

# KETE KUPU

## WORD BASKET

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New Zealand Council Of  
Christian Social Services

### Please help the Children's Commissioner do well for our kids



[Photo source: Office of Children's Commissioner [www.occ.org.nz/home/childpoverty/explore\\_the\\_issue](http://www.occ.org.nz/home/childpoverty/explore_the_issue)]

Here is a real opportunity to do better for our children.

Not so long ago, the Children's Commissioner got this idea that he wanted to deal with child poverty and all the damage it does. So he collected together some of the best minds he knew and told them to 'go to it', and come up with a plan to fix the problem.

And so they did. It's called Solutions to Child Poverty in New Zealand and it's on the Children's Commissioner's website at [www.occ.org.nz/publications/child\\_poverty](http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/child_poverty). The 38 page document is a refreshingly positive report, full of practical ideas for things we can do now, that are quite simple, and do not cost a lot of money. It is clearly child friendly and written with the best interests of children in mind. It doesn't just stop with the short term solutions. One of the report's strengths is it also addresses deeper causes of poverty and ameliorating these in the longer term.

The authors knew they were writing amid Welfare Reform and Green and White papers, so they have put in some similarities, e.g. getting parents off benefits, and accessible affordable quality early childhood education. However, the authors go further and seek family friendly workplaces and incentives for Work and Income to better support parents into work. They also recommend a Children's Act (rather like the Green Paper), but their Children's Act requires a poverty strategy based on their report's short and long term solutions.

There are other ideas well removed from the Green Paper and Welfare Reform. The authors use the well documented wisdom about proportionate universality, recognise the expense of young children, and suggest creating a new child payment to support all children. Additional payments would be targeted to those needing more.

They also address some of the biggies – like housing availability, affordability and quality. They do not avoid the horrible statistics about so many Māori children, and advocate

for better holistic appropriate measures of Māori wellbeing. Likewise for Pasifika children.

There are things in this report readers will probably like:

1. Ensuring free primary care visits for all children 0-6, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
2. Increasing the number of low income families and whānau who own their own homes.

Then there might be things readers are not so sure about:

1. Assisting parents to increase hours of work up to about 30 hours per week by the time their child starts school.
2. Developing a national strategy for food in schools

The Experts' Group want us all to read the report and send them some comments on what we think by October 12. They are particularly interested in

- Which proposals will be effective in reducing child poverty?
- Which proposals are less likely to be effective?
- What are the most important proposals to reduce child poverty?
- What needs to be done first and why?
- What is missing from the package?

There is an online survey form to help us respond at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/child\\_poverty](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/child_poverty). There are also plenty of extra working papers and a summary of the main proposals at [www.occ.org.nz/publications/child\\_poverty](http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/child_poverty).

There is an NZCCSS summary of recommendations under Publications at [www.nzccss.org.nz](http://www.nzccss.org.nz)

### Poverty

*Poverty is just a word...  
but a word that means a lot  
not when said  
but when seen.*

*Poverty is just a cycle  
but an on-going cycle  
not being altered  
but left aside.*

*Poverty is on our conscience  
but at the back of our minds  
not acted on...  
but why not?*

-by Sa'o, Otahuhu

[Source: Office of Children's Commissioner  
[www.occ.org.nz/home/childpoverty/explore\\_the\\_issue](http://www.occ.org.nz/home/childpoverty/explore_the_issue)]

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## Why Universal Child Support is not "Dopey"



[Source: Office of Children's Commissioner [www.occ.org.nz/home/childpoverty/explore\\_the\\_issue](http://www.occ.org.nz/home/childpoverty/explore_the_issue) ]

In the heat of a recent Parliament debate Prime Minister John Key dismissed as "dopey" the idea of paying a universal child benefit that would, by definition, go to children in the wealthiest as well poorest homes. In saying this, the PM was speaking for many of us, because it seems obvious that the best way to spend money on reducing poverty is to target it to those who need it most.

Wait a minute - surely the leading academics, policy advisers, advocates and business people on the Children's Commissioner's Experts Panel are not "dopey" people and they must have thought very hard about ways that child poverty can be reduced in this country? Indeed, many of them have devoted their entire careers to studying the best ways to help people get out of poverty.

What the experts have found is that universal benefits actually work better than targeted ones that seek to select the "most needy" or "worthy" of tax-funded support. That is to leave aside all debates about fairness, justice, equity and opportunity.

When the welfare systems of wealthy countries are compared, the countries that do best have "encompassing" welfare systems in which all citizens have access to benefits. One very helpful paper used by the Experts Panel shows the countries like Denmark, Finland and France that are more committed to universal forms of child support also achieve the biggest reductions in child poverty, while countries like NZ with highly targeted systems do worse.

The main reasons for this "paradox" of the inefficiency of targeting are that countries that use universal approaches avoid stigmatising the poor because everyone receives assistance. Universal child benefits also achieve a political buy-in because everyone benefits but the poorest benefit proportionately the most, exclusion errors (where people miss out on what they are entitled to and need) are reduced and the shared commitment means there is a willingness to increase budgets (i.e. through higher taxes).

You might want to voice your support for this approach, that isn't so "dopey" after all...

### References:

**Child Poverty in OECD Countries: Lessons for Developing Countries**, S. Kidd, 2012. [www.developmentpathways.co.uk](http://www.developmentpathways.co.uk)

**"The Paradox of Redistribution and Strategies of Equality: Welfare State Institutions, Inequality and Poverty in the Western Countries"**. W. Korpi & J. Palme, 1998.



# Liability or Citizen? Welfare Reform

A particularly nasty article in the September 13 Dominion Post begins “Young beneficiaries and people on an invalid’s benefit are responsible for the majority of the \$78 billion cost of those currently on welfare...” (Cost of welfare for lifetime put at \$78b). The article went on to spell out the new investment approach to welfare and links to the latest welfare developments.

In the July 2012 issue of Kete Kupu we summarised welfare reform to date and the plans for future change. So what now? There are two “what nows”, neither of which are really new announcements. First there is the legislation; the Social Security (Benefit Categories and Work Focus) Amendment Bill which was introduced on 17 September.

It includes actual changes to welfare payment rules and eligibility, and restructure of existing benefits into three new benefits. There’s drug testing, together with social obligations for parents, work ability assessments, and potential for benefits to be stopped when warrants for arrest are not cleared promptly. Probably the most user-friendly information about the Bill’s content and summary of reform generally is Paula Bennett’s September 17 news release at [www.beehive.govt.nz/release/second-stage-welfare-reforms-introduced](http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/second-stage-welfare-reforms-introduced) and the questions and answers at the bottom. Submissions are due on 1st November. Enthusiasts can find regulatory impact statements and other documents on the Ministry of Social Development website [www.msd.govt.nz/](http://www.msd.govt.nz/).

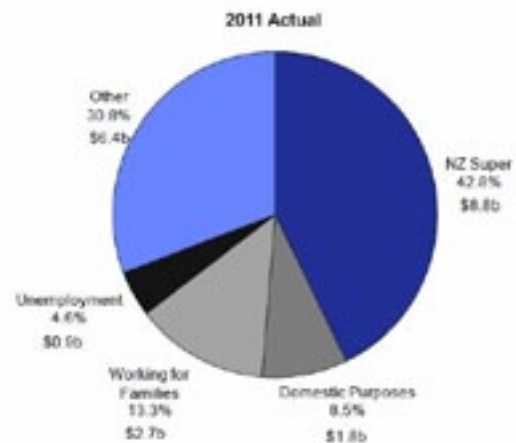
Then there is the new approach to welfare being spelled out. Government paid \$800,000 for an Australian firm Taylor Fry to do actuarial sums, and calculate “current client benefit liability” to be \$78.1 billion (MSD website, Newsroom, Taylor Fry valuation key findings and background facts, p.1). This new investment approach to welfare has unpalatable implications about how we think of human beings.

As Taylor Fry clearly show, once we get into the language of investment we also get into “assets” and “liabilities” which raises a question about how we value one another. People are citizens in democratic societies, and have rights and responsibilities which go with that role. The welfare reform language suggests our value is associated with our market economic role; i.e. we are liabilities if we cost the state money and, by implication, assets if we do not.

Sure enough, Minister Benefit says “taxpayers spend \$22 million a day on welfare payments and want to know we’re managing the needs of individuals as well as the costs of this system” (Press Statement 12 September 2012). So if you cost taxpayer money you are in the liability camp, and if you pay tax you get to be an asset. It’s then not a big jump to suggest people, who theoretically pay large amounts of tax, like the Westpac CEO who receives over \$5 million per annum are our biggest assets. NZCCSS is not keen on the morality of where all this is going. It is obnoxious to think of our invalids as liabilities. Looked at in this way, the Government would label superannuitants as our biggest “liabilities.”

Children are in the cross- over camp either as (a) investments who will be future economic units delivering goods and services or (b) liabilities, as in reasons for people to get the DPB and cost taxpayers an Awful Lot of Money. Of course, this takes us right back to the legislative part of welfare reform. If we make sure those beneficiary children go to early childhood education and get their immunisations etc, they are less likely to become “liabilities” in the future.

**Components of social assistance expenses in 2011 and 2016**



Source: The Treasury, Budget Economic and Fiscal Update 2012 p.31.

## Food in Schools

A recent Campbell Live news clip portrayed the stark reality of kids’ schools lunches for kids coming from low income families. It highlights the debate about how poverty and inequality impacts on children’s learning. In their 2011 report, the Child Poverty Action Group put it simply “there is a now a great deal of evidence that a good breakfast improves children’s educational outcomes including test scores, as well as their school attendance and classroom behaviour” (Hunger For Learning: Nutritional Barriers to Children’s Education [www.cpag.org.nz/resources/](http://www.cpag.org.nz/resources/)). The debate about parental responsibility and the logistics and practicalities of providing a good breakfast for kids in low-decile schools distracts from the urgency that is required

– the right of children to food and the damage that poor nutrition is doing to them. Providing breakfast on its own is not a magic solution but it is clear the current fruit in schools and charity-based programmes are not sufficient to meet the extent of need.

A community development approach to meeting the breakfast in schools issue will require that schools, social services, churches and other community groups take the chance (supported by effective government funding) to respond and while feeding the kids, work with their communities to try and respond to the poverty and other social issues that leave kids without breakfast or a school lunch.



# CLOSER TOGETHER WHAKATATA MAI



## REDUCING INEQUALITIES

### Income Inequality Reaches New Heights

Inequality is rising - this is the bad news that was contained in the latest MSD Household Incomes in New Zealand report released in August. Income inequality has hit a peak above any level measured since the early 1980s, when the data began being collected.

The highest income households are the only ones who

are doing better, while middle and low income households are going backwards. The divide between higher income earners and the rest has been anchored in. Another Treasury report shows that since 1988, after adjusting for inflation, the bottom 50% of income earners have not increased their incomes at all, while the top 10% of income earners have enjoyed large increases.

#### Children Bear the Burden of Inequality

The result of this income disparity is also documented in the MSD report, based on data from a longitudinal study of family incomes. It shows 16% of children in persistent poverty over a seven year period, with Maori (23%) and Pacific (29%) children even more likely to be in that situation.

This is the stark price of a generation of high inequality - a generation of children growing up in poverty. As the CTU points out, an effective income tax system and good public services are vital to ensuring everyone gets a fair income, because market incomes in NZ are now hugely unequal. The market alone does not provide.

**Read the Household Incomes Report:** [www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/monitoring/household-incomes/index.html](http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/monitoring/household-incomes/index.html)

**Read the CTU Economic Bulletin** [union.org.nz/economicbulletin138](http://union.org.nz/economicbulletin138)

## The Impact of inequality on our mental health - Mental Health Awareness Week 8-14 October 2012

[www.mentalhealth.org.nz](http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz)

The Mental Health Foundation is calling on us to “take notice” during this year’s Mental Health Awareness week. Taking time to become more mindful of the inequalities that literally prey on our minds would help.

One in five people live with some form of mental illness in New Zealand, which is more than twice the rate of more equal countries such as Spain, Germany and Japan. Māori have an even higher rate with close to one in three (29.5%) facing mental health problems. Depression, addictions and anxiety-related illnesses are more common in unequal societies where more people experience on daily basis the reality of missing out.

In New Zealand we face a very distressingly high rate of youth suicide and there is evidence of rising youth suicide rates that relate to deteriorating economic wellbeing and are associated with being raised in a family with low socio-economic status. ([www.closetogether.org.nz/inequality-in-nz/index-of-health-and-social-problems/mental-illness/](http://www.closetogether.org.nz/inequality-in-nz/index-of-health-and-social-problems/mental-illness/)).

The way we treat other people in our economic system is closely tied up with how we treat each other in other parts of our society. Reducing the gap between rich and poor and reducing poverty are hugely powerful ways to give hope to thousands of people in this country. Taxation is an efficient and organised way to share our wealth as a nation. Let those of us who have more also pay more and do this out of a sense of gratitude for the wellbeing that we are fortunate to enjoy and a desire that others should enjoy such wellbeing also.

So let’s join the call for mindfulness - in learning to be



grateful for what we have, may we also learn to share with others out of a sense of gratefulness, so that we can all discover the hope that helps lead us out of despair.



# Taking Action on Inequality – Things You Can Do

For those of you who are convinced about the evidence and the justice of reducing inequality, here are some of the ways to contribute to reducing inequalities.



**Living Wage** – sign up your organisation, faith group, or school to the campaign for a Living Wage and support the principle of a minimum income to ensure the basic necessities of life for families: [www.livingwage.org.nz](http://www.livingwage.org.nz).

**Time banking** – check out if there is a time bank in your region and get involved. If not, think about getting one going in your area [www.timebank.org.nz/](http://www.timebank.org.nz/). Explore other ways of saving and escape the interest trap such as Savings Pools at Living Economies [www.le.org.nz/](http://www.le.org.nz/)



**Make a submission** on welfare and child tax credit legislation that is before Parliament (see the Submissions & Legislation p.11).

**Child Poverty – Send in your comments** on the Children’s Commissioner’s Expert Panel Report on Solutions to Child Poverty due by 12th October (see article on Page 1)

**Get involved in a co-operative** – 2012 is International Year of the Cooperative and on 18th October in Wellington there will be a public meeting to learn more about how cooperatives can help overcome social and economic inequality. Contact: [paul.barber@nzccss.org.nz](mailto:paul.barber@nzccss.org.nz)



**Follow us and Like us** on Facebook

CloserTogether, Twitter @CloserTogether and sign-up to our Closer Together Choice – the more sign-ups we have, the more this shows the support out there for action to reduce inequality



**Get in touch with others in your region:**

**CloserTogether Whakatata Mai contacts:**

<http://www.closetogether.org.nz/take-action/regional-meetings-and-networks/>

**ClosingTheGap contacts:**

<http://www.closingthegap.org.nz/how-can-you-help/area-groups-and-coordinators/>

**Christchurch Occupy**

[workersparty.org.nz/2012/09/14/occupy-christchurch-womyns-group/](http://workersparty.org.nz/2012/09/14/occupy-christchurch-womyns-group/)

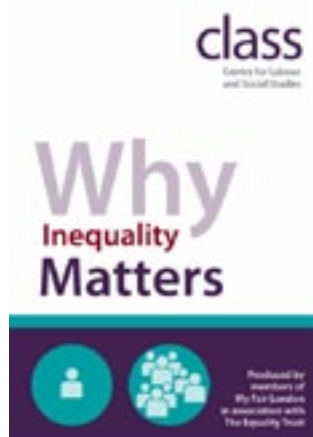
**Go along to the public lecture Forums for the Future:**

**Rich and Poor** - on the gap between rich and poor – and how to close it. Thursday 4th October 6.30 – 8pm, Soundings Theatre, Te Papa, Wellington

## More ideas...

**Read about more ideas to reduce income inequality on our website:** <http://www.closetogether.org.nz/reduce-income-inequality/>

## A couple of very good publications out of the UK are excellent resources for understanding why it is important reduce inequality.



*Why Inequality Matters* summarises the arguments and evidence for reducing inequality in a very readable 32 page-format. Read more on the Equality Trust website: [www.equalitytrust.org.uk/node/693](http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/node/693)

If 32 pages is too long for you then try this snappy little 7-pager *Ten Reasons to Care About Economic Inequality* published by the UK nef (new economics foundation) in 2011. As they say, it’s all very well to talk about tackling poverty or improving social mobility, but the reality is that inequality lies at the heart of both these and other social issues.

<http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/ten-reasons-to-care-about-economic-inequality>



# Poor Quality Housing, Lack of Housing is Making Our Children and Older People Sick...

...but the Government is still “thinking about it”. The staggering lack of urgency around social housing continues. Presumably pre-occupied with selling off state assets, the government is not finding the time to invest in one the most urgent needs facing our communities – quality housing for people on low incomes.

South Auckland community workers from the Sisters of Mercy are outraged at the dozens of Housing NZ houses that stand empty and neglected in South Auckland while struggling families sleep in garages or in over-priced and poor quality boarding houses. The massive Hobsonville housing development in Auckland that was started in 2006 on the basis that 1,000 of the proposed 3,000 new homes would be either state rental units or affordable private rental or home ownership models. In the end a mere 17 Gateway homes were sold as affordable first homes to middle income families. Not a single state or NGO rental house has been built or is planned to be built. The Salvation Army in latest of a long line of excellent housing reports, has analysed the “political economy” that is behind this complete failure of housing policy to deliver what is so urgently needed by people on low-incomes.

There is no one single factor that has led to such an utterly dysfunctional housing market in this country, but if you listen only to the property development lobby, you are given the impression that local authorities and the provisions of the Resource Management Act are preventing them from developing more cheap land on the fringes of the large cities like Auckland.

Indeed, the government has already signalled that after taking a leisurely six months to look at the latest (of numerous recent) housing reports, this time from the

Productivity Commission (released in April), it will make changes to the Resource Management Act to make more residential land available in an effort to curb rising house prices.

The full response from the Government is not due out until late October, but it can only be hoped that they will address the other factors in the equation. Despite all the noise from developers, there is plenty of evidence of “land banking” where developers buy up property and then sit on it until the time is “right” for the best return on developing that land and to stop competitors obtaining it. In actual fact there is already enough land available within the existing limits of Auckland to build thousands of new homes.

The Government will have to take action to address the massive wealth inequality that has opened up a huge divide that has allowed “some Aucklanders to occupy larger and larger houses, while other Aucklanders live in more crowded houses and sheds, garages and caravans”. Our tax system allows house prices to become overly inflated while at the same time billions of tax subsidies are needed for hundreds of thousands of low and middle income earners whose chances of ever owning a house are low and who must live in poor quality and over-priced rental housing provided by a dysfunctional private rental housing market.

It is important that the Government does not indulge in “cherry-picking” the recommendations it likes from various reports. The social and economic drivers that continue to define the housing crisis need to be addressed.

**Read the Salvation Army report “Adding it all up” here: [www.salvationarmy.org.nz/research-media/social-policy-and-parliamentary-unit/housing/](http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/research-media/social-policy-and-parliamentary-unit/housing/)**

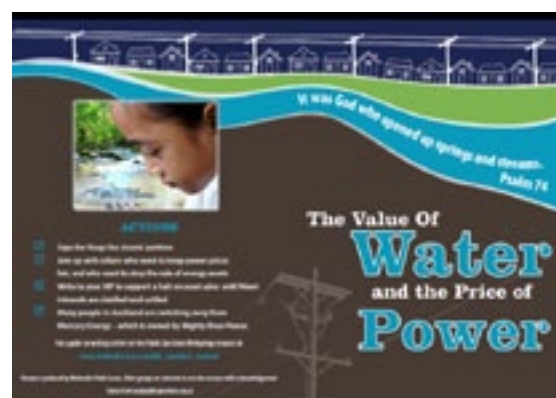
## Energy Poverty and Asset Sales

There is a significant oversupply of electricity in New Zealand - so why aren't electricity prices dropping for retail consumers? One explanation comes via the news that Bluff aluminium smelter owners, multi-national corporation Rio Tinto, are trying to renegotiate the price of electricity for the smelter that uses 14% of New Zealand's total electricity supply. Wholesale customers like Rio Tinto, have leverage to bargain down prices, ordinary consumers don't - we just get to play musical chairs between the various energy companies and pay a higher price to prop up their profits. We have no choice but to buy electricity to live and to heat our homes. It is a basic right for all people to have access to affordable energy, yet many families can't afford the electricity they need. As Grey Power has pointed out, the way retail customers on low incomes try to get by is by turning heaters off, wrapping up in blankets, and even going to bed early to keep warm.

Another reason for high electricity prices is the government asset sales programme. The four government-owned power companies are busy preening themselves to woo investors with promises of large profits and high dividend returns. The mythical rigours of the market will most likely be visited onto ordinary consumers, as large customers like Rio Tinto drive

a hard bargain, so we can expect the trend of the past 20 years of energy prices will continue – retail prices increasing well ahead of industrial and commercial pricing (which in real terms haven't increased at all).

The Methodist Public Questions network is asking us to take a stewardship approach to power assets and that includes our water. When the debate becomes one about kaitiakitanga and stewardship rather than right to own and make a profit, our shared responsibility to care for each other and the resources for future of our land becomes clear. [www.methodist.org.nz/public\\_questions\\_network](http://www.methodist.org.nz/public_questions_network)



# Watch out for Burnout

*"After the earthquakes many people just hunkered down. Many medical and counselling centres went quiet for months. Now we're seeing the emergence of longer term stress, manifesting in a broad range of symptoms that affect families and workplaces. Often people often feel exhausted and unequal to the extra responsibilities they carry."*

Murray Win, Arahura Health Centre, Christchurch  
(Touchstone, September 2012)

Burnout is not nice, and it results from way too much stress. It does not respond to minor measures or resolutions to pull up the socks and carry on. Preventing it is vital and there are too many people at risk especially in Canterbury. It's hardly surprising really, and Kate Van Heugten from Canterbury University has confirmed what must be obvious. You have two years' worth of earthquakes. You have housing sagas and insurance sagas. You also have changed demands and expectations at work. In service organisations, the people who are seeking assistance are affected by earthquakes. But so are the staff. Stress reduces everybody's ability to cope. Burnout brings people to a standstill, when the body steps in and cries "enough".

Kate's work documents how stress is a biggie for too many frontline workers and managers in government and quasi government departments, non-government-organisations, health, mental health, child protection, justice, welfare, education and industry groups in Christchurch. Last year she published a book about stress in the service sector more generally: Van Heugten, K. (2011) *Social Work Under Pressure: How to Overcome Stress, Fatigue and Burnout in the Workplace*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Service sector workers probably all know the signs: tiredness that isn't overcome by sleep and rest, infections, skin irritations, and stomach upsets. It's harder to think through problems and prioritise. We feel down or easily irritated; have difficulty sleeping, or want to sleep all the time; under or over eat; drink to excess; cry more; become more argumentative.

Work overload, dealing with on-going uncertainty including around funding, inadequate workspace, resource problems, poor social and professional support, people with more complex problems, staff members who have left have not been replaced, all don't help. In Canterbury, staff may have had little respite in the last two years and may be exhausted.

"In terms of causes, research has shown that it is factors in the organisation, rather than in the person, that lead to burnout. Factors that are implicated are not just high workloads. Workers are more likely to burn out in organisations where they experience lack of control over how they work, unreasonably tight regulations, and where they don't feel the organisation treats them with fairness and respect, or they feel disillusioned about the organisation's values" according to Van Heugten (Scoop 17 August 2012).

In the context of things like the earthquakes, restructures, and welfare reform, people's capacity for work is reduced, while demands on them increase. It is hardly surprising workers get exhausted and "may ultimately suffer burnout

unless organisations take proper account of that. Practical support, coupled with respectful empathic communication, goes a long way in terms of retaining loyalty."

Basic things people can do include:

1. **Postpone major life changes**- e.g. try to avoid moving house or changing jobs until feeling better.
2. **Resolve personal conflicts**- it can help to talk to a neutral person to help.
3. **Do some enjoyable things**- allocate the time to do them.
4. **Control that workload**- avoid long hours and additional responsibilities. Small changes can make a difference. Avoid becoming overwhelmed by new commitments.
5. **Get enough rest**
6. **Exercise regularly**- i.e. every day, even if it's just going for a walk.
7. **Get some help**- Talking to a friend, doctor, counsellor or trusted person can help relieve stress.

**For more info on stress and burnout:**

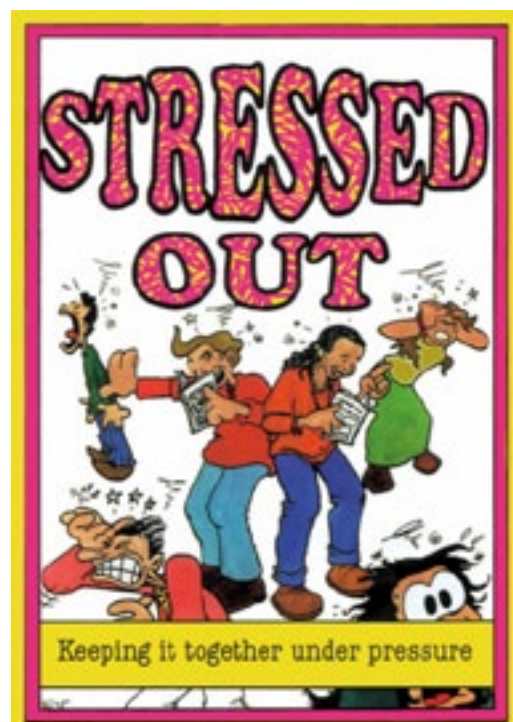
**Age concern** <http://www.ageconcern.org.nz/health/health-help/survival-strategies-carers>

**Small business owners / managers:** [www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=3&objectid=10816816](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=10816816)

**Ministry of Health** [www.health.govt.nz/yourhealth-topics/mental-health/stress](http://www.health.govt.nz/yourhealth-topics/mental-health/stress)

**Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (Department of Labour)**

[www.osh.dol.govt.nz/publications/stress/stress.asp](http://www.osh.dol.govt.nz/publications/stress/stress.asp)



# Quality of Care in Rest Homes Auditor General's Latest Report



The quality of audits and the process of certifying rest homes has improved over the past couple of years, says the Auditor-General, Lyn Provost. She is less certain about how these improvements actually translate into improved quality of care to rest home residents.

The Report follows up on a 2009 report (*"Effectiveness of arrangements to check the standard of services provided by rest homes"*) that was very

critical of the way the Ministry of Health was monitoring the quality of rest home audits. Since then a great deal of work has been done to streamline and improve the audit process and all the 2009 report's recommendations have been or are being implemented. Aged care providers are finding that the disruptive duplication of audits from DHBs and Ministry of Health has reduced considerably and there

is indeed more consistency between audit agencies in the way they approach the audits.

The Auditor-General surveyed rest homes, auditors, DHBs and clients as well as looking at the Health & Disability Commissioner's complaints and those surveys provided little evidence to suggest that there were significant problems with quality of care. The main recommendation arising out of this work was to recommend that audit processes focus more on the quality of the actual care that is being delivered (e.g. through more observation and interaction with residents and families) and less on the documentation of processes.

*Future Needs:* The OAG office will be focusing over the coming year on looking at the future needs of New Zealand's ageing population and how the public sector is planning to meet them. This work is planned to include exploring "the extent that older people's care and support services are integrated." We will be following this work with interest.

**Read the full Auditor-General's Report here:** <http://www.oag.govt.nz/2012/rest-home-services-follow-up>

## Family Carers Policy – public submissions called for

The Court of Appeal has ruled that family members for providing home and community support to disabled adults have the right to receive payment for this work. This means that the government's current policy of not paying certain family members to care for disabled adults needs to change. The Ministry of Health is asking for comment from the disability and carers' community about what form the payments should take.

Health Minister Tony Ryall commented that there are different views about this: "Some people say any approach that involves paying family caregivers – where they may become financially dependent on their adult children – will undermine family relationships and a disabled person's ability to live an everyday life. Others say the family carers

know the needs of family best." Carers NZ has produced a very useful discussion document to help those thinking about the issue ([www.carers.net.nz](http://www.carers.net.nz)).

A series of public workshops are being held in centres around the country. Details of these meetings, the consultation document: Consultation on Paying Family Carers to Provide Disability Support 2012, and questions and answers are available at [www.health.govt.nz/familycarersconsult](http://www.health.govt.nz/familycarersconsult). You can make a submission by email to [familycarersconsult@moh.govt.nz](mailto:familycarersconsult@moh.govt.nz) or in writing to Family Carers Consultation, Ministry of Health, PO Box 5013, Wellington 6145.

**Submissions close at 5pm on Tuesday November 6, 2012.**

## Conference Prize Helps Residents Rest Easy

At the NZCCSS Services to Older People conference in Wellington in March, Dr Rod Perkins, the Selwyn Foundation's General Manager for Research and Planning, won a draw for a top-of-the-range, lift-recliner chair ([nzccss.org.nz/site/page.php?page\\_id=304](http://nzccss.org.nz/site/page.php?page_id=304)). The ChairWorks Electric Lift-Recliner chair was supplied by Salamander Enterprises Ltd, who exhibited at the conference and it has found a new home. To determine which of the Foundation's eleven care facilities in the Upper North Island would take delivery of the luxury item, an internal competition was held. Staff and residents alike were keen to take part, submitting a total of 55 entries.

Activities Coordinator, Sashi Singh, won the contest for Caswell rest home at Selwyn Village, Point Chevalier, with her winning tie-breaker, in which she praised the chair as "a 'bed' for our activities lounge that still allows unwell residents to take part in activities."

Caswell House resident, Mary 'Bubs' Johnson, is pictured enjoying the new chair with (from left to right): Sashi Singh, Jenny McIsaac (Manager, Caswell House) and Dr Rod Perkins. The Selwyn Foundation appreciates the generosity of Salamander for providing the chair.





# Legislation and Submissions

## Welfare Reform Bill

The Social Security (Benefit Categories and Work Focus) Amendment Bill has been introduced into Parliament and referred to Select Committee. The Bill voted for by the NZ First Party supported the governing coalition parties ACT and United Future in this first vote. See our article on Page 3 for more information to support submissions on this Bill.

### Submissions close on 1st November 2012.

[www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/PB/Legislation/Bills/5/2/a/00DBHOH\\_BILL11634\\_1-Social-Security-Benefit-Categories-and-Work-Focus.htm](http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/PB/Legislation/Bills/5/2/a/00DBHOH_BILL11634_1-Social-Security-Benefit-Categories-and-Work-Focus.htm)

## Child Tax Credit Bill

A private member's bill with the title Income Tax (Universalisation of In-Work Tax Credit) Amendment Bill will come before Parliament in October. This Bill would change the current tax credit paid to all families with children, removing the discrimination against children in families without paid employment. It is a very specific way that vulnerable children can be helped. It is under the name of Green Party MP Catherine Delahunty but it will require support from Government MPs if it is to get past a first reading in Parliament, so that submissions can be heard.

Please contact MPs and ask them to support this bill to a first reading. Read the Bill online at: [www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/PB/Legislation/Bills/b/3/6/00DBHOH\\_BILL11565\\_1-Income-Tax-Universalisation-of-In-work-Tax-Credit.htm](http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/PB/Legislation/Bills/b/3/6/00DBHOH_BILL11565_1-Income-Tax-Universalisation-of-In-work-Tax-Credit.htm)

## Lobbying Disclosure Bill

This Bill is before Parliament's Administration Select Committee and seeks to bring more transparency into lobbying activity in New Zealand. NZCoSS (NZ Council of Social Services) raised some concerns about the impact of the Bill on small NGOs because of broad definitions of paid lobbyists that would include most NGO CEOs, as well as overly onerous reporting of all forms of contact with MPs. The Green Party has issued a revised Q&A paper addressing those concerns.

See [www.councilofsocalservices.org.nz/news/2012/09/05/lobbying-disclosure-bill-updated-qa/](http://www.councilofsocalservices.org.nz/news/2012/09/05/lobbying-disclosure-bill-updated-qa/)

### Submissions close on 5th October

## Paid Parental Leave Bill

Extending paid parental leave will help families parents of new born babies spend their time where it is best spent – caring for their child.

Find out more and make a submission at [26forbabies.org/resources/](http://26forbabies.org/resources/).

### Submissions close on 5th October

## Selwyn Centres – Word and Deed Going Together

By Janice Sanders, The Selwyn Foundation

Visiting research professor and New Testament Scholar, Dr Darrell Bock, praised the value of the work being undertaken by Selwyn Centre coordinators during their annual conference held at Selwyn Village, Point Chevalier, Auckland.

Dr Bock addressed the conference which was attended by over seventy Selwyn Centre coordinators, volunteers and parish committee members, during his recent lecture tour of New Zealand. Professor of Spiritual Development and Culture at Dallas Theological Seminary in Texas, Dr Bock spoke about word and deed going together in faith, particularly when dealing with marginalised groups of people like the elderly.

“How the church steps into the community and serves in a variety of ways underscores its message about the gospel and how God cares for people,” he said.

Part-funded by The Selwyn Foundation - one of New Zealand's largest charitable providers of residential care, independent retirement living and community services for older people - and operated in association with local Anglican parishes, the Selwyn Centres are for those over 65 of any religious or cultural background who may live alone or may be in need of friendship, help and support. Activities are run by a coordinator and a team of volunteers, who can also play an advocacy role and liaise with other service agencies on behalf of the guests attending.

More than six hundred older adults of varying levels of independence and mobility currently attend one of over thirty Selwyn Centres in Greater Auckland, Whangarei or Thames each week. Loneliness can be a serious health issue for older people, and research indicates that social interaction with others directly influences general health. It can also bring psychological benefits, such as delaying the onset of dementia. The Foundation commits over \$400,000 per year to the Selwyn Centres, which are an effective means of delivering care and support to older people in the community.

Read more about the Selwyn Centres online at:

[www.selwyncare.org.nz/12/selwyn-day-centres-for-older-people](http://www.selwyncare.org.nz/12/selwyn-day-centres-for-older-people)

## Funding available for community health projects

New Zealand organisations running programmes to improve the health and well-being of local communities are invited to apply for funding from the Medibank Community Fund (MCF). The MCF supports grassroots initiatives throughout New Zealand and Australia that encourage healthy eating, physical activity or community connectedness. Grants are allocated regionally and vary in value depending on the project. For the 2013 funding round, programmes must address at least one of three criteria: healthy eating, encouraging greater exercise or greater community connectedness.

Applications are due by midday on 7 December 2012. Grants will be announced by 1 May. Find out more online from the Medibank Community Fund website



# Your feedback on Kete Kupu

Thanks to those of you who have provided us with feedback on Kete Kupu. We appreciate the kind and supportive comments as well as the suggestions for improvement that we will try and put into action!

It is nice to know that you find our newsletter useful and thanks to Rev Nick Frater who shared his reflection from Social Services Sunday 22nd July 2012. NZCCSS mission statement is about "Justice and compassion" and Nick reflects on compassion:

"It's not enough to hold certain beliefs in our hearts and express them in worship. We must live with courage and self-giving kindness to others, particularly those who are less wealthy or more vulnerable. Otherwise says James, our faith is dead! Otherwise says Micah, we are not worshipping the God we think we are!

We do what **we want** to do. The devout, wealthy people of Jerusalem and Samaria saw the way the poor lived and kept **their distance**, because they wanted to live at ease in their rich houses without feeling guilty. God's heart, as shown to us in Jesus, is a heart of **compassion**. Compassion has to do with **suffering—with** another. We don't turn the other way. We draw near to them. We stay **present with** them in their suffering even though it feels uncomfortable. As we stay with them we come **to understand** something of how life is for them, what it is like to be in their skin. Then we do what feels **like the right thing to do.**"

## Receiving Kete Kupu in hard copy

From now on we will only be publishing Kete Kupu in electronic format. If you are receiving hard copy in the post from us or would like to still receive a hard copy, we will need to ask for a contribution to cover the print and postage costs. Please contact Ange at NZCCSS for more information 04 4732627 admin@nzccss.org.nz

## NZCCSS Regular Publications



**Policy Watch e-news**



**Kete Kupu - bi-monthly newsletter**



**Vulnerability Report - quarterly**



**Go to [www.nzccss.org.nz](http://www.nzccss.org.nz) to see all our publications available online.**

# Events

## Forums for the Future: Rich and Poor - on the gap between rich and poor - and how to close it.

Thursday 4th October

Te Papa Soundings Theatre, Te Papa Wellington

6.30 - 8pm



## CHRISTIANITY & THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS: Lament, Hope, Action.

5-7 October,

St John's-in-the-City, Willis Street, Wellington.

Hosted by CTPI, A Roche Aotearoa NZ, & Caritas

## RECOVERING THE COMMON GOOD

Friday 26 / Saturday 27 October,

The Beehive, Wellington.

[www.otago.ac.nz/ctpi/news/](http://www.otago.ac.nz/ctpi/news/)



## KETE KUPU WORD BASKET

**Designer:** Tessa Hansen Cane

**KETE KUPU - Word Basket**

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