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National president of the Grey Power Federation Tom O'Connor said the increased age of entitlement for national; superannuation did not come as a surprise.

"We have known for some time that the Prime Minister was heading in that direction. We have some concerns about the rationale for the move as we are confident that national superannuation is affordable in the long term, particularly if other changes had been made."

O'Connor said the federation's concerns were not for people currently receiving national superannuation but for those people who will be entering their retirement years in the next decade or more.

"We are particularly concerned for those people in physically demanding jobs. It's all very well to talk about retraining them but the reality is that no matter what qualifications people might gain as adults no one really wants to employ a newly qualified middle aged clerk when there will be school leavers available," he said.

The increase in the residential term for immigrants to qualify for national superannuation, from ten to twenty years was a different matter and O'Connor said there had been a general agreement among Grey Power members to increase the term to twenty five years.

"It seems a bit ironic that the Government has not paid into the superannuation fund since 2008 but gave the pension to immigrants after only ten years in New Zealand and then claim the scheme to be unaffordable", he said.

O'Connor said he has a scheduled meeting with the Prime Minister in two weeks when some of the details of the new policy would be discussed. The matter would also be on the agenda for the federation's AGM in May and the membership, of around 65000, would decide to accept or oppose the changes.

"If they decide to oppose them we could be in for a major political battle like they one which launched Grey Power 30 years ago," he said.

Ends

Tom O'Connor
President

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