

## Incoming Government 2014 Child poverty a priority

In a clear and direct response to the high level of public concern about poverty and inequality during the election campaign, following his re-election as Prime Minister John Key has declared child poverty to be a top priority for his government. This represents an important change and is a small victory for all those who have worked so hard to change attitudes about poverty and inequality. Previously John Key has denied it is an issue and largely ignored the comprehensive and authoritative work of the Expert Group on Child Poverty reports he received

two years ago, including refusing to measure child poverty.

The pressing question is whether this change of language is a signal of serious change in policy? Unfortunately initial hints from the limited information that can be obtained from briefings and papers that have been released suggest that the overall approach remains the same as for the past six years – ‘incentivising’ people off benefits and into paid work and an obsession with ‘targeting’ a defined ‘population’ of ‘at risk’ children that the government has decided are

the really poor and disadvantaged. Perhaps they will choose to ‘target’ the 135,000 children who live in severe poverty (i.e. with household incomes below 40% of median income after housing costs [[MSD Household Incomes Report, 2014](#)]).

The Treasury briefing to the incoming government talks a great deal about better data matching and ‘segmenting’ of information in an attempt to identify the children who really are poor and ‘deserving’ more assistance.

The MSD Briefing to Incoming Government clearly identifies that the people most affected by poverty are those who rely on a benefit. Benefit levels have fallen in real terms since the mid-1980s, especially for sole parents while average wages, household income and NZ Super have all increased over the same period.

The information clearly shows that benefit incomes are too low and are driving people into deep and persistent poverty but the neither Treasury nor MSD mention the obvious solution to lift core benefit rates above recognised poverty lines (as is done with NZ Super). The best that MSD can offer is to suggest ‘ensuring that

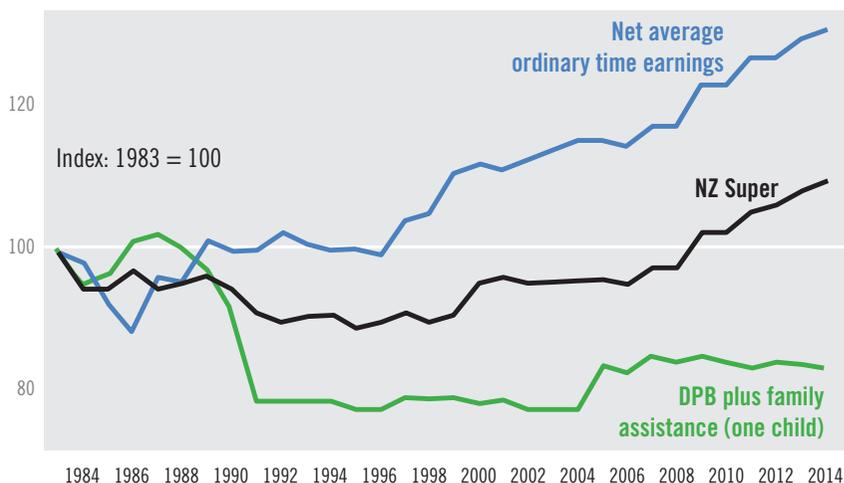
the tax/benefit interface and effective marginal tax rates are fair and provide the right incentives.’

If the Prime Minister is seeking advice on how to reduce child poverty then he does not need to look far – the Children’s Commissioner has given a very helpful set of options to reduce poverty, [78 of them in fact](#). The key recommendations around lifting incomes are important:

- increasing the Family Tax Credit to equal the rate paid for the first child and eliminating the different rates based on the number of children in a family.
- reforming the In-Work Tax Credit to make it available to families not in employment and combining this with changes to abatement rates, work-hours tests and thresholds, having the level of assistance more closely related to the number of children and have time limited assistance carrying over into employment (e.g. for the first 6–12 months).

While increasing benefit payments costs more (between \$1.5–2.0 billion was estimated in the [EAG report](#)) that report also documents the

### Comparisons between average wages, NZ super & benefit levels



## CONTENTS

<b>Incoming Government 2014</b> Maggie Barrie: ‘The wellbeing of older New Zealanders is close to my heart’	2
Taking on the big challenges in an ageing society	2
Getting ready for large scale state housing sell-off?	3
Pay equity and the Services for Older People sector	4
Conference report: Social Justice in Communities	5
Conference report: NZ Faith Community Nursing Assoc.	8
<b>Legislation &amp; submissions</b> Productivity and Social Services	9
Treasury requests information on vulnerable (at-risk) children	9
Draft Code of Responsible Lending	10
Gambling Amendment Bill (Nr 3)	10
Social Security Act re-write and basic principles of social security	10

estimated \$6–8 billion annual cost of child poverty to New Zealand. As an ‘investment’ in the terms being used by the government to describe its approach to welfare, it appears to be a ‘no brainer’ – for every dollar spent, up to \$4 is saved.



'The wellbeing of older New Zealanders is close to my heart'

**A message from  
Hon Maggie Barry ONZM,  
Minister for Senior Citizens**

**A**s the new Minister for Senior Citizens, I intend to be a strong advocate for older New Zealanders, and being invited into Cabinet by the Prime Minister means the voice of your sector will now be heard around the top table. The wellbeing of older New Zealanders is close to my heart and I will be travelling around the country to meet as many of the seniors groups and key stakeholders in the sector as I can.

As Minister for Senior Citizens, I take a whole of government advocacy role on behalf of older people, particularly in relation to policy development and decision making.

This means supporting positive ageing and the wellbeing of older New Zealanders in a range of areas and I'll be your advocate across retirement income, employment, housing, transport, ageing in the community, disability support, community and voluntary sector involvement and the protection of older people's rights and interests.

I'm very aware after experiencing with my own mother's decline into dementia, that there are many

vulnerable older people who don't always have the advocates and safeguards they need, and they deserve dignity and respect in their final years.

I have also been actively involved in the palliative care sector for many years as a former Patron of Hospice NZ. Prior to entering Parliament, I chaired a working party into the care of those who are dying and during the last Parliamentary term, I founded the All Party Palliative Care Group, a cross-party initiative to raise awareness and support in Parliament for the care of people who are dying. I am also a co-founder of the Care Alliance which is a coalition assembled to oppose euthanasia and assisted suicide.

As the Minister for Senior Citizens, my priorities will include working to change attitudes towards ageing by encouraging people to value the role of older people in the workforce, as taxpayers and consumers. Most importantly I will be raising awareness of elder abuse and neglect and social isolation, issues which I believe need to be taken seriously.

## Incoming Government 2014 Taking on the big challenges in an ageing society

**C**an we expect significant change under the new trio of ministers? It seems unlikely, as the political success of former Health Minister Hon Tony Ryall was in his ability to keep health out of the 'bad news' headlines for the government, while at the same time keeping the lid (sinking) on real levels of health funding while continuing to squeeze additional productivity gains out of health spending. Low paid frontline care workers and closed community-based health services have been among the casualties of this push to meet a few narrowly focused health targets, but it seems unlikely that a new ministers will want to depart from this winning formula.

The equal pay legal action and the continuing pressure on the aged care sector wages and service delivery needs constructive attention and this represents an opportunity for those working with older people and other advocates to build pressure for more future-focused approach to the challenges ahead.

Older people have gained two new ministerial advocates at the Cabinet table in new Cabinet. With this move, another of the ten recommendations of the 2012 *Caring Counts* report has been partially implemented with the Minister for Senior Citizens now a

### **HON PESETA SAM LOTU-IIGA, ASSOCIATE MINISTER OF HEALTH (responsible for aged care)**

Hon Pesera Sam Lotu-liga has been in Parliament since 2008 as MP for Maungakiekie and lives in Onehunga in Auckland and is an active leader in the Pacific community holding the high chief title of Peseta. He has a background in commerce and law working with prominent law and consultancy firms in Australia, UK as well as New Zealand. He is ranked 19th in Cabinet and also holds the Corrections portfolio and is Minister for Pacific Peoples and Minister for Ethnic Communities.

He has been given the ministerial delegation for aged care as well as responsibility health certification of health services and the Health & Disability (Safety) Act, which makes him a key minister for those involved in service for older people such as aged residential care and home based support services.



### **HON JONATHAN COLEMAN, MINISTER OF HEALTH**

Dr Jonathan Coleman is MP for Northcote and has been in Parliament since 2005 and a Cabinet Minister since 2008 that included being an Associate Minister of Health. He is a qualified doctor and has worked in obstetrics and general practice as well management consultancy. His background no doubt makes him very familiar with New Zealand's health system and we await with interest signs of his particular interest in responding to the challenges facing aged care, home support and other services for older people.



Cabinet role. New Minister **Maggie Barrie** is indeed in Cabinet, even if the lowest ranked member at 20th. The addition of Associate Minister of Health **Peseta Sam Lotu-liga** to Cabinet is also a win for older people,

as he has budget responsibility for aged care and unlike his predecessor Jo Goodhew, is now part of Cabinet ranked 19th.

These two low-ranked Cabinet

*Continued over...*

*Continued from page 2*

voices combine with the new Minister of Health **Hon Jonathan Coleman**, who is ranked 6th in Cabinet, reflecting the importance of the health portfolio and its role in government. As one of the Cabinet senior ministers, it remains to be seen how much of an advocate and supporter of services for older people he will be. It is to be hoped that the two new ministers will work hard to keep the importance of the issues facing older people, their support services and those working in the sector higher up the government's priority list. Maggie Barry, well-known as a television personality and journalist, receiving the Order of NZ Merit in 1996, has sent us a message (see page 3) pledging her commitment to be an advocate for older people in the new Cabinet and noting her special interest in palliative care, dementia and being an advocate for vulnerable older people. NZCCSS looks forward to working with her towards achieving progress.

## Incoming Government 2014

### Getting ready for large scale state housing sell-off?

The three housing ministers in the new Cabinet need no introduction, Hon Bill English, Hon Paula Bennett and Hon Nick Smith. The three senior and well-known Cabinet Ministers will be turning their combined energies to housing in the new Cabinet. The most intriguing part of this is creating the new Ministerial role of Minister for Social Housing for Hon Paula Bennett. Now ranked 5th in Cabinet, after muscling welfare reform and the vulnerable children's work through in social development, she has presumably been given the task of implementing the same 'tough love' approach she took with welfare to social housing. Given that most of those on the receiving end of her attention will be very familiar with her style and her interests, it is very much a case of 'we know what to expect'. Paula Bennett has earned respect for her willingness to front up on her work and policies but that does not disguise the fact that the experience of people receiving welfare in this country has not improved under her watch.

Bill English is also appointed to a new portfolio as Minister for Housing New Zealand. He appears to be using



the new role as an invitation to run down his own department at every opportunity. He seemed to delight in describing how badly his department treats people in government-owned housing and in his public comments is quite open about his desire to extract more 'value' out of the \$18 billion housing asset. His interpretation of extracting value seems narrowly focused on extracting higher dividends and selling off state houses to fund subsidies for private rental housing or simply to top-up the government's coffers. Paula Bennett in contrast, seems to be clearer that the government wants to increase the number of social houses and that any proceeds of sales of state houses would be recycled back into increasing social housing numbers.

The government is sending mixed messages about what social housing should be, and appears to be floating ideas in public to see how much opposition there is, especially to the idea of further large scale sales of HNZ housing. A major challenge for all those concerned about quality and affordable housing for people on the lowest incomes will be, at

the very least, to keep the government to its existing commitment to government-owned housing while at the same time supporting local government and community housing organisations to significantly grow their stock of housing. We need at least 15,000 more social housing units as soon as possible in addition to the current level, yet HNZ in its Briefing to the Incoming Government says it has only managed to build 274 of the 2,000 houses the Prime Minister in January 2013 announced would be built by December 2015. Community

housing organisations have virtually no new funding to build new housing and local authorities such as Christchurch and Hamilton are looking at selling their current stock. In addition, the government has 'capped' the amount of income related rent subsidy (IRRS) it will pay in the coming years, meaning that there will be some form of 'contestability' required between HNZ and other social housing providers to receive this subsidy. At the moment about 50 community housing units are receiving the IRRS subsidy.

#### HON ANNE TOLLEY, MINISTER FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Anne Tolley is MP for East Coast and has been in Parliament since 1999 and since 2005 has held a range of different portfolios including being Minister of Education 2008–11 as the National Standards policy was introduced and Minister of Police and Minister of Corrections 2001–14. She lives in Gisborne and before entering Parliament was Napier deputy mayor as well as serving on the Board of Napier Girls High School and the trust board of the Hawkes Bay Community Law Centre.

The new minister is ranked 11th in Cabinet and will be inheriting from previous Minister Paula Bennett the Children's Action Plan work on vulnerable children that the Prime Minister has high in the government's priority list in this term. She will no doubt also have a role to play in implementing the commitments made by the Prime Minister on responding to child poverty as well as overseeing the planned rewrite of the Social Security Act scheduled for 2015.



# Pay equity and the Services for Older People sector

The pressure on government to lift wages in the aged care sector is growing, as demonstrated by the recent decision of the Court of Appeal to uphold the interpretation of the Equal Pay Act used in the Employment Court case taken by aged care worker Kristine Bartlett against her employer Terra Nova.

Some NZCCSS member organisations are among the aged care providers who are included in the continuing employment court litigation, that is now going to the Supreme Court, meaning the court process is likely to continue over the next couple of years before it can be concluded. NZCCSS is not participating in the legal process and individual member agencies make their own

decisions about engaging with the legal process.

NZCCSS sees its role in supporting the advocacy and sector wide coalition-building that is needed to achieve changes in the way the sector is funded to enable care workers to be paid higher wage rates. Our involvement with the Caring Counts Coalition, a cross-sector group that is following through on the recommendations of the Human Rights Commission 2012 aged care inquiry report 'Caring Counts', the support for Living Wage campaign and the *Closer Together Whakatata Mai – reducing inequalities* information programme are all contributing to raising wider awareness, concern and willingness to support the necessary actions to help lift wages for workers in our sector.

For the first time in some years we have a situation where employers, sector associations, unions and consumer groups agree on the need to raise wages and have made public commitments to act on this, should the funding situation allow this to happen.

The small increase in funding for rest home providers and the home support workers travel time settlement are two examples this year of the

way government is recognising and responding to the pressure to act. The travel time settlement includes a commitment to establish a Reference Group to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the wider sector issues in home support including levels of and complexity of demand, service changes and funding levels. Noting that the government sets the fees for aged residential care and homecare services are constrained by the level of government/DHB funding, a significantly greater increase in funding is needed before any provider will be in a position to pay equitable wages to those who work in these sectors.

More work is needed but there are real opportunities for change and organisations, boards and individuals within our networks can support this by both public commitments to principles and initiatives as well as advocating with local MPs and government officials.

**Lifting wages is an investment in wellbeing for workers, their families and the older people they support**

**Job Creation:** Somewhere around 50,000 care workers are employed in the home support and aged residential care sector. Most of them are women and most work part-time. The demand for aged care services is

growing as the population ages and we can expect considerable future job creation in aged care. It is important that the investment in job creation in this sector is focused on creating the best quality jobs as possible that include fair rates of pay, stable hours but with reasonable flexibility to meet the needs of clients and workers as well as training, skills and career development. Higher wages would increase the incentive for people on benefits to take up work and overcome barriers such as the additional childcare and travel costs.

**Child poverty reduction:** Many of the children living in poverty live in the families where one or more family members may be employed in the aged care sector. Government investment in higher wages for this sector would help lift children in these families out of poverty. The current settings for Working for Families do not work well for workers such as those in aged care, whose incomes may vary and hover around the cut-off levels and abatement points for In-Work Tax credits and other income

support for families.

**Welfare savings:** Investing in better pay rates in the sector will generate fiscal savings in other areas of government. Most directly in reduced tax credits and income support payments and more indirectly through savings to other government social services by reducing families' vulnerability to poverty and associated health and social issues.

**International commitment to human rights:** The commitment to employment equity is part of our country's formal legal commitment to internationally agreed human rights conventions. Taking steps to lift wages in aged care is a strong signal to the international community that New Zealand takes those commitments seriously. In a time when New Zealand is on the Security Council of the United Nations, such steps have strong significance and show real leadership on the world stage.

**Transparency:** The clear commitment of all involved in the sector to lift wages needs to be accompanied by processes of transparency that can show how increased government funding is being applied to lift wages and conditions. Options such as using a minimum or industry mid-point for wages rates could be one part of such a process.



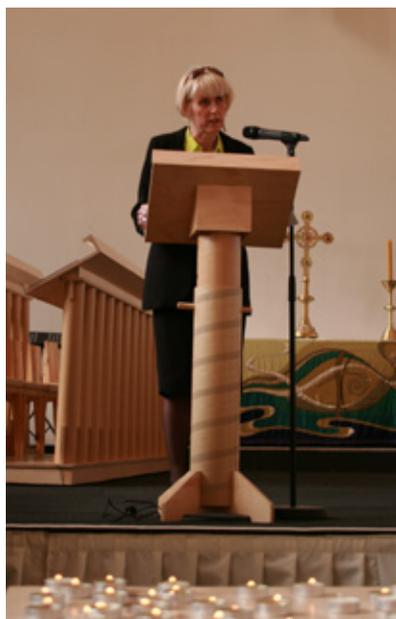
Aged care worker Kristine Bartlett.

**MUST READ:** *Insite* magazine journalist Jude Barback has published an [excellent article](#) giving a very thorough coverage of the situation in the equal pay litigation

# Conference report: Social Justice in Communities

23–24 October 2014, Christchurch, hosted by Community Networks Aotearoa and NZCCSS

It was important to be in Christchurch for a social justice conference and it was wonderful to have more than 120 people gather there in October. The brand new hotel and the temporary Cathedral that were the conference venues are two new buildings amongst demolition and construction sites, damaged and derelict houses. There is a huge amount of work still to do to rebuild the city and to do it in a way that is just, fair and inclusive. So it was that Christchurch voices were prominent in the programme and led the debate.



## A tale of two cities

On the second morning of the conference at the transitional Cathedral, former Methodist Mission CEO **Mary Richardson** reminded us that the story of the disaster and its aftermath is and remains a 'tale of two cities'. There is one where there is economic growth and vast wealth, and there is another where people are sleeping in garages and dying eight years earlier than they would have done prior to the earthquakes. On one side the wealthy, well-connected and powerful who have largely successfully sought to preserve their wealth and privilege and interests in the response to the crisis. On the other side, are the ordinary folk and the disadvantaged many of whom are still cannot find decent or affordable housing, whose homes have not been repaired or replaced and whose lives are still in disarray.

## Social justice is self-determination

Faced with such huge disparity it is important to find ways forward that can lead to greater justice. **Arihia Bennett**, CEO of Ngāi Tahu, began the conference, speaking about the aspirations of Ngāi Tahu for social justice. She said that for Ngāi Tahu social justice is self-determination.



She reminded us that it was the iwi and hapu of Ngāi Tahu that welcomed, helped feed and house and traded with the early whalers and settlers in the late 18th Century, before the Treaty of Waitangi was signed. The Treaty is for Ngāi Tahu a central justice document, negotiated by their tupuna in good faith with the Crown.

Fifteen years after their Treaty settlement Ngāi Tahu is moving to *delivering* on social justice, spending \$32 million on social and cultural development each year. This is the *practice*

'The greatest threat to our health is inequality. Equality and egalitarianism are natural states'

of self-determination, with priorities around investment in education, rejuvenation of the language and restoring land which was central to the claim and is vital to the future of the iwi. The iwi also seeks to build people's wealth through Whai Rawa (Building Wealth), their own KiwiSaver-style saving scheme, which has subsidised people's own savings more than doubling contributions from \$17 million to \$36 million. Ngāi Tahu is also implementing Whanau Ora agenda in the South Island, working



alongside whanau to empower them to transform their wellbeing. She describes it as an 'investment into a holistic sense of growing community'.

## Build the hope budget

Australian based community builder **Gilbert Rochecouste**, literally got everyone moving with his many stories of working with local people in many places around the world over the last 20 years to create more vibrant, connected and resilient communities. He spoke about the 'in-between stories' and transition process as communities adapt to social and environmental change and try to overcome the inequalities that are damaging all of us. He pointed to the work of ecological entrepreneur Paul Hawkin's *Blessed Unrest* (see [video](#) and [website](#)) and about the diverse movement from communities to organise

for human rights and social justice. Hundreds of thousands of organisations and groups with common goals and visions have emerged and continue to emerge as a powerful, non-ideological groups for change. Hawkins describes it as ‘humanity’s immune response to resist and heal political disease, economic infection and ecological corruption.’

Rocheouste emphasised that the search for meaning is the biggest gap for people of all ages in our communities and that in our work with communities we need to make use of the emerging technologies as game-changers for organising, the ‘pop-up’ culture as an easy fast and cheap way to try new ideas, and participatory democracy as the way for communities to make decisions.

He shared some of the vast numbers of clever and creative initiatives happening, using public spaces to do fun, temporary ‘interventions’ that open up new possibilities to break down corporate retail oligopolies and

promote re-localisation. The combination of social justice and social entrepreneurship is appearing in many forms. He shared the story of *Lentil as Anything*, an Australian free donation café where no-one has to pay but donations are invited. It has been so successful that they have been able to train over 500 refugee and migrant workers. He urged us to ‘build the hope budget’ and create powerful stories of change that can inspire others to take action.

**Energy injustice – What would a city without oil look like?**

Engineering professor Susan Krumdieck took the conference on a journey into a locally-based response to energy injustice. She asked the simple question if we know that in the next 30 years the supply of oil will have dropped to below the level of the early 1970s then should we not be designing and building our communities to live without oil? She pointed out that in New Zealand we are among the ‘30% of people alive today use too much energy’ and that energy injustice is ‘people using copious quantities of fossil fuels



degrading the wellbeing of ALL other people – now and in the future.’

Think 100 years into the future, she told the conference, ask ‘where you would need to be?’ and work backwards about the steps needed to get there. If we want a city like Christchurch to be liveable without vast consumption of fossil fuels, what would it need to look like? The answer lies as much in our past as in the future. Christchurch was a very liveable city full of cyclists and pedestrians as well as a few buses and cars in the 1920s and using far less oil than the city of today. Thinking forward 100 years means to learn from this for how Christchurch can be ‘affordable, accessible, vibrant, prosperous and educated without using oil’.

She and a team of Christchurch engineering students have set out

‘Energy injustice = people using copious quantities of fossil fuels degrading the wellbeing of ALL other people – now and in the future’

through their transition engineering projects to work with communities in Christchurch to try and initiate a re-development of a central



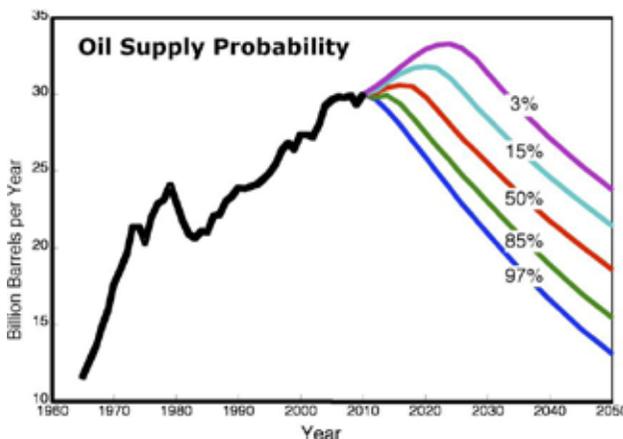
‘30% of people alive today use too much energy’

Christchurch suburb next to the University. They want to use a social business model that will be designed to be highly liveable with more people within walking and cycling distance of the work, shops and community amenities they need to thrive. They are looking for partners in the community to help get the project moving, to work with the 120 or so property owners with the suburb to gain their buy-in to take part in project. Find out more at [transitionengineering.co.nz](http://transitionengineering.co.nz)

**Beyond housing – creating communities of hope and belonging**

Another voice of hope was Lisa Woolley, CEO of VisionWest in Auckland. She leads an organisation that has grown out of her church’s work in west Auckland into a major provider of social services and housing. She shared her research work into homelessness and how the supportive housing her organisation provides works to change the lives of people who have been formerly homeless.

With around 34,000 people in New Zealand affected by ‘severe housing deprivation’ and much of that



need concentrated in Auckland and Christchurch, the need for good responses is urgent. Looking in detail at the stories of the people her agency works with, Lisa showed the complexity of peoples' lives and the issues that led them into homelessness. Experiences of trauma such as family violence, lack of support, release from prison, poverty and unaffordable rents are among the experiences she reports.

VisionWest's 'housing first' response means giving people a safe and secure place to live is the starting point for dealing with the other issues than so many of the clients face. It means offering them the experience of community and belonging that enables them to move on in life (but not necessarily their housing). The commitment is to house people long term and not to move them on and it is enormously cost effective, less than a third of what it would cost to 'house' a person in prison for example!

Such investments in hope for people are returned with gratitude and transformed lives. Her presentation is full of quotes from the participants in the research emphasising the importance of their experience of community:

*'It's very important to me, because without community I don't think as a solo mum I would have safety and friendship with others.'*

**Threats to democracy – it's getting harder to challenge**

Victoria University academics Dr Sandra Grey and Dr Charles Sedgwick shared the results of two surveys of NGOs they have undertaken, in 2008 and again in 2013, that show a disquieting growth in the number of NGO organisations that feel constrained in their ability to speak out and advocate in the current political and funding environment. They reported that the number of

NGO contracts with 'gag clauses' has doubled to more than a quarter of all respondents, with people saying that under contract they are 'not allowed to make public criticism', for example. Organisations also report it is harder to influence policy direction and that meaningful consultation has also declined. They are also more concerned about losing government funding if they speak out.

Grey & Sedgwick see this evidence of the undermining of democracy, a climate of intimidation and the manipulation of decisions behind closed doors by key power-holders. They are calling for a review of the Charities Act that is being used to pressure NGOs to retreat from advocacy. They also call for NGOs to work out the core messages for engagement and seek change in what is 'counted'.

**Make your summer a summer of neighbourliness**

The conference saw the launch of Christchurch church network Te Raranga's summer of fun project launched together with Neighbours Day Aotearoa. The Te Raranga network grew out of churches getting together in the aftermath of the 2011 earthquake to coordinate their work to support communities. Churches throughout Christchurch will be holding Summer of Fun events during December and January and a programme of those events is online at [raranga.org.nz/summer-of-fun/](http://raranga.org.nz/summer-of-fun/)



*'I found the conference to be re-energizing and inspiring on the whole'*

*'Best conference ever – it is going to be a hard act to follow for the future'*

thanks goes out to all those involved in making this conference happen – to the hard working organising team, especially Fionn Peat from CNA and Sharee Eden from NZCCSS. Conference MC Adrian Te Patu guided us through the two days with a lot of humour and insight and the Ridges Hotel team kept us well fed and watered!

Thank you to all of those who took part and for the great feedback you have given us that will help with planning future events.

**Workshops**

The conference workshops provided a great opportunity to discuss workforce development, building neighbourliness, overcoming inequality, community change, safe communities and the NGO sector. Notes and presentations of some of the workshops are online at the [conference website](http://conference website).

**Thank you!**

This was the first time the two social service umbrella organisations have organised a conference together and it was a great success. A huge vote of





## Sustainability of practice

A report on New Zealand Faith Community Nursing Association (NZFCNA) conference 11–13 September 2014 held at the Cathedral of St Paul in Wellington

New Zealand Faith Community Nursing Association (NZFCNA) is a national Christian organisation that equips nurses to serve in their local community. Christian nurses are in a unique and privileged position as they are bilingual in faith and health. As nursing professionals they can serve an important role in the community, promoting health and well-being through education, advocacy and care management as well as providing pastoral support through a church fellowship. Whether it is guiding someone through the health care system, or sharing their journey of faith, Faith Community Nurses are passionate about providing truly holistic healthcare.

In keeping with having a foot in both the faith camp and the health camp the annual conference provided teaching in both these areas. The conference had 28 attendees over the two and a half day period; amongst the delegates there was 968 years of nursing practice, an average of 34.5 years per person. This represented a wealth of experience in many different disciplines. The members of NZFCNA come from different denominations and so there were speakers who represented several

denominations including Salvation Army, Anglican and Baptist. Other speakers were from the group's members. They provided the nursing educational aspect of the conference. Heather Rodwell from the Salvation Army led a directed retreat to commence the conference, this was a valuable time for all those who were able to attend.

The Very Reverend Charles Tyrrell, the Patron of NZFCNA, officially opened the conference. Charles is the Bishop's advisor for the Care of Older People in the Diocese of Nelson. To quote Charles: "The theme for this conference is "Sustainability of Practice" and I don't want to say much about it save this. When God calls us into a particular ministry and we respond obediently then his sustaining love enables us to carry on to fulfil that vision. We are never called into a 'nothingness', a void if you like, but into a relationship where hand in hand with God we serve his precious people in his name. God never pushes us out of the door and says as it were, "I inspired you to this ministry, now get out there and get on with it and don't come running back to me at the first hint of a problem." In fact if anything is true it is the complete

opposite of those words, isn't it? "I inspired you to this ministry, yes, so let us proceed together and at the first hint of a problem I will be there to guide you through." I can imagine God saying that, can you?"

He reminded the nurses of Psalm 55:22 'Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.'

The main speaker was Pastor Simon Alexander, from Te Awamutu Baptist church, he spoke on sustainable biblical principles and guidelines. Simon reminded us that when we become Christians we are in Jesus; 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

Acts 17:28. Therefore our ministries are in His strength.

He suggested that each of us has a plant on our desk to remind us that like plants we are all different and have different needs. We only see the part of the plant that is above the soil as others only see the outside of us. If neglected the plant will not flourish as will we if we neglect our own relationship with God.

Archdeacon Wendy Scott spoke on the ministry of Faith Community Nursing from many perspectives; Wendy has been a FCN and a Parish Vicar with a FCN on her ministry team and is now the Archdeacon for Ministry Development in the diocese of Wellington. Wendy asked the

attendees to name some of the skills that nurses have that make them valuable in building God's kingdom. The group identified at least 15 skills including compassion, communicators, trustworthy, availability and leadership. The FCN's perspective as health care professionals counts and they need to let churches know the value of nurses in ministry.

Isabel Mordecai, Chairperson of NZFCNA, spoke on sustaining our vision as an organisation, she briefly talked of the history of the organisation and described the functions of the Board as a whole and also the role of individual members and how they work to support the nurses.

Diane Webster, National Liaison Coordinator of NZFCNA, highlighted some of the key things that lead to Faith Community Nurses continuing long term in their roles. These included support from the Association, from local peers, and from a shared ownership of the ministry with the church. The need for preparation prior to beginning the ministry by completing the education modules provided by the Association was emphasised.

Learn more about NZFCNA's conference at [www.faithnursing.co.nz/latest-news/2014-conference](http://www.faithnursing.co.nz/latest-news/2014-conference)



# Legislation and submissions

## Productivity and Social Services

SUBMISSIONS DUE 2 DECEMBER

The Productivity Commission is undertaking an enquiry into 'More Effective Social Services' and has released an Issues Paper to help inform their enquiry. The enquiry will focus on:

- The strengths and weaknesses of the current approaches to purchasing social services
- Lessons from recent initiatives and new approaches
- How to combine public services, not for profit and private sectors to tackle difficult social problems
- Improving coordination within and between government agencies and service providers
- How government can shape the long-term sustainability of the market for social services
- How agencies can build and maintain capability to support better outcomes.

Unfortunately the enquiry will not investigate what creates the need for social services or what approaches could be taken to decrease the vulnerability of families, whānau and community. Specifically ruled out are such issues as:

- An evaluation of specific social policies
- A review of the level of funds allocated to services or service providers
- An assessment of the level at which welfare benefits are set
- The productivity of the public sector
- An investigation of appropriate levels of public expenditure or employment.

Within this context NZCCSS made four recommendations for the Productivity Commission to focus on when preparing their enquiry report:

1. NZCCSS sees a **strong network of well supported community based not for profit social services organisations** as critical providing more effective social services.
2. NZCCSS recognises the need for community involvement in local decision-making and supports the development of **regional social services boards** which will work in conjunction with the public service to devise local solutions to local issues.
3. NZCCSS supports a **well-informed, capable public service empowered to make cross sectoral decisions** which result in

holistic services being available where they are needed, when they are needed.

4. NZCCSS providers **caution against the commodification of social services and excessive privatisation of social service delivery.**

Both Productivity Commissions Issues Paper and the submissions made to it are available [here](#). Unfortunately after taking more than 14 weeks to produce the issues paper, they have allowed only a eight weeks for **submissions that close 2 December**. A draft report from the Commission will be published in early March for further comment before the final report is completed in mid-2015.

## Treasury requests information on vulnerable (at-risk) children

DUE 4 DECEMBER

Earlier this month a Request for Information (RFI) appeared on the Treasury website asking for information on how the government can improve results for our most vulnerable (at-risk) children and their families.

Treasury appears not to be content with the thousands of public

comments and submissions on the Green & White Paper process on Vulnerable Children and the resulting [Children's Action Plan](#) process nor with the hugely comprehensive Children's Commissioner's [Expert Advisory Group on Child Poverty report](#) and working papers series. Perhaps they have overlooked the work of the [Ministerial Committee on Poverty](#), which might be understandable as this committee seems to have faded out of existence over the past 18 months?

Is Treasury to be congratulated for its openness to going out to the public with such an RFI when in the past it has tended to live in its own special analytical world unencumbered by the inconvenient complexities of the real world? Or are they making inefficient use of their own and others resources, doubling up on the consultation and analysis that has already been done at great length and expense by others?

## Lack of income puts children 'at risk'

With only a few days left until submissions close, anyone wanting to make a submission to Treasury in this RFI process might want to draw to Treasury's attention the continuing strong evidence, including that contained in Treasury's own

documents, that lack of income (otherwise known as poverty) is the main causal factor contributing to must forms of vulnerability (e.g. hunger and poor nutrition, disease and poor health, inadequate housing, disrupted education) for children and the best form of 'intervention' is to ensure that their families have sufficient income to live with dignity. Seeing as most of the 'at-risk' children are in households relying on a benefit, Treasury might like to consider the simple step of increasing benefit levels above recognised poverty lines as an 'effective intervention'?

Of course Treasury might rule out such an option because increasing benefit levels might mean having to postpone tax cuts or (heaven forbid) require an increase in taxes. Giving more money to 'at-risk' families might be (horror of horrors!) inflationary or cause interest rates to rise. No doubt Treasury will feel it must reluctantly conclude that the price of reducing vulnerability for children is 'too high' if it puts 'at risk' higher priorities such as achieving a budget surplus, or maintaining low inflation & interest rates.

No doubt the hungry children would understand that these goals are in the end much more important...

Comment is due by **4 December**. Download the RFI on the [Treasury website](#).

## Legislation and submissions (continued)

### Draft Code of Responsible Lending

COMMENT DUE 23 DECEMBER

Just in case you have nothing better to do in the lead up to Christmas, the Minister of Commerce & Consumer Affairs has released the [Draft Responsible Lending Code](#) for comment. Comments are due by 5pm 23 December 2014 and the Draft Code and other documents are online at the Consumer Affairs website.

NZCCSS will be submitting comment based on the comments we made earlier this year when the Ministry asks for ideas on what to include in the Draft Code. In summary our submission said:

NZCCSS member agencies work every day with people affected by non-bank fringe lenders. We welcome the steps taken in the new legislation to control the sector and this should help improve the situation for people who are vulnerable or on low incomes. We believe the Responsible Lending Code must contain strong guidelines as to what is reasonable behaviour by lenders. The current situation is unacceptable and exploitative and the Code must support the goals of the amended Credit Contract and Consumer Finance Act 2003 (Part 1, Para 3): to protect the interests of consumers in connection

with credit contracts; to provide for the disclosure of adequate information to consumers under consumer credit contracts; to provide rules about interest charges, fees, and payments in relation to consumer credit contracts; to enable consumers to seek reasonable changes to consumer credit contracts on the grounds of unforeseen hardship; and to prevent oppressive credit contracts and oppressive conduct by creditors.

We note that social services and other community agencies such as Community Law Centres are experiencing higher demand for their advocacy, advice and budgeting services at the same time as their own funding sources through donations, charitable grants and government contracts are static or declining. It is therefore important that government consumer oversight steps up and takes a lead in setting strong and effective guidelines to back up the objectives of the legislation. It is also important that the Code be regularly reviewed to test its effectiveness in achieving the objectives of the legislation. We recommend an initial review one year after the Code is implemented.

There are five main points that we wish to make in these comments:

- In the absence of a formal legislative interest rate cap, strong guidelines on reasonable levels of

interest to charge are essential in the Code;

- Fees must be fair and reasonable and not punitive and exploitative;
- Lenders should not be allowed to use direct debits for loan repayments; and
- Lenders must demonstrate that they have assessed people's ability to re-pay before lending
- Cooling-off period should be as long as possible.

Our full submission is on the NZCCSS website at [www.nzccss.org.nz](http://www.nzccss.org.nz) under Submissions.

### Gambling Amendment Bill (Nr 3)

SUBMISSIONS DUE 30 JANUARY 2015

This latest piece of gambling legislation has a number small steps to reduce gambling harm, aiming to 'increase transparency of grant-making from the proceeds of Class 4 gambling; reduce potential conflicts of interest situations between Class 4 gambling operators (societies), venues, and grant recipients; improve transparency surrounding management companies that provide societies with services; simplify compliance and reduce costs for societies and venue owners; and ensure the

efficiency of the appeals process is not undermined.'

Reintroducing commissions for gaming venues is however one significant concern that the [Green Party](#) has identified in this Bill. They point out that commissions were expressly banned in the 2003 Act because they incentivise venues such as pubs to promote gambling and seek excessive commissions as was the case before the 2003 Act was introduced.

Read more on the [Parliament website](#).

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

No new information has been made public but MSD notes that work on this is continuing with a view to releasing a draft Bill in December 2015. Read our article in [Kete Kupu #32](#) for some initial analysis and comments on the principles that should underlie social welfare in this country.

## 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](mailto:admin@nzccss.org.nz)

Acknowledgements: In addition to its member subscriptions, NZCCSS extends its thanks to: JR McKenzie Trust, TG Macarthy Trust, Tindall Trust and Think Tank 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