

## We, Together

Social issues that providers of social services are engaged with **every day** are about solutions not problems. We see the big picture.

The big picture of what it means to have your life and your potential valued, to be safe and nurtured as a child, to have your choices respected and supported as you grow older, to have your family live in an affordable and healthy house.

All of these things are compromised by poverty, by ignorance of how poverty affects New Zealanders and by prejudice. We still live in a political environment where words such as 'underclass' are used to describe those amongst us who survive on the lowest of incomes or are otherwise at their most vulnerable. Rather than labels, we seek social justice for all. After all, is it too much to ask for demonstrations of fairness and caring from our leaders and decision-makers?

A strong and healthy society is one where the least amongst us, those who are most vulnerable, are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve. The fate of one of us affects all of us. We believe that such a society cannot be built on selfish interests. We cannot thrive as a 'ME first' society, we can only thrive as a 'WE together' society.

The 'call for more action' **Aroha tētahi ki tētahi – Let Us Look After Each Other**, that the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) has promoted in 2008 points to a vision of a society in which we are all connected - one to the other. With the right mix of government policies for developing strengths within our communities, and by all of us taking a 'we together' approach, more people will get a fair go in our society.

### Strength in Community

The strength evident in so many of our communities gives us real hope. Problems like child safety, domestic violence, poor housing, unhealthy lifestyles, mental health issues and

even the worst affects of poverty can be overcome by people working together in communities. But communities need support to achieve these changes.

Community organisations play a vital role in making community aspirations a reality. These organisations include iwi/Maori providers, Pasifika groups, community based trusts, and Christian and other providers of social services. They are organisations that are part of



- and trusted by - the communities they work with. Community organisations assist communities and families develop solutions to their unique needs. In order that these solutions are allowed to grow and become truly effective, community organisations need to be supported. Governments need to listen to hapu, iwi, and to Pasifika and other communities.

Through truly listening Governments will develop policies to help with community based solutions to local issues.

## Supporting Neighbourhoods

We know that the way forward lies in a partnership between government agencies and community organisations.

This partnership needs to be two-way. Government agencies must work alongside and with community organisations collaboratively. They must share their power and their resources and we, as individuals and community members, must contribute our knowledge and passion to develop strong, healthy families, vibrant neighbourhoods and a more just society. We, together.



### FOUR THINGS YOU CAN DO

We call on you to become a champion of just and compassionate communities by:

**Knowing** your community, caring about what happens in your community and to those that live in your street, the next street and the next suburb.

**Learning** more about community organisations and the roles they play in growing an inclusive, just and fair New Zealand.

**Supporting** one or more of these community organisations through contributing your skills and resources.

**Encouraging** local and central government politicians to listen to and support those people that do care for their community.

NZCCSS can support you through the research, information and advocacy it makes freely available to its members and to wider communities of interest throughout Aotearoa New Zealand at its website [www.justiceandcompassion.org.nz](http://www.justiceandcompassion.org.nz)

We welcome all inquiries by email to [admin@nzccss.org.nz](mailto:admin@nzccss.org.nz) or by phone to (04) 473 2627



**Ehara taku toa te toa takitahi, engari taku toa he toa takitini**

Success is not the work of one, but the work of many