

KETE KUPU

WORD BASKET

ISSUE 22
MAY 2012



New Zealand Council Of
Christian Social Services

3 NZCCSS CONFERENCES IN 3 WEEKS – Ka mau te wehi!

Nuku Tahi – Hikoī Tahi – Maranga Tahi *Moving Forward Together*

NZCCSS Services for Older People Conference, 29–30 March 2012
Te Raukura – Te Wharewaka o Poneke

Paul Barber, NZCCSS Policy Analyst

This year's Services for Older People Conference – Moving Forward Together – offered ample evidence of the depth and breadth of expertise on issues of ageing and aged care within our sector, the strength we gain by openly pooling and sharing our knowledge, and our great potential as a gathering and rallying point for that knowledge in future years.

This year we were fortunate to again enjoy a great venue for this event, namely Te Raukura – Te Wharewaka o Poneke on the Wellington waterfront – but as always the lifeforce of the event was its people ... he tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

From the karakia and waiata (prayers and songs) throughout this two-day gathering, and from the powhiri on day one to the poroporoaki at its end, there was a real spirit, a very strong wairua, around what we all had in common and the perspectives we add to the aged care sector that can't be found elsewhere.

We were especially privileged by the quality of our keynote speakers from within Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond. In Professor Simon Biggs and Dr Chad Boulton we heard from two truly international leaders in the field of gerontology and social policy in the case of Professor Biggs, and in pioneering models of care for older people in the case of Dr Boulton.

And in the case of our special guest Jean-Paul Bell of Australia's Arts Health Institute we were treated to a larger than life presenter - someone for whom laughter really is the best medicine and for whom this simple equation says it all: "humour plus humans equals humanity".

We were all given a timely reminder of our humanity and mortality by opening keynote speaker Anglican Bishop of Christchurch Victoria Matthews, who reflected on various aspects of that city and region's recovery from the

devastating earthquakes of 2010 and 2011.

Reflecting on spiritual aspects to the recovery Bishop Matthews suggested that a role of the church community is to see and make note of subtle changes taking place that others might not see. She expressed concern that the realities of many of the changes happening in the world inhabited by all the people of Christchurch and Canterbury had yet to sink in – including the loss of supports resulting from depopulation and dislocations of family and friends.

For churches and social services facing their own pressures and limitations, she said a big question is how will we respond to the new subdivisions that will be opening up and the new realities such changes present, given the fact that our old systems simply won't be able to serve those changes (in the future)?

Rather than resisting change she suggested that the on-going uncertainty in Christchurch is an invitation to release as much vision and imagination as possible. Bishop Matthews suggested one way to better serve the elderly is to create cities that give a priority to the experience of being an older citizen.

"What a difference it would make to have a city with more thought to pedestrians over cars for instance, a city with more sidewalk benches, longer pedestrian crossing signals, more legible signage". This would also be a friendlier city for people with disabilities and for children as well.

Following on from Bishop Matthews the conference



Clockwise from top left: Powhiri; Councillor Stephanie Cook welcomes conference to Wellington; Dr Chad Boulton; Jean-Paul Bell and Prof. Simon Biggs.

Contents

Services for Older People Conference 2012 reports	1–3
Keynote Laughter at the SOP Conference	4
Learning From Success with Older Māori	4
Social Services for New Zealand's Future: an overview of the Future Wellbeing Conference	5
Auckland Social Futures Conference	8



Left to right: Bishop Victoria Matthews; Professor Chris Cunningham; our treasured MC, Hera Clarke.

remained fully grounded in the context of issues of ageing in this country through hearing from Charles Waldegrave on the latest results from the NZ Longitudinal Study on Ageing, from Careerforce’s Ray Lind on the topic of empowering high performance through training and development, and from Massey University Professor Chris Cunningham who looked at the drivers of best outcomes for older Māori.

Associate Health Minister the Hon Jo Goodhew reiterated the Government’s policy for older people. In an environment where funding is tight, “service integration” is a major focus of health policy. The Government is looking for smarter, more integrated ways of doing things and delivering “wrap around services” for older people to support them to continue to live independently in the community for longer. A particular emphasis is on better dementia care pathways and introducing compulsory standards in home support over the next 12 months.

Our plenary panel discussion topic following Charles Waldegrave’s presentation was a rich discussion – with input from the Rt Reverend Bishop Muru Walters, researcher Kay Saville-Smith and Gillian Bremner, CEO of Presbyterian Support Otago. The questions posed during this session were all responded to extremely positively. Put simply when times are tough, the answer is that we respond best by walking together, leaving no one behind.

Over the two days of this event there was an opportunity to interact with an incredibly diverse set of topics through a full slate of 24 workshop sessions themed under the headings of leadership, residential care, and home and community.

Our gratitude goes out to Dr Brian Ensor, Sheena Farquahar, David Hanna, Judith Davey, Alayna Watene, Grace O’Sullivan, Dr Richard Egan, Dr Shankar Sanakran, Rod Perkins, Martin Taylor, Dr Chris Perkins, Clare Brockett, Professor Ngaire Kerse, Rosemary Nourse, Helen Lloyd, Dr Catherine Love, Michael Pead, Nicola Turner, Rangimahora Reddy, and Dr Elizabeth Spellacy for making those workshops possible.

Two other notable features seemed to set this conference apart from the ‘ordinary’.

One was the immense cloak of confidence we all wore



Left to right: Trevor McGlinchey presentation to Duncan Macdonald, retiring CEO of Selwyn Foundation; Professor Simon Biggs, Dr Anthony Dancer and Iria Biggs; exhibitors promote their products .

in the spoken words of our MC Hera Clarke and in the language of song delivered by the inimitable Brannigan Kaa.

Second was the meaningful relationship-building way in which each of our conference sponsors and exhibitors became an integral part of the event. Conference sponsors Wellington City Council, Bupa retirement homes and rest homes, Careerforce, the Social Justice Commission of the Anglican Church, Presbyterian Support Enliven, Mercy Healthcare, the Selwyn Foundation and Pharmac were joined by a varied group of exhibitors: Time Target, Ebos Healthcare, The Eden Alternative, BUNZL, the Families Commission, CSC Buying Group, Driving Miss Daisy, Mobility Centre, Te Wana/ Healthcare Aotearoa, Infogeni Business Solutions. They all made a difference to the sociable nature of the conference, itself a tribute to our supporting conference management team of Kaye-Maree & Mita Dunn - tino pai e hoa ma!

From the quality and quantity of knowledge possessed and expressed at events such as our “Moving Forward Together,” conference there is little doubt that our sector is well positioned to be a centre of working knowledge for the future. Not only do we have a real handle on the real issues, but we also have a real ability to speak up in representing an expert collective voice on those issues.

Conference Clearly Positions Christian Social Services in Aged Care Sector

This conference celebrated the remarkable strength, diversity and resilience of the NZCCSS agencies working with older people. They are at the cornerstone of the not-for-profit sector, and keynote speaker Simon Biggs identified those strengths in his closing remarks:

- Special role in aged care – rooted in communities and their churches, offering
- Advocacy – standing beside older people and advocating for their needs
- Spirituality – addressing the whole person and their needs, the “old story of the human search for meaning” (Victoria Matthews)
- Innovative practice – among the sector leaders in community services, housing and residential care





Left: Hon. Jo Goodhew. Right: Brannigan Kaa.

Simon encouraged us not be too modest about our work and to get out there and advocate for policies that can help our work succeed for the older people we working with.

A lively panel discussion on the first afternoon debated the issue of how to meet the challenges of tougher economic times and “doing better with less.” Our volunteer base is one of our key strengths and abiding points of difference to the for-profit sector, said Presbyterian Support CEO Gillian Bremner. The work of volunteers builds social capital as well as the financial capital of donations and fundraising.

Leading social researcher Dr Kaye Saville-Smith reminded us that the future path to wellbeing is not a “zero-sum game” where generations are in competition for limited resources. The types of housing and communities that are good for older people are also good for children, people with disabilities and indeed for us all.

One very telling question from the audience will go with us into the future debate about policy and services for older people: Should we stop doing things? Should our sector continue to simply act as the backstop for inadequate Government provision of services and instead advocate for a decent service?

As competitive contractual relationships in community sector work push down the prices paid for services, should we continue to try to “grind out” the improvements with fewer resources?

We owe it to our clients, staff and supporters to do more to call for a better vision in aged care, because (as Victoria Matthews put it) “we flourish together, we wither alone”

Conference Participants’ - feedback

We found it particularly encouraging to read the response we had to a set of three on-the-spot questionnaire slips that were passed around so that we could compile some of the issues that conference participants consider to be most urgent to act on. Here is a brief, un-edited selection of the top of mind issues that we can all do our best to move forward together on:

Some of the biggest drivers of change for the future

- Recognition in wider society over the difficulties we will face with an ageing population
- Confidence in the gift of older people in our midst/ celebrating age
- All workers using their voice
- Sharing and communication; equality of opportunity & sharing of resources
- Lobbying by the Baby Boomers & networks via social media
- The Nurse Practitioner programme
- Intergenerational relationships, understandings, valuing all ages; connecting across sectors
- Demographics; the split between those who can afford to live in retirement and those who can’t

Some of the biggest barriers to future improvement

- The focus on preventing early death rather than support for disability
- Fear of dementia and of ageing in general
- Organisational silos by NGOs
- Sticking to the known and being unwilling to change
- Disparity between expectations and resources
- Not thinking outside the box
- Lack of investment & lack of informed vision
- Lack of political will

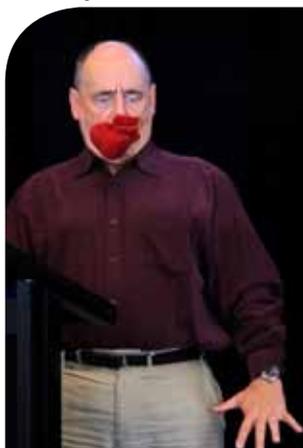
Areas of practice or research that could be the biggest catalysts for positive change

- Increased focus on listening to the individual client... (and) implementation of space for spirituality across age care services
- Alignment of Māori health for older people to te reo Māori language
- Links established at this conference and sharing of skills/ resources
- Ways of finding a champion for dementia? (e.g. like John Kirwan for mental health)
- Partnerships and integrated care approach
- Reduction of super-eligibility age for Māori and other vulnerable ethnicities
- Workforce issues
- Promotion of more innovation e.g. identified areas that need to be addressed, such as how to support young people with dementia, and create an award for the best idea to address the issue
- Increased funding for low cost housing, for elderly, appropriate to needs and inclusive of community socialising
- A campaign to reduce the threshold for accessing residential care subsidy to at least \$100,000
- Research and implementation based on wellbeing factors, not just clinical voices
- Creating a dedicated (NZCCSS) website for sharing ideas

Conference papers and presentations all online at www.nzccss.org.nz



Keynote Laughter



Jean-Paul Bell

One of the many highlights of the conference was the hearty laughter provided by keynote speaker Jean-Paul Bell of Australia's innovative Arts Health Institute.

Most well-known for his work as a Clown Doctor, through the Arts Health Institute Jean-Paul has been focusing his work towards older people in residential care and on applying humour therapy to dementia. From this he has developed a programme

called Play Up which is a direct continuation of the work of the SMILE Study conducted by the Dementia Collaborative Research Centre at the University of NSW, and funded by National Health and Medical Research Council.

In an interview with TVNZ's Breakfast show host Petra Bagust during his time in Wellington, Jean-Paul spoke about the "dose effect" of humour and the importance of "keeping up the dose". He also noted the way that Play UP has introduced opportunities for aged care staff to share in and benefit from some additional levity and social engagement at their workplaces.

For more insight into Jean-Paul Bell's enterprising work see www.artshealthinstitute.org.au and www.thesmilewithin.com.au

Learning From Success with Older Māori – Moving Forward Together

Bishop Muru Walters opened for us the soul of Te Raukura, the feather, a sign of peace. At the powhiri we were welcomed into Te Wharewaka, home of the ceremonial waka, through the entrance framed as the arms of the ancestors. Located at the harbour, he reflected on the way the tides bring with them and then take away. So it was for us gathering for this conference, we came together, bringing our stories, skills, concerns and hopes. At the end of the conference we went away again, taking with us new experiences, understandings, ideas and inspiration.

Understanding what it means to work successfully with older Māori was a central thread woven through the conference. Successful work with older Māori needs to understand both the cultural expectations *of* kaumātua and also the cultural expectations *on* kaumātua. This was a key insight that Professor Chris Cunningham brought to the conference. Kaumātua are key contributors to whānau in many ways and as they age and retire, the expectations on them tend to increase.

Bishop Muru Walters expressed one aspect of the cultural expectations of older Māori evocatively when he told of his experience of visiting older kaumātua in aged residential care. He felt they were missing the "magic of Te Reo" and came alive when he spoke & prayed with them in Māori.

Chris Cunningham unfolded a differentiated picture of older Māori, recognising the diversity of their experience of their own culture and identity. In differentiating between "mainstream" and Māori cultural contexts, he showed how Māori are living in varying degrees of relationship to their culture. Some will continue to lead "Māori-centric" lives



but there are many who are comfortable in both the Māori world and mainstream "Kiwi" worlds. Māori service provision continues to grow but he pointed out that mainstream provision will still be critical to wellbeing for older Māori and indeed kaumātua "may have a dollar each way" in service provision.

Kaumātua have led the way in developing the Rauawaawa Kaumātua Trust in Hamilton.

Trust CEO Rangimahora Reddy spoke about the success of the work being built on factors such as the integration of kaumātua throughout the organisation, a committed group of staff and volunteers, offering wrap-around services – health services, housing support, social & cultural activities as well as education and training. They work as advocates with their kaumātua and have aimed to develop services that are convenient and appropriate for their community. Future plans include kaumātua housing and building further collaboration with other service providers.

The kaumātua programme of the Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga Trust has taken a different path growing out of wider work of the iwi and primary health organisation. Focused on improving the health status of kaumātua in a culturally appropriate way led by Māori health professionals, the trust has built up an impressive range of services over more than 20 years. The trust is leader in developing kaumātua housing and supported living as well as offering restorative home based support and day programmes. The strength of the trust is its strong base in the work of the wider iwi.

The journey of the Wellington Tenths Trust is a distinctive one because of its particular history arising out of the settlement of Wellington in the 1840s. The work of the Trust with kaumātua arises out of their role as carriers of culture, tradition and history. So much if its work is around supporting them to fulfil those essential roles. By conducting research and asking kaumātua what they expect and need from the trust, needs and services have been identified and are being developed in response.

It is inspiring to learn more about how kaupapa Māori services are developing and it is clear that "mainstream" services need to keep in touch with these developments and understand what makes them successful. Mainstream services will need to consider how they can design their organisation and services to be more open to kaumātua needs.

The wider social and political challenge is more simply articulated. In the light of the continuing life expectancy gap of around 8 years, the theme around access to retirement support, housing, health services is "Equity, equity, equity", as Chris Cunningham put it. How do we ensure that older Māori can enjoy fair and equal access to health, retirement incomes and good quality housing?



Social Services for New Zealand's Future

Community based social service agencies are on the cusp of a time of great change and challenge, a theme that was explored from many different angles at the Future Wellbeing social services conference run in Auckland on 18-19 April 2012.

This theme was continued at the inaugural Auckland Social Futures conference on Friday 20 April, also held at the University of Auckland.

As Dr Rod Watts, chief executive of Presbyterian Support Northern (and the current chair of conference convenors the NZ Council of Christian Social Services), reminded the 200+ people present, these coupled events were not just about the contribution made by social services agencies in the common cause of wellbeing for New Zealanders, but also about the wellbeing of the agencies themselves.

By gathering together a cross-section of agency and sector representatives at a village-like level, some valuable space was intentionally created for taking the time for that type of reflection. A space particularly where becoming 'better' is not about being individually 'better off', but more about being reaffirmed around the way the sector aspires to work – its collective values, its collective knowledge and the collective skills embedded in each other's community based activities.

A point raised by Rod was that change and transformation is actually at the core of what agencies strive to bring to people in the community who seek and receive their services, but that the extent of turbulent structural change that can be expected within an already stretched social services sector needs to be carefully staged and managed.

Just as a guiding principle of working with clients is to provide some assurance and safeguard against "further harm", it would be important to ensure essential services are not compromised when significant changes to the sector occur. Rod said that change processes would need to be deliberately managed, in the hope that what emerges does not result in inefficient short-term contracts that competitively pit one service against another for relatively small amounts of money (a prevalent risk). The implications of short-term thinking carry into things like short-term recruitment, said Rod, making it more difficult to "employ the best to do their best".

If the driver for deciding priorities is to produce evidence of the timely and targeted benefit that funded services deliver, then government services should not be exempt from transparent scrutiny either, be that central or local government (see back page).

Social Development Minister Paula Bennett, speaking on the afternoon of 19 April, reaffirmed the point of difference the Government she belongs to is seeking to inject into a sector she described is fundamentally working well. In talking to an audience of people from agencies who already aspire to apply the best governance they can in the best organisational forms they can in order to have people working together to best effect, the Minister was adamant that policy changes she would be instituting would give agencies that receive Government funding more flexibility in the "how" of what they do.

At the same time she pulled no punches in saying that her Ministry will only be paying for social services that deliver results that can be measured in milestones. Good intentions alone won't count, and hard calls will be made on which deliverers to continue to fund.



Clockwise from top left: Professor Paul Smyth; Dr Rod Watts, NZCCSS President; Nic Frances; Paula Bennett, Minister of Social Development.

For her own part Minister Bennett will be judging her time as Minister on the basis of the agenda to be set via the soon to be published White Paper on facing up, first and foremost, to the vulnerability of children and young people in our society.

In a wide ranging, free and frank manner the Minister talked about the "mammoth beast" of a portfolio she oversees. She asked people to consider what it is they stand proud of, and whether society in New Zealand can somehow reach beyond consisting simply of the 'haves' and 'have-nots' through seeking to adjust the picture so that no child is "born into welfare".

How exactly the changes ahead are going to change or reshape the world of social services remained a looming issue for those in the room, most of whom, in reality, physically operate separately – and as the conference touched on – even competitively to each other.

For those aware that their workplaces might not be as ready for the soup of challenges they are about to face as they could be, another backdrop provided at this conference was the possibility that the tide of economy-centric policy in developed countries might slowly be turning - with income inequality finally dawning as too big an elephant in the room for any agglomeration of personally sheltered economists, politicians, policy makers or economic and business think tanks to ignore.

The engine rooms need to be recalibrated and that can't be done without a higher regard for human capital in the fullest senses.

Speaker Tim Hazeldine, Professor of Economics at the University of Auckland, suggested there are any number of options, some as radically difficult as stepping back from and resisting "forced globalization", if a growing call to seriously rethink the responses to the ongoing repercussions of the global financial crisis is ever going to be heeded.



Tim's starting point was that orthodox thinking about paths to redistribution of wealth or laughable ideas of trickle-down effects are as depleted as our fossil fuels, that trading our way into wealth is just a persistent illusion and that elected governments need to consider what economic and social sufficiency for their own citizens would look like – with the hopeful note being that with some pain might come greater happiness.

In a similar review of policy trends Australian social policy academic Professor Paul Smyth outlined a growing number of situations under which opportunities to “rule social policy in” and to gain traction for different forms of a renewed social contract for societies in the 21st century, have grown.

In particular he advocated getting the maximum leverage from words like “investment”, terms like “social infrastructure” and platforms like “inclusive growth” – especially given the fact that developed economies are increasingly turning to an acknowledgement that old recipes for success, most notoriously the idea of trickle down, have no currency left and are only adding to inequality and poverty.

Talking of what can be put on the table for creating a new narrative, Professor Smyth suggested it would be a missed opportunity to passively accept push-backs on funding of social services based on the line that the “cupboard is bare”, when more productively speaking this is a time to reframe the bigger picture of what the “cupboard” actually is.

“There is a realisation (across developed economies) that what is actually needed above all are strong societies and well-educated workforces,” he said. That, he suggested, is a reason for the social services sector to capitalise on the worth of more investment, not less.

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHT

A highlight of day two of the conference was the mix of humour and humanity brought by keynote social change agent and Cool nrg founder Nic Frances.

Through sharing about his own life experience and leading roles he has played in organisations such as Australia's Brothers of Saint Laurence, Nic contextualized a direct and pointed set of problem-solving lessons.

From being awarded an MBE for services to charity after an earlier career in stockbroking in the UK through to his work in Australia and global projects of social enterprise, a key realisation Nic had made in his own career shifts was about acquiring a healthy disregard for money; that in the scheme of things an ambitious shoot-for-the-99% idea, if scaled and planned and pursued passionately into a compelling business proposition, will be followed with money.

If it's not being spent to do the wrong things in the wrong place, don't be frightened by money, he urged.

Using his own story as a case in point, Nic contrasted the risk taking potential offered by fast moving models of social enterprise with the weighty structural forms of many established not-for-profit organisations, noting that it can often be better to start out as a for profit enterprise before evolving into a charity. “Learn the game; be in it... give it all a go”.

In the case of the Brothers of Saint Laurence he said he had found it useful to bring to mind the risks that the founder, Anglican Father Gerard Tucker, had taken at the

outset of “working out” that organisation.

In Nic's worldview the easiest path is the one that constantly weighs up which calculated risk or innovation to take next. He favours the dynamic of constantly interrogating motives, and suggested all social services organisations would benefit from regularly questioning the policy and advocacy direction their agency, or for that matter their whole sector, is taking.

He expressed his strong personal belief that the greater good of serving the community is a privilege not to be wasted. “If anything gets in the way (of that) for a second I have no time for it”.

One of the conference's workshop leaders Murray Edridge expressed confidence that the community services sector “can do better”, but that in the future it will probably consist of fewer and larger organisations.

A former chief executive of Barnardos in New Zealand, Murray now sits at the nexus of decisions on funding and changes in policy direction as the new head of Family and Community Services at the Ministry of Social Development. Given that position and his message that the sector is “about to go on an interesting journey”, the general advice he offered was closely listened to.

After beginning with three questions – what are you passionate about doing? what drives your resource engine? what are you best in the world at? – Murray encouraged everyone in the room to “think about doing even better”, because “doing what we've always done won't be acceptable”.

“I suspect we'll be the difference (in the changes ahead), but are we good enough, collectively? Are we prepared?”

In the workshop's question and answer session Murray agreed that while there is a perception that the government and social service organisations are joined at the hip, what matters most is what occurs in local communities and at the level of everyday life experienced by families. “There is a real risk that we confuse the community with the community sector – they're not the same thing”.

Whānau Ora Minister, Tariana Turia, spoke to the conference about whānau ora as a “lens to see the world with” and a way to re-bond families together.

Minister Turia affirmed the conference theme that this is indeed a time of change, and a time for doing things differently. In addition to Whānau Ora, the Minister is committed to more interconnectedness across portfolios and views intersectoral co-operation as a critical success factor. The “hardest part” of implementing the Whānau Ora way of doing things has been implementing collaboration between providers.

The Rt. Hon. Bill English began his address to the conference with recognition of the consistently constructive



Jane Drumm talks with Bill English, Minister of Finance.



and gritty discussion afforded the government by Church leaders and the NZ Council of Christian Social Services over many years, particularly from the angle of “what we can do together”.

As a Finance Minister who spends 95% of his time focused on the economy, he then left no one in any doubt about the chastened economic times we are living in, times in which we are “borrowing from the future to cushion ourselves from the sharp edge of the present”.

Answering questions after his talk the Minister made it clear that the government has, through an actuarial evaluation, crunched the numbers, so that it knows, for instance, that the “thick end” of its liability over a lifetime of those currently in the welfare system is in the order of \$40 billion.

Mr English reminded the audience of the “10 challenging results” that PM John Key has put forward to be achieved – eight of which are related to welfare, health, education and justice issues.

In Minister English’s view the community sector remains “part of the ecosystem created by government spending”. The biggest proportion of attention, and the motivation behind that attention, needs to be about “what’s at stake”.

“Human misery (fragmented communities, directionless youth, and vulnerable children) costs a lot of money. We will balance our books when we’ve got our community in good shape ... (We all need to) roll out of bed determined to make changes that change the headlines”.

The Minister stated that the ethos for the sector will need to shift from one perceived to be based on demonstrations of care and sensitivity and awareness raising (good intentions), to a greater emphasis on responsibility and the role of holding and exercising that responsibility to produce concrete results.

At the same time he referred to the supporting importance of there being moral frameworks that can be seen to be operating in neighborhoods through the work of faith-based Christian organisations, even in such a secular society as New Zealand’s. “Those are things that can’t be rebuilt with money”.

In a small country such as New Zealand there isn’t just a name behind every number, there is a much stronger sense of knowing who we are: our community, our iwi, our relatives. For that reason the Minister expressed confidence that our “human misery” isn’t 100% intractable.

He used examples such as the known scale of youth offending as a reason not to repeatedly over-analyse certain areas of social breakdown, in favour of taking a more empowering, more humanising “one person at a time” approach along with an “uncompromising commitment to what works” of the kind taken by his Cabinet colleague Paula Bennett.

The government will be looking to the public service – judged to have become “too self-satisfied” – to increase its capacity to learn through, for instance, a range of initial trials focused on youth, along with an expectation that communities will take on more responsibility for making their own decisions.

The Minister was critical of some policy making in the past which had, he said, held “too much sway”; leading to programmes that lacked effectiveness measures, within an operating environment that was admittedly not geared for the speed needed to take proactive actions in real time. “Changing the way things are done is inevitable, and you

are absolutely critical (to that)”.

Jane Drumm, the executive director of Shine (Safer homes in New Zealand everyday) alerted the Minister to the experience of changes made to create her organisation, an amalgamation of Preventing Violence in the Home and Safer Families Foundation, which had posed roadblocks to success. She explained there had been no financial incentives to merge and a quantum of funding had been lost even though the formation of the new organisation enabled more needs to be met.

In response Minister English said the example of Shine was an example of why change is needed, so that organisations with “serious intent” could be identified and incentivised.

The Minister indicated that this period of change should be seen as an opportunity for community based social services agencies to get to know their business, to benchmark administration costs and to focus on areas where real change can be made to the life course of individual lives.

In the absence of major adaptation within the sector the Minister’s message was blunt; contracts will stop, organizations will adapt or disappear. “Read the signs... if it doesn’t work, we’ll stop (funding) it”. The message of doing more with less and of gaining savings at the margins was equally prominent.

On a question about what the scale and nature of the social services sector might look like after a decade of such a direction, Minister English said it would be wrong to jump to conclusions about there being a single model.

On the aspect of what capacity is required to ensure a cohesive sector however, he suggested a parallel between social infrastructure and roading infrastructure would not be inappropriate, referring to the capacity a company such as Fulton Hogan needs for its part in tendering for the mending of “potholes in roads” as a helpful way to consider not just how that market operates but the key components of capacity.

Minister English noted that on the face of it some communities must be confused by the sheer number of social services agencies in their midst, a point also made by the Hon. Tariana Turia, adding “(we have) no process or legitimacy or well-informed way for helping to sort that out”. Minister English concluded his time at the conference with the statement that “every week we delay reorganising we lose another life”.



Trevor McGlinchey and Dr Rod Watts.



Co-creating Auckland Social Futures



The call put out by the Auckland Services Group of the NZ Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) to attend a one-day Auckland Social Futures Conference was extremely well responded to on 20 April.

As promoted beforehand this was an event tailor-made for focusing on how the social services sector, along with Auckland Council and Government, can work off the platform now provided by the Auckland Plan (adopted in March 2012) to co-create “a social future where all Aucklanders are valued and included”.

Penny Hulse, Deputy Mayor of Auckland, delivered the day’s opening address and began with an acknowledgement that the inaugural Auckland Plan was by no means perfect, but that it points to ways to “shore up the future (in preparation) for future ‘shocks’”. She also acknowledged that Auckland Council, a sponsor of the event, would need to continue to talk more and more and more with community representatives, while also working hard internally to overcome its own silo-like structures.

Next up was Ree Anderson, Council Regional Strategy Manager, who particularly highlighted two aspects of the Auckland Plan: the Southern Initiative proposed in the plan, and work that will be done on formulating a Strategic Housing Action Plan.

This provided a good basis for the interactive, community-led workshops held throughout the remainder of the day. The workshops, with facilitators in brackets, covered:

- Social services and vulnerable people (Peter Sykes, Mangere East Family Service Centre, and Mike O’Brien of the Child Poverty Action Group)
- Community development (Puamiria Maaka of Te Waipuna Puawai)
- Social housing (Lisa Woolley of VisionWest, and David Zussman of Monte Cecilia Housing Trust).

Council staff contributors to the workshops included Catherine Fitzsimons, Tina Abbey and Anne-Marie Mujica.

Catherine was instrumental in ensuring input from children and young people to the Auckland Plan - noting that their messages sometimes differed from “the experts”. Tina urged people to think of the Southern Initiative proposition as a rallying point. “We need your input to operationalise it”.

NZCCSS chair Rod Watts returned to the theme of the immediately preceding Future Wellbeing Conference held on 18-19 April, that the community sector’s operating environment nationally and locally is entering a period of major realignment and transformational change required by shifts in policy direction.

He drew attention to the importance of having a healthy community sector - “the more robust we are the better we can weather the pressures”. He then

described a set of dilemmas, often ethical in nature. What if, for instance, the sector experiences pressures to move towards commercialised supply chains? “What are the implications? ... Should we change what we do? ...Do we expand or shrink...?”

In his closing whaikorero Trevor McGlinchey, NZCCSS executive officer, described this Auckland-focused event as the “beginning of a process” whereby networks are strengthened for the future.



Left: Lisa Woolley, VisionWest. Right: Kotuku Tibble M.C. & Dan Hauraki Cultural Advisor Presbyterian Support

[This article was supplied by supporters of the new Community.Scoop page at www.scoop.co.nz; inquiries can be made to community@scoop.co.nz]

KETE KUPU WORD BASKET

Designer

Tessa Hansen Cane



mistessie@gmail.com

Printers

Thames Publications Wellington



KETE KUPU - Word Basket

ISSN 1174-2514 (Print), 1174-2526 (Online)

The newsletter of the NZ Council of Christian Social Services

Post address: PO Box 12-090, Thorndon, Wellington 6144

Physical address: 3 George Street, Thorndon (ground floor)

If you would like to receive this mailing in a different format, (by email, mail or both) please contact NZCCSS (04) 473 2627 or email to admin@nzccss.org.nz

Acknowledgements: In addition to its member subscriptions, NZCCSS extends its thanks to: Todd Foundation, JR McKenzie Trust, TG Macarthy Trust for the grants and donations that help to make the work of NZCCSS possible.

Disclaimer: Every effort is made to ensure the correctness of facts and information in this newsletter. However, we cannot accept responsibility for any errors. Items from this newsletter may be freely copied provided the author and the sources are acknowledged.