

LEADING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN
Taranaki, King Country
and Wanganui



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora



REGIONAL PLAN 2006/2007



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



Cover Photos

- Left: The Anaha family attend a *Working for Families* promotion.
- Centre: Painters employed by the Central Taranaki Employment Trust.
- Right: A Ngati Ruanui volunteer (left) and a Work and Income work broker at a Social Services Day.

Leading Social Development:

A PLAN FOR TARANAKI, KING COUNTRY
AND WANGANUI 2006 / 2007



Contents

Achieving Better Social Outcomes Together	2
Opportunities for Action in Taranaki, King Country and Wanganui	3
Moving Forward	7
Leading Social Development	8
Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed	16
Improving Opportunities for Working Age People	21
Enhancing the Wellbeing of Older People - Today and Tomorrow	28
Partnering with our Communities	31



Achieving Better Social Outcomes Together

Our Ministry of Social Development 2006/2007 Regional Plan sets out the priorities and direction for the Taranaki, King Country, Wanganui 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 Taranaki, King Country, Wanganui, 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 Taranaki, King Country, Wanganui 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 Taranaki, King Country and Wanganui

The Taranaki, King Country, Wanganui region covers a large area from Otorohanga in the north, Rangitikei in the south and Ruapehu in the east. It covers eight local authorities and three regional council boundaries.

Our economy is based on agriculture, meat processing, forestry, tourism, manufacturing and energy production with the region being the recognised centre of New Zealand's oil and gas exploration.

Our population according to the last census was 194,415 or 5% of New Zealand's total population. In our region, we have a large and growing population of older people.

At the 2001 Census, the number of people aged 65 years or over stood at 26,829 or 13.8%. This is projected to rise to 36,400 or 19.4%² by the year 2016 - a significant increase, with a significant impact for services now, and for planning into the future.

We have a declining rural population but a reasonably stable urban population. The largest part of the region's population (over 50%) can be found in the cities of Wanganui and New Plymouth, with the balance living in provincial townships or rural areas. There is, therefore, a reasonably even urban-rural split which offers the challenge to provide services in a way that helps address the needs of both our rural and city folk.

Rising fuel costs and other roading and transport issues create challenges for rural people travelling to larger centres for employment, tertiary education and training. Lack of sufficient childcare has also been identified by some townships as a barrier to securing employment. Most rural communities in our region, such as the King Country, have large proportions of Māori job seekers, therefore a priority is helping local communities to create local employment opportunities and address skill shortages. Through Work and Income, we have a dedicated Labour Market Development team who administer an Enterprising Communities Grant that provides specific support in this way.



Mount Ruapehu viewed from the beautiful winter-wonderland village of Ohakune.

2. *Subnational Population Projections, 2001 - 2026*, Statistics New Zealand. To reflect Work and Income Taranaki, King Country, Wanganui region's geographical area, population statistics include the following: Otorohanga, Waitomo, New Plymouth, Stratford, South Taranaki, Wanganui, Rangitikei and Ruapehu districts.

Opportunities for Action in Taranaki, King Country and Wanganui

“I’ve seen the relationship between primary health organisations and the Ministry as a very constructive relationship. I encourage further development of cross-sectoral management with the Ministry as definitely one of the ways to improve health in the long term”.

Dr John McMenamin
Whanganui PHO

The development of *Long Term Council Community Plans* has created new opportunities for us to strengthen our work with local authorities. Engagement has been successful, particularly in Taranaki, where a wider range of central government agencies are present and a whole-of-government approach through joint planning and co-ordinated services can be achieved. It is more challenging in smaller, more isolated areas with less central government presence. Work with other local authorities is underway with some success in Rangitikei and Otorohanga and a new project in Ruapehu. To realise some of the other possibilities, we need to be more active in Wanganui and Waitomo.

Levels of unemployment in the region are at the lowest for nearly two decades. Current skill and labour shortages provide an ideal environment for people to get work. An increasing number of people with either childcare responsibilities or health-related issues have indicated they want jobs. Working with the health sector to address people’s health issues will help them achieve their employment goals.

Through Work and Income we deliver income support services to 46,156³ people and we provide a range of employment services for people who are able to work and want to move in to lasting employment. Services to assist employers and industry include recruitment and financial support as well as training and work experience programmes.

Employers are saying that even for entry-level positions they require recruits to have a minimum level of training. Through our *Local Industry Partnerships* programme we are helping people to get the skills industries need.

While there has been a notable decline in the number of Taranaki students leaving school with no or low qualifications⁴, Taranaki remains in the top third in the country for students leaving school without qualifications. Initiatives such as cadetships and the *Youth Transition Services* are helping address this issue, and there are opportunities to work more closely with schools, education providers and parents so that young people transition successfully from school to training and employment.

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 or improving policies and services.

3. 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.

4. *Taranaki School Leavers Research 2005*, Education Taranaki Trust.

Opportunities for Action in Taranaki, King Country and Wanganui

The *Wanganui Litter* project is helping to keep the city clean and providing long-term unemployed people with work. Pictured with Mayor of Wanganui, Michael Laws (far right) are members of the litter patrol team and Work Broker, Brian Weck.

Photo supplied courtesy of Wanganui River City Press.



The Ministry of Youth Development is supporting the positive development of young people by funding services targeted at those aged 12 to 24 years. Services aim to increase the confidence of young people, help them set goals for the future, increase their personal and relationship skills, improve health and wellbeing and reduce offending and other risks that will slow their movement into further education, training and employment. Programmes such as the *New Zealand Conservation Corps* help us achieve this.

The Ministry of Youth Development is also creating regional support through youth development teams. These will provide communities with improved

access to information and resources such as the *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*⁵, that support the positive development of young people.

The *Strategy* is the overarching strategy for youth development and suggests actions for supporting positive youth development and improving outcomes for young people.

The part of the Ministry known as Specialist Services is made up of StudyLink, Benefit Integrity Services and Senior Services. StudyLink provides services to students such as Student Loans and Allowances and some scholarships. We work in co-operation with secondary schools, tertiary education providers and student bodies to ensure students get the

“The tutors are the best that I have had in a long time and I enjoyed my time with *Conservation Corps*. Thanks for having me”.

YMCA participant

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

Opportunities for Action in Taranaki, King Country and Wanganui

information and finance they need to successfully complete their study with the least amount of 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.

Through Senior Services we deliver services in three main areas.

We administer the Community Services Card, which provides people with access to affordable healthcare from primary health organisations. Through International Services, we manage New Zealand's social security agreements and portability arrangements so New Zealand superannuitants can access their entitlements regardless of where they choose to retire. We also process

and pay war pensions and other related entitlements through War Pension Services, contracted by Veterans' Affairs New Zealand.

Government and non-government agencies provide services to support families and communities. Family and Community Services works with these agencies to make the services easy to access and use. These services aim to 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. Improving government services for rural or isolated communities through a one-stop-shop such as *Heartland Services* is one example. Another project, *Local Services Mapping*, ensures community and family services meet the needs of our region.

We are supported by a network of contact centres across all services of the Ministry. These range from employer lines to specialist superannuation services. Initiatives include outbound calling campaigns such as *Working for Families*⁶, raising awareness of extra assistance available.

There are many more opportunities for us to work together in a whole-of-community way. Our Plan is intended to highlight some of these opportunities, why we consider them to be priorities and show that by working together with a social development focus, we can improve the lives of our children, young people, working people, families and communities.



Carey Jacobs is one of three *Heartland Services* co-ordinators in the region. Carey is the co-ordinator in Taumarunui, where *Heartland Services* is co-located with Work and Income.

6. 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.

Moving Forward

Greetings!

I am delighted to present to you our first Ministry of Social Development Regional Plan. It describes the breadth of our work, who we are working with, who we are working for, what our priorities are and how we can work together for the future benefit of this wonderful region which we have the good fortune to be part of. Whether you identify one or 100 opportunities for us to work together, we welcome them all.

Social development is an approach that provides equal opportunity and a fair go for everyone. It also means that during hard times, we will make sure people are given a helping hand. If we are to provide better health, education and employment outcomes tomorrow, we need to be investing in people today.

By applying a social development approach to our work, we increase our knowledge and understanding of how the areas of wellbeing such as health, employment and education intertwine and work together.

Social development involves tackling the underlying causes of people's problems - investing early in addressing issues to avoid the bumps in the road to achieve success in life. We need strong families and communities so people can thrive. Individuals, families and communities face challenges and pressures. The complex nature of the issues some people face presents challenges for us, and we cannot help to resolve them on our own. Lasting positive change therefore, requires a partnership approach, and we are committed to working together with other agencies and sectors on areas of shared interest.

We maintain that employment remains the most efficient welfare policy ever invented. It is therefore a very exciting time for us, with unemployment at the lowest levels in two decades. This positions us well to introduce enhanced services for all working-age people. In tandem with the *Working for Families* package, this provides even greater opportunities for people to work and for us to lift labour market participation.

Our work touches the lives of many people. Every day our staff are making a positive difference for people, from infants right through to those in their golden years. They are talented, skilled and dedicated people ready and able to work in a variety of situations. Their commitment to improving social outcomes for people and communities is inspiring.

Leading and contributing to work that strengthens communities and improves the lives of individuals and families is not just our business but our commitment to the people who live in our communities. As we move forward we are well placed to make even greater contributions to the social and economic achievement of our region.



Gloria Campbell
Regional Commissioner for Social Development



Leading Social Development

“The Ministry has enabled us to have Apprentice Support, and the Otorohanga Training Centre to be more effective getting youth and business together”.

Andrew Giltrap
Giltrap Farm Machinery

Social development is an approach that achieves meaningful and lasting results for individuals and families, enabling them to fulfil their potential and more fully participate in their communities. It is about investing in our people and communities in the Taranaki, King Country, Wanganui region to succeed.

As our *Statement of Intent*⁷ reinforces, we are now much more than an organisation focused on the payment of benefits. While this will always be one of our functions, our uniting focus across the Ministry is about improving social development outcomes for people, their families and the communities we serve.

We can contribute to improved social development outcomes by addressing the five critical social issues identified in the Government's document *Opportunity for All New Zealanders*⁸. The five social issues that we are taking priority action on now, and in the coming years are:

- 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 abuse, and neglect of children and older people.

We are leading work on addressing sustainable employment (in partnership with the Department of Labour) and family violence issues, and we strongly support and contribute to action being taken by the Ministry of Health on obesity-related diseases and drug abuse, and the Ministry of Education in tackling educational under-achievement. By acting on these priorities, we are helping improve people's capacity to participate in the social and economic life of their communities.

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.



Joint initiatives with district councils are assisting youth into jobs and training. The Mayor of Ruapehu, Sue Morris is pictured with Work and Income's Contracts Manager, Brett Engert (seated); and 'Working for Ruapehu' youth employment co-ordinators, Diane Porritt (left) and Awatea Herewini.

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

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

Leading Social Development

Social and economic development firmly linked together

Opportunity for All New Zealanders states that investing in social development results in a healthier, better educated, employable and productive population. This in turn contributes to economic development and the prosperity of our region and its people.

Successful social development includes ensuring that social and economic development go hand in hand. This is not something we can do on our own. Much of our social development approach, therefore, is based on partnership and collaboration with other government agencies, local government, with business and employers and with community and voluntary organisations. By strengthening this approach we can:

- achieve positive results in helping those who are able to work to move into lasting employment
- provide protection for those unable to work due to their current circumstances
- build strong families and communities
- improve the wellbeing of older people and people with ill-health or a disability
- strengthen the Government's relationship with community and voluntary groups
- ensure individuals and families have access to affordable healthcare
- prevent and reduce child abuse and neglect and domestic violence
- ensure clients receive correct entitlements to financial assistance and prevent and minimise debt and fraud.

We can assist more people achieve successful lives through increased labour market participation. First, we need to remove or address factors that prevent people from taking up or staying in work, and by encouraging investment that leads to new job opportunities. Factors impacting on people's capacity to work include low skills, drug and alcohol issues, health matters and debt to name a few.

Our work in addressing such issues is evident across many sectors as the following examples show.



The first trainees from the Otorohanga Trades Training Centre graduated in February 2006. Dale Williams, Mayor of Otorohanga, is pictured presenting Darren Speight with his certificate, watched by his fellow students.

All have secured work locally.



Leading Social Development

The region's first joint private sector cadetship saw four young people graduate. Keri-ann Barkle is pictured receiving her certificate from the Hon. Harry Duynhoven, MP for New Plymouth. Watching from left are Regional Commissioner for Social Development, Gloria Campbell; and Tegel Managers Bill Williams and David Taylor.



Lifting labour market skills and participation

“At the District Health Board, we are delighted to have willing partners in the Ministry of Social Development and Web Health/Linkage Trust to turn this logical concept (*PATHS*) into a reality”.

Tony Foulkes
CEO Taranaki District Health Board

Industry and employers report labour shortages as the main constraint on our economy, and impact on our ability to sustain and support growth. We have been working in partnership with a range of industries to help address this situation through our *Local Industry Partnerships* programmes. Industry-designed training for entry-level positions is the immediate focus. By increasing people's skills and qualifications for the twenty first century, over time we will build industry workforce capacity leading to lasting jobs and careers.

Private sector cadetships have been established such as the *Tegel Foods Ltd* and *Rangitikei* models. These are adaptations of the successful three-year *Career Start* programme, undertaken in partnership with the New Plymouth District Council. Cadetships provide young people with opportunities to earn as they learn, and to obtain qualifications that support advancement or higher learning towards sustainable careers. The *Working with the Ruapehu* model, recently started in partnership with the Mayor of Ruapehu, also promises to be successful in getting more people working.

We are also working with the Chambers of Commerce in Taranaki and Wanganui to gain their involvement in new employment initiatives.

StudyLink focuses on providing financial support and information to students either in tertiary education or to those thinking about study as a future option. We also work closely with Student Job Search to help students find work over the summer period. Students completing study successfully with minimal debt, supports the tertiary education sector's commitment to create skills and knowledge that New Zealand needs for a thriving economy.

Leading Social Development

The Education Taranaki Trust is a regionally-focused education group which provides a forum for all stakeholders across the Taranaki education spectrum; it is as much about the economic vibrancy of the labour market as it is about the needs and knowledge within the community. Membership represents primary, secondary and tertiary educators, private training establishments and adult educators across Taranaki. The Trust is involved in regional initiatives that promote educational excellence. We have contributed by funding *Taranaki School Leaver Research 2005*. The Trust's website, *Taranaki Careers*, promotes lifelong learning and fosters informed career choices.

With reduced levels of unemployment, our case managers are identifying more clients with complex needs such as drug and alcohol issues. We are interested in sourcing drug and alcohol treatment expertise, but in a more employment-related field that will enable employees to meet their requirements and to prevent further drug use. This sits outside the traditional brief of drug and alcohol services.

Working together across the social sector

The five critical social issues identified in *Opportunity for All New Zealanders* cannot be addressed effectively by one single agency. Through agencies tackling the priority issues together

and taking action in new ways, we can improve social outcomes for the people and communities of the Taranaki, King Country, Wanganui region.

PATHS (Providing Access to Health Solutions) commenced in March 2006 in partnership with the Taranaki District Health Board and Web Health/Linkage Trust. This is a Taranaki-wide programme run by a specialist health team working out of our New Plymouth Service Centre. The team is made up of qualified health and employment specialist staff from the Taranaki District Health Board and Work and Income. Through the client assessment process, issues around healthy eating and healthy activity as they relate to employment will also be identified for action. Alongside this, the *Working for Families* package helps to ensure families will have sufficient income to access healthy foods for healthy diets.

We are part of the *Healthy Homes* project working group that sees immense value in retro-fitting people's homes to improve the health of homeowners, through increased efficiency and affordability of home heating. This supports our goals of helping people in receipt of a Sickness or Invalid's Benefit who suffer from respiratory disorders to enjoy improved health and the ability to work. It also has a positive impact on their debt levels by reducing the need for an advance on their benefit required to meet power costs. Key partners also include primary health organisations, Housing New Zealand and Accident Compensation Corporation. *Healthy*

Homes is also supported by the Taranaki District Health Board and the New Plymouth District Council.

We also meet regularly with primary healthcare organisations and the Taranaki District Health Board for updates on the wider developments in the health and disability sector. The forum is led by primary healthcare organisations and we attend on a quarterly basis, to provide updates on initiatives such as the pilot service for youth with a disability in Taranaki and identify and develop other ways of working together.

The *Taranaki Transition Service for Youth with a Disability* pilot provides a unique opportunity for school leavers with disabilities aged 16 to 21 years, focusing specifically on employment and community participation. It is available to students who are funded by the *Ongoing and Reviewable Resource Scheme* through the Ministry of Education. Transition is often a time of high stress and uncertainty for youth with disabilities. The ongoing availability of a designated case worker means that young people and families have time to consider and try out new options. This initiative has filled a gap in the mix of services available to assist youth with disabilities to plan for community participation and employment as adults. The implementation of the pilot service resulted from a partnership formed between local health service Access Ability, Group Special Education and ourselves.



Leading Social Development

We have recently developed alliances with both Sport Wanganui and Sport Taranaki to support our role in promoting healthy activity. This supports their aims and also presents us with the potential to develop employment opportunities in the area of sport and recreation.

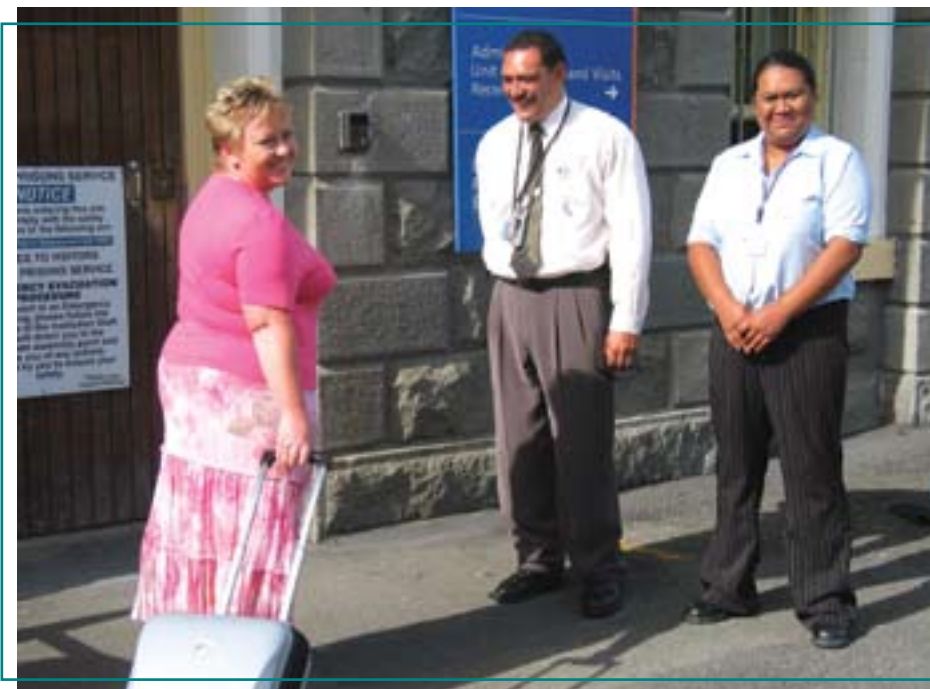
The *Primary Principals* project is an initiative involving Wanganui primary school principals. With the facilitation of Group Special Education, a service line of the Ministry of Education, and our participation, we are working towards an *At-risk Checklist* project that is consistently applied in primary schools, particularly low-decile schools. It will identify the needs of students when they enrol, especially years 1 to 3, with an inter-agency response to the broader needs of both child and family.

The *Offender Re-integration Programme: Improving Employment Outcomes* is a joint initiative with the Department of Corrections, working with prisoners at Kaitoke and New Plymouth prisons eight weeks prior to release, to provide them with information about employment and other services. Our Offender Re-integration teams consist of case managers and work brokers that primarily focus on assisting prisoners find suitable employment to be taken up upon release. The longer-term aim is to reduce re-offending.

We are leading work to address issues of child abuse and neglect, and elder abuse. Through the local Family Violence Funding Circuit Breaker group we are improving government funding processes for service providers, so that the amount of work and

“This initiative (*The Taranaki Transition Service for Youth with a Disability*) has filled a gap in the mix of services available to assist disabled youth (and their families) plan for community participation as adults”.

Diane Doehring
Group Special Education



Offender Re-integration teams assist prisoners secure work on release. Work Broker, Denise Mackle (left) and Case Manager, Aisha Niwa (right) are greeted by Custodial Systems Unit Manager Gordon Ngatai outside the New Plymouth Prison.

Leading Social Development

Local leaders working and achieving together

cost involved for them when seeking approval from more than one agency is reduced. The group includes the Departments of Internal Affairs and Corrections; Child, Youth and Family Services; the Ministry of Justice; and Accident Compensation Corporation. It has analysed what each department was funding within the community, obtained community feedback to identify any gaps and we are now building a funding strategy based on this.

Our leadership and involvement in the *Debt to Multiple State Agencies* project supports our *Debt Strategy* which provides a framework and strategic direction for all debt work across the Ministry. The *Strategy* leads all of our activities focused on client debt issues,

with a key goal being that debt is not a barrier to people participating in their communities.

We are involved in a number of regular network meetings with social service and voluntary agencies in our region. These include hosting monthly meetings of social service agency representatives in Wanganui and attending quarterly meetings with Taranaki foodbank operators. The purpose of these networks is to update policy, consultation, identification of trends and issues for action and notification of upcoming events that groups can jointly participate in such as the 2006 National Foodbank conference, being hosted by the Stratford Community Foodbank in September 2006.

The Futures Taranaki Group was formed by the leaders of the Taranaki Regional Council and the three Taranaki local authorities. The Group oversees the *Community Outcomes* process to ensure *Long Term Council Community Plans* are on track. It is endeavouring to identify priorities the community has said are most important to them and act on these. Other current members are the Chief Executive Officers of the Taranaki District Health Board and economic development agency Venture Taranaki, the Regional Manager of Te Puni Kōkiri and our Regional Commissioner for Social Development.



Work and Income and Benefit Integrity Services work together to ensure clients receive their correct entitlements to financial assistance. From left are Benefit Integrity Investigators, Max Brooking and Sarah Scott; with Work and Income's Raewyn Johnson and Jan Mills.

Leading Social Development

Our Social Development Manager and Regional Policy Advisor also play significant roles in working alongside our councils, advising them of the Government's priority strategies as stated in *Opportunity for All New Zealanders* and aligning these strategies to the regional indicators identified in *The Social Report 2005*⁹, which paints a generally positive picture of wellbeing and quality of life in our region. We reconcile the community's priorities to the Government's priorities in an endeavour to bring a co-ordinated approach to the needs of the community.

The Regional Inter-sectoral Forum is a well established leading stakeholder forum of primarily Taranaki-based central government leaders. Initially put in place to identify capacity-building opportunities, the group has broadened its focus to ensuring an inter-agency response to the needs of the community.

The *Youth Transition Service*, launched a year ago in partnership with the New Plymouth District Council, is helping school leavers into training, employment and further education. This year we will be launching a *Youth Transition Service* in South Taranaki.

Launched in October 2005 by the Ministry of Youth Development, the *Youth Development Partnership Fund* enables us to respond to emerging youth needs and create new opportunities by partnering with local authorities to support projects that benefit young people. The Wanganui, Rangitikei and



Regional Commissioner for Social Development, Gloria Campbell, pictured addressing guests at the New Plymouth *Youth Transition Service* launch accompanied (from left) by: Hayden Wano, Tui Ora Ltd CEO; Sir Ross Jansen; Lindsay McLeod, Iwi liaison; Peter Tennent, Mayor; and the Hon. Harry Duynhoven.

South Taranaki District Councils were among the first to obtain funding. Wanganui's *Make It. Take It* project, Rangitikei's community leadership development initiative and South Taranaki's *Human Powered Vehicle Challenge* all focus on employment, training and education. These projects give young people new skills that benefit themselves, the workforce and the wider community.

We are part of our region's Welfare Advisory Group, comprising a range of central and non-government agencies who provide joint community welfare

responses in the event of an emergency such as flooding or pandemic influenza. Helping people recover from civil defence emergencies is part of our role through Work and Income. We also work closely with our local emergency management teams on planning for co-ordinated responses to emergencies.

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

Leading Social Development

Leading social development across the Ministry

Our work is wide and varied and touches most people at some time during their lives. To strengthen our ability to lead social development, the role of our Regional Commissioner for Social Development has been broadened to include a regional social development leadership focus.

Our Social Development Manager and Regional Labour Market Development Manager work closely with the Regional Director and Operations Manager of Work and Income and other business unit's regional managers on local projects that take an integrated social and labour market development approach. This way of working delivers

improved services for our clients and greater communication with and between our areas of operations using each other's collective knowledge and experience.

With the broadening of the Regional Commissioner's role, we are also moving towards establishing a wider representation of our business unit regional managers within our regional Governance Group.

We realise that sometimes it is a challenge to know where to access information and services or find out how people can contribute to or support social development in their region. Our

aim is that when any individual or group approaches us, they are connected to the most appropriate person or service that is best able to assist them. By better aligning our shared priorities, each service within the Ministry can identify further opportunities to work together and achieve more effective and co-ordinated services.

This in turn provides us with greater capacity and more opportunities to work with you on improved social-development outcomes. Working in partnership is vital to achieve a positive difference in the lives of our region's people, and it is the key to success for our communities.



Many *Youth Transition Services* clients are undecided about future options. When Toni McCallum chose tertiary studies, *Youth Transition Services* Coach, Sara Bright introduced Toni to Eirlyn McBride from StudyLink. Toni, Sara and Eirlyn are pictured from left on campus.

Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

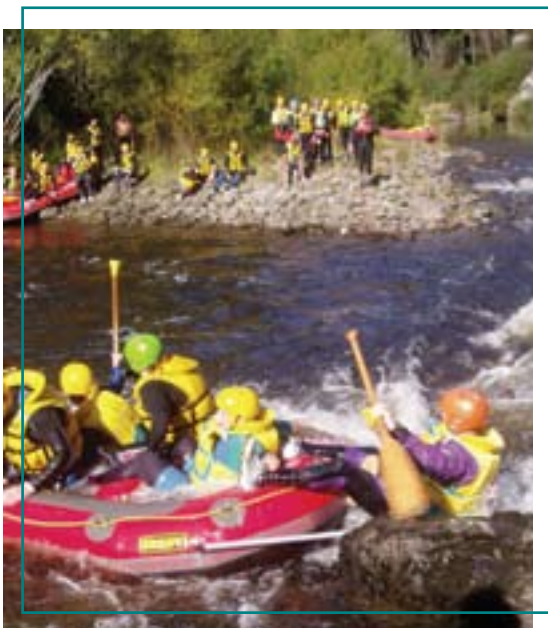
We want to give children the best start in life, for them to thrive in childhood, be respected and valued, have the opportunity to reach their full potential and participate positively in society now and in the future. Young people are tomorrow's workers, parents and leaders. Families and whānau should be strong and resilient and be a safe and secure environment for all family members. Children who grow up in safe and secure homes can develop greater self confidence that will stand them in good stead for adult life.

The early years

The early years are the most important for child development. We are providing programmes to improve support to vulnerable children from birth until they start school. These contribute to improving health, learning ability and development, and reducing neglect and insecurity.

The *Family Start* programme is part of our wider strategy to strengthen families. It provides intensive, home-based support services for families with high needs to ensure that their children have the best possible start in life. Designated community agencies refer families to *Family Start*. They can be accepted onto the programme from six months before the birth of a child and up to one year after. Participation is voluntary and *Family Start* is currently available in Wanganui and Tamarunui.

By providing working parents with access to quality childcare and early childhood education, we are also contributing to positive childhood development. Through Work and Income, we help parents with the cost of childcare services and after-school care and holiday recreation programmes through Childcare and OSCAR (Out of School Care and Recreation) subsidies.



Wanganui is famous for its river. The YMCA Wanganui and UCOL programmes delivered near the river provide the opportunity for young people to have an exciting experience while learning. The programmes introduce young people to water safety, team work and cultural experiences as there are several stops at marae along the way for overnight stays.

Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

Tomorrow's workers, parents and leaders

Improving educational, employment and social outcomes for young people today is one of the best investments we can make to secure a prosperous future for them.

In the region, there has been a significant reduction in the number of people under the age of 25 years receiving unemployment-related benefits¹⁰. This number reduced by 1,228 over the five years ended 31 March 2006, and by 226 in the last 12 months alone. People under the age of 25 years, however, still represent 29.3% of the total number of people receiving unemployment-related benefits in the region.

While many young people achieve well at secondary school and make the transition to tertiary education or jobs, not all school leavers enjoy the same success. Some struggle to move from school to work or further training and many young people need clear guidance and help to make the transition. Without formal qualifications or plans for the future, they are at risk of remaining unemployed because they are unable to successfully compete for jobs. We are helping to address these issues and connect young people to positive activities so they can move successfully into adult life.

Through Work and Income, we are contributing to reductions in youth unemployment through initiatives that strongly support the *Mayors Taskforce for Jobs* goal of ensuring 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. By assisting young people to enter the workforce we are helping solve current labour shortages. We continue to have success with our *Career Start* cadetships, in partnership with our local mayors and councils. Based on what has been learned from the successful New Plymouth and Rangitikei District Council cadetships and with Tegel Foods Ltd, we have recently adapted the model for the Ruapehu. We are seeking to develop a similar model in Wanganui.

Programmes that combine employment and training such as the *Modern Apprenticeships* scheme and *Youth Transition Services* are helping young people on their way to careers. Last year, in partnership with the New Plymouth District Council, we established the New Plymouth *Youth Transition Service*. Run by Tui Ora Ltd, the *Service* is successfully connecting young people to work, skills training and tertiary education. Through career training and job-seeking advice we are helping young people into activities that support a positive future. Youth co-ordinators focus on young people's talents, strengths and potential to prepare them for work. More intensive customised support is provided for those with more complex issues including budgeting and debt management and health issues such as drug and alcohol abuse.

The Ministry of Youth Development is encouraging other agencies to utilise the *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* when delivering youth services and programmes. This *Strategy* suggests actions that can be taken to support

the development of young people and is a resource for individuals, groups and organisations that work with young people at all levels to deal with the issues they face.

We run other local youth programmes such as *New Zealand Conservation Corps* and *Youth Service Corps*. These connect young people to the community through project work. Participants gain job skills, undertake job planning as part of their personal development and identify opportunities for further education, training and employment. Programmes are delivered by the YMCA in Wanganui and New Plymouth, the Maniopototo Training Agency in Te Kuiti, the Taranaki Environmental Education Trust in Stratford and the Salvation Army Employment Plus in Hawera.

*Aotearoa Youth Voices*¹¹ is the banner under which youth participation activities are run by the Ministry of Youth Development. We support young people by listening to what they have to say, providing an avenue for feedback to the Government about decisions that affect them. *Aotearoa Youth Voices* activities include *PROVOKE*, *Activate* and support for *Youth Week* and *Youth Parliament*. The *Youth Parliament* is an exciting event which happens every three years and gives selected young people the opportunity to experience how Parliament really works. The young people involved sit on Select Committees, debate mock legislation in the House and ask Ministers tricky questions in a real 'question time'. The next *Youth Parliament* takes place in 2007.

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

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

Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

“The most valuable qualification I have is my trades certificate... skills I learned as a tradesman apply in every position I have held”.

Dale Williams
Mayor of Otorohanga

Tertiary education

StudyLink aims to ensure that young people have the information they need to make informed choices about study. Our services are much wider than just the payment of student allowances and loans. We offer a range of services aimed to help students make sound financial educational decisions. We run the *On Course* programme in secondary schools in the Taranaki and Wanganui districts for Year-12 and 13 students. Through this assistance, students begin to make choices about their study options for the following year. We encourage parents' involvement to support their children make the transition to tertiary education. Other services include attending careers and training expos and education provider open days to promote information about education and employment options, scholarships, budgeting and how to reduce student-loan borrowing. We offer a service to first loan borrowers in particular, to discuss the various options for funding tertiary education and provide information about the implications of borrowing. In Wanganui, we deliver StudyLink services on campus at UCOL and in New Plymouth we provide a seamless service with Work and Income through co-location.

Transition for Tamati

Tamati Noble registered with the New Plymouth *Youth Transition Service* last year. Previously, his playstation occupied most of his day. Tamati attended a *Ready for Work* programme which helped him develop job-search skills and self sufficiency. Tamati is now in his first full-time paid job after being introduced to Peter Spurway of Dominator Garage Doors.

Tamati is enjoying the independence paid work provides. “It’s all good”, says Tamati. “Mum thinks it’s great too. I pay her board and I’m not home bugging her all the time”.

Youth Transition Services Co-ordinator, Mary Wilson, pictured with Tamati, says it’s been rewarding watching Tamati’s transformation. “He came to us with his cap pulled down over his face and now he looks completely different. It has been like watching him step up another gear”.



Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

'No sweat parenting' provides confidence



In 2005, Manaaki Oranga Ltd. received *SKIP* funding for a *No Sweat Parenting* event in New Plymouth. Manaaki Oranga Ltd. specialises in maternal, infant and child health. Over 15 other community organisations were involved in the event.

The key messages were love, empowerment, encouragement, responsibility not authority, loving discipline, talking not yelling - listening to your child and labelling the problem not the child.

The audience of about 230 parents enjoyed hearing the messages, especially through guest speaker comedian Pio Terei's humour and singing. They found it related to real life and it was a fun and entertaining. One person said, "*It made us feel we can make it as a parent*".

Pio Terei is pictured with Saphron Ngaia, North Taranaki MenzB Co-ordinator (left) and Lisa Tamati Rongonui, Whanau Kaitāutoko.

"The projects done on this course were amazing. I definitely gained from them".

YMCA Conservation Corps participant

Building strong, resilient and safe families

Families take many forms. For most of us, 'family' means a kin-based group that includes parents, children and other relatives, and often spans more than two generations. Within families, members help and protect each other, particularly children and older people, share skills and pass on cultural values.

Our work with families focuses on enabling them to be strong and resilient, and supporting them to function well. All families face challenges and pressures: resilient families have good parenting and communication skills and cope well with pressure and change.

The resilience of some families, however, is put under strain by such things as low income, debt, unemployment, family change and separation, and work and family demands. While most families cope well with these issues, others find it more difficult. Strong, connected support services that are easy to access and provide the right help at the right time are essential in helping families cope.

Through Family and Community Services we are working with other agencies and community organisations to develop and co-ordinate services and information for families. Our *211 Directory*, formerly known as the Family Services National Directory, lists family-related services, programmes and resources that are available across New Zealand. Another resource, *FamilyWeb*, links people to helpful sites on subjects such as raising children, supporting young people and growing older. More topics will be added in the coming year¹².

12. Information about these services can be accessed at www.211.govt.nz.

Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed

StudyLink helps tertiary students study wisely



With access to a variety of networks and websites with financial information for students, StudyLink helps students explore efficient ways of funding their studies. StudyLink has a service which helps students make decisions around tertiary study including funding options.

Earlier this year, Sam Markham and his mother Bev (right) met New Plymouth's StudyLink Outreach Officer Erilyn McBride (left) to discuss Sam's study funding options. He had already been awarded a small scholarship, but needed more information about student allowances and loans.

"Helping students work out what funding they need to successfully complete their studies is rewarding", says Erilyn. "Showing them how to avoid unnecessary borrowing and talking with parents helps students make appropriate choices".

Bev happily reports that Sam is progressing well on a surveying course at Otago University.

Other initiatives that assist us to help families are programmes such as *Strengthening Families*, *SKIP (Strategies with Kids: Information for Parents)* and family violence prevention programmes.

The *Strengthening Families* initiative provides co-ordinated support for families who are working with more than two government or non-government agencies by encouraging the agencies to work together. Family and Community Services provides support and resources so communities can own and implement this initiative. *Strengthening Families'* co-ordinators operate in Tamarunui, New Plymouth and Wanganui. Referrals are received from schools, community nurses and doctors, government and other agencies.

Our *SKIP* programme supports parents and caregivers of children under five years of age to feel confident about how they manage children's behaviour. *SKIP* funds community organisations to promote positive parenting and to provide practical knowledge and skills on safe, effective, non-physical ways of disciplining children. Work undertaken locally has included *No Sweat Parenting* events, the appointment of a *SKIP* co-ordinator and successful evening workshops for parents.

Families and whānau should be a safe and secure environment where all members live free from violence. Sadly, family violence including child abuse and neglect, and elder abuse is a major problem in New Zealand. Through Family and Community Services and Work and Income, we deliver the *Family Violence Intervention Programme*. Family violence intervention co-ordinators based in New Plymouth and Wanganui provide specialised advice and support for Work and Income clients facing situations of family violence. Our case managers are also trained to identify signs of family violence and to refer clients to the right help. As well as parenting support programmes such as *Family Start*, we provide services for children who witness family violence. We contribute to the prevention of elder abuse by funding services in the community such as Age Concern in Wanganui and Tui Ora Ltd through Te Hauora Pou Heretanga in New Plymouth.

Debt can cause anxiety and pressure in families, therefore we provide funding for community budget advisory services in New Plymouth and Wanganui. Many referrals are made by our Work and Income case managers. We are working on identifying and referring people early before their debt situation becomes critical.

In partnership with Inland Revenue, we have implemented the *Working for Families* package of financial assistance that is aimed at making it easier to work and raise a family. It includes more help with housing and childcare costs, higher rates of Family Assistance and raising income limits, ensuring more families with children are eligible. *Working for Families*, which is expected to significantly boost working family incomes, will be fully implemented in April 2007.

Improving Opportunities for Working Age People

Good news

The good news is that New Zealand has the lowest unemployment levels in 20 years. The number of working-age people receiving unemployment-related benefits in our region has plunged to 3,501, from 9,021 as at 31 March 2000 - a massive reduction of 61.2%. While this is a huge achievement, and our initiatives have directly contributed to the reduction, there is room for significant improvement in labour-market participation rates. While a slowing in the economy was signalled earlier this year, industry and businesses are still crying out for people with the right skills. Our clients currently have the best opportunities to secure paid work while the labour market remains buoyant.

Strengthening people and growing businesses

Through Work and Income, we are building the skills and capacity of our working-age people. The introduction of new targeted programmes and the establishment of industry partnerships with employers with an on-the-job component, have contributed to our low unemployment rate.

Fiery start for Taranaki oil industry trainees



Clients seeking jobs in oil exploration receive a fiery introduction to the industry during a 12-week lease hand training programme. Trainees learn a range of skills including extinguishing fires quickly and safely.

The training is a *Local Industry Partnership* between Work and Income, training provider Glasgow Training Services and oil companies OD&E and Parker Drilling. The programme has been designed by the industry to meet its needs for more workers. Training provider Des Glasgow says the work can be hazardous. *"That's why the introductory training is so important"*.

Des Glasgow (second from right); and Regional Commissioner for Social Development, Gloria Campbell (far right) observe Fire Safety Officer, Peter Gallagher as he demonstrates the required skills.

Improving Opportunities for Working Age People

“With Ministry of Social Development funding, we are able to employ an advisor part-time, and offer appointments within a few days of client contact”.

Stacia Smith
New Plymouth Budget Advice Service

Existing employment programmes that are working well through our *Active Employment Assistance* approach, focus on getting people work, supporting people to stay there and to change jobs without periods of reduced income while on a benefit. These programmes will continue whilst we develop new ones.

One of the best ways we can contribute to growing labour market participation and improving our economy is by building on our *Active Employment Assistance* approach, specifically for people receiving unemployment-related benefits. Another is to go a step further and offer new services that support all working-age clients who want to work, into employment and this is what we are doing.

A new way of working with our clients

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 trialed in 12 service centres around the country, including the Waitara Service Centre, before being made available nationally in May 2006.

This means delivering employment services that are increasingly tailored to meet skill shortages faced by industry and business, with a much stronger emphasis on providing employment services to people previously considered outside the labour market.



The *Career Start* cadetship, in partnership with the Rangitikei District Council, has seen 16 cadets placed into work with the Council or local businesses. From left, Fernley Frederick and Celeste Barker are pictured with *Career Start* co-ordinator Kerry Brown, working at the Council offices.

Improving Opportunities for Working Age People

What our priority clients look like

The number of working-age people receiving income support in the region is 18,147, of which 5,612 are receiving a domestic purposes-related benefit¹³; 4,472 an Invalid's Benefit; 2,014 a Sickness Benefit; and 3,501 an unemployment-related benefit. Through our case management services and client development plans, many people receiving domestic purposes-related benefits, Sickness or Invalid's Benefits have indicated they want to enter the workforce. We also have significantly

higher proportions of Māori job seekers residing in smaller or rural areas such as Te Kuiti, Taumarunui, Taihape and Hawera, with Māori representing 46.3% of clients in receipt of an unemployment-related benefit regionally.

With a greater focus on employment services for all working-age clients, our priority groups are Māori, youth, sole parents, people with ill health or a disability, long-term unemployed¹⁴, clients in rural communities and mature¹⁵ job seekers.

Working partnerships and enterprising communities

Through our Labour Market Development team we have entered into a number of *Local Industry Partnerships* and expanded on others. These address targeted industry-specific skills training and at the same time secure jobs for programme participants. Our most successful have been with the oil industry in Taranaki and the retail sector in New Plymouth and Wanganui. Work has also recently commenced with the engineering and hospitality industries.

Building a new future

Jordan Prestidge has commenced a modern apprenticeship in carpentry with New Plymouth firm At Your Request. Following a serious back injury three years ago, Jordan applied for a Sickness Benefit. Surgery last year resulted in some improvement but Jordan was unable to find work. He then met Work Broker, Sally Ann James who helped him achieve his employment goals. Jordan is now in full-time work with an employer who also saw his potential.

"He turned up with a smile on his face. We knew he was a bit crook with his back problem, but we worked around that and he's fine now", says Greg Aim of At Your Request.

Jordan admits, *"I felt a bit nervous returning to work but I wanted to do it"*.

Pictured from left are Jordan, Sally Ann and Greg.



13. A domestic purposes-related benefit comprises DPB Sole Parent, DPB Caring for the Sick or Infirm, DPB Woman Alone and Emergency Maintenance Allowance.
 14. Long-term unemployed are clients who have received an unemployment-related benefit for 26 weeks or more.
 15. Mature clients are those aged between 45 and 59 years of age.

Improving Opportunities for Working Age People

We also administer the Enterprising Communities Grant. Successful recipients of the Grants include:

- the Central and Taranaki Employment Trust, to operate a community-based business helping long-term unemployed gain work skills while on community projects
- the Wanganui Glass Cluster, to appoint a project manager to support artists in this medium, raise the visibility of the glass industry through the development of Wanganui as a national centre of excellence for glass and the concept of a National Museum of Glass
- the Taranaki Arts Community Trust, to employ a co-ordinator to link budding artists registered under our *Pathway to Arts and Culture Employment* programme with other networks for support, and to help investigate the viability of their plans for a sustainable career in the arts
- the Otorohanga Trades Training Centre, to fund an apprenticeship co-ordinator to link trainees with local businesses - a *Mayors Taskforce for Jobs* initiative developed by the Mayor of Otorohanga and local business people.

“This job is working out really well. It’s great, I have already had a promotion. It has less financial stress...I am better off.

My daughter looks up to me as a working mum and she loves coming to see me at work”.

Kylie Bennett
A former client

In partnership with the New Zealand Māori Tourism Council, we are developing the design of an employment recruitment model for Māori regional tourism organisations who work with and for local tourism operators. The model is likely to be based upon a key worker and a cadet for each organisation. Because many tourism operators are whānau and hapū based, this is particularly exciting, especially for our rural communities where many of our Māori clients reside. Engaging with regional Māori tourism operators to identify how we can help create more jobs forms part of a wider opportunity to help regional Māori economic development.

We purchase services from providers who train, prepare and place people into work. Our contracted programmes put a strong emphasis on getting people the right skills that align to a specific job. We expect our providers to have strong links with and knowledge of the labour market. Services include curriculum vitae preparation, job-search skills and coaching and employment planning, especially for longer-term clients. More specialised assistance such as counselling or budgeting is arranged if client assessments reveal high or complex needs such as drug and alcohol abuse or debt issues. *In Work Support* providers resolve hurdles that traditionally occur in the early stages of employment. Drivers licence training is available, which is particularly beneficial for clients from rural areas and places without regular public transport. Help is also available for people struggling due to a lack of literacy skills.

Improving Opportunities for Working Age People

“We recruited a great team for our new store. We couldn't have done it without (Work Broker) Jan Lawton”.

Brendon Jones
Owner, New World Wanganui

Limited Service Volunteers is a six-week motivational training programme run for people between 18 and 25 years of age at Burnham Military Camp near Christchurch. It encourages participants to seek work or further training and educational opportunities and often leads to careers in the army. Referrals are made through Work and Income case managers.

Because we have been successful in developing cadetships for young people, we believe this model could be adapted to secure jobs for all ranges of working-age people. This presents an ideal opportunity to engage with employer groups to encourage workforce diversity such as combining the skills, experiences, ideas and energies of both mature and youth workers as a catalyst for retaining older workers and recruiting young people. We have a range of services including wage subsidies to help with initial supervision and training, and *In Work Support* services to ensure any potential issues that could put the placement at risk are minimised.

Last year, in partnership with primary healthcare organisations in Taranaki and Wanganui, we commenced an early assessment and counselling pilot for people with mild stress-related disorders. In a recent media story¹⁶, Taranaki was highlighted as having the lowest numbers of people in receipt of a benefit for reasons of stress. By investing early, we enable people to regain their former wellness, return to work and their previous levels of income sooner, rather than leaving things until their situation becomes longer term, more serious and harder to resolve down the track.

Wanganui mum secures a career



Local Industry Partnerships with supermarkets have resulted in entry-level positions leading to promotions and apprenticeship opportunities for job seekers.

Work Broker, Jan Lawton worked with New World Wanganui in the recruitment of staff for its new store. Training and wage subsidies formed part of the recruitment package.

Sole parent, Kylie Bennett was selected to train for employment with New World. Owner/Operator Brendon Jones was very impressed with Kylie's work at the checkout and quickly promoted her to the wine department. Kylie says working has made a big difference in her life. “*My daughter is very proud of me getting this job*”. Kylie's goal is to attain a management role. “*This is a good start*”, she says.

Kylie (right) is pictured with Jan Lawton.

16. Sunday Star Times, 19 March 2006.

Improving Opportunities for Working Age People

As outlined earlier, our *PATHS (Providing Access to Health Solutions)* programme was launched in March 2006 and is helping provide access to medical services that assist in removing and reducing health problems for people who want to return to work. An appropriate plan of treatment and a pathway back to former levels of wellness is implemented. Clients are then connected to job opportunities and supported in their return to work. The expansion of *PATHS* to Wanganui is intended to be established by the end of 2007.

We realise for some clients, going to work is not a realistic option but for many others it is. In our region, the number of people in receipt of an Invalid's or Sickness Benefit has steadily increased since the early 1990s. However, the rate of increase has slowed, with an increase of only 192 in the year ended 31 March 2006, compared with 281 at the same time in 2005. Many of these clients have told us they want to work. Together with the health sector, we are addressing clients' health concerns to help make this happen. For those with permanent medical conditions or a disability who want to work, our focus will be on people's strengths and what they can do rather than what they can't.

Client appreciates early intervention service

In her field officer role with Benefit Integrity Services, Sam Alchin provides an early intervention service by visiting clients at home or in the workplace to ensure they are receiving the help they are entitled to.

When Lloyd Roberts' benefit was suspended due to non-return of benefit forms, Sam arranged to visit Lloyd at work to obtain an update on his situation. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Lloyd's agent had been unable to attend to the matter for him. During the visit, Sam learned Lloyd had recently been diagnosed with a medical condition that entitled him to a Disability Allowance. Sam worked with Lloyd and his new agent Tracey Neilson at Atawhai Industries to have Lloyd's payments increased and back on track.

Sam is pictured visiting Lloyd at work.



Improving Opportunities for Working Age People

“I think it’s great that they (Benefit Integrity Services) offers this (early intervention) service and will come out to the person’s home or workplace”.

Tracey Neilson
Support Co-ordinator
Atawhai Industries

Making work pay

The *Working for Families* package aims to put more money in the pockets of low- and middle-income working families. It will also ensure parents moving off benefit into work are financially, and ultimately socially better off. More sole parents than ever before are entering the workforce. Through a New Plymouth initiative implemented earlier in 2006, sole parents who were working part-time were invited to attend *Working for Families* assessments. Most were pleasantly surprised at the extra income their family could receive and how much better off they were by moving totally off benefit. With further incentives in the package released in April 2006, we anticipate many more will follow.

For those people for whom work is not immediately an option, we ensure they receive their correct entitlements to financial assistance. Clients who do not meet their obligations, and abuse of the benefit system can lead to debt and impact on a person’s ability to get work and remain there. As part of the *Return*

to Work initiative, Benefit Integrity staff visit employers to seek their assistance in encouraging staff to declare their income or cancel their benefits before they incur debts through an overpayment. Some employers are developing induction packs for new recruits to help achieve this. Reducing the level of overpayment helps remove a debt burden from many of our clients and increase their financial independence. We assist proactively through our early intervention service, visiting clients in their homes, assessing their circumstances to ensure clients are getting all the assistance they are entitled to. We also ensure that they understand their obligations to advise us of changes to their circumstances that may affect their entitlements.

Our initiatives support the development and advancement of clients so they can maximise employment opportunities. Employment helps to build strong and resilient individuals and families who make up well-functioning communities. It is a key element to a successful life!



Enhancing the Wellbeing of Older People – Today and Tomorrow



Ahipawanui Herewini is well known for helping others. Her voluntary work includes visiting people at home to ensure they remain connected to the community. Mrs Herewini is pictured (left) with Work Broker, Jannet Newland-Lash at a Ngati Ruanui Social Services Day.

Older people have valuable skills, the benefit of a lifetime's experiences to offer and are major contributors to our communities.

In our region, there are 27,704 people receiving New Zealand Superannuation. We have 11 Work and Income service centres where older people can access New Zealand Superannuation services. In the majority of sites, specialist case managers provide information, assess, pay and review entitlements for people aged 65 years and over. We also contribute to the work of other government services such as the Ministry

of Health in the areas of *Home Help* and *Limb Centre* services.

We know that in our communities many older people continue to make a significant contribution, remaining active way beyond retirement. With people living longer and healthier lives, some choose not to automatically retire at age 65.

In a time of skill and labour shortages, older people should feel encouraged by the opportunity to work longer if they choose, and we want to support them to be able to do this.

Many retire from paid employment and engage in voluntary community activities for the benefit of groups such as sports clubs, marae and organisations that help people in need. Through family circumstances, some have taken on the hugely important role of raising their grandchildren. We support older people's choices leading up to and in retirement.

Our main focus is to assist older people get the services they need when they need them. First, we need to let them know about existing services and we are doing this in a number of ways.

Enhancing the Wellbeing of Older People - Today and Tomorrow

To reach as many people as possible, we proactively promote our services. Each year we do this by speaking to groups such as Grey Power, the women's section of the Returned Services Association, Positive Ageing fora, kaumātua, the Widows' and Widowers' Associations and sometimes even garden circles to name a few. We participate in many community services expos and information days. An extensive network of service providers and interest groups also attend, and a good deal of information sharing is achieved. These activities help inform older people of the options they have available in their community.

"Work and Income was there with Positive Ageing back in the beginning. Our continued partnership is crucial...we cannot achieve things alone".

John Cunningham, QSM
Chair, Positive Ageing Trust

We actively support the goals of the *New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy*¹⁷ through our strong links with groups that provide support and services specifically for older people. We help ensure they have access to sufficient income, affordable housing, safe environments, health services and social activities.

We have a particularly close relationship with the New Plymouth Positive Ageing Trust and our national Office for Senior Citizens. The Trust has developed a reputation for innovation and influence, for example leading research into older people's housing needs and assisting other areas such as Waitara and Stratford to develop Positive Ageing locally. Positive Ageing events include quarterly fora in which we actively

Positive ageing strong in New Plymouth



The launch of the New Plymouth Positive Ageing Trust in 2005 was the result of the dedicated work of several local people. The Trust's Chair, John Cunningham (QSM), also a voluntary community co-ordinator appointed by the Office for Senior Citizens, is one of them.

A retired school principal, John applies his varied talents for the benefit of Positive Ageing locally. Through John and the efforts of his wider team, the Trust enjoys significant support from the New Plymouth District Council, including hosting fora on topics of interest to older people and regular meetings with the Mayor about matters affecting older people.

John is pictured at last year's launch of the Trust with New Zealand Superannuation Case Manager Kym Martin, who is a past pupil from John's teaching days in Waitara.

17. 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

participate. They cover topics of wide interest, from waiting lists for operations to life in retirement, and attract notable speakers such as the Minister for Senior Citizens and the Director of the Office for Senior Citizens. Managers from a range of central and local government services also attend, which provides older people with direct access to the decision makers, to discuss the matters that affect them.

The New Plymouth Positive Ageing Trust grew out of several years work by the local Positive Ageing Group, which has flourished since 1999 which was the International Year of the Older Person. We belong to this Group, which boasts membership of many agencies across the social, education, health and disability, sport and recreation sectors, and interest groups such as Age Concern and Grey Power.

Through our membership of the New Plymouth Positive Ageing Group, we are aware that more of Taranaki's older people are choosing to live independently in their own homes for longer. We need to ensure that they are supported to do this. We are looking at new ways to provide services for those who are living

independently but may no longer have the mobility or support to visit our service centres.

In 2005, New Zealand Superannuation staff visited clients aged 100 years and over who were still living independently in their own homes or with family members. We wanted to ensure they were receiving their full and correct entitlements to income support and identify any additional services they required from other agencies. Making sure older people and their families are aware of additional assistance such as Disability Allowance and special grants for things such as spectacles forms part of our everyday work.

Information is a two way street. We provide information, but we also need to receive information from older people and interest groups so we can anticipate and understand the impact of our ageing population. A key priority for us this year is the review of the Ministry's delivery of services to older people. This is seen as a one-time opportunity for us to prepare for the challenge of an ageing population and to provide a more fully integrated service that brings central government and local services together. We need to

plan for and deliver services for older people that keep pace and meet their diverse needs. Through Senior Services and Work and Income, we will be developing ideas on what our services to older people might look like in the future, in consultation with older people.

This year commemorates one, if not the biggest contribution any group of people have made in our history. 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*¹⁸ has been set up to assist local communities provide ways of recognising their ex-servicemen and women, and at the same time to educate our younger people about the special contribution our veterans made for them.

Our population of older people is growing, and when we consider the huge community contribution they make, we also acknowledge how fortunate we are to have such a valuable and growing community resource. We need, therefore, to ensure older people are well supported and looked after into their later years.

18. 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

Communities make an enormous contribution to the social wellbeing of individuals, families and whānau. They provide support, maintain cultural practices, norms and values, and often partner with government agencies in planning and delivering social services. In well functioning communities, networks and shared values within the community contribute to economic growth and social development.

Family and Community Services contributes to building strong communities, hapū and iwi by funding social services to families, and providing information and advice to help families and communities access services and develop their own knowledge about the support that is available locally. Our goal is to build connected communities, and strong and resilient families. Working together with local government and community-based organisations allows us to identify local needs and support local community planning processes.

Local Services Mapping is an initiative that is helping us to help communities identify their priorities and what social services are available, to address the particular needs of the region. *Local Services Mapping* involves central and local government agencies, iwi and other community organisations working together. Action plans are developed that set out what everyone will do to find practical solutions to meet these needs. A *Local Services Mapping* Group has been established, with mapping underway in New Plymouth, Stratford and South Taranaki. Reports from this work are expected to be finished before

the end of the year. Regional mapping groups will continue working closely with communities to learn how services can be better aligned, funded and delivered.

Community organisations are able to access Enterprising Communities Grants through Work and Income. This assists them to design and implement projects that will develop local skills and create job opportunities for people such as those living in areas where there are few opportunities for employment or where job seekers don't have the right skills or training for the jobs that do exist. Through projects like these, we are growing community-owned businesses that create employment opportunities for the local labour market, community and economy.

Through *Heartland Services*, we help link rural and isolated communities with government services. Currently we have three Heartland service centres in our region, located in Taihape, Taumarunui and Hawera. All co-located with Work and Income service centres, each has a co-ordinator providing one-stop-shop access to government and community services.

In Taihape, contributing agencies include Work and Income, Inland Revenue, Te Puni Kōkiri, Housing New Zealand, the Department of Internal Affairs and the Māori Land Court. They provide regular services on a visiting basis. Co-ordinators organise appointments for people and facilitate connections to other services people need such as website information. Participating in and helping to organise community events and information days is a successful part of *Heartland*



Volunteer Recognition Awards night is an important occasion each December in New Plymouth. Organiser Geetha Kutty, is pictured following last year's ceremony with many of the community's volunteer awards recipients in the background.

Partnering with our Communities

Funding for enterprising Stratford trust



The Central Taranaki Employment Trust has received an Enterprising Communities Grant to provide long-term unemployed people with work experience and skill development through community projects. Work involves green waste, gardening, section clearing and maintenance, fencing, cutting firewood, minor repairs, painting and decorating, water blasting and machinery cleaning.

Manager, Nick Brady, says they help people who may have been out of the paid workforce for some time. *“They are supervised by a qualified experienced person who ensures work is completed to the highest standard”*.

The aim is for workers to achieve sustainable employment, and the Trust's work enables them to demonstrate their abilities to potential employers. Pictured painting the Ngaere Hall south of Stratford from left are Matt Bungard, Deane Goodwin (Supervisor), Rodney Bosson, Brian Westbury and Tracey Potter.

Services. Last year, events were held in Ohakune at Maungarongo Marae and in the Taihape Town Hall, and organisers are looking to widen the range of exhibitors in the future. *Heartland Services* encourages other agencies to join with services already participating.

Family and Community Services programmes are also supporting community-based initiatives such as the *Community Initiatives Fund* which provides support for outstanding community leaders undertaking social development projects.

Much of the work in achieving strong and resilient communities is done by community-based organisations. Through our national Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector, we will continue to help build the capacity of community organisations. Family and Community Services administer the *NGO Study Awards*, supporting staff from non-government organisations undertaking study towards a social work degree. The awards recognise that non-government organisations have limited resources to support staff in study, and that we need to increase the qualifications base among community-based workers.

The community and voluntary sector is very diverse. Each December, our communities celebrate International Day of the Volunteer. We are proud to support events such as the *Volunteer Recognition Awards* evening in New Plymouth. This has grown to be a highlight in the volunteer calendar and this can be accredited to the professional

approach and organisational skills of the New Plymouth Volunteer Centre. We contribute in the lead up to the event, and our Regional Commissioner for Social Development has the privilege each year of being invited as a guest speaker. It is our experience, however, that volunteers prefer to go about their work without fanfare. They remain very much the unsung heroes of our community. *Volunteer Recognition Awards* night is therefore an appropriate occasion and our opportunity to join with the Mayor and other community leaders to publicly acknowledge our volunteers for the enormous contribution they make across our whole community.

We have developed or contributed to strategies that promote the participation of New Zealanders in their communities and in local and central government decision making. These include: *Opportunity for All New Zealanders*, *The New Zealand Disability Strategy*¹⁹, *The New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy*, the *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* and *New Zealand's Agenda for Children*²⁰. Strong communities involve families, whānau and individuals in their planning and decision making. This leads to services and policies that are right for the community.

We take every opportunity to partner with our communities and we will continue to engage with you, the people and communities of this region, on matters of importance to you. The goals we have set aim to make a positive difference to the lives of people, enriching our communities so that our region remains vibrant, successful and strong.

19. *The New Zealand Disability Strategy*, Ministry of Health, 2001.

20. *New Zealand's Agenda for Children*, Ministry of Social Development, June 2002.

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 4, Tasman Towers
62 Gill Street
New Plymouth
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

