

LEADING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN *Central*



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora



REGIONAL PLAN 2006/2007



Cover Photos

- Left: Mature workers are valued employees.
- Centre: A young mother and her son, who receive *Working for Families* assistance.
- Right: Industry skills courses help people into work.

Leading Social Development:

A PLAN FOR CENTRAL 2006 / 2007



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Achieving Better Social Outcomes Together

Our Ministry of Social Development 2006/2007 Regional Plan sets out the priorities and direction for the Central region. It paints a picture of how we intend to achieve the things that will make a real difference in the lives of this region's families and communities.

We can't do this alone! We need to be well connected to our central and local government partners. By working in partnership with the people of the Central region, our communities will get an accessible service that meets their needs.

Within the Ministry we have a growing number of regional services and activities. Under the leadership of the Regional Commissioner for Social Development the challenge is to ensure that these services are aligned, strongly led and tightly focused on the social development outcomes that matter.

Families are under pressure. Experience shows that they face many challenges. We strive to support parents and families to ensure all children get the best

possible start in life; and that anyone accessing our services is guided through to the right place to get the help they need. Our merger with the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services on 1 July 2006 strengthens our ability to achieve these outcomes.

Record low unemployment presents a new set of opportunities for us. Although the number of working-age¹ New Zealanders receiving a benefit has decreased significantly in the last five years, some groups remain at risk of long-term benefit receipt, and therefore lower living standards. There is a real opportunity for us to focus on the groups that need extra help to move in to and hold on to sustainable employment.

We have set these goals because we know that if they are achieved they will contribute positively to the wellbeing of the people of the Central region, they will enrich your communities and improve the lives of all New Zealanders.

We look forward to working to achieve these goals with you!



Peter Hughes
Chief Executive



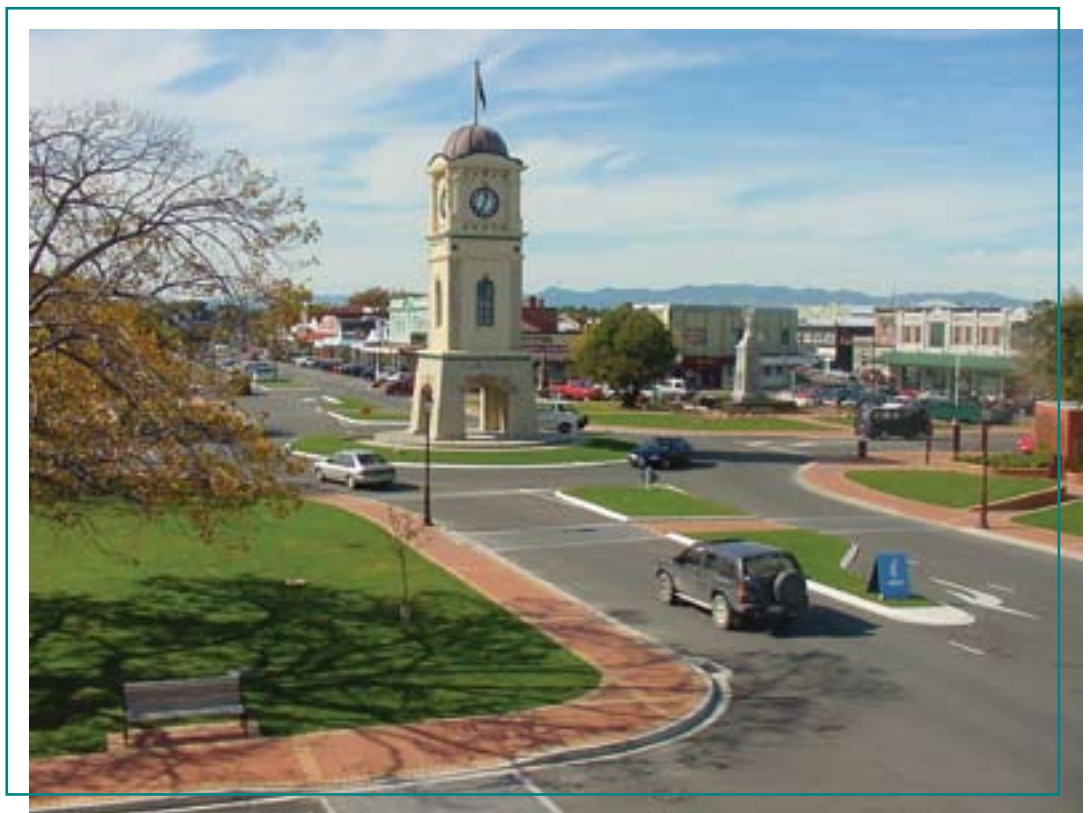
1. Working-age people are those aged between 18 to 64 years (inclusive).

Opportunities for Action in the Central Region

Our region

The Central region includes much of the lower North Island, extending from the Kapiti district in the west, up through the Horowhenua to the Manawatu, with Palmerston North being the largest city in the region. The region then extends to the Tararua district and down through Masterton, Carterton and southern Wairarapa. Approximately 227,880² people live, work and play in the Central region and call it 'home'.

We have a diverse economy, ranging from a strong primary sector through to tertiary education and research. Government administration, defence, education and health make up nearly a quarter of all employment in our region. This cluster is predominantly found around Palmerston North and in our larger towns such as Masterton and Levin. In these larger centres, manufacturing and retail continue to provide strong labour market opportunities. In rural areas, agriculture, forestry and fishing are the strongest sectors, making up 11% of our workforce³.



Our people enjoy the opportunity to either live rurally, in towns such as Feilding (pictured), or in the city of Palmerston North.

2. *Census of Population and Dwellings, Regional Summary, Census 2001, Statistics New Zealand.*

3. *Ibid.*

Opportunities for Action in the Central Region

“Local Services Mapping is a great opportunity to build on our positive community partnerships”.

Kiri Parata
Board Member, Capital & Coast
District Health Board

Our focus

The Ministry's vision is “an inclusive New Zealand where everyone is able to participate in the social and economic life of their communities”⁴. This means finding ways to help people get through barriers they may face and make sure they can access the support and services they need to get on with their lives.

We have the role of leading social development in our region. In simple terms, this means we want to assist all people, no matter what their circumstances, to get involved and make a positive contribution to their community. Social development is about investing in people so they become more independent and resilient. It is also about providing a safety net for those people who need it. The Ministry's *Statement of Intent* establishes our outcome framework to help us focus attention on the real changes our communities want. There are six key outcomes areas:

- leading social development
- children and young people
- working-age people
- older people
- families, whānau
- communities, hapū, iwi.

*The Social Report*⁵ provides statistical information on the social health and wellbeing of New Zealand society in areas such as health, knowledge and skills and paid work. The *Report* provides information about our communities and allows us to direct attention where it is needed and monitor progress over time.

We have a strong focus on helping people prepare for, secure and stay in employment. We see the difference it makes to people, their families and communities. Through committed frontline staff, we are able to gain from the knowledge and experience of the people who we work with every day in our region. This enables us to build proactive, work-focused programmes helping people on a pathway to the right job, right from the start.

Our approach aims to tackle the important issues by addressing their underlying causes. This is delivered through partnerships between central government, local authorities, community groups, industry and iwi organisations.

4. *Moving Forward with Confidence: Statement of Intent, 2006/2007*, Ministry of Social Development.

5. *The Social Report 2005*, Ministry of Social Development.

Opportunities for Action in the Central Region

The region at a glance

The Central region may appear a typical slice of New Zealand, however it has its own distinctive regional flavour. To target opportunities and tackle issues we need to understand this flavour. To assist with this, we engage with a wide range of organisations and participate in the council-led *Community Outcomes* process.

Our diverse geography

A key challenge for us is the wide variety of communities, which include larger cities through to small towns and wide spread rural areas. For instance, Palmerston North has a population of 72,033 compared with Eketahuna's population of 579⁶.

This diversity affects every area where we work, therefore one size does not suit all. To be effective, we must understand our communities' needs so the services and solutions delivered are what are required. Working alongside the eight local and two regional councils who share our region will help us respond to our communities' issues.

Children and youth

Giving children and youth the best chance to succeed is a key focus. Our region has a large youth population, especially in Palmerston North where youth represent 19.1% of the population compared with 13.5% nationally⁷. The investment of time and resources in children and young people will be repaid many times over throughout their lives.

We enjoy productive partnerships with central and local government agencies, secondary schools, tertiary education providers and community organisations that are keen to act early to make a difference in the lives of individuals and families.

Older population

The 2001 Census showed that regionally we have a higher percentage of people aged over 65 than the rest of New Zealand, although this is not consistent throughout all areas within the region. Older people are attracted to lifestyles in Horowhenua, Kapiti and Wairarapa. Palmerston North has a lower percentage of older people (11.3% compared with 12.1% nationally); but in Horowhenua (18.5%), Kapiti (22.3%) and Wairarapa (15.1%), the percentage of older people is significantly higher⁸.

The *Limited Service Volunteers* course, run at Burnham Military Camp near Christchurch, is literally changing the lives of many of our youth.

Work and Income case managers regularly report that course graduates are motivated to make positive changes in their lives leading to apprenticeships, further education and full-time employment.

Photo kindly supplied by Limited Service Volunteer graduate, Chris Grant.



6. *Census of Population and Dwellings, Community Profile*, Census 2001, Statistics New Zealand.
 7. *Census of Population and Dwellings, Regional Summary*, Census 2001, Statistics New Zealand.
 8. *Ibid.*

Opportunities for Action in the Central Region

“I let people know what doors open when you have a trade”.

Sam Moore
Trades Mentor

The ageing population will have differing effects on our communities in the short and long term. We are continuing to work with key agencies in our communities to plan for and deliver accessible services to this group of people.

Labour market development - economic growth

In our communities, social and economic development goes hand in hand. We need a healthy business environment that offers long-term, rewarding employment and inclusive, vibrant and safe communities. For the region to thrive, we need to focus on both elements.

Our region has been enjoying strong economic growth which has been positive for employment and currently the region has an unemployment rate of 4.9%⁹. However, this success has meant in some areas skilled people are becoming harder to find. Several industries within the region are reporting skill and labour shortages. We will continue to work with industry groups and employers to find solutions to these identified shortages.

Healthier homes, healthier lives



Manawatu Healthy Homes Installers, David Davenport (left) and Jordie Harris install the underfloor foil insulation in a Palmerston North home. Ceiling insulation was also installed.

David is one of many Work and Income clients trained to retrofit homes and is now in full-time employment. Through the project, over 370 Work and Income clients in the region have had their homes fitted with insulation.

The retrofitting project is making a real difference to people's lives and has long-term benefits. Recent research by the Wellington School of Medicine Housing and Health Research Programme has found that people living in insulated homes experienced fewer visits to the doctor, fewer admissions to hospital for asthmatic or respiratory conditions and fewer days off work or school as well as reduced power bills.

Photo kindly supplied by the Manawatu Healthy Homes Project.

9. Household Labour Force Survey, 31 March 2006, Statistics New Zealand.

Opportunities for Action in the Central Region

Our team

Our role is to provide leadership, sound policy and a range of services to support individuals and communities.

Work and Income employs 220 staff in the Central region, mainly based in our recognisable service centres. We provide a range of employment services to help people gain lasting work and independence. We want to help the 58,431¹⁰ people who we provide income support to, improve their circumstances. In addition, our contact centres take as many as 125,000 calls each week from clients, employers, members of the public and community groups.

Work and Income plays a key role in the growth of people and communities by increasing their potential to participate in meaningful activities.

The Ministry of Youth Development promotes the interests of young people aged between 12 and 24 years. Our work involves keeping up to date on key issues affecting them. By listening and responding to the needs of young people, we are always seeking ways to help make sure that they are valued, nurtured and challenged to realise their full potential.

Families have a diverse range of needs, coping with the challenges of raising children and caring for sick or elderly family members. Government and non-government agencies provide a number of services to support families and communities. Family and Community Services works with these agencies to

make the services easy to use. These services help families solve problems early, before they get out of hand. This in turn supports families to be strong, violence-free and connected to their communities.

Family and Community Services manage and fund preventative social services programmes such as *Well Child* and the *Family Violence Intervention Programme*. We also provide information and advice to help families and communities access services and develop their own knowledge.

Benefit Integrity Services helps people to receive their correct entitlement to financial assistance with an emphasis on preventing and minimising debt and fraud. We have a strong focus on helping clients avoid debt, which can be a significant barrier to people achieving their goals and gaining financial independence. We also provide an early intervention service, visiting clients in their homes to assess their circumstances and entitlements.

Senior Services delivers information and services contributing to older people's ability to enjoy a secure income and standard of living. We provide three key services: War Pension Services, International Services (responsible for international social security agreements) and the Community Services Card (administered on behalf of the Ministry of Health) which provides individuals and families with access to affordable health care.

Tertiary education also plays a major role in economic and social development. Our services to future and current tertiary students are critical to raising the incomes and aspirations of people in the region.

StudyLink focuses on providing financial support and information to students either in tertiary education or thinking about study as a future option. We play a vital role in connecting students to the range of services available to help them make informed tertiary education choices. We provide on-the-ground services to students in the region in a number of locations. Palmerston North is the location of StudyLink's National Processing Centre which employs between 110 and 215 staff during different times of the year.

Looking ahead

We are ready for the challenges and opportunities 2006/2007 will bring. We look forward to partnering with a wide range of organisations to deliver the Government's vision for social development in the Central region.

10. All benefit statistics in this Regional Plan have been sourced from the Ministry of Social Development's Information Analysis Platform as at 31 March 2006. Where comparisons are made, these reflect statistics as at 31 March 2005, unless otherwise stated.



Moving Forward

I'm pleased to welcome you to the first Ministry-wide Plan for our region. We've been finding ways to work more effectively across the broad range of areas we are involved in. We have a lot of people doing great work in their particular areas, whether that is supporting students while they study, finding people jobs, managing our clients' income support or working with community organisations.

We believe that by working together across the whole Ministry, we will achieve much more for our clients, their families and our communities.

The Ministry has a 'whole of government' and 'whole of life' approach to social development. We aim to help New Zealanders - this includes older people, families with children, young people and working-age people. We also want to continue to work with communities, hapū and iwi.

We recognise that we are only one piece of the puzzle. To make real, lasting differences, we will continue to work with other parts of the community including local and central government agencies.

Social development can seem like a big, theoretical concept but our people are good at finding practical ways to make social development a reality. It's about asking the extra questions when someone is having difficulty such as why are people in this position, how can we support them to change their lives for the better and what could be done to avoid this happening to others? It's this sort of thinking that sees our staff helping our clients make well-informed decisions about their study and training choices. It's these types of conversations that lead to new job opportunities through industry partnerships and job creation initiatives.

It takes a 'can do' approach, plenty of communication to find ways to help and lots of determination to hang in there when things don't progress quickly or easily.

There'll be plenty of highlights and challenges ahead of us in the coming year. We have a great region with many strengths in terms of a diverse economy, natural assets and talented people. This is an opportunity for us to make real and lasting differences in our communities.



Penny Rounthwaite
Regional Commissioner for Social Development



Leading Social Development

We are taking a social development approach to how we work with our clients and communities. It's about helping people in need while also assisting them to be self-reliant. This underpins the Government's social vision which was set out in *Opportunity for All New Zealanders*¹¹ of an inclusive New Zealand.

Opportunity for All New Zealanders identified five critical issues that need to be addressed over the next three years:

- improving educational achievement among low socio-economic groups
- increasing opportunities for people to participate in sustainable employment
- promoting healthy eating and healthy activity
- reducing tobacco, alcohol and other drug abuse
- minimising family violence, and the abuse and neglect of children and older people.

We recognise that the task of leading social development is complex and cuts across all aspects of life in New Zealand. We also recognise that we cannot make real strides towards addressing these issues alone. In the areas of minimising family violence and sustainable employment (in collaboration with the Department of Labour) we are taking the leading role and in other areas we are actively supporting the other lead agencies. This year we look forward to working with a wide variety of central, regional, local and community organisations to really make a difference.

We are also committed to ensuring that our work at a regional level reinforces the Government's three priorities for the next decade: economic transformation, families - young and old and national identity.

Across the Ministry

Our Regional Commissioner for Social Development has a strong focus on improving the co-ordination of government services in our region. We are starting by looking at how we can streamline our services to meet the needs of individuals, families and communities. Accessing the right service within a large organisation can often be difficult. This plan is a tangible example of how the Ministry is bringing together our different service delivery units to create a service with a single face.

Within the Ministry we have formed a Lower North Island Cluster to fast track information sharing. This Cluster includes the Wellington; Taranaki, King Country and Wanganui; East Coast; and Central regions. This is an opportunity to share

Migrants helped into work



Migrants in Palmerston North are getting work and enjoying specialist case management and support from Work and Income as part of our partnership with the Ethnic Council of Manawatu.

An employment co-ordinator helps migrants gain confidence and an understanding of the local labour market and together they develop their CVs and prepare for job interviews. The co-ordinator also helps migrants transfer their qualifications through equivalency exams and works with agencies to help their integration into the community.

Photo kindly supplied by the Ethnic Council of Manawatu (Inc).

11. *Opportunity for All New Zealanders*, Office of the Minister for Social Development and Employment, 2004.

Leading Social Development

what is working well and work together on programmes such as *Gradforce*, a joint Work and Income and StudyLink project which helps recent tertiary graduates find work.

Building leadership

Regional social and economic prosperity relies to a great extent on agencies working together with leadership being shared. In the case of social development, leadership also means acknowledging that local people are often best placed to develop and implement local solutions. Developing the local solution requires a range of organisations to work together.

During 2002, the Regional Inter-agency Network was established to lead the development of a 'whole of government' approach to economic and social development issues. More than 20 central and local government and iwi agencies are now contributing to the Network, which covers much of the region.

The Regional Inter-agency Network identified common concerns for young people and the impacts of the drug methamphetamine (P) and is now leading the *Horowhenua Youth Support (Drug and Alcohol) Project*. The *Project* addresses the social issues caused in the Horowhenua community through young people abusing drugs and alcohol. A comprehensive community consultation process was undertaken which is helping to shape the *Project* to meet local community needs.

We also contribute to the Te Puni Kōkiri facilitated Wairarapa/Tararua Regional Inter-agency Fora made up of senior representatives from local and central government agencies, iwi and community groups. This provides the opportunity for organisations to share information and discuss matters of interest to the community, particularly focused on building the capacity of Māori. Collaborative projects have included the co-ordinated approach to the *Community Outcomes* consultation process and *South Wairarapa Life to the Max*, a programme supporting youth and their families.

Working on what really matters

Because each community has their own issues and needs, what is of key interest in Palmerston North may not be on the radar in Dannevirke and vice versa.

To allow us to gain a good understanding of local issues, we keep in close contact with a wide range of organisations. We work closely with community, student and benefit advocacy groups, enabling us to be responsive to the changing needs of our communities.

Working with local government and communities as they work through their *Community Outcomes* process is an important area of work for the Ministry. *Community Outcomes* are a reflection of what is important to a local community within a city, district or region. We have a role to play in supporting and sharing

responsibility for *Community Outcomes* and we welcome opportunities to work alongside our councils to contribute to community goals.

Currently a series of *Local Services Mapping* exercises are taking place across the region. *Local Services Mapping* involves us working together with government agencies, local authorities and community organisations to identify the services a community has and what it particularly needs. An action plan is then developed that sets out how everyone can work together to support and develop practical solutions to meet the needs of the community.

The Tararua Community Report is one of the first in the country to be published from the *Local Services Mapping* exercise. It has identified parenting support, educational underachievement, youth support, dependencies, access to services and family violence as issues the community needs to address.

The Kapiti Community Report has also been completed. Their identified priority needs are emergency housing, access to mental health services, drug and alcohol services, additional kaupapa Māori services, transport services and support services that strengthen parent and child relationships. These reports will be used as the basis for engaging with local organisations to develop solutions to these issues.

Leading Social Development

Reducing inequalities

Our long-term vision is to have communities without disadvantage. The indicators in *The Social Report* show that some groups are not as well represented in statistics relating to employment, health and education. We have, and will continue to develop close working relationships across government agencies to assist groups in our communities including Māori, Pacific peoples and migrants. We will continue our focus on this area and will be working with community and iwi organisations on innovative ways to reduce the inequalities in our communities.

Last year, Work and Income held Māori youth employment seminars in the Central region. Their aim was to motivate these clients to move towards employment, training and education. Opportunities relevant to the local labour market were profiled by key employers who also spoke about their expectations for employees such as workplace ethics. Many participants were able to take up the opportunities presented by employers during the seminars. In the coming year we will extend our strategy for working with Māori, youth, families and working-age clients.

Tackling problems early on

While early intervention can mean early in life, it also means early in the life of the problem. Early intervention is the step between prevention and treatment. Prevention normally addresses the community and treatment generally targets a relatively small number of individuals. Early intervention is often most effective when aimed at high-risk individuals or families.

To provide a greater level of support to clients in family violence situations, we have employed family violence response co-ordinators. Family violence awareness training has been provided to Work and Income staff, enabling them to offer support to clients in family violence situations and refer them to appropriate service providers. The move forms part of our commitment to addressing the Government's identified critical issue of family violence, including child abuse and neglect, partner or spouse abuse and elder abuse and neglect.

There are key transition times in people's lives when they become more at risk of developing problems. Transitioning into school, leaving school and becoming a parent are examples of these. The teen parent programmes running in Masterton and Palmerston North, and the *Offender Re-integration Programme: Improving Employment Outcomes* are examples of interventions helping to remedy problems early.

Manawatu Prison was a trial site for the *Offender Re-integration Programme: Improving Employment Outcomes*. Our staff, alongside Department of Corrections staff, work inside the prison with offenders who are about to move back into society. The focus is on securing employment by addressing both the prisoners' goals and local employers

Tararua services mapped



Local Services Mapping in Tararua is receiving high praise from community, council, government and iwi representatives who have undertaken a comprehensive project to identify what social services are available locally and what particular services are needed.

In Tararua, these issues include parent and youth support, education, dependencies, family violence and access to services.

"Our aim is to help communities and agencies come together to provide services that support local families", says Family and Community Services Regional Manager, Brett Austin.

Some of the members of the Tararua *Local Services Mapping* Steering Committee are pictured with Family and Community Services Regional Manager, Brett Austin (second from left).

Leading Social Development

Making a new start



Work and Income's *Offender Re-integration Programme: Improving Employment Outcomes* has been positively received by both prisoners and the people helping them to find work once they are released from prison.

Working from within the Manawatu Prison, Work and Income Case Manager, Grant Hayde (centre) has an average caseload of 50 offenders that are either soon to be released or are about to come before the parole board where they are planning for their release date.

Grant helps offenders to identify their employment goals and understand the needs of employers. He also scouts the local labour market looking for jobs that match their skills.

Around 65% of ex-prisoners apply for a benefit once they are released. It is hoped that this programme will help reduce this figure significantly.

needs. This programme has proven successful and has now been rolled out throughout the country.

Through our involvement in inter-agency and community fora we will also continue to look for opportunities to develop and support other early intervention services. The development of these services has huge benefits for our communities through the generations.

Policy and knowledge

A major challenge is to make sure the needs of our communities are being heard. We have established processes to gather the information and knowledge we need to create sound, sensible social policies.

To get closer to the local issues, we have a Regional Policy Advisor, who provides policy input to 'whole of government', national, regional and local initiatives. Through this process, practical and realistic information can be fed back from the 'grass roots', helping to shape future policies that will affect our people. In the coming year we will be talking to our communities about a range of issues as we develop major policy work involving core benefit reform.

To allow our policies to be formed on the basis of sound research, the Ministry established a national Centre for Social Research and Evaluation. The Centre creates strong evidence-based knowledge which supports social development policy and service delivery across government agencies. It engages in research,

evaluation and data analysis to help provide a deeper understanding of the social sector by publishing information and reports on social issues and trends¹².

The Ministry of Youth Development is one of the Government's key connection points with the youth of New Zealand. The Ministry of Youth Development plans to establish a regional presence, enabling us to better support and achieve positive outcomes for young people at a local, regional and national level. We will also be able to more effectively contribute to 'whole of government' initiatives that support young people. The regional teams provide a base for initiating and supporting collaborative activities, including the development of new initiatives.

Limiting avoidable debt

Debt is a key government focus. Debt that is manageable can be positive, such as a house mortgage or a student loan. Debt, such as debt from fraud, people borrowing more than they can afford to repay or fines, can be a key barrier to many people fully participating in the social and economic lives of their communities. *Debt to Multiple State Agencies* is a project led by the Ministry involving Inland Revenue, Housing New Zealand and the Ministry of Justice. The project aims to help individuals and agencies with the issues of debt owed to multiple government agencies.

Benefit Integrity Services puts a face to the work we do to address debt by attending the Central region's Community

12. Information and reports can be accessed via www.msd.govt.nz.

Leading Social Development

and Advocacy Group meetings. This is a very successful initiative where numerous community groups, advocacy services and government departments work together. Our staff also meet with community groups and employers. They visit workplaces to speak to employers with a view to preventing abuse and fraud of the benefit system, while at the same time helping individuals and employers to become fully aware of the services and entitlements available to them.

“My hope and my dream is that we will prosper in Palmerston North. Work in harmony with the people and work hard. We will give the city much pride”.

Mouthys Mickalad
Congolesse refugee

Welcoming migrants to our region

In 2006, Palmerston North was proud to become the seventh refugee resettlement area in New Zealand, welcoming Congolese refugees to the city. We formed part of a large multi-agency project to help the resettlement programme run smoothly. Thirty-five local volunteers were tutored by Refugee Migrant Service trainers prior to the refugees' arrival in Palmerston North.

The Regional Migrant Service Refugee Resettlement has engaged a French-speaking co-ordinator to work one on one with each of the refugees and help them integrate into the community. Work and Income and StudyLink staff are working on their employment goals in partnership with the Ethnic Council of Manawatu. The Ethnic Council has received an Enterprising Communities Grant to help migrants into sustainable employment.

New home for refugees

Forty refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo are making a new life in Palmerston North, with more refugees due to arrive later in 2006.

Former policeman, Mr Mouthys Mickalad (pictured rear left, with his family and other resettled refugees) says that the war in their home country left them with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. After six years of moving from place to place, the family are relieved to finally be settled in Palmerston North. “We have never felt so welcome”, Mouthys said.

The new residents are learning English and have started rebuilding their lives. Work and Income, along with other government agencies, is helping them integrate into the community.



Photo kindly supplied by the Manawatu Standard.

Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

Children and young people are the future of New Zealand, and the quality of their family life is one of the most important factors in ensuring that we have a society where they can succeed. Success in this area will flow through to success in the future economic and social life of our region.

We aim to improve the environment for our children and young people by improving services and support for them. We support the *Mayors Taskforce for Jobs* goal of ensuring that all 15 to 19 year olds will be in education, training or employment, or other activities that contribute to their long-term economic independence and wellbeing by 2007. This area sits at the heart of social development and requires the focus of central and local government and community organisations to identify the issues and solutions that meet the needs of children, young people and the community.

Giving children the best start in life

Family and Community Services funds community groups to deliver early intervention programmes. The aim is to make sure that no child or family slips through the cracks. Intensive home-based support services and parenting programmes such as *Family Start* are provided to vulnerable families with young children, improving their ability to resolve problems. In Masterton, *Family Start* has formed a collective of Māori health providers which includes social, health and education services actively working together. If whānau and families are supported early they will have a better chance of raising healthy, loved and happy children.



Tepene (seated) of Highbury in Palmerston North, makes good use of the facilities and teaching available at UCOL's Te Hono Café. Te Hono Café is a free community resource that aims to encourage young people to pursue learning and develop skills that will help them reach their employment goals.

Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

Building family resilience

All families face challenges and pressures. We work with other agencies and community organisations to develop and co-ordinate services for families. These services help families to solve problems early, before they get out of hand.

The *211 Directory* (formerly known as the Family Services National Directory) helps people access information on family-related services, programmes and resources available in communities across New Zealand.

FamilyWeb links people to helpful sites on subjects such as raising children, supporting young people and growing older. The range of information available will be expanded in the coming year¹³.

We also recognise that for families to thrive, they need to have an effective work-life balance. Changes to paid parental leave, holiday entitlements and access to affordable, quality childcare have been critical to achieving a better work-life balance for families. This year improvements being introduced as part of the *Working for Families* package¹⁴ include access to early childhood education and childcare, with 20 hours of free care for three and four year olds due to take effect in 2007.

Some of our other initiatives to help families include:

Strengthening families

Strengthening Families involves agencies working together with children, young people and their families to support and improve their wellbeing and future opportunities. It provides co-ordinated support for families who are dealing with more than two government or non-government organisations, encouraging the agencies to work together. Everyone benefits - agencies are not repeating each other's work and families get to see everyone at once. Family and Community Services provides support and resources so communities can implement this initiative.

Local management groups that manage *Strengthening Families* operate in Masterton, Dannevirke, Palmerston North, Feilding, Levin and Kapiti. It is also an active regional governance group.

SKIP

SKIP (Strategies with Kids: Information for Parents) supports parents to bring up children in a positive way, using love and nurture as well as setting boundaries to guide and teach them. Funding for *SKIP* helps community organisations promote positive parenting and provide practical knowledge and skills for parents with children under five. There are three components:

- resources such as pamphlets, videos, tip sheets and research information

Opportunity knocks



Motivating youth towards productive futures is the aim of the Palmerston North-based *Conservation Corps*.

The programme, funded by the Ministry of Youth Development, provides opportunities for young people aged 15 to 24 to develop their work skills, self-esteem, confidence and qualifications.

Key components of the programme include personal development, conservation/environmental projects, challenging recreational activities, education, personal grooming, anger management and work-readiness skills. Participants also gain work experience during the course.

Work and Income Case Manager, Leeann Clark says that when clients return from the course they have a fresh positive outlook that really helps them make the most of the opportunities around them.

13. Information about these services can be accessed via www.211.govt.nz.

14. The *Working for Families* package assists low- and middle-income working families by improving the returns from paid work and reducing barriers to participation in the labour market.

Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

- development of parent support and education training packages
- a *Local Initiatives Fund* to help community groups promote positive parenting.

Some of the *SKIP* initiatives that have been run in the Central region are workshops for dads, solo and non-custodial parents and a series of fono to deliver positive parenting information and support to Pacific families. In the coming year we will also be promoting the *SKIP* programme with our own staff who are parents or carers.

Support for sole parents

Supporting sole parents is a priority for us. We will help them look at work options as their family and individual circumstances allow. Often they live in

difficult and complex personal situations. We aim to help them become more independent and resilient.

Parenting is an important responsibility and raising children alone while receiving a benefit increases the challenges. We will work with other community networks to help sole parent's access parenting, budgeting and other support programmes.

Positioning youth for success

Young people are tomorrow's workers, parents and leaders. Improving educational, employment and social outcomes for young people is one of the best investments we can make for the future. We have and will continue to invest in a range of initiatives focused on helping young people to succeed.

The Southern Wairarapa Safer Community Council is delivering the *Life to the Max* programme. It provides tailored programmes to enable better life outcomes for youth and their whānau/families. The programme is a partnership between the community, the Safer Community Council and central and local government.

Our youth coach and youth workers help young people aged 15 to 17 years with career development and placement into work and training. Each year we help people to take part in *Limited Service Volunteers* courses run at Burnham Military Camp near Christchurch. This six-week training course increases motivation, self-discipline, self-confidence and leadership skills. The *Conservation Corps*, a community-based youth-development programme, provides young people with opportunities to develop their work skills, self-esteem, confidence and qualifications.



Our region has spectacular scenery stretching from the magnificent Tararua and Ruahine Ranges to the diverse coastlines of Kapiti, Himatangi and the Wairarapa.

Photo kindly supplied by Destination Manawatu.

Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

“I’m excited that Palmerston North is going to have a *Youth Transition Service* to help our young people into work, training and further education”.

Heather Tanguay
Mayor, Palmerston North

In Otaki, the community was concerned that young people were slipping through the cracks. As a practical solution, the *House of Hope* was funded through an Enterprising Communities Grant to assist 20 young people into work each year.

The Ministry of Youth Development launched the *Youth Development Partnership Fund* in October 2005. The *Fund* creates new opportunities by partnering with local authorities to support projects that benefit young people in their communities. The theme this year was education, training and employment, which is aligned to the *Mayors Taskforce for Jobs* goal. In the Central region, we are partnering with the Palmerston North City Council to deliver *Akohia Te Rangahau*, an initiative to provide training so young people can conduct their own youth-development research projects and contribute to knowledge about youth health and wellbeing.

Investing in the workforce of the future

New Zealand has a high level of young people who are not participating in work, education or training. Data shows between 10% and 15% of 15 to 19 year olds are inactive¹⁵. Tackling this is important for the development of our communities.

Part of our investment supports young people to develop the skills necessary to participate positively in society. A young

person’s journey from school to work or further education is a critical step and a successful transition can bring lifelong gains. The majority of school leavers leave with a plan for their futures. For those that do not, support and guidance will help their transition.

To address this, a new initiative with the Palmerston North City Council will establish a *Youth Transition Service* late in 2006. *Youth Transition Services* have been successfully implemented in other regions and aim to assist young people to move from school into further education, training or employment.

A trades mentor partially funded by the Ministry was employed by Vision Manawatu. The new role was created by the *Tools for Schools* group, a *Mayors Taskforce for Jobs* initiative promoting trades and apprenticeships in schools and the local community. The trades mentor will continue to explore opportunities with employers and help young people and their families.

Good decision making is critical for young people. We deliver the *On Course* programme which provides information and advice to Year-12 and 13 secondary students thinking about moving into tertiary study. It aims to stimulate students’ thinking about their career and study choices and the options for funding themselves through study. We want young people not only to succeed but to do so in a way that minimises their debt burden from study.

15. *Youth Transitions Report Series 2003 - Young People Not in Education, Training or Employment*, Ministry of Social Development.

Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

Getting our youth involved in their communities

Effective youth participation is about creating opportunities to be involved in influencing, designing and contributing to policy and the development of services. This means supporting young people as leaders, advisers and decision-makers. *Aotearoa Youth Voices*¹⁶ is the programme of activities run by the Ministry of Youth Development. This year, a focus will be planning and preparing for the next *Youth Parliament* being held in 2007.

Another *Aotearoa Youth Voices* programme is *PROVOKE*, a youth-participation project that involves secondary school students and adult liaisons. It provides them with a range of ideas and tools to assist young people to get their voices heard. We also support *Youth Week*, which is held annually to recognise and celebrate the achievements of the youth sector and to foster young people's connections to their community.

The *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*¹⁷ promotes a youth-development approach to understand what needs to happen for, around and with young people. The *Strategy* focuses on how government and society can support young people aged 12 to 24 years and how they can develop skills and attitudes to play a positive part in society. In order to improve outcomes for young people we are focusing on building a knowledge base and the Ministry of Youth Development will be developing a regional presence. This will allow us to be even more responsive to local needs.

Giving youth new hope

Otaki's House of Hope Co-ordinator, Mike Chase (left) is helping young people transition into employment. *"Many of these young people thought work was not an option for them but we are changing that"*, says Mike.

Mike does more than find work for Otaki youth; he also encourages their personal development. During the programme, youth develop work-readiness skills and identify barriers such as drug abuse and wellbeing issues and together they work through them. *"I am inspired by the young people I am working with"*, said Mike. The first group of nine Work and Income clients referred to the programme are now in work.

Regional Commissioner for Social Development, Penny Rounthwaite says the pilot is a practical response to the concerns the Otaki community had for the young people who had fallen through the cracks.



16. Further information about the *Aotearoa Youth Voices* programme and contributing projects can be accessed via www.youthvoices.govt.nz.

17. *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*, Ministry of Youth Affairs, January 2002.

Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

Making work pay for families

Our focus is on encouraging people into the workforce and supporting those already there. Families and individuals should be better off in employment than on a benefit. The *Working for Families* package, delivered by Work and Income and Inland Revenue, is designed to make it more affordable to work and raise a family. It pays extra money to hundreds of families in our communities. The package includes a new In Work Payment available to low- and middle-income working families.

“The *Working for Families* package has made budgeting and living each week much easier”.

Jordan Bingham
Young mother

Childcare can be a major barrier to parents entering employment, particularly for women, sole parents and parents receiving low incomes. There are some shortages of after-school care and holiday programmes around the region. We will work with our local communities to help organisations establish these facilities. Work and Income and Child, Youth and Family Services work together to provide OSCAR (Out of School Care and Recreation) funding to organisations providing before-school, after-school or school-holiday programmes for 5 to 13 year olds.

In addition, as part of the *Working for Families* package, childcare subsidies are being increased to make quality childcare more affordable. Our childcare co-ordinators will help childcare centres to support families accessing care and subsidies.



Jordan Bingham and her family are one of thousands of local families that are financially better off under the *Working for Families* package. “We have not been receiving Family Assistance, but now we will be entitled to Family Support and the new In Work Payment”, explains Jordan.

Improving Opportunities for Working Age People

The communities in our region need a productive, highly skilled and well paid workforce to make our economic and social goals reachable. We are focused on helping working-age people get the right skills, study or training to enter and stay in the workforce. Finding the right solution, tailored to the individual, family or community where everyone's circumstances are unique is one of our biggest challenges.

We are taking the lead in increasing opportunities for people to participate in sustainable employment (in conjunction with the Department of Labour). Research shows that people in employment have better lifestyles and are able to be more involved in their communities¹⁸. People have more choices and their feeling of belonging in the community is increased. We are focused on supporting long-term employment outcomes by preparing people for jobs and working with employers during the recruitment stage to allow people to be placed into jobs which match their abilities.

Reducing unemployment

Our aim is to help all working-age people reach their full potential by providing services to assist those that are able to work, get work. We take great pride in helping people find work that is long-term and rewarding. Our work directly contributes to the reduction in unemployment numbers. Unemployment-related benefit¹⁹ numbers are continuing to decrease with 2,552 people receiving a benefit as at 31 March 2006, compared to 3,233 at the same time last year, a reduction of 21.1%.



Work and Income's Industry Partnership advisor is working closely with local industries to identify and tailor courses to connect our clients to local opportunities. Pictured is Ali Hadwen, who had been receiving a benefit for 13 months. He is now in full-time employment at Steelfort Engineering and recently started an engineering apprenticeship.

18. *The Social Report 2005*, Ministry of Social Development.

19. An unemployment-related benefit includes an Unemployment Benefit and an Unemployment Benefit - Hardship.

Improving Opportunities for Working Age People

The number of people in the Central region who have been receiving an unemployment-related benefit for more than 26 weeks has reduced from 5,437 in March 2000 to just 1,331 in March 2006. Tailored work-experience and confidence programmes have contributed to this significant reduction.



Work and Income has a number of priority groups we work closely with who often face barriers to employment and are consequently over-represented in national and regional statistics. For example, nationally the Māori unemployment rate is 8.7% compared to 4.3% for the total population²⁰. Our priority client groups include: long-term unemployed²¹, Māori, Pacific peoples, migrants, youth, people with an illness or a disability, sole parents and older people.

There are many rural areas and smaller communities in our region where finding work can be more difficult. Last year our mobile work brokers helped people in Taranaki and the Wairarapa to find work. Their concentrated efforts mean that there are now very few unemployed people in these areas. The success of this has meant we can redeploy this resource to tackle other priority areas.

Long-term employment

Employment can be a catalyst for individual, family and community development. Our focus is on getting people into work, helping them to spend longer periods in employment with shorter transition periods between jobs, and giving people the opportunity to move into higher-paid jobs over time.

We are focused on supporting long-term employment outcomes. Right from the start we help people find a pathway to the right job. We are increasing our *In Work Support* services to help people remain in employment and this work will continue.

It is vital that our job-seekers' skills match the demands of the local labour market. Our individual contracted services, local and national *Industry Partnerships* programmes and the Tertiary Education Commission's training programmes are all designed to help meet industry needs.

A new approach

Many people are telling us they want to work and participate in their communities, and as a result, the way we deliver services to our clients is continuing to evolve. This is demonstrated by the *New Service Approach* being delivered in all Work and Income service centres.

The *New Service Approach* provides clients with access to a range of employment programmes and support services at their first point of contact with us based on their individual needs, regardless of their benefit entitlement. Sole parents or people with ill health or a disability are now able to access support and employment services which were traditionally more readily available to people receiving an unemployment-related benefit.

20. *Household Labour Force Survey*, 31 March 2006, Statistics New Zealand.

21. Long-term unemployed are clients who have received an unemployment-related benefit for 26 weeks or more.

Improving Opportunities for Working Age People

The *New Service Approach* was trialled in 12 service centres around the country, including the Masterton Service Centre, before being made available nationally in May 2006.

Helping students make informed choices

“StudyLink looked at my individual needs and circumstances and was very helpful”.

Elyse
Palmerston North student

A strong economy in turn needs healthy, well educated, highly motivated and confident people to drive it. This means helping people access and succeed in tertiary education. There are a lot of options and choices including full- or part-time study. We need to take the time to weigh these up with the individual to find what is best for them.

People moving from a benefit into study often find the transition difficult. StudyLink works with the client, Work and Income and local education providers to ensure the course choice is best suited to the individual and that student loan debt levels are minimised.

This year Work and Income’s successful *Gradforce* programme operated from StudyLink’s Outreach Office in Palmerston North. *Gradforce* case managers help link graduates into employment in Palmerston North, and the programme includes support services such as writing a CV and job-interview techniques.



Partnering for success

StudyLink knows that when a person is studying, they want easy access to financial assistance, and support to help them reach their goals. “*We have continued to strengthen our working relationship with Massey University campus staff and we have found that this has enhanced the services students are receiving*”, says StudyLink’s Palmerston North Outreach Manager, Vicki Jarvie. Application processing and enquiries are made faster and simpler for students because the two organisations are working alongside each other.

StudyLink Outreach Officer, Rod Pelosi is pictured helping Massey students to complete their loan applications.

Improving Opportunities for Working Age People

Clients receiving a Sickness or Invalid's Benefit are making the most of the six-week coaching and work-support programme *Life to the Max*. The programme helps to increase people's self confidence, supporting them to participate in community activities and pursue employment or further training. National Environmental Week inspired these participants from a Foxton course to clean up a local churchyard.



Real choices, real jobs

Many people with a disability or ill health want to work and there are many employers who recognise the value of their contribution. We are partnering with Workbridge to help these people into work and support them whilst there. We want to help people where work is a realistic option to participate and experience equal opportunities in the labour market.

In the Horowhenua, *Job Club* is a voluntary support group for people who want to re-enter the workforce. Participants learn pre-employment skills such as interviewing techniques and CV preparation and they connect directly with employers that understand and are receptive to their circumstances.

PATHS (Providing Access to Health Solutions) is a new service for people receiving a Sickness or Invalid's Benefit. It assists people to get back to work faster and brings employment, training and health services together into one package. Kapiti is one of the *PATHS* concept areas and as at 31 March 2006, 20 people had been referred into the programme from the area.

The labour market

Improving the performance of the labour market will improve social and economic wellbeing throughout our region. Employment contributes to economic growth.

There are a range of factors that influence the economy and labour market, and in our region there is considerable variation between communities. To allow us to understand these labour markets, our Labour Market Development team has developed a Labour Market Engagement Plan. This focuses on identifying and engaging with key groups to address labour market needs and increase labour market participation. Employers, industry groups, training organisations, central and local government, iwi organisations and economic development agencies all have important roles in the labour market.

Improving Opportunities for Working Age People

“We are aiming to upskill our workforce and encourage people to make the most of opportunities”.

John Bush
Wairarapa Workforce Development
Trust Co-ordinator

Relationships with these groups will allow us to develop co-ordinated and effective responses to meet local communities' labour market needs.

In the coming year we will develop more comprehensive labour market development plans with local economic development agencies, the Department of Labour and other key stakeholders. These plans will enable us to better respond to local skills and labour shortages, take advantage of labour market growth opportunities and contribute to improved co-ordination of labour market issues at a strategic level.

Listening to employers' needs also helps us provide a quality employment service. Many employers are finding they need to think differently about filling their labour needs. They realise they can't always get

a skilled or experienced person and need to invest in training and development. Other employers have recruited a diverse range of people and considered part-time options. Many people have medical conditions, are sole parents or older people who can make a valuable contribution to the workforce.

*Better Work, Working Better*²² has evolved out of the Government's 2000 *Employment Strategy*. It has been developed in consultation with Business New Zealand, the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, the New Zealand Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and aligns with the *Mayors Taskforce for Jobs* initiative. It identifies the steps to take at a regional, business and community level to achieve high-quality employment and drive continued economic growth.



Wairarapa students got hands-on experience of what the working world can offer at an industry 'grazing day' in Masterton. The event, organised by the Wairarapa Workforce Development Trust, was an opportunity for 13 and 14 year olds to experience the careers available in the region.

Photo kindly supplied by the Wairarapa Times-Age.

22. *Better Work, Working Better*, Labour Market and Employment Strategy, Department of Labour, 2005.

Improving Opportunities for Working Age People

Working with industry

Industry Partnerships programmes are designed to help address local skills shortages and to respond quickly to emerging local employment opportunities. Working directly with industry is an important demand-led strategy to identify and contract the appropriate training courses which will lead to lasting jobs and new career opportunities for clients.

To address skill shortages, we have rolled out an extensive programme of work including support of modern apprenticeships, national *Industry Partnerships* and local investments in industry training. An example of this is a Palmerston North-based *Engineering Skills* course. Industry employers worked alongside Work and Income to design a course that would give participants foundation engineering skills such as sheet-metal fabrication and welding. Upon completion of the course, 12 of the 14 participants moved into full-time employment or apprenticeships within the local industry. A similar approach is being taken with a *Digger School* in the Wairarapa, to increase the number of people available to work with heavy machinery.

The Labour Market Development team are proactively addressing labour market issues by working closely with industries and key agencies. Skill and labour shortages are a national issue and our region is no different. We have implemented initiatives to enable job seekers to understand local labour market needs and prepare for employment, particularly in industries with skills gaps. Formal agreements with industries have been developed to address labour issues in specific sectors such as retail, hospitality and meat processing. People throughout our region are being trained to take advantage of these employment opportunities and develop new careers which will result in better quality jobs.

We are actively involved at a local level with community and iwi groups that also seek to address labour market issues for their people. In Kapiti we are working with local iwi to develop employment opportunities in forestry and the popular tourism centre Lindale through Enterprising Communities Grants. At times, employers are faced with reducing staff through redundancy or lay offs. On these occasions we work proactively with employers and their staff to promote other work opportunities available to them. We are also working with new businesses to the region, to help meet their labour requirements.

We support those who are looking to become their own boss. The Enterprise Allowances and the *Be Your Own Boss* programme assist people wanting to become self employed, and each year we help a range of new businesses start up. Recently we have helped establish new businesses in website design and roadside cleaning. Self employment is a good option for some of our clients and can lead to employment of others in the future. New businesses starting up in smaller towns contribute significantly to township wellbeing and economic development.

Enterprise Allowance cleans up



With the help of Work and Income's Enterprise Allowance and some mentoring, Trevor Skipper (seated in truck) and Matthew King (far right) are now clearing Manawatu highways and drains of rubbish and debris.

Long-term beneficiary Trevor Skipper says the business, Riparian Men, has three full-time employees and a significant contract with Palmerston North City Council to clear 104 kilometres of roadsides and drains around the Manawatu region.

Trevor says the hardest part of establishing the business was developing a business plan. *"This was foreign to us but with the help of Small Business Specialists, Sandra Anderson (contracted by Work and Income) we got there and it really helped get us going"*.

Improving Opportunities for Working Age People



Jim Morton, Benefit Integrity Services (right), makes sure client Andrew Wild is receiving his full and correct benefit and family support entitlements, and that he knows to advise us of any changes that may affect his benefit. Andrew says, "It is reassuring to know that I am not getting into debt and (Benefit Integrity) staff are able to put me in touch with all the support and services I need".

Financial assistance

In the Central region we assist 21,957 working-age people with income support and approximately 6,534²³ students with student loans. People receive income support for a range of reasons including study, sickness and caring for dependents.

We recognise that some people in our communities are reliant on the income support and advice they receive from our staff. We are committed to ensuring people receive their full and correct entitlement to financial assistance by focusing on service excellence, and pride ourselves on service quality and timeliness. By investing in our staff, we aim to have the right people, with the right skills, at the right time and in the right place helping people receive the support they need.

We also know that managing on a low income or a benefit can be challenging. Often debt is a trigger to more serious issues for individuals and families. Recent research identified that unsustainable debt problems can be linked with:

- financial hardship
- poor health (physical and mental)
- family stress, stigma and social exclusion
- barriers to employment²⁴.

The Ministry is moving from reacting to issues such as inappropriate debt,

to proactively preventing things from happening in the first place. Benefit Integrity Services staff attend seminars such as *WRK4U*²⁵ and *Work Track*²⁶, to reinforce clients' responsibilities when receiving a benefit and answer questions about benefit abuse and fraud. StudyLink has a focus on reducing student debt by improving and enhancing financial information available to students. We also visit employers to help their staff understand changes to entitlements such as those created by the *Working for Families* package.

Seasonal workers face unique income pressures. We have close relationships with large employers such as AFFCO Manawatu. Our work at AFFCO Manawatu includes:

- providing regular work broker and benefit administration services from within the factory
- encouraging workers to look for other seasonal or short-term work during the off season
- reminding workers to let us know about a change in their circumstances that may affect their financial assistance entitlements
- providing tailored pre-employment training to assist our clients into work in this industry locally.

We aim to extend this service to other large seasonal employers in the coming year.

23. Statistics have been sourced from the Ministry of Social Development's Student Allowances and Loans system.

24. *When Debt Becomes a Problem: A Literature Study*, Ministry of Social Development, 2004.

25. *WRK4U* is a seminar for people applying for a benefit, letting them know about the state of the labour market and informing them of their job-seeking obligations.

26. *Work Track* is a three-week programme that provides work-search skills and techniques for clients who are at risk of becoming long-term unemployed.

Enhancing the Wellbeing of Older People – Today and Tomorrow

“Many senior people are raising grandchildren, wanting to work long after they turn 65 and we have seniors actively undertaking further education”.

John Dixon,
New Zealand Superannuation
Case Manager

The contribution older people make in our communities and workforce is considerable. Current predictions suggest that 19% of New Zealand’s population will be 65 years and over by 2024, while the working-age population will reduce²⁷. Older people now and in the coming decades will live longer, be healthier, more active, more diverse and better educated. Many will want to work longer and will have different lifestyles at the end of their working lives. Our policies and services are being designed to support people as they grow older to maximise their participation in society and contribution to the economy.

There are 37,196 New Zealand Superannuitants in the Central region, making them the largest client group we work with. Making sure older people have the right information when they need it is a key focus. This includes improving the content and access to information we provide such as websites, fact sheets and other printed material and face-to-face opportunities including conferences and expos. This will help people understand what their entitlements are and enhance their ability to enjoy a secure and comfortable standard of living.

The *New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy*²⁸ is a key document that encourages older people to be involved in their communities and recognises the value of their knowledge, skills and experience.

Many older people tell us they want to participate in and contribute to local community activities. We want to help these people achieve their goal and will assist them to be well informed and receive their full entitlement to income support. We are partnering with agencies such as Grey Power, Age Concern and Probus to see how we can deliver these planned improvements for our clients.



Seniors expo hits the spot

What started as a Work and Income display in the Horowhenua shopping mall has grown into an annual exhibition tailored to the needs of local senior citizens.

This year a variety of agencies and recreational interest groups displayed information about the services they offer seniors and the interesting and valuable things they can do with their spare time including voluntary work opportunities.

International Services, Community Services Card, the Office for Senior Citizens and Work and Income provided a one-stop-shop display with helpful information on entitlements and services, to exhibition visitors.

27. *The Social Report 2005*, Ministry of Social Development.

28. *The New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy: Towards a Society for all Ages*, Ministry of Social Policy, April 2001.

Enhancing the Wellbeing of Older People – Today and Tomorrow

Goodtimes ahead



Sixty-three year old David Mason (pictured left) was made redundant from his Wellington-based managerial position 14 years ago. Refusing to be forced into an early retirement, David applied for many jobs but was repeatedly told he was 'too old'. With the help of Kapiti Work and Income work brokers, David is now enjoying his new job as a driver at Goodtime Foods.

Eight of the 20 people employed by Goodtime Foods are over 50 years of age. Owner, Brent James (pictured right) says that he finds that mature employees are great at building relationships with clients and have the sort of work ethic he is looking for. *"I encourage employers to take another look at mature workers. They are reliable, consistent and dedicated"*, Brent says.

Improving the delivery of services

We provide a wide range of services for older people. Our Senior Services team in particular has a key role to play. We administer New Zealand's international social security arrangements for overseas people living in New Zealand and also for New Zealanders living abroad. Through the Community Services Card, we help individuals and families access affordable health care. Currently, there are over 58,000 people in the Central region with a Community Services Card.

War Pension Services is contracted by Veterans' Affairs New Zealand to administer War Disablement, Veterans' and Surviving Spouse Pensions. There are over 1,800 people receiving a War Pension in our region.

It is important that the services needed by older people are provided in ways that meet their needs. A key part of this is working closely with local Positive Ageing groups who provide an effective way for older people to give advice to local and central government. In Kapiti, we are working in collaboration with the Kapiti Positive Ageing Group on issues concerning the wellbeing of older people.

A key priority for us over the coming year is to review our delivery of services to older people. This review seeks to understand what we should be achieving for older people in the longer term; what

services we should be providing and how they should be delivered. This is an opportunity to prepare for the challenge of New Zealand's ageing population and to provide a more fully integrated service for older people.

Opportunities for older workers

There are increasing opportunities for older people to remain in work, which is positive for the individual and means employers can retain their skills and knowledge. Research shows that those who work longer, either in paid or voluntary work, enjoy better health in their older age²⁹. Full-time employment rates for people aged 60 and over have increased since the qualifying age for New Zealand Superannuation began rising in 1992 and we expect these increases to continue.

To help older people into paid and voluntary work, we are partnering with training organisations, employers and community and voluntary organisations. We will continue to grow our support for those that are already in work and help those who are trying to reach this goal. This may include finding solutions to barriers to employment such as developing computer skills.

29. *Strategies for a Learning Society*, Jean-Claude Paye, OECD Observer No 199, April/May 1996.

Enhancing the Wellbeing of Older People – Today and Tomorrow

Tapping into a world of experience

Older New Zealanders are a valuable source of wisdom and we are keen for young families to benefit from their experience and knowledge. The *SAGES* programme, run by Family and Community Services, taps into the wealth of experience and life skills older people in our region have, matching families and individuals with volunteers. It strengthens the capabilities of parents and individuals caring for their families through improving home management skills, positive parenting and understanding children and young people's needs.

Supergrans provide valuable services as part of the *SAGES* programme. The goal of Supergrans is to help families make the most of their resources and finances. The Horowhenua Supergrans, Bush Supergrans (Pahiatua/Eketahuna), Wairarapa Supergrans and Palmerston North Supergrans all provide free, practical advice on everything from cooking on a budget and mending clothing through to effective communication.



Nan Solomon is one of many older people working in the community. Nan loves teaching Te Reo Māori at St Mary's School in Palmerston North.

Providing protection for older people

Protecting against elder abuse is one of the five critical issues identified in *Opportunity for All New Zealanders*. We are partnering with Age Concern to provide the management of the Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention Services, providing awareness and education services designed for both older people and those who care for them. This service has recently been expanded into the Horowhenua, which was identified as a region with a high proportion of older people currently lacking adequate access to these services. In addition, Work and Income has employed family violence response co-ordinators as part of the *Family Violence Intervention Programme*, to help staff identify and deal with signs of elder abuse.

Honouring our veterans

The Government has designated 2006 as the Year of the Veteran. Events are being held around New Zealand to honour our veterans and their service to our country. A *Year of the Veteran Community Grants Fund*³⁰ has been set up for community-based projects, which will provide opportunities for communities to recognise and honour their servicemen and women. This is also an opportunity to educate our younger people about the special contribution our veterans made. It is available to local authorities, ex-service groups and other organisations such as schools and local museums seeking support for their projects.



30. Further information on what funding is available and how to apply is located on the Veterans' Affairs New Zealand website, www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz.

Partnering with our Communities

Social development is not just embraced by the Ministry in our region. Our local councils, government agencies, iwi, communities and voluntary groups are all working collaboratively to find real solutions to a range of social issues. Youth development, improved health and housing, local economic development, community safety and migrant and refugee resettlement are areas where our regional leaders are striving to make a difference. We are proud to be part of this team of local agencies who are passionate

about positive community outcomes and sustainable development throughout the Central region.

We manage a *Community Initiatives Fund* that supports community leaders to run new and innovative social development projects that will make a positive and measurable difference within their communities. Managed by Family and Community Services, this operates as a project-based fund and assists around 15 projects each year. Funding of up to \$75,000 a year is available for between one and three years.



Work and Income chair the regional Welfare Advisory Group that is co-ordinating its planning to deliver effective services during and after an emergency. *Photo kindly supplied by NZ Defence Force.*

Partnering with our Communities

Partnering with organisations

We recognise that building strong relationships and working together is an investment in the future of our communities. There are many individuals, groups and agencies working hard to improve the social and economic lifestyles of their communities and we are working with them to achieve this shared goal. We have developed our relationships with local iwi organisations to see how we can work together to improve the wellbeing of Māori.

There are no quick-fix solutions to broader social issues such as crime, health and unemployment, but by working together and developing collaborative initiatives we can make a difference in the long-term.

The Manawatu-Wanganui Civil Defence Emergency Management Group (CDEMG) Plan places strong emphasis on the building and enhancement of relationships. As a result of the 2004 storms, a Welfare Advisory Group was established which we chair. The Group provides advice and undertakes planning so that effective welfare services can be delivered during and following an emergency. Current membership includes regional and local councils; Red Cross New Zealand; Housing New Zealand; Child, Youth and Family Services; the Salvation Army; Te Puni Kōkiri; Victim Support; the District Health Board; the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; and ourselves. The Group is currently working on regional welfare responses to a possible influenza pandemic.

Working together with other government agencies means we can increase our ability to provide easy-to-use services. We have been working with Inland Revenue, Accident Compensation Corporation and Housing New Zealand, looking at opportunities in the areas of exchanging information, improving services and our involvement in community projects.

Partnering with the community and voluntary sector

The *He Waka Kotuia*³¹ report identified the day-to-day struggle to survive faced by many community and voluntary organisations. The report identified causes including competing demands for people's time, balancing paid and unpaid work and a shortage of volunteers contributing to the pressures of running a community or voluntary organisation. The positive local economy is attracting people into paid work, which is forecast to continue, increasing the pressures on volunteers.

Meeting seasonal needs



Staff at AFFCO Manawatu are now more likely to go into employment during the meat processing off season than onto a benefit.

With the support of AFFCO management, Work and Income and Benefit Integrity Services are providing regular work broker and benefit administration services from within the processing plant. We encourage workers to look for other seasonal or short-term work during the off season, rather than relying on a benefit.

Being more visible and accessible within the processing plant also means that we are raising the awareness of those who do require financial assistance, about the need to tell us about changes in their circumstances that may affect their benefit entitlement.

The relationship with this large employer has been further strengthened by the successful placement of 13 full-time employees.

Pictured from left are Dan Herlihy and Dave Wilson from the Ministry with AFFCO's Training Co-ordinator, Farley Hokopaura.

31. *He Waka Kotuia - Joining Together on a Shared Journey*, Ministry of Social Policy, August 2002.

Partnering with our Communities

We value the work done by community and voluntary groups in our region. They work at the coalface, dealing with issues of social need, policy and development. Their efforts contribute greatly to advancing solutions for issues in their communities. To make life easier, Family and Community Services has published *Managing Well*³². The resource lists over 120 written resources, websites, newsletters, manuals, information sheets and other documents that provide information related to running an organisation. It also includes a directory of organisations that provides support for the community and voluntary sector.

Partnering in provincial communities

About two thirds of the people in the Central region live in smaller centres and rural communities. These communities often don't have access to the range and breadth of services available in urban areas. We have a focus on making sure our services reach out into these communities.

Our *Heartland Services* concept is a one-stop-shop where people in smaller communities can access a range of government and other related services. An outreach service has also been developed. This involves a number of agencies synchronising visits to smaller communities once or twice a month to provide a face-to-face service.

The *Pahiatua Heartlands* is a valuable asset to the community. In addition, we work with other government agencies to improve service delivery in towns such as Woodville, Eketahuna and Featherston.

Helping our communities thrive

For our region to remain a great place to live we need to focus on making our communities strong; economically and socially. Your local council has asked you, "what is important to you and your community?" as part of its *Community Outcomes* process for developing a *Long Term Council Community Plan*. Most communities were concerned

about their young people, safety and access to healthcare and employment. Also, job creation, job quality and low unemployment were recurring themes around our region. As a key contributor, we are keenly interested in working collaboratively with councils to strengthen our communities.

The Enterprising Communities Grant helps fund several community-led projects around the region including a migrant assistance programme (in Palmerston North), a mentoring programme for youth (in Otaki) and projects with local iwi (in Kapiti). All of these projects have a strong focus on getting people into employment in their local communities.

In addition, our Enterprising Communities advisors are helping communities by providing guidance on other Ministry programmes available and connecting them to other organisations who can assist.

We live in a great region with a strong economy, diverse assets and natural resources. Our communities reflect the diverse and interesting character of our area. Together we can help protect and develop the Central region for the generations to come.



Shirley Hull (pictured) is a welcoming face at the busy Heartland Service Centre in Pahiatua. Work and Income and a variety of other agencies offer services to the Tararua community from the Centre.

32. *Managing Well: resources for community and voluntary organisations*, Ministry of Social Development, August 2005.

POLICY

Social Development Policy and Knowledge

- Strategic Social Policy
- Regional Social Policy
- Social Inclusion and Participation (including the Office for Senior Citizens, the Office for Disability Issues and the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector)
- Centre for Social Research and Evaluation.

Social Services Policy

- Ministry of Youth Development
- Working-Age Peoples' Policy
- Child, Family and Community Policy
- Older Peoples' Policy
- International Relations.

Ministry of Youth Development promotes the interests of young people aged between 12 and 24 years. By listening and responding to the needs of young people, we seek ways to help ensure that young people are valued, nurtured and challenged to reach their full potential.

SERVICE DELIVERY

Work and Income

- 11 Regional Offices
- 141 Service Centres
- 46 Outreach Centres
- 5 Contact Centres (which includes a Multilingual Contact Centre).

Work and Income offers a single point of contact for people needing work-search support to secure employment; in-work support that assists people to stay in employment; and income support to people who require temporary assistance or additional income to supplement their earnings.

Specialist Services

- StudyLink (which includes 6 Outreach Offices plus numerous campus services, 2 Contact Centres and 1 Processing Centre)
- Senior Services
- Benefit Integrity Services.

StudyLink administers financial assistance to students and works in co-operation with secondary schools, tertiary education providers and student bodies to ensure students get the finance they are entitled to so they can complete their study.

Family and Community Services

- 4 Regional Offices
- Co-ordination of 34 Heartland Services.

Senior Services includes administration of the Community Services Card, which gives people access to lower cost health care; International Services, which pays benefits and pensions to people who come to New Zealand from overseas, and New Zealanders who leave the country; and War Pension Services, which administers services to veterans.

Child, Youth and Family (from 1 July 2006)

- 52 Site Centres delivering services
- 12 Service Centres managing Sites
- 3 Specialist Service Units
- 7 Secure Residences for children and young people in youth justice or care and protection.

Benefit Integrity Services includes Benefit Control, the National Data Match Centre and Debt Management. It helps to ensure clients are receiving their correct entitlement to financial assistance with an emphasis on preventing and minimising debt and fraud.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND RISK

People, Capability and Resources

- Human Resources
- Finance
- Information Technology.

Corporate and Governance

- Planning, Purchase and Governance
- Communications
- Legal
- Ministerial and Executive Services
- Client Representatives and Review of Decisions.

Family and Community Services helps to build connected communities and strong, resilient families. We co-ordinate government and non-government organisations to support families to be well resourced, violence-free and connected to their communities. We do so by providing leadership, information and funding social service providers.

Risk and Assurance

- Internal Audit
- Risk Management
- Internal Fraud
- Security.



Ministry of Social Development

Regional Office
32 Victoria Avenue
Palmerston North
www.msd.govt.nz

Benefit Integrity Services

0800 558 008 (Debt Enquiries)

Community Services Card

0800 999 999

Family and Community Services

www.familyservices.govt.nz

International Services

0800 777 117

Ministry of Youth Development

www.myd.govt.nz

StudyLink

www.studylink.govt.nz
0800 88 99 00

War Pensions

0800 553 003

Work and Income

www.workandincome.govt.nz
0800 559 009

