

Repairing A Broken Welfare System

Trevor McGlinchey, NZCCSS Executive Officer

New Zealand's once proud social security system is broken. The Welfare Expert Advisory Group (WEAG) has been touring the country talking with people from all walks of life about the kind of welfare system they would like to see for all New Zealanders. I have been privileged to be part of this group.

We heard of the incredible struggles faced by those on the benefit system to survive in the face of a punitive structure that seems to keep people in poverty, with little hope for change. Of taxation and benefit abatement systems that makes taking up work opportunities incredibly difficult. We met with people working part-time who after having their benefits and Accommodation Supplement abated feel they are working for no extra income.

We met with extremely well-organised, and tightly-budgeted single parents, who after carefully accounting for every cent spent each week find themselves thrown off course by an unexpected medical necessity and spiralling into debt. They told us about their children who are unable to attend school camps, buy lunches (even when the rest of their class does on special occasions) or participate in sports.

People with health conditions and disabilities, and their carers who saw little hope for their futures. They were trapped in an endless cycle of never having enough income to fully meet their everyday lives, let alone address their health needs.

There are the many Work and Income staff who took up jobs in this organisation in order to support people and make a difference in their lives. Instead they find themselves sanctioning people and driving them further into hardship as this is the requirement of the current system. We met with clients of Work and Income who feel real fear at the prospect of going to Work and Income offices as they do not trust the system.

It was obvious the current system is broken and is not achieving wellbeing for those who rely on it and is creating great stress for those working in it.

The WEAG has been tasked with creating a system which achieves the government's vision for welfare that ensures people have an adequate income and standard of living, are treated with and can live in dignity and are able to participate meaningfully in their communities. A welfare system that enables people to be earning, learning, caring or volunteering and ensures a dignified life for those for whom these options are not otherwise possible.

The WEAG is now working its way through the many submissions received and preparing its final report that is due in February 2019, that will include summaries of what people have told the WEAG. You can read the NZCCSS submission to WEAG on our [submissions page](#).

Ngā mihi hōhonu ki a koutou katoa.



Christmas message

The glad tidings of God's becoming human have lifted the human prospect, forging us into one humanity, beloved of God and bound in solidarity to work for justice and peace, to protect the vulnerable, to heal the wounded, and to offer protection for the refugee.

May the wonder and joy of the Christmas message inspire hope in our hearts, love in our deeds, and a heedless solidarity with all humanity!

*Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit,
(General Secretary,
World Council of Churches)*

**He mihi mō te Kirihimete – Me te Tau Hou
Merry Christmas and a happy New Year
from us all at NZCCSS**

*NZCCSS office will be closed from 24th
December until 22nd January.*

NZCCSS AGM 2018	2
Inland Revenue is changing for you	3
Neighbours Day: 22–31 March 2019	4
Spreading our Wings Report on Home Support Workforce	5
We Belong Together	6
Virtual mechanics	7
Preparing the 2019 Wellbeing Budget	8
Child Wellbeing Strategy and Child Poverty Reduction	9
Chatbot to help renters released	10
Homeless people finding homes	10
Charities Review Update and Survey	11

SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday 20 February 2019

NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL of CHRISTIAN SOCIAL SERVICES



invites you – your church – your agency
to join with them
in prayer for
the United Nations



International Day of Social Justice

AND the celebration of the 50th anniversary of
the Churches working together for a just and
compassionate Aotearoa New Zealand through NZCCSS.

You are invited to join one of the events that will be held
throughout Aotearoa New Zealand on this day, to do
prayers in your place, or to create an event with others in
your area to celebrate this.

Check out our facebook page or go to the NZCCSS website
for prayer resources and event locations.

Pop this event in your diary now!

Our member organisations serve thousands of people every day in communities throughout the country



NZCCSS AGM 2018

*Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.
(Proverbs 13: 12)*

The NZCCSS Annual General Meeting took place in Wellington on November 29th.

The AGM thanked Council members who left Council during the year for their work. Presbyterian representative Diane Gilliam-Weeks has ended her time on Council as has Salvation Army representative and former Vice-President Pam Waugh. During the year Council welcomed new Salvation Army representative Gerry Walker, who is returning to Council after his previous term from 2010–2013 as well as co-opted member Miri Rawiri (Te Kahui Atawhai o te Motu).

The AGM confirmed the current leadership group of President Col Ian Hutson (Salvation Army), Vice-Presidents Lisa Woolley (Baptist Union) and Garth Nowland-Foreman (Methodist Church).

The meeting recorded thanks to all the Secretariat team at NZCCSS for the work done during the year. Highlights for the year ended 30th June 2018 in the draft annual report presented at the meeting included...

- Bringing social justice messages into the public debate during the 2017 General Election 2017 campaign
- Comment and submissions on a range of government policy areas, as well as NZCCSS Executive Officer Trevor McGlinchey being invited to be part of the Welfare Expert Advisory Group (WEAG) that has a wide mandate to review the welfare system
- Important work has been done responding to the issues of pay equity for workers in social services and how this will impact on the future sustainability of services.
- Further strengthening the ties between Te Kahui Atawhai o te Motu through co-opting their Executive Officer as a Council member
- Furthering NZCCSS Te Tiriti o Waitangi commitment through marae-based hui at Wainuiomata marae near Wellington and Kokourārata marae near Christchurch.

The full NZCCSS 2018 annual report will be available early in 2019.



Kore Hiakai: Zero Hunger

Developing a robust network to eliminate food poverty from Aotearoa New Zealand

Save the date for one of our hui in March 2019

→ **Christchurch** Tuesday 12 March 2019

→ **Auckland** Thursday 14 March 2019

→ **Wellington** 21 March 2019

Click this image to register your interest,
put these dates in your diary
and please pass this on to others

korehiakai@nzccss.org.nz www.zerohunger.org.nz



Nāu te rourou, Nāku te rourou, ka ora ai ngā iwi
*With what you have to offer, with what we bring too,
together we all thrive*

Inland Revenue is changing for you

Over the last few months, the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) has been sharing information about the important changes coming in April next year. They will be working with you all closely over the next few months to make sure you're fully prepared for the changes and understand what they mean for you, focusing on reaching out at a community level.

More information will be coming in the new year, but in the meantime please visit the **Changing For You** website and the Inland Revenue webpages, or email IRD at IRTransformation@ird.govt.nz if you'd like to get in touch and find out more.



Automatic tax refunds

Whether you do them yourself, or use a third party, soon the process could be a lot simpler.

[Learn more >>](#)



Tax code notifications

We could start telling you if your tax code is wrong to help you stay on track.

[Learn more >>](#)

CHANGING FOR YOU

We're looking at making tax more straightforward. See what this could mean for you:



Never thought about a tax refund?
If tax refunds always looked too hard or difficult, this is for you. We're looking at making the process more straightforward.

[Learn more >>](#)



Easier IR3 forms

Next year the salary and wage information on your IR3 form could pre-populate itself, making it much easier to complete.

[Learn more >>](#)

SAVE THE DATE!

2019 Community Networks Aotearoa and NZ Council of Christian Social Services joint conference

27th and 28th August 2019

CNA and the NZCCSS are holding their joint conference on the 27th and 28th August 2019 in Wellington.

Registrations will open in the new year, but in the meantime save the date!

Neighbours Day: 22–31 March 2019

Celebrating 10 years of NDA with 10 days of celebrations!

Ten years ago, Auckland community worker Rebecca Harrington responded to the finding that **many people today recognise they are isolated from their neighbours, yet are unsure what to do about it, by organising the first Neighbours Days.**

Ten years on, it is a national event and because 2019 it is 10 years old, they are looking for more people to join the celebrations. As individuals, groups and organisations, the website is full of easy and fun ideas to help people get

Neighbours Day Aotearoa is a collaborative campaign organised and supported by Lifewise, Inspiring Communities, The Mental Health Foundation, Christchurch Methodist Mission, New Zealand Red Cross, Neighbourhood Support New Zealand and Housing New Zealand.

Thousands of neighbours, organisations, local government and local businesses have been involved, bringing neighbours together over the last weekend in March each year. There are so many different ways to get to know your neighbours, and with Neighbours Day celebrating its 10th year there are some really great ways to be involved. Whether this is your first time, if you're keen to host a larger event, or if you're part of an organisation wanting to encourage people to participate, there is something for everyone.

www.neighboursday.org.nz



Spreading our Wings Report on Home Support Workforce

Paul Barber, Policy Advisor, NZCCSS

Demand for home and community support services will continue to grow over the coming decades, largely driven by population changes including an ageing population. Alongside this increasing demand is the fact that more than half of the support workers in the sector are aged 55 or over.

These are some of the challenges and opportunities are before the home based support sector in this country responding to three broad trends in our society:

- urban centres growing and provincial parts shrinking
- growing number of older people compared with younger people with associated health provision implications
- increase in migration leading to more ethnic diversity.

The number of older people of Asian ethnicity will nearly treble from 59,500 to 164,100 in the next 15 years (to 2033) while older European ethnicity will grow by nearly half, meaning an increase of 276,300. This population change will bring with it increased support needs. So the challenge is to recruit and train more support workers to help meet this need.

Comparatively little is known about the current state of the home and community support workforce. This is despite it being a 16,000-strong workforce, responsible for providing home support services for approximately 75,000 people aged over 65, numerous New Zealanders recovering from injury, and 7,900 people living with disability in 2017.

Careerforce, the Industry Training Organisation for the health and disability sector, commissioned the report *Spreading our Wings – A Report into the Training and Development Needs of the Health & Disability Home and Community Workforce* to help understand the emerging health and wellbeing needs of people living at home and how that

WORKFORCE PROFILE

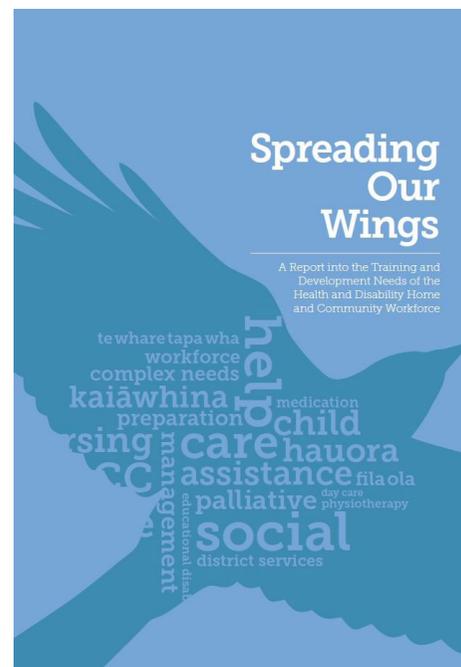
- 16,300 employed in MoH & DHBs funded services
- 76% were paid \$16 per hour or less (23% on minimum wage of \$14.75 at that time)
- 91% of workers female
- 28% European
- more than half are aged over 55 years

translates into developing the support workforce. The report was compiled by the Home and Community Health Association, peak body for the sector.

Andrea McLeod, HCHA Chairperson, commented that “The report confirmed concerns we have about our workforce, in terms of aging and supply. The home support workforce is generally older than other health workforces, and there is not an obvious pool of replacements. This is a big challenge. Training is also an issue – both in terms of funding and in having qualifications that are a good fit and are flexible for clients and services.”

Like many health services, home and community support services are financially stretched. According to the HCHA, this represents a significant problem as the services being provided need to grow to be responsive to increasing needs, more client choice, more integrated health care, and the impacts of technology.

Training resources are needed to develop a fit for purpose culturally responsive workforce that reflects



the changing population demographics. Among other challenges, a significant proportion of the workforce struggle with literacy, or have English as a second language, and there is also a growing need for better IT skills.

Training has to recognise the growing complexity of client needs and that the best responses are holistic service delivery responses. There are also significant levels of unmet needs relating to disability, with

around 10% of people with disability reporting unmet need. This requires a workforce with skills in reflective practice, collaboration orientation and care-oriented towards fostering informed and active clients.

Organisational development in a system under huge pressure

Reading the report begs the question whether the investment in organisational development that is needed for the learning and development needs of staff, and their pastoral support is recognised in the way services are funded and commissioned by government?

The report identifies some specific workforce training needs based on client demand, including:

- specific chronic conditions
- medication support
- cognitive decline/dementia
- palliative care
- mental health and addiction
- challenging behaviours
- impact of social isolation on people's wellbeing

Organisations often have multiple funding streams, but the frontline staff interact with a wide range of clients not knowing where funding

SPREADING OUR WINGS REPORT ON HOME SUPPORT WORKFORCE

is coming from. There are also some questions about whether younger people have the maturity and life skills for the support worker role.

The report identifies the numerous system-related change pressures, including the financial constraints with costs rising faster than funding. Other issues identified include the changing skill mix with more personal care, less household support, and increasing use of restorative and rehabilitative services. Socioeconomic deprivation is an issue with workers not trained to see client needs in wider social context. Other challenges arise from the need for more integrated service provision that requires working across

boundaries of teams/organisations, the use of case-mix funding model will continue to grow, and the trend to more self-directed care with support workers employed as independent contractors. More training is needed to meet the requirements of the Pay Equity Settlement to support workers through their training, while some questions remain about the role of Level 4 support workers in the services.

A total of 22 recommendations for service providers, funders and service commissioners, as well as for Careerforce itself provide an outline of appropriate responses to the many challenges and opportunities ahead.

Recommendations for service providers

- profile your client groups to get a better picture of the workforce you need
- engage in workforce planning – retirements, qualification training and local workforce availability
- improve cultural competency of staff to respond to ethnic change
- develop digital strategy
- build stronger alliances with other local health providers including shared training opportunities
- strengthen workforce core skills, values & attitudes (e.g. Let's Get Real framework)

Recommendations for services commissioners

- consider future workforce requirements using a workforce planning model
- commission research on info gaps
- focus on service outcomes
- act cohesively and promote service integration
- address systemic workforce development issues
- develop new approaches to commissioning and contracting e.g. case-mix funding

We Belong Together

Source: [Selwyn Institute](#)

The Selwyn Institute's 2018 [Ageing and Spirituality Conference](#) examined the issue of loneliness from a different perspective – namely, that people have a natural desire and vital need to belong. The event completed the 'circle' in terms of understanding the issue of loneliness in older adults (explored in the Institute's Gerontology Nursing Conference in October) and demonstrated how 'true belonging' is a spiritual practice and antidote to loneliness.

In an era when opportunities to 'connect and belong' have never been greater with the advent of the 'information age' and digital technology, the irony is that nothing can replace genuine and authentic human interaction.

The conference posed the question: *Are we longing for Belonging?* The answer from the different speakers who each approached the question from different spiritual or cultural perspectives and backgrounds was unequivocal – Yes, we long to 'truly' belong.

Authentically belonging

A *Mihi* and *Waiata* from Selwyn Village resident Kahu Pou, and *Karakia* from The Selwyn

Foundation's Reverend Lucy Nguyen, opened proceedings and set the tone of engagement for the day. Director of the Selwyn Institute, Hilda Johnson-Bogaerts, then painted a picture of the voyage of understanding that would define this year's conference.

Echoing the words of Dr Brene Brown, an expert in the subject, who says belonging is at the heart and soul of what it means to be human, a number of key questions were posed that demanded answering.

- What are the ramifications and issues around not belonging?
- How do we lose the ability to belong?
- What does it mean to authentically belong?
- How does belonging look like within a diverse population?

End of belonging

The ultimate evidence of not belonging, irrespective of age, is suicide – a major public health concern in many parts of the world. This includes increased suicide rates within the demographic group of older men. In New Zealand, men aged 85 and above have one of the highest suicide rates among all age groups.

The University of Auckland's Dr

Gary Cheung elaborated on 'The Interpersonal Theory of Suicide' which proposes that a lack of social connectedness and perceived burdensomeness can lead to suicidal thoughts.

Over and above being a contributing factor to premature mortality, poor psychological and negative contributors to physical wellbeing are factors that are clearly exacerbating the problem. Having a spiritual practice seemed to be a protecting factor.

Despite suicide in older men being, in some quarters, something of a 'taboo' subject, delegates applauded the opportunity to have an open, honest and revealing approach to finding meaningful solutions.

Many paths, common destination

A key part of the conference focused on belonging from different spiritual and cultural perspectives. These included a cross-section of religions: Zen Buddhism (Hanya Gallagher), Islam (Imam Mohammad Saleh Almodarresi), Anglican Church (Chaplain Lucy Nguyen), and a NOLA (Non Label Spiritual) focus (Dwight Whitney), as well as a Tangata

WE BELONG TOGETHER

Whenua perspective (Venerable Lloyd Nau Popata). An interactive session followed with the delegates responding with insights and elements related to belonging.

Consensus from this session of the conference was that, despite differences in faith, the common 'human' factors relating to belonging were remarkably similar. In fact, delegates concurred that everyone was essentially on the 'same page' when it came to finding the core elements, and contributors to, this fundamental human need.

We agreed that 'true belonging' is a spiritual practice. It has the two core elements of believing in yourself and who you are, and being able to share your most authentic self with the world. It is different from fitting in, or being part of an ideology.

It is about enabling people to show up as their true selves, and interacting with each other at that level. We are wired to be social. We are deeply motivated to stay connected with our true selves, with friends and family, with nature, with the land, with the transcendental.

Now that we know what true belonging looks and feels like, we can recognise when people we care for have that 'lonely feeling' of disconnect. Having established this in the interactive session, delegates also

discussed strategies they could add to their tool-belt as spiritual care providers to facilitate 'true belonging'.

Built on belonging

When it comes to city planning and creating environments that are inclusive and encourage community, a number of cities internationally are developing city planning strategies. Auckland is one of them, and conference delegates had the opportunity to contribute their own recommendations as to what the 'look and feel' of an engaged city might be like.

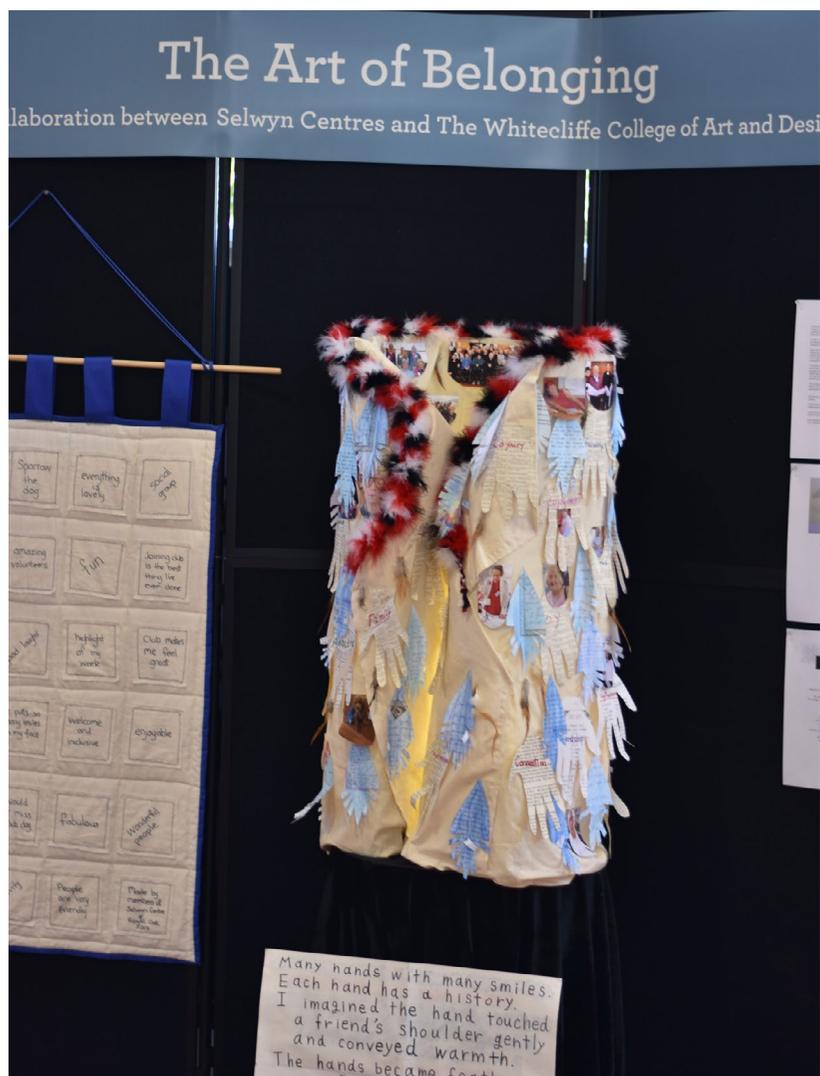
The Auckland Plan is the main document being developed, looking at long-term strategies to steer growth in a suitable direction. A fundamental part of this document is to inform, support and provide background material for the 'Belonging and Participation' outcome in the Auckland Plan 2050. Part of this involves focusing on specialist knowledge and evidence related to the themes in the Belonging and Participation outcomes.

The art of belonging

Selwyn Centre guests contributed to the conference through their 'The Art of Belonging' exhibition. This featured their authentic and creative expressions of what it means and how it feels to 'belong' when they

visit Selwyn Centres (The Selwyn Foundation's network of community drop-in centres for older people, hosted in partnership with Anglican parishes). *The Art of Belonging*

Initiative was a collaborative project between the Selwyn Centres and Whitecliffe College of Art and Design art therapy students.



Virtual mechanics

Virtual reality technology is helping prisoners get a qualification thanks to the shared project between the Methodist Mission in Dunedin, Otago University and Animation Research working together with prisoners in Dunedin's Milton Prison.

Methodist Mission Southern is involved in a range of services at the prison, including a literacy and numeracy programme. People struggling with reading and writing find it difficult to learn, train and, upon leaving prison, to get jobs. Jimmy McLauchlan from MMS, says that traditional classroom learning is a struggle for prisoners, and the challenge with adults learning in prison is to make the content relevant, accessible and interesting, relating it to their interests or hobbies.

The team at Animation Research have developed a virtual reality mechanics workshop that they have tested with the inmates who have shown real enthusiasm for it. The aim is for the tool to be run as a pilot programme in 2019 in the Milton prison and if successful could be made available more widely.

Preparing the 2019 Wellbeing Budget

The Minister of Finance Grant Robertson will be releasing the annual [Budget Policy Statement](#) in the week ending 14th December. This is an opportunity for people

to comment on plans for the 2019 Budget and make a submission to the Parliament Finance and Expenditure Select Committee that considers this. NZCCSS and other

groups in our networks will be preparing comment, that is usually due in mid-January.

The Treasury has released its outline of the [Living Standards](#)

[Framework Dashboard](#) that it will be using to measure wellbeing impacts and guide the preparation of the 2019 Budget.

This framework provides the opportunity to make the case more clearly for the wider health and social gains that would be achieved through better welfare, tax, health and other social policy.

Read the [NZCCSS comments](#) on the draft Wellbeing Framework from earlier this year that focused on the need to more strongly incorporate the measurement of inequality and its impacts within the wellbeing measurement framework. Our submission on the Budget Policy Statement will include analysis of whether the Framework as released this month addresses this issue.

Tax and Benefit Systems Need to Work Better Together

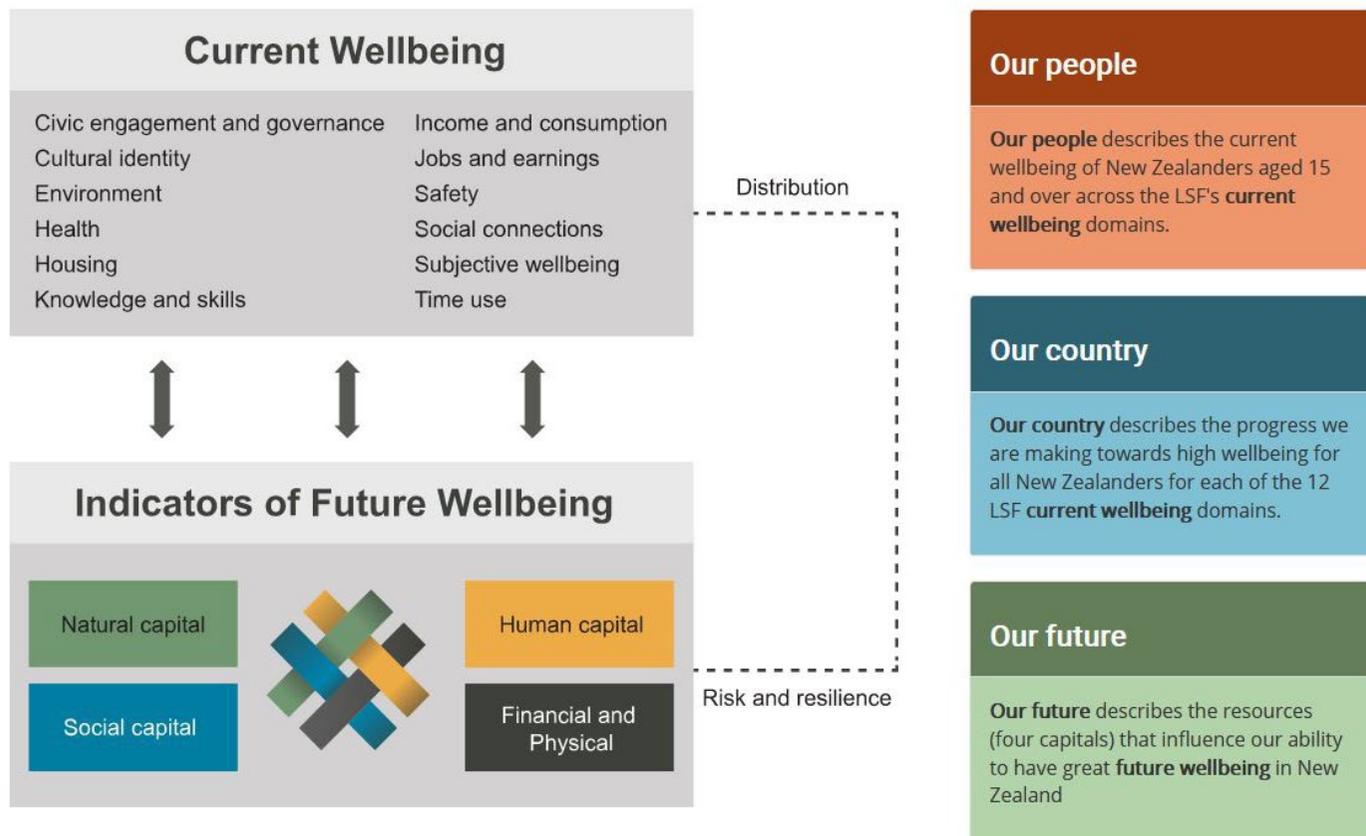
There are many important ways that the tax and welfare systems interact, especially to support low and middle income earners and the Tax Working Group (TWG) needs to make recommendations about this in its final report. This is one of the key points raised by NZCCSS in commenting on the [Interim Report of the TWG](#).

Issues such as abatement rates and thresholds for Working For Families and accommodation support, support for childcare costs, as well as the way secondary tax works for people with irregular employment hours and/or transitioning off a welfare benefit, all affect the ability of people and their whānau and families to earn an adequate income.

The Interim Report notes that income increases for the very low income households would be best achieved through welfare transfers, but does not frame this as a recommendation. The risk in not making clear recommendations relating to the welfare system is that this very important area in tax and welfare policy is left in limbo, and

Continued p. 9

Living Standards Framework



TAX AND BENEFIT SYSTEMS NEED TO WORK BETTER TOGETHER

that neither the TWG nor the Welfare Expert Advisory Group, that is due to report around the same time, will adequately focus on this area.

NZCCSS also recommends more attention in the TWG final report is needed to the ways the tax system can help reduce income inequality as well as gender inequality, as well as assessing the child wellbeing impacts of tax proposals more fully.

NZCCSS urged the TWG to be more proactive in recommending that more work is done on broadening the tax base into areas where wealth holders and high income earners benefit disproportionately from little or no tax. These areas include GST on financial services, as well as better taxation of wealth, including further exploring forms of net wealth tax and financial transactions taxes.

The final report from the TWG is due in February 2019. Read the full NZCCSS comments on our [Submissions webpage](#).

Child Wellbeing Strategy and Child Poverty Reduction

The Child Poverty Reduction Bill has completed its journey through Parliament and will become law later this month when the Governor-General signs off the Royal Assent.

Just before this historic example of cross-party consensus is formalised as legislation, the release of the Child Poverty Monitor on 10th December gives the latest information on child poverty. The Technical Report from the Monitor is a source of facts and information relating to child poverty that will be an independent assessment of progress, in addition to any reporting done by government on progress in reducing child poverty.

The Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy will be the official Government plan that will guide the work to improve wellbeing and reduce child poverty. The draft Strategy was released in October for public comment closing in early December. Overall, NZCCSS supports the draft Strategy and the direction of the proposed outcomes framework.

NZCCSS comments suggest further improvements to the draft Strategy including recommending that the vision for the Strategy be changed to read “New Zealand is the best

place in the world for *all* children and *youth*” in recognition of the longstanding inequities experienced by specific cohorts of children and young people in New Zealand.

Similarly, NZCCSS is recommending that economic wellbeing (“*Have what they need domain*”) is weighted over all other wellbeing domains identified in the strategy because of the strong link between poverty and wellbeing.

Spiritual wellbeing also needs to be included in the strategy in recognition of the role spirituality plays as part of a holistic approach to young peoples’ wellbeing and across all age groups.

The role of Te Tiriti o Waitangi is recognised in the strategy but the NZCCSS recommends that Te Tiriti o Waitangi is separated out from underpinning principles to acknowledge its significant status as a founding document between the Crown and the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand. The strategy also needs to make it clearer how it gives effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and more Te Reo Māori and Te Ao Māori needs to be incorporated into the strategy.

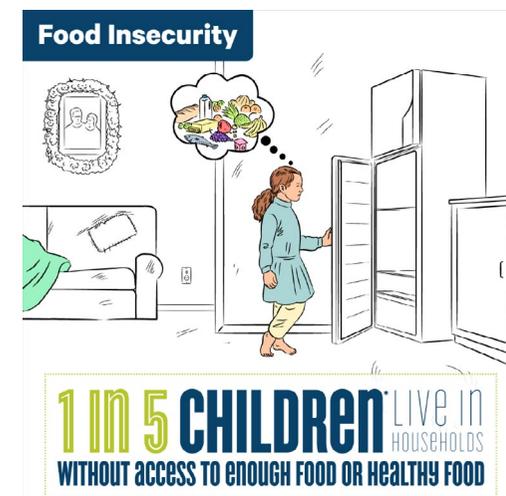
NZCCSS supports calls for the link

between the main articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) in the strategy and the strategy’s outcomes and priorities to be set out more clearly.

Funding for the community-based sector to support wellbeing outcomes is another key recommendation from NZCCSS. The 2019 Wellbeing Budget should include additional and ring-fenced appropriations to the NGO sector to support

both government’s priority areas and the wider needs of communities. In addition, a new mechanism needs to be established to support the funding of community-based work and innovations as occurred under MSD (Family and Community-Services Department) prior to Oranga Tamariki’s establishment.

The NZCCSS comments also include a strong call for clarity around the processes and actions needed to translate the desired outcomes or sixteen potential focus areas into a cross-sector action plan. Given the critical role played by NGOs in



[HTTP://WWW.CHILDPORVITY.CO.NZ/1/#](http://www.childpoverty.co.nz/1/#)

implementing the Strategy, it is critical the ‘transitional Chief Executives’ governance group’ includes NGO and iwi representation.

As well as recommending the inclusion of a monitoring framework alongside the outcomes framework to monitor progress towards the desired outcomes and vision of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy over time, NZCCSS also recommends that the voices of children and young people are taken into account in measuring the outcomes.

Read the full submission on the Submissions page our [website](#).

Chatbot to help renters released

Community Law Centres o Aotearoa in partnership with Citizen AI has released a chatbot for people having problems with renting today.

“Rentbot” makes information about tenancy law more accessible to the over 2.9 million people in New Zealand who use Facebook. Rentbot is a free digital assistant to answer questions about renting, and the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords. It can be accessed for free via [Facebook Messenger](#).

Chief Executive of Community Law Centres o Aotearoa, Sue Moroney believes the chatbot will help improve access to quality legal information in an innovative format.

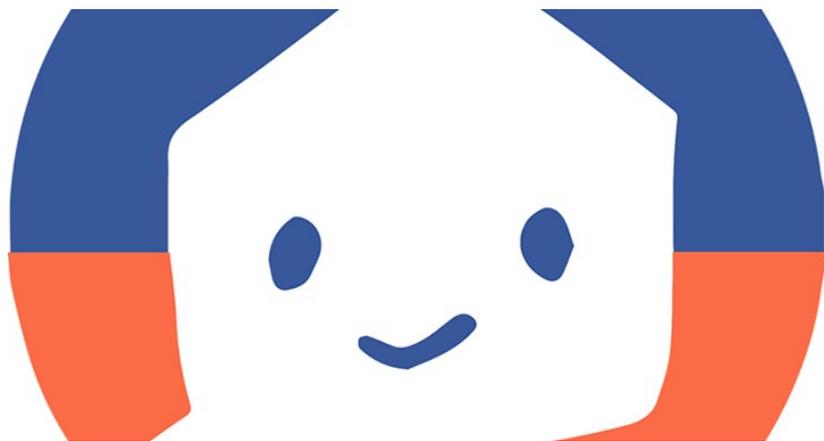
“It’s exciting for Community Law to be at the cutting edge of getting legal information to people. Decent housing is so important to people’s lives and Rentbot is a tool that will make important information more accessible. It will particularly appeal to younger renters.”

Rentbot has been developed by Citizen AI, a charitable organisation whose mission is to use artificial intelligence for public benefit. Citizen AI Executive Director Geoffrey Roberts says, “Rentbot is a great example of how we can leverage advances in natural language processing to create a tool that helps those experiencing problems as a tenant.

With more and more people renting and typically the less well-off portion of the population too, Rentbot can help tackle the types of problems many people face and is available for a chat 24/7.”

Rentbot is the first of three legal information chatbots produced with funding from the Michael and Suzanne Borrin Foundation – a new philanthropic foundation that supports legal education and legal research projects.

“RentBot is about making plain-English legal information about renting more accessible to the 90% of adults who are on Facebook. Knowledge is power. And when people understand the law, their rights and obligations better, they can negotiate for better outcomes.” said Michelle Wanwimolruk, Philanthropic Advisor for the Michael and Suzanne Borrin Foundation. Citizen AI and the Rentbot project have also benefited from generous pro bono support from law firms Bell Gully, Russell McVeagh and Chapman Tripp.



Homeless people finding homes

Christchurch is seeing a drop in the number of [people living on the streets](#) thanks to the work of the [Housing First](#) collective impact group down there, including Christchurch Methodist Mission, Comcare, Otautahi Community Housing Trust, Emerge Aotearoa, the Anglican City Mission and Te Whare Roimata.

In other cities where Housing First is operating, Hamilton and Auckland, have also seen more people moving from homeless into stable housing situations.

But the overall challenge to overcome homelessness is still huge. The recent homelessness count that was conducted in September 2018 in Auckland showed that there is a minimum of 800 people living without shelter and another 2,874 in temporary accommodation. This compares to the 771 without shelter and 3,175 in temporary accommodation in 2013 that Otago University researchers arrived at using 2013 Census figures.

There is still immense pressure on low-income families and other centres are feeling the pressure now as well.

One key missing piece in the homelessness puzzle is the access to public housing through Housing NZ

or community housing providers, as well as finding affordable private rentals. More public housing is beginning to become available but not yet fast enough and government financial support for private renters is increasing but so are the rents in the private market.

Auckland transitional housing provider De Paul House has been thrilled by the response from [some Auckland church members](#) who have made houses available for families from the transitional housing to move into long-term rentals. This is just one of the ways communities are responding to the housing needs of people in their area.

Community housing providers are crying out for access to [affordable capital funding](#) to help them complete projects that are ready to go as well as continue to plan and prepare further housing projects.

The message out of the [Māori Housing Conference](#) in November was similar – provide more resources and communities will work with kaupapa Māori housing providers to build housing the works for their whānau, hapu and communities. The lessons learned through the

HOMELESS PEOPLE FINDING HOMES

experience of Rauawaawa Kaumatua example of the successes that can be housing in Hamilton is but one learned from.

Charities Review Update and Survey

In October the Minister of Internal Affairs, Peeni Henare announced that public consultation for the review of the Charities Act 2005 would take place over March and April 2019.

“Reviewing the Charities Act is a great opportunity for robust, honest discussion about how we can strengthen the Act and ultimately, work better with charities and communities,” says Internal Affairs General Manager Policy, Raj Krishnan.

Community meetings and hui will be held throughout the country as part of the consultation process. Those wanting to give feedback can ask questions, learn more about the review process, and feel encouraged to make quality submissions in response to a public discussion document.

Further details about public consultation will be available on the Department of Internal Affairs’ website over the next few months. More information about the review, including details of the Core Reference Group, can be found [online](#).

Sector Survey

Dave Henderson and Sue Barker are both members of the Core Reference Group for the review of the Charities Act 2005. With support from a

consortium of philanthropic trusts, Dave and Sue are undertaking independent research in their private capacities, with a view to gathering empirical evidence to feed into the review in 2019.

This is the first time since 2005 that the Charities Act has been reviewed. Charities and the community sector need to be heard. The 20-minute online survey and the community consultation meetings scheduled for March/April 2019, provide the channels to speak up.

If you are connected to more than one group or organisation, you are welcome to fill it out multiple times, giving the information separately for each one. The more completed questionnaires we receive, the stronger will be the data that we can gather and input to the review of the Charities law.

The link to the questionnaire is [here](#).

If you have any questions please contact Sue Barker (susan.barker@charitieslaw.co) or Dave Henderson (davehendersonnz@gmail.com).

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

To receive this newsletter in a different format (by email, mail or both), contact NZCCSS (04) 473 2627 or admin@nzccss.org.nz

Acknowledgements: In addition to its member subscriptions, NZCCSS extends its thanks to Combined Community Trusts and TG McCarthy Trust for grant funding as well as Ministry of Social Development, Oranga Tamariki, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and the Ministry of Health for contract funding 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.



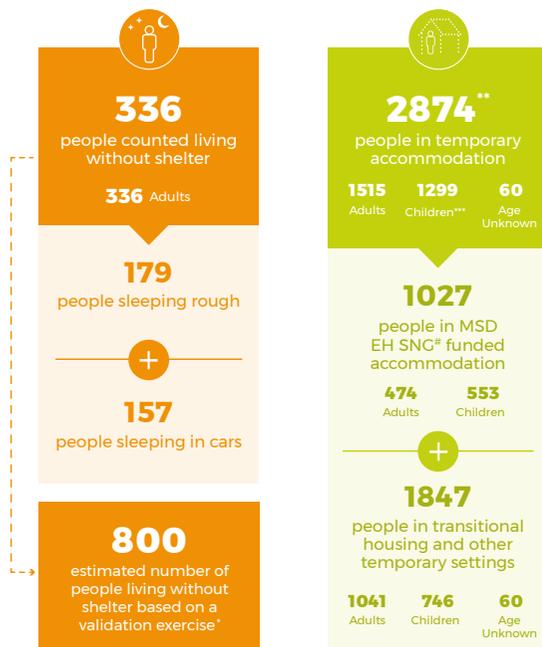
New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services

Initial findings

Point in Time count, 17 September 2018



Minimum numbers of people living without shelter and in temporary accommodation in Auckland.



* The validation exercise is explained over the page.
** The number of people in temporary accommodation and services includes information provided by 24 service providers. This does not include all funded and non-funded providers.
*** A child is under 18 years of age.
* MSD EH SNG = Ministry of Social Development Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant.

www.aucklandshomelesscount.org.nz



Supported by

