those people you consider to be your grandparents, so that we can see how many there are and what you call them". This listing process made it possible for the students to recognise the named grandparent, while for research purposes they became a numbered grandparent for the charting of the various dimensions of relationship, contact, location and activities which followed. As Appendix 2C shows, for this section the chart was set in landscape format, and students were advised to work on the charts with the coding sheet alongside as the key to the sections marked A, B, C, D, with additional room for open-text responses. For the purposes of this publication, this chart has been reformatted to save space.

**TABLE 5: Grandparent forms of address**

	Common	Mixed categories	1 only example
<b>Grand-mother title</b>	Nana 55		Gannie
	Grandma or Granma 41	Nana + name 20	Gramma
	Gran 9	Gran + name 1	Gramma
	Granny 8	Granny + name 1	Nani
	Nan 13		Nanma
	Nanny 6		
	Grandmum 2		
	Great Grandma 4		
	Great Nana 1		
	<b>(Total 139)</b>	<b>(Total 23)</b>	<b>(Total 5)</b>
<b>Grand-father title</b>	Grandad 91		Grandy
	Grandpa 7	Grandad + name 13	Grandan
	Gramps 2		Pa
	Pop 12	Popa + name 2	Papa
	Popa or Poppa 8		Pupa
	Poppy 2	Grandparent + name 4	
	Great Grandad 4		
	<b>(Total 126)</b>	<b>(Total 19)</b>	<b>(Total 5)</b>
<b>Personal name</b>	Personal name 29	Personal name with Grandparent title added 8	
	<b>(Total 29)</b>	<b>(Total 8)</b>	
<b>Other names</b>			Highly personalised, so not listed to avoid identifiability, but included Opa
			<b>(Total 8)</b>

**Total names: 362**

In Table 5, the 362 terms recorded are sorted into categories by gender and the structure of the term of address. In most cases the missing names of the 18 mentioned grandparents relate to deceased grandparents, where the students possibly had not regularly used a form of address in relation to a grandparent who had died. Conversely, the other 55 deceased grandparents mentioned were given a term of address and reference as used by their grandchildren. This tabulation shows more variety in the naming of grandmothers than of grandfathers, with the most regularly used grandmother titles (Nana and Grandma or Granma) being mentioned 55 and 41 times respectively. Grandad is clearly the most popular grandfather title, with 91 of 126 mentions. Personal names are used alone as terms of address in 29 cases, and in combination with a common generic term, in

a further 50 cases. In the short list of 18 ‘once-only mentions’, it is interesting to note some terms that are common in other linguistic and cultural traditions: Opa and Papa, for example. Some spelling variants may not be intentional, but an attempt has been made to list these names as written by the students.

#### 4.8.2 Type of relationship to grandparents

The first column on the chart (marked A, Appendix 2C) was designed to ask the students to define in terms of family and kin links, how the named grandparent is related to them. As Appendix 2C shows, the chart came with an attached ‘code sheet’, so that some consistency could be achieved in how the responses could be recorded. Interestingly, while 10 coded options were provided, it became clear at the first school research visit that the category of “great-grandparent” also

needed to be separately coded. Table 6 shows that eight percent were described as great-grandparents, slightly more than the six percent described as step-grandparents. Each time the matter of ‘defining’ great-grandparents arose, some students needed a clear explanation of what this term might mean, suggesting that they had no experience of this relationship.

In one classroom, the following exchange was overheard, suggesting some background mental arithmetic:

Student A: What do you mean, ‘great-grandma’?

Student B: She’s my mum’s grandma...

Student A: (after a pause) ... So how old is your mum?

Student B: Thirty-seven...

Classroom discussions in each school clarified these coding distinctions in response to questions. Most of the teachers had had a preliminary introduction to the research and survey completion with their classes before the research visit, and the students had no significant difficulty with the concept of coding *per se*. In one case, the class had previously been working on a statistics exercise in their maths class, and they were well attuned to basic principles of survey design and method. The fact that the charts and coding sheets sent to the school contained an error (expanding the code FF as Father’s Mother, instead of Father’s Father) made a good ‘teaching point’. This error was corrected on the blackboard by the researcher or classroom teacher during the session introducing the survey and the coding sheet.

In one school there was interesting discussion in the classroom exercise, as earlier in the year they had been doing some work on the idea of ‘family tree’ and ways of representing family relationships. As indicated earlier, some of these students had shared years of schooling, while others were relative newcomers to both the school and district. Indeed, as will later be shown, there were some students who were relatively new migrants (from the United Kingdom, South Africa and the Pacific Islands) and for these students most of their wider family ties were beyond the awareness of their classmates.

For the majority, however, there was open knowledge about how family networks within the local rural area and neighbouring districts played out in quite some detail. In one class, siblings were both involved in the survey, as one was a Year 7 and one a Year 8 student. In two other classes there were ‘cousin’ relationships,

where students were discussing and referring to relatives they had in common.

### 4.8.3 Family relationships with grandparents

At this point, students were asked to identify and code how they understood the basis of the genealogical relationship between themselves and each grandparent. The codes were provided for students to describe their relationship to any person they recognised and counted as a grandparent, and allowed specific classification as a grandparent in 97 percent of the cases, as Table 6 shows.

**TABLE 6: Type of grandparent**

Grandparent type	Number	%
MM	88	23
MF	70	18
FM	79	21
FF	79	21
Great-grandparents	30	8
Step-grandparents	22	6
Older friend / other relative	8	2
Other – not specified	4	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100%</b>

At this stage, there is no obvious ‘preference’ for grandparents to be mentioned based on whether they are recognised as related through the mother’s or father’s side of the family. Some additional tables are presented in Appendix 3 as a series looking at potential cross-tabulations of interest, to explore possible associations of significance according to such variables. While these may merit later and further analysis (particularly if comparative material comes available from different settings or populations of participants), they add little to this summary report. Within the six percent coded as step-grandparents, some were noted as being step-relationships at the grandparental (rather than parental) generation. When a grandparent has a new partner, the implications of this for relationships with grandchildren are not always clear.

Next, the students provided information on the relationships they described with their grandparents. The first aspect to be explored was how close or distant the grandparents are to their grandchildren in terms of travel time. Proximity of residence is likely to be a fundamental factor influencing the nature



and frequency of contact, which in turn could well determine the quality and intimacy of the relationship at this stage of the lives of these young people. As Table 7 shows, one-third of the grandparents are reported to live ‘close’ to the students, and approximately one-fifth (22 percent) live over 90 minutes’ travel away. Combining the three closest groups gives a total of 49 percent of grandparents who live within the 90-minute travel zone. Thus, about half of the grandparents are separated from their grandchildren by more than 90 minutes’ travel time, making visits and face-to-face contact much less likely on a regular basis, and suggesting contact will occur much less frequently. In the case of the eight percent of students whose grandparents live overseas, some were relatively recent migrants from the United Kingdom. They described very regular contact (daily and weekly) with their grandparents before they emigrated, but only in one or two cases had there been an annual visit for grandparental contact. It is likely that the nine percent of grandparents about whom students did not provide information on their place of residence is based on the fact that the students did not know where these grandparents lived, suggesting considerable distance and limited or marginal contact.

In the following discussion, the tables use percentages to represent the proportion of the total number of grandparents on whom the students provided data in each field.

**TABLE 7: Where grandparents live/lived (distance from student)**

Distance	Number	%
At same property	2	0.5
Close	127	33.5
30-90 mins away	57	15
Over 90 mins away	84	22
In NZ, outside SI	44	12
Overseas	31	8
Other (no data)	35	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### 4.8.4 Frequency and type of contact with grandparents

The first four options in Table 8 cover some standard frequency measures, and show that a combined 41

percent of grandparents have daily or weekly contact. A further 20 percent have monthly contact, and 12.5 percent have ‘occasional’ contact. As the note to this table explains, the other categories are not cumulative in this way, as students could and did nominate more than one category per grandparent: the two options of “staying overnight sometimes” and “contact at special occasions” were included as simple measures to extend a strictly time-based orientation.

**TABLE 8: Grandparents’ current contact with grandchild**

	Number of times nominated	% of all nominated responses
Daily	55	16.5
Weekly	82	24.5
Monthly	66	20
Occasional	42	12.5
Sometimes stay overnight	38	11.5
Contact at special occasions	36	11
Used to have contact, not in last year	7	2
No contact	6	2
<b>Total responses*</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Figures exclude grandparents who have died, and missing data. Note that respondents could nominate more than one category per grandparent.

The next question on the chart further opened up the area of the content and quality of the relationships with grandparents, as described by the students. The codes provided were designed to cover some gradations of expected variation in these aspects of content and quality. The measures provided in Tables 8 and 9 are conversions into numerical representations, and proportional responses. Again, as the note explains, grandparents who have died were excluded from these measures, and students could record more than one code or category of relationship per grandparent.

In opting for the coded responses provided, the students indicate that about one-third “regularly do things together” with grandparents, and another third say that they and their grandparents “do things together with wider family”. Nearly one-fifth of the

grandparents are described as “having a special relationship” with their grandchild. Just over 10 percent say they “have contact mainly at special events” and just under 10 percent say they “don’t really know each other”.

**TABLE 9: Grandparents’ current relationship with grandchild (number of grandparents by relationship)**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of all responses</b>
Have a special relationship	53	18
Regularly do things together	95	32
Have contact at special events	36	12
Do things together with wider family	88	30
Don’t really know each other	25	8
<b>Responses*</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Figures exclude grandparents who have died. Note that respondents could nominate more than one category per grandparent.

In addition to the coded responses, the charts (Appendix 2C) had two additional columns for the students to write in their own words more information about the activities they shared with each grandparent, as well as further comments on anything they were able to add. These comments were then transcribed and collated. There was a total of 310 text phrases written on the charts by the students. By far the majority were in the activity column, with about 50 responses in the comments column. Most use of the comments column was supplementary to an entry in the activities column so, overall, open text information was provided by students on about 260 of the 380 grandparents mentioned in the survey.

For the purposes of initial analysis of this qualitative textual commentary from the students the 310 entries were combined from both columns, as this seemed to provide more meaningful information. It would appear that the rate of response grew throughout the series of research visits to conduct the classroom survey. This was because the researcher learnt from the review of the first two schools’ material that potentially useful comments from the students could be encouraged. In subsequent school visits, when students raised questions about the coded responses both the researcher and the teacher more readily suggested writing a note to clarify what the student wanted to say about their relationships with grandparents.

**TABLE 10: Themes derived from open text responses**

Theme label	Example	Number
<b>Marginal – limited</b>	“Nothing much seeing as he’s half blind” “He died but we used to go see him at the rest home” “Nothing” “Sat there while he talked to mum” “Have not seen much, he cannot come to my school or community” “Sometimes have family gatherings but barely get to see her” “Lives in South Africa, never met before” “Found him on picture” “We used to have a lot of contact when we were younger, but not now, drifted apart” “Went to park once” “I wasn’t alive when she died” “He can’t really do anything anymore” “Too old” “He does work so I hardly see him”	<b>54</b>
<b>Everyday – descriptive</b>	“Watch TV, have a cup of tea, talk” “Have walks, have fish and chips” “Watches me play rugby” “Boat. Go fishing” “Have lunch, go shopping, other stuff” “I do her wood every day” “Helps me with my homework when I get stuck” “I go over and mow her lawns and do jobs for her” “Help cooking” “Walk the dog” “Building, teaching me stuff” “Talk on the phone and webcam” “When I am there we go to the movies, pool” “Help out on the farm” “Holidays, camping”	<b>218</b>
<b>Special – positive tone</b>	“He has a lolly addiction. He shares them with me” “Sometimes I go to work with him – he is an engineer” “She spoils me” “Gran plays games” “Everything” “We are good friends” “Great, really good relationship” “Go and see him at work, watch telly together, cook breakfast together!” “I see her most holidays. Helping with lambing. Go to my cousins. Long walks on the farm. Help with shearing and many more things” “She tells me lots of cool stories” “My grandad often watches TV but I love him lots” “Was in the army and I love army things” “He lets me come to the pub with him cos he’s the President of the RSA”	<b>38</b>

It will be possible to carry out a more detailed content and thematic analysis of these open text notes. As a first step in this direction, these comments have been classified into three themes, based on both descriptive content, and an interpretation of 'tone'. Selected and illustrative entries under each of these themes are provided in Table 10, alongside a column which counts the number of entries in each theme. It will be clear from the illustrative examples included here that the lines between these three broad themes are not definitive. The largest group, classified as the 'everyday', are largely descriptive of straightforward activities shared by the grandparent with the student/grandchild, and largely come from the activities column. Some entries in this column were quite full, listing several activities in each case, but in straightforward matter-of-fact language and tone. These contrast with the classification of the simple one-word response "nothing" in the 'marginal-limited' theme, and the equally expressive "everything" in the 'special-positive' theme.

From this classification, some underlying attitudes to older age can be interpreted. These, too, follow a similar spectrum, reflecting a range from limited opportunity for shared activity to pride and pleasure in shared activity. Within the 'special-positive' theme, different perceptions are evident about the work and activity of older people. There are interesting contrasts between the students who enjoy sharing work activities with their grandparents on the farm, and the one whose grandfather, the engineer, is often too busy at work to spend much time with his grandson, yet whose pride in his occupation is evident. However, the comment "He does work, so I hardly see him" is classified as in the 'marginal-limited' theme, largely on the basis of 'tone'.

Gendered observations can also be noticed in these examples, reported apparently without irony by these students in terms of perpetuation of stereotypical role expectations. Positive grandfather-grandson bonds are evident in the references to the values associated with "army things", the RSA and the pub. Parallel female links are also evident in shared grandmother-granddaughter activities mentioned such as shopping, baking and sewing. There are also, however, references to women engaged in everyday farming activities, and some ambiguity about the punctuation/ exclamation

mark in "Go and see him at work, watch telly together, cook breakfast together!" This phrase has been interpreted as positive tone, conveying unusual excitement and pleasure, but it could be surprising that Grandad can cook breakfast!

One prevalent impression of these comments is the detail on each survey form, as the students personalise and differentiate their relationships with each grandparent. There are of course several cases where the student describes their relationship with a couple (Grandad and Nana) in matching terms, as family links are often with a grandparental couple. Even so, students do differentiate within a grandparental couple, and show that the relationship is also an individual one. Within the 'everyday' theme, one student wrote "Watching TV and having fun, staying the night at their place" alongside both grandparents, and then added "+ baking" alongside the grandmother's entry.

## 4.9 Summary

The 98 young people in five schools (about half of the available students in these years in the schools) who completed the survey provided information on 380 grandparents, of whom 73 were no longer alive. About half of these students live relatively close (within 10 minutes' travel) to school, and the whole group say that about half of their grandparents also live relatively close to them (within 90 minutes' travel time). An analysis of the patterns of naming and terms of address for grandparents is made, showing that the most commonly used name for grandfather is Grandad (used by 25 percent). For grandmother, Nana and Grandma are almost equally common (used by 15 percent and 11 percent respectively). Personal names are used in a small number of cases (eight percent), and in combination with a grandparent title in 13 percent of cases. Around 40 percent of the students have contact daily or weekly with a grandparent. One-third "regularly do things together" with a grandparent, and one-fifth say they have a "special relationship" with a grandparent. Fewer than 10 percent mention a grandparent whom they "don't really know". In terms of the content and quality of their relationships with grandparents, the majority provided descriptive detail of the typical activities they share on an 'everyday' or regular basis. A small group (18 percent of

responses) mentioned aspects of relationships which are interpreted as 'marginal-limited', while a smaller group (12 percent of responses) gave examples of relationships interpreted as 'special-positive'.

In the next section, further interpretation of these findings is presented, along with linkages and

comparisons with local and international material. In light of these findings, consideration is also given to future potential development of research which links grandparent-grandchild relationships to the circumstances of a wider variety of New Zealand families.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The findings from the study show that these young people in rural South Island schools report a variety of relationships with their grandparents. The students came from rural classrooms and from the age group of 11-13 years. Most live in nuclear family households with two parents and one or two siblings. Most provided information on three or four grandparents, and there were no apparently significant differences between their maternal and paternal grandparental relationships. About half of the grandparents live within 90 minutes' travel time of their grandchildren; this includes 34 percent who live "close", that is, within 30 minutes' travel time.

This study outlines varied levels of interaction between grandparents and grandchildren, ranging from no contact with a grandparent, to daily face-to-face interaction. Just over 40 percent of the grandparents are in daily or weekly contact with their grandchild. Nearly 20 percent of the relationships with a grandparent are described as "special", and over 30 percent involve regularly doing things together, with a further 30 percent coded as "doing things together with wider family".

Extensive detail is provided on the everyday activities which the students in the study say they do with their grandparents; over 70 percent of the comments describe regular shared activities. These include reciprocal help such as "I do her wood every day" and "Helps me with my homework when I get stuck". A wide range of activities with grandparents is described in the qualitative comments: playing cards, watching TV, sharing meals, knitting and craft activities, involvement with sports events. There is significant evidence of reciprocity also in these relationships – cutting wood, child-minding, helping with lambing, eating together, teaching and learning.

Many grandchildren valued their relationships with their grandparents, including with those who had died. There is positive commentary on the fun and enjoyment grandparents and grandchildren share, but there is also sadness in acknowledging that these opportunities for mutual sharing can be limited. Declining health and death of a grandparent, or distance in both time and place, are acknowledged as limiting the opportunities for relationships and contacts to grow over time, as young people also develop. While studies have considered ways of exploring 'grandparent role

satisfaction' and factors which influence frequency of contact (such as Peterson, 1999 and Reitzes & Mutran, 2004), few appear to have taken the point of view of considering grandchildren's level of satisfaction with this relationship.

Diverse roles played by grandparents are apparent in this case study. The student comments reinforce the role images of wizard, fun-seeker and storyteller. Some grandparents are also distant figures, while others are 'nurturers'. This means in many cases, substitute parents: "She looks after me when Mum's not home." There is also a suggestion that nurturing goes beyond that when the phrase "she spoils me" is used. Providing treats, in the form of holidays, outings, special activities and even sharing "a lolly addiction" is also distinctive in the descriptions of relationships with grandparents.

Diverse family relationships were apparent and included blended families with step-grandparents and step-siblings. Great-grandparents (eight percent of grandparents mentioned) were mentioned slightly more often than step-grandparents (six percent), which we should perhaps have anticipated more clearly in our coding options. It is also interesting to note that the data in this study remind us that re-partnering, with consequences for wider family relationships, is occurring at both the parental and grandparental level. This poses challenges for family functioning and communications, as well as for researchers, as Fingerman (2004) discusses. In New Zealand, the work of Worrall (2005) and others keeps a watchful eye on the interests of grandparents in the context of family changes.

Grandparenting from a distance was also apparent, including those living at a distance, but within New Zealand, and those living overseas. A number of grandchildren maintained regular contact with overseas grandparents through weekly phone calls and, in one case, through 'web cam' communication. Two major national studies based at Waikato University (see Koopman Boyden et al, 2000; Koopman Boyden, Van der pas, & Cameron, 2007) can offer more extensive analyses of the significance of 'social connectedness' to wellbeing, for older people, and the framework of family and kin ties surrounding intergenerational exchanges.

Patterns of how grandparents are named and referred to have been presented. This shows a predominance of generic titles for both grandfathers and grandmothers,

but with quite extensive use of personal names and surnames both in their own right, and in combination with a common title (see Keeling 2007 for a more extended discussion of how some New Zealand grandparents explain the attachment of names and titles in their own families).

## 5.1 Ageing in rural families

The schools, communities and students in this study describe patterns of both stability and change. The students at one school have been there for an average of four years, while another has an average of seven years in their group of student participants. Some families are ‘transient’ (one student lives in a “house truck”) and more than one principal commented on how seasonal workers bring students to school sometimes for short periods. Most area schools recognise that they will lose some students at either Year 9, or perhaps Year 11, as they leave the rural community for boarding schools in larger neighbouring centres.

As Lidgard (2006) shows, patterns of ageing in rural areas in New Zealand are closely linked to facilities and services available in smaller communities. Few rural areas can offer specialist services for older people, and there is a clustering of rest homes and care facilities in bigger centres, meaning that rural grandparents may have to move as their needs change. This has an impact on the level and type of contact with grandchildren, as noted in the comment from several students about not having much interaction with their grandparent in a rest home. Other comments to the effect that the grandparent “can’t do much” reinforces the strength and significance of the regular and everyday activity which is part of most of the grandparental relationships explored in this study.

## 5.2 Researching ageing with children and young people

With the support and advice of the Human Ethics Committee, Victoria University of Wellington, the researchers were aware that open information about research involvement should be provided to all parties involved in this project. The principles of informed consent and the protection of potentially vulnerable young people in educational settings were fully considered. As outsiders to the schools, we needed to negotiate appropriate access to students, teachers and

parents/guardians, and assure all involved that data obtained in the course of the study would be managed without breaches of confidentiality and privacy.

In following the agreed protocols it is interesting to note that no parents or students opted out of the research activity and none of the parents raised concerns or questions about the conduct of the study or the use to which the information would be put. Each school was sent their own tabulated data, and all were advised that this report would be publicly available, as part of the agreement with the Families Commission.

At some future date, it would be interesting to see how possible it might be to carry out research involving both the grandchild and grandparent to explore the two-way relationship. Limiting this project just to the perspectives of young people, and working in a classroom setting, was a practical and feasible approach, given the time available. The complexities of obtaining linked consent between grandchildren and grandparents, and the likelihood that this would need to be mediated by the parents in the middle generation (in relation to contact details and arrangements), makes such research particularly challenging and labour intensive.

## 5.3 Limitations of this study

This study of 98 participants in five schools can provide only descriptive outlines of the set of factors which are reported in both the series of tables and the additional tables in Appendix 3. While these present some apparent diversity (for example in level of contact, nature of relationship and contact and distance), the opportunity for identifying patterns of association or correlations with this data is extremely limited. Small sample sizes in each cell of these tables constrain the ability to generate key associations, and this further supports our interest in extending the scope of future research.

A further clear limitation of this study is its focus largely on Pākehā families in communities in the South Island with relatively low rates of ethnic diversity. To some extent, this restriction was deliberate to control variation while this research approach was in its developmental stages. Within the scope of the time and funding available, and the small size of the research team, it would not have been possible to do justice to appropriate cultural consultation, advice and research engagement of partners. In relation to Māori family



patterns and the roles and significance of grandparental relations, there is already highly valuable coverage (see, for example, Durie, 2001; Metge, 1995; Ra, 2002), although to our knowledge younger people's perspectives in Māori families has had limited research attention.

Acknowledging limitations need not undermine the value of what the study can offer. While the numbers of student participants are small, we have outlined where they come from in terms of the defined community of rural students in their age group. Thus, while we cannot generalise beyond "young people of this age group in South Island rural schools", we have made every attempt to show that our results are unlikely to differ significantly if we had worked with five other schools from the initial 16 contacted. While some more remote South Island communities were not involved, some students in our participating group are travelling extended distances on a daily basis even to attend the schools we did visit. We also weighed up the need to access good numbers of students in our chosen age group by working with schools which themselves ranged in roll size from 126 to 477 students. The number of families served by these schools ranged from 60 to 283. While this study itself does not offer comparative information (rural-urban, or ethnic variation), we would hope that extending the use of this methodology could build a more widely based national study. Any extension of this project into urban schools would require significant funding and research resources to meet the need for appropriate engagement with ethnically diverse school and community contexts, not to mention the complexities of working with families with mixed ethnic and cultural traditions.

As with any snapshot view of relationships, this study cannot explore how circumstances may change over time and is not able to explore past reciprocal links, such as those with the deceased grandparents mentioned by the students. Snapshots do, however, have a particular place in an album or collection of related pictures, and it is to be hoped that this study may be the first in an extended collection.

## 5.4 Further research

This study shows that it is possible to obtain interesting descriptive data from young people in classroom settings using the methods involved in this study. Further comparative work would provide more extended

coverage of the field of young people's experience of their links and relationships with their grandparents, and would allow exploration of questions such as: Is distance associated with the type of relationship or level of contact reported by grandchildren?

This would require the introduction of more factors of potential variation in the patterns and meanings behind these relationships. In this regard, involving students from intermediate schools in selected urban and provincial centres in New Zealand, within and beyond the South Island, and students from more diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds would be valuable next steps.

It is not uncommon for one research project to generate a series of further questions for subsequent study. The main direction for future work, based on this study, would be to develop mechanisms for 'controlled comparison'. By this, we mean that it could be possible to develop a series of research activities (using the survey developed for this study) with comparable student groups, of the same age group, in different school settings. In this way variations by social situation, school decile status and ethnicity could be carefully explored.

For this initial study, and while the methodology of carrying out social survey work with young people in a classroom setting was being developed, it was useful and practical to limit some of this variation. Looking ahead, the research team recognises that with some refinement to the survey as a classroom activity, and by establishing some research and data gathering protocols in association with schools and classroom teachers, this project could be offered more extensively in New Zealand intermediate schools. If these data were collated and analysed nationally, using this methodology and research instruments, a wider national picture would emerge.

At the same time, this research has the potential to itself generate effective educational involvement in linking 'intergenerational understanding' into classroom settings in the intermediate school years. Such a proposal would fit well into the *Positive Ageing Strategy* and the annual action plans of the Office for Senior Citizens (2006). Since the development of the *Positive Ageing Strategy* in New Zealand (Dalziel, 2001), the policy emphasis on "Ageing in Place" has been overt (Boston & Davey, 2006; Schofield, Davey,

Keeling, & Parsons, 2006). Within the strategy, there is also a clear focus in Goal 7, on the special situation of older people in rural areas, to ensure that they are not disadvantaged, relative to those who live in larger centres (Office for Senior Citizens, 2006).

In the introductory review of key grandparenting literature, the recognition of grandparenthood as a 'marker of social age' was noted (Armstrong, 2003). In retrospect, the researchers in this project acknowledge that the addition of one or two questions to the classroom activity would have been useful in order to explore the extent to which young people's perception of attitudes to older people in general, and their definitions of old age and its relationship to chronological and/or social and cultural markers, could be gauged in a study such as this. The available data offer some tantalising clues, and further analysis of the open text responses may, as earlier acknowledged, be illuminating.

In this continuing analysis, it will also be worthwhile to assess the relevance of other approaches to thematic analysis beyond the broad three theme groupings presented in Table 10. For instance, it will be useful to evaluate the suitability of the differing models of styles and role dimensions of grandparenting previously derived from work with grandparents and how they 'fit' with the comments obtained from these grandchildren. First impressions certainly suggest that the grandchildren's comments do illustrate most of the aspects identified earlier by Bengston (1985), Neugarten and Weinstein (1964), Szinovacz (1998), Block (2000) as well as by Wilton and Davey (2005, 2006) and Missen (2002) in New Zealand. However, more extensive and sensitive qualitative methods that work in ethical and age-appropriate ways with young people need to be developed, and effective partnerships with a variety of disciplines need to be formed within a research team extended for this purpose.

On the basis of the data obtained in this study, and mindful of the work of Thomas (1986) and Wilton and Davey (2005) and others, we recognise that careful attention needs to be paid to possible gendered dimensions in grandparent-grandchild relationships. These might be related to the gender of both the grandparent and the grandchild, and to particular same-sex/different-sex combinations, as well as to the gender of the link parent. Some impressionistic comments have been made in the findings, but these

also prompt a requirement to develop more nuanced methods to extend this line of enquiry. To colleagues in both family studies and gender studies, we also argue for the inclusion of older people's issues and interests in future planned research.

Wilton and Davey posed several questions suggesting areas for future research at the end of their scoping paper in 2005 on grandfathers. They asked, among other questions (Wilton & Davey, 2005, pp 21-22):

- In what ways will longer life expectancy provide greater opportunities for older people to develop relationships with their grandchildren and great-grandchildren?
- What is the effect of there being fewer grandchildren, but potentially more adults in the grandparenting role?
- How do conceptions and patterns of grandparenting vary between ethnic and cultural groups? Between age-groups of young people?
- How will the higher incidence of step, de facto and elective kinship affect the role of grandparents (particularly grandfathers) within families?
- Who initiates, controls and decides on how grandparent-grandchild interactions will take place and develop?
- How can discussion around the grandparenting role be encouraged? What resources or education do people need?

Partial responses to some of these have been made throughout this report, as a result of the data obtained in a series of defined settings, and looking at these questions from the perspective of grandchildren aged between 11 and 13. International studies have considered the grandparenting experience in relation to adult grandchildren using several different methodologies (Roberto, Allen, & Blieszner, 2001; Silverstein & Long 1998; Somary & Stricker, 1998), but generally these retain the point of view of looking 'down' the family tree. This report gives us some first indications of what is able to be seen when we ask young people to 'look upwards' in the family tree.

This project set out to begin 'mapping the field' surrounding grandparents in rural families. Kemp's (2003) work provided a cue to this approach and

presented an ambitious comparison, of 'mapping the social and demographic contours' of grandparenthood in the US and Canada. While New Zealand may have a long way to go on such a journey, by limiting the geographic area to South Island rural communities and working with young people as grandchildren as

our entry point, this project is now under way. As researchers, we follow the motto that "it is better to travel than to arrive", and make the most of the learning acquired along the way. This report records the journey so far, and sketches out some possible future directions.

## 6. CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Contribution to knowledge

This study has contributed empirical material to the understanding of family functioning in rural areas, based on the intergenerational links described by young people in their final years of primary schooling. It has begun to explore how population ageing affects families in rural areas and to illuminate how young people perceive themselves as grandchildren. The project maps the grandparental links described by students in Years 7 and 8 in selected area schools in the South Island, in terms of kinship, geography and patterns of shared activities. Understanding how rural families in the South Island work, in relation to intergenerational ties such as grandparenting, adds to and enriches understanding of diverse family forms and responses to different living situations in New Zealand.

The 98 young people in five schools who completed the survey (about half of the available students in these years in the schools) provided information on 380 grandparents, of whom 73 were no longer alive. About half of these students live relatively close to school (within 10 minutes' travel) and say that about half of their grandparents live relatively close to them (within 90 minutes' travel time). There is no apparent preference or bias towards contact or proximity based on whether the grandparents are related on the maternal or paternal side. An analysis of the patterns of naming and terms of address for grandparents is made, showing that the most commonly used names for grandfather is Grandad (used by 25 percent). For grandmother, Nana and Grandma are almost equally common (used by 15 percent and 11 percent respectively). Personal names are used in a small number of cases (eight percent), and in combination with a grandparent title in 13 percent of cases. Around 40 percent of the students have contact daily or weekly with a grandparent. One-third "regularly do things

together" with a grandparent, and one-fifth say they have a "special relationship" with a grandparent. Fewer than 10 percent mention a grandparent whom they "don't really know". In terms of the content and quality of their relationships with grandparents, the majority provided descriptive detail of the typical activities they share on an 'everyday' basis. A small group (18 percent of responses) mentioned aspects of relationships which are interpreted as 'marginal-limited', while a smaller group (12 percent of responses) gave examples of relationships interpreted as 'special-positive'.

The study has also shown that it is possible to develop a research approach that generates good information from the point of view of research validity, as well as making it possible for the perspectives of young people about their grandparents to be explored. The research partnership between the classroom teachers at the five schools and the visiting researcher proved a relatively simple and effective way to monitor consistency in the administration of the survey, and bridged what could have been a complex rapport-building process. By setting up this research project surrounding work with a group of young people as 'index grandchildren', the complexity and variety of grandparental relationships can begin to be better understood.

This study provides descriptive data from a group of young people, from South Island rural schools, using sound and potentially replicable methods of data collection. One major contribution is the focus on younger people's perspectives to complement the growing interest in understanding the roles and contributions made by grandparents to New Zealand families. In the process, further potential lines of enquiry are developed to extend aspects of variation in grandparental relationships. These include further exploration of geographic proximity, gendered experiences, the significance of blended and emerging family forms and ethnic and cultural diversity.

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## APPENDIX 1: CONTACT WITH SCHOOLS

### APPENDIX 1A: Cover letter to principals

(NZiRA letterhead)

22 August 2007

Dear [Name of Principal]

The New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing, with funding from the Families Commission, is undertaking a study aiming to explore how young people experience family relationships in small towns, farming communities and remote rural communities. The study seeks to describe how young people perceive themselves as grandchildren and is designed to explore how population ageing affects families in rural areas. This project will contribute increased understandings in two fields of family studies (rural families and ageing) where there is limited available data, in New Zealand or internationally.

We would very much like your school to be involved in this study and enclose an information sheet outlining the project and a short questionnaire for you to complete should you agree to take part.

There are two phases to the research and you may elect to be involved in one or both phases. The first phase involves the completion of the enclosed confidential questionnaire by you as principal, or by a nominated school representative. The second phase would involve the participation of pupils from Years 7 and/or 8 alongside their class teacher, and takes the form of an agreed upon classroom activity to be conducted jointly with the lead researcher. If you are willing to be involved in Phase B we ask that you also complete and return the attached consent form which covers this aspect of the study. Please note that participation of pupils (and their teacher) in Phase B would be voluntary and no individual pupil, teacher, class or school would be identifiable in the final report.

If you have any questions about any aspect of this research project, please don't hesitate to contact myself, or my research assistant Kathy Glasgow by phone or email, using the contact details below. Thank you and we look forward to your agreeing to take part in this research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Sally Keeling

Director, New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing

School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington



## Appendix 1B: Information sheet for principals

### Grandparents in rural families: Mapping the field

#### Information sheet for principals of South Island area schools

**Researchers:** Dr Sally Keeling (New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing, School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington) and Dr Carolyn Morris (Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Canterbury)

**Primary contact:** Dr Sally Keeling, Director, New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing, School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington, Box 600, Wellington. Phone 04 463 6746; Mobile: 021 542184; Fax 04 463 5454; [sally.keeling@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:sally.keeling@vuw.ac.nz)

You are invited to take part in this study being carried out by the New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing, with funding from the Families Commission as one of their 2007 Blue Skies projects. New Zealand area schools provide a convenient access point to explore the intersection of family life, rurality and population ageing. There are 33 area schools, with 16 of these in the South Island.

For the purposes of this project, the classification of area school provides a straightforward definition of rurality, and a relatively full coverage of the cohort of young people in the district, in the Year 7 and 8 classes. This project will take a case study approach to contribute increased understandings in two fields of family studies (rural families and ageing) where there is limited available data, in New Zealand or internationally.

We are interested in exploring how young people experience family relationships in particular small towns, farming communities and remote rural communities. While some limited review and empirical work has been done on aspects of rural ageing in New Zealand communities, none has focused on grandparental and family ties, or taken the perspectives of young people as an entry point for description.

This study will contribute empirical material which will help us understand family functioning in rural areas, in relation to the intergenerational links of young people in their final years of primary schooling. It is designed to explore how population ageing affects families in rural areas, and will illuminate how young people perceive themselves as grandchildren. The project seeks to map the grandparental links described by students in Years 7 and 8 in selected South Island area schools, in terms of kinship, geography, and the patterns of shared activities and links. Understanding how rural families in the South Island work, in relation to intergenerational ties such as grandparenting, will add to and enrich understanding of diverse family forms and responses to different living situations in New Zealand.

**Study questions:** This case study aims to bring together two linked research questions:

- a) How do 11- and 12-year-olds in rural schools perceive and experience their links to grandparents?
- b) Taking these young rural people as a point of reference, how can the intersection of family life, rurality and population ageing be explored?

We are seeking your involvement in this study at two levels:

#### Phase A: Completion of school questionnaire

With this information sheet presenting the study, we are enclosing a school questionnaire [Appendix B] for the principal or representative of each South Island area school to complete and return to us in the enclosed prepaid addressed envelope.

### **Phase B: Participation in classroom exercise by Years 7 and/or 8 through collaboration with classroom teacher**

We are also seeking schools to volunteer to take part in the second part of our study. If you are willing to take part in this second part, we ask you to complete and return to us also the signed consent form which covers this aspect of the study. If more than five schools offer to participate in Phase B, a selection will be made to obtain the broadest geographic coverage from the South Island's regions.

The design and development of the data collection method to be used at each of the Phase B participating schools will be developed by the researchers, in collaboration with the class teachers at the selected school sites. Once the school liaison process, information sheets, and data collection schedules have been fully approved by the VUW Ethics Committee, the lead researcher will visit each Phase B site and, together with the designated classroom teacher, will conduct the exercise in a class session. At the end of this session (which is expected to not exceed 45 minutes), each student's 'data sheet' will be collected by the researcher. The data from each school will be collated and summarised, and a brief report will be returned to the designated class teacher. The summary of the data from all sites will be included in the final project report.

**Reporting:** No data in any published report will be identifiable either at the individual school level or at the individual student or class level. The report will be published by the Families Commission following completion of the project, and this publication series is made widely available. In addition to the full report, any publications in academic journals would acknowledge the participation of South Island area schools and the funding support from the Families Commission. The final report will cover in a standard manner: the aim, background, methods, results, discussion and conclusions of this case study.

**Expected timetable for the project:** We have obtained ethical approval for Phase A of this study, from the Human Ethics Committee of Victoria University of Wellington. The ethics application for Phase B is currently in process and will be obtained prior to commencement of Phase B. We also need to schedule our school-based research around school terms. The following key dates have been identified:

By 7 September: Return of school questionnaires and principal's consent forms.

By 14 September: Selection of sites for Phase B from amongst consenting schools.

By 21 September: Finalisation of arrangements for classroom exercise with classroom teachers at selected sites.

8-19 October: Researcher visits to each site for classroom exercise.

**For more information:** If you have any questions, please contact Dr Sally Keeling, Director of the New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing (NZiRA) at the numbers listed above.

**Thank you for your co-operation in this study.**

(continued over)

## Appendix 1C: Consent form for principals

(NZiRA letterhead)

### Grandparents in rural families: Mapping the field

**Researchers:** Dr Sally Keeling (New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing, School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington) and Dr Carolyn Morris (Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Canterbury)

**Primary contact:** Dr Sally Keeling, Director, New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing, School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington, Box 600, Wellington. Phone 04 463 6746; Mobile: 021 542184; Fax 04 463 5454; sally.keeling@vuw.ac.nz

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### Consent form for principals of South Island area schools

I have received the information sheet relating to this study, which provides adequate information relating to the nature and objectives of the research project.

I understand that information and have had the opportunity to seek further clarification or explanations.

I understand that no identifiable or personal information relating to the school, its staff or students will be retained in any final or published reports from this study.

I have undertaken any consultation with staff, parents or board of trustees which is required through school policy, relating to participation of this school in this project.

I understand that completion of the written school questionnaire and its return to the researchers is taken as consent to participate in **Phase A** of this study.

I understand that South Island area schools are being invited to volunteer to become a site for **Phase B** of this study, to be conducted in the period October 8–19, 2007.

I understand that **Phase B** involves a classroom-based research exercise with the participation of Year 7 and/or Year 8 pupils and their designated classroom teacher.

I am willing to consent (by signing below) to this school offering itself as a site for the conduct of the classroom research exercise, as outlined for **Phase B** of this study.

I understand that a brief summary report on the classroom research exercise will be made available to the school in November.

**I hereby agree to \_\_\_\_\_ Area School volunteering to be a site for Phase B of this study.**

Signed (Principal): \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of designated classroom teacher of Year 7 and/or 8: \_\_\_\_\_

***I have attached the completed Phase A school questionnaire.***

tick

## Appendix1D: School questionnaire for principals

### Grandparents in rural families: Mapping the field

#### Questionnaire for principals of South Island area schools

Thank you for answering this questionnaire as part of the New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing (NZiRA) study exploring how young people in rural areas perceive themselves as grandchildren and how population ageing affects families in rural areas.

This questionnaire seeks information on your school and community and should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Please note that your answers will be completely confidential. No one other than the researchers, and NZiRA's research fellow entering the data, will be able to tell who answered this questionnaire. Your answers will be combined with those of others and no names will be included in any report.

**Please complete and return in the enclosed envelope by 7 September 2007.**

1. **Name of school:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Form completed by:** [Principal or designated representative]

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

3. **School roll 2007:**

Number of pupils: \_\_\_\_\_ as at (date): \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Staff size:**

(i) expressed as number of personnel: \_\_\_\_\_

(ii) expressed as full-time equivalents: \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Roll of each year group within your school in 2007:**

Year	Total number of pupils in this year group	Size and nature of their class/classes: If the year group is in one or more composite class/es please indicate the nature of the composite class.
Year 1		Class 1: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____ Class 2: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____
Year 2		Class 1: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____ Class 2: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____
Year 3		Class 1: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____ Class 2: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____
Year 4		Class 1: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____ Class 2: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____
Year 5		Class 1: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____ Class 2: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____
Year 6		Class 1: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____ Class 2: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____

Year	Total number of pupils in this year group	Size and nature of their class/classes
		If the year group is in one or more composite class/es please indicate the nature of the composite class.
Year 7		Class 1: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____ Class 2: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____
Year 8		Class 1: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____ Class 2: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____
Year 9		Class 1: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____ Class 2: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____
Year 10		Class 1: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____ Class 2: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____
Year 11		Class 1: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____ Class 2: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____
Year 12		Class 1: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____ Class 2: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____
Year 13		Class 1: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____ Class 2: Pupils: _____ Year group/s: _____

**6. Please estimate the number of families with students enrolled at your school in 2007.**

Number of families: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Please estimate the geographic catchment area of your school:**

*(Feel free to use any measures you consider appropriate to your area, such as an estimate of kilometres N,S,E,W; distance of school bus or feeder routes; distance from nearest primary or secondary school.)*

**8. Could you please comment on any observed pattern of continuity of family participation at the school** *(such as an estimate of the proportion of families in the district who send children out of the district for primary and/or secondary years):*

**9. Could you please comment on any key elements or significant changes in your area over the last five years** *(such as enrolment patterns; community and environmental changes; seasonal factors):*

**10. Could you please comment on any ways you perceive the ageing of New Zealand's population is related to change in the communities served by your school:**

*(Things to think about include: is the region increasingly seen as a retirement destination for older people; have there been any changes in the availability of local health and social services; are older family members moving into or out of the area.)*

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.**

**Please return in the enclosed prepaid envelope to The New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing, School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington, PO Box 600, Wellington, by 7 September 2007.**

## APPENDIX 2: CONTACT WITH STUDENTS

### APPENDIX 2A: Information sheet for parents of students

#### Grandparents in rural families: Mapping the field

Dear Parent

Your school has been invited to take part in a study on grandparenting being carried out by the New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing with funding from the Families Commission. This study will help us understand families in rural areas and intergenerational links of young people in their final years of primary schooling.

We are interested in exploring how young people, in particular students in Years 7 and 8, experience family relationships in small towns, farming communities and remote rural communities. We are particularly interested in grandparental and family ties, from the perspective of young people.

#### Your child's involvement in this research

Your child's teacher has been invited to administer a questionnaire in a class-based activity, observed by the researcher. Pupils in the class will be asked to tell us, **without any names or identifying details**, some information about themselves and about their relationship with their grandparents. The types of questions they may be asked include their age, gender, school year and school year of any siblings, method of transport to school, number and type of people in their household (eg two brothers), title they use for their grandparent (eg nana), how they're related to the 'grandparent' (eg mother's mum), the nature of their contact with them (eg daily contact by phone) and the type of activities they do together.

At the end of the session (which is expected to take no more than 45 minutes), each student's 'questionnaire data sheet' will be collected by the researcher. The data from each of the schools involved in the research will be put together and summarised and a brief summary report will be returned to the class teacher. A final research report including data from all school sites will be produced for publication by NZiRA and the Families Commission. No individual pupil, teacher, class or school will be identifiable in any report.

The classroom exercise for your child's year group will be held on: \_\_\_\_\_

We now invite you to talk to your child about the planned research activity in preparation for the classroom session.

**If, for any reason, you would prefer that your child did not take part in this research, you may ask for the child to be excused by returning the attached tear-off slip to your class teacher, and an alternative school activity will be arranged. Please see over for more information.**

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**Researchers:** Dr Sally Keeling (New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing, School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington) and Dr Carolyn Morris (Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Canterbury). Research Assistant Kathy Glasgow (PhD Student, School of Social and Cultural Studies, Victoria University).

**Primary contact:** Dr Sally Keeling, Director, New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing, School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington, Box 600, Wellington. Phone 04 463 6746; Mobile: 021 542184; Fax 04 463 5454; Email: [sally.keeling@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:sally.keeling@vuw.ac.nz)

### **Ethics approval**

As University researchers, we are required to obtain ethical approval for any research involving people from the Human Ethics Committee of Victoria University of Wellington. We have submitted an ethics application outlining our approach to the study and they have granted us approval to commence the study.

### **Additional information**

This study is being carried out by the New Zealand Institute for Research on Ageing, with funding from the Families Commission as one of their Blue Skies projects for 2007.

It is designed to explore how population ageing affects families in rural areas and will illuminate how young people see themselves as grandchildren. The project seeks to map the grandparental links described by students in selected area schools in the South Island, in terms of kinship, geography and patterns of shared activities and links. Understanding how rural families in the South Island work, in relation to grandparenting, will add to and enrich our understanding of diverse family forms and responses to different living situations in New Zealand.

Five rural area schools have agreed to be involved in the research. The classroom research exercises are scheduled to take place between 8-19 October 2007.

The final research report will be published by the Families Commission and will be widely available. The report will cover the aim, background, methods, results, discussion and conclusions of the research project. No individual pupil, teacher, class or school will be identifiable in any published report.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions about the research or class activity, you may contact us through your teacher, or you can contact us direct by phoning Sally Keeling on 021 542184 or by email (sally.keeling@vuw.ac.nz).

*Thank you for taking the time to read this sheet and to talk to your child about this research on grandparents.*

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### **Grandparents in rural families: Class Research Exercise**

If you are happy for your child to take part you don't need to do anything.

**If you DO NOT want your child to take part in the class research activity, please return the signed form below to school before \_\_\_\_\_**

I DO NOT give consent for my child \_\_\_\_\_ (name of child) to take part in the classroom activity on grandparents in rural families. Please arrange an alternative activity for them to do during that session in class.

Signed (Parent/guardian): \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Appendix 2B: Information sheet for students**

### **Grandparents in rural families: Mapping the field**

This classroom exercise is part of a study designed to help researchers understand a little bit more about the contact and relationships young people of your age have with their grandparents. For the study we are visiting several South Island rural schools to talk to some Year 7 and 8 classes. Your school principal, classroom teacher and your parents have been sent full information about this study, and they have agreed that the research and classroom exercise can take place in your class today.

We invite you to take part in this exercise and would like you to understand the following points.

- Because this is a research exercise, taking part is voluntary (your own free choice).
- If you don't wish to take part in this activity for any reason, please let your teacher know, so that an alternative activity can be arranged.
- There are no right or wrong answers to these questions – we are interested in what you feel comfortable telling us about your contacts with your grandparents.
- You do not need to write anything on one or more of the following questions if you don't want to.
- Anything you do write will be treated confidentially – this means that your name is not on the form, and apart from the researchers, nobody else will see what you write.
- There will be no identifying information about you, your family or your school retained in any reports published at the end of this study.

We are very pleased to have this opportunity to hear the information you'd like to tell us about your relationships with your grandparents.

Thank you for taking part in this exercise today.

## Appendix 2C: Classroom activity – student survey

### Grandparents in rural families: Mapping the field

Thank you for taking part in our research on grandparents. The questions below will help us to know more about grandparenting in rural areas. We'd like to know about your contact with your grandparents and what kinds of things you do when you are together. Please answer all the questions below. If you're not sure how to answer, please ask your teacher for help.

#### First some questions about you:

1. How old are you?

2. Are you... (circle one):

Male                      Female

3. What year are you in at school? (circle one)

Year 7                      Year 8

4. How long have you been at this school? \_\_\_\_\_ years

5. (i) Do you have any brothers or sisters at this school? (circle one)

Yes                      No

(ii) If you said No, go to question 6. If you said Yes, please tell us what year they are in:

a) Brother/Sister                      Year \_\_\_\_\_

b) Brother/Sister                      Year \_\_\_\_\_

c) Brother/Sister                      Year \_\_\_\_\_

6. (i) Do you have any brothers/sisters who go to another school? (circle one)

Yes                      No

(ii) If you said No, go to question 7. If you said Yes, please tell us what town (or city) they go to school in and what year they are in at their school:

a) Brother/Sister    Year \_\_\_\_\_    At school in \_\_\_\_\_ (name of town/city)

b) Brother/Sister    Year \_\_\_\_\_    At school in \_\_\_\_\_ (name of town/city)

c) Brother/Sister    Year \_\_\_\_\_    At school in \_\_\_\_\_ (name of town/city)

7. (i) How do you usually travel to school each day? (circle the main one)

Walk              Cycle              School bus              By car              Other: \_\_\_\_\_

(ii) How long does it take you to get to school? \_\_\_\_\_

8. (i) During the school term, do you usually live in the same house each day?

Yes                      No

(ii) If you said Yes, go to question 9. If you said No, please tell us what you usually do:

**9. In the house where you live most of the time during the school week, please tell us who lives with you.**  
*(Please write how many for each. If none, put down 0.)*

	Number (e.g. 0,1, 2...)
Mother:	_____
Father:	_____
Stepmother:	_____
Stepfather:	_____
Brothers:	_____
Sisters:	_____
Stepbrothers:	_____
Stepsisters:	_____
Grandparents:	_____
Other relatives:	_____
Other adults who are NOT related:	_____
Other children who are NOT related:	_____
_____	_____
<b>Total people in your household</b>	_____

**10. Please list all those people you consider to be your grandparents, so that we can see how many there are and what you call them.**

*(Here is an example:  
 Grandparent 1: Nana  
 Grandparent 2: Grandad  
 Grandparent 3: Poppa)*

The name I know this person by:

Grandparent 1:	_____
Grandparent 2:	_____
Grandparent 3:	_____
Grandparent 4:	_____
Grandparent 5:	_____
Grandparent 6:	_____
Grandparent 7:	_____

(add more over page if needed)

**11. Please now tell us about each of your grandparents – how they are related to you; where they usually live; what kind of relationship you have with them; and what kinds of things you do with them. (Mark your answers in the chart on the next page.)**

**Thank you for helping us with this research on grandparents!**

**Chart: About your grandparents (Sheet 1)**

Which grand parent?	A: How are they related to you?	B: Where do they usually live?	C: What kind of contact do you have with them?	D: What kind of relationship do you have with them?	What kinds of things do you do with them?	Any other comments?
<i>For example: Grandparent 1</i>	MF	LH	CD	RI	<i>Helping with lambing, playing cards, watching TV, sometimes he helps me with my homework</i>	<i>Grandad takes me to soccer in the weekend and he came to watch me in my school play</i>

**Grandparent 1**

**Grandparent 2**

**Grandparent 3**

**Chart: About your grandparents (Sheet 2)**

**Grandparent 4**

**Grandparent 5**

**Grandparent 6**

**Grandparent 7**

## CODE SHEET

### A: How are they related?

**Codes for A:** (choose one for each grandparent and mark on your chart)

- MM = Mother's Mother
- MF = Mother's Father
- FM = Father's Mother
- FF = Father's Father
- NS = Not sure
- OR = Older Relative, but don't know more than that.
- SGP1 = My stepmum or stepdad's parent
- SGP2 = My mum or dad's step-parent (my grandparent's partner/wife/husband)
- OF = Older friend of family
- OTH = Other (please explain if you can)

### B: Where do they usually live?

**Codes for B:** (choose one for each grandparent and mark on your chart)

- LH = Lives with us at home (in the same house or in their own flat/building on our property)
- LC = Lives close to my home – less than 30 minutes to get there
- LRC = Lives reasonably close to my home – 30-90 minutes to get there
- LF = Lives far from my home – over 90 minutes to get there
- LDNZ = Lives outside the South Island, but in New Zealand
- LOS = Lives overseas
- DL = This grandparent has died but they used to live... (please add).

### C: What kind of contact do you have with them?

**Codes for C:** (choose one or more for each grandparent and mark on your chart)

- CD = We have contact daily, face to face or by phone or computer
- CWF = We have contact weekly, face to face
- CWP = We have contact weekly, by phone or computer
- CM = We have contact about once a month, face to face or by phone or computer
- CO = We have contact occasionally, usually during school holidays
- VO = Sometimes our visits involve my staying with my grandparent, or my grandparent staying with us
- CS = Our contact is usually only on special occasions, such as Christmas, birthdays, or large family gatherings
- CA = I used to have contact with this grandparent, but not in the last year
- NC = I don't have any contact with this grandparent
- DD = This grandparent has died, but our contact used to be (please choose from above options)

### D: What kind of relationship do you have with your grandparent?

**Codes for D:** (choose one or more for each grandparent and mark on the chart)

- RI: Regular involvement – we do things together on a regular basis (eg watching sport, helping around the house)
- SE: We are involved together at special events – family, school or community
- SR: I consider we have a special relationship and know each other individually, not just as part of the family
- FR: Our relationship is more about doing things together as a wider family
- DK: I really don't know this grandparent well, or feel they don't know me well
- DD: This grandparent has died, but our relationship used to be (please choose from above)

## APPENDIX 3: SUPPLEMENTARY TABLE SERIES

Note:

FF=Father's Father, FM=Father's Mother,  
 MF=Mother's Father, MM=Mother's Mother,  
 StepGrPt=Step-Grandparent, GrtGrPt=Great Grandparent

### APPENDIX 3A: Type of grandparent by distance from grandchild

Parents' parents	FF	FM	MF	MM	Total
Live with student	1	1	0	0	2
Live close	34	33	17	24	108
Live reasonably close	8	9	6	13	36
Live SI, far	6	12	17	26	61
Live outside SI	7	7	9	9	32
Live overseas	5	5	5	7	22
<b>Total responses*</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>261</b>

\*Total excludes grandparents who have died and missing data (no data, not sure)

Parents' parents	StepGrPt	Other	GrtGrPt	Total other grandparents
Live with student	0	0	0	0
Live close	6	0	2	8
Live reasonably close	7	4	5	16
Live SI, far	4	2	6	12
Live outside SI	2	1	1	4
Live overseas	1	0	1	2
<b>Total responses*</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>42</b>

\*Total excludes grandparents who have died and missing data (no data, not sure)

### APPENDIX 3B: Grandparent by distance from grandchild

	Parents of Parents (FF, FM, MF, MM)	Other	% of Total
Live with student	<1% (n=2)	0	<1% (n=2)
Live close	41% (n=108)	19% (n=8)	38% (n=116)
Live reasonably close	14% (n=36)	38% (n=16)	17% (n=52)
Live SI, far	23% (n=61)	28.5% (n=12)	24% (n=73)
Live outside SI	12% (n=32)	9.5% (n=4)	12% (n=36)
Live overseas	9% (n=22)	5% (n=2)	8% (n=24)
<b>Total responses*</b>	<b>100% (n=261)</b>	<b>100% (n=42)</b>	<b>100% (n=303)</b>

\*Total excludes grandparents who have died and missing data (no data, not sure)

### APPENDIX 3C: Type of grandparent by contact with grandchild

	FF	FM	MF	MM	Total
Daily contact	16	15	5	15	<b>51</b>
Weekly contact	15	20	13	26	<b>74</b>
Monthly contact	12	10	15	19	<b>56</b>
Occasional contact	7	9	10	11	<b>37</b>
Stay overnight	7	8	5	10	<b>30</b>
Contact only at special occasions	5	9	8	4	<b>26</b>
Used to have contact but not in last year	2	2	1	1	<b>6</b>
No contact	2	0	2	0	<b>4</b>
<b>Total responses*</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>284</b>

\*Total excludes grandparents who have died and missing data. Note that respondents could nominate more than one category per grandparent.

	StepGrPt	Other	GrtGrPt	Total	Total
Daily contact	2	1	1	4	<b>55</b>
Weekly contact	5	0	3	8	<b>82</b>
Monthly contact	4	4	2	10	<b>66</b>
Occasional contact	1	1	2	4	<b>41</b>
Stay overnight	3	3	2	8	<b>38</b>
Contact only at special occasions	5	0	5	10	<b>36</b>
Used to have contact but not in last year	0	0	1	1	<b>7</b>
No contact	1	0	1	2	<b>6</b>
<b>Total responses*</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>331</b>

\*Total excludes grandparents who have died and missing data. Note that respondents could nominate more than one category per grandparent.

### APPENDIX 3D: Grandparent by contact with grandchild

	Parents of Parents (FF, FM, MF, MM)	Other	% of Total
Daily contact	18% (n=51)	27% (n=4)	17% (n=55)
Weekly contact	26% (n=74)	12% (n=8)	25% (n=82)
Monthly contact	20% (n=56)	10% (n=10)	20% (n=66)
Occasional contact	13% (n=37)	29% (n=4)	12% (n=41)
Stay overnight	11% (n=30)	22% (n=8)	11% (n=38)
Contact only at special occasions	9% (n=26)	22% (n=10)	11% (n=36)
Used to have contact but not in last year	2% (n=6)	22% (n=1)	2% (n=7)
No contact	1% (n=4)	22% (n=2)	2% (n=6)
<b>Total responses*</b>	<b>100% (n=284)</b>	<b>100% (n=47)</b>	<b>100% (n=296)</b>

\*Total excludes grandparents who have died and missing data. Note that respondents could nominate more than one category per grandparent.



### APPENDIX 3E: Type of grandparent by current relationship with grandchild

	FF	FM	MF	MM	Total
Regular involvement	24	23	11	26	<b>84</b>
Together at special events	9	12	5	5	<b>31</b>
Have a special relationship	8	11	12	18	<b>49</b>
Do things together with wider family	16	18	18	23	<b>75</b>
Don't really know each other	6	2	5	3	<b>16</b>
<b>Total responses*</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>255</b>

\*Total excludes grandparents who have died and missing data. Note that respondents could nominate more than one category per grandparent.

	StepGrPt	Other	GrGrPt	Total
Regular involvement	6	3	2	<b>11</b>
Together at special events	2	0	3	<b>5</b>
Have a special relationship	2	2	0	<b>4</b>
Do things together with wider family	7	1	4	<b>12</b>
Don't really know each other	2	0	7	<b>9</b>
<b>Total responses*</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>41</b>

\*Total excludes grandparents who have died and missing data. Note that respondents could nominate more than one category per grandparent.

### APPENDIX 3E: Summary

	Parents of Parents (FF, FM, MF, MM)	Other	% of Total
Regular involvement	33% (n=84)	27% (n=11)	<b>32% (n=95)</b>
Together at special events	12% (n=31)	12% (n=5)	<b>12% (n=36)</b>
Have a special relationship	19% (n=49)	10% (n=4)	<b>18% (n=53)</b>
Do things together with wider family	29.5% (n=75)	29% (n=12)	<b>29.5% (n=87)</b>
Don't really know each other	6.5% (n=16)	22% (n=9)	<b>8.5% (n=25)</b>
<b>Total responses*</b>	<b>100% (n=255)</b>	<b>100% (n=41)</b>	<b>100% (n=296)</b>

\*Total excludes grandparents who have died and missing data. Note that respondents could nominate more than one category per grandparent.

# **families** commission kōmihana ā **whānau**

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