

Stay calm and hopeful in the face of Coronavirus

Ian Hudson, NZCCSS President

In the face of Covid-19 Coronavirus, the message we are hearing across faith communities is stay calm, have hope we will all get through this together, and look after yourself and others. Covid-19 coronavirus has now arrived on New Zealand's shores and for the most part, as we write this, the number of cases remains small. Government is actively putting in place controls to keep the number of cases from increasing. Good hygiene and social distancing are a key part of the strategy. Many big gatherings and events have already been cancelled and there are signs of further restrictions ahead. In other parts of the world, we are already hearing about creative solutions to restrictions on faith gatherings such as televised and live-streamed services and broadcasts on the radio. Creative solutions will also be needed across our social services to continue our Mission to support the vulnerable in our communities, who are likely to be more severely impacted (the elderly, the sick, the homeless), whilst keeping ourselves and each other safe. As we all await more guidance, I shall leave you with a quote from James Martin S.J. ... *"Many things have been cancelled because of coronavirus. Love is not one of them."*

Economic Support Package Announced

The Government has announced its Covid-19 coronavirus economic support package to assist people and organisations impacted by the crisis, with affected businesses receiving the majority of support through wage subsidies. The package includes support packages for those people unable to work because they're either in quarantine, sick from Covid-19 coronavirus, or caring for family members in either of those situations.

From today a **Covid-19 coronavirus leave payment** will be available to support people financially if they need to self-isolate for 14 days. It is paid to employers who have eligible employees and they must pass the payment onto their employees in full. It covers full-time, part-time and casual employees, and contractors who are legally working in New Zealand and who:

- need to self-isolate in line with Ministry of Health guidelines and have registered as needing to self-isolate with Healthline, cannot work from home, and their self-isolation is not because they left NZ since the travel restrictions on 16 March 2020 and have since returned *or*
- cannot work because the person has been diagnosed with Covid-19 coronavirus *or*
- cannot work because they are caring for dependents who are required to self-isolate or who are sick with Covid-19 coronavirus.

How much you can get

The Covid-19 coronavirus leave payment will be paid at a flat rate of:

- \$585.80 to a person working 20 hours or more per week
- \$350.00 to a person working less than 20 hours per week.

Employers receiving the payment for employees who are required to self-isolate can receive it for 14 days. As people may be required to self-isolate more than once, employers will be able to apply for this on an 'as needed' basis. It can be paid for the entire period an employee is sick (or looking after a dependent person who is sick) with Covid-19 coronavirus but the employer must apply every 14 days.

Benefit increases

Winter Energy Payment rates will double for 2020:

- Single people with no dependent children – \$40.91 a week
- Couples, and people with dependent children – \$63.64 a week

The period it is paid for isn't changing (1 May – 1 October).

Main benefit increase

From 1 April 2020 all main benefits will increase by \$25 per week.

This increase to the after-tax rate will apply to:

- Jobseeker Support
- Sole Parent Support
- Supported Living Payment
- Young Parent Payment
- Youth Payment

This is in addition to the already announced 1 April rate changes.

This increase in the benefit payment may affect some of the other payments such as Temporary Additional Support, Accommodation Supplement and Childcare Assistance – but generally people will be better off because of these changes.

In-work Tax Credit

The hours test for In-work Tax Credit will be removed from 1 July 2020. More information about what this means for people on a benefit will be available in the next few weeks.

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One year later – Remembering 15 March

One year on, NZCCSS, acknowledges those who were deeply affected by events in Christchurch on Friday 15th March 2019 with a prayer written by Methodist Minister David Poultney.

Like the assassination of President Kennedy,
the first landing on the Moon,
9–11,
or the death of Princess Diana
we will always remember where we were when we heard
those first reports a gunman,
a mosque,
two mosques.
We will always remember that dark afternoon,
that fearful evening
as the death toll mounted.
How often had we heard of such events
in other places and felt just a little smug?
It could never happen here,
but it did, and there is no shred of comfort
that the gunman was a foreigner.
He could not have done this
without a network, support.
One year ago today, 51 people died, 49 were injured
and almost 5 million people lost the illusion of our innocence.
Let us sit with our thoughts, feelings and memories.

(Two minutes silence is observed)

To those who mourn, grant consolation,
to those who are fearful, bring peace,
to those who challenge hatred and intolerance, grant courage and
resilience,

May their cause be ours **Amen**



A Faith Response to the Coronavirus

Reverend David Bush has circulated information on a faith-based response to the Covid-19 coronavirus and the following message:

“We are encouraged to be faith-filled people especially when times are tough or uncertain. Please continue the good work of supporting one another.”

The Covid-19 coronavirus outbreak is stirring up anxiety, confusion, and major inconveniences. It is a situation in which we can easily over-react or under-react. How can our faith tradition guide and comfort us through this troubling time?

A good starting point is to remember that the most repeated phrase in the Bible is “Do not be afraid!” or “Have no fear!” God probably sends us this message so frequently because fear is such a big part of human nature. Fear can alert us to dangers in our lives to keep us safe, but fear can also lead us astray, toward selfish responses.

Enough for everyone

Of course, we see these same dynamics play out in Scripture, where fear leads to hoarding. The most famous story is when the Israelites are in the desert without food (Exodus 16). God rains down manna from heaven but also cautions them to take only what they need for now. They disobey and find that the food

they attempt to store away goes bad immediately.

The consistent message we hear in the Bible is that we need to trust in God, who will provide enough for everyone. The problems come when people begin to take more than they need.

Fear of the Covid-19 coronavirus has caused some to stockpile and hoard unreasonable amounts of hand sanitizer, face masks, and other supplies against the recommendations of leaders. The problem is that this wipes out supplies for those who truly need them the most – health care workers – and those most vulnerable to the disease, without really making the buyers safer.

Protect the vulnerable

Scripture and the social teachings of the church remind us again and again that we – as individuals and a society – must protect and give priority to those who are most vulnerable and at risk. We see this from the laws in the Old Testament that

looked out for the poor and the widows, to Jesus’ embrace of people on the margins of society, to the early church’s adamant support of those who had less. The Bible urges us to put those who are most at risk first.

In the midst of the Covid-19 coronavirus, the vulnerable take many forms. Most obvious are those who are elderly or have other health conditions that make them most susceptible to illness. Those who are younger may not be concerned about our own health risks, but if we help pass on the virus, it can be a life-or-death situation for others.

Others are financially vulnerable and do not have the flexibility to take sick leave that many of us take for granted. That puts them in a difficult situation when they become ill and may have to choose between putting their job at risk and staying home to protect others. Likewise, many parents do not have the flexibility to stay home when school is cancelled for their children.

Continued p. 3

A FAITH RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS *continued*

The situation is impacting many others, such as small business owners who may already be on shaky financial ground.

A spirit of sacrifice

This health crisis is challenging many of us to make sacrifices in our lives. Some are huge, such as those made by exhausted health care workers around the world, desperately trying to keep patients alive (while avoiding the illness themselves).

Other sacrifices fall more in the category of inconveniences. It is inconvenient when events are cancelled, schools close, and travel is limited. It is inconvenient to wash our hands intentionally and regularly.

But this kind of sacrifice is at the very centre of our faith. Every time we gather around the Lord's Table, we celebrate the powerful way Christ showed us how to love others. He sacrificed everything in self-giving love for us, and he invited us to do the same. In turn, we die to ourselves – through inconveniences and more – in order to love those around us. Truly loving others will always cost us something.

Actions that may not entirely make sense to us can have huge effects. Scientists point to the 1918 flu when St. Louis proactively and

aggressively closed its schools to prevent infections. Death rates in the city were about one third those in Pittsburgh, which was much slower to close its schools. Thousands of lives were saved.

We may grumble about or resist changing our habits, especially if it's unclear what's in it for us. But we need to remember that many of these actions are more about protecting others. Perhaps the invitation amidst this crisis is to embrace the inconveniences fully, and then move beyond them to seek out the best ways to serve those who are most in need.

Loving our neighbour

Community is essential to us as Christians. We are the Body of Christ, and we know that when two or more gather in Jesus' name, he is present with us. So it may be a bit harder for us to handle the “social distancing” happening in many communities.

Our call to community is not only in the context of our church but also in our neighbourhood community. How do we literally love our neighbour? How can we be witnesses on our streets?

One way is to regularly check in on your neighbours who may be vulnerable and isolated. Offer to deliver

groceries or other items for them or to run other errands so they won't have to risk infection by leaving their home.

Be a positive, calming influence in any online neighbourhood communities. Don't spread rumors or hysteria, but find ways to support each other through the crisis.

Living the Virtues

Ultimately, as with life in general, we are called to live out the four cardinal virtues:

- **Prudence** – Carefully discern the best course of action, not just for ourselves, but for the good of all. Ask: What action does God want me to take?
- **Justice** – Seek fairness for everyone, especially those who need it most. Ask: Who is not getting the help that they need?
- **Temperance** – Find a healthy balance between self care and care for others. Ask: Do I err toward selfishness or an unhealthy co-dependence?
- **Fortitude** – Persevere in times of trial and difficulty. Ask: Do I have the courage to do the right thing even when the going gets tough?

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What You Can Do

- **Stop the spread.** Even if you are not particularly concerned about the risk to yourself or your own family, these tactics will protect others who may be more vulnerable. Many of us will carry the virus before having any symptoms (and may never develop any).
 - **Wash your hands well** for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. Sing the refrain to Michael Joncas' song “On Eagle's Wings” (“And he will raise you up...”) while you wash.
 - **Avoid touching your face.**
 - **Cough or sneeze into your elbow** or a tissue.
 - **Follow the guidance of local officials.**
 - **Stay home if you become ill.**
- **Don't take what you don't need.** Hoarding worsens the situation, and can lead to more infections and more impacts for the most vulnerable.
 - **Leave the masks to others.** Masks only make sense for health care workers and those who are infected. They are not guaranteed to prevent transmission anyway.
 - **Do not overbuy supplies.** Retailers are being wiped out of disinfectants and other supplies, leaving some who most need them without. Be prepared, but be thoughtful and reasonable.
- **Advocate for the vulnerable and targeted.**
 - **Have compassion for those most at risk.** Stand up for those who need the most help and make sure they are being cared for, without judgment.
 - **Fight racism.** Discrimination against those with Asian background only hurts the situation.
- **Proactively love your neighbour!**
 - **Check in on isolated or vulnerable neighbours** and offer to help with specific tasks, such as shopping, child or pet care, cleaning, etc.
 - **If you are in a position of power,** use that power for the good of all. Allow workers to work from home or take time off, limit large gatherings, follow Government guidance, etc.
 - **Thank those on the front lines** who are protecting us, such as healthcare workers, police, firefighters. Be gentle and kind with them.
 - **Pray** for all those affected by the crisis.



Covid19.govt.nz

Everything you need
to know in one place

Unite
against
COVID-19

New Zealand Government

<https://covid19.govt.nz/>

Under section 66D of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, child welfare and protection agencies will need to publicly notify their use of combined datasets by 1 July 2020



ORANGA TAMARIKI
Ministry for Children

Oranga Tamariki wants to hear any questions you have about section 66D

Oranga Tamariki is preparing information for the sector on section 66D of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989. Section 66D is part of the wider information sharing provisions that came into force on 1 July 2019. You can find out more about the wider information sharing provisions on the [Oranga Tamariki information sharing website](#).

The section 66D provision covers the requirement for a child welfare and protection agency to publicly notify when they are combining datasets from two separate sources. Here's what section 66D says:

1. To avoid doubt, a child welfare and protection agency may use information relating to a child or young person to produce, link, or analyse datasets of information and produce combined datasets.

2. If a child welfare and protection agency links or analyses datasets or produces combined datasets from more than 1 source, it must notify, at least once a year, on an Internet site maintained by the agency, an independent person, or a class of independent persons:

- (a) the types of information used in the combined datasets
- (b) the sources of those types of information
- (c) the purpose or purposes served by creating or analysing the combined datasets
- (d) the privacy safeguards relating to the use of the combined datasets.

So we can support NGOs to meet the requirements under section 66D, we are asking agencies to send us any questions they have about section 66D. We can then use these questions as a basis for putting together

further information for the sector about what section 66D means. We've already come up with some initial questions and answers ourselves which are on the [information sharing website](#). We're sure you'll have more questions.

Please can you send any questions about section 66D to Ann Walker ann.walker@ot.govt.nz and Jordan Willis-Love jordan.willislove@ot.govt.nz at Oranga Tamariki. There's no closing date for when you can send questions in, but the sooner we get them the sooner we can put meaningful advice together for the sector and upload it on the Oranga Tamariki website.

In the meantime, if you would like more information about what section 66D might mean for your agency, you can contact the Oranga Tamariki information sharing help-line 0508 463 674 or email infosharinghelpline@ot.govt.nz

Ko te wā whakawhiti – It's time for change

A Māori inquiry into Oranga Tamariki

Trevor McGlinchey

The “Ko te wā whakawhiti – It's time for change” report recently released by the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency into the practices of Oranga Tamariki provides a powerful commentary on the impact of colonisation on whānau Māori. These impacts are seen through the lens of whānau who have lived experience of removal of children and/or care by the State. In the Inquiry's own words:

“The Māori Inquiry into Oranga Tamariki seeks to fill the current gap of understanding around the intricacies and complexities that lie at the heart of Māori realities, and to give voice to something that for too long has been either silenced, or wrongly appropriated and misrepresented ... In many ways these findings ... represent just a small exposure of a much larger problem, and highlight the need to provide a more extensive space to hear whānau voices, especially the voices of those who are the least powerful in this scenario, which are tamariki Māori.”

Emerging from this inquiry are three recommendations, three Action Points which could create

significant change in the wellbeing of tamariki Māori and their whānau.

Action Points

1. Supporting whānau – strengthen whānau capability and capacity

Immediate support of whānau with lived experience of the State care process ... is of the utmost importance

2. A structural analysis and review of Oranga Tamariki systems, policies, processes and practices

... the complexity of the issues reached beyond a single government department, and pointed to inter-related systemic dysfunction across multiple government agencies underpinned by Crown policy, and misunderstanding of the application of policy, in particular Section 7AA of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families (Oranga Tamariki) Legislation Act 2017 ...

3. Build on the call from whānau for ‘By Māori – For Māori, with Māori’ solutions for long-term sustainability

The long-term vision for whānau wellbeing is for robust and

sustainable change that is ultimately driven by whānau priorities and world-views. This long-term, systemic change is based on Māori decision-making, collective Māori endorsement, integration, workforce development, and sustainable funding. It includes the voices of whānau Māori with lived experience at all levels of decision-making, and builds on collective Māori endorsement (whānau/hapū/iwi/hapori) and political momentum.

The report concluded that:

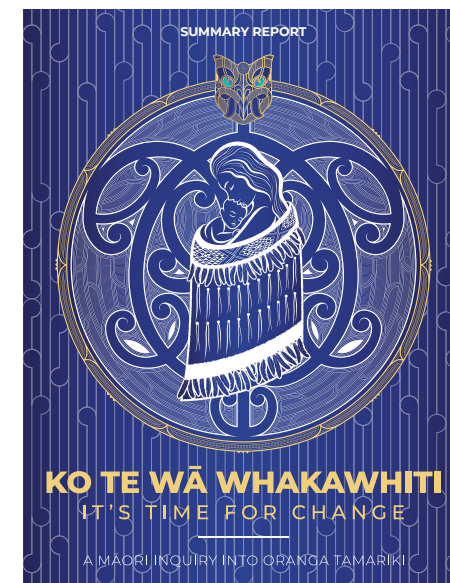
“Decades of reviews, reports and legislation on child welfare services have failed to produce a system that answers the needs of whānau and tamariki ... the desire of Māori communities to keep tamariki with whānau; the lack of responsiveness of services to whānau needs; the continued failure of practitioners to exercise the required cultural intelligence in dealing with whānau.

“The findings of this Inquiry have to be viewed within the context of the impacts of colonisation, including the dispossession of Māori from their land, culture and the means of production and wealth ... This

includes the history of increasing State intervention in the lives of whānau, with the observable effect of undermining the traditional role of the wider whānau and community in the care and protection of their tamariki and mokopuna.

“The overwhelming conclusion from this Inquiry is that the State care of tamariki and pēpi Māori, and in particular the uplift practices used by the State, are never appropriate for the long-term wellbeing of Māori. With new increased government fiscal spending still resulting in poor outcomes for whānau, there is a strong economic case to make substantial, revolutionary change to the current system – it is time to listen to the voices of whānau.”

This report is sobering reading for all of us who are involved with tamariki and whānau wellbeing. As organisations and practitioners engaged with the work of child and family wellbeing – how well are we building practice frameworks and organisational systems which will ensure we are exercising the



required “cultural intelligence in dealing with whānau”? This report, and the experiences of whānau, demand we respond in ways that enable whānau Māori to build on their strengths and ensure their tamariki are not removed.

“Ko te wā whakawhiti – It's time for change” is of particular concern to Oranga Tamariki. The increase in government spending and the focus on “mana tamaiti” has not yet seen any perceptible difference in the inequalities of the Māori experience of State care. While Oranga Tamariki has responded that they welcome the findings of this report they and their political leadership will be even more strongly focussed on the requirement to demonstrate they are able to support positive change for Māori.

Expansion of NZCCSS Policy Groups

Exciting opportunities to be more directly engaged in identifying and spreading good practice, and in developing NZCCSS policies and advocacy are now available.

New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) is inviting individuals from member organisations of NZCCSS who have a particular interest in policy development and critique to join one of its three policy groups. This is

an opportunity to be more directly engaged in identifying and spreading good practice, in developing NZCCSS policies and advocacy and supporting the mahi of the Council of Christian Social Services. NZCCSS Policy Groups provide

a close linkage between the work and decision making of the Denominational Representatives on Council and the work and experience of Christian Social Services. In the past these Policy Groups have consisted of about 6 to 8 people with expertise in the Policy Group focus areas. Due to the value placed by NZCCSS on the work of the Policy Groups, Council has decided to increase the numbers of people in each group by an additional 2 to 4 NZCCSS social services and community members. Membership is offered on an up-to-three year period. The Policy Groups and their focus areas are:

- Social and economic policy concerning older people
- The application of Te Tiriti for the wellbeing of older people

Child and Family

- Supports for children and families, tamariki and whanau
- Social and economic policies concerning children and families
- Child and family wellbeing
- Informing the development of social workers and other social services workers
- The application of Te Tiriti for the wellbeing of tamariki and whanau, children and families

Policy Groups meet at least four times per year. Two of these meetings are physical meetings and the remainder are through video and/or telephone conferences. They are voluntary positions. All costs for Policy Group members are covered by NZCCSS.

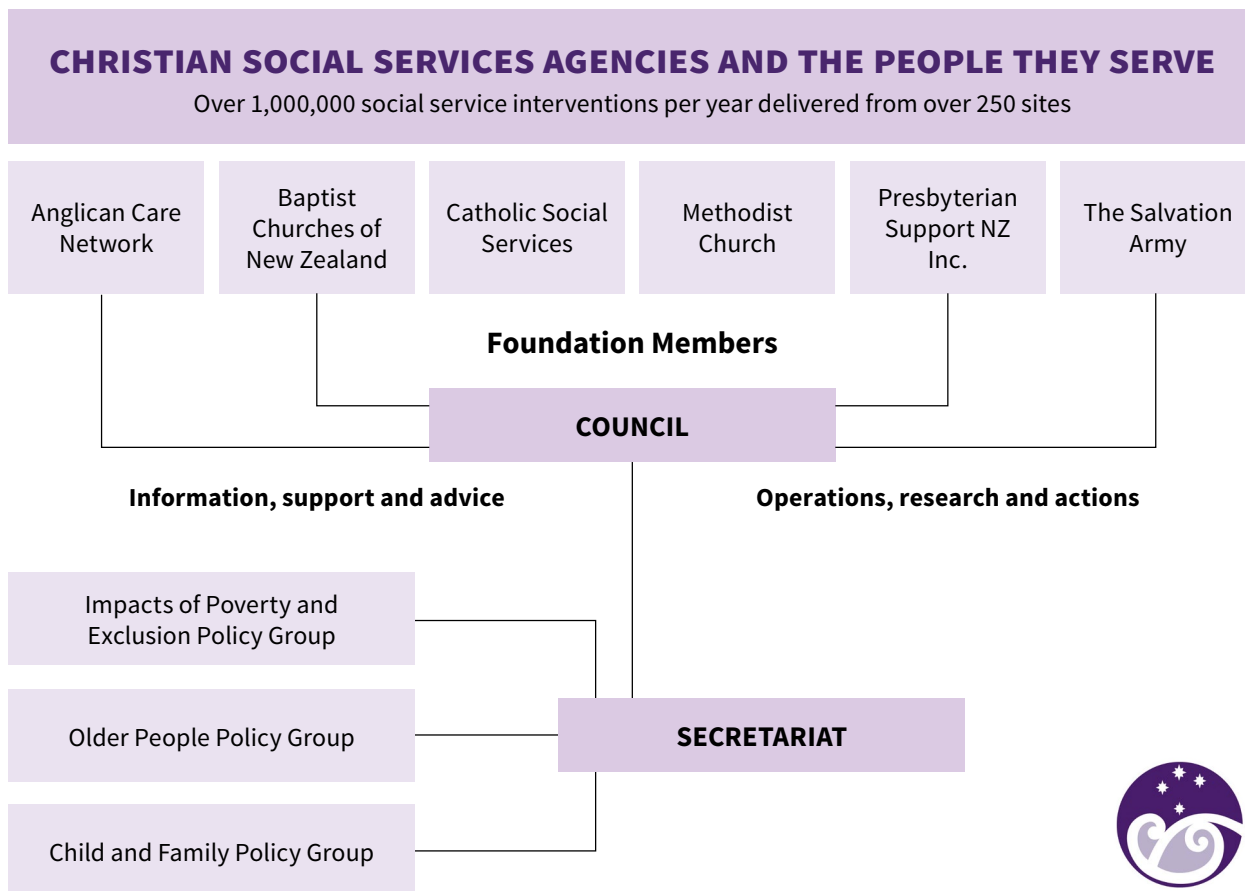
If you are interested in finding out more about the Policy Groups and the work of Policy Group members please email the NZCCSS Secretariat Administrator, Melissa Neale, melissa@nzccss.org.nz for an information pack and an Expression of Interest guide.

Impacts of Poverty and Exclusion

- Income and wealth inequality
- Housing
- Benefit reform
- Community development
- The application of Te Tiriti for the wellbeing of those impacted by poverty and exclusion

Older People

- Community supports for older people
- Older people's housing
- Residential care for older people



Principles & Theological Reflection for Housing Regeneration Projects

The NZCCSS Impacts of Poverty and Exclusion Policy Group has developed a housing framework out of members' observations that the focus of housing development and regeneration projects has primarily been on bricks and mortar and not, as it should be, on people and communities.

Housing is for people and therefore people must be kept at the heart of every housing regeneration project. A holistic approach is required for housing regeneration projects which incorporates social, economic and environmental regeneration as well as the physical regeneration.

Respect for human dignity

He aha te mea nui o te ao

What is the most important thing in the world?

He tangata, he tangata, he tangata

It is the people, it is the people, it is the people

Maori proverb

We believe that all people are all made in God's image and therefore everyone has an inherent value and dignity – te tapu o te tangata. Jesus said, "I came that they have life, and

have it abundantly."¹

"The fundamental human rights include food and shelter, work, education and healthcare. These protect human life and dignity, and therefore must have priority in any social, political or economic system."²

The fundamental human right to adequate housing is recognised in many international treaties to which New Zealand is a signatory. The right to adequate housing consists of seven standards: security of tenure, availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure; affordability; accessibility; location; and cultural adequacy. Housing regeneration projects need to guarantee these seven standards are met.

A focus on human rights provides a strategy to ensure that people are kept at the centre of housing projects but shifting the focus to the wellbeing and dignity of the person. Therefore the first test for any project or policy should be whether it enhances or threatens human dignity.

Housing which has the wellbeing and dignity of the person at its

1 John 10:10 New Revised Standard Version
2 1993 Making Choices – Church Leaders' Statement of Intent 1993

centre connects the integrity of the person to their fundamental human right to housing.

Solidarity – home as community – whānuangatanga

The sense of belonging to a community, to be part of something larger than oneself, to feel appreciated and valued, and to share aspects of one's life with others is fundamental to human needs. Maslow described the psychological need for love and belonging and the need for interpersonal relationship which motivates behaviour. People have a fundamental need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance.

We are all part of a community and we recognise others as our brothers and sisters with mutual responsibilities to receive and offer support. This is like the Māori concept of whānuangatanga which reaches beyond whakapapa relationships to people who are not kin but tied by shared experiences are similar to kin. This community is the network of relationships where a person belongs and feels most at home.

Housing developments are often treated as commodities with the

focus on bricks and mortar without consideration given to the community which is and will be living in them. This narrow focus misses the interdependence of people living in neighbourhoods each with their own distinct character, story and nature. This interdependence is the right and duty of all individuals to share in the shaping of the community and society in which they live.³ This interdependence and relationship with others is at the core of community and humanity. This concept is fundamental to Christian beliefs – "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."⁴ It is in relationships with others that people realise their rights and responsibilities.⁵ Human values are best learnt when we live in close and loving relationships with others.⁶

All housing regeneration projects need to ensure communities retain their unique dignity, values, and mana.

3 Church Leaders' Statement 1993, #22

4 John 13:34, New Revised Standard Version

5 1993 Making Choices – Church Leaders' Statement of Intent 1993

6 Ibid

"My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."
(Isaiah 32:18)

Participation – kotahitanga

Every community has the right to determine and pursue their own goals. Every individual has a role to play in their community and bring their own unique skills and talents. When each individual works towards achieving their community's common goal that goal is more likely to be achieved. These actions create unity and the very fabric of society. It breaks down social isolation by ensuring that everyone is included and has a role to play. Individuals are working towards the common good of their community and a just society. These actions are an application of the second great commandment "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."⁷

Regeneration projects are in places which have existing communities. These communities need to be given the opportunity to determine how their new community will look and feel, what facilities they need in their newly generated community. This community consultation and active engagement with the existing community will ensure the success and vitality of the regeneration

7 Mark 12:31, New Revised Standard Version

DRAFT PRINCIPLES & THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION FOR HOUSING REGENERATION PROJECTS *continued*

project. If communities are able to help shape the local public services they receive the newly created community is more likely to be sustainable and have a higher sense of well-being and belonging.

The role of the community in urban regeneration projects is important because the community will be more willing to support the changes in their neighbourhood if they can participate in the regeneration project from the beginning. This not only provides communities with transparency of decision making but gives them the opportunity to play an active part in it. We recommend collaborative community planning for all regeneration projects.

Place matters – kaitiakitanga

Housing is frequently referred to in terms of supply and demand or an asset which will provide a return on investment. This view fails to consider the fundamental link of housing to place – the community and environment where houses are located. Houses are where people make their home, where roots are put down and memories are made – all of which make a home so much more than a mere house.

Place often comes with historic meaning, where significant things have happened which are remembered and provide links across the

generations. Where we live affects who we are, what we do and goes to the core of our identity. Further recognition of this is the definition of refugees as displaced persons – people who have been forced to leave their home due to safety concerns.

It is essential that all residents who currently live in communities that are undergoing regeneration are able to stay in their community.

Individuals are often strongly connected to the land and the community in which they live. Kaitiakitanga is the deep connection between humans and the natural world and the responsibility of managing the environment. The guardianship and protection of the land and the communities that live on the land is essential. Safeguarding the natural resources for future generations is a shared responsibility for communities and government.

All communities are different and have their own characteristics. This reflects the different strengths and needs of each particular community. Therefore different solutions will be needed to meet the needs of different locations.

Regeneration projects need to ensure that the natural resources and characteristics of each community are safeguarded, preserved and protected.

Empowering communities – keeping the heart of the community beating – mana motuhake

All regeneration projects aim to keep the heart of the community beating. This means that the existing community needs to be well informed and assured of their place in the newly generated community. They need to be confident that if they are displaced they will return. The community also needs to be given opportunities to develop their own ideas for the use and development of green space and community spaces. Community organisations can play a vital role in stimulating, facilitating, community involvement in urban regeneration projects. We recommend intentional intensive cooperation between a community organisation and the local council/ HUD. It is essential that all parts of the community are represented and consulted in this process to ensure everyone's voice is heard. If this is not done there is a risk that a small non-representative group of local residents will take control of the decision-making process and therefore questions could be asked about the lack of democracy. While they may operate on behalf of the whole community, they may just try to achieve their own goals.

Face-to-face meetings with the

community and intentional listening to their needs must come before the regeneration building process starts. By building these relationships, the interests and passions of the community can be identified and relational power can be built – this is the ability of individuals to act with others to change their neighbourhoods for the better. By building relationships, communities are better able to face issues of disagreement and participate in a positive way to bring about a deeper and more lasting resolution.

By ensuring decision making is happening at the most appropriate level, so that those that are affected can contribute, will empower communities and increase their sense of belonging. Mana whaka-haere is the rights and responsibilities to ensure that the wellbeing of communities is maintained. This is based on the concept that if people care for the land, the land will continue to sustain the people. This governance and management must be shared between government and communities.

Home ownership affordability

The right to live in security, peace and dignity is enshrined in our Human Rights Act and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Safe, affordable, secure

housing is essential to wellbeing, and the inability to obtain affordable housing is a major barrier to an adequate standard of living. The quality of housing directly affects people's health, especially that of children and older people. The lack of secure adequate housing has negative impacts on children's achievements and development.

There are not enough new houses being built to meet the demand and the increasing costs of purchasing a house puts affordable housing out of the reach for many New Zealanders. Our home ownership rate has fallen to a new low.¹

Ensuring that everyone has access to affordable housing is perhaps the most important means to lifting New Zealanders out of poverty and boosting the nation's collective health and prosperity.²

We recommend the inclusion of affordable housing in all housing regeneration projects and robust financial tools like rent to buy and shared equity ownership are made available to enable low income households to move into home ownership.

¹ Home & Housed – A vision for social housing in New Zealand, Housing Shareholders Advisory Group, 2010, p27

² Church Leaders' Statement on Housing May 2017, p1

HAVE YOUR SAY!

ComVoices State of the Sector Survey 2020



ComVoices

Advancing the community sector

Calling all community organisations!

Have your say about how your organisation is faring in the ComVoices State of the Sector Survey 2020.

The link to the survey is:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ComVoices2020>

The Survey is open until 5pm, 31 March 2020.

Please share the survey with other organisations in your networks.

The Kore Hiakai Zero Hunger Collective

Just over two years ago, several of our large social service agencies started a conversation about the increasing levels of food poverty in Aotearoa New Zealand. We were aware that while we were becoming better and more innovative with our strategies to attend to the immediate symptoms of chronic long-term food poverty, food poverty itself wasn't decreasing. In early 2019 those organisations held a series of engagement hui, initially inviting people from the social service and community development space, government, the health space and more. From these hui came three threads of actions, and a cohort of people from a variety of sectors passionate to contribute to lasting change. And so the Kore Hiakai Zero Hunger Collective has come into being.

Our vision is to have a Food Secure Aotearoa New Zealand.

Our goal is to create a Food Secure Aotearoa New Zealand through sustainable, structural, mana-enhancing solutions which ensure all New Zealanders have access to affordable, nutritious, culturally appropriate food.

We have identified three key approaches to creating that lasting change:

1. Structural change, through;
 - a. Establishing a biennial measurement tool to identifying the level of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand
 - b. Creating a state measurement tool measuring the rate of food distribution by social service and community food providers
 - c. Increasing public awareness and empathy for those experience long term food poverty
 - d. Building a diverse community of interest committed to working towards a food secure Aotearoa New Zealand
2. Mana enhancing practice
 - a. Establishing a tested understanding of mana enhancing practice of food distribution to those experiencing food poverty, and continuing to test and modify it
 - b. To champion models of exemplars good practice of food distribution
 - c. To give voice to lived experience of food poverty
3. Food rescue and redistribution
 - a. To contribute to the development a national strategy on food waste, rescue and redistribution

In late 2019 the collective engaged in a partnership project with MSD with a focus on how we might be able to reduce the number of people experiencing food poverty and in particular needing to seek hardship grants. This has resourced Kore Hiakai to begin some of the change work we have dreamed about. In mid-November 2019, Tric Malcolm was appointed the new Pou Ārahi / Executive Office for Kore Hiakai Zero Hunger Collective alongside Sonya Cameron, a senior analyst from MSD.

Please check out what is happening in this space through our Website www.zerohunger.org.nz or send us an email to receive ongoing updates and ways to be enjoyed: korehiakai@nzccss.org.nz

Tric Malcolm

Pou Ārahi Executive Officer
The Kore Hiakai Zero Hunger Collective



Talking Cents

March 2020

Talking Cents is an ecumenical group charged by the Auckland Anglican Diocesan Council to promote an alternative to current economic and political thought, and to encourage debate within the church. Ministry units are encouraged to distribute these articles. This article is contributed by Mary Betz, Catholic spiritual director and writer on ecology, justice, scripture and spirituality.

New Zealand: country of wellbeing or inequality?

In recent months, a number of reports and articles have once again highlighted inequality. This article will explore the manifestations of economic inequality in our country; why inequality matters; inequality's multiple, complex and interwoven causes; and how New Zealand is and could be addressing inequality.

We only need look around us to see the great disparity in the way New Zealanders live. Some of us have good jobs, homes, cars, health care and education; take regular overseas trips and think nothing of tickets to symphony, theatre, professional sports games or eating out frequently. Others of us are homeless; living in overcrowded or mouldy homes; never able to afford a dentist and rarely a doctor; work many hours at minimum wage jobs or struggle on benefit rates that have never recovered since the cuts of 1991; cannot afford enough meals for their children, decent shoes, money required by schools for trips or electronic devices, or even the time to

spend caring for their children.

A level of inequality is acceptable in most democracies. We value the different ways in which people choose to live and work and spend their time and money. But higher levels of inequality bring decreases in health, happiness and social connectedness¹ – more particularly, increases in imprisonment rates, mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, child poverty, and punitive attitudes toward those in difficulty. That is why dealing with inequality is targeted in the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals,² along with its many contributors – poverty, hunger, gender inequality, and poor access to health, education, clean water, sanitation and decent work.

Paul Barber's December 2019 report, *Progress Towards Equality*, highlights inequalities in New

Zealand.³ These include the Māori imprisonment rate, which he traces to social and economic policies that marginalise Māori. The rate is more than 700 per 100,000, compared to the overall imprisonment rate of 234 per 100,000. Educational and employment disparities for Māori include a 'stand-down from school' rate which is twice that for non-Māori, earnings which are \$10,000 lower than the rest of New Zealand, and an unemployment rate that is 2.5 times higher. He also cites home ownership, and says that for Pasifika, less than one in five over the age of 15 live in a house they own.

Such disparities were also criticised by an NGO report in July 2019 on New Zealand's progress towards meeting the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.⁴ Author Bryan Perry noted that progress in reducing inequality in New Zealand is 'not on track to meet the 2030 targets. Significant disparities remain

in outcomes for Māori and Pacific people and for those living with disabilities.' Perry acknowledged recent policy changes that would bring improvement, such as Māori and Pasifika provisions in the 2019 Wellbeing Budget.

In November 2019, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) reported on incomes and inequality,⁵ and Max Rashbrooke highlighted some of MSD's findings.⁶ New Zealand had the largest increase in income inequality in the world between the mid-1980s and the late 1990s, an increase which set the stage for where we are today. In the early 1980s, someone in the richest tenth of the population earned (after tax) 5–6 times as much as someone in the poorest tenth. The ratio is now

over 9 times. While incomes in the poorest tenth have increased roughly 30 percent, the incomes of those in the richest tenth have doubled. Internationally, 'the latest rankings have put New Zealand at 22nd out of 34 OECD countries' in terms of most inequality, above the OECD average, and 'on the edge of the poorest-performing one-third of rich countries.'

Rashbrooke notes that material hardship here has fallen. After the global financial crisis (2008ff) the percentage of children without six or more of 17 basic items was up to 25 percent, but by 2018 this had reduced to 13 percent. Still, our child poverty rate is among the worst half in the developed world, at 4–5 times the rate of the best global performer, Denmark.

In February 2020, Statistics NZ published recent findings appearing to show a very slight decrease in child poverty over the past year by two of three measures of child poverty, with the disappointing result due to continued rising housing costs. The income-basis figures confirmed that one in five Māori/Pasifika

1 Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett. *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger* (Bloomsbury Press, New York, 2009).

2 <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

3 Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit.

4 https://www.sdg.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Final_PeopleReport_2019-Dec-2019_for-web.pdf

5 Bryan Perry. *Household Incomes in New Zealand: trends in indicators of inequality and hardship 1982 to 2018*. <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/monitoring/household-incomes/household-incomes-1982-to-2018.html>

6 <http://www.goodsociety.nz/inequality-and-poverty-a-summary-of-the-2019-household-incomes-in-new-zealand-report/> December 2019.

TALKING CENTS continued

children live in poverty, compared with one in nine European children.¹

According to Barber, some of these inequality markers may improve as the minimum wage continues to rise – to \$20 per hour by April 2021. The current minimum wage of \$17.70 is a real increase of 57 percent since 2000, and the increases puts more income in the hands of the poorest working people.

The struggle of beneficiaries in the poorest tenth of our population to meet their basic needs remains an indictment on our country. Beginning in April 2020, welfare rates will be indexed to wage increases, which was a recommendation of the May 2019 WEAG report,² and will increase main weekly benefits \$26–\$46 per week by 2023, this year \$10–\$17 above the rates which are currently aligned with the Cost-Price Index. The changes will increase incomes of the poorest in our country – 310,000 working age

people and their families.³ Some other recommendations of the WEAG report are also being implemented, including a slight increase in abatement thresholds (\$115 in income can be earned before it affects a benefit instead of \$100).

One important tool in reducing inequality is the tax system. Paul Barber notes the Government-appointed Tax Working Group (TWG)'s February 2019 observation that New Zealand's tax system has been weakened as a redistributive tool over the past 30 years. The TWG suggested possible forms of capital gains taxes, inheritance or gift taxes, or a wealth tax, all of which are commonly used internationally and would help reduce wealth inequality. It also suggested using some of this revenue to reduce income tax on lower income earners. The Government ruled out capital gains taxes, and no progress has been made on lower tax thresholds for those who earn the least.⁴

Among Barber's overall recommendations for decreasing inequality are specifically targeting inequality in government policy; lifting core benefit rates higher than the government has – up 12–47

percent; improving the way subsidies for housing are calculated; replacing approaches to how housing and services are provided with ones designed by Māori and Pasifika, including a Te Ao Māori approach to wellbeing across government policy; and implementing a more progressive income tax structure as well as a wealth tax.

The Government's five main 2020 May budget priorities have been identified as follows: transitioning to a sustainable economy; preparing for future work through technology and innovation; lifting Māori and Pasifika incomes, skills and opportunities; improving child wellbeing and improving physical and mental health.⁵ Let us hope – and ensure – that inequality and all its contributors will be addressed in substantial ways towards wellbeing for all.

Looking after our older people

Covid-19 coronavirus brings new challenges to our faith-based older people services, particularly rest home facilities. NZCCSS members are reporting they are strictly following the Ministry of Health pandemic safety protocols. Our services understand the importance of family visits to the wellbeing of residents, and are putting in place restrictions and hygiene practices to enable visits to continue. Many of our services are also continuing with day activities. Bonnie Robertson, Convenor of the NZCCSS Older peoples Policy Group and CEO of HBH Senior Living Care and Village, said, "NZCCSS social services providers are focused on providing values-based leadership within their communities. This leadership will strive to:

- Protect the community
- Support and protect client families, whanau and their tamariki



and mokopuna, residents of residential services and those experiencing hardship in the community

- Support and protect staff and their families and whanau
- Maintain the ability of the service organisation to deliver services to their communities over the long-term."

1 Thomas Manch. Child poverty: Rising housing costs punish children as more kids in 'material hardship'. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/119777431/child-poverty-numbers-show-marginal-change-but-more-children-in-material-hardship>

2 MSD, Welfare Expert Advisory Group. <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/research/weag/index.html>

3 https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12311309

4 See note 3, previous page.

5 <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/priorities-2020-wellbeing-budget-outlined>

It's time for benefit increases to save those who are drowning, not help them tread water

Trevor McGlinchey

(This article was published 4th of March before the Government's Economic Support Package)

It should be a ridiculously simple puzzle to solve. Like a jigsaw with only two pieces. On one side you have the facts: benefits are 22% lower in real terms than the sub-poverty levels Ruth Richardson set them at; the Salvation Army have calculated that a 30% increase is needed to stop children going hungry; the Government's own Welfare Expert Advisory Group (WEAG), of which I was a member, recommended between 12% and 47% increases across the range of different benefits.

It should be a ridiculously simple puzzle to solve. Like a jigsaw with only two pieces.

On the other side of the equation you have Jacinda Ardern – a Prime Minister who has personally taken up the portfolio of Child Poverty Reduction – and Grant Robertson – a Finance Minister who has repeatedly said child poverty is a top issue. Add to that an economy that is shaping up to need serious fiscal stimulus that cannot be provided

by monetary policy, a homelessness problem that is acknowledged by New Zealanders of every political stripe, and a massive surplus, and it should all add up to a substantial hike in benefits, right?

The Government can do better than that. It holds billions of dollars of surplus in its hands.

So far it hasn't. Instead we've seen a meek commitment to raise benefits in line with wages. At best, it's a commitment to make sure people on benefits don't get any worse off. But after 30 years of benefits sinking below costs that's akin to "helping" a drowning man by not throwing him any more stones.

The Government can do better than that. It holds billions of dollars of surplus in its hands. Just a small portion of that would be a life preserver. And not just for the families who are in dire need but also for the small businesses they buy from and the communities they live in.

Ask any social services advocate

about their experiences of trying to get people their benefits, and they'll tell you that the issue used to be actually getting your benefit. In the past they would spend their time walking people through WINZ's deliberately complicated process to get them what they were entitled to, and from there they could eek out some kind of existence. Now, on the whole, people are getting their entitlements more easily, but what they get isn't enough to pay the rent, the electricity, and the groceries.

Getting rid of barriers designed to keep people from accessing support is a good thing.

Getting rid of barriers designed to keep people from accessing support is a good thing, and one that signals a positive change in political culture in itself. This is clearly a Government that wants to break from a punitive and politicised approach to people on benefits and their families. That shows a good heart.

But "do no more harm" is not

Our children must have hope, hope for a better future and fulfilling life.

enough when we have a generation of children whose futures are being written by grinding hardship and by the poor health, poor learning, and wasted opportunities it brings with it. Our children must have hope, hope for a better future and fulfilling life, rather than being trapped in poverty and despair.

People who are in this kind of hardship are seldomly in a position to lift themselves out of it because their day to day struggle is all consuming. And after thirty years of eroding benefits there is no fat to cut. As financial mentor Adrienne Gallie has said, "When people on benefits ring up it's not because they have wasted their money, it's because they don't have enough to begin with."

This Government can fix this. They can lift people out of this hardship directly and easily by

substantially raising benefits in line with their own experts' advice.

And in doing so they can make sure that the tens of thousands of children who are too hungry to learn properly, and are too cold to stay well, can have hope, can have the opportunity to do well for themselves and for our future.

This Government can fix this. They can lift people out of this hardship directly and easily.

Prime Minister Ardern and Minister Robertson have the chance to make an historical decision that would better the lives of an entire generation of New Zealanders. Let's hope it's a decision they take.

People's Voices

David Harding, Presbyter, Trinity Union Church Newtown

9am to 1pm, Wednesday 4 March
Te Rauparaha Arena, Porirua



On Wednesday 4th March, Wesley Community Action (WCA) held The People's Voices forum which was a unique opportunity to hear from people whose voices are often not heard in policy making.

A selection of whānau who experience a range of hardships talked honestly and openly about their experiences with the systems meant to help them. They shared their stories and ideas for change – on their own terms.

Wesley Community Action, Wellington's Methodist Mission invited and hosted the event which was attended by about 130 people, including policy makers, national leaders, a couple of Judges, decision makers from various government departments as well as philanthropic funders. Among those who attended was David Harding, Presbyter at Trinity Union Newtown. David described this as an extraordinary event. The following are his words:

We were there to listen to presentations from some of WCA's clients who gave permission to record, even film. We sat in groups of 10 at tables and listened to people not

only telling the impact on their lives and on those of their families of deprivation, always of abuse, always of drugs. By invitation they also told us governance folk the story of their interactions with "the authorities". Horrific. Always intergenerational. Each of the clients who spoke were from sizeable families – therefore so many people other had been affected by their trainwreck. But all of those clients were able to talk now how they are working intergenerationally to make a difference. For most of those who spoke of change, Wesley Community Action had helped them go for it.

At my table there were two folk from the Wellbeing Unit in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, two from a wellbeing policy unit in the NZ Police, two from Ministry of Social Welfare policy unit, two folk from the NZ Social Workers Registration Board, and a barrister who is on the WCA board and happens to be a Methodist lay preacher (he mostly provides legal aid in the criminal courts). During the morning we had a number of round table discussions.

At the start, the Children's Commissioner Judge Andrew Beecroft reminded us of the needs of children, then Supreme Court Justice Joe Williams told of us about consequences. Then the clients spoke – and we heard not a bunch of numbers or educated theory, but of the shattered lives of individuals.

Apart from some of the horrible personal stories, among the sayings I recorded

- "You don't know what you don't know until you know it"
- "While the gift of chiefs is to be able to speak, the gift of the gods is to be able to listen"
- "Trauma is a virus that hasn't been cured"
- "Belonging is up there with food, procreation and shelter yet it was the very thing that the colonisers set out to crush out of Māori when they took over their society"
- "Sibling unity – the keeping of brothers and sisters together when placing children in care – has only recently been enshrined in law, and then only after Minister Tolley asked a group of children what they most wanted."

I also heard:

- "After being molested, abused and beaten from when I was 18 months until I was 12, I was embarrassed, isolated, humiliated, and defeated. I didn't know how to reach out, how to bring it up. Only how to cower. Today, I have a website on the internet with 140,000 followers. I livestream from my day, from my work with others, for up to 5 hours, every day."
- "I was concerned for my mokopuna (grandchildren) because their parents were using methamphetamine. When I sought help to take them into my own home and bring them up myself, the authorities said I was an unsuitable person for government-assisted fostering, unsuitable because my husband belonged to a gang. We did it anyway ... 9 of them."
- "My grandson said, 'Nan, we have to do something.' I began my Hikoī to Porirua. I knocked on the doors of homes, of schools or institutions. So many of those doors were firmly shut. Today, in various parts of the North Island there are 13 weekly 2-hour events/

places where people can just walk in and talk about/ask questions the impact of the drugs"

- "Our P-Pull movement now has 8,000 followers on our closed Facebook *Meths Page*"
- And to the Government Departments: "You walk into our lives: you spray, and walk away." "I chose to sleep with my children in a car, rather than seek help from the authorities, for fear that they would take my children away."

It was a privilege to be with those clients. And a tragedy.

A privilege to be a Methodist seeing what this Methodist mission is doing and with whom. I never expected myself to talk with the movers and shakers in the Prime Minister's Department, or with those who approve social workers – or to talk with them about what I and what Trinity Union are doing, and how we see things. I watched them listen.

If you have ears then hear.

Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill

The Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill (RTA Bill) is part of a wider programme of work to improve renting.

The content of RTA Bill has been shaped by feedback from an extensive public consultation process in 2018 (Reform of the Residential Tenancies Act 1986) during which NZCCSS made a [detailed submission](#).

NZCCSS is currently consulting on the Bill. Overall, NZCCSS is supportive but is seeking clarification on the extent to which Bill will impact on boarding tenancies, and on the need to introduce measures to require that rent increases in the private market are based on the Consumer Price Index.

Submissions close on 25 March 2020.

Urban Development Bill



NZCCSS has submitted on the [Urban Development Bill](#). The Bill follows on from the Kāinga Ora–Homes and Communities Bill, which disestablished Housing New Zealand and set up a Crown entity in the same name, and aims to provide Kāinga Ora with powers to improve the social and economic performance of New Zealand's urban areas through complex development projects, including specified development projects.

NZCCSS applied the Principles and Theological Reflections on Housing Framework (developed to guide thinking on housing development and regeneration projects) to the Bill.

NZCCSS submission supports the overall intention of this Bill, including the establishment of specified development projects (SDPs), but only in so far as the Bill:

- mandates the building of affordable mixed housing for low income people – state homes, social housing delivered by community organisations, affordable homes for ownership – in all SDPs.

- ensures all affected communities have an opportunity to engage early and have input throughout the development process.

- requires Kāinga Ora to actively support vulnerable people and communities to engage in the SDP process. It is critical that urban development means primarily housing development for low-income people, families and communities and not high or medium income homes or commercial facilities that will not address New Zealand's longstanding housing crisis at the low-income level.

- requires that each development has a blessing of the land before the development begins.

NZCCSS is an associate member of Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA) and NZCCSS broadly supports the views expressed in [CHA's submission](#) on the Urban Development Bill.

Read NZCCSS' submission [here](#).

Social Worker Registration Board

The [Social Worker Registration Board \(SWRB\)](#) is currently developing a range of policies to support the implementation of the [Social Worker Legislation Registration Act 2019](#). These include:

- developing a Scope of Practice for social work,
- making changes to the experience pathway S13 registration,
- developing policies for the new mandatory environment, and
- reviewing frameworks for competence and education.

As part of this process, SWRB has been on a road show across the country to hear your views.

The first consultation document released is the Scope of Practice for Social Work consultation document.

A Scope of Practice is a high-level

description of social work practice, and it supports a shared identity for social workers across different work settings (fields of practice), roles and employment titles, and establishes a common understanding of social work in Aotearoa New Zealand.









































If you haven't already done so, feedback can provide feedback in a number of ways:

- via email: consultation@swrb.govt.nz
- via survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DNK7WH2>

Once the initial consultation has been completed a revised discussion document will be released for further consultation.

Check out the SWRB website and keep up to date.

SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19, FLU AND COLD

	 DRY COUGH	 FEVER	 RUNNY NOSE	 SORE THROAT	 BREATH-LESSNESS	 HEADACHE	 BODY ACHES	 SNEEZE	 FATIGUE	 DIARRHOEA
COVID-19										
FLU										
COLD										

 FREQUENTLY
  SOMETIMES
  LITTLE
  RARE
  NOT

@SIOUXSIEW @XTOTL thespinoff.co.nz

SOURCE: WHO, CDC

CC-BY-SA

FOR THE LATEST INFO PLEASE SEE who.int or health.govt.nz

18 MARCH 2020

Kete Kupu Word Basket

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