

Review of retirement income policies

Hi, I saw the piece in Mary Holm's column in Saturday's Herald. I'm 39 and I worked in England for 2 years, Ireland for 4 months and Canada for 2 years on working holidays during my 20s, earning a basic income. I've found out that the NZ Super payment gets reduced if you've worked overseas. It appears I will need to apply to the UK government to get their pension which will be pro-rated to the amount of time I spent there (when I called them to ask, it appears it will be about 14GBP a month). I'm not sure if I'll need to apply to the Irish government to get a pension. and if it is anything, I can't imagine it'd be a significant amount. I will also need to apply to the Canadian government to receive the Canadian Pension Plan that I paid into from my own wages. This is the most bothersome aspect of these rules - the Canadian Pension Plan is the equivalent of Kiwisaver. I had to pay compulsory contributions of my own money from my wages, and even though when I arrived in Canada I tried to get them to not be deducted, it was compulsory and I had to have them deducted. From the current rules of NZ Super, Canadian Pension Plan payments are then deducted from the NZ Super payments. This is completely unfair. It's my own money in my Canadian Pension Plan account, not the equivalent to NZ Super. It's the equivalent of Kiwisaver.

So my concerns are twofold:

1. The process of having to apply to the government of every country you've ever worked in is cumbersome and complicated. The retirees of the future will be mobile in their younger years like I am so they're all going to come across this complication when they come to apply for NZ Super. I would much rather not apply to all these other governments and just receive NZ Super. NZ Super should be universally paid to every NZ citizen and it should only be reduced by another country's superannuation scheme if the person actually applies to that other government's superannuation scheme and that scheme is government-funded and equivalent to NZ Super.
2. If however, the other country's superannuation scheme is equivalent to Kiwisaver in that the person has paid into it with their own money, NZ Super should not be reduced by that amount. It should be paid in addition to that amount.

There is a really informative website I've found, <http://www.nzpensionprotest.com/Home> which details further problems and gives examples of people disadvantaged by the NZ Super rules.

I also think the age of eligibility of NZ Super at 65 needs to be changed. In Canada, you can choose to retire at 60 or 65. If you choose to retire at 60 you get a reduced pension. I think this is a great scheme because it gives people flexibility. I think the age of 65 should be gradually increased to 67 or 68 though, so that the country is better able to afford it.

Name withheld on request