It was also the occasion to hear from several speakers from outside the profession who had messages of direct relevance to our professional lives. 105 delegates attended the conference in total, slightly in excess of expectations. We were especially pleased to welcome actuaries from as far away as Germany and to see a solid representation from Australia. Equally pleasing was a surprisingly good showing from younger actuaries, including part-qualified members.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS
We were privileged to be able to welcome the following external speakers to the conference, who addressed delegates in plenary sessions:
• Shane Jones, the local Member of Parliament, shared his views on financial challenges for the nation with insights on the history of the region and how actuaries could more effectively influence policymaking.
• Natalie Jackson provided us with insights on demographic trends in New Zealand and highlighted the challenges we may face with the advent of regional depopulation.
• Len Cook delved in to the problems of policy formulation connected to the ever-increasing dependency ratio. He drew the strands of longevity, retirement provision, workforce and home ownership trends and many others together.
• Bernard Hickey drew the conference to a close with an entertaining and wide-ranging exposé of the macroeconomic outworkings of the global financial crisis. His conclusion that an alien invasion is all we need to spur much needed growth was no doubt memorable for us all!

OTHER PLENARY SESSIONS
Andrea Gluyas and Charmaine Green presented an update on their 2002 presentation on Actuaries of the New Millennium. This provided insights on qualification times, professional progress (both titular and pecuniary) and family life: conjugal bliss was quite the theme!
The conference would not have been complete without a focused discussion on earthquake risk, a topic at the forefront of many actuarial minds at present. Accordingly, Janet Locket, Clinton Brookway and Bronwyn Lusby led a comprehensive and fruitful discussion on the future of disaster insurance in New Zealand.

BREAK-OUT SESSIONS
We must extend our thanks to the many speakers who volunteered their time and effort to present in our six concurrent sessions. While insurance themes featured strongly, the topics ranged from valuing the New Zealand social welfare system to stochastic interest rate modelling and from the applications of chaos theory to a demystification of enterprise risk management – variety enough to keep actuaries of all callings happy.

SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES
The opportunity to enjoy the beauty of the natural surrounds was part of the program. On the first night, our delegates were welcomed on to the historic treaty grounds at Waitangi by local Maori hosts. They provided personal insights into the cultural backdrop to New Zealand’s political foundation.

Unfortunately, the late spring weather was hardly clement but that didn’t stop us from getting on to the water to weave among the Bay’s islands, enjoying some fishing and dolphin spotting, going horse-riding, mountain biking or playing a round of golf.

The conference dinner at the Duke of Marlborough restaurant in romantic Russell was a culinary and musical delight. We once again debunked the myth that actuaries are a shy and tight-lipped bunch: the conversations were many and varied and the neighbours may well have had trouble getting to sleep!

UNTIL NEXT TIME...
Planning for the next conference in 2014 has already begun and rumour has it that a southern Gaelic theme may be prevalent. Watch this space for further details! We look forward to seeing you there.