

A photograph of several wind turbines in a field under a clear sky. The turbines are white with green towers. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal box containing text.

Leading Social Development in
CENTRAL

Regional Plan 2007 > 2008





child, youth
and family

A service of the Ministry of Social Development



family &
community services
ratanga ā-whānau, ā-hapori

A service of the Ministry of Social Development



MINISTRY OF
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO TAIOHI

Administered by the Ministry of Social Development



STUDYLINK

Hoto Akoranga

A service of the Ministry of Social Development



Work and Income
Te Hiranga Tangata

A service of the Ministry of Social Development

Cover Photos

Iconic Watermark:

Wind farm near Apiti (*photo courtesy of the Horizons District Council*).

Top Left:

Children having fun and making friends.

Bottom Left:

Older people fit and active in the community.

Right:

Enjoying the challenge of the Conservation Corps programme.

Leading Social Development

A PLAN FOR CENTRAL 2007/2008



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Achieving Better Social Outcomes Together

I am pleased to introduce the Ministry's 2007/2008 Regional Plan for the Central region. The Plan sets out our key priorities and how we will respond to the needs, challenges and opportunities for the region. It also sets the direction for all our service lines, including - for the first time - Child, Youth and Family.

We work with people in a lot of different ways and our work touches the lives of many people. We need to make sure that anyone accessing our services gets the help they need, when they need it. Regional Commissioners take a leadership role to ensure these services are well connected and accessible, and make a real difference to the people who live in our communities.

But we also need to work with other agencies. Strong relationships with central and local government, non-government organisations and community partners are critical to our success. Only by working closely with other agencies, can we provide our communities with tailored, accessible services that meet their needs.

The Government has set three priority themes for the next decade: Families - Young and Old, Economic Transformation, and National Identity. Our work contributes to all of these - and to Families - Young and Old in particular.

Supporting families is one of our most important roles. We work to ensure that children get the best start in life, that everyone is safe from violence and abuse within the family and that older New Zealanders are supported to live in their community as they wish. By supporting parents and families in managing their lives and caring for each other, we can make a difference to all families both young and old.

Our ability to achieve these outcomes has been hugely strengthened by the inclusion of Child, Youth and Family within the Ministry.

Helping people into work and building the skills of our workforce are both critical to developing a high value economy and achieving economic transformation. With record low unemployment, we are well positioned to continue to enhance our services for all working-age¹ clients and to work in partnership with industry to increase productivity in the workplace.

2007/2008 will be another big year for us. By working together, we can achieve these goals and make a real difference to the lives of people in the Central region!



Peter Hughes
Chief Executive



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

Opportunities for Action in the Central Region

Introducing our region

The Ministry of Social Development is one of New Zealand's largest government agencies. The Central region is made up of seven service lines - Child, Youth and Family, Family and Community Services, Integrity Services, the Ministry of Youth Development, Senior Services, StudyLink and Work and Income, who all work to achieve better social outcomes for all New Zealanders.

Māori oral traditions record that legendary explorer, Māui-Tikitiki-a-Taranga 'fished-up' Te Ikanui-a-Māui, the North Island. The shape of our region can be likened to the throat of the great fish.

Our region is home to 236,100 people, 15% of whom identify as Māori². Spanning 15,051 square kilometres³, our region covers the districts of Kapiti, Horowhenua, Manawatu, Tararua and the Wairarapa. Palmerston North is our largest city. We enjoy a rural economy with significant natural resources, coupled with vibrant urban centres. Eight district, and two regional councils, are based here along with eight distinct iwi tangata whenua groups.

Central is a region of cultural diversity. Approximately 15,825 people have identified their ethnic origins as being Pacific, Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American, African or other⁴. With a large proportion of these people living in Palmerston North, they add to the city's cultural diversity and ethnic mix. We will continue to cater for these new citizens by taking account of any additional needs they may require such as addressing language barriers or financial support.

Our focus

Our vision is of an inclusive New Zealand where all people are able to participate in the social and economic life of their communities. Put simply, this is about helping people overcome the challenges they may face so that



Left: Pictured from left are Massey University students Justin Ngai, Okuda Chimwayange, Sarah Jones and Elizabeth Savage, taking a break during Orientation Week activities.

"Work and Income has shown a willingness to commit their resources alongside local partners in response to the needs of our communities".

Peter McKenna
Regional Manager
Manawatu/Taranaki/Wairarapa
Housing New Zealand

2. *Census of Population and Dwellings*, Census 2006, Statistics New Zealand.

3. *Meshblock Dataset*, Census 2006, Statistics New Zealand.

4. *Census of Population and Dwellings*, Census 2006, Statistics New Zealand.

>> Opportunities for Action in the Central Region >>

they can fulfil their potential, get on with their lives and make a positive contribution to their communities.

Our *Statement of Intent*⁵ sets out our high-level direction. We aim to improve the quality of life of individuals, families and communities and help build the foundations for positive wellbeing in the future. Priority areas include:

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

In addition to a focus on our priority areas, we will align our work with three key themes the Government has set for the next decade: Families - Young and Old, Economic Transformation and National Identity.

Measuring social and economic progress

The Social Report 2006⁶ presents a comprehensive picture of New Zealanders' social and economic wellbeing and quality of life. It provides guidance around what issues are important for the region. Regional indicators highlight three important areas of focus: knowledge and skills, paid work and income levels. We will contribute to an improvement to these indicators by providing advice, training and financial assistance to clients seeking jobs or wanting to undertake tertiary studies. Other support and financial assistance is also available to working families.

Our labour market and economy

We have enjoyed a sustained period of good economic growth which has improved the overall standard of living in our region.

We want to help people become independent and manage their own lives. For most working-age people, getting long-term employment is the best step on that path. The number of people in paid work in the Manawatu-Wanganui region has increased from 65.6% to 67.5%⁷.

Mangahao lasting effects ...

Tucked up in behind the small rural town of Shannon is a natural resource that has been transformed into a community-based nature reserve with a world-class kayaking facility.

Six former long-term unemployed workers from Shannon were involved in the project, establishing the walkways and viewing areas along the course. This labour-intensive work has contributed toward Mangahao being named New Zealand's premier race course by Slalom New Zealand.

Mangahao attracts world-ranked kayakers for training and competitions throughout the year and is a well used resource by the community. Shannon local Lyall Hatton says, *"We love coming here; it's a great place to bring the family for a good day out. There's the river and lots of good walking tracks. It wasn't like this a few years ago but now this is definitely a community asset"*.

Pictured is Michael Dawson, National K1 Men's Champion competing at the Mangahao National White Water Park 2007 Oceania Championships.



5. *Safe families, successful communities, strong New Zealand: Statement of Intent 2007/2008*, Ministry of Social Development.

6. *The Social Report 2006*, Ministry of Social Development.

7. *Household Labour Force Survey*, Manawatu-Wanganui Region, 31 March 2007, Statistics New Zealand. Household Labour Force Survey statistics are unavailable for the Central Region as a whole. The Central Region excludes Wanganui but includes the Kapiti Coast and the Wairarapa areas.

>> Opportunities for Action in the Central Region >>

Although our unemployment rate is higher than the national average of 3.8%⁸, skill shortages exist in a range of industries including call centre, bus and taxi drivers, hospitality, retail and engineering. Labour shortages in seasonal meat work and fruit and vegetable industries are also a challenge. We will continue to deliver training programmes to improve the skills and confidence of clients and partner with employers to meet the demand for skilled workers.

Over 115,000 people are in paid work and 78.6% of all jobs in the region are in occupations including: Managers/Professionals (34%), Technicians/Trade (12%), Labourers (12%), Clerical (11.2%) and Sales/Retail (9.3%). Palmerston North City accounts for over one third of economic activity in the region⁹. Professional services, trades and manufacturing are important to our urban centres while the primary sector is key in the rural areas.

Regional priorities

Leading social development in our region is a key responsibility of the Ministry and strong and healthy families are a priority. For some families, income levels, violence, abuse and neglect are critical challenges. We will increase our promotion of the Working for Families assistance package to help working families access additional support. We will also focus on the safety of children and young people by fostering strong families and responsive communities. Specific initiatives include: managing family violence notifications, improving care and protection services, implementing our Youth Justice Strategy and supporting other agencies that have a shared interest in the safety of our children and young people.

Happy and motivated young people are the key for the future. We have a high youth population under 24 years at 81,462, representing 34.5% of the region's total population¹⁰. Youth can face many challenges as they transition between education, training and employment. We need to listen to them and help them participate fully in their communities. We will continue to work with government and community agencies to take account of youth interests when developing or improving policies and services. Palmerston North is a priority, as 37% of our region's young people under the age of 24 years live there¹¹.



Above: Aiming high, recognising potential and overcoming barriers to education, training or employment is important for the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. Our services aim to assist and support people to make positive choices.

"We have found Child, Youth and Family staff to be helpful and professional in all our dealings with them. If we have had any problems, staff have been more than willing to work with us towards an amicable solution, which has led to better understanding and improved relationships between government and non-government organisations".

Michael Vanden Brink
Practice Manager
Open Home Foundation of New Zealand

8. Household Labour Force Survey, 31 March 2007, Statistics New Zealand.

9. Census of Population and Dwellings, Census 2006, Statistics New Zealand.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

>> Opportunities for Action in the Central Region >>



Above: 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.

Tertiary education is an important decision that needs to be made from a well informed base, taking into account costs and employment prospects. We will provide advice on relevant study and how the cost of these studies can be funded through our StudyLink team, online services and secondary school seminars.

For those in our region who cannot work, or are looking for work, we provide financial assistance which acts as a safety net. We will continue to work actively with our clients to help them find work. For clients who receive a benefit, it is important that they receive their correct entitlements. At the same time we work to prevent and minimise debt and fraud. Debt can arise from the over-payment of benefits to clients. Fraud involves a client's deliberate failure to disclose full information. Maintaining public trust and confidence in the Ministry's benefit system is critical to us. We also encourage our clients to participate in their communities, by being involved in voluntary work or by being part of a support network.

Older people play an important role in our communities. We have a seniors population of 37,890, of whom 25,000 (67%) live in Kapiti-Horowhenua and Palmerston North City¹². The warm climate, flat land and relaxed lifestyles offered are among the many reasons older people are attracted to our region. Accessibility to services remains a key issue. We will continue to support older people to remain independent, and part of this is making information readily available to them so they can make well-informed decisions. The introduction of the SuperGold Card will enable our seniors to access commercial discounts on everyday goods and services and help facilitate concessions on central and local government services.

Achieving a better quality of life for all of our people is a goal worth striving for. Together we will support individuals, build strong families and strengthen our communities so that we all benefit.

¹². *Census of Population and Dwellings*, Census 2006, Statistics New Zealand.

Moving Forward

Greetings from the Central region.

I am delighted to present our second Ministry of Social Development Regional Plan, and share with you our goals and challenges for this coming year.

Social development is an approach that provides equal opportunity and a fair go for everyone. As Regional Commissioner for Social Development, I will continue to champion a social development approach both within and outside of our Ministry. I know that many people go about their lives with minimum help from agencies such as ourselves. However there are some people for whom access to government and community assistance is vital or who at times just need a helping hand to move forward with their lives. For these people, social development in action provides a pathway to wellbeing.

We have been working hard to help our clients and communities move towards greater levels of independence during a period of sustained low unemployment and good economic growth. There are more people taking up employment, training and study opportunities. Working for Families assistance has provided a major financial boost to working families and parents are being supported to raise their children in more positive ways. Family violence, however, is an area we have dedicated specialised people and resources to.

Bringing about positive changes in our society does not happen without a lot of hard work and commitment. I would like to personally thank all of our staff who make a positive difference in our community. I would especially like to acknowledge our Child, Youth and Family staff who joined us last year.

I would also like to acknowledge our partners and stakeholders, such as local and central government agencies, iwi, employers, education providers and volunteer community groups. To achieve success, we cannot work alone and we continue to value your support.

This year, important issues for us are supporting families, and continuing to work closely with other agencies on mutual issues. Helping more people to upskill and obtain paid work are also priorities. We are well equipped to make a real contribution to improving the lives of people in our communities. By working well together we will enable the fruits of our region's social and economic benefits to be shared with our communities, including those people who are most disadvantaged. We may not have all the answers but put simply it is about helping people to help themselves.



Penny Rounthwaite

Regional Commissioner for Social Development



Leading Social Development

"The level of inter-agency co-operation that has been led by the Regional Commissioner has developed into a strength that is benefiting government agencies in the Central region. I believe that agencies are better co-ordinated to work together to deliver a whole-of-government approach than we have been in the past".

Mark Lammas
District Commander
New Zealand Police

Social development is about supporting New Zealanders' health, education, employment and community life, and assisting them to be self reliant. Social protection and social investment are the key elements of social development. Social protection is about providing a safety net and extending a helping hand to people facing difficulties. The benefit system, community assistance and support programmes are examples of this. Social investment provides the foundation for positive wellbeing in the future. Good health, education, skill development, housing, employment, living standards and safety all contribute to prosperity and future opportunity.

We lead social development by building thriving, healthy and safe families and communities through working closely with other central and local government agencies and non-government organisations. Co-ordinating access to our services across the region increases community buy-in and enables better targeting of resources. Improved communication enables us to focus on what we are doing and what we seek to achieve.

Our ability to successfully lead social development depends heavily on our people, their knowledge and the quality of our relationships with stakeholders. We will strengthen our leadership role, by improving our knowledge through effective analysis, research and evaluation, and share this with other organisations.

From a regional viewpoint, social development is about taking time to listen carefully to the concerns of people and communities. It is about making well-informed decisions as to what help, programmes and services need to be provided to make a real difference. For central and local government agencies it requires a 'can do' attitude and willingness to go the extra steps to achieve good outcomes. It is also about supporting each other, being accountable for actions and being aware of the 'big picture'.

The Government's priorities for the next decade

We lead social development in the region by taking a leadership role across the social sector. We are committed to initiatives at a regional level that reinforce the Government's three key priorities for the next decade, which are focused on building a successful New Zealand. Families - Young and Old, is about strong, healthy families and safe communities. Examples of our inter-agency work involving families include our leadership and co-ordination of services to families and communities through networks such as the Manawatu/Tararua/Horowhenua Regional Inter-agency Network and the Strengthening Families Group.

Economic Transformation is about growing a globally competitive economy with a world-class infrastructure, innovative and productive workplaces and environmental sustainability. Our industry partnerships with employers and the Working for Families package with Inland Revenue contributes directly to economic transformation in our region. National Identity is about having pride in who we are, what we do, where we live and how we are seen by the world.

Families – Young and Old

There are 35,598 families with children living in our region¹³. We also have a high youth population, particularly a high number of Māori youth. There are 19,833 Māori youth aged less than 24 years, representing 24% of the regions total population for this age group¹⁴. Some areas such as the Horowhenua have high numbers of young Māori people, and concerns exist about high Māori youth unemployment and drug and alcohol issues. We are providing appropriate training and community support programmes to improve these issues.

We also have a high elderly population with 37,890 people aged 65 years and older, making up 16% of the regions total population¹⁵. The long-term demographic projection is for a continuing increase in this group, which will bring with it greater employment and social issues over time.

Families - Young and Old is about helping people fulfil their potential through participation in their communities. It is about:

- the overall wellbeing of New Zealanders
- all New Zealanders having opportunities to contribute to, and benefit from, New Zealand's economic success
- a cohesive society into the future that secures the economic, social and cultural benefits of diversity
- helping to equip New Zealand to achieve economic transformation.

Search4WRK leads to a career

For 22-year old Todd Johnson, being offered a Butchery Apprenticeship after four months working as a meat packer at Palmerston North's Pioneer New World was awesome.

Todd was unemployed and attended a Search4WRK seminar, as part of Work and Income's Job Search Service. Through the seminar, Todd was referred to a retail and hospitality course which led to a full-time meat packing position.

"The Work and Income facilitator was really helpful, friendly and easy to talk to. The focus was getting into work and the messages were all positive", said Todd. "It was hard living off a benefit, but now I'm in a job I love and I'm getting paid to train as a butcher".

Contracted training provider, Treehouse Group, connected Todd to the employment opportunity. Tutor Liz Mitchell is proud of Todd - one of her 'stars'. *"He was totally motivated, and stood out from the rest. He played a key role in the classroom and was a positive influence on his classmates".*

Todds new boss, Allen Brown said *"Todd has impressed me with his commitment to his work and shows good initiative. We need more people like Todd to help address the skill shortage in the butchery trade".*

Work and Income continues to actively link more clients like Todd to training opportunities which help address skill shortages and lead to sustainable employment.



13. *Census of Population and Dwellings*, Census 2006, Statistics New Zealand.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

>> Leading Social Development >>

We are offering a practical approach that works towards building:

- strong families
- healthy, confident kids
- better health for all
- safe communities
- positive ageing.

We are well placed to make an impact on our families both young and old, as we provide core income and support services to families and work with organisations to achieve positive outcomes. Early action can address poor personal and social outcomes before they become complex, entrenched and harder to resolve.

Family violence is one area where timely action can achieve positive results. Eliminating family violence requires co-ordinated, multi-level action over a long period. No single intervention will work in every case, and no government agency, court or community organisation can prevent family violence in isolation. The Te Rito New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy¹⁶ proposes a long-term plan of action at a national and a local level. The Strategy is for action on four fronts; leadership, changing attitudes and behaviour, ensuring safety and accountability, and effective support services.

Economic Transformation

Economic Transformation is about building a sustainable knowledge-based economy which is innovative, export led, high waged, creative and environmentally sound. It is about raising living standards and the quality of life for all New Zealanders. The work we do with local communities

in the region directly supports this priority. We invest in people to help them find sustainable jobs, deliver programmes to improve the skills and confidence of clients and we partner with employers to meet their demand for skilled workers as well as address skill shortages. Our local and national industry partnerships provide clients with skills training (such as retail and hospitality training) matched to the specific needs of employers. Wage subsidies can also help employers to recruit clients such as people with disabilities and migrants, who face additional challenges to entering employment.

In addition, we provide assistance, information and advice to students entering tertiary education. We work collaboratively with external stakeholders, such as territorial authorities and economic development agencies, to make sure that we understand and are aware of drivers and trends regarding growth in our local economy. We share ongoing information and communication through jointly held forums and seminars. The full implementation of the Working for Families package has increased the incomes of many New Zealand families, providing a welcome social and economic boost.

Good, reliable and robust information is essential for effective social development and economic transformation. We need to know that what we are doing is working and that it is effective. We will continue to look for the best solutions based on the information that we gather. To build this understanding we are supported by the Department of Labour who gather and monitor labour market information to assist us with our decision making.

Publications such as the 'Job Vacancy Monitor' and 'Older People in Work' provide us with detailed labour market information so that we can better direct our resources and strategies.

16. *Te Rito, New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy*, Ministry of Social Development, February 2002.

We are implementing a new way of working with clients and employers to make sure that the services we deliver are responsive and flexible. This will be achieved by looking at our service delivery with a specific work-focused approach for clients looking for work, and developing opportunities for clients who are not available for work immediately. Our Straight 2 Work¹⁷ industry training partnership with the retail sector is an example of how we work with employers to reduce skill and labour shortages.

National Identity

The priority of National Identity involves enabling all New Zealanders to take pride in who and what we are. Our leadership of work across government to strengthen relations between New Zealand's diverse communities contributes to valuing and understanding who we are, what we do, where we live and how we are seen by the world.

Regional wellbeing and quality of life

The Social Report provides statistical information on the social health and wellbeing of New Zealanders in areas such as health, knowledge, skills and paid work. It provides a national and regional picture of wellbeing and quality of life and shows how social conditions are changing over time and what matters most to people. *The Social Report, 2006* Census information and the Household Labour Force Survey together identify regional priorities for action.

Whilst significant improvements in our region have occurred in enrolments in early childhood education, educational achievements of our adult population, household overcrowding, quality of drinking water and the number of people being killed as a result of motor vehicle accidents, there are other areas where continued improvement is needed¹⁸. These areas cover low school-leaver qualification achievements, low participation in paid employment and lower hourly earnings levels for groups such as Māori. We will contribute to improvements in these areas by continuing to take a leadership role across agencies in the social sector and encouraging increased collaboration.

Living life to the max

'Life to the Max Horowhenua' takes a multi-disciplined team approach to assisting young people and their families.

In May 2004, the Regional Inter-agency Network established a working group to design and implement a programme aimed at combating escalating problems arising from the use of the methamphetamine drug known as 'P', particularly in relation to young people.

Local Services Mapping and a needs assessment indicated that service delivery should be based, in the first instance, in the Horowhenua. Extensive engagement with the local Horowhenua community and planning between local government agencies has brought 'Life to the Max Horowhenua' to its present state of development, with a non-government organisation contracted, and staff, including alcohol and drug social workers and a youth coach, employed.

'Life to the Max' is unique to the region in that it is an inter-agency sponsored initiative managed and owned by the community. A charitable trust has been established to provide strategic vision and oversight for the initiative and to make sure that the service remains responsive to the needs of the local community.

"This Programme has the potential to be life changing, not just for the child, but for the family and community. This is a new way of working with youth in the community by taking the services to them; this is a challenging and exciting time", said Ian Pigott, from the New Zealand Police.

Pictured are members of the Life to the Max Horowhenua team.



17. Straight 2 Work is an Industry Partnership training and support programme that gives people the basic skill set required to move straight into employment and help them stay there.

18. *The Social Report 2006, Regional Indicators, Manawatu-Wanganui*, Ministry of Social Development.

Co-ordinating services across the region

Addressing critical social issues and improving social outcomes requires services to be well co-ordinated, responsive and flexible. Our role is to help develop local solutions to local problems.

We are the largest government agency with many functions and services. Anyone making an enquiry at any one of our service centres should be directed to the right place to get the help they need. Co-locating our services wherever possible, developing staff knowledge of each of our services, and strengthening our internal networks are key priorities as we move forward.

We will continue to strengthen our Lower North Island cluster of senior regional managers to give time and practical consideration to issues across the region that affect us all. The cluster includes the Taranaki, King Country and Wanganui; Wellington; East Coast; and Central regions. The cluster will continue to develop initiatives to enhance the 'single face' of the Ministry.

We are active in improving the co-ordination of services to families and communities through networks such as the Regional Inter-agency Network, Strengthening Families, Local Services Mapping, the Regional Intersectoral Fora and Heartlands in Pahiataua.

"My health issues have definitely improved. I don't get colds or the flu like I used to, and I don't have as much asthma. I recommend others consider having their homes insulated".

*Patricia Knowles
Feilding*



Above: Members of the Kapiti Local Services Mapping Steering Committee are pictured with Family and Community Services Regional Manager, Brett Austin (back row, second from left), at the launch of the Kapiti Coast Community Action Plan.

The Regional Inter-agency Network was established in 2002 to lead a whole-of-government approach to improving the social and economic wellbeing of communities by facilitating cross-agency collaboration and sharing of knowledge. The Network has senior representation from central and local government agencies and iwi groups. This means that decisions or commitments can be more readily made to support the work of the Network.

In the coming year, the Network will be implementing the 'Life to the Max Horowhenua' project to work with young people and their families who face drug and alcohol abuse problems. This is a project that aims to improve the life outcomes for Horowhenua youth and their families. The project arose as a practical extension of the Regional Inter-agency Network's desire to work collaboratively and as a response to community concerns about youth and the impacts of using the drug methamphetamine ('P').

The Network will continue to support the local government Community Outcomes process, which enables communities to identify their own priorities. Collaborative responses from our central and local government and community agencies will achieve better social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes within our communities.

Family and Community Services Strengthening Families Network of seven Local Management Groups and five co-ordinators, involves agencies working together with children, young people and their families to support and improve their wellbeing and future opportunities.

Agencies involved include Te Puni Kōkiri, the Ministry of Education Special Education, the Department of Labour, the Ministry of Youth Development, the Accident Compensation Corporation,

Housing New Zealand, the New Zealand Police, the Wairarapa Management Group, Tararua REAP (Regional Education Activities Programme), the Horowhenua District Council, the New Zealand Fire Service and the MidCentral District Health Board.

Following the implementation of the Strengthening Families Ministerial Review in 2005, two new initiatives are underway in the region. Firstly, funding known as Lead Agency Funding is now available to assist community providers by covering their costs to engage with clients. Previously engagement by providers has been mainly on a volunteer basis. Secondly, the Strengthening Families Regional Governance Group is now able to consider any issues or barriers that Local Management Groups are not able to fully resolve. Referrals to the Strengthening Families programme can come from schools, community nurses and doctors, government agencies and other organisations. The programme works by encouraging the co-ordination of support for families where multiple agencies are involved. This means that the family and relevant agencies all agree on the best way forward, with each contributing to make the outcome a success.

Local Services Mapping is a consultative process where we work together with other organisations to identify and prioritise community needs. Each Mapping exercise results in a report that identifies community priorities and strengths, and any gaps in the delivery of social services. An action plan is then developed to identify timelines and practical solutions to meet these needs. Family issues, youth needs and drug and alcohol dependency were identified as issues in the Tararua and Kapiti communities. We will support these communities to implement their local action plans. A further Local Services

Mapping exercise is to be undertaken in the Horowhenua region.

We also contribute to the Wairarapa/Tararua Regional Intersectoral Forum, which is led by Te Puni Kōkiri. The Forum has been successful in co-ordinating central and local government initiatives which impact on Māori. The Southern Wairarapa 'Life to the Max' project is an example of the work of the Forum. A proposal for future focus by the Forum is being developed around initiatives covering four key areas: health, justice, employment and education.

Experience gained during the floods of 2004 has enabled our region to take a lead role in developing the intersectoral welfare response to a possible emergency event. The Welfare Advisory Group provides co-ordinated advice and planning from welfare agencies during and after an emergency. The Group works with the Manawatu-Wanganui Civil Defence Emergency Management Group in the co-ordination of welfare for any emergency. Intersectoral partners include Red Cross New Zealand, Housing New Zealand, The Salvation Army, Te Puni Kōkiri, Victim Support, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the MidCentral District Health Board and territorial and regional authorities. We have been active in supporting the Ministry of Health's lead in national exercises designed to test the region's preparedness for a pandemic, working closely with both the MidCentral District Health Board and other welfare agencies.

We will continue to work closely with agencies on planning a co-ordinated welfare response to a possible Pandemic threat, at both an organisational and community level by building on existing inter-agency networks such as the Regional Inter-agency Network and Regional Intersectoral Fora.

"While we continue to work with government and non-government agencies to develop strategies and work together with the aim of eliminating family violence within our communities, this also means that ending violence in homes is, and must be seen, as a collective responsibility for the whole community. We can't do this in isolation from each other."

Maree Hill
District Family Violence Co-ordinator
New Zealand Police

We listen to the issues raised by our stakeholders, whether they are clients, staff, other central and local government agencies or non-government community organisations. We seek to implement early interventions that attempt to address the underlying cause, rather than trying to treat the symptoms. Our commitment to the 'Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families' is one example of this. Our ability to respond to local issues is strengthened by the appointment of a Regional Policy Advisor, who will be able to take our local policy issues to National Office for consideration. This will give us the ability to directly influence policy development at a national level, whilst implementing solutions at a local level.

Healthy futures

Healthy eating, healthy action

The Government's 'Healthy Eating, Healthy Action' programme is a national health initiative which calls for a more integrated approach led by the health sector to addressing nutrition, physical activity and obesity, emphasising the importance of influencing individual and family behaviour. The programme involves healthy eating messages that aim to improve nutrition by promoting healthy foods such as fruit and vegetables, and reducing less nutritious foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar. Being active, the importance of exercise and maintaining a healthy body weight are also key messages conveyed through the programme.

We are involved in the Steering Group and working parties in a local programme through the Wairarapa District Health Board's 'Healthy Eating, Healthy Action' programme. The programme delivers the healthy eating messages to early childhood groups, schools, youth and Māori. In addition to the Wairarapa District Health Board, the programme is supported by territorial authorities, including the Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Councils, Sport Wairarapa, Active Wairarapa, Wairarapa REAP, local schools, non-government organisations and iwi organisations.

Healthy homes

The aim of the Healthy Homes programme is to provide insulation for low-income families that live in older homes. We are working with other agencies in the programme which include the district health boards, power companies, territorial authorities, the Eastern and Central Community Trust and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority. A number of non-government organisations also make referrals to the programme.

We are involved in the programme through four main projects:

- the Wairarapa Healthy Homes Project
- the Kapiti/Horowhenua Healthy Homes Project
- the Tararua Healthy Homes Project
- the Manawatu/Palmerston North Healthy Homes Project.

We are on the steering committees of all the above projects in conjunction with central and local government and community partners. Over 260 clients have benefited from these projects, with many indicating that they now have warmer homes and lower power bills. This has resulted in positive outcomes in terms of better health and wellbeing. A recent study by the Wellington School of Medicine on the Wairarapa Healthy Homes Project revealed that benefits of the programme included a large reduction in admissions to hospital, energy savings, and a reduction in the number of days off work and school.

Providing access to health solutions

Some of our clients are keen to work, however they require additional support to realise their employment goals. During 2007, PATHS (Providing Access to Health Solutions) was implemented in our region in partnership with the MidCentral District Health Board. PATHS aims to help Sickness or Invalid's Benefit clients into work by bringing employment, training and health services together in a co-ordinated way. This is a key part of our work in assisting all clients who are willing and able to work.

Specialists from across the health and welfare sectors are working together with PATHS participants to create Wellness and Employment Plans which will help people receive the medical treatment they need and assist them achieve their employment goals.



Above: We want to make New Zealand a great, fun place for our children to grow up in.

Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed



Above: Investing in families helps to build resilient children, young people and communities. By investing early in our children, we increase their future potential and reduce the challenges they may face during their lifetime.

The future of New Zealand depends on our children and young people getting the best possible start in life. We all want our children and young people to enjoy a thriving and fun childhood, be loved and cherished, and become valued citizens, now and in the future. Our region enjoys almost full enrolment of children aged three to four years in early childhood or home-based education, which represents a significant investment for the future¹⁹.

We are the lead agency for Families - Young and Old and for the sub theme of Strong Families. Most New Zealand families provide safe, loving and caring homes for their children. However many families face challenges from time to time that can affect their ability to cope. These struggles can be even greater for families facing financial difficulties - at these times a helping hand is invaluable. For some families, violence, abuse and neglect are critical issues - supporting family members who have a disability or long-term illness can also be a challenge.

Our work to support, protect and care for children and young people is an important focus for us. Our region has 49,485 (21%) children aged under 15 years, and 31,977 (14%) young people aged between 15 to 24 years²⁰. These young New Zealanders are our future workers and we need to make sure our work delivers positive outcomes for them.

Early intervention services

The early years of a child's life lay the foundations for their future. Every child deserves to grow up in a stable and loving family environment. Freedom from violence, abuse and neglect, an adequate standard of living, access to a good education and healthcare and opportunities for training and work - are the cornerstones of wellbeing for children and young people. Being valued and respected and having some involvement in the decisions that affect them are things our young people need to feel.

We will be expanding our early intervention programmes such as Family Start for vulnerable children, their families, and communities. Research clearly shows that intervening early in the life of a child facing a problem brings the best long-term results.

Family Start provides intensive, home-based support to families with very young children, at a time when a helping hand is needed to ensure their children are given the best possible start in life. It provides information, gives advice and support, and refers parents to other sources of support. Local providers Plunket and iwi Te Rūnanga o Raukawa Incorporated, deliver the programme tailored to the needs of their members. The programme works with families with new babies and can start working with families up to six months prior to the birth of a child.

19. *The Social Report 2006*, Ministry of Social Development.

20. *Census of Population and Dwellings*, Census 2006, Statistics New Zealand.

The 2006 Budget indicated that the Government intended spending \$14.8 million nationwide over four years to continue the SKIP programme. This programme promotes positive parenting and alternatives to physical discipline. Some parents and caregivers only have one model to follow, inherited from their own parents. They find that up-to-date skills do not come naturally or are not easy to learn. Community organisations involved in SKIP get their message across using pamphlets, videos and tip sheets. A number of parent support and education packages are available and there is also a Local Initiatives Fund²¹ for the promotion of positive parenting.

Many parents find that coping with a second or third child is difficult, and that relationships can suffer as a result.

The SKIP programme gives parents useful skills which are based on tried and true techniques that have been found to make a difference to children, and make a positive contribution to the ability of parents to cope. SKIP initiatives within our region, such as the Te Aroha Noa Community Services in Palmerston North and the Wairarapa Community Counselling Centre, have focused on positive parenting information and support for sole parents and Māori and Pacific families.

Parents who can find a balance between work and parenting, tell us that this makes for a happier, more well-balanced family all round. We are helping them to make the transition to work by providing training programmes and advice such as the benefits of the Working for Families package.

Supporting our families

Paid work is considered a major contributor in addressing social and economic disadvantage. The benefits include greater self esteem, a sense of achievement and social comradeship. Our Working for Families package, including tax credits will continue to help make it easier to work and raise a family. More parents can access affordable, quality early childhood education for their children, including kohanga reo. Childcare Subsidies for pre-schoolers and OSCAR (Out of School Care and Recreation) Subsidies for 5 to 13 year olds have also assisted many families as they juggle their commitments. In Levin, the Muaupoko Tribal Authority OSCAR-funded initiative has provided holiday programmes which have been welcomed by busy working parents.

Raising children alone can present extra challenges such as help with childcare when needed, and budgeting and parenting pressures. Sole parents often tell us how much value they get from work, not just financially, but also from increases in self esteem, self confidence and their own wellbeing. We will continue to help them to move into the workplace as their family circumstances allow. We will provide practical advice and training to meet the needs of our sole parents and the job market.



Above: Pictured from left are members of the Youth Transition Services team Louis Smith, Sam Scott, Rauna Ngawhare, Peter Butler, and Chris Hill (kneeling).

21. The Local Initiatives Fund supports activities which foster the collaborative networks in communities. These activities focus on the objectives of SKIP by helping build strong and healthy relationships between parents and children.

>> Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed >>

"Youth Parliament is more than just a feel-good public relations exercise, it is a teenagers think-tank, a diverse cultural melting-pot of ideas, opinions and beliefs. I was proud to be a part of it; proud to contribute, proud to listen and proud to feel some of the great mana surrounding the event".

Christopher Bishop
Former Youth MP

We believe that connected families are strong families. Strengthening Families is a well established programme involving agencies and community providers working together to support and improve the wellbeing of children, young people and their families. It also helps people to overcome any problems or challenges that may affect their successful progress in life and future opportunities. Agencies committed to the co-ordination role are being supported with increased financial resources. This will enable the programme to be more widely promoted and increase the number of families able to be engaged.

Eliminating family violence

While most children in New Zealand are safe and secure, rates of violence within some families are very high. Family violence and its effects on children and young people are a critical national social issue.

The 'Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families' has the vision that all families and whānau have healthy, respectful and stable relationships, free from violence. Safety and accountability is being achieved through the way we work with the New Zealand Police, the Courts, and the Department of Corrections to keep victims and their families safe and provide them with access to the support they require. There will be greater accountability for those who commit family violence and steps will be taken to reduce re-offending.

We will support a new Family Violence Court, aimed at protecting victims against abuse, which has been set up in Masterton. The Court is a new way of working that is intended to speed up the court process and reduce the risk of further violence while a case is waiting to be heard.

Our Family Violence Intervention Programme gives our case managers the skills and resources to recognise abuse and assist clients who experience family violence. Our family violence response co-ordinators provide specialised advice and support to case managers who help clients facing situations involving family violence. We will be working with agencies including the New Zealand Police and the Ministries of Justice, Health and Education to develop indicators to measure our success. We are working closely with the New Zealand Police in supporting our staff to respond appropriately to family violence. We are also working with community agencies to make sure that adequate support systems are in place. We will improve outcomes for children and young people, by providing information and programmes to support parents and to prevent or lessen the impact of violence within families.

Care and protection

Central to our work in building strong families is the requirement that all children and young people are protected from abuse and neglect. There are currently over 420 children in care in our region. We will be working to ensure that care and protection services are timely, effective and responsive to the



Above: We work in partnership with Inland Revenue to provide increased levels of Family Assistance, Childcare, Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) Subsidies and Accommodation Supplement to low- to middle-income families. Pictured are children taking part in the OSCAR programme.

>> Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed >>

needs of the child, young person and family. This will involve:

- continuing to establish very clear and measurable outcomes for care and protection services
- promoting good governance
- gathering and using evidence about what works
- leading and supporting multi-agency family violence community groups
- making sure services work well together and provide good coverage across New Zealand
- promoting family and community involvement in decision making.

We will also develop improved responses to the demand for services by families, agencies and members of the public. These developments will focus on more effective responses to notifications of possible abuse or neglect. We will continue to review our existing relationships with agencies such as the New Zealand Police and the Women's Refuge, to see how our services can be improved. This includes our upfront responses to family violence.

Safety and accountability for young offenders is being achieved through the way we work with the New Zealand Police, the Courts and the Department of Corrections. We will work to increase or improve access to programmes that support the current range of Youth Court orders. We will build on the work of our Youth Offending teams to tackle the entrenched problems of some older children and young people. These teams are the link between key agencies, whose aim is to reduce the rate and severity of re-offending of young people in the youth justice system.

Revitalisation of the family group conference tool and improved co-ordination is being undertaken so that families and victims can be better assisted and empowered to cope with their situations. A family group conference is often arranged in order to promote accountability, reduce the risk of youth offending and reach agreement on how to keep children safe.

Supporting our youth

The way forward

We are fortunate to have a high number of young people living in our communities and their zest and energy for life represents much of the future potential of the region. However, some young



Above: Children and young people are our taonga. If they are nurtured and given the right opportunities and encouragement, they will achieve. If we have strong families, we will have strong communities.

New Zealanders today can face a number of challenges as they move into adulthood such as low self esteem, poor literacy, drug and alcohol abuse, obesity, loneliness, teen pregnancy and poor access to a good education and training.

We work with community groups and other agencies to help young people transition successfully from school into work, training, or further education.

Through our outdoor and community recreational projects, we provide opportunities for young people to build their skills, confidence and self esteem so they can actively take part in decisions that affect them now and in the future.

Investing in youth development

The Government's Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa²² promotes a country where young people are vibrant and optimistic through being supported and encouraged to take up challenges.

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

>> Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed >>

A plan to boost social work students' job experience

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Massey University School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work and Child, Youth and Family that will give social work students greater experience before they step into the workforce.

Under the agreement, up to five Bachelor of Social Work and Masters of Social Work students will become involved with the Child, Youth and Family's Lower North Island service next year.

Students will work with Child, Youth and Family staff who have had training in supervising students, and who have had a minimum of three years social work experience. The school will also ensure students have up-to-date theoretical knowledge and skills before they begin their placement.

Lynda Angus, Child, Youth and Family Regional Director Central Region, and Michael Peters Massey University Director Research Management Services sign the Memorandum of Understanding, while members from Child, Youth and Family, and the Massey University School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work look on.



To make this vision a reality, we will continue to focus on working collaboratively with others by:

- providing leadership, co-ordination, support and policy advice for government and non-government agencies working with young people
- funding youth-development services for young people
- ensuring the specific needs and interests of young people are taken into account at all levels of government
- building our knowledge-base of models of good practice for youth development
- supporting young people to influence their social and political environment by giving them avenues to voice their ideas and concerns.

The Ministry of Youth Development's Partnership Fund aims to provide funding to territorial authorities wishing to implement the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa and establish good youth development practices in their communities. The Fund promotes youth development opportunities and wellbeing outcomes, for young people aged 12 to 24 years, through local solutions. Palmerston North City Council's initiative, Akohia te Rangahau (teaching research) is the first initiative to be funded locally through the Fund. This initiative aims to provide training that enables young people to conduct their own youth development research projects and contribute to our knowledge about youth health wellbeing.

Other youth initiatives

Youth Parliament

Youth Parliament 2007 is New Zealand's fifth Youth Parliament. It aims to encourage enrolment and voting participation of young people, and provide positive images of young people as active citizens. It also raises the profile and relevance of Parliament and government.

PROVOKE

The PROVOKE Network is a national project which aims to provide:

- government and non-government organisations with a mechanism to engage with young people in decision making
- young people aged 13 to 24 years with opportunities and information on getting their voices heard
- youth councils and youth advisory groups with a national networking facility.

Youth councils are examples of the PROVOKE Network in action in our region and are located in Palmerston North City, Horowhenua, Masterton and Kapiti.

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Youth 2007

The Youth 2007 Research project will gather and analyse information about health and wellbeing from a sample of over 10,000 young people aged 12 to 18 from 100 different secondary schools in New Zealand, including schools in our region. The accurate and comprehensive data that will be available from this survey will give us an even better picture of the needs of young people in our region, to inform how we can continue to improve the targeting and nature of our youth development projects.

Youth health

The spotlight is being placed on young people's health and the importance of them accessing first-rate health care. By international standards, current research indicates that New Zealand's 12 to 24 year olds have high rates of preventable illnesses which could be avoided by regular health checks and 'youth-friendly' health care. At this age and stage of life, the effects of risky behaviour such as drug taking, binge drinking and unprotected sex can have life-long consequences.

We will be highlighting adolescence as a critical developmental phase and drawing attention to the need for more 'youth-friendly' health services that are accessible to young people no matter which part of New Zealand they live in.

"The advent of Lead Agency and Facilitator Funding is welcomed as it will assist non-government organisations to provide better and more consistent services to families. The funding will increase the number of non-government organisations willing to participate in Strengthening Families. Coupled with the Best Practices Model, the additional funding will also help to raise the standard of those delivering the Strengthening Families programme."

Peter Zapasnik
Manager Tararua REAP and
Chair Tararua Strengthening Families



Above: Family Violence impacts on the lives of thousands of New Zealanders. We are committed to working with our clients, communities and other organisations towards eliminating family violence. Supporting White Ribbon Day is one way we achieve this.

>> Helping our Children, Young People and Families Succeed >>

"The effective partnership with Work and Income assists us to achieve our organisational goals of promoting the Working for Families package. In doing so we are helping families financially and enhancing their economic wellbeing".

Mark Dawson
Inland Revenue
Customer Insight
Community Relationships
Palmerston North and New Plymouth

Youth upskilling

Developing thriving skills and a knowledge-based economy means investing in people to undertake further studies, including tertiary. We help students make informed choices about their education by providing financial assistance such as loans, allowances and bursaries to tertiary students. We also assist them with decisions at key transition points and provide advice concerning the completion of their studies and managing their debt.

Our Youth Transition Service in Palmerston North is a collaborative initiative with the Palmerston North City Council, which works closely with schools and other youth agencies. Palmerston North has a high youth population of 14,724 people aged between 15 to 24 years. This represents almost 46% of the region's total youth population for this age group²³. The Service provides intensive support to young people, who after leaving school, may be at risk of 'falling through the cracks'. These young people are offered valuable opportunities to work, train or undergo further education. A three-year strategic plan for the Service has been developed and lead providers have been identified to undertake the work.

We will also continue to support the shared goal between government and the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs that all 15 to 19 year olds be engaged in education, training or employment. Our Kelvin Grove Youth Worker project is jointly funded by the Palmerston North City Council, and works proactively with youth (and their families) by providing after school programmes as well as the Kelvin Grove Alternative Education Programme. Plans to break down barriers to social participation are developed. A Youth Worker assists 'at risk' youth to either stay in school or guides them through to training or work experience, with the ultimate goal of securing paid employment.



Above: The Palmerston North YMCA Youth Development Centre delivers the Ministry of Youth Development-funded Conservation Corps programme to young people aged 16 to 25 years.

23. *Census of Population and Dwellings*, Census 2006, Statistics New Zealand.

Creating Opportunities for Working Age People

For most working-age people, employment is the pathway to achieving financial independence. Paid employment is often the best way to improve economic independence and social wellbeing. It provides monetary rewards and enables people to be recognised for their work and to have a sense of contribution and belonging. This in turn has a positive impact on their families and communities. Employment, training and up-skilling are key contributors to economic transformation as they represent an investment in people and provide pathways to independence.

Over the years, our focus has been on reducing the number of people receiving an unemployment-related benefit²⁴. The significant reduction in unemployment over recent years has allowed us to shift our focus to other groups that need extra help to join the workforce, such as people with ill health or a disability, and sole parents. Ongoing skill and labour shortages also require us to look at new options to fill the gaps.

Our labour market

Our unemployment rate of 5.0% is higher than the national average of 3.8%²⁵. This may indicate that some people in our community still need extra help, such as skills and confidence training to get into work.

The needs of our labour market have changed significantly over recent years. Skill and labour shortages are growing issues as the workforce gets older and economic conditions continue to improve. Since the 1990's, participation in our labour force has been increasing for all groups in our region. Despite these increases, some groups still have lower-than-average job participation rates, particularly Māori, young people, people aged 55 to 64, women, people with a disability and recent migrants. We will continue to focus on working with these groups to assist them into sustainable employment.

Given the youthfulness of the Māori population, it is crucial that Māori are able to fully participate in the labour market. Nationally, Māori unemployment stands at 8.6%, compared to 4.2% for New Zealand's total population. This is the lowest rate in 20 years.

We respond to the needs of the labour market, including Māori, by matching our training to meet specific industry job requirements and actively promoting our clients to suitable opportunities. We can also provide Skills Investment subsidies for up to three months to employers who recruit clients who may otherwise have difficulty entering the workforce.

Building a new future

According to Statistics New Zealand data, Manawatu has been the second fastest growing region in New Zealand during the last four years.

With unemployment levels continuing to fall there are challenges to fill job vacancies.

"As more jobs are being created, it's harder to find people to fill those vacancies. It's a good place to be. We just have to find more workers by looking at our wider client base", said Toni Seanoa, Regional Labour Market Manager.

"We continue to work with industry, economic development agencies and the Department of Labour to use labour market intelligence which helps us develop training programmes tailored to industry requirements", he said.

Palmerston North business Metalcraft Industries Ltd is one of many industries in the region riding on the tail of a buoyant building industry.

Pictured from left are Cecil Fueman and Kelvin Abbott making roof flashings at Metalcraft Industries Ltd.



Photo courtesy of Manawatu Standard.

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

25. *Household Labour Force Survey*, 31 March 2007, Statistics New Zealand.

>> Creating Opportunities for Working Age People >>

Enterprising Communities Grants are also available to help communities to create new enterprises or fill job opportunities that they have identified. We work closely with industry, economic development agencies, other institutions and the Department of Labour to source labour-market intelligence to help us with job opportunities, issues and trends. We are also supporting the promotion of the Equal Employment Opportunities Trust document 'Making a Difference: Why and How to Employ and Work Effectively with Māori' in the region to help us market clients to employers.

"The Job Search Service staff were excellent, the messages were all about work first and what I needed to do to get a job."

Alan Littlejohn
Former client
Dannevirke

Economic development agencies

We work collaboratively with economic development agencies Vision Manawatu, Nature Coast, Go Wairarapa, Wairarapa Workforce Development Trust, and Te Arahanga ō Nga Iwi, on practical initiatives to deal with challenges in the labour force. These include support and mentoring, skill and labour shortages, seasonal needs, workforce education, industry clusters, self employment assistance and other economic considerations.

Our work with the Wairarapa Workforce Development Trust is aimed at supporting employers in the Wairarapa. Funding is being provided for a co-ordinator to facilitate initiatives including a farmers market, a food sector cluster and a cuisine culinary school.

In the Wairarapa, we are also working closely with the Department of Labour and employers in the horticulture and viticulture industry, who are experiencing seasonal labour shortages. A new scheme called the Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme has been implemented by the Department of Labour to facilitate the temporary entry of overseas workers to plant, maintain, harvest, and pack crops in the horticulture and viticulture industries. The scheme can be applied in instances where workers from New Zealand are unavailable. The scheme provides an ongoing labour supply from approved Pacific Island countries and operates alongside our other programmes to place clients in this industry.



Above: Work and Income Childcare Co-ordinator Sarah Paterson (left) and Inland Revenue Social Policy Liaison Officer, Philippa McNae promote the Working for Families package at the Feilding Children's Day celebrations.

Our client base

The number of working-age people receiving income support in the region has reduced to 16,571, from 22,405 as at 31 March 2001²⁶. The total number of people receiving an unemployment-related benefit is 1,538, representing a 40% reduction from last year. The number of people receiving a domestic purposes-related benefit is 5,773²⁷, the majority of whom are sole parents with childcare responsibilities. This number has reduced by 565 (9%) over the last year. There are a number of people receiving a Sickness or Invalid's Benefit, representing 50% of the total number of people receiving a working-age benefit.

Building and supporting our workforce

Achieving good economic growth, eliminating poverty and improving social outcomes requires people to be working productively. Helping people into work and building the skills of our workforce are central to the economic transformation of our region.

We build the skills and opportunities of our working-age people by:

- providing enhanced work-focused services for those looking for work, and developing opportunities for those who are unable to work straight away
- continuing to develop and implement employer and industry-focused employment services
- making sure that parents can access effective paid parental leave arrangements, targeted income support, and high-quality and flexible childcare and education services.

Helping people on the pathway to work

We provide working-age people with security and social protection, in the form of benefits and entitlements. We also invest in opportunities that can help clients enter and remain in sustainable employment.

We do this by providing:

- employment, training, other development opportunities and in work support services, coupled with financial benefits and entitlements

- contact centre services to promote industry-focused job training directly to clients
- Student Loans and Student Allowances to help and support people wanting to undertake tertiary education studies
- the Community Services Card to help people access and meet the financial costs of goods and services.

We are focused on helping people achieve financial independence by helping them to get the right job at the right time, right from the start, therefore, where possible, reducing their need to apply for a benefit. We also support our clients to settle into their job, so that they are able to remain employed.

Our New Service Approach and Job Search Service are a new way of working with all working-age clients. They provide people with work-focused services right from the start. Instead of services and opportunities being driven by benefit type or category, we are able to tailor our services to meet an individual's circumstances and work-readiness.

This approach allows us to determine a client's circumstances at a pre-assessment meeting at their initial contact, and assess the level of support they need in their job search. Clients who are deemed work ready undergo immediate employment profiling and job matching.

Assisting clients at an early stage in their job search is the focus of the Job Search Service. Clients who are ready to work are referred to the Service which assists them to take more responsibility in their job-search activities. They are provided with a range of assistance depending on the level of support they require, including access to employment programmes, seminars and work broker services.

In our region, those clients receiving an unemployment-related benefit only represent 9% of our total working-age population. We therefore expect that clients receiving a Domestic Purposes, Sickness or Invalid's Benefit will gain the most from these enhancements.

Enhanced case management

We support people caring for dependant children or experiencing ill health to help them identify their work strengths so that we

26. All benefit statistics in this Regional Plan have been sourced from the Ministry of Social Development's Information Analysis Platform as at 31 March 2007. Where comparisons are made, these reflect statistics as at 31 March 2006, unless otherwise stated.

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

>> Creating Opportunities for Working Age People >>

Right: Career support and advice from Jim Morton, Integrity Services, has supported Margaret Douglas into her new role as a Home Care Worker. Margaret (centre) and Jim are pictured in the home of Enid Russell, one of Margaret's clients.



can provide the appropriate support to assist them with their employment goals. We will continue to provide financial assistance and access to other services in the meantime.

Our enhanced case management of sole parents helps them to plan for their future and enables us to check that they are receiving their full and correct entitlements. For those considering returning to the workforce, either full- or part-time, it can include applying for Working for Families assistance. Help with accommodation and childcare costs, along with tax credits, can provide a helpful increase to family incomes. As a result, increasing numbers of sole parents are moving off benefit and into work.

Making a fresh start

Last year we introduced our Offender Re-integration Programme: Improving Employment Outcomes to improve the employment prospects for people released from prisons. The Programme aims to move offenders back into society, with the focus on securing employment by matching local employer's needs and the individual's goals. We work closely with the Department of Corrections to help offenders find work once they are released from prison.

Proactive client assistance

Preventing and managing benefit fraud and debt are necessary to maintain public trust and confidence in our benefit system.

We will:

- make sure clients are aware of their responsibility to advise us of changes in their circumstances
- continue to streamline our internal processes and respond quickly to situations
- seek opportunities to partner in the prevention of fraud and reduction of debt, both across the Ministry and externally
- provide people with advice about getting their right entitlements at the right time.

Active case management involves providing clients with advice and support that focuses on the management and reduction of debt. It can help to prevent and minimise it, and reduce barriers for clients when they enter employment. When we need to recover debts from people, we will always take into account their individual circumstances.

Services to employers

Central to our success in achieving sustainable employment outcomes is our ability to match employers needs to our clients skills.

Jobz4u is an internet-based tool which our staff use to assess clients and match them to employer vacancies. The tool enables us to support employers to get the people they need, at the right time. By doing this well, we can achieve better employment outcomes for both employers and our clients.

Our services to employers focus on delivering the right level of service which includes a greater emphasis on engaging with those employers and industries who can offer jobs which suit our clients. We will also work towards a structured process to assist in building and managing our relationships with them, undertake more analysis and planning so that we better understand our clients' capability and actively develop their skills so that they match available job opportunities.

Our industry partnerships are an effective way of working with industry and government to minimise skill and labour shortages, and maximise job opportunities for our clients. We work with industry both nationally and locally to identify their labour needs and hiring requirements. We also develop enhanced, tailored training programmes that are responsive to the needs of employers. Larger employers (for example McDonalds and the Warehouse) are account-managed so that their individual employment needs can be attended to centrally. Individual employer partnerships are appropriate where there is a clear job opportunity and need by an employer for pre-employment skills training and specific entry-level skills, but where the employer does not have the resources or time to develop and promote these by themselves. These partnerships also enable a wider range of job seekers (for example people with disabilities) to obtain access to opportunities.

Our Straight 2 Work training programmes are developed by industry, for industry, and ensure that we train our clients to an employer's entry-level requirements. We run a variety of tailored training programmes with industry such as food and beverage, flooring, plumbing, meat industry and bus and coach. These partnerships require effective and close account management services, work brokerage and the development of our clients. We are seeking opportunities to develop new partnerships with other large employers such as the New Zealand Defence Force and the banking industry.

Our Palmerston North Straight 2 Work programmes in retail and hospitality have been very successful. High employment outcomes are being achieved and local employers are benefiting from well trained new staff. Our taxi driver training in Palmerston North is also proving a success as the industry provides job opportunities for our more mature people. The taxi industry prefers drivers to have many years of practical driving experience in order to provide a safe and quality service.

"We work together to resolve any issues that students may have with their Student Loans, Allowances or Scholarships and take a proactive approach at looking at ways to improve the ways the University is doing things in relation to StudyLink practices".

Pauline Frings

*Campus Information Services Officer, Finance
Massey University*



Above: Coachwork Central Ltd are specialist manufacturers of buses, coaches and truck bodies. Our partnership with Coachwork and other industries enables us to prepare and train clients to be placed into industry positions.

>> Creating Opportunities for Working Age People >>

For clients entering employment from Straight 2 Work and other training opportunities, we offer a Skills Package, which provides extra post-placement support to help clients to overcome additional on-the-job training needs such as assistance with literacy and numeracy. The Package is operated with the agreement and co-operation of the client's new employer, over a six to nine month timeframe and is delivered in the workplace by an industry endorsed trainer.

A highly educated and skilled workforce is crucial to developing a high-value economy and trade opportunities in international markets. Our 'Manawatu Tools for Schools' initiative involves a trades mentor who promotes trades apprenticeship and entry-level job opportunities to youth in secondary schools and the community. We also support the Government's Gateways programme throughout our secondary schools. Students are provided with a practical introduction to industry, work-based training and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority unit standard system of accreditation, which gives national recognition to their on-the-job studies.

"People find it extremely helpful to have both Inland Revenue and Work and Income working together to provide information on the extra assistance available, for those families making the life changing decision to come off benefit".

Philippa McNae
Social Policy Liaison Officer
Inland Revenue

Contact centre – supporting our services

Our contact centres will play an increasingly pivotal role in our ability to deliver the services employers and clients expect. We know that most of people make their first contact with us through a contact centre, and as our services evolve, more and more people will be engaging with us over the phone. Our contact centres are centralising and removing large volumes of transactional processing away from service centres. This enables our case managers to work even more proactively with our clients.

In the future we will be establishing or enhancing the following services:

- developing an enhanced Employer Line that will improve the placement of people into work
- clients will be assisted by the provision of a free phone Job Search Line
- extending Service Express to allow clients to check payment and debt details or tell us about their wages using secure technology
- extending our outbound calling to allow job-skill profiles to be reviewed, appointments to be arranged and early discussion of available work opportunities.

Shaping our students futures

We contribute to both social development and education through our StudyLink service. The education sector's commitment to creating the skills and knowledge that New Zealand needs for a thriving economy means investing in people so the opportunity to take-up tertiary education is available to all. Successful education outcomes lead to improved employment opportunities, which are likely to be more sustainable over time.

>> Creating Opportunities for Working Age People >>

We help students make informed choices about their education and we provide support so they:

- are financially able to undertake study and are assisted at key transition points
- complete their study
- have manageable levels of debt.

Māori are well represented at the certificate or diploma level of tertiary education but are under-represented at a degree level, although this is increasing. Our StudyLink service will continue to encourage Māori into tertiary education with the promotion of our services on marae and tertiary institutions such as wananga.

We will continue to work with our central and government partners including Career Services rapuara in relation to course-related advice to students, Student Job Search around facilitating employment for students, and the Ministry of Education in relation to policy development.

We will review and enhance the delivery of the On Course programme with schools, and identify opportunities to build on relationships with other agencies. This programme aims to share information with school leavers in an engaging way, and provides them with an insight into the realities of student life. It also looks at different ways of funding study as well as Student Loans, Student Allowances and Scholarships. Last year a Work and Income On Course module was developed especially to help people transition from a benefit to study. This year StudyLink and Work and Income will be training staff in the module and promoting it to assist our clients.

We will continue to support the Palmerston North Youth Transition Service, which assists school leavers aged 15 to 17 years, into work, education or training. We will continue to have extensive involvement with Massey University, UCOL and other local education providers, by working co-operatively to make sure that students receive access to the financial support they need.

Right choice

Seventeen-year old Bjorn Reiersen wants to work in the sports industry and thought studying at UCOL would be the best way to achieve his dream. Bjorn left school with no formal qualifications and was hesitant in financing his study through a Student Loan.

"Taking the loan was not right for him", Bjorn's mother Horina Reiersen said. "As a parent we want our children to succeed, but I didn't want to see Bjorn struggle, not complete his studies and have a big debt".

StudyLink Officer, Melanie Te Hiwi talked to Bjorn about his proposed course of study to make sure it was exactly what he wanted and hoped to achieve. *"It was clear that Bjorn was going to need some foundation skills and get back into the routine of studying before going to UCOL".*

Palmerston North's Course X-treme was chosen as the best starting place for him. The 12-month programme for 16 to 17 year olds is run by Trade and Commerce and funded by Work and Income. It gives students a taste of the different options available, giving them the confidence to make well-informed decisions on their future training or employment, by offering NCEA credits, driver's licences, a first aid course, and much more.

"I have more social skills and confidence. When I finish I'll have a better idea whether study or work will be the best option for me. My aim is to study at UCOL next year, and this course is going to help me get there", Bjorn said.

Pictured from left are Melanie Te Hiwi, Bjorn Reiersen and Tawhiti Henare from Course X-treme.



Enhancing the Wellbeing of Older People - Today and Tomorrow

Older people are valued in society and have the right to dignity and security. They should have opportunities to use their skills, knowledge and experience to contribute to our communities. As the lead agency for Families - Young and Old we are focused on creating positive choices for older New Zealanders, to help them lead healthy and productive lives.

Our region has a higher proportion of older people than the national average, with 16% of our people aged 65 years or older, compared with 12% nationally²⁸. This number is predicted to rise to 25% in 2026²⁹ and will have a significant impact on our services now and in the future.

There are 36,846 people receiving New Zealand Superannuation in our region. Through our service centres our Superannuation case managers provide information, pay and review entitlements for people aged 65 years and over.

Through the Office for Senior Citizens we actively lead, monitor and promote the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy³⁰.

Skills and experience go a long way

Keith Wooller is the first official custodian of Te Ore Ore Marae on the outskirts of Masterton. With 30 years work experience as a builders labourer behind him he is proving to be an asset and is turning a skilled hand to caring for the 125-year old marae.

Sixty-two year old Keith secured his new job over some much younger applicants. *"It's hard out there, once you're my age employers politely make excuses about why they can't take you on. I find it a great honour to work here"*, he said.

Keith was referred to the vacancy through the Masterton Work and Income Service Centre where he had registered as a job seeker after finishing work with a local building firm. His skills were assessed and matched to the custodian position.

Keith had been to two tangi in his life but apart from that, he had not been involved in marae protocol at all. *"It's very much about getting on with people, I find, and if you are friendly and welcoming, it goes a long way"*, Keith said.

Marae chairwoman Angie Pourau said, *"Keith has earned the respect of the elders and kaumātua, he's on a journey of cultural transition and he is up for the challenge"*.

Keith's supervisor Mere Kerehi said there have been caretakers in the past but they have been mainly responsible for bookings.

Keith's role is far wider and his will be the 'face' people will turn to when they have issues with maintenance of the facilities. *"Keith's maturity is a real bonus, he looks for work to do and uses his initiative. He's a real asset to the Marae"*, she said.



28. *Census of Population and Dwellings*, Census 2006, Statistics New Zealand.

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

30. *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 >>

Key areas of the Strategy include ensuring our older people have access to sufficient income, affordable housing, safe environments, health services and social activities.

We are focused on providing older people with easy access to simple and complete information, to assist them in making their own choices in relation to services, continued independence and social participation. We indicated in last year's Plan that one of our priorities was to review how we deliver services to older people. This review has made a number of recommendations to improve how we deliver services, including better integration with other service providers. Work is currently underway on possible options for improving the delivery of services to older people in the future, and further work will be carried out in consultation with key groups including older people themselves, on developing these ideas over the coming year.

Our service arm of Senior Services includes International Services, the Card Centre and War Pension Services. We administer New Zealand pension entitlements for eligible people living overseas, and for people living in New Zealand and receiving an overseas pension, through International Services. The Card Centre administers the Community Services Card (on behalf of the Ministry of Health), which assists people on low- to middle-incomes or receiving income support to access affordable healthcare. War Pension Services administers the payment of War Disablement, Veterans and Surviving Spouse Pensions.

War Pension Services administers War Pensions to over 1,100 people in the Central region.

The Card Centre is currently focused on working to make sure that people who still require or are eligible for a Community Services Card apply for one, by promoting the card at community events and expos, with an emphasis on groups with historically low take-up rates.

In the second half of 2007, the Card Centre will administer the SuperGold Card, which is a discount and concession Card for all New Zealanders who are over 65, or who qualify for New Zealand Superannuation or a Veterans Pension. The Card will provide commercial discounts from participating businesses and easy access to concessions for government and local authority services. Card holder spouses who are under 65 are also able to access the business discounts.

A joint Ministry initiative with the Palmerston North City Council is the Recreation Ticket. The Ticket enables Community Services Card and SuperGold Card holders to access a broad range of subsidised services and activities in the area. Accessed either through Work and Income or the City Council, card holders are able to obtain entry to the arts and theatre, museums, movies, public swimming pools, croquet, bowls and golf amenities at heavily discounted rates, increasing participation. The scheme is being extended to subsidised bus transport and ten pin bowling.



Above: Our goal is to assist older people to remain an active part of the community. We want to help them to live independently and be protected from abuse and poverty.

>> Enhancing the Wellbeing of Older People - Today and Tomorrow >>



Left: Older people are a vital part of our communities. Pictured from left are David and Jean Holiday, Sanchia Hooker and Russell Carthew, volunteers at the Masterton Food Bank.

To promote positive messages about older people and their participation, International Services and the Card Centre attended the Senior Citizens Expo held in Levin to provide information and raise awareness of the services we provide. We will continue to focus on improving access to information for clients, including information available through websites, fact sheets, in other printed forms and face-to-face through community expos and other events. Keeping Independent Now (KIN) seminars were also well attended during the year, and these will be repeated in the coming year.

The proportion of people over 65 years of age who are choosing to remain in employment has more than doubled in the last 10 years³¹. We will continue to work alongside employers and training providers to support older people and work on removing barriers to employment for others who wish to do so. During times of skill and labour shortages we are presented with more and more opportunities to assist our older and

mature workers to re-enter the workforce.

We assist in protecting older people from abuse and discrimination, to maintain their independence, remain in their own homes and participate in the community and economy where possible. We are working with other sectors on sharing information to facilitate a reduction in elder abuse. This is a complex issue that compromises families, and has significant health, education and employment effects. The most common forms of elder abuse and neglect are psychological abuse and financial abuse, with most abusers being family members. Our family violence response co-ordinators work with our community partners to meet the needs of families and to help them receive the help and support that they require.

We will continue to support older people to make an active contribution to our communities. Making use of the valuable experience and knowledge of our older people is a prime aim of the

SAGES programme. The programme matches families to volunteer mentors to develop skills in home management, cooking, budgeting and parenting. SuperGrans services operating in Horowhenua, Pahiatua/Eketahuna, Wairarapa and Palmerston North are all part of the SAGES programme. One of the features of the programme is how far simple, practical advice can go. People approaching the SAGES service for help with budgeting advice, for instance, will find that they are helped in other areas as well; they may be put in touch with free counselling services and educational courses as well as being able to take control of their debt.

Through our commitment to creating positive choices for our older people we will continue to work with our community partners to help address their specific needs, supporting them to participate fully in society and help them to live with independence and dignity.

31. *Census of Population and Dwellings*, Census 2006, Statistics New Zealand.

Partnering with our Communities

Our work with communities, hapū, and iwi is about helping them build their own capability; to reduce disadvantage; to provide access to government services; and to simplify present funding processes for community providers. We also provide policy advice on issues affecting communities, and support government agencies to identify and use best practices in their work with communities, hapū and iwi.

Working with our communities

Through the Regional Inter-agency Network, we are involved in many local-level social development projects. The Network works strategically to improve the social and economic wellbeing of communities and is used to increase cross-agency knowledge and collaboration. Examples of work undertaken by the Network to-date include collaboration during the 2004 floods, participation in the Community Outcomes process and implementation of a drug and alcohol programme in Levin.

The Community Initiatives Fund supports community leaders to run new and innovative social development projects. The purpose of each initiative is targeted to specific groups where there is evidence of need within the community, which is currently not being met by existing services, but which has community support. Over the past three years, this Fund has supported 20 projects nationally, one of which is an integrated wrap-around service for young people aged 10 to 25 years in the Tararua District. The project provides a service linking non-government organisations with government agencies to help support the needs of youth, such as education and training and relationship concerns.

"We are very grateful for the financial assistance we received from Work and Income. This has enabled us to fund an office position here at Rangiatea Church to help with administration tasks and assist with the many local and international queries for historical information and visits".

*Te Hope Hakaraia
Convenor
Rangiatea Church*



Above: Heartland Service Centre Co-ordinators, and staff from Work and Income and Family and Community Services come together to review existing services and look at ways to improve access to government services in our rural areas.

>> Partnering with our Communities >>

"Palmerston North has excellent education and health services, a supportive local body and enthusiastic community groups. It is a welcoming and progressive city, which already boasts a significant international population that adds to its diversity and appeal".

Peter Cotton
Director

RMS Refugee Resettlement Incorporated

Basic foundation skills such as numeracy and literacy are not just important in the workplace, but also in terms of everyday living and can impact on a person's confidence and self worth. Client numeracy and literacy difficulties are being addressed through contracted services with community organisations and our Straight 2 Work programmes. The Te Aroha Noa Community Group, delivers an adult-learning programme to residents in the western suburbs of Palmerston North. The programme focuses on providing adult-learning opportunities for Māori and Pacific peoples, youth and sole parents who have been identified as having little or no literacy skills, thereby limiting their employability. The programme provides increased learning opportunities for parents, which also leads to improved outcomes for their children.

Where community organisations are contracted by several government agencies for services, they can be faced with multiple reporting requirements, processes and systems. To help the many organisations that work in our communities, we have developed easier methods of contracting services through our Funding for Outcomes project. The aim of the project is to improve service delivery and reduce compliance and transaction costs for client organisations.



Above: Palmerston North has amenities and support networks necessary for successful refugee resettlement and is one of the newest refugee resettlement centres. Pictured are Burmese refugees being assisted by Specialist Refugee Case Manager, Tiare Sharpe.

Building capacity in the community sector

Family and Community Services is working to improve access to information and support for non-profit organisations. In their work with the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector, they have identified the information, resources and services needed by people wanting to build organisational capacity in community and voluntary organisations. The focus is on small and medium organisations such as Māori, sports, arts, social service, and environmental groups.

Enterprising Communities Grants also help community organisations to design and implement projects that will create skills and job opportunities for people who are finding it hard to get work. Any legally-incorporated non-profit organisation can apply for funding. The aim of the funding is to help sections of the community develop projects that lead to sustainable long-term employment opportunities and financial independence. Projects are considered on a case-by-case basis.

The scheme has helped fund several community-led projects including a mentoring into work programme for Otaki youth and workforce employment projects with iwi tangata whenua, Ati Awa, on the Kapiti Coast. All projects focus on generating employment within local communities.

Heartland Services provide access to government services and information in the community. Our Heartland Service Centres are one-stop-shops that feature services and information from a range of government organisations. The service assists clients to make appointments and directs them to services that meet their needs.

Pahiatua Heartlands works with the community in Woodville providing access and information for agencies and services such as Child, Youth and Family, Housing New Zealand, Inland Revenue, Rangitāne o Tamaki nui a Rua Incorporated Society, Te Puni Kōkiri, Tenancy Services, Wairarapa REAP, UCOL, Pain Management and Rehabilitation, Plunket Antenatal Classes, TIPS parenting courses, Diabetes Education Courses, Pahiatua Budgeting Services, SuperGrans, Community Garden and Food Bank.

Our diverse families and communities

Although overseas migrants make up only 6% of our population³² (excluding those from Australia and the United Kingdom) many have significant social issues, particularly refugees. Challenges for migrants integrating into New Zealand include difficulty finding employment, little or no understanding of the workplace, language difficulties, low income, little family support, inadequate housing, problems accessing early childhood education and discrimination. We continue to implement various initiatives to address these issues by working closely with the Ethnic Council of Manawatu and other support agencies including the Palmerston North City Council.

"Much more can be achieved when we combine our efforts and work towards common goals. The work that the Regional Inter-agency Network does crosses the boundaries of several organisations, realising that no one issue is in isolation to one single organisation. Collaboration between government agencies - local and central is no easy task. Penny [Regional Commissioner] and her team are integral in leading and driving the Network forward".

Maureen Reynolds
Mayor
Tararua District

32. *Census of Population and Dwellings*, Census 2006, Statistics New Zealand.

>> Partnering with our Communities >>

In Palmerston North, one of our main priorities is to help new migrants build their skills to access good job opportunities. The Settlement Support Co-ordinator at the Ethnic Council of Manawatu is a role that is supported by Work and Income, the Palmerston North City Council, the New Zealand Police, the English for Speakers of Other Languages Service and the Citizens Advice Bureau, and is funded by the Department of Labour. This position connects migrants and refugees to local agencies and services that support their settlement and helps them to integrate into the community. The Palmerston North RMS Refugee Resettlement Centre, which opened in early 2006, has successfully integrated four intakes of refugees in the short time that it has been operating.

Migrants in Palmerston North are receiving specialist case management and support from us as a part of our partnership with the Ethnic Council of Manawatu. An employment co-ordinator, whose position is funded through Migrant Employment Assistance, helps migrants gain confidence and a practical understanding of the local labour market, before they are placed into work. The role also provides help in developing CV's and preparation for job interviews. Understanding the 'Kiwi' workforce culture can be especially difficult for migrants who come from countries where central authorities decide where and when a person is to work. The role also provides assistance for migrants who need to transfer their qualifications through equivalency

exams and makes referrals to other agencies to help their integration into the community.

The diversity of communities within our region reflects a rich and growing mix of cultures. With abundance of natural resources, a healthy economy, and through the collaborative efforts of our agencies, we believe the Central region will remain a great place to live and work now and into the future.

Ticket to recreation

Community Services Card and Super Card holders in Palmerston North are benefiting from the 'Ticket to Recreation' scheme developed through a partnership between the Palmerston North City Council, the Card Centre, and Work and Income.

The initiative is proving popular with over 10,000 card holders already using the Ticket to gain entry into the two local aquatic centres who have signed up to the programme.

"It's great people are using the Recreation Ticket to get out and use the facilities in the City. We support the scheme and the benefits people are gaining by having access to recreational venues like this one, including our programmes like Aqua Aerobics at a discounted rate", said Lynden Noakes, Lido Aquatic Centres Facility Manager.

The scheme provides opportunities for current Community Services Card and Super Card holders to access community-based activities such as bowling, martial arts, movies, croquet, theatre, museums and much more, at a discounted rate.

Riding the wave of success from left are Michael Fletcher, Social Development Manager; Jo Sutton, Palmerston North City Council Projects Co-ordinator; Clive Doughty, National Manager, the Card Centre; and Josie Ratuere, Business Development Manager, the Card Centre.



Organisational Overview



Ministry of Social Development
Regional Office
32 Victoria Avenue
Palmerston North
www.msd.govt.nz

Community Services Card
0800 999 999

Child, Youth and Family
www.cyf.govt.nz
0508 326459

Family and Community Services
www.familyservices.govt.nz

Integrity Services
0800 558 008 (Debt Enquiries)
0800 556 006 (Allegation Line)

International Services
0800 777 117

Ministry of Youth Development
www.myd.govt.nz

StudyLink
www.studylink.govt.nz
0800 88 99 00

SuperGold Card
0800 25 45 65

War Pension Services
0800 553 003

Work and Income
www.workandincome.govt.nz
0800 559 009

