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BUDGET 2014 Bill English on the inequality debate: 'True, but useless'

Max Rashbrooke

On Wednesday 28 May the New Zealand Council for Christian Social Services hosted an event on inequality and the Budget with ministers Bill English and Paula Bennett.

Perhaps the most telling phrase came from English, when he said that, in his view, a lot of the debate around inequality was “true, but useless”.

This implied that, while it's true that inequality has risen significantly in the last 30 year, there's no point worrying about income gaps, just absolute poverty and “persistent deprivation”.

It was a shame the ministers couldn't stick around for the NZCCSS presentations, which argued that the two things are inextricably linked: people's incomes are so low because we have an economic system in which a lot of the rewards of their hard work are being channelled upwards into the arms of the richest 10%.

English didn't see a connection, however, and focused instead on policies like free GP visits being extended from age 6 to age 13, which

he argued would make a significant difference, and help reduce hospital admissions, for a cost of just \$30 million a year. (The low pricetag, English admitted, might be in part because “kids between six and 13 don't go to the doctor much”.)

The government was also asking itself what it should do with the expected welfare savings from more people moving into work, and whether they should be “recycled” back into more active support for those still on benefits.

In what looked like an admission that benefit levels and other supports are too low, English said: “At the bottom level, quite apart from the benefit levels, we under-resource them [families in poverty].”

Interestingly, he insisted that fiscal discipline and taking a tough line on beneficiaries was necessary to generate support for more welfare spending. The government had to show middle New Zealand that “putting more money in won't make the problem worse”, and people would

develop “a stronger, broader empathy” for beneficiaries only if they felt that was the case.

But again, if the ministers had stuck around, they would have heard the argument that the biggest destroyer of empathy in a society is, in fact, inequality, since people with very different incomes and lives find it hard to empathise with each other.

The ministers did hang around for questions and comments from the audience – and were promptly told

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Finance Minister Bill English addressing social services leaders at NZCCSS's Budget Briefing Breakfast.

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that providers of social services in New Zealand were “in crisis” thanks to frozen funding and increased reporting burdens. They were also urged to work in a closer partnership with providers, allowing agencies to help shape strategies, not just deliver them.

However, the ministers showed significant frustration with any talk of partnership. English said the government was “not here to service the NGO [non-governmental organisation] sector”, while Bennett said, “We can come up with some agreed language if that makes you feel better.”


English also made clear his frustration with the public sector, especially over cross-agency collaboration. Joint working on children’s teams, for instance, was being held up by “discussion on whether the policeman will be told what to do by the nurse. I’m sick of hearing this ... [from] well-paid people, with good jobs, getting paid good money.”

If re-elected, English said National would be “reasonably energetic about trying to move these things on. We can’t sit around letting the deliverers get in the way for too long.” In



NZCCSS EO Trevor McGlinchey with Minister for Social Development Paula Bennett.

what sounded like a willingness to privatise more services, he said: “The nurse and the policeman will have to sort out their differences ... or we will get someone else to do it.” ■

Watch videos from the day at vimeo.com/nzccss/ — 

A summary of the day: **Inequality, the Budget and Social Services**

Max Rashbrooke’s presentation: **Inequality: A New Zealand crisis**

Paul Barber’s presentation **Introducing Closer Together Whakatata Mai**



Max Rashbrooke has written for national newspapers and magazines in Britain and New Zealand, including the *Guardian*, the *National Business Review* and the *Listener*. He was the recipient of the 2011 Bruce Jesson Senior Journalism Award. He is the editor of *Inequality: A New Zealand Crisis*.

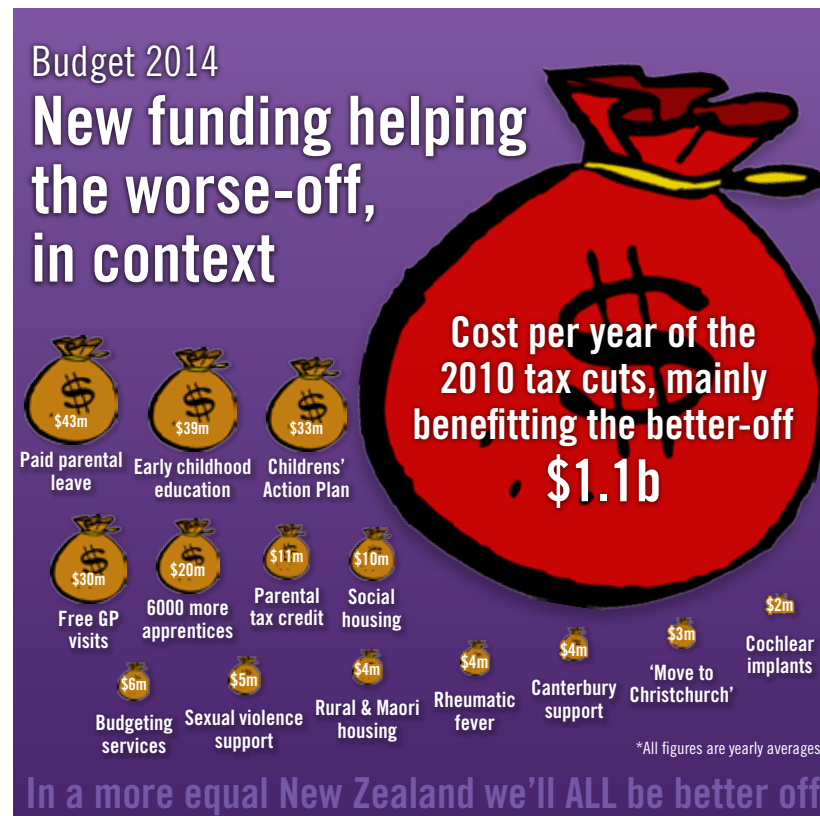
BUDGET 2014

What impact will it have on inequality and poverty?

How well has the 2014 Budget done in lifting the lowest incomes and reigning in the run-away growth of higher incomes? Very little, is our answer. The dynamics of 30 years of high levels of inequality and poverty embedded in our social and economic system will not change as a result of this budget. The hundreds of thousands of people and their families that rely on welfare benefits come away empty-handed. With unemployment set to remain over 5% until at least 2016, there will continue to be a huge proportion of our people living in poverty.

The promise of rising average wages for those fortunate enough to actually get a job disguises the fact that two-thirds of workers earn less than the average wage. Increased wages have mainly gone to higher income earners. This means that the average wage goes up but because of the increasing gap between middle and low wage earners, lower wage earners benefit less or not at all.

Hints about tax cuts in the future offer little hope for those who rely on income support that is funded through tax income. Their incomes are too low now and most people on a welfare benefit (including more than 200,000 children) live in poverty. The 2010 tax cuts that cost \$1.1



billion per year benefitted the highest income earners the most, and future tax cuts would have to be very strongly targeted to those on the lowest incomes to do anything to address this.

The lack of investment in raising the supply of low-cost rental housing for people on low incomes means that even the limited relief

that income-related rents contribute to reducing inequality and poverty is not going to grow in any significant way. ■



Paul Barber is a policy advisor at NZCCSS and leads the Council’s flagship programme, Closer Together Whakatata Mai.

285,000 children living in poverty through the eyes of their mothers A MOTHER'S REFLECTION

Sonia Scott

"The most children in vulnerable circumstances we see are those where family appears to be constantly in a state of chaos and stress. Everyday life is a struggle. Mum has three to four children and is on a benefit. It's not enough to cover rent and feed the family and they rely on food parcels up to twice a week to cover the basics. Accessing assistance is a problem (getting to Work and Income, doctors etc.) because they have no car and can't afford the bus fare or the bus timetable makes it difficult to get in and back home in time for kids after school.

There are mounting debts. Parent and child/children have health problems, sometimes serious. There have been family violence/abuse within family issues, which have led to re-location, and loss of family support. It becomes difficult to make supportive connections with neighbours and often a loss of confidence to make new links. The problems indeed can seem insurmountable but one thing that is nearly always present is that the kid's parents do love them and are doing the best they can". — from one of NZCCSS's social service providers.

Some facts about child poverty

Mothers of Māori and Mothers of Pasifika children: Māori and Pasifika children are approximately twice as likely as Pakeha/European children to be in severe poverty and also at risk of persistent poverty.

Mothers in single income families: New Zealand children living in single parent families are more likely to experience poverty than children living in a two parent family. This is partly due to comparatively low rates of paid employment when compared against OECD standards, and low welfare payments.

Mothers of children with disabilities: Approximately 107,000 New Zealand children have a disability. Children with disabilities are more likely than other children to live in poverty.

Mothers living in private rental accommodation: Half of children in poverty live with their family in private rental accommodation and another 20 percent in state housing.

Mothers living in poor areas: Northland, South Auckland, the East Cape and pockets of the central North Island have significant concentrations of deprivation.

This began as a Mother's Day reflection on the personal experience of motherhood and the truly life-changing impact of a child born. After marking my first year at the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, this year I find my usual musing go well beyond the personal to reflections about those mothers amongst us who struggle to provide basic necessities for their children. and I find my new found knowledge of 285,000 children living in poverty has left me reflecting on how I would feel if I was a mother of these children? And I'm no longer able to nicely silo-off my life from theirs; we are mothers doing the hard yards together.

Who among us are the mothers of 285,000 children and what are their stories?

I reflect and find a story that is far more complex than simply a group of 'bad mothers' who make 'poor parental choices' and that a change of behaviour and access to the right information can fix. I find intergenerational poverty, mothers disenfranchised from their cultural identity, mothers that have never experienced nurturing first-hand, mothers with mental illness and addictions, mothers of children with disabilities struggling to cope, mothers living in cold,

'Enforced lacks' of children's items include...

Warm winter clothes • Waterproof coats • Friends to a birthday • A good bed • Economising on children's items to keep down costs to pay for other basic items • Continued with worn out shoes or clothes for the children • Postponed child's visit to the doctor • Unable to pay for school trip • Went without music, dance, kapa haka, art, swimming • Involvement in sport had to be limited • Enforced lacks of other basic items • Could not keep main rooms warm • Cut back or did without fresh fruit, vegetables and meat. • Postponed own visit to doctor (a lot) • Delayed repair or replacement of applications

Source: Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty (EAG Report), August 2012

damp, over-crowded housing, and mothers who genuinely do not have sufficient household income to support their children's basic needs. And amongst all of these extraordinary stresses, I also find mothers who love their kids, who have a strong sense of hope that life can be better for their children, and who prioritise the needs of their children above themselves.

What necessities are children missing out on?

When I reflect on the term child poverty I find it doesn't adequately convey the magnitude of what 285,000 children are missing out on a daily basis. I find an official list of 'children's deprivation of necessities' and it's much longer than I had expected. There are so many 'enforced lacks' and 'cut backs' that I'm left wondering what necessities are exactly being

provided! I find it sobering to learn that amongst us there are mothers whose limited resources require them to make what Karlo Mila describes as 'constrained choices'. And this is not the exclusive list; additional items and interventions required for children with disabilities don't even get a mention!

Inequality and child poverty

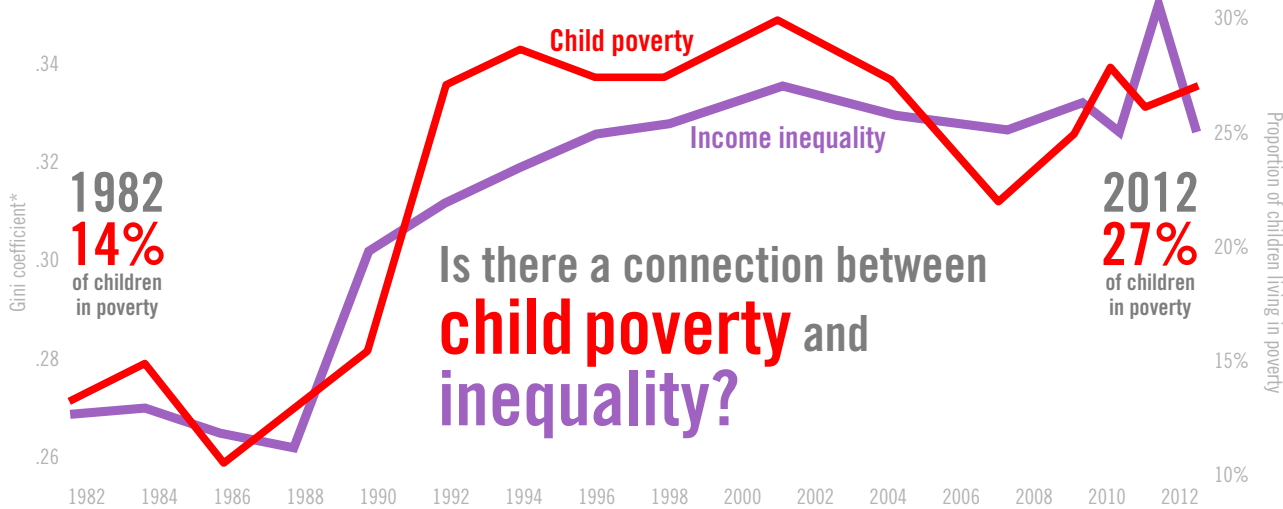
Looking at the bigger picture I see the increase in the rate of child poverty coincides with increases in inequality in New Zealand over the past thirty years. The level of child poverty in 1982 was 14%; this had jumped to 27% by 2012.

As mothers what can we do about it?

I reflect that 285,000 children left behind is simply too many in a small country like New Zealand. As

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*The Gini index represents the spread of incomes in a country. In a country with a Gini index of 0, everyone would receive an equal income. In a country with a Gini index of 1, just one person would receive all the income. Data sources: BHC-1, Table D.9 and 60% contemporary median, Table F.7 (revised), Perry (2014), Household incomes in New Zealand, Ministry of Social Development



Is there a connection between child poverty and inequality?

mothers we share an intrinsic need to love and nurture our children; we know the health and well-being of both our individual children and our collective society depend on this. The reverse is also true. There is a myriad of data that points to the long-term impact of poverty on children and that supports the view that investing early in a child's development pays dividends long-term both for the child, community and wider society. Is it really rocket science though?

The September 2014 Election is looming and *you* have an opportunity to make a difference to the lives of those mothers among us who also want their children to grow, develop and flourish into adulthood. As

mothers we have more similarities than differences. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all mothers joined together in solidarity so that when we've done our job and our children are ready to leave the nest, we deliver all of them into a safe, healthy and innovative New Zealand that can take on the challenges of the future. Some places to start:

- Tick For Kids (tick4kids.org.nz) Become a child advocate and support policies that invest in children (equal access to health, education, housing and nutritious food is a right for *all* children — not just middle New Zealand). See over the page for more about this campaign.

- Get informed about child poverty in New Zealand. Check out the Child Poverty Monitor: www.childpoverty.co.nz and the Children Poverty Action Group www.cpag.org.nz
- Join the movement to reduce inequality at closertogether.org.nz.
- Join the conversation about inequality and what we can do about it at www.facebook.com/closetogethernz ■



Sonia Scott is a policy advisor at NZCCSS supporting child and family policy work, and writes *Policy Watch* and *Vulnerability Report*.

the BIG PICTURE Competition

Drawing attention to child poverty solutions

Up to 285,000 children live in poverty in New Zealand. That's more than one in four kids.

This is a competition, tied into the school curriculum, for primary and secondary students to create a big picture and make a difference. Great prizes are up for grabs. Teaching resources available. Entries are due 5pm, Friday 17 October 2014. Multiple entries per school are welcome.

As well as being a great challenge, creating a picture shares your opinions on what kids need to thrive. You also add to the call for Parliament to have big picture thinking for our nation's kids! Entries will be shown to leaders as part of a call for Parliament to adopt a national strategy on child poverty. Check out the website for more info: thebigpicture.org.nz ■

New NZCCSS President — Lisa Woolley

At its June meeting, NZCCSS Council elected Lisa Woolley as the new President of NZCCSS. Lisa is the CEO of VisionWest Community Trust (formerly the Friendship Centre Trust) and one of the two Baptist representatives on Council.



Community Trust For the last 16 years (as CEO for the past 13 years). She is passionate about community development and addressing social issues such as poverty, marginalization, unemployment and homelessness.

Lisa has been working within community services for most of her adult life, and is committed to working in the community, addressing issues of social justice. She has been working for VisionWest

A big thank you also goes to outgoing President Rod Watts, who has led the NZCCSS Council so ably over the past two years. We are grateful for all the time and energy he has given to the work! ■

Tick for Kids Election 2014 is a tick for closing the inequality gap

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) supports *Tick for Kids Election 2014: it takes a child to raise a country*. “We recognise it as a significant initiative towards closing the inequality gap between rich and poor children in New Zealand”, says Executive Officer Trevor McGlinchey.

“All our children are New Zealand’s future and yet for over thirty years New Zealand has gone from a place that valued itself as the ‘best country in the world for bringing up children’ to one that has left increasing numbers of New Zealand children to flounder in poverty”, he says.

This unacceptable situation is not accidental but reflects policies of successive coalition governments. They have not put children first but have widened income gaps to create a culture of winners and the rest.

“Child poverty and inequality are intertwined and cannot be seen

apart. New Zealand has enough resources to support all of our children properly”, Mr McGlinchey says. “The reality is there are twice as many children living in poverty now than there were 30 years ago.

“We know that from the mid-1980s to the mid-2000s the gap between the rich and the rest widened faster in New Zealand than in any other wealthy country. At the very same time, children living in poverty almost doubled from 14% in 1982 to 27% of New Zealand children.”

In the last 30 years:

- Incomes for people at the top have doubled, while those at the lower end have barely increased
- The average household in the top 10 per cent of New Zealand now has nine times the income of one in the bottom 10 per cent
- The top 1 per cent of adults own three times as much of the country’s wealth as the entire lower half put together.

This dramatic increase in inequality in New Zealand has had far-reaching effects for our society, including many more children suffering from third-world diseases such as rheumatic fever. Increases in these diseases are not accidental. They are driven by poor quality and

unaffordable housing, overcrowding and poor nutrition. Insufficient household income lies at the heart of child poverty.

NZCCSS is calling for government policies that lift the household income of vulnerable families so they can provide a healthy standard of living for their children. Policies such as paying a universal child benefit (e.g. by extending the In-Work Tax Credit to parents who are not in work) will help reduce child poverty. Policies like these make a contribution to reducing inequality and consequently lifting children out of poverty. It is much harder for children to achieve their potential when the income gap between rich and poor is too large.

“When we create an even playing field for all our children to grow, develop and flourish, we build a future New Zealand that is safe, healthy, innovative, and ready to take on the challenges of the future”, Mr McGlinchey says. ■



It takes a child to raise a country
Mā te ririki – Mā te ririki e ora ai te motu

Find Tick4Kids online
at tick4kids.org.nz and
[facebook.com/tickforkids](https://www.facebook.com/tickforkids)

New masters degree in faith based leadership – your feedback sought

A proposed new Masters in Faith Based Leadership and Management being developed by the University of Otago.

Many NGOs which are faith/values/spiritual based are delivering services funded by government in the community sector. They have all experienced, at some time or another, the tensions in managing the relationship with government and providing the required contracted service outcomes. Managers/CEOs within these organisations manage money, staff, capital, resources and clients at very high levels. They are also required to deliver on contracts in an organisation not focused on profits or shareholder returns.

The University of Otago, working initially with its partners The Salvation Army and World Vision have proposed a new Masters in Faith Based Leadership and Management (MFBLD). The proposed degree is being developed for NGO senior managers/CEOs to equip them with the knowledge and skills to balance the missional, values or spiritual underpinning philosophy and also manage and lead at the strategic, policy and operational levels.

It is recognised that the NGO sector is not homogenous: the sector has a wide variety of needs; not one size fits all. For example, from basic

management, to strategic management and leadership, to deeply reflective practice by senior leaders.

The proposed graduates of faith, values and spiritually based organisations will understand leadership and mentoring of theology, spirituality and beliefs within the organisation e.g. Church, community service, Iwi or aid organisation. They will have the confidence to critique and influence the environment at the highest level and demonstrate leadership in the qualities of compassion, caring and empathy for the clients within the social, community and international development sectors while achieving contracted outcomes and operationalising the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Managing ‘the business’ is also an essential element of senior manager/CEO capability and the MFBLD will aim to ensure the graduates have gained the ability to oversee exemplary budgetary management and good stewardship of the resources of the organisation. This will include a high level understanding of contracting, capital management, financial control, HR and employment, procurement, information technology and ethical advertising. Finally, the new MFBLD will aim to develop high level strategies which are effective in

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achieving the mission of the organisation and at the same time holding a sophisticated relationship with government officials and ministers.

The University of Otago has indicated that it needs a clear understanding of its partners and other NGO needs and expectations. The University is keen to listen and consult with the NGO sector. At this stage, the University has an open mind and has not made any assumptions about the design or structure of the degree. There are various options and methods of delivery — essentially an open canvas (eg. multi university, multi-site is not out of the question; could also partner with another University).

The University of Otago is aiming for the MFBLD degree to be delivered in partnership between the Theology Department and the School of Business. It will offer papers on theology, management, economics, international relations, government relationships, Maori leadership, public policy/politics and others drawn from various disciplines (e.g. sustainability and resilience; health; family

and social, etc). There will be distance learning and on-line delivery with Block Courses in a part-time study over two years or more. The MFBLD will also include a research component contextualised to student's current area of work.

The development of a new degree will take time. Essentially, every new course, except Executive Education and non-qualification courses need to go through the CUAP (Committee on University Academic Programmes) process in order to receive government funding. CUAP meet biannually—in April and September. Given this timeframe, the University of Otago would aim to make a submission to CUAP in April 2015, with a proposed commencement date in the first semester 2016.

The University of Otago is keen to hear from organisations or individuals who could offer feedback on the proposed degree and initial support for the project. Please contact Dr James Conner, Senior Enterprise Manager, Government Sector, Research & Enterprise, University of Otago, mobile 021 241 8011, or email james.conner@otago.ac.nz ■



Early Warrant of Fitness results promising

Max Rashbrooke

The results of the first-ever trial of a Warrant of Fitness for New Zealand houses are in, and they look good.

The trial was run by several local councils, and involved 144 houses around the country being checked for things like having insulation, proper electrical wiring, smoke alarms, no leaks or major mould, proper heating, good plumbing and so on.

The headline result is that of the 144, just eight passed. But the most common failures were from relatively minor (and cheap to fix) problems, such as the water coming out of the hot taps not being hot enough, windows not having those stays that prevent children from opening them and falling out, and so on.

If those minor problems had been fixed, 36% of houses would have passed.

Of the 24 landlords interviewed following the trial, 19 said they had noted ways their houses could be warmer, dryer, or safer as a result of the assessment, and 15 had taken action to improve their property as a result of participating in the trial.

Only a small minority of the private landlords (12%) interviewed

stated they would put up the rent as a result of improvements made.

Over three quarters of tenants in the survey supported the idea of a Warrant of Fitness.

So what are the results telling us? They show the clear need for a Warrant of Fitness, since so many houses failed on substantial grounds – even though, and this is an important point, the landlords who participated were probably above average, since they volunteered to take part. Despite much progress on insulation recently, this remains one of the biggest failures of many houses.

Responding to the landlord feedback, the team doing the research has already concluded that some items should be dropped, like the window stays.

One big challenge for making the Warrant of Fitness mandatory will be getting landlords onside. Even in this self-selected group of relatively responsible landlords, only half of them supported a mandatory Warrant of Fitness scheme, with more supporting a voluntary one.

The argument that will probably be made to them is that we don't allow sub-standard cars to stay on the road



without a Warrant of Fitness, no matter the cost and inconvenience to car owners, so why should bad houses be any different?

Either way, the report on the trial concludes: "In general the results are very positive. There is a workforce willing and able to carry out the inspections at a reasonable price and both landlords and tenants appear to generally support a rental housing wof.

"The challenge will be to establish the appropriate regulatory framework to support the Rental wof and carry out an implementation trial to evaluate the costs and benefits of a housing wof."

Read the full trial results on the Healthy Housing website: healthyhousing.org.nz/news/ ■

NZCCSS Services for Older People Conference 2014, Dunedin 8–9 May

The Next Stretch is the 'Big Stretch'

The “next stretch” for New Zealand will also be the **“big stretch”** for our ageing society, keynote speaker Dr Satya Brink told the 2014 NZCCSS Services for Older People Conference in Dunedin. We have to do things differently – if we don't there are financial and human consequences.

She urged the sector to hold the New Zealand government to task, **“you are doing your part, the government needs to do its part”**. Drawing on her many years of experience advising governments throughout the world, Dr Brink compared New Zealand with other countries at different stages in population ageing.

She emphasised that we do not want to pit generations against one another or for-profit against not-for-profit. The challenge is going to be providing more care for less resource as there is likely to be continuing constraints on public and private resources into the future. Old models based on 35 years working don't work when people have the prospect of living 35 years after the age of 65.

We are in “uncharted territory”, never in history have we had so many older people. This will require a coordinated approach to policy across all areas of government, across health, housing, employment, education and pension. As a general aim

for policy she suggests to aim for a standard of living before 65 and after 65 that is about the same.

Particular areas of concern for New Zealand Dr Brink points to are pension policy, obesity, dementia, housing and education. The debate about the age of eligibility for New Zealand Super, its affordability and incomes for older people needs to recognise the advantages of publically funded pension schemes where the risk of poverty is shared across the population. Any changes to superannuation that do not adequately address such equity issues could end up exposing vulnerable people to the risk of extreme poverty. Allowing others to remove themselves out of any contribution to shared wellbeing by having their own private pension opens up the prospect of large inequalities in the future.

Obesity stands out as a key problem that is increasing faster in New Zealand than other comparable countries and this is associated with serious health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. In addition demand for **dementia support** will triple in the coming years and Dr Brink points out that health systems generally are still focused on health conditions, so cognitive conditions like dementia not well catered for. A shift to health promotion and

prevention is a policy shift that still needs to be made real. **“Don't ration the things that make people independent”** says Dr Brink.

She urges us to be careful in the debate about **“non-productive assets” in housing**, when a house is so central to the overall wellbeing of people. If we design our housing policy around the person not type of housing, then the value of the housing asset takes on a different meaning. In Sweden and Japan they have managed to unbundle health and housing costs, making it easier to deliver health services into the housing settings that work best for older people.

Education plays a vital role in the response to ageing populations. You really are never too old to learn, she said, quoting the Maori whakatauki **“Ma te mohio ka ora, ma te ora ka mohio – Through learning there is life, through life there is learning.”** Education throughout life helps people to understand their situation better, live more healthy lifestyles and stay healthy longer. Government policy to cut subsidies for older people in higher education is a false economy in this context.

She finished her address with a call for wise decision making that looks to build the future we imagine it should be.

Workforce challenges and teamwork

Two speakers were invited to respond to Dr Brink's address, DHB Lead CEO for Health of Older People, Chris Fleming and Otago University health academic Dr Fiona Doolan-Noble. Chris Fleming emphasised the workforce challenges ahead, arguing that the workforce is just not going to be there as demand for healthcare staff rises in developing countries. Technology having a big role to play and he urged participants to engage with the possibilities that are emerging, such as those canvassed in the technology and ageing Institute: www.techandaging.org

Dr Doolan-Noble emphasised the vital importance of teamwork and the basics of good communication in working with social and health complexities that people live with. Otago University's interdisciplinary approach to learning that is generating good results for students and her work evaluating the impact of “lay navigators” in health on the West Coast shows they were able to have a positive impact in helping people to understand how the health system can work for them. It comes down to the very basics of good communication, such as simply checking with clients whether they really understand what is being said to them.

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Dr Satya Brink.

Services for Older People Conference 2014 *Continued from page 8*

Dementia – stop being so nice!

Dr Susan Koch

Introducing herself as a kind of “Billy Connolly without the profanities”, Dr Koch lit up the plenary with her humour and Glasgow accent! She urged the sector to “stop being so nice!” when it comes to advocating for the resources and political attention needed to respond to dementia.

She told the conference that becoming a truly inclusive society for people living with dementia will need many changes. How will we *do* this? Through improved systems of care & support, removing stigma and providing social inclusion. For example, we will need to make our workplaces friendly for someone with mild cognitive impairment (in the same way we accommodate physical disability).

The basic principle is to manage the *person* with the condition, understanding Alzheimers as a “terminal disease” from which there is no

recovery but improved capacity is possible in the progress of the condition. We have to find ways to involve people, to work *with* them and encourage self-management and to get in early with a timely diagnosis.

A personal touch and the art of conversation – older person’s perspective

Rest home resident Jim Aipes and former Dunedin Mayor, Peter Chin, gave their perspectives on aged care to the conference. Jim Aipes emphasised the need to seek out social contact and get out and about. He spoke of needing to learn the “art of conversation” and having a relationship. “Keep them alive, keep them *talking*”, he urged. Peter Chin shared a very personal account of close family in dementia care. He emphasised the importance of continuing to recognise the person and their identity – who they are, even as they themselves begin to lose many strands of this.

Making the family connections to put the ageing issue on the election year agenda – political panel

The short-comings of the market, angry workers politicising and the reasons why ageing and aged care is not an election issue at the moment – these were themes that emerged from the panellists looking at Election 2014 and our sector.

Economist **Ganesh Nana** emphasised that economics is about *people* not dollars and lamented the short timeframe that dominates political debate. We need to collectively lift debate and look over a longer timeframe. We need to understand the shortcomings of the market – the low cost, low wage, low skill model is too dominant. If we don’t pay for it now, we will pay for it somewhere else later (e.g. health and wellbeing of next generation) and so we need to call for leadership to plan for high wage, high skill economy.

University academic and former Human Rights Commissioner **Dr Judy McGregor** spoke of her experience of angry workers politicising. The example of aged care worker Kristine Bartlett and others in aged care joining the legal action to claim their right to pay equity is encouraging other workers around the country to demand their rights. The multiple legal challenges from the unions to employers are turning out to be game-changers and have political consequences that the government is only now responding to. She sees inequality as a “sleeper issue”, as the international discourse begins to ask the question “when are the poor too poor?”

The “politics of numbers” is important for the election. Almost 100% of over 65s are enrolled and vote and older people realise that their wellbeing is tied up with their support



He Waka Kōtuia kapa haka group performing at the conference dinner.

workers and what they earn. She sees caring as skilled work – requiring high emotional skills (even if there is no formal training and qualifications). The politics of coalition can be used to promote a whole of government approach to sector affordability and “ingenuity in reward systems” to help meet the huge workforce challenges.

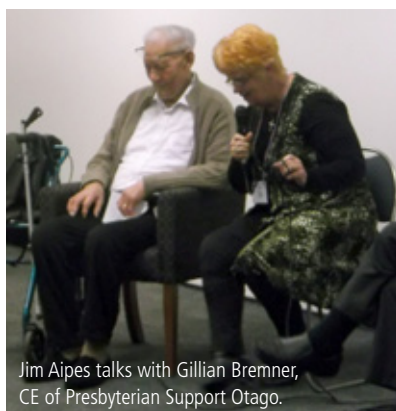
Political scientist **Dr Bryce Edwards** told the conference that aged care and older people not on the public agenda *at the moment*. But the election campaign is in flux with no settled “battle lines” as yet. He spoke of the economic and “hip pocket issues” that are dominant at present, inequality and distribution of wealth are very much part of that mix. When it comes to health care

debates, “no-one wants to touch them”, he said.

The emptiness and blandness of political debate at present however means that we can make aged care an issue. This low profile is associated with the lack of “symbolic representation” by a Cabinet Minister or Commissioner. The political debate has put the economy at the centre and aged care is not seen as part of the economy, but rather as a “social issue” – an extra to deal with if there is money.

He urged the conference to make the links between the “embarrassment” of high child poverty and connect the family story between aged care/family/children/poverty. He questioned the value of cross party consensus, suggesting that elections encourage

Continued over...



Jim Aipes talks with Gillian Bremner, CE of Presbyterian Support Otago.

Services for Older People Conference 2014 *Continued from page 8.*

political parties to out-bid each other. Consensus politics, he argued, can tend towards weaker results and the “lowest common denominator”.

An age-friendly work culture. engaging the realities of an ageing workforce – Geoff Pearman

As many as 48,000 workers, mostly women, do largely invisible work caring for older people in their homes, in residential care facilities or in hospitals, says workforce expert Geoff Pearman, but this workforce is not well understood and little researched.

He urged employers to engage with the realities of the life situations of older workers in our organisations – what does your workplace look & feel like, what are the things that worry you and does anybody care? As we battle with the realities of a difficult labour market and ask “where will our next worker come from?” we need to think maybe that next worker is actually already there and doesn’t want to retire or would carry on working if some things were changed about how they work...

Geoff urged people to create an age friendly culture in the workplace where people have flexibility and choice, feel they are doing valuable work and are being valued and are part of a great place to work.

“We create the future by changing the nature of decision making in the present.”

Unconventional pathways to leadership – Sue Bidrose

Sue Bidrose shared her story of her journey into leadership as Dunedin’s first “women CEO”. Her unconventional pathway through social work, parenthood, university study later in life and then into government and local government reminds us there are many pathways into leadership.

Her message was not to be afraid that someone one day will realise I don’t know what I am doing! That is a feeling all those in leadership have and it is important to identify the people and skills you need in your organisation in order get things done.

She places strong emphasis on good communication, taking communication seriously - between teams and with the community, to be available and to listen. Her other advice is to lead from alongside, working with people and “partner promiscuously” to use other people’s ideas for the good of all the people of the community.

Minister calls aged care a “protected sector” in tight times

Associate Health Minister Jo Goodhew focused on workforce issues and defending the government’s level of investment into aged care. She described health generally and aged care as well as education as having been “protected” from the

spending cuts that other areas of government have had to face.

She thanked the sector for its commitment to interRAI and went on to describe how the government is responding to the ageing workforce issues. She noted that the voluntary bonding scheme for nurses has seen around 20% working in aged care and an evaluation of it is underway of a pilot scheme of supporting nurses in careers as examples of this. She also highlighted the importance of the revised Carers Strategy that has just recently been released.

In a lively question and answer session she responded to questions about the retirement age by stating that the government’s position is that the current pensions are affordable in to the future. When asked about government funding levels leading to low wages, she emphasised that people were providing fantastic care but “times are tight”. The Government hopes to be able to put more into sector in the future. In one small glimmer of hope for some workers, she confirmed that negotiations are taking place on a resolution of the issue of travel time costs for home support workers.

Pensions affordable but higher wages are not

One questioner asked how the government could argue that we can afford to keep the current pension



Satya Brink with conference organiser Pat Johnston.

eligibility age yet cannot afford to lift the very low wages of workers in the sector? The Minister answered by claiming the “pots” of money drawn on by government for pensions and aged care workers are separate and the two issues are not related.

The next stretch is the new normal – adapt and create a legacy

In her closing address to the conference, Dr Satya Brink urged the sector to **adapt**. The new generations of seniors expect us to be wise and we need to re-design the way we think about ageing. She urged our society to use “**life course thinking**” and re-imagine life as contributing members of society (not a burden). We will need a commitment to **quality & equity**, “knowledge is not sufficient for a caring society” it must be “combined with empathy”. Lastly, we need to live a **legacy**, act for the future in current day practices. We need to see this as investments with long horizons that require “patient policy” and “patient money”. ■

Premium charging in rest homes New rules from 1 July

From 1 July 2014 DHBS will be responsible for monitoring new rules about when rest homes and other aged residential facilities can charge new residents for so-called “premium rooms”. These are rooms that offer facilities that go beyond what is required to meet the government-funded aged residential care subsidy.

The basic principle is to ensure that no-one should be forced to pay for a “premium room” just because there are no “standard” rooms available, so new rules have been introduced to ensure that residents continue to receive a genuine choice about additional charges over and above the government subsidy.

The maximum contribution that residents have to pay for rest home care also increases on 1 July and you can find out what fee applies in your region on the Ministry of Health website: health.govt.nz/our-work/life-stages/health-older-people/long-term-residential-care ■

Last chance to participate in workforce survey

Despite the vital work done by the nearly 50,000 aged care workers in New Zealand and the fact that demand for their services is expected to grow rapidly in the coming years, there has been very little research done about the structure and dynamics of this important group of workers. Researchers at the AUT University in Auckland are seeking to fill in some of the gaps with the first comprehensive survey of all aged care workers, both in home support and residential aged care. They aim to produce data to assist those in the sector with their planning, service development

and training as well as sector benchmarking around trends such as turnover, labour supply and wellbeing of the workers. At completion of the study a final report will be publically available on the website of the New Zealand Work Research Institute www.workresearch.aut.ac.nz

Researchers are still accepting responses from employers through into early July and we urge employers to support this survey and contact Dr Katherine Ravenswood at AUT University if you wish to participate: katherine.ravenswood@aut.ac.nz ■

Overseas workers coming to work in aged care

Useful new resources for migrant workers and their employers in aged care have been published by Immigration NZ. Migrant workers in aged care sector have been identified by the government as a priority group for targeted settlement information to help prepare them well for New Zealand aged care workplaces, which can be quite different from those in their own countries.

These guides are part of a series of resources which help sectors' employers understand the kind of challenges that migrants face when moving to New

Zealand and help migrant workers settle more quickly into work and understand some of the differences they may experience here compared to home. Wide input from the sector employer and worker groups as well as researchers was sought in producing the guides.

Both publications, *A guide for employers: Are you employing migrant workers in Aged Care?* and *A guide for migrants: Working in the Aged Care in New Zealand* are online or can be ordered in hard copy at ssnz.govt.nz/working-in-new-zealand/agedcare/ ■



Events at the Selwyn Centre for Ageing and Spirituality

Workshops: Spiritual Reminiscence in Dementia, with Rev Dr Elizabeth MacKinlay — 16 August (Auckland), 20 August (New Plymouth) and 23 August (Wellington)

Spiritual reminiscence is an effective means of helping people with dementia to find meaning in their own experience, and interact meaningfully with others.

'Perspectives on Ageing and Spirituality' Conference 28 August at Selwyn Village (Point Chevalier, Auckland)

This conference will feature the latest research work in the field of ageing and spirituality. Keynote speakers include Elizabeth MacKinlay, psychotherapist and author Juliet Batten, and Ofa Dewes of the University of Auckland, Pacific Health, who will examine the spectrum of cultural, religious and secular views on the spirituality of ageing. This event will be of interest to older people, health and aged-care workers, chaplains and pastoral caregivers, members of religious organisations, students and academics.



Rev Dr Elizabeth MacKinlay.

Big changes needed in home support

"The status quo is not a viable option" in home support, says the Home and Community Health Association (HCHA). In a new briefing paper they are calling for comprehensive changes to policy, planning and integration of home and community support services. NZCCSS member agencies are very much involved in working with older people and people with disabilities in a sector under enormous pressure to meet growing need. Thousands of home support workers are doing vital work out in the community supporting people to live independently in their own homes.

Faced with inconsistent approaches to contracting services, inadequate funding levels from government and legal challenges from workers, the sector association HCHA has identified four broad actions are needed to ensure that clients continue to have

access to safe, good quality home and community support:

- Development and implementation of a policy framework that prioritises home and community support and removes unreasonable inconsistency.
- A focus on growth, retention and development of the workforce.
- A stronger focus on aligning service models to services that support client choice, family and whanau relationships.
- Proactively averting legal challenges, which if allowed to escalate will move the service quickly into insolvency.

This is a very important document for all those involved in the sector, not only those managing and governing home support agencies but also clients, families, and workers. Read the briefing paper at hcha.org.nz/assets/Uploads/HCHA-Briefing-Paper-2014.pdf ■

Certificate in Pastoral Care of Ageing People

Module 1 of the popular Certificate in Pastoral Care of Ageing People facilitated by the Reverend Anne Russell-Brighty will be held in Nelson, Hamilton and Auckland on various dates from September 2014 onwards. Entitled 'Walking on Holy Ground – introduction to nurturing the spirit in aged care', these

workshops will cover key topics such as how to minister to those who have moved to residential care complexes, to people in grief and those with special needs, and how to care for people with dementia and their loved ones.

For further information on any of the above courses and to register, visit www.selwyncare.org.nz or contact Dr Chris Perkins at chrisp@selwyncare.org.nz or (09) 849 9202. ■

Legislation and submissions

“I was hungry and you gave me food” (Matthew 25:35)

Sonia Scott

First Reading of The Education (Breakfast and Lunch Programmes in Schools) Amendment Bill

There is movement on Hone Harawira's Education (Breakfast and Lunch Programmes in Schools) Amendment Bill (Feed the Kids Bill). On 28 May Harawira gave an opening speech in the First Reading of Debate, calling for the House to vote it to the Māori Affairs Select Committee to enable all concerned New Zealanders to debate how best to effectively address child hunger in New Zealand. Although the debate was adjourned early, the debate in the House and vote is set to happen when the House resumes in mid-June.

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

There is significant support for this bill, including a coalition of 30 organisations (The Community Coalition for Foods) actively working to raise

awareness about child hunger and poverty in New Zealand; a subject long been denied despite substantive evidence supported by data from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Development. Over the past two years this public apathy has however turned to significant concern. A 2013 TV3 poll showed that 70% of New Zealanders supported government-funded food programme in low decile schools, and Food in Schools made the top 10 news stories in 2013.

KickStart is a good initiative but not enough on its own

In 2013 the government responded with a joint initiative with Sanitarium and Fonterra to provide breakfast in schools. The government put up \$9.5 million over 5 years, match by Sanitarium and Fonterra. This initiative was widely seen as a great start and for some an end to the matter. For others, including Harawira, this initiative has been seen as simply not enough on its own. Drawing on Ministry of Health figures that estimated 100,000 children are going to school hungry each day, and the KickStart Breakfast websites showing they are feeding approximately 20,000 children, Harawira argues

approximately 80,000 kids must still be going to school hungry every day. A view supported by the Feed the Kids coalition.

Access to nutritious food is not a luxury; it is a requirement of good health and it is essential to child development and learning. While most people would acknowledge that parents have primarily responsibility to provide their children with adequate nutrition, the fact that there are thousands of children are missing out on adequate nutrition in households receiving wages as well as benefits, suggests there is much more to this issue than simply irresponsible parents.

“People still need help despite the news that the financial resources of our communities are stabilising and/or looking better. Any unexpected cost forces people to seek help, despite the best budgeting skills. Demand on families for money for school activities, faced with back to school costs such as books and uniforms places pressure on an already stretched budget. Then add to that a power bill higher than expected, medical costs or car repairs not expected and often the only way to manage that is to seek help for food. — Salvation Army (Vulnerability Report, Issue 18, April 2014)

Inadequate household income

NZCCSS service providers consistently talk about the trade-offs many families make in order to pay high rents and electricity bills. The purchase of food is a discretionary expense and can be cut back. For children, this all too often means going to school without breakfast or lunch, eating cheap carbohydrates which lack protein and essential nutrients that are the leading cause of childhood obesity and diabetes. It means not being able to learn in class because the physiological discomfort of inadequate nutrition. It's about feeling judged and stigmatised by people who don't understand why a child is hungry in God's Own.

NZCCSS believes we have enough resources within our country to ensure every child has access to adequate nutrition to enable them to grow, develop and learn. Healthy children make healthy adults and healthy communities. The reverse is also true. If we are serious about making a difference to those 80,000 children amongst us who regularly miss a meal and feel hungry, the household income of vulnerable families/whanau (both in work and on benefits) must be lifted so that families can provide a healthy standard of living for their children. There are enough resources to go round. ■

Responsible lending – New laws to control loan sharks

New laws are being introduced over the coming year effect requiring lenders to act more responsibly towards borrowers and provide them with the information they need. Lenders will also need to make sure those they are lending to can make repayments without suffering substantial hardship and there are stronger penalties for lenders who do not comply with the new rules.

Among the changes include restrictions preventing goods from being repossessed that are not specifically listed in a credit agreement and also protecting some essential household items.

The new Credit Contracts and Financial Services Law Reform Bill has recently passed into law. Under the new law, there are a number of regulations to be developed as well as the Responsible Lending Code to be enforced by the Commerce Commission. Consultation on the Code is due to begin soon. For more information on the timeline for change, visit the Consumer Affairs website: www.consumeraffairs.govt.nz ■

Conference: Social Justice in Communities

23–24 October 2014, Rydges Latimer, Christchurch

*Tuhia ki te raki, tuhia ki te whenua,
tuhia ki te kākau o kā takata, ko te
mea nui, ko te aroha!*

*Write it in the sky, write it in the
earth, write it in the hearts of
the people, the greatest thing is love!*

Social justice for our communities – What is it? How do we build it? How do we sustain it? Community Networks Aotearoa (formerly the New Zealand Council of Social Services) and the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) are joining together to host this important conference. The members of our Councils are committed to real change for the people they serve through their wide range social services. They know that strong, socially just communities provide the natural supports, linkages and empowerment that help families to be strong and resilient.

This conference will explore what is meant by social justice and how this can be created and sustained in our communities. 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, from other New Zealand communities and from Australia are coming to share their experiences in working to bring about self-determination, inclusion and empowerment for community members. The conference is intended to 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 in their communities.

Conference contacts: Ros Rice, Community Networks Aotearoa on 04 472 3362 / 021 178 433; or Trevor McGlinchey, NZCCSS on 04 473 2627 / 027 286 9393, or email admin@nzccss.org.nz. ■



The NZCCSS team enjoying their Fair Trade Fortnight morning tea, May 2014.

Fair Trade Fortnight at NZCCSS

NZCCSS has been a Fair Trade workplace for several years now and we celebrated Fair Trade Fortnight 2014 with a special morning tea on 14 May. Paul baked banana muffins using Fairtrade bananas as well as some Fairtrade chocolate from Cadbury and we enjoyed them with our Trade Aid tea and coffee. Fair trade is part of our everyday work – buying our supplies online from Trade Aid as well as picking up extras in the local supermarket. We sweeten our drinks with Trade Aid sugar and for those who want a flavoured tea, we also buy the Scarborough Fair Earl Grey tea and even offer Trade Aid instant coffee for those who can't handle real coffee.

NZCCSS encourages others to join the movement for change by buying fair trade products and registering your organisations as Fair Trade workplaces, churches and schools. You can do this through the Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand www.fta.org.nz/fair-trade-communities.html and buy online from Trade Aid: www.tradeaid.org.nz/index.php/pi_pageid/76 ■

Kete Kupu Word Basket

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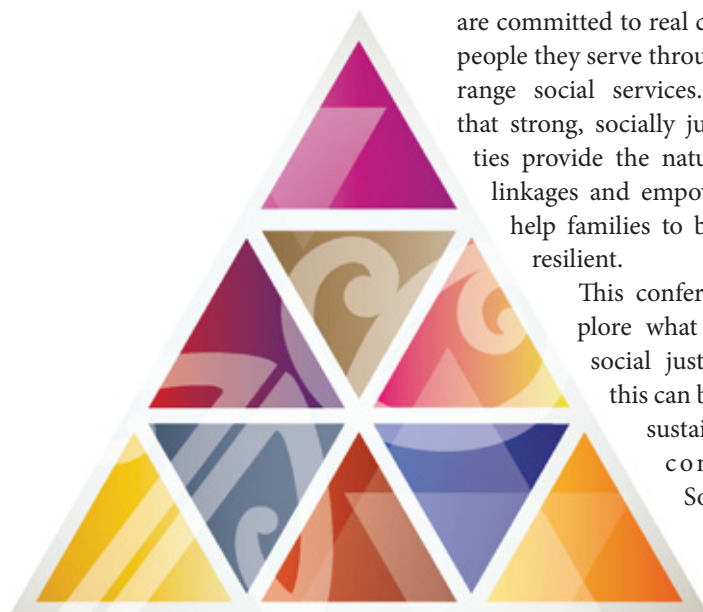
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conference
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socialjustice.org.nz