

E rau rangatira mā, tēnā koutou katoa

With the approach of Christmas I also approach the end of my time with the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services. What a fulfilling role this has been with many challenges as we the Council, the Secretariat and you, the NZCCSS members, have striven together to achieve the NZCCSS mission: 'to work for a just and compassionate society in Aotearoa New Zealand'.

Since I began this role on 2 April 2007, I have taken great heart from the commitment and strength of the Christian social services network that forms the strength of NZCCSS. The willingness of you all to respond

to the needs of your communities, to be innovative leaders in the development of new approaches, to building community, to recognising the mana inherent in all those you serve, has been both inspiring and humbling. Ngā mihi aroha ki a koutou katoa.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of this role has been when I have escaped from the Wellington 'halls of power' and visited your organisations, met with your staff and your clients. Through this I have gained a much better knowledge of the work you do and the difference this makes to so many whānau and families. The many personal friendships we have built over these years is a real taonga that will transcend my moving to a new role and I look forward to seeing you in the future.

I have been privileged to have worked with many denominational representatives on the Council. Their deep experience in community and in social service, their strategic forethought and ability to provide guidance grounded in lived



Trevor and Her Excellency The Rt Hon Dame Patsy Reddy

experience, has supported me in working to effect structural change. The commitment of your representatives on Council has been the glue that has meant NZCCSS is now in its 51st year of operation as a structural change agent and as a promoter of the wellbeing for poor and vulnerable New Zealanders.

During my almost 14 years of working here I have been blessed to have many capable staff members, people with 'social justice hearts'. To these social justice warriors who have done the real work of planning, preparation, writing, analysing, submitting and activating – kia ora

ki tēnā, ki tēnā o koutou – my deepest thanks to each and every one of you.

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services is a special organisation, it is well known in government and government agency circles. Council's work is held in high regard and its connection, through you, the NZCCSS members, with the flax roots of our communities and with what's really happening on the ground is highly valued. If I have one ask of you all as I leave my role as Executive Officer it is to really embrace NZCCSS. Reach out and become even more actively involved with the work of Council by engaging with your denominational representatives, contacting the Secretariat, joining the NZCCSS policy groups and by being real advocates for social and structural change.

Nō reira e hoa mā, rangatira mā, tēnei tāku mihi hōhonu kia koutou katoa.

Noho ora mai koutou i raro i ngā manaakitanga o te Atua.

Trevor McGlinchey



E ngā kaihāpai i ō tātou kaumātua, i ō tatou whānau rawakore huri noa i ngā motu, nei rā te mihi nui ki a koutou mā i te wā Kirihimete kei te haere. Mā te Atua koutou e tiaki.

To those who support our older people, our families in need, Christmas greetings to you all. May God protect and bless you.

Warmest Christmas wishes from us all at the NZCCSS Secretariat.

Our Office will be closed from 18 December 2020 to 11 January 2021.

Introducing New President	2
Introducing New Vice President	2
Introducing NZCCSS to Incoming Ministers	3
Depression-era Levels of Homelessness Emerging	4
Constant Growth in Housing Demand in the South	5
Mana Whānau	7
Understanding the Needs of Young Pacific Family Carers	7
Connecting Faith	8
Abuse in care	8
Sick Leave Legislation	9
Voluntary and Community Sector Snapshot	9

Introducing the NZCCSS New President

The Council's November meeting marked the retirement of President Ian Hutson and the election of Bonnie Robinson to the role for the next three years. As you'll read, Bonnie comes to the position after a long association with NZCCSS. Currently, Bonnie is Chief Executive of HBH Senior Living, a Baptist organisation caring for vulnerable older people, based in East Auckland. She is one of the Presbyterian denominational representatives on the Council.

Social justice is a thread woven long throughout Bonnie's career. She graduated university with a heart to make the world a better place and the question of what the mechanism was that would allow her to achieve that. Initially, the answer was Presbyterian minister. "I was a parish minister for a short time. Though it was a role that I enjoyed, I was soon keen to invest myself in something that might be able to make change on a larger scale."

Edging toward that larger scale, Bonnie began working in the national office of an NGO serving the interests of senior New Zealanders. "As with all small offices, I ended up doing everything, which is how I discovered an affinity for policy and submission work." It was an affinity that opened the door to her first encounter with NZCCSS, as Executive Officer, in 1995.

"I would have to say that the role has been a highlight in my career.

It was wonderful work – the things that we worked on, the way we worked ecumenically, the links with Government, and the advocacy on what we were seeing through our services. It was a real privilege."

Bonnie especially appreciated that the work of Council was based in the real stories of the lives of real people. "Politicians and government officials may not agree with our stance, our policies or our approach, but they can't deny the stories that our member organisations see every day. The Council has the privilege of seeing how member organisations are meeting the needs of New Zealanders and, through the power of these stories, we can influence wider change."

With the birth of her second child, Bonnie left the Council, later working with various non-profit social service organisations, both church and non-church. "I also had a brief stint in government, which was



Bonnie Robinson

interesting but proved to me that my heart was in the community and non-profit sector."

Before her current role with HBH Senior Living, Bonnie was General Manager for Alzheimers Auckland. She says these roles, in particular, gave her a renewed appreciation for the work of NZCCSS.

"As a manager of a service providing organisation, you usually have neither the resources nor the time to access and read in any depth the latest policies and information. And that's a strong point of the Council, that there is this resource that is on top of sector developments and

Continued p. 3

Introducing the New NZCCSS Vice President

For her 'day job', newly elected NZCCSS Vice President Renee Rewi holds the position of Manager – Catholic Family Support Service (CFSS), Hamilton Diocese. Operating in the Waikato and Tauranga, CFSS offers intensive family support services designed to empower families and individuals to regain control over their lives.

Most, if not all, of Renee's career has involved service, a wiring she says was nurtured early in her life. "It was my upbringing, really." Murupara born and bred, of Ngāti Manawa and Ngāti Whare descent, Renee is the youngest of four sisters raised in a Catholic family. As a teen, she boarded at St Joseph's Māori Girls' College in Napier. She credits both the college and the Catholic church as instilling in her a passion for service and serving. "Even today, I'm saddened by all the need that I see. Then, as now, I wanted to be part of working with the Māori community and to be giving back to our community. In many ways it's about belonging."

On leaving college, Renee took the brave step of moving to Wellington to take up her first job with the Catholic Commission for Justice, Peace and Development. "That was the beginning – and the foundation – of my career in the non-profit



R Rewi

sector." A good part of the 25 years that Renee has since invested in working in the sector, has involved working for her iwi, in Treaty, Māori and community issues. It was her work with her iwi that motivated her decision to take up law. "I attended Waikato University as a mature

Continued p. 3

INTRODUCING THE NZCCSS NEW PRESIDENT

Though our kaupapa remains the same, we need to continually check that the 'how' of what we do meets the needs of the times. That's an important part of moving forward.

emerging issues. It does the work those of use working at the front line often don't have capacity for."

A convener of the NZCCSS Older People policy group for many years, Bonnie is particularly keen to plug the benefits of being involved in policy groups. "You really do benefit from the collective experience and broadened perspectives that are brought to the table. It's invaluable."

In taking up the Council presidency, Bonnie's guiding tenet is: all leadership is shared. "Especially with NZCCS, where its strength is unity in diversity. There's cause to be proud in the fact that NZCCSS is one of the longest continuously operating ecumenical entities in the country. That's no mean feat with the long history of differences in theology, practices and perspectives. But together, we reflect the voice of the clients that our member services work with every day, and use that voice to motivate systemic change."

The first line challenge in front of Council right now, says Bonnie, is the appointment of a new Executive Officer. "The recruitment process is underway and our focus is on ensuring that we secure the right person for the role."

Ensuring Council remains relevant is also top of mind. "Though our kaupapa remains the same, we need to continually check that the 'how' of what we do meets the needs of the times. That's an important part of moving forward."

INTRODUCING THE NEW NZCCSS VICE PRESIDENT

student while raising my son." While she found the work and study juggle challenging, Renee duly graduated with a Master of Law and in 2010 was admitted as a barrister and solicitor. Her skills were put to good use. As a trustee and negotiator, Renee helped her iwi negotiate settlement of their respective Treaty claims as part of the Central North island negotiations.

Renee credits her iwi work as a great teacher. "It's work that taught me about policy and process. It taught me about Government and relationships. And it taught me that it is important to achieve for our people."

These are among the strengths that Renee believes she brings to the Council's governance. "I bring my kaupapa Māori perspective and also my skills with years of working with Māori at the grass roots. And, perhaps it's my legal background, but I do think that it's important to have policies and processes in place as the base for what we do."

Like President Bonnie Robinson, Renee has valued her time as a NZCCSS policy group member. "It's been such a great opportunity to be around the table with other denominations, to be united by a common purpose for people in New Zealand."

"For me, if we can help one person, if we can help one family come out of poverty because of our policy shaping, our advocacy, because of our lobbying, that's the reward. Here at CFSS we have a slogan 'Keeping hope alive.' That's the work of Council also."

If we can help one person, if we can help one family come out of poverty because of our policy shaping, our advocacy, because of our lobbying, that's the reward.

Introducing NZCCSS to Incoming Ministers

A new Government means a new Cabinet and new Ministers of the Crown. Along with government departments and agencies, and NGOs, NZCCSS prepared and distributed a Briefing to Incoming Ministers post-election. The purpose of these briefings is to introduce, or update, Ministers on the issues and perspectives of aspects within their portfolio.

In our NZCCSS briefing, we emphasised as a priority the need for structural change within Aotearoa New Zealand to reduce the inequality and poverty in this country. We reflected some of the key trends Council member organisations are currently seeing in the areas of poverty and exclusion, child and families, and older people. For us, a significant inclusion in the briefing was the invitation to work together with Ministers and agencies to bring about the positive change so needed for the wellbeing of New Zealanders.

The NZCCSS briefing was distributed to:

- Minister for Child Poverty Reduction, Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
- Minister of Finance, Hon Grant Robertson
- Minister for Children, Hon Kelvin Davis
- Minister of Housing, Hon Dr Megan Wood
- Minister for Social Development and Employment, Hon Carmel Sepuloni
- Minister for Whānau Ora, Hon Peeni Henare
- Minister for Seniors, Hon Ayesha Verrall
- Minister for Pacific Peoples, Hon Aupito William Sio
- Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities, Minister for Youth, Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan

Read the NZCCSS Briefing to Incoming Ministers [here](#).

Depression-era Levels of Homelessness Emerging

“There’s a need for a paradigm shift in New Zealanders’ thinking.”

According to Monte Cecilia Housing Trust Chief Executive Bernie Smith, too many New Zealanders think that every person who is homeless is in that place because of their own poor decisions and choices. “Ninety percent of our clients aren’t jobless or drug addicts or gamblers or chain smokers. They are frequently working two or more jobs in a genuine effort to try to make ends meet. The actual underlying cause of homelessness in this country is not that people are squandering their income it’s that New Zealand lacks the right structural support. And – to date – no Government has had the will to make a difference.”

The actual underlying cause of homelessness in this country is not that people are squandering their income it’s that New Zealand lacks the right structural support.

From his front row seat in South Auckland, Bernie sees the situation rapidly worsening. He says COVID has had a huge impact on not just low-income families but now also middle-income families. “With the loss of jobs, reduced hours and increased cost of living, we’re now seeing levels of homelessness and poverty not seen since the Depression

years. Even families that had been self-sustaining are now struggling to cope.”

The latest stats tell a sobering story. A year ago, Monte Cecilia averaged 10–15 calls per week and its wait list was 20–40 families, fully assessed. Now, the Trust is receiving 20–30 calls per day and has more than 400 on its wait list:

- 196 families awaiting a social worker assessment
- 127 families in the process of being assessed
- 140 families who have been fully assessed and waiting on a housing solution.

Currently the Trust also has 161 families in transitional housing (receiving a 12 week wrap around support service) who are waiting for a warm, dry, secure and sustainable house they can call home. A further 273 families are in Monte Cecilia’s community housing.

As Bernie points out, “we’re just one organisation.”

Along with the rising number of people calling on the Trust’s help, it’s seeing a change in who is seeking its help. Monte Cecilia’s client base used to be 80 percent Pasifika. Currently 50 percent are Pasifika and 31 percent Māori. The Māori cohort has grown as the Trust has extended



Windrush Close, the 31-unit transitional facility opened by Monte Cecilia in 2019.

its services in South Auckland to Manurewa, Takanini and Pukekohe. Having now opened a new office in Manurewa, Bernie expects the number of referrals will grow.

From working closely with the Pasifika community, one of the problems that Bernie points to as specific to Pasifika clients is an anomaly with Government policy.

“The Government allows an annual intake of Pacific peoples to fill jobs that they say New Zealanders won’t do. While these arrivals are eligible for all other forms of Work & Income support, they are not allowed on the housing register.”

In the Trust’s experience this sees many new arrivals living with relatives, often in over-crowded and sub-standard conditions. “Last winter, one of our workers found a family living in a lean-to of a Government-provided house. A child was lying on a bed on the floor. The floor was wet and there were power cables, leads and plugs all over the place. They simply didn’t understand the risks. But then,” adds Bernie, “it’s hard to pick up on such things when your focus is on just surviving.”

The Trust works hard to maintain hope in the face of a growing

Continued p. 4



Monte Cecilia CEO Bernie Smith

DEPRESSION ERA LEVELS OF HOMELESSNESS EMERGING

mountain of need. Bernie says he encourages his staff to treat every case as new and unique.

“We have one opportunity, up-front, with our very first meeting with a family to make a generation-

The Trust works hard to maintain hope in the face of a growing mountain of need.

al shift. If we take the tick-the-box, sausage factory approach – because we’re busy – we may overlook things and miss the opportunity to really change lives.

The challenge for the Trust to deliver that individualised approach is far from diminishing. “In July the housing wait list jumped by 2000 – in just one month to 20,000+. Some of this jump may be a result of Work & Income stopping housing assessments during the first COVID lockdown, with the increase occurring when the assessments re-started.”

The burgeoning numbers draws the clear picture of the relationship between housing and poverty. “They go hand in hand,” says Bernie. “While recently there’s been a lot

of talk about a living wage, what’s really needed is a living household income. He gives the example of family working two jobs. “With one worker on the minimum wage, they’re getting around \$500 in the hand. The rents here in Mangere are between \$500 and \$800 a week. That’s not touching the water rates, the power, putting food on the table.

“The Government will need to pull a few rabbits out of the hat in the next few years.”

One of those ‘rabbits’ according to Bernie is a New Zealand Housing Strategy with 15–25-year scope. “The strategy needs to bridge all political parties – they all need to make a commitment to housing in this country. Alongside a strategy, the Government needs to pull every lever, every mechanism, to get homes built.”

Monte Cecilia Housing Trust is a not-for-profit community housing provider delivering secure housing. The Trust owns and leases almost 470 dwellings across the Auckland region and provides wraparound services to clients ranging from financial & IT literacy to job seeking.

Constant Growth in Housing Demand in the South

For any remaining sceptics that New Zealand is in the midst of a housing crisis, Jill Hawkey, Executive Director of Christchurch Methodist Mission (CMM) will direct you to Blenheim.

“Blenheim’s really interesting. It’s a small place that shows how quickly things can turn.”

One of New Zealand’s elite wine growing areas, Blenheim has seen significant conversion of sheep farms to the more labour-intensive

activity of viticulture. As a result, the town and surrounds are a great place if you’re looking for employment. For a home? Not so much.

CMM, a provider of child and family services, social housing, group programmes and services for older people, has been working in Blenheim for two-and-a-half years. “Since then, we’ve had 800 individuals go through our services. We figured that out to be 3 percent of Blenheim’s population.”

In its main base, Christchurch, Jill says the demand for housing support is constant and growing. The latest MSD Housing Register (as at 30 September) posts a wait list of 1,423 for the city. It might be only a modest dent in the face of the growing list, however a housing development that CMM opened in December will see up to 50 people enjoying a healthy, safe and secure home – just in time for Christmas.

Continued p. 6



CMM Executive Officer Jill Hawkey speaking at the opening of the Guild Street development.

CONSTANT GROWTH IN HOUSING DEMAND IN THE SOUTH

The Guild Street project is a 15-house development involving the collaboration of CMM with land-owners Anglican Care and funders the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. Constructed on the site of the former Churchill Courts rest home, the development comprises 16 relocated houses previously available to people awaiting earthquake repairs. The complex is made up of two 2-bedroom, twelve 3-bedroom and two 4-bedroom homes.

As part of CMM's commitment to building communities not just houses, one of the properties is designated as a community house, to be a gathering point for residents. The development also has its own community development worker. "We've been fortunate to receive funding from the Wayne Francis Charitable Trust to employ a dedicated worker for the site, for five years."

Support workers are a key part of CMM's approach to housing services. CMM is the lead agency in the Christchurch and Blenheim for Housing First. As the name suggests, Housing First focuses firstly on getting people into homes; then, as the stresses caused by insecure accommodation lessen, the issues that contributed to the experience of homelessness can be addressed.

Which is where the support workers come in.

"Each person – or kaewa,¹ as we call them – is assigned a support worker. And they're not assigned for just 10 weeks, they stay with the person for the long haul. Even if a kaewa spends time in prison, for example, their support worker will be there for them when they come out."

In CMM's experience, generally those that have the most difficulty securing accommodation are inclined to be large whānau, with a higher representation of Māori and Pacific peoples, and people with any financial or criminal offence in their histories. "These are the ones that get squeezed out the bottom in a housing crisis. They're the ones that end up paying."

While CMM's focus is across the demographics, Jill has a particular concern for an emerging cohort. "We're seeing an increasing demand for assistance from older people reaching retirement age who don't own their own home."

CMM's own village for older people, Wesley Village in Papanui, has 49 rental units and a waiting list of 60. "With a turnover of three or four units a year, some of those on the

¹ Kaewa means wanderer or traveller.



16 relocatable houses were moved onto the Guild Street site.

list will never make it in. We could build another Wesley Village and fill it immediately."

Jill says that a significant issue in the city is the lack of one-bedroom properties. "Developers aren't building them. They're building mostly two-bedroom properties, which for older people are unaffordable."

While the continually growing needs could be a challenge to even the most hardened optimist, Jill says that what gives her hope is that there are a lot of people in the community who want to make a difference. "Often they just need to know how they can be of help."

She gives the example of the Guild

Street Development. "We asked the Methodist parishes if they would fill a laundry basket with supplies as a welcome gift to the residents. Their giving was so generous. We also had church folk volunteer to give the houses a clean before the residents moved in. This was on a Saturday at a busy time of year."

Jill says that it's just a matter of being creative to find ways to harness goodwill. She sums up the benefit of doing so with the whakataukī/proverb Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka oraai te iwi. With my food basket and your food basket, the people will thrive.



150,000 children continue to live in extreme poverty this Christmas.

Thousands of generous kiwis are helping put together food parcels and running community Christmas meals.

At the end of June, organisations within NZCCSS recorded distributing food at twice the level of Christmas 2019. These increases in need for food continue in ways we could never imagine as we come to Christmas this year

Food related poverty happens because of our high cost of living and insufficient income for low-income earners.

This Christmas, NZCCSS & the Kore Hiakai Zero Hunger Collective invite you during your celebrations to light a candle or hold a moment's silence to acknowledge the people experiencing food related poverty in Aotearoa, as well as our responsibility to be part of the change. We cannot watch in silence.

Be a beacon of hope and Shine the Light on food related poverty!

Mana Whānau – An Alternative to Foster Care

Mana Whānau is a six-month, tailored, in-home programme designed to keep tamariki who are on the edge of care, or have been removed by Oranga Tamariki, safely living within their whānau and communities. Critical to its success is that it is led by the whānau and that it weaves



Te Ao Māori with the latest international research findings.

Developed by Lifewise in Auckland in 2017 following a pilot in 2015, the programme was subsequently adopted by Wesley Community Action in Porirua in early 2019. With such successful outcomes achieved for whānau, the programme was scaled up, with a second and third Lifewise team starting in October 2019.

The programme was initiated with investment from Foundation North. Lifewise has also valued active support of Oranga Tamariki (OT) staff who were prepared to back a new approach. OT helped

with referrals and funding as well as working closely with the Lifewise Mana Whānau teams to understand who the programme might benefit and to offer it to those whānau.

So far, 94% of tamariki involved remain living safely with their whānau. A total of 67 whānau have safely retained their tamariki or had them returned, with 188 tamariki now living safely together with their parents since joining the programme. For early graduates of the programme this has now been over two years.

See more on this programme on the [Lifewise website](#).

Understanding the Needs of Young Pacific Family Carers

Supporting Pacific young people who are involved with the care of family – and their wellbeing, their education and employment aspirations – is the focus of research being conducted by Dr Ofa Dewes, of the University of Auckland's School of Nursing and Department of Molecular Medicine & Pathology.

According to the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), nearly 39,000 young New Zealanders aged 15–24 years are carers, representing 9 percent of 430,000 carers in total. Ofa believes that the MSD stats haven't captured the full picture and that both the total number, and the proportion of Pacific carers who are young, are higher. She attributes the greater proportion of Pacific young carers to culture.

"It's part of Pacific culture that we look after family in the home right to the end of life. Pacific peoples are 100 percent caring – and even young children can be involved."

Intergenerational family caring was identified as an emergent attribute in a previous research project Ofa conducted. This earlier research focused on the experiences of family caring for a loved one at end of life.

"In this latest research project, we're seeking to understand the needs of younger family carers looking after family, not only at end of life, but also family living with a disability, or long-term chronic illness. As well, we want to tackle the issue of ageing well by placing younger carers as central to our research in order to understand how to enhance their community strengths and resiliences."

Ofa says little is known about these young carers.

"This research project is a means to find ways to support them and also to make them visible. Caring, no matter what age, is invisible work and we want to recognise young carers, and their potential as a significant workforce, a valuable workforce."

Interviewees needed

Currently, Ofa is recruiting interview participants, looking for families and carers to take part. She emphasises that the research is Pacific-peoples-centric. "The interview is simply a talanoa – a conversation. I myself am from the Pacific and I bring to this project my experience as a Pacific researcher."



Dr Ofa Dewes

Ofa is keen to hear from NZCCSS members and services that can help her connect with families and carers to interview.

Participants who agree to take part in the interview will receive a gift voucher valued at \$30 in acknowledgement of their time and contribution to the study.

Ofa is willing to travel and can present to groups to explain more about the project and to provide more information.

"This is a serious issue that deserves a serious response. It is of great importance that the voice of Pacific people is heard by decisionmakers."

The project is being undertaken by researchers from the University of Auckland, Pacific Home Care, the Tongan Health Society, and NZ Council of Christian Social Services with funding from the National Science Challenge for Ageing Well.

For more information contact Ofa via email: o.dewes@auckland.ac.nz

Connecting Faith

Since the 15 March 2019 terror attacks in Christchurch, the Government has focused on fostering greater interfaith unity and understanding in Aotearoa New Zealand. In February and March 2020, the Office of Ethnic Communities brought together representatives from faith communities and interfaith groups all across Aotearoa New Zealand. Close to 300 people took part in these hui to discuss, identify and agree on actions to promote greater social inclusion and wellbeing, and to counter racism, discrimination and religious intolerance.

The *Connecting with Faith Communities and Interfaith Groups: Growing a socially inclusive Aotearoa New Zealand to counter racism, discrimination and religious intolerance report* is a record of those discussions as well as outlining the key themes that emerged.

Some of the key themes captured include the need for enhanced collaboration; the importance of an education system that normalises faith and ethnic diversity; the importance of the media in promoting social inclusion; the recognition that, while Government can be an enabler, community-led actions are important; and, the need to ensure better connections and collaboration with Government.

The report also identifies a number of opportunities that the Office of Ethnic Communities, community organisations and members of communities could seize to address the challenges, issues and opportunities raised.

In releasing the report, the Office is hopeful that it will help guide collective effort in ensuring Aotearoa New Zealand remains a socially inclusive country.



Abuse in Care Report

The Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry's Interim Report *Tāwharautia: Pūrongo o te Wā* was released by the Commission on Wednesday, 16 December.

The Inquiry was established to look into why people were taken into care, what abuse happened and why, and the effects of the abuse. The Commission has specifically focused on Māori and Pacific peoples and people with disabilities.

Some key findings from the two-volume report include:

- The nature of abuse in care is significant; it is estimated that the number of people who have been abused could be up to 250,000 out of a total of 655,000. Even on conservative estimates that is more people than previously thought.
- The range of people who have been abused is wide and includes those from many backgrounds and situations. It is known that many of the people came from disadvantaged sectors of the society – children, young people and vulnerable adults in the Māori and Pacific communities and children from impoverished backgrounds, disabled people and women and girls.



• Other findings include:

- A wide and disturbing range of abuse and physical, emotional, psychological, medical, educational, spiritual and cultural neglect has occurred.
- Common factors in abuse cases including a lack of training and vetting and poor complaints and response processes and at the worst further abuse, harassment or punishment for reporting abuse.
- Discrimination and racism played a role from authorities and the public.
- Economic cost: Our Economic Cost of Abuse report estimates the cost of abuse in care to individuals and society – between 1950 and 2019 is up to \$217 billion.

In acknowledging the release of the report, the Minister for the Public Service, Hon Chris Hipkins says the report is a deeply moving record of the State's past failings in looking after citizens in its care.

"I welcome this interim report, and I acknowledge the courage and determination of survivors who relived their painful experiences with the Royal Commission," Chris Hipkins said.

The Minister said that the Royal Commission's work would inform further improvements to care-and-redress systems. One area already being looked into is the use of the Limitations Act to deny claims.

"The redress principles outlined by the Royal Commission in this report will help us progress these actions and the Government will continue to listen and learn from the experience of survivors."

Submissions Open on Increased Sick Leave Bill

Before Parliament rose on 9 December, the Government introduced a new Bill increasing the availability of employer-funded sick leave for employees. The Bill proposes an expansion from the current five days per year to 10, but keeps the current maximum entitlement of any unused sick leave at 20 days annually.

Employees will not suddenly gain more sick leave. The entitlement comes into effect according to when they were employed.

In introducing the Bill, the Government's stated purpose is to better enable New Zealand employees to access sick leave when they are sick or injured, or when their spouse or partner or someone who depends on them for care is sick or injured. You can read the Bill [here](#).

The Bill will go through a full Select Committee process. The Government expects to have the law changed by halfway through 2021, with the changes coming into effect from two months after passage.

Submissions are now being accepted by the Education and Workforce Committee. You can make submissions [here](#)

The closing date is 28 January 2021.



Voluntary and Community Sector Snapshot

The 2020 State of the Sector Survey was released late November by ComVoices, a network of national community and voluntary organisations. The survey is the fourth biennial snapshot of the community and voluntary sector undertaken by ComVoices. Its findings reinforce those of previous surveys and other recent reports on the community and voluntary sector:

While still fragile, the community and voluntary sector is generally more stable and viable than it was two years ago. The survey of 129 community

and voluntary organisations shows that the sector continues to deal with increased demands, increasing costs and has been significantly impacted by COVID-19.

Further, the snapshot finds:

The pressures and stresses on community and voluntary organisations continue. The overwhelming majority of surveyed organisations (over 80%) are dealing with ongoing, increased demands and workloads (in many cases at least since 2011), often without a corresponding increase in funding.

ComVoices noted some improvement in two priority areas – fair funding and making it easier to work with Government. However, it concludes that the persisting fragility of the sector could worsen over the year as the country continues to cope with the impact of the global pandemic.



Kete Kupu Word Basket

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that help to make the work of NZCCSS
possible.

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