

CONTENTS

Decline in home ownership will impact on future generations of older people	2
Election 2014 Church leaders' messages to New Zealanders	3
Your vote, your chance to make a difference Values, targets and policies to achieve them	4
Inequality-focused candidates meeting	5
Where the parties stand on inequality	5
Election 2014: Caring Counts in aged care – Who cares?	6
Lifting wages: A clear divide	7
Travel time settlement: Good news for care workers	7
Rest home subsidy to increase	7
Productivity and social services	8
Social Security Act re-write and basic principles of social security	8
Conference: Social Justice in Communities, 23/24 October	9

We are feathers in the breath of God Gospel Manifesto 2014

Vaughan Milner

An overview of the five priorities of Gospel Manifesto 2014:

- Every child counts
- Healthy homes lead to healthy lives
- Gross inequality costs everyone
- Towards a less punitive and fearful society
- New Zealand as a better world neighbour

In an increasingly secular society with diverse ethnic groups and many faiths, a Gospel Manifesto has to engage the spiritual and a sense of inclusive community to be relevant.

From this angle, it is often the heart-felt tug of community aroha or compassion that inspires the pursuit of social justice. When we reach out in love to others, we acknowledge our interdependence and one-ness. In Hildegard of Bingen's terms, it is through this empathy in action that we recognize we are feathers on the breath of God.

It is shameful in modern day Aotearoa that there are many signs of societal breakdown and of gaps and fragmentation across society. Statistics and a variety of international reports tell us we are not doing

"The breath of God needs freshening and the feathered cloak of community restored if New Zealand is to regain its place as God's own and be a genuinely just and fair society."

so well in raising our children, having affordable homes to live in, equitable access to adequate income, or restoration and reconciliation. There is also a looming bulge in the numbers of older people and increasing evidence of social isolation and poverty particularly amongst elders who don't own their own homes. This

greying group of the vulnerable will put greater pressure on health services and increase demand for affordable housing and access to adequate care and support.

The breath of God needs freshening and the feathered cloak of community restored if New Zealand is to regain its place as God's own and be a genuinely just and fair society.

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services publicized a call for action in 2007. Many of the issues still require attention.

The [Gospel Manifesto 2014](#) has been coordinated by a working group within EcuAction, an ecumenical grouping under the convenorship of the Rev Dr John England (rmpe22@xtra.co.nz)

The Council promoted an injection of Government funding to eliminate poverty by providing adequate income at 60% of median disposable income to those on benefits; strengthened control of gambling; low cost and culturally appropriate credit alternatives for those on low incomes struggling with debt; increased investment and more social and affordable housing; implementation of Te Tiriti in social policy.

The issue of adequate income and poverty has been put in the too hard basket by successive Governments and business leaders. New Zealand's low wage economy relies heavily on Working for Families and tax credits yet at the same time many large companies are returning very healthy profits to small groups of



Continued over...

Continued from page 1

shareholders. Similarly, pay differences between highest and lowest paid within some sectors, and between some sectors, have become the subject of much debate and concern. Contemporaneously benefit payments to those unable to work (apart from superannuitants), create a poverty trap. Somewhere there must be a fairer balance able to be achieved. The current National government (or a new government) is well positioned to capitalise on its economic successes, provide ethical social leadership, and do something about poverty. It is promoting balanced budgets and making much of the performance of the economy. Reform of health, education, justice and welfare is well advanced.

Fundamental reform of the income and tax systems should now be a top priority. A capital gains tax would enable redistribution of money to the worse off. Regulatory control to reduce pay differences would free up some money to redistribute to lower paid workers; employer tax incentives and penalties could similarly boost wages and enable retargeting of some Government Working For Families funds to beneficiaries. Everyone would be better off, and some companies and individuals would reap greater triple bottom line rewards from their increased social contribution.

Un-affordable housing is one of the major causes of poverty. The Government is currently reforming the way it administers income related rental subsidies. There is further scope to significantly reform this area by targeting the accommodation supplement to benchmark rents related to tenant's income, and to housing that meets standards for energy efficiency and health. This measure could be used to incentivise rentals that cost 30% or less of income. Such a measure might also have the result of driving highly geared or unscrupulous landlords out of the market and freeing up housing for home ownership or for socially minded landlords. Perhaps some form of capitalisation of accommodation supplement for low income earners could become another mechanism for access to home ownership.

One of the insidious effects of poverty is that of social isolation and being alone. There is a vicious circle whereby lack of funds often accompanied by health or functional issues leads to withdrawal from social networks and loss of confidence and identity. Over time there is an accompanying erosion of respect and acceptability from the wider community, leading to greater vulnerability and marginalisation. We all have a part to play in helping others to feel included so they can be aware and active in their community and accept their roles, functions and responsibilities. Individual responsibility is

built on the accountability that comes through reciprocity, feeling like you belong, are respected and valued, and, can contribute in a meaningful way. This personal engagement as part of community is not straightforward because everyone is so different, and liking and respecting others tugs at our emotional core –our hopes and fears. There is however a wider collective sense that forms the cloak of community. It is this sense that enables people to find a place, to be supported and to take part. There is no doubt maintaining a sense of community is an enduring challenge for each generation. Poverty requires more than charity. Poverty requires a response from hearts and minds, a generosity of spirit and a willingness to make the money go round in a different way. Political and public leadership alongside determined action is essential.

The election campaign creates an opportunity for everyone to debate and do something about the people and groups who are being left behind. We need a commitment to action on child poverty, reducing inequality, affordable housing, and a valued and dignified life with positive choices for our elders; society's *kuia* and *kaumatua*. We should not only be kind to one another but look to ensure the blessings of being in community with one another are fairly shared.

Vaughan Milner is CEO of Presbyterian Support (Upper South Island).

Decline in home ownership will impact on future generations of older people

The decline in home ownership has implications for future generations of older people who will age without the buffer of home ownership. Rental accommodation will be the new norm for many more New Zealanders as they age” says Trevor McGlinchey, Executive Officer of the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS). “While 77.5% of older people aged 70-74 years own their home, home ownership is on the decline for younger age groups, this will place pressure on private rentals and social housing in the future and create greater potential for hardship for our elders”.

NZCCSS has released its 19th Vulnerability Report. The report considers how older people (65+) are faring in communities and draws on official data on housing, superannuation, special grants for food

and other needs, and compares this with the experiences of social service agency members.

“We see the universal superannuation payment has been a success in keeping older people out of the worst of poverty, and that this model has merit for a number of vulnerable groups, including 285,000 children living in poverty”, said McGlinchey. “However, this also means any change to Government policy on superannuation and other state supports, including state housing, will have a direct impact on a large group of older people who are highly dependent on superannuation as their main source of income”.

Feedback from NZCCSS members show some early signs of pressure on state supports, with more elderly clients approaching services for food parcels and other assistance. This,

against a backdrop of an increasing number of people living longer, is a signal that government needs to step up its preparation for an aging population if future generations of older people are to be supported appropriately.

How are older people faring in our communities?

The high level of reliance on superannuation for the majority of New Zealanders also means there is a large proportion of older New Zealanders (65+) sensitive to any policy changes around this universal entitlement. If older people drop below the poverty threshold in larger numbers in the future, it can be expected that their quality of life will reduce and their health will deteriorate.
Dr Charles Widdigrove, NZ Longitudinal Study of Ageing

WCCSS has a long history of delivering social services to older people in the community. These services span from informal local parish supports to more formalised home support services, residential services and retirement villages. The 19th Vulnerability Report draws on the knowledge, expertise and feedback from WCCSS member organisations working with older people to explore how older people (65+) are faring in communities. Population ageing is a human and social achievement and reflects a combination of factors: improved living standards, advances in medicine, lower fertility, and a large group of baby boomers

born between 1946 to 1965 moving into the 65+ age group. A growing proportion of older people aged 65+ is the greatest population in the legacy of all of these factors and is a new reality for some countries, including New Zealand (Office for Senior Citizens).

In New Zealand, the 65+ demographic has doubled since the early 1980s to 651,000 and now comprises 14% of the population (Statistics NZ). This group is estimated to double again by 2040 when New Zealand baby boomers approach 85+ and beyond. In New Zealand, state funded social support (superannuation, public health system, and state housing) have played an important role in keeping the majority of older people in good health and out of poverty. Any change to policy settings around these state supports are therefore likely to have a direct impact on the health and well-being of this group. This report identifies some early signs of pressure on these state supports. Our social service members are



increasingly pointing to older people not previously seen approaching for help. While at the same time, official data (March 2014) reports fewer older people accessing hardship supports. Advances for electricity and gas (14.9%), Special Needs Grants for food (3.2%) (4.6%). This contradiction is puzzling and an area that will need to be further explored.

VULNERABILITY REPORT 19th 19th August 2014

All living costs have risen and it is now harder to make ends meet if Super is the only source of income. 80% have had to budget for their basic needs – some choosing to go without heating, Christchurch City Mission

Demand for food banks is higher than last year: 23% of our clients are over 65. VisuaWest Community Trust

We are seeing more elderly clients. Many management currently supporting 31 clients over 65 and 11 clients in retirement, budgeting, advocacy, food parcels, Presbyterian Support Northern

ELECTION 2014 Church leaders' messages to New Zealanders

NZ Catholic Bishops:

“Pope Francis has renewed with vigour and his own personal example the Church’s mission to the poor, with a call for an end to an economy of exclusion, in which people are not just exploited, but discarded and cast aside. In New Zealand disparities between rich and poor have become entrenched in a society that once regarded itself as egalitarian. Struggling families with empty cupboards sometimes live only a few streets away from others for whom the provision of food and other basics is no problem. It is particularly

concerning when people live in ignorance, and even indifference, to how their neighbours are faring.”

Catholic Social Justice Week 14–20 September

During Social Justice Week Caritas is focusing on Catholic social teaching, which provides us with key ethical principles through which we can interpret social issues around us and take action to seek justice. Seven of the principles are brought to life through video: human dignity; solidarity; subsidiarity; stewardship; common good; participation; and preferential option for the poor.



Presbyterian Moderator Rt. Rev. Ray Coster

“One justice issue that really concerns me as a follower of Jesus is the growing inequality between the rich and the poor of this world. The opening word Jesus quoted in his mandate means that we cannot be his followers and turn a deaf ear to the poor. “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor...” Isaiah 61:1 “If a person shuts their ears to the cry of the poor, they too will cry out and not be answered.” Proverbs 21:13. The total wealth of the world is about US\$223 trillion. The big concern is how this is distributed and the impact that has on people’s lives.

Anglican Archbishops

The three Anglican Archbishops have identified four key challenges facing Aotearoa New Zealand in the run-up to the General Election on September 20: child poverty, income inequality, lack of affordable and accessible housing, and global warming: “Each person possesses a dignity

ELECTION

SERIES 2014

Make your vote count.

that comes from God, not from any human quality or accomplishment. The foundational human rights that protect this dignity include food and shelter, work, education and health care. Therefore, the test of any policy is whether it ensures that everyone – regardless of race, gender, age or economic status – has these needs met. This must be the first priority of any political system.”

Methodist Public Questions

The Methodist Church Public Issues Network has identified Poverty/Inequality, Children, Housing, Climate, and Water as key election issues and provides an overview of party policy in each area.

Salvation Army – Make Your Vote Count

“Dealing with poverty, abuse and unfairness in New Zealand needs to be of central importance to all political parties and all voters,” Major Campbell Roberts, Director of The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit.

The Salvation Army has produced a [series of videos](#) on key social issues as the basis for discussion and debate in the lead up to the election.

Your vote, your chance to make a difference Values, targets and policies to achieve them

How can New Zealand take steps to reduce poverty and inequality and move ‘closer together’? We set out a framework to build a more equal society built on shared values and guided by clear targets.

Values

Any move to reduce inequality needs to be anchored in values that are recognised and accepted by most people. NZCCSS mission is built on the values of justice and compassion coming out of the Christian tradition. Those values are widely shared by people of diverse faith traditions and all walks of life and are about the

principle of “*aroha tētahi ki tētahi* – let us look after each other”. Faced by growing and seemingly overwhelming problems, practical day to day responses in people’s daily lives need to be matched with a prophetic call for changes to the way we organise our society.

It is very clear that concern is growing about inequality and poverty and has reached a point where it is a leading issue going into the 2014 election. There is recognition of the ‘money-empathy gap’ that has opened up as those with the highest incomes and wealth distance themselves from relationship and accountability

towards others in their community. This is a moment of opportunity for our country to make the choice to learn to share our nation’s abundant wealth better.

Targets - What the Future Might Look Like – nobody loses out and the gap is closed

Imagine a future where the highest incomes are restrained and grow in line with inflation while the middle and lowest incomes more than double.

Targets are a strong way to focus the attention of decision makers. The Better Public Service (BPS) targets introduced by the National Government have captured the attention of public service management because their own performance accountability has been closely bound up with meeting those targets.

Therefore it is important when responding to inequality to set targets that are achievable and measurable and that are not too narrowly focused. One strong criticism of the BPS targets is the fact that other good and important areas have lost resources or been neglected because of the focus on meeting the limited number of narrowly framed BPS targets.

Reducing inequality does not involve seeking complete income

equality (any more than those who oppose reducing inequality would claim total inequality - where one person owns everything - as a target). Indeed targets could be set that involve no-one losing out but rather ensuring that the gains at the top of the income scale are smaller than the gains for lower and middle incomes.

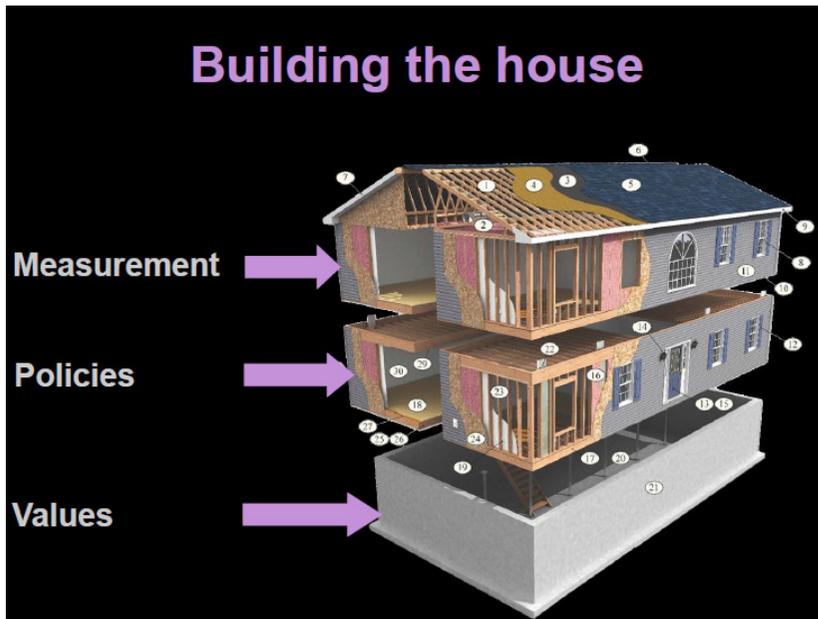
A plan to reduce inequality will include a number of measures across a range of indicators. A headline set of targets could be framed up as seeking to reduce income inequality in as measured by the ratio of top 10% of household incomes to the bottom 10% from its current 9:1 to the 5:1. This is a level New Zealand has achieved in the past and is currently achieved by other wealthy OECD countries. It would involve NZ aiming at returning to being one of the less unequal countries in the OECD and it could also be a target to maintain that position of being among the leading countries in reducing inequality. There is a danger in international comparisons, especially

as the majority of the OECD countries have been becoming more unequal over recent decades, but as a country we should not be satisfied with mediocrity, of being “about average” or in the “bottom third” but seek to lead by example.

Together with these broader headline targets, there would need to be specific targets focused on the ethnic, gender, disability as well as strong links to other poverty measures.

Using pay ratios in the public service would be an example of implementing inequality reducing policy. A recent OECD report highlighted the fact that CEOs and senior managers in the NZ public service are the second highest paid in the OECD, well ahead of USA, UK and Canada and exceeded only by Italy. It would make sense to tie the implementation of a living wage in the public service to a maximum of 8-10 times the living wage. That would be around \$320,000 – 390,000 which compares to current CEO salaries that are in the \$400,000 – \$700,000 range.

New Zealand has enough for everyone, we just need to share it better



Tackling Inequality – What are the kinds of policies that will make a difference?

Inequality needs to be tackled head on through policies that directly impact on household incomes through the tax, benefit and employment systems. At the same time, we need to be

working on policies to ameliorate the effects of inequality and break the cycle through health, housing and education and our democratic systems.

In the table below we set out the kinds of policies that could contribute to tackling inequality. The important point is that individual policies

are less likely to be effective than when they are combined into a web of social policy that is driven by the goal of reducing inequality and poverty. We urge you to consider these issues when choosing how to cast your vote in 2014.

Addressing inequality at source, right now

Getting people into skilled jobs

One of the first steps towards reducing income gaps is to create more well-paying and rewarding jobs – and then make sure people have the skills to fill them

- Creating more jobs in high-employment fields
- More research and development spending
- More skills and trade training

Closing the salary gap

Once people have a job, they have to be in a workplace that gives them a fair reward for the effort they have put in

- A significantly higher minimum wage
- Support for a Living Wage of \$18.80
- Encouraging stronger collective bargaining
- Pay ratios and high pay transparency

Tax and benefits

For people not working, or doing important unpaid work like child-rearing, support needs to be more generous – and the tax system should ask those who can to contribute more towards that

- A capital gains tax
- A more progressive tax system
- Increasing payments to beneficiaries

Breaking the cycle and reducing inequality in the long run

Education

Schools can offer all children the chance to realise their potential, helping reduce the influence of family background on their life choices

- Helping low-decile schools and students
- Boosting teacher training and quality
- Supporting high-quality early childhood education

Health and housing

Being in good health is crucial to people’s chances of earning a decent income and not been trapped in cycles of poverty

- A Warrant of Fitness for all homes
- Improving access to primary healthcare
- A commitment to reducing health inequalities

Democracy

Only if everyone has a genuinely equal say in politics is New Zealand likely to move towards a fairer future

- Supporting high-quality public broadcasting
- New ways for people to be involved in politics
- Developing measures of progress beyond GDP

To see how the parties’ polices measure up, visit equalitynetwork.org.nz

CANDIDATES MEETING
Where the parties stand on inequality

Around a hundred people filled Connolly Hall to hear from National, Labour, Greens, NZ First, Mana, and Conservative Party candidates respond to the question of where their party stands on inequality and what they plan to do about it. NZCCSS was host for this special candidates meeting in Wellington on 16 September and journalist Max Rashbrooke chaired the debate.

All the candidates present expressed genuine concern about inequality and poverty, but the differences in policy and approach also emerged. There was wide agreement about employment as an important way out of poverty and strong commitment from all to the concept of

full employment. Difference emerged about the causes of poverty (e.g. are alcohol problems or sole parenthood a symptom of poverty or a cause of it?) and whether parties were willing and genuinely able to work together to overcome child poverty. Policies affecting people on benefits are a clear point of difference between the National and Conservative Parties on the one hand and Labour, Greens and Mana on the other.

NZCCSS Executive Office Trevor McGlinchey closed the meeting with a strong appeal to all parties to commit working on policies that help the most vulnerable, overcome the divide between the haves and have-nots and bring us all closer together.



ELECTION 2014 Caring Counts in aged care – Who cares?

There is a clear choice emerging in policy around aged care at this election. The National Party is committing to more of the same with no major changes in policy direction or funding levels. In contrast, some other political parties are making very strong commitments to increase the

both the level of services and funding for those services, compulsory staffing levels and lifting wages for workers in the sector.

The **Caring Counts Coalition** group of consumer, worker, employer and sector associations involved in home support and residential

aged care has been working with the Human Rights Commission to follow up on the recommendations of the *Caring Counts* report prepared by the Commission in 2012.

All the political parties currently in Parliament were invited to come and speak to around 100 representatives

of the sector at a forum in Wellington in July to give their position on implementing the report recommendations and wider issues for the sector. Representatives from Labour, Greens, NZ First attended the gathering, with National unable to send a replacement for Hon Jo Goodhew,

who was a last-minute apology, was the Māori Party representative.

The forum had ten questions for the panel of politicians and some of their responses are summarised below (n.b. Jo Goodhew sent her responses to questions in writing following the event).

National – Jo Goodhew: I am proud of the work the government has done to strengthen the quality and monitoring of aged care. Many of the recommendations within the *Caring Counts* report continue to be consistent with initiatives and actions underway. ... National will continue to increase investment in aged care, as strongly as can be afforded.

Greens – Kevin Hague: We are committed to implementing all the recommendations. We are concerned at the slowness of implementation. It is a disgrace that issues about fair travel and pay parity has been left to the Courts. There has been some progress with qualifications but there needs to be national standards and transparency. In-house qualifications will not be acceptable. Safety standards need to be implemented but these need to be reviewed as acuity of need has changed. Safe staffing levels in particular need reviewing. Current standards are not adequate. Consumer information is essential. Transparency of money flows from DHBS is very important but the industry must pass through the funding increases it receives to increase wages. There is no updated strategy or plan. We need to more proactive and strategic. We would follow Labour's model of getting all stakeholders around the table.

Labour – Iain Lees-Galloway: The *Caring Counts* recommendations are sound and Labour will ensure they are implemented by working across the sector. We will ensure aged care is adequately resourced. In the first 100 days of government we will establish a working group of key stakeholders to agree a plan within 12 months to implement the recommendations. The first Budget will have steps to address pay parity and fair travel and we will ensure that the health budget will have increases to match population and inflation changes.

NZ First – Barbara Stewart: *Caring Counts* report is a major report and the recommendations totally achievable and realistic. We need to meet every single recommendation. We are committed to empowering senior citizens to remain independent for as long as they can. We acknowledge the huge efforts of the care workers. There is a tsunami of need coming our way. We would like to see a sustainable aged care national plan. We support increased funding which should be directed to pay parity and we will be working towards this after the next election.

General comments on implementing the *Caring Counts* recommendations

Is aged care a priority for your party?

All parties claim that aged care is a priority for them and Labour and Greens committed to having their Health Ministers within top 10 cabinet ranking and with responsibility for aged care while NZ First promised to “consider this”. National's Jo Goodhew defends her status as Associate Minister outside of Cabinet by saying that she has “good support” from senior Cabinet Ministers Tony Ryall (Health) and Paula Bennett (Social Development).

The model of care we have in the aged care with big private providers for publicly funded services – is it too late to change this? Would you change it?

None of the parties felt much could be done to change the current model of an “illogical” mix of public and

private funding. The private sector already has a massive investment in the sector and Greens, Labour and NZ First all agreed that a focus on the best outcome with taxpayer dollars strictly monitored is the best way forward.

The staffing guidelines need to be updated because of how acuity has changed and they need to become compulsory. Do you agree?

Labour, Greens and NZ First all said “Yes” on this question but National’s response is that the “Government considers it more important to focus on positive outcomes rather than measures like minimum staffing ratios, as outlined in the indicators. Minimum staffing ratios risk locking in particular types of service delivery, stifling innovation, and creating barriers to more effective ways of caring for older people and improving their experiences.”

Top three things you want to do?

National:

1. Improvements in rest home auditing and monitoring, as well as greater transparency of the audit system
2. Roll-out of the internationally recognised comprehensive clinical assessment tool, interRAI
3. Greater integration of aged care services.

Labour:

1. We need a sustainable, coherent plan. This will mean getting stakeholders around the table.
2. We need to address fair travel pay
3. Ensure transparency of the money flow so that it gets to care givers.

Greens:

1. We need to ensure safe and quality care. Fair pay travel and wages needs to be looked at.
2. Home based care model needs to be refreshed and reviewed. It is vital that people have the opportunity to stay at home.
3. We are concerned that the Industry is more focused on the bottom line and not the quality of care.

NZ First:

1. We need an enduring national plan.
2. Workers’ pay, training and travel issues needs to be addressed.
3. We need national standards for residential care.

Lifting wages A clear divide

The National Party is the only major party that is not willing to commit to pay parity with DHBS for aged care workers but their likely coalition partners disagree. NZ Aged Care Association “Who Cares” campaign has demonstrated a clear political divide on the issue of lifting wages. The entire aged care sector, employers, unions, consumers is committing to lifting wages for aged care workers if the Government will deliver the funding to enable this.

When asked whether their party will “commit to achieving pay parity between government care staff and aged care providers care staff by increasing funding to the aged care sector over three years, by 12%, to achieve a minimum rate of \$17.50 per hour for caregivers”, the Labour, Greens, NZ First, Māori, United Future and Conservative parties all support this. Only the National Party did not make this commitment, saying that pay rates are “a matter between the employers and their workers”. Check out the responses from parties at: www.whocares.org.nz

Travel time settlement Good news for care workers

Another of the *Caring Counts* recommendations has been advanced with the announcement of an agreement between the Government, unions and employers on a proposal that will see home support workers paid for travel time and travel costs in a consistent way throughout New Zealand, begin in July 2015.

More than 40,000 older people receive home support and the proposal represents good first steps to improving pay and working conditions for the estimated 24,000 care workers providing home support.

The proposal also aims to establish an expert reference group by the end

of the year to develop and oversee the transition to a more ‘regularised’ workforce where workers have guaranteed hours and workloads. The group will also conduct a review of health funded home and community support services looking at future demand and sustainability.

The agreement has been welcomed by sector unions (PSA and SFWU), the employers Home & Community Health Association, as well as Human Rights Commissioner Jackie Blue as a positive step forward for equal pay for workers.

Read more on the [HCHA website](http://www.hcha.org.nz).

Rest home subsidy to increase

In response to the pressure across the whole sector, Health Minister [Tony Ryall has announced](http://www.mta.govt.nz/minister/tony-ryall) a modest but very welcome increase in aged residential care funding. The extra funding will be for a price increase of 5% on the rest home bed price only (not dementia or hospital) with effect from 1 October 2014. The maximum contribution that aged care residents

have to pay will also be raised because of the change to the rest home bed price. Minister Ryall suggested that the funding could be used for wage increases in the sector but did not explain how he imagines those organisations offering more than rest home care (e.g. hospital and dementia care) will fund increases for workers in those other areas.

Legislation and submissions

Productivity and social services

What does the concept of productivity mean when applied to social sector public services? This is the first question that springs to mind about the latest Productivity Commission inquiry. Previous Commission inquiry reports seem to operate much like the medieval doctors, where regardless of the ailment the treatment prescribed involved “bleeding” the patient. So it has seemed “more competition” is prescribed as the Commission’s recipe for responding to everything from freight transport, housing affordability, local government and the services sector (e.g. “A healthy level of competition is an important prerequisite for lifting productivity”). Reports published so far have been packed full of the standard market-orientated jargon of “flexibility”, “competition”, “reducing barriers to trade”, etc. So, can the social sector now look forward to a further round of vigorous competition-focused fat-trimming recommendations?

In fact the Commission has a broad mandate to improve productivity in a way that supports the overall well-being of New Zealanders, whether economic, social, environmental and cultural. This invites those of us involved in the social sector to

encourage the Commission to explore a suitably broad understanding of productivity in the social services sector. Understanding productivity in terms of contribution increasing social capital and other non-GDP based measures would be one aspect of this broader understanding.

The Commission tells us that this inquiry will focus on ways to improve productivity and generate better outcomes for New Zealanders from the Government’s investment in public services such as social housing, employment services, and programmes to reduce crime. They will be considering new approaches to social services such as the Social Sector Trials and Whānau Ora, as well as looking to overseas approaches. They will consider how agencies identify social-service needs and make decisions about delivery, how services are targeted to the right clients, bringing together the right mix of agencies, and achieving desired outcomes.

They are very keen to hear from and better understand the experience of those involved in delivering social services. [The full Terms of Reference are on their website](#) and they will be issuing a “issues paper” inviting submissions and comment in later 2014.

Social Security Act re-write and basic principles of social security

In May the Minister of Social Development, Paula Bennett, announced a rewrite of the 1964 Social Security Act. In the 50 years since the Act was passed there have literally hundreds of amendments and changes to the Act and all those involved find it confusing and difficult to work with.

Minister Bennett has stated that the focus is making the existing policies more accessible and understandable, not further welfare reform. In the Cabinet Paper about the proposed work, she states that the purpose of the work is to ensure the legislation supports the government’s “investment approach” to welfare, use a more “contemporary approach” to the Act’s structure with less detail in the primary Act and more use of regulations to make changes to things like supplementary assistance easier (not requiring an amendment act to be passed through Parliament).

The Cabinet Paper also identifies some of the risks involved in such a re-write. It is probably impossible to re-write such an Act in a “policy neutral” way – the process of Parliamentary scrutiny opens all the recent reforms and policies to potential debate and provisions of the Act

that are contrary to the Bill of Rights “may not be able to be justified”.

It is expected to the legislation will be before Parliament in late 2015 with people having the opportunity to make submissions through the Select Committee process. Find out more on the [MSD website](#).

It is indeed important that any re-write of the Act should consider the basic principles and values that underlie social security in this country. The 2010 Welfare Working Group process took a very narrow focus in its consideration of the welfare system and the churches responded by forming their own Alternative Welfare Working Group to seek input from a wide cross-section of our society and provide a broader examination of our welfare system.

[Welfare Justice For All](#), the final report of the Alternative Welfare Working Group, sets out the values and vision that should underlie the approach to welfare in this country. It is these principles that need to inform any debate about re-writing the Social Security Act. These principles draw on the comprehensive work done in the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Social Security 1988 and the 1972 Royal Commission on Social Security:

The provision of social security reflects the values of interdependence, social cohesiveness and the common good

Affirm adequate benefit levels to ensure participation in society and reject punitive stigmatising policies and a narrow focus on paid work.

Social security:

- Requires investment in the well-being of all members of society
- Ought to properly reflect Maori aspirations for full citizenship and rangatiratanga
- Ought to protect the vulnerable from adverse conditions
- Ought to be financed by general taxation rather than individual contributions
- Should encourage opportunity for all citizens to participate in our society
- Ought to facilitate the achievement of paid employment, as well as other beneficial types of work
- Should provide an adequate standard of living.

Social security law should be simple, transparent, consistent and consistently applied.

A comprehensive social security system should be linked with good economic, employment, housing, health, education and social services. ([Welfare Justice For All](#), p.8–9)



Conference: Social Justice in Communities

23–24 October 2014, Rydges Latimer, Christchurch

Register now at socialjustice.org.nz

Social justice in communities
What is it? How can we build it?
How can we sustain it?

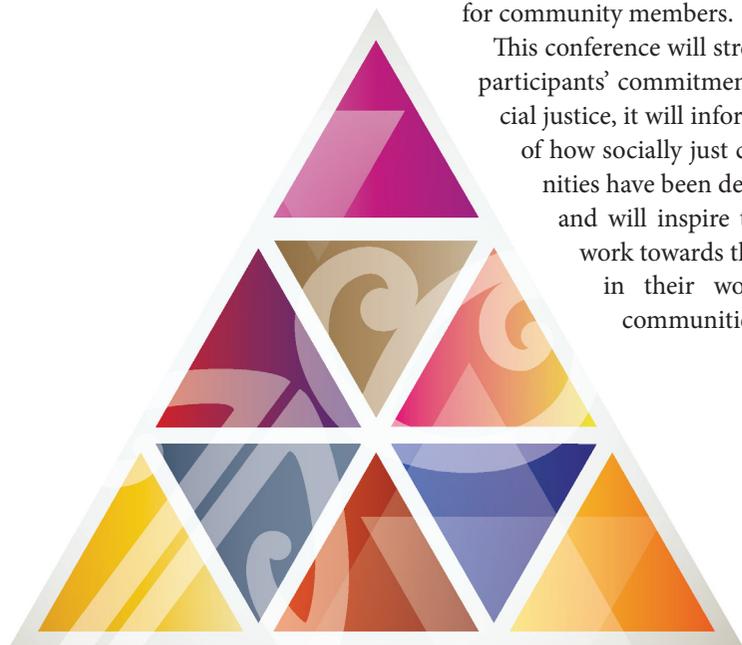
A conference jointly hosted by [Community Networks Aotearoa](http://CommunityNetworksAotearoa.org.nz) (formerly NZCOSS) and the NZ Council of Christian Social Services.

Social justice is vitally important in Christchurch as it is rebuilding and redeveloping; it is equally important

in all of our communities. It does not happen by accident but is the result of deliberate and inclusive decision-making.

Inspirational speakers from Christchurch, elsewhere in New Zealand and Australia will share their experiences in working within communities to bring about self-determination, inclusion and empowerment for community members.

This conference will strengthen participants' commitment to social justice, it will inform them of how socially just communities have been developed and will inspire them to work towards this ideal in their work and communities.



conference
social justice
 in communities | 4

KEYNOTES

Arihia Bennett
 Ngai Tahu Aspirations

This kaupapa sits at the heart of Ngai Tahu aspirations and it is indeed reflected in intentional creation and maintenance of whanau ora.



Appointed CEO of Te Rūnanga o Ngai Tahu in 2012, Arihia Bennett has worked in health, social services with government, non-government and iwi agencies for more than 30 years. She has held governance roles associated with Te Rūnanga o Ngai Tahu and in 2008, she was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to Māori and the community.

Gilbert Rochecouste
 "Placemaking"

Gilbert's passion is the creation of socially just and sustainable places that are inclusive and loved by all. He will inspire and make you laugh, always creating a hopeful story for our countries. He will take you on a journey on how people and countries around the world are talking back control and creating great places for all



Gilbert Rochecouste is recognised both nationally and internationally as a leading voice in placemaking. He is a sought after speaker and motivator, known for his innovative thinking, dynamic engagement processes and inspirational approach to community activation. One of the first AI Gore climate leaders, Gilbert has worked with hundreds of mainstreets, developers and businesses over the last 20 years to create more vibrant, connected and resilient communities.

Susan Krumdieck
 Social Business in
 Transition Engineering



A social business is a not-for-loss, not-for-profit company that has a mission to solve a problem. Transition of all current uses of fossil fuels to rapidly reduce production and combustion rates is a massive engineering change problem. The keynote presentation will challenge the dominant mythologies. The first myth is that green technology will lead to green growth. The second myth is that we can't use less fossil fuels. And the third myth is that poverty could be reduced if people used more energy. Once we bust these myths, the challenges in the lecture will continue as we look at the reality of using

less fossil fuel through the emergence of Transition Engineering. Transition Engineering will do the same thing that engineering always does – make things work.

Professor Susan Krumdieck has been at Canterbury University since 2000. Her research focuses on developing the engineering methods and innovative technologies for adaptation to reduced fossil fuel consumption. She is an expert in developing new ideas for dealing with oil supply issues in transportation systems and urban planning.

Sandra Grey & Charles Sedgwick

The ill effects of government actions on social justice advocacy by the NZ community and voluntary sector

For decades, community and voluntary sector organisations have contributed to social justice by meeting immediate social needs and by advocating for governments and societies to change their approach to the distribution of goods and services. Two surveys of community and voluntary



sector organisations completed five years apart, show that governments with a 'take it or leave it attitude' and their demands for a 'contract environment' have negatively impacted upon the social justice advocacy work carried out by NGOs. Community and voluntary sector organisations are fully aware of the tensions that have been created by successive governments. The question in a hostile climate is how to recover the broader advocacy and democratic role of the sector as a corner stone of social justice?

Dr Sandra Grey is a Senior Lecturer in Social Policy at Victoria University of Wellington. Sandra is currently working on a major project examining activism by the New Zealand women's, union, and anti-poverty

movements since 1970. Dr Charles Sedgwick is a sociologist with strong interdisciplinary interests.

Mary Richardson

A tale of two cities

Mary will present the social justice experienced by different sectors of Christchurch's population post the earthquakes.

Mary is currently the Director Office of the Chief Executive of the Christchurch City Council. Previously Mary was the highly respected Unit Manager Policy and Research for the Council from 1998 to 2005. Mary moved to her current role from the Methodist Mission where she was Executive Director/



CEO – a role she held from 2010 to 2014. Mary's previous roles included Director of Policy for the Department of Internal Affairs.

Lisa Woolley

Beyond Housing – Creating communities of hope and belonging

Lisa's address will be taking the key themes

from her thesis on homelessness and supportive housing and looking at the outcomes for people who have been formerly homeless, who have been housed in a supportive housing model where they are connected to wrap around support services, family and community.

Lisa is the CEO of VisionWest Community Trust (formerly the



Friendship Centre Trust). Founded by members of the Glen Eden Baptist Church community in 1988, the Trust is one of the largest community based organisations in West Auckland. The Trust is well known for its innovative and holistic approach to community services. Lisa is passionate about community development and addressing social issues such as poverty, marginalisation, unemployment and homelessness. Over the last ten years, Lisa has been highly involved in developing community based social housing; was on the Council for Community Housing Aotearoa for six years and is currently President of the NZCCSS.

REGISTER EARLY

The Conference is on the Thursday and Friday before Labour Weekend – you may wish to spend a few extra days in Christchurch – however, if not register and book your travel early as flights out of Christchurch will get more expensive the closer you get to Labour Weekend.



Register now at socialjustice.org.nz



SPECIAL
Free sessions open to the public

In the spirit of social justice the Conference includes an open to the public session at the Transitional Cathedral on Friday morning. Morning tea and remaining sessions will be back at Rydges Latimer (a five-minute stroll away). The church service is optional; the keynote by Mary Richardson provides an opportunity for those unable to make the service to experience the cathedral.

FREE SESSIONS
FRIDAY 24 OCTOBER

Church service led by the Rev Jolyon White, with a presentation by Lisa Woolley, 'The impact of secure homes for vulnerable families'

Keynote: Mary Richardson, 'A tale of two cities'

Neighbourhood project launch: Neighbours Day Aotearoa, in conjunction with Te Raranga, will present and launch the Neighbourhood Project and Te Raranga's summer of fun.

Friday's programme begins at 8.15am

Kete Kupu
Word Basket

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

The newsletter of the NZ Council of Christian Social Services
PO Box 12-090, Thorndon,
Wellington 6144

3 George Street, Thorndon
Wellington

If you would like to receive this newsletter in a different format (by email, mail or both) please contact NZCCSS (04) 473 2627 or 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.



New Zealand Council of
Christian Social Services