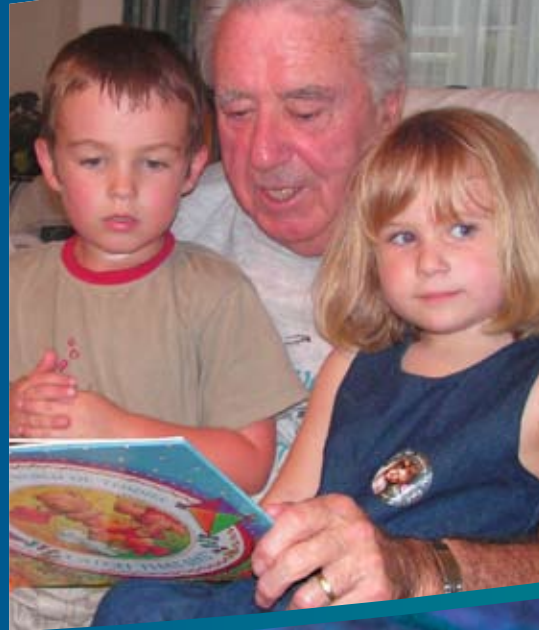


LEADING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN Northland



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora



REGIONAL PLAN 2006/2007



**MINISTRY OF
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO TAIOHI
Administered by the Ministry of Social Development



Cover Photos

- Left: Kate Harbutt studying the art of jewellery making.
- Centre: Whangarei pensioner Geoffrey Field with his grandchildren.
- Right: Joseph Broughton is learning bricklaying through an *Industry Partnership* programme.

Leading Social Development:

A PLAN FOR NORTHLAND 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 Northland 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 Northland, 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 Northland 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 Northland

A picture of Northland

Northland is well known for its gorgeous beaches, beautiful scenery, and strong Māori culture. It is also known for having many remote communities and high levels of poverty. Some communities are vibrant and growing, while others are suffering from long-term economic hardship.

There are an estimated 148,900 people living in Northland of which 49% live in the Whangarei district - the only recognised city in the region². The other 51% are spread across approximately 13,800 square kilometres of mostly rural and coastal area. The widespread nature of our population creates challenges such as access to health and education services, availability of employment, and providing amenities such as water, sewerage, roading and telecommunications.



The remote Hokianga region features some of Northland's most beautiful scenery. Pictured are the area's famous sand dunes, seen from the wharf at Omapere.

2. *Subnational Population Projections, 2001-2026*, Statistics New Zealand.

Opportunities for Action in Northland



Trainees from a Kaikohe pre-employment programme put their new skills to work when they renovated a building at the town's Historic Pioneer Village. Left to right: Henry Padlie, Moko Te Haara, tutor Lawrence Wikaira from Regent Training (seated) and Junior Ru.

Our population make-up is quite different to the national average. Thirty three per cent of Northlanders are Māori, compared to a New Zealand average of 15%³. In 2004, 56% of Northland new-born babies were Māori, compared with a New Zealand average of 28.1%⁴. We also have more young mothers than the national average. Compared to the rest of the country we have more children (under 15 years) and less young people (15 to 24 years). Like everywhere else, we are facing an increase in the number of older people over the next few years. However, it has been identified that Northland's older population will increase much faster than the rest of the country.

The median income for Northland people is \$17,940p.a compared with \$21,994p.a for all New Zealanders⁵. We have one of the lowest qualification levels of all regions, for both the working-age population and for school leavers. We also have low levels of participation in employment compared with most other regions⁶.

Manufacturing and construction make up 20% of the region's workforce. The primary sector (agriculture, fishing and forestry) is particularly important in the Far North and Kaipara regions and makes up 10.5% of the Northland workforce⁷. The seasonal nature of the primary sector creates challenges for our workforce. Other employment is spread across a number of different sectors, predominantly in the service industries, recognising the diversity of our workforce.

Northlanders recognise that we have to work together because the issues we face are so intertwined that we can't do it alone. The shared understanding of the issues and our style of working together has already made a difference for our communities. We have great potential to move beyond the challenges Northlanders face, towards a bright future.

The Ministry's role

Our aim is to understand the realities that Northlanders face and to build partnerships that create opportunities for development. There are many examples of where one action can impact on the lives of many people, or can create lasting effects for individuals. At the same time as investing in Northland people and communities, we also seek to ensure that everyone has the basics for a decent standard of living.

The Ministry of Social Development's *Statement of Intent 2006/2007*⁸ sets out the high level direction we are heading in and what we want to achieve. This plan sets out how we are implementing the Ministry's vision in Northland, and each of the following sections reflects one of the outcomes we are working to achieve.

Previously our Regional Plan has been primarily focused on the Work and Income service. This year, as part of our increased integration, we have expanded it to include the other services within the Ministry. Below is an overview of the different services, which are covered in more detail throughout the plan.

3. *Subnational Ethnic Population Projections, 2001-2016*, Statistics New Zealand.

4. *The Health Status of Children and Young People in Northland*, Paediatric Society of New Zealand (on behalf of Northland DHB), 2005.

5. Statistics New Zealand income data for 2004.

6. *The Social Report 2005, Regional Indicators*, Ministry of Social Development.

7. *New Zealand Business Demographic Statistics*, Statistics New Zealand, February 2005.

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

Opportunities for Action in Northland

- The Ministry of Youth Development works to promote youth as valuable contributors to society. They also provide support to organisations that are engaging with young people. Their aim is that all youth have a chance to reach their full potential.
- Family and Community Services works with other organisations to co-ordinate information and services to support families to be strong, violence-free and connected to their communities.
- StudyLink administers financial assistance for students. They ensure that students receive their full entitlement of financial support. They also help students make informed decisions about their study and funding options, so that more students can complete their study with the least possible debt.
- Benefit Integrity Services helps to ensure people receive their correct entitlement to financial assistance with an emphasis on preventing and minimising debt and fraud.
- Senior Services manages three areas: International Services administers New Zealand's social security agreements and portability arrangements here and overseas; the Community Services Card Centre administers the Community Services Card on behalf of the Ministry of Health; and War Pension Services (contracted by Veterans' Affairs New Zealand) administers war-related pensions to veterans. Their main client group is people aged 65 plus, however they also deliver services to younger New Zealanders.
- Work and Income supports people who need help getting work. They also provide other financial assistance such as *Working for Families*⁹ and national superannuation. These are the staff you are most likely to see when you walk into one of our service centres. We also work to address skills gaps, and other issues that make it difficult for businesses and communities to grow, through our Labour Market Development team. Our Social Development team works with communities and organisations to tackle the broader issues. Most recently their focus has been on family violence, youth transitions, building strong families, housing and infrastructure issues such as sewerage and water.

Whangarei is fortunate to be home to the Residential Subsidy Unit. This Unit, on behalf of the Ministry of Health, is responsible for assessing a client's entitlement to financial assistance for residential care such as rest homes, drug and alcohol units or psychiatric units. They process claims for all of New Zealand.

Wayne cleans up



Wayne Sowter from Whangarei was delighted to land a full-time job after 20 years on a benefit. Wayne, pictured with employer Catherine Houben, gained his first full-time job as a factory cleaner after being on an Invalid's Benefit for most of his adult life.

Wayne, 44, has learning difficulties and was assisted into his job after receiving strong support from Work and Income and Workbridge. Staff worked closely together to find a job that would suit Wayne's skills, and after completing his work experience, he was taken on by Acclaim Joinery Ltd. He also receives assistance from IDEA Services, formerly IHC.

9. *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.

Opportunities for Action in Northland

“The Ministry has been a key strategic partner working alongside Enterprise Northland and other agencies to deliver on the recommendations from the Northland Economic Strategy.

The positive engagement by the Ministry has been a critical part in ensuring a collaborative approach to address both the challenges and opportunities this region faces. This has resulted in a real team environment, via such activities as the Northland Intersectoral Forum and the Northland Skills Forum, and the Ministry has played a significant part in ensuring effective strategies have been delivered upon”.

Brian Roberts

*Chief Executive Officer
Enterprise Northland*

Into the future

Our focus is on investing in our people and communities, however we will also continue to provide the safeguards that mean everyone has the basics for living. Over the next year we will ensure that those in contact with us receive an excellent service. The focus of new initiatives will be on the following groups:

- Families - any improvement in the lives of families has an impact on the children and extended family. In particular we will be working on how we can help our sole-parent clients. We will also be focusing on ensuring our response to families and individuals affected by family violence helps them find a way forward.
- Māori - they are prominent in benefit, poverty, crime and ill-health statistics. One initiative already identified is looking at how we can reduce the number of Māori receiving an unemployment-related benefit¹⁰.
- Youth - intervening early will give them the opportunity to reach their full potential and have lasting positive effects in their lives.
- Isolated and disadvantaged communities - government agencies have a responsibility to provide adequate services no matter where someone lives. Also, improving the welfare of a community means that the lives of individuals are improving too. In particular we have already identified the need to investigate childcare and transport options in the region.

In addition, we have also identified that over the coming year we will be taking further action on the following:

- discussions with stakeholders about planning for the future needs of older people
- improving co-ordination and training of seasonal workers
- improving the collaboration between health providers and Work and Income to assist people who are receiving benefits due to illness or a disability.

We can't change the world on our own. It is important that we continue the effective partnerships we have already begun with other government agencies, local authorities, economic development agencies, iwi, employers, training and education providers, non-profit and non-government organisations, communities and most importantly individuals. These relationships, and a commitment to working together towards shared goals, will enable us to make a long-lasting difference for Northlanders.

¹⁰. An unemployment-related benefit includes an Unemployment Benefit and an Unemployment Benefit - Hardship.



Northland's tourism industry provides opportunities for social and economic development. Pictured is one of our beautiful beaches in the Hokianga.



Moving Forward

E ngā mana
E ngā reo
E ngā tini karanga maha
Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou,
tena rā tātou katoa.

Welcome to the Northland Regional Plan for the 2006/2007 year. This plan builds a picture of who we are as a Ministry and what we are trying to achieve in Northland. Where once the focus was on employment through Work and Income, our scope has broadened to cover all aspects of social development for individuals, whānau and communities. We cannot achieve this alone so much of our work will continue to promote and reinforce collaborative approaches across the social sector. Our vision is to make Northland a place where it doesn't matter which agency people visit, from there the move between support services is easy and stress free.

Our various services have a broad range of functions for making a difference in the communities that we live in.

These changes could be improving the family or community setting, developing sustainable community initiatives or supporting young people to reach their potential. Internally, we are making our service more flexible and co-ordinated so that people have easy access to whatever service they need.

Whether you read the entire plan, or you only read certain sections, I hope you get a sense of the enthusiasm the Ministry's staff have for Northland and its people. I would like to acknowledge their effort in striving towards providing excellent service to all our clients and stakeholders. They have been coping with a time of change and growth within our organisation, and their positive outlook and desire to make a real difference is the key to our success.

E mihi nui ana ki te kaupapa kei mua nei i a tātou. Arā te whakapiringa o ngā tari maha ki raro i te maru o Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora. Kia ora mai tātou katoa.



Marama Wiki
Regional Commissioner for Social Development



Leading Social Development

Leading social development can happen at any level, be it government, regional or community. It can be around giving everyone better information to help their decision-making; encouraging other government agencies to work with us towards joint goals; helping communities to take action for themselves; or it can be around finding better ways to work internally.

Across Government

“As the Commander of Northland Police for the last five years I have been excited and impressed by the role the Ministry is taking in the community. At a time when leadership at the highest level is required, the Ministry has been at the forefront and the contribution of Regional Commissioners Debbie Power and Marama Wiki, and many others should be applauded. As an organisation, the Ministry has moved ahead in leaps and bounds and is at the centre of a number of collaborative efforts that will make Northland a better place to live”.

Viv Rickard
District Commander
Northland Police

Each year we release *The Social Report*¹¹, an annual report that monitors the quality of life and wellbeing of all New Zealanders at a national and regional level. In response to the issues being identified by *The Social Report*, on behalf of the Government and central agencies, we published *Opportunity for All New Zealanders*¹². It paints a picture of what the Government is doing to improve the wellbeing of New Zealanders. It also identifies five critical social issues that the Government wants to focus on over the next three years:

- improving educational attainment 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 abuse and neglect of children and older people.

We are responsible for co-ordinating action on two issues; minimising family violence, and sustainable employment (in conjunction with the Department of Labour) and we contribute to addressing the other issues through our relationships with other agencies.

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.

Through our various service lines, we have an in-depth knowledge of the needs of our key population groups, be they older people, youth, families, communities, iwi, students or beneficiaries. We use this knowledge to guide government policy and decision-making, and are available to provide advice to other interested parties as necessary.

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

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



Leading Social Development

One of the most important aspects of improving the way we do things is researching best practice, implementing changes, and then measuring the outcomes of what we have done. Our Centre for Social Research and Evaluation undertakes research, evaluation and data analysis to develop and disseminate knowledge that supports decision-making across various government agencies. Their aim is to encourage informed debate on emerging and enduring social issues.

In the region

The Social Report 2005 Regional Indicators identified some issues for Northland, particularly around participation in early childhood education, participation in employment, educational attainment, household crowding, and road deaths. We are having discussions with other agencies to see how we can help Northlanders improve their lives in such a way that these results will get better over the next few years.



The Northland Inter-sectoral Forum is a strategic planning group made up of senior managers from the Ministry of Education, the Department of Labour, the Department of Conservation, Te Puni Kōkiri, New Zealand Police, local authorities, the Northland District Health Board, Sport Northland, Enterprise Northland, Housing New Zealand, Child, Youth and Family Services, the Tertiary Education Commission and ourselves. Our Regional Commissioner for Social Development co-chairs the group, alongside the District Commander from New Zealand Police. The group has confirmed the *Opportunity for All New Zealanders* critical issues as a focus for Northland, with the addition of improving housing. They are now working on a plan for how to work together to tackle these issues.

We also take part in the Northland Skills Forum, which is a group of agency representatives who are working to identify the issues that relate to skills shortages in Northland and taking action to resolve them. They have developed a strategy¹³ and are now implementing the identified actions. The work that

we do contributes to a number of their action areas.

Our Regional Commissioner for Social Development chairs the Northland Welfare Advisory Group which is attended by various support agencies and community organisations to plan responses to crises such as pandemic or civil defence emergencies. By meeting regularly and undertaking planning sessions for various emergencies, the different groups are able to identify what resources they can provide, and how to best work together in a crisis situation. They align with the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group to support their work.

Our Labour Market Development team is responsible for engaging with local forums to stimulate job growth. They have been working with local councils, economic development agencies and the Department of Labour to set up labour market development forums in the Far North, Kaipara and Whangarei. The Kaipara forum now includes a large employer alongside other industry representatives. One task the forum is undertaking is to talk to

Whangarei *Work Track* participants Jessica Adams, left, and Sarah Lamb, right, discuss CV preparation with *Work Track* Facilitator Denise Tucker (standing). The Work and Income programme for job seekers aims to help unemployed clients find work.

13. Meeting the skills challenge in Northland: A Regional Skills and Training Strategy, Northland Skills Action Working Group, 2004.

Leading Social Development



Beauty of the Hokianga

An Enterprise Allowance helped qualified beauty therapist Lorraine Eden set up her own salon at the Copthorne Hotel in Omapere.

Lorraine, who is from the Hokianga, had been based in the South Island when she returned to Northland to look after her sick mother, and was unable to work. Lorraine was unsure whether to stay in Northland or return to the South Island. After speaking with her Work and Income case manager, she realised she was eligible for an Enterprise Allowance, and set about establishing a business in her home town.

Lorraine is now running a successful salon, 'Vibrant Beauty and Massage Spa', which brings another service to the Hokianga and appeals to locals, weekenders and tourists.

selected employers to identify what is hindering their growth. It is hoped that this information can be extended to cover all employers, and resulting work will improve the local economy.

On the funding side, the Labour Market Development team has worked with the Department of Internal Affairs and Enterprise Northland to develop the Investing in Northland Communities (INC) Funders' Forum. This brings together organisations that may have funding available to invest on our communities. It allows for joint funding of projects, and offers a central point for people who need to access funding for new initiatives. The next step is to develop a reference book that gives groups information about where to go to fund every stage of their project.

Last year the four Northland local authorities undertook a *Regional Community Outcomes* project¹⁴ to identify what is important to Northlanders. The consultation process included focus groups in each district, meetings with key sectors and agencies, focus groups with Māori residents and a telephone survey. The results of this project will guide councils in the development of their *Long Term Council Community Plans*, and set the foundation for all organisations to work together for the benefit of Northlanders. We have been involved in the project from the beginning, and will continue to work towards achieving the outcomes that have been identified. This is discussed in more detail in the 'Partnering with our Communities' section of this plan.

14. *Northland: Our Place, Our Future - Regional Community Outcomes Project*, A.C. Nielson (on behalf of Northland councils), 2005.

Leading Social Development

Government agencies have made progress towards better understanding each other so that we can all work more closely together. The next step is to co-ordinate services so that people are guaranteed to receive the right service, from the right providers, at the right time. From an individual's perspective, it doesn't matter who is funding or providing a service, as long as the people who need help are getting it.

The Pulse in Raumanga, Whangarei is an example of how a partnership with community and government agencies can develop a collective response to the issues faced by young people in that community. *The Pulse* is an urban Heartland service centre; a one-stop-shop where people can access a range of government and community services. A person arriving at the central reception will be referred to the appropriate agency for assistance. Services with a presence at *The Pulse* include Work and Income; New Zealand Police; the Northland District Health Board; Child, Youth and Family Services; School Attendance Services; He Mataariki (a teenage parent school); James Family Centre (counselling and other interventions); Te Ora Hou (support for families); Tautoko Teina (mentoring); and He Kakano Childcare Centre.

While we have already mentioned that it is difficult for individuals and families to deal with the many government agencies, it can also be difficult for our community and Māori organisations to have separate funding contracts with various government agencies. The *Funding for Outcomes* project has been trialling an integrated funding agreement so that providers have only one government contract for services, and therefore only one set of deliverables. At this stage, the only Northland organisation involved in the project is Te Runanga o Te Rarawa. We are keen to work with the *Funding for Outcomes* project team to identify other providers who could benefit from this initiative.

Within the Ministry

As we have already mentioned, there is a drive to improve government agency linkages so that a person can have easy access to services. Easy access to services is also a challenge within large organisations like ours. This Plan is an example of how we are bringing our different services together to create a more holistic service. When you make contact with us, it shouldn't matter who you talk to, they will be able to link you with someone who can help.

Our regional Ministry of Social Development Governance Group meets regularly to identify risks and opportunities ahead of us, and to implement joint solutions. We are developing a high-level framework that will bring all aspects of social development together, highlight shared priorities, and encourage all business units who have activities within Northland to work more closely together.

Another challenge for large government agencies is making sure that the needs of communities are being heard. Our service centres and outreach offices have the flexibility to have an input into their own communities. They also act as a conduit to transfer information and issues about Northland to central government. While all staff undertake these responsibilities, we are fortunate to have a Regional Policy Advisor whose main function is to take suggestions from staff and stakeholders and use them to inform policy decisions at a national level. She also works to find ways of addressing issues at a local level. Both our Regional Policy Advisor and Regional Commissioner for Social Development ensure that Northland's voice is heard where policy decisions are made for the entire country.

"It's been great doing the programme and having the support of the *Family Start* team. They really help take the edge off stressful situations. Sometimes it's just having the simple things done for you that can really make a difference to your daily life".

Gemma Edmonds
Family Start graduate

Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

Making a difference for our children and their families

While the majority of families are doing well, some need support. Different types of families have different needs. The pressures that families face can have an impact on the development of their children. By supporting parents and families in managing their lives and caring for each other, we can make a difference for the entire family.

Laying the foundations

Family and Community Services provides funding, information and assistance for community organisations to undertake education and support programmes. The *SKIP (Strategies with Kids: Information for Parents)* initiative supports parents to bring up children in a positive way, using love and nurture as well as setting boundaries to guide and teach them. *SKIP* helps community organisations promote positive parenting and provide practical knowledge and skills for parents with children under five years old. There are three components:

- resources such as pamphlets, videos, tip sheets and research information
- development of parent support and education training packages
- a *Local Initiatives Fund* to help community groups promote positive parenting.

Over the last few years we have funded a number of *SKIP* events in Northland including seminars, workshops and courses, fun days, pool parties and a peer development programme for teenage and young mothers.

The *Family Start* programme provides intensive home-based support services to vulnerable families with young children, aimed at improving their ability to resolve problems. There are three *Family Start* programmes running in Northland; Ngati Hine Health Trust provides the service in

Te Aupouri Social Services, providers of the successful *SKIP* programme in the Far North area, are pictured here at the *Kaitaia Parents Expo*. From left are Tonya Pene, Te Aupouri; Justine Rae, Work and Income Kaitaia Service Centre Manager; and Dawn Reid, Te Aupouri.



Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

Gemma blossoms into motherhood



When Gemma Edmonds moved to Whangarei two years ago she was 19 years old and about to have her second child, with no local family support. With hard work and a helping hand from the Whangarei *Family Start* programme, Gemma has blossomed into a resourceful mother of three. Her increased self-confidence and the support offered by the programme means she finds the stresses of daily life easier to cope with.

Gemma was visited regularly by a team member to help her acquire parenting skills and attain goals, including her desire to plant a vegetable garden providing cheap, healthy food for the family. She now hopes to study for a certificate in horticulture when her children are older.

Gemma is pictured with her three children and *Family Start* workers. From left, Gemma with baby Hoana, Peka Moore with Rawiri and Tania Siteine with Whakaari.

Whangarei, Te Runanga o Te Rarawa in the Far North and Tihewa Mauriora Primary Health Organisation offers the service in the Kaikohe area. Families stay with the programme until they improve their circumstances and acquire skills that help them give their children the best possible start in life. Last year, 22 families attended a graduation ceremony in Whangarei to celebrate their achievements in completing the programme.

The *Strengthening Families* initiative provides co-ordinated support for families who are dealing with more than two government or non-government agencies. Typically these are the families who are most in need. We fund Strengthening Families co-ordinators in Kaitiaki and Whangarei who cover the entire region. These are the people who bring the different agencies and families together and work to find ways to move the families forward. Everyone benefits because families get to see all agencies at once instead of having various individual meetings, and agencies are not repeating each other's work. Usually joint solutions are more beneficial than each agency working individually.

Family and Community Services also offers online information services to help families solve their problems early, before they get out of hand¹⁵.

- The *211 Directory* (formerly known as the Family Services National Directory) lists family-related services, programmes and resources available across the country.
- *FamilyWeb* links people to helpful websites on subjects such as raising children, supporting young people and growing older. The information available will be expanded in the coming year.

Providing assistance

The *Working for Families* package was developed to help families have a decent standard of living, particularly so that working parents are financially better off for their effort. Most low- and medium-income families are entitled to Family Assistance and possibly Accommodation Supplements. For those parents who are working, there is also an In Work Payment available and they can receive subsidies for early childcare and after-school care costs. The thresholds and rates for all of these supplements will continue to increase up until April 2007, so families who were previously not eligible may now be able to receive assistance. Our Contact Centre has an on-going programme to call parents who are either past or existing clients, or who have had contact with us through services such as the Community Services Card, to promote the *Working for Families* package.

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

Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

Childcare is a major issue for parents who want to work. While the *Working for Families* subsidy helps make it affordable, there are other issues such as availability of childcare facilities in rural areas, quality of services and the ability to get care outside of normal working hours. Having reliable childcare that the parent trusts can make a big difference in the quality of a parent's working experience. Last year we provided an Enterprising Communities Grant to fund a co-ordinator who set up the He Kakano Childcare Centre at *The Pulse* in Whangarei. *The Pulse* is home to the teen parent school and near the Northland Polytechnic, so it is a prime location for a childcare centre. Over the next 12 months our Labour Market Development team is going to be engaging with the Ministry of Education, local economic development agencies and other groups to see if there are other ways we can address the problem of childcare for families.



Rock climbing is among the activities on offer at *Conversation Corps* programmes funded by the Ministry of Youth Development. Zac Nicholson, a programme participant said, "I found the course structure suitable for my needs as I am a practical learner rather than a theoretical learner. The content had a lot to offer me and the delivery from the staff was great".

Minimising family violence

We are responsible for co-ordinating action to minimise family violence and the abuse and neglect of children and older people. At a local level we are working alongside a number of organisations to make this happen. The focus is on changing attitudes and behaviours, and giving families the skills they need to resolve conflicts without using violence or abuse.

Family and Community Services and Work and Income have jointly developed an intervention programme that gives case managers the skills and resources to recognise abuse and help clients who are experiencing family violence. The programme ensures that all Work and Income staff are aware of the effects of family violence, provide a safe and sensitive environment for clients and

are able to refer clients to appropriate support services. There are family violence co-ordinators based in Kaikohe and Whangarei who are building links between the various support services, as well as assisting all Work and Income staff.



Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

“It’s all about being persistent, and believing in the whānau’s strength. Visiting the parents at home and helping them learn about their child’s development really works. It is so important that we keep our eyes on our babies, and the more families involved with *Family Start* the better”.

Mariameno Kapa
General Manager, Whānau Whanui

Developing our young people

Moving from childhood to adulthood can be a difficult time for some people. During this time we start to become independent from our parents, and we move away from the protection of school. The things we do and choices we make can create either positive or negative effects across the rest of our lives. As a society we have a responsibility to try and help our young people make the right choices for them as individuals. Young people are tomorrow’s workers, parents and leaders.

The youth voice

The Ministry of Youth Development is one of the Government’s key connection points with the young people of New Zealand. A vital part of our work is talking with and listening directly to young people. This puts us in the special position of being able to inform the Government on finding ways to take into account youth interests when developing policies and services.

The Ministry of Youth Development has three areas of particular focus. The first is giving young people opportunities to take part in decision-making and thereby increase their control over what happens to them. The national participation projects



Cadet scheme keeps trainees on track

Ten young Northlanders celebrated a great achievement when they graduated from the first regional cadetship programme. Its success led to a second cadetship being established, giving 18 more young people the chance to start a career. Run with the support of *Mayors Taskforce for Jobs*, the cadetship gives young people the opportunity to work in the public service for 12 months, learning a range of skills.

The Whangarei, Kaipara and Far North District Councils, along with the Northland Regional Council each interview and select their cadets and provide them with training and mentoring. Work and Income and the Tertiary Education Commission are also partners in the programme, and initial training is given by a private training provider.

Pictured are the successful graduates from the first cadetship with their tutor.

Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

Northland's second *Youth Transition Service* will serve the Far North district, with offices in Kaitaia, Kaikohe and Kawakawa. Pictured left to right are *Youth Transition Services* staff; Rohario Makiha, Wiremu Harrison, Tony Brooking, Edmund Eramiha and Marina Yates.



are promoted under the *Aotearoa Youth Voices*¹⁶ banner. One such project is *PROVOKE* which involves secondary school students and adult liaisons working with ideas and tools to assist young people to get their views and perspectives heard by decision-makers. This year, a key project will be planning and preparation for the next *Youth Parliament*, to be held in 2007.

The second focus area is funding programmes, services and initiatives that increase young people's chances of successfully reaching their full potential. The core elements of these services are work related, recreation and the environment, and education on personal health and social skills. Courses are available in the Northland region.

In addition, the *Youth Development Partnership Fund* is available to respond to youth needs by partnering with local authorities. Currently the Far North District Council is giving youth-led presentations which provide career information and showcase positive role models of youth achievement. The project seeks to expand the employment expectations of young people and motivate them to achieve their goals.

Our final focus area is providing advice to agencies and organisations about how to involve youth so that they receive the best services and support. This includes the implementation of the *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*¹⁷ and presenting workshops such as *Keepin' it Real* and *E Tipu E Rea*. We will also provide policy advice in a range

of areas where we do not have primary responsibility, but young people are affected. These areas include the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the age of criminal prosecution, the *New Zealand Suicide Prevention Strategy*¹⁸, youth health, and the minimum alcohol purchasing age.

Over the next year we are co-funding the *Youth2007* research project, led by the University of Auckland. This is a survey of the health and wellbeing of young New Zealanders in secondary schools. Over 10,000 school students, from 100 secondary schools will be asked to complete the survey. The aim is to collect information that will help us develop policies and practices to improve the health of young people.

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, 2002.

18. *New Zealand Suicide Prevention Strategy: A Life Worth Living: Consultation document*, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Youth Development, April 2005.

Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

Maarten's drive for a better life



Taxi driver Maarten Lintern is back in work and loving it, thanks to *Working for Families*.

Maarten, from Waiotira near Whangarei, was forced to give up his job managing a dairy farm when he became the sole carer for his three young children. He found himself on the Domestic Purposes Benefit and feeling increasingly isolated and depressed as a rurally located stay-at-home dad. So he jumped at the chance of training for a new job which would allow him to combine his home and work responsibilities, and have his earnings boosted by more than \$100 per week through the *Working for Families* package.

After completing a 'P endorsement' programme, which earned him a passenger licence, Maarten found a job driving taxis, and says being back in work has made a huge difference to the whole family. He is pictured, right, with employer Tony Tedbury.

Photo courtesy of Northern Advocate.

Successful transitions

Ideally, all young people move smoothly from school to work or further training. Unfortunately this isn't always the case. We have two *Youth Transition Services* in Northland. These *Services* are part of our support of the *Mayors Taskforce for Jobs* goal, that by 2007, all 15 to 19 year olds will be engaged in work, education or training, or other activities that contribute to their long-term economic independence and wellbeing. The *Services* engage with people who leave school early and monitor them as they move into employment or training. They also work closely with some youth who are at risk of losing motivation or direction around what to do with their future.

The Whangarei *Youth Transition Service* is run by People Potential. They have more than 1,000 school leavers on their register, and are offering intensive support to between 50 and 100 youth at any one time. The Far North *Service* is a partnership between Ngati Hine and Tai FM. They are still getting up and running, but aim to have offices in Kaitaia, Kawakawa and Kaikohe, and mobile services in other areas. They already have just over 100 youth on their register.

Te Uri o Hau Social Services and the *Kaipara Youth Connections* project, administered by the Dargaville High School, support youth living in the Kaipara area. The projects work with those who are at risk of leaving school or who have left school, to help them develop a plan for their future. They also work with some younger children to identify, and overcome, what is standing in the way of their being successful at school.

Our StudyLink service works in co-operation with education providers and student bodies to ensure that students receive financial support while studying. We administer Student Allowances, Student Loans, Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship and some scholarships. Our aim is that students have the financial assistance they need when studying, while minimising the amount of debt they incur. We provide a year-round service in Whangarei co-located with Work and Income, and at the Northland Polytechnic and Kaitaia Work and Income site during peak enrolment times. While many of the people who access StudyLink services are youth, they are available to anyone who is studying.

StudyLink also delivers the *On Course* programme to potential tertiary students while still in secondary school. The programme helps young people make informed choices about their study, and about their funding options. For people who choose to take out a student loan we ensure borrowers are aware of all funding options and the implications of study choices and borrowing.

Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

Creating partnerships with communities to help our young people

Increasingly, communities are coming up with multi-faceted ways to help their young people. Below are two initiatives that we have been involved with that highlight the potential to make a difference by working together.

The Te Runanga o Te Rarawa housing project provides youth with training in carpentry by building a house, which is then sold to Housing New Zealand to provide accommodation for low-income families when the project is complete. The profit goes towards running the next course. We expect that students who

complete the course are moved on to apprenticeships or other employment in the community. This scheme has been running for the last three years with varying levels of support from Work and Income. To date, six houses have been built and a number of students have moved on to full-time employment or further training. Discussions are underway to expand the training to include plumbing and electrical work, and to expand the scheme to other areas.

Te Whare Rerenga is a project undertaken by the Otangarei Youth Sport and Recreation Trust to establish a residential facility for teenage girls. Currently there are no such facilities in Northland, and

any girls who need this service have to leave the region and stay in Auckland. We have provided an Enterprising Communities Grant for the co-ordinator to purchase the building, recruit staff and get the establishment running. Housing New Zealand has committed to providing the house, and the ASB Trust will fund the cost of whiteware, furnishings and utilities. Child, Youth and Family Services will contract the service for girls in their care, thereby providing ongoing funding to cover operating costs. The service will provide a safe and secure home environment for the girls, and will include education in the areas of personal and sexual health, preparation for employment, budgeting and daily life skills.

“In a region like Northland partnerships are hugely important if we are to improve the quality of life of our communities. I am most appreciative of the opportunity to work with the Ministry to bring hope to our young people through the establishment of the *Youth Transition Service*”.

Yvonne Sharp
Mayor of Far North



Amanda Brown, right, pictured with her son Tai-la Harrison, discusses opportunities with Career Consultant Rina Hudson, at a *Training Expo* held at Whangarei's Walton Plaza Service Centre.

Improving Opportunities for Working Age People

“Mike (Work and Income Kaikohe Work Broker) doesn’t realise how much I have a place in my heart for him. He took time out to help me find work and he really went out of his way, so I had to prove that I could get out there and get a job”.

Sharon Brown
former DPB client
now Trainee Manager, KFC

What we do during our working lives has an impact on our children and families, and on how comfortable we are during our retired years. Getting a person into a decent paid job that lasts, will have a positive effect on their whole way of living.

We have two roles in improving opportunities for working-age people. The first is that we help those who are willing and able to work to move into ongoing employment. The second role is to provide protection and support for people for whom work is not appropriate at this stage in their lives.

Currently we have 2,829¹⁹ people receiving an unemployment-related benefit, a 19.9% reduction from last year. In addition, there are 5,553 people receiving a domestic purposes-related benefit²⁰, and of these 4,981 are sole parents. When you compare our benefit rates to population proportions, Māori are over represented, making up 64.1% of both our unemployment-related and domestic purposes-related benefit recipients. We also support 5,981 people who need assistance due to ill health or disabilities.



An *Industry Partnerships* bricklaying programme run in Whangarei, helped trainees like Joseph Broughton learn skills to launch a career in construction.

19. 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.

20. A domestic purposes-related benefit comprises DPB Sole Parent, DPB Caring for the Sick or Infirm, DPB Woman Alone and Emergency Maintenance Allowance.

Improving Opportunities for Working Age People

Work and Income clients are helping Kawakawa's effort to restore its reputation as Northland's 'train town'. Bill Brown, left, and Martin Tautari, centre, are pictured with Bay of Islands Vintage Railway's Operations Director, Mike Bradshaw, aboard the steam train 'Gabriel'.



Developing the labour market

Finding workers for jobs

The challenge for Work and Income has changed from finding jobs for workers, to finding workers for jobs. This means that we partner with potential employers to find out what they need. By working with specific industries or employers who are facing skills gaps, we can train and develop our clients to meet their employment needs, thereby giving clients the opportunity for lasting employment.

Our Industry Partnership advisor actively looks for opportunities to build partnerships that will fill gaps in the labour market. For example, last year, an employer who is involved in bricklaying approached Work and Income to say that he had a lot of work coming up and a shortage of staff. Our Industry Partnership advisor did some investigation and found that there is a demand for bricklayers, and there is no training in stone masonry north of Wellington. G & H Training have since been contracted to provide a 12-week course in bricklaying and stone masonry, based in Whangarei. The course was

offered to 12 clients, some of whom came from as far away as Kaitiāia. The Northland Masonry Association is supportive of the initiative and has agreed to provide work experience for the students. If the course is successful we will look at offering more training courses and maybe expanding it to cover full masonry qualifications.

Another recent success saw our Labour Market Development team working collaboratively with other key agencies to attract the finance and administration department of APN, a major publishing house, to relocate to Whangarei. Our work brokers will be managing the recruitment of upwards of 40 vacancies for the organisation.

One focus area for *Industry Partnerships* this year is the hospitality industry in the Bay of Islands. We understand that increasing tourism demand in the hotels is resulting in employment gaps in roles such as house-keeping, porters and kitchen hands. We will be talking to stakeholders to see if we can find ways of filling these gaps.

Labour market development is about supporting communities to develop sustainable sources of income. Earlier this year we entered into a partnership with the recently restructured Bay of Islands Vintage Railway Trust for the restoration of the train (Gabriel) and track between Kawakawa and Opuā. We provided an Enterprising Communities Grant to employ a co-ordinator who has extensive experience in rail operations. We have also wrapped in an *Industry Partnerships* programme to enable the Trust to provide a 10-week training course for long-term unemployed clients²¹. After the course, there will be a Job Connections Wage Subsidy available to support the employment of those who have completed the course. Clients will be involved in the restoration of Gabriel, upgrade of the station and upgrade of the railway tracks. It is hoped that the completed train and track restoration will be a tourist attraction for the Kawakawa community.

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 benefits of the (*Conservation Corps*) course have had a big impact on my learning ability. The delivery and support from staff was fantastic. The course contents had a lot to offer me and I am now back in the workforce”.

Loki Sylva
*Conservation Corps participant
 Northland Polytechnic*

Seasonal work is one of the challenges for Northland. In recent years, the volume and quality of horticulture produce has led to an increasing need for trained staff in all aspects of horticulture production. Seasonal employers in Kerikeri will be supported by an enhanced seasonal co-ordination role focused on developing the labour market to better meet their needs. There is also an opportunity to cultivate a full-time labour force that can work across different seasonal demands. We are working towards that goal by trialling a programme with Rural Training Solutions to provide our clients with skills in more than one seasonal produce. If successful, the programme will be extended to cover all aspects of seasonal

work, including harvesting, horticulture pack house, tree management, market garden and glasshouse work.

Getting people ready to work

For those who find it a challenge to get and hold jobs, we try to identify what is making it hard for them. Where the barriers result from a lack of skills, we are able to move the person into training that often covers skills such as job seeking, work ethics and working in teams as well as technical skills relating to specific jobs. Recent courses have included scaffolding, bricklaying and processing oysters for Sanfords Limited.



Brent lays out his future

After years working in seasonal and temporary jobs, interspersed with spells of receiving an Unemployment Benefit, Brent King is now the proud owner of a Dargaville flooring shop.

The former beneficiary, who has worked in the kumara fields, been involved in the *Taskforce Green* work programme and undertaken a range of part-time jobs, finally found a career after completing an apprenticeship in carpet-laying.

Brent gained experience working for flooring companies in Northland, and now owns 'All About Floors', which he runs with wife Sue.

The couple, pictured with baby Caitlin and Work Broker Maree Chapman (left), are now employing people through Work and Income. They have taken on two staff to assist them and will also use self-employed contractors in Dargaville and Whangarei to help lay carpets and vinyl.

Improving Opportunities for Working Age People



Chance Hati, pictured here learning to pick persimmons, was among those taking part in a training programme to provide skills in the horticultural sector.

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.

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

As already mentioned, StudyLink offers financial information and information to people who are undertaking tertiary education irrespective of age. The financial assistance is in the form of student allowances and student loans, Unemployment Benefit student Hardship and some scholarships.

The opening of the Northland correctional facility in Ngawha gave us an opportunity to set up a Re-integration team based part-time within the prison, to help men work towards paid employment as they are preparing for

release. Being able to work with the men before they are released means that there is a seamless transition from prison to either work or a benefit. Our work brokers engage local employers on behalf of the men.

Sometimes the barrier to work is in encouraging employers to take on another staff member that they may need but can't afford. We can subsidise the wages of an employee until they have developed the skills to be a productive member of the organisation. Once they are working to the level required for the position, the employer is expected to offer on-going employment under the same conditions as were previously subsidised. This option for support can create benefits for both the client and the employer.



Improving Opportunities for Working Age People

As already mentioned, *Working for Families* has been developed to make it easier, and more worthwhile, for parents to undertake work. The top-up of low- and medium-income families through Family Assistance, In Work Payments and Childcare Assistance is aimed at making work more attractive than being on a benefit. Over the last few years the thresholds and rates have been increasing, and they will go up again in April 2007.

While we acknowledge that there are many groups who need help to move off a benefit, this year, we are concentrating on reducing the number of Māori unemployed. Māori represent 64.1% of the number of clients receiving an unemployment-related benefit, while only making up an estimated 33% of our population. The recent buoyant job market has reduced the total number of unemployed, but much more slowly for Māori. We will be undertaking enhanced case management of Māori unemployed clients living in selected areas, with the aim of identifying and overcoming what is stopping them getting work. We will also be improving our information capture to get a better picture of what makes it difficult for Māori to get and hold jobs.

Career development

For people who are employed, our aim is to make it worthwhile for them to stay working. To do this, people need to be able to move between jobs, undertake training and advance in their careers without requiring a benefit in between. The *New Service Approach* being delivered in all of our service centres will help this. In addition, people who have been placed in employment through *Industry Partnerships* or other Work and Income placement schemes could be eligible for funding towards career development. Helping people advance their careers not only creates opportunities for them, but also for others, as those positions become available for someone else to fill.

Family and Community Services offers *NGO Social Work Study Awards* to staff in non-government organisations. These are targeted at practising social workers and aim to help them increase their skills, competence and qualifications. The awards contribute to the cost of the course fees, to support the employee taking study leave, and to allow the employer to backfill the employee's position while they complete their final three-month placement. Two hundred and five applications were received, and 75 awards were offered for the 2006 academic year. Ngati Kahu Social Services, Te Puna O Te Aroha Māori Women's Refuge and Te Ora Hou Northland Inc. have all been successful with their applications for these awards.

Supporting those who need it

Previously, once a person was receiving a Sickness, Invalid's or domestic purposes-related benefit, there was limited support towards entering the workforce. Now we deal with each individual's specific circumstances, and if they are ready and able to work we will support them to train for and develop towards getting a job.

The Kaikohe Service Centre has been offering enhanced services to people with ill health or a disability who are able and wish to work. Services may include support to obtain and keep employment, assessment of support needs in the workplace and funding for healthcare that will help them return to work. This programme will be extended to other service centres shortly.

If people can't work now, but may be able to in the near future, we can help them to develop a plan towards being ready to work. If they are unlikely to enter paid work in the long term, we can help them find other ways to contribute to their community. This may be by linking them up to community groups or voluntary organisations. Encouraging activity to improve physical and mental wellbeing can only be good for the individual and the community as a whole. The focus is on what a person can do instead of what they can't.

This year we will be making contact with health providers to increase collaboration regarding how we can improve the lives of people who are under the care of both

Improving Opportunities for Working Age People

“The (Benefit Integrity) presentation was excellent and extremely informative. It was also beneficial in building a closer relationship between our organisations and a greater understanding of each others’ roles in the community”.

Sally Hume

Accident Compensation Corporation

Work and Income and health providers. Improving how we work together, particularly in regard to health promotion and rehabilitation could have significant impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of our joint clients. Reducing the negative impact of obesity, and alcohol and drugs is particularly important.

Our Contact Centre undertakes outbound calling campaigns to help us keep in contact with our clients. These campaigns are usually either centred around promoting a new initiative such as *Working for Families*, or to check in with clients about their current circumstances or progress with planning to enter the workforce. Recent examples have included contacting domestic purposes-related benefit clients to see how they are going with their Personal Development and Employment Plans as well as discussing *Working for Families* assistance that is available to them.

For all people who receive assistance through Work and Income, it is important to make sure that they receive their full and correct entitlement. Benefit Integrity Services educate and assist clients to advise us of their circumstances, thereby ensuring they receive the support they are entitled to.

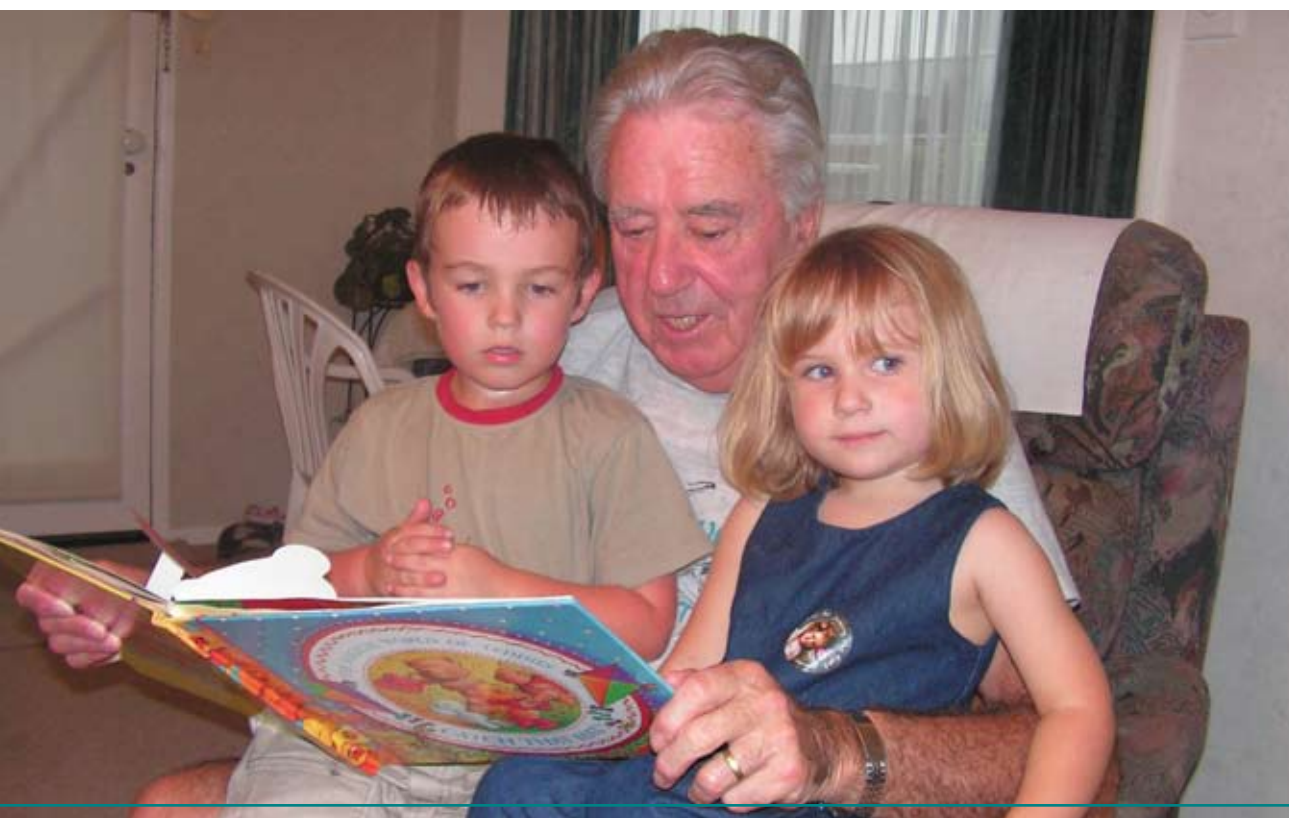
Benefit Integrity Services attend a number of introductory presentations for Work and Income clients. We advise clients about their responsibilities while receiving a benefit and encourage voluntary notification of changes in circumstances. We also visit individual clients in their homes to reiterate the message. Another prevention function is data matching with other government agencies, such as Inland Revenue, to check for people who may be receiving incorrect benefits. Staff also give presentations to community groups and agencies that have staff who engage with our mutual clients. These presentations heighten awareness, educate and ultimately minimise the incidence of benefit fraud and related debt.

As part of the *Return to Work* initiative, Benefit Integrity Services staff visit employers to get their help in encouraging staff to declare their income, or cancel their benefits before they incur debts. Some employers now include the brochures on *Working for Families* assistance and forms to cancel benefits and arrange debt repayment in their induction packs for new recruits.

Our work to reduce the burden of debt extends to leading the *Debt to Multiple State Agencies* project. This project recognises that multiple agency debt is a heavy burden on the client, can undermine each agency’s efforts to reduce client disadvantage, and pose collection problems. The project aims to develop a co-ordinated approach to dealing with client debt.



Enhancing the Wellbeing of Older People – Today and Tomorrow



Geoffrey Field, from Whangarei is pictured here with grandchildren Darian, left, and Piper. Mr Field, who receives a United Kingdom War Disability Pension, is one of many people in New Zealand who use War Pension Services to liaise with the United Kingdom government departments, and to access approved medical treatment.

The older people in our region are a vital part of our communities. Some are working past the age of 65, others are providing care and support for children or family members and many make up the core group of voluntary workers in non-profit and community organisations. We are responsible for monitoring and reporting on actions around implementing the *New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy*²², which sets out 10 goals for improving the lives of older people. In addition to undertaking our own projects that contribute to these goals, we work in partnership with other groups as well.

New Zealand Superannuation is paid to 21,015 people across Northland. There are specialised case managers available in central Whangarei and our rural offices, and there are some outreach centres in smaller communities. It is important that our superannuitants are receiving all the support they are entitled to, and where needed, extra help is available to supplement costs of housing, health and emergencies. Over the next year our New Zealand Superannuation team will be contacting all clients aged over 80 years, who currently don't receive

either an Accommodation Allowance or a Disability Allowance to make sure that they are aware of the availability of these subsidies.

As already mentioned, Whangarei is home to the Residential Subsidy Unit. Each year they process more than 10,000 applications for the Residential Care Subsidy to support older people living in rest homes and hospitals across New Zealand.

Regularly we run *Keeping Independent Now (KIN)* meetings which involve

22. 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

inviting superannuation clients to attend a session on how they can stay independent. Typically, other agencies such as New Zealand Police, Fire Services and Community Health Services participate as well. Over the next year we will be running more of these sessions and plan to make them available to parts of Northland that haven't previously received them.

Our Senior Services group manages three areas: International Services, War Pension Services and the Community Services Card Centre. The International Services unit administers New Zealand's social security agreements and payment arrangements so that people who live in New Zealand but are entitled to overseas pensions can receive their appropriate pensions, and New Zealanders who live overseas can receive their New Zealand entitlements. The War Pensions service is contracted by Veterans' Affairs New Zealand to administer pensions and other support for veterans and their spouses. The Community Services Card Centre administers the Card on behalf of the Ministry of Health with the aim that people on low to middle incomes receive cheaper access to healthcare.

Power to the people



Champion powerlifter Rupene (Rueben) Mare and his wife Beulah established a gym in Kaitaia, with the help of an Enterprise Allowance.

The couple had previously run fitness centres in Sydney and Auckland, and had not intended to start a new business when they returned home to the Far North. But Rupene, aged 67, was approached by so many people asking him to train them that he decided to take the plunge again. With Beulah registered as a job seeker, the couple were eligible for an Enterprise Allowance and used it to cover set-up costs at 'Ruebenz Gym'. They have since employed local people to work as fitness trainers and receptionists.

Rupene (NZ Masters record holder in the 90kg powerlifting category) said, *"My aim is to get our people eating better and living healthier lifestyles"*. He is pictured here, left, with son John Mare working out, assisted by Tipene Mead.

Enhancing the Wellbeing of Older People - Today and Tomorrow

Senior Services national client base is just over 1 million people, many of whom are Community Services Card holders, although at least 90,000 people receive either war pensions or overseas pensions. Over the next year they will be seeking opportunities to provide information and raise awareness about their services so that these numbers can increase.

The Government has designated 2006 as the Year of the Veteran so our communities can commemorate and honour the sacrifice and service of our servicemen and women.

A *Year of the Veteran Community Grants Fund*²³ has been set up to assist local communities to provide ways of recognising the ex-servicemen and women in their community.

It is estimated that currently, people aged over 65 years make up 15% of Northland's population. By 2021 they are projected to make up 22% of our population, compared to a national average of 17%²⁴. Northland's increase in its older population is predicted to start earlier, and increase faster than the rest of New Zealand. As such, it

will become increasingly important that we plan for how our services will meet the needs of our future older people. We will be undertaking discussions with other agencies such as the District Health Board, Housing New Zealand and councils about how we can work together to develop new ways to support older people into the future. Of particular importance is finding ways to support people so that they can continue to live in their own homes.

Not only will we have an increasing number of older people, but they are likely to be more active and stay healthy longer. This provides us with an opportunity to encourage them to remain linked in with their communities, either through voluntary work or through paid work. Over the next few years Work and Income will be looking at how we can create opportunities for mature and older workers.

The Family and Community Services *SAGES* programme seeks to make the most of the knowledge and experience of our older people by getting them to provide life and home skills to young families in need. The *SAGES* volunteers

provide information, encouragement, practical advice and support to families in areas such as budgeting, nutritious cooking, positive parenting and networking. Two Northland organisations have successfully secured funding for this programme - Kaipara *SAGES* will be running their programme in Dargaville and the Ngati Hine Health Trust will run theirs in Whangarei. Mentors are currently being trained and the programmes will start shortly.

Over the next year, as part of our work to reduce family violence, we will be raising the issue of elder abuse with the people that we work with. Elder abuse and neglect is when a person experiences harmful physical, psychological, sexual, material or social effects caused by a person with whom they had a relationship, implying trust. The importance of recognising and responding to elder abuse will be highlighted to all Work and Income staff during their family violence training. In addition, our Northland New Zealand Superannuation team and Residential Subsidy Unit staff have received specialised training on elder abuse as they have regular contact with older people.

“In 2002, the Ministry was a founding member of the Kaipara Community Outcomes Steering Group which facilitated a process to identify Kaipara's *Community Outcomes*. The Ministry's staff have been leading or participating in a number of collaborative projects aimed at achieving the outcomes desired by the community, and their efforts have also helped secure funding for these initiatives. The Ministry's continuing partnership with Council indicates a shared understanding of the intent of the Local Government Act 2002 and a willingness to be held accountable for playing their part in Kaipara's future”.

Jack McKerchar
Chief Executive Officer
Kaipara District Council

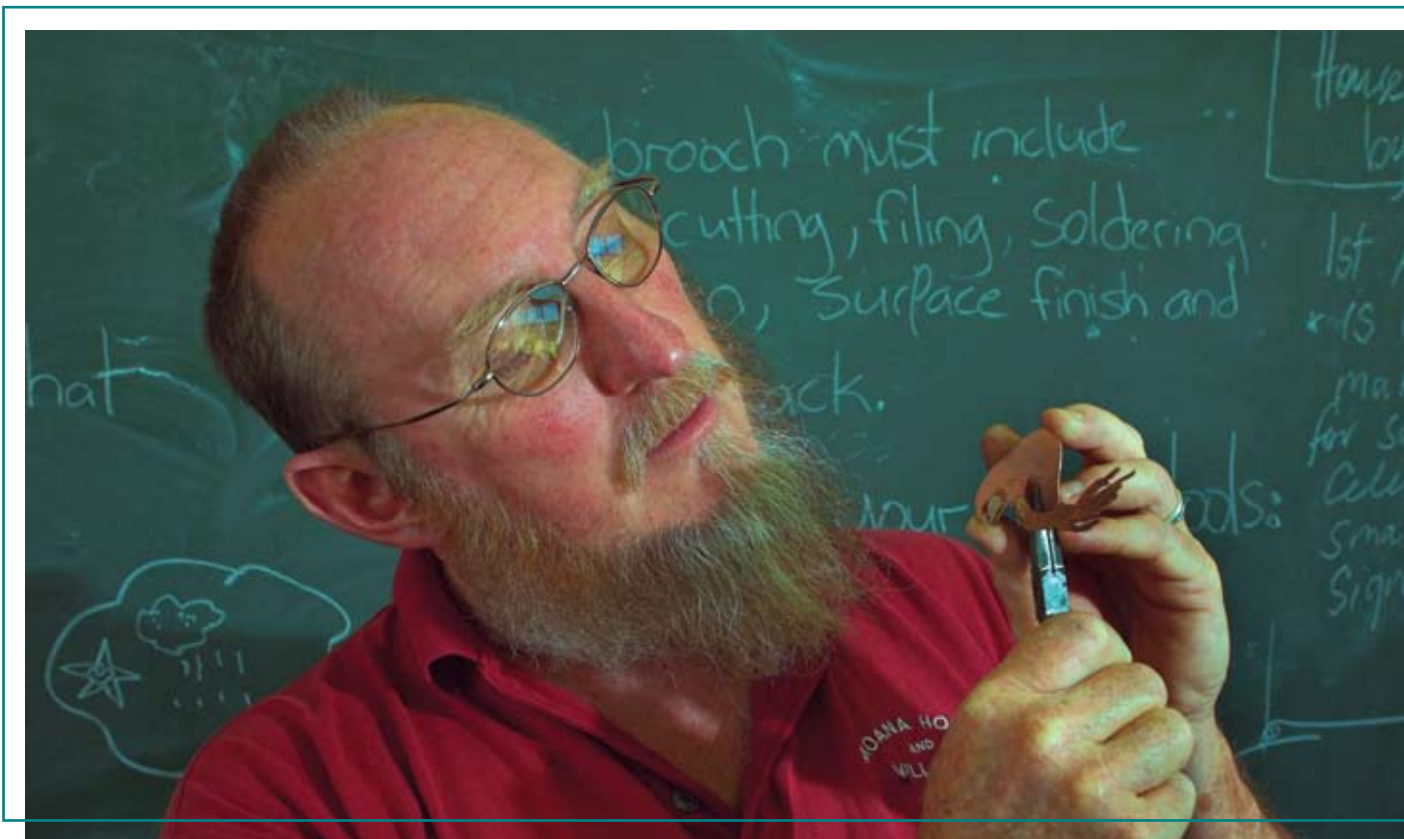
23. Further information on what funding is available and how to apply is located on the Veterans' Affairs New Zealand website www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz.

24. *Subnational Population Projections, 2001-2026*, Statistics New Zealand.

Partnering with our Communities

The Northland local authorities' *Regional Community Outcomes* project has identified the following priority outcomes for Northland:

1. Northland residents are safe and healthy
2. Northland's infrastructure is developed in a sustainable way
3. Northland's natural environment is sustainably managed
4. Northland is prosperous
5. Northland residents are educated and skilled
6. Northland has cohesive communities
7. Northland retains and enhances its regional identity
8. Northland residents have access to recreational and leisure opportunities.



An arts and crafts programme in the Hokianga is providing a boost for the local artistic community. Pictured is Lindsay McAuliffe-Evans, taking part in the jewellery-making class.

Partnering with our Communities

This project has given everyone a common foundation from which to work together. The next step is for councils to develop their *Long Term Council Community Plans (LTCCPs)*. Our one regional and three district councils are at different stages in the process of developing and implementing their *Plans*. Collectively we are identifying how we can respond to the priorities identified through the *Community Outcomes* process. We are already working with a well-established multi-agency steering group in the Kaipara District to address their priorities.

In the meantime, much of what we undertake is focused on improving the

welfare of communities. Our focus on building the capability and capacity of non-government organisations and community groups can lead to positive effects in a variety of areas. For example, recently our Social Development Manager has been having discussions with the Far North District Council and some rural communities about how they can improve their drinking water and sewerage infrastructure. A community initiative around improving sewerage could create a permanent scheme which trains and employs local people, while also solving an infrastructure and environmental problem, and improving the health of the residents.

Secret recipe for employment



When KFC came to Kaikohe it brought more than fried chicken - it created 25 new jobs in the mid-North town. Work and Income recruited all the new staff, who underwent four weeks of training with the company before the store opened.

Store Manager, Carla Matiu (right), pictured with trainee Sharon Brown, described her new staff as 'awesome'. Five trainees, including Sharon, performed so well that they were accepted for management training.

Sharon, a former Domestic Purposes Benefit client with two children said she wanted to work full-time so she could build a good future for her children. She praised Kaikohe Work Broker Mike McCarthy for the support he gave in her search for employment.

Partnering with our Communities

Seamless service for students



Northland has a large number of courses run in remote rural areas, and StudyLink Whangarei is working closely with education providers and Work Income service centres, to ensure students in these rural areas are receiving their correct financial entitlements.

To ensure we have a co-ordinated approach, where clients can be referred to the correct service depending on their needs, StudyLink officers are based at Work and Income's Whangarei and Kaitaia Service Centres for the summer holiday period.

Pictured is StudyLink Officer, Shanti Pospisil.

A recent community development initiative has been undertaken to make the Hokianga a recognised art and craft community, thereby making artistic work a viable option for those who live there. An Enterprising Communities Grant has been provided to fund a project manager who will assist artists in developing their work, business planning and assessing the commercial viability of opportunities. Work and Income is funding a 30-week training programme for 13 unemployed clients on two levels: master craft artists and cottage industry crafts. The master crafts artists' stream will develop students' artistic skills towards producing a steady output of professional work suitable for sale. The cottage industry crafts stream will specialise in supporting functions such as canvas preparation,

metal preparation and flax harvesting for which there is a national market. All students will gain knowledge in business management and marketing. It is expected that much of the work produced will be available for sale in the Hokianga.

Over the next year our Labour Market Development team is keen to work with councils to try and develop public transport in the region. Public transport could increase opportunities for people to obtain work, particularly in the Bay of Islands. Other outcomes would be improved access to services such as health providers, tourist attractions and retail, as well as making it easier for people to visit family. Added to that, with the right set-up, a transport service could be a provider of sustainable employment and income for a district.

Partnering with our Communities

The *Community Initiatives Fund*, which is administered by Family and Community Services, is available to fund innovative projects that will benefit families and the communities they live in. All projects must contribute to addressing the needs of a geographic community or a community of interest²⁵. Currently there are no projects running in Northland, but we are eager to support worthy proposals.

Other initiatives being undertaken by Family and Community Services in Northland communities include:

- A *Local Services Mapping* process, which involves government agencies, local authorities and community organisations working together to identify the services a community has and what services it needs to address the particular needs of our region. Work is currently underway with all three Northland districts. An action plan that sets out what everyone will do to find practical solutions to meet these needs will be well underway by the end of 2006.
- Funding nine budgeting education and advisory services across the region.

This year we will be working to improve our relationships with local iwi to identify further ways we can work together to improve the wellbeing of Māori in Northland. We will also be working to find ways that we can partner with some of our more disadvantaged and isolated communities to improve both their economic and social wellbeing.

“I am more than happy to work with Work and Income, because it is a benefit to the employer, the community and the taxpayer”.

John McConnell
AFFCO

Strong relationship meets needs



Benefit Integrity Services staff have carried out visits to employers in Northland as part of the *Return to Work* initiative, aimed at minimising debt and benefit fraud. The team visited AFFCO meatworks in Moerewa, where they have developed a strong working relationship with the company.

Through the initiative, employers encourage their employees who are also Work and Income clients, to declare income or cancel their benefit and arrange to repay any debt they have.

From left, back row: John McConnell, AFFCO Site Manager and Kevin Fitzpatrick, Debt Management Officer. Front row: Yvonne Weck, Technical Officer; Christine Strawbridge, AFFCO Compliance Manager; and Marlene Kaio, Investigator.

25. Details of how to apply for this fund are available via www.familyservices.govt.nz.

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
Level 2
49-53 James Street,
Whangarei
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

