

SPECIAL POST ELECTION NEWSLETTER

NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL SERVICES



In Brief

Key Ministers

Social Development:
David Benson-Pope

Health:
Pete Hodgson

Housing:
Chris Carter

CYF:
Ruth Dyson

Associate Senior Citizens:
Winston Peters

National Spokespeople

Welfare:
Judith Collins

Health:
Tony Ryall

Housing:
Phil Heatley

CYF:
Anne Tolley

Key Agreements

- Raising minimum wage
- Elder care addressed
- Budgets to include initiatives on further reducing the levels of child poverty

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POST-ELECTION WRAP

In this special, combined General Social Services / Services for Older People newsletter, we've compiled a 'who's who' of the new Government, as well as taking a look at some of the other parties' spokespeople.

Although the election was held over a month ago, we've waited until the major announcements from both Labour and National have been published before summarising the names you're likely to see mentioned in the media this coming term. We also examine some of the relevant agreements between Labour, the Green Party, New Zealand First and United Future.

The following lists only include the issues NZCCSS' three Policy Group areas cover – and only note the minister or spokesperson's portfolios that relate to these three Policy Groups – i.e. services for older people; children and families; and housing and poverty. For example, new Social Development and Employment Minister, David Benson-Pope is also Minister for the Environment – an important portfolio – but one which NZCCSS does not generally focus its attention on so we've not listed his other responsibilities.

To keep the run-down as simple as possible we've listed the broader portfolios and then noted the relevant government minister and other parties' spokespeople (where they've been announced), as well as the broader geographical location of the electorate MPs.

Full run-downs of respective parties' ministers and spokespeople can be found at:

ACT
Green Party
Labour

Maori Party
National
New Zealand First
Progressive
United Future

www.act.org.nz
www.greens.org.nz
www.labour.org.nz or
www.beehive.govt.nz
www.maoriparty.com
www.national.org.nz
www.nzfirst.org.nz
www.progressive.org.nz
www.unitedfuture.org.nz

Social Development; Child, Youth and Family; Senior Citizens; Community and Voluntary Sector

Government

- Minister for Social Development and Employment: David Benson-Pope (MP for Dunedin South, former Fisheries Minister – replaces Steve Maharey who has moved to Education)
- Minister for Senior Citizens; Associate Minister for Child, Youth and Family: (no change from pre-election): Ruth Dyson (MP for Banks Peninsula – Canterbury)
- Minister for Youth Affairs: Nanaia Mahuta (MP for Tainui – Waikato and new to the Ministry)
- Associate Minister for Senior Citizens: Winston Peters (List MP, New Zealand First)
- Associate Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector: Winnie Laban (MP for Mana – Porirua / Wellington and new to the Ministry)

Green Party

- Children's Affairs; Community and Voluntary Sector; Social Services: Sue Bradford (List MP)
- Youth Affairs: Metiria Turei (List MP)

National

- Welfare; Family Affairs (no change from pre-election): Judith Collins (MP for Clevedon – Auckland)
- Senior Citizens (no change from pre-election): Sandra Goudie (MP for Coromandel)
- Associate Welfare (CYFS): Anne Tolley (MP for East Coast)
- Associate Welfare: Paula Bennett (List MP)
- Policy on Children: Dr Paul Hutchinson (MP for Port Waikato)

New Zealand First

- Family (Women's Affairs, Senior Citizens) (no change from pre-election): Barbara Stewart (List MP)

United Future

- Social Development and Employment; Youth Affairs; Senior Citizens; Community and Voluntary Sector: Judy Turner (List MP)

Health; ACC; Disability Issues

Government

- Minister for Health: Pete Hodgson (MP for Dunedin North, former Associate Minister for Health – replaces Annette King)
- Associate Minister for Health: Peter Dunne (United Future MP for Ohariu-Belmont - Wellington)

Green Party

- Health: Sue Kedgley (List MP)
- ACC: Sue Bradford (List MP)

National

- Health: Tony Ryall (MP for the Bay of Plenty, former law and order spokesman – replaces Dr Paul Hutchison)
- ACC; Disability Issues: Dr Paul Hutchinson (MP for Port Waikato)

New Zealand First

- Health: Barbara Stewart (List MP)

United Future

- Health: Judy Turner (List MP)

NB: The Government, National and New Zealand First have a number of associate health

Housing

Government

- Minister for Housing: Chris Carter (MP for Te Atatu – west Auckland, former Minister for Conservation et al)

Green Party

- Housing: Sue Bradford (List MP)

National

- Housing: Phil Heatley (MP for Whangarei)

United Future

- Housing – Judy Turner (List MP)

Agreements and Policies of Note

In forming government, Labour has arrangements with the Green Party, the Progressive Party, New Zealand First and United Future.

The full text of the arrangements can be found at www.beehive.govt.nz

Some of the relevant agreements which cover NZCCSS' issues are noted:

Green Party: The Greens have three 'levels' of policy areas – or simply put – a series of understandings between Labour and the Green Party, with an agreement regarding the community and voluntary sector at level two.

A policy initiative NZCCSS' members may be interested in is the raising of the minimum wage, with the agreement noting *“The Green Party is committed to a minimum wage of \$12.00 an hour. The Labour/Progressive Government has raised the minimum wage each year it has been in office, and agrees to continue to increase the level on an annual basis in consultation with the Green Party, with a view to it being set at \$12.00 per hour by the end of 2008 if economic conditions permit.”*

The agreement also includes a reference that *“budgets over this term of Parliament will include initiatives”* which includes *“further reducing the levels of child poverty”*.

New Zealand First: As noted in the media, Winston Peters has been appointed Foreign Affairs Minister, but it is of interest and note that of the seven policy initiatives agreed to by Labour and New Zealand First, 'senior citizens' is listed first:

“The Government has agreed to:

- *Develop a Seniors Card able to be used to identify the holder's eligibility for all public sector entitlements, and which is capable of also being used for claiming negotiated commercial discounts.*
- *Ensure that the rate of New Zealand Superannuation is set at 66 per cent of the average ordinary time weekly earnings as from 1 April 2006.*
- *Agree that better recognition can be given to veterans of active overseas service and investigate the best way of achieving that.*
- *Investigate ways to improve options for senior citizens who may be eligible for foreign pensions as well as New Zealand Superannuation.*
- *Address the issue of elder care as a matter of priority in the 2006 budget.”*

United Future's agreement with Labour includes a *“Policy Programme... the Labour-led government has agreed during this term of Parliament to adopt and implement the following broad principles, policies and priorities advanced by United Future.”* This includes the agreement that *“the Families Commission will not be downgraded, and will be the agency responsible for co-ordinating government support to “third sector” organisations providing parenting education and relationship counselling programmes.”*

In an area which NZCCSS has an interest in, *“the government has identified the pledges on its commitment card along with their election policy to extend the working for families package as priorities for them and United Future agrees to support the legislation required to give effect to these policies.”*

Parliament at a Glance

How the 121 seats are divided:

52 List Members of Parliament, 62 Electorate, 7 Maori seats

ACT 2 (1 Electorate & 1 List)

Green 6 (all list)

Labour 50 (31 Electorate & 19 List)

Maori Party 4 (Electorate)

National 48 (31 Electorate & 17 List)

New Zealand First 7 (all List)

Progressive 1 (Electorate)

United Future 3 (1 Electorate & 2 List)

Source: www.ps.parliament.govt.nz/schools/texts/members.shtml

What Is NZCCSS Doing?

Now that the announcements have been made and agreements signed, NZCCSS is writing to relevant ministers and spokespeople from across the political spectrum requesting meetings with them.

In addition to focussing our attention on the specific issues we shared with you during the election campaign, we have prepared an 'Incoming Government Briefing' which introduces Council and the work of our members to new ministers. It provides a theological framework for our discussions and highlights some issues we'd like the government to focus on this Parliamentary term that cross traditional departmental 'boundaries'. These include:

- Affordable Housing for People on Low Incomes
- Ageing Population and Care for Older People
- Poverty within Families
- Child Abuse and the Continued Need for Effective Co-ordination in Government Workforce
- Income Disparities, and
- Income levels for Charitable Non-Government Organisations

NZCCSS is proud to contribute to the leadership provided by the national Church Leaders (made up of the leaders of a number of Christian churches, including those whom NZCCSS represents) and we'll continue to work with this important group in 2006.

We're on the web
www.nzccss.org.nz

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Thanks to Trust Waikato - New Website

NZCCSS would like to thank Trust Waikato for their recent donation which will allow us to redevelop our website later this year. Our web address www.nzccss.org.nz will not change – but it will be easier to use and include far more information. We will keep you informed of the changes to our site, which are likely to include our General Social Services and Services for Older People newsletters being revamped and published in a more reader-friendly format.

NZCCSS

Mission: The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services works for a just and compassionate society in Aotearoa New Zealand. We see this as a continuation of the mission of Jesus Christ.

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services represents the Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, and Presbyterian social services agencies, as well as the Methodist and the Salvation Army churches.

The role of NZCCSS is to represent the common interests and vision of these agencies at the national level, supply information and networking opportunities to support members provide quality services, and develop, critique and advocate for policies that will assist poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society.

Feedback

If you have any comments or queries about this special newsletter please do not hesitate to contact Jeremy Irvine at (04) 473 2627 or admin@nzccss.org.nz