

Looking Back

Reflecting on five and a half years as Children's Commissioner

Dr. Cindy Kiro



I finish my term as Children's Commissioner at the end of April and so have been reflecting on my five and a half years in this role. It has been a privilege to be New Zealand's Children's Commissioner and I am sad to be leaving, but also ready for a change. I have met truly amazing people dedicated to making the life of children and young people better. My office has operated on very tight budgets and has managed to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear at times, with an average of 13 staff over my term to undertake the work.

I am especially proud of the work we have done on early intervention. This is most clearly spelt out in *Te Ara Tukutuku: An Integrated Approach to Early Intervention*, which forms the basis of my 10-year vision for children and young people. Making sure that we have a health, education and safety plan for every child and support their families to make these reality, is still the basis of ensuring good outcomes for every child in New Zealand.

The prevention of violence against children has been a strong theme for much of the work of my office and my term. I am pleased that the rate of child homicide has been declining for each of the past five years, and hope that this trend continues. I am also proud of increased awareness of the risk of family violence and the threat that this poses to children and young people, with real impacts on them that are often life long.

there have been improvements to Child, Youth and Family resulting in decreased numbers of young people in police cells; a Charter of Children's rights for all children in care; improved Grievance Panels within Child, Youth and Family residences; a robust complaints process for Child, Youth and Family; and many other changes that will hopefully improve the safety and reduction of harm to children who are among our most vulnerable, namely children in care or who come to the attention of Child, Youth and Family. My office completed a comprehensive report on child poverty last year and this area remains a crucial priority for the office into the future.

The completion of our inquiry into *School Safety* marks a turning point for the office, by addressing a problem raised in almost every consultation with children and young people, namely their concerns about bullying and violence in schools. Schools also struggle to deal with these issues, and this inquiry aims to help by providing some basis for identifying good practice that other schools can learn from and adapt for their school.

Youth justice and the child discipline law (repeal of Section 59 of the Crimes Act) remain political footballs. While they are issues that will be picked up by the next Children's Commissioner, they are ones my office has been a strong advocate on.

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March 2009**

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FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER.....

Tena Koutou, Talofa Lava, Kia Orana, Fakaalofa Lahi Atu, Malo e Lelei, Bula Vinaka, Taloha Ni Greet

It is with great pleasure that I welcome SPPA's two Regional Development Officers Dianne Smith based in Canterbury and Delia Crozier based in Wellington. The Regional Development Officers are primarily responsible for organising and facilitating Regional network meetings for SSPA members and organising Best Practice Seminars in response to identified need. An interview process is underway to fill the Regional Development position in the Auckland area, and we are continuing to seek a suitable person to fill the Regional Development Officer position to work with Pacific providers. You can read more about Delia and Dianne on Page three of the Newsletter. We are grateful to the host Agencies Wesley Community Action in Wellington and Presbyterian Support in Christchurch for providing a home base and support for the Regional Development Officers.

Members will remember that at the end of last year you were asked to comment on the MSD Contract Standard Terms and Conditions. I am pleased to report that we received over 40 well considered responses that helped to inform further discussion on this document. SSPA was asked to co-ordinate a group of NGO providers to meet with MSD legal advisors and members of the contracting team to provide feedback on the document - specifically -

- Ease of reading
- Tone of the document
- Specific clauses where the actual content is either not accepted or not clear
- Any other concerns identified by providers

Kimiora Rawiri from Ngatiranginui Iwi Social Services, Tauranga, John Dougherty from Birthright NZ, Wellington, John Exton from Kingdom Resources, Christchurch and Graeme Munford from Across Social Services, Palmerston North and myself volunteered to be on the panel to meet with Ministry staff SSPA obtained a legal opinion prior to the meeting so that we were both well informed and had the back up of sound legal advice.

The contentious 'gagging' clause and the intellectual property rights clause were changed in response to the feedback received and the word 'must' was changed to 'will' throughout the document to reflect the same wording as applied to MSD as the other party to the contract.

The panel all felt that the process of consultation was an excellent example of collaboration and working together to achieve a more balanced outcome for those entering into contracts with the Ministry of Social Development.

Regards

Jocelyn Wilson
National Executive officer

NOTICES

What Happens Next? By Wendy Lyons and Tricia Irving Hendry is a practical introduction to mental illness and the mental health system for parents and caregivers of children and young people with mental health problems. For more information call Starlight Trust Ph 0800299100

Eloise's Excellent Experiment By Nikki Evans and Bronte Evans Pollock is a resource for children, young people and adults who struggle with anxiety issues. Lots of humour and bold illustrations are used in this story about how a young girl called Eloise negotiates her intrepid journey to conquer the worries.

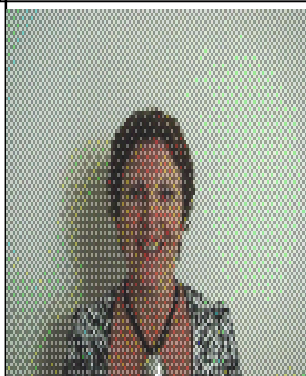
Cost: \$20 Enquiries to: nikki.evans@canterbury.ac.nz

Inaugural Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Conference is to be held at the Ellerslie Convention Centre on Wednesday and Thursday 28 and 29 October 2009. More information available from: office@grg.org.nz

ANZASW is responsible for hosting the first joint Asia Pacific Regional Conference of the International Federation of Social Workers and the Asia Pacific Association for Social Work Education across three days in November 2009, to be preceded by a one – day Symposium for Educators More information available on the website www.anzasw.org.nz

Announcing Social Service Providers Aotearoa Annual Conference 2009 to be held at Flames International Hotel, Whangarei 17 and 18 September 2009 The Conference Theme is "Te Puawaitanga O Te Kakano" - Sowing Seeds of Change. More information is available by contacting the conference team on 09 4388852. Further information will be available shortly at www.theorganisation.org.nz

Welcome to our new Regional Development Officers



Kia ora Koutou

I am the new Wellington Regional Development Officer with Social Service Providers Association. I joined SSPA at the end of February 2009 and am enjoying my first month into the job getting up to speed with SSPA and getting to know the Wellington members. I come from a varied work background, making a significant change around eight years ago to pursue a long held desire to work within the social services sector. In that time I have gained a Diploma in Counselling and held various volunteer positions with organisations including Lifeline Sydney, Skylight, Kapiti Women's Centre and Wesley Counselling Service. Over the last two and a half years I have worked within the Not for Profit sector in Wellington and at present wear

several hats including Team Leader – Volunteers for Wesley Community Action three days a week and Volunteer Counsellor and collective member of Kapiti Women's Centre. After many years living in Australia I am delighted to have spent the last 2.5 years back home in Wellington. I love this lively city and being closer to my family. My interests include alternative health, meditation, movies and walking.

I'm enthusiastic about my role with SSPA for the opportunity it brings to build my sector knowledge, learning more about the agencies and current issues within the sector. Also of interest is how we work together, sharing knowledge and skills and ideas to promote best practice and collaboration for holistic services to families, whanau and communities. I'm excited to have joined SSPA and look forward to meeting SSPA members in the Wellington region. I'm keen to hear your thoughts on how SSPA might support your organisation and how we might work collaboratively in our region. I'd love to hear from you so please feel free to give me a call or drop me an email if you have any questions or suggestions.

Delia Crozier – Wellington Regional Development Officer Ph: 04 385 37327 x868

Cell: 021 859 053 E mail: delia.crozier@yahoo.co.nz

Dianne Smith brings vast experience in health, community and justice settings. Her passion for people, for professionalism and 'best practice' was shaped by her early career in nursing and nursing education, and later through working with people in crisis, counselling, clinical supervision and group facilitation roles. As well as community based positions, Dianne worked in a multidisciplinary team at Christchurch Women's Hospital for years and then as Service Co-ordinator and Practice Specialist for Victim Support Canterbury. Her training and practice specialist role with Victim Support included teaching in south Canterbury, the West Coast and Marlborough. Since January 2008 Dianne has been based at Presbyterian Support as Elder Care Canterbury's Co-ordinator three days a week.

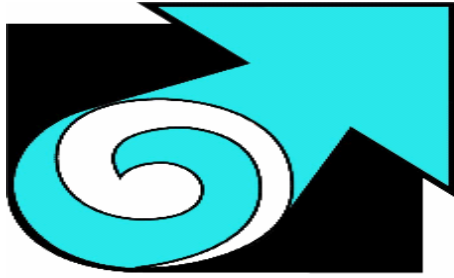


Dianne sees her new role with SSPA as complementing her Elder Care Canterbury role and is committed to effective social services for all generations. She sees informed provider networks as a key to future service development, especially in view of Aotearoa New Zealand's changing demographics and increasing cultural diversity. She is committed to promoting effective processes so that all people working in this arena are well supported through the challenges that their work brings to them personally. Dianne is passionate about people's rights, issues of justice and in ensuring the voices of people of all cultures are heard. Living and working in Western Samoa as a midwife, travelling extensively including living in Kuwait for over 2 years, has given her valuable insights and experiences of people of many cultures.

Dianne describes herself as a caring, energetic, lateral thinking person who appreciates 'difference' and enjoys diversity, walking on the beach, swimming, fishing, gardening and music. She lives in North Canterbury at the mouth of the Waimakariri River. Family life is important to her. She and her partner are in close contact with their 'blended' family of 5 adult children, 8 grandchildren and 2 elderly parents. She looks forward to meeting and working alongside many of you over the next year.

Dianne Smith - Canterbury Regional Development Officer

Ph 03 3638225 Email: dsmith@psusi.org.nz



NEW ZEALAND FEDERATION OF
FAMILY BUDGETING SERVICES (INC.)
TE RŌPŪ PENAPENA PŪTEA
WHĀNAU O AOTEAROA

The New Zealand Federation of Family Budgeting Services has 141 member services around New Zealand. These services deal on a day to day basis with approximately 30,000 families per year who need guidance and support in relation to their family finances.

With the worsening financial climate Budget Services in some areas are having large increases in the numbers of people coming to them for help and the demographics and presenting problems of those people are different from what they were in the past.

Traditionally about 70% of our clients would have been people on benefits or lower income categories but quite suddenly we are seeing increasing numbers of people in the middle and upper income brackets, typically families who have (or have in the past had) incomes of over \$40,000 and at times closer to the \$100,000 wage bracket. These people have typically either had a sudden change of income, such as going from two to one family income or having been made redundant, or they have mortgages which have become unmanageable.

In the case of mortgages, clients often arrive at the budget service having already received a mortgagee sales notice so stress levels are extremely high and options difficult and time consuming to find. With the drop in house values many people are facing the prospect of selling their house for much less than what is owing on the mortgage and being left with no house and still a big debt.

We are also being asked by firms to provide counselling for people facing redundancy and in the last two weeks we have had a number of such requests.. In national office in Wellington, we operate a free phone number for people to be able to talk

directly to a trained adviser over the phone. This adviser can give initial information and advice on the spot, help callers to develop a budget and cash flow by interacting on our website and/or refer callers on to their local budget service.

The callers to this number provide an instant barometer of what the concerns are for people and one interesting trend emerged in January. A number of workers returned from their Christmas breaks to find that all overtime had been stopped. Many workers had relied on this overtime, sometimes for years, to make ends meet and suddenly there was not enough money to go around. The most frequent concern coming via these phone calls is "how am I going to pay my mortgage next month?".

Why are we worried about this? Firstly, financial pressure is one of the biggest contributors to family stress and soon other social service agencies will start seeing the effects of this stress on families. Secondly, we believe we are only seeing the tip of the iceberg at this stage and there could be much more to come.

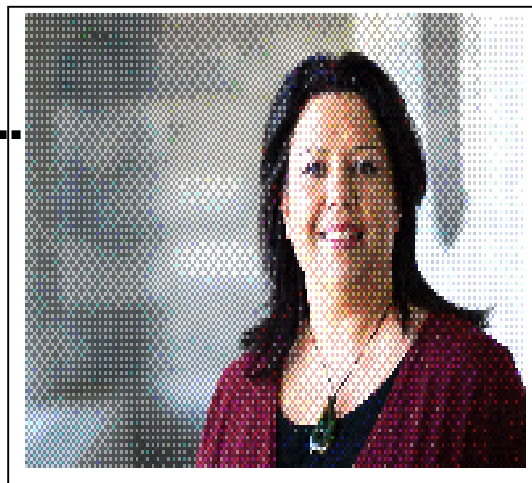
How can we all work together to minimise stress for families? We would like to encourage all Social Service Agencies to be aware of early signs of financial pressure on families they are working with and encourage them to address the issues straight away. The earlier a client seeks help from a budget adviser the more there is that the adviser can do to help.

How do you put clients in touch with us? Our website has information on who we are, what we offer clients and some tools for people to use. www.familybudgeting.org.nz.

Our free phone number is open 8.00am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday, 0508 Budgetline, 0508 283 438.

From the Minister's Desk.....

Hon. Paula Bennett



This is my second time writing to you as Minister and much has happened since last December. As the year progresses it's becoming more obvious how challenging this year will be for many New Zealand families, and I feel all of us are being called to help out where we can. This Government understands what's happening in our communities, and we want to do whatever we're able to mitigate the impacts of financial and social pressures on individuals and families.

We all know that when people are working, it's not simply about having a job which provides regular income. Being in work breeds self-respect, pride and a sense of achievement. You'll know this from the work you do out there in the community – you'll be seeing it for yourself. Working and feeling like you've got something of value to offer society makes people feel good about themselves, which is why this Government wants to do everything it can to keep people in jobs.

New Zealand is a small country, where everyone is connected to everyone else. Employers understand that when they have to let someone go, it's not just that person who's affected. They have a family. They're part of a community. It's possible they're even a customer of the company. It's in the interests of both the employer and employee to work together to keep that job, and find other innovative ways to cut costs and boost value.

That's why we held the Job Summit at the end of February. We wanted to get business, government, banking and union leaders together to collectively work out how the country can get through this recession. I think the summit demonstrates the way

we'll all need to work together to look after each other in this time of economic uncertainty. It's up to Government to lead this new way of working.

And we want to work with organisations like yours.

People are coming to you for help, and you're able to respond to that need. However, the dynamics of the relationship between you as a social services provider and the people you help is different from the one between the Government as a social services provider and the people we help.

It's our challenge to know that the support and assistance we're providing is being effective; not just in getting people through the next week or the next month, but in changing the drivers that created the situation they're in. We need to make sure our programmes and services help people to prove themselves and, as a result, have the power to change their situation for good.

I recently heard of a man needing help from a food bank in Dunedin. He felt embarrassed by his situation, and didn't want to take anything without giving something back. So he brought fresh veggies from his own garden to be shared with the next person requiring the food bank's services. I was bowled over that someone in obvious need would stop and think of others in his situation. It's what gives me hope that together, we'll get through this recession.

Paula Bennett



BECAUSE THEY ARE WORTH IT!



The gap between the pay that employees in the not-for-profit sector are willing to accept and what they could be receiving in the broader employment market has been discussed at length. There is a general view that they accept this gap in pay because of the greater personal rewards they gain from working in this sector - or, as is said so often, "because they love their work!" From this, the term "Love Factor" has come into common usage in Not for Profit circles to describe this gap. However, warm and fuzzy as the term "Love Factor" sounds, it must be used as a justification for ever-lower salary levels. Employees have to feed their families too!

While this gap will undoubtedly persist to varying degrees among different organisations, it is essential that employers ensure it does not get out of hand. If the gap grows too large, even the greatest love for the work won't prevent good workers from seeking greater rewards elsewhere. There is a sound reason for watching the pay of these staff closely – *because they are worth it!* They have demonstrated their commitment to this work in their willingness to make some sacrifice for it. But this willingness should not be taken endless advantage of.

Employers must keep a close eye on the broader employment market in order to assess this gap and take the appropriate actions, within their budgetary capabilities, to ensure the continued support of these staff.

The Strategic Pay Limited Survey of Remuneration in the Not for Profit Sector is the most comprehensive study available for tracking the relativity of pay in this sector with that in other employment markets. With data on over 4,000 jobs from more than 200 organisations, the survey provides a sound understanding of pay in this sector.

The Strategic Pay Survey provides an in-depth picture of the overall remuneration market, and individual job analyses identify clearly where specific roles sit in the market as well as the overall organisational profile. Knowing these different market rates will play a key part in keeping individual pay aligned with the broader market.

This year, Strategic Pay is assisting the Ministry of Social Development in researching rates of pay within the Not for Profit Sector and how they compare to the wider market. Developing an understanding of these rates and the gap to the general market will provide common ground for the work of the Ministry and its many service providers. The Strategic Pay Survey offers an objective, independent facility for this research. Individual organisation data will remain in complete confidence while providing the Ministry with the overall trends and summative figures they require to better understand the challenges of employment in the sector.

Ensuring your staff continue to be paid competitively with the rest of the market is the best way of showing that you knowthey are worth it!

Data packs for participation in the survey are being sent out to more than 800 not-for-profit agencies in March. If you have not received yours, contact David Shannon by phone, mail, fax or email as follows: DDI: 09-303-4053 FAX: 09-303-4048 or David@strategicpay.co.nz



Changing lives.

Youthline Facts

Youthline is a charitable youth and community development organisation that has been operating since 1970. We are well-known for our nationwide youth helpline which operates 24 hours a day seven days a week, but we also offer free text, e-mail and MSN counselling. What many people don't realise is that Youthline also offers face-to-face counselling; youth worker services; information and referrals; programmes, seminars and training to the youth sector; and community enterprise and sector development.

Youthline runs youth development programmes, developing young people's self awareness and communication skills as well as working with at-risk young people. Youthline Auckland provides face-to-face counselling, pregnancy counselling, family therapy and an Alternative Education programme for young people excluded from mainstream schooling.

Youthline has nine centres across the country including Central Auckland, Manukau, Waitakere, North Shore, Wellington, Central South Island, Otago, Southland and Palmerston North. These centres are linked into a national telephone network so that when a young person dials 0800 37 66 33 they will automatically be put through to the next nearest telephone counsellor if there is no one available locally.

Youthline also has a strong online presence. We receive over 120,000 visits per year to www.youthline.co.nz and our youth health information site www.urge.co.nz. Our online community is made up of 1800 members where young people can get involved and parents can get information and support. We also assist parents through our free e-mail support service at parenttalk@youthline.co.nz.

Volunteers are the backbone of Youthline with over a 1000 people volunteering their time to our organisation each year and donating 130,000 hours of time annually. It costs over \$1200 to train a volunteer and \$1.50 per minute to run the phone service. However these costs are paying off as shown from the huge response to our services reflected by Youthline making over 400,000 contacts per year and receiving 5000 texts from young people each month!

**For more information or to contact Youthline's helpline: phone: 0800 37 66 33
e-mail: talk@youthline.co.nz or freetext 234**

How is the Recession affecting your Service?

The feedback I am getting from some of our members is that 2009 is increasingly becoming a worrying year for social service providers as the recessionary pressures start to bite and providers struggle with uncertainty of funding and a lack of confidence that the situation will recover in the short term.. The NZ Federation of Family Budgeting Services has provided some insights in this issue of the Newsletter on just how these pressures are being felt by clients who seek out their services.

What do we know :-

- Although the Government has requested a line by line review of Government funding, no decision has yet been made on how this will affect statutory services or funding to social service providers
- No decisions have yet been made about Pathways to Partnership Funding for essential services and the future of this funding is still under discussion
- Several representatives from the NGO sector are meeting in Wellington shortly to discuss the financial pressures affecting the NGO sector and the most effective way of informing decision makers at the Ministry of Social Development and Minister Bennett on how these pressures will impact the NGO sector
- Philanthropic organisations have had their income severely depleted by the economic downturn. Not all philanthropic organisations are affected to the same degree, and while some will be conserving their capital and not making any grants to social services this year, others will be making smaller grants and/or pruning the list of charities that will benefit,
- Proposed changes to the taxing of donations may encourage more philanthropic giving by the general public. This could have the effect of raising the general level of charitable donations in NZ to make our philanthropic giving more in line with that of other western countries.
- Work is continuing by the Pathways to Partnership Steering Group in the meantime to complete the costing of services, to further work on outcomes based models of practice and to fine tune the Differential Response process which is due for full rollout by July 2009

2009 is shaping up to be a challenging year with many unknowns coupled with an uncertain economic and financial environment - a climate in which social services will endeavour to continue to deliver their services to children and families.

Continued from Page 1 - Children's Commissioner Dr. Cindy Kiro

I believe that the fundamental principles of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families 1989, with activity services in the community for at risk remain valid today, namely rehabilitation and accountability. That will keep us all safer. We have gathered an arsenal of national and international evidence of what work, and much of it flies in the face of popular notions of punishment. Dealing with offenders requires consistency, innovation, skill and resource. The repeal of Section 59 was important because of the public debate that raised awareness of the unacceptability of the use of violence in any form against children. The Referendum to repeal this law is a waste of public money and time, when we can least afford it. The \$10 million it costs could have been spent supporting families to care for their

There are many issues to deal with — equity of access for children to health services and the increasing need for child and adolescent mental health, the need to address what is happening for disabled children, for migrant children, and the importance of educating children about their right to be treated with respect and dignity, so that they may grow and learn to treat others the same way. I wish the next Children's Commissioner the best of luck with a huge job. It is never dull and always challenging. Children's rights are the foundation for any society built on inter-locking human rights.