***Informing the 2019 Review – 133 questions that New Zealand needs answered***

**Our vision – reforms that really matter**

**25 June 2019**

Michael Chamberlain and Michael Littlewood have published what they suggest should be the basis for the review of retirement income policies that New Zealand needs in 2019. Their report is called *Informing the 2019 Review – 133 questions that New Zealand needs answered* and is available online at [www.alt-Review.com](http://www.alt-review.com/).

This press release summarises the nine key reforms the authors recommend, listed in their preferred order of importance to the country. They suggest these should be the key recommendations to come out of the Retirement Commissioner’s report.

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**Summary:** So as to put our report into context, we list the nine key reforms we see as essential to a sustainable, flexible, inclusive retirement income framework. We list them in order of significance to us, starting with greater economic growth.

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Michael Chamberlain and Michael Littlewood’s report *Informing the 2019 Review – 133 questions that New Zealand needs answered* looks at 21 different aspects of New Zealand’s retirement framework from the economy to KiwiSaver; from the New Zealand Superannuation Fund to longitudinal studies of households; from reforming the state pension to sorting out income tax and regulation as they affect retirement saving schemes. It also suggests a framework for future reviews.

In each case, there is a list of questions that New Zealanders need to address as part of a comprehensive review.

From that list of 21 issues, Chamberlain and Littlewood set the report’s scene by ranking the nine policy priorities they think should form the foundation of a sustainable, flexible, inclusive and successful retirement income framework.

Top of the list is greater, sustainable economic growth because, as the authors say, with growth more things are possible in all aspects of public (and private) spending. “It’s really simple – a bigger pie means more to share around and more valuable slices for everyone, including pensioners. Yes, it might put more wealth into the hands of the top 1% but importantly, it gives New Zealand choices on how to improve the wellbeing of everyone else.”

Next in the list by importance is a properly designed longitudinal survey of households’ finances:

“Unless we know what households are doing in their financial lives and what their aspirations are over time, public policy debates will take place in a vacuum. We won’t know whether things need changing, nor the chances that any proposed change might actually work. We can’t even see whether policy is achieving its objectives. Without the data and evidence, it becomes an environment judged by who yells their opinion the loudest.”

At number 3 is reform of the way in which New Zealand reviews retirement income policies. The authors say that “the Retirement Commissioner’s current triennial review of retirement income policies hasn’t worked, can’t work and must change.”

At numbers 4, 5, 6 and 7 are principles-based reviews of New Zealand Superannuation, KiwiSaver, disclosure requirements and the tax rules that apply to retirement saving schemes of all kinds.

Chamberlain and Littlewood then suggest (at number 8) that a serious effort is needed to improve mathematical competence through the school curriculums. They say that should be more important in all areas (not just with respect to saving for retirement) than the now more fashionable ‘financial capability’.

Finally (at number 9), Chamberlain and Littlewood list a 2023 version of the 1993 *Superannuation Accord* as a priority*.* They argue that this is not just a matter for the politicians alone:

“The *Accord* should be supported by an inclusive review framework with impeccable, deep data at its heart. The more we know about what citizens do and what help they actually need, the more confident we can be about the framework’s long-term sustainability.”

“These are nine reforms that really matter – the rest of the issues we cover in our report, such as getting rid of the New Zealand Superannuation Fund, are also important but they are lower down our list.”

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