

Social Sciences, Public Policy, and Difficult Decisions

Len Cook: Independent government administration professional and former government statistician

Thursday 26 August, 12.30-2pm

Spectrum Theatre, BP House, 20 Customhouse Quay, Wellington

Abstract

The presentation highlights population changes that bring the most difficulty in making effective long term decisions. In examining past and future demographic trends, the presentation considers the opportunity cost of a delayed response to major structural shifts in the population that could be critical to future wealth creation in New Zealand. The talk draws on two papers completed while chair of SPEaR, and looks at how the social sciences can influence timely decision-making, by the capacity for effective anticipation of population shifts.

Biography

Len Cook was the National Statistician of the United Kingdom from 2000 to 2005, and from 1992 to 2000, he was the Government Statistician of New Zealand. As well as working in Statistics New Zealand in a variety of roles from 1971 to 1999, becoming Deputy Government Statistician in 1986, he was a member of the Royal Commission on Social policy in 1987-88. Some recent roles include Vice-President, International Statistics Institute (2005-2009), Chair, Medical Training Board (2007-2009), Chair, Social Policy and Evaluation Research Committee (2008-2010), President, Institute of Public Administration NZ (2009-). Visiting Professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at UCL, (2006-2010). Chair, Advisory Board, NZ Institute of Mathematics and its Applications (2009-).

