



Number 9 - February 2010

TAXING TIMES AHEAD

An opportunity lost?

A Tax Working Group (TWG), formed in the middle of 2009, has diligently been producing papers and discussing ways to improve NZ's tax system. They have concluded that the system does indeed need changing, have articulated the nature of the problems with the current system and have suggested a number of changes needed to make the system more efficient, fairer, coherent and more likely to encourage economic growth.

In January, the TWG released *A Tax System for NZ's Future*. The recommendations in the report seek to address problems with the current system.

Firstly, the tax structure is a problem because it is deemed to be too heavily reliant on generating revenue from personal and corporate taxes. These are 'harmful to growth'. A lack of capital gains tax was identified as a gap in the tax structure – a problem because it has led to too much investment in an unproductive area. Working for Families assistance was also seen as a problem because the high abatement for Family Tax Credits provides a 'disincentive to work'. In other words, when earnings increase this often leads to families losing financial assistance through WFF.

Secondly, the TWG wants changes to address 'coherence, integrity and fairness'. By making tax levels the same, a key recommendation in the report, this will remove the incentive for people to 'divert income' into structures with lower taxes e.g. through trusts and companies. This manipulation of income is not an option available to PAYE tax payers and is therefore seen as unfair.

Thirdly, the current system is not sustainable as wage growth over time pushes greater numbers of workers into higher tax brackets. Already the top 10% of income earners pay 44% of all income tax.

Of course the alignment of taxes whether they are top personal taxes, corporate or tax trust rates actually means not just making them the same but lowering them because NZ must stay competitive internationally. But herein lies the conundrum – the tax reforms need to be fiscally neutral so the tax revenue lost by aligning and lowering company, top



personal and trust taxes must be generated from elsewhere. In John Key's Statement to Parliament on 9 February - see more on page 3 - he has promised to make personal tax cuts estimated to be worth between \$3b and \$4b dollars. While it is encouraging to hear that tax cuts will be 'across the board', we know that those who pay the most tax get the most reward from cuts. Low and middle income earners will get very little back.

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SPECIAL NOTICE: REGISTER NOW!

Enclosed with this issue of *Kete Kupu* is the **Registration Brochure for the NZCCSS Conference 2010**. You can use our PDF form to email your registration, or post it to us. Keynote speakers and workshops will cover leadership, economic and business outlook for aged care, spirituality, dementia, community development, employment, training, and much more. Find out more on our website and register online: www.justiceandcompassion.org.nz

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TAXING TIMES - defining "better off"

From our perspective, if tax reform is to improve equity and wealthier people get most of the estimated \$4b in proposed personal tax cuts, then the shortfall in tax revenue must come from new taxes that affect the wealthy. John Key has ruled out a Comprehensive Capital Gains Tax, a land tax or the Risk-Free Rate of Return Method on residential property. This is a lost opportunity to address significant gaps in the tax system that would make a difference to the equity issues so ably articulated by the TWG.

Instead most of the revenue is to be gathered in two ways. Firstly, the government "will be making changes to the way property is taxed". We don't know the details and will have to wait for the Budget on May 20 to find out more. It's likely to include changes in depreciation rules. These changes are estimated to raise \$1.7b in revenue for the government.

The second source of revenue is likely to come from "a modest increase in the rate of GST to no more than 15%," which will generate approximately \$2b per annum.

The PM has said that the government is "acutely aware of the effect that a rise in GST could have on lower income families." If it was to go ahead that "it would have to be accompanied by across the board reductions in personal taxes, as well as up front increases in benefits, NZ Super and Working for Families payments."

A final decision has yet to be made on GST because John Key wants officials to do more work. He wants to be assured that increasing GST "would benefit the NZ economy in the long term" and would lead to "the vast bulk of New Zealanders being better off".

The response of NZCCSS to proposed tax changes

PROPERTY INVESTMENT

Until we know what the rental property tax reforms will be it is hard to comment. However, it will be important to look at whether rents will go up in the short to medium term. There is a well known shortage of houses in Auckland which suggests that landlords will still be able to find tenants even if rents do rise.

Of concern is the plight of those who cannot meet rent increases in the private market and cannot access a State House. The longest wait list for State Houses is in Auckland.

We would also be concerned about those people who absorb rent increases but then have much less to spend on food, heating, clothing and school expenses, all of which are set to increase if GST rises.

The people most vulnerable are those already living in poverty. We already know who these people are; they are sole parent families, beneficiary families with children, low income working families with children, larger families and Maori and Pacific peoples. Data from the latest Living Standards report confirms this.

GOODS & SERVICES TAX (GST)

A rise in GST even with compensation is not our preferred option – far from it. There is always a nagging doubt about the adequacy of 'compensation'. Even with compensation low income people at best will be 'no worse off'.

No doubt there will be a fierce debate about GST primarily centred on the impact on GST on low income people and rightly so. Some will argue that the rich pay more because they consume more. This is countered with the argument that low income people will be hit harder because they spend all their income on consumption (to meet basic needs).

Whilst the politicians try to ascertain the political fallout from raising GST, it seems likely that an increase will be confirmed on Budget day given the lack of more attractive alternatives.

WORKING FOR FAMILIES (WFF)

There will be minor WFF changes for high income earners who have 'managed' their income to enable them to access WFF assistance.

The TWG estimated that 9,700 families with rental properties were also receiving WFF tax credits – "boosting their entitlements by offsetting their incomes against rental losses on the properties." This loophole will be gone shortly, along with income sheltered through trusts and trading companies.

Given rising child poverty levels in NZ it is disappointing that the government is not considering any significant changes in WFF that could better target payments to the most in need.

Interested in social issues in Auckland?

The Minister for Social Development, Paula Bennett, has released a discussion document on the newly formed Auckland Social Policy Forum.

The Minister has described the Forum as a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get the structures that support the social fabric of Auckland right." She also says the Forum will bring together key political leaders from Auckland and central Government, providing a platform to ensure social issues remain high on the agenda as governance in Auckland changes.

"We want to see a range of organisations and communities involved with the Forum, so those making decisions about Auckland, understand the diverse needs of those groups", Ms Bennett says. "We want to get feedback on the form and function of the Forum, the types of issues it should be considering, and how it can best engage with Auckland's diverse communities and social organisations."

NZCCSS is forming a Auckland Social Issues Group and will be preparing a submission with Auckland based members. Submissions close on Friday 21 May 2010.

Copies of the discussion document can be downloaded from the Minister's page on the Beehive website: www.beehive.govt.nz/minister/paula+bennett

PM John Key's 9 February Statement

Broader Issues of Concern

Tax reform is just one of the “six main policy drivers” in the government economic plan. In the PM's rather lengthy Statement to Parliament, he broadly outlined the government's intentions in a range of areas of interest to NZCCSS.

While lacking in substantive detail it's important to look at the signals that are being given.

Social Sector Reform

This part of the speech focussed on education, improving social services and benefit system reform.

There is no denying that the poor educational outcomes of one fifth of school leavers, often referred to as the “tail of disadvantage,” needs to be addressed. It's the ‘how’ part that's tricky.

Reference was made to improving participation rates in ECE particularly for poor communities and for Maori and Pacific pre-schoolers. This is a problem highlighted in the latest Salvation Army State of the Nation report – *The Road to Recovery*.

Very sketchy reference is made to improving the effectiveness of social services and the PM's concern with the “growing underclass.” Specific reference was made to Whanau Ora, a Maori Party policy that appears to be morphing into an all ethnicities approach to social service provision for vulnerable families. We've been told to wait to Budget day for details of the first stage.

Welfare Reform

It was with some apprehension we heard the PM talk about introducing legislation this year ‘to reform the benefit system’.

Given that most of the election policies were largely operational it's unclear what changes require legislative amendments. Increased vigilance is needed apparently so John Key can “look taxpayers in the eye and assure them that their hard earned wages are not being used to support those who lack the will or the desire to work as hard for their living as their fellow New Zealanders”.

There was one glimmer of hope when reference was made to adjusting abatement regimes to improve incentives for beneficiaries to “at the very least, take up part time work”.

It appears that “the number of people on Sickness or Invalids Benefits has been allowed to grow out of control in recent times”.

Actually, Invalids beneficiaries only increased 2% in the year ending December 2009 (compare that with numbers of people receiving the Unemployment Benefit which has increased by a whopping 117% in the same period). Sickness Beneficiaries increased by 17% over this period. It's hard to ascertain what the drivers



behind these increases are. According to the Benefit Fact Sheet for the December 2009 quarter produced by the Ministry of Social Development the increase is due to “ageing of the population, and increasing movement of people with incapacities into the community”. From where it doesn't specify.

Perhaps tougher approaches to ACC clients could be a factor. Two in five sickness beneficiaries have psychological or psychiatric conditions and 14% musculo skeletal disorders. How was that ‘allowed’ to happen?

The government is going to ‘appoint a working group of experts to recommend ways in which we can reduce long term welfare dependency and thereby reduce the welfare bill future generations will face.’ NZCCSS will closely monitor developments in ‘welfare reform’.

Social Housing

An advisory group is also going to be established to provide advice to the government on what can be done to ensure families most in need of a state house can access one. Currently there are approximately 10,300 families on the waiting list and 45% of them are classified as having either a severe or significant housing need.

The PM notes the need to address poor access in some areas while in other areas people have access to State Houses that ‘exceed their relative needs’. We think the more important issue is the lack of supply of State Houses. Again, we will monitor developments in this area.

- Copies of the Statement to Parliament can be found at: www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/statement+parliament+0
- Papers from the Tax Working Group can be found on the left hand panel of the Victoria University website: www.victoria.ac.nz/sacl/cagtr/twg/

2008 NZ Living Standards Survey Results – a snapshot ‘before the Recession’

The results from the 2008 NZ Living Standards Survey have recently been released by the Ministry of Social Development.

This is the third ongoing nationwide (face to face) survey of 5000 households. The latest interviews were carried out between June and October 2008 by Colmar Brunton for MSD. This is important because “the bulk of the interviews were carried out just before the global financial crisis and recession impacted on households” and “working age benefit numbers were at their lowest in many years” (Background & Key Findings).

Presumably this means that the levels of poverty and hardship identified in the survey are now much worse.

The survey collects information from respondents about their material circumstances, including questions about ownership of household durables and their quality, their ability to keep the house warm, pay the bills, have broken down appliances repaired promptly, pursue hobbies and other interests, pay for a night out, and so on.

Income information was collected but the main focus was on non-income indicators of material living standards.

Some of the key findings are sobering and reinforce what many of us already know:

- older New Zealanders (65+) have low hardship rates (4%) relative to the whole population (13%), and children (0-17) have relatively high hardship rates (19%), using the quite stringent Level 2 threshold on the Economic Living Standards Index measure
- the low hardship rate for older New Zealanders means that the mix of current public provision (mainly NZS) and private provision built up by most of the current cohort over their lifetime (including equity in own home) are ensuring very low hardship rates among older New Zealanders
- the hardship rate for sole parent families is around 4 times that for those in two parent families (39% and 11% respectively)
- beneficiary families with dependent children have a hardship rate of around 5 times that for working families with children (51% and 11% respectively)...
- ... but around half the children in hardship are from working families (this is because there are some 4 to 5 times more working families than beneficiary families)
- sole parent families in work have a hardship rate (20%) well below that for sole parent beneficiary families (54%)

- Maori and Pacific people have hardship rates some 2 to 3 times that of those in the European or Other ethnic groups
- families with 4 or more children have higher hardship rates (27%) than those with 1-2 children (17%)

The latest survey notes an improvement in living standards for children since the last survey in 2004, with hardship rates falling from 26% to 19% - however the gains were made almost entirely from low to middle income working families.

Hardship rates for sole parent beneficiaries were unchanged at 55%. Improvements in child hardship statistics for working families during 2004 to 2008 were attributed to the assistance provided through the Working for Families package and relatively high employment rates during this period.

There was also some evidence of increasing hardship rates for individuals without children in low and middle income households.

How do we compare to other countries?

Using the EU measure of hardship we fare well on 4% for older New Zealanders (the EU median is 14%) but our 18% hardship rate for children is above the EU median of 15%.

The Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) has rightly commented that the Living Standards report is a mix of good and bad news.

The good news pertains to improvements in living standards for low income working families. The bad news is that CPAG’s long standing concern over the plight of beneficiary families is borne out in the findings that there were no improvements in living standards for beneficiary children, even though hardship rates for these families are very high.

Worse still, comments Susan St John, “this [survey] is based on 2008 data and does not include the effects of the recession”.

It is worth keeping in mind that at the time of the survey the Unemployment Rate was 4.2% (September quarter 2008) but that this has now risen to 7.3% for the December 2009 quarter.

In September 2008 23,000 people were receiving the Unemployment Benefit. By December 2009 this had doubled to over 66,000.

How many children live in benefit dependent households? As at the end of September 2009 - the latest figures we have - nearly 228,000 children aged under 18 years were being supported by a caregiver receiving a main benefit. This will have increased as unemployment increased in the last quarter of last year.

CPAG is urging the government to “pay attention to its own research and use the opportunity provided by the tax reforms to improve incomes for beneficiaries with children by extending the In Work Tax Credit to all low

income children.” CPAG is also calling on the government to raise the benefit earnings threshold from \$80 to \$150. Both measures are supported by NZCCSS. We agree with CPAG “these children can’t wait for the government’s books to get back into the black.”

A copy of the NZ Living Standards working paper (Dec 09) and the ‘background and key findings’ summary can be downloaded from the publications section of the MSD website: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/

INCOME SPLITTING PROPOSALS OPPOSED

NZCCSS has recently made a submission on an officials’ issues paper prepared by IRD on ‘An Income Splitting Tax Credit for Families With Children’. We also made a submission on an earlier income splitting discussion document. In both we have expressed our opposition to the idea.

The paper estimates that it would cost approximately \$450m per year if implemented and could be of benefit to over 300,000 families – an estimated 60% of families with a dependent child.

Income splitting occurs when a couple’s combined taxable income is split equally and progressive tax rates are applied to each partner’s share. This figure would then be compared with the actual amount of tax paid and the difference paid out by IRD as an income splitting tax credit.

Income splitting for tax purposes has been proposed by United Future as a way to “enable parents to have greater choice in their work and caring roles. It could help to alleviate the financial constraints on parents being able to stay at home, and give them more choice around work and home life balance” (excerpt from Introduction to discussion document).

National has agreed in its confidence and supply agreement with United Future to support income splitting legislation to a First Reading in Parliament.

The absence of income splitting as an option for exploration by the Tax Working Group is noteworthy. It does not appear to be a priority for the current government.

While NZCCSS welcomes debate on any policy that looks at providing better financial help for families and agrees with principles expressed in the paper that people who have opted out of the workforce (or reduced their hours) in order to raise a family are making a vital contribution to society, we have some difficulty in supporting income tax splitting proposals because of their untargeted nature.

Such proposals reward families on higher incomes and fail to provide financial help to the families most in need.

The poorest families are single parent families, low wage working families, benefit dependent families and those with three or more children.

Income splitting offers nothing for single parents and almost nothing for those on low incomes. We have suggested that there are a number of different ways that child poverty could be addressed that would be more effective than income splitting. Examples include:

- universalising access to the In Work Tax Credit component to the Working for Families package to enable beneficiaries with children to access this support
- reintroduce a universal child benefit
- lifting main benefit levels to allow people to cover essential living costs (or at the very least remove Temporary Additional Support and return the Special Benefit)
- lifting the level of income that beneficiaries can earn before their benefits are abated.

A full copy of our submission can be found on the NZCCSS website, www.justiceandcompassion.org.nz

Conferences and Events

NZCCSS Conference 2010 “Working Together We can...”

22-23rd April www.nzccss.org.nz

Perspectives of Ageing and Long-term Conditions – An opportunity to discuss local and international research on ageing

Tuesday 2 March, 9.00 am - 5.00 pm School of Population Health, Function Room 730-220, Level 2, Tamaki Campus 261 Morrin Road, Glen Innes, Auckland

Maori Housing Conference

22-24 March 2010, Te Papaiouru Marae, Rotorua. www.maorihousing.com

Alzheimers NZ Conference 2010

“People, Policy, Partnerships”

Wellington Convention Centre 6-8 May 2010
www.alzheimers.org.nz

Events Calendar: The Office for the Community & Voluntary Sector events calendar is a handy resources for key dates, events and conferences which are of possible interest to community organisations. See: www.ocvs.govt.nz/news-and-updates/events.html

Preventing and Minimising Gambling Harm 2010 – 2016

Six-year Strategic Plan and Three Year Service Plan

In August 2009 NZCCSS submitted comment on the Ministry of Health (MoH) Problem Gambling Strategy. The summary of submissions and MoH response to those submissions is available on the Ministry's website www.moh.govt.nz/problemgambling

NZCCSS supports the aims set out in the discussion document and the overall aim of the strategic plan to prevent harm caused by problem gambling and to reduce health inequalities associated with it. In our submission we noted that we believe there is insufficient evidence that a truly whole of government approach is being taken to problem gambling.

Greater emphasis is needed on ensuring that government agencies work closely together to minimise gambling harm. For example, it is important that the Department of Corrections and the Ministries of Justice and of Social Development give more priority to supporting the Department of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Health in implementing the strategy.

We note that while children and young people are not prominent among the statistical profiles of the "typical" problem gamblers, they are certainly among the most impacted by the harm caused through problem gambling. The strategy does not appear to specifically address this reality and neither does the Needs Assessment seem to pick up this impact on children and young people.

Public information needs further encouragement and we would support greater emphasis on this public education process. We welcome the additional funding allocated to public health services in the coming years. The social marketing campaign Kiwi Lives has had some success and would surely benefit from further investment in reaching people at risk.

NZCCSS welcomes the additional funding that is being applied to public health services to address problem gambling but also notes that overall funding is being reduced in the next three years. We question how, even with increased efficiency in services, genuine reductions in harm from problem gambling can be achieved with fewer resources. It cannot necessarily be expected that the impact of the economic recession will be reduced gambling. But it can be expected that the impacts of problem gambling will be more acute for families already under social and economic pressure through the recession.

NZCCSS supports the Ministry's proposed 30:70 weighting for the proposed Problem Gambling Levy calculations as we believe this recognises more fully the impact of those sectors causing the most harm. [Note: NZCCSS does not accept any funding sourced from gambling proceeds (such as Lotteries Commission or Gaming Machines Trusts)].

SENTENCING AND PAROLE REFORM BILL CHANGED

Because the urge to punish forms part of the unredeemed 'shadow' side of humanity, it cannot be appeased...The demand for harsher penalties is insatiable. It can never be met. This is why the latest measures are such a cop out. (Jim Consedine, comments on three strikes, *Tui Motu*, February 2010).

The Sentencing and Parole Reform Bill is a Government Bill introduced by the Justice Minister Simon Power in February 2009. The purpose of this Bill was to create a three stage regime of increasing consequences for the worst repeat violent offenders – commonly referred to as a 'three strikes' approach. NZCCSS made a written and oral submission opposing this Bill.

This Bill in its original form made qualifying offences those for which an offender is sentenced to five or more years. On first strike offence a warning is given, on a second strike offence eligibility for parole was removed and the offender was to serve the sentence in full. On a third qualifying offence the offender was to receive an automatic life sentence with a 25 year minimum non parole period.

We opposed this Bill on the grounds that "the removal of parole as proposed in this Bill removes prisoners' sense of hope, damages rehabilitative work and places both prisoners and prison staff at risk because those prisoners with life sentences have little incentive for good behaviour." We also pointed out that "there is a distinct lack of evidence from the American experience regarding the efficacy of three strikes type legislation on reducing crime".

In the revised version of the Bill negotiated by National and ACT and announced on January 19th (which NZCCSS has yet to see) we understand that a list of 36 qualifying sexual and violence offences has been put together with each offence having a maximum penalty of seven years of more in prison. This is an improvement on the original 5 years of more threshold in the original Bill. The revised Bill also removes the automatic life sentence on the third qualifying strike leaving the offender to serve the full sentence without parole. Despite these improvements we are still opposed to the overall direction of the Bill.

Howard League for Penal Reform President Peter Williams QC has commented that "The policy fails to address the underlying causes of crime, which include poverty and alcohol and drug addiction". Kim Workman, Director of Rethinking Crime and Punishment, believes "offenders sentenced without parole will lack the motivation to reform and could become a major management problem in prison". Others have raised concerns over the policy moving discretion away from the judiciary to the Police.

The Law and Order Select Committee is due to report back to government by the end of March. We will keep you posted.

How Should We Care for the Carers, Now and into the Future? Manaaki Tangata

The future effectiveness of our health and social services will depend on how well the formal health and social service sector interacts with the informal family/whānau carers. This report released at the end of January is a thought provoking and sound analysis of the situation for carers in our health sector.

The strength of this report is that it seeks to integrate its analysis of the experiences and needs of an estimated 420,000 informal carers who do the bulk of the caring for the aged, disabled, mentally ill or those with long-term conditions. They struggle to interact with a health system that is not flexible enough to respond to the unique needs of each caring situation but at the same time lacks a consistency in access to services around the country.

Maori and Pacific carers identified numerous barriers including costs, language and lack of “cultural fit” in the way the support health services are offered. The general picture is one of fragmented and uncoordinated services. As one carer describes it: “Not only did I have to get him up in the morning, wash, change, fed, dressed, nappies, take him to wherever, I could do all that, but then I found myself juggling appointments with 17 different agencies, receptionists and assessors, and advocates and counsellors, therapists, and you name it, and it was all put onto me, so there was no clear way through.”

Many carers feel that their knowledge and input is not sufficiently valued in planning and decision-making. As a result the Committee recommends actions to:

- Reduce fragmentation in the care system
- Achieve national consistency and local flexibility
- Raise awareness
- Improve workforce capability
- Prepare for the future

Case study examples of good innovations responding to these issues are identified. Wairarapa DHB Needs Assessment Services Coordination Agency FOCUS is seeking to become the single point of entry for anyone regardless of their diagnosis. This includes disability of any age, home & community support, respite, support for carers and palliative care. A patient’s carer’s needs

Needs of older prisoners in Aotearoa New Zealand

Wellington based Wesley Community Action Community Worker Tom White is currently exploring the situation of older prisoners in Aotearoa New Zealand. The initial intention is to enquire whether older prisoners are especially marginalised within our country and what an appropriate and viable community development project might look like. If you are interested in exploring this issue further with Tom, please contact him at Wesley Community Action (04) 389 3433 or email twhite@wesleyca.org.nz

are assessed at the same time and the DHB reports that it has been able to improve relationships with primary care clinicians and better coordinate services for patients with complex needs. All this has been achieved “within existing funding arrangements.” Respite care at Waitemata DHB was redesigned after surveying users to find out what services they needed. This resulted in a broader range of options being offered to carers, including in-home respite care, which was the preferred option for the majority of those surveyed. The DHB has also built in flexibility to change the mix if carers become unwell to provide a higher level of care to the older person should their carer become unwell.

The full report is online at the National Health Committee website: www.nhc.health.govt.nz

IN BRIEF:

Caregiver Survey Report: To be respected and valued for the work they do is a key priority for caregivers working in aged residential care, according to a NZ Nurses Organisation (NZNO) survey recently released. Pay, work-life balance and providing quality care were other key priorities named. The survey of 1,000 NZNO members indicates that moves to increase the levels of training may be starting to take effect. But concerns are raised that caregivers reported performing tasks more commonly thought of as Registered Nurse (RN) tasks such as giving out medication without RN supervision. This is despite that fact that almost all of the caregivers reported that they had access to RN support at all times. The caregivers surveyed supported the idea of standards and regulation for care givers along with the expectation that this would lead to increased pay and recognition for the role. The NZNO has issued a call to Government to support quality care in the residential aged care sector through prioritising training, nationally recognised career pathways and pay linked to training and skills development. The report is online at: www.nzno.org.nz/activities/research

Five Million Dollar Investment in Respite Care - what does this look like in practice?: The Government committed an extra \$5m per year in last year’s Budget targeted at dedicated residential respite for older people. The implementation of this funding began in January 2010 with \$2.5m allocated to District Health Boards using the population based funding model. Carved up among 21 DHBs this ends up as amounts varying between \$45,000 for the smaller DHBs to around half a million dollars for the largest. The funding is specifically allocated to increasing dedicated residential respite capacity and this is based on number of additional “bed days” able to be purchased. The mix of how this is allocated is determined by individual DHBs who have worked through proposals with the MoH. Factors that have been considered in implementing the policy by DHBs include whether to fund additional rest home, hospital or dementia bed days and in what mix. The MoH has drawn up draft service specifications guidelines that are a “non-mandatory nationwide description” of services to be provided and can be viewed online at www.nsfl.health.govt.nz Implementation has begun in most DHBs although some are still working through tendering processes. The Ministry is requiring DHBs to report back in April and July on how the funding increases are being applied and to demonstrate that capacity is being increased.

RECOMMENDED READING

Nurse Practitioners Working With Older People

A new Ministry of Health publication highlighting the role of Nurse Practitioners (NP), includes the stories of 63 NPs who have qualified in the first eight years of registration in NZ.

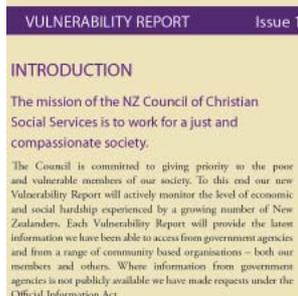
One of the pioneers of NP in NZ, Dr Michal Boyd says there are only four NPs in gerontology care and the country needs more NPs with expertise in this area. Part of her work is with a gerontology nurse service that works with the highest-risk older people to help them live as healthily as possible and also supports staff at aged residential care facilities with education and clinical coaching. She sees the work as being successful in reducing hospital admissions for those older people in the programmes as well as fewer pressure ulcers, leg ulcers and skin tears.



Liz Langer is another NP based at Dunedin Hospital and working in the community in rest homes. With 15 years NP experience in America she works with older people with long-term psychiatric disorders and anxiety. She assists rest homes in dealing with residents whose behaviour may be causing problems and helps to avoid unnecessary hospital admissions. Understanding the links between medical condition and mental state and the importance of prescribing the right medications are keys to her role.

The MoH's Clinical Training Agency is supporting nurses to undertake post-graduate education at Masters level that would enable them to seek registration as NPs.

Nurse Practitioners – A Healthy Future for New Zealand can be downloaded at the MoH website: www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/nurse-practitioners-a-healthy-future-for-nz



The next **Vulnerability Report** will be published by NZCCSS in early March. Please also visit our regular '**Policy Watch**' bulletin available from our website.



MANAAKI HAPORI - SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES Parishes! Church communities!

Let us know if you are planning to initiate or continue successful community-facing activities in 2010

Contact Betsan Martin
phone (04) 473-2627 or (021) 388 337
or email Betsan@nzccss.org.nz

KETE KUPU - Word Basket

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