

KETE KUPU

WORD BASKET

ISSUE 29
DEC 2013



New Zealand Council Of
Christian Social Services

Nga Tangata Microfinance Sustainable Business of the Year



The Trustees of the Ngā Tangata Microfinance Trust were amazed to receive not one but two awards at the recent NZI Sustainable Business Network Awards. After initially being awarded the “Community Innovation Award”, the Trustees were stunned to also receive the “Greatest Contribution to a Sustainable New Zealand” award.

This award is only occasionally presented and then only when there is a compelling reason for doing so. CEO of the Sustainable Business Network Rachel Brown says “The Kiwibank/Nga Tangata initiative stood out to the judges because of the collaborative nature of the project, which ensures a genuine knowledge and understanding of the causes of poverty. It’s directly addressing these causes, as opposed to supporting initiatives that simply look at the symptoms or stop gaps”.

Established three years ago the Ngā Tangata Microfinance Trust is a collaboration between the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS), Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) and the New Zealand Federation of Family Budgeting Services (NZFFBS). Each of these organisations appoints one person to the National Trust Board. NZCCSS Executive Officer, Trevor McGlinchey is the Council’s appointment. The Trust has been actively supported since its inception by Kiwibank and the Trust Chair, Claire Dale from CPAG, thanked Kiwibank for their unflinching support and mentoring when receiving the award.

The Trust has been operating in South Auckland for two years, offering (NILS) No Interest Loans and DRLS (Debt Reduction Loans) to low income families. This work has been very proactively supported by NZCCSS member Presbyterian Support Northern – without their support it would have been very difficult to achieve this success. The Trust has established a charitable company, Ngā Tangata Microfinance Trust (Manurewa) Ltd, in South Auckland. The Directors of this Company are all well respected community leaders. Their hard work and dedication must be acknowledged when reflecting on the progress of the loans schemes. The Ngā Tangata Trust has recently started operations in Hamilton and is considering other areas of operation as its capacity to do offer services in other communities grow.

Ngā Tangata has received ongoing assistance from Good Shepherd Sisters Australia and New Zealand and is the first organisation to have been accredited by them as a NILS loan provider. The Trust’s ongoing relationship with Good Shepherd has been invaluable in the growth of the organisation.

When offering its small no-interest loans Ngā Tangata is committed to assist loan recipients build their financial literacy. All applicants must either be a client of a NZFFBS



Left to right: Karl Armstrong (NZI, award sponsors), Clare Dale (CPAG), Trevor McGlinchey (NZCCSS), Murray Wu & Nick Astwick (Kiwibank), Nicola Brehaut (Presbyterian Support Northern) at the awards ceremony.

approved budget service or nominated through a social service organisation. They must have a commitment to repaying the loan, have a completed budget that demonstrates they are able to make the small repayments necessary and must stay with the budget service until the loan is paid off. These processes help loan recipients develop the skills to be independent budgeters and stay out of the hands of loan sharks.

Contents

Nga Tangata Microfinance Sustainable Business of the Year	1
Vulnerable Children’s Bill	2
Is NZ fair?	3
The Price of Inequality in Education	3
What To Do About Child Poverty? The High Cost of Being Poor	4
Living Wage in Wellington in the New Year	4
The “Wobbly Pillar” of Our Welfare State	5
Paper Walls - Using the Law Keep Rental Housing Healthy	5
NZCCSS SOP Conference 2014 Dunedin	6
New Zealand Framework for Dementia	6
Details of Dementia Funding Announced	6
Enduring Powers of Attorney	6
Is New Zealand A Great Place to Grow Old?	7
Positive Ageing Strategy in 2013	7
More Rest Home Info Goes Online	7
interRAI in Aged Residential Care - 31 December Deadline	7
Families’ Basic Needs Not Being Met –Vulnerability Report December 2013	8
Legislation and Submissions	8

Children and Families

Vulnerable Children's Bill – good intentions but the framework can't deliver

The Vulnerable Children's Bill has the stated intent to promote the best interests of vulnerable children but does not provide the framework to give effect to this intent. That was the central message of the NZCCSS oral submission to the Social Services Select Committee at Parliament in November. NZCCSS stressed the need for legislation to address the causes of child vulnerability and in closing the submission NZCCSS made the following points: NZCCSS is particularly pleased with Section 6 and the intent to promote "...the best interests of vulnerable children (having regard to the whole of their lives), including (without limitation) taking measures aimed at" a) protecting them from abuse; b) improving their physical and mental health and their cultural and emotional wellbeing; c) improving their education and training and their participation in recreation and cultural activities; d) strengthening their connection to their families, whānau, hapū and iwi or other culturally recognised family group; Increasing their participation in decision making about them, and their contribution to society; improving their social and economic wellbeing.

NZCCSS Executive Officer went onto say, "Unfortunately the Bill did not then provide a framework to give effect to this intent:

- The practical experience of NZCCSS members and the overwhelming weight of evidence demonstrates that childhood poverty is the biggest driver of vulnerability for children
- This bill does not provide any mechanisms to commit government to ensuring families are provided with a basic income which would allow them to provide the necessities of life for their children
- NZCCSS would welcome a Vulnerable Children's Bill that set out official poverty measures and set targets for poverty reduction for New Zealand's families
- A Vulnerable Children's Bill that provided support for the development of a values base that meant we, as a community, and as a nation would not accept that children should live in cold damp houses without enough to eat and that we as communities would all take responsibility for our children.
- NZCCSS looks to our government to provide a societal role model demonstrating that child poverty and family marginalisation is unacceptable.
- We seek a bill that provides programme of action to reduce the structural inequalities in our society so that all of our children have a good chance of living healthy and fulfilling lives. This is not that Bill."

Sonia Scott, the NZCCSS Policy Advisor who developed the submission was guided in her work by the NZCCSS Child and Family Policy Group. This Policy Group consists of Christian social service leaders with practical experience of the on-the-ground realities of working with vulnerable families and vulnerable whānau. This experience informed the direct feedback on different clauses of the Bill. Key points included:

- This group recognised a number of positives in the Bill and were particularly supportive of across agency holistic responses to working with children experiencing increased vulnerability.
- While recognising the desire to reduce child harm that sits behind those parts of this Bill that seeks to bar

people from participating in the children's workforce, in prohibiting people from associating with children and in removing subsequent children from their parents NZCCSS is concerned that there is no recognition of the possibility of hope and redemption.

- Our members employ a number of people from very difficult backgrounds, people who may have in fact committed some of the serious crimes which could result in exclusion from the children's workforce. They do so because it is often those who have already walked a mile in the shoes of the families they are working with who are able to support the families most in need of support to make positive changes.
- They often also work with parents who have had their children removed. These parents can reach a point in their life where change can be achieved and they can be successful parents. This Bill removes that hope.
- The social workers within our networks report that some of the most difficult families to work with are those families who are driven underground by the threat of losing their children or because they are in a relationship with a partner previously prosecuted or accused of abusing children. They are concerned that the Child Harm Prevention Orders may mean more families living in transience, with children not enrolled in school or with a GP so that their relationship is not "found out".

NZCCSS is supportive of the provisions in this Bill that provide for increasing the level of care and support for children in care and for transitioning young people from living in care to independence. We would like to see this level of support being established as an entitlement of support for children in care and in transition with less reliance on meeting "extraordinary needs" or meeting needs in "exceptional circumstances" at the "discretion of the Chief Executive" to a more open handed approach with more localised decision making.

The strengthening and greater support for the Family Group Conferences was strongly supported by our social services networks.

The full NZCCSS Submission on the Vulnerable Children's Bill is available here: www.nzccss.org.nz under Publications

United Nations Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights in New Zealand

New Zealand is required to give account to the rest of the world at the United Nations next year on progress to meet the requirements under human right conventions. The Human Rights Commission (HRC) has prepared a submission as has the New Zealand Government and many NGOs, including NZCCSS.

Read the submissions on the HRC website and learn more about steps to improve human rights in this country through the development of the Action Plan for Human Rights: www.hrc.co.nz/international-human-rights-new/upr-1314-nzs-second-universal-periodic-review



Inequality and Poverty

Is New Zealand Fair? A competition about inequality



Is NZ fair? Competition – Schools Get Creative

A new board game, short films, photos, petitions, t-shirt art, poems, newspaper articles and posters – these are some of the wonderful creative entries from school students from around the country in the “Is New Zealand Fair?” schools competition run by Anglican Social Justice Unit in Christchurch.

The winners were announced on 6th December with first place in the primary/intermediate category, going to Pukehomoamo School for a board-game simulating the real-life impacts of wealth inequalities. More than 100 people played the game and it was sent home to students’ families.

Second place went to another Pukehomoamo group, who started the Facebook group Paint Our Future (www.facebook.com/paintourfuture). They interviewed people about poverty, started a petition calling for action on child poverty, and drew the attention of Classic Hits radio station. Third place went to Manurewa Intermediate for a lively



Facebook page Paint Our Future

facebook discussion, great photo, and clearly vibrant discussion throughout the school.

In the secondary category, first place went to Avonside Girls High School. They created blackboard frames to collect students’ opinions in the playground. They also gave away jellybeans and information reflecting the wealth distribution in New Zealand in a way that got lots of people talking.

In second place, another Avonside Girls High group wrote an article published in the Otago Daily Times (Extra!), which goes to 160 schools.

In third place, Feilding High School created a Facebook page about the gap between rich and poor. This grew quickly and generated discussion at the school.

The top two schools in each category each received an iPads as a prize. Many of the entries can be viewed on the Facebook page: www.facebook.com/isnzfair

The Price of Inequality in Education – PISA Shock

As the news broke last week about New Zealand’s sharp decline in mathematics, reading and science performance of our 15-year-olds in the international education rankings recorded by the 2012 OECD PISA study, many commentators pointed to the large inequalities in our education and wider society as the main contributing factor.

As education academic Dr Fiona Ells put it, the “real story is about equity. It is in everyone’s interests that our education system serves all our students well. You can make a moral justification for it or an economic justification for it, but in both ways, decreasing the achievement differences between groups of students is a win for New Zealand.” She goes on to point out that we are “above the OECD average on two measures that we don’t want to be above average on: there are bigger differences in mathematics performance between rich and poor children in New Zealand than many other countries, and there is a significantly stronger-than-average relationship between the mathematics test scores and socio-economic status than most other countries (so it is harder to do well in New Zealand if you are poor than in other places).”

Other experts teachers, academics and commentators,

echoed these concerns about the impact of socio-economic inequalities in wider society on the home environment for children – poverty and inequality do impact on the ability of children to learn and their ultimate education outcomes. While it is possible for really good schools to help kids to succeed despite these challenges, it is an uphill battle.

Combined with widespread concerns about lowering of the bar for teacher standards and the way our education continues to fail Maori and Pasika students, the PISA results are a wake-up call on current education policy and a reflection of the international evidence that more equal countries (like Finland and Estonia) do better in education – because fewer kids get left behind.

The PISA 2012 New Zealand Summary Report is on the Ministry of Education website: www.minedu.govt.nz/

**CLOSER TOGETHER
WHAKATATA MAI**

REDUCING INEQUALITIES



What To Do About Child Poverty? The High Cost of Being Poor

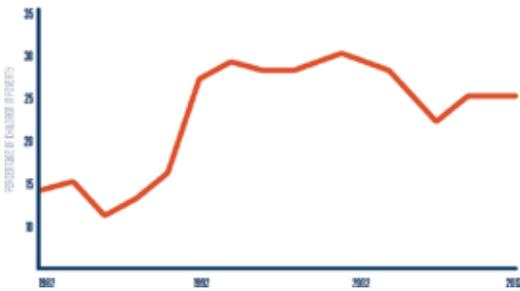
Early December has seen a cluster of reports highlighting New Zealand's poor performance in looking after our children.

Kids Missing Out published by UNICEF reported on the continuing high child poverty levels in this country as a failure to fulfil international commitments made by New Zealand to the United Nations on the rights of children. Twenty years after adopting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, little progress has been made in this area yet as the report states, children's "wellbeing depends on their rights to healthcare, education and an adequate income being met."

Similarly, the PISA 2012 study (see article p.3) graphically showed the impact of inequality and poverty on education performance.

The release of the first **Child Poverty Monitor**, developed as a project between the Children's Commissioner, Otago University and the JR McKenzie Trust, features much information but one key message – child poverty is not decreasing in any meaningful way and is still locked in at 25% of kids living poverty, a level well above that of a generation ago in the 1980s.

KIWI CHILDREN POVERTY OVER THE LAST THREE DECADES



Source: Child Poverty Monitor www.childpoverty.co.nz/flow-infographics/child-poverty-trends

Living Wage in Wellington in the New Year

The movement to reduce inequality can point to a significant milestone in the decision by Wellington City Council to commit to implementing a living wage. The recent local body elections delivered a majority of councillors who have committed to supporting the living wage principle.

The WCC is committed to moving all directly employed staff to the living wage during 2014 and Deputy Mayor Justin Lester has also committed to further work to ensure that workers employed in council-controlled organisations and contractors, such as cleaners and parking wardens, are not left out. The WCC sees the living wage as part of its wider workforce strategy to encourage greater productivity, career pathways, a commitment to public service and to address a low wage issue within parts of Council.

The Living Wage Wellington group welcomed the WCC decision with spokesperson Rev. Brian Dawson saying that "Wellington has the highest average household incomes in New Zealand but also has the biggest gap between rich

and poor. CPAG advocates Donna Wynd and Nikki Turner point to the impact of low income and social inequalities on children's health. They report that the "key barometer" of socio-economic inequality - the rate of hospitalisation for diseases related to socioeconomic conditions - continues to increase. The result of this poor health for these children is clear - reduced social and educational opportunities and falling behind other kids in their generation.

What to do about this?

Wynd and Turner point out that we know that we can make changes for the better. Work to increase immunisation rates and to close the equity gaps for Maori and Pacific children shows what can be achieved with political support and cross-sector collaboration.

Along with others like the Children's Commissioner, they call for a systematic approach that includes progress across all the areas that affect children:

- Adequate and affordable housing
- Better social policy and a focus on adequate incomes
- Sustainable parental employment
- Social support networks,
- Early childhood education
- Access to healthcare

The call is for cross-party to work to commit to setting targets to reduce poverty and measure and monitor progress. Election Year 2014 will be a time to focus political attention on this and find ways for us all to work together.

View the Child Poverty Monitor at:
www.childpoverty.co.nz



and poor. Our city has the capacity to address poverty and inequality, and Council can take a lead in this. It is good news that this process has begun. It is off to a good start and now we look forward to working with Council on its implementation".

Auckland Council is also working on introducing a living wage for its directly employed staff as part of its remuneration policy. The result of this will be pay increases for several thousand Wellington and Auckland council staff who currently earn below the \$18.40 living wage rate.

Read more about the Living Wage at:
www.livingwage.nz.org.nz/index.php

**CLOSER TOGETHER
WHAKATATA MAI**

REDUCING INEQUALITIES



The “Wobbly Pillar” of Our Welfare State – ‘Give Me Shelter’ Report



Salvation Army policy analyst and housing expert Alan Johnson has produced an insightful and comprehensive analysis of housing assistance policies in this country. ‘Give me shelter: An assessment of New Zealand’s housing assistance policies’ was released in November and charts the “radical detour” New Zealand housing policy took in the early 1990s with the dismantling

of housing assistance policies of the previous 40 years and introduction of the Accommodation Supplement.

The report concludes that housing policy is very a “residual” policy area and not an important focus for social policy. Indeed one commentator has described it as the “wobbly pillar” of our welfare state when compared to the other pillars of our welfare system: health, education and the income support safety net.

The report makes a sustained effort to get behind the challenges of reviewing the effectiveness the accommodation supplement and income related rents. More than \$2 billion annually is spent on these government transfers yet there is a scarcity of public information or research that assesses their effectiveness or options for change.

Lack of Vision

Similarly, despite the “social housing reform” programme being pursued by the government, the report identifies a lack of vision or unifying view of social and affordable housing, poor understanding of future housing need and a failure to plan for this. Despite the level of expenditure on housing assistance, analysis of HNZ financial statements suggests that it is not being adequately funded and other community and social housing has not received sufficient investment. There is also a lack of “horizontal equity” between tenants in different social housing providers and private sector and a lack of integration of social housing policies with other current welfare policies.

The report proposes some elements for a way forward and a vision for housing based on ensuring that “all New Zealanders have access to secure housing of an acceptable standard which they can reasonably afford.” There are policy responses put forward that would address the problems identified above. Re-framing housing as part of our “social infrastructure”, reviewing the subsidies to ensure they are consistent, adequate and equitable, and well-integrated with other parts of the welfare system – these are some of the elements of the new vision proposed.

Read the report online at The Salvation Army website: www.salvationarmy.org.nz/research-media/social-policy-and-parliamentary-unit/latest-report/give-me-shelter

Paper Walls – Using the Law to Keep Rental Housing Healthy

What if you tried to answer the basic questions about rental housing like:

- Why aren’t current laws protecting tenants from unhealthy homes?
- What laws need to change?
- How can tenants in substandard rental housing in New Zealand protect themselves?
- How can New Zealand’s housing law be used to raise rental housing standards?

The Anglican Social Justice Unit in Christchurch set about trying to answer those questions and the Paper Walls report released in November is the result.

The report identifies new arguments and options for tenants to protect their rights and improve the quality of their rental property. The report also identifies pressure points for law changes to assist tenants as well as answering questions around tenancy law.

The main answers to the questions above are summarised as:

- 1 Tenants can **stop their landlord** from renting their home out again until the landlord brings it up to housing health standards. There are several Acts that require certain standards of repair, design and health and government agencies such as the Tenancy Tribunal, Local Authorities and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment all have powers and responsibilities to help.
- 2 Tenants can **take their landlord to the District Court** and seek a “further commission order” where the condition of their house poses a danger to their health. Unlike Tenancy Tribunal hearings, which are not subject to “legal precedent” rules, District Court proceedings are on the legal record and their decisions offer guidance to future cases about rights of tenants.

Several pressure points for change in the law are also identified, including introducing a rental housing warrant of fitness with measurable standards and regular inspections for private rental properties. Other areas include giving local authorities a wider range of powers to deal with sub-standard properties and to protect tenants through ‘good cause’ for eviction rules (similar to those in employment law). More accessible and transparent tenancy tribunal and government processes are also needed.

Check out the report and further info at www.paperwalls.org/





NZCCSS SOP Conference 2014 Dunedin – call for sponsors and exhibitors

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services is holding our biennial Services for Older People Conference in Dunedin with the theme “The Next Stretch” on the 8th & 9th May 2014 at Dunedin Art Gallery. We are looking forward to heading to Dunedin for our conference and welcoming to this event a wide range of executives, directors, and other senior managers from aged care services, members of boards of governance, government agencies as well as other nursing, allied health and administrative staff from throughout New Zealand.

NZCCSS conferences are unique and distinctive events for social services working with older people. The conference is a place to work on the significant issues facing our sector over the “next stretch” informed by the values and perspective of our network of faith-based social service organisations.

The conference planning committee includes representatives from NZCCSS member agencies based in the region and they are working hard on putting together a programme featuring speakers and presenters with expertise across the whole range of support services for older New Zealanders. Among the keynote speakers invited for the conference are international expert on population ageing Dr Satya Brink from Canada, Australian expert on the aged care workforce Geoff Pearman.

For more information for sponsors and exhibitors, check out the link to the conference website at www.nzccss.org.nz or contact Pat Johnson DCMS Conference Management convene@dcms.co.nz (03) 477- 1377. Conference registrations will open in early 2014.

New Zealand Framework for Dementia

Dementia is on the increase in this country with the number of people living with the condition expected to triple from 48,000 today to 150,000 by 2050. In 2012 the Government allocated \$2.5 million to District Health Boards (DHBs) to help them develop dementia care pathways with the aim of better supporting people with dementia and maximising their independence and wellbeing. The Ministry of Health (MoH) has worked with DHBs, people with dementia and a wide range of sector groups to develop a national framework to guide DHBs in developing dementia care pathways. In November 2013 the Framework for Dementia document was published and is available online or had copies can be ordered on the MoH website: www.health.govt.nz/publication/new-zealand-framework-dementia-care

Details of Dementia Funding Announced

At the same time as the release of the Framework, Associate Minister of Health Jo Goodhew announced more details of the extra \$3.2 million funding over three years that was allocated in the May 2013 Budget. The focus of the additional funding is supporting early diagnosis of dementia to help people communicate their treatment preferences to family and whānau. The funding includes significant investment in training healthcare workers in dementia signs and symptoms.

The funding has been allocated to three streams of work: \$1.25m for a public awareness campaign by Alzheimers New Zealand, \$750,000 for clinical education, coordinated by DHBs, to improve awareness and responsiveness of dementia in primary care and \$1.2m for dementia training for healthcare workers, coordinated by Careerforce New Zealand.

Alzheimers NZ Executive Director Catherine Hall says the \$1.25 million contract will support the organisation’s work in helping people with dementia get an early diagnosis and access to education, support and services to improve their quality of life. NZCCSS looks forward to learning more about how the remainder of the funding will be utilised by Careerforce and DHBs and progress on the dementia care pathways will be an area of focus at the NZCCSS conference in May 2014.

Enduring Powers of Attorney – costly and complicated

Earlier in 2013 the Ministry of Social Development ran an extensive public consultation on how effective the 2007 amendments to the Protection of Personal and Property Right Act relating to enduring powers of attorney have been. The amendments were introduced in 2008 to provide greater protections for people setting up an enduring power of attorney.

In October the Ministry published a summary of some of the results of this work. Overall the feedback indicated that the EPA provisions were sufficient to protect the person granting power of attorney (the donor) and the person granted those powers (the attorney) and to carry out the wishes of the donor.

Main criticisms focused on the costs of EPA (up to \$1,200 in legal fees), the complexities of setting them up (especially witnessing requirements), and that attorneys often do not know what is required of them. There was also concern raised about level of abuse of the powers of attorney and the need to ensure monitoring and accountability provisions to prevent abuse of EPAs by attorneys. It is also expensive and difficult to challenge an attorney or lay a complaint. Another issue was around clarifying who can certify mental capacity, as some medical practitioners are not comfortable with being asked to do this.

Some suggestions coming out of the consultation include a public education campaign and information brochures to better inform the public. There is also a suggestion for



a national register of EPAs to help identify if one exists for a person or resolve competing claims by family members.

The Minister for Senior Citizens is due to report back to Parliament about the findings of the work and whether further changes to the legislation are needed. Find out more on the MSD website: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/whats-happening/index.html

Is New Zealand A Great Place to Grow Old?



The Global AgeWatch 2013 report is an interesting new publication that provides some intriguing international comparisons for New Zealand as a place to grow old. While overall ranking 7th out of 93 countries analysed, income the New Zealand income security ranking was 43rd compared to 3rd ranking for health status.

This initial comparison sets out the overall risks to wellbeing for older people and the specific risks for health services – lower performance in other areas can lead to significant reduction in overall wellbeing for older people. It underlines the importance of pursuing more joined up and strategic approaches in responding to population ageing.

Check out the report online at www.helpage.org/global-agemwatch/reports/

Positive Ageing Strategy in 2013 – indicators but where are the measures?

The Associate Minister of Health launched the *Older New Zealanders: Healthy, independent, connected and respected* update report on the Positive Ageing Strategy in October. This strategy is now the lead strategy for older persons' policy since the Health of Older People Strategy lapsed.

The report includes the commitment to “making sure older people are well supported to maintain good health and active, safe and connected lives” including working to “ensure older people get the right support and services”. The strategy emphasises collaboration between government agencies and with communities and sets out a very clear set of progress indicators for the strategy (p.6).

Unfortunately, the document does not contain any measures of these indicators and neither does the MSD website appear to have up to date statistics on these indicators. This leaves us wondering at NZCCSS how the Government will know if their strategy is succeeding?

Read the report online at:

www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/seniorcitizens/positive-ageing/connected/

More Rest Home Info Goes Online

In November the Ministry of Health began the publication of full rest home audit reports online and introduced a new website map format for the online information on rest homes. These are further initiatives from the Ministry aimed at increasing quality and safety through increasing information to the wider public.

Generally consumer groups such as Age Concern and Grey Power have welcomed the additional information but, as has been pointed out by others, the full audit reports are often long and technical and not easy to interpret.

The existing audit summaries have been re-organised on the MoH website into a map format, making it easy to locate and compare facilities (see www.health.govt.nz/your-health/certified-providers/aged-care) and the full audit reports can be accessed via a link from the same web page.

NZCCSS welcomes any feedback from the sector about how the information is being used and whether they feel it is having any impact on how clients, families and the wider community interacts with aged residential care. Contact us at: paul.barber@nzccss.org.nz or (ph)04 4732627.

interRAI in Aged Residential Care - 31 December Deadline

Aged care facilities that have not signed up for interRAI training for their registered nurses by 31st December 2013 will miss out on the \$650 funding support payment being offered by the Ministry of Health. interRAI is an assessment tool designed to help nurses understand the needs of their residents in order to plan their care. The Ministry of Health is making use of the interRAI in aged residential care mandatory by 1 July 2015 and requiring all aged care facilities to be engaged in training by June 2014.

Latest information from the project suggests that the vast majority of facilities are now signed up for training and all facilities that are signed up will be reimbursed \$650 per registered nurse as a contribution to back-fill, provided the nurse achieves competency within a total of 12 weeks. Once competent, the facility must require the nurse to use the interRAI LTCF as their primary assessment on an on-going basis.

There is considerable debate and frustration in the sector about the interRAI implementation process and the decision to accelerate its implementation, which has placed a great deal of pressure on the sector and additional costs that are not being fully compensated by the government. Check out the debate on the *InSite* magazine website www.insitemagazine.co.nz/issues/may-2013.

The latest newsletter from the interRAI project attempts to address these concerns reporting on the benefits to families, residents and facilities of the involvement of families in the shared process of doing interRAI assessments and the individualised plans of care that result. Read the latest newsletters [here \(www.interrai.co.nz\)](http://www.interrai.co.nz).



Families' Basic Needs Not Being Met -Vulnerability Report December 2013

"The evidence is in - low income families can no longer provide for even the basics as their weekly incomes falls further behind the rate of inflation", says Trevor McGlinchey, Executive Officer of the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS). "In the last four years inflation has increased by 8.7% but benefits have only increased by 8.1%. Christian social service agencies are struggling to try and bridge the gap to help low income families survive."

"The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is used to track inflation. This includes inflation on new cars, imports and luxury goods, which have dropped in price, not the basic needs that low income families spend all their money on", said McGlinchey. "The 17th Vulnerability Report shows that when looking at the increases over 4 years for rent and energy - the two items that low income families must pay before they buy food - there has been an 11.9% increase in price. The additional 8.1% increase in benefits is obviously inadequate to cover the cost! If a family is on a benefit then they have received a total increase in gross income over four years of only \$20.16 for a couple with 1 or more children or \$17.33 for a sole parent."

The strains placed on families have resulted in more pressure being piled onto the social service organisations trying to support vulnerable families. This Report shows Christian social service providers are continuing to experience high levels of demand. The need for food parcels continues to grow, as does the demand for both long-term and emergency accommodation, budgeting advice and family counselling.

While there has been some economic good news this is very unevenly spread. Regions like Manawatu/Whanganui, Gisborne/Hawkes Bay and Northland all experienced declines in their economies. Māori, women and Pacific Peoples are over-represented in those without work. Young Māori, in particular, have been hard hit with 28.5% of 20-24 year old Māori women and 17.4% of 20 -24 year old Māori men deemed not in employment, education or training (NEET).

"The impacts of inequality in New Zealand continue to grow", says McGlinchey. "If you live in the right region, and are from the right demographic you may be beginning to experience some of the much heralded economic recovery. If not you will continue to pay the price of the unequal distribution of wealth that has marked the descent of New Zealand into one of the more unequal countries in the OECD. In the long run both international and local evidence shows this is not good for the wellbeing of our country. NZCCSS urges political parties to develop policies that share New Zealand's wealth and opportunities more evenly".

The *Vulnerability Report 17* is available at www.nzccss.org.nz

Christmas Greetings

*Ngā mihi o te wā me te Tau Hou
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year*

From us all at the NZCCSS Secretariat

*Our offices will be closed from Monday 23rd December 2013 -
Monday 13th January 2013 inclusive.*

Legislation and Submissions

The *Law Reform Pipeline* includes updates on some key legislation affecting our sector: www.communitylaw.org.nz/resources/articles/law-reform-pipeline/.

NZCCSS submissions are online at www.nzccss.org.nz on the Publications Library page

Education (Breakfast and Lunch Programmes in Schools) Amendment Bill

Food in Schools bills are still trying to get a first reading in Parliament. Last month Hone Harawira organised a breakfast event for the students of Natone Park School to coincide with the first reading of his food in schools bill. The Bill was subsequently postponed as the House ran out of time. The latest information received indicates the Bill will have its first reading in the New Year. While the delay is disappointing, the significance of this Bill lies in its potential to drive a whole-of- country debate about food in schools and how best to implement a programme that fits a diverse range of needs. So while this potential may have been delayed, it hasn't been lost.

Here's a quick reminder for those needing a refresher. The purpose of the Bill is to amend the Education Act 1989 to provide for the introduction of fully State funded breakfast and lunch programmes into all decile 1 and 2 schools, and other designated schools in New Zealand. It is also provides for the availability of meals to all enrolled students in these schools free of charge, and will be required to meet Ministry of Health nutritional guidelines.

UN Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights in New Zealand (see article on p.2)

KETE KUPU WORD BASKET

Designer: Tessa Hansen Cane

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: JR McKenzie Trust and 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.